

# 2016 Year in Review

(The following is a look back at some of the memorable news events of the past year on the reservation.)

## January

Being Miss Warm Springs was something Keeyana Yellowman wanted to do for some years.

"I've always looked up to the former Miss Warm Springs, especially my mom," Keeyana said in January, after being crowned **Miss Warm Springs 2016**.

Keeyana's mom is Merle Kirk, and her dad is Virgil Yellowman. Keeyana is a former Miss Junior Warm Springs, and Little Miss Warm Springs.

Keeyana went to Madras High School, and is a co-founder and co-president of the Warm Springs Youth Council.

During the Miss Warm Springs Pageant, Keeyana performed a hand drum song she had written. The song was in Ichishkeen:

"My grandma Mildred Queampts helped me with the translation," Keeyana says.

Keeyana is the fortieth Miss Warm Springs, carrying on a tradition that began in 1955, when the tribes were celebrating the One-Hundred Year Anniversary of the Treaty of 1855. In other January news:

Warm Springs BIA Agency Superintendent John Halliday met with Tribal Council regarding the petition that calls for a vote on **tribal Constitutional amendments**.

The petition suggests a number of changes to the Tribal Constitution. The group that circulated the petition in 2015 submitted a total of 1,290 signatures to the BIA. A minimum of about 1,183 signatures is necessary to call for the vote. Elsewhere this month:

Tribal Council and Warm Springs Ventures met to discuss the next steps in the



**cannabis production project.** One item on the January agenda was the development of regulations that the tribes will implement in the operation of the facility. And this from January:

Deanie Smith, language coordinator came across an interesting and important federal law that has to do with **tribal languages and public schools**. Here is some of the language in the law:

"The traditional languages of Native Americans are an integral part of their cultures and identities, and form the basic medium for the transmission, and thus survival of Native American cultures, literature, histories, religions, political institutions and values..."

This could be an important part of the current discussion between the tribes and the school district, regarding a new long-term memorandum of understanding. In January news from Tribal Council:

The **construction of dams on the Columbia River** displaced many tribal families that had been living and fishing there for generations, since time immemorial.

The displacement and de-

struction of fishing sites, individual homes and villages along the river, creates an obligation on the part of the federal government.

To address part of this obligation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked with the Columbia River tribes to create fishing access and in-lieu sites at the river.

As part compensation, the Corps of Engineers also built a new longhouse, infrastructure and homes at Celilo Village.

These accomplishments are to be celebrated, but the outcome has been imperfect, said Louie Pitt, director of tribal Governmental Affairs. This is true because of the scope of the damage from the dams.

Several decades after the construction of the dams, the federal government now appears ready to address another obligation that exists at the river—that of housing to displaced tribal families.

Kah-Nee-Ta Resort will be a key partner in the **Warm Springs Unmanned Aerial Systems Center for Excellence for Wildland Fire Management**. This will be a mutually beneficial partnership, helping the resort and the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) program.

The area of the lodge that once housed the Indian Head gaming office will be remodeled to serve as a training center for the UAS program. This will include training classrooms, space for a UAS training simulator, offices and a conference room.

The tribes have received two grants, each in the amount of \$500,000. Some of this can be used for the Kah-Nee-Ta remodel, and to bring high-speed Internet fiber optic cable to the resort.

## February

The three districts held their **Tribal Council nomination** meetings in February.

In the Agency District, there were 22 nominations, with one person declining the nomination; so there are 21 nominees. At Seekseequa, there were seven nominees. And at Simnasho, eleven nominees.

The Tribal Council election is scheduled for early April.

Warm Springs Ventures board and management met in February with the U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon Bill Williams, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tim Simmons, who deals with Native policy matters. A main point of discussion was **the tribes' cannabis project**.

"They were pleased with what we presented," said Ventures' Don Sampson. "It was a good meeting, and we intend to continue working closely with them as we move forward."

Meanwhile, Ventures has identified a preferred site for the construction of the greenhouse. The location is in the Lower Dry Creek area, past the landfill on the way to the water treatment plant.

The construction work will include a concrete pad, with the greenhouse—offices and the growing space—on the pad. Elsewhere:

The **Warm Springs Forest Products Industries mill** had to shut down this month. The problem was a log inventory shortage, because rainy weather had made the logging roads impassable.

The closure was expected to be about three weeks, according to a mill spokesperson. The mill management and board met with Tribal Council this month to update the Council on the closure.

The discussion also turned to the long-term viability of the mill, and its plan of operation. The goal has been to make the mill at least a break-even enterprise.

The situation at the mill has repercussions through the organization. Part of the mill debt, for instance, is to the Credit enterprise, and some is to the tribes in the form of a Business Investment Revolving Fund (BIRF) loan. And this in February:

YouthBuild welcomed 19 young people to the program.

The new students joined the program after the two-week orientation, called 'Mental Toughness.' YouthBuild is part of the Heart of Oregon youth edu-

## March

The Madras High School **girls varsity basketball team** traveled to the state tournament, having won the Tri-Valley Conference. Elsewhere in March:

The Eugene Greene Sr. American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit 48 hosted the **Inaugural Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Parade and Expo**. In other news:

The membership is set to give a definitive answer to proposed changes to the **tribal Constitution and By-laws**. For the April 11 election, 987 members registered to vote.

The total number who were eligible to register was about 3,550; so nearly 1,000 registrations are a good voting percentage of that total. And this:

The Confederated Tribes' **Managed Care program**, and other tribal health programs, have seen a significant savings in tribal dollars over the past few years. This is due mainly to the increased billing opportunities.

"The Affordable Care Act is working for the tribes," said Caroline Cruz, general manager of Health and Human Services.

In recent years the tribes and IHS have focused on having as many people as possible sign up for health insurance, such as through the Oregon Health Plan, or Medicaid.

The Annual Health System report for the reservation, published by the Joint Health Commission, explains the savings the tribes have been seeing in recent years:

Managed Care saw a spending reduction of more than \$2.2 million—or 43 percent. Community Counseling saw a decrease of nearly \$900,000, or about 37 percent. These savings correspond to increases in collections from outside sources.

Since the Affordable Care Act took effect in 2012-13, Health and Human Services has focused on an improved billing department.

## April

The **Warm Springs Forest Products Industries mill** is no longer a viable and solvent enterprise. The WSFPI mill cannot resume operation, and the enterprise is now going into court-supervised receivership.

This will involve the sale of the WSFPI assets in order to mitigate the financial loss.

The Confederated Tribes are WSFPI's largest creditor, with loans outstanding to the tribal Credit enterprise, and the tribes' business investment fund.

WSFPI also owes the tribes for past due reservation timber sales. The timber is a trust asset, and has funded the Senior Pension and per capita.

WSFPI and the Confederated Tribes last year agreed to a re-payment schedule to bring the stumpage payments up to date. WSFPI missed its most recent scheduled payment, and the BIA had to issue a cease and desist order to prevent further extraction of the timber.

Tribal Council took action this month to pursue receivership for WSFPI, on advice of legal counsel. In other April news:

The tribes' **truck stop** project is now in the design phase. The truck stop will be located at the tribes' 10-acre trust property at the Madras industrial park, just off Highway 26.

The Twenty-Sixth Tribal Council approved the project last year, on recommendation of the Gaming board.

The tribes' property at the Madras Industrial Park—acquired in 1977, as part of the then-viable mill operation—has not been used in several years. The Gaming proposal calls for development of a truck stop with gasoline service, a restaurant and convenience store, among other amenities. And this:

The membership on April 4 elected the **Twenty-Seventh Tribal Council** of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. In other news:

Two of the **economic development projects** Warm Springs Ventures is working are the unmanned aerial systems training center at the Kah-Nee-Ta Lodge, and a plan, involving Bear Springs, to increase tourism revenue to the tribes.

The Kah-Nee-Ta project will involve a \$350,000 investment in the resort. The lower floor area will be developed into a UAS training center, including flight simulation.

Meanwhile at **Kah-Nee-Ta**: there is a renewed effort by the resort board and staff to invest in this unique destination.

The first project has been a remodeling of the Juniper Room. The idea for the remodel came from the resort food and beverage manager Alp Kalyon. He suggested the idea to the board, which gave the okay.

The remodel work itself was done completely in-house, by the resort maintenance team and other staff.

The Juniper Room is now a more open area, where the guests can enjoy the atmosphere of the lodge lobby.

Tribal Council met in April for discussion about an issue at the **Willamette Falls fishery**.

Recently, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to allow ceremonial fishing on scaffolds by members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde at Willamette Falls. Council members were concerned that Warm Springs had not been involved in the process, as Willamette Falls is a traditional and Treaty fishery of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The Council stated the intent to contact the state for discussion of the circumstances.

## Poet Laureate of Oregon

Elizabeth Woody is an award-winning author of poetry, short fiction and essays. She is an educator and practicing artist.

She won the American Book Award for her first book of poetry, *Hand Into Stone*.

She later won the William Stafford Memorial Award for Poetry, among other literary awards.

Elizabeth was a founding board member of the national Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, and was a founding member of Soapstone, a group dedicated to supporting women writers.

A member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Elizabeth learned in March 2016 that she was named the Oregon Poet Laureate.

Gov. Kate Brown made the announcement



on the recommendation of the Oregon Humanities.

Elizabeth is Navajo, Warm Springs, Wasco and Yakama. She was born in Arizona, on the Navajo

Reservation, and lived most of her life in Oregon.

She is now a judge at the tribal court.