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Students achieve positive performance goals

Graduating from high school is one of the most important things a young person can do, because the achievement improves the rest of the person's life, even future generations.

On average overall, a high school diploma allows for better job and higher education opportunities, higher wages and job security, confidence in pursuing a career, even longer life expectancy.

At Madras High School the ninth-grade on-track rate monitors the likelihood that each student just

completing the freshman year will graduate.

The student needs 24 credits to graduate; so a freshman who earns six credits is on-track to graduate. "This is a big predictor for graduating after four years," said Madras High School Principal H.D. Weddel.

During the past four years at the high school, the overall ninth-grade on-track average has seen a 36-percent percentage point improvement. The state education department even called to con-

gratulate the school.

The overall on-track rate is broken down by identified groups of students at the school, and the Native American ninth-graders have seen a dramatic increase in their on-track rate.

For the Native American ninth-graders at Madras High School, the on-track rate during those years has gone from 33 percent, to 68 percent in 2015-16, and then to 69 percent last school year.

"The on-track rate for the Native American students has more

than doubled, and we're very excited about that," said school Principal Mark Neffendorf.

Principal Neffendorf and Principal Weddel came to the high school four years ago. Before that they were principals at Bend High School.

At the Academy

Like the high school, the Warm Springs Academy received some good student performance news.

(Please see **STUDENTS** on 7)

Languages return to Academy

The Native languages of the Confederated Tribes this year will be taught during the regular school day at the Warm Springs Academy. The Culture and Heritage Department, Education Committee and others have advocated this change for some time now.

"We've always wanted culture and languages to be part of the regular school day," said Deanie Smith, Culture and Heritage Language coordinator and Education Committee member.

"So this is an important change for us. Culture and language are no longer on the back burner. They're coming to the forefront."

Tribal languages and culture once were part of the regular school day for younger students with 509-J, but the district discontinued the program some years ago.

Culture and Heritage then taught language and culture during the Rise & Shine period at the Warm Springs Academy. Rise & Shine was early in the morning, before the start of the regular school day. Culture and Heritage also taught after school at the Academy.

Because of the timing, the lessons were not available to all students, depending on when the parent was able to drop off or pick up the student, for instance.

(Please see **LANGUAGES** on 7)

Council hears plan for KNT

The board and management of Kah-Nee-Ta Resort and Spa have been considering options for bringing in a partner to help run and improve the resort. The idea has the support of Tribal Council, who heard some details of the proposal this week.

Kah-Nee-Ta needs significant improvements in order to be competitive in the regional destination resort market. On its own the resort is not be able to make this kind of investment. The partnership approach would be the way to keep the resort open past this fall.

(Please see **KNT** on 7)



Courtesy Kah-Nee-Ta

Enterprise updates at Council

The Indian Head Casino board and management met with Tribal Council this week, reviewing 2017 and looking toward 2018.

The big change is the Plateau Travel Plaza, said casino general manager Jeffrey Carstensen. Construction is proceeding on schedule, with the opening expected in March 2018.

The framing work at the Travel Plaza main building is done, and the roof will be going on soon, Mr. Carstensen said. Next will be the black top for the large parking area.

The casino team is working with ODOT toward a gas rebate agreement, similar to the one that applies to the sales from the reservation sales. At 80-percent the rebate is significant.

Regarding Indian Head, the casino continues to implement the latest technology innovations. Indian Head is also adjusting its minimum wage standard, allowing the casino to compete with other employers in the region. Some other notes from the meeting:

The new tribal casino that opened in Washington has had no apparent impact on business at Indian Head, Mr. Carstensen said.

Food and beverage sales have been up in recent months. Part of this has been due to the number of fire fighters in the region, purchasing meals at the casino, Mr.

Carstensen said.

Close to 70 percent of the workforce at the casino is Native American, he said.

Credit Enterprise

After the casino presentation, Credit gave its Council update. The enterprise is expecting a dividend to the tribes in 2018 of \$250,000, said Bridget Kalama, Credit controller.

Projections beyond 2018 are not yet available, as it is not known what the per capita will be in the following years.

Credit has faced two major challenges in recent years: The reduction of the per capita, followed by closure of the Forest Products mill.

Due to these factors, the account delinquency rate jumped from about 8 percent to 44 percent, said Carlos Calica, collections supervisor. Per capita payments, for instance, were a means of keeping many accounts current. When per capita was cut, the accounts were adversely affected.

Credit has taken measures such as reducing interest to zero percent, but this in turn reduces revenue to the enterprise.

Council and Credit officials also discussed the WSFPI receivership process, which is winding down. Credit is to receive significant receivership payment, as the enterprise is a secured creditor.

Toward development of the downtown

The downtown, or campus area of Warm Springs holds an economic development opportunity for the tribes.

The vision of the downtown plan is for small business development, serving residents of the reservation, and visitors from Highway 26.

There are some challenges to achieving this. The condemned buildings on the campus need to be removed, and the underground infrastructure needs to be renovated.

The demolition of the condemned buildings is moving forward: You can see the structures slated for removal by the red 'X' painted on the side.

Replacing the underground pipes is more complicated, because the cost is much greater.

The tribes have been encouraging the Bureau of Indian Affairs to address the matter, but budgeting the funds for this has been an ongoing challenge.

Meanwhile, though, the Warm Springs Community Action Team has been working on a project that could help get the downtown plan on track.

A key component of the WSCAT program involves the 'old commissary' building—an historic structure—currently lo-



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

The old commissary currently sits vacant.

cated by the Post Office and police station. The Community Action Team last year met with the membership and Planning, collecting ideas for future use of the building.

Based on the input, WSCAT is now pursuing a plan to move the old commissary to the lot by Highway 26, at Paiute Avenue and Summer Street. The renovated building could then be a small business incubator, said Dustin Seyler, WSCAT finance counselor and small business advisor.

There would be retail space in the downstairs of the building, and business office space above.

Many kinds of small businesses could take advantage of the opportunity—a coffee shop, barber shop, flower shop, artisan areas, among

other ideas.

The Community Action Team is pursuing a grant to make this idea become a reality. The application to the potential funding groups is still pending, but there is hope the plan is appealing to the funders, Mr. Seyler said.

An architecture firm and a landscape architect are also interested in helping. Moving and then renovating the building would be the first phase of the project.

At that point the businesses could move in. The enterprise would be overseen by a program manager. Not only would this provide space for several local small businesses, but it would help attract others to develop on nearby vacant lots.

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