



Spilyay Tymoo

Coyote News, est. 1976

December 28, 2022 - Vol. 47, No. 26

December - Nch'i-An - Winter - Yiyam

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Skatepark opening in the new year

The new skatepark at Elmer Quinn Park in Warm Springs should be ready to roll by mid to late January, depending on weather conditions. And the grand opening event may wait until spring, also depending on the weather.

"With cold temperatures it is difficult to have the cement cure," said Michael Collins, director of Warm Springs Managed Care and skatepark advocate. "And snowfall and below-freezing temperatures contribute to delays."

Still, "We are excited about the park for the community, and we will open it as soon as it is ready," Mr. Collins said.

A recent contribution of \$10,000 has come from the Tribal Council, through the Health and Human Services Branch, matching a contribution from Jefferson County. "We want to thank them for their ongoing commitment to the youth of our community," Michael said. "We're think they're very pleased with the progress, and we're all looking forward with excitement and anticipation to the opening of the skatepark," he said.

The skatepark opening will be the fulfillment of two years of planning, fundraising and hard work.

The project began in 2021, when Scott Koerner of the Tactics skate shop in Portland contacted the tribes, asking if there was interest in a new local skatepark. A member of Mr. Koerner's team was from Warm Springs, and this had given him the idea. Then several Oregon companies—Collective Concrete, the Skatepark Project (formerly the Tony Hawk Foundation) and Ginew clothing, for example—gave their support with Tribal Council and tribal departments.

And he Warm Springs Community Action Team agreed to help as a financial sponsor. Major donors for the project are the tribes, Skatepark Project, Tactics, Ginew, PacificSource of Central Oregon, Visit Central Oregon, the PTM Foundation and the Dehen Company.

Coming up at Tribal Council

Tribal Council will be in session in 2023 starting on Tuesday, January 3. On the agenda that morning are updates from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration.

Some other items that day are Realty topics with BIA Realty; a Covid-19 update with the Response Team; legislative conference calls, and an update from the tribal attorneys. Some items the following day are discussion of the Statewide Transportation Fund; updates with the Indian Head Casino-Plateau Travel Plaza team (see page 2 for the agenda).

Kah-Nee Hot Springs Resort in 2023

Construction workers are on the job and making great progress on the Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort Village Phase 1 reopening project. A central feature of the Village resort—the series of large pools, including hot spring pools, each unique in its own way—is beginning to take shape. This part of the overall revisioning and renovation has been very involved: The complex of underground water pipes to and from the six pools, for instance, has been an engineering and construction feat in itself.

Some aspects of the resort will be familiar to return visitors. The existing building footprints will remain essentially the same, along with the foundations and structures, said Jim Souers, CEO of Warm Springs Economic Development. Much of the interiors of the buildings, furnishings and amenities will be renovated and there will be a new restaurant and grill located in the old gift shop space, Mr. Souers said.

The natural hot springs water, a star feature of the Village, will feed the three large soaking pools of varying temperatures from 92 to 102 °F and one clover shaped youth



Construction crew working on the new pools at the Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort (above); and the architect's conceptual rendering of the pool area when finished.

soaking pool. The recreational pools will include a lazy river-like pool with a flowing current surrounding an inner pool. There will also be a children's zero depth entrance play pool. The new pools will include handicap accessible accommodations.

Some other new features will include twenty semi-private hot springs 4 to 6 person soaking tubs



overlooking the Warm Springs River. Also, in the pool area there will be 15 shade cabanas each with a mini-refrigerator, LCD screen, sofa and personal device power source.

The greatly expanded lounging area around the pools is also new and will include 18 smaller two-person shade cabanas.

KNT RESORT continues on 5

\$23.8 million for tribes' water system

The Confederated Tribes will receive close to \$24 million to help replace the Warm Springs Water Treatment Plant, through funding provided by the Indian Health Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The existing treatment plant serves the Agency area of the reservation—about 3,800 people, the Warm Springs Academy, Indian Head Casino, the museum, etc. The plant for years has posed a serious health problem: Delivery of sufficient clean drinking water at times has been impossible, requiring people to boil water before usage, and complete water outages.

Part of the problem has been the aging water lines, though the treatment plant itself is also a fundamental source of the problem. The current plant was built in the 1980s, and is now well past its serviceable life. Finding replacement parts, for instance, can be a challenge: At times, such as last March following a fire at the plant, replacement parts had to be specially made in order to function with the rest of the dated system.

Most concerning of all, water outages and boil water notices happened at the height of the covid pandemic, when clean water was literally a matter of life and death.

Tribal leaders for years have



The Warm Springs Water Treatment plant by the Deschutes River; and below, earlier this year, leaders with IHS, including IHS director Roselyn Tso, tour the treatment plant with Chico Holliday, Utilities general manager, and Council members.

made domestic water safety a top priority. Finding the necessary large amount of funding has been the obstacle. Over the past few years, Tribal Council has worked especially closely with Oregon U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley.

When Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021, the Senators helped ensure funding was included to address the Warm Springs water situation.

This allowed IHS and the EPA last week to announce the \$23.8 million award for a new treatment plant. This is the largest tribal water system award in the history of EPA Region 10, which includes all of the Pacific Northwest and 271 tribal nations.



"We're proud to be a part of such a historic investment in the community," said Casey Sixkiller, EPA Region 10 administrator.

The current treatment plant, located in the Dry Creek area, draws water from the Deschutes River for

treatment and distribution. The new plant will also use the Deschutes as the water source. The work will begin in 2023. A completion date is not yet set, although the design phase is expected to start soon.

WATER continues on 5



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