

LONG AWAITED CONVENIENCE STORE WILL OPEN IN NOVEMBER

■ Tribal considerations and county road designation have finally come together.

By Ron Karten

By late November of this year, the Tribe will open a new 4,500 to 4,600 square foot convenience store and gas station. The project, expected to provide 12 new jobs, will be located on casino property along Highway 18 where the valet parking lot is currently located.

The facility will feature a quick serve restaurant, self-serve delicatessen-style foods, more than typical convenience-store fare and a 12-pump gas station. Diesel, propane and an air and water station will be available on site.

"The Tribe's objective," said Larry Kovach, Finance Officer for the Tribe and general manager of the project, "is to provide a marriage of economic development and community development and this is one piece of that."

Adjacent to the store, the Tribe will construct new parking for both cars and recreational vehicles. An RV dump also is planned and a new location for valet parking is currently being discussed.

The project, which has been under consideration for more than five years, finally came together when Polk County legalized Murphy Road for public use. Following a public comment period, the Tribe agreed to dedicate an additional 20-foot strip to provide the minimum standard 40-foot right of way necessary for a public roadway.

"It's been a long time in getting here but it will definitely benefit the community and the Tribe," said Tribal Council member Bob Haller.

"Anything that starts to diversify the Tribe's economic base is a good endeavor," said Chris Leno, Deputy

Director of Operations for the Tribe.

It took "several iterations" to get to the point where we are now nearing completion of the preliminary design," said Eric Scott, the Tribe's Engineer, who is coordinating design and construction of the project.

Design considerations included the size and configuration of the structure, the number of pumps, the layout of the fuel services, as well as highway access and traffic circulation issues, according to Scott.

The Tribal Council recently established a new corporation — The Grand Ronde Food and Fuel Company — to run the facility.

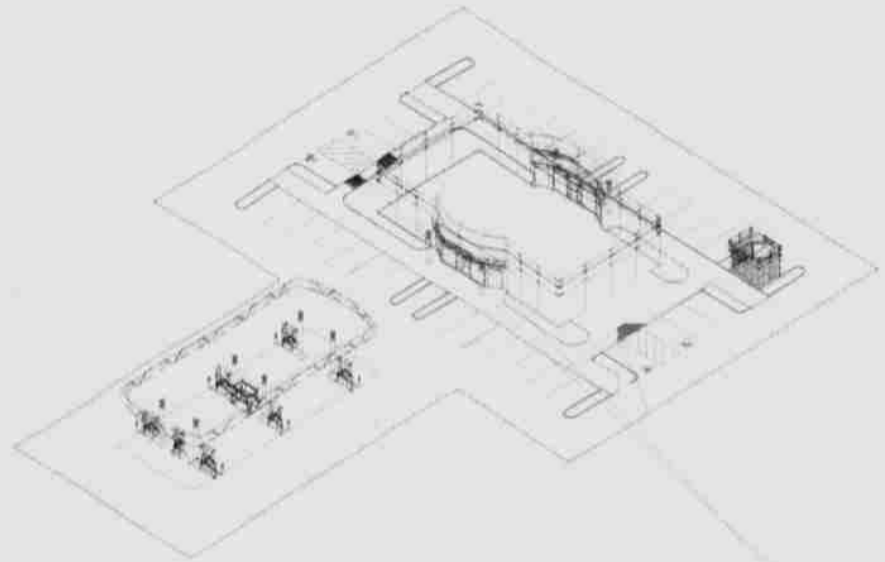
Traffic traveling east will have a simple off-ramp to the facility. The same divided ramp will be used to get back onto Highway 18 going east. Traffic going west to the coast will use the current cloverleaf under the highway to access the convenience store.

According to Scott, within 10 years, the Oregon Department of Transportation is expected to build an interchange here.

Early studies considered alternatives to minimize impact to wetlands and considerations were made with respect to anticipated future highway improvements.

"The design of the convenience store will incorporate a stucco-type finish with similar geometric designs as that used on the casino," said Scott.

Scott said PNE Corporation, with offices in Portland and Longview, Washington, will build the \$2.5 to 3 million project. PNE, a design-build contractor specializing in gas station construction, has built hundreds across the northwest.



Drawing courtesy of Eric Scott

Location, Location, Location

— The new Tribal convenience store and gas station will be built just east of Spirit Mountain Casino, where the valet parking is now located. Target date for opening the new gas and food store is late November of this year.



Photo by Peta Tinda

Civil engineer for the project is Westlake Consultants, based in Tigard. Other consultants include traffic engineers, environmental and wetlands scientists, archaeologists and soils engineers.

Construction is set to start in mid-summer with the facility operational by the end of the year.

Like the casino, the convenience store and gas station will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

From the casino's point of view, "the addition of the convenience store means

we can offer more to our customers," said Adam Henny, Director of Marketing for the Casino. "I look forward to setting up some exciting offerings for our Coyote Club members and our casino guests."

Tribal Council has assembled an 'owner's design team,' to "facilitate decisions regarding the physical design and operational aspects of the project," said Scott. The design team will include representatives from Spirit Mountain Gaming Corporation, the facilities staff, Tribal engineers, the finance office and legal support. ■

Blockbuster Project Coming to a Sewer Near You, Soon

■ The local systems are at capacity but timely planning and quality workmanship will keep it flowing.

By Ron Karten

The report titles have no punch and there is nothing glamorous about the finished product, but very little in the public domain is more important to our sense of security and calm than a smooth running sewer system.

Yes, the *Grand Ronde Sanitary District's Waste Water Facilities Plan* is about to be released, and *Smoke Signals* has had an advance report. In a nutshell, it will conclude, according to Tribal Engineer Eric Scott, that local facilities are at capacity and new projects are needed to keep the effluent flowing through the year 2027.

The *Plan* will provide a detailed "needs analysis," said Scott, and a discussion of alternative possibilities to meet those needs. Among the information the *Plan* will release are population projections leading to flow calculations, leading to hydraulic capacity analysis (how big the pipes need to be), along with an assessment of current and future regulatory requirements.

Among the anticipated conclusions: immediate capacity improvements are needed on the Grand Ronde Road main line from the wastewater treatment plant to Highway 22, a total of nearly

8,000 feet.

In conjunction with this project, the Tribe recently received an Indian Community Development Block Grant for the design and construction of the main line improvements. Specifically,

In a nutshell, it (Grand Ronde Sanitary District's Waste Water Facilities Plan) will conclude that local facilities are at capacity and new projects are needed to keep the effluent flowing through the year 2027.

the grant funds replacement of six-inch pipe with 532 feet of 15-inch pipe, 4,724 feet of 12-inch pipe, and 2,670 feet of 8-inch pipe.

Scott will solicit bids from qualified engineers to prepare detailed designs starting last month. Selection of an engineer will take place in mid-March. Design will be completed by mid to late summer with construction beginning in 2004, said Scott.

In conjunction with this project, the Tribe has recently completed two related projects in cooperation with the Tribal Housing Authority, Polk

County, the Grand Ronde Sanitation District and Indian Health Services.

The first increased capacity of the main line by decreasing extraneous flows into the system through leaks and abandoned septic tanks. The work

included backfilling several such tanks, and capping the laterals still connected to the system. The project also included retrofitting active septic tanks which were deficient and repairing broken sewer laterals connecting them to the system.

The second project involved repairing pipes running under the South Yamhill and Rock Creek bridge crossings. The pipes, which normally use gravity to carry sewage across the river to the treatment plant, had bent over time impeding the process. Repairs solved the problem, said Scott.

The *Plan* also will call for "significant improvements" in the wastewater treatment plant, built in 1985, according to Scott.

Five proposed alternatives for treating waste in coming years will be proposed costing anywhere from \$3.2 to \$6 million. They include lagoon, filter and biological treatment systems.

Other necessary improvements will provide effluent disposal capabilities with an emphasis on reclamation and reuse. This part of the project — which seeks to dispose of the treated waste water on land rather than directly into the South Yamhill — is attractive because it makes a significant amount of water available for secondary uses, including irrigation. The project has a potential \$300,000 price tag, though the Tribe has received an offsetting grant to conduct soils evaluations, identify possible sites and develop re-use plans.

Grand Ronde Sanitary District engineer is Whitaker Engineering, Inc. based in Independence, Oregon. Except the work already completed by the Tribe, all of these projects will be open for public discussion and input. ■