

Jay Leno Launches Tribe's New Lodge Expansion

■ Many thanks plus an appearance by "cousin" Jay Leno spotlight the Tribe's twin specialties: hospitality and entertainment.



Jay Leno

By Ron Karten

Gratitude was the center piece of the Tribe's dedication to the 163-room addition to the Spirit Mountain Lodge. With rain coming down all day Saturday, April 23, the dedication was held indoors in the lodge's reconstructed lobby. The fire was roaring in the fireplace as a wall-to-wall

collection of staffers, guests, press and others crushed forward to see the ribbon cutting, and just maybe, to get a glimpse of Jay Leno, *The Tonight Show* host who was to perform at the casino that night.

"With this lodge expansion," said Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy, "we bolster the (valley's) economic landscape."

Ten years ago, when the Tribe opened the casino, "our primary goal was to provide superior service," said Kennedy. "Because of our success we have been able to expand."

Following came thanks to many who made the expansion possible. They included former Interim General Manager Mike Larsen, new casino General Manager Randy Dugger, Financial Officer Larry Kovach and Tribal Attorney Rob Greene, Kennedy passed the microphone to Tribal Vice Chair Reyn Leno, who continued

with thanks to Project Manager Ron Sabatini, Facilities Manager Ron Reibach, Maintenance Administrative Assistant Denna Diaz, Maintenance Supervisor Lou Younger, Lodge Manager Wayne Miller, Lodge Room Manager Sharon Hall, Guest Services Manager Diana George, Surveillance Director Steve Bobb and Surveillance Tech Manager Tracy Howerton, Purchasing Manager

Ivan Karpman, Contractor Howard S. Wright, the engineers and architects who contributed, with special thanks to building inspector Ted Darling, a friend of the Tribe's who passed on recently.

Tribal member Jan Michael "Looking Wolf" Reibach opened the ceremony with a flute rendition of "Dragonfly." Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison offered the official blessing on the expansion.

A very unassuming Jay Leno stepped up to the microphone to receive gifts from the Tribe: a myrtlewood clock, a beaded Tribal logo pin and a Tribal leather jacket.

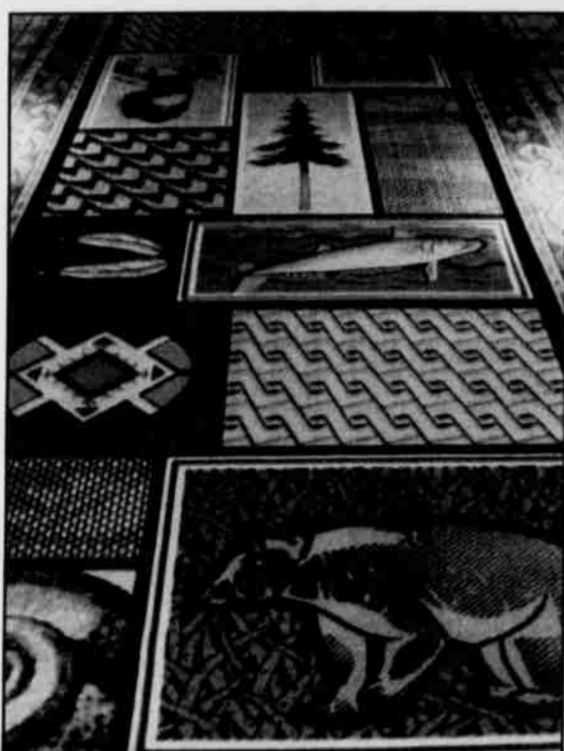
"My wife is Iroquois," said Leno as he looked at the beaded logo. "I will wear this when I'm riding my motorcycle," he said.

"And my cousin will help me put it on," he joked, referring to Reyn Leno who was presenting the gifts, and the Leno last name shared by many here in Grand Ronde.

"This is fun," he added, "because it is not Las Vegas."

Portland retirees, "K" and "K" Peterson, were among guests who stopped to see the ribbon cutting on their way to the slots. "We stay here two times a month," said Mrs. Peterson, "and in December we were here five times."

She said it is exactly 66 miles from



Photos by Toby McClary

Designer Digs — Pictured here is a look at the carpet on the second floor of the new lodge expansion. The Spirit Mountain Casino logo and other Native American themes can also be seen woven into the carpet on all of the different levels.

her driveway to the Spirit Mountain Casino.

"And we'll be back for my birthday, May 22," said Mr. Peterson.

"If the machine's pay," added Mrs. Peterson. "I love *Money to Burn*."

The first of the new rooms opened April 5, said Randy Dugger, with the remainder opening April 15.

With 240 standard rooms and 14 2-room suites now available for guests, Dugger noted that all have been full on weekends since opening. "We're shooting for 80 percent occupancy for the first year," he said.

Coyote Club members will enjoy a two-month, May-June promotion pricing rooms at \$69 a night.

Following the ceremony, interested parties were treated to light hors d'oeuvres and a tour of new rooms, including both single and two-room suite.

"It shows the Tribe's commitment, and faith in the Spirit Mountain Casino," said Tribal Council member Chris Mercier. "We're devoting our energies to making the Spirit Mountain Casino a prime destination."

The addition also included a new gift shop in the Lodge lobby where the front desk used to be. The front desk moved to the back of the lobby on the new rooms side of the hallway.

Whether for the opening of the new rooms or the opportunity to see Jay Leno live, the place was packed. In the parking lot, a bright blue Ford Focus inquired about how long a sharp black Toyota Celica in one of the lot's farthest back spaces was going to idle before pulling out.

"There's just no place to park," said the Ford Focus. ■



Rooms With A View — The \$22 million lodge expansion project is 155,000 square feet and includes a bell hop service, 24-hour front desk assistance, housekeeping and a security-patrolled parking lot. Coyote Club members will receive discounted room rates. Each room contains a desk, cable TV, an in-room safe, a coffee maker, a multi-faceted phone, an iron and ironing board and a hair dryer. Many of the rooms on the west side will feature a view of forested hillsides and beautiful sunsets.

\$22 Million Lodge Expansion Creates Excitement At Spirit Mountain Casino

Smoke Signal's reporter Toby McClary caught up with Spirit Mountain Lodge Manager Wayne Miller just prior to the dedication of the lodge's expansion for a quick interview to ask him about the Tribe's latest economic endeavor and the buzz it's created.

By Toby McClary

Smoke Signal's: Is there anything unusual or interesting in the design or construction (of the lodge) that the public would want to know?

Wayne Miller: Just that we've got 12 new suites. They are Jacuzzi suites, they have Jacuzzi tubs and a shower, plasma screen tvs and the west side has an incredible view of the coast range. A beautiful view, they'll get super sunsets.

S.S.: Did you stick with the same Native American theme for each room?

W.M.: Oh yeah, when you see the hallway carpeting, you'll see the Spirit Mountain logo on the door entrances and Native American artifacts woven into the rugs at the elevators. It's beautiful, it's very beautiful.

It's a hotel for a casino. It's gonna be comfortable. There will be four game rooms for the table games people who want to take a couple hour break off of the table, maybe have a little rest or shower before they go back to play. There is also gonna be a continental breakfast room which will be serving a free continental breakfast in the mornings from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. There is a business center with high speed internet. We'll have one computer in there and three other hook ups for people that want to bring their own computers. There will be a fax and a copy machine. And there is a small business meeting center there for about eight to 10 people. We anticipate it being utilized quite often.

S.S.: Can you tell me about the Native American companies or individuals that have played a significant role in the construction?



Wayne Miller

Photo by Toby McClary

W.M.: Howard S. Wright and Cherry City Electric have all had Native American hiring preferences. There have been several of the Tribal members working on this project, there are several still working on it and we are in the process of trying to source right now some artists to finish off the murals at the front desk.

S.S.: What have been some of the economic benefits for the community due to the expansion?

W.M.: For the local economy, we are hiring approximately 35 more employees to run this and that will increase the payroll in this area significantly. The major economic benefit is going to be the gaming and the amount of people that we can hold here overnight or several nights that are gonna enjoy the amenities and the excitement of Spirit Mountain Casino.

S.S.: What's next for Spirit Mountain Lodge?

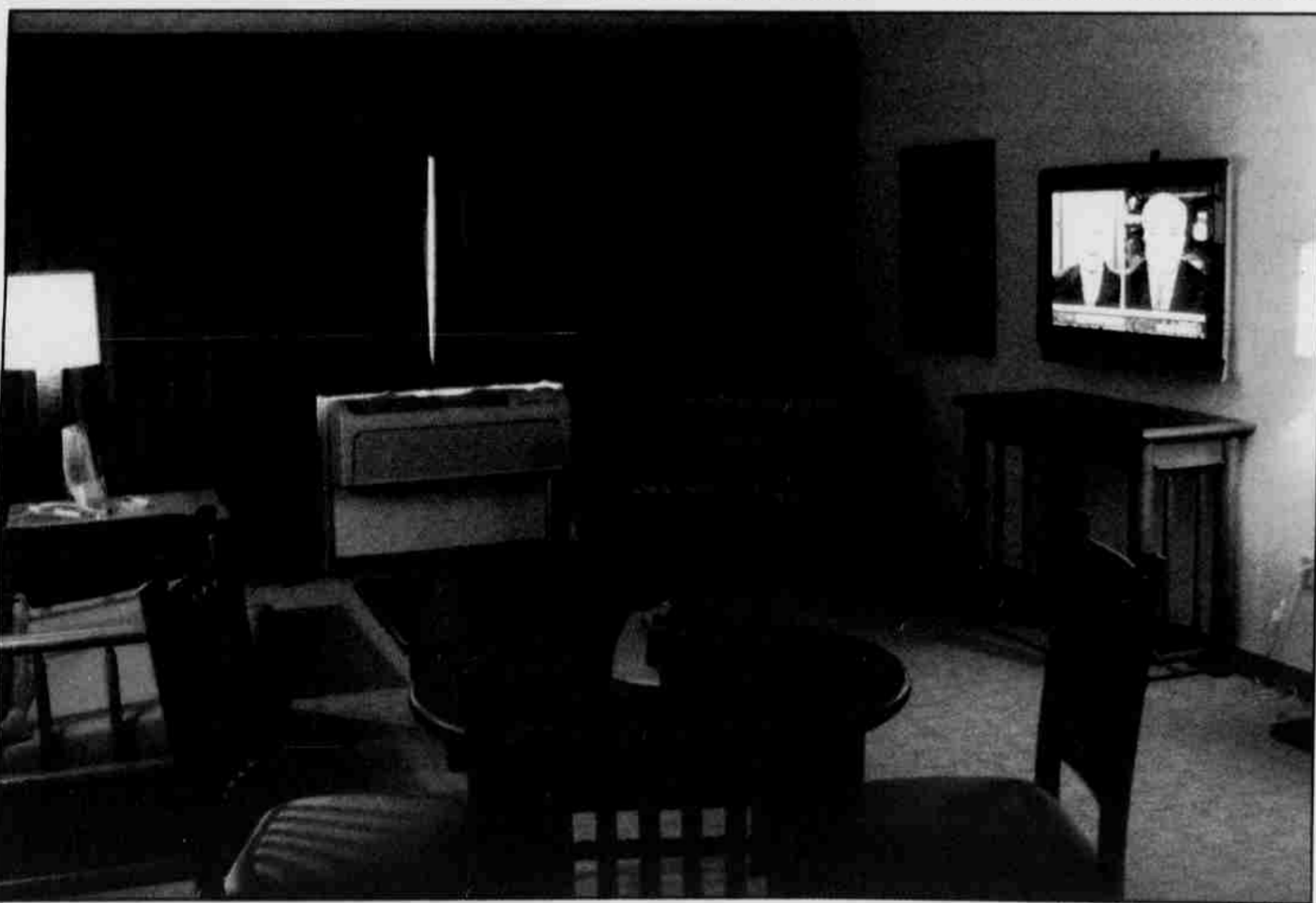
W.M.: Trying to keep the rooms filled right now. I think our major focus is going to be on marketing this lodge, bringing back a lot of the players that we couldn't accommodate when we only had 100 rooms. It's an upgraded facility now, it's going to be much more attractive and we've got room for more people. So on the whole, we're pretty excited about that.

S.S.: Were there any environmental considerations that you had to take in to account for the project?

W.M.: The major environmental problems were addressed earlier in the project and that was the water situation. We finally got access to enough water that we could build this large property. When the Tribe developed there own water treatment system and took the demand off of the community system, then it was full steam ahead.

S.S.: Who were the construction companies, the architects and any other major contributing companies and what city are they from?

W.M.: Howard S. Wright Construction Company was the main construction company and they are worldwide, but this particular crew was based out of Portland. The architects were the Friedmutter Group, Inc. out of Las Vegas. They are very well known in the casino business. They've done a lot of casino architecture. And then our own local Cherry City Electric has done all of the electrical connections and they are putting in all of the new generators. Various subcontractors have been working (on the expansion) from around the area.



Cozy — This is one of the 12 suites each with a flat screen television featured in the expansion of Spirit Mountain Lodge.