

Grand Ronde Continues Outreach To Warm Springs

By Siobhan Taylor

The Grand Ronde Tribe has consistently opposed off-reservation gaming. The Tribe sees it as bad policy for all Oregon Tribes and for all Oregonians. Yet, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs are doggedly pursuing building an off-reservation casino in Cascade Locks. The Grand Ronde Tribal Council has aggressively pursued opportunities to work with the Warm Springs Tribe and give them a viable alternative to their proposed off-reservation casino in Cascade Locks. Unfortunately, the Warm Springs Tribal Council has declined the Tribe's offer. This happened even after Governor Kulon-goski got involved and tried to help bring both Tribes together to work on the issue.

The Grand Ronde Tribal Council is deeply concerned that the exclusive exception for any Tribe, not just Warm Springs, to move their casino off reservation is going to lead to an explosion of gaming. Most significantly it is going to lead to private initiatives to allow off reservation gaming in Oregon by private, non-tribal parties. Oregon could potentially be inundated by private casinos, competing for what has traditionally been Tribal dollars. The Grand Ronde Tribal Council, dedicated to protecting the resources of the Tribe, and committed to helping formulate healthy and fair policies for all Oregonians, is faced with few choices.

The Grand Ronde Tribal Council offered to finance the construction of a new casino on the Warm Springs reservation. The financing the Tribe offered would have given the Warm Springs Tribal people a new on-reservation casino, off Highway 26 or Highway 22 that the Grand Ronde Tribal Council is convinced would be incredibly successful for the Warm Springs Tribe. And the CTGR Tribal Council is convinced that the new casino, instead of the project in Cascade Locks, would be good for both Tribes as well as good for all of Oregon.

Grand Ronde offered to share its research with the Warm Springs leadership. The study was prepared by senior staff in Grand Ronde and outlined the Tribe's proposal. That overture, one of many made by the Grand Ronde Tribal Council, was summarily rejected. The Warm Springs Council remains unwilling to share their studies of feasibility to see how they might contrast with the work the Grand Ronde senior staff has done. Conversely, Grand Ronde has continuously expressed a willingness to share all research and information they have gathered on the subject.

The Tribal Council is bitterly disappointed in Warm Springs dismissal of all of their work to help the Warm Springs build a better Tribal economy for their Tribal people. The Grand Ronde Tribal Council is faced with few alternatives in the face of this rejection. The Tribal council will continue to advocate for a change to this policy and work with the Governor for a just solution for all Oregon Tribes, including the Warm Springs, and all Oregonians. ■



The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon

Tribal Council
Phone (503) 879-2301 or (800) 422-0232
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9615 Grand Ronde Rd.
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

May 9, 2006

Ron Suppah
Tribal Council Chairman
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
1233 Veterans St.
Warm Springs, OR 97761

Dear Chairman Suppah:

On behalf of the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, I'd like to invite you, your fellow Council members, and senior executives to meet with us. We would be honored to host the meeting, either here in Grand Ronde or in the Portland area if that is more convenient for you.

We would like to meet in order to allow Grand Ronde to present to you our proposal to finance the construction and development of a new casino on the Warm Springs reservation. Grand Ronde is prepared to finance, on favorable terms, a new on-reservation casino - one that is better situated than Kah-Nee-Ta to take advantage of the rapidly expanding population and economy of Central Oregon. Our senior staff has prepared a presentation which outlines our proposal.

We believe strongly that a new casino on your reservation off of Highway 26 or Highway 22 would be incredibly successful. The development of this alternative casino, instead of the proposed project in Cascade Locks, would be good for both our Tribes and for all of Oregon. It would also avoid an acrimonious fight over off-reservation gaming and the casino at Cascade Locks, allowing you to move forward more quickly to generate jobs and revenue.

I encourage you to give this invitation thoughtful consideration. I will call you next week to answer any questions you might have about this invitation, and hopefully, to set a time for our meeting. I am optimistic our Tribes can work together for the good of all.

Very truly yours,

Cheryle A. Kennedy
Cheryle A. Kennedy
Tribal Council Chairwoman

Letters exchanged between Grand Ronde and Warm Springs.



December 11, 2006

Chairman Chris Mercier
Tribal Council Chairman
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
9615 Grand Ronde Rd.
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Dear Chairman Mercier:

The Warm Springs Tribal Council is very encouraged by our recent meetings and I personally want to thank you for the open and frank discussions that we have had. Our Tribal Council firmly believes that it is in the best interests of all Indian people to work together for the good of every Tribe and that this can only benefit Indian people everywhere.

As you know, our Tribal Council has been unwilling to provide you with our proprietary and confidential studies of the feasibility of construction of a new casino within the boundaries of the Warm Springs Reservation. However, these studies demonstrate that there is no location on the Warm Springs Reservation that can bring our Tribe the funds necessary to maintain a viable economy on our Reservation. Furthermore, these studies confirm our judgment that our Tribal Council has chosen the path forward that best discharges our sovereign responsibilities for the welfare of our tribal families.

We believe that there are opportunities for investors, such as your Tribe, to be a part of our project to construct a casino at Cascade Locks, Oregon, and that the return to your people would be greater than you have proposed for financing a casino on the Warm Springs Reservation. We have done some preliminary calculations of that possibility and it appears that it may well offset any impact of our casino on your operations.

Accordingly, we would welcome the opportunity for further discussions between our Tribal Councils, to further explore these possibilities. Let us proceed in the spirit of cooperation and brotherhood that has always been the hallmark of our relationship.

Sincerely,

Ron Suppah, Sr.
Ron Suppah Sr.
Tribal Council Chairman
The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

*To Council
Legal Dept
Perservance Stout
Public Affairs
General Manager
july 12/14/06*