

City, Tribes Trying To Rise Above A Towering Logo Problem

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

The Chemawa Station water tower, fed by Keizer-area wells, was designed to provide a backup source of city water during summer peaks.

For that worthwhile use, earlier this year the Grande Ronde and Siletz Tribes granted the city an easement to build and access the 100-foot structure that now stands at the tip of their 15.7-acre property at the Gateway to Keizer development.

Now that it's built, design differences for the face of the tower have roiled the friendly waters.

The 560,000-gallon, \$1.7-million water tower is visible from Interstate 5, it heralds the Gateway to Keizer project and is a perfect spot for something inviting and representative.

Initially, the Tribes intended to place a design created by Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Steve Bobb on the tower. The art combined stylized symbols (Spirit Mountain for the Grand Ronde, salmon for the Siletz and a river joining the two and referencing the resource the tower will store) for each Tribe. However, it ran into trouble at Keizer City Hall.

"Our sign code doesn't allow corporate or private sector advertising on public facilities," Keizer City Manager Chris Eppley said.

The design plan evaporated into the air.

The city and Tribes put their heads together and came up with a neutral, sky blue color that would allow the water tower, not to mention the controversy, to blend in with the horizon behind. The tower was scheduled for a \$105,000 paint job in August and, for a moment, all seemed well.

July had not even dawned, however, when Keizer folks started proposing pictures and paintings for the coming sky blue space — a bunch of irises, perhaps; a sign recognizing the nearby 45th parallel; or maybe an alien. Nike proposed a swoosh for the space and then came the idea of holding a design contest. Some of those design proposals are now posted on the Keizer Web site at www.keizer.org.

That's when the Tribes stepped back into the discussion.



Photo by George Valdez

The city of Keizer's water tower, which sits at the tip of Chemawa Station, the planned development by the Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes, is the center of a friendly discussion about what kind of design will be painted on it. The Tribes and city are attempting to find a hybrid design that will please all three parties.

"We're looking at alternative graphic designs," said Grand Ronde Tribal engineer Eric Scott. "They were concepts we were talking about in a meeting with the city early in August."

Graphic designers from the Siletz's Chinook Winds Casino created alternative designs.

"We looked at options this week, but didn't really like them," Scott said.

So, the next step is for the graphics departments at Spirit Mountain Casino and the Siletz Tribe to submit new ideas for the blank "canvas." And Bobb's original design may be thrown back into the mix.

The Chemawa Station LLC, comprised of Grand Ronde and Siletz representatives, will select a design to be forwarded to the city of Keizer, where the city council will approve features for both tribal and city designs and

put the whole thing together. That could take place in September, according to Grand Ronde Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor.

"The city's druthers," said Eppley, "are that the Tribes and city cooperatively decide on some sort of design that incorporates the Tribes' interests, the city's interests and something that represents the city of Keizer."

The city symbol might be an iris, said Eppley, because Keizer is "the self-proclaimed iris capital of the world."

"There will be some elements that city folks had suggested," Scott said. "We're looking at different kinds of combinations. Maybe something with the Chemawa Station logo (by Steve Bobb), and something that would have the word Keizer in it. Some might even include options of pictures with irises."

But the issue of Keizer's sign rules remains to be solved. Scott said that "reframing it as a locational sign instead of an advertisement for specific enterprise" might solve the problem. "We may need a variance on the sign ordinance to get it done," he said.

Meanwhile, the inside of the tower has been painted to keep the water inside clean of rust, and the gray blue outside coat was just beginning to be applied in the last weeks of August.

Between the Tribes and the city, only the tower itself stands aloof, blissfully unaware of the winds swirling around it.

And it may remain so because the painting of whichever design is selected will not likely take place until next summer, Eppley said. Only because of Oregon's wet winter weather. ■

Project's Financing Obstacles Cleared

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office space. The property can not be used for any Tribal gaming.

Chemawa Station will be part of the city of Keizer's larger, 237-acre Gateway to Keizer project that will include transportation, entertainment and sports complexes. Gateway to Keizer will encompass the current Keizer Volcanoes baseball stadium.

"Developing this land will serve a variety of self-governance goals, including funding for Tribal programs, increasing the Tribes'

economic self-sufficiency," said Grand Ronde Tribal Chair Chris Mercier. "It will provide employment and training for Tribal members, particularly those for whom commuting to Grand Ronde or Siletz may be a hardship."

"This bill also allows us to diversify the Siletz and Grand Ronde economies," said Siletz Chair Delores Pigsley, "providing a non-gaming revenue source. It will enhance relationships with other governmental agencies that may foster intergovernmental partnerships ... (and) will add to the employment opportunities for

local residents."

"We wanted a quality development," said Siobhan Taylor, Public Affairs director for the Grand Ronde Tribe, also assuring Keizer residents that "the project will not be a strip mall."

The Tribes' 15.7-acre site originally belonged to Chemawa Indian School. Early in the 20th century, the school transferred the property to the Federal Highway Administration for construction of Interstate 5 and the Salem Parkway. After the highways were completed, the Highway Administration deemed the re-

maining property surplus and, in 2002, transferred ownership to the two Tribes under the Indian Self-Determination Act. The area is part of the Grand Ronde's ceded homeland.

Oregon Sen. Gordon Smith (R) introduced Senate Bill 375 and Sen. Ron Wyden (D) co-sponsored the effort. Oregon Congresswoman Darlene Hooley (D-5th District) introduced House Resolution 679. The twin bills passed by unanimous consent in each chamber and were sent to the White House for President Bush's signature. ■