

Gorge casino opponents use YouTube to drive home point

Video examines impracticality of daily commute from Warm Springs to Cascade Locks

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Opponents of the Warm Springs Tribe's proposed Cascade Locks casino have posted a video on YouTube.com undermining one of the main assertions made in supporting the Tribe's application for an off-reservation casino — that the Warm Springs Reservation is only 40 miles from the proposed casino location.

The 5 minute, 27 second video features a man in his late 20s who leaves Warm Springs at 7 a.m., expecting to drive only 40 miles to his new job at the proposed Bridge of the Gods Casino site in Cascade Locks in Hood River County in the Gorge.

He arrives at work, however, two hours later after having driven more than 100 miles, partially over snowy and icy roads on state Highway 35 east of Mount Hood.

The video was shot in April and posted by the Coalition for Oregon's Future, which includes

the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Parents Education Association, Oregon Restaurant Association, Oregon Center for Environmental Health and Trout Unlimited.

The video highlights the impracticality of the Warm Springs Tribe's claim that Tribal members who live on the reservation will commute daily to jobs in Cascade Locks.

It shows how treacherous, time-consuming and costly the shortest route to work would be for Warm Springs Tribal members, who live mostly in Warm Springs near Madras 109 miles away and not at the northwest corner of the 640,000-acre reservation.

It also points out that with escalating gas prices that 25 percent of a Tribal employee's estimated income from working at a Cascade Locks casino would be spent on gasoline driving more than four hours daily to and from work.

Or, as the unnamed driver points out, one out of every four weeks worth of pay will go directly into the gas tank.

The video argues that the proposed Cascade Locks casino does not qualify under new Department of Interior "commutable distance" guidelines issued in January for off-reservation casino requests.

Those guidelines state that the department will increase scrutiny of off-reservation casino proposals the farther they are located from Tribal residents who could potentially work at and benefit from the new off-reservation casino.

The video was shown at the May 8 Grand Ronde Community Membership meeting in Eugene and the May 9 meeting in Bend, and received applause from Tribal members after it was over.

The video had been watched by almost 400 people as of May 13.

In other Gorge casino-related news, the Coalition for Oregon's Future announced May 12 that

support from Hood River County residents for a casino in their county has dwindled to just 22 percent while 56 percent of voters oppose the casino proposal. Twenty-two percent of those asked either didn't know or declined to answer.

"Do you favor or oppose allowing a casino to be built in Hood River County?" was asked of 300 likely voters in Hood River County on April 21.

The Grand Ronde Tribe opposes the Warm Springs effort to build a casino in Cascade Locks because it deviates from the long-standing state policy of one casino per Tribe on reservation land, is located within the Tribe's historic and ancestral homelands and would adversely affect services the Tribe can provide to its members by reducing the dividend Spirit Mountain Casino makes annually.

The video can be watched at www.nogorgecasino.com or www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBZh8mq4zjw. ■



A Call for Tribal Member Artists' Portfolios

The Cultural Resources Department is putting together a pool of qualified artists for future projects. If you are interested, please submit a portfolio of work of all artists in all mediums with your contact information to the department.

Please send materials to:

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