

Casino security thwarts alleged counterfeiters

Albany men arrested on forgery charges after visit to Spirit Mountain

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Two Albany men are facing felony charges after they allegedly passed counterfeit \$100 bills at Spirit Mountain Casino on Tuesday, Feb. 7.

Their arrest also led police authorities to more fake bills and money-manufacturing equipment at a home in the 3600 block of Adah Avenue in Albany.

Polk County deputies were called to the casino at about 6:15 p.m. Tuesday after fake bills were discovered by casino staff, said sheriff's spokesman Lt. Jeff Isham.

Terry Albert Connor, 42, and Eric Jon Willem, 43, were arrested after they left the casino parking lot. They were booked into the Polk County Jail in Dallas.

Police said the two men passed 17 counterfeit bills at the casino and

were in possession of 30 more.

Deputies later conducted a search with the U.S. Secret Service at the Albany address and found more fake bills and computer equipment, including hard drives burned in a woodstove, Isham said.

Connor and Willem face counts of forgery and criminal possession of a forged instrument.

As of Friday, Feb. 10, both men were being held on multiple charges with bail amounts of approximately \$150,000.

"The passing of counterfeit bills is fairly common in the casino business," said Rodney Ferguson, chief executive officer of Spirit Mountain Casino. "Fortunately, our staff is trained to identify counterfeit bills via visual and other means. The U. S. Secret Service always gets involved because it is a federal offense." ■

Lobbying efforts



Contributed photos

During a trip to Washington, D.C., between Feb. 7-9, Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno and Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen Jr. met with Obama administration officials and congressional representatives regarding the Tribe's proposed amendment to the 1988 Grand Ronde Reservation Act. Above, Giffen, left, Leno, second from left, and Tribal Attorney Rob Greene, right, met with Alaska Congressman Don Young, chair of the House Subcommittee on Alaska Native and Indian Affairs, about scheduling a House hearing on the proposed amendment. The U.S. Senate held a hearing on the proposed amendment on Feb. 2. Below, Leno, left, and Giffen, right, attended a reception on Feb. 7 for newly elected Oregon Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, who won a run-off election to succeed David Wu in the District 1 seat, which includes Grand Ronde. Leno and Giffen also met with Bureau of Indian Education officials and attended a Senate Indian Affairs hearing on Internet gaming.



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Tribal member Bryan Langley, left, won the professional division at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's Elk Calling Championship held Feb. 2-4 in Las Vegas, Nev. Joel Turner, right, of Eatonville, Wash., finished second. Both Langley and Turner are professional staff for Point Blank Hunting Calls of Redmond, Ore., which is owned by Grand Ronde Tribal descendant Willy Rodgers. It's Web site is www.pointblankcalls.com. Langley is also a long-time employee of the Tribe's Education Department and member of the Tribe's Ceremonial Hunt Board.

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