

Board and council credited for success of casino

CASINO continued
from page 12

The dividend we give has turned our Elders' lives around."

Based on the Community Fund's 6 percent distribution of \$67 million, Spirit Mountain Casino has earned more than \$1 billion since it opened that has gone to support the Tribal government and its programs for members.

Dr. Katherine Spilde, who is an associate professor at the L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at San Diego State University, says revenues at Spirit Mountain Casino place it among the most successful Tribal gaming operations in the United States.

"Gaming revenues are a function of numerous factors, including operations expertise, good management, location and marketing," says Spilde. "As important as the revenues, however, is the Tribal government investment strategy. Your Tribe invests these revenues into endowments, which is a true commitment to institutionalizing the social and economic recovery that Tribal gaming has stimulated across Indian Country."

Spilde says that according to the National Indian Gaming Commission's 2014 statistics on Indian gaming revenues, Spirit Mountain Casino is in the top 25 percent of Indian gaming operations. The commission's statistics show that 50 of the 459 Tribally owned gaming operations generate revenues between \$50 million and \$100 million annually.

"The benefits from the casino are just unmeasurable to the people in this community and especially to the Grand Ronde Tribal members," says Gleason-Shepek. "You look at all of the programs that we offer and a lot of that is supported

Spirit Mountain Casino general managers

1. Bruce Thomas – May 27, 1993, through Feb. 8, 2000
2. Michael Moore – Nov. 28, 2000, through Nov. 28, 2002
3. Doug Pattison – May 1, 2003, through Oct. 13, 2003
4. Richard Kline – Dec. 31, 2003, through Oct. 10, 2004
5. Gary Stopp – March 28, 2005, through April 8, 2005
6. Randy Dugger – April 25, 2005, through Oct. 5, 2007
7. Rodney Ferguson – Oct. 10, 2008, through Aug. 1, 2012
8. Randy Dugger – Sept. 16, 2012, through Aug. 1, 2014
9. Stan Dillon – July 29, 2014, to present

Also serving as interim general managers: Bob Watson (Tribal member), Mike Larsen (Tribal member), Bill Pierce and Roy Rhode.

by gaming dividends and I really support that.

"The early Tribal Council had a wonderful vision and without the gaming we would have none of that. It's brought so many people back to the Reservation and it has provided so many jobs and opportunities."

'It's a benchmark'

Current Spirit Mountain Casino General Manager Stan Dillon says he has seen casinos open and close in less time during his long career.

"It's a benchmark," says Dillon. "I look at it like 20 years of success is a long time for a casino. So when you think of the casino not only as still there, but thriving 20 years later, it says a lot about the people and the company that is running it."

Dillon says much of the credit for a successful casino operation goes to Tribal leadership. The fact that Spirit Mountain is competing with another casino nearby and the Oregon Lottery's 12,000 machines says a lot, he adds.

"Our board and our council have done good things to keep the company where it's at," says Dillon. "It's a huge moment for us and we expect to continue to be the premier destination with the best machines, the best food and the nicest appear-

ance. So that's what it means to me in my position."

Dillon attributes much of the property's success to the employees who work at the casino.

"Casinos are a reflection of the people who work in them, I think any good business is," says Dillon.

The casino is now 100 percent coinless. When players cash out of their slot machines or video poker games, they are issued a paper ticket that can then be fed into any other machine. Players can move freely from one machine to another without having to cash in at the cashier window each time. When players are ready to receive their cash, they can go to the cashier window or cash in at exchange machines placed throughout the casino – usually next to the ATMs.

Casino visitors can play Texas Hold'em in the poker room, three-card poker on the gaming floor along with pai gow, Let It Ride, craps, roulette, blackjack, keno, bingo and the largest variety of slot machines in Oregon. Selected video slot machines are considered progressives and they are connected nationally to other Native-owned and -operated casinos throughout the country. Guests playing these machines have a chance to win major jackpots of as

much as \$500,000 or more.

"I think the Tribe has managed the casino great," says Gleason-Shepek. "I think the casino has grown with the community and the needs. I think they have done a good job managing the growth. I think they have done a good job of keeping it nice and fresh and updated, and I absolutely love the hall that tells our story."

"One of the goals for any council, whether it was 20 years ago or today or hopefully in the future, is self-sustainability for our Tribal members," says McClary. "And I think the revenues driven by the casino allow us to help build those steps to self-sustainability for our membership. It really provides us an opportunity to get people moving in the right direction. Take education, for example. We spend a portion of our revenues from the casino every year to educate our people, which helps them go on to become positive influences in society."

Mercier agrees that the casino has had a huge effect on the Tribe and the surrounding community.

"It's more than a casino," says Mercier. "It's been a catalyst for change. It's brought the Governance Center. That is something we wouldn't have without the casino. We have sidewalks now on Grand Ronde Road – remember seeing people walking in the ditches? It's brought so much to the community. Who would have ever seen this at Restoration? It's phenomenal. It's put our people on the map."

Leno says he sees a 30-year or even a 40-year anniversary coming.

"When I drive by the casino every morning I guess I don't see the glitz and the glamour and all the cars and the excitement and everything, I see the future of the Tribe," says Leno. "I see our education program. I see our Elders' pension. I see our health plan. I see all of that in the casino." ■

Parenting A Second Time Around..

A group for grandparents and other relative caregivers who are raising their grandchildren or other relative's children.

Come share with other grandparents and relative caregivers and learn more about:

- Your changing roles & responsibilities
- Effective discipline tools
- Rebuilding a family
- Advocating for yourself & your relative children
- Communication skills
- Understanding adolescents

When: October 6th, 10:00 to noon & the following 7 Tuesdays (ending November 24th)
Where: Grand Ronde Adult Education Bldg., Room 126
Cost: FREE with child care** & meal provided**for children 18 months - 8 years

prizes Parent Educator: Carmen Mercier
Drawing Register: Online: www.midvalleyparenting.org
 By phone: Heather 503-623-9664 ext.2368 OR Audra 503-879-2069 OR Amanda 503-879-2039

*Thank you for respecting Grand Ronde's Community & Culture by not displaying Gang Affiliation and by not bringing Drugs, Alcohol or Weapons to this event. Anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave and to not participate in future events.
 **The USDA and the State of Oregon are equal opportunity providers and employers.

share the warmth

S.O.S!

Seeking your donations for 3 organizations!

GRAND RONDE HELPING HANDS

ISKAM MĀK'MĀK-HAWS, THE CLOTHES CLOSET, & A CAUSE FOR PAWS ARE WORKING TOGETHER

You've got it. We want it!
Wednesday, October 21st
2 pm to 6 pm

- Give to 3 organizations in one location!
- **Iskam** is seeking warm clothes and blankets. Items to create a **Bed-in-a-bag**. Please consider donating: tent, tarp, pillow, sleeping bag, blankets, sheets, or a foam mattress for homeless families.
- **The Clothes Closet** is seeking Halloween Costumes! Consider recycling gently used costumes for local youth.
- Clean out your food pantry, we'll figure out the expiration dates!
- **A Cause for Paws** is seeking pet costumes, food, pet toys, and beds.
- We will take books for our lending library.
- If you are not sure if we can take it, bring it or give us a call.

STOCK OUR SHELVES

COSTUME DONATION

Iskam Māk'Māk-Haws
 9675 Grand Ronde Road
 Grand Ronde, OR 97347
 503-879-FOOD (3663)
 Follow us on Facebook