

# Outside of building will be clad in cedar

**CONSTRUCTION continued**  
from front page

as part of the continuation of the plan.”

Harrelson said the second phase project had been placed on the backburner in each of the last two budget cycles.

“There was a lot of careful consideration that went into this to even see if it was going to be funded,” said Harrelson.

Harrelson said the Phase II construction was part of the initial concept planning that went into the project in 2012 and that although the expansion project will be the program’s “most visual” project, the Cultural Resources Department will continue to be involved in a multitude of efforts.

Harrelson said the most visible part of the project will be one of the smaller parts of the overall expansion construction.

“The outside of the building will be clad in cedar that we got from the Willamette National Forest,” said Harrelson.

Harrelson said the cedar was donated to the Tribe for the project and that the department only had to pay for transportation of the lumber. He said the cost savings to the Tribe were “huge” because of the donation.

Much of the funding has come from years of fundraising and donations raised from various foundations throughout Oregon.

The Meyer Memorial Trust contributed \$241,315 to the project with \$127,516 of that going to the cedar siding. The Ford Family Foundation contributed \$200,000 and the Oregon Community Foundation \$19,740 toward the cedar siding as well.

The Collins Foundation gave \$40,561 and the project received \$33,543 from the Oregon Cultural Trust as well as \$7,500 from the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Tribe’s Three Rivers Foundation.

Engineering and Public Works Manager Jesse White said expansion plans also call for a larger parking lot in front of the building closer to the post office.

White said the front of the building also will have a bus stop and a large vehicle turnaround.

“The main thing to remember is Chachalu isn’t just a museum, it’s a cultural center,” said White. “It’s a place for Tribal members to come and learn – take classes, talk about the past and talk about the future.”

The space that will be created by the expansion project that has Harrelson most excited is the planned research room.

“This is going to be available for both Tribal members and research scholars to come in and to work at large tables,” said Harrelson. “There will be a log-in work station where they can get access to files we have digitally through our laser fiche software, but they will also be able to look at a catalog of our collection.”

Harrelson said if an artist, for ex-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal Cultural Collections Coordinator Veronica Montano removes Royalty sashes from a display case at Chachalu Museum & Cultural Center in Grand Ronde on Friday, Feb. 10, in preparation for construction of Phase II of the center.**

ample, wanted to study a particular style of basketry, this room would be the place where the item would be brought from the vault so that it could be examined.

“They can make a request of the collections staff and they will bring these things into that space,” said Harrelson. “One of my big hopes is that the research room gets treated as a place where there is always a pot of coffee on and community members always feel welcome. I hope people do their own individual research through getting interested in what we’re doing.”

Harrelson said the project when completed by the end of the year will include a new conference room that will be a multi-use space with an accordion door.

“We will also have a curatorial room where we will develop exhibits and interpretive content,” said Harrelson. “We will be adding 10 new offices with doors and included in that will be a receptionist’s office. There will also be four drop-in work stations, a new break room and storage lockers.”

Harrelson said the biggest part of the Phase II construction project will be the new exhibit area that will remain in its current location at the front of the building.

“We are going to have a large, 5,000-square-foot exhibit hall,” said Harrelson. “The exhibit hall is going to allow us to do different programming that changes over time. There is going to be different exhibits going on. Our intent behind that is we want Tribal members to keep coming back so we want to add content and exhibits that are relevant at the time.”

Harrelson said he knew the expansion was going to be extensive and complicated so he tapped Tribal member and Cultural Exhibits Supervisor Julie Brown to lead the project.

“When I thought about who was going to be able to lead us and take us to this point of bringing Chachalu to fruition Julie came to mind and I asked her to fill that role because she has an outstanding passion and history and commitment

and dedication to the museum,” said Harrelson.

“We’re developing a cultural center with a gallery space,” said Brown. “The reality of a cultural center for the community is more visible than it has ever been for me.”

Brown said her late mother, Anabelle “Peachie” Hamm, was born and raised in Grand Ronde and was a proponent of the Tribe having a cultural center when she was alive.

“She always praised our Tribal leaders for all they have accomplished, but the one thing that meant the most to her, other than health care, was the museum and cultural center,” said Brown. “She wanted there to be a place where people could bring their precious items to be cared for. For me, it’s not just a priority of meeting the needs of all of our community. It’s the one thing I can do that will really honor my mother.”

Harrelson said the new, expanded center will be an important place to the community now and in the future.

“The museum is telling the story of our people in the past tense and the cultural center is telling the story of our people now,” said Harrelson. “This is going to be a facility that does both because not only are our ancestors relevant and important, but the people in the recent history and the present are also important because that is how we are going to continue into the future. We can’t just reflect on the past.”

Tribal member and Cultural Center Coordinator Rebecca Knight said she works with everyone in the Cultural Resources Department to ensure that their needs are being met during the construction project. Knight also said she takes care of the building, ensuring its proper maintenance.

“I wear multiple hats,” said Knight, whose first task related to the Phase II construction was to gather a needs list. “I have to think outside the box and I try to think about the things they haven’t thought about. I have to think

about the whole picture needs.”

Knight said she is proud to play a role in the preservation of the Tribe’s history and that she is honored to be part of its present and its future.

“The ultimate goal is to preserve history, to interpret it and to educate our Tribal members, our descendants and our community,” said Knight. “You don’t want the stories to be forgotten. Working here every day you see that people care so much. They really make an effort to do the best quality of work overall because they have that connection.”

Knight, who consults and works with Brown daily, said she is thankful to be in a position to see the expansion come together this year and down the road in future phases of the museum/cultural center project.

“We are excited about this build-out and look forward to welcoming the community into newly renovated space within the year,” said Knight. “Watching this whole thing come together is going to be a powerful and rewarding experience for everybody.”

General Manager David Fullerton said Chachalu will be even more important to the overall efforts of the Tribe and the Tribe’s Cultural Resources Department when it is completed.

Fullerton said the completed center will raise the credibility level of the Tribe when it comes to cultural projects and collections.

“If you want to be at that level you have to be at that level,” said Fullerton. “It’s one more step in the right direction.”

Fullerton said the full scope of what the project means and will mean to the Tribe will come in the future when Tribal people look back.

“In a 100 years from now something that seems very small could be very significant to the people who are in charge long after we’re gone,” said Fullerton. “You’re creating a record. Everything that you are doing today – you now have a place to store it. We’re creating history here every day.”

White said the timeline on the project is ideally six to seven months until completion.

“We are working right now on an RFP for a contractor,” said White. “We are going to put it out to bid in February and hopefully have a contractor on board in March.”

Brown said the most important thing for everyone involved is to honor the memories of those who came before us – those people who created the Tribe from the ashes of Termination. She said it is those memories of the people who were dreaming of what they knew the Tribe could be one day that fuel her.

“We had nothing,” said Brown. “We just knew we were going to be something. I’m hopeful that as we create opportunities like this cultural center that perhaps we will be able to re-visit the passion and the loyalty and the design that we had back in the day.” ■