

'It's interesting how the process works'

VISIT continued
from front page

years on getting the streamlined, money-saving process through Congress.

"It's interesting how the process works," Schrader said. "You can't get something done and then all of a sudden it breaks through."

As a result of the amendment, 40 properties totaling 1,227.3 acres were added to the Reservation, Tribal Realty Coordinator Teresa Brocksen said after the meeting.

Schrader also inquired about how the Grand Ronde Tribe is faring with the opening of the Cowlitz Tribe's Ilani Casino located 15 miles north of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area.

Leno, who also sits on the Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board of Directors, repeated news he delivered to the membership during the Aug. 1 Legislative Action Committee meeting: Revenues are down, but not as catastrophically as some had predicted.

"You guys have a great operation. People are comfortable when they come here and they have a good experience," Schrader said. "A couple miles doesn't make that much of a difference and it's a lot prettier drive."

"As long as they don't build any more bridges across the (Columbia) river, we'll be in great shape," Leno joked.

Natural Resources Manager Michael Wilson briefed Schrader on the Tribe's 10-Year Management Plan for the Reservation that considers environmental and financial impacts on the Tribe through 2022.

Wilson said the Tribe's Natural

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~ U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader

Resources staff balloons from about 20 employees in the winter to about 80 in the summer.

Schrader asked how the Tribe's volume-based harvest goals relate to the mortality rate and forest life cycle on the Reservation.

Wilson said the Tribe harvests on a 70-year cutting rotation. "We're not cutting until the trees are right around 70 years old," he said. "Compared to the industry, I think you are seeing 40 years. We're getting a lot older forest structure and bigger trees."

Senior Forester Zach Haas briefed Schrader on the Tribe's annual timber harvest on the Reservation, which currently culls approximately 7.1 million board feet off of about 270 acres.

"I think it is a real balance," Leno said. "Our membership goes up on the Reservation a lot and they don't want to see a clear-cut Reservation, so they have been very supportive of what we do on the Reservation even though you can say it potentially costs them because all of the revenues go back to them."

Schrader inquired about Tribal buffer zones around fish-bearing waterways and Haas said the Tribe uses a 150-foot horizontal distance zone and then another 100-foot outer zone to create a complex forest

structure.

Wildlife Biologist Lindsay Belonga discussed Tribal efforts to ensure healthy and sustainable wildlife and habitat on the Reservation, which has mostly "properly functioning" streams that have temperatures reading 67 degrees or below.

Silviculture and Fire Protection Manager Colby Drake talked about the Tribe's self-sustaining fire program that brings approximately \$150,000 in revenue and wages back to the Grand Ronde community. He also discussed the department's efforts to grow Native plants in a nursery at Natural Resources.

Environmental Resources Director Meagan Flier finished the whirlwind briefing as Schrader was running out of time. She discussed her reviews of state and federal projects to ensure they don't affect Tribal lands and natural resources.

Other topics discussed included sea lion predation of lamprey and salmon at Willamette Falls and

the distance migrating fish have to swim to reach the clean waters of Agency Creek on the Reservation.

Schrader said he would return and tour Reservation lands next time, especially to see how the Tribe manages buffer zones along streams in an active timber harvesting area.

"I am trying to shepherd the national discussion to something a little more thoughtful. Best practices, frankly," he said. "Real-world experience cuts through a lot of BS."

Giffen volunteered to supply any Tribal forest management practices data should Schrader need it to bolster his arguments in Congress. Wilson presented him a copy of the Tribe's 10-Year Management Plan.

The meeting ended with Leno presenting Schrader a framed ceded lands map to hang in his Washington, D.C., office. Because of Schrader's busy schedule, a planned visit to the new Tribal Police Station on Grand Ronde Road and discussion of non-existent federal law enforcement funding for Terminated Tribes was postponed.

Tribal Council members Denise Harvey, Brenda Tuomi, Chris Mercier, Secretary Jon A. George and Kathleen George also attended the meeting, as did Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, Tribal Attorney Rob Greene and Economic Development Administrative Assistant Meghan Zimbrick. ■

Willamina High All-Class Reunion set

The Willamina High School All-Class Reunion will be held starting at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9, at the home of Marilyn Rosenbalm, 385 S.W. Hill Drive. There will be a potluck meal and attendees are encouraged to bring chairs. Coffee, water and soft drinks will be furnished. If you'd like something else to drink bring your own.

For more information, call 503-876-6773 or e-mail Ming1R@hotmail.com. ■

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