

Tribal Council OKs \$5.2 million to complete lodge remodel project

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved moving \$5.2 million from the Tribe’s line of credit to Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. to pay for the second phase of the Spirit Mountain Lodge remodel project at its Wednesday, Aug. 14, meeting.

In early February, Tribal Council allocated \$15.5 million from the Tribe’s line of credit to Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. that funded construction for the first phase of lodge interior remodeling.

The lodge’s interior remodel included adding more high-demand suites, updating older lodge rooms, and redesigning and updating the entrance way and Hall of Legends connecting the lodge to Spirit Mountain Casino. Tribal Council approved \$1.1 million to fund the remodel’s design phase in March 2018.

The first phase updated 156 rooms, turning 14 into suites and eight into mini-premium suites.

The additional \$5.2 million will pay to update the remaining 98 rooms at the lodge, bringing the total re-investment in the lodge to almost \$21 million.

The additional funds were approved by Tribal Council in a July 29 authorization to proceed.

Revamping of the 254-room lodge, which opened with 100 rooms in 1998, follows the Tribe’s \$13 million investment to remodel the casino in 2016. Both remodels were in reaction to the opening of the Cowlitz casino in Ridgefield, Wash., in April 2017 and are an effort to keep the Grand Ronde Tribe’s gaming facility competitive and current.

The Grand Ronde Tribe is in the enviable financial position of having the resources that it can loan Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. the necessary funds for remodeling both the casino and lodge and then Spirit Mountain Gaming pays the loan back to the Tribe with interest.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved 101 Restoration Roll corrections involving seven families and asked the Secretary of the Interior to approve the corrections. The approvals bring the number of names added to the Restoration Roll in 2019 to 158;

- Approved using up to \$5.1 million from the Tribe’s line of credit to help purchase the 23-acre Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City;
- Approved Friday, Sept. 13, as the next per capita distribution date;
- Approved a \$225,000 contract with Scholten Construction of Willamina to build a playground shelter at Early Childhood Education, which will allow children to play on the structure year-round;
- Approved a memorandum of understanding with the Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, Tillamook County, Washington County Visitor’s Association and Port of Tillamook Bay regarding the 84-mile Salm-onberry Trail;
- Approved a relinquishment of membership requested by one Tribal member;
- Approved the Kali Logging Unit as presented by Natural Resources Department staff that will bring the Tribe an estimated \$630,000 in net return;
- And approved the annual O’Link agreement between 11 Tribes that will bring the Grand Ronde Tribe’s Housing Department an additional \$117,000 in Indian Housing Block Grant funding.

Also included in the Aug. 14 Tribal Council packet were approved authorizations to proceed that appointed Tribal Council member Michael Langley to the Tillamook Forest Heritage Board of Directors, declassified the 2012 Anuskewicz & McCabe enrollment audit report and directed Historic Preservation Office Manager Briece Edwards to negotiate a new five-year inter-governmental agreement with the state Department of Transportation regarding project consultation and recovery of cultural resources work undertaken by the Tribe.

Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier opened the meeting by drumming and singing for the cultural presentation.

The entire meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribal government’s website at www.grandronde.org and clicking on the Government icon and then Videos. ■

Tribal Court is now open during the lunch hour

As of Monday, Aug. 5, the Tribal Court office will be open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., including the lunch hour.

Tribal Court also provides notary services. However, to obtain notary services please arrive before 4:30 p.m.

For more information about Tribal Court and the services available, contact the court at court@grandronde.org or 503-879-2303. ■

Willamina High All-Class Reunion set

The Willamina High School All-Class Reunion will be held starting at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 7, 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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