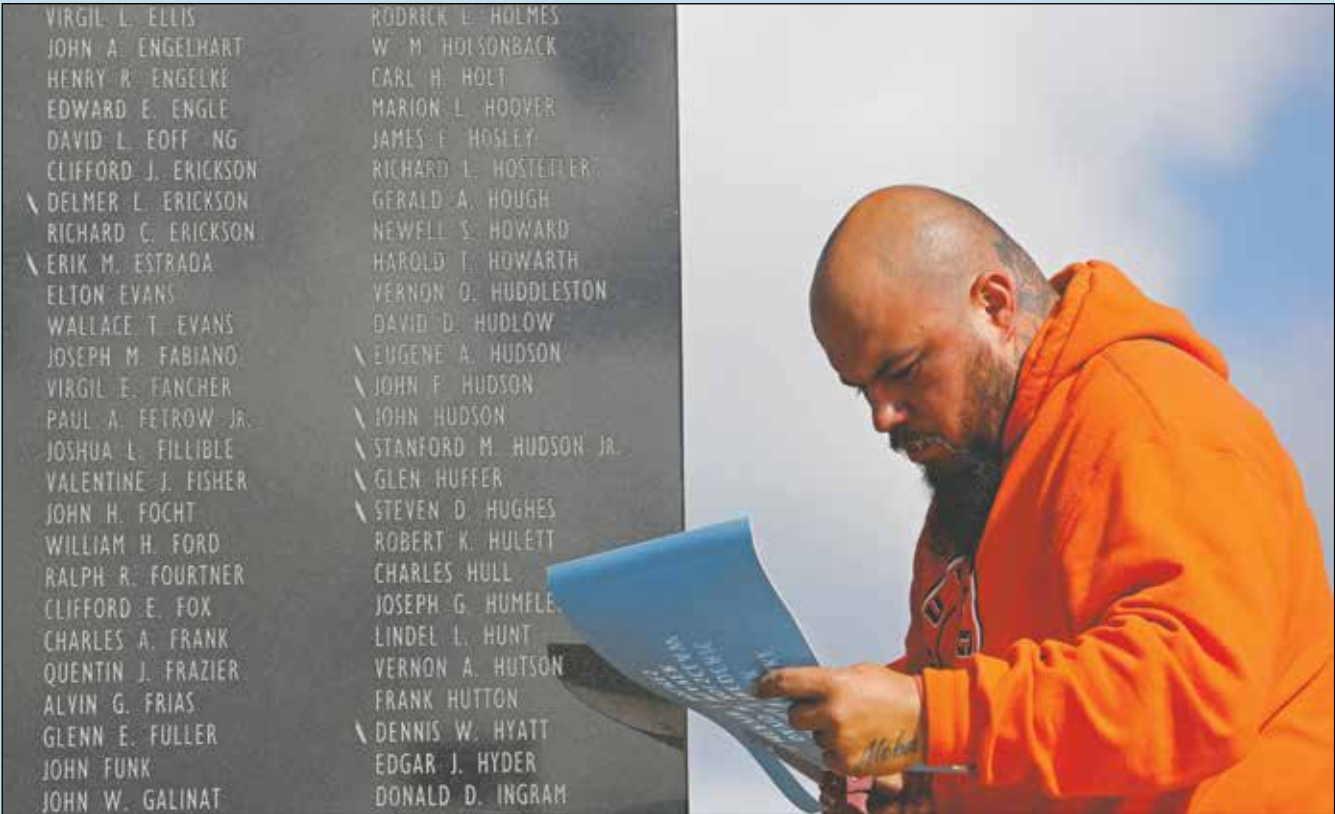


Etched in granite

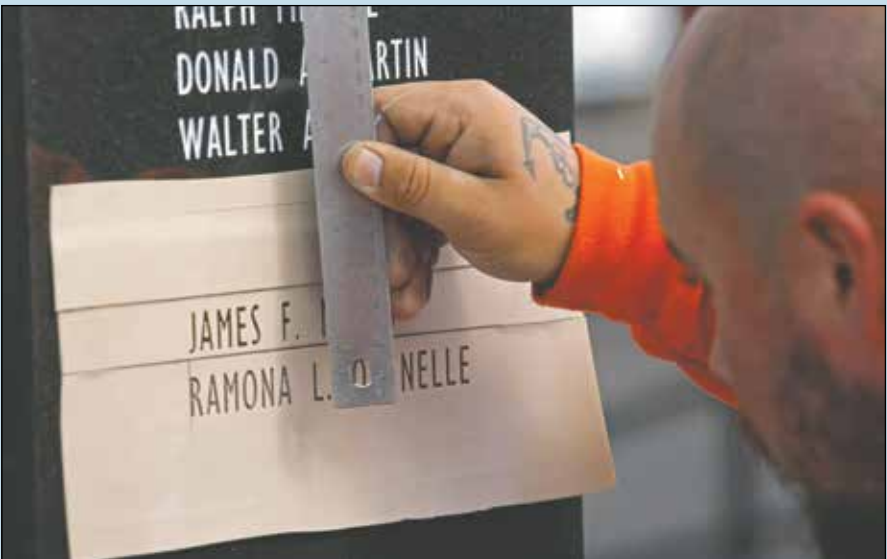
Cemetery Service Technician Greg Gnos with OM Stone cuts the stencil before adding the names of veterans Douglas D. Stake, Alden H. Clark, Linden W. Frederic, Donald E. Holsclaw, David W. Weaver and Mervin J. Holmes to the Army pillar of the West Valley Veterans Memorial on Friday, May 15.

Visit [Smoke Signals' facebook](#) page to see more photos

Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez



Tribal Council member and West Valley Veterans Memorial designer Steve Bobb Sr. talks with Cemetery Service Technician Greg Gnos with OM Stone before etching new names.



Cemetery Service Technician Greg Gnos with OM Stone makes sure the names of veterans James F. Marks and Ramona L. Quenelle are in proper alignment on the Navy pillar.

Improvements made during closure

CASINO continued from front page

“We’re excited to welcome our guests and employees back to Spirit Mountain Casino,” said General Manager Stan Dillon in a press release. “We have used this closure as an opportunity to make improvements throughout the property. We want all of our visitors to experience the best of Oregon’s premier gaming destination.”

A blessing and cleansing ceremony was held Tuesday, May 26, before the re-opening.

During a Facebook Live event held on Wednesday, May 27, Dillon said the casino has removed less popular slot machines to accommodate social distancing requirements and capacity has been reduced in restaurants. For instance, seating at the Cedar Plank Buffett has been reduced from 384 to 248, and diners will order from a selection of three-course entrees instead of eating buffet style and handling utensils other people have touched.

Three Oregon Tribal casinos re-opened during the week of May 18-22.

The Coquille Indian Tribe’s Mill Casino in North Bend re-opened on Monday, May 18, while the Siletz Tribe’s Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City opened its doors

More info

To review Spirit Mountain Casino’s entire Health & Safety Plan, visit [www.spiritmountain.com/images/uploads/pdfs/SMC_Health-and-Safety-Plan_2020-05-21.pdf](#).

on Thursday, May 21, and the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians’ Three Rivers Casino in Florence and Coos Bay started welcoming customers starting on Friday, May 22.

The Cowlitz Tribe’s Ilani Casino north of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area in Washington state announced on Monday, May 18, that it would open on Thursday, May 28, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians’ Seven Feathers Casino near Roseburg off Interstate 5 opened recently.

In a press release, Ilani stated it also would open with safety protocols in place, including reduced and distanced seating at its restaurants, guest temperature checks at the entrances, face masks for team members and frequent sanitizing of frequently touched surface.

The local announcements mirror Tribal casino re-openings that are occurring nationwide from Connecticut to the Seattle metropolitan area.

The Grand Ronde Tribe cautiously re-opened its Tribal government on Monday, May 18, bringing back almost 500 employees who have been idled since mid-March. Tribal governmental employees continued to receive their salaries and were granted 320 hours – eight weeks – of extra paid time off to ensure they continued to receive paychecks.

Employees are undergoing a temperature check when they arrive for work and social distancing, mask wearing, and frequent handwashing and cleaning are encouraged.

Spirit Mountain Casino’s 1,100 employees also were idled in mid-March and have been receiving their usual paychecks plus consideration for lost tips during the 74-day closure. Casino employees were granted 400 hours – 10 weeks – of extra paid time off to ensure they continued being paid.

In the days before announcing the re-opening date, Tribal Council met with Dillon on Monday, May 18, and later that day the SMGI Board of Directors met. Both meetings were held in executive session.

On Tuesday, May 19, investment bank Goldman Sachs sponsored a teleconference titled “The Gaming Industry and Approaching the Re-opening of Casinos” and the Oregon Tribal Gaming Alliance met on the same day.

Grand Ronde Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier, who also serves as vice chair of the Oregon Tribal Gaming Alliance, said he was not “hugely surprised” that other Tribes decided to start opening instead of all Oregon Tribes opening their casinos in unison.

“Who knows what kind of pressures other Tribes are under,” Mercier said. He also acknowledged that the Siletz Tribe’s re-opening of Chinook Winds “might” have influenced the Grand Ronde Tribe decision to re-open Spirit Mountain Casino. The two casinos are approximately 26 miles apart.

Spirit Mountain Casino is located in Polk County, which is one of the Oregon counties Gov. Kate Brown gave permission to begin re-opening on Friday, May 22. Nearby Yamhill County was granted permission to start re-opening a week earlier.

However, casinos are not subject to state law. Brown previously acknowledged in March that Oregon Tribal casinos are operated by sovereign nations and that she does not have control over when they open or close.

Grand Ronde Station, the Tribally owned convenience store adjacent to Spirit Mountain Casino along Salmon River Highway, has remained open during the casino’s closure because it sells essential items like food and fuel. ■