

Siletz Tribe submits application to build casino north of Salem

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

SALEM – The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians has filed an application with the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Indian Gaming in Washington, D.C., to build a casino north of Salem.

"I can confirm that the application was submitted and is in the very early stages of review," said Paula Hart, director of the Office of Indian Gaming, in an e-mail.

The Siletz Tribe most recently proposed a 140,000-square-foot inter-Tribal casino north of Salem in May 2017 that would be built on a 20-acre trust land parcel near Interstate 5 at the Portland Road NE exit. They predicted it would create 1,500 full-time jobs and generate \$184.5 million in revenue.

The Siletz proposed that revenues would be split with 25 percent going to the state, 25 percent to their Tribe, and 50 percent divided up between the other eight federally recognized Tribes in Oregon – slightly more than 6 percent per Tribe if split evenly. The website created to promote the project, www.oregon-tribes.com, is still active.

However, the new proposal would be a Siletz-only casino after objections from other Tribes scuttled the previous project. Details about the proposed casino are not known and calls to Siletz Tribal Chairwoman Dee Pigsley were not returned.

Grand Ronde Tribal lobbyist Justin Martin said in 2017 that a casino off Interstate 5 near Salem would be "devastating" to the Grand Ronde Tribe's Spirit Moun-

tain Casino, which is currently the closest gaming enterprise to the Salem market.

The Siletz Tribe's Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City is 26 miles farther away from Salem than Spirit Mountain.

Proposals for a north Salem casino from the Siletz Tribe date back to the 1990s and also faced strong opposition then. A 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in 1997 upheld a governor's ability to limit or deny gaming facilities in urban areas and then-Gov. John Kitzhaber was opposed to building casinos off-Reservation.

The Siletz Tribe would need approval from the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown before proceeding. The state's current gaming policy remains one casino per Tribe on Reservation land.

An e-mail to Brown's current press secretary, Elizabeth Merah, was not answered regarding the Siletz proposal.

The Coquille Indian Tribe, which was seeking to build a casino on land it owns in Medford, was recently turned down by the federal government over concerns that included the coastal Tribe being too far away from its homeland.

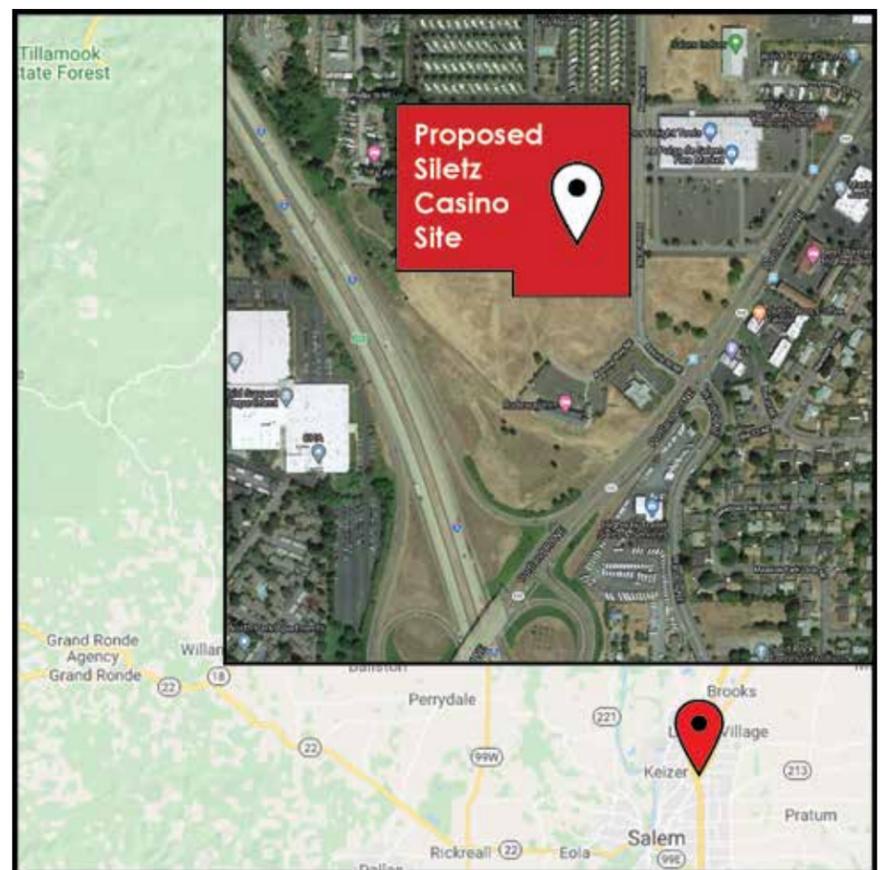
Meanwhile, the Siletz and Grand Ronde Tribes are working together to finally develop the nearby 15.7-acre Chemawa Station property, which the two Tribes have owned since 2002.

Grand Ronde Tribal representatives declined to comment on the Siletz Tribe's new casino proposal. ■



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians has filed an application with the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Indian Gaming to build a casino on this 20-acre parcel off Interstate 5 north of Salem at the Portland Road NE exit.



Graphic created by Samuel Briggs III

Afterhours health line

Tribal members can contact the Afterhours Health Line for questions about health care concerns you may have when the clinic is not open.

You can reach the Afterhours Health Line by calling 503-879-2002 and follow the prompts.

The Afterhours Health Line will coordinate care and communicate with Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center providers. ■

Portland Grand Ronde Tribal members & Elders

I wanted to remind Tribal members if you are in need of food the Grand Ronde Portland office has a limited supply of food boxes and shelf-life food on hand at all times.

Please call
Lisa Archuleta at
503-879-1881
and I can assist you
with curbside pickup.

By appointment only.

grandronde.org



Ad by Samuel Briggs III

Take control of your financial future and
Download the MINORS' TRUST FUND booklet today!

Minors'
TRUST FUND

Do you want to know more?

- What are my accounts?
- What are my options?
- How do I access my account?
- What about taxes?
- Where can I go for financial advice?

The answers to all of these questions and more can be found on the Tribal website / member services.
<https://www.grandronde.org/services/member-services/>

YOUR MONEY YOUR FUTURE

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Member Services Department
9615 Grand Ronde Road
Grand Ronde, OR 97347
503-879-2116
memberservices@grandronde.org