

Crowd jams gym to discuss wellness center

By Clark Walworth
Communications Director

More than 50 members of the Tribal community offered opinions and questions on March 30 about building a wellness center on Kilkich bog property.

Tribal members, spouses and non-Coquille residents of Kilkich gathered in the Learning Center gym for a barbecue chicken dinner and spirited conversation. Wide-ranging topics included project financing, traffic concerns and future service options.

Tribal staff members used flip charts to record 40 pages of comments and questions. Written answers and explanations will be published as soon as possible. A Tribal staff member began typing up and organizing the handwritten notes on the Monday morning following the Saturday meeting.

The Ko-Kwel Wellness Center (a temporary name) will be a 17,000-square-foot building, replacing the existing 8,000-square-foot Community Health Center. Built atop one of Kilkich's former cranberry bogs, the new center will offer more health-care providers, probably including a physician assistant dedicated

solely to same-day service. Dental care also will be added. Other possible additions include mental health counseling, massage, acupuncture and chiropractic.

The goal is to create a holistic, integrated health-care facility, where patients can receive healing of mind, body and spirit.

To pay for the added services, the wellness center will increase the number of non-Tribal patients who use the Community Health Center. The health center currently serves a total roster of about 1,800 patients. Adding 600 more would provide an adequate stream of insurance, Medicaid and out-of-pocket payments to cover operations.

A packet of explanatory documents was handed out at the meeting, and the same materials are available in the Highlights section of MyTribe. (Go to www.coquilletribe.org, and click the MyTribe tab. If you don't already have a log-in, simple instructions are provided to get one.)

Answers to the March 30 meeting input will appear soon on MyTribe and in other Tribal communication venues.



Photos by Anne Niblett

Top: Executive Director Mark Johnston leads a discussion about plans for a new wellness center.

Above: Tribal members and Kilkich residents attend the meeting in the Learning Center gym.