

Wellness Center Update

August 2019

Project design and financing move ahead

Design work and financing are moving briskly for the Coquille Tribe's future wellness center.

Aiming to break ground by year's end, contractor S+B James Construction has been working with the Tribe's project team on a task known as "space programming." That doesn't mean building a moon rocket. Tribal Project Manager Eric Scott said it's simply a plan for the wellness center's future uses.

So far, the Tribe's project team has described a tentative purpose for each area of the building, such as exam rooms and offices. A fitness room is tentatively part of the scheme, but diagnostic imaging is not, because of the high cost of X-rays, MRI machines and the like.

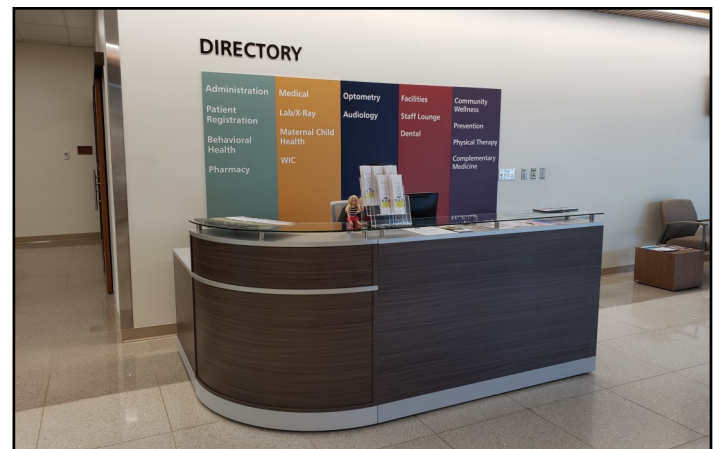
Something called a "bubble diagram" – vague shapes representing locations for various activities – should come together in early August. A study of the project's potential environmental effects will begin in midmonth.

"One of our core values is stewardship," said Fauna Larkin, the Tribe's Operations Director. "Part of stewardship is conducting an environmental assessment for a project of this size."

Then comes a topographic survey, providing information to help decide the building's exact location, its parking configuration, and its traffic flow. September should bring an "initial schematic" – a rough floor plan showing the wellness center's potential footprint.

Scott, Larkin and Health Administrator Kelle Little recently visited the Umatilla Tribe's Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center in Pendleton. Though Yellowhawk's 64,000-square-foot complex dwarfs the Coquille plan, the trio came back inspired by the center's design features, such as an interior courtyard, color-coded departments, and use of natural light.

"There are some cool elements that I hope



Scouting trip

The wellness center project team recently toured the Umatilla Tribe's health center to gather ideas.

Top: Health Administrator Kelle Little examines an exercise station.

Center: "Wayfinding" signs use color coding to lead patients to various departments.

Left: Native American artwork adorns the walls.



Project Basics

- The Ko-Kwel Wellness Center is intended as a comprehensive, holistic wellness venue.
- It will combine existing services with new ones, such as dental care, same-day appointments, mental health care and alternative therapies.
- The building is tentatively expected to be 17,000 to 20,000 square feet. Costs, including construction and startup, are projected at about \$12 million.
- Thanks to innovative financing, the Coquille Tribe's contribution to the project should be no more than \$1 million – and possibly less.
- A key goal is to have the facility fit gracefully into the community character of the Kilkich neighborhood. It will be built on the bog property behind the existing Community Health Center.
- The Tribe hopes to have the wellness center open in mid-2021.
- The Tribe hasn't named the building yet. "Ko-Kwel Wellness Center" is a temporary label.

we'll be incorporating in our project," Larkin said.

The design work is running parallel to plans for financing. The Tribe has received letters of intent from two entities — Craft 3 and Northern Trust — that are involved in federal New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC). The NMTC program lets investors lend to the Tribe and then receive tax credits in place of direct repayment.

Craft 3 is a nonprofit that administers community development financing. It was involved in financing the RV park at The Mill Casino. Northern Trust is a company that invests in projects. Together, they're providing nearly a quarter of the project's \$12 million budget.

Additional project funding will come from the Tribe itself, various grants, and a U.S. Department of Agriculture loan. Once the center opens, Indian Health Service reimbursements will cover the loan payments and other costs.

The tax credit arrangements turned out more favorably than the Tribe expected. Tribal Controller Kyle ViksneHill said the deal will deliver \$2.7 million in net benefit to the Tribe, up half a million from the previous estimate of \$2.2 million. That change could reduce how much of the Tribe's own money will need to be spent.

In another development, the Tribal Council recently approved a "project charter." The document defines the project's objectives, financial plans, schedule and community engagement plans. The council meets with the project team every other week.

The next opportunity for Tribal community members to review and comment on the plan probably will be a community meeting in October, Larkin said. The design should be 80 percent finished by then.

Meanwhile, the project charter and other updated information will be available soon in the "Highlights" section of MyTribe and in the lobby of the existing Community Health Center.

