

Busy, busy, busy

KWC project keeps galloping along

Work on the Ko-Kwel Wellness Center is nicely ahead of schedule — nearly a month ahead in one area. A little cushion will be welcome as the project heads into the rainy season.

What's happening

- Exterior siding is going up.
- The central courtyard is getting its plywood sheathing.
- Drywallers are finishing the medical area. Pharmacy next.
- Doors are being installed.
- Roofing continues.
- Plumbing for medical gasses (oxygen, nitrous oxide) is finished in the dental area.
- Chief Don Ivy and staff members toured the site to plan landscaping. (Expect lots of native vegetation.)

What's ahead

More drywall, roofing, siding and doors. They'll pour concrete curbs at the south entrance (Thursday), followed by sidewalks.

Fun fact

To solder plumbing for medical gas, you need to flood the pipes with nitrogen first. Nitrogen won't burn. So future patients won't inhale residual soot.



Photos

Top: A crew hangs siding outside the wellness center's medical clinic.

Middle and bottom: Workers apply plywood sheathing to the central courtyard's exterior walls. The courtyard is like a triangular donut hole in the middle of the building.

Photos by Lon Matheny

Blessings and bazookas

This is definitely not your grandpa's drywall project.

Gone are the ladders of yesteryear. Gone also are the stilts worn by workers applying paper tape and "mud."

Instead, workers at the Ko-Kwel Wellness Center wield something called a "bazooka." It's an all-in-one tool that dispenses and cuts tape while extruding drywall compound. A second worker follows with a long-handled smoothing tool.

No wonder these guys are ahead of schedule.

Recent progress

- The siding is mostly up in Zone 1 (the medical clinic and pharmacy). Windows are installed there, too.
- Curbs have been poured in the parking lot.
- The area surrounding the building is being backfilled to align the ground with the foundation.

Coming soon

- Zone 2 (the dental area) will get thermal and acoustic insulation, then drywall. As each crew finishes in Zone 1, it follows the previous group to Zone 2.
- Drywall mudding will wrap up in Zone 1.

Nov. 20 ceremony

Back in March, Chief Don Ivy led a ceremony to bless and cleanse the construction site. With the walls and roof in place, he'll add a second blessing at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 20.

You're welcome to join the event in person or via streaming video on the tribe's K'wen 'inish-ha Facebook Group (KFG). Watch KFG for details.



Top photo: A worker uses a 'bazooka' tool to tape and seal a drywall joint. The bazooka makes short work of a previously tedious task.

Bottom: Curbs are in place in the wellness center's parking area.

Photos by Lon Matheny



Aerial drone photography shows the Ko-Kwel Wellness Center nestled in the Kilkich neighborhood. Coos Bay and the Pacific Ocean provide a salty backdrop. The roof has been finished since this flyover.

Photos courtesy of S+B James Construction

Halfway home

The Ko-Kwel Wellness Center project has crossed the halfway mark, and it's looking good. Here are some current highlights:

- The roof is on.
- Most outside doors are hung. The few remaining doorways are boarded up.
- The exterior walls of the central courtyard are being enclosed.
- Drywall is being hung in the dental area.
- Power is being hooked up.
- Painting in medical and pharmacy areas should start in the next week or so.
- In the Family Services area, the last of the building's interior framing is nearly finished.
- Next week will be a short week for the construction crew: just two and a half days, then a long holiday weekend.



The black triangle in the center is the interior courtyard.



Fly over Kilkich

Tap the image to see the latest drone video.



Photo by Lon Matheny

What looks like a mud hole is really the future location of a hard-working environmental tool known as a bioswale.

A swales tale

Low spots treat water and nurture greenery

Right now they look like big, muddy puddles. But don't let their looks fool you. Sloping depressions in the land around the Ko-Kwel Wellness Center — known as bioswales — have an important environmental job.

Helena Linnell, the Coquille Tribe's biological operations and planning manager, says a bioswale is basically an urbanized wetland. It diverts and disposes of runoff from roofs and parking lots.

Three design elements make that possible:

- With a curved bottom, a swale has more surface area than a flat piece of ground. That allows more water to “percolate” into the soil.

- Grasses, sedges and trees planted in each swale will suck up additional water.
- Whenever the first two tactics aren't enough, drainage pipes will carry excess water elsewhere.

Drainage from the wellness center's bioswales will flow to two destinations. One is the irrigation pond that formerly served the Kilkich cranberry bogs. The other is a pipeline under Miluk Drive, draining onto the forested floor of the Tarheel watershed.

Linnell says the swales will remove sediment from the runoff while adding green space to the wellness center's surroundings. The biggest swale will sit in the middle of the center's parking lot.

“It's an opportunity to have some nature right by your car,” she said.



Photo by Lon Matheny

Tribal employee Zachary Seeger works on milling cedar planks for the wellness center.

Planks? Thanks!

Cedar will bring traditional feel to modern facility

Next summer, when you walk into the finished Ko-Kwel Wellness Center, you'll see immediate evidence of the building's indigenous roots.

Passing through the plankhouse-style round entrance, you'll encounter rough-cut Western red cedar from the tribe's own forest.

Tribal member Lon Matheny and the tribe's forestry manager, Zachary Seeger, milled the logs this week in Kilkich's firewood lot, up the hill from the construction site.

The planks will adorn a reception area and waiting room. Traditionally known by coastal Indians as the "tree of life," the cedar will be appropriate finery for a building dedicated to healthy minds, bodies and spirits.

Meanwhile, back at the job site ...

- Painters are putting primer on interior walls in Zone 1 of the project: medical and pharmacy.
- The administration area in Zone 3 is intentionally last in line at each step of the project. Framing for its interior walls is just now getting finished.
- Outdoors, workers continue hanging siding and working on the roof.
- Drainpipes are being installed for the bioswales — low-lying areas that will collect and filter runoff. The chain-link fence around the site has been moved to accommodate bioswale work.
- More curbs and gutters are being poured.

20,000 hours and counting

S+B James Construction proudly reports clocking 20,000 man-hours of work on the Ko-Kwel Wellness Center — with zero lost-time accidents. That's good news on any job site, and it's particularly fitting for a project dedicated to good health.

Recent activity

- Workers are hanging drywall in hallways.
- Framing is finished in the administration area. That leaves just a few minor spots for the carpenters to complete.
- Painters have begun work in Zone One, the medical and pharmacy area.
- A crane arrived Wednesday to set HVAC units on the roof Thursday.
- Roofers have been, um, roofing.

Coming soon

- The roof will be finished soon, along with the parapet (a short wall extending above the roof edge) atop the pharmacy and entryway.
- More siding will be installed.
- Main entry doors will be installed. These are the doors whose round framework will resemble the entrance to a traditional plankhouse.



Top: Workers from Rich Rayburn Roofing seal seams in the roof membrane.



Left: A bird's-eye view of the interior courtyard, awaiting siding, doors and windows.



Bottom left: Forms are in place for curbs around landscape areas in the parking lot.

Photos by
Lon Matheny