

Spirit Mountain Casino  
Confederated Grand Ronde Tribe

May I have a moment of your time to discuss an issue concerning Indian People everywhere? Many young people are moving away from Reservations looking for the good life. The young want to explore and see what is out there, what is new, fun and exciting. Who can blame them I do not. I was once young and searching to see what was on the other side of the hill. This can be a good thing but it can also turn into tragedy and despair that can lead to the loss of a young mind.

The intention of this letter is to show why I believe Lane Community College desire to build this Longhouse on Campus is beneficial for your people. First of all I wish to thank LCC for their gracious donation of the site. The site location at the Main Entrance to the campus overlooks the Track and Field arena and the Campus proper. From this Vantage point one can see the high Mountain Peaks of the Cascades to the east of campus, which are spectacular year round, and play important role in Indian society. In the recent past Mr. Frank Merrill blessed this site making it a special place. I sometimes just sit on the ground in the early morning looking at the Mountain Peaks, which is a good way for me to start my day.

I hope I am able to impress upon you the importance of this project and the need for it, It can provide a place for all people to come together and observe & learn the Indian way of life. In recent years many true stories of real Indian life are starting to surface. It has sparked the interest of many people around our ever-shrinking world. There are ever increasing requests daily for information on genealogy, art, Powwow's, who do I contact and where. Many students from other lands and Nations want to join and learn what it is to be Indian. They have helped with our projects, fund raising events and LCC Powwow. We open our arms at LCC and welcome all for that is the Indian way and maybe by sharing our culture we can help this place we call Earth to become a better place to live in, PEACE.

My personal belief in this project is that it provides a place for students to come and be with other Indians, establish an extended family unit in a safe and secure atmosphere. You are fully aware of the Alcohol and Drug problem that plagues our people. The Long House would provide education, and offer contacts for treatment to those who want and need it in this never-ending battle. I speak from personal experience concerning this battle for I am (61) recovering alcoholic an Indian and proud to say I have remained sober going on (18)years. I am Lakota of the Standing Rock Reservation in the Dakota's and a retired Law Enforcement Official. I have seen both sides of that picture and it is not a pretty picture. I believe that if I am able to stop a few from falling into the self-destructive lifestyle of alcohol or drugs then I have helped another human being. We may not save all but at least they will have the opportunity & resources available. The Longhouse will provide a place & people to ask for help knowing that no one will make fun or scold them for and error or a wrong decision.

I moved to Oregon some years back and I have found the people in this community and throughout the region are a caring, giving, and compassionate, they want to help and it shows. I have observed the staff at Lane Community College from the president on down and they are willing to do whatever it takes to help a student succeed. This will be my fourth attempt to earn a college degree and as I reflect back on my earlier attempts maybe just maybe the presence of a Long House would of helped, that will remain and unknown factor. This is just one reason why I have such a strong conviction about this project I know it can help. I fjust one young mind is stopped from going down that path of self-destruction then it has accomplished its mission in the war against Alcohol and Drugs.

In closing I hope you can see within your Hearts to assist us once again in this project. I believe that this would give not only your young but all Native People the opportunity to learn from other native people, to share ideas, thoughts, projects, cultures. To learn that we as a people have many of the same problems, concerns and by sharing with others would establish a common ground to work together in finding answers for our respective people. It is a worth every penny to educate our young for it has been said many times that our young are the (Future Leaders of our People).

Sincerely Yours

  
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