



Rural Development • Rural Housing Service • Community Facilities Program

New School Celebrates Native Traditions, Nurtures Young Learners

A new, state-of-the-art K-8 school complex opened its doors on the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon in the fall of 2014. Created with intergovernmental collaboration, Warm Springs Academy demonstrates how such partnerships can generate long-term prosperity and vitality in Indian Country and across rural America.

The project originated through the tribal council’s prioritization of and vision for a new educational experience for their children—one that will prepare them for their future leadership of the community. The tribal government committed to paying half of the \$22 million project. USDA Rural Development provided a \$6.85 million [Community Facilities loan](#), and Jefferson County School District 509-J funded the remaining costs through a bond measure approved by residents both on and off the reservation.

“We are very thankful for what USDA has brought to the table in helping to make this become a reality,” said Tribal Council Chairman Austin Greene Jr. School District Superintendent Rick Molitor agreed, saying “We would not be here today talking about the building without the involvement of USDA and their funding to support the project.”



The new, state-of-the-art Warm Springs Academy.

The new 80,000-square-foot facility replaces a cramped and neglected 1930’s-era school building with a modern complex featuring science and computer labs, art and music rooms, a gymnasium, cafeteria and kitchen, and many cultural features that celebrate the tribal community’s heritage and traditions. The modern facility will help develop the next generation of Native educators, innovators, scientists, nurses, businesspeople, and tribal leaders who will, one day, give back to their community.

“They wanted it to be their school,” said School District Board Member Laurie Danzuka. “They wanted to see it reflect Warm Springs. They wanted it to reflect our culture, our traditions, and to have the things in it that are important to the Tribe.” Not only does Warm Springs Academy accomplish that goal, it can also accommodate sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, allowing them to benefit from the new facility as well rather than traveling 15 miles to attend school Madras.

Since opening its doors last year, the school has become a source of pride for the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation. For local schoolchildren, Warm Springs Academy is also a powerful symbol of the great value the community places on them, their education, and their future.

Obligation Amount: \$6.85 million loan

Date of Obligation: June 2013

Congressional District: Representative Walden, District 2; Senators Wyden and Merkley

Partners: Jefferson County School District 509-J

Demographics: Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation in Jefferson County, Oregon; 19% poverty rate out of total population of 4,012

Impact: Approximately 720 schoolchildren each year will benefit from the educational resources provided through the new, modern school facility, enabling them to remain on the reservation through eighth grade; the school serves as a focal point and source of pride for the community.