

Proposal for the Veteran's Memorial Building

Brief Summary of Project: The Project seeks to preserve and maintain the Veteran's Memorial Building for generations to come. This project will provide:

- 1) Adequate space for Veteran's services and Bingo,
- 2) Sustainable economic development for California's first people,
- 3) A center for Watsonville's community to hold events,
- 4) A safe environment for after-school programs,
- 5) Meeting rooms for substance abuse recovery,
- 6) Benefit the local economy of Watsonville by promoting tourism,
- 7) Preserve Ohlone traditional culture,

We seek to preserve and utilize the Veteran's Memorial Building with all the honor and dignity due to the brave men and women who have served their country.

Statement of Need: Traditionally these memorials have been stewarded by the veteran's organizations that they were built to immortalize. But as our WW2 and Korean Vets are approaching the twilight years, the task of managing and maintaining these buildings is becoming an increasing burden. The Veterans Memorial building was left to be managed by a third party that allowed this great memorial to fall into dilapidated condition. Through the years it has been used by many cultural organizations as well as emergency shelter during natural disasters. Now the building is a disaster.

The Ohlone people have been searching many years for a centrally located cultural resource center that they could use every day of the week for classes, rehearsal, cultural and social events. A single, accessible place to store equipment, tools, and materials will also make a huge difference. Right now our elders spend a lot of time, energy, and money moving from one end of the "tri-counties" area to the other, chasing down materials someone else has, teaching several tiny local groups in various kitchens or backyards. A community center located in Watsonville would be an answer to their prayers.

The Ohlone Tribal Council also needs an opportunity to provide their people with jobs now and in the future that are not depended upon environmental destruction. These jobs would provide steady incomes that are culturally correct and of benefit to their community and humanity as a whole.

Project Description:

1. This project will provide the front left office space for County Veterans Services providing easy access for their clientele. This space is accessible whether the rest of the building is open or not. The main hall will be reserved on Sundays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for the Allied Veterans Council's bingo fundraisers. The main entrance way will be restored displaying veteran's commemorations and mementos to honor those who have served their country.
2. This project will provide sustainable economic base by developing jobs and job skills, i.e. management, building maintenance, janitorial, food service, sales, grant writing, clerical, bookkeeping, cultural consultant, stipends and travel expenses for teachers and artists. Along with these jobs it will create opportunities for participation, collaboration and partnership among Native Americans.
3. This project will provide affordable community access to the main hall for quinceaneras, weddings, baptisms, dances, and other events Friday evenings, Saturdays, and Sunday evenings after Bingo.
4. This project will provide a safe environment for after-school programs for the high school students. Sporting, educational, entertaining, and cultural activities will be offered Monday through Thursday.
5. This project will provide affordable meeting rooms for substance abuse recovery in the upstairs offices lending support to those who truly want to help themselves.
6. This project will increase tourism to Watsonville this being the only Native American cultural center in Santa Cruz County. It will draw visitors from all over the area.
7. The cultural center upstairs will provide room for workshops, dance rehearsals, and Ohlone events. It will promote awareness of issues facing Native American communities throughout North America, develop awareness of the health and prevention needs of Native Americans, give Native Americans access to and use of prevention and treatment resources, and provide an environment to research Native American prevention and treatment needs. This will also serve as a single accessible location where the community young and old can come and learn about the culture from the Ohlone people themselves. This will preserve the traditional Ohlone way of life for generations to come.

Budget:Projected Income

Workshops	6,000
Fundraisers	12,000
Pow wows	3,000
Room Rentals	12,000
Hall Rentals	76,000
Restaurant	9,000
Craft Sales	10,000
Refreshments	6,000
After School Events	6,000

Total Income	\$140,000
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Personnel SalariesYearly

Cultural Consultant	\$20,000
Office Manager	35,000
Secretary	25,000
Bookkeeper	3,000
Building Maintenance Engineer	20,000

Total - Salaries	\$103,000
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Expenses

Rental	1
Office Supplies	2,400
Supplies	3,000
Insurance	5,000
Transportation	1,000
Utilities	25,000

Total - Expenses	\$36,401
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Grand Total all Costs	\$139,401
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Tribal description:

The current Pajaro Ohlone Indian Tribal Group consists of approximately three hundred and fifty individuals. About fifty members of the tribe including the current tribal leader, Patrick Orozco, live in the Pajaro Valley near the city of Watsonville. Members also live in the Monterey and San Francisco Bay areas. Families have moved to Los Banos, Los Angeles and to cities in other states. About two hundred seventy-five members of the tribe are documented as California Indians through mission, California, census records and BIA rolls.

These individuals descend primarily from branches of the Rumsen and Ritocsi (or "Santa Theresa Hills" people, as they were called by mission padres). The Ritocsi originated from a village south of San Jose, the Rumsen people in the Monterey area. In 1880, these two branches came together in the Pajaro Valley. As genealogies are completed, additional tribal roots from Central California areas will be discovered. The disruption of the village of the Ritocsi and their involvement in the mission system occurred in 1782 at the mission of Santa Clara. The tribal group that survived the mission period has reconstituted frequently, returning to the Pajaro Valley as a home base.

The Pajaro Valley is defined by a broad river delta system, surrounded by Redwoods, pine and chaparral covered mountain ranges. The delta provides rich agricultural land, supportive of crops of strawberries, lettuce, apples and others. In earlier days, the area was composed of marsh, wetlands and slough-, that were a rich source of food, building materials and medicine for the indigenous people. It was densely populated by the Calendaruc, who were taken into the mission system in the 1700s. No Calendaruc known to have survived the mission system.

The tribe since 1975 has owned seven acres of land, which adjoins the site of an ancient Indian village and graveyard. (The Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council, a non-profit organization incorporated in 1985 actually holds title to the land). The tribe feels a spirit connection to this graveyard and village and to all others in the area like it. The purpose of the incorporation was to protect and preserve sacred sites, especially burial site. The circumstances of their acquisition of the land is a major episode in their historical record.

Tribal members stay connected through yearly get-togethers, (such as the Gathering of the Elders at Mount Madonna), occasions such as mourning ceremonies, sweat lodge activities and weddings; through correspondence, phone calls and meetings for the exchange of tribal concerns. They come together with other nearby California tribes, also, such as the Esselens and Salinans and attend gatherings sponsored by these other groups. Patrick Orozco has served as chairperson for seventeen of the last twenty years and is a primary unifying force among the people.

Current activities of the Pajaro people

1. Preserving the culture.

Dancing and singing was always a central feature of California Indian life. Patrick Orozco has encouraged the return of the songs and dances of the people. He regularly dances with a group of 10-20 children and adults. The group dances for tribal gatherings and events, such as weddings.

The group, Amah-ka-tura, also travels to grade schools, universities, public events, private schools, state parks, and dedications. For many of these events, a fee is charged to pay for costs and to reimburse the dancers. The group would like to be able to go to any school that requests them; however, not all schools have the financial resources to pay their fee. Grant money covering their performance fee would improve the situation.

Other cultural activities include teaching the language, telling the stories, making musical instruments (clapper sticks, primarily) and regalia (shell and feather headdresses, rabbit fur capes and other features of authentic Ohlone regalia).

2. Protecting Sacred Sites.

The non-profit Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council was formed to protect sacred sites. The Headman becomes involved with construction projects that impact gravesites. He works with government officials, tribal persons, archaeologists and others to find ways to preserve the burials and prevent desecration. He must appear often at public hearings and utilize the media to promote his cause when there is indifference or insufficient legal protection. Sometimes he travels a considerable distance because the Ohlone people inhabited land from the Carmel River to San Francisco.

3. Learning the history.

The historical record of the tribe has evolved through reconstructing individual genealogies (using mission and other records), recollections of elders, anthropological and archaeological records and by exchanges with other related tribal groups. There is a continuing effort to learn the history of the Pajaro Ohlone people, especially through genealogical research.

4. Participation in gatherings and ceremonies.

The group participates in California Big Times, pow-wows and extended tribal gatherings, very often at nearby Mount Madonna (a County park) since the group has no usable land of its own or central meeting place in Watsonville.

5. The tribe helps persons in need.

Tribal leaders provide food, bedding, household necessities and funds. Sometimes they work with probation or welfare personnel. They provide employment, vocational and personal counseling.

6. Work for federal recognition.

The Pajaro Ohlone people applied for federal recognition in 1995. As has been true for almost all the California tribes, the BAR of the Interior Department for numerous reasons rejected their proposal, The Federal Government has recognized very few California tribes. To revise the proposal, considerable historical research is required well beyond the capacity of the tribe to provide. The tribe is applying for an ANA grant, from which funds may be obtained to do the exacting research. A legal student worked on the ANA grant for a year but has not completed it.

7. Search for land and a cultural center.

This is a central need of the tribe. The Tribe continues to investigate possibilities for acquiring land. These efforts have involved dealing with the California Department of Fish and Game, who would like to acquire the Indians' seven acres of slough land and return some usable land to them. So far, this has not worked out. The Tribe also explores possibilities for land with realtors, City and County planners and private individuals. Plans are discussed for a replica Indian village and for trails connecting Indian sites that could be part of the Watsonville park system. But none of these possibilities have come to fruition, and the Pajaro people still have no land or cultural center.

8. Training programs and workshops.

Attempts to create programs and workshops are made periodically and are a critical need.

9. Sales.

The group has a CD-Rom that tells the story of their tribe. They sell it and T-shirts.

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Patrick Yanahea Orozco, Council Chairman. Yanahea is a co-founder of the Council and a major motivating force for the Council's various activities, including decades of effort in uncovering tribal history and genealogies, and revitalization of traditional cultural practices. A retired weigh master and inspector with Agrilink Foods in Watsonville, CA, he now devotes even more time to California Native issues.

Sally Alderete, Council Vice - Chair. Ms. Alderete has spent many years helping meet the cultural, material, and spiritual needs of the Pajaro Valley Ohlones. She currently specialize in leading field trips for Ohlone youth to burial sites and Native cultural events; collecting and teaching our people about traditional medicines, foods, arts, and song. Sally works at the quality lab for the Castroville Packing Company.

Terry Reynaga, Council Secretary - Treasurer. Aside from serving as the financial officer and record-keeper for the Council, Terry also focuses on cultural preservation. She has assisted in the reactivation of our traditional songs and dances, teaching young people and sharing her skills through many performances both for our own people and the wider Native and general population. Ms. Reynaga currently works as an electrician and a printer.