



• TAMÁSTLIKT •

CULTURAL INSTITUTE

Contact:

Tiah DeGrofft, Community Relations Manager, 541-966-1628,
tiah.degrofft@wildhorsesort.com

Description or Type of Museum/Institution

Tamástlikt Cultural Institute tells the story of three American Indian Tribes, the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla, who for 10,000 years have inhabited the Plateau region of the Pacific Northwest, U.S.A. and who welcomed and assisted the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Tamástlikt brings the story alive with a 14,000 square foot exhibit space that incorporates artifacts, photography, video and interactive multi-media in world class exhibits. Its Museum Store sells American Indian arts and crafts, as well as books and music and uniquely designed Pendleton Woolen Mills Indian blankets. It is located five minutes from Interstate 84, four miles east of Pendleton, Oregon. For more information: 1-800-654-9453 or 1-541-966-9748 or www.tamastlikt.com
Tamástlikt Cultural Institute is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Collections

Focused on the history and culture of three American Indian Tribes, the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla, beginning with traditional culture and history and including the later history of their relationships with non-Indian immigrants: Lewis and Clark, early fur traders, missionaries, Oregon Trail immigrants and modern members of their larger community in what is now northeast Oregon, southeast Washington and western Idaho.

Pronunciation

Tah-Must-Slicked, with the accent on the second syllable.



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Tamástslikt Cultural Institute Story Ideas

Following are some story angles for your consideration. Please call me for help with interviews or photos. Tiah DeGrofft, 541-966-1628,
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- Interview Tribal leaders regarding the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute's economic and cultural impact on the future of the Tribes.
- Interview the Institute's language program director and teachers, as well as Tribal participants, regarding the importance of Tamástslikt as a place for learning and preserving the Tribal languages, Nez Perce, Umatilla and Walla Walla.
- Talk with the Institute's director regarding the importance of Tamástslikt as a place for preserving the artifacts. Artifacts over 150 years old are being protected with scientific methods of preservation applied by professionals at Tamástslikt. Preserving the artifacts enables the Tribal members to study them and re-create old styles of apparel and other cultural items. Preserving the artifacts makes an interesting story about the process of eliminating bugs, mold and the destructive elements of a century or more.
- Talk with the Institute's director and the Museum Store manager about their focus on the sale of Tribal art and crafts from this area. This allows Tribal artists to practice and expand on the arts learned from ancestors, while earning a living from their work.
- Diverse recreational, educational and historical study opportunities abound in the plateau and mountain areas around Tamástslikt. A story or sidebar could cover activities for families.
- Tamástslikt is the only one of five Oregon cultural institutes along the Oregon Trail that tells the Oregon Trail story from the Native American point of view. Tie the story as told at Tamástslikt with that told at other interpretive centers. Note the differences and the similarities in the telling of this story.
- Tamástslikt tells one part of the story of this area, covering the history and culture of the people who were here first. Other museums in the area, at Pendleton, Walla

Walla, Baker City, The Dalles and Moro tell the story of the people who came later. Explore the overall appeal and diversity of this region through the telling of the story in these museums. Oregonians rediscovering their roots and the many newcomers to the state are interested in these stories and in visiting the places that help understand them.

- Museum exhibit design is an art and craft form in itself. One of the best modern exhibit design firms is Jean Jacques André, Vancouver, B.C. This firm designed the exhibits at Tamástslíkt and has designed exhibits at museums worldwide. A look at modern exhibit design could include the work at Tamástslíkt and other museums in Oregon or the Pacific Northwest.



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Background

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Tamástslikt Cultural Institute
72789 Highway 331
Pendleton, Oregon 97801
Phone 541-966-9748
FAX 541-966-9927
Email: contact@tamastslikt.com
Website: www.tamastslikt.com

The Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, which celebrated its 11th birthday in 2009, was built by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation as a place to preserve the Tribes' culture and history while also presenting their story to the world. Inside its walls of native rock and wood are 45,000 square feet of exhibits, meeting places, archives, a research library and work spaces.

Located five miles east of Pendleton on the grounds of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino against the backdrop of the nearby Blue Mountains, Tamástslíkt has drawn praise for its stunning design. The permanent exhibits that reveal the story were designed by a renowned exhibit designer in Vancouver, British Columbia. Rotating exhibits, changing every six to eight weeks, are always connected to the Tribes' story.

Those Tribes are the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla, people who have resided in NE Oregon and SE Washington since time immemorial. Their story is one of a steadily growing base of knowledge and trade, disrupted only recently by an immigration of people who were initially welcomed, but who soon brought disaster to the Tribes. Those people were, of course, the immigrants on the Oregon Trail. Tamástslíkt tells a large part of that Oregon Trail story, the only interpretive center on that trail to tell it from the American Indian point of view.

Permanent exhibits are organized in three sectors: We Were, We Are, We Will Be. In each, displays, sound effects and interactive multi-media tell of the Tribes' past, present and their plans for the future.

At the beginning of the permanent exhibits visitors enjoy a multi-media trip into the mind of Coyote. Sitting in a darkened theater in the cone shape of a tipi, with twinkling stars overhead, visitors hear and watch how Coyote defeats a monster and saves the world.

The permanent exhibits are housed in a round wing of the building, designed to capture the feel of the circle, which has special meaning in the Tribal culture. Visitors walk counter clockwise through the exhibits, beginning with the Seasonal Round, where the four seasons are presented as periods of harvesting, processing, and manufacturing. From high overhead come the natural sounds of the raven.

Subsequent exhibits reveal the extent to which trade was carried on prior to the arrival of non-Indians, using colorful maps and displaying a variety of trade goods. A major exhibit details the importance of the horse to the Tribes in the two centuries after it first arrived in the 1600's. A full-sized lodge constructed of tule reeds demonstrates the traditional form of housing predominant in the Tribes' region. Inside the lodge are benches where visitors can relax while listening to the recorded voices of Tribal members telling Coyote stories and recounting other culturally significant memoirs.

The first sign of the new immigrants comes with the exhibit on the fur traders. Closely following them are the missionaries, then the settlers. On the heels of these exhibits come more, with the stories of disruption, war, forced treaties and boarding schools, the parceling away of reservation land.

When the visitor enters the We Are exhibits it's obvious that today's Tribes are upbeat and active members of their larger community, major participants in such famed celebrations as the Pendleton Round-Up.

Finally, in We Will Be, Tribal members young and old speak on video about their hopes and plans for a strong future that at once breaks with the disruption of the past two centuries, while it holds fast to a unique culture.

Outside, a living culture village—Naamí Nishaycht—open June-October, demonstrates how modern Tribal members continue to practice ancient traditions from food preparation and hide tanning to make a traditional lodge. Here visitors can talk to the Tribal members about their culture and view various forms of lodges going back thousands of years.

In addition to the exhibits, Tamástlikt hosts numerous events ranging from an American Indian Film Festival to convocations with scholars and elders to discuss social and cultural issues with an eye to the history from which they were born. Art shows and artists, cultural demonstrations of ancient hunting weapons, American Indian storytellers—the events have run the gamut of entertaining and culturally significant presentations. The Museum Store regularly hosts authors for book signings and to speak on their work. Thousands of school children have visited to have fun and learn in day-long programs. A deli-style café offers visitors a place to relax, refresh and view the beautiful vista of the nearby mountains.

In a few short years, the Tamástlikt Cultural Institute has become a major visitor attraction and a source of pride not only for Tribal members, but for the entire northeast Oregon region.



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150 Words

Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, the world-class museum of the Umatilla Tribes, has opened its long-planned Living Culture Village. The village, staffed by trained interpreters from the three Tribes here, presents forms of lodging ranging from pit houses of 2,000 to 600 years ago, to the more modern tule mat lodge or hide-covered tipi. A stream runs through it. Skilled artisans work on leather, dry fish, weave mats and work on other traditional seasonal crafts, while explaining to visitors what it all means. The Village, located behind Tamástslikt, welcomes visitors with paid admission to the permanent exhibits. The Naamí Níshaycht Village is open the same schedule as the museum through Labor Day weekend. Tamástslikt is open 9-5 daily, except Sunday, November-March., open every day April-October.

54 Words

Tamástslikt Cultural Institute's Living Culture Village, a vibrant, living display of traditional housing forms and Tribal crafts and life ways, is open to visitors at Tamástslikt June-Oct. From ancient pit houses to more recent tipis, the village will include trained interpreters to explain traditional crafts. Tamástslikt is open 9-5 daily, closed Sundays Nov.-Mar.



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News Release

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Pendleton, Oregon—Since it opened in 1998, visitors to the Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute have exited the building housing the museum’s exhibits to be greeted by a spectacular view of the adjacent plain fronting the nearby Blue Mountains. But since May 2005, they’ve also been greeted by the Naamí Nishaycht Village, a new living culture exhibit that demonstrates how modern Tribal members are continuing to practice ancient traditions from food preparation to making a lodge. And how, along the way, they’re preserving their Tribal languages.

Tamástslíkt is the museum of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), a reservation government comprising three Tribes: the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Lewis & Clark Expedition’s first appearance in the CTUIR’s traditional homelands, in October 1805. In the new village visitors can experience first-hand the forms of housing and the richness and texture of traditional activities and a way of life that Lewis & Clark found and described in their journals. But as the interpreters who work at the village make clear, that culture is still very much alive.

Among the traditional activities demonstrated by the village’s permanent interpreters are storytelling, basket and tule mat weaving, hide tanning and smoking, sweat lodge construction, flint knapping, hemp cordage making, salmon drying and smoking, venison drying and smoking, dancing, singing, drumming, horsemanship, and the making of traditional clothing. Just as they would have in a traditional village, the activities will vary by season. The immediacy of the experience provides the opportunity for extended

dialogue with interpreters and promotes learning about the Tribes and their relationship to their environment.

"We do not live in the past--the past is alive in us. Our Tribal people carry on ancient practices and carry very old knowledge while living in the modern world," says Bobbie Conner, Tamástlikt director. "Visitors see Tribal people practicing ways that have sustained us for thousands of years. In our outdoor village, the visitor sees, hears, touches and even smells our Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla life."

The Naamí Níshaycht Village is open the same schedule as the museum Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

Tamástlikt Cultural Institute is the museum and interpretive center of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, comprising the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes. The Institute is open daily 9-5 April-October, closed Sundays November-March and also closed Thanksgiving Day, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. It is located just off Interstate 84 near Pendleton, Oregon. For more information: 541-966-9748, www.tamastlikt.org.

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