



YELLOWHAWK PUTS PEOPLE AND PLANET FIRST

HEALTH CENTER IS FIRST TRIBAL BUILDING ON THE PATH TO NET ZERO

Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center is a mission-driven clinic that brings together healthcare, tribal culture and energy-efficient design. Located outside Pendleton, this beautiful facility provides health and wellness services to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), and also represents the community's forward-thinking approach to sustainability and saving energy.

"It's part of the tribe's history, really looking at energy-efficient green buildings. We were proud, in working with Energy Trust of Oregon, that Yellowhawk was the first tribally owned building that's on the Path to Net Zero," said Bill Tovey, director, CTUIR Department of Economic and Community Development.



« Yellowhawk is set to save around 646,000 kilowatt hours per year, making it 60% more energy efficient than most new healthcare facilities.

BRINGING ENERGY GOALS INTO FOCUS

Once certified net zero, Yellowhawk will generate as much energy as it uses over the course of a year. The building is currently 60% more energy efficient than a standard new construction healthcare facility of its type, and saves an estimated 646,000 kilowatt hours per year. That's equal to approximately \$58,000 in annual energy cost savings, which can be invested back into the community.

"Sustainability and energy efficiency are very important to the tribal organization. It's a key component, both operationally and financially, to what we believe in," said Sandra Sampson, tribal state liaison.



I'm so proud of this building.
We're on our way to net zero.

Sandra Sampson,
tribal state liaison



A LOOK INSIDE

Many key decisions were made to help Yellowhawk achieve outstanding energy performance while creating a welcoming atmosphere for patients and staff. All of the office spaces receive natural light and natural ventilation through windows or skylights. Operable windows allow staff to control their own comfort level, and the high-efficiency heating and cooling system provides further individualization by zone.



"We went with a system called VRF, which is variable refrigerant flow. This system is unique because it uses liquid to transfer heating and cooling rather than air. So it's much more efficient," said Neil Piispanen, architect and project manager.

Other energy-saving features include a high-performance building envelope with increased insulation and strategically placed windows, interior and exterior LED lighting, and low-flow water fixtures.

"When we enrolled in Path to Net Zero, I think what was very important within this structure was the lighting, how it's open and bringing in more sunlight, the efficiency of the heating and cooling, and also the solar panels," said Sampson. "We looked at making it a place that our patients would want to come and enjoy."

« The VRF system uses energy recovery for highly efficient zonal heating and cooling.



A BRIGHT SOLAR FUTURE

Generating clean solar energy is important for reaching net zero. Yellowhawk is well on its way, with an initial solar array already producing, and a solar-ready building design that simplifies the process of installing additional panels in the future.

“There was a mission always to make this a net-zero project,” said Piispanen. “We started out with solar panels on the parking canopy. But the roof of our building is designed with conduit and structure in place to handle the remaining solar panels to get to actual net zero. That was in large part due to the early guidance Energy Trust was able to provide.”

BLENDING TRADITION AND TECHNOLOGY

Some of Yellowhawk’s most unique features combine traditional tribal themes with new energy-saving techniques. Most notable is the center courtyard with its circular design representing the seasons of the tribe and the different first foods within each season.

“In the center of the courtyard there’s this very large structure for shading, which helps to shield the southern-facing window from excess heat gain. From that, we were able to reduce our load inside so we could downsize the equipment. What you end up with is a great architectural feature, because it’s not just aesthetic, it’s actually performing,” said Piispanen.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Overview

- Tribal healthcare and wellness center
- 64,500 square feet
- More than 140 employees
- Nearly 50,000 patient visits per year
- Located outside Pendleton, Oregon

Energy-efficient and renewable features

- High-performance envelope
- Efficient heating and cooling with energy recovery
- Solar panels on covered parking areas
- LED lighting
- Low-flow water fixtures

Energy Trust cash incentives

- \$295,000

Estimated annual savings

- 646,000 kWh
- \$58,000 energy costs

Project team

- Kirby Nagelhout Construction Company
- NBBJ
- The Wenaha Group



CHOOSING THE RIGHT PATH

The Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) opened the original Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center clinic in 1972 and made history as the first tribal organization to fully own its own health clinic. In 1996, it assumed 100% ownership and leadership of its tribal healthcare, marking another step forward. Currently, it's still uncommon for tribes to own or govern their healthcare services.

When it came time to build a new Yellowhawk clinic, everything was in place to invest in a high-performance building that reflects the values of the tribe. Energy Trust was proud to support the CTUIR in achieving efficient building strategies that unlock the value of long-term operational savings, while balancing initial investment.

"With Energy Trust, they provide funding that helps reduce the cost. They were involved from the very beginning with modeling, early design work and following it all the way through," said Tovey.

"I'm so proud of this building," Sampson added. "We're on our way to net zero."

Find your Path to Net Zero

See other success stories and find incentives and resources at www.energytrust.org/zero.