

# The Arlington Times

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**River Rock Smoke Shop opens at I-5 Exit 210**



Stanwood's Chris Nerland checks out the selection in the 'Beer Cave' at the River Rock Smoke Shop at I-5 Exit 210 in Arlington on Feb. 28.

— *image credit: Kirk Boxleitner*

- by [KIRK BOXLEITNER](#), Arlington Times Reporter

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ARLINGTON — The Stillaguamish Tribe's third River Rock Smoke Shop opened with a full day of fanfare on Friday, Feb. 28, as the convenience store and gas station at 23704 13th Ave. NE, just off Interstate 5 at Exit 210, drew literally more cars than they had room for in their parking lot.

"This is definitely better than we expected," Store Director Michael Olguin said. "We thought we'd just have a small crowd, but the weather definitely helped. And so did the Sea Gals," he laughed.

While Stillaguamish Tribe employees served up free hot dogs and drinks to visitors, a lengthy line stood waiting for autographed photos of themselves with Seattle Seahawks Sea Gals cheerleaders Mhkeeba and Michelle.

"I saw that the Sea Gals would be here, but I also wanted to see what the price of gas would be out here," said Chris Nerland, who wore her Seahawks colors as she scoped out the River Rock Smoke Shop's one-of-a-kind walk-in refrigerated "Beer Cave." "It's really expensive back in Stanwood."

Store Manager Nettie McCully attributed the presence of the Beer Cave to Olguin pushing for its installation.

"He wanted to bring people in with something they wouldn't normally see at a convenience store," McCully said. "I think he nailed it, because it's unique and already very popular."

McCully also expects that the newest River Rock Smoke Shop will attract new and returning customers alike through its fast and friendly service.

The River Rock Smoke Shop at I-5 Exit 210 is starting out with 28 employees, but Olguin expects that number to grow quickly, thanks to its prime location for high volumes of traffic.

"We've got a full selection of wine, beer and food, plus necessities like emergency auto supplies," said John Cronin, marketing manager for the Stillaguamish Tribe's Angel of the Winds Casino.

Julie Pinneo of Concrete was among those who stopped by without even realizing that it was the store's grand opening, since she was simply looking to get some gas. She wound up staying long enough to sign up for the raffle prize drawings, while Arlington's Charlie Dawson came because his girlfriend and mother had heard the Sea Gals would be there.

"I've got to support my Seahawks," Dawson said, as he stepped inside the 6,000-square-foot convenience store to scope out its selection, which includes the same discount cigarette and tobacco inventory for which all three River Rock Smoke Shops are named. "It's got a great location, right off the freeway."

Stillaguamish Tribal Chair Shawn Yanity basked in the warmth of the sun as the convenience store and its 16 fuel pumps, including diesel and propane, opened to serve the public.

"This helps to promote the continuity of our businesses, which mean more jobs for local people," Yanity said. "The gas taxes collected here will also help support the roads and infrastructure. The money we collect will help those in the surrounding community, so it's great to see so many people here, partaking of our food, tobacco and other merchandise. The chicken strips they serve here are really good," he laughed.

For more information, log onto [www.riverrocksmokeshop.com](http://www.riverrocksmokeshop.com).

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