

Warm Springs hopeful after Haaland tapped to head Interior

By Michael Kohn
The Bulletin

BEND (AP) — Since the historic appointment of Deb Haaland to head the U.S. Department of the Interior, hopes have been high among members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs that better times are ahead.

Next month the congresswoman from New Mexico will become the first Native American appointed to the position of cabinet secretary when she takes over at the Department of the Interior, which also oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Haaland is a member of the Laguna Pueblo, a tribe located near Albuquerque.

Warm Springs tribal members see the appointment as a beacon of light following a tough year of wildfire, high rates of COVID-19, and infrastructure failures that left parts of the reservation without potable water, *The Bulletin* reported.

“Considering our large number of COVID-19 cases, everyone seems happy and excited for the potential of what Deb Haaland could do,” said Dustin Seyler, a Warm Springs tribal member.

The tribes have been hit hard by COVID. As of Monday, the tribes had 664 total positive cases since the start of the pandemic and 14 deaths, a relatively high case rate for an area with just 5,000 people.

“Since she will be in charge of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there could be a lot of change that happens in that office, which has so much influence over all the tribes in the U.S.,” said Seyler, who works as a small business program manager for the Warm Springs Community Action Team, a nonprofit organization.

Seyler says the bureau neglected to fulfill its responsibilities when it came to working with Warm Springs on infrastructure improvements in its central area, also called the campus. Most of the buildings on the Warm Springs Campus are filled with lead paint, asbestos, and other dangerous contaminants, he said.

“It’s been a 20-year fight to get them to pay for the repairs,” said Seyler. “That is just one example of the many issues the BIA caused and left for the tribes to clean up. These are things we don’t have the money or

skilled workforce to deal with.”

The Warm Springs tribal government has also tangled with the Bureau of Indian Affairs over responsibility for the reservation’s water delivery system. The system has broken down on multiple occasions in recent years, forcing residents to boil water or collect water jugs from an emergency distribution center. The bureau installed the system more than 40 years ago, but there’s been debate over who should foot the bill for maintenance and upkeep.

Seyler said one outcome of having Haaland at the helm could be improvements and modifications at what he described as “outdated” rules at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., also sees the nomination of Haaland as a chance to hit the reset button between Washington and tribes.

Haaland’s “knowledge of the urgent need to right historic injustices will help generate long-overdue help for tribes,” said Wyden.

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— Dustin Seyler

“Her appointment marks a monumental achievement for Native Americans.”

Wyden anticipates that working with Haaland and the incoming Biden administration will smooth the approval and implementation process of the Western Tribal Water Infrastructure Act, which if greenlighted would provide millions of dollars to improve water infrastructure at Warm Springs.

Haaland, who describes herself as a 35th generation New Mexican, has not yet set out policy goals but in her acceptance speech described early life challenges including being homeless and reliance on food stamps.

“These struggles gave me perspectives though, so I can help people to succeed,” she said.

Carina Miller, an economic research analyst with the community action team, said the addition of a Native American to the cabinet will give the U.S. government long-overlooked perspectives on critical issues such as social injustice and climate change.

“The Indigenous knowledge that has long been disrespected will be utilized,” said Miller.

Miller said it’s not clear yet what direct impact Haaland’s appointment will have at Warm Springs, but she takes a broader view that the appointment will be good for tribes across the country.

For the first time, Miller said, tribes will not have to spend valuable resources and time educating a cabinet secretary on tribal politics and policy.

“Less money and time will be spent educating people within the Department of the Interior, and on playing defense against environmental attacks,” Miller said. “Deb Haaland’s appointment to head the department is going to be a turning point for this nation.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sisters Library Children’s Activities

Deschutes Public Library is offering virtual events and take-home activities for children. On Tuesdays at 10 a.m. join community librarians and other preschoolers for songs, rhymes, stories and fun. Online story time is live at 10 a.m. on Thursdays and at 10:30 a.m. children ages 3-5 can join in music and movement to develop literacy skills. Parents, don’t miss the opportunity to pick up a story time activity kit for your preschooler at Sisters Library on Thursdays starting at noon. Available while supplies last. Go to www.deschuteslibrary.org/kids/programs or call 541-312-1032 for more info.

Career Funds Available

Applications are available for the Sisters Kiwanis Career Opportunity Fund to help adult residents of Sisters establish an occupational path. Pick up forms at the Kiwanis House, corner of Oak and Main, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursdays, and during regular hours from the Sisters Habitat for Humanity office. For more information, call 541-719-1254.

Furry Friends Has Moved!

The Furry Friends office is now located at 412 E. Main Ave., Ste. 4 behind The Nugget office. Though the office is closed to the public, the pet food bank is still open for no contact porch pickups. Call to order your pet food for pickup during our regular weekly pickup time on Thursdays from 12:30 to 4 p.m. or by appointment the rest of the week. Info: 541-797-4023.

Free Weekly Grab-N-Go Lunches For Seniors

The Council on Aging of Central Oregon is serving seniors (60+) free Grab-N-Go lunches on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays each week. The lunches are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis drive-through style from 12 to 12:30 p.m. at the Sisters Community Church, 1300 W. McKenzie Hwy. Seniors may drive through the parking lot and pick up a meal each day of service. Come on by, no need to make a reservation. For more information call 541-678-5483.

Weekly Food Pantry

Wellhouse Church has a weekly food pantry on Thursdays. Food is currently being distributed drive-through style from 12:30 until all food is distributed at the Wellhouse Market building, 222 N. Trinity Way. People in need of food may drive through the parking lot and pick up a bag of food for their household. Other Sisters-area churches are joining with Wellhouse Church to contribute both financially and with volunteers to help sustain the program. For more information, please call 541-549-4184.

Antiques & Jewelry Donations Needed

Sisters Kiwanis takes donations of antiques, collectibles and jewelry throughout the year for its annual Antiques, Collections & Jewelry Sale, held on Saturday every Memorial Day weekend. Your donation is tax-deductible! For more information and to arrange for pickup of large or small items, please call Pam at 541-719-1049.

PET OF THE WEEK

Humane Society of Central Oregon
541-382-3537



Meet **FRANKIE**, an incredibly loveable 10-month-old Great Dane mix who is eager to meet his forever family! This giant puppy is a very clever boy with a lot of love to give! Frankie will need a family that has the time and physical ability to help him with his training and socialization as he is very big and still has a lot to learn about life! Call the shelter and schedule an appointment to meet Frankie today!

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800-650-6766

Please call the church before attending to verify current status of services as restrictions are adjusted.

SISTERS-AREA CHURCHES

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church (ELCA)
386 N. Fir Street • 541-549-5831
10 a.m. Sunday Worship
www.shepherdofthehillslutheranchurch.com

Sisters Community Church (Nondenominational)
1300 W. McKenzie Hwy. • 541-549-1201
10 a.m. Sunday Worship (with signing)
www.sisterschurch.com • info@sisterschurch.com

St. Edward the Martyr Roman Catholic Church
123 Trinity Way • 541-549-9391
5:30 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass
9 a.m. Sunday Mass • 8 a.m. Monday-Friday Mass

Calvary Church (NW Baptist Convention)
484 W. Washington St., Ste. C & D • 541-588-6288
10 a.m. Sunday Worship • www.ccsisters.org

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
452 Trinity Way • Branch President, 541-420-5670;
10 a.m. Sunday Sacrament Meeting

Baha’i Faith Meetings
Devotional gatherings, study classes and discussion groups. Call for location and times
541-647-9826

Chapel in the Pines
Camp Sherman • 541-549-9971
10 a.m. Sunday Worship

Sisters Church of the Nazarene
67130 Harrington Loop Rd. • 541-389-8960
www.sistersnaz.org • 2sistersnaz@gmail.com
10:45 a.m. Sunday Worship

Wellhouse Church
442 Trinity Way • 541-549-4184
<https://wellhousechurch.churchcenter.com>
10 a.m. Sunday Worship (Indoor & Outdoor Venues)

Vast Church (Nondenominational)
541-719-0587 • 5 and 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Worship at 442 Trinity Way (Wellhouse building).
See www.vastchurch.com for details.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
386 N. Fir St. • 541-595-6770, 541-306-8303
11 a.m. Saturday Worship

The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration
68825 Brooks Camp Rd. • 541-549-7087
8:30 a.m. Ecumenical Sunday Worship (Sunday school, childcare) 10:15 a.m. Episcopal Sunday Worship (Sunday school, childcare)