

Abortion march set

Sunday will witness what is expected to be the largest pro-choice march ever in Lane County, with a group winding its way from the EMU Courtyard to the Federal Building.

The march, carrying the theme "We Won't Go Back!" begins at 1 p.m., followed by a rally at the Federal Building.

Rally speakers will include Congressman Peter DeFazio; Senate candidates Harry Lonsdale and Congressman Les AuCoin; Secretary of State Phil Keisling; Secretary of State candidates Mary Wendy Roberts and Bob Kholos; Oregon Representatives Jim Edmunson and Sam Dominy; and District 41 candidates Cynthia Wooten and Bob Reuchlein.

The march coincides with the "March for Women's Lives" in Washington, D.C. The local organizers are a coalition of pro-choice groups including Lane County NOW, Oregon NARAL, Planned Parenthood of Lane County, Students for Choice, and the Women's Law Forum. The event is being staged to support pro-choice candidates and the Freedom of Choice Act.

Students for Choice member Debi Webster said the feeling of this march will be different from the 1989 march, "Mobilize for Women's Lives."

"There's more anger," she said. "There's more feeling and emotion behind this. People can't believe that they still have to fight this all over again."

In early April, the Supreme Court is expected to be hearing arguments in the controversial Pennsylvania case that may overturn Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 ruling that legalized abortion.

Webster said focus has turned away from trying to preserve Roe, with a new eye on getting the Freedom of Choice Act passed in the U.S. Congress.

Locals rally for American Indians

By Lisa Millegan
Emerald Associate Editor

For six springs between 1984 and 1989, Yoncalla resident Tresa Des Hotel made a regular pilgrimage to Big Mountain in northeastern Arizona.

Each time she made the trip, the situation at the sacred Navajo and Hopi land seemed to worsen.

Every year, under the auspices of the 1974 Navajo-Hopi Indian Land Settlement Act, the United States government forcibly removed more and more of her American Indian friends from their homes. Government officials impounded more livestock of Navajos and Hopi that resisted removal.

"People think the war between the white and the indigenous people is over and it's not," Des Hotel said.

This week Des Hotel, three other Lane County residents and supporters from around the world will return to Big Mountain to bring food, tools, other

supplies and moral support to the 200 Navajo and Hopi that live there.

Local supporters of Big Mountain residents will hold a send-off rally Saturday between 1 and 2 p.m. at Eugene's Wayne Morse Free Speech Area, Eighth Avenue and Oak Street.

The Eugene-based Big Mountain Native American Support group and the Seattle-based Support for Native Sovereignty group will be accepting money donations at that time.

The conflict between the United States government and American Indians over Big Mountain dates back to the 1920s when oil was first discovered on the land.

At that point, Congress authorized the first-time creation of tribal councils in that area so the councils could lease the land for oil exploration.

However, many people, including Beth Newberry of the Big Mountain Native American Support Group, contend that a large number of Navajo and

Hopi did not support the councils because they were government-created.

By the 1950s, coal and uranium was discovered on Big Mountain, but energy companies were having a hard time getting land leased.

Newberry said a subsequent law passed in Congress giving tribes the right to sue each other was a direct result of energy company influences.

In 1966, Peabody Coal Company secured a lease from Navajo and Hopi councils to mine Black Mesa, an area which includes Big Mountain. By 1970, some people living in that area were forcibly removed from their homes to allow the coal company to strip-mine the land.

The 1974 Navajo-Hopi Indian Land Settlement Act, passed because of what Congress called a land dispute between the two tribes, stipulated that most of the 10,000 people living in Black Mesa would have to move by 1986.

Although the deadline was later extended to 1992, the United States government has forbidden Big Mountain Indians from repairing their homes or to planting gardens, impounded up to 90 percent of their livestock and torn down some ceremonial structures, Newberry said.

The 1,500 remaining Indians in Black Mesa continue to resist leaving the area because their religion requires them to live there. Newberry said they believe worldwide catastrophe could occur if they leave.

"The people insist that they're not leaving," Newberry said. "It's a spiritual struggle." Newberry said resisters are now trying to pressure Congress to stop funding relocation.

Des Hotel said she feels a moral responsibility to help Big Mountain resisters as much as she can.

"This is a deliberate act of genocide by our government," she said. "To know about it and ignore it is to participate in that genocide."

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