

# Vision Becomes Reality, Coalition Commits to Community Wellbriety

By Natasha Kavanaugh

"Inside every human being is the innate knowledge of your own well-being – knowledge of how to be a well human being. You inherently know what to do – the only thing remaining is choice," says Don Coyhis, founder, director and motivational leader of White Bison.

White Bison is a proud facilitator of the Wellbriety Movement, which means to be sober and well. The Wellbriety Movement is the 21<sup>st</sup> century effort on the part of American Indians in recovery to create the opportunity for individuals, families, communities and nations to live sober and balanced lives – healthy lives that are balanced emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.

Last December, White Bison provided a Vision Training to the Tribal Community Coalition (also known as CEDARR). The training, hosted by the Healthy Family Healthy Child Project (HFHCP) of the Siletz Tribe, provided coalition members with the knowledge, skills and strategies to implement the Community Vision Day.

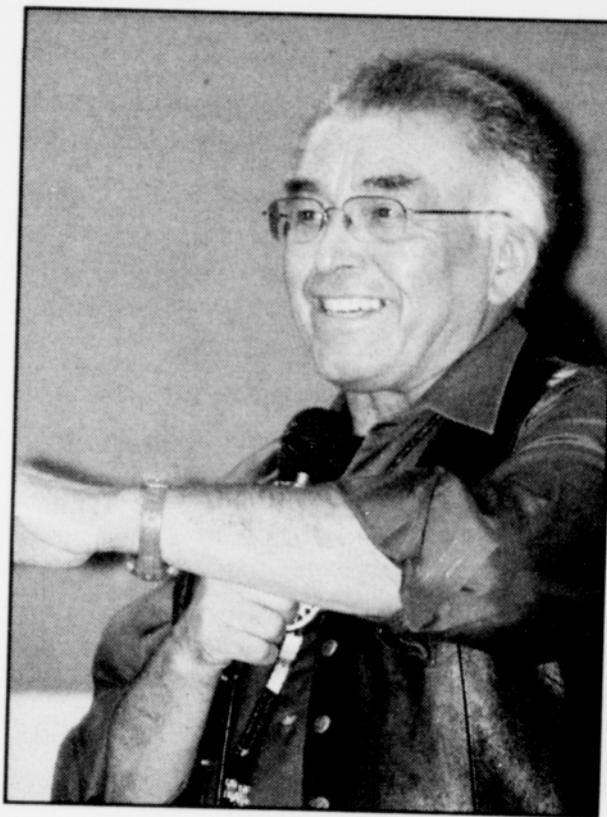
On July 13, Coyhis spent the day with about 20 eager participants. He provided additional training for the Community Vision Day and it was held at the Siletz Tribal Community Center.

Coyhis started the day with his own personal story highlighting intergenerational trauma.

"I continued to treat my children as I was by my parents until I began my own recovery," he said.

"Historical/generational trauma has many causes – boarding schools, assimilation, the removal of our beliefs and way of life, etc.," added Bekki Lundy, HFHCP manager. "We all have something to bring, think through and heal from."

Lynn Whitlow, an active volunteer, coalition member and leader of the Siletz Valley Partnership, brings a sincere desire



Don Coyhis

to see big recovery efforts and healing in the Siletz community.

"I love this place and these people," she said.

If the community is to change, the new change must occur at the root level. Values, culture, spirituality, teachings and ethics must replace anger, guilt, shame and fear.

This is developed as a result of the community visioning process. We must create a healing forest. The idea is that a forest, like a community, is only as healthy as its roots and environment.

The healing forest is an environment characterized by positive and shared values, nurturing relationships, interconnected lives and the respect of one person for another. In essence, it's a healthy community, an ecological system that nurtures, nourishes and replenishes itself.

Each of the trees in the forest represents the individuals in the community – children, men, women and elders. Each one also represents the various systems within the community – families,

clans, social practices and community activities.

If the root system of the forest is dysfunctional – that is, driven by anger, fear, guilt and shame – then the forest cannot be healthy. It's critical that we create an environment based upon positive values, such as love, forgiveness, hope and unity.

"If you don't have passion and determination, it won't work," Coyhis stressed. "The vision will come from the one with passion."

Lundy is one of those who has the passion and determination to implement a vision for our community.

"I do, this is my baby," she says.

Throughout the day, Coyhis shared an important message – "You move toward and become like that which you think about."

Lundy shares that same belief.

"In order to move forward, we must heal the old wounds that our parents and grandparents passed on to us and we carry on to our descendants. We must forgive to heal, but it is important to never forget our past, where we come from and where we are going," she said.

Coyhis returned to Siletz for the coalition training on July 21-23. During this much-anticipated training, he provided tools, built relationships, addressed intergenerational healing and helped create a vision and strategic plan for our community.

What will we see after all these trainings?

"I would like to think big and see a drastic change in Siletz within one year. If there is interest in starting groups, work groups, meetings, etc., HFHCP staff can assist with those," said Lundy.

"What happens after the gatherings on July 21-23 will depend on the needs/ actions that are brainstormed during those meetings and how many are willing to help with the efforts," said Whitlow.

The White Bison movement is a vision of the Elders, who direct and advise



Bekki Lundy

Photos by Natasha Kavanaugh

the White Bison staff. Our way is to seek advice and direction from our elders.

"This movement can assist us in getting back our culture and cultural ways. Our culture was taken from us in the worst way. We can work together and become the healthy people our ancestors were," said Lundy.

Some say this is going to be a lot of work. Coyhis asked the group if the vision is possible and the answer was yes!

"If many are going for the same goal, the load will be lighter and the prize at the end sweeter," said Lundy.

"There is hope!" added Whitlow, who brings dedication and envisions a better quality of life for our community, one that is "as close to alcohol- and drug-free as possible. Hopefully I will be one of many working toward this end. We do need input and participation from as much of the community as possible."

Coyhis will return to Siletz on Aug. 19 to present the vision book to the community.

We have the power within this community to make these changes – changes that will impact future generations.

## USDA Changes Schedule in Salem

By Margo Hudson

USDA food distribution serves clients in Siletz and Salem. Set appointments are needed for both warehouses. We can be reached at 800-922-1399, ext. 1393, or you can call direct at 541-444-8393 or 541-444-8279.

We are changing our schedule for the Salem warehouse to better accommodate clients. We will schedule appointments during distribution week (full third week of the month):

Monday	Noon – 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Thursday	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.



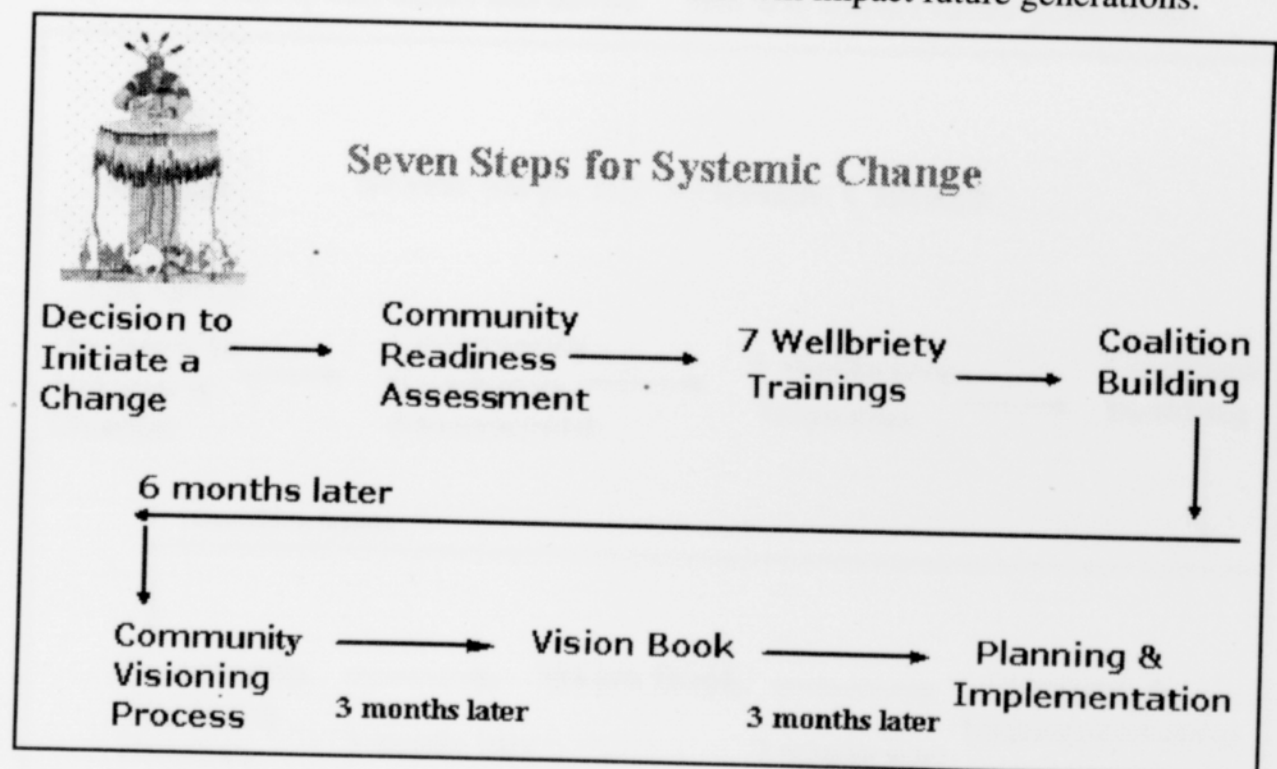
Call to make an appointment for Siletz (full first week of the month) dates and times.

Upcoming events at USDA include food demonstrations for new commodity users to learn to cook with commodities. You do not have to be a new commodity user to join the fun. If you are someone who has used commodities and would like to help, please contact us. This should be fun and anyone who would like to help with a dish will receive a small stipend. We can be reached at the numbers above.

If you have community service hours you need to get done, are in the self-sufficiency program or are just a concerned citizen of the community, we can use assistance with volunteer time. There is an application process, so please call if you are interested.

Upcoming distribution weeks:

Siletz – Aug. 4-6, and Sept. 8-11  
Salem – Aug. 17-20 and Sept. 21-24



**Elders' Council Meeting**

**Aug. 15 • 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.**  
**Chinook Winds Casino Resort**

For more information, please contact Angela Ramirez at  
800-922-1399, ext. 1255; 541-444-8255; or [angelar@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:angelar@ctsi.nsn.us)