

UN HIRES LOCAL WOMAN

When Hillary McBride started applying for positions with the United Nations, she wasn't expecting to be called back. Although extensively traveled and an accomplished professional, she was the public relations rep for a small electric utility, Emerald People's Utility District. To her surprise the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) flew her to Bonn, Germany during the first week of July for an interview. A little over a month later, on Aug. 22, the UNFCCC hired her as an associate communications officer.

The UNFCCC is the branch of the U.N. most involved in attempting to reduce carbon emissions, regulating the carbon credit market and providing economic incentives for countries to be more environmentally sustainable.

"I was pretty excited to get the job," McBride said. "I just really did it as more of an exploratory thing."

"I started applying thinking I wasn't going to get it," she added, "but I proved myself wrong."

"Basically what the organization does is help the countries involved in the Kyoto Protocol achieve their goals," said McBride, who will help organize communication campaigns designed to educate countries on how they can use U.N. resources to reach their carbon emission reduction targets.

McBride's new job requires her to relocate to Bonn, but she is no stranger to living abroad, having visited over 25 different countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas. She also studied and worked for three years in Japan. She moved to

Eugene seven years ago after finishing a volunteer stint in Southeast Asia.

"When you're living outside your comfort zone in another country you really see the magic of things," she said. "We're looking forward to it — it's going to be a challenge but we're definitely looking forward to it."

"I am really excited to be a part of the U.N.," she said. "I would like to stay in the organization for the rest of my career." — *Nils Holst*



Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

HEATHER NIC AN FHLEISDEIR

"I'm Irish, Welsh and I've got a bit of Scotch in me," says Heather Nic an Fhleisdeir, quoting her grandmother. "She infused me with her culture and sense of humor." Born Heather Petty in Excelsior, Minn., she spent childhood summers with grandma in South Dakota. She studied art in Minneapolis, then moved to L.A. to enroll in the Otis Institute of the Parsons School of Design. In 1985 she became ill, and doctors were unable to help. "They said I'd maybe live to be 30," she notes. Hearing a radio interview with an herbalist, she saw her within a week. "She gave

me a list, things I could eat: garlic, onions, brown rice, broccoli and turkey," she says. "My symptoms turned around." She left school to pay medical bills, got married, worked in health-food stores and relocated to Eugene in 1993. She found work as a chef at Friendly Street Market, studied at the Oregon School of Herbal Studies, and opened her shop, Mrs. Thompson's Herbs, Gifts and Folklore in 1994. "Herbalism is a more friendly, comfortable way of caring for your health," she says. "It's like something you get from your grandma or aunt." After a divorce, she kept the shop name but changed her own to Nic an Fhleisdeir, a Gaelic version of Fletcher, her grandma's name. Learn about classes, Celtic imports, and more at <http://celticherbs.com>



news Briefs

COUNTY BUDGET QUESTIONS

County administrator Liane Richardson authorized \$46,800 to pay for 12 videos and six "watercooler Skype chats" during the same time period that county commissioners were voting to not spend money on a video series because county agencies from the Sheriff's Office to advocates for the homeless are experiencing deep budget cuts. Longtime Budget Committee chair Scott Bartlett says his questions about the expenditure are going unanswered.

According to county documents, Rick Dancer Media Services proposed the videos on "various topics to be decided by Lane County and Rick Dancer." Dancer is a former journalist and former Republican candidate for Oregon secretary of state. In Dancer's proposal, he writes "the stories will set the record straight rather than relying on public relations or the traditional media to do this for you."

The first two videos have covered the Lane County budget and cuts to the Sheriff's Office.

On April 6, Judy Williams, a Lane County budget specialist, sent an email to Robert Lewis, the creator of the award-winning video series that went unfunded in the recent county budget, asking him to propose 12 four-to-five minute informative videos and six watercooler-type videos and gave him seven days to come up with a proposal. Lewis proposed 12 videos for \$14,640. In Dancer's proposal the videos cost \$40,800.

Richardson chose to go with Dancer's proposal and he signed the contract in early May, but it was not signed off on by the acting county administrator until May 19 — two days after the Budget Committee adjourned.

Questions about the proposal are going unanswered. Bartlett wants to know why the Budget Committee wasn't told about the Dancer video series proposal when it was being told there was no money in the budget for the previous video series. He also questions the "watercooler" proposal, as watercooler segments were one of Dancer's hallmarks as a KEZI television news anchor.

Bartlett says Lane County has been "stonewalling" his requests for more information.

EW asked Richardson how the more expensive proposal was chosen as well as how the process of soliciting proposals proceeded. Richardson replied via email that she "had a full schedule of meetings the last few days and do tomorrow as well" and could not respond to questions.

Dancer responded to questions about the videos with "I need to check with Lane County, since they are my client and I am contracted through them."

EW filed a public records request with Lane County in order to get more information about the Rick Dancer video series proposal. According to Judy Williams, the county would charge *EW* \$200 for each machine searched for emails about the proposal.

Under Oregon law, agencies can waive fees for public records requests that are in the public interest. Niel Laudati, Springfield's community relations manager, says in response to an April 2010 public records request from the *R-G*, "we provided full access to more than 5,000 emails within 48 hours." He says, "We always try to provide media records requests quickly and free of charge, since typically it is a benefit to the public." — *Camilla Mortensen*

WOLVES BACK IN GUNSIGHTS

Reintroduced wolves are on the brink of a blood bath. Activists are calling for a boycott to save the wolves from outright extermination in some key Western states.

The federal government's wildlife management strategy will allow wolves to be slain in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Open season began on Aug. 30 in Idaho, where the up to 78 percent of the wolf population is up for slaughter. And the other states will follow in this decimation in the next two weeks.

Brooks Fahy, executive director of the Eugene-based national nonprofit Predator Defense, says it's important for Oregonians to pay attention to what's going on because Oregon will eventually implement a hunting decree on wolves as the population grows too.

Predator Defense started the boycott with the international animal advocacy group Friends of Animals and is working to get other nonprofits involved and to expand its grassroots movement. The organizations are boycotting these "killing" states and are urging people to stop buying any products from these states and cancel any plans to visit them. They are calling for people to write letters to state representatives, congressmen, editors and even travel agents explaining the boycott.

But Fahy says the American public is so inundated with news of other things that it has no idea about the impending wolf slaughter. "This (boycott) is a last ditch effort to stop or slow this thing down — or to get the American public to wake up."

Wolves, which lost protection under the Endangered Species act in April thanks to a congressional rider, are now subject to the merciless killings of ranchers and hunters.

"The body count isn't going to be just the number of animals killed," Fahy says. "There is going to be an unforeseen death toll. And in states like Idaho, this could stand to wipe out the entire wolf population." He says many of the wolf pups, which are about 4 to 5 months old right now, will not be able to survive alone.

Fahy doesn't want the wolves hunted at all. Predators are beneficial, he says. A recent study out of OSU shows that wolves could play an important role in helping to save other threatened species like the Canada lynx. When apex predators such as