

Corps determines Kennewick Man is American Indian

Will be returned to tribes for burial

By **NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS**
Associated Press

The ancient skeleton known as Kennewick Man is related to modern American Indian tribes, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Wednesday, opening the process for returning to tribes for burial one of the oldest and most complete set of bones ever found in North America.

The Northwestern Division of the corps said its decision was based on a review of new information, particularly recently published DNA and skeletal analyses.

The corps, which has custody of the remains, said the skeleton is now covered by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

The 8,500-year-old remains

were discovered in 1996 in southeastern Washington near the Columbia River in Kennewick, triggering a lengthy legal fight between tribes and scientists over whether the bones should be buried immediately or studied.

The bones will remain at the Burke Museum in Seattle until the corps determines which tribe or tribes will receive them.

The next step is for interested tribes to submit a claim to acquire the skeleton for burial, said Michael Coffey, a spokeswoman for the corps in Portland.

Determining which tribe receives the bones is likely to be a lengthy process, Coffey said. In the past, the Colville, Yakama, Umatilla, Nez Perce and Wanapum Indians have claimed a connection to them.

"We still have a lot of work to do," Coffey said.

However, Chuck Sams, spokesman for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, said the tribes plan to cooperate to hasten the burial.

"We will send in our joint request for disposition for the reburial of the Ancient One," Sams said.

Last year, new genetic evidence determined the remains were closer to modern American Indians than any other population in the world. Following that, the corps began to re-examine Kennewick Man's status.

"I am confident that our review and analysis of new skeletal, statistical and genetic evidence have convincingly led to a Native American Determination," said Brig. Gen. Scott A. Spellmon, commander of the corps' Northwestern Division.

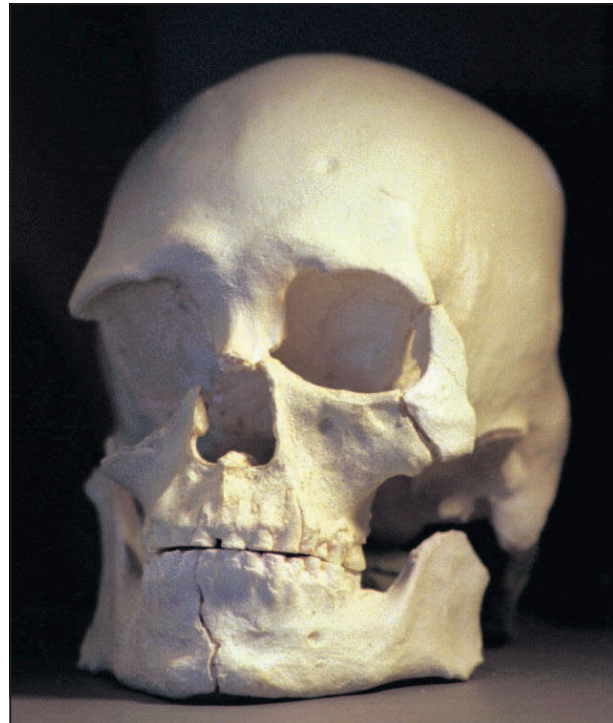
Sams said the corps' finding was correct.

"After 20 years, it acknowledges what we already knew and have been saying since the beginning," Sams said.

Most scientists trace modern native groups to Siberian ancestors who arrived by way of a land bridge that used to extend to Alaska. But features of Kennewick Man's skull led some scientists to suggest the man's ancestors came from elsewhere.

Researchers turned to DNA analysis to try to clarify the skeleton's ancestry. They recovered DNA from a fragment of hand bone, mapped its genetic code and compared that to modern DNA from native peoples of the Americas and populations around the world.

The results showed a greater similarity to DNA from the Americas than from anywhere else.



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson, File
This 1997 file photo of a plastic casting of the skull from the bones known as Kennewick Man is shown in Richland, Wash.

BRIEFLY

Benedict, Woodson finalists for Cannon Beach job

CANNON BEACH — Pendleton Fire Department's assistant chief and former chief are two of three finalists for the top job in the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District.

Matt Benedict is Pendleton's fire marshal and the chief of the all-volunteer Helix Rural Fire Protection District. And Gary Woodson is the former Pendleton chief now working for the Oregon Department of Corrections. Both men were selected as finalists, along with John West of the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, for the job of chief in Cannon Beach.

Jim Stearns, interim chief for the district and the former head of the Hermiston department, is leading the search.

"I think the board has three very strong candidates to choose from," he said Monday. Stearns is hoping for an early May decision so the new chief can start by June.

Salary for the chief's job is \$67,500 to \$75,000, depending on qualifications.

The board is looking to replace former Fire Chief Mike Balzer, who was fired in October. Balzer has since filed a lawsuit against the fire district claiming wrongful dismissal.

Three fire board members turned back a recall election in early April. The recall effort stemmed from frustration among some residents over the board's handling of Balzer's firing.

Hospital auxiliary hosts book sale

HERMISTON — The Good Shepherd Hospital Auxiliary is hosting a "Books Are Fun" sale.

The sale, which is May 5-6 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the hospital's pharmacy lobby, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston, offers a large variety of unique gifts and books.

All proceeds from the sale help fund medical equipment and scholarships. The auxiliary awards up to five \$1,500 scholarships per year to qualified applicants, and local seniors can submit applications through Friday.

Chamber seeks ambassadors

BOARDMAN — People in the community interested in helping promote Boardman are invited to attend an upcoming meeting.

From groundbreaking or ribbon cutting ceremonies for new businesses to welcoming dignitaries, the Boardman Chamber Ambassadors represent the city of Boardman and the chamber.

The next meeting is

Friday at 2 p.m. at the chamber office, which is located at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman.

For more information, call 541-481-3014.

Free event introduces people to Tai Chi

People in hundreds of cities across 80 nations will participate in a public demonstration of Tai Chi and Qigong.

The goal of the free public event is to introduce people to the traditional Chinese health practices and to instructors in their area. Research studies suggest that Tai Chi can have significant positive impacts on health and well-being. The deep breathing and gentle, flowing movements can help reduce stress, improve flexibility and decrease the risk and fear of falling, especially in older adults.

A pair of events are planned in Umatilla County. The public is invited to join local Tai Chi and Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance instructors and students in learning about the healing benefits of Tai Chi. No experience is required. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and shoes with flexible soles. The local gatherings are:

- Saturday from 9-10:30 a.m. on the grassy area next to the movie theater at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, located off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

- Saturday from 9:30-11 a.m. in Conference Center 1 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. (It may move outside, weather permitting).

For more information about the Pendleton event, call Tania Wildbill, Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center life coach, at 541-215-1938. For the Hermiston event, call Helena Wolfe, CAPECO Area Agency on Agency health promotion coordinator, at 541-561-5443.

15-year-old rape defendant out on bail

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

An Irrigon teen facing charges of rape and more is out of jail.

The 15-year-old boy was in the Northern Oregon Regional Corrections Facility, The Dalles, on charges of first-degree rape, two counts of first-degree unlawful sexual penetration

and three counts of first-degree sexual abuse. The state accused him of raping an 18-year old woman at his Irrigon home the night of April 11.

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson charged the teen as an adult, thus the court record is public.

The teen pleaded not guilty to the charges, court

records show, and Circuit Judge Dan Hill during an April 15 hearing reduced his bail from \$50,000 to \$25,000 over the objections of the district attorney's office.

Nelson said while the teen is not behind bars, he is not totally free. He cannot go to certain areas, for example, including the local high school. The court, though, has allowed the boy to use

educational electronics to continue his schooling at home. Nelson also said he must stay under the supervision of his mother and cannot have any contact with the alleged rape victim.

The family of the teen hired a private attorney, Amy Lammers, who works for a law firm in The Dalles. The teen's next court appearance is Thursday, May 5.

IRRIGON

PENDLETON

Budget committee deals with general fund decline

Proposed budget has \$15.8M in discretionary spending

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

The city of Pendleton introduced some new wrinkles in its proposed 2016-2017 budget.

The Pendleton Budget Committee, which includes the members of the city council, met Tuesday morning to discuss the budget for the first time.

The proposed budget is \$58.6 million. The general fund, the city's only discretionary budget, is set for \$15.8 million. While the total budget is higher than it was the year before, the general fund is about \$100,000 lower.

Below are some of the highlights.

- **Fire:** One of the budget's most significant effects on public safety is how the fire department classifies its personnel.

Due partly to new state legislation that will increase Medicaid reimbursements, the fire department expects to see more revenue in the next fiscal year.

In his letter to the budget committee, City Manager Robb Corbett said the new revenue should be used to promote the department's lone single-role paramedic to a firefighter-paramedic.

"This will enable the

organization to better protect the community by making more certified firefighters available during each shift, while maintaining the staffing to respond to (emergency medical services) calls," he wrote.

Besides personnel, the fire department is requesting money for the jaws of life, an ambulance, a heart monitor and other medical equipment.

- **Police:** Corbett also proposed adding another lieutenant position to the police department, which he said would give the police staff more experience with administrative duties.

Police Chief Stuart Roberts told the *East Oregonian* the upcoming spate of promotions will actually decrease salary costs because the newly ranked employees will earn less money than their predecessors — such as Bill Caldera, who recently left for Pilot Rock — as they work their way up the pay scale.

The police interagency special revolving fund — which covers Pendleton's contributions to the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team — was decreased by \$5,000 as the department eliminated the funding for the "marijuana eradication" line item.

Roberts said the move had nothing to do with marijuana legalization but rather a change in the way the state Department of Justice

allocates its money for drug enforcement.

Roberts said the funding change makes it easier for the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office to manage that part of the budget, which is used for flights over forested and agricultural areas in search of illegal marijuana grows.

Additionally, the police department is requesting three vehicle replacements and mobile computer replacements.

- **Airport:** Despite a lack of returns, Corbett was still optimistic about the economic potential of the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport.

"While results on the ground have been slow, we continue to see high profile opportunities that whet the appetite for things to come," he wrote.

As a sign of continued support, Corbett proposed reassigning the associate engineer position to serve as the airfield and test range operations manager.

- **Convention center:** The city wants to spearhead an "enhanced marketing effort" of the Pendleton Convention Center overseen by the economic development department.

To do that, Corbett wrote that the city is trying to strengthen its ties with the Round-Up Association and the Happy Canyon Co. to expand the number of events hosted at the center.

The convention center's

budget is rising by more than \$30,000, much of that due to an increase in marketing and contract service costs. The budget also calls for \$190,000 to replace the roof.

- **Infrastructure:** As the Eighth Street Bridge project, as well as paving projects funded by the street utility fee get underway, the city's street capital outlay budget will rise from \$1 million to \$1.75 million.

Revenue from the water and sewer rate increases are also starting to roll in, and the budgets reflect that.

Water fund spending will rise from \$6.8 million to \$7.5 million while the sewer is going up from \$4.9 million to \$8.2 million.

The city will also budget \$9,250 to patch the Pendleton River Parkway.

Tucked away in the city manager's budget is a half-time position for a public information officer, a job that has been debated by the city council in recent months.

The budget committee will meet again Thursday, 6 p.m.-7 p.m., Tuesday, 7 a.m.-8 a.m., May 5, 6 p.m.-7 p.m. and May 6, 7 a.m.-8 a.m. The committee could schedule more meetings if necessary.

The budget will be proposed for adoption in front of the council on June 7.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.



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