

Tribes mark 20th anniversary of Kennewick Man's discovery

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Members of five tribes gathered Thursday along the Columbia River to mark the 20th anniversary of the discovery of the Kennewick Man.

The moment was bittersweet for the members of the Umatilla, Nez Perce, Yakama, Colville and Wanapum tribes, who were there to honor their ancestor but also to lament that they have not yet been able to lay him to rest.

"As we recognize the Ancient One's discovery, we also mourn for him," said Armand Minthorn, board of trustees member for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, in a statement. "He is our ancestor, and yet he lies in a museum rather than at rest with his people. It's been 20 years, and he is still being denied

"We need Congress to pass this legislation because 20 years of delay have demonstrated that there is no guarantee that the law will prevail."

— **Aaron Ashley**, CTUIR board of trustees and cultural committee member

his right to a proper burial."

The ancient skeleton was discovered near Kennewick in 1996, triggering a lengthy legal battle between scientists wanting to study the 8,500-year-old remains and the tribes that wanted to immediately bury them.

In 2015 Eske Willerslev, Director of the Centre of Excellence in GeoGenetics at the University of Copenhagen, released findings from a team of scientists who used new DNA techniques to determine that the Kennewick Man's DNA most closely matches the Native people of the Columbia Plateau.

In April, the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers, which controls the land where the skeleton was found, also announced that a different team of scientists had confirmed the man was, indeed, an ancestor of modern American Indian tribes. The determination gives the tribes claim on the remains of the man they call the Ancient One, under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

As the five tribes work together to gain physical custody of the Kennewick Man, Congress is also considering a more situation-specific bill known as the Bring the Ancient One Home Act.

"We need Congress to pass

this legislation because 20 years of delay have demonstrated that there is no guarantee that the law will prevail," Aaron Ashley, board of trustees and cultural committee member for the Umatilla Tribes, said in a statement. "The Ancient One's Native American identity has been proven beyond a doubt. It is time to expedite the return process so he can properly be laid to rest."

Currently the Ancient One's remains are located at the Burke Museum in Seattle, where they are not on public display but have been accessed by scientists for research purposes. The skeleton is one of the oldest and most complete found in North America, offering clues to the origins of the continent's early inhabitants.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

BRIEFLY

Clues lead to golden medallion

HERMISTON — The annual National Night Out Treasure Hunt continues in Hermiston.

The rules and first clue were printed in Wednesday's *East Oregonian* and another clue in Thursday's edition. A bonus clue appeared on the front page of Wednesday's *Hermiston Herald*. The person who finds the golden medallion will win an ice cream social block party Tuesday, Aug. 2 as part of the National Night Out activities.

When you find the medallion, you must immediately turn it in to the Hermiston Police Department. If it's after 6 p.m., call 541-966-3651 or 541-567-5519 and ask dispatch to notify Erica Sandoval, Hermiston Police Department crime prevention/youth services officer.

Clue No. 3

Roger Waters says you don't need it. But in 2010, golden shovels moved some dirt. All's fair in finding the prize. Don't go too far, it's just a little drive. Oh hec(k), you should be close.

Health district expansion to include ambulance area

PENDLETON — The East Umatilla County Health District is seeking to expand its boundaries.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday in Pendleton held the first of two public hearings on the matter.

Health district administrator Mark Moore told the commissioners the taxing area covers the Athena-Weston School District, but the local ambulance service handles calls all the way west past Holdman on Highway 37. The district, though, receives no taxes from that area.

Moore explained the district wants to redraw its lines to include that area, as well as east to the county border that would exclude a portion of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. It also would not infringe on the Milton-Freewater district.

Tribal Fire Chief Rob Burnside told the commissioners the tribes agreed with the health district on the need to change the boundaries, but ambulance services would not change due to the mutual aid agreement between the tribes and the health district.

Gina Miller with the Milton-Freewater Ambulance District Board also spoke in favor of the change. She said it would be beneficial if the taxing district and the ambulance service district covered the same area.

The board set Aug. 16 for the second public hearing to make the deadline for putting this on the November ballot.

HERMISTON

Youth officer position deemed a success after one year

By **ALEXA LOUGEE**
East Oregonian

In 2015 the Hermiston Police Department created a new youth services officer position in an effort to create better community connections.

"It's an area the police have been extremely remiss on," said police Chief Jason Edmiston at a public safety committee meeting Monday.

He said the closest thing he could think of was the previously used D.A.R.E. program, where police officers went into fifth and sixth grade classrooms to address drug use.

The youth officer position works much like a school resource officer, only the focus is on grades K-5.

It is a new title for officer Erica Sandoval.

"I was not fully 100 percent sold on the change in my position," Sandoval said at the meeting, but that has changed over the year. "I love it and getting to meet the kids."

The youth services position is the result of a brainstorm between Hermiston Superintendent Fred Maiocco, Edmiston and Captain Travis Eynon. In conjunction with



In this December 2015 file photo, Erica Sandoval of the Hermiston Police Department visits with students at Highland Hills Elementary School as part of her duties as youth services officer.

the Hermiston School District, Sandoval is working to address truancy issues at a young age. Efforts include meeting with families and working to identify and assist with barriers that lead to absence from school.

Sandoval also spends time at the elementary schools during the

lunch period, gives presentations, participates in home visits and is a presence after school. She described the last year as "eye-opening" and said she is looking forward to the new school year.

The school district pays 50 percent of the Youth Services Officer wage and benefit package.

Sandoval has been involved in juvenile crime prevention since 2008 and the city has seen a steady decline in juvenile crime since that time, according to Edmiston. "It made perfect sense to engage Erica with younger kids that we normally have limited contact with," Edmiston explained. Much of the contact the department has with elementary-aged kids comes as a result of calls for service that are not always positive, like those related to domestic incidents.

"I firmly believe the role Erica is fulfilling will be one of the most significant changes our department has made in the last decade," Edmiston said.

Also at Monday's meeting, the committee looked at crime rates which, for the most part, were on a decline or remained flat. One area that jumped out to Chief Edmiston and the committee was aggravated assaults, which have seen a spike this year. Edmiston did not have an explanation for the increase, but said his department would be looking at ways to address the issue.

He noted the department has really been focused on burglaries and has seen a steady decline since 2012.

Condon teen dies in crash on Hwy 206

East Oregonian

A 17-year-old Condon girl died after a two-vehicle wreck Wednesday afternoon on Highway 206.

The teen was driving eastbound when she collided with a truck towing a grain trailer east of Condon. She was extricated from her vehicle and flown by air ambulance to Mid-Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles, where she died from her injuries. Her name has not been released.

The truck driver, 35-year-old Benjamin McElligott of Ione, was not injured.

An investigation into the crash is underway. Oregon State Police were assisted on scene by authorities from Gilliam and Sherman counties, as well as the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Anyone needing counseling to cope with this death is asked to contact Community Counseling Services at 541-384-2666.



A 17-year-old from Condon died Wednesday after a two-vehicle crash on Highway 206. Photo contributed by Oregon State Police

HERMISTON

New Holiday Inn Express expected to open Oct. 31

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Hermiston's newest hotel is expected to open on Oct. 31.

The four-story Holiday Inn Express, currently under construction on Highway 395, was originally expected to open this month. But InnSight Hotel Management Group President Richard Boyles said there was about a three-month delay on starting construction after the bank that the company had used in the past was acquired by another financial institution.

"They were unable to get that loan closed before the merger," he said.

Starting over on the financing process cost the company time, but Boyles said since then construction has been going well. The general contractor is Integrity Structures, with subcontractors hired from various places, including some local

businesses. The 90-room hotel will be Holiday Inn's new Formula Blue model, which includes amenities such as a spacious lobby, indoor pool, fitness area, meeting rooms, continental breakfast, guest laundry and innovations like curved headboards designed to reduce noise between rooms.

The hotel is expected to employ an average of 25 people, with some seasonal fluctuation. Boyles said it's a little early for InnSight to

start advertising for most hotel positions, but they have hired Steven Arrasmith as general manager.

Boyles said one of InnSight's pillars of corporate culture is community involvement, including volunteer work with education programs like SMART (Start Making a Reader Today).

"I would expect we will be very involved in the community of Hermiston," he said.

Boyles said the company

looks forward to helping revitalize the downtown area.

"I think the building itself is a lovely addition to the city of Hermiston," Boyles said.

The new hotel is in Hermiston's Urban Renewal District, meaning extra tax revenue generated through the boost in property value

will support the district's downtown revitalization projects, including a planned festival street in front of city hall. The hotel received a \$36,400 facade grant from the Urban Renewal Agency.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

Music on the Lawn FRIDAY, JULY 29
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