



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**Dion Fry, with All Wall out of Post Falls, Idaho, cuts framing for a wall while working on the new Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center on Friday in Mission.**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**Jason Terry, senior project manager with Kirby Nagelhout Construction Co., talks about the design features in a dental exam room with a tour group.**

YELLOWHAWK: Serves more than 3,200 tribal members

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way through net-zero certification. Nelmes said the tribes reached out to Energy Trust even before they hired an architect to build Yellowhawk. From there, the team played around with different models and climate conditions to come up with a plan that fit their energy saving goals. “It’s interesting where energy efficiency takes you,” Nelmes said. The tribes already have a long working relationship with Energy Trust on a net-zero initiative at Tamást-slikt Cultural Institute, which started in 2003 and has expanded to include multiple solar carports in the parking lot and a small wind turbine across from the front entrance. Energy Trust is there to provide assistance, and Nelmes said the CTUIR has participated at just about every level. “They are looking for ways to set the bar for future development,” she said. “We’ll be there to support them, that’s for sure.” Carrie Sampson, assistant administrator for Yellowhawk, said the new building will be roughly double the size of their current facility. The extra space



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center assistant administrator Carrie Sampson touches the rubber-like weather coating on a wall at the new Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center on Friday in Mission.**

will allow the clinic to add services such as audiology, optometry, physical therapy and alternative therapies like acupuncture all under one roof. The current clinic offers a wide range of health services, from dentistry to sports physicals, eye care, lab tests and counseling. Yellowhawk serves more than 3,200 tribal members, Sampson said, and they are striving to build the best tribal health clinic in the country. Energy efficiency is

part of that equation, which she said relates directly to tribal values. “We highly value protecting our natural resources and protecting the Earth,” Sampson said. “That’s really where our values lie.” Construction on Yellowhawk broke ground in August 2016, and the \$26.3 million building is slated to open sometime in November. Jeremy Wolf, vice chairman of the CTUIR

Board of Trustees, attended Friday’s tour and said Path to Net-Zero is something the tribes are interested in incorporating into future developments. “We are constantly striving to protect, preserve and enhance our environment and our people,” Wolf said. “This sort of project will assist us in that.” Contact George Plaven at [gplaven@eastoregonian.com](mailto:gplaven@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0825.

SCHOOL: District raised \$33.4 million for the project

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said. “You wonder if it’s really true.” The donation came with a catch — the district needed to pass a bond in order to have access to the foundation’s money. Although the community hadn’t passed a bond since 1982 and had seen multiple measures fail on the ballot since then, Milton-Freewater passed the bond with 78 percent support. “It’s rare that you can get it above 50 percent,” he said. Combining the money from the \$12.5 million bond, the Valley Foundation funding, a state grant and a lucrative bond sale, the district was able to raise \$33.4 million. That money not only goes to Gib Olinger’s K-3 facility, but also the demolition of Grove Elementary School, a new sports complex in its place and capital improvements at McLoughlin High School, Central Middle School and Ferndale Elementary School. InterMountain Education Service District superintendent Mark Mulvihill said aging infrastructure with a growing backlog of maintenance is the norm for many school districts, but what Milton-Freewater did by voting for the bond would have the biggest impact on its kids. “The experience they’re going to have is going to be unbelievable,” he said. Clark gestured to the abandoned pea cannery in the background, which would be demolished to make way for the primary school. The old building was once the top producing pea cannery in the world,



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**InterMountain Education Service District superintendent Mark Mulvihill speaks during a ground breaking ceremony for the new Gib Olinger Elementary School on Friday in Milton-Freewater.**

Clark said, but he was lowering expectations for Ami Muilenburg, who will be Gib Olinger’s first principal when it opens in 2018. “Not to put pressure on Ami, but I’ll settle for the best school in the United States,” he quipped. Clark said the Gib Olinger’s construction was a part of a larger surge of forward momentum that included growing enrollment in the school district, fuller storefronts in town and help wanted signs in business windows. Among the last group of people to ceremonially till the earth before children descended on the shovels to play in the dirt, Barbara Olinger shared some

memories of her father Gib, who passed away in 1999. A member of the 1939 University of Oregon “Tall Firs” championship team, Barbara said her father was a prominent Milton-Freewater business owner, school board member and volunteer who offered a helping hand to anyone but avoided taking credit for his good deeds. As far as naming a school after him? Olinger says: “My father is looking down from heaven, saying, ‘They didn’t have to do that.’” Contact Antonio Sierra at [asierra@eastoregonian.com](mailto:asierra@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0836.

FRITSCH: Has been an assistant superintendent for the past six years

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which allowed the board to select a slate of finalists who were all central-office administrators. When it came time to choose the top candidate, McBee said it was a tough decision — the board deliberated for more than an hour behind closed doors Wednesday night after interviewing the finalists and met again for another 40 minutes Thursday morning before coming to a consensus. During the board’s internal discussions, McBee said they zeroed in on Fritsch and Wagner, a charismatic administrator from Central Minnesota who helped coordinate an aggressive advertising campaign to reverse a declining enrollment trend in Kimball, but Fritsch’s experience in human resources, finance, facilities and more put him over the top. “He’s kind of done it all and he brings it all to the table,” she said. Fritsch was the only finalist from a school district larger than Pendleton’s — the 6,500-student Longview Public Schools system in southwestern Washington. “Every child who steps through our doors deserves no less than the opportunity and our best effort to learn the knowledge, skills, and develop the abilities that will allow them to follow their dreams and career pursuits,” Fritsch said in a statement. “The challenges we face as a public school system are many and growing,” he continued. “However, the good news is that caring and highly skilled staff receiving support and inspiration can and do make a difference in the lives of the children we serve.” In an interview, Fritsch said Pendleton was a smaller

district with strong community support, which was the situation he was looking for during his job search. Fritsch is a veteran of the superintendent search circuit, having been named a finalist in several school districts in Washington over the past few years, according to newspaper reports. But Fritsch said he believes everything happens for a reason and he’s happy with his selection. “We felt like we’ve landed in a special place,” he said. Fritsch was a social studies teacher for 15 years, serving stints as a football and wrestling coach before he became a Longview administrator. Six years as a high school principal and three years as the executive director of leadership and learning preceded his hiring as assistant superintendent, a job he has had since 2011. Fritsch holds a bachelor’s degree in social sciences and legal study from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, and a master’s degree in school administration from Portland State University. Fritsch’s hiring will be made official at a school board meeting Monday when the board will formally offer him the job, which he is expected to accept. McBee said the district’s tentative offer is a \$135,500 yearly salary, not including a standard benefit’s package. In comparison, Kovach earned \$127,500 while his predecessor, Jon Peterson, received \$128,215 in his last year before retirement. Two fringe benefits Fritsch won’t take advantage of are reimbursements for cell phone use and travel costs. He said forgoing those benefits has been a personal philosophy throughout his career, one he plans to bring to Pendleton.

U.S. military member killed in Somalia, first death since 1993

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—A U.S. service member has been killed in Somalia during an operation against the extremist group al-Shabab — the first U.S. combat death there in more than two decades — as the United States steps up its fight against the al-Qaida-linked organization in a country that remains largely chaos. “We do not believe there has been a case where a U.S. service member has been killed in combat action in Somalia since the incident there in 1993,” U.S. Africa Command spokesman Patrick Barnes said Friday. The United States pulled out of Somalia after that incident in which two helicopters were shot down in the capital, Mogadishu, and bodies of Americans were dragged through the streets. In a statement, the U.S. Africa Command said the service member was killed Thursday during the operation about 40 miles west of Mogadishu. Two other service members were wounded, the Pentagon said. A Somali intelligence official said U.S. forces killed at least six people during the raid on a building housing al-Shabab’s Andalus radio station at a farm near Dare Salaam village. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media, said the dead included al-Shabab journalists.

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