



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Fermore Craig Sr. carries the eagle staff in the honor guard during the flag day ceremony for the CTUIR.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read addresses the crowd gathered in Mission.

MEDAL: More than 650 veterans have come from the CTUIR

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tribal chief Jim White, and learned to speak the Umatilla language fluently.

"I think he just really enjoyed this area," Close said.

The Bronze Star, which had been kept in a safe deposit box, was discovered and turned over to the Oregon Department of State Lands as unclaimed property. As a member of the State Land Board, Read — who was elected state treasurer last November — learned about the medal following a meeting with department staff.

Along with the decoration itself, Read discovered the same yellowed newspaper article from Michigan describing Nanegos' feats and bravery in service. After some research, Read was able to trace the family back to the Umatilla reservation and reached out to the tribes.

The medal was thus returned Friday as part of the CTUIR Flag Day celebration outside the Nixyaawii Governance Center, where Thomas Morning Owl presided as the master of ceremonies.

"To have it brought home in an honorable way is truly a blessing that we have all been able to witness today," Morning Owl said.

Flag Day is officially observed May 20 by the tribes. The CTUIR flag was adopted by the Board of Trustees on May 20, 2002, and features three horses that represent each of the three confederated tribes: the Umatilla, Cayuse and Walla Walla. The color red symbolizes sacrifice, bloodshed and courage.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Tribal drummers perform a traditional song as an honor guard brings in the flags during the flag day ceremony Friday in Mission.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
CTUIR general council chairman Alan Crawford addresses the crowd during the flag day ceremony Friday in Mission.

Vincent Sheoships, CTUIR Youth Council chairman, said the flag is a symbol of the tribes' strength and resilience.

"We have endured to remain on our homelands," Sheoships said. "This is our

home and our flag represents just that."

More than 650 enrolled CTUIR members have served in the U.S. military. Alanna Nanegos said the family was happy to honor Willard's memory on Flag

Day, along with all others who served their country.

"As people are lifting up his name today ... we can rejoice and share that with all the veterans who have come home," she said.

Alanna added that the family will continue to track down the rest of Willard's lost medals. Past efforts have come up empty.

"We don't know where they were, how he received them or where he stored them," she said. "Maybe this will reinvigorate our search."

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ECHO: Madisons will not buy the 132-acres until they have the support of the city

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would drill, could be used to irrigate the RV park and surrounding green space.

"We would do the legwork, we would drill the well, create the new sewer structure, and then we would hand it over to the city. They would all become city assets," he said.

The city would have to take on the responsibility of maintenance, he said, but would also double its sewer and water revenue once the project was finished.

The Madisons do not currently own the 132-acre dryland wheat parcel in question, but it is for sale. They said if Echo supports their vision, they are willing to buy the whole tract, develop the RV park and start recruiting a hotel and other companies to develop the rest. But the Madisons won't buy the property until they're sure the project, including sewer and water improvements, will pencil out financially and have the support of the city.

"If the public of Echo is adamantly opposed to it, we have better things to do," Madison said. "We don't want to fight you all the way."

He said the project would need annexed into the city. He has also been discussing with the Oregon Department of Transportation the need to turn Thielsen Road into a three-lane highway with a frontage road to handle the increased traffic.

Members of the public who came to hear Madison's presentation had concerns and questions about the development's impact on Echo's quality of life and on property values.

Craig Cooley, a resident of Echo Heights near the proposed development, said he and his wife had concerns about noise from the amphitheater and about

the new well's impact on their own water supply. Others echoed that concern and added their own worries about parking, traffic and that a light industrial project could bring nuisances along with it.

"How much collateral damage will there be?" Cooley asked.

Madison said there could be noise ordinances put into place to make sure sound from the amphitheater wasn't overly burdensome on neighbors. He said the well, at 1,500 feet, would be deep enough that it "theoretically wouldn't be touching your aquifer."

City Manager Diane Berry said the city would have control over issuing conditional use permits for any light industrial projects.

After residents questioned the need for an RV park and hotel in the small city, Laura Madison said the park would not include long-term leases and permanent residents, but would instead provide 80 to 100 pull-through spaces for people traveling with RVs or multiple vehicles.

"There really is a need for large RV spaces," she said.

During the meeting's public comments section Jason Sperr, a city councilor for neighboring Stanfield, said the project sounded like it could be a "great opportunity" for the area.

He said Stanfield city leaders had been discussing Echo's sewer issue and the possible condemnation of the Yunker property, and said Stanfield has the capacity to take in Echo's recycled water. He said the city would be willing to start conversations with Echo about the feasibility, and would likely be able to offer a reduced rate.

"It's something we've considered, and we do feel like we could help out," he said.

TRANSPORTATION: Plan would raise title and registrations fees by \$40

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Highland Avenue to Geer Road, creating an alternative to Highway 395 and placing traffic signals at First Place's intersection with Highland and with Orchard avenues. The Orchard intersection in particular creates a major bottleneck blocking the fire station and police department when school is getting out in the afternoons.

"That's going to take a lot of design work and creativity," Morgan said.

He said it was a "really demoralizing defeat" for the city to be told in the past that there weren't enough Oregon Department of Transportation funds available for Region 5 (covering most of Eastern Oregon) to fund even a portion of the project.

As legislators craft the transportation package they hope to pass before the end of the 2017 session, they are working off of a \$5 billion wish list compiled from cities, counties and state agencies. The list includes pavement and bridge repairs, widening existing roads and bridges, new streets and seismic upgrades.

The three biggest traffic congestion-relief projects the Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization is looking to fund are \$450 million for an overhaul for I-5 near the Rose Quarter, \$450 million to widen I-205 in Clackamas County and \$98 million for Highway 217.

Portlanders will see the biggest effects from those projects, but the city will be expected to front half the cost, and residents will also contribute more toward the transportation package via a series of tolls the state plans to implement around the

metro area as one of package's revenue streams.

And, as Rep. Greg Smith (R-Heppner) pointed out in a committee work session Wednesday, getting freight trucks through the Portland area faster does benefit Eastern Oregon too.

"If we can clear out that bottleneck at I-5, you help the Port of Morrow and Port of Umatilla boom," he told the group.

In addition to Portland-area tolls and raising the gas tax, the plan being compiled by the committee would also add a 0.1 percent payroll tax, increase title fees by \$40, increase registration fees by \$40, add a 5 percent tax on new bicycle sales and a 1 percent tax on new vehicle sales.

A report put out by the Association of Oregon Counties estimates the new transportation package would result in Umatilla County

receiving about \$19.4 million in new revenue over the course of five years, assuming the state continues to send 20 percent of the gas tax revenue to counties. According to what the county provided to AOC, about \$12 million of that would likely go toward pavement preservation.

The rest would go toward repairing the county's 20 bridges deemed "structurally deficient," maintaining the county's 904 miles of gravel roads and repairing storm damage.

The Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization plans to examine a draft of the transportation package put together by legislative council during a May 31 work session, with the legislature voting on the bill sometime in June.

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

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