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EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2017

141st Year, No. 226

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CTUIR passes on pot question

Board declines to vote on whether to send legalized marijuana to voters

A call to the Board of Trustees was directed to board Secretary Kat Brigham, who declined to comment. Crawford did not return a request for comment as of press time.

Under tribal government, the General Council is comprised of every tribal member over the age of 18. The General Council votes for its own officers as well as the members of the nine-seat Board of Trustees.

In an interview before the meeting, Woodrow Star, a member on the board, explained some of the recent activity surrounding marijuana legalization on the reservation.

Star said some tribal members have been interested in legalizing marijuana since the state did it several years ago, although the tribes' uncertainty on federal prohibition of the drug kept it from moving forward.

"It was more or less a wait-and-see," he said.

Although the U.S. Department of Justice under former President Barack Obama wrote a memo that stated that federal resources would not be used to enforce marijuana laws on reservations that had legalized cannabis, current U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions' anti-marijuana views have put legalized marijuana's status in doubt.

Star said tribal opinions on marijuana varied, with many elders opposing it while younger members support legalizing cannabis.

Although no Board of Trustees members voted for or against the referendum, a *Confederated Umatilla Journal* questionnaire published in November 2015 gives some insight into their opinions on marijuana.

While stressing the need for a tribal survey and support from the federal government, Jeremy Wolf, the board's vice chairman, wrote that there was some merit to marijuana.

"Marijuana has been scientifically proven to be a viable and safer alternative to

See POT/8A

HERMISTON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Principal Laura Jacobsma, left center, watches over the exodus of students as they leave for home after the first day of class Monday at Desert View Elementary School in Hermiston.

CHAOS CONTROL

New principals join effort to direct busy, exciting first day

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Hermiston's first day of school continued a tradition of enrolling plenty of new students on the first day, but this year some of the "new kids" are on the staff.

Laura Jacobsma, principal of Desert View Elementary School, had her first day of school in Hermiston School District Monday, as did Christie Petersen, who joined the district as principal of Sunset Elementary School.

After popping in and out of classrooms all day, Jacobsma wrapped up with a short assembly to introduce herself and all of the school's teachers to a gym full of children wiggly with first-day energy.

"I am so excited to be here today, and so excited to have you all with me," she told the students. "We have been preparing ourselves all summer to have you back in school so it's a really exciting time."

Afterward, as she got ready to help direct the year's first bus-and-parent pick-up, she said she felt the first day had gone well.

"There's been lots of excitement and smiles," she said.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Sunset Elementary School principal Christie Petersen has a background in English as a second language and literacy development.

After the first day it's hard to tell where enrollment numbers will settle, as the school's staff was handling last-minute registrations all day but also taking note of students who hadn't shown up for the start of the school year. Jacobsma, who came to the district from Eugene, said she's still learning about Hermiston School District and its students, but there are many similarities between all

school districts. So far, she's just glad to finally have kids in the building.

She said one of her biggest areas of focus at the beginning of the school year will be building relationships, whether it's between colleagues, between teachers and students or between the school and the community.

Over at Sunset Elementary, Petersen was having an exciting

first day of her own as the final minutes of the school day ticked down and the school had still not been given a master list for which students ride which bus. The hiccup meant staff — including Petersen — had to carefully check each student's address before directing them to the right bus.

"There will be plenty of people out there to help sort children and verify addresses and get them on the correct bus," Petersen assured staff during her first all-school announcement over the intercom.

As she emerged from her office a moment later, she greeted the parents who had congregated around the front office and offered them the same assurance.

"It was a good first day, we're just working on getting the busing figured out," she said.

After that she was off to reassure the students who were just emerging from classrooms, eager to get home and tell their families about their first day.

"It's OK," she said, giving a quick shoulder squeeze to a crying boy in a Mario-themed backpack. "If you go to this school then we have your name, and we'll get you on the right bus."

See FIRST DAY/8A

Reconnecting from inside

Inmates, family take part in powwow at state prison

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

Inmate Rick Weaver welcomed visitors to the second annual powwow at Two Rivers Correctional Institution by bathing them in a balmy, fragrant smoke made by burning dried sage and sweet grass in a small shell bowl.

The ceremony, known as smudging, is a custom of American Indian culture, done to purify the body and remove negative energy and spirits. Weaver, who is affiliated with both the Cherokee Nation and Lakota people, used a single eagle feather to waft the smoke over each individual, from head to toe.

More than 70 inmates and 65 guests

attended Saturday's powwow, with traditional drumming, dancing, food and gifts. The event was organized in large part by Red Lodge Transition Services, a nonprofit organization based in Oregon City that helps American Indians successfully reintegrate into society after leaving prison.

Weaver, who also goes by the name White Eagle, is serving 25 years at TRCI on two counts of robbery and attempted aggravated murder. His earliest release date will be in 2035.

Meanwhile, Weaver said he is trying to reform his life and be a positive influence within the American Indian population at TRCI. The powwow is one way inmates like himself can heal, he said.

"Having a powwow every year is special, to bring us all together," he said. "It helps with our rehabilitation,

See TRCI/8A



TRCI inmate Eagle Eye Leonard, a Cherokee Tribe member, dances with a visiting dancer during Saturday's powwow at the prison in Umatilla.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

