



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan
Circuit Court Judges Eva Temple (far left), Lynne Hampton, Christopher Brauer, Dan Hill and Jon Lieuallen, serve food to people participating in the “Cafe with a Judge” event on Tuesday.

Cafe with a Judge asks minority communities about court experiences

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Dealing with the court system can be challenging, especially for minorities. Whether they are dealing with language barriers, unfamiliarity with the legal process or concerns about stereotyping from law enforcement, going to a courthouse can be daunting.

About 50 people packed a classroom at Blue Mountain Community, Hermiston campus Tuesday night to talk about how to mitigate some of those issues. A group of citizens put together the first “Cafe with a Judge” event, inviting members of local minority communities to talk about their experiences in the court system.

All five circuit court judges were in attendance, as well as trial court administrator Roy Blaine, Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus, and Morrow County DA Justin Nelson.

The event was spearheaded by Judge Eva Temple, who said it was important for judges to hear what community members have to say.

“As judges, after court we can’t hand out a satisfaction survey,” she said. “But we want to listen. We want to hear from people who use the courts system — how it feels to come to court, what your experiences are.”

The judges were not present for most of the discussion, and could not answer any specific questions about legal proceedings or give legal advice. They left the room while those in attendance discussed their experience with and perception of the local courts system.

Ultimately, the group came up with three categories to present to the judges: What’s available, what’s lacking, and expectations. The judges then returned to the room to review the final lists.

Those in attendance said they had found that things like court-appointed

attorneys and forms in Spanish were available, as well as interpreters and legal aid. But many said they found customer service, bilingual judges and attorneys, and immigration attorneys to be lacking in the area.

Some also said they’d like to see more free legal aid, courts that accommodate people who work during the day and aid for medical and mental health issues. Others said they would just like to see more empathy and better customer service at local courts.

The group came up with some expectations for judges: equitable outcomes, diversity in juries and clear language in proceedings.

After the event, Judge Jon Liullen said he got some useful information out of the event, but that he was aware of some of the concerns already.

“There aren’t easy fixes to their concerns,” he said. “Some of the things — they just may not understand how they work. There is court-appointed counseling, but it’s not always perfect.”

He said regarding comments about diverse juries, there are some existing challenges.

“A lot of times, juries are picked from voting rolls or driver licenses,” he said. “If you’re not voting, you’re not going to be able to influence those things.”

But he said the event was a good example of things moving forward, however slowly.

Primus said he wasn’t surprised by most of the things he heard, and many of the victims he works with have similar concerns.

“If it’s expressed more, we have more opportunities to make the changes necessary,” he said.

The event was a partnership between Umatilla-Morrow Head Start and members of the Hermiston Cultural Awareness Club.

Alex Hobbs, who helped plan the event, said they reached out mainly to Latino communities in the area.

Jose Garcia, the director for the New Horizons program, was one of the members of the planning group. He was helping interpret questions at the event for families who only spoke Spanish.

He said many Latinos are scared when it comes to the criminal justice system.

“They even miss court,” he said, “They don’t want to show up. Maybe we can resolve this mystery.”

He said he hoped the event would help judges understand some of the community’s fears, but also clear up misconceptions Latino community members who deal with the courts system may have.

But he said many have had negative experiences with law enforcement.

“One gentleman said that he pulled over to answer his cell phone. A lady who lived on that street called the cops on him, and said he was trying to get into her house,” Garcia said.

Garcia said the man had police come to his house three days later for the same incident.

But others said their dealings with the law enforcement system have been positive.

One man said he was stopped by a police officer for a traffic violation, but he felt the officer was kind to him because he had his children in the car.

Another said he was pleased with his encounter in court.

“He knew he was in the wrong, but he was still treated fairly,” said Jesse Roa, translating for a man at the event.

After the event, organizer Mary Lou Gutierrez said the information would be compiled and distributed to judges.

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CTUIR joins in another round of land buy-backs

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation will participate in another round of buy-backs of “fractionated” lands to be used for the benefit of tribal members.

The U.S. Department of the Interior announced Thursday that the CTUIR had signed an agreement to participate in the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations again after their first round of buy-backs in 2014.

The land consolidation program is part of the Cobell Settlement, which provided \$1.9 billion for tribes to purchase land that was originally allocated to individual tribal members and now has as many as 100 different owners due to laws that required the land to be passed down evenly to all heirs each time an owner dies.

If the multitude of heirs agree to sell the land to tribal trust ownership at fair market value, it can be used for projects that benefit the reservation community and all tribal members, from farming to housing projects to new roads.

“The Umatilla Tribe welcomes the return of the Land Buy-Back Program to our reservation, which we see as a means to further our tribal priority of restoring our reservation land base as intended by our 1855 Treaty with the U.S. government,” Gary Burke, chairman of the CTUIR board of trustees, said in a statement.

According to a news release from the Department of the Interior, the department has entered into agreements with 47 tribal nations since the buy-back program was created, transferring more than 2.2 million acres of land to tribal governments. To maximize effectiveness, for

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— Gary Burke, CTUIR chairman

this round the department is focusing on locations such as the Confederated Indian Reservation where the program has been used successfully in the past.

“The continued success of the Buy-Back Program will depend on collaborations with tribal governments and outreach to individual landowners,” Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs John Tahsuda said in a statement. “We look forward to working with the Umatilla Confederated Tribes to achieve our mutual goals.”

In December 2014 Bill Tovey, then economic and community development director of the CTUIR, told the *East Oregonian* the CTUIR had purchased 4,250 acres through the program and had a second wave of buy-backs in the works. At the time, 36 percent of land owners who had been approached had agreed to sell, with the CTUIR focusing first on properties that had more than 20 owners.

More information is available at www.doi.gov/buybackprogram/FAQ or landowners can call the trust beneficiary call center at 888-678-6836.

Short-staffed department handles three fires in 10 minutes

HERMISTON — The Umatilla County Fire District 1 was busy on Wednesday night, dealing with three fires within a span of 10 minutes.

Fire Chief Scott Stanton said the first two fires — a structure fire at East Beech Street and a field fire at Feedville Road — came in 90 seconds apart. Within 10 minutes, he said, Umatilla Rural Fire Department

called for assistance on a structure fire.

“With Echo Fire assisting, we were able to handle all three fires although short on people,” Stanton said in an email to the *EO*. “While the three fires were going we also had to run two more medicals. For a couple of hours it was very interesting. We couldn’t have handled one more call.”

Hermiston middle schoolers learn basics of cooking, nutrition

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Making meals is easier than it looks. About 20 Hermiston middle schoolers have spent the last four weeks learning that in the inaugural middle school cooking class at Hermiston High School.

Angie Treadwell, who works with the OSU Extension program, coordinated the class with Hermiston High School teacher Susie Cobb and a few high school students. Students spent the once-per-week class learning about the basics of nutrition, and how to make some simple snacks and meals from scratch.

On the last day of class, students learned about added sugars, looking at the amount of sugar in Dutch Bros. coffee drinks and flavored yogurt. They then learned how to make their own fruit yogurt, using frozen fruit and a little sugar, granola and apple cinnamon muffins.

“You can give them lectures about nutrition, but helping them learn hands-on, through taste and touch, is better,” Treadwell said.

Lidia Ortiz, a seventh grader at Sandstone Middle School, said this was her first time cooking, and she was surprised by some of the things she learned.



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan
Eighth graders Ryan McElroy and Sebastian Gutierrez stir granola at the middle school cooking class on Wednesday.

“Dutch Bros. (drinks) had more sugar than I expected,” she said.

Ortiz was making apple cinnamon muffins, with some help from Avery Treadwell and Monica Hernandez, the

high schoolers who had the idea to start the class.

“I know a lot of younger kids don’t know how to cook meals, so we wanted them to be able to cook healthier meals and snacks,” said Treadwell.

She said they taught students how to make cookies, pancakes and muffins, as well as soup, from scratch.

“When they’re at home, they can actually cook something simple and healthy,” Hernandez said.

Cobb, who teaches family and consumer sciences at the high school, said some students come into the class with basic cooking skills, but the majority have no experience.

“They learn how to cook food so they don’t only have to eat out of a box,” she said. “A lot of the time, when you don’t know what you’re eating, you end up eating a pile of chemicals.”

She said she tries to incorporate nutrition lessons directly into what the students are doing.

“We made pancakes with six to seven ingredients,” she said. She picked up a box of prepared pancake mix.

“If you look at this box, it has 20 to 25 ingredients. Most of them are fillers or so it will last,” said Cobb.

She said they also discuss the cost of buying healthy foods.

“Many people think it’s cheaper to eat fast food, but it’s not. It’s not just the financial cost, but the cost to your body.”

Cobb said she teaches students about using food

preserved in different ways.

“You can buy things that are fresh now, like raspberries, but there’s a hefty cost, and they’re transported. You don’t know what the standards are,” Cobb said. “When you buy things that are sourced closer, they may be frozen, but they’re from here. Sometimes frozen or canned is better.”

She said she hopes they will be able to host more classes. The day after the deadline for signing up for the class, Cobb said she got 20 more applications.

“And at the high school level, I’ve had no trouble getting kids to volunteer,” she said.



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Peter Rabbit (PG)

11:50* 2:00* 4:50 7:20 9:30

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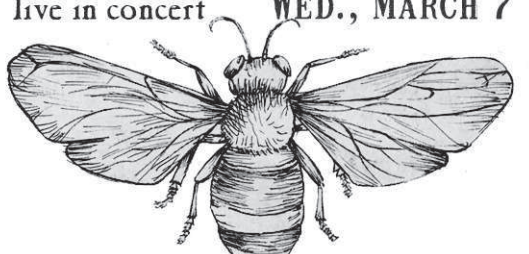
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