

Tribal swearing in



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Judge William Johnson speaks to a large crowd gathered at the Nixyaawii Governance Center for the swearing in on Wednesday of members of the CTUIR Board of Trustees, General Council and the Youth Council. BOT members who raised their right hands were Kathryn Brigham, Jeremy Wolf, Sandra Sampson, Sally Kosey, Corinne Sams, Armand Minthorn, Jill-Marie Gavin and Boots Pond. General Council members included Lindsay Watchman, Michael Ray Johnson, Shawna Gavin and E. Thomas Morning Owl.

Umatilla names South Hill connector as top trail priority

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — The city of Umatilla is finalizing a trail plan that will eventually bring the city’s three distinct sections of town together.

The city’s parks and recreation committee and community development department have been working for two years on the City of Umatilla Trail Plan, narrowing down ideas into 11 different trail projects, which the public was asked to help prioritize last month.

“The overarching goal is to connect the three neighborhoods,” said Tamra Mabbott, the city’s community development director.

The plan, which will go to the city council for approval at the beginning of January, gives top priority to the South Hill Connector project. That trail would create a walking path parallel to Powerline Road, from Tyler Avenue to the existing trail near Jackson Street.

Mabbott said the city feels optimistic it will be able to get at least some of its funding for the project from the Oregon Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School fund. Students living in the South Hill neighborhoods frequently walk to school along Powerline.

Those students used to cross a footbridge to reach Clara Brownell Middle School and Umatilla High School downtown, but the bridge was destroyed by flood water last spring. Mabbott said the city is working with FEMA and their insurance company on replacing the bridge, but due to all of the utilities that the bridge contained it will likely take two years for a new bridge to open there. The second project listed in the Trails Plan would improve existing dirt trails around the foot bridge.

Residents ranked their third priority as a trail in the McNary section of town, connecting the Lewis and Clark trail with trails along Bud Draper Road and the golf course.

Other trails farther down the priority list of 11 projects includes one linking McNary to downtown, one linking McNary to McNary Beach and a trail linking Sixth Street downtown to Third Street by the river.

Mabbott said bicycle/pedestrian trails are a priority for the city because of their many benefits. They provide residents alternatives to driving, promote health, increase livability, increase safety by moving pedestrians and cyclists away from car traffic and provide economic benefits

by making the town more attractive to tourists, developers and potential new residents.

“The council sees value in alternative modes of transportation, but also for recreation and exercise,” she said.

It will take a while, in some cases as much as 10 years, for all of the projects to be built. But Mabbott said having a written, formalized plan is a key step in seeking grant funding from sources like ODOT and the state’s parks and recreation project.

Mabbott is seeing the creation of the plan through, but won’t be around to implement it. She is leaving her job at the city of Umatilla on Dec. 11 in order to become the Eastern Oregon representative for the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.

“It’s kind of my dream job,” she said.

Mabbott will continue living in Umatilla and said she hopes to continue contributing to the community through volunteer work. But her job will include traveling to 10 counties to assist them and their cities in land use issues, and she will serve as the land use representative on the governor’s Regional Solutions team.

“I’m really looking forward to it,” she said.

Pilot Rock sewer project won’t be delayed for change orders

East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — The project to replace the sewer lagoons in Pilot Rock has been hit with some change orders, but City Recorder Teri Bacus said they shouldn’t affect the project’s timeline.

The Pilot Rock City Council held a meeting Tuesday where they got an update from engineering firm Anderson Perry on the project.

In a Wednesday inter-

view, Bacus said the change orders were the result of contractors running into bedrock during excavation that they were not anticipating.

Bacus said the city will draw from its contingency budget to pay for the change orders, but there isn’t a definitive number attached to it yet.

Replacing Pilot Rock’s sewer lagoons has been in the works for five years after the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality informed its current sys-

tem was leaking into nearby Birch Creek.

The city is now spending \$6 million to build new lagoons away from the creek, raising the money to pay for the project by raising sewer rates and obtaining a low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The city broke ground on the lagoons in June, and barring any unforeseen circumstances like the weather, the city still expects the project to be completed in May or June 2020.

Investigation underway for missing Hermiston woman

Graciela Garcia last seen by family, friends on Nov. 8

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Police in Hermiston are investigating the disappearance of a woman missing since Nov. 8.

Graciela Garcia, 49, of Hermiston, owns and operates Careyes Beauty Salon out of her residence on 298 E. Hurlburt Ave. According to her daughter, Anabel Coria, she had recently moved her business to that address.

“She’s had her business

a long time, and has lived here all her life,” Coria said. “We don’t really know much, where she went or who could have taken her.”

Coria and her family are asking people to share any information regarding where Garcia may have been seen with the Hermiston Police Department.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said the investigation was opened three days after Garcia went



Garcia

missing, on Nov. 11.

“We are actively investigating this case, and detectives are continuing to work on this,” he said.

He said there are no confirmed details available about exactly where or when Garcia was last seen.

A missing poster, which has been circulating on local social media, describes Garcia as about 5 feet, 4 inches tall and weighing 140 pounds.

Anyone who might have information regarding Garcia is encouraged to call the Hermiston Police Department at 541-567-5519.

BRIEFLY

Lexington fire damages home

LEXINGTON — A structure fire seriously damaged a home Tuesday morning, resulting in a “total loss,” according to the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office.

A wood stove sparked a fire in a one-story addition to the back part of the residence, located at 295 E. Main St., Heppner Fire Department Assistant Chief Steve Rhea said.

The flames broke out shortly before 10 a.m. and quickly spread to the upstairs portion of the rest of the house. Rhea said by the time the Heppner Fire Department arrived, flames were coming from the roof.

The fire was under control just before 11 a.m. Rhea said that the fire was prevented from reaching the main downstairs portion of the home. A lone occupant evacuated the home and was not injured.

According to the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office, the home was built in 1840.

The Heppner Fire Department was aided at the scene by the Lexington Fire Department and the Lone Rural Fire Protection District. The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office, the Lexington Quick Response Team and Columbia Basin Electric also responded to the blaze.

The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office said the Red Cross was contacted to assist the homeowners.

Heppner grad named finance officer at EOU

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center announced the hire of Patrick Collins as a finance officer.

Collins is a 2016 graduate of Heppner High School and will graduate from EOU in a few weeks with a degree in agricultural sciences, according to the announcement from the university. Collins has served as a student intern in the Small Business Development Center for almost two years and is pursuing a master’s degree



Collins



Morrow County Sheriff’s Office Photo

A fire burned through a Lexington home Tuesday morning, according to the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office. The residence at 295 E. Main St. was built in 1840.

in business administration.

“Patrick is an extraordinarily capable young man who has proven himself while serving as a student intern in our office,” SBCD director Greg Smith said in the announcement. “We are pleased to be able to advance him to the next level as he joins us in striving to provide exceptional service to entrepreneurs and small business owners.”

Collins said he excited to have the opportunity.

“The internship with the EOU Small Business Development Center has given me valuable experience and this falls in line with the plans I’ve had after completing my education,” he said.

— EO Media Group

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