



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

The Thorn Hollow Bridge sits in disrepair on Feb. 3, 2021, roughly one year after severe flooding damaged the structure.

Bridge: Funding for the bridge replacement originally comes from federal level

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away from the desk until they found a solution.”

County officials worked with those in the CTUIR and the Oregon Department of Transportation to make the news plans with funding from the state. The county also received support from politicians, including Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, as well as state Sen. Bill Hansell and state Representative Bobby Levy, Dorran said.

“This is a project that has been on our radar since the floods last year,” Ken Patterson, an area manager for ODOT, said at the press conference.

The bridge’s location on tribal land made it so the project wouldn’t ordinarily fall to ODOT, Patterson said, but with the insistence of county officials, ODOT officials found a way to allocate state resources toward repairing the bridge more quickly.

“As a department, we’re glad to help restore activ-

ity out in the Thorn Hollow area as soon as possible,” he said.

Funding for the bridge replacement originally comes from the federal level that “trickles down” and becomes state money,

The six-week “in-stream work window,” intended to minimize the construction’s potential impacts on fish, wildlife and habitat, made it impossible to complete the project in less than two

Fellows said. “If everything would fall into place, if I was an optimist, then I would say that maybe we could get that demolition done this year, but I’m not that much of an optimist. If it happens, it happens.”

“WHEN WE SAY WE CAN START DEMOLITION IMMEDIATELY, WE CAN START THE PROCESS OF PLANNING PERMITS IMMEDIATELY.”

Tom Fellows, Umatilla County Public Works director

providing an opportunity to “take savings from one project and move it over to another project,” Umatilla County Public Works Director Tom Fellows said.

The state, therefore, covers about 89.7% of costs, Patterson said.

Umatilla County will cover about 10.3% of the project’s overall costs, Dorran said. He added the county also has to cover any “early overages.”

Fellows said that the main goal of the project was to shorten its timeline.

construction seasons, officials said. After further discussion, however, Fellows said officials made new plans to remove the bridge earlier while simultaneously designing the new bridge.

Fellows said although the timeline for replacing the bridge has been sped up, there remain several hurdles regarding permits.

“When we say we can start demolition immediately, we can start the process of planning permits immediately,”

Fellows said the bridge is likely to be demolished in 2022, which will “set us up perfectly for construction in 2023 if the funding comes into line and everything moves forward.”

Dorran said the bridge project is an example of the good that comes when county and state entities work together.

“I think that when you work together, when you row the boat in the same direction, you can find ways,” he said.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Haven Pho recently opened in the former Quiznos location at 204 S.W. 20th St. in Pendleton.

Restaurant: ‘It’s been busy and tiring’

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Ha said when he first moved to town a lack of Vietnamese food inspired him to want to open a restaurant, and while Pendleton’s dining options have diversified some since then, Ha’s desire to run a restaurant never faded.

When putting together his menu, Ha said he wanted to stick with what he considers staples of

Vietnamese cuisine — pho dishes, steamed rice with pork or chicken, and egg and salad rolls.

Since opening his restaurant, Ha said it has stayed busy with dine-in and takeout orders. The dining room was buzzing with people on the evening of March 4, as customers

ventured in to try the new place to eat. One customer joked with Ha that she had come by to get her nails

done while picking up a to-go order.

As customers filed through, Ha and his staff worked diligently to fill orders as steaming bowls of pho and egg rolls were carried to tables.

“It’s been busy and tiring,” he said.

Ha said the restaurant is currently open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. for takeout and dine-in service.

While business is steady, Ha said he has had to remain optimistic amid the pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions. With restaurants across the country closing due to the pandemic, Ha said he keeps focusing on the end of the pandemic to stay motivated.

“I think the pandemic is going to go away,” he said. “Hopefully, everything is going to go fine.”

Sams: CTUIR has often joined the other Tribes of the Columbia Plateau

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the work he has done for the better part of two decades.

Brown and Sams had previously held talks over him joining the Oregon Public Utilities Commission, but it never turned into a nomination. With an offer now in hand, Sams took it.

Established in 1980, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council is responsible for devising long-term planning for the Columbia Basin, taking both energy and conservation needs into account. Sams is joining an eight-person council with representation from Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. A full-time job, each council member earns \$120,000 per year.

Sams said he will become the only enrolled tribal member on the board and only the second American Indian in the council’s 30-year history.

The CTUIR has often joined the other Tribes of the Columbia Plateau in trying to protect the river’s salmon from the adverse effects of the river’s hydroelectric system.

When asked for comment, the governor’s office mentioned their work in appointing him to the council and recommending him to a job with national implications.

“The governor counts herself as one of the many Oregonians who has learned so much from him about the history and cultures of the Indigenous and Tribal peoples who have lived in Oregon since time immemorial,” Charles Boyle, a spokesman for Brown, said. “In December, she wrote a letter recommending him to lead the National Park Service, and she is extremely pleased for his commitment to now serve on the NWPC.”

A ringing endorsement

In a letter dated Dec. 17, Brown was effusive in her praise for Sams.

Addressed to Joe Biden, Brown’s letter ran through Sams’ qualifications and qualities before sharing her vision for the National Parks Service under Sams’ leadership.

“During your administration, I envision students — both young and old, tribal and nontribal alike — visiting Yellowstone, Arches, Mesa Verde or Oregon’s Crater Lake, and hearing the

stories of our past and present, including the important stories of the tribal peoples who have inhabited these special places,” she wrote. “Chuck is a consummate storyteller, and has the skill set and passion to inspire the dedicated staff of the NPS to tell those stories, and to find new and innovative ways to make our parks accessible to all Americans, while conserving and preserving those lands.”

If appointed to the position, Sams would be the service’s first full-time director since the Obama administration. Former President Donald Trump nominated a candidate, but he was never confirmed by the Senate and the agency has been overseen by a series of acting directors for the past four years.

An announcement on the next parks director isn’t expected until the Senate confirms Deb Haaland to lead the U.S. Department of Interior, which manages the national parks system. A congresswoman from New Mexico and an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo, Haaland is poised to become the Interior’s first American Indian secretary.

Sams said he was honored by Brown’s recommendation, but he added that he will also be pleased to stay in the Northwest and serve on the council if he doesn’t get the parks director position.

Although the council’s offices are in Portland, Sams said he intends to stay at his residence on the Umatilla Indian Reservation and work remotely.

Sams’ last day in tribal government came on Friday, March 12, and he left with some warm words from one of his former bosses.

“I can’t thank Chuck enough for his service to the Tribe,” Kat Brigham, chair of the CTUIR Board of Trustees, said in a statement. “We are sad to see him go, but happy that he has received such a prestigious appointment from Gov. Brown. We know that he will work for the benefit of the entire region. We wish him nothing but the best.”

Both Brigham and Sams gave a vote of confidence to Paul Rabb, who took over for Sams as the Tribes’ interim executive director. The CTUIR expects to make a permanent selection this summer.

Family: Patrick presented evidence that the gathering was a ‘family religious observance’

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“essential” event.

The BOT resolution prohibited “nonessential tribal, longhouse, social and recreational gatherings of individuals outside of a home or place of residence (parties, celebrations or other similar gatherings)” regardless of size, “if a distance of at least 6 feet between individuals cannot be maintained.”

According to the verdict and judgment, Patrick presented evidence that the gathering was a “family religious observance” that was “essential to the spiritual and cultural well-being of the family.”

Gallagher’s ruling said the Tribes, represented by Daley, presented no evidence that a family religious observance is a “nonessential gathering.”

“In the absence of evidence on a material element of the violation, the Court is left to speculate as to what is meant by ‘essential,’ and ‘essential’ to whom? Such guesswork and speculation may not be the basis of a finding of guilt,” Gallagher wrote in his ruling.

Under questioning from Daley, Tony Barnett, who at the time of the feast was a member of the Umatilla Tribal Police working as an investigator for the CTUIR Department of Children and Family

Services, testified that the Patrick residence is a “certified foster home.”

A Facebook photo, which spurred the investigation and subsequent citations, showed at least one child and an adult who had a “protection order against him,” Barnett said he told Patrick such gatherings “can’t continue if you want to keep your certification as a foster home.”

However, there was no further discussion of foster children during the trial.

Chair Kat Brigham, speaking on her own and not for the full Board of Trustees, said the restrictions in the resolution were never meant to punish people for their religious beliefs.

She said the Patrick gathering was investigated and resulted in citations because of “other concerns” that were made apparent by the Facebook photo.

Brigham acknowledged that many families, including her own, had ceremonies at home.

“The resolution didn’t stop that. It just asked people to be careful of numbers,” she said. “We didn’t have a lot of information at the time, other than the need for social distancing, washing your hands and wearing masks. We just wanted people to take seriously about being careful, being safe, and being healthy.”