

Feud:

Continued from Page A1

“You make a choice,” he said. “You can do one or the other, but you can’t do both. Because it’s a conflict of interest and the different difficulties that arise from that.”

Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner, D-Lake Oswego, later signed on as a co-sponsor, and then moved to chief sponsor, indicating the bill would likely have the votes to pass if it came up for a vote in the Senate.

Findley said he spoke with the chairs of several other county Republican central committees in his district who supported the bill, but had not had time to convene their executive committees. Those counties, unlike Baker, Malheur and Morrow, are not listed on Senate Bill 865.

Suzan Ellis Jones, chair of the Baker County Republican Party, said in a Thursday, May 6, statement that the county’s party supports the move.

“The Baker County Republican executive committee is supporting the efforts of our Republican state senators Lynn Findley and Bill Hansell,” she said. “This bill simply implements a similar structure in Oregon to what is seen already in place in other states.”

Findley said he believes the bill is important because legislators “can’t serve two masters,” but said he can’t cite any specific examples of conflicts that resulted from Republican lawmakers also serving as officials in the Oregon Republican Party. Hansell also said he is not yet aware of any specific conflicts of interest.

Gun bill shows dispute

The bill was introduced the same day the Senate voted 17-7 to approve House revisions of Senate Bill 554, a gun control measure whose provisions include a ban on firearms in the Oregon Capitol and rules requiring gun locks on weapons.

Hansell told the *East Oregonian* that the GOP caucus was approached prior to the final vote in March by representatives of the Oregon Firearms Federation, which calls itself “Oregon’s Only No Compromise Gun Rights Organization.”

The senators were firmly asked by the interest group to walk out of the vote and deny a quorum. When they refused and showed up to the floor to oppose the bill, some senators, including

Hansell, received threatening emails from gun rights advocates, which had to be turned over to the state police. And some senators, like Hansell and Sen. Minority Leader Fred Girod, R-Stayton, faced recall efforts for showing up that day.

“There is a fringe group out there that is sure not welcome in my office,” Girod said. “It is not OK to threaten people’s lives, their staff. It’s not an appropriate way to lobby.”

The seven “no” votes were cast by six Republicans: Hansell, Finley, Girod, Sen. Dick Anderson, R-Lincoln City, Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, and Sen. Bill Kennemer, R-Canby. Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, joined the opposition.

Four Republican senators were not present for the vote: Heard, Linthicum, Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, and Sen. Chuck Thomsen, R-Hood River, were marked as absent or excused.

Also not voting were two former Republican lawmakers who had bolted the Republican caucus earlier this year and declared themselves as independents: Sen. Brian Boquist, I-Dallas, and Sen. Art Robinson, I-Cave Junction.

Those who voted and those who skipped the floor session form the outlines of a rift in the Senate Republican caucus that became more heated this session with the original vote on SB 554.

The Senate currently has 18 Democrats, 10 Republicans, and two independents.

Democrats had the votes to pass the bill. But the Oregon Constitution requires each chamber of the Legislature to have at least two-thirds of its members answer the roll call of attendance to establish a quorum to do any business.

Oregon is one of a handful of states where the presence of a majority of members is not considered a quorum.

Senators had walked out in previous sessions over tax legislation and a carbon cap bill that opponents said would harm the state economy. Those walkouts were led by then-Senate Minority Leader Herman Baertschiger Jr., R-Grants Pass.

Baertschiger stepped down from his Senate seat at the end of the walkout-shortened 2020 legislative session to successfully run for Josephine County commissioner. Baertschiger was also elected GOP state party vice chairman in alliance with Heard and Linthicum.



CTUIR Board of Trustees member Armand Minthorn, center, holds a plate during filming of an episode of “Top Chef” in Cascade Locks last year. Also pictured are Board of Trustees Chair Kat Brigham, left, and Vice Chair Jeremy Wolf.

CTUIR: Smelt-crusted rabbit is winner

Continued from Page A1

to please the judges and advance to the next round of the competition, but also to honor the Brighams and the CTUIR’s culture and heritage.

“At the end of the day, we have to cook for the judges, but I need to pay homage to these people,” Maria Mazon, a chef from Tucson, Arizona, said during the show. “I feel blessed.”

The contest opened and closed with Armand Minthorn, a member of the CTUIR Board of Trustees and a tribal elder, who delivered a Washat prayer to begin proceedings, and then made some remarks as it drew to a close.

“When those Indian foods began to grow, they prepared themselves for today,” he said. “And because you cooked our food, our food knows who you are now. You’ve honored us today.”

Two days worth of events at Cascade Locks were edited down to 45 minutes, but the slickly edited package belied the months of preparation and coordination between Magical Elves, the production studio behind “Top Chef,” and the CTUIR.

Doneen Arquines, a producer with Magical Elves, said the process started when “Top Chef” began scouting locations after committing to basing their 18th season in Portland.

“Top Chef” soon connected with Brigham Fish Market, a Cascade Locks business run by sisters Terrie Brigham and Kim

Brigham Campbell, who are both enrolled members of the CTUIR.

As the producers learned more about the sisters and the Tribes, they decided to expand their focus to encompass the Tribes and the First Foods.

Magical Elves reached out to the CTUIR in early 2020 and eventually connected with Wenix Red Elk, a public outreach and education specialist for the CTUIR Department of Natural Resources.

Red Elk said she and a group of tribal members went out and gathered roots and berries for the production, eventually providing “Top Chef” with First Foods like duck potato, elderberries, huckleberries and chokecherries.

Red Elk said she requested Pacific lamprey be included as one of the ingredients, but with fresh lamprey unavailable in September when the episode was shooting, the show decided to substitute catfish for lamprey.

The production crew also wanted fish from Brigham Fish Market and to film a fishing session with the sisters. But with filming coming relatively late in the season, Terrie Brigham said they couldn’t provide whole fish that time of year and opted to do a fishing demonstration instead.

The CTUIR sent a contingent of tribal leaders to Cascade Locks for the filming of the episode, providing the contestants and the television audience with an introduction to First Foods, and

then tasting the completed meals along with the judges the following day.

Filming in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, “Top Chef” had strict protocols for its Portland season. All contestants stayed in a bubble at their hotel when not on location, and all guests, including the CTUIR members, had to test negative multiple times and self-quarantine before arriving.

The production also had to deal with the temperamental weather of the Columbia River Gorge.

Cascade Locks experienced heavy rain on the first day of filming. Arquines said they had to scrap plans to film on nearby Thunder Island and instead relocated most proceedings to a riverside tent.

“Top Chef” got some karmic balance when the second day of filming included sunny skies and a rainbow, but Terrie Brigham was caught off guard in a different way.

Brigham said she arrived on set unaware that she would be on camera with the rest of the CTUIR group. She hadn’t dressed in tribal regalia like the rest of the members present, but she decided to go with the flow.

“There I sat, in my sweatshirt and my hair pulled back,” she said, laughing.

Kat Brigham, the chair of the CTUIR Board of Trustees and Terrie’s mother, said the food was delicious but prepared very differently than what the tribal members are used to.

The winning dish was

a smelt-crusted rabbit loin, while other cooking teams paired their dishes with molé, a Mexican marinade and sauce.

Lessons learned

The episode ended with two chefs eliminated from the competition, but Arquines hoped the viewers took away something deeper.

“I think that the Pacific Northwest tribes definitely have an abundance of beautiful ingredients around,” she said. “We wanted to show that off, and I think that the reverence that you’ll see from the tribe, and from the chef’s cooking for the tribe, or the ingredients is really special.”

For the Tribes, they got the chance to share with a potential audience of millions the importance of First Foods and the tribes that they feed.

“We learned a little bit more about how ‘Top Chef’ operates and all the processes that they go through,” she said. “But they also learned from us about our tradition, our first foods. I think it was a good day for all of us.”

Red Elk remembered when Mariah Watchman, an enrolled member, competed on American’s Next Top Model in 2012, and the Tribes organized watch parties. The pandemic meant there will be no watch parties, but Red Elk was still excited to see the result.

“It’s really exciting to watch it,” she said in an interview before the episode aired. “We’re going to tell a little bit about where our foods are coming from and highlight the Tribes.”

Tumors:

Continued from Page A1

Edmiston said.

Officers in the department have heard from Studebaker’s wife, Shelley, that his procedure went well, but now, he begins the long process of recovery.

Studebaker has served in law enforcement for 18 years. He comes from a family devoted to law enforcement. His father served in law enforcement, his wife works with the Pendleton Police Department and his brother also works in the Hermiston Police Department.

Studebaker moved to Hermiston when he joined the department in 2012.

Studebaker leads the investigation unit for the Hermiston police. He was promoted to lieutenant in 2017. And in April 2021, he was appointed as the select law enforcement professional in a “Children’s Justice Act Task Force” with the Oregon Department of Justice.

“He takes public service very seriously,” Edmiston said. “He’s a huge asset to our department and has been for many years.”

Edmiston described Studebaker as a trustworthy person that can make

split-second decisions.

“There’s things that happen in law enforcement where you have to trust your people,” he said. “And I trust Randy implicitly.”

Edmiston also said he, as well as the rest of the department, appreciates Studebaker’s witty sense of humor.

Studebaker would often write posts on the department’s Facebook page. In a recent post, he wrote: “The weather has been beautiful this week. To enjoy a gorgeous sunrise or sunset, head for the top of the butte or other local areas with an unobstructed view. You won’t regret it. Avoid places that lack windows, like the local HPD holding cell and the county jail over in Pendleton. The view there is just not so great.”

In a 2018 story in the *Hermiston Herald*, Studebaker said his proudest moment was when he somehow “made my wife think that marrying me was a good idea.”

“She’s helped me raise a reasonably normal, well-adjusted and polite son,” he said. “I’m not sure how that happened with me for a father, but whatever we did seemed to work. He leaves next month for the Coast Guard and, eventually, he wants to be a police officer. I’m pretty proud of them.”

Fires: State warns of another busy fire season

Continued from Page A1

he’s worried there could be an earlier start to fire season.

“It could be a busy year,” he said. “And that’s what they’re forecasting at the state level — that this could be another busy year.”

Conditions rival driest on record

The fires come as some areas of Umatilla County report conditions that rival the driest on record.

The month of March was the sixth driest on record in Pendleton and the second driest in Hermiston. And in April, conditions hardly improved, with Pendleton reporting the seventh driest month on record and Hermiston the third driest, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

Since October 2020, precipitation in both Umatilla and Morrow counties have been reported “well below normal,” according to Marilyn Lohman, a hydrologist with the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

With much of the county already experiencing some level of drought, the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners last month unanimously declared a drought disaster and asked Gov. Kate Brown to follow suit.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Pendleton firefighters use a hose to mop up a hotspot at a brush fire near Southeast Nye Avenue on Wednesday, May 5, 2021.

And last week, the Morrow County Board of Commissioners declared a drought and sent a letter to Brown. The resolution, dated April 28, stated that half the county is experiencing severe drought conditions, while the rest is either experiencing moderate drought or abnormally dry conditions.

“There is a potential for Morrow County agricultural and livestock, natural resources, recreational and tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe damage resulting in extreme weather conditions in the County,” the letter stated.

The declarations come as more than three-fourths of the state is already in some stage of drought. The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center has said drought will likely continue throughout the summer in Southern, Central and Eastern Oregon, as reported by Oregon Public Broadcasting on Monday, May 3.

What residents can do

Fire officials pointed to several different common causes for vegetation fires, including illegal fireworks, cigarette butts, downed power lines, controlled burn

piles being kicked up by the wind, and even vehicles and lawn mowers moving through dry grass.

They also noted several things that residents can do to prevent fires from sparking in their communities.

Critchley said it’s important for homeowners and landowners to create a “defensible space” by “making sure that grasses or light fuels are mowed down within 30 feet of your residence.” In addition, he advised that homeowners clear dry leaves out of roofs and gutters, and move flammable materials like wood piles away from their homes.

Stanton said for his district, residents should adhere to burning regulations and remain “extra cautious and careful, because it is extra dry.”

If residents have questions about how to mitigate the risk of fires, Critchley advised they contact their local fire departments for advice. He also advised residents to check the department’s Facebook page for updates and guidance.

“Fire is just part of our lives,” Critchley said. “We just need to make sure that it doesn’t injure anybody or damage property too much. That’s what we’re trying to stay in front of.”