

Fire near Wolfe Point

A fire broke out in rangeland in the Wolfe Point area on Tuesday, July 19. The fire had burned 600 acres by Tuesday afternoon.

No buildings were damaged. The fire was moving away from the subdivision by the afternoon, said Warm Springs Fire Management Officer Gary Cooke. The fire was moving southeast, toward the Deschutes River, he said.

The fire was human caused, but a more specific cause was not yet known, and is being investigated, said Cooke.

Fire Management and Warm Springs Fire and Safety responded to the blaze, which was first reported at 11:45 a.m. Other crews and engines from the region provided support.

There was talk on Tuesday afternoon of closing Highway 26, though this decision was still pending at press time. This is the first large wildland fire of the 2005 season. Cooke said that current conditions on the reservation are conducive to wildfires. People need to be extremely careful with anything that produces sparks, but once ignited, a fire will take off in these conditions, he said.

Officials struggle with problem of youth suicides

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) - Surgeon General Richard Carmona has been quick to acknowledge a major problem with teen suicide in Indian Country. He also says efforts to slow the death rate aren't working.

"I am proud to report that for the general population, the long-term trend in the United States has been toward a decline in the suicide rate," Carmona said at a congressional hearing last month. "I am troubled by the fact, however, that suicide in Indian country is not declining."

The statistics are grim: The suicide rate for American Indians and Alaskan Natives ages 15 to 24 is three times the nation's average, Carmona says. And it is estimated that there are 13 nonfatal attempts for every fatality.

The Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota has lost 17 teenagers to suicide in recent years. On the Standing Rock reservation, which straddles the border between North Dakota and South Dakota, at least 10 teenagers have taken their own lives since early 2004.

Perhaps the most highly publicized suicide was in Minnesota in March, when 16-year-old Jeff Weise killed nine people - including several students at Red Lake High School - before turning a gun on himself. The shootings brought a mountain of attention to the

Red Lake Indian Reservation and depression among teens there.

Federal officials are still looking for answers to the teen suicide increase.

"The reality is that we have not adequately explored either the problems or the necessary responses," Carmona said.

Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., says reservations need more money for mental health services and school counselors that could be a help to troubled teens. President Bush proposed an increase in mental health funding for the Indian Health Service in fiscal 2006, but the agency's budget has been tight in recent years due to cuts in domestic spending across the board.

Dorgan said he is working with Senate Indian Affairs Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., on legislation that would authorize more money for mental health services on reservations.

In his June testimony, Carmona said most teens who commit suicide have never visited with mental health professionals.

Twila Rough Surface, a North Dakota member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe who lost a niece to suicide, told a congressional committee that many Indian families do not have the transportation needed to seek help.

"Families are economically disadvantaged, and with the 40- to 75-mile trip

to seek counseling, it is virtually impossible to access these options," she said.

Marlene EchoHawk, a doctor who works on the behavioral health staff at the Indian Health Service, agrees that more funds are needed but says the problems are complex.

She speculates the suicides cannot simply be traced to poverty on the reservations.

"We have had poverty since 1492, and you haven't had this degree of suicide," she says.

EchoHawk, a member of the Otoe-Missouria tribe from northern Oklahoma, attributes the deaths to high rates of alcoholism on reservations, frequent incidents of sexual abuse and a lack of identity among many American Indian teens.

The IHS says a University of New Mexico study found 69 percent of all Indian suicides involved alcohol. The agency has worked to bring agencies together to identify causes and responses, including emergency services in communities with the highest level of suicides.

But doctors have much to learn about Indian suicides, Carmona said.

"We have nothing close to the more robust literature and science that are available about the general population," he said.

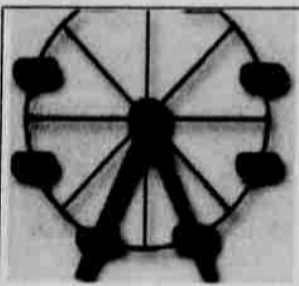
For now, many of the prevention

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efforts will fall to the reservations themselves. Carmona said the Jicarilla Apache of New Mexico decreased the rate of suicide on that reservation by 60 percent over 10 years by creating a prevention strategy that involved tribal leadership, community members, teenagers, IHS staff and local academics.

The Cheyenne River tribe in South Dakota is also working to lessen the pain for young people. The Cheyenne River Youth Project is a nonprofit organization that provides after-school activities for teenagers.

"Unfortunately there is no one magic answer to fix what decades of neglect and hopelessness have caused," said project director Julie Garreau at the Senate hearing. "But our community is strong and resilient, and we are working hard to address these issues together."



Jefferson County Fair

July 27-30, 2005

Wednesday, July 27

Opening ceremonies 9:30 a.m.
Buildings open everyday at 10:00 a.m.
High Desert Dance 5:00 p.m.
Talent Show prelims 6:00 p.m.
Jefferson County Fair Play Day 6:00 p.m.
Teen Dance (Pavillion) 9-10:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 28

Cow-Horse Contest (Corwin Arena) 6:00 p.m.
Talent Show finals 6:30 p.m.
Estella & Alberto 9:00 p.m.

Friday, July 29

Queen Lorene & the Skillet Lickers 1, & 4:30 p.m.
Zach Driscoll 2:30 & 6:30

NPRA Rodeo (Corwin Arena) 8:00 p.m.
Juice Newton (Les Schwab Stage) 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, July 30

Parade 10:00 a.m.
Juniper Clicken Cloggers 3:00, & 6:30 p.m.
Lindy Gravelle (Beef show barn) 4:00 p.m.
Kiwanis BBQ (Beef show barn) 4:00 p.m.
Livestock auction (Beef show barn) 5:00 p.m.
NPRA Rodeo (Corwin Arena) 8:00 p.m.
Countryfied (Big Western Dance-Pavillion) 9 p.m.

Appearing daily

Wagon's Ho, Atlas Robots, Busybee Dogs, Sam Klemke caricature artist, Davis Amusement Show (carnival)



Juice Newton will perform at the fair at 9 p.m. on Friday, July 29, on the Les Schwab stage.

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