



Spilyay Tymoo

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Tribes pursue Simnasho water fix

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Tribal Council last week passed a resolution to address the Simnasho drinking water problem.

Through the resolution, the tribes are now pursuing up to \$450,000 in Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant money for work on the Simnasho-Schoolie Flat water system.

Total cost of a new system is estimated at \$2.5 million, said Don Courtney, Utilities general manager. The HUD money could be used to le-

verage further funding toward its construction, said Courtney.

The HUD grant is to address water-quality cases involving an "imminent health threat," which describes the Simnasho water situation.

The Tribal Council resolution also authorizes the S-T to seek funding through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Indian Health Services, and other federal agencies to create a funding package for this project.

The resolution also authorizes the construction of a domestic water pipeline from the well source to the Beaver Creek well field, and infrastructure

to provide drinking water for the Simnasho-Schoolie Flat residents.

The new water system would require a right-of-way along the proposed pipeline from the well head to the existing Beaver Creek well field.

The existing Simnasho water system is not in compliance with EPA standards for arsenic.

Since 2007, Simnasho-Schoolie Flat residents have relied on Saturday deliveries of Earth2O bottled water. Estimated cost of this service is about \$4,400 per month.

The Simnasho water was in compliance with the EPA arsenic standard

until 2006. At that time, the agency lowered the part-per-million standard for arsenic, making the Simnasho water non-compliant.

Arsenic is odorless and colorless, and can appear in drinking water through natural deposits in the earth, or from agriculture and industrial practices. Arsenic is cancer causing. Other health problems associated with the semi-metal include thickening and discoloration of the skin, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, numbness of the hands and feet, partial paralysis and blindness.

Law would address tribal officer jurisdiction

By Duran Bobb
Spilyay Tymoo

A hearing is scheduled on March 24 in the Oregon Legislature for Senate Bill 412, which is an effort by Warm Springs and the other Oregon tribes to make changes to state law regarding the definition of "police officer."

One provision of the bill states that it would provide tribal police officers in Oregon with the same powers and protections provided by Oregon law to state and local law enforcement officers. This would allow tribal officers to cite non-Indians, over whom the tribe lacks criminal jurisdiction, into state court for state law violations.

If passed, the bill would be declared emergency and effective immediately.

Currently, tribal police maintain the same training and professional certification standards that are required of state and local law enforcement officers. All Warm Springs tribal police officers and detectives have been deputized by the Jefferson County Sheriff and 19 of the Warm Springs tribal police officers and detectives have been deputized by the Wasco County Sheriff.

"Senate Bill 412 is needed to protect tribal members from crimes committed against them and their property by non-Indians," said Stan Suenaga, general manager of the Warm Springs Public Safety Branch.

"This stems from the State v. Kurtz case," he said. "We can't allow non-Indian offenders to ignore tribal police and as well as state and federal laws that may apply to them, and make a run for the border, thinking they can leave and not face any criminal consequences."

Please see TRIBAL OFFICERS on 7

Japan crisis impacts mill

By Dave McMechan
Spilyay Tymoo

Warm Springs Forest Products Industries is a leading regional exporter of lumber to Japan.

About 80 percent of the housing construction wood product from the WSFPI mill goes to Japan.

Like everyone, the millworkers were shocked by news of devastation from the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters in Japan.

Mill workers have met Japanese clients on many occasions at the mill, said John "Sky" Katchia, WSFPI operations supervisor.

Being familiar with Japanese people made the images of disaster there even more moving, Katchia said.

"There was tremendous concern at the mill for the Japanese," said Ryan Holwege, export sales director of Van Port International. For the past several years, Van Port has worked with WSFPI in marketing lumber to Japan.

"I work with the Japanese every day," Holwege said. "And it was nice to hear the concern from the people at the mill."

There is no way to tell for certain how the national disaster in Japan will impact the WSFPI operation, said Holwege.

In the short term, though, the mill could see a spike in the demand and price of lumber, followed by a lag in the market.

Then in the long-term, the demand could be greater than in recent years. "It all depends on the internal factors in Japan," he said.

For instance, the wood from the Warm Springs is used for framing, while manufacturers in Japan have provided the plywood.

New homes cannot be built without the plywood, so the demand for the framing lumber would be low if the plywood is absent.

"And the plywood mills in Japan, and the workers there were affected," Holwege said.

How all of this will play out is speculation, although there is some precedent: Holwege was in Japan shortly after the Kobe earthquake of 1995, "so we do have some history to draw on," he said.

After the Kobe earthquake, which killed over 6,400 people, there was in the short-term a larger demand for lumber coming from U.S. mills. WSFPI could see a similar spike in demand.

The Warm Springs Forest Products Industries mill employs about 140 people, mostly tribal members.



The vehicle of the deceased was towed from the embankment by the mill and Shitike Creek. Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Man shot, killed after police chase

A 22-year-old Madras man was shot and killed by a Warm Springs police officer at 10:40 p.m. on Sunday, March 20. The deceased was identified as Vernon "Buddy" Middleton Jr. His body was transported to Portland after the shooting, as part of the investigation into the incident.

As standard practice, the officer was placed on administrative leave, pending the outcome of the investigation, said Warm Springs Public Safety Branch Manager Stanley Suenaga.

The shooting happened at the Warm Springs Forest Products Industries mill, following a traffic stop and a police chase on foot.

Two Warm Springs officers were involved in the stop and the chase. Another person was in the vehicle with Mr. Middleton. This person was not injured, according to reports.

One of the officers received minor injuries, and was treated and released from Mountain View Hospital in Madras.

FBI agents from Bend and Portland and troopers with the Oregon State

Police are investigating the case.

The investigators on Sunday night and Monday morning had a large outdoor area of the mill blocked off with police crime tape.

Evidence was located at various places across the asphalt, showing where the foot-chase occurred. The vehicle that Middleton had been riding in was lodged on an embankment above Shitike Creek. FBI, state police and tribal investigators were on the scene for several hours, determining the sequence of events that led to the fatal shooting.



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Colton Reese shows his hula hooping skills at the '50s Sock Hop held at the Community Center on St. Patrick's Day. Yvonne Iverson/Spilyay

Composite expecting steady year

The coming year will look a lot like 2010, Duane Darnell, general manager for Warm Springs Composite said.

"The economy is off, but on the bright side we already have substantial sales," Darnell told Tribal Council last week.

Employment at Composite Products should hold steady, he said.

"Towards the end of 2010 we built up some inventory to keep people employed, rather than having lay-offs. Now, we anticipate we'll be able to use some of those inventories as demand picks up."

So far, Composite Industries has maintained a good safety level at the plant, Darnell added. In addition to their normal wages, employees also earn incentives based on safety and attendance.

The immediate goal at Composite is to keep sales revenues up, Darnell said. "We want to keep our employment up, we want to keep our profit up and develop off-shore markets," he said.

Composite Products gave their financial report to Tribal Council last week.

— by Duran Bobb