



Spilyay Tymoo

Coyote News, est. 1976

July 20, 2016 Vol. 41, No. 15

July – Pat'ak-Pt'akni – Summer - Shatm

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Working toward education agreement

The Education Committee, Tribal Council and the school district continue working toward a new long-term education agreement.

The current agreement expired this summer, but will be the controlling document until the sides reach a new agreement.

There are currently three versions of the tribal-509-J education agreement: one by the Education Committee and Tribal Council, one by the school board, and the current expired agreement.

The challenge will be to come to a mutual agreement, as the

tribes' and school district's versions are very different.

The tribal version includes specific goals and proposed accomplishments, whereas the school district version is not specific.

There are some good aspects of the tribal version that could be implemented, said school board member Laurie Danzuka. Some aspects, though, would need to be reviewed by the district legal counsel, as the district is held to standards regarding, for instance, the use of class time.

The Education Committee and Tribal Council have placed an em-

phasis on language and culture as part of the school experience for Native students.

At the school district board meeting this week, the board appointed Laurie Danzuka and Tom Norton to the team that will work toward a new agreement.

The tribal parties are the Education Committee—Jaylyn Suppah, Pah-Tu Pitt, Deanie Smith and alternate Ervanna Little Eagle—and Tribal Councilwomen Carina Miller and Val Switzler.

The BIA is also a part of the education agreement process. The Warm Springs Agency has an act-

ing superintendent, Body Shaw, BIA deputy regional director. A permanent superintendent is expected to be on board in August.

Tribal Council and the Education Committee met last week with school district superintendent Rick Molitor. All parties to the conversation agree that some change is needed to improve the graduation rate among tribal.

Finding agreement on how best to achieve that goal will be a focus of the talks toward a new multi-year agreement.

Program removes thousands of horses

The tribal horse removal program is in its fifth year. During that time, the program has removed thousands of excess and unwanted horses from the reservation.

"If the horse removal program was not implemented in 2011, there would be an estimated 11,628 horses on the reservation today," said Jason Smith, director of tribal Range and Ag. Instead, there are now 3,886, a difference of 7,742 horses.

Smith and Bobby Brunoe, Branch of Natural Resources general manager, gave an update on the horse removal project last week to Tribal Council.

Without the horse removal program, the number of excess horses on the reservation would be 23,388 by 2020, according to the Range and Ag estimate.

The near-term goal for the program is to remove another 1,000 horses from the reservation, during 2016-17, then level off horse removal to about 350 per year. This would reduce the reservation horse population to about 1,500, a manageable number, Smith said.

For comparison, the Yakama Nation has no removal program, and there are 20,000 horses on the Yakama Reservation, causing serious environmental damage.

The Tribal Council stated their continued support for the removal program, as a way to greatly improve fish, deer, elk, other wildlife and native plant habitat on the reservation.

Another benefit has been the creation of dozens of jobs, said Tribal Councilman Ron Suppah.

An aspect of the reservation horse problem began in 2006, when the federal government stopped funding for horsemeat inspection.

"Since then the horse market has been flooded, and the prices for all horses have dropped dramatically," Jason said. "The consequences of this policy change have been devastating, both economically and environmentally, to tribal nations throughout the country."

Another unintended consequence of the federal policy is increased neglect and abandonment of horses, he said.

According to a report by the Government Accountability Office: "Clearly, the cessation of domestic slaughter has had unintended consequences, most importantly perhaps, the decline in horse welfare in the U.S."

So instead of protecting horses, the federal policy has had the opposite effect.

Bobby Brunoe said an issue to keep an eye on is the idea to ban the exporting of horses from the U.S. for slaughter purposes.

See Horses on 6

On the Job with YouthBuild

Eight young people from Warm Springs are working with Heart of Oregon YouthBuild.

They are building houses in Madras. Heart of Oregon has developed a great working relationship with the tribes. In time they are hoping to build new homes on the reservation. Meanwhile they are planning a clean-up project in Warm Springs in early September.

The homes they build in Madras are for Habitat for Humanity families. YouthBuild has completed 16 houses so far, with the goal of finishing 25 by the end of the year. Each house takes about nine months to complete.

See Heart of Oregon on 6



Dave McMechani/Spilyay

Rodger Jack, Leionah Scott and Alyssa Culps at the Habitat house they are working on.

Cannabis project Commission on board

The Tribal Council last week appointed the Cannabis Commission of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The commissioners will take office August 1, and will serve three years.

Tribal Council appointed Ronald Roome as the commission chairman; Shana Radford as vice chair; and Starla Green as commission secretary.

Mr. Roome is an attorney from Bend. He has served as a judge pro tem in the Warm Springs Court. He is a former member of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, the body that regulates the cannabis industry in Oregon.

Shana Radford is the health liaison of the Warm Springs Health and Human Services Branch. She has a Master's Degree in International Law

and International Relations. Ms. Radford is a member of the Umatilla tribes.

Starla Green is in law enforcement with the Warm Springs Police Department. She also has experience in food handling regulation, experience helpful in cannabis regulatory compliance. Ms. Green is a member of the Confederated Tribes.

A selection committee—including Tribal Council members, the secretary-treasurer, and the Public Safety general manager—made the recommendation to appoint these three individuals to the newly formed commission.

They will be the policy-making and oversight body for the tribes' cannabis production program.

See Cannabis on 5

Unexpected result of WSFPI closure

The closure of the Warm Springs Forest Products Industries mill had consequences beyond just putting people out of work.

One consequence involves the successful enterprise Warm Springs Composite Products.

Composite Products is located adjacent to the mill structures. Unfortunately, the two enterprises shared the same power and water utilities systems.

The mill is now in receivership, and not in operation. If the mill does not re-open, then Composite Products eventually would need to have its own separate power system, said Jake Coochise, Composite chief executive officer.

There have been power outages recently with the overall system, he said, causing some problems for Composite Products.

The solution—establishing a new power system at Composite—will have a financial impact on the en-

terprise. The water system—the same pump that serves the mill also serves Composite—is another issue that would have to be dealt with.

Jake and Composite Chief Financial Officer Chuck Carrier gave the update last week to Tribal Council. Tribal Councilman Austin Greene said he appreciates the patience at Composite Products, as the Tribal Council works through the WSFPI receivership process.

An enterprise shut-down, such as happened with WSFPI, is new to the tribes, and there are unknown aspects, Chairman Greene said. Meanwhile, he said, an update on the receivership process is coming up later this month. The update could provide some insight in how to deal with the power matter at Composite Products.

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