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Tribes celebrate new Indian education law

Oregon now has a state law recognizing the importance of accurate Native American history and culture lessons in the public school system.

During this Oregon legislative session, Councilwoman and Culture and Heritage director Val Switzler testified two times in favor of Senate Bill 13, signed into law last week by Gov. Kate Brown.

Oregon is the third state to have this kind of law, Councilwoman Switzler said. Montana and Washington State each have similar existing legislation.

She and others worked with educators in those states to come up with the Oregon version of the law.

They also worked in government-to-government meetings with the Oregon Department of Education on the project.

Tribal Government Affairs director Louie Pitt was another advocate and facilitator of the process.

The tribes will develop



Courtesy Louie Pitt

At the Governor's signing, tribal Councilwoman Valerie Switzler and Kiksht language teacher Intern Rosie Johnson were among the guests.

their own history and cultural guides that will be the basis for a new curriculum. Culture and Heri-

tage, the Museum at Warm Springs, Natural Resources and others will be involved, giving a complete pic-

ture of the tribes, Councilwoman Switzler said.

Within the school system in the state, "There is a lot of inaccurate information about tribes," she said. The new approach will correct these inaccuracies.

The new law says the state Education Department "shall ensure that the federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon are given the opportunity to collaborate in the development of the curriculum..." The department may also make funding available to tribes to help with this project.

The Native American curriculum, once adopted by the Education Department, will then be made available to all the districts in the state.

The curriculum—conveying "the Native American experience in Oregon"—will be for grades kindergarten-12 throughout the state.

The 2019-20 school year is the target date for implementation of the curriculum.

Council posts 2018 proposal

Tribal Council voted this week to the post a proposed 2018 budget. Members will be receiving the budget mailing in the near future, and the district and General Council meetings will happen within the next 45 days.

Council approved a proposal as recommended by the Secretary-Treasurer. Tribal Council also earlier in the month heard detailed presentations from the enterprises and departments.

At management and Finance, the budget process began several months ago, in February or March.

The initial numbers foresaw a projected shortfall. A goal in developing a balanced budget recommendation was to see no tribal employee lose his or her job, said Secretary-Treasurer Michele Stacona.

A cost-saving idea involves the discretionary tribal contribution to the employee 401(k) plans, currently at 5 percent for those who qualify. Substantial savings can be had by suspending the contribution for a year, and this is part of the 2018 proposal. Employees could still contribute to their own plans, if they so choose. This approach that would allow for no employee layoffs in 2018 under the proposed budget.

Regional Finals Rodeo this weekend

DMJ Cattle this weekend will host the Western States Regional Finals Rodeo, a first for Central Oregon.

The Western States Finals Rodeo 2017 will be Saturday and Sunday, September 30 and October 1, at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds rodeo arena.

In the past, the event—a year-end chance to qualify for the Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas—has been held in Klamath Falls.

This year the organizers there couldn't host the event, and the DMJ stepped up and agreed to help. It was a lot of work with not much time, but the family put in a great

effort.

The rodeo will feature the standard events, plus three specials, said Shana Johnson, of DMJ. Mutton Busters, Wild Cow Milking and the 2-plus-1 event will be the specials.

The standard competitions include bareback, bull riding, junior bull riding, saddle bronc, steer wrestling, ladies breakaway, senior and junior breakaway roping, barrel racing, junior barrel racing, team roping, and senior team roping.

As this is a rodeo year-end event, there will be competitions that are Finals Rodeo elimination

rounds for some riders.

In competition from Warm Springs will be Tribal Councilman Lee Tom (senior breakaway roping), Jenna Johnson (ladies breakaway roping), Clint Bruised Head (steer wrestling), and Mike Holyan (calf roping).

The weekend will feature a Saturday barbecue after the rodeo, and a live musical performance.

The buckaroo breakfast is on Sunday morning.

Kedo Olson, voice of the Pacific Northwest rodeos, will be the announcer.

The rodeo on Saturday starts

at 1:30 p.m., and on Sunday at 11:30 a.m. You can get tickets at DMJ Auto, or at the rodeo gate. There will be a raffle with the top prize being two nights and three days at the South Point Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, during the National Finals Rodeo.

While this is the first locally-hosted Western States Regional Finals Rodeo, the hope is to make it an annual event, Shana Johnson said. There are many future possibilities, such as having a powwow as part of the show, she said.

Promising meeting with National Guard

Tribal Council met with a team from the Idaho National Guard this week, to discuss a program that could be of help to the tribes.

The Guard's Innovative Readiness Training program helps communities with many kinds of projects—from housing and infrastructure, to medical exam services, among many others.

The program also makes equipment—road and construction machinery, for instance—available to the organization, the only cost to the tribes being delivery of the item from the base where it's located.

All branches of the Armed Services participate, so the variety of available equipment and services is extensive, said National Guard Maj. Gen. Saylor.

He met with Council along with Guardsman Russ Johnson, and the Guard's cultural resources advisor Jake Fruhlinger.

Their meeting in Warm Springs came about through earlier contact from Councilmen Lee Tom and Ron Suppah. They had learned of the opportunity through the Return of the Boise Valley People tribal event in Idaho. During the meeting here this week, Chief Operations Officer Alyssa Macy mentioned housing, and the downtown infrastructure as areas of particular interest. The drinking water system is another area of interest.

Academy Language session

Tribal language instructors are now teaching during the regular school day at the Warm Springs Academy. This is a new program at the school.

The language class schedule now allows the option for all students at the Academy to choose to take a Native language, whereas before instruction was only available before the start of the regular school day, and afterward. Each child, with his or her parent's permission, may now join a class.

This had been a long-standing goal of the Culture and Heritage Department, Education Committee and others who seek to preserve the tribal languages.



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Culture and Heritage language teachers Jefferson Greene and Suzie Slockish teach at the Academy.



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