

# Town hall with Senator Merkley



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Senator Merkley presents the Warm Springs Community Action Team with a flag that had flown over the United States Capitol. On hand from the Community Action Team were board member Pinky Beymer, IDA program coordinator and Tax Aide program manager Nettie Dickson, office manager Lori Switzler, AmeriCorps Community Development specialist Gabby Robinson, financial counselor Demus Martinez, IDA program administrator Leah Guliasi, board member Jonathan Smith, board president Ted Brunoe, and WSCAT executive director Chris Watson (from left). Not pictured here are Small Business coach Dustin Seyler, board vice president Julie Quaid, board secretary Yvonne Iverson, and board member Shayleen Macy EagleSpeaker.

United States Senator Jeff Merkley opened his Warm Springs Town Hall by honoring the work being done at the Community Action Team.

The team assists tribal members who are working to purchase a home, a vehicle, begin a small business, or just save money.

The Individual Development Account, or IDA, program has seen great success among many residents, said Community Action Team executive director Chris Watson.

Dozens of residents have graduated from financial planning education, and tens of thousands of dollars have gone toward improvement

of the homes, and the community. Many have used the tax assistance program, among other programs at WSCAT.

An important project coming up is the small business incubator program, Mr. Watson said.

The Warm Springs gathering at the Academy was Merkley's Town Hall for Jefferson County, so many were in attendance.

Topics ranged from health care, the Middle East and Far East, gun control, the environment, tribal water rights, and veterans services.

The Senator also gave a special thank-you to the Warm Springs Ladies Auxiliary.



Senator Merkley honors members of the Ladies Auxiliary of Warm Springs, Viola Govenor, Gladys Grant, Diana Burger and president Susan Guerin.



Courtesy Diane Fuller

The Confederated Tribes Housekeeping staff from the Clinic, ECE-Head Start and Utilities completed a three-day training. This included both Basic and Advanced custodial skills in all areas of health and commercial building cleaning. At the end of the training all of the staff successfully completed a lengthy written exam and earned Certified Custodial Technician status. Congratulation to Woodrow Smith,

facilities manager and training host Orlando Stevens, Marion Ivey, Certified Trainer from CMI, Tanner Yallup, Rodney Katchia and Dani Katchia (back row standing); Gifford Anderson, Tim Wainanawit, Lyda Rhoan and Cheryl Starr (middle row standing); Lois Knight, Lisa Wallulatum and Chariss Haskins (front row seated).



D.McMechan/Spilyay

After the Council meeting, Chairman Austin Greene meets with Congressman Greg Walden.

# Wide ranging talk with Council, Congressman

During their meeting this month in Warm Springs, Congressman Greg Walden and Tribal Council held a wide ranging discussion—covering topics from the drug abuse crisis, to reform of forest management and fire fighting, to the tribal infrastructure dilemma.

The first talking point was illegal opioid use in Indian Country. The initial points were: The rate of drug overdose deaths among Indians is twice that of the general population. And deaths by prescription opioid overdoses among Indians increased four-fold between 1999 and 2013.

Tribal Council Chairman Austin Greene pointed out that the tribes currently contend with problems associated with alcohol abuse, and methamphetamine. "Meth use on the reservation is affecting our housing efforts, and has moved into our public tribal buildings," Chairman Greene said.

Walden acknowledged the point: "I do realize that in this region the meth problem can be bigger, compared to some other areas," Rep. Walden said. For this reason, he said, we need flexibility in the spending of federal drug prevention and treatment funding.

Council and the Congressman also talked about a variety of other subjects.

Councilman Ron Suppah said the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery is on the verge of failing, and the issue—as with many other things—is funding.

Councilman Suppah said the tribal water treatment plant also is 25 years old, and needs significant improvement. Funding for this, such as through IHS or the BIA, is a growing priority, Mr.

Suppah said.

Council Vice Chairman Jody Calica brought up the need for downtown underground infrastructure, another area where BIA cooperation will be essential.

Secretary Treasurer Michele Stacona said the Warm Springs Telecom has a pending application—pending for two years now—to become the incumbent local exchange carrier.

With the ILEC status, the Telecom could make improvements to better serve the reservation. Rep. Walden said he would contact the FCC and try to determine the reason for the delay.

Some recent good news, the Congressman said, was the passage of legislation that will improve wildland fire fighting. Among the provisions: The previous system required the use of forest management and fire prevention accounts for wild fire response. The new legislation provides funds that will be used specifically for fire fighting.

### Prevention summit

Health and Human Services general manager again addressed the crisis of drug abuse on the reservation.

Tribal communities face unique challenges in meeting the challenge, Mrs. Cruz said.

The Confederated Tribes will host the opioid and other drug abuse prevention summit June 5-6 at Kah-Nee-Ta. This will be with the nine Oregon tribes, and groups working with urban populations of Native Americans, working with the Oregon Health Authority.

## Register to vote

Several positions in Jefferson County are coming up for election on May 15. The Jefferson County Sheriff, the county clerk, and two county commission positions will be determined in this election. This will be a primary election.

If you aren't registered to vote, you still have time to register. The deadline to register is April 24, and ballots are scheduled to be in the mail on April 25.

You can register online if you have an Oregon driver's license or state ID. Go to: [SOS.Oregon.gov](http://SOS.Oregon.gov)

Or stop by the Jefferson County Clerk's Office, 66 SE D St., Madras. Or call 541-475-4451.

# Vote ~ Kim Schmith ~ Jefferson County Commissioner

### My priorities

#### A vibrant economy:

I will listen to our communities, help establish priorities, and work to develop balanced economic solutions to help us attract outside investment and spur economic development.

#### Education:

I wholeheartedly support the Warm Springs K-8 Academy and stand with Madras High School providing classes in the trades. Vocational courses provide a whole new world of opportunities for our youth—opportunities that pay well, may help

keep them in our community, and also strengthens our local workforce.

#### Affordable housing:

Whether renting or looking to buy, people in

our communities should be able to find housing that fits their needs, is in reasonable condition and doesn't cost so much they can't afford other basic needs.

#### Rural livability:

To protect our way of life, preserving our rural lifestyle, communities



and values, we must modernize our infrastructure; starting with improving Internet services, and keeping roads

and buildings in good repair.

*I bring a common-sense approach to problem solving, believe government is strongest when inclusive of all its residents, and am not afraid of hard choices or hard work.*

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The Warm Springs Baptist Church will host the **Revival 2018** this Sunday through Wednesday, April 15-18. The Evangelist will be Gerry Locklear of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

The Revival begins Sunday morning, and continues each night, starting at 6:30, through Wednesday. Bring family and friends. There will be great preaching, singing, and a great time for fellowship with the presence and the Spirit of God.

For information call 253-651-6849. The church is at 2230 Elliot Heights, Warm Springs.