



Spilyay Tymoo

Coyote News, est. 1976

September 25, 2019 - Vol. 43, No. 20
September - Wanaq'i ~ Fall - Tiyam

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Water system assessment at Council

The summer water crisis—with the months-long boil water notices—is over; yet the tribal water system is far from secure in the long-term.

The tribes are working toward an assessment of the entire water system, as a compliance measure with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The assessment will determine the future course of repairing and upgrading the system, with the most pressing matters to be addressed first.

Finding a solution is important, as the EPA in time could issue fines

in the instance of non-compliance.

Replacement of the water treatment plant on the Deschutes River will be the single biggest and most expensive item, though other areas of the system also need to be addressed.

The task is daunting to say the least, with overall funding likely in the tens of millions of dollars.

There are grants and other non-tribal sources available to tribes, though these could not cover the entire cost of all that needs to be done, said Alyssa Macy, Chief Operations Officer.

“There is no way to grant-write

our way out of this,” Ms. Macy said.

The summer water crisis required new piping under Shitike Creek to get domestic water to residences on that side of the creek. The work also required replacement of pressure control stations: The lack of pressure control was resulting in pipe breakage, taxing the already under-staffed water system staff at Public Utilities. The pressure control work is nearly done, with only one station still needing work.

Tribal Council on Monday discussed the water system with Man-

agement staff. An emphasis of the discussion was that the repairs this summer were not a long-term solution for water delivery system on the reservation.

On a brighter note: The tribes did learn this summer that the Oregon legislature approved close to \$8 million in Lottery funds for work on the tribal water system.

The funds become fully available in 2021 and will provide for, among other things, the installation of water meters for the many unmetered residences on the reservation.

Police Taser matter

As at other police departments, the Warm Springs department equips each of its officers with a Taser. “It’s a good option,” said Carmen Smith, Branch of Public Safety general manager.

The Taser provides a non-lethal option in making an arrest of someone who may be belligerent or resisting.

The Taser option can remove the need for an officer to pull his or her firearm, for instance, Mr. Smith said. And for this reason the use of a Taser can save lives.

The Warm Springs Police Department has had the Tasers since June of 2017, when they were purchased through a public safety grant.

Earlier this year the use of Tasers by the Warm Springs department became an issue when an officer was apparently misusing the device: The officer no longer works at the department, Smith said.

Tribal Council has discussed the topic, as the use of Tasers by the Warm Springs officers was apparently not brought before Council when they were purchased in 2017. This was before Mr. Smith became the branch manager.

Tribal Council this week took up the subject again, with Council members speaking in favor of the use of Tasers. “I would like to see the non-lethal option,” said Councilman Wilson Wewa.

He added that the Taser can be useful in apprehending a suspect who is trying to flee from police, because officers in these situations will generally not resort to the use of a firearm.

“I support this also,” said Councilman Glendon Smith, though he pointed out that there are situations when the Taser can cause injury or even death, such as when a person is on methamphetamines with an already elevated heart rate.

A Taser will fire two small barbed darts intended to puncture the skin and remain attached to the suspect.

The darts are connected to the main hand-held unit by thin insulated copper wire, and deliver a modulated electric current designed to disrupt voluntary control of muscles, causing “neuromuscular incapacitation.”

The reaction to a TASER strike may only be localized pain, or strong involuntary long muscle contractions, based on the mode of use and connectivity of the darts.

The TASER is marketed as “less-lethal” since the possibility of serious injury or death exists whenever the weapon is deployed upon a person.

Award nomination for health professionals

For the second time this year the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center is seeing outstanding recognition for its vaccination programs.

This summer the Community Health and clinic team won national recognition with the 2019 Indian Health Service Area Director’s Award—Fostering Relationships. This award was for the high rate of immunizations for children and adolescents among the reservation community.

This month Health and Wellness is nominated for the Oregon HPV Vaccine Is Cancer Prevention Champion Award.

“The award recognizes clinics who are leaders in health care, and who go above and beyond to promote HPV vaccination in their communities,” said Jody Anderson, public health educator with the Oregon Health Authority-Oregon Immunization Program nomination.

The award requires that the clinic have a minimum 60 per-



Courtesy W.S. Community Health

The team members at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center.

cent HPV series completion rate, while the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center has a completion rate of 73 percent, Ms. Anderson said.

The immunization rate is the result of a collaborative effort at the clinic, with Community Health working with the nursing and

medical staff of Warm Springs Indian Health Service. Plus:

“Warm Springs Health and Wellness has built collaborative relationships on a state, county and community level,” Anderson said.

The HPV vaccination is important, as it can prevent can-

cer caused by the human papilloma-virus. The vaccine is a way to build up the body’s natural immunity to the disease. Especially for young people this helps prevent the contracting and spreading the disease.

— Dave McMechan

Second funding summit on infrastructure

The tribes on Tuesday hosted the second Warm Springs Funding Summit, a comprehensive and cooperative project to help in rejuvenating the reservation infrastructure. Close to 60 people were on hand representing many agencies and organizations:

The regional Environmental Protection Agency office in Seattle, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Housing and Urban Development, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Health Service, the offices of Senators Wyden and Merkley, Rep. Daniel Bonham, USDA Rural Development, Business Oregon and the Oregon Community Foundation, among others.

Representing the tribes were Council and Management, Public Utilities, Sanitation and Landfill,

Housing, Governmental Affairs, Emergency Management, Health and Human Services, and others.

As the water crisis this summer has been the most publicized infrastructure event on the reservation, the summit began with Barry Buchanan, of PDG engineers, reviewing this work.

He detailed the repairs on the Shitike Creek pipe crossing, and the flow control station work. Helping the tribes in funding the repairs were the BIA, HUD and IHS.

He discussed the EPA order calling for an assessment of the entire water system. The survey will indicate what assets exist within the system, and what needs to be repaired or replaced. “Right now we don’t know what we have,” Mr. Buchanan said.

Since the first Warm Springs Funding Summit earlier this year, the Summit participants have been working in sub-committees with more specific areas of focus: Drinking water and waste-water systems, Housing, and the Dry Creek landfill. All of these areas are in need of serious attention; and are the reason for the tribes calling the Funding Summits.

Before this week’s Summit the participants were asked to complete a survey of seven questions regarding the infrastructure needs of the tribes. The results were shared among the participants. Some of the responses to the survey results:

Besides the actual physical needs of the infrastructure, there is a need for more staffing. Utilities is understaffed, and the tribes for the past

many months have had no planner. The existing staff are dedicated, with the best interests of the membership at heart; yet there is too much work, and this could lead to job burn-out—creating a potential new set of problems.

Dan Martinez, tribal Emergency Management, said the Summits and sub-committees have brought strong state and federal relations and partnerships to the tribes. Another observation:

Warm Springs is not alone among rural communities in Oregon that are experiencing serious challenges in creating and maintaining adequate infrastructure.

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