

Spilyay Tymoo

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New law respecting religion

A true and religious belief held among a culture is always to be respected. Oregon Senate Bill 189 is a great, and successful example of this principal. For years an Oregon law regarding health care has been in conflict with a spiritual belief held and practiced by some tribal members.

"It felt so unfair to our tribal people and to our staff who wanted to support the patients," said Dr. Shilo Tippett, manager of Caregiver Experience and Inclusion at the St. Charles Health System. "It felt morally wrong not to be able to do this," she said.

At issue has been the religious belief that at passing, the body of the departed must be buried whole, thereby allowing the person to travel to the spiritual world, Dr. Tippett said.

Previous Oregon law required "that pathological waste, including amputated body parts, organs, and tissues, must be incinerated by the health care facility within a certain time after removal from a patient's body."

Some patients in need of serious or life-saving medical care, such as amputation, were hesitant or against the idea of having the procedure. The concern has been that the patient would not be able to receive the body part back after surgery, precluding the religious practice at burial. "We've known this has been a concern, and it had been on the books for a long time," said Tribal Council Chairman Jonathan Smith.

The previous law was hurtful not only to the patient: The caregiver was also distressed because of the additional and unneeded anxiety of the patient, Dr. Tippett said.

Working in partnership for the past year, the Confederated Tribes and St. Charles were able to change the law. "It was very good to see St. Charles support us in this," Chairman Smith said, "and our continuing partnership is going to be a key for success in the future." The Chairman, Dr. Tippett and Councilman Wilson Wewa were among the tribal advocates for changing the law.

And following the advocacy of St. Charles and the tribes, the state legislature changed the law "to allow a patient or their representative to remove amputated body parts, organs, and tissues from a health care facility for purposes of cremation, interment, or other final disposition." (The change "excludes pathological waste that may cause disease or adverse health impacts in humans.")

For background: St. Charles Health System caregivers began the work on amending the law last summer, following a survey among the tribal community: By a large margin community members said they wanted the law to change, allowing for tribal custom and practice.

See SB 189 on 6

Water, power line work in Warm Springs

Utility crews in early August finished the first phase of the Shitike Creek Bridge water line crossing project. The work will provide a permanent solution to a water delivery issue that came to light in 2018-19, said Chico Holliday, tribal Utilities general manager.

At that time the 14-inch water main in the creek was compromised, impacting the Agency water service to the south side of the creek, Mr. Holliday said.

The solution at the time, as an emergency repair, was the replacement of the 14-inch water main with a smaller line, as a temporary solution until funding became available for the permanent solution, Mr. Holliday said.

About a year to the day of the installation of the temporary fix, the system failed again, as "the flow could not meet the demand," he said.

The solution at that time was the installation of a new 12-inch line, which until now had been the primary line for service to the Agency south side.

The project that concluded last week replaces the 12-inch line with a 16-inch primary line, while the 12-inch line will now be the redundancy or back-up line, Mr.

Holliday said.

The new line goes from the area of the cattle guard on Shitike Creek Road, following the creek down to the bridge, where it makes a 90-degree turn across the creek. The line will be alongside the bridge.

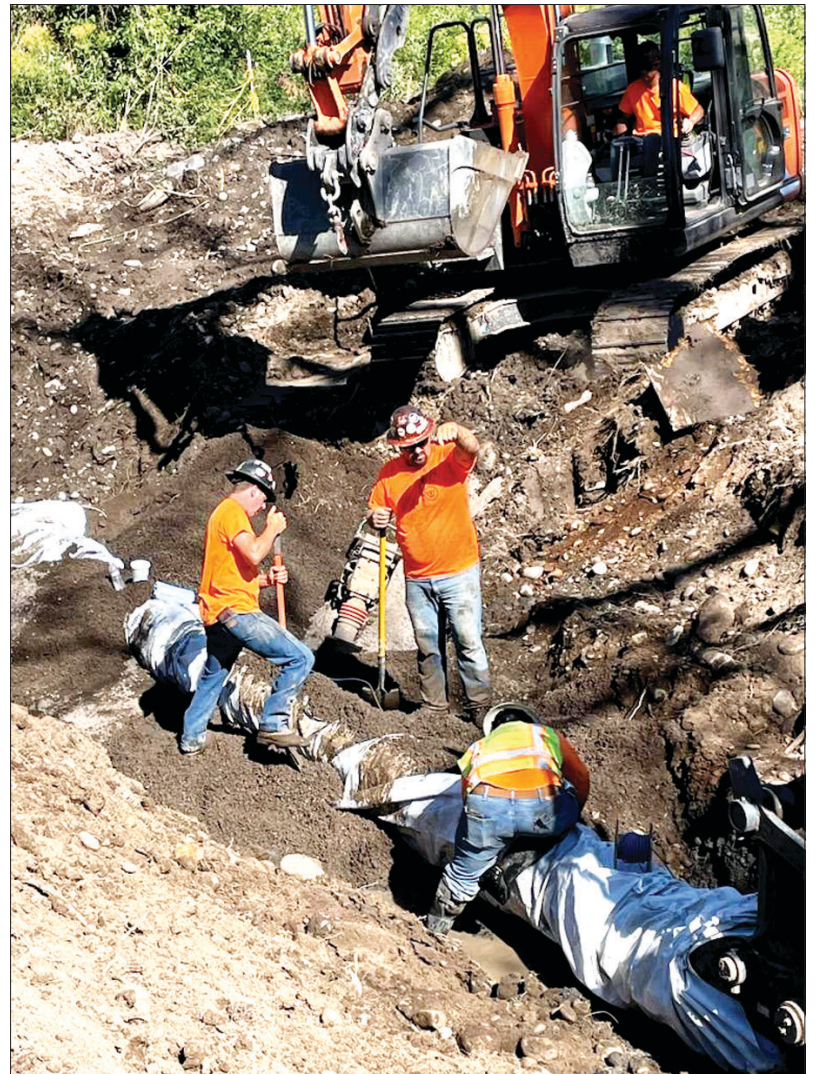
A second phase will be the installation of control valves along the line on both sides of the bridge, Mr. Holliday said.

The Indian Health Service is funding about 90 percent of the overall \$2.3 million project. The Confederated Tribes are providing \$450,000.

Power lines

Meanwhile, a line crew with Pacific Power & Light has been installing new power poles in Warm Springs, as part of a project along highways 26 and 97.

PP&L is also changing out the power transformers. The transformer aspect of the work has to do with the incidence of wildfires in the region, Holliday said. There are instances—the 2020 Beachie Creek fire, for instance—when the transformers have been contributing, or at times main factors in the spread of wildfire. The new system will allow PP&L to shut down specific transformers during emergency situations, Mr. Holliday said.



Courtesy photo

Construction crew installing new water line in the area of the Shitike Creek crossing, where in the past, previous problems have caused significant water outages and other problems.



The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Canoe Family joined more than 100 other tribal canoe families at the conclusion of the Journey to Muckleshoot.

More than 10,000 people gathered on the Muckleshoot Reservation to welcome the canoes and paddlers, and to share songs and dances for several days at Alki Beach.

Tents, RVs, vans and cars covered the grass in front of the newly constructed Muckleshoot Community Center. The week-long celebration was July 31-August 6.

The canoe of the Warm Springs Family is pictured above at center with the flag of the Confederated Tribes; and members of the family are pictured at

Samiakin Allen/
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