



Historic investment in tribes' energy system

\$250 million for power transmission

The Confederated Tribes and Warm Springs Power & Water Enterprises are at the beginning of a new and promising time. A way forward now seems open for serious economic growth for the tribes and membership, while improving electricity transmission in the state, and at the same time helping the overall environment. The idea and potential development are big.

"This is a game-changer for the tribes, and for the region," said Cathy Ehli, general manager of Power & Water Enterprises. "This could be the catalyst that opens up so many possibilities." As Tribal Councilman Jim Manion, former long-time general manager of Power & Water, adds, "This is a once in a generation opportunity."

With business partner Portland General Electric, the tribes and Power & Water sell electricity from the Pelton-Round Butte hydro dams to communities in the Willamette Valley. The power is carried approximately 100 miles west on power lines—the Bethel-Round Butte transmission lines—that were built in the 1960s. The lines can carry only so much, and are at capacity in terms of allowable kilowatts.

At the same time, the state by law and the U.S. by policy are moving to more reliance on renewable energy such as hydro and solar power, and away from fossil fuels. Over the past couple of years, these and other factors aligned fairly quickly, resulting in the tribes learning in October they are to receive a \$250-million U.S. Department of Energy grant. The funding will help replace the vital power lines between the Pelton-Round Butte system and the Willamette Valley.

The process began with passage of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021. The law includes a \$10.5 billion investment to improve the U.S. electric grid. This part of the overall law is the Grid Resilience Innovative Partnership program, or GRIP.

Early this year Power & Water Enterprises applied for a grant under GRIP to address the capacity and efficiency issue of the Bethel-Round Butte transmission lines. The Department of Energy review team liked the proposal for several reasons. "We just had to tell our story, and they agreed," Cathy Ehli says.

One initial positive factor is that the right-of-way corridor for the transmission lines already mostly exists, as the new lines would follow this same right-of-way. This eliminates what would be a lengthy, expensive legal and land-use process of obtaining a 100-mile long



Courtesy PGE

The Bethel-Round Butte transmission lines, currently carried on wooden poles: In the future the larger lines, able to carry much more power, will be on metal poles.

utility right-of-way.

Another key aspect of the tribal proposal is that the electricity to be transmitted across the new lines would focus on renewable sources, the Pelton-Round Butte system, for

instance. And this brings up another fortunate aspect of this recent development.

The tribes and Power & Water for several years have been studying the idea of a commercial solar

power project on the reservation, and a number of developers are interested. The problem has been the transmission system, too expensive for the tribes to upgrade themselves. "The lines are full and right now we can't put more power on them," Mrs. Ehli said. The new GRIP grant would help resolve this.

An Oregon policy requires that utilities in the state have a certain amount of renewable energy sources in their portfolios, so the demand for solar is high, like for hydro. "This is a tremendous opportunity for renewable energy development on the reservation to the economic benefit of the tribe and its membership," commented Tribal Council Chairman Jonathan Smith.

A solar panel field would have to comply with the tribes' environmental and land-use process, and have the support of the membership and Tribal Council, Mrs. Ehli said. This is also true of the expanded Bethel-Round Butte transmission line on the reservation.

If the project happens as now envisioned, the potential sources of new revenue to the tribes are great. There would be the opportunity to lease an area of the reservation to a solar developer. The upgrade to the transmission lines would also allow more efficient use of the Pelton-Round Butte power.

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Member Art Show opening at Museum



Submitted by Deborah Jackson, owner of the necklace.

The Judges Choice Award—Traditional award-winning beaded medallion necklace *The Cougar with Green Eyes* by Delcie Scott. (More Art Show on page 3.)

The Thirtieth Annual Tribal Member Art Show is opening at the Museum at Warm Springs. A soft opening is this Wednesday, November 3, and then the grand opening is tentatively set for next week. The show features the Judges Choice Awards Traditional and Contemporary, and many other works of art showcasing the talents—in beadwork, regalia, painting, multi-media and more—of the membership.

A thank you for the memories

Among the friendliest and most helpful people you can meet is Doris 'Teeney' Miller. She has been both the nicest and longest-serving office manager of the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes.

"I started working with Tribal Council in March 1984," Ms. Miller was saying last week. "I've been here for 40 years, short four months, in the same spot. I moved once for a couple weeks but moved back to my spot. Can you imagine 40 years in the same spot?"

This was easy for her, though: "I've loved my job," Teeney says. "I've enjoyed working with and meeting people."

Over the four decades, she has worked with more than a dozen Tribal Councils, learning as much as anyone about the tribal government, and the membership. She's worked with Council from the time the chambers were located in the Courthouse building.

"In my earlier years with Tribal Council I spent a lot of time away from home. They were my family away from family," she says. "I enjoyed the time I spent with them, listening to the stories they told or remembering 'the good ole times' and the people they grew up with, and the laughter.

"I learned of our tribes' religions we practice here on the res-



Dave McMechan/Spilyay

During her farewell week at the Tribal Council offices, Doris Teeney Miller, long-serving office manager.

ervation, the spirituality often spoke of. I remember one member saying, 'I am not afraid of anybody or anything—I have my spirituality, and my savior protecting me.'"

As a youth, Ms. Miller attended Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma. She then attended the Cleveland Academy of Professional Secretaries in Ohio. This was with the encouragement of Perry Smith and George Smith, and BIA Education.

Finishing school, she soon joined the staff of the Tribal Council, by

then located in the Administration building, built in the 1980s. Teeney moved to the Tribal Council support staff offices, where ever since she had the seat by the window, except for the couple of weeks as she mentioned.

She remembers the Councils she first worked with. "They often spoke of our major documents, and most importantly the relationship between the Tribal Council and the people."

See Years of Service on 5



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