

Letters to the editor

From CET

Cascades East Transit has reinstituted bus fares after five years of free service that began with the covid pandemic. The change is due to a reduction in state and federal funding, particularly following the state transit tax.

CET is offering daily, monthly and yearly passes for tribal members, people on the Oregon Health Plan; people with disabilities, and military veterans. Anyone who falls under those categories qualifies for half off on the passes: They just need to call their customer service line.

With the pass, cost is \$30 for an unlimited number of rides for the monthly pass, or \$1 per ride; and the yearly pass, at the half off rate, would be \$250.

All riders are now required to have both a transit pass and a fare to ride the bus, though cash is still being accepted for a two-dollar ride. Additionally, CET is adding security guards to buses to enhance safety.

CET staff is holding weekly sign-up events in Warm Springs to help people get passes.

They have begun setting up on the Warm Springs Reservation every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to help out the avid transit goers' transition to their new fare pass system.

Concerns have been raised about the impact of the new fares on homeless people and those with financial barriers.

In response, CET has launched a 'Community Movement Fund,' and they are seeking donations from corporations and individuals to provide tickets to social service companies, non-profits, and homeless shelters across Central Oregon. Interested donors can contact CET directly.

For young health scholars

More than 50 Central Oregon Community College students enrolled in health care training programs in rural areas will have their tuition fully or partly covered by a grant from the Central Oregon Health Council.

The \$224,532 grant funding will also be used to help expand health sciences programming at high schools in the Jefferson County School District; and pay for field placements for Central Or-

egon Community College students.

The grant period opened late last year and continues through 2030.

The new grant bolsters a \$300,000 grant from the Oregon Health Authority given in 2025, and covers the same purpose. The OHA funding will continue through June 2027.

Scholarships from that grant are being awarded to about 100 COCC students studying health care specialties.

Oregon has a vast need for health care workers, especially in rural areas.

"With our newly expanded Madras campus, the timing of this funding is allowing more students from rural areas to work toward high-demand health care careers in the region," said Zak Boone, vice president for college advancement and COCC Foundation executive director.

Priority for the OHA and COHC funding is being given to students who lived in, attended or are attending school or intend to work in a health professional shortage area, including most of Central Oregon and the Warm Springs reservation.

Awards range from \$500 to \$5,000.

From NCAI

With the unpredictable and chaotic nature of American politics, National Congress of American Indians President Mark Macarro was adamant that tribes should remember their power and protect tribal citizens, while giving the 2026 State of Indian Nations address earlier this month.

"We are sovereign tribal nations, and we will never back down," Mr. Macarro said.

The speech, Macarro's third, outlined priorities for the tribal advocacy organization and is given at the start of NCAI's Executive Council Winter Session in Washington, D.C.

Macarro, also the chairman of the Pechanga Band of Indians, said full funding for healthcare, education, housing, infrastructure, law enforcement, and disaster relief must be given for Indigenous communities.

"For Congress to fulfill the United States trust responsibility to Indian Country, the entire tribal budget must be funded. An annual non-competitive based budget, or give our stolen lands back. Let's state this truth clearly. There is enough.

There has always been enough. The only scarcity is political will," Macarro said.

Macarro reiterated that tribes need to come together to meet the moment.

"Let's walk forward together in unity, in strength, and abundance, and commit to one another that we will not just survive this moment. We will shape it," he said.

Traditionally, a member of Congress gives a response to the State of Indian Nations. This year, U.S. Senator Tina Smith, a Minnesota Democrat, was afforded the opportunity. Smith was previously recognized by the organization in 2024 when she was awarded the Congressional Leadership Award for her dedication to Indian Country.

Despite being set to retire at the end of her term later this year, Smith vowed to continue to fight on behalf of tribes in the halls of Congress.

"I will work as hard as I can on food sovereignty in the Farm Bill, to pass the Protect Act, and to address the critical housing shortage in Native communities. I will push, relentlessly, the federal government to uphold its trust and treaty obligations, and to meet those obligations, and to honor your sovereignty," Sen. Smith said.

Travelpulse feature on Kah-Nee-Ta Resort

Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort was a featured destination in a recent review by the website travelpulse.com

Here is their write-up:

As winter drags on—when the days are short and the cold seems to seep into your bones—few things feel better than sinking into a steamy hot springs pool. Close your eyes, take a long breath and, for a moment, let the cold, the calendar and the noise of the world dissolve into steam.

Across the United States, hot springs resorts deliver this rare winter luxury. Once temperatures drop, these destinations transform into cozy sanctuaries, inviting travelers to slow down, unplug and warm themselves from the inside out.

Notes...

Warm Springs Community Health Program has a **hand sewing circle** that meets every Tuesday at noon in the clinic atrium. Lunch and supplies are provided for participants. For more info contact Charlene, 541-553-2352. Or email: charlene.moody@wstribes.org

Thrive Central Oregon can help connect people to local resources they are looking for, such as housing, healthcare, basic needs, benefits assistance, employment and more. There are many resources in Central Oregon, but they can be difficult to access alone.

They have drop-in hours in Warm Springs and Madras once a week. Tuesdays they are available at the Warm Springs Housing Authority from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m. Thursdays they are at Jefferson County Public Health 10 a.m. to 3.

First recipient of 1905 Legacy Award



The artist in her Portland studio; and an example of her work.

A new award honoring Oregon artists has its very first recipient: Lillian Pitt of the Confederated Tribes and Portland-based sculptor.

Ms. Pitt was awarded the inaugural 1905 Legacy Award, handed out by the Ford Family Foundation, the organization announced last week.

Lillian has spent decades making clay masks, cast glass figures, bronzes, jewelry and prints using local Indigenous petroglyphs and

pictographs as inspiration.

Her most recognizable pieces feature Tsagaglalal, or *She Who Watches*, located in Columbia Hills State Park on the Washington side of the Columbia River Gorge. Her work is also featured at the lobby area of the Museum at Warm Springs.

The 1905 Legacy Award is named for philanthropist Hallie Ford's birth year.

The award recognizes outstanding Oregon artists whose extensive careers and sustained excellence have significantly impacted the artistic community of



Oregon.

The award is now given every five years, accompanied by \$50,000 for the artist to use as they see fit.



Kah-Nee-Ta reopened in the summer of 2024, wholly renovated and better than ever.

selves from the inside out. For inspiration, here is a hot spring perfect for a winter escape:

Owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs Resort has been welcoming visitors since 1962. The beloved,

family-friendly resort closed in 2018 but recently reopened in the summer of 2024 after a multi-million-dollar renovation.

This Central Oregon gem, which is located on the Warm Springs Reservation in the foothills of Mount Hood, offers soaking pools

with mineral-rich, geothermal waters ranging from 92 to 104 degrees.

There's also an on-site wellness spa, several sport courts and overnight stays that include remodeled hotel rooms, camping-style teepees and and RV sites.

WARM SPRINGS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (WSED) BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)

Notice for 2 Board Member Applicants

for

1 - Tribal Member POSITION

&

1 - Non-Tribal Member POSITION

Letters of Interest & Resumes of applicants in serving on the WSED BOD, should be submitted

NO LATER THAN 5PM – WEDNESDAY – March 4th, 2026

- Drop off at WSED Building addressed to WSED CEO
- By Mail send to: WSED CEO, 4202 Holliday St. - PO Box 1186, Warm Springs, OR 97761
- By email send to: jim.souers@wstribes.org

Criminal and Credit Background Check will be required and forms can be emailed or mailed as requested. Information will be submitted confidentially to the WSED CEO.

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