

Tribe issued a statement calling the situation ‘unfortunate’

FREEZE continued from front page

Management and Budget officials reversed course and rescinded the federal freeze order the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 29. Then, later in the day, the White House said that the federal funding reviews remain in effect, according to an article in The Washington Post.

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden announced on social media Tuesday morning that his staff had confirmed that Medicaid portals were down in all 50 states.

“This is a blatant attempt to rip away health insurance from millions of Americans overnight and will get people killed,” Wyden said.

The Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center reported that it was able to verify Medicaid accounts through the federal portal as of Tuesday afternoon.

Tribal Communications Director Sara Thompson issued a statement calling the situation “unfortunate.”

“The recent actions by the federal government to stop payment on federal grants and loans is unfortunate,” she said. “While we are still trying to figure out how these actions may impact our programs, we are confident that our own financial security should help us navigate any temporary uncertainty this may cause. We will continue to monitor the situation and re-evaluate things as we move forward.”

Engineering & Community Development Department Manager Ryan Webb said it was unclear which of the Tribe’s grants will be affected.

“We got direction that Head

Start is not affected and that the Environmental Protection Agency grant for the recreation center is affected,” Webb said. “But we didn’t get that same clarification for the EPA grants for environmental cleanup at tumwata village, or for the Tribe’s toxins reduction grant... Information is unclear even when it does come trickling out.”

He added that his department is continuing to seek more information through contacts in the federal government and across Indian Country.

Meanwhile, Tribal Grants Manager Wendy Sparks informed department heads in an email that it was reviewing all federal grants and loans. If necessary, these will be “realigned to the priorities of the current administration.”

Departments that are working on existing grant applications or programs should continue to do so, she added, and should continue submitting reports as usual.

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley condemned Trump’s actions in a press release, calling the freeze “a clear violation of law and Congress’s constitutional duty to appropriate funds.”

“The president is not a king, and the laws Congress passes are not suggestions,” Merkley said. “Federal funds are the foundations for our schools, hospitals and law enforcement and fire departments. These funds support the roads we drive on, the pipes that deliver water to our homes, the food we eat at our kitchen tables grown by farmers in our communities and federal programs that assist families recovering from natural disasters.” ■

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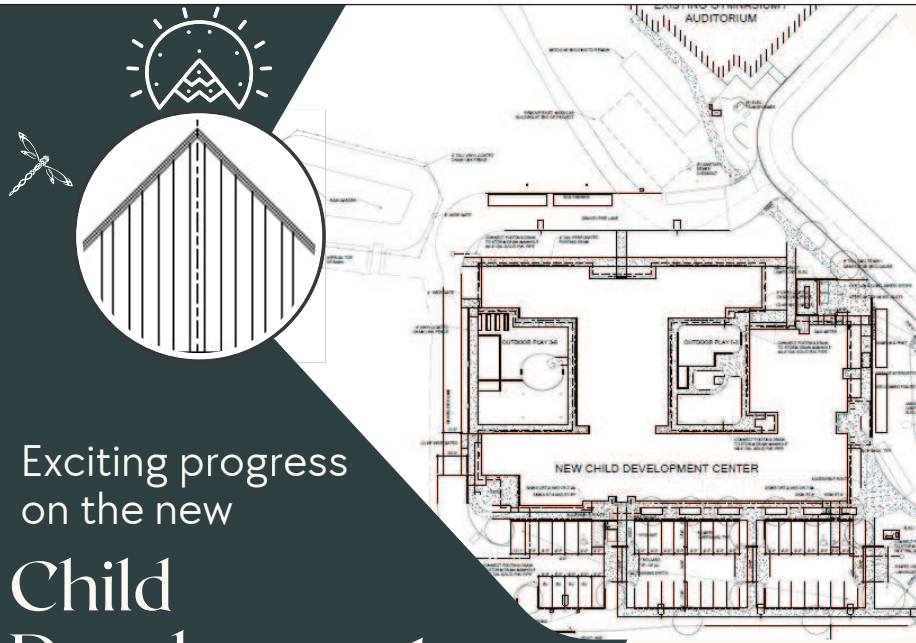
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