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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

WESTERN OREGON TRIBAL FAIRNESS ACT SET TO BECOME US LAW

Legislation would transfer control of 32,000 acres of federal land to tribes

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

In a rare example of bipartisan law making, House Resolution (HR) 1306, The Western Oregon Tribal Fairness Act, will convey more than 32,000 acres of land, currently under federal control, to three tribal entities in western and southern Oregon.

The bill was passed by the House of Representatives in the summer of 2017 and the Senate approved the bill by voice vote for delivery to the President on Dec. 27, 2017.

HR 1306 provides for conveyance of land to three of Oregon's nine

federally recognized tribes.

The Western Oregon Tribal Fairness Act would place 17,519 acres of federal land, currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management, (BLM) into trust for the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and 14,742

acres of federal land into trust for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians.

It would also amend the Coquille Restoration Act to require the Interior Department to manage the

Coquille Indian Tribes' forestlands in the same way as other tribal forestlands.

President Donald Trump has 10 legislative days from the time the bill is presented for his signature, to veto the legislation or to sign it into

"We are excited to once again be in control of a small piece of our homeland."

— Brenda Meade, Coquille Indian Tribal Chairwoman

law.

If no action is taken by the president during this time period, the bill automatically becomes law.

The president is not expected to veto the legislation, according to multiple sources on the hill, primarily

because of the strong support the bill has received in both houses of legislative branch.

If there is no veto of the bill, it will take effect on Tuesday, Jan. 8.

HR 1306 was introduced in March by District 4 Rep. Peter Defazio and the legislation is cosponsored by District 2 Rep. Greg Walden.

Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley were sponsors of the bill in the Senate.

Coquille Tribal Chairwoman Brenda Meade is pleased with the change in the law and the shift in the position of the federal government.

"We are tremendously relieved

and grateful to have the Senate address the disparity that has burdened our forest for so long. We have managed these forests since time began," Meade said. "We are excited to once again be in control of a small piece of our homeland."

The intent of the legislation has several components. One element is the restoration of ancestral lands to indigenous people that were victimized by government officials and civilians intent on cashing in on the gold fever of the 1850s.

Additionally, the bills' sponsors said they see the need to expand the control native peoples have over the resources they own, such as timber and minerals.

See **FAIRNESS 6A**

Siuslaw Bridge upgrade is ahead of schedule

ODOT expects all phases of bridge protection project to be finished in fall of 2018

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) released the 2017 Bridge Condition Report this week.

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

ODOT currently manages 2,742 bridges. The report stated that 13.7 percent of Oregon bridges are in good condition,

84.2 percent are in fair condition and 2.1 percent are in poor condition.

The information provided in this year's report also includes updates on upgrades being conducted across the state. This includes information on the progress of the improvements underway at the Siuslaw River Bridge in Florence.

According to ODOT Region 2 Public Information Officer Angela Beers Seydel, the overall status of the Siuslaw Bridge Protection Project is good.

"The northern half of the bridge is complete and the crews are currently working on the southern half of the bridge. The rail replacement is about three quarters done and crews are currently working on the arches and the northeast section of the bridge," Beers Seydel said.

The Siuslaw River Bridge project does present some unique challenges, as it is an historical landmark which also serves as an entrance to a functioning port and marina, as well as serving as part of Highway 101.

ODOT also seeks to protect the bridge from the corrosive effects of sea air and river tidal movement.

The name for this aspect of the upgrade is cathodic protection. The multi-phase process is partly completed at this point.

ODOT State Bridge Engineer Bruce Johnson believes cathodic protection is essential to maintaining the Siuslaw River Bridge for the foreseeable future, and, coupled with the other improvements being undertaken, will significantly lengthen the usable life of the structure.

"We are very happy with the work on the Siuslaw Bridge Protection project. All of our projects don't go as well as this one," Johnson said. "Our contractor is organized and the major areas of repair work are all progressing quite well. We have fabricated a new rail that resembles the classic design of the previous rail. We are also applying a cathodic protection layer of zinc, which will corrode before the steel of the bridge, helping to protect the structure from the harsh coastal environment."

Unfortunately, the danger of a catastrophic natural event will still pose an ongoing threat to the residents of Florence. This is mainly because the seismic improvements that are being installed will not totally protect the bridge from a major earthquake.

See **BRIDGE 6A**

'You have already won'



PHOTOS BY JARED ANDERSON AND CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

Deluxe Corporation and Small Business Revolution leader Amanda Brinkman addresses a crowd of more than 500 at the Florence Events Center at a reception featuring 10 restaurants, small business owners, singers and community members.



Above, ten restaurants provide samples of their cuisine at the reception. Below, Brinkman visits with community members during site visits and meetings on Thursday.



BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

The Florence Events Center (FEC) was packed on Wednesday night as producers and hosts from the Hulu television show "Small Business Revolution - Main Street" came to Florence.

The event was spearheaded by the Downtown Revitalization Team (DRT), a committee of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, and was led by DRT Chairwoman Ellen Huntingdon. The reception itself was hosted by the City of Florence.

Small business owners and community members flooded the main floor of the FEC as they dined on refreshments provided by 10 area restaurants.

"I really hate it when you schedule an event and nobody shows up," Mayor Joe Henry joked as he spoke to the crowd. "There are at least 500 people here. It's really amazing on short notice what's been put together here, and that everybody turned out like this. It shows what small

town America is all about, and what being the 'premiere coastal city' in Oregon is all about."

Chamber Executive Director Bettina Hannigan said, "The Small Business Revolution team was blown away by the turnout. They said that they had never had a turnout like that ever, in the last two years. Our community just blew their socks off."

The keynote speaker of the evening was Amanda Brinkman, cohost of the show.

"This is the first stop on our 10-city tour, and you guys have set the bar," Brinkman said to a round of applause. "There were thousands of nominations for season three (of the show). Of those thousands of nominations, you made it into the top 20, which is a big deal in of itself. Now you're in the top 10. These are the 10 towns we get to visit and get to know better."

"We want to meet the small businesses and the community residents and find out what your needs are, your challenges, your successes, and what makes this place special."

See **REVOLUTION 7A**

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