

## PENDLETON

# National Forest office moving to Umatilla Indian Reservation

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East Oregonian |

By spring of 2012, the Umatilla National Forest headquarters will have a new home on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The U.S. Forest Service office has been at its current location, 2517 N.W. Hailey Ave., in Pendleton for 44 years. The new location will be a new single-story building at Coyote Business Park, just off Interstate 84 at Exit 216. It will house 70 employees, about the same amount as are at the current building in Pendleton.

Pendleton Mayor Phil Houk said he didn't mind seeing the Umatilla National Forest headquarters move outside his city's limits, because the jobs still are staying local.

"What's fortunate about that is the jobs are not leaving Pendleton," he said. "Quite frankly I'm very pleased it worked out that the tribes were able to get that project. I congratulate them for their work on that for keeping the jobs in Pendleton."

There will be 113 parking spaces, including those large enough for horse trailers, haulers and RVs, a news release from the Umatilla National Forest and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation said.

The CTUIR, which owns Coyote Business Park, will own the building. The forest service will lease the building from the tribes. The news release referred to a "\$3 million financing package" but did not go into more detail, as negotiations are still taking place.

The building achieved a silver rating on the Leed certification scale — a rating the U.S. Green Building Council uses to rate green buildings — the news release said.

The old building on Southwest Hailey Avenue was built in 1967. The forest service held two 20-year leases there, said Joani Bosworth, public information officer for the Umatilla National Forest. At the end of each 20-year lease the forest went through a formal bidding process. At the end of the most recent 20-year lease, it was extended for two years. In that most recent two-year extension, the forest paid \$289,000 annually.

During that time the forest service has been negotiating and bidding for a new location. The owner of the building on Southwest Hailey Avenue did not put in a bid for the new lease. According to Umatilla County records, the building is owned by Nora Peterson of Pocatello, Idaho.

"It is with mixed emotions we prepare to leave our current site," said Kevin Martin, forest supervisor. "This location has served us well and we recognize that, for generations, the community has come here for information about their forest. We will strive to provide the same quality service at our new site."

The CTUIR won the bidding process. The new lease is a 15-year firm term lease with a five-year renewal option. There is not a definite timeline on when negotiations for the new lease will be finished.

CTUIR Interim Executive Director Debra Croswell said the Board of Trustees will be meeting and working through a multi-step process. She and the board hope to have the paperwork done in time to begin construction on the building this summer.

The CTUIR sees the new building as another chance to add to its expanding business hub off Interstate 84.

"The CTUIR has a well-established relationship with the Umatilla National Forest and we believe that the proposed office location would

expand our opportunities to collaborate on a government to government basis, and it will increase traffic at CTUIR enterprises such as Arrowhead, Wildhorse and Tamastlikt,” said CTUIR Board of Trustees Chairman Elwood Patawa.

“It definitely adds some diversity to the business park,” Croswell said. “This will be one more element to continue to draw other businesses as well.”

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