



Tribal members Merle Kirk, left, Pamela Cardena, Shirley Tufti, Arlita Rhoan and others will work with students as primary resources for research information. Susan Matheny/The Pioneer

Students tackle research

By Susan Matheny
General Editor

A classroom of students at Madras High School has accepted the challenge to extensively research a topic, then condense the material down to 500 words for possible publication in the online Oregon Encyclopedia.

"Oregon Encyclopedia in the Classroom" is being field-tested in select schools in Oregon. At MHS, students in the Cultures of Warm Springs class, taught by Becky Dudney and tribal guest speakers, are participating in the pilot project.

Started in 2008, the Oregon Encyclopedia, at www.oregonencyclopedia.org, is a comprehensive resource for information about the history and culture of Oregon.

The storehouse of information is being built through selected submissions from Oregonians themselves.

But unlike Wikipedia, all submissions go through nu-

merous editors and fact-checkers to make sure the entries are accurate and easily understood. Those that make the grade, are then entered into the encyclopedia.

Previously, workshops were held in communities around Oregon to encourage people to submit entries about their areas. This year, the classroom project is expanding the encyclopedia's reach to include the perspective of students.

Dr. Bill Lang, executive director of the Oregon Encyclopedia, spoke to students Feb. 15, to explain the project and what type of writings are being sought.

"We now have 1,000 entries on the encyclopedia, and our goal is to have 5,000 en-

tries," Lang said, projecting an image of the website on a screen.

Material posted has to be originally written, and can not be copied from other websites or publications.

"We have had 450 authors for those 1,000 entries. No other encyclopedia can match that," Lang said, commenting on the way it is being compiled.

The perspective of Warm Springs tribal students could add a lot to the encyclopedia, Lang said.

"Why? Because if you pick up an Oregon history textbook, the story is extremely narrow; there are only three or four themes," Lang said, citing the Oregon Trail as an example.

"Instead of staying in those same old ruts," he quipped, "other people, places and events should be part of the Oregon story." And that includes tribal history.

Worldwide, people are

history of the Paiute, Wasco and Warm Springs tribes, Tribal Council, the Treaty of 1855, traditional fishing, Warm Springs government, and biographies of chiefs.

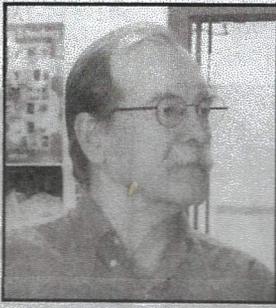
The MHS students' primary source for information will be tribal elders and members. "We could have five to 12 tribal people a day working with my students," Dudney said.

"You are using human beings as a resource, not writings elsewhere. Lived experience is the ultimate reality, and they're sitting here right now," Lang said, gesturing at the tribal volunteers in attendance who have been working with the class.

During the process, students will develop research, interviewing, and writing skills, while delving into tribal history.

There is no guarantee their finished essay will be accepted by the Oregon Encyclopedia. But entries can also be reworked and entered in the National History Day competition.

"If we could get one or two of you on the Encyclopedia that would be great. You'd be



Bill Lang, Oregon Encyclopedia executive director.

