

# Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CTUIR Commemorates MMIWP Week for Those Missing or Murdered**

MISSION – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation’s (CTUIR) Family Violence Services and Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center held events on May 6 as part of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women People (MMIWP) Week.

Outside the Nixyáawii Governance Center at 10 a.m., the Nixyáawii Drum Group performed several songs and Umatilla Master Speaker Fred Hill offered a prayer. Family Violence Services employees set out silhouettes as well as memory dresses and shirts with messages or names of murdered or missing people.

Yellowhawk organizers hosted a remembrance walk at 11:30 followed by a lunch.

Family Violence Services Manager Desiree Coyote said the CTUIR commemorated MMIWP Week because community needs to know that murdered or missing relatives are remembered.

“We want to bring healing to our community for those who are missing, murdered or have been trafficked and are trying to come back to who and what we are as Indigenous (people), and to stand up and continue to state, ‘We are not invisible,’” Coyote said.

She added that far too often Indigenous people have gone missing or murdered and are not properly acknowledged by the system.

“There is a lack of accountability, a lack of transparency with regard to addressing the violence that occurs against our people,” Coyote said. “So in order to take a look at the baseline information around missing/murdered Indigenous (people) even the systems don’t even have the exact number, nor do they know or understand. The unfortunate piece is that tribal communities do know and remember even though our numbers don’t match what the system has and probably never will match what the system has because of the lack of meaningful investigation or meaningful heeding of the community when people are missing or murdered.”

Other MMIWP events included making the memory dresses or shirts on April 29 and May 1 at the Nixyáawii Governance Center and Yellowhawk, respectively. Also, a closing prayer and songs are set for 2 p.m. on May 10 at the Nixyáawii Governance Center.

Although the CTUIR held its events May 6-10, the National Partners Work Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) and the MMIW Family Advisors organized a National Week of Action from April 29 to May 5 to call the nation and the world to action in honor of MMIWR.

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek officially proclaimed May 5 as MMIP Awareness Day in Oregon to honor and remember the Indigenous people affected by violence and to affirm collective responsibility to promote justice and awareness. It serves as a reminder of the disproportionate violence that American Indian and Alaska Native people, including women, girls, two-spirit relatives and other Indigenous people face.

*The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Tribes, and formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.*

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Caption1: Observers listen to a speaker during the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's Family Violence Services event commemorating Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women People Week on May 6 at Nixyáawii Governance Center. CTUIR

Caption2: Family Violence Services Manager Desiree Coyote, right, walks with Education Administrative Assistant Andria Scott and a child during a remembrance walk commemorating Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women People Week on May 6. The walk went from the Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center to the Nixyáawii Governance Center and back. CTUIR

Caption3: A memory shirt stands on May 6 outside the Nixyáawii Governance Center as part of Family Violence Services' Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women People Week. Memory shirts and dresses with messages or names of murdered or missing Indigenous people were made the previous week. CTUIR