

Tribal Council swearing-in photos

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025



SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA, MOLALLA, ROGUE RIVER, KALAPUYA, CHASTA

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE, SMOKESIGNALS.ORG

George re-elected, Wakeland and McClary clinch other seats

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

ncumbent Kathleen George, past Tribal Council member Toby McClary and first time Tribal Council candidate Pete Wakeland won victories in the Tribal Council election Saturday, Sept. 6.

McClary garnered more than 18% of the vote, Wakeland received 14.4% and George received 14.2%

McClary received 681 votes, Wakeland received 537 votes and George received 528 votes.

"This election was like one I've never seen before," McClary said. "With only 15 votes separating second and sixth place, it literally came down to Saturday's walk-in voters. Perhaps that's a testament to the fact that candidates need to work hard right to the very end. This election



Toby McClary



Pete Wakeland



Kathleen George

cycle seemed very clean and each candidate seemed very respectful of one another. That's something each of us should be proud of, and I hope that can be an example for future elections."

George said she was grateful for the support of fellow Tribal members and that she knows the Tribe can come together to continue nation building.



"As I look to the work ahead, three priorities rise to the top for me: Keeping our Tribe's ability to provide services to our people strong and sustainable by carefully

evaluating and managing growth..., communicating openly with our Tribal members about important decisions or changes that affect the way our Tribal government works and creat(ing) an independent Ethics Commission that can

> See ELECTION continued on page 8

General Council briefed on **Social Services**

By Danielle Harrison

 $Smoke\ Signals\ editor$

ribal Social Services Manager Dana Ainam gave the first presentation of the 2025-26 General Council meeting cycle on Sunday, Sept. 7.

Ainam gave an overview of the myriad services her department offers to help the Tribal membership become self-sufficient, which include access to services, supports and cultural connections that help provide and promote wellness.

The department currently offers Tribal members assistance with basic needs, transition services, drug and alcohol recovery support, mental health support, assistance for victims of violence, employment and training, youth and family support, child safety support, unforeseen crisis support, resource connections, transitional housing and financial literacy and wellness.

Ainam noted that the Tribe's strong relationship with the Oregon Department of Human Services has helped engage the membership with programs beyond Tribal offerings.

"We have our self-sufficiency workers from their offices housed here at Social Services on Wednesdays," she said. "They can provide things like TANF applications, SNAP benefits, printing cards for people and then on Thursdays, we have family support coaches here to help families that need assistance with parenting and those types of things."

> See MEETING continued on page 13



Riley Freeman, 13, left, and Tribal member Fabian Quenelle participate in Ampkwa Advocacy's 2025 Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Walk at Riverview Park in Independence Saturday, Aug. 30.

Honoring the missing, murdered

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

t has been 26 years since Leona LeClair Kinsey (Puyallup) of La Grande, Oregon, joined the legions of Indigenous women who have vanished without a trace. Kinsey's daughter, Carolyn DeFord (Puyallup), is still searching for answers, a search that has also drawn her into fighting for justice for Indigenous people.

It's why DeFord drove to Oregon to serve as the keynote speaker at Ampkwa Advocacy's 2025 Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Walk at Riverview Park in Independence Saturday, Aug. 30.

Survivors of lost loved ones, dancers and supporters came together to remember their missing, grieve their dead and call awareness to the ongoing crisis. TikTok influencer Che Jim (Dine) was the emcee for the event. Turquoise Pride was the drum.

The group listened to speakers

See MMIP continued on page 10

General Council meeting

11 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 5
Tribal Council Chambers

Tribal members can participate remotely via Zoom and in-person attendance. Call 800-422-0232 for more information.

Please note that these times and dates are subject to change if needed. Attendance in Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 503-879-2304.

Tribe offering support to incarcerated members

Grand Ronde Tribal members who are incarcerated, have been recently released from prison or are involved in addiction treatment programs don't have to face challenges alone.

The Tribe has a post-prison/post-treatment peer support specialist, Tribal member Joe Ulestad, who is also a certified recovery mentor.

"I want our members who are incarcerated or need help to know we haven't forgotten about them and we're here to help," he said. "They can call me, email or text."

Ulestad can be reached at joe.ulestad@grandronde.org, by text/call at 971-237-5262 or on office line, 503-879-1389.

Letters welcome

smok signalz, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, is published twice a month. No portion of this publication may be reprinted without permission.

Our editorial policy is intended to encourage input from Tribal members and readers about stories printed in the Tribal newspaper and current events happening within the Tribe. However, all letters received must be signed by the author, an address must be given and a phone number or email address must be included for verification purposes. Full addresses and phone numbers will not be published unless requested. **Letters must be 400 words or less.**

smok signalz reserves the right to edit letters and to refuse letters that are determined to contain libelous statements or personal attacks on any individual, as well as individual Tribal staff members, individual Tribal administration members or individual Tribal Council members. Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Letters to the editor are the opinions and views of the writer.

Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of smok signalz.

TRIBAL OFFICE CLOSURES

Tribal offices will be closed Friday, Sept. 26, in observance of National Native American Day.

STORY IDEAS?

Do you have Tribal story ideas you would like to see in Smoke Signals?

Please share your suggestions at news@grandronde.org or by calling Editor Danielle Harrison at 503-879-4663.

WWW.SMOKESIGNALS.ORG

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

smok signəlz

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DEADLINE DATE ISSUE DATE Monday, Sept. 22 Oct. 1

 Tuesday, Oct. 7...
 Oct. 15

 Wednesday, Oct. 22...
 Nov. 1

 Wednesday, Nov. 5...
 Nov. 15

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Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assoc.
2022 IJA General Excellence
2023 IJA General Excellence

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smok signəlz **SEPTEMBER 15, 2025**

N THE FUTURE (k^hapa ałgi)

Kwayts-mun (September)

- Wednesday, Sept. 24 Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 503-879-2304.
- Thursday, Sept. 25 Northwest/West Coast Indigenous Fashion Show, 6 p.m., Spirit Mountain Casino, 27100 SW Salmon River Highway.
- Friday, Sept. 26 Tribal offices closed in observance of National Native American Day.

tałlam-mun (October)

- Sunday, Oct. 5 General Council meeting, 11 a.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Wednesday, Oct. 8 Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Monday, Oct. 13 Tribal offices closed in observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- Sunday, Oct. 19 Spirit Mountain Casino 30th anniversary celebration for Tribal members, 2 to 4 p.m., Spirit Mountain Event Center. Light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be served.
- Wednesday, Oct. 22 Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.

To stay informed of future Tribal events, visit www.smokesignals.org/calendar.

We want to hear from you!

The Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center Comment Box is located at the entrance of the Health & Wellness Center, next to the drinking fountain. Share your experience, good or bad with us.

Find us on

OFFICIAL TRIBAL FACEBOOK PAGES

Smoke Signals:

facebook.com/SmokeSignalsCTGR

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde:

facebook.com/CTGRgov

Grand Ronde Health & Wellness:

facebook.com/GRHWC

Grand Ronde Children & Family Services:

facebook.com/CTGRCFS

Grand Ronde Royalty:

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Grand Ronde Education Programs:

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Grand Ronde Youth Council:

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Grand Ronde Station:

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Grand Ronde Social Services Department:

facebook.com/CTGRSocialservices **Grand Ronde Food Bank:**

facebook.com/GrandRondeFoodBank

Spirit Mountain Community Fund:

facebook.com/SpiritMountainCommunityFund

Grand Ronde Cultural Education:

facebook.com/Grand-Ronde-Cultural-Education

Grand Ronde Community Garden:

facebook.com/GrandRondeCommunityGarden

Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department:

facebook.com/Grand-Ronde-Tribal-Police-Department

Grand Ronde Employment Services

Facebook.com/EmploymentServices

School clothes program is open

The Social Services school clothing program is open and requirements are as follows:

- · Child must be an enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member (must provide CIB or Tribal ID);
- · Child must be of school age and must be registered in preschool, elementary, middle or high school;
- Income must meet eligibility criteria.

To learn more about the application process or to get an application, call the Social Services front desk at 503-879-2034 or stop in between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Social Services is located in the Tribal Community Center building on the Tribal campus.

The program closes Wednesday, Dec. 31. ■





Food Bank news

The Grand Ronde Food Bank – iskam məkhmək haws – is operated by Marion-Polk Food Share, which has been leading the fight to end hunger since 1987 because no one should be hungry.

Recipients of SNAP, TANF, SSI or LIHEAP assistance automatically qualify for assistance at the Grand Ronde Food Bank, 9675 Grand Ronde Road. No one will be turned away in need of a food box.

'We believe that everyone deserves to have enough to eat," Food Bank Coordinator Francene Ambrose says. "You are welcome to get a food box at each of our regular weekly distributions. No one will be turned away in need of a food box."

The Food Bank will hold September food box distributions from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays. In addition, there is a light food box (mostly bread and produce) distribution from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays.

People must check in 15 minutes before closing to receive a food box on both days. If you need immediate assistance, call 211 or visit

Those who are unable to pick up a food box can fill out an authorized representative form and that designated person can pick up a food box on your behalf. The authorization is good for one year.

The Food Bank continues to seek volunteers to help with repacking food, putting food on the shelves, handing out food boxes, end-of-month inventory and picking up food donations at area stores.

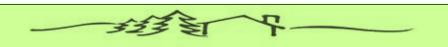
Call to ensure someone is available to assist. People also can sign up for a monthly email for the Food Bank calendar and events, as well as follow the Food Bank on Facebook.

The Food Bank is an equal opportunity provider. Contact Ambrose at 503-879-3663 or fambrose@marionpolkfoodshare.org for more information or to volunteer. ■

Committee & Special Event Board meeting days and times

- Ceremonial Hunting Board meets as needed. Chair: Marline Groshong.
- Culture Committee meets as needed at the Veterans House. Chair: Molly Leno.
- Editorial Board meets monthly. The next meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 19, via Zoom. Chair: Mia Prickett. Contact Editorial.Board@grandronde.org for the meeting link.
- Education Committee meets at 5:30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the month in the Adult Education building. Interim Chair: Valeria Atanacio.
- Elder Board meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m. in the Elders Activity Center. Chair: Darlene Aaron.
- Enrollment Committee meets quarterly in Room 204 of the Governance Center. Chair: Debi Anderson.
- Fish & Wildlife Committee meets at 5:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month at the Natural Resources building off Hebo Road. Chair: Reyn Leno.
- Health Committee meets at 10 a.m. the second Monday of the month in the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Building. Chair: Darlene Aaron.
- Housing Grievance Board meets at 3 p.m. the third Thursday of the month in the Housing Department conference room. Chair: Harris Reibach.
- Powwow Special Event Board meets as needed at the Community Center. Dates vary. Contact Dana Ainam at 503-879-2037. Chair: Dana Ainam.
- TERO Commission meets at 10 a.m. the second Tuesday of the month in the Employment Services building. Chair: Russell Wilkinson.
- Timber Committee meets at 5 p.m. the second Thursday of the month at the Natural Resources building off Hebo Road. Chair: Jon R. George.
- Veterans Special Event Board meets at 5:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month in the Quenelle House. Chair: Molly Leno.

To update information on this list, contact Smoke Signals Editor Danielle Harrison at 503-879-4663 or danielle.harrison@grandronde.org.



GRAND RONDE HOUSING DEPARTMENT

28450 Tyee Road – Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347 – 503-879-2401 – Fax 503-879-5973

ATTENTION ALL HOUSING TENANTS AND GUEST PLEASE SLOW DOWN IN ELDER HOUSING

also, please make sure and maintain low levels of music in the Elder community.



2020 — Meeting virtually because the Tribal Government Center was closed due to extreme fire danger, Tribal Council approved another round of virus relief payments for adult Tribal members for September to November.

2015 —The Tribe accepted a donation of 14 acres from the Tillamook County Board of Commissioners at Kilchis Point on the eastern shore of Tillamook Bay. It was located near the site of one of the largest Native villages on the northern Oregon coast.

2010 — The Tribe submitted a 155-page document to



File photo

the Bureau of Indian Affairs, opposing the "preferred alternative" of the Warm Springs Tribe, which was seeking to build a new off-reservation casino in Columbia River Gorge.

2005 — The Tribe and Portland State University were preparing to offer a class on "Great Tribal Leaders of Modern Times" in the Education Building on the Tribal campus. Nearly 30 Tribal leaders had been interviewed for the series, including Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison.

- After signing a memorandum of understanding earlier in the year, the Tribe hosted representatives from five ranger districts in the Willamette National Forest for a tour, to develop a closer government-to-government relationship and discuss joint projects.

1995 — Tribal Elders attended a "Moonlight Pour" in Troutdale, of the bronze statue the Tribe had commissioned of Martha Jane Sands and her granddaughter, Gertrude. It was created by Oregon artist Rip Caswell. Today, the statue is on display at Spirit Mountain Casino.

1990 — Tribal Chairman Mark Mercier reported that the Office of Housing and Urban Development had approved funding to build a community center to house community and Elder services, marking the Tribe's first facility on the reservation. It was to be about 6,000 square feet. The Tribe was also purchasing property and hoped to acquire 140 acres by the end of the year.

1985 — The draft of the Tribe's Reservation Plan was nearing completion, as the Tribe continued to fight for federal reinstatement. The Tribe was planning to release an executive summary of the plan for Tribal members as soon as it was completed.

Yesteryears is a look back at Tribal history in five-year increments through the pages of Smoke Signals.

Cedar Circle Home Visiting



Now Enrolling Families for Services

- · Tribal Member or Tribal Descendants
- No referral needed
- Sign-up period: Prenatal-3 months of age (please reach out for exceptions).
- · Service length: Prenatal-age five*
- · First home visit will mark the official enrollment of family.
- Service area within Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington, Polk, Marion, Yamhill and Tillamook County.

Children will be able to graduate at ige three, services will be available through the age of five if Japuil Specialist (FSS) six

Requirements: About Cedar Circle **Home Visiting**

Cedar Circle is a home visiting program that will support parents, caregivers, and babies prenatally through 5 years of age. In this program you will be connected with a Family Support Specialist that will share information about child development and parenting, promote healthy and nurturing parent-child relationships, and provide information and referrals to strengthen families. Our Family Support Specialists have access to supplies for their families to help them

meet their needs.

Interested in enrollment? Jenn Clark Cedar Circle Home Visiting Family Support Specialist 503-879-6713



Tribal Council approves grant application for salmon recovery

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved a grant application aimed at increasing the Tribe's salmon recovery efforts during its Wednesday, Sept. 3, meeting.

In 2024, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board secured additional grant monies from the federal Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund specifically for Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes. Grand Ronde was allocated approximately \$100,000 for salmon recovery and conservation planning efforts, which cannot be used for monitoring, restoration or acquisition.

During a Tuesday, Sept. 2, Legislative Action Committee meeting Tribal Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen said that if awarded, the Natural Resources Department would like to use the grant funds to support current and future consulting work by VandenHeuvel Strategies, which it has contracted with since 2022 for salmon recovery services.

"There are three main components under the grant that this would cover," he said. "Basically, it's administrative work under the salmon strength team. It does say that the money can't be used for lobbying...so we might modify the grant and use of the funds to cover staff reaches. ...It does have some complications but we think it would be really useful to supplement the existing grant to free up Tribal funds that are dedicated to the contract now."

Specifically, grant funds would be used to coordinate the Tribal Salmon Strength Initiative, participate in the Willamette Valley environmental impact statement and provide technical help to implement the Willamette Basin biological opinion.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved a Tribal credit card authorization for Audit Manager Michael Langley with a \$2,500 limit:
- And approved the enrollment of seven infants into the Tribe because they meet the requirements under the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance.

In other news, the first payment date under the new General Welfare Ordinance was announced. It was set for Friday, Sept. 12, and the amount was \$870 for all eligible Tribal members, including minor children. The payment is tax-free and will not reduce other Supplemental Social Security payments to members who receive those benefits.

The payments will be made to members by direct deposit or check, whichever has been requested by the member. General welfare payments to minor children will be deposited into a new account.

The payments are calculated based on casino dividends, similar to per capita payments. Future program funding sources will be discussed by council for the 2026 budget.

Members will not receive a per capita payment for September.

For more information, visit the Tribe's website, scroll to the bottom of the page and view "September 2025 General Welfare Program Payment."

To watch the entire meeting, visit www.grandronde.org and click on the Videos tab. ■

CALLING ELDERS: KEEP OUR STORIES ALIVE Our history, teachings, and ways are knowledge that must be carried forward for our children, grandchildren, and those yet to come. However, they can only live on if they are told by you. We are seeking community elders to serve as docents who can provide museum tours, and share our traditions, history, and wisdom with public visitors and community members. Your stories, your knowledge, and your way of teaching are irreplaceable. Without your voice, the next generation may never know the stories that shaped them. WHY JOIN US? Pass on our history and stories how they are meant to be told Strengthen community connection and pride 4-8 hours per week, within Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm Flexible schedule, we will work around your availability Support provided, you will never be alone in this work Training provided No experience necessary, just the willingness to learn and share Your presence is a gift we cannot replace. TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE CONTACT Crystal Starr Fullerton crystal.szczepanski@grandronde.org

Drug take-back kiosk located at Tribal Police Department

There is a new drug take-back kiosk in the front lobby of the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department, 9655 Grand Ronde Road. It is open during regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The following items are accepted:

- Unused or expired prescription medications, including pet medications
- Unused or expired over-the-counter medications
 The following items are not accepted:
- Thermometers or any item containing mercury
- · Needles
- Pre-loaded needles
- · Empty bottles
- Personal care products (vitamins, herbal remedies, supplements, cosmetics)
- Batteries
- Illegal drugs
- Aerosol cans





Now accepting new applications

- Do you want to be more involved with the Tribe?
- Do you have a desire to be a part of a group to plan and be involved in Tribal activities and events?
- Are you intersted in making positive changes for future generations?

Current vacancies:

- Ceremonial Hunting Board Must be a ceremonial hunter (2)
- Election Board (1) Election Board alternates (2)
- Fish & Wildlife Committee (1) Culture Committee (1)
- Powwow Special Event Board (2) Health Committee (1)
- Timber Committee (2)

For questions email:

shannon.ham-texeira@grandronde.org

Applications available online at:

www.grandronde.org/government/tribal-council/committees/

Applications also available in the Tribal Governance building: Located at the Tribal Council office near the security desk.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

A newer, readily available synthetic kratom has healthcare providers worried. The supplement can cause unexpected harm.

Synthetic kratom sales worry healthcare providers

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

While illegal drug usage wreaks havoc among users and their loved ones, treatment providers say a legal, readily available herbal supplement can also cause unexpected harm, particularly in a newer synthetic form.

The leaves of kratom, a tropical shrub related to coffee, are traditionally used as a mild stimulant like coffee or tea in the southeastern Asian countries where it grows, and sometimes for pain relief or recreation.

But it has found a different audience in the United States; one far more interested in the fact that "at really high doses, way higher than the tea level, you can get an opioid-like effect," Dr. James Laidler of the Tribe's Great Circle Recovery Clinic said.

Unfortunately, those effects also come with serious downsides, and a new, synthetic form, sold as an all-natural and organic supplement, is drawing notice.

"In recent years, there have been an increasing number of outlets selling 7-hydroxymitragynine (often labeled as 7-OH) as a recreational substance," Laidler said.

However, "the amount of 7-hydroxymitragynine in kratom leaves is 2%; there's not enough in the leaf to extract. They are chemically oxidizing mitragynine" to create 7-OH, Laidler said. "Not exactly natural, and it's also more potent. If that's what's actually in it."

Laidler said part of the concern is that supplements are unregulated.

"Nobody knows what's in it; it could be anything," he said. "A lot

of people don't realize they will become addicted. When it was (popular) before, people were using it to get off heroin. They were thinking, it's natural, it will ease the withdrawal — and then what would happen is they would get off heroin using kratom stop taking the kratom, and have withdrawal from that."

Seizures are the most common symptom of overdose of kratom or kratom products, Laidler said. In addition, some people who try to stop using kratom experience "absolutely crushing depression," he noted.

The federal Food and Drug Administration announced in July that it was recommending placing some 7-OH products under the Controlled Substances Act.

"I hope that the current administration and the FDA follows through and bans it," Tribal Peer Support Specialist Ferrell DeGarmo said. "I'm pretty concerned about how accessible it is. Many of our youth have started experimenting with kratom or using kratom. I know a lot of people in addiction who self-medicate with kratom, but this is a whole 'nother beast...because it's so much more potent than kratom itself. It's way more potent, way more addictive and just a way higher risk that what kratom already is."

Doctor Manya Helman of Great Circle Recovery said the issue is important "because it concerns a drug that is sold at convenience stores, gas stations etc., giving the impression that it is okay. But it isn't, we have seen how addictive it can be. As such, it is certainly a gateway drug."

Grand Ronde Station offering gas discount

Grand Ronde Tribal members, as well as Tribal and Spirit Mountain Casino employees, can receive a 30-cent per gallon discount on gasoline at the Tribally owned Grand Ronde Station convenience store.

There are, however, a few rules. Tribal members and employees must go inside and show either their enrollment card or employee identification card to receive the discount. ■

Tribal Council approves ag permits, announces new app launch

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

With just a week passing in between meetings, Tribal Council had a fairly light agenda Wednesday, Sept. 10, with only a few action items.

The shorter one-week period between meetings occurred because Tribal Council traditionally holds a meeting after new members are sworn into office.

Earlier in the day, incumbent Kathleen George, past Tribal Council member Toby McClary and first-time challenger Pete Wakeland were sworn in for new three-year terms after taking the top three spots in the Saturday, Sept. 6 election. Denise Harvey, who served 12 years on Tribal Council, officially became a former Tribal Council member.

During the Tribal Council meeting, Vice Chair Chris Mercier announced that the Tribal member app, CTGR alta (chinuk for CTGR now), was available in Google Play and the Apple Store.

"Through this app, Tribal members will have access to a secure and user-friendly platform that will allow Grand Ronde Tribal members to stay informed and up to speed on things that are happening in Grand Ronde," he said. "With CTGR alta, Tribal members can stay up to date with all Tribal events, tune in to meetings and receive reminders for upcoming meetings, activities and events.

503-879-2146.

Jacob.Boekhoff@grandronde.org

The app provides secure messaging capabilities which will allow members to receive secure information often reserved for executive session directly on their device. The app allows Tribal members to select what topics they are interested in and allows them to enable push notifications to make sure they're receiving timely updates about important events, news, announcements and reminders."

Mercier added that staff is working with developer Sembit to expand the app's capabilities and is looking forward to launching future phases.

For more information on the app, visit www.grandronde.org/alta/.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved reappointing Trevor Aaron to the Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees, with a term ending Sept. 30, 2027;
- Approved annual agricultural permits for hay, crop and pastures, which are expected to generate approximately \$31,000 for the Tribe during the 2025-26 season;
- And approved enrolling one infant into the Tribe because they meet the requirements under the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance.

To watch the entire meeting, visit www.grandronde.org and click on the Videos tab. ■



Casino guest hits the jackpot

A guest at Spirit Mountain Casino received a surprise during his Labor Day Weekend trip. He hit a \$506,482.32 jackpot on the Buffalo Diamond Extreme slot machine.

"This is a significant win and an exciting highlight for Spirit Mountain Casino," CEO Camille Mercier said.

The winner has chosen to stay anonymous. The payout for the jackpot will be handled directly by Aristocrat Gaming, the machine's manufacturer. The guest will have the option to select either a monthly annuity payment over 20 years, or a one-time lump sum settlement.

"This type of win is excellent news for our property, as it reinforces the excitement and thrill of playing here at Spirit Mountain," Mercier said. "It also provides us with a great opportunity to highlight SMC's ability to deliver memorable, life-changing experiences for our guests. We are thrilled to see such a win take place on our floor, and we look forward to celebrating more of these milestone moments in the future."



Attention All Artisans

Now accepting bids for our Senior Miss crown.

Submit full design that includes:

- The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde logo including feathers.
- Court Year 2026–27.
- Title: Senior Miss Grand Ronde.
- Crowns must be completed and delivered by July 31, 2026.

Must submit photos of progress when requested.

Bid deadline is Friday, Oct. 31, 2025. (deadline is firm and no bids will be accepted after 5 p.m.)

Mail bids and designs to: CTGR Royalty c/o Shannon Simi 9615 Grand Ronde Road Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Questions: Call Shannon at 503-879-1358 or email shannon.simi@grandronde.org

*Bids and designs can be sent to the above email address.

Sund Porte

Overdose awareness



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Native Plant Nursery Assistant Joseph Ham, left, packages tobacco seeds for Tribal Elder Alan Ham during the Overdose Awareness Barbecue at the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Building Thursday, Aug. 28. The event was organized by Behavioral Health for the community to come together to honor, heal, raise awareness and share a commitment to recovery and remembrance. There were resources tables and hot dogs and hamburgers were served for lunch.



Tribal member Dakota Butler tells his story of addiction, treatment and recovery during the Overdose Awareness Barbecue at the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Building Thursday, Aug. 28.

ELECTION BOARD VACANCIES

One permanent full time board member position open.

Two alternate board member positions open.

Qualifications:

Basic computer skills / file search / email / phone inquiries / flexible hours.

For information contact:

Shannon Ham-Texeira • 503–879–2301 shannon.ham-texeira@grandronde.org



Turnout was 29% with 1,329 ballots cast

ELECTION continued from front page

help us uphold good process and accountability. When Tribal members raise concerns, this would provide an independent commission that could investigate the request and determine appropriate steps."

Tribal Council incumbent Denise Harvey was not reelected. She came in at 523 votes, slightly more than 14%.

"It's been an honor to serve as a Tribal leader for the Tribe, community and nationally," she said. "I truly appreciate all the years of support from our membership."

Tribal member Valeria Atanacio also received 523 votes, resulting in a tie for fourth place.

"To those of you who placed your trust in me with your vote – hayu masi," Atanacio said. "I am truly humbled by your support and the trust you carried in my leadership. While this is not the outcome we hoped for, please know my commitment to our people, our sovereignty and our future remains."

Tribal Elder Lisa Archuleta received 522 votes, approximately 14% and just one less than the fourth-place finishers.

Tribal member Peter Grout received 251 votes, approximately 6.8% and Tribal Elder Pamala

Warren-Chase received 153 votes, approximately 4.1%.

George, 54, will serve her fourth term on Tribal Council.

Wakeland, 63, will serve his first term on Tribal Council.

McClary, 47, was the Tribe's Procurement Department supervisor. He resigned from that position to serve on Tribal Council. He previously served on council from 2009-15.

This year marked the 11th consecutive year of single-digit candidates running for Tribal Council. The last time 10 or more candidates threw their proverbial hats in the ring was in 2013.

Turnout was 29% with 1,329 ballots cast out of 4,586 eligible adult Tribal members.

Winners were sworn into office at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 10, in the Governance Center Atrium.

Also on the ballot were two advisory votes. The results were:

- Should the Tribe evaluate opportunities to pursue or invest in a Tribally operated farm? 794 yes and 355 no.
- Should the Tribe create an online store where Tribal members can buy Tribal logo clothing, blankets, etc.? 902 yes and 248 no.

This is story will be updated online with candidate statements if they provide those. \blacksquare

ATTENTION!!!

DUE TO ILLEGAL DUMPING OF TRASH IN THE RECYCLE BINS AND CONTAMINATION, THIS RECYCLING DEPOT IS ON THE VERGE OF CLOSING AND GOING AWAY.

CTGR FACILITIES DEPARTMENT





of Indigenous fashion in the Pacific Northwest.



Election results

Sept. 6, 2025

CANDIDATES FOR COUNCIL

Toby McClary	681
Pete Wakeland	537
Kathleen George	528
*Denise Harvey	523
*Valeria Atanacio	523
Lisa A. Archuleta	522
Peter Grout	251
Pamala Warren-Chase	153

* TIE

ADVISORY VOTE QUESTIONS

QUESTION #1

Should the Tribe evaluate opportunities to pursue or invest in a Tribally operated farm?

YES - 794 / 69.1% NO - 355 / 30.9%

QUESTION # 2

Should the Tribe create an online store where Tribal members can buy Tribal logo clothing, blankets, etc.?

YES - 902 / 78.4% NO - 248 / 21.6%

Graphic by Samuel Briggs III

Scam and Fraud Prevention Education

- Please join your local G.R.T.P.D. for education on how to recognize the current online, phone, and mail
- The only thing required is any desired note taking material, the education is no cost to you.
- The class will be at the Elder
 Activity Center, located at: 48940
 Blacktail Dr., Grand Ronde, 97347
- October 10th, 2025
- Anyone is welcome to attend.
 Class starts at 10:30 am.





smok signəlz **SEPTEMBER 15, 2025**

Swearing-in ceremony held



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Newly elected Tribal Council member Toby McClary is sworn in during the Tribal Council swearing-in ceremony in Tribal Council Chambers Wednesday, Sept. 10.



Newly elected Tribal Council member Pete Wakeland is sworn in during the Tribal Council swearing-in ceremony in Tribal Council Chambers Wednesday, Sept. 10.



Newly reelected Tribal Council member Kathleen George is sworn in during the **Tribal Council swearing-in ceremony in Tribal Council Chambers Wednesday,** Sept. 10.

Grand Ronde artists receive grants from Oregon Community Foundation

Two Grand Ronde Tribal artists Steph Littlebird of Salem and Stephanie Craig of Dayton — are among 14 who have been selected to receive grants from the Oregon Community Foundation's Creative Heights grants program.

According to its press release, OCF's Creative Heights initiative "has invested roughly \$1 million per year since 2014, to support 151 projects across visual art, performance, folk and traditional arts, film and media, literary arts. museum exhibitions, humanities, music, theater, dance, opera, history, cultural heritage and multidisciplinary works."

"We want to support bold creative visions — not just to advance the careers of these artists, but also to enrich Oregon's creative landscape. These projects give communities access to groundbreaking arts and cultural experiences," OCF Senior Program Officer Jerry Tischleder said in the press release. "Opportunities like these are rare. We have found that when given the resources they need to reach for the stars, Oregon's creatives deliver."

Littlebird, an artist and curator, received \$55,000 to expand a contemporary Indigenous art biennial

exhibit with the Salem Art Association that showcases the artistic talents of Indigenous artists.

"We are so thrilled to showcase the deep well of Indigenous talent in the Pacific Northwest," she said in the press release. "We cannot wait for everyone to learn more about the Native creatives and innovators carrying culture forward through contemporary art."

Craig received \$24,000 to create a digital curriculum of traditional basket weaving with instructional videos.





Stephanie Craig









'The system has failed us'

MMIP continued from front page

and enjoyed traditional Indigenous dances from both the U.S. and Mexico, before setting off on an awareness walk.

Many came dressed in red, some with red handprints across their faces, covering their mouths. The powerful symbol reminds viewers that the heartbreaking disappearances are caused by acts of violence, and that too often, law enforcement and media are silent.

They walked through downtown Independence, drumming, holding posters and signs with slogans including "Silence is violence," "Keep MMIP visible," "End the crisis," "Honor our stolen relatives," "Protect our native women," "Gone but not invisible" and more. Many of the signs were marked with red handprints as well. Some walkers held signs with information about missing or murdered people.

"Our loved ones are not numbers. They are not statistics," Tribal member and Ampqua Advocacy Founder Amanda Freeman said. "They are lives that should have been lived: Birthdays, graduations, weddings, Sunday dinners, all those small and big moments that never got to happen. The system has failed us. Too many times, families are told their missing loved one is probably out partying or on a bender ... We are not disposable and our people are not disposable."

Freeman said that more money is needed for training and investigation, but in addition to that, she said, "We need law enforcement who will take our cases seriously."

Families and advocates will continue to demand those things, she added.

"We will not be silent, and we refuse to accept a society where our people vanish without answers," Freeman said.

Kinsey was one of many women the walk honored. Grand Ronde Tribal Council member Matthew Haller gave the invocation for the event and played a flute song – one he said he remembers playing for his cousin, Tribal member Heather



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Carolyn DeFord speaks about her mother, who disappeared in 1999, as she gives the keynote speech during Ampkwa Advocacy's 2025 Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Walk at Riverview Park in Independence Saturday, Aug. 30. DeFord is a member of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians where she serves as their anti-trafficking program manager.

(Haller) Cameron, who went missing in August 2012, in Redding, California. Cameron made three 911 calls, pleading for help and saying she had been drugged, before she vanished.

These disappearances didn't start recently, DeFord told the crowd. They began with colonialism, when white settlers raped Native women and when brothel owners sought out Native women for the gold miners flocking to Oregon and California, and have continued since then.

"Native women have been trafficked since colonization and it's still happening," DeFord said.

"It's really a human rights issue," Tribal member Camille Mercier, a board member of Ampkwa Advocacy and CEO of Spirit Mountain Casino, told the crowd.

She reminded them of Wilma Acosta (Pascua Yaqui), whose body was found in the Willamette River in January 2024, after she went missing the previous November.

"From the beginning, her disappearance was framed as mental

health struggles, without listening to her family, friends and community," Mercier said.

Police claimed that Acosta was suicidal, despite denials by her family, with whom she was close.

"Too often, our women are dismissed as suicidal," Mercier said.
"Our women are blamed for their own disappearance."

Studies by the National Institute of Justice have shown that Native women face rates of murder and assault that are far higher than national averages, as well as high rates of sex trafficking.

Mercier urged the audience to "educate yourselves. Learn their names. Hold institutions accountable. Demand better training for police. Raise awareness. Keep MMIP visible. Support legislation."

Jan Smith (Kiowa), drove up from Eugene to attend the walk, wearing red.

"I just wanted to support our missing sisters," she said. "It's something we all feel very strongly about and I like walks."

Smith said the problem "is so under-acknowledged and I think that's the thing that is so important for these walks," calling the high statistics "shameful."

DeFord founded Missing and Murdered Native Americans to raise awareness and support the families; she now serves on the Washington state Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force.

She said she faced the common problem of police indifference first-hand during the search for her missing mother. Kinsey had struggled with addiction, DeFord said, telling the audience, "To me, her addiction was terrifying. To the system, it was like, because of her lifestyle, she chose this. It was several months before her case was taken seriously."

To a family member desperately seeking answers, DeFord said,

"Every minute feels like hours. ... I felt guilty for laughing or eating."

She noted that dealing with police is often deeply frustrating.

"Too often, these systems that were meant to protect us, they respond with indifference and apathy, and add to our mistrust," DeFord said. "When I call with a tip or a thought that may be pressing to me, I'm responded to with, 'That's just hearsay. We can't do anything with that,' like, they won't even look into it. When we report our loved ones missing and we're told, 'They're probably just partying,' or 'Well, due to her lifestyle, it's like finding a needle in a haystack; what do you want us to do about it?' I want you to find the needle in the haystack. I want you to do something."

Still, she said, if enough people speak out, change is possible. "That apathy, we've got to change that. Sometimes our stories, they carry; they have life and they can touch people. And they have turned people's minds, they have changed people's decisions and policies into being able to create safe, protected spaces."

DeFord discussed about how Washington now issues a Missing Indigenous Person Alert, called an MIPA.

"We've had great success with the alert, over 100 have been issued," she said.

In most cases, she added, "Within a couple of days, maybe a week, we get a response that that person has been located. Those MIPA alerts are the result of family members telling their stories, that we want an alert when our loved one goes out, we want a poster. We need notification. We want everybody to know. We need more tools. Sharing our voices created that. We have to demand change. It's not going to happen if we don't demand change, if we don't use our voices. Share your story. I can't emphasize that enough."

Although she has forged a life of advocacy, DeFord has never fully recovered from her mother's disappearance.

"Some days I can get up here and talk and do this, and other days, I'm back on day one, and I can't get out of bed," she said.

Violence against Native women is so pervasive that people sometimes fail to see it.

"My cousin died of domestic violence," DeFord said. "After 21 days on life support, she died of organ failure and at first, my aunt didn't realize he murdered her."

Part of the fight to have the crisis taken seriously, she said, is "sharing our stories as we remember them, not as the police and media portray them. ... Let your stories be justice, when it doesn't come in the Western way."

The crisis is also tied to the massive harm that Native men have suffered from child abuse and neglect to foster care, incarceration and drug addiction, DeFord said

"This is not a women's issue; this is a men's issue," she said. "We need our brothers to heal, to have spaces where they can come and feel safe." ■



Ampkwa Advocacy Co-Chair Kola Shippentower (Umatilla) demonstrates women's traditional dancing during the 2025 Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Walk Saturday, Aug. 30.

Oregon City accepts state lottery funds for tumwata village

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

OREGON CITY – The Oregon City Commission has approved the reallocation of \$12.5 million in state lottery money for improvements at the Grand Ronde Tribe's tumwata village property near Willamette Falls.

"Many years ago, the city and Metro, through the Willamette Falls Legacy Project Partnership, were able to secure two direct funding allocations from the state Legislature for design and construct(ion) of an access along the Willamette River," a staff report to the commission noted. "The two allocations totaled \$12.5 million and have been held by Metro over the years. Metro has returned the money to the state of Oregon and, if this agreement is approved, these funds will be provided directly to the city of Oregon City to complete a project consistent with the terms of this agreement."

The report said the money "may be utilized for land acquisition, improvements, design and engineering, rehabilitation and enhancement of the area in Clackamas County in or around the area including Willamette Falls. A specific project for the use of the funds will be determined through negotiations between the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and the City of Oregon City. The negotiations with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde will determine a defined project scope and access agreements for a construction project."

Tribal Communications Director Sara Thompson issued the following statement from the Tribe.

"Since the Tribe acquired the former Blue Heron Paper Mill in 2019, we have been working on cleaning up the site and bringing the property back to life. Our partnership with Oregon City is an important component of that. We're grateful that they have been able to work with the state of Oregon to ensure that funds allocated years ago remain on the Oregon City side of the river. As we get ready to break

ground on the first phase of redevelopment, we remain committed to working with our partners and local residents to create safe, uninterrupted public access for everyone at Willamette Falls."

The commission's vote comes after a decision by the state Legislature earlier this year to grant \$45 million in state funds to the Willamette Falls Trust, a coalition of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama

Nation. Former Oregon Gov. Kate Brown works with the group. Grand Ronde had urged current Gov. Tina Kotek to veto the measure, arguing that the group was misrepresenting Tribal history, but she declined.

The Willamette Falls Trust Tribes also backed a move by Portland General Electric to condemn and seize land at Willamette Falls, where Grand Ronde's fishing platform is located. A trial over the proposed condemnation was held in federal court in May. Oregon District Court Judge Michael H. Simon had not yet issued a ruling, as of press time.

MARRIAGES IN TRIBAL COURT

Tribal Court is issuing marriage licenses and able to perform marriage ceremonies for a filing fee of \$40. Contact the Tribal Court at 503-879-2303.

Visitors to EAC asked to utilize parking lots, not streets

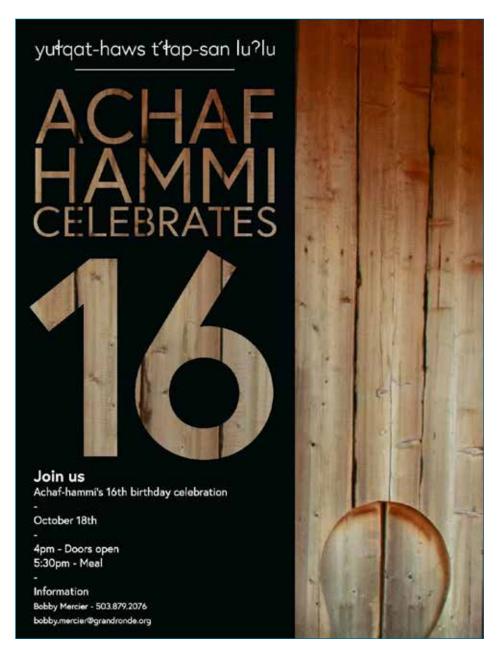
Tribal administration is requesting that non-Elder visitors to the Tribe's Elders Activity Center utilize the parking lot across the street from the Adult Foster Care homes, as Blacktail Drive was not built to accommodate street parking.

"We have allowed street parking knowing that at some point this was going to need to be addressed because of how narrow the street becomes when cars park on one side of the roadway, which only allows for one car to pass through at a time," Tribal Interim General Manager Bryan Langley said in an email. "With the increase in the numbers of residents and employees, the traffic in this area has also increased, making this area unsafe at times. Public Works will be reviewing this area to determine potential changes that will need to be made to allow cars to pass uninhibited and provide safe street parking, therefore we are asking that only Elders park on the south side of Blacktail Drive while visiting the Elders Activity Center."

The Tribe is planning on doing some curb painting and placing additional signage to raise awareness regarding the changes. ■







Funders tour Tribal campus

By Nicole Montesano

 $Smoke\ Signals\ staff\ writer$

Representatives from major foundations and funding organizations spent the morning of Thursday. Aug. 28, touring the Tribal campus, learning more about Grand Ronde's programs and about the history of the place, the people and the names. That included learning why the reservation they were visiting is named the Grand Ronde Reservation, rather than the Chachalu or Yamhill Reservation.

"Some French-Canadian trappers called this the Grand Ronde Valley," Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson explained. "But in honor of the language, we named our museum Chachalu," memorializing the "place of the burnt timbers."

The group has been participating in a new program to provide annual "listening tours" of different Oregon Tribes each summer, with the goal of developing closer relationships and understanding more about the history and culture of each of the Tribal nations in Oregon, as well as to see the projects the Tribes have undertaken, in some cases funded by their organizations.

The Grand Ronde tour included representatives from the Ford Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Willamette Health Council, The Roundhouse Foundation, Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation, Gray Family Foundation and Business Oregon, Spirit Mountain Community Fund and the Oregon Community Foundation, which was represented by Tribal member and former general manager Angie Blackwell.

For a number of the representatives, it was a chance to reconnect with friends in the Tribe, met through previous grant processes.

The group stayed overnight at Spirit Mountain Casino Hotel before arriving at the campus for the tour the following morning, followed by a pizza and salad lunch



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Meyer Memorial Trust Program Officer Stone Hudson checks out playground equipment on the infant/toddler playground while touring the Early Care and Education Center on the Tribal campus Thursday, Aug. 28. Representatives from Oregon-based foundations and funding organizations visited Grand Ronde to learn about the Tribe's history, programs and funding needs.

at the Health & Wellness Center.

Tribal Council members Kathleen George and Lisa Leno also joined the group for lunch. George joined the tour as well, offering commentary for the visitors along the way.

On Friday, group members were scheduled to travel to the Chinook Winds Resort, to visit the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

During the tour, the visitors nibbled on yampah roots, seeds and brodiaea corns at the Tribe's Native Plant Nursery while listening to Nursery Supervisor Jay Ojua talk about the Tribe's mission to repopulate as much of Oregon as possible with first foods. Then, they viewed the traditional baskets and fish trap brought in by Nursery Assistant Joeseph Ham, drove past Tribal housing to view the neat rows of homes, each provided with solar panels, and, at Chachalu Tribal Museum. viewed a map showing what the

Willamette Valley would have looked like as a massive 400-footdeep lake during the Missoula Floods. The Eola Hills, Red Hills in Dundee and West Hills in Portland were submerged, their tops becoming islands of refuge.

"We have stories about the great floods," which occurred some 13,000 to 18,000 years ago, Harrelson told the group, as well as about the last massive subduction zone earthquake that struck off the Oregon coast in 1700, and the eruption of Mount Mazama, 7,700 years ago, that formed Crater Lake.

"We've literally been here since a time no one can remember," Harrelson said.

Tribal Grants Program Manager Wendy Sparks and Tribal Community Development Manager Kristen Svicarovich provided visitors with an overview that included brief updates of the Tribe's intended new recreation center, phase 3 of the Wind River Apartments, scheduled

to break ground this month, and other upcoming projects. Engineering & Community Development Department Manager Ryan Webb spoke briefly about the plans for the Tribe's tumwata village project in Oregon City.

In addition, they briefly discussed the current plight of wild populations of Chinook salmon and winter steelhead, which are both on the brink of extinction. The Tribe has been struggling to get the Army Corps of Engineers to allow salmon past the dams that block their access to urgently needed habitat and spawning grounds, Kathleen George told the group, saying the situation is a tragedy that many Oregonians remain unaware of.

The group also toured the new Early Care and Education Center, exploring the classrooms and playgrounds,

kitchen and other amenities.

"This building is a dream come true for me and so many Tribal members," George told them. "Lack of childcare is a barrier to work."

Brian Plinski, of Business Oregon, said the funders' listening tour is an important program, "to try to better understand. Rather than making Tribes come to the funders, it's getting the funders out to the Tribes, to better understand what they're doing."

Marina Bhargava, of the Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation, said it was a second visit for her, as she had also attended the grand opening of the center, which her foundation had helped to fund.

She said she had especially enjoyed touring Chachalu, listening to Harrelson talk about the Tribe's history and the ways in which people traditionally prepared first foods.

"I enjoy history, so that was really fascinating," Bhargava said. ■



Tribal Court Programs Coordinator 9615 Grand Ronde Road Grand Ronde, OR 97347

503-879-4623 CourtPrograms@grandronde.org

olunteers Neede

We are seeking volunteers for two of our programs:

Court Appointed Special Advocate (open to all community members)

Tribal Member Review Boar
(must be an enrolled CTGR Tribal membe

If you would like to volunteer:

- 1. Indicate which program you are interested in (mark one of the boxes above).
- 2. Fill out the form below with your contact information.
- 3. Mail, drop-off or email the completed form to Tribal Court Programs Coordinator.

Full Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Address:

Visit our website for more information and the qualifications for each program: grandronde.org/government/tribal-court/court-programs/



477 Program and Vocational Rehabilitation to be consolidated

MEETING continued from front page

Ainam listed all of the programs offered within her department. Programs include Emergency Services, Youth Empowerment & Prevention, Family Partnerships, Post Treatment Service, the Warriors of Hope Domestic & Sexual Violence Program, Children & Family Services, Men's Transition House, the Employment & 477 Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Portland Area Office and Community Programs, which includes the Veterans Service Office, Adult Services, Tribal Navigator and Financial Wellness.

Ainam shared that the 477 Program and Vocational Rehabilitation would be consolidated soon.

"We're really hoping that it reduces the duplication of services and that it can create a one-stop service," she said. "We hope it will streamline access and allow for stronger resources. We'll be cross training our staff so that you won't have to have two workers if you qualify for 477 and VR, but you would have one worker being able to develop that plan."

Some highlights from Ainam's presentation included:

- The Tribal Rental Assistance Program offers Tribal members \$4,500 to help with move-in or deposit fees. It can be used once every five years and there are income eligibility criteria. During the past year, the program assisted 27 Tribal households;
- The Tribal Emergency Assistance/Mortgage Assistance program will provide up to \$1,000 to assist with move-in or deposit fees. It can be used once every two years and there are income

eligibility criteria. During the past year, the program helped 35 Tribal households;

- The Enrollment Ordinance change in January after Tribal voters approved lineal descent has had an effect on the Children & Family Services Program, resulting in an increase of child welfare assessments from 10 to 15 a month to 25 to 35 a month as the Indian Child Welfare Act applies to all children who are eligible to be enrolled. Tribal Council supported adding three additional positions to help meet the need;
- Tribal Veterans Service Officer Ramona Quenelle has helped Tribal veterans file 33 claims and 17 were awarded retroactive amounts totaling more than \$210,000;
- The partnership with DevNW has resulted in 11 Tribal members graduating from the Individual Development Account program in two years. Each participant saved at least \$1,200 toward their goals, which was grant matched with \$6,000 per person;
- The department is celebrating 19 years of hosting monthly Sobriety Dinners, with an annual attendance of more than 800;
- Ten youth received Horse Healing Program support through the Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program and more than 100 community members of all ages were supported on the annual Canoe Journey;
- And the Portland Aera Office on Barbur Boulevard has distributed more than 600 food boxes, as well as served 100 community and Tribal families through its food pantry.

In 2026, Ainam said Social Ser-

vices plans to expand financial wellness in the community, continue to look for grant opportunities, expand the men's transitional center with a focus on post-incarceration support, expand the childcare reimbursement program to include non-licensed childcare options and continue to realign child welfare services to manage the increased need.

Lastly, Ainam introduced her management staff in attendance online and in-person, which included Warriors of Hope Domestic & Sexual Violence Program Manager Cassie Dandy, Employment Program Manager Michael Herrin, Children & Family Services Program Manager Kristi Petite, Youth Prevention Manager Amber Zimbrick, Community Programs Manager Caitlin Zimbrick and Portland Area Office Tribal Services Representative Lisa Archuleta.

After her approximate 40-minute presentation, Ainam fielded four questions and comments from the membership.

"Thank you, Dana and all of the team," Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said. "We truly appreciate all of the service that you provide. It's amazing."

In other action, Tribal Election Board member Shannon Simi delivered the Tribal Council election results from Saturday, Sept. 6, that saw one incumbent – Kathleen $\label{eq:George-re-elected} George-re-elected to a three-year term.$

Challenger and past Tribal Council member Toby McClary, as well as challenger and first-time Tribal Council candidate Pete Wakeland, were elected to the other two seats. Incumbent Denise Harvey was not reelected.

For more information on the results, see the Tribal Council election story in this issue of Smoke Signals.

Kennedy thanked the Election Board members.

"I want to thank the Election Board for all of the work that they've done, starting from the time of nominations," she said. "I know they worked even before then to make sure packets were ready for that time and then held office hours as well as accommodating our members. We appreciate it."

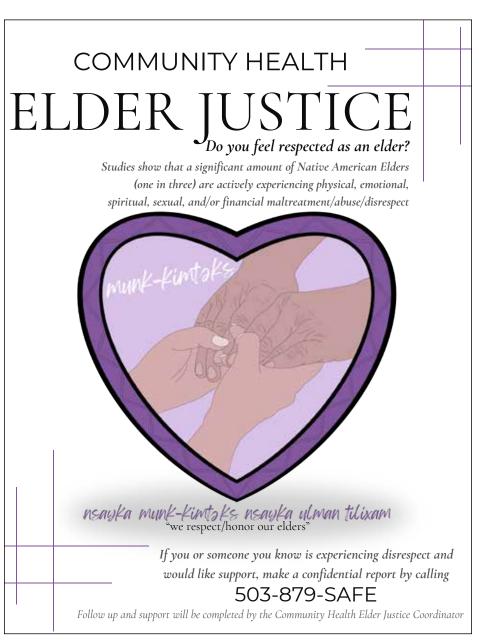
The next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 5, and feature a report on the Tribe's various investments.

Debi Bernando, Andrea Knight and Dorothy Leno each won the \$100 door prizes. Robert Haller, Mike Giffen, Tamie Spitzer, Robert Wiggs and Shawn Haggerty won the \$50 door prizes.

The meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribe's website at www. grandronde.org and clicking on the Videos tab. ■















Watchlist: 'The American Southwest'

(Editor's note: It is estimated that there are approximately 149 billion videos on YouTube, and the number continues to grow. Grand Ronde Tribal member and Social Media/Digital Journalist Kamiah Koch sifts through those videos twice a month to recommend a worthwhile Indigenous video to watch. Follow her bimonthly recommendations and enjoy!)

By Kamiah Koch

Social media/digital journalist

Indigenous model and activist, Quannah ChasingHorse, is the new David Attenborough.

A wildlife documentary narrated by ChasingHorse was released on Friday, Sept. 5, called "The American Southwest."

"This story follows the Colorado (River) on its journey to sustain society and the natural world," ChasingHorse said in the trailer. "And is a call to action to conserve the wildlife and wild places in the American Southwest."

The documentary by Fin & Fur Films, a film group working to amplify conservation efforts, posted an official trailer in August to YouTube. The trailer highlights the natural landscape along the Colorado River.

"Fueled by snowmelt from the Rockies, the river and its tributaries grow with each confluence and pump life into the harsh Mojave and Sonoran deserts," ChasingHorse said. "Along it's nearly 15,000 mile journey, the Colorado connects the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of California and nurtures landscapes that are bursting with wildlife."

As she narrates, a large bird flies over the frigid headwaters of the Colorado River with a snowy bank before transitioning to a larger and warmer section of the river that is lined with lush greenery.

The documentary shows birds, beavers, fish, elk, insects, snakes and an ocelot, who all call the river their home.

"Water is the divine force in this unforgiving landscape," Chasing-Horse said. "It is the most essential and precious resource that has supported humanity for over 1,000 generations."

In the trailer, an aerial view of the river in a desert canyon is the backdrop behind text that reads "A tribute to the mighty Colorado River."

Screenings are limited to select theaters. For information on where you can see the film, visit https://theamericansouthwest.film/ and watch the trailer at -www.youtube.com/watch?v=K96ly_uLAPk.

Clothes Closet open

The Clothes Closet is open from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 2 p.m. every Friday on the Tribal campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive. The Clothes Closet accepts clothing, small appliances and pieces of furniture, electronics and household goods that are clean and in good condition. It does not accept books, large TVs or furniture, but there is a community board where people can post those items. For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565. ■





Find out more:

Get as much information about foster care as you can. Children & Family Services offers opportunities to talk one-on-one with certification staff to ask questions and learn more before attending required training. You can also review our certification standards, which offers guidance and expectations of being a resource provider.

Make the decision:

Becoming a resource provider will bring changes to your life. Because of that, it is important that every member of your household considers what that will mean to them. The following is a list of questions that can help you make the right decision with your family:

- · Does everyone in our family believe that resource care is right for us?
- · Are you comfortable maintaining and making cultural connections?
- · Are you willing to attend cultural events in Grand Ronde?
- · Do we have friends or family that will support us in this decision?
- · Do we have space in our home for a child?
- · Is there an age group or gender that would work best with our family?
- · Any special needs a child may have that we would not be comfortable taking on?

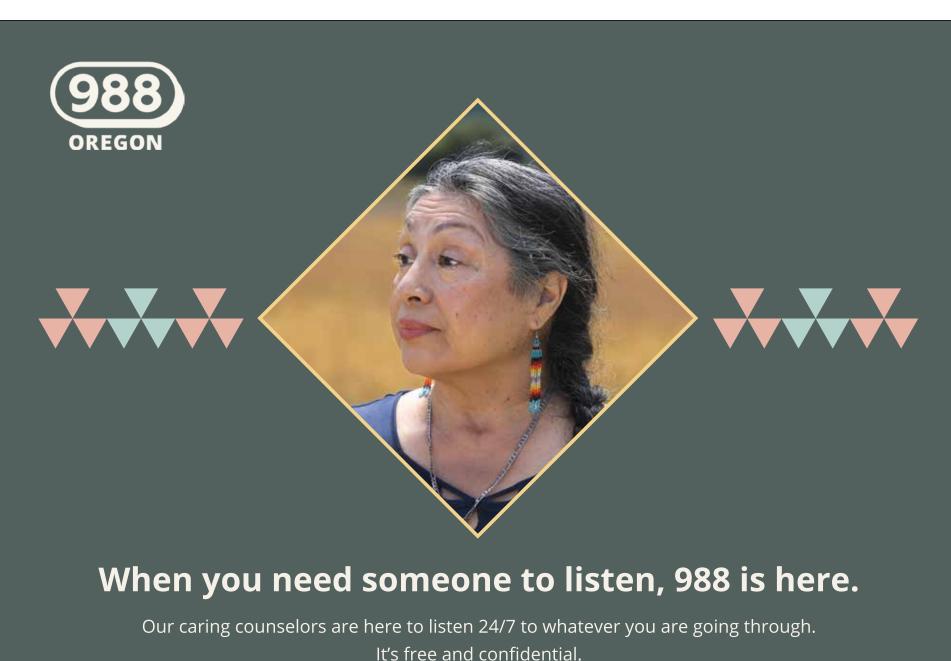
For information contact:

Audra Sherwood Foster Gare Coordinator Children & Family Services 503-879-2039



Ad by Samuel Briggs III





Call or text 988

A message in partnership with Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

Tribal Library merges with Regional Library Service

The Tribal Library has merged with the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service, said Tribal Librarian Kathy Cole.

Tribal members can now get books from libraries in Polk, Yamhill and Marion counties, as well as access to many free programs.

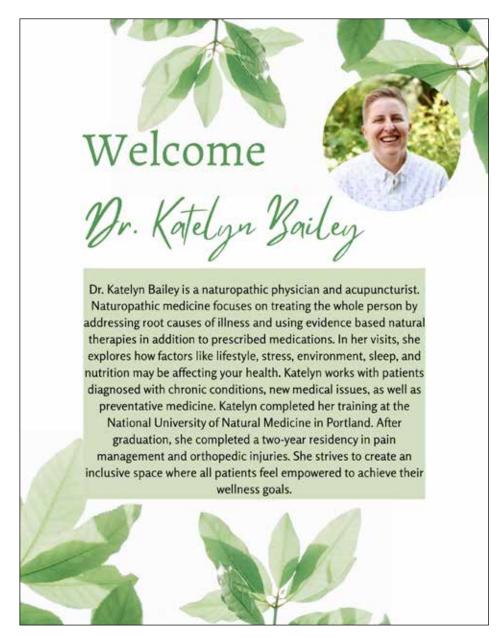
Tribal Library patrons should visit the Tribal Library and update their information and obtain a new Regional Library Service card.

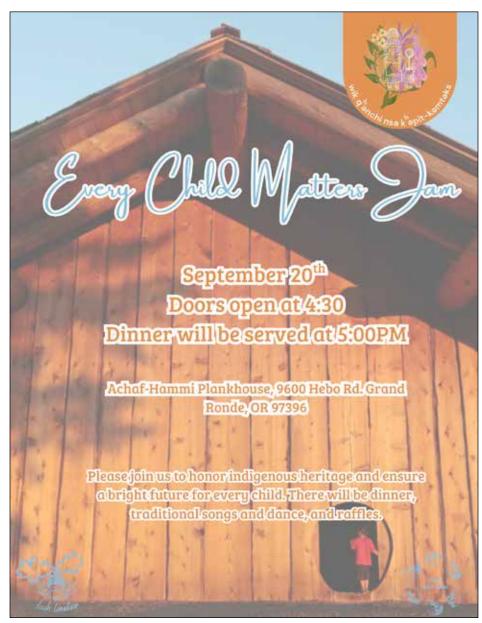
For more information, contact Cole at 503-879-1488. ■











17 smok signəlz **SEPTEMBER 15, 2025**

FUN AND ADVENTURE

LICENSED - ERDC QUALIFIED - CPR CERTIFIED 1930'S SCHOOLHOUSE IN SHERIDAN RURAL SETTING WITH 2 ACRES OF FENCED YARD AND ORIGINAL PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

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CALL 503-437-0332 OR EMAIL TAMMYTREXLER@ALITTLEBITCOUNTRYDAYCARE.COM

Mental Health Texts!



On Fridays you will receive a message about mental health, a social emotional tip or a simple quote or message of encouragement.

Text JOIN to (971) 318 - 3459





Reading volunteers needed

Children's literacy nonprofit SMART Reading is seeking volunteers to read with students weekly at Grand Ronde Head Start. Reading is an essential skill for kids, helping them start and stay on a path to success in school and beyond, according to a press release from the organization.

"Volunteering with SMART Reading is a fun, meaningful way to impact kids right here in our community," Michael Finlay, Interim Program Manager for SMART's northwest area, said. "I regularly have volunteers tell me that the hour they spend at SMART is the best part of their week."

The time commitment is one hour per week. To learn more, contact 971-634-1628 or visit www.SMARTReading.org. ■



Position Title	Grade	Min. Start Wage	Max Start Wage	Closing Date
Cashier-Fuel-PT Grave and Variable Shifts	5	\$16.04/hr.	\$16.04/hr.	09/15/2025
Certified Medical Assistant	8	\$24.60/hr.	\$31.84/hr.	09/08/2025
CFS Investigator	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	09/15/2025
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Therapist	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Front Desk Dental Assistant	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	09/08/2025
Groundskeeper	6	\$20.75/hr.	\$26.42/hr.	09/08/2025
Infant/Toddler Teacher	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
Lodge Caregiver – Full Time (Variable Shifts)	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	Until Filled
Lodge Caregiver – Part Time & On-Call (Variable Shifts)	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	Until Filled
Lodge Caregiver – Full Time, Part Time & On-Call - GRAVE	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	Until Filled
Member Benefits Administrator - Finance	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
Mental Health Therapist – Behavioral Health	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Nurse Practitioner – Health & Wellness	22	\$176,396.03/yr.	\$248,130.43/yr.	Until Filled
Physician – Health & Wellness	25	\$226,851.26/yr.	\$330,026.39/yr.	Until Filled
Police Officer	11	\$32.74/hr.	\$42.16/hr.	Until Filled
Recovery House Program Manager – Sheridan - GCR	14	\$90,930.26/yr.	\$116,255.21/yr.	Until Filled
Senior Dental Assistant	8	\$24.60/hr.	\$31.84/hr.	09/15/2025
Staff Pharmacist	19	\$137,901.74/yr.	\$186,617.49/yr.	09/15/2025
Teacher Aide/Bus Monitor – Part Time	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Temporary Pool	2	\$16.00/hr.	\$16.00/hr.	
Tribal Security Officer - On-Call - Oregon City	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	09/08/2025



POSTING TITLE	CLOSE DATE	WAGE/SALARY
Hotel Front Desk Clerk	9/11/2025	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Casino Beverage Waitstaff (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$15.05/hr. DOE + Tips
Cook (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.29/hr. DOE
Host/Hostess Cashier (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Hotel Houseperson (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Hotel Laundry Attendant (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
IT Production Supervisor	Until Filled	\$83,914.69/yr. DOE
Prep Cook (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Pro Shop Host (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Room Chef	Until Filled	\$63,586.43/yr. DOE
Table Games Dealer (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$15.05/hr. + Tips

\$1,000 Hire-On Bonus All Positions \$500 Referral Bonus SMC & CTGR Employees

*Part-time employees are eligible for a **20% differential** pay to their base wage if they are scheduled to work up to 29.99 hours per week.

SPIRIT MOUNTAIN CASINO EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

- SMGI adheres to a Tribal hiring preference policy for enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon.
- Please reference the Job Description for job duties, qualifications, and required knowledge/skills.
- ✓ Job postings are updated every Friday with remaining and new positions; applications must be received by 5:00pm on the following Thursday to be considered.
- ✓ Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- ✓ All positions are eligible for an incremental Hire-on Bonus

⊠employmentteam@spiritmtn.com https://www.spiritmountain.com/careers Call (503) 879-3737 for application assistance

EnergyTrust

Tribal member's work part of Portland art exhibit

Tribal member Matthew Williams (aka M. Earl Williams) is a part of the Blue Sky Oregon Center for the Photographic Arts' Pacific Northwest Drawers program for 2025. He is sharing a set of photographs which seek a reconciliation between the self, the land and the painful histories they carry.

These can be viewed from noon to 5 p.m. Wed-Sat, through March 2026 at 122 N.W. 8th Ave., Portland. \blacksquare

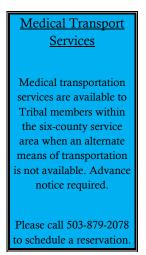
Hotel room rates increase

As of January 2025, the Spirit Mountain Hotel at Spirit Mountain Casino has implemented a revised pricing structure for the Elders discount, which has remained unchanged since the hotel's opening in 1997. The new discounted rates are \$99 for mid-week stays, \$109 for weekends and \$129 for holidays.

This adjustment is necessary to better align room rates with the actual cost of room upkeep, while still offering competitive pricing, according to Spirit Mountain Casino Chief Executive Officer Camille Mercier.

The Tribal member discount will reflect a 10% discount on standard room rates. The RV park will offer Elders and Tribal members a \$10 discount off the standard rate at the RV lot.

"The changes ensure that we continue to provide valuable services while maintaining financial sustainability," Mercier said. ■





Now accepting new residents

For Grand Ronde and other Federally designated Tribal members of Oregon chaku tush temtem haws – Grand Ronde's new treatment program in Sheridan, Oregon

We are proud to welcome new residents to chaku tush təmtəm haws, a newly launched healing program by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Located in Sheridan, Oregon, this program provides a safe, supportive living environment with on-site wraparound services focused on recovery, mental health, and traditionally centered wellness.

If you or a loved one is ready to take the next step toward healing, we're here for you. Our compassionate team is committed to walking alongside you on your path to wellness.

Location: 1330 West Main Street, Sheridan, Oregon Call for services: 503-879-1501



Walking On...

Marion Rose Mercier

July 6, 1954 - Aug. 31, 2025

Tribal Elder and longtime Tribal librarian Marion Rose Mercier passed away August 31, 2025, at the age of 71.

West Valley Funeral Home is assisting the family.

Mercier served her Tribe for 29 years until retiring in 2019, working as the Education Department manager and helping plan the current library's construction before moving into the role of librarian in 2006.

A celebration of life is being planned with details provided at a later date. A full obituary will appear in a later edition of Smoke Signals.

Iola Marie Galindo

June 19, 1951 - Sept. 3, 2025

Tribal Elder Iola Marie Galindo passed away Sept. 3, 2025, at the age of 74

Bollman's Tribute Center is assisting the family.

A funeral service was held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 10 in the Tribal gym, followed by a gravesite service at the Tribal Cemetery. A meal followed at the Elders Activity Center.

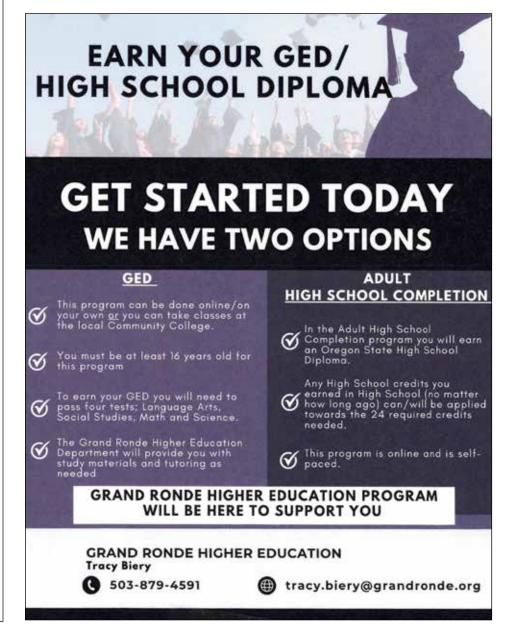
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Why would you want to do that? The PDF version is available before the newspaper is sent to our printing contractor in Salem. You can read the paper on your computer or print out a copy of individual pages yourself. And you will receive Tribal news much faster than the current standard mailing utilized by the Tribe.

If you would like to receive an emailed PDF version of smok signalz and stop receiving a mailed newsprint version, send your email to esubscription@grandronde.org. Stopping mailed delivery of the newspaper will not affect other Tribal mail. ■





September is National PCOS Awareness Month

Why PCOS Awareness Month matters

It helps teach people about this condition. Many women have it but don't know. Awareness helps more women get the care they need to live healthy lives.

What is PCOS?

PCOS stands for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. It is a health condition that affects how a woman's ovaries work. The ovaries are small organs in the body that help with having periods and making hormones.



PCOS is common. It affects 1 in 10 women of childbearing age.

What are the signs of PCOS?

Every woman is different, but some common signs include:

- Irregular periods periods may come too often, not often enough or stop altogether
- Hair changes extra hair on the face, chest or back, or thinning hair on the scalp
- Acne bad skin or pimples
- · Weight gain especially around the belly
- Trouble getting pregnant

What causes PCOS?

Doctors don't know exactly what causes PCOS. But it may be linked to:

- Hormone imbalance the body makes too much of some hormones
- Family history if your mom or sister has PCOS, you might too
- Insulin problems insulin helps control sugar in your blood and many women with PCOS have high insulin

Why is PCOS a problem?

If PCOS is not treated, it can cause other health problems such as:

- Diabetes (high blood sugar)
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterolSleep problems
- Trouble having a baby
- ullet Depression or anxiety

Can PCOS be treated?

There is no cure for PCOS, but it can be managed. Treatment depends on your symptoms and goals. Common treatments include:

- · Healthy eating and exercise to manage weight and blood sugar
- ${\boldsymbol{\cdot}}$ Birth control pills to help with periods and a cne
- Medicines to help with hair growth or help you get pregnant
- Mental health support if you're feeling sad or anxious

What can you do?

- \bullet Talk to your doctor if you think you have PCOS
- Write down your symptoms to help your doctor understand
- Make small healthy changes like eating more fruits and veggies, and moving your body daily
- Reach out to support groups or online communities for PCOS

Back-to-school dental checklist

1. Dental checkups:

Schedule a back-to-school cleaning: A dental cleaning and exam can identify and address any potential problems early on, like cavities or early signs of decay.

Consider sealants and fluoride: These treatments can help prevent cavities, especially in the back teeth.

Mouthguards for sports: If your child plays sports, ensure they have a properly fitted mouthguard to protect their teeth from injury. 2. Lunchbox strategies:

Pack tooth-friendly lunches: Focus on foods like fruits, vegetables, cheese, and lean proteins.

Avoid sugary drinks and snacks: Limit sugary drinks, candies and sticky snacks that can contribute to tooth decay.

Hydration is key: Encourage plenty of water throughout the day to help wash away food particles and neutralize acids.

3. Brushing and flossing routine:

Establish a routine: Brush twice a day for two minutes and floss once a day.

Make it fun: Let kids choose their toothbrush and toothpaste, use a sticker chart or play music to make brushing more enjoyable.

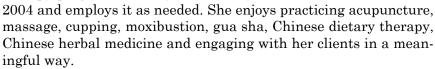
Lead by example: Brush and floss alongside your children to demonstrate proper techniques and reinforce the importance of oral hygiene.

Acupuncture/massage service at Health & Wellness Center

Heidi Manning, acupuncture and massage therapist, is now seeing patients at the Health & Wellness Center.

Heidi has been licensed in acupuncture since 2005 after completing a masters of acupuncture degree at Bastyr University. She has been a licensed massage therapist in Oregon since 2017.

In addition, she completed a craniosacral therapy program at Bastyr University in



She specializes in pain management, infertility and gynecological problems, digestive issues and psycho-emotional health issues, especially as they relate to trauma.

Heidi also enjoys working with animals in the state of Oregon under a referral from a veterinarian. She has worked with dogs, cats, cows and horses.

At the Health & Wellness Center Monday and Fridays.

The scheduling link is:

https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=12567238 **Heidi Manning Acupuncture & Massage** 541-992-5175 (cell)

Health & Wellness Center entrance

Reminder: The drive-through entrance at the Health & Wellness Center is for loading and unloading only. The entrance was built with our Elders and those with mobility issues and their ease of access in mind.

If you are coming to the center to pick up prescriptions, please park in one of our regular parking spaces.

ELDERS LIVING WITH

LONELINESS

IN ADULT FOSTER CARE

WHEN ELDERS MOVE INTO ADULT FOSTER CARE, WE ASSUME THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE THE SOCIAL LIFE THEY HAD WHEN THEY WERE LIVING INDEPEDENTLY. THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO SEE THEIR FAMILY & FRIENDS, PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS, VISIT....

NEARLY 40% OF ELDERS LIVING
IN ADULT FOSTER CARE SUFFER
FROM DEPRESSION AND
LONELINESS.

THERE IS NO REPLACEMENT FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS!

IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER OR A FRIEND IN ADULT FOSTER CARE, PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO SEE THEM. OUR TEAM IS HERE TO SUPPORT!



SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA, MOLALLA, ROGUE RIVER, KALAPUYA, CHASTA

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE, SMOKESIGNALS.ORG

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