



Spirit Week Jam
photos — pg. 7



SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA · MOLALLA · ROGUE RIVER · KALAPUYA · CHASTA

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

DECEMBER 1, 2025

Tribal members find satisfaction in legal work

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal member and Tribal Senior Staff Attorney Brooks Wakeland wasn't aiming for a career in law; he started out studying to be a forensic psychologist. Tribal member and Tribal Senior Staff Attorney Holly Partridge has wanted to be a lawyer for as long as she can remember.

Neither of them expected to be able to join the Tribe's legal offices immediately, but today, they said, they share a nearly ideal job: Representing their Tribe while doing the work they love.

Tribal Honors Attorney Jonathan Tasa completes the trio of Grand Ronde Tribal members working in the Tribe's legal department but declined an offer to participate in the article.

Partridge said she initially thought she wanted to be a criminal defense attorney but revised that idea after interning with the district attorney's office in Georgia as a student.

"I changed my mind quick," she said. "It was not for me."

Partridge grew up in Astoria, with little connection to the Tribe, apart from attending powwows and other events. After marrying her husband, Kelsey, in 1999, she put off going to college for several years while raising their three youngest children. In 2005, Partridge finally began chasing her long-standing dream, enrolling at Tacoma Community College.

See **LEGAL**
continued on page 8

Rejoicing at 42



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Head woman Tribal member Molly Leno and head man Tribal member Chad Leno participate in the noon grand entry of the Tribe's 42nd Restoration Celebration Powwow at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Saturday, Nov. 22. See story and more photos on pages 10-11.

Discount Tire, Marriott coming to Chemawa Station



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

A 92-room Fairfield Inn by Marriott hotel is currently under construction at Chemawa Station in Keizer. The hotel is expected to open in mid-2026. The Tribe co-owns the 14-acre Chemawa Station with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Two new tenants are coming to the Tribe's co-owned Chemawa Station development in Keizer: Discount Tire and Fairfield Inn by Marriott.

The four-story, 92-room hotel is currently under construction and is being developed by Damon Kluck and Scott Knox. The two are real estate developers from Bend. Both the hotel and the tire store will be on the southern end of the property. The northern end is currently leased to Chick-fil-A and 7-Eleven.

The Tribe co-owns the 14-acre Chemawa Station with the Siletz Tribe. The development is located between Chemawa Road Northeast and the Keizer water tower.

The hotel is expected to open in mid-2026 and the tire store potentially by late 2026.

The new leases were discussed during a recent Legislative Action Committee meeting.

"We're moving forward to the next phase of leasing out our properties and are really excited about that," Tribal Council member and Chemawa Station Board member Lisa Leno said. "We also have some really exciting potential leases that we can't share now but hopefully within the next month."

Chemawa Station Co-Executive Officer and Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia

See **CHEMAWA STATION**
continued on page 5

General Council meeting

11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 7

Tribal Council Chambers

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

NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday meetings

DATE	TIME
Wednesday, Dec. 3.....	4 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 17.....	4 p.m.

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

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 ■

TRIBAL OFFICE CLOSURES

Tribal offices will be closing at noon Wednesday, Dec. 24, and remain closed on Thursday-Friday, Dec. 25-26, in observance of the Christmas holiday. Offices also will be closing at noon Wednesday, Dec. 31, and all day on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2026, in observance of New Year’s Day.

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**.

smok signalz

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DEADLINE DATE	ISSUE DATE	MEMBERS OF:
Thursday, Dec. 4	Dec. 15	Indigenous Journalists Association
Monday, Dec. 22	Jan. 1	Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assoc.
Thursday, Jan. 8	Jan. 15	2022 IJA General Excellence
Friday, Jan. 23	Feb. 1	2023 IJA General Excellence

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Reminder

TRIBAL MEMBERS ON THE TRIBAL SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME/DISABILITY & MEDICARE PART "B" PROGRAMS

IT'S TIME TO SEND US A COPY OF YOUR '2026' SOCIAL SECURITY AWARD LETTER!
If you haven't received your '2026' Social Security Award letter yet, please get in touch with the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or online at www.ssa.gov
Your current SSA award letter must reach our office by Friday, January 16th, 2026, by 5:00 PM to avoid any future delays in your benefits.



Please send a copy of your 2026 SSA letter to:
CTGR Member Services
Attn. Shayla Murphy
9615 Grand Ronde Road
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Fax: 503-879-2480 - Email: shayla.murphy@grandronde.org
Phone: 503-879-1364 or 1-800-422-0232 Ext. 1364

Hayu masi!

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the Tribal member to notify the Tribe of any changes in your benefits from the Social Security Administration SSI/SSD program. Failure to submit your yearly SSA award letter and/or notify the Tribe of any changes may result in an obligation to repay ineligible benefits received and/or interrupt or delay your Tribal Supplemental Security Income & Disability payments and Medicare Part "B" reimbursements.



IN THE FUTURE



(k^hapa atqi)

- taɬlam-pi-wakwst-mun (December)
- Wednesday, Dec. 3 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
 - Sunday, Dec. 7 – General Council meeting, 11 a.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
 - Wednesday, Dec. 17 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
 - Wednesday, Dec. 24 – Tribal offices closing at noon in observance of the Christmas holiday.
 - Thursday-Friday, Dec. 25-26 – Tribal offices closed in observance of the Christmas holiday.
 - Wednesday, Dec. 31 – Tribal offices closing at noon in observance of New Year’s Eve.

- ixt-mun (January)
- Thursday, Jan. 1 – Tribal offices closed in observance of New Year’s Day.
 - Sunday, Jan. 4 – General Council meeting, 11 a.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
 - Wednesday, Jan. 14 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
 - Monday, Jan. 19 – Tribal offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
 - Wednesday, Jan. 28 – 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.



Calling All Tribal Artists

Your Art. Your Story. Our Hall of Legends.

Spirit Mountain Casino is seeking to showcase the incredible talent of our tribal community in the Hall of Legends — a space dedicated to celebrating culture, creativity, and heritage. We invite tribal artists to submit photos of their artwork for consideration. Selected pieces will be featured on semi-permanent loan, proudly displayed within the casino for guests and community members to enjoy year-round.

This is your chance to share your vision, your voice, and your artistry with thousands who walk through our doors. Whether your work is traditional, contemporary, or somewhere beautifully in between — we want to see it!

Submission Deadline: December 19, 2025



RISE & SHINE! IT'S A

MONDAY MEET UP

UNDER THE COVERED AREA IN
Tribal Housing
6th-12th Grade

MONDAY MORNINGS
9:50AM - 10:20AM
FREE BREAKFAST FOR YOUTH

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:
facebook.com/CTGRRoyalty

Grand Ronde Education Programs:
facebook.com/CTGREducation

Grand Ronde Youth Council:
facebook.com/CTGRYouthCouncil

Grand Ronde Station:
facebook.com/GrandRondeStation

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



A Tribal Navigator is Available!

We all need support sometimes. Many programs and services can help us stay healthy, independent, and connected — but they’re not always easy to access. That’s why the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde has partnered with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS).

The Tribal Navigator supports tribal members with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) by helping them understand and access services through ODDS. The Navigator serves as a bridge between the community and state programs, providing culturally respectful guidance and support at every step.

Services Include:

- Provide information and referrals to I/DD Services
- Serve as a liaison between Tribal members and ODDS/Agency staff
- Help navigate systems to ensure access to appropriate supports
- Offer culturally informed support to individuals and families
- Coordinating services with the Tribe, Oregon Department of Human Services, and any other community partner organizations

Contact the Grand Ronde Tribal Navigator!
Denaee Towner
Denaee.towner@grandronde.org
503.879.1993

Learn more by following the link
[Oregon Department of Human Services : I/DD Services and Eligibility : Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities : State of Oregon](#)

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 December 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. Call the Food Bank at 503-879-3663 for holiday closure information.

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 211info.org.

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 11 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 11 at the CTGR Employment Service Center. Chair: Mia Prickett. Contact Editorial.Board@grandronde.org for more information.
- **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.



2020 — Despite a global pandemic, wildfires and an extended census deadline abruptly cut short by 16 days, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde still managed to count more of its members than any other Tribal nation in Oregon, with a 78.5% response rate.

2015 — A large contingent of Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde members participated in a long-awaited flag hanging ceremony during dual assemblies held at Willamina High School. The Tribal flag now hangs next to the Oregon flag, U.S. flag and a POW/MIA flag near the scoreboard in the school’s gymnasium.



File photo

2010 — The Health & Wellness Center scheduled an open house to show off its \$2.25 million renovation, which included an additional 4,000 square feet, a new metal roof and Native-themed flooring. The improvements included more space for the dental clinic, medical clinic, pharmacy, medical exam rooms, lab and radiology equipment.

2005 — The Tribe celebrated reaching the \$30 million mark in giving at the new Salem Convention Center. The Spirit Mountain Community Fund was started in 1997 and thus far had awarded \$4.2 million to arts and culture, \$11.7 million to education, \$2.7 million to environmental preservation, \$5.8 million to health, \$837,000 to historic preservation, \$216,000 to problem gambling and \$6 million to public safety, totaling 762 grants and \$31.5 million to communities.

2000 — The National Indian Gaming Commission announced that the Grand Ronde Tribe was recognized for operating a self-regulated casino. It was the second Tribe in the nation to achieve the distinction. “This is something we have strived (to do) for many years,” Grand Ronde Gaming Commissioner Lynn Hillman said. “We far exceeded the highest levels required by the IGC for self-regulation.”

1995 — The Tribe was preparing to establish a housing authority within the next several months, overseen by a board of commissioners, to oversee all housing management and operations for the Tribe.

1990 — The Tribe was scheduling a date to move modular buildings onto Tribal land at Grand Ronde Road, so its administrative and governmental functions could be moved there as well.

1985 — The Tribe celebrated the second anniversary of Restoration Nov. 22. In October, the Tribe approved 54 applicants for membership.

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

ELECTION BOARD VACANCIES

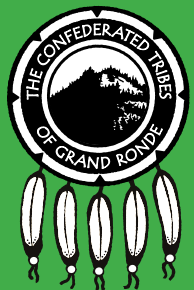
Two alternate board member positions open.

Qualifications:

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

For information contact:

Shannon Ham-Teixeira • 503-879-2301
shannon.ham-teixeira@grandronde.org



Ad by Samuel Briggs III



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.

Tribal Council approves grant application for Tribal youth

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved a grant application to the Oregon Department of Education to address the most pressing educational needs for Tribal youth during its Wednesday, Nov. 19, meeting.

During a Tuesday, Nov. 18, Legislative Action Committee meeting, Tribal Grants Program Manager Wendy Sparks said that the three-year Community Partnerships Grant would be up to \$265,000 and if awarded, would be used to provide funding for an existing full-time position and cover meal costs for family coaching and attendance recognition nights.

Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez also announced that the emergency food assistance program for Tribal member individuals and households who were affected by the delay of SNAP benefits ended Monday, Nov. 17. It began Friday, Nov. 7, to help families affected by the government shutdown and subsequent delay of benefits.

“I do want to let folks know that we are meeting with staff

to debrief on how that program went and we did hear from a lot of members that there are additional needs in the community,” she said. “We’ll be meeting to discuss any other options we can bring forward to present to council for consideration because we do know food insecurity is a real thing in our community, so we’ll keep everyone posted.”

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved appointing Claudia Leno to the Elder Board with a term ending March 31, 2027;
- Approved the next general welfare and supplemental general welfare assistance payment date for Friday, Dec. 12, and set quarterly payment dates on the second Friday of March, June, September and December of 2026 for future payments;
- And approved enrolling three infants and 28 non-infants 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. ■

Blacketer retires



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Executive Director of Health Services Kelly Rowe, left, and Tribal Council member Toby McClary present Tribal Dental Department Manager Sheila Blacketer with a Tribal Pendleton blanket during her retirement party in the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center Atrium Thursday, Nov. 13. She worked for the Tribe for 27 years, starting as clinical dental hygienist and retiring as the Dental Department manager. According to Blacketer, she fell in love with the Dental Department and the Tribe in 1998 when she did a two-week rural rotation while in college. She was then officially hired in 1999. Her last day was Friday, Nov. 14.

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. ■

Two parcels still available

CHEMAWA STATION
continued from front page

Hernandez said that the second phase of development will include five parcels and a community gathering area. Two of the parcels are still available and one will be retained by LLC ownership.

“The two available/undeveloped sites call for a carwash and brewery in the masterplan but that could change with potential other opportunities,” she said in an email. “The tenant mix is important and the target list includes quick service restaurants with drive-thrus and sit-down, medical (and) personal care services such as hair and nails.”

In January 2020, the Grand

Ronde Tribal Council approved a lease with 7-Eleven Inc. to build a convenience store at Chemawa Station. In February 2021, the Keizer City Council unanimously approved a plan for Georgia-based fast food restaurant chain Chick-fil-A to build its seventh Oregon eatery at the site.

The Federal Highway Administration transferred ownership of the 15.7-acre Chemawa Station property to the Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes under the Indian Self-Determination Act in 2002. Ground was officially broken on the site in December 2019. ■

Includes information from the Keizertimes newspaper

New work by Grand Ronde artists installed on Portland waterfront

Two art works designed by Grand Ronde Tribal members Zoey Holsclaw and Nakoa Mercier and commissioned by the Tribe have been installed in downtown Portland’s Tom McCall Waterfront Park near the Hawthorne Bridge. They will remain on display through spring of 2026.

The two-part, three-piece installation, titled “Traveling with Our Ancestors,” celebrates living Indigenous cultural activities and highlights the Tribe’s use of historic canoes, particularly for Canoe Journey.

“Being in the canoe is where I feel most connected to my ancestors, my people, and the water,” Holsclaw said. “It centers me and feeds my spirit.”

The project was supported by the city of Portland’s Office of Arts & Culture, the Portland Monuments Project, Mellon Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation and Lewis & Clark College.

“Tribal history is our shared history in Portland,” Portland Office of Arts & Culture’s Assistant Director Darion Jones said. “Traveling with Our Ancestors” invites the public to listen, learn, reflect and share in community memory with Portland’s Native and Indigenous neighbors in Grand Ronde

and across Oregon.”

The press release from the city noted that “Portland’s downtown riverfront along the Willamette River has not always been a central hub—historically, people traveled through the area going to or coming from their nearby villages. The cultural practices, stories, and teachings of a place, especially those with deep foundational and long-duration activities of an area’s Indigenous people should be presented in public art and monuments.”

Grand Ronde’s Cultural Resources Department developed the idea for “Traveling with Our Ancestors” in response to Converge 45’s 2021 open call for their Portland Monuments and Memorial Project.

“It is amazing to see these works installed, having first worked on the project as the Executive Director for Converge 45,” Tribal Arts Administrator Mack McFarland said. “These kinds of projects, where we can share the unique forms and designs of lower Columbia River style is one of the goals for the Grand Ronde art program. This way of making (art) originated in this region and to be able to share public artworks with these designs in downtown Portland is very special.” ■

ARE YOU A CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE TRIBAL VETERAN?

Contact the Tribal Veterans Service Office (TVSO)

To Add Your Name:

- ✓ To the email list
- ✓ To the mail out list
- ✓ To the t-shirt list

*If you are already on the list, but need to update your information, please email those changes.

To Recieve:

- ✓ Benefits information & updates
- ✓ Event invitations
- ✓ Veteran recognitions

Why? Because the TVSO shares information all year long about veterans benefits, events, and periodically sends veteran recognitions.

If you have any questions or want more information, email:

✉ CTGRtribalVSO@GrandRonde.Org

TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

Suicide prevention work focuses on creating strong connections

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

Dancing at one of the several jams the Tribe’s Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program offers looks like simple fun – and it’s meant to be fun. However, there’s a deeper purpose behind it, Tribal Native Connections Coordinator Keri Kimsey said.

Those dinners, dances and other events are creating bonds among Tribal members, connecting young people to their Elders, teaching them Tribal traditions, helping them find their own voices and above all, teaching them that they are not alone and help is available.

“Sometimes people don’t think it’s hard because it looks like all we’re doing is having fun but sometimes that’s part of the work,” Kimsey said.

YEP focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles and strengthening families, as well as addiction and suicide prevention.

Kimsey works in suicide prevention, with the aid of one of the several federal grants the program receives. The work can look different with each young person, she said. For some, personal mentoring helps to address struggles with depression and self-harm through building relationships with trusted adults. For others, a more general approach is sufficient.

Kimsey is also called on by area schools, to respond to children who are struggling or at risk.

“They want to pull me in to support the youth,” she said.

Her job is to work with the young person to discover the distress driving their despair and help them to see a way through it.

“It isn’t always the easiest work,” Kimsey said, “But I think I’ve been able to find ways to lighten the load.



Keri Kimsey

I really like the focus on hope and resiliency.”
In the Tribal Community Center, Kimsey and her teammates are quietly working to undo the damage of decades of trauma, passed down from one generation to the next, that can lead Tribal youth to contemplate harming themselves or ending their lives. There’s heartbreak behind the project in the form of grim statistics, but although she tracks them, Kimsey doesn’t spend her time contemplating those painful numbers, noting that they don’t always tell the complete story.

“We are always looking at the numbers of (suicide) attempts completed,” she said. “We’ll never know the numbers on the other side – the people who reached out to someone. We’ll never know how many lives we’ve saved just by listening to someone. I have to remind myself of that sometimes.”

Kimsey said finding ways to create joy and connection is a fundamental part of the work.

“We’re empowering them to be a voice to their peers,” giving young people “a feeling of belonging and working for their community,” she said.

The focus on empowerment builds confidence but it also benefits the entire Tribe.

“(They) have powerful things to say and I’m excited to give them the opportunity to have that voice,” Kimsey said.

Among the ways young people are encouraged to use their voices



Smoke Signals file photo

Mila Linton dances during the Pajama Jam held in the Tribal gym in January. The Tribe’s Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program holds several jams throughout the year to help create bonds among Tribal members, connect young people to their Elders, teach them Tribal traditions, help them find their own voices and lets them know they are not alone.

is by talking with Kimsey and her colleagues about which strategies actually help.

“We ask them, ‘What are the things they do to support themselves, who do they reach out to when they’re struggling?’” she said.

Much of the damage stems from the era when Tribal children were forcibly sent to boarding schools that separated them from their own cultures, and from the years after Termination, when the government encouraged Tribal members to leave their reservations and scatter throughout the country.

Since 1983, the Tribe has been working to rebuild itself, and Kimsey sees her work as a critical part of that mission. Giving people back a sense of connection back to their culture, she said, can make a huge difference in their struggles. So, the department offers opportunities for youth and families to connect, be in community and have access to cultural lifeways that, she said, can help people not get to a point where they need more direct intervention.

“When you attend a jam or a celebration at the plankhouse, that is

prevention,” Kimsey said. “I want families to know they are doing the work...You go to these events and they’re just jam-packed. It’s all about drumming, singing and dancing. There’s a little bit of information disseminated, but I think people are craving that (traditional celebration) and finding it healing.”

The department’s work intersects with other departments such as Cultural Resources, which provides space and time to help Tribal members explore traditional activities and skills.

“Those practices the Tribes had before contact supported people,” Kimsey said. “There was never a word for suicide before contact. So much of the work we’re doing is responding to that dismantling of people and Tribes. ... We have to think about that and decolonize the ways that we’re doing the work here. Maybe sit-down, talk therapy isn’t the right thing for everyone.”

While the department’s focus is on youth, it recognizes addressing families is crucial.

“The services we provide are very holistic,” Kimsey said. ■



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The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department has a nonemergency text line at 541-921-2927.

“If you have a nonemergency situation or question, feel free to contact my officer via text through this line,” said Grand Ronde Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight.

McKnight said that emergency situations still require calling 911. For more information, contact McKnight at 503-879-1474. ■

Economic Development Program undergoes transition

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

The Tribe’s Economic Development Program has a new look, a new leader and a new name.

In June, Tribal Lands Manager Jan M. Reibach took responsibility for the program, becoming the Economic and Lands Director. He said that the lands team is ready to manage the program as he has been working with economic development centered projects since 1997 and the lands department has been involved in several large Tribal projects, as well as managing real estate which has netted \$15 million in profits.

Now called EcDev, it functions as a program within the Tribal Lands Department with the goals of “improving efficiencies, better aligning with the Tribe’s economy and increasing operational effectiveness.”

“I am grateful to be part of this incredible team to move the Tribe’s economy forward in a good way,” Reibach said. “There are some incredible projects in motion with so much progress being made and good things to come. The Tribe has always been at our best when we work closely together in solidarity. The energy of this movement



Jan M. Reibach

is amazing. With the leadership of Tribal Council, EcDev is collaborating with Finance, Engineering and Planning, Lands, Natural Resources Department, Spirit Mountain Casino, Tribal Attorney’s Office, TERO and many other areas to strengthen and diversify our economy.”

He added that since the merger earlier this year, his team has hosted external economic development agencies including the Yamhill County Economic Development Alliance, Oregon Entrepreneur Network and Business Oregon.

According to a recent program update, the main objectives are to “exercise CTGR sovereignty by identifying, analyzing and providing recommendations for economic development related projects” and to “coordinate with departments and programs to fully vet potential projects and related impacts to Tribal operations and finances.”

As part of the move, now-former General Manager’s Office Executive Assistant Barbara Branson transferred to the Lands Department, with the title of Services Coordinator. Central phones and the Records Management Program, which were previously under the purview of the General Manager’s Office, were also moved under the Lands Department.

“Moving EcDev into the Tribal Lands Department is part of a strategic focus to further align its operations to support the Tribe’s economy,” Reibach said. “The merge of these areas resulted in a substantial budget savings for the Tribe while increasing efficiencies and output. While reducing these operational costs from the merge, we were able to fill two positions in lands, including an administrative assistant and economic development analyst, who will be assisting with opportunity assessments and project evaluations.”

Part of revamping the EcDev program included updating the website to include a new description, mission statement, project highlights, transportation projects, conservation property recovery statistics and the Tribe’s community development plan,

Grand Ronde 2033.

“We just updated the webpages for EcDev and the Lands Department with expanded information about the program and several projects to highlight large Tribal project collaborations that include updates for our profitable commercial real estate projects,” Reibach said. “The team continues to move existing projects forward while refining our opportunity assessment process. Every opportunity is assessed for its potential while we are preparing to launch development of a Sustainable Economic Development Strategy, also known as a SEDS, for the Tribe that will provide a pathway for long-term economic success.”

He noted that the creation and adoption of the new strategy will take a few years and will include community meetings with input from Tribal members.

“In the meantime, I am always available to meet and share information with our members,” Reibach said. “Also, we look forward to providing an EcDev update that will include project details at the January General Council meeting.”

Reibach can be reached at 503-879-2394 or Jan.Reibach@grandronde.org. ■

Spirit Jam



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Willow Squetimkin, 9, dances during the Native American Heritage Month Spirit Week jam at the Willamina High School gym Friday, Nov. 14. The jam was attended by all Willamina School District students. Additional activities throughout the week included rock your ribbon skirts or ribbon shirts, necklace making, rock your beaded bling, stick game, rock your mocs and storytelling. The Tribe’s Youth Empowerment & Prevention and Public Health programs and shawash ili?i skul were among some Tribal programs that hosted the activities. November is Native American Heritage Month.



The Grand Ronde Canoe Family drums and sings during the Native American Heritage Month Spirit Week jam at the Willamina High School gym.

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. ■

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Position of Honors Attorney created for Tribal members

LEGAL continued
from front page

In 2013, Partridge joined the Tribal Attorney's Office as an intern, working for six months as a Ceded Lands specialist. In that role, she served as the Tribal representative in negotiations over the Superfund site in the Portland Harbor. Two weeks later, she passed the Oregon State Bar Exam and later in 2013, she became the first Tribal member hired by the Tribal Attorney's Office.

The Tribe had created a position of Honors Attorney for Tribal members lacking the required two years of legal experience, to give them a way to join the department while they are gaining experience.

"I did not expect to get hired here as my first job: I thought it would be years before I worked for the Tribe," Partridge said.

After deciding against pursuing criminal law, she thought back over her studies of Tribal law and sovereignty.

"It seemed like a natural fit," she said.

The Honors Attorney position was another perfect fit, she said. "My family wanted to come back; my dad grew up here and connecting with the Tribe is important to all of us," Partridge said. "Now we all live here; my parents, my sister and me."

Partridge is still working on the Portland Harbor cleanup; now as the legal representative for Ceded Lands.

"What I learned in those first six months really made it easier to do my job today," she said.

Like all of the Tribe's attorneys, Partridge also does her share of child welfare cases. Her work often deepens her appreciation of Tribal ceremonies and milestones, she



Brooks Wakeland



Holly Partridge

noted. "It makes it more rewarding, when I go to a First Fish ceremony, knowing I have a role in making the river safe for those fish," she said. "When I go to harvest lamprey, knowing I have a role in keeping the Willamette River clean. ... When I'm there for the worst moments of someone's life, like when we're taking someone's children – I'm also there at their best moments, when we return someone's children and they're being the best parents they can be. I don't get to celebrate with them but I get to see it and know I had a role in keeping that family together," she said. "When I went to the opening for Stratus Village – I was there, every step of the way ... and now I get to go on a tour of it."

She said she most enjoys her environmental work.

"I am not a litigator," she said. "I can tell you what is not my favorite part; going to court. I do it and I think I'm good at it, but it's not my favorite part. What I really enjoy is working with my clients; helping them be successful. I really enjoy that."

Wakeland said he had intended to pursue a medical career in forensic psychology, earning degrees in science and sociology.

"It wasn't until my last two se-

mesters at Portland State (University) that just for fun, I took a class in forensic evidence by a professor who used to be a defense attorney in California," he said.

The professor suggested that he consider law school instead and Wakeland said the idea appealed. He was earning an A in the class, while struggling with Cs in his chosen major. After he earned a second A in a follow-up class suggested by the professor, he called his parents to announce he was changing his focus.

His father, Tribal Elder Pete Wakeland, who was working for the Tribe in forestry, told him there was an internship open in the Tribe's legal office.

"So, I've been in the legal office since 2012; I interned there before I even went to law school," he said. "I really enjoyed it. ... I came back every summer until 2015, then graduated and got hired on permanently."

Wakeland said he focused on business in law school. "I had zero interest in property or tax law," he said. "Everyone in our office does a little bit of everything. My primary focus is contracts and contract negotiation."

Wakeland said his clients include "Natural Resources, the Tribal Police Department, the Tribal Fire Department. And a lot of boards and committees... My biggest clients are the casino and child welfare work.

... Also employee litigation ... I'm now the primary litigator in the office, so I am the one who goes to court most often."

Wakeland said he particularly enjoys that aspect.

"I love going to court; it's one of my favorite parts of my job," he said.

Theater improvisation classes and speaking classes as a kid helped build his enjoyment of being in the courtroom, he said.

Wakeland said he was born in Eugene and the family moved to Salem when he was in middle school. His father's work for the Tribe in forestry led to hunting and fishing trips on the reservation, he said, "so I've always kind of been around."

Partridge and Wakeland both encouraged Tribal youth to pursue any interest they have in education and law, noting that the Honors Attorney position can be an important step in pursuing a career.

"I would like all Tribal members to know they can be successful in anything they choose and education is the key to that," Partridge said. "I was the first in my family even to go to college, let alone all the way through law school, so it can happen for anyone."

Wakeland encouraged members with questions about law school or a legal career to call him at 503-879-2344. ■

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. ■

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TERO holds annual appreciation lunch, names worker of the year

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

The annual Tribal Employment Rights Office Appreciation Lunch was held Saturday, Nov. 15, at Spirit Mountain Casino’s Event Center to honor and highlight employees and projects in 2025, and to honor the worker of the year.

TERO Director Harris Reibach served as master of ceremonies, introducing speakers, presenting awards and announcing raffle winners while approximately 200 attendees enjoyed lunch and desserts.

Before lunch began, Reibach read aloud a tribute letter to the family of past TERO worker and Warm Springs Tribal Elder Sammy Bruised Head, who walked on Oct. 26.

“Sammy had a wealth of experience working with the Grand Ronde TERO program dating back to 2018,” Reibach said. “Since then, Sammy had been a great asset to our workforce, contributing and helping meet Tribal hiring goals in various capacities. We are sincerely grateful we had those opportunities to work with Sammy as she progressed along her journey within the construction trades. It is with deep sadness and a spirit of mourning that we send this letter to acknowledge your loss.”

Reibach took a moment to acknowledge all who had come out for the event, and noted it was the second time they had invited primary contractors for various Oregon Department of Transportation projects that employ TERO workers.

“This is just a small portion of the ODOT team and they are amazing,” Reibach said. “It’s so special to have a relationship with the DOT. There are only seven Tribes in the United States that have a relationship with their DOT.”

He noted that of those seven Tribes, three are located in Oregon: Grand Ronde, Umatilla and Warm Springs.

Then, Reibach introduced ODOT Director of Engagement and Civil Rights Serena Stoudamire Wesley, Office of Equity and Civil Rights Manager Angela Crane, Labor Equity Coordinator Michelle Ehara, Region One Coordinator Tricia Vrana and Region Two Coordinator



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Rob Roy (Yakama Nation) speaks after being named Tribal Employment Rights Office Worker of the Year during the TERO Appreciation Lunch at Spirit Mountain Casino’s Event Center Saturday, Nov. 15. Behind him are members of his crew that he brought on stage with him to be recognized.

Alyssa Soots.

Reibach acknowledged the Klamath Tribes TERO, who visited the Grand Ronde TERO program earlier this year after launching their program in early 2025.

“They are now the fourth and newest TERO in the state of Oregon, Reibach said. “We’re hoping that they can be another Tribe to get an MOU that way.”

Reibach introduced employees in the TERO program, which include Senior Compliance Officer Duke Kimsey, Compliance Officer Matt Lux, Training and Development Coordinator Jacob Boekhoff, Senior Administrative Assistant Caden Leno, Administrative Assistant Kristy Summers and Khofi Haws Lead Barista Ariel Hunt. Past TERO staff member Lori Sterling was also in attendance.

Then, Reibach mentioned TERO Commission members in attendance, which included Sterling and fellow Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Perri McDaniel.

Reibach thanked Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier, the Tribe’s Human Resources Department and Tribal 477 Employment and Training Program for attending the lunch.

Lunch and dessert were followed by raffle prize drawings, an explanation of the various services TERO

provides and project statistics, among other presentations.

“We’re going to talk a bit about 2025,” Reibach said. “Overall, it’s been an awesome year. It seems like every single year we just grow, learn more, do more and get on more projects. In 2025, the TERO program has been on a total of 30 projects. The Tribal projects and ODOT projects are the main ones we’re on.”

He mentioned the Tribe’s Wind River Apartments, with 10 buildings and 45 units being added to Tribal housing, as one of the big projects, along with the Interstate 205 Abernathy Bridge project.

“We’re talking hundreds of millions of dollars,” Reibach said. “It’s the biggest project we’ve ever been on actually. So, we keep a lot of people dispatched to that project.”

Overall, in 2025, TERO participated in 31 projects and 90 new workers registered with the program, up from 51 the past year. There were 77 active workers on jobsites.

“For total hours and wages, and this is always something I’m harping on here, I call it food in the fridge and shoes on the feet,” Reibach said. “These are real, tangible numbers...these total hours and wages, that’s actual money going into the pockets of people who work hard for that. Total hours for 2025 were 28,088 and total wages were \$1.1 million. That’s a big deal and we’re proud of that.”

Mercier spoke about how the Grand Ronde TERO program has grown since the early days when it was just a discussion amongst Tribal leaders.

“I’m really impressed by the turnout and remember the days we were just discussing the program,” he said. “For the longest time, it was just something the council talked about. A couple of the Tribal leaders who helped make it happen – Wink Soderberg and Steve Bobb Sr. – they’re no longer with us. I know if they were here, they’d be really proud about what they’re seeing, how much the program has grown and how many people it has helped.”

McDaniel and Sterling spoke on

behalf of the commission. They said that Grand Ronde TERO has the best program that they have seen in Indian Country.

“I started working for the Tribe about 30 years ago and started advocating for a TERO program back then,” McDaniel said. “I think I’m probably the longest-standing advocate for TERO. The growth of the program is just amazing and unprecedented.”

Added Sterling, “I’m very happy to still be a part of TERO. I worked in the office for several years and now I’m on the commission. I know how hard the staff works. It’s amazing and none of it happens if you don’t work together.”

After ODOT and various contractors had the opportunity to speak, there were open mic opportunities.

Contractors who attended included Stotts Construction, High Quality Traffic Control, Knife River Construction, Wildish Construction Co., Brown Construction, Legacy Contracting Inc., Roger Langeliers Construction, Just Bucket Excavating Inc., Kiewit Bridge and Marine, Suulutaaq Inc., CG Contractors and Eugene Williams Asphalt.

Toward the end of the event, the TERO Worker of the Year award was presented to Yakama Nation Tribal member Robert Roy Jr., who was also a TERO Worker of the Month in March 2023.

“This young warrior joined our TERO program in 2022 and was soon dispatched to one of our (memorandum of understanding) ODOT heavy highway construction projects,” Reibach said. “He has been a great asset to not only our TERO program but a key employee on each and every project he has been assigned to. He started out as a general laborer and has since been promoted to foreman in about a two-year period. That is not an easy task to accomplish, which most people in this room can attest to. He has been a great advocate for our TERO program as well.”

Reibach noted that Roy, “sees the importance of getting our Native people out on these projects to show that our people are capable of not only doing the work but running these multimillion-dollar projects.”

“He is now the foreman of an all-Native crew on a half a billion-dollar project. He has helped the TERO dispatcher put together this all-Native crew which supersedes any work crew that our program has done to this day. He is well-versed when it comes to the rights that our program has for our Natives. He stands strong as a Native man and is not afraid to stick up for the rights of our people in the industry. There are many challenges in the position which he holds, and he is very well-spoken when it comes to getting the job done, whether it be with his supervisors or with his crew.”

Roy was presented with a Tribal Pendleton blanket, \$200 Cabela’s gift card, plaque, one-night stay at Spirit Mountain Casino with a \$50 meal comp and a two-hour bay rental for six guests at the TopGolf swing suite.

The event concluded with a final raffle and photos. ■

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Molly Leno @ molly.leno@grandronde.org

Restoration Celebration recalls



Senior Miss Grand Ronde Marie Quenelle, 15, left, hands Nova King, 7, a bag of raffle prizes as her grandfather, Tribal member Barry Larsen, looks on during the Tribe's 42nd Restoration Celebration at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Friday, Nov. 21.

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

On Friday, Nov. 21, Tribal members gathered again at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center to celebrate, drum, dance, eat and honor the Tribe's accomplishments since it was restored in 1983. The celebration continued with the annual Restoration Celebration Powwow Saturday, Nov. 22.

Forty-two years after Restoration, the Tribe rejoices in a sprawling campus that includes a governance center, health and wellness building, school, library, gym and

numerous other resources, as well as a casino that forms the bedrock of the Tribe's economic engine.

"This is the greatest thing that the Tribe can celebrate, it really is," Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy told the assembled members at Friday's event, before embarking on a history lesson.

"I want this to be a teaching moment for your children, our young people who did not experience termination. ... I always want our young people to know that what you have and see today is not a given. This is something unique,

very special, a gift from God for us to be able to gather together and also celebrate our Restoration."

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George served as the event emcee. In addition to George and Kennedy, Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier and council members Kathleen George, Lisa Leno and Matthew Haller were in attendance.

Tribal Elder Ronnie Riggs Johnson gave the invocation.

A lunch of salmon with cranberries and walnuts, autumn greens, roasted acorn squash, sweet potato casserole, mashed potatoes, pot roast, chicken and mushrooms, berry cobbler and mini red velvet cupcakes was served at 11:30.



Tribal members Ila Mercier, 11, left, and Emmalynn Warren, 11, dance in an owl dance during the Tribe's 42nd Restoration Celebration Powwow at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Saturday, Nov. 22.

There was also a gluten-free selection offered.

The Grand Ronde Canoe Family drummed and sang a meal song and enjoyed a jam session before the event started.

Kennedy told the assembled Tribal members that she wants everyone to remember Termination and Restoration.

"One challenge that I always put out at every Restoration is to know who your treaty signer ancestor is, and it can be multiple ones," she said. "I know for myself, I have four treaty signer grandfathers. I just want to reflect back on the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Prior to contact from other people, from other lands, our people lived in western Oregon from time immemorial. So, when you see anyone who is digging in the ground or are finding artifacts, those are ours. Those were what your people had made, had worked on, had used them as instruments for living. We were residents of this land. We occupied the land and we lived off the land.

She continued, "The land was

Two-year-old Tribal member Kaiya Mercier rattles as the Grand Ronde Canoe Family sings at the beginning of the Tribe's 42nd Restoration Celebration at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Friday, Nov. 21.



Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy speaks at the 42nd Restoration Celebration at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Friday, Nov. 21. Behind her is Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George.

the fight for sovereignty, land



Tribal member Nacoma Liebelt, 16, dances in the noon grand entry of the Tribe's 42nd Restoration Celebration Powwow at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Saturday, Nov. 22.

Brendyn Smallwood, 8, dances during a Youth Education Program's dance special during the Tribe's 42nd Restoration Celebration Powwow at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Saturday, Nov. 22.

Photos by Michelle Alamio



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS AND VIDEO



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what sustained us. All of our food, you can see the abundance of food that we had here today, and it was wonderful. Wonderful food. And we used to take all of the foods that were growing on the lands, we also cultivated them and encouraged them to return, year after year. And we want to return to all of those ways again. And the reason that we stopped doing that was because of the effects of colonization. We no longer had the land for us to take care of and so we could not practice our ways.”

During the 1850s, the United States entered into treaties with Tribes.

“The entering of treaties (with) Tribes was all about taking the land,” Kennedy said. That’s what it was all about. How can we acquire the land. And that’s what happened. We entered into seven treaties. All of us come from those peoples, those treaty signers, who at the time, knew that ‘unless we sign these treaties, we’re going to be extinct,

because we will be killed, we will be driven, we will be hunted down, so it’s best for my people to sign treaties,’ and in that treaty, there was the agreement to relocate, to move from your lands that we occupy down in southern Oregon, northern California, southwest Washington.”

This culminated in Tribes being forcibly relocated to the Grand Ronde Reservation beginning in 1856, known as the Oregon Trail of Tears, which had a devastating effect on Tribal ancestors.

“We moved, as we were driven,” Kennedy said. “It wasn’t a little walk, though, a ‘tiptoe through the tulips’ walk; it was a very dangerous walk. It was in the dead of winter. It was walking on your feet for hundreds of miles, with moccasins that were thin-soled and often wore out on the way here. It was a terrible time for our people. I know that my treaty-signer from the Umpqua was driven up here; he and his wife and their sons, and he was killed on the way here.”

She noted that in the decades following the Tribes’ removal to the Grand Ronde Reservation, various government actions whittled down the Tribe’s land base until the federal government terminated its recognition of the Tribe altogether in 1954.

“So, the land that you’re walking on, that we’re living on today, was all taken away. We did not have anything left at all, except our cemetery that is in continuous use today, that buries our ancestors,” Kennedy said.

She noted that the Tribe’s Cultural Resources Department is still working to record family stories and to collect artifacts to be displayed at Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center.

Tribal Elder Josephine Ingraham said she was finding Restoration “really emotional,” and that she did not know growing up that she was a Tribal member.

“My grandma married in 1942,” she said. “She moved away and she didn’t look back.”

At a garage sale in 1987, she said, her neighbor told her he knew her family in Grand Ronde, baffling Ingraham, who was unaware of any family members in Grand Ronde.

He provided her with the name and phone number of a friend of

her grandmother, she said, but when she called, the woman told her “I can’t talk to you,” and hung up. That incident touched off Ingraham’s curiosity and she began researching her genealogy.

In 1999, she and her mother were enrolled as Tribal members.

On Saturday, Nov. 22, the Tribe held its annual Restoration Celebration Powwow, following a morning prayer at the cemetery. The doors opened at 9 a.m. Grand entry was at noon and 6 p.m.

George was also emcee for the powwow. The arena director was Tribal member Levi Liebelt. Head man and head woman were Tribal members Chad and Molly Leno. The host drum was Northern Blackhorse.

Dance specials included golden age by the Elders Activity Center, Marion Mercier Fancy Shawl by Adult Education, tiny tots by Tribal Council, all-in-all by the Health & Wellness Center and Ampkwa Advocacy Red Regalia for all ages. There was also a fill-the-blanket dance, an owl dance, and a head man/woman special potato dance for all ages. Coming out/returning to the circle was performed at 10 a.m. Youth Empowerment & Prevention put on a “street style” dance special for ages 14 to 24, with one song and three winners who each received a \$500 budget to either start or add to their regalia. ■



speaks during the Tribe's n Casino's Event Center Friday, on A. George, who was emcee



Tribal member Sam Hedrick, 14, dances in the “street style” dance special during the Tribe's 42nd Restoration Celebration Powwow at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center Saturday, Nov. 22. The Tribe's Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program sponsored the dance, in which all dancers needed to participate were the clothes on their back. Hedrick was chosen as a one of three winners and each winner received a \$500 budget to either start or add to their regalia.

Fashion star



Photo courtesy of Good Earth Media

Tribal member Auburn Logan walks in the third annual Indigenous Fashion Show at Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino in Niagara Falls, N.Y., Saturday, Nov. 1. Logan walked for four Indigenous designers: Tisha Thompson, Pidabinikwe, Kreations by Kehala and Queena Ribbon Designs. Designers Tisha Thompson and Kay Francis collaborated to create this custom dress for Logan inspired by her Instagram feed.

Gas discount in Grand Ronde

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. ■



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF Human Services

**INFORMATION SESSION:
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM (SNAP) CHANGES.**

Date: Thursday, December 11th, 2025
Time: 5:00-7:00 PM
Location: CTGR Community Center Bldg B

Informational meeting to understand SNAP program updates due to federal changes, including changes to work rules for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD), exemptions and more.

**DINNER, RAFFLE &
RESOURCE
CONNECTION**

Organized by: Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) & The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) Social Services





Children & Family SERVICES

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Youth Winter Coat GIVEAWAY



**YOUTH SIZES AVAILABLE:
4T, 5/6, 7/8 10/12, 14, & 18**

**11/20 (12pm-3pm), 11/25 (2pm-5pm)
& 12/6 (1pm-4pm)**

**CTGR Community Center
9615 Grand Ronde Rd. Grand Ronde, OR 97347**

For more information call or text Alex W. at 541-921-0610



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Domestic Violence Community Advocate	\$27/hr
Alcohol & Drug Specialist	\$25-27/hr
Youth Housing Advocate	\$22-25/hr
Foster Care Support Specialist	\$24+/hr



All jobs are located in Portland or Vancouver.

Visit nayapdx.org/jobs to learn more.

11/18/25

Appeals court reverses Cherry decision

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

A Tribal Appeals Court panel has reversed the Tribal Court’s decision acquitting former Spirit Mountain Casino Marketing Manager Chris Cherry of violating a Tribal ordinance prohibiting use of Tribal resources to solicit or distribute election campaign materials.

The appellate court sent the case back to the lower court to reconsider, asking it to “affirm or dismiss the citation in a written opinion that sets out its analysis.”

The original trial was held in March of this year and the verdict was appealed by the Tribe.

In mid-August 2024, Cherry was cited under the Tribal Public Safety Ordinance for violating its campaign provision, which bars using Tribal resources to solicit or distribute campaign materials. It carries a maximum penalty of a \$50 fine and is a civil ordinance violation.

Cherry was accused of having used Tribal resources to print campaign material for his wife, Michael Cherry, who was running for reelection to Tribal Council. Chris Cherry testified that Michael Cherry never directed him to produce any campaign materials through his work and was unaware of his effort to correct the proofs. Michael Cherry was not cited in the incident. She lost her 2024 reelection bid and

Chris Cherry is no longer employed by the casino.

The Cherrys said at the time, they believed the complaint and social media allegations were tactics to undermine her campaign.

Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight, whose department investigated the incident and issued the citation, said, “I want to make clear that we don’t get involved with political decisions whatsoever; we base our decisions on facts. ... Our actions had nothing to do with a political stance; it was all based off facts we collected at the time of the incident.”

McKnight added, “I have a lot of respect for the Cherry family,” noting that he has known them most of his life. “We’re just doing our jobs.”

Chris Cherry did not respond to a request for comment.

His attorney, Dori Brattain, argued that Cherry’s actions were no different than someone printing out a recipe for personal use. She said Cherry had merely spent a few minutes checking the “visual acuity” of the campaign banners after the vendor complained they were not printing correctly, then made a few corrections before emailing the file back to himself and returning it to the vendor.

“He was looking at the acuity on his work computer for those six minutes,” Brattain said. “He printed it out to see what it looked like

and that was the end of his use. The material that he printed to look at was not used for distribution and it was not used for solicitation. And I believe that is what the finding of the lower court was and the evidence supports that.”

Prosecutor and Tribal Senior Staff Attorney Brooks Wakeland argued to the appellate court that Cherry had taken advantage of his access to resources that other candidates did not have.

“So, while you might hear an argument that other people used the printers and used their computers to print out recipes or concert tickets or anything else, that may be a violation of employment policy here at the Tribe, but it’s certainly not enacted in the Tribal law,” Wakeland told the appellate court panel, noting that such uses are relatively trivial in the eyes of the law.

“However, when we’re talking about Tribal elections, that cuts to the very integrity and the core of Tribal sovereignty, and the Tribe enacted this ordinance in order to assure that those are fair,” Wakeland said. “And so, when you have an employee who uses resources such as marketing software, computers that aren’t available to anyone else, printers that aren’t available to anyone else, a contact that he knew from his time in marketing ... That’s the very definition of using Tribal resources to solicit campaign materials, which is what is expressly outlined in the ordinance.”

He argued that if Cherry had been able to make the corrections on his home computer, he would have done so.

Wakeland said the fact that Cherry had used his work computer and printer to develop materials

that he then, on his own time, had printed and distributed around the Tribal campus, meant that he had violated the ban on solicitation and distribution.

“If it wasn’t for his access to these Tribal resources, he would not have been able to either solicit or distribute these images, and that’s the problem,” Wakeland said.

Wakeland argued that Tribal Court Chief Judge Patrick Melendy erred in issuing his verdict that Cherry “did not solicit and distribute,” noting that the ordinance says “to solicit or distribute election campaign materials.”

Brattain argued that Melendy had considered both words separately.

“I think the lower court did weigh the evidence on distributing, that it looked at also the solicitation portion of the ordinance and found that there was neither,” she said. “I guess I would rephrase it this way, if I was to break it down; that the trial court said he did not solicit and he did not distribute.”

Wakeland said he disagreed.

“The judge states ‘It’s my job today to decide whether or not Mr. Cherry solicited and distributed campaign materials using Tribal resources.’ He was very clear,” Wakeland said.

Appellate judges Robert J. Miller, Patricia Paul and Patricia Davis concurred, writing in their ruling that “the court improperly amended the language of the ordinance ... We reverse the trial court’s decision dismissing the citation. We remand this case to that court to apply the ordinance as written and to affirm or dismiss the citation in a written opinion that sets out its analysis.”

Updates will be posted online at www.smokesignals.org. ■



Elderberry Wisdom Farm

2026 TEK Habitat Restoration Internship Opportunity

Winter and Spring Internships

Native American nonprofit, Elderberry Wisdom Farm is recruiting Native American and other interns of color pursuing conservation career pathways. Culturally tailored classroom education, experiential service-learning activities and mentoring support integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge and climate adaptation practices into habitat restoration, urban forestry, native plant nursery work, organic farming and micro-enterprise training and is supported by Mid-Willamette Valley conservation partners.

The Winter Internship (1/6-3/12/2026) and Spring Internship (3/24-5/21/2026) will be held three days a week Tuesdays through Thursdays for 10 weeks (200 hours). A \$3,000 stipend is provided. Applicants must live near training and work sites in Marion, Polk, Linn or Benton counties, OR, and be willing to consider employment with EWF following 1-2 internships. To apply, send resume and letter of intro to accounts@elderberrywisdom.org. More info is available in newsletters at www.elderberrywisdom.org.

Now Accepting Applications



ADULT FOSTER CARE

Priority is given to Grand Ronde Tribal Elders, dependent on need and acuity of all Tribal applicants

Eligibility Requirements

- TRIBAL ELDER (55+)
- COMPLETED WAITLIST APPLICATION

RETURN APPLICATIONS TO ALISHA PARKS SHELL, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND ADULT FOSTER CARE MANAGER
PHONE: 503-879-6542
ALISHA.PARKSSHELL@GRANDRONDE.ORG

If level of need and/or safety concerns at time of admission exceed a Level 2 Classification as defined by Oregon Department of Health Services OAR 411-049-0125, the applicant will be notified of ineligibility

Students of the month

The Tribe's Youth Enrichment Program hayu-munk skukum implemented student of the month awards for grades K-2, 3-5 and 6-12. Students of the month for October were named in November.



Alder Krehbiel was chosen as student of the month for grades K-2 because he comes to class with a radiant, positive attitude that lifts everyone's mood. He helps his peers and friends all the time. Most importantly he works at always including everyone with whatever activity is going on for the day.



Worthy Amouak was chosen as student of the month for grades K-2 because she shows great leadership and has always come to class with a positive attitude. She loves helping both the teacher and her friends every chance she gets. It is such a pleasure to have her in class.



Hope Mull was chosen as student of the month for grades 3-5 because she has been a pleasure in class. She has helped numerous people including staff with various projects and crafts. On multiple occasions she has been a great leader to both her peers and K-2 kids.



Dash Amouak was chosen as student of the month for grades 3-5 because he has been a great leader, encouraging other peers to follow directions and transition from activities. He has been kind to everyone, helping students to feel included and a part of the class.



Contributed photos

Tristan Soderberg was chosen as student of the month for grades 6-12 because he is kind and helpful and always ready to lend a hand. He participates in activities at the Tribal youth center such as art, crafts and community gatherings. During culture practice, Tristan takes leads in drumming and singing, sharing his energy and passion with everyone around him. His dedication inspires others to stay connected to their traditions.

NEED FIREWOOD?

We would like to open a specific location within Noble Oaks to Tribal member firewood cutting. Please contact Natural Resources to obtain a permit and further details.

503-879-2424



Education Division

COAT DRIVE



Donate a new or gently used coat for a chance to win a great selection of raffle prizes. Donations can be dropped off at any CTGR Education building.

Questions: email education@grandronde.org or call 503-879-2275

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- Gas Fireplace
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For land leasing application: downpayment@grandronde.org or grandronde.org



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Watchlist: ‘First Descent: Kayaking the Klamath River after the largest dam removal in US history’

By Kamiah Koch
Social media/digital journalist

In the summer of 2025, Oregon Public Broadcasting followed a group of Indigenous teens who were the first to kayak the entire Klamath River to commemorate the largest dam removal project in American history.

“They removed four out of the six dams that were built on the Klamath River,” a narrator said. “This was a battle Tribal communities have been fighting for over a century. The first descent is to celebrate the work that went into dam removal and to show why it’s necessary.”

The 300-mile stretch of river flows through southern Oregon and northern California and took the Tribal youth a month to complete.

On launch day, Klamath Tribal member Jeff Mitchell spoke to the kayakers about the significance of this journey through his peoples’ homelands. He shared it was an emotional day because it had been 100 years since salmon had been able to reach upriver spawning areas because of the dams.

With a prayer and sage, they began their journey in a good way.

Tasia Linwood, 15, was one of the Indigenous youths participating in the journey. She said her grandparents never thought they would see the Klamath River undammed.

Linwood’s mother, Nisha Supahan (Karuk) says she held some concerns about kayakers’ safety because they are kayaking on a river that is unknown. With the dams removed, it’s now flowing in new directions. Kayak guides from the Paddle Tribal Waters program had heard warnings about “strainers,” meaning downed wood and trees that can be dangerous to kayakers.

But many of the Tribal youth had been kayaking and training for this journey for two years and rafted many of the white water sections a year before in preparation.

With Go-Pros strapped to several of the kayaks, the nervous teens braved the class-four rapids.

After paddling through the previous dam sites, many of the kayakers marveled at seeing the river in its new form.

“I have only ever seen Iron Gate (Reservoir) as this big ugly blockade on the river, and I was looking at it from river level and I never thought that I would see it like this,” Paddle Tribal Waters Director Danielle Frank said. “This is the river I grew up on but I have never known this river like this.”

You can watch the full Tribal youth kayak journey on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FuGuWeAra4. ■



Turkey bowling



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Dental Assistant Samuel King watches his throw as he competes in the 21st annual Turkey Bowling event at Youth Education’s covered area Thursday, Nov. 20. The competition has men’s and women’s divisions with prizes of \$100 for first place, \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place. For the men’s division, Tribal Maintenance Technician Jr Carillo won first, Tribal Social/Emotional Learning Coach Joshua Sherwood won second and Tribal Academic Coach Micah Grogan won third.



Tribal Academic Coach Cherie Trujillo bowls her way to first place for the women’s division in the 21st annual Turkey Bowling event. Krystal King took second and Tribal Accounts Payable Specialist Emily Sterling took third.

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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. ■

TYPES OF IN HOME SERVICES

Home Health Care

Home health care providers services in a patient’s home to treat an illness or injury. These services are provided by licensed nurses, therapists, home health aids. Insurance *may* cover home health care if the patient is homebound or needs intermittent skilled nursing or therapy (care at least once every 60 days, but no more than once a day for up to three weeks). Requires referral from healthcare provider.

SERVICES CAN INCLUDE:

- Nursing Care for wound care, medication administration, pain management, and more
- Physical, Speech, Occupational Therapy
- Activities of Daily Living Assistance
- Medication Management

Home Care Services

Home care is care that allows a person to stay in their home. It can be for people who are chronically ill, recovering from surgery and do not qualify for home health care, or have a disability, or are aging and wish to stay home. Home care services, are not covered by insurance, but covered out of pocket by the person receiving the care.

SERVICES CAN INCLUDE:

- Personal care such as helping with bathing, washing hair, or getting dressed
- Household chores such as cleaning, yard work, laundry
- Cooking or delivering meals
- Money management
- Medical transportation

Grand Ronde Community Health

Community Health provider a community approach for improving the overall health, preventing disease and reducing health disparities by addressing the whole person. Services and support is offered to Tribal Elders and Native Family Caregivers.

SERVICES INCLUDE:

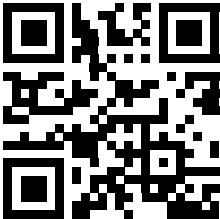
- Medical Transportation
- Care Management
- Medication Delivery
- Blood Pressure Checks
- Life Alert Services
- Home Safety Visits
- Elder Justice Support
- Wellness Checks
- Dementia Care Support
- ER/Hospital Discharge Calls
- Any many more....



Position Title	Grade	Min. Start Wage	Max Start Wage	Closing Date
Administrative Assistant – Social Services	8	\$24.60/hr.	\$31.84/hr.	12/01/2025
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Therapist	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Clinical Manager – Salem - GCR	14	\$90,630.26/yr.	\$116,255.21/yr.	Until Filled
Cook – Adult Foster Care	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Cook – Early Childhood Education	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Emergency Assistance Programs Coordinator	8	\$24.60/hr.	\$31.84/hr.	12/01/2025
Front Desk Dental Assistant - Updated	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	Until Filled
Housekeeper - Swing	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Licensed Practical Nurse - Salem Detox - GCR	12	\$36.01/hr.	\$46.31/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
Maintenance Technician – Facilities	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	11/24/2025
Maintenance & Safety Technician Supervisor – Salem - GCR	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	12/01/2025
Mental Health Counselor – Sheridan - GCR	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Mental Health Therapist – Behavioral Health	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Milieue Safety Technician – Salem Detox – GCR	6	\$20.75/hr.	\$26.42/hr.	Until Filled
Nursing Supervisor - Salem Detox - GCR	13	\$82,391.14/yr.	\$105,817.37/yr.	Until Filled
Physician – Health & Wellness	25	\$226,851.26/yr.	\$330,026.39/yr.	Until Filled
Preschool Teacher	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
Recovery House Program Manager – Sheridan - GCR	14	\$90,630.26/yr.	\$116,255.21/yr.	Until Filled
Post-Treatment Services Support Counselor	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	11/24/2025
School Administration Coordinator – Limited Duration	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	12/01/2025
Senior Lead Auditor	14	\$90,630.26/yr.	\$116,255.21/yr.	Until Filled
Silviculture Coordinator	12	\$36.01/hr.	\$46.31/hr.	Until Filled
Social Emotional Learning Specialist	13	\$82,391.14/yr.	\$105,817.37/yr.	Until Filled
Teacher Aide/Bus Monitor – Part Time	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Temporary Pool	2	\$16.00/hr.	\$16.00/hr.	







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The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde offers generous benefits and competitive pay. POSTINGS ARE OPEN UNTIL FILLED & WILL BE REMOVED WITHOUT NOTICE

INTERVIEWS WILL BE GIVEN IN THE FOLLOWING RANKING ORDER:

- Grand Ronde Tribal members.
(Qualified Grand Ronde Tribal members who show they meet the minimum qualifications of the position during the course of the screening and interview process will be given first consideration for hire and the recruitment process will end)
- Tribal member spouses, parents and/or legal guardians of Grand Ronde Tribal member children & current regular Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde employees.
- External candidates including current Spirit Mountain Casino employees.

Apply online at: www.grandronde.org



POSTING TITLE	CLOSE DATE	WAGE/SALARY
Bar Porter	12/04/2025	\$18.29/hr. DOE
Amore Restaurant Manager	Until Filled	\$63,586.43/yr. DOE
Assistant Food and Beverage Manager	Until Filled	\$48,329.22/yr. DOE
Casino Beverage Waitstaff (<i>*Part-Time</i>)	Until Filled	\$15.05/hr. + Tips
Cook (Full-Time & <i>*Part-Time</i>)	Until Filled	\$18.29/hr. DOE
Count Operations Technician III	Until Filled	\$25.45/hr. DOE
Hotel Room Attendant (Full-Time & <i>*Part-Time</i>)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
IT Production Supervisor	Until Filled	\$83,914.69/yr. DOE
Table Games Dealer (Full-Time & <i>*Part-Time</i>)	Until Filled	\$15.05/hr. + Tips
Uniform Attendant	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE

On-Site Job Fair with Goodwill and WorkSource

December 10th, 2025 | 1:00pm – 3:00pm

\$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.

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TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS





Mallory Harman, LAc



Alison Healy, LAc



Grace Rodriguez, LAc

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- pain
- headaches/migraines
- digestive issues
- women's health issues
- emotional pain & trauma
- diabetic neuropathy
- addictions
- and so much more!

Questions or to schedule:

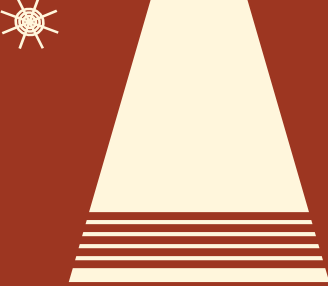
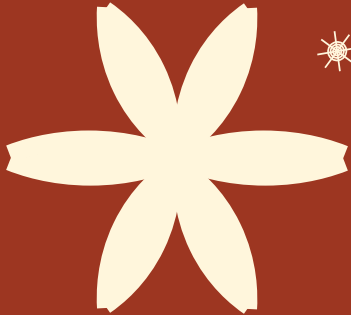
CALL OR TEXT: 503-482-9370

EMAIL: info@yourdearbody.com



Chachalu Friday Marketplace

FOOD // ART // CRAFTS



December 12
Holly Jolly Marketplace
10AM - 5PM

MARKET IS HELD IN THE CHACHALU GYM

VENDOR INFO / CHACHALU.MARKETPLACE@GRANDRONDE.ORG 8720 GRAND RONDE ROAD, GRAND RONDE, OREGON





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A message in partnership with Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

Walking On...

Richard Edward Gardee
May 24, 1979 – Nov. 9, 2025

Tribal member Richard Edward Gardee passed away Nov. 9, 2025, at the age of 46.
Valley Hills Funeral Home in Wapato, Washington, is assisting the family.
Funeral service information was not available before presstime.

Service offered at the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Building





Registered Dietitian
Nutritionist

Becky Johnson

Becky Johnson is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist able to work one-on-one with any HWC-eligible patient at the Cheryle Kennedy Public Health Building. Becky has been licensed as a dietitian since 2019 after completing a Master of Science in Human Nutrition degree at Oregon Health & Science University and dietetic internship with the Veterans Administration Portland Health Care System. Becky has previously work as a dietitian and nutrition services manager at Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City and dietitian and health education manager with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians in Canyonville. She enjoys working with individuals of all ages, using the power of food and nutrition to create personalized eating plans and set goals to improve or maintain health. This includes both managing chronic health conditions (such as chronic kidney disease, heart disease, food allergies/intolerances or digestive problems) or promoting optimum nutrition at different life stages (such as early childhood, youth athletes, pregnancy, or older adulthood).

Contact Details

For appointments contact the Public Health Department front desk at 503-879-6701
OR contact Becky directly at 503-879-6711 or Becky.Johnson@grandronde.org.

Woman's Gathering

@ the

Plank house

On

December

17th

12~1pm

Come sit in the warmth of the Plank house, where stories rise like cedar smoke and women gather to remember their strength. This is a time for healing, &connection Join other women to share presence, peace, and the medicine that comes from simply being together

Woman's Gathering will continue to be on every 3rd Wednesday of the month

Volunteers Wanted

Volunteers Wanted

Grand Ronde Tribal Emergency Services is looking for Volunteers

If you are interested in helping to service your community, please apply by visiting www.Grandronde.org at

Volunteer Opportunities include:

Firefighter
Water Tender Driver
EMS
Auxiliary
Chaplaincy





Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Emergency Services
9615 Grand Ronde Rd. Grand Ronde, OR 97347 503-879-3473



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✓ You must be at least 16 years old for this program

✓ To earn your GED you will need to pass four tests; Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Science.

✓ The Grand Ronde Higher Education Department will provide you with study materials and tutoring as needed

ADULT
HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

✓ In the Adult High School Completion program you will earn an Oregon State High School Diploma.

✓ Any High School credits you earned in High School (no matter how long ago) can/will be applied towards the 24 required credits needed.

✓ This program is online and is self-paced.

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 tracy.biery@grandronde.org

PLAN
AHEAD

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DIRECTIVE CLINIC

WHEN:
FRIDAY...
FEBRUARY 20TH, 2026
9AM-4PM

WHERE:
ELDER ACTIVITY CENTER

SIGN UP AT ELDER CENTER OR
CALL * 503-879-2145 * 503-8792233

HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

Hand washing



Every time you wash your hands, you’re doing something big for your health and the health of those around you. It may sound small, but it matters a lot. especially during National Hand-

washing Awareness Week Dec. 5-11, when we focus on helping everyone make handwashing a good habit.

Here’s why handwashing is so important:

- Dirty hands pick up germs (bacteria, viruses) that can make you or others sick.
- Washing hands with soap and water removes many of those germs before they can get into your body (through touching your face, eating, etc.).
- Studies show handwashing can prevent about one-third of diarrhea-related sicknesses in children and one-fifth of respiratory illnesses (like colds, coughs).
- It’s also a smart way to help keep antibiotics working. When fewer people get infections, fewer antibiotics are needed — which helps avoid antibiotic resistance.

When to wash your hands — It’s key

Here are some of the most important times to make sure you wash your hands:

- After using the bathroom or helping someone who did.
- Before you eat or feed someone else.
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- After touching something dirty or being outside and then touching food or your face.

By washing at these “key times,” you reduce the chance of germs getting into your body or spreading to someone else.

Easy tips to remember

- “Soap + water = power” — soap helps lift off the germs.
- If you skip soap and only use water, it’s better than nothing - but soap is much better.
- Even if your hands look clean, they might still have germs: Going through the scrubbing step matters.
- Make handwashing a habit, not a maybe. Once you do it often, you’re less likely to forget.

Attention pharmacy locker users

The pharmacy department has a policy regarding perishable items that are placed in the lockers. In an effort to ensure that these medications are stored properly, items left in a locker for more than 48 hours will be overnighted free of charge to the patient’s address on file. Patients who leave perishable items in the lockers beyond 48 hours will also be restricted from having refrigerated items placed in the lockers for six months. Pick up or mail delivery options are available for these items during that time.

Healing as a community

Healthy parents create healthy children. Healthy children create a healthy future. The old ones said, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Unfortunately, some of our youth are faced with traumas that take them to unhealthy spaces. Some are there for just a short time, while others are for years, well into their adulthood.

This is where we can heal as a community. Allowing a healthy space for one of our youth in the community can create a healthy future for them and their families. Whether you have thought it was possible or not, if providing space to be a foster or respite provider has crossed your mind, don’t hesitate to reach out and fill a role in our children’s lives. We have a wonderful team that will walk you through the entire process. Become the missing link.

May you all have a blessed day. Much love and respect.

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Holiday loneliness

The holiday season often brings bright lights, fun gatherings and happy faces. But if you’re feeling lonely or disconnected during this time, you are not alone.

Why loneliness can hit during the holidays

- There may be fewer visits, travel may be hard or old family traditions might have changed.
- Big expectations: We often see images of perfect family celebrations and that can make us feel like we’re missing out.
- The weather and shorter days can bring on a low mood for many people.

How to support yourself or others

- Reach out and connect
 - Call or video chat with someone you trust — a friend, family member or neighbor. Just “Hi, how are you?” can go a long way.
 - Write a letter, send a card or use social media to say you’re thinking of someone. Small gestures matter.
- Be kind to yourself
 - It’s okay to feel lonely or sad — those feelings are real and valid.
 - Do something you enjoy: Read a book, take a walk, watch a movie you like. It doesn’t have to be big.
- Volunteer or help someone else
 - Helping others gives you connection and purpose. It also reminds you that you are part of something larger.
 - Even small things count: Drop off a card, make a phone call, offer a ride.
- Watch for signs you may need extra support
 - If loneliness turns into sadness that lasts many days or you stop doing things you used to enjoy, you could benefit from talking with a professional.
- Invite them
 - Ask if they’d like to join you for something low key — a walk, a coffee, a movie. The invite itself shows you care.
- Know when it’s more than loneliness
 - If you notice serious changes (sleep, eating, mood) help steer them toward talking with a health professional. You matter. Your feelings matter. Even when things feel hard, small steps can create meaning. If you or someone you know is feeling really down or unsafe, please reach out for help — you don’t have to face it alone.

Now accepting new residents

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

We are proud to welcome new residents to chaku tush tæmtæm 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





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