Wakeland pursues degree in national fire program — pg. 9

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MARCH 15, 2026

SMOKE SIGNALS

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

Judge orders feds to resume salmon protections

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

A judge has ordered federal agencies to restore salmon protections on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

Last summer, the Trump administration withdrew from an agreement reached in mediation in 2023.

That agreement, Federal District Court Judge Michael Simon wrote in his Feb. 25 ruling, "showed great promise for resolving the myriad challenges facing the ecological and economic future of the Columbia River Basin."

The withdrawal led to resuming a decades-long lawsuit by environmental and fishing organizations against NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The state of Oregon, the Spokane Tribe of Indians and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe joined the plaintiffs.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, state of Montana and various farm and irrigation associations joined the defendants.

The plaintiffs asked Simon to order the feds to continue salmon protections.

Simon granted some of their requests, specifying seasonal spill levels and reservoir levels at 2025 operating levels, noting that "The federal defendants have, for years, maintained a safe and reliable power system and dam operations with the nearly the same spill levels as ordered here and with the same reservoir levels from 2025."

Tribal Council member Kathleen George, who is also an advocate

See SALMON continued on page 12

Tribal member Kaliska Gibbons, 8, dances during the 21st annual Agency Creek Round Dance in the Tribal gym Saturday, March 7. ***See more photos on page 11.***

Round Dance time!

The 21st annual Agency Creek Round Dance took place in the Tribal gym Friday and Saturday, March 6-7. A pipe ceremony and traditional dinner was held Friday before the round dance.

TO SEE MORE PHOTOS AND VIDEO
@SmokeSignalsCTGR @ctgrsmokesignals @SmokeSignalsCTGR

Tribal member Anthony Quenelle drums and sings during the 21st annual Agency Creek Round Dance.

Egg-citing annual event will be April 4

Kinzlee Linton collects Easter eggs during the Tribal Housing Department Easter Egg Hunt last April. This year's hunt is Saturday, April 4.

Smoke Signals file photo

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

With Easter falling on Sunday, April 5, the annual Tribal Housing Department Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 4.

It takes much longer for volunteers to hide the eggs than it does for the egg-er young participants to find them, typically two to five minutes to locate every last one of the 3,000-some plastic eggs.

Since the event is over with so quickly, parents are advised to arrive early and to bring a basket or container for their children to collect the candy-filled eggs in.

"We are very excited to be able to have the Easter egg hunt," Housing Services Coordinator Lacy Leno said. "We look forward to seeing everybody and watching the kids have fun finding eggs."

The event will be held at the covered area in Tribal housing on Raven Loop, rain or shine. Once again, the Easter Bunny will be making

See EASTER continued on page 3

General Council meeting

11 a.m. Sunday, April 12

Lane Community College Longhouse
4000 E. 30th Ave., Eugene.

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

NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday meetings

DATE	TIME
Wednesday, March 25	4 p.m.
Wednesday, April 8	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.

Letters

Dear Smoke Signals,

After five council members filed an appeal in my husband Chris Cherry's Tribal court case, the court has now ruled in his favor, for the second time. For that, I begin with gratitude to the Creator. We are also thankful for the many Tribal members who offered encouragement and prayers.

If you have followed this case, you know how unnecessary this all has been. I previously shared my perspective in a video with nearly 10,000 views, which tells me people are paying close attention.

We are grateful for a fair judge who twice examined the facts and ruled accordingly. This case never should have been in Tribal court. The judge described it as "de minimis," meaning too trivial to warrant legal action. After a year and a half of litigation, that conclusion speaks volumes.

Here is how it began: During my 2024 reelection campaign, a council member filed a police report, backed by some other council members who later appealed the not-guilty verdict, alleging that I instructed my husband to print campaign banners at his workplace. That accusation was proven false. I provided receipts for every banner printed. There has been no public acknowledgment of error or accountability for that false accusation made against me.

Subsequently, my husband was then terminated from Spirit Mountain Casino after 27 years of dedicated service, for allegedly "breaking Tribal law" before he was afforded due process in Tribal court. That should concern all of us.

This situation also raises procedural concerns. Tribal ordinance requires that an Authorization to Proceed (ATP) or staff directive be introduced at an LAC meeting or a work session and receive five affirmative votes. Where was the ATP authorizing the investigation following the police report filed by a council member? Those five council members who appealed the original win do not represent the voice of the entire membership nor that of the entire council.

Transparency is foundational to good governance. ATPs direct staff work and reflect council priorities; whether passed or failed, ATPs should be readily accessible and posted alongside council minutes.

We have chosen forgiveness, but forgiveness does not eliminate accountability.

I started with thanking Creator and that's where I'll end: "We are pressed but not crushed." Looking back, I can see how God was preparing us, strengthening our family, our faith and paving the way for something greater.

Masi,
Michael Cherry
Roll #1091

STORY IDEAS?

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

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

WWW.SMOKESIGNALS.ORG

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

smok signəlz

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DEADLINE DATE	ISSUE DATE
Friday, March 20	April 1
Monday, April 6.	April 15
Wednesday, April 22	May 1
Wednesday, May 6	May 15

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Smoke Signals, 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. 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.

Smoke Signals reserves the right to edit letters and to refuse letters that are determined to contain libelous statements or personal attacks on individuals, staff, Tribal administration or Tribal Council. 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 Smoke Signals.

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IN THE FUTURE
(kʰapa ałqi)

ɬun-mun **(March)**
- Saturday, March 21 – Household hazardous waste collection event, 9 a.m. to noon, Procurement drive-thru area on the Tribal campus. Safely dispose of household hazardous chemicals. 503-879-2387.
- Wednesday, March 25 – All-Elder quarterly question-and-answer meeting, 12:30 p.m., Elders Activity Center.
- Wednesday, March 25 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., in-person attendance in Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.

lakit-mun **(April)**
- Saturday, April 4 – Tribal Housing Department Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m., covered area in Tribal housing. Mini powwow to follow at Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center.
- Wednesday, April 8 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., in-person attendance in Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Sunday, April 12 – General Council meeting, Lane Community College Longhouse, Eugene, 11 a.m., and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Wednesday, April 22 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., in-person attendance in Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.

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

Legislative day

Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George, middle, drums and sings a blessing song to open the Oregon State Senate during Tribal Governments Legislative Day at the Oregon State Capitol building in Salem Monday, March 2. Joining him are Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Tribal Council member Julie Siestreem, left, and CLUSI Chief Doug Barrett. The Legislative Commission on Indian Services plans the day, designed to be a time for lawmakers, legislative staff, agency directors and their staff and members of the of public to learn about Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes. Tribal Communications Director Sara Thompson covered the Tribe's information table.

SEE MORE OF THIS STORY
Visit YouTube
@SmokeSignalsCTGR

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. ■

About 3,000 plastic eggs with candy will be provided

EASTER continued from front page

a special guest appearance and posing for photos. Parents will be responsible for taking their own photos, Leno said.

There are four categories of egg hunts: Ages 1-2, 3-4, 5-8 and 9-12. Typically, there are approximately 200 participants.

Members of the Tribe's Housing Department, Community Health employees and other volunteers stuff about 3,000 plastic eggs with candy during the week before the event. Tribal Council sponsors the hunt and pays for the candy.

Afterward, the Tribe's Children & Family Services Department will once again host a mini powwow, Family Support Specialist Alexandria Warren-Masters said. The event will be held at Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center following the egg hunt. ■

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 March food box distributions from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays. In addition, there is a light food box (mostly bread and produce) distribution from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays.

People must check in 15 minutes before closing to receive a food box on both days. If you need immediate assistance, call 211 or visit 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 via Zoom at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 19. 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.

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.

YESTERYEARS | A LOOK BACK...

2021 — A year after the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in widespread closures and remote work, the Tribal government was moving into its third phase of re-opening, allowing limited on-site meetings and visitors and limited programming.

2016 — The Tribe donated $4 million to the Oregon Department of Transportation to help fund the first phase of the Newberg-Dundee Bypass construction project. "This is a huge project that will make the passage from Portland to the coast even safer," Tribal Council Vice Chair Jack Giffen Jr. said.

2016 File photo

2011 — The Tribe purchased 139 acres of original reservation land in eight tax lots, from the Rink family. "This is a big one," Tribal member and Tribal Lands Manager Jan Michael Reibach said. "The Rink family purchased this property after the termination of the Tribe and now the Tribe has purchased it back."

2006 — Grand Ronde Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy joined Siletz Chairwoman Dee Pigsley and Warm Springs Chairman Ron Suppah Sr. in supporting future plans for the Clackamas River hydro project. Among the issues resolved by the agreement was a plan for improved fish and wildlife protection along with provisions for a number of recreational activities.

2001 — Tribal leaders convened in Washington D.C. for the National Congress of American Indians conference. It was the first meeting of the year and the first since newly elected Republican President George W. Bush took control of the oval office.

1996 — Tribal Council honored V. Marie Schmidt for her involvement and support of education. She served on the Education Committee and as Tribal representative for the statewide Oregon Indian Education Association. Schmidt worked 36 years for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and served on the board of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

1991 — The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, in cooperation with members of the Grand Ronde and Willamina communities, formed an Oregon TOGETHER! Board. The community-based prevention board was made up of key leaders and other community members, with a goal to reduce substance abuse in the community.

1986 — The Tribe called for a special General Council meeting to discuss its negotiations with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to resolve the hunting and fishing issue that had been raised with the establishment of the reservation.

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

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING...

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

RECOVERY IS REAL.

THERE IS A WHOLE COMMUNITY READY TO WALK WITH YOU. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IS NOW OFFERING WALK-IN APPOINTMENTS FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELING.

PLEASE CALL 503-879-2026 OR STOP BY THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINIC AT THE GRAND RONDE HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER.

Tribal Council approves developing public utility master plan

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved spending up to $776,000 to develop a public utility master plan to meet future growth needs of the Grand Ronde community at its Wednesday, Feb. 25, meeting.

Keller Associates of Salem will complete the work.

"So, the purpose of this project is really building on the work that we did with the housing study and the campus master plan work," Tribal Engineering & Community Development Department Manager Ryan Webb said during a Tuesday, Feb. 24, Legislative Action Committee meeting. "It's really going to develop a community-wide master plan for all public utilities, storm, sanitary and water, to meet the future growth of Tribal government buildings, as well as housing and other facilities within the community in a way that optimizes Tribal land, facilities for Tribal government operations and serves community members. … It will identify things that we need to do in order to get utilities in the ground to serve potential new housing projects and new government buildings."

The work will be fully funded by grants that have already been secured, Webb added.

Tribal Council member Kathleen George asked whether the master plan would address some of the challenges that occurred with other building developments due to drainage issues from the clay soil in Grand Ronde.

"Not only will it look at where a storm pipe can go and where that falls, but it will look at creating standards and best management practices in how we manage that stormwater as it comes onto sites in and around buildings and roads and how we channel that," Webb said.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved a loan from the Tribe's TriState Capital Bank line of credit to Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. for up to $1.52 million for its rooftop replacement project at Spirit Mountain Casino;
- Appointed Oregon Secretary of State Tobias Reed to the Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees with a term ending Sept. 30, 2026;
- Approved an agreement between the Tribe and the United States Forest Service for its Siuslaw National Forest Tribal Plant Materials Collaboration funding opportunity for up to $160,000;
- And approved six non-infant enrollments and four infant enrollments into the Tribe because they meet the enrollment requirements in the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance.

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

Powwow SEB seeking logo designs

The Powwow Special Event Board is seeking designs for the 2026 annual contest powwow logo. The selected artist will receive $350 and a powwow jacket (with logo).

The deadline to submit designs is 5 p.m. Friday, March 27.

Submit all designs to Shannon.simi@grandronde.org. ■

TRIBAL COMMITTEE / BOARD & COMMISSION

Now accepting new applications

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

Current vacancies:

- Ceremonial Hunting Board – Must be a ceremonial hunter (2)
- Election Board (1) • Election Board alternates (2)
- Fish & Wildlife Committee (1) • Veterans Special Event Board* (1)
- Powwow Special Event Board* (3) • Health Committee* (1)
- Housing Grievance Board* (1) • Enrollment Committee* (1)

Board and committee requirements: No more than three employees per board and committee. This includes all Tribal entities. *Current vacancies with three employees.

For questions email:
shannon.ham-texeira@grandronde.org

Applications available online at:
www.grandronde.org/government/tribal-council/committees/

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

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

WATCH SMOKE SIGNALS VIDEOS

Powell's Books Storytime features Littlebird

Tribal member, artist and newly published author Steph Littlebird was a guest reader at Powell's Books Saturday, Feb. 28, reading her recently released children's book, "YOU ARE THE LAND," published Tuesday, Feb. 24.

For more information contact Kamiah Koch at 503-879-1461 or kamiah.koch@grandronde.org

Visit youtube.com and search smokesignalsCTGR

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

Smoke Signals file photo

The Tribe is requesting that all Tribal employees review and sign the electric vehicle charging station policy before using the EV charging stations on the Tribal campus.

Charging up on campus? There's a policy for that

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Are you a Tribal employee with an electric vehicle who wants to plug in while at work? If so, the Tribe is requesting that all employees review and sign the EV charging station policy beforehand.

"The Tribe needs to be able to track usage and potential future usage for EV chargers around campus, as well as making sure all employees have access to the EV chargers," Tribal Engineering & Community Development Department Manager Ryan Webb said. "Therefore, it is important for all employees to read and understand the policy and sign the policy to make sure they adhere to it."

Among other things, the policy requires that employees using charging stations on the Tribal campus register with Tribal security and display a Tribally issued tag at all times, not exceed a 4-hour per day charging time limit, use the space only when actively charging their vehicle and avoid using non-EV designated electrical outlets.

"I wanted to let everyone know we will be installing additional EV chargers around campus," Webb said. "That work will likely start in late spring and all EV chargers should be online by late summer.

The additional chargers are funded by an Oregon Department of Transportation grant.

The Tribe first installed a solar-powered charging station on the Tribal campus in 2023. There are also charging stations at Spirt Mountain Casino and at Grand Ronde Station.

For a copy of the charging policy, contact Webb at ryan.webb@grandronde.org. ■

Annual performance report comment period opportunity for comment on Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Department 2025 Annual Performance Report:

Under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, (NAHASDA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide grants to eligible Indian Tribes/Indian Housing Authorities/Departments for the development and operation of low-income housing in Indian areas. To be eligible for the grants, respondents must submit an annual performance plan that meets the minimum requirements for the act and maintain records for HUD monitoring. The Tribe, through the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Department, has received multiple grants under this program, which was active during 2025.

Comments on the annual performance report are welcome and copies of these reports can be obtained at the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Department office, 28450 Tyee Road, or by calling 503-879-2401. Comments must be submitted in writing to the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Department no later than 5 p.m. Monday, March 23.

All comments will be incorporated into the final report submitted to HUD. ■

Request for Proposals
architectural and engineering services
The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Grand Ronde Shawash-ili?i Skul (SIS) Expansion and Renovation Project
Proposal due: 2 p.m. Thursday, April 2, 2026

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Shawash-ili?i Skul (SIS), Expansion and Renovation Project: Through this request for proposals (RFP), the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR), seeks competitive proposals from qualified and experienced individuals or firms hereafter, "proposer," for the provision of architectural and engineering services for CTGR's Shawash-ili?i Skul (SIS) "project." Sealed bids must be received by Ryan Webb, Project Manager, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347, by or before 2 p.m. local time, Thursday April 2, 2026. Questions or requests for clarification shall be directed in writing to Project Manager Ryan Webb via email at Ryan.Webb@grandronde.org by 2 p.m., prevailing local time, March 27, 2026.

An electronic copy of the RFP is available by emailing Ryan Webb at Ryan.Webb@grandronde.org or calling 503-879-2404.

Respondents shall provide a written proposal by 2 p.m. Thursday, April 2, 2026, to Project Manager Ryan Webb, at 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347. Specific information regarding document submittal procedures and due dates will be found in the RFP. ■

State creates new Tribal housing grant

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

The Tribe will receive $1.375 million in state funds under a new Tribal Housing Grant Fund created by the 2025 Oregon Legislature, Tribal Engineering & Community Development Department Manager Ryan Webb said.

"At this time, we do not have a plan in place for those funds," he said. "We will work with Tribal Council to allocate those funds to the appropriate housing project."

Tribes are excluded from some housing funds. Last year, the Legislature took steps to address the problem by allocating $10 million to Oregon Housing and Community Services, the state's housing finance agency, to expand housing resources available to the nine federally recognized Tribes in the state. There is a specific formula to determine how much each Tribe receives.

The money may be used for homelessness response and prevention programs, affordable rental housing, home ownership programs, land acquisition/development, operations/maintenance of existing affordable housing sites, shelters/transitional housing projects, financial assistance/support services such as rental assistance and case management, and capacity building and administrative costs.


Ryan Webb

Tribes will need to submit housing plans every two years outlining how they intend to use the money and report on those activities annually.

The program is the first in the nation to consolidate a single state funding source for Tribal housing needs, according to the state.

A separate program, the Oregon centralized application process, also makes affordable rental housing funds available to Tribes.

"The Tribal Housing Grant Fund creates a new framework for how the state works with the nine federally recognized Tribes of Oregon," Gov. Tina Kotek said in a press release. "It represents a meaningful step forward in honoring our government-to-government relationship and ensuring Tribes have the resources and flexibility they need to address their critical housing needs."

Oregon Housing and Community Services, as well as representatives from Tribal nations, including housing directors, health and human services directors and council members, worked for more than a year to develop the program.

"The values, culture and housing needs of communities are best understood locally," OHCS Executive Director Andrea Bell said. "In consultation with Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, the Tribal Housing Grant Fund emphasizes self-determination and flexibility in how Tribes use state resources to address local needs. Honoring Tribal sovereignty, in its richest form, calls on us to operationalize this shared value."

Tribal Grants Coordinator Dana Morfin and Social Services Manager Dana Ainam served on the working group that designed the new fund.

"This was and continues to be a great project to work on," Morfin said in an email. "This project has been three years in the making and it's been a pleasure to work with the state. I think what has been amazing is the team on the state side and the members/representatives from other Tribes. We've painstakingly identified the needs of Oregon Tribes in general and our own, and it's been remarkable how the state team has listened to our needs and concerns and created this grant tailored to our needs/wants/desires. The Tribes of Oregon, in general, have been amazing contributors and it's been an overall amazing experience."

Morfin said she joined the work group in November 2022 after starting her position with the Tribe's grants program.

"It's been a great experience to work with the state the entire time I've been in grants, simply because it's personally helped my knowledge and understanding of how to work with the state regarding grants for the Tribe," she said. "It's also given me the opportunity to work with other parts of the state concerning grants. Even when we work with other organizations who may be sub-awarding to us from a grant they received from the state and they don't understand the full process, I have a better idea of how to help them in their knowledge base and at the same time, protect the interests of CTGR. … At the end of the day, for me, it's about what we can do to best serve Indian Country and how we can best provide for our members' needs with the amazing team we have here at the Tribe." ■

Tribal member's work part of Portland art exhibit

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

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

General Council briefed on Spirit Mountain Casino

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Spirit Mountain Casino Chief Executive Officer Camille Mercier gave a presentation to the membership on the casino's history, current status and future plans during the General Council meeting on Sunday, March 1.

Mercier gave the 40-minute presentation in executive session and then fielded 11 questions and comments from Tribal members in attendance.

Since it was held in executive session, Smoke Signals cannot publish specific details.

The next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, April 12, at the Lane Community College Longhouse in Eugene and feature a report on the Health & Wellness Department. It is being held the second Sunday of the month instead of the first, as Easter falls on Sunday, April 5.

Kayla Leno, Sam Hedrick and Emma Leno each won the $100 door prizes. Reyn Leno, Mike Wilson, Josephine Ingraham, Eric Bernando, Lee Ann Huffman and Eric Sabin won the $50 door prizes. Reyn Leno donated his winnings to Nikia Mooney.

The non-executive session portion of the meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribe's website at www.grandronde.org and clicking on the Videos tab.

Tribal members wanting to see the executive session portion should contact Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez at stacia.martin@grandronde.org or call 503-879-2304.

After the meeting concluded, a form was made available for community input regarding future advisory votes. Tribal members have until Monday, April 13 to provide feedback. ■

Casino's revenue projections praised for accuracy

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

Revenue for Spirit Mountain Casino ended 2025 close to 1.5% less than projected, a level of accuracy that drew praise from members of Tribal Council.

"I think that one or two percent is within a margin of error and their accuracy and ability to do that is amazing, and I raise my hands to them for that," Tribal Council member Tonya Gleason-Shepek said during a Legislative Action Committee meeting.

Council member Kathleen George said she agreed.

"In some ways, it's easier and it's safer for executives to under project and over deliver," she said. "And then you look awesome. 'Every month, look, we're half a million dollars over budget. Some months, we're two million dollars over budget.' And so that's safer for an executive. But it is not going to provide the people that they work for, which is our Tribe and all our Tribal members really, the most accurate numbers that can be produced. So again, I just want to kind of give them credit for really providing the most accurate numbers."

Spirit Mountain Casino CEO Camille Mercier said in an email that, "After 30 years, the casino has become significantly more sophisticated in how it measures performance, evaluates economic factors that influence the business and understands seasonality within our market. Advances in technology have helped us as operators by improving forecasting, analyzing volume, identifying peak periods and minimizing risk."

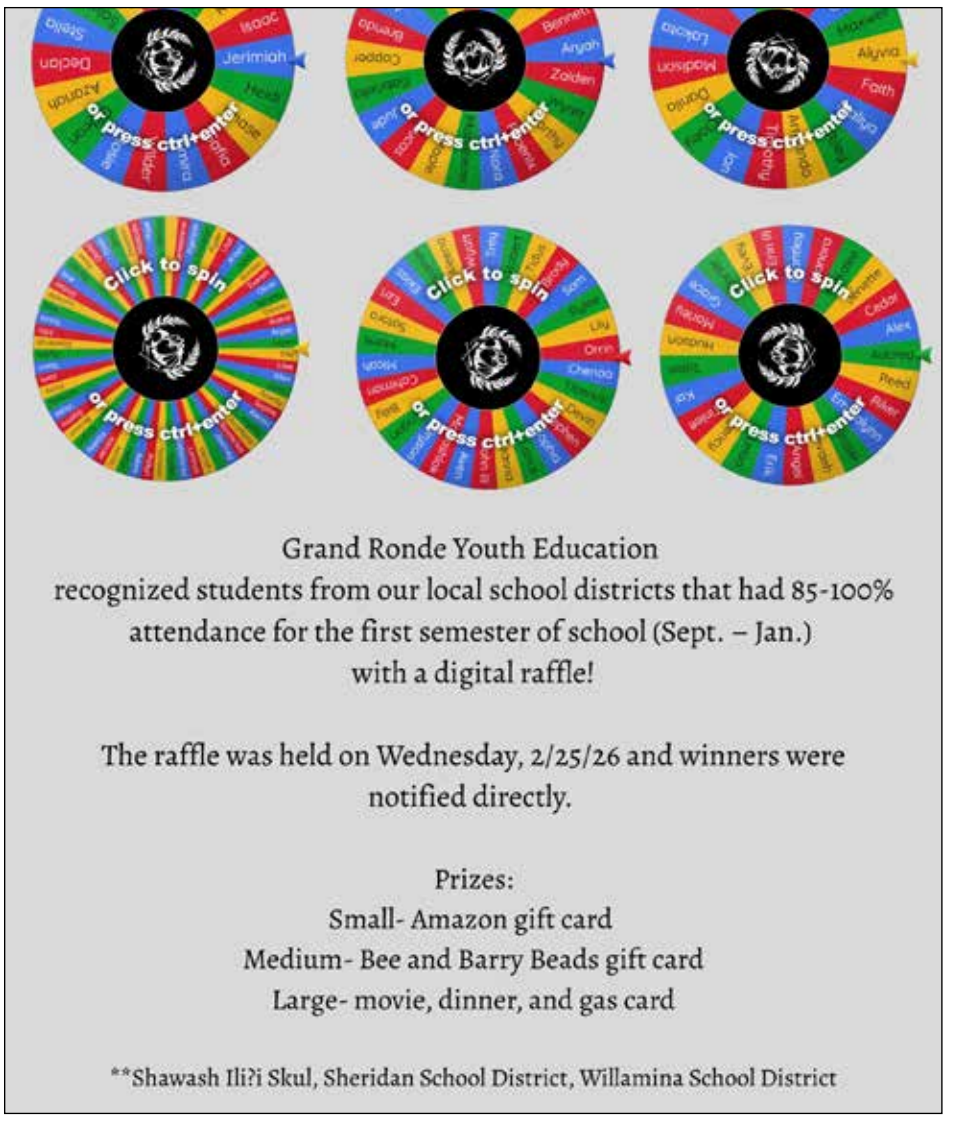
All that, she noted, has made it significantly easier to provide highly accurate revenue forecasts, although those will unlikely ever be perfect.

"There are still external factors beyond our control," she said. "For example, a snowstorm or news reports of road closures can have a detrimental effect on visitation despite even the best planning."

A significant amount of analysis goes into each year's forecast.

"Basically, staff budget each year by combining historical performance data, market insight and strategic priorities into a realistic financial plan," Mercier said. "They begin by analyzing past results across gaming and non-gaming areas, looking closely at seasonality, demand patterns and marketing effectiveness to establish a reliable baseline. From there, they factor in external conditions such as the economic outlook, competition and regulatory changes, often building multiple scenarios to prepare for uncertainty."

In addition, she said, "Our budgeting process is also closely tied to strategy, ensuring resources support priorities like capital improvements, technology investments and guest experience enhancements. Departments develop their own projections for revenue, labor and expenses, which then aligns into an overall plan. Importantly, the business must remain flexible and agile in order to pivot — acknowledging that factors like weather, market shifts or unexpected competition can impact results. Ongoing monitoring throughout the year allows us to compare performance to budget and pivot quickly when needed, keeping the operation both disciplined and agile." ■



Grand Ronde Youth Education
recognized students from our local school districts that had 85-100% attendance for the first semester of school (Sept. – Jan.)
with a digital raffle!

The raffle was held on Wednesday, 2/25/26 and winners were notified directly.

Prizes:
Small- Amazon gift card
Medium- Bee and Barry Beads gift card
Large- movie, dinner, and gas card

**Shawash Iliʔi Skul, Sheridan School District, Willamina School District

NRD Spotlight

Harvest Card holders we want to connect with you! Please send us your email address to receive hunting and fishing announcements, breaking news and other outdoor related information and opportunities

HuntingandFishing@grandronde.org

Wakeland blazing a path with degree in national fire program

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal member and Tribal Assistant Fire Chief Torey Wakeland is blazing a path forward as he pursues a graduate level degree in the Executive Fire Officer Program from the National Fire Academy.

Wakeland, 40, will be the first Tribally-enrolled fire chief or assistant chief to graduate from the program. Due to delays from federal shutdowns, he expects to graduate sometime next fall.

He has more than a degree in mind: Wakeland also aims to institute a program to address the long-term health of the Tribe's firefighters. The course requires a capstone program, similar to a master's thesis, but intended to result in a tangible outcome for the graduates' home departments.

"I wanted something meaningful," Wakeland said. "We see a lot of stuff; we go through a lot of stuff. I want to see our firefighters and emergency responders, when they get to retirement, be mentally healthy with peace in their hearts. … I don't want them dealing with issues that have been buried for years."

Although exposure to smoke and hazardous chemicals play their own role in long-term health effects, it's the emotional toll of trauma on the body that has seized Wakeland's interest, along with a potential remedy: A dog trained to help firefighters reduce their stress. So, he's researching how to create a program for a trained department therapy support dog. He said he's currently immersed in research about the effect of firefighters' careers on their health.

Firefighters and emergency medical technicians respond to some of life's most painful moments — drug overdoses, car crashes, medical emergencies, fires — attempting to help badly injured, sometimes dying patients and calm distraught family members.

Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member and Grand Ronde Emergency Services Department Assistant Chief Torey Wakeland is pursuing a graduate level degree in the Executive Fire Officer Program from the National Fire Academy in Maryland. He will be the first Tribally-enrolled fire chief or assistant chief to graduate from the program.

Witnessing those tragedies hurts and often stays with the responders long after the call is over, sometimes in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder. The stress and emotional effects, combined with hours away from family, disrupted sleep, long working hours and reluctance to talk about what they've witnessed, can take a toll on relationships, creating additional stress and anxiety, as well as a loss of emotional support.

Long-term effects include heart disease, strokes, neurodegenerative conditions, cancer, chronic anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, mental health struggles, divorce and high risk of suicide — mostly stemming from the years or decades of enduring repeated emotional trauma in the course of the job.

In the past, Wakeland said, first responders were expected to simply cope with that pain and stress on their own.

"There was a stigma to seeking out mental health counseling," he said. "It seemed like a lot of folks were just beaten down because they were never offered these services."

Wakeland recalled a firefighter from the West Valley Fire Department, which preceded Grand Ronde's station, who took his own life in the department's parking lot. He said he doesn't want Grand Ronde's firefighters to live with that kind of pain.

Early on, he created a peer support program for the department's firefighters, overseen by a licensed counselor who offers private and group counseling, and who brings her own therapy service dog two or three times a week. The State Fire Marshal's Office now has two dedicated therapy dogs that sometimes travel to departments or fire camps to comfort and support firefighters.

Wakeland said he sees a Grand Ronde Fire Department service dog as the natural next step.

"More and more stations are trending toward having a service animal living at the station," Wakeland said.

It's a trend Grand Ronde station members are eager to embrace. "At least once a week I get asked, 'When are we going to get a service dog?'" he said.

According to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, "Interacting with therapy dogs provides a welcome distraction from firefighters' stressors and challenges. Engaging in activities with the dog can divert attention away from anxiety-inducing thoughts and promote relaxation. A therapy dog can become a trusted companion, allowing firefighters to express their emotions and process their experience healthily. These dogs serve as a source of comfort and stress relief, helping firefighters find solace and recharge."

By the time he graduates, Wakeland said, he hopes to have a proposal, complete with funding estimates, descriptions of how the program would work, details about acquiring, training and caring for the dog and supporting research, ready to present to Tribal Council.

"I'm studying housing, caring for one, the benefits of having one," he said. "It would be another level of health services we provide to our firefighters."

Wakeland has had a varied career at the Tribe, starting in 2004 when he joined the first all Grand Ronde wildland fire crew. He's continued to work seasonally for the fire crew, he said, while moving through a series of other jobs for the Tribe: Aquatic biologist, a stint as Ceded Lands Department manager, an environmental policy analyst and then division chief of training and recruitment for the newly-created Grand Ronde Emergency Services Department six years ago, when the Tribe took over providing emergency fire and medical services for much of the West Valley.

Today, he serves as assistant chief.

"We're still getting things buttoned up and concentrating on finer details," Wakeland said, noting there are a lot of components the department has to be prepared to respond to, including structure fires, vehicle crashes, hazard response and medical emergencies of all kinds.

While attending courses at the National Fire Academy in Maryland, Wakeland said, he learned about its graduate program and decided to enroll.

"There was a very extensive application process," he explained, with 500 candidates nationwide chosen for a second round of selection.

Wakeland was one of the final 150 accepted into the two-year program. It requires in-person classes in 10-to-12-day stints, followed by six months at a time of remote online work.

"It's very academic-heavy," he said. "There are lots of hours put into this." ■

Native Youth Wellness Day

Hadley Kimsey, 13, left, and Tribal member Hudson Hubbell, 13, count money as they shop during the spending frenzy workshop during Native Youth Wellness Day in the Tribal gym Friday, March 6.

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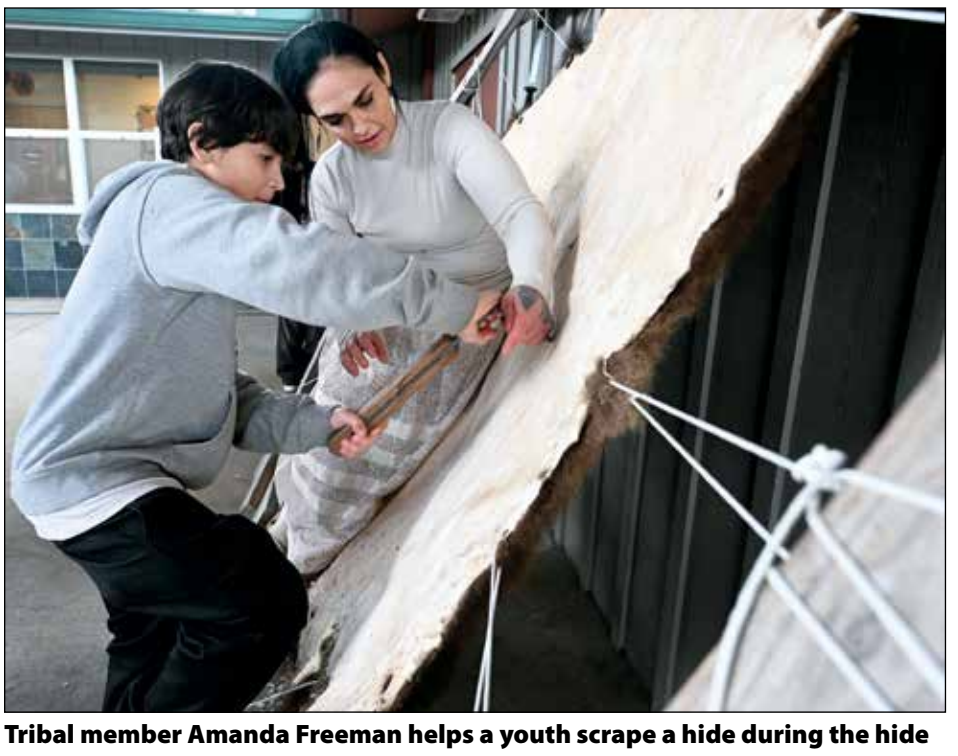
@CTGRsmokesignals

The annual Native Youth Wellness Day took place in the Tribal gym Friday, March 6. This year's event included keynote speakers Miss Indian World Dania Wahwasuck (Anishinaabe) and professional slam dunk artist Isaac Fisher (Flathead), a Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and youth safety presentation by Tribal member Amanda Freeman and several workshops including round dance singing, hide tanning, journalism, college pathways, spending frenzy and WeRNative. About 150 youth attended the event that is sponsored by the Tribe's Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program.

Tribal member Ulali Quenelle, 10, writes a message on a poster board that was part of the MMIP presentation during Native Youth Wellness Day.

Tribal member Ila Mercier, 11, left, looks over Tribal member Elizabeth Ulestad, 10, as they form the look over your horse scenario during a game of sweep the tipi.



Tribal member Amanda Freeman helps a youth scrape a hide during the hide tanning workshop she held during Native Youth Wellness Day.

Ten-year-old Wastesko Buck (Swampy Cree) dances during the 21st annual Agency Creek Round Dance in the Tribal gym Saturday, March 7.

Dancing circles

Tribal Elder Renee Norcross dances around the outside of the circle during the 21st annual Agency Creek Round Dance in the Tribal gym Saturday, March 7.

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

TO SEE MORE PHOTOS AND VIDEO
@SmokeSignalsCTGR @ctgrsmokesignals @SmokeSignalsCTGR

Hundreds of people filled the gym to participate in the 21st annual Agency Creek Round Dance in the Tribal gym Saturday, March 7.

‘This decision lets us move forward focused’

SALMON continued from frong page

for salmon recovery, praised the ruling.

“We congratulate the plaintiffs, including our fellow Tribal Nations, on this important decision upholding critical improvements for salmon and regional energy sustainability,” she said. “This win for Columbia Basin salmon marks an important step toward long-term recovery benefiting all who value a future where salmon and steelhead can thrive.”

Simon declined requests to order the defendants to complete repair and maintenance projects or conservation projects, saying it was unnecessary. However, he ordered them to submit quarterly progress reports.

“One of the foundational symbols of the West, a critical recreational, cultural and economic driver for Western states, and the beating heart and guaranteed resource protected by treaties with several Native American Tribes, is disappearing from the landscape,” Smith wrote. “And yet the litigation continues in much the same way as it has for 30 years.”

The lawsuit concerns the biological opinions, often referred to as BiOps, put out by NOAA Fisheries. The BiOps dictate how the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation operate the Federal Columbia River Power System.

Kathleen George

Simon noted the courts have repeatedly ruled they failed to safeguard salmon and steelhead even though NOAA acknowledges that the existence and operation of the dams accounts for most of the mortality of juvenile fish migrating through the system.

He wrote that, “The case stems from the declining abundance of salmon and steelhead species in the Columbia and Snake rivers. Every year, these fish must travel up the rivers to spawn and their offspring must return down river to the Pacific Ocean. In the course of this journey, both adult and juvenile salmonids must navigate the dams, powerhouses and reservoirs of the FCRPS. Since the beginning of this case, this court and the ninth circuit, as well as the federal government, have all found that this difficult and sometimes lethal odyssey is a major contributor to the dwindling numbers of salmonids returning to the Columbia and Snake rivers each year. … There are now 13 populations of salmon and steelhead and one smelt population listed under the (Endangered Species Act) and affected by the FCRPS.”

Simon noted that NOAA Fisheries relied on the agencies’ promises of goals for habitat improvement, with no details provided.

“This is precisely what the ESA does not permit. … Additionally, given the history in this case of habitat restoration projects falling significantly behind in expected completion, NMFS had even more reason to be cautious in relying on the action agencies' assurances that all projects will be completed and all benefits be achieved within the BiOp time frame,” Simon wrote. “The 2020 BiOp itself acknowledges that the FCRPS operations contemplated … will kill a substantial amount of the listed fish.”

Simon wrote that, “Further harm to the listed species would be catastrophic to the Tribes of the Columbia River Basin. The salmon and steelhead of the Columbia River are integral to the cultural, religious, social and economic life of many of these Tribes.”

Treaties specifying Tribes’ access to salmon and steelhead are “the supreme law of the land,” whose importance has repeatedly been upheld by the courts, he wrote.

The defendants raised concerns about power system reliability, flood risk, transportation, irrigation and availability of water supplies and clean drinking water, but Simon said that the regional power system was deemed to be reliable by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, the organization responsible for assessing regional power demand and reliability

“Moreover, the routine variances and adjustments that have helped to support that reliability will continue to be available to federal defendants under the injunction,” he wrote. “So too would the emergency protocols previously used to prevent and mitigate flooding remain available to federal defendants.”

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek issued a press release applauding Simon’s ruling.

“This decision lets us move forward focused on what really matters — restoring fish populations, meeting energy demand and building a clean energy future for the Pacific Northwest,” she said. “Recent preliminary analysis by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council indicates this will have modest impacts on power generation, our ability to meet peak demand and our region’s overall ability to maintain a reliable, affordable power system.” ■

Tribal nonemergency text

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. ■

Visitors to EAC asked to utilize parking lots, not streets

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

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

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

Baker Technical Institute
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Heavy Equipment Operator Training

This course is for participants who want to train on Dozers, Wheel Loaders, Excavators, and more. Students will learn both in our high-tech CAT Simulator mobile classroom and in the field, running equipment side by side with our experienced instructors. This training will prepare you for a great career!

- 3-week course - some type of construction experience is preferred
- Must by 18 years of age and enrolled in the TERO skills pool
- Must sign a contractual agreement that you will complete the course
- A valid driver's license is required

Simulated Training - Tribal Campus/SMC: March 16 - March 27, 2026 Land Lab Training - Albany: March 30 - April 3, 2026

Register for training by calling 503-879-2146 or email tero@grandronde.org

West Valley Veterans Memorial Application

Deadline is January 15, 2027

Name (as desired on memorial): DOB:

Address: City: State: Zip:

Phone: Gender: Male/Female (Circle)

Rank: Branch: Honorable: Yes/No (Circle)

DOE: Place of entry:

DOS: Place of seperation:

Deceased: Yes/No (Circle) Place of burial:

CTGR Tribal: Yes/No (Circle) If Tribal, Roll#

*All applicants must submit a copy of their DD214. If applicant is deceased, a family member or spouse can submit a copy of their DD214. If you are a CTGR Tribal member please attach a copy of your Tribal ID. If you are non-Tribal please attach a copy of a bill/record with your name and address showing you had lived or now reside in Grand Ronde, Willamina or Sheridan. Please send application and all documents to Grand Ronde Veterans SEB, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR, 97347. If you have any questions, please contact Chelsea Clark at 503-879-1418 or e-mail: publicaffairs@grandronde.org

Any applications received after January 15, 2027, will be kept on file for inclusion to the Memorial in 2028.

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

The Village

kʰanamakwst nsayka chaku-hayash
(Together We Grow Stronger)

If you are currently unhoused and a Grand Ronde Tribal Member - The Village could be a resource for you

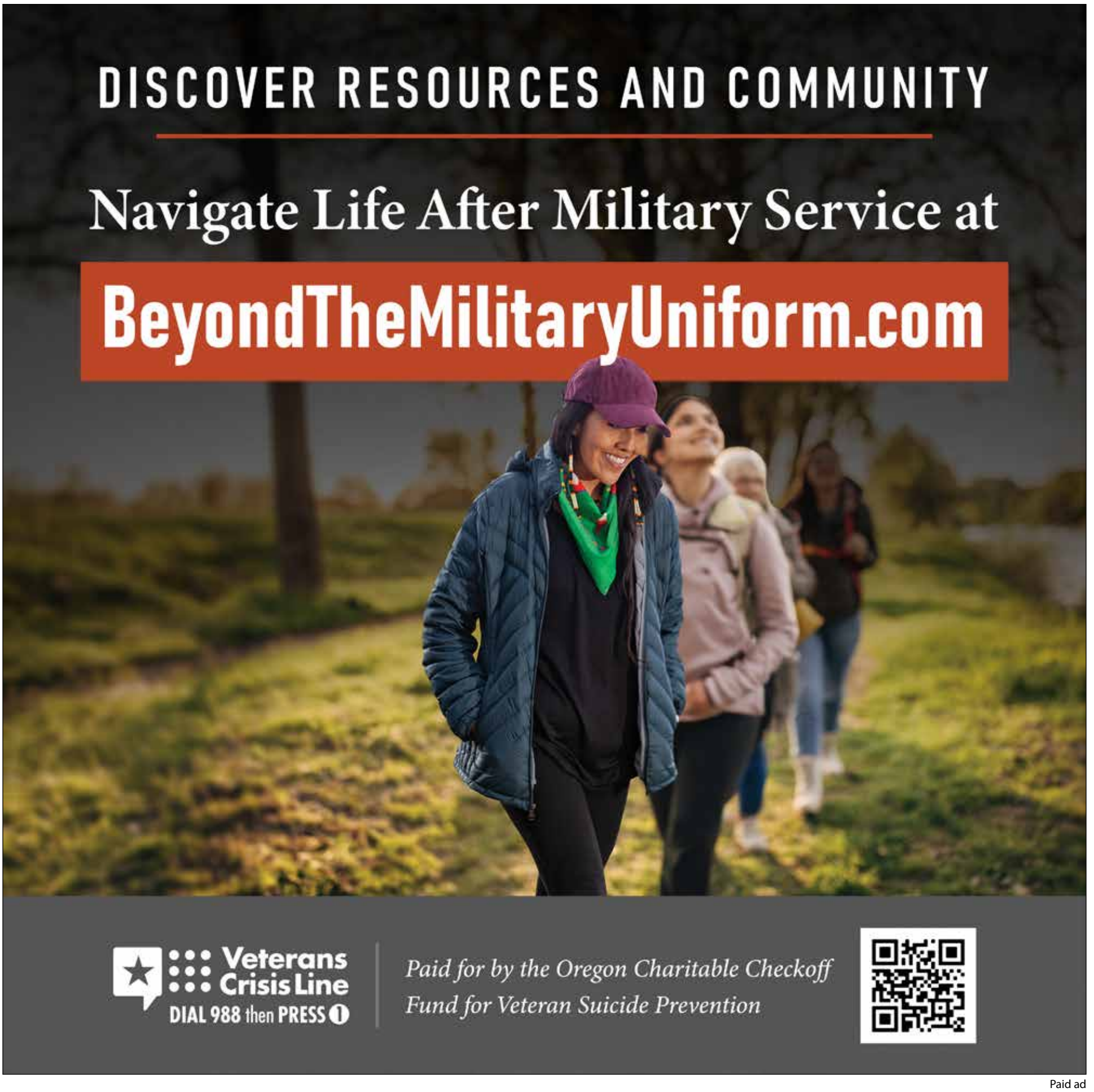
---

The Village is intended to provide support services to unsheltered/houseless Grand Ronde tribal members.

The Village will provide case management and wrap services intended to move the population towards permanent housing and wellness.

Each applicant will go through an application process which will include a limited background check, prior to move in.

For more information please call :
Grand Ronde Behavioral Health
503-879-2026



Paid ad

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. ■

Health & Wellness Center entrance

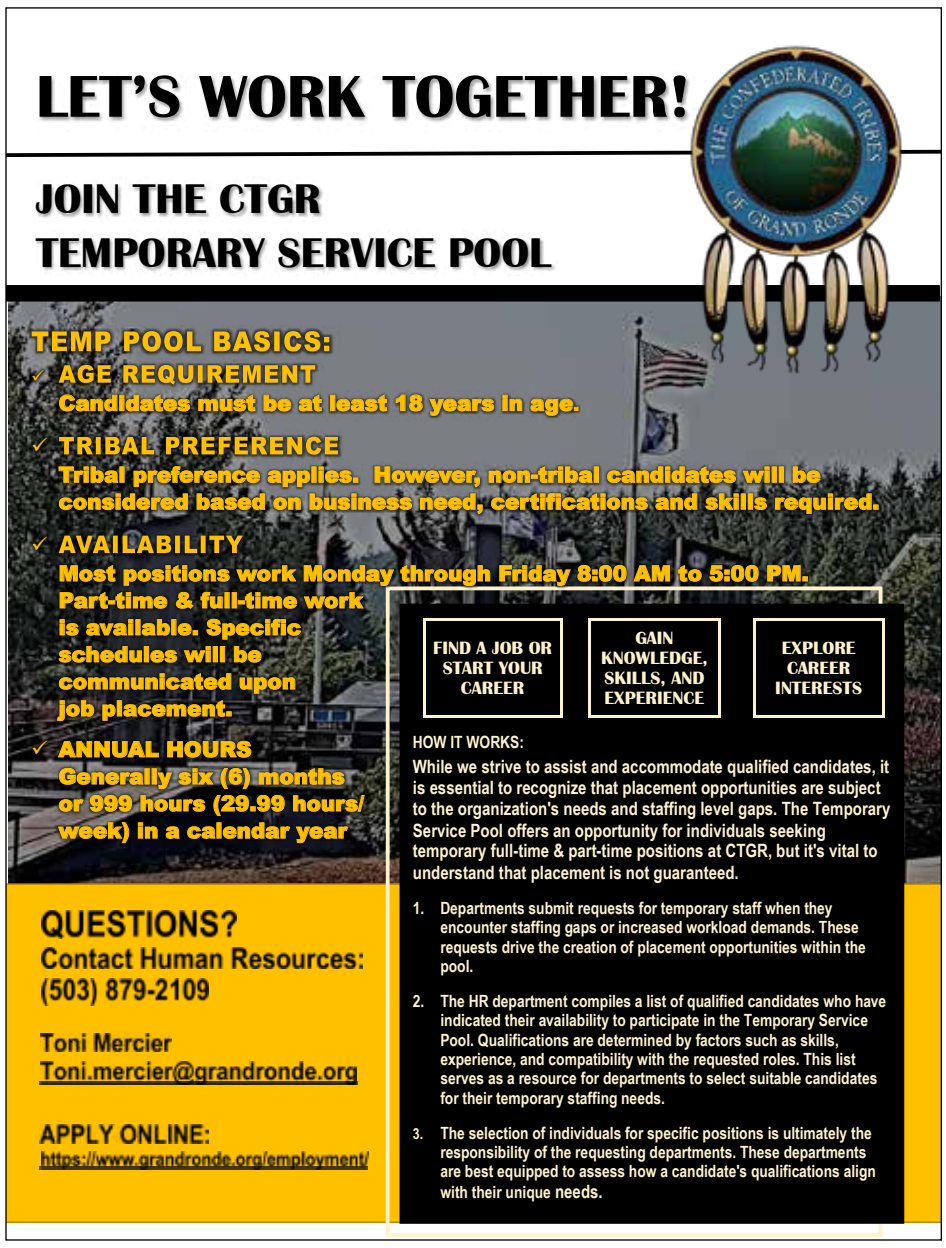
Reminder: The drive-through entrance at the Health & Wellness Center is for loading and unloading only. The entrance was built with our Elders and those with mobility issues and their ease of access in mind. If you are coming to the center to pick up prescriptions, please park in one of our regular parking spaces. ■

Position Title	Grade	Min. Start Wage	Max Start Wage	Closing Date
Certified Applications Assistor – PRC Assistant	8	$24.60/hr.	$31.84/hr.	Until Filled
Certified Medication Aide – Adult Foster Care	8	$24.60/hr.	$31.84/hr.	03/16/2026
CFS Caseworker – Portland Office	11	$68,091.85/yr.	$87,692.49/yr.	Until Filled
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
Clinical Manager – Salem Detox - GCR	14	$90,630.26/yr.	$116,255.21/yr.	Until Filled
Clinical Supervisor – Salem - GCR	11	$68,091.85/yr.	$87,692.49/yr.	Until Filled
Cook – Adult Foster Care	5	$18.86/hr.	$24.07/hr.	03/16/2026
Denturist	12	$74,901.04/yr.	$96,316.53/yr.	03/16/2026
Enrichment Coordinator Aide – Part Time	5	$18.86/hr.	$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Firefighter/Paramedic	11	$68,091.85/yr.	$87,692.49/yr.	Until Filled
Forestry Technician (Entry Level Fire Suppression/Prevention) – Seasonal/Limited Duration	6	$20.75/hr.	$26.42/hr.	Until Filled
Forestry Technician (Intermediate Level Fire Suppression/Prevention) – Seasonal/Limited Duration	7	$22.36/hr.	$29.00/hr.	Until Filled
Forestry Technician (Engine Boss/Crew Boss/EMT) – Seasonal/Limited Duration	8	$24.60/hr.	$31.84/hr.	Until Filled
~~Foster Care Recruitment Specialist~~	~~9~~	~~$27.05/hr.~~	~~$34.95/hr.~~	~~03/09/2026~~
Licensed Practical Nurse - Salem Detox - GCR	12	$36.01/hr.	$46.31/hr.	Until Filled
Medical Director – Salem OTP - GCR	25	$226,851.26/yr.	$330,026.39/yr.	Until Filled
Milieu Safety Technician – Salem Detox – GCR	6	$20.75/hr.	$26.42/hr.	Until Filled
~~Milieu Safety Technician – Portland – GCR~~	~~6~~	~~$20.75/hr.~~	~~$26.42/hr.~~	~~03/09/2026~~
~~Pharmacy Technician~~	~~8~~	~~$24.60/hr.~~	~~$31.84/hr.~~	~~03/09/2026~~
Physician – Health & Wellness	25	$226,851.26/yr.	$330,026.39/yr.	Until Filled
Physician – Salem Primary Care	25	$226,851.26/yr.	$330,026.39/yr.	Until Filled
Physician – Salem - GCR	25	$226,851.26/yr.	$330,026.39/yr.	Until Filled
Physician Assistant – Salem - GCR	20	$151,691.92/yr.	$205,141.88/yr.	Until Filled
Preschool Teacher	10	$29.76/hr.	$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
Teacher Aide-Bus Monitor - Part Time	5	$18.86/hr.	$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Village Case Aide	6	$20.75/hr.	$26.42/hr.	Until Filled
Temporary Pool	2	$16.00/hr.	$16.00/hr.	

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:

1. 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)
2. Tribal member spouses, parents and/or legal guardians of Grand Ronde Tribal member children & current regular Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde employees.
3. External candidates including current Spirit Mountain Casino employees.



POSTING TITLE	CLOSE DATE	WAGE/SALARY
~~Assistant Food and Beverage Manager~~	~~3/12/2026~~	~~$48,329.22/yr. DOE~~
~~Barista (*Part-Time)~~	~~3/12/2026~~	~~$18.02/hr. DOE~~
~~Prep Cook (Full-Time & *Part-Time)~~	~~3/12/2026~~	~~$18.02/hr. DOE~~
Amore Waitstaff (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	$15.05/hr. DOE + Tips
Casino Beverage Waitstaff (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	$15.05/hr. DOE + Tips
Cook (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	$18.29/hr. DOE

$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.

February 2026 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 February were named in March.

Phoenix Ivy was chosen as student of the month for grades K-2 for demonstrating outstanding honesty. Phoenix consistently acts with integrity, telling the truth even when it is difficult and doing the right thing even when no one is watching. He is a trusted, reliable member of our classroom and a fantastic role model for his peers.

Tribal member Paisley Smith was chosen as student of the month for grades K-2 for consistently demonstrating honesty in expressing her emotions. Paisley serves as an example to others that it's perfectly acceptable to be open about feelings, creating a safe space for individuals to share their genuine emotions.

Tribal member Aliyana Strobel was chosen as student of the month for grades 3-5 because she consistently demonstrates the important character trait of honesty. Honesty means telling the truth, making responsible choices and doing the right thing even when it may be difficult or when no one is watching. She shows integrity in her words and actions each day, and takes responsibility for her behavior, admits mistakes and learns from those. She treats classmates and teachers with fairness and respect and can always be trusted to make positive choices.

Tribal member David Priest was chosen as student of the month for grades 3-5 because he is a hard worker and always involved in what we have planned that day. He's always energetic and looking to help whenever it comes to class projects or even hobbies. He is a great friend to everyone and always positive and looks forward to anything we do. He takes accountability multiple times for messes he may have made or if he accidentally made a mistake and his honesty is appreciated. He's all around a great student to have.

Arya Clark, left, was chosen as student of the month for grades 6-12 for demonstrating a consistently positive attitude and has had meaningful personal growth this year. She continues to mature socially, showing respect, responsibility and confidence in her daily efforts. By trying new activities and stepping out of her comfort zone, Arya has developed new skills and has embraced opportunities to learn and grow. We are so proud of the friend and student she has grown to be.

Contributed photos

Lincoln O'neal Bobb
Born: Feb. 19, 2026
at 7:38 a.m.
9 pounds, 8 ounces, 20.25 inches
Parents: Landon and Jordan Bobb
Grandparents: Cory and Sandy Bobb, Brian and Nettie Yechout
Great-grandparents:
Steve and Connie Bobb,
Ron and Kay Yechout

Happy birthday
March 25, 2026:
Happy 79th birthday to
Leroy "Buzz" Simmons.
Love,
Janet and family

Spirit Mountain Community Fund seeking Hatfield Fellowship applicants

Applications for the 2026-27 Hatfield Fellowship program are being accepted through Friday, May 1. The fellowship program is funded by the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the philanthropic arm of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Each year, the Spirit Mountain Community Fund sponsors a highly motivated Native American to serve as the Hatfield Fellow and intern in a congressional office. Placement of the fellow rotates through the Oregon congressional delegation to enhance the mutual understanding between leadership in Washington, D.C. and Indian Country. Fellows are given an invaluable opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of how to navigate the political process in Washington, while working on issues that directly affect Native Americans.

The Hatfield Fellow will begin their Capitol Hill experience in November with a month-long orientation at the American Political Science Association, followed by an eight-month term in an Oregon congressional office. The fellowship includes a monthly stipend, relocation and travel expenses.

This life-changing opportunity is extended to Tribal members from the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon, as well as Tribal members from any Tribe within the United States, who are currently living within the Pacific Northwest. Preference will be given to members of Oregon Tribes. Applicants must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree (or be graduating in June 2026) and be at least 21 years of age to apply.

The Hatfield Fellowship was created in 1998 to honor Oregon Sen. Mark O. Hatfield's public service to Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. For more information about the program or to apply, visit thecommunityfund.com/grants-programs/hatfield-fellowship/ or go to youtu.be/9QLMuOETaaI to view a Hatfield Fellowship informational video. ■

FREE Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event

SATURDAY March 21, 2026
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location
CTGR Campus
Procurement Building V
9635 Grand Ronde Rd
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

For more information
Lindsay McClary
Natural Resources Department
503-879-2387

GRAND RONDE POLICE LOG

Sunday, Feb. 1
- Officers assisted an outside agency with attempting to locate a driving complaint.
- Officers contacted a male who was unconscious in his vehicle on the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Monday, Feb. 2
- Officers took a report of a possible stalking incident that occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- A false alarm was reported at the 8000 block of Grand Ronde Road.
- A driving complaint was reported at the corner of Andy Riggs and Grand Ronde roads.

Tuesday, Feb. 3
- Officers responded to the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway for possible counterfeit money that was used.
- Officers assisted an outside agency with an abandoned vehicle that was located at the 9000 block of Hebo Road.
- A driving under the influence of intoxicants arrest occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Wednesday, Feb. 4
- Officers assisted an outside agency with a stranded motorist on Highway 22 and Beck Road.
- A drug arrest and trespassing occurred on Tribal lands.
- Officers assisted an outside agency as cover for a possible theft case at the 9000 block of Steel Bridge Road.

Thursday, Feb. 5
- A theft call occurred at the 26000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Citizen contact occurred on Salmon River Highway near milepost 21.

Friday, Feb. 6
- A domestic disturbance was reported on Hebo and Grand Ronde roads.
- An emotionally disturbed person was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Saturday, Feb. 7
- A domestic disturbance was reported at the 26000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Citizen contact occurred on Salmon River Highway near milepost 27.
- Officers assisted an outside agency with attempting to locate a suspicious vehicle reported near North Street.

Sunday, Feb. 8
- A domestic disturbance was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers responded to a possible assault at the 48000 block of Dragonfly Drive.
- A driving under the influence of intoxicants arrest occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Theft occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Monday, Feb. 9
- Officers followed up with an investigation of a possible fraud case at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers assisted an outside agency with responding to a vehicle that went off a cliff on Hebo Road near milepost 12.

Tuesday, Feb. 10
- Officers assisted an outside agency with investigating a possible money laundering case occurring on the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers stopped a vehicle near Salmon River Highway near milepost 28.

Wednesday, Feb. 11
- Officers assisted an outside agency with responding to a crash that occurred on Salmon River Highway near milepost 25.
- Officers responded to the 9000 block of Grand Ronde Road after possible gunfire being heard.
- A driving under the influence of intoxicants arrest occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Thursday, Feb. 12
- Citizen contact occurred at Salmon River Highway near milepost 28.
- A driving complaint was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Drugs were seized at the 26000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Drugs were reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Friday, Feb. 13
- Officers assisted an outside agency as cover for a possible harassment case in Willamina.
- Officers contacted a male at the 26000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers assisted a stranded motorist by helping them change their vehicle's tire on Salmon River Highway near milepost 25.

Saturday, Feb. 14
- A theft occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers assisted an outside agency with a crash on Salmon River Highway near milepost 17.
- A welfare check occurred at the 7000 block of Rowell Creek Road.

Sunday, Feb. 15
- Officers assisted an outside agency with attempting to locate a vehicle possibly involved with a domestic disturbance.
- An arrest occurred on Highway 22 near milepost 1.

Monday, Feb. 16
- Trespassing was reported on Tribal lands near Grand Ronde Road.
- Possible drugs were found at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Tuesday, Feb. 17
- A driving complaint was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Wednesday, Feb. 18
- Officers assisted an outside agency with responding to a crash that occurred on Hebo Road near milepost 23.
- Officers stopped to assist a vehicle with hazard lights blinking near the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Thursday, Feb. 19
- A warrant arrest occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- A citation for possession of a controlled substance was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Trespassing occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Friday, Feb. 20
- A possible theft occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers assisted an outside agency with responding to an incident at Salmon River Highway near milepost 18.
- A gambling cheating arrest occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Underage drinking was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Saturday, Feb. 21
- A warrant arrest occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers assisted an outside agency as cover for a traffic stop on Salmon River Highway near milepost 24.
- A warrant arrest occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Sunday, Feb. 22
- Officers assisted an outside agency as a cover for a possible domestic disturbance on Salmon River Highway near milepost 21.
- Trespassing was reported at the 8000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Theft was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- A criminal citation occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Monday, Feb. 23
- Officers assisted an outside agency as cover for a traffic stop on Salmon River Highway near milepost 28.
- A warrant arrest occurred in the city of Sheridan.
- A possible counterfeit bill was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Tuesday, Feb. 24
- A welfare check occurred at the 25000 block of Coyote Court.
- Officers assisted an outside agency with responding to the 7000 block of Alvord Alley Road for an RV fire.
- A criminal citation for possession of a controlled substance occurred at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Wednesday, Feb. 25
- Trespassing occurred on Grand Ronde Road.
- Officers assisted an outside agency as cover while attempting to locate a male on North Street.

Thursday, Feb. 26
- Possible drugs were reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Friday, Feb. 27
- An emotionally disturbed person was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Officers assisted an outside agency with attempting to locate a possible armed person in Willamina.
- Found bullets on public property were reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Saturday, Feb. 28
- A possible armed robbery call, which turned out to be a domestic disturbance, was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.
- Trespassing was reported at the 8000 block of Grand Ronde Road.
- A three-vehicle crash was reported at the 27000 block of Salmon River Highway.

Compiled by Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department Officer Prommisse Thornley

Walking On...

William Jerome Hawks

Nov. 17, 1954 – Jan. 29, 2026

Tribal Elder William Jerome Hawks, 71, walked on Jan. 29, 2026, while in hospice care at home. He suffered from gastric and prostate cancer.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations in his name be made to the American Cancer Society. As a reminder, get cancer screenings as often as your doctor orders them.

Willie was born Nov. 17, 1954, in Astoria to Tribal member Edwina LaChance Winslow Hawks and William F. Hawks. He grew up in Warrenton. At the age of 18, he moved to Portland where he attended Mount Hood Community College to pursue his study of photojournalism. There, he started his own janitorial service and married his first wife. When his father fell ill, he moved back to Warrenton to assist his mother in running the family bar, The Seafarer. Over the course of time Willie ran several bars and restaurants, which he greatly enjoyed.

He married multiple times, producing three handsome sons; William Matthew, Dustin Cain and Edward William. He is survived by four wives; Vickie, Mary, Victoria and Anita. He also has many grandchildren. He was immensely proud of his Indigenous heritage and his affiliation with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. He was also a huge New York Yankees fan.

Willie was a lovely man who loved many, many people, especially family: His sons, his aunts, his cousins and grandmothers. He also loved his wide variety of friends. He could not help but assist homeless friends and friends who needed a helping hand or a shoulder to cry on. He was selfless in his assistance to others.

Willie's memorial service, held at the Grand Ronde Elders Activity Center Monday, Feb. 9, was attended by more than two dozen of his friends and relatives, including several members of his 1973 graduating class at Warrenton High School.

Those who did not know Willie certainly missed out on meeting a wonderful man. Those who did know him will miss him wholeheartedly. He touched every person he met in a memorable way. Walk on peacefully, Willie, you are deeply missed.

Linda Langley McCullar

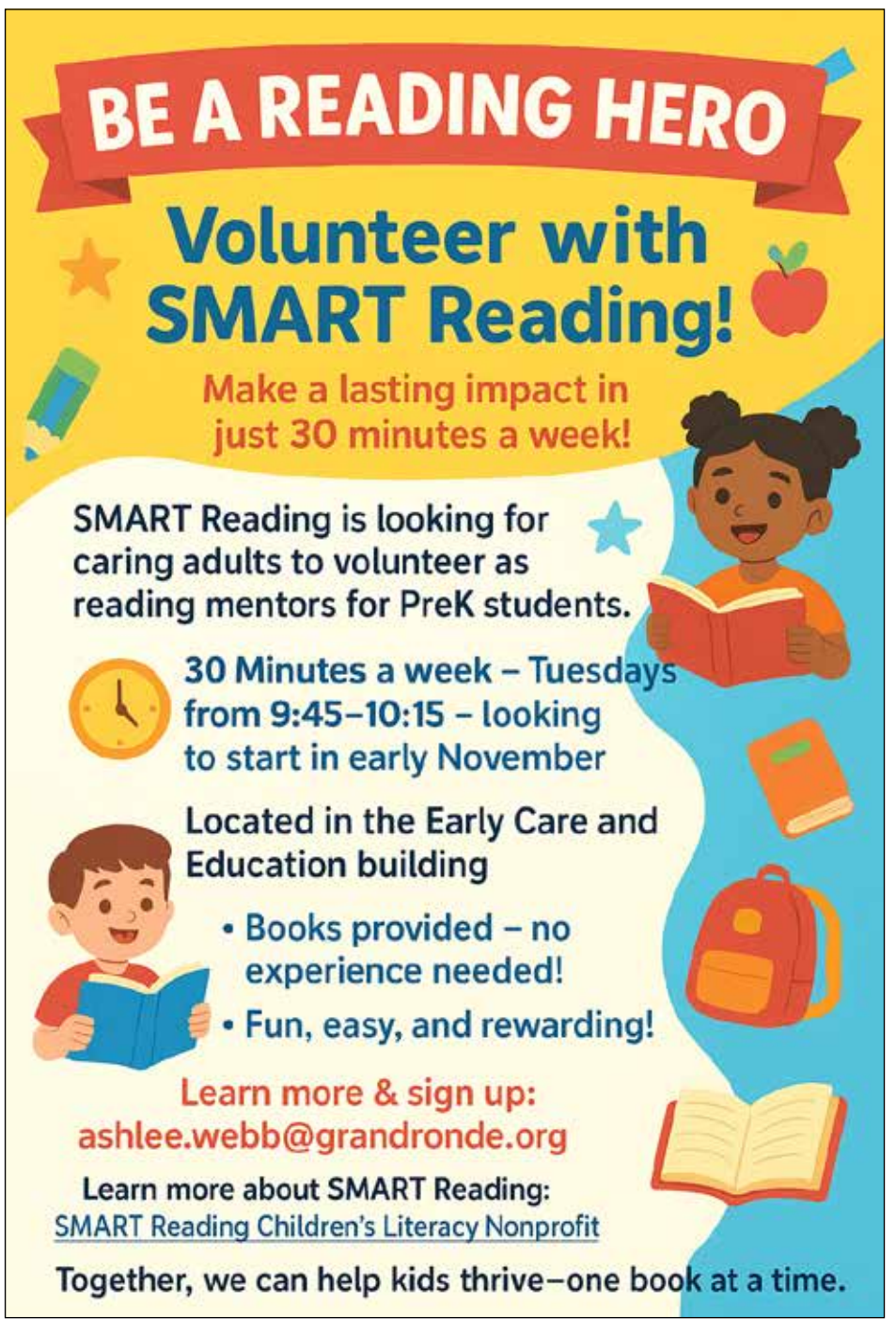
June 27, 1954 – March 1, 2026

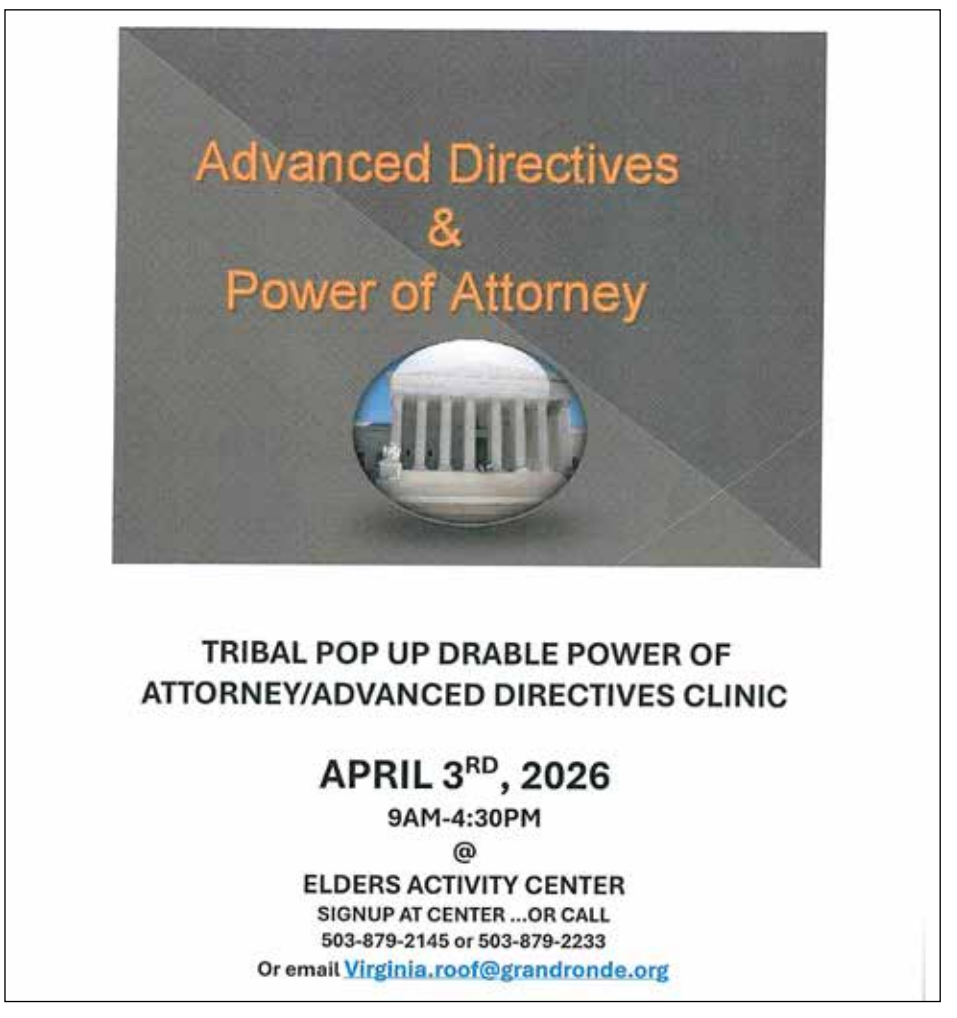
Tribal Elder Linda Langley McCullar, 71, passed away peacefully March 1, 2026. Born on June 27, 1954, Linda was the beloved daughter of the late William and Ellen Langley.

Linda was a devoted wife to her husband, Luther "Gene" McCullar. As the matriarch of a large and loving family, she is survived by her four children: Paxton Helton, Stormy (Helton) Parsons, Misty Haralson and Joshua McCullar. Her legacy continues through her eight grandchildren — Kirstie, Destinie, Cody, Casandra, Gage, Paxton Jr., Madelyne and Anthony — and her seven great-grandchildren: Kennedi, Oliver, Legend, Lane, Dax, Elija and Ethan.

She is also survived by her siblings, Steve "Beaver" Langley, Deborah Langley, Kathy Langley and David "John" Langley. Linda was predeceased by her parents; her siblings, Billy Joe Langley, Ellen (Langley) Haralson and Loretta (Langley) Graham; and her grandson, Jason Mena-Helton.

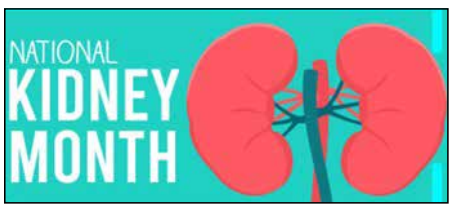
Linda will be remembered for her dedication to family and the warmth she brought to everyone around her. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.





HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

National Kidney Month: Taking care of your kidneys



March is National Kidney Month. This is a time to learn about your kidneys and how to keep them healthy.

Your kidneys are two small, bean-shaped organs in your lower back. They clean your blood, remove waste through urine and help control blood pressure. Healthy kidneys help your whole body work better.

Many people have kidney disease and do not know it. Kidney disease often has no symptoms at first. That is why learning about kidney health is important.

You can help protect your kidneys by taking simple steps:

- Drink water every day.
- Eat healthy foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Limit salty and sugary foods.
- Do not smoke.
- Stay active by walking or moving your body.
- Take medicines only as directed by your doctor.

Some people have a higher risk for kidney disease. This includes people with diabetes, high blood pressure or a family history of kidney problems. If you are at risk, talk to your doctor. A simple blood or urine test can check how your kidneys are working.

National Kidney Month is a reminder to take care of your kidneys. Small, healthy choices each day can make a big difference. ■

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.

What is low vision?

Low vision means trouble seeing even when wearing glasses or contacts. It is not the same as being blind. People with low vision may have a hard time reading, driving, seeing faces or doing daily tasks.

Common signs of low vision

- Blurry or cloudy vision
- Trouble seeing at night
- Needing more light to read
- Losing side (peripheral) vision
- Seeing dark or empty spots

If you notice these signs, it is important to get an eye exam.

What you can do

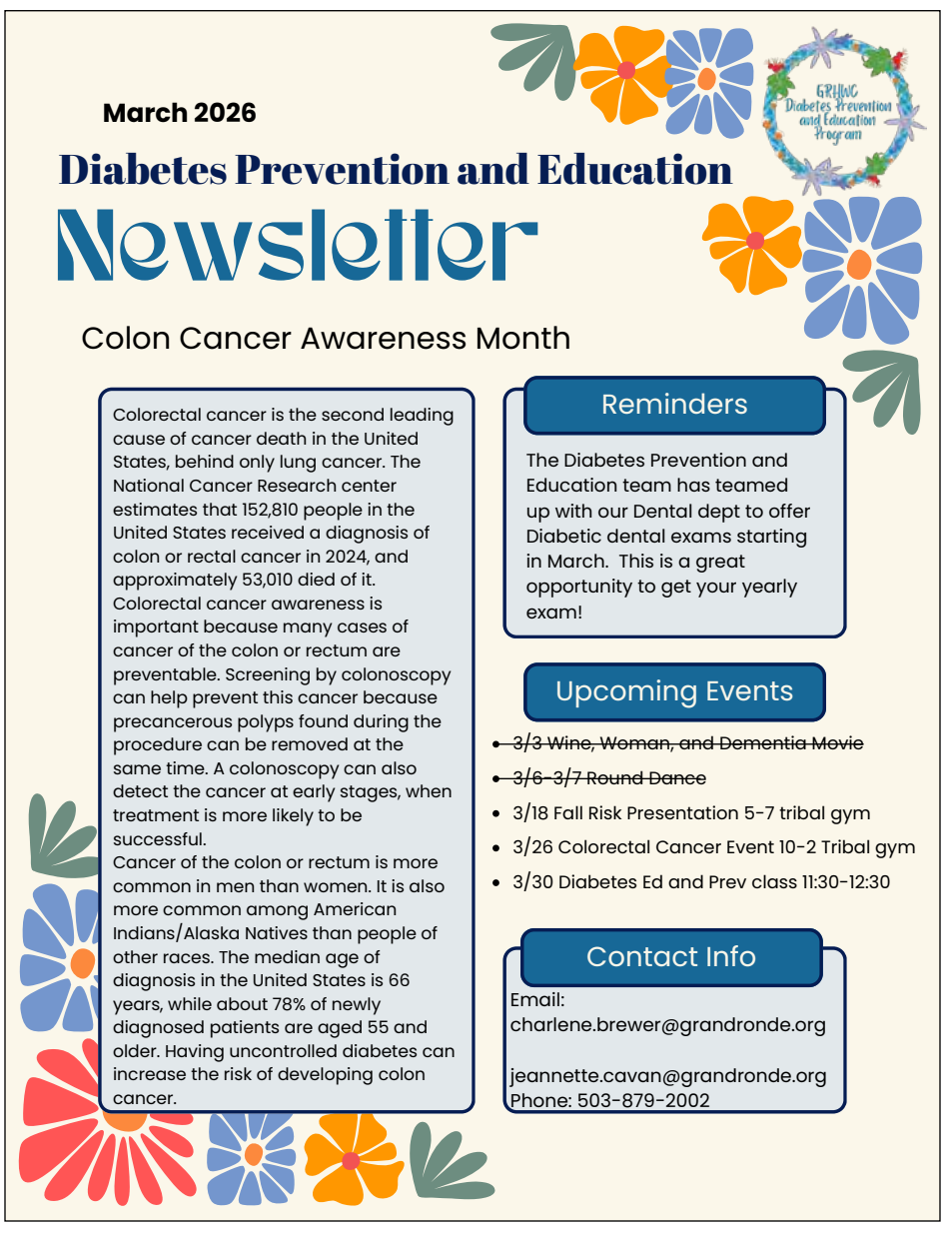
- Get regular eye exams. Even if you feel fine, exams can find problems early.
- Manage chronic conditions. Controlling diabetes and blood pressure protects your eyes.
- Protect your eyes. Wear protective eyewear when working or playing sports.
- Ask for help. Vision aids, brighter lighting and training can make daily tasks easier.

Care is available

Many clinics, including Indian Health Service (IHS) and Tribal health programs, offer eye care. Low vision services can help people stay independent and safe.

Remember

Low vision does not mean giving up. With care, support and the right tools, people can continue to live full and active lives. During Low Vision Awareness Month, take time to care for your eyes and encourage loved ones to do the same. ■



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