



New K-9 officer
joins Tribal police
— pg. 6



SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA · MOLALLA · ROGUE RIVER · KALAPUYA · CHASTA

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

AUGUST 1, 2026

Candidates respond to Tribal member questions

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

Candidates for the upcoming Tribal Council election spent 90 minutes Thursday, July 23, answering questions submitted by Tribal members, which included council decision making, enrollment, Tribal sovereignty, conduct at meetings, general welfare payments and more.

The questions were selected at random for each candidate, who had the chance to answer four, in addition to providing opening and closing statements.

Candidates who finished answering and still had time remaining in the two minutes allotted were allowed to answer earlier questions addressed to their fellows. Due to space considerations, Smoke Signals is not providing the entire list of questions and answers. To watch the full video, visit grandronde.org/videos/.

Lisa Leno and Matthew Haller are running for reelection, while Tribal members Valeria Atanacio, Christopher Bailey and Tribal Elders Denise Harvey and Pamala Warren-Chase are also seeking seats on the council. Harvey served on Tribal Council previously for four terms. Leno is seeking her fourth term. Haller is seeking a second term.

Tribal Council member Kathleen

See FORUM
continued on page 7

A veterans weekend



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder and U.S. Navy veteran Jesse “Peewee” Roberston, holding the microphone, introduces himself during the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Saturday, July 11. All veterans in attendance were given the opportunity to introduce themselves.

2026 Veterans Powwow edition



Special pull out section INSIDE — pages 13-16

Contest powwow set for Aug. 14-16

By Alexander Bliven
Smoke Signals intern

The 2026 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow will bring dancers, drummers and community members together Friday, Aug. 14, through Sunday, Aug. 16, at the uyxat Powwow Grounds.

Attendance is free. Camping with parking is available for \$5 per vehicle beginning 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12.

Mountain Kree will be the host drum and Bad Soul will serve as local host drum. Invited drums include Bad Nation, Milepost 30, Bad War Cloud, Meskwaki Nation and Little Bear.

Howie Thompson and Marty Thurman will serve as emcees for the event. Grand Ronde

Tribal member Anthony Quenelle will serve as arena director.

Randall Paskemin will be head drum judge; Tavian Lasley will be head dance judge.

The powwow will begin with a royalty pageant at 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 14, at the Tribal Governance Center, followed by ceremonies for

See POWWOW
continued on page 6

Tribal member Kalea Liebelt participates in a grand entry of the 2025 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds last August. This year's contest powwow is Friday-Sunday Aug. 14-16.



Smoke Signals file photo

NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday meetings
DATE **TIME**
Wednesday, Aug. 12.....4 p.m.
Wednesday, Aug. 26.....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.

Back-to-school clothing swap set Aug. 11

There will be a back-to-school free clothing swap that will be held at the Tribe’s Back-to-School Health Fair and the Family Night Out Tuesday, Aug. 11, to help local students and families prepare for the upcoming school year.

As part of this effort, the Tribe is seeking donations of gently used clothing items that are clean, in good condition, and appropriate for school aged children and teens.

Donated items may include shirts, pants, jackets, sweaters, shoes, sports gear and hats, as well as any regalia or ribbon skirts/shirts.

There are two drop-off location on campus for donations:

- Health & Wellness Center – Administration wing, call ext.1407 for drop offs;
- Shawash-ili?i Skul – Front desk, call ext. 1856 for drop offs. ■

General Welfare Assistance and Supplemental General Welfare Assistance Programs Ordinance open for comment

Tribal Council is considering amendments to the General Welfare Assistance and Supplemental General Welfare Assistance Programs Ordinance. The proposed new ordinance was given a first reading at the July 15, 2026, Tribal Council meeting.

The primary purpose of the proposed ordinance is to provide a death benefit to beneficiaries of Tribal members who were alive during a General Welfare Assistance Payment period.

Tribal Council invites comment on the proposed amendments to the General Welfare Assistance and Supplemental General Welfare Assistance Programs Ordinance. For a copy of the proposed amendments, contact the Tribal Attorney’s Office at 503-879-4664 or legal@grandronde.org. Comments can also be sent to the Tribal Attorney’s Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347, or by email to legal@grandronde.org.

Comments must be received by Aug. 31, 2026. ■

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DEADLINE DATE

ISSUE DATE

MEMBERS OF:

Thursday, Aug. 6.....Aug. 15
Thursday, Aug. 20.....Sept. 1
Thursday, Sept. 3Sept. 15
Tuesday, Sept. 22.....Oct. 1

Indigenous Journalists Association
Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assoc.
2022 IJA General Excellence
2023 IJA General Excellence

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.

2026 TRIBAL COUNCIL

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Oregon Department
of Human Services
OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

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](#)

IN THE FUTURE



(k^hapa atqi)

stuxtkin-mun (August)

- Tuesday, Aug. 11 – Back to School Health Fair, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Building. Call 503-879-6701 to make an appointment for a sports physical or car seat check.
- Tuesday, Aug. 11 – Family Night Out, 4-8 p.m., Tribal gym/parking area.
- Wednesday, Aug. 12 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom, 9615 Grand Ronde Road. 503-879-2304.
- Friday-Sunday, Aug. 14-16 – Grand Ronde Contest Powwow, uyxat Powwow Grounds, 9600 SW Hebo Road. Grand entries are typically at 7 p.m. Friday, 1 and 7 p.m. Saturday and 1 p.m. Sunday.
- Friday, Aug. 21 – Grand Ronde Education Summit, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Spirit Mountain Casino, 27100 SW Salmon River Highway.
- Wednesday, Aug. 26 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom, 9615 Grand Ronde Road. 503-879-2304.

kwayts-mun (September)

- Monday, Sept. 7 – Tribal offices closed in observance of the Labor Day holiday.
- Wednesday, Sept. 9 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom, 9615 Grand Ronde Road. 503-879-2304.
- Saturday, Sept. 12 – Tribal Election Day. 503-879-2271.
- Sunday, Sept. 13 – General Council meeting, 11 a.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom, 9615 Grand Ronde Road. 503-879-2304.
- Wednesday, Sept. 16 – Tribal Council swearing in-ceremony, 11 a.m., Tribal Governance Center, 9615 Grand Ronde Road. 503-879-2304.
- Wednesday, Sept. 16 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom, 9615 Grand Ronde Road. 503-879-2304.
- Friday, Sept. 25 – Tribal offices closed in observance of National Native American Day.
- Wednesday, Sept. 30 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom, 9615 Grand Ronde Road. 503-879-2304.

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

Tribal election office open until Sept. 12

The Tribal Election Board office is open through Saturday, Sept. 12. Office hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday to Thursday.

The office is located in the Tribal Community Center at 9615 Grand Ronde Road. The phone number is 503-879-2271.

Blank signature verification forms have been placed in a hanging basket outside the Election Board’s office. Complete signature verification forms, with a notarized signature or legible copy of identification that includes your signature, such as a driver’s license, Tribal ID, passport, etc. need to be mailed to the Election Board for processing. The form will not be processed unless it has been notarized or includes a legible copy of your ID to match signatures.

To request a signature verification form by phone or email, contact the Election Board at 503-879-2271 or election.board@grandronde.org.

Ballots will be mailed to voters with verified signatures Wednesday, July 29. Tribal members can submit a verified signature form at any time up to and including election day, which is Saturday, September 12.

There will be a ballot box in the Governance Center during election season and one in the Community Center on election day to drop ballots off.

Ballots will be available, as they have been in the past, for Tribal members who prefer to vote in person. It is the voter’s responsibility to ensure their ballot is received by the Election Board on or before election day.

Remember, if you use the post office, all mail must go through Portland to be sorted before returning to Grand Ronde, so make sure your ballot is in the mail a few days early. ■



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OFFICIAL TRIBAL FACEBOOK PAGES

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The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde:
facebook.com/CTGRgov

Grand Ronde Health & Wellness:
facebook.com/GRHWC

Grand Ronde Children & Family Services:
facebook.com/CTGRCFs

Grand Ronde Royalty:
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Grand Ronde Social Services Department:
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Grand Ronde Food Bank:
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Spirit Mountain Community Fund:
facebook.com/SpiritMountainCommunityFund

Grand Ronde Cultural Education:
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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





LISTEN

TO TRIBAL COUNCIL
CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS



Lisa Leno



Denise Harvey



Christopher Bailey



Pamala Warren-Chase



Valeria Atanacio

Listen to the Smoke Signals candidate interviews wherever you listen to podcasts or at <https://www.spreaker.com/podcast/smoke-signals-podcasts--2745752>

*All six Tribal council candidates were invited to the Smoke Signals podcast but this year one candidate decided to direct their campaign efforts elsewhere.

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



VISIT SMOKESIGNALS.ORG AND CLICK ON PODCAST

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 August 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 in August. 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.



2021 — The Tribe held an Indig-Immunity Youth Vaccination event for Tribal youth aged 12 and older to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. The event included a social powwow with youth dancers, a three-on-three basketball tournament and lacrosse activities. Youth were given gifts and could win special prizes such as a basketball signed by the Portland Trail Blazers. In total, 331 adults and 106 youth attended the event.



File photo

2016 — Tribal Council Secretary Cheryle A. Kennedy met with Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley during a town hall meeting in Tillamook to discuss the passing of a U.S. Senate bill opposed by the Tribe. The bill would expand the area in which the Secretary of the Interior could take land into trust for the Siletz Tribe to include Tillamook and Yamhill counties, both of which had originally been allocated to the Tribe in the Grand Ronde Reservation Act. “We’re not opposing it just to fight with another Tribe,” Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno said. “We’re opposing it because we feel that’s our land, that’s where our people come from.”

2011 — Tribal member and Forest Patrol Officer Jake McKnight graduated from the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training and became the Tribe’s first police officer. During defensive training, McKnight earned “Best in Class” honors out of 325 trainees. McKnight had previously been working with Tribal Council to approve a resolution to establish a police department, which passed in December 2010.

2006 — Elders from eight Tribes across the Pacific Northwest gathered in Grand Ronde to celebrate the Tribe’s annual Elder Honor Day. A total of 193 Elders attended, including 76 from Grand Ronde, 34 from Coos, 36 from Siuslaw, 16 from Coquille, 14 from Umpqua, eight from Suquamish, six from Siletz and three from Swinomish. Nora Kimsey, 97, was honored as the longest living Grand Ronde Elder and oldest living Elder among the eight Tribes.

2001 — The Tribe’s Social Services Department opened a youth shelter in Grand Ronde in an effort to provide a safe place for troubled youth. Social Services Director Anthony Gagliardo said the shelter took more than a year to put together. “This shelter shows a true commitment and dedication for the safety and well-being of Tribal member children,” he said.

1996 — Spirit Mountain Casino was credited by local government agencies as being responsible for eight new businesses opening in Willamina following the casino’s launch in October 1995. Willamina Business Group President Gary Brooks noted that all but one of the new businesses had been started by local residents. “It’s economics,” he said. “The bang you get from 1,000 new jobs is going to have an impact. All of that new money in the area creates new business opportunities.”

1991 — The Tribe was joined by representatives from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Klamath Tribes and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board to host a two-day orientation workshop for Indian students at Chemeketa Community College in Salem. Topics included entrance into community college, placement assessments, support services, four-year colleges and universities and student clubs.

1986 — Tribal Council was formulating a comprehensive plan to outline long-term goals for the Tribe’s future. Topics of the plan included housing, future administrative buildings, health facilities, improved care for Elders and ways to educate Tribal youth. Tribal Council Chairman Mark Mercier said the plan was very important, as it would “help the Tribe expand into a very formal and organized unit of operation.”

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

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. “When one of my officers receives the text, they will call you back when they have time.”

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



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.

Council approves grant application for Tribal police

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services Office that, if approved, would be used to launch the Tribal Police Department's first dedicated mental health and wellness program for officers, civilian staff and their families.

The \$185,000 grant application was approved at the Wednesday, July 15, council meeting.

"This approach relies on contract vendors and trainers rather than new hires, so the department can provide an employee assistance program, peer support training, suicide prevention program, family support services and related resources without adding long-term payroll obligations," Tribal Grants Program Manager Wendy Sparks said at a Tuesday, July 14, Legislative Action Committee meeting.

According to National Institutes of Health, suicide rates among law enforcement officers are 54% higher compared to the general population or other employed civilians. Additionally, a 2012 study published in the International Journal of Emergency Mental Health found that small departments, those defined as having less than 50 full-time officers, had a suicide rate more than three times higher than that of departments with more than 500 full-time officers.

In other news, Tribal Council:

- Approved appointing Shannon Simi to the Tribal Election Board with a term ending March 31, 2027;
- Approved final adoption of the Nonprofit Corporations Ordinance setting forth policies and procedures for the governance of nonprofit corporations chartered

under Tribal law for the benefit of Tribal government or Tribal members, and enabling such nonprofit corporations to achieve tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) status;

- Approved a first reading of amendments to the General Welfare Assistance and Supplemental General Welfare Assistance Programs Ordinance to provide a death benefit to beneficiaries of Tribal members who were alive during a general welfare assistance payment period;
- Approved an application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime for the OVC Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside Formula grant for up to \$230,000. If awarded, the funds will be used by the Tribe's Warriors of Hope Domestic & Sexual Violence Program to continue its shelter-based domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking victim services program, as well as adding a dedicated maintenance fund for the Tribe's manufactured-home shelter units to address plumbing, electrical and weather-related wear;
- Approved an application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking grant for up to \$700,000. If awarded, funds will be used by the Warriors of Hope program for a new domestic violence advocate, expanded civil legal services, an annual community awareness event held each October, and a contracted Yamhill County Sheriff's Office officer dedicated to investigative and enforcement response for Tribal domestic violence and sexual assault victims;

- Approved an application to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment grant for up to \$4.77 million. If awarded, funds will be used by the Tribe's Health & Wellness Department to implement a unified, culturally grounded, no-wrong-door system across all Grand Ronde health entry points to help with the early identification of substance use among Tribal youth and families, intervention and connection to care and recovery support services;
- Approved an application to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality for the Reduce, Reuse, Reimagine grant program for up to \$225,000. If awarded, funds will be used for construction activities at the historic Grand Ronde Rail Depot building near Grand Ronde Road;
- Approved an application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services Hiring Program for up to \$125,000;
- Approved two sovereign immunity waivers for the Kahoot! platform and for Online Information Services software;
- Approved an O'Link 12 Tribes Agreement for 2027 payments to use enrollment data instead of service area data, which is projected to improve funding to the Tribe by approximately 7.25%;
- Approved an application to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Strategic Prevention Framework/Partnership for Success Grant for up to \$1.25 million. If awarded, funds will be used for the Tribe's Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program to build a substance use prevention program focused on opioid, methamphetamine and underage alcohol use;
- Approved an application to the Health Resources and Services Administration Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Scaling

Effective Early Childhood Systems Development grant for up to \$875,000. If awarded, funds will be used by the Health & Wellness Department to build an early childhood screening and support program;

- Approved an application to the Portland General Electric Charging Resiliency Hub Demonstration grant for up to \$1.9 million. If awarded, funds will be used to build an eight-port, fast charging station near Spirit Mountain Casino for electric vehicles;
- Approved an application to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for a restoration grant of up to \$290,000. If awarded, funds will be used by the Natural Resources Department to continue restoration efforts at its Chahpam conservation property near the North Santiam River in Marion County;
- Approved an application to Indian Health Service for its Phase 2 Prescription Pilot Program grant for up to \$1.25 million. If awarded, funds will be used by the Health & Wellness Department to launch the Grand Ronde Nutrition Prescription produce box program;
- Approved an application to the Administration for Community Living for the Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative/Dementia Capability Indian Country Grant for up to \$900,000. If awarded, funds will be used to expand a dementia care system across the Tribe's seven country service area;
- And approved enrolling two infants into the Tribe because they meet the enrollment requirements in the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance. Total enrollment counts in 2026 include 72 infants, nine non-infant emergency enrollments and 95 non-infants.

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

BACK TO SCHOOL CLOTHES

Kick Off The School Year With New Fits!

Applications are now available for school clothes!

- This is a first come, first serve program
- Child must be enrolled in CTGR
- Child must be of school age and registered in school
- Must meet income requirements

APPLICATIONS CAN BE FOUND ON GRANDRONDE.ORG OR BY CALLING SOCIAL SERVICES AT (503) 879-2034

Completed applications can be emailed to ssdinfo@grandronde.org or dropped off in the Social Services Department at the Community Center Building

OSU researchers and CTGR Emergency Services seek volunteers for study

Oregon State University researchers are working with Grand Ronde Emergency Services to conduct a study of the needs, values and experiences of community members with extreme weather events and other disruptions.

The research team is interested in speaking with various Grand Ronde, Willamina and Sheridan community members to share their experiences and ideas related to emergency preparedness, not just those who are very prepared or have planned for disasters, to make sure that emergency preparedness is inclusive of everyone's needs. Tribal members and non-Tribal members are welcome to participate.

Those interested will be given an approximately one hour interview. The information gathered during the research will help inform emergency operations to help prepare the community for future natural hazards.

To participate, call or text Josh Blockstein at 301-906-4954, email blockstj@oregonstate.edu or visit www.tinyurl.com/OSUDesSignUp and fill out the form. Participants will receive a \$25 gift card for their time.

Researchers will also be at the Grand Ronde Contest Powwow in the informational booth section. ■

New K-9 officer joins Tribal police

By Alexander Bliven

Smoke Signals intern

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department has a new officer trained in narcotics detection and tracking, who will help safely identify illicit and harmful substances.

However, this officer doesn't wear a uniform, drive a patrol car or carry a firearm: He's a friendly, fluffy, Springer Spaniel.

On June 18, Tribal Police Officer and K-9 Handler Tyler Mursch and partner, Kishkish, completed their professional K-9 certification training through the American Society of Canine Trainers International. Kishkish is a Chinuk Wawa word which means, "to hunt something."

Kishkish, just 18 months old, officially joined the department June 24 and is currently its only K-9, as well as its youngest officer.

Mursch, his handler, has worked for the Tribal Police Department for two years and has spent eight years total in law enforcement. Before moving to Grand Ronde, he worked for the Madison County Sheriff's Office in Montana. He has also served in the U.S. Army and worked as a wildland firefighter.

As a newer member of the police department, Mursch approached Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight about adding a K-9 to the force.

"When I took this job, I expressed to Chief McKnight that I could help build a new K-9 unit because I've done that prior to this," Mursch said, "I also knew a trainer, Molly McKinney, in Montana who trained my last dog."

Together, they discussed the type of dog they wanted — one friendly enough for community members to pet but also capable of narcotics detection and tracking.

"As soon as chief said, 'Let's do it,' we were on it," Mursch said.

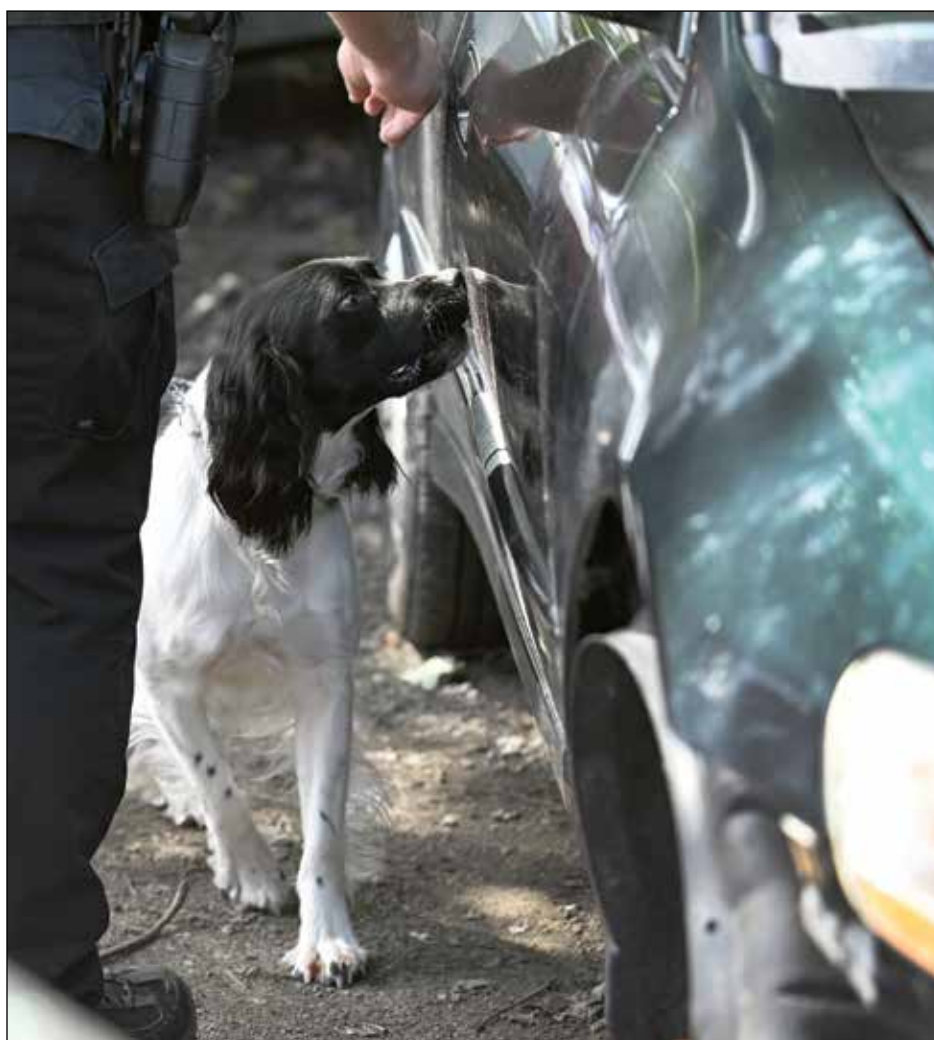


Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department K-9 Kishkish sniffs a vehicle for narcotics during a training session with Tribal Police Officer and K-9 Handler Tyler Mursch at OK Towing in Sheridan Friday, June 26.

SEE MORE OF THIS STORY

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McKinney, a certified master instructor with the American Society of Canine Trainers International, who holds a master's degree in canine developmental science, obtained Kishkish as a puppy from a hunting dog breeder and provided initial training for him in Helena,

Montana. Mursch traveled there later and he spent three weeks completing required handler training before returning to Oregon with Kishkish.

Kishkish continues to receive training from Mursch.

"I do at least two trainings a day," he said.

In addition to obedience training involving sitting, laying down and staying, Mursch regularly conducts narcotics detection and tracking exercises.

"He's imprinted on four odors and he's proven he can find fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine," Mursch said. "The other thing he does is tracking. I can put him on a track and he'll follow somebody who gets lost or somebody who runs away from us."

During his previous law enforcement work in Montana, Mursch used a K-9 to track juveniles as well as Elders who wandered away from care facilities.

"Tracking is not just for law enforcement," he said. "It can be used for search and rescue and a lot of other things that we can use

Kishkish for."

Mursch said the dog's name was chosen with help from students in the Willamina School District.

"Officer JJ Flynn, who works with us, is the school resource officer for the Willamina School District," he said. "The kids came up with a couple names. I decided the one that worked best...K-9 names kind of need to be short. They don't really understand long words so it needs to be a short name."

Mursch said being a K-9 handler can be challenging but also rewarding.

"It's not easy; there's never a break day for me," he said, noting Kishkish's high energy and eagerness to work.

With a laugh, he added "Everybody thinks that he's way cooler than me, which hurts my feelings a little bit—but you know, I get it."

Despite the challenges, Mursch enjoys the partnership he has developed with the dog.

"My previous K-9 and Kishkish both live at home with me," he said. "Working dogs especially build really strong relationships with their handlers and anywhere I go, he follows me. I would say we have a really strong relationship and he's adorable, which makes it easy."

That relationship extends beyond just working hours, as Kishkish still enjoys time for play, whether it's catching balls or chasing toys.

"He's got this furry little tail with a handle on it kind of like a cat toy. And he's a hunting breed so he just goes nuts for it," Mursch said.

Mursch is confident Kishkish will be a great fit for the department.

"He's super tough; that's one thing I know about him," he said. "We did a track and he went through a bunch of blackberries. I didn't even realize until afterwards that I saw his nose was kind of cut up but he was like, 'Let's go, I don't wanna do this!' while I was putting ointment on it."

Mursch hopes people who see him and Kishkish around the community won't hesitate to stop by for a visit.

"If you see us walking around, go ahead and feel free to come over and pet him," he said. "Everybody does that thing where they try and hold out their hand so he can smell it first but Kishkish would say, 'I don't need that — you can just pet me.' He's a super friendly dog. Just feel free to come over and say hi." ■

Powwow is a clean and sober event

**POWWOW continued
from front page**

the outgoing royalty and crowning incoming royalty at 5 p.m. at the powwow grounds. Grand entry will begin at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, Aug. 15, grand entry will take place at 1 p.m. and again at 7 p.m.

On Sunday, Aug. 16, there will be an Indian auction at 11 a.m., followed by grand entry at 1 p.m. at the powwow grounds.

Dance categories include Elder (65+), golden age (55-64), senior adults (36-54) and junior adults (18-35), with prize money ranging from \$1,000 for first place to \$50 for fifth place.

Additional categories include teens (13-17), with prize money ranging from \$600 for first place to \$100 for fifth place; juniors (6-12), with prize money ranging from \$150 for first place to \$50 for fifth

place and the women's fancy special and men's fancy special, featuring the theme "Feathers vs. Hackles," with prize money ranging from \$1,000 for first place to \$300 for fourth place.

The powwow is a clean and sober event. Attendees are asked to respect the Grand Ronde community and culture by not bringing alcohol, drugs or weapons to the event and not displaying any gang affiliation. Smoking and vaping are not allowed around or in the arena or arbor. Dogs are not allowed in the event area, including the arena, around the arbor and in the vendor areas.

The event is often crowded, so attendees are advised to arrive early to allow time to find parking and seating.

The uyxat Powwow Grounds are located at 9600 Highway 22 (Hebo Road) Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347. For vendor information, call 503-879-2037. ■

CTGR

Portland Area Office

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Interim General Manager Bryan Langley acted as moderator

FORUM continued from front page

George gave the invocation. Interim General Manager Bryan Langley acted as moderator.

Haller said he had joined numerous committees and was eager to continue the work he had started. Harvey said she is running because “some of the things I’m seeing have me concerned.” She noted her extensive experience working with the federal government.

Atanacio said her childhood experience of going into foster care and being separated from her siblings taught her importance of family and community and council members “are not elected to lead from own perspectives alone,” but to reflect the views of Tribal members.

Bailey said he had been asked to run by other Tribal members. He said he supports having more General Council meetings take place outside of Grand Ronde and creating a stronger land base for the Tribe.

Warren-Chase said her long-time dream is to serve on council.

“All I want to do really, truly, is serve,” she said. “And the best way to do that is in this leadership role.”

Leno promised to serve with integrity.

“Serving our Tribe has never been just a position for me,” she said. “It’s been a calling.”

Harvey was asked if she would support adding 50 more people to the annual lottery for a total of 250 new enrollments.

“Absolutely,” Harvey said. “In my last term, I actually assumed that was going to occur fairly quickly. It had been talked about quite a bit. I felt like everyone was pretty supportive of that.”

A question about how to handle friends or family members asking for special treatment or favors went to Haller, who said he’d continue to

handle it the way he does now.

“Nepotism is one of the reasons I wanted this position,” Haller said. “I don’t believe it has a place. I’ll use my own daughter as an example; she’s smart, she’s independent. She sits as the vice chair of our Youth Council, and she often comes to me with asks or desires and I purposely will not even entertain those questions. I tell her at that point, ‘As much as you are my daughter, it’s up to you to advocate for yourself, because I do not believe in nepotism and it does not belong in our organization.’”

Haller noted that everyone elected to council is connected to a large family.

“If you cannot remove the name from the equation, you should not be one of the people making the decision,” he said.

Atanacio answered a question how she would go about reducing programming or staff, if needed to balance the budget, with a question that noted the initial Tribal budget has been in deficit.

“Every year, this is a concern,” Atanacio said. “For me, I do believe that some of those calls are difficult and they’re ones that need to be made. I don’t think it’s the Tribal Council’s role necessarily to implement that...That’s what staff are for and they help determine what their programs need, what their services entail and who can support that work.”

She continued, “But in terms of a larger budget question, I think we can get a little bit more forward-thinking in our strategy, in our way of how we’re planning for the future. This is the first time I’m hearing some of the people in the room talk about like a general welfare plan, just making that sustainable; I love that idea. Why wouldn’t we also be looking at maybe an Elders fund? The way that we take care of different populations

in the community, the way we can grow that and make sure that it is sustainable, far after we are here, you know, serving the next seven generations, because we will be here, always. ... I want to learn more about how we could do that. I think part is getting a unified vision and being able to share in what are the true priorities of the Tribe to make sure that we’re here for many generations to come.”

A question whether people who have previously sued the Tribe should be allowed to run for Tribal Council went to Bailey, who said they should.

“Is the Tribe infallible, no,” Bailey said. “I’ve worked with people in the Tribe, employees that have sued successfully because it was found they were fired without cause. ... I think it’s a complicated issue. Frivolous lawsuits could be a problem. But if somebody’s mistreated by the Tribe and that can happen; we have hundreds of employees and thousands of Tribal members and things can happen, they need to have some recompense. ... there could be situations, but at the same time, you don’t want to make specific rules preventing somebody who’s been wronged by the Tribe from being able to serve the Tribal membership.”

Warren-Chase was asked whether the Tribe’s general welfare amounts are sustainable.

They are at the moment, she said, but the Tribe needs to think about the future.

“You can’t have your cake and eat it too,” Warren-Chase said. “We want general welfare payments, but we also want our descendants eligible and able to enroll. How’s that going to look in the future? How’s that going to look 20 years down the road, in regard to that pool? These things all need to be thought out for not how they affect things today or tomorrow or next week, but how they affect things five years, 10 years, 30 years down the road.”

She said she would need more information to know how sustainable the payments will be in the long term.

Leno fielded a question about whether it is appropriate for Tribal members to override decisions about patient care, sparked by recent complaints that the council voted to place a resident in Adult Foster Care, whose needs are greater than the facility is designed to meet and who has allegedly been causing disruption.

“There are times we are going to have information, or be working from a value system that may not be exactly in line with a decision that a clinical employee is going to make ... My perspective it’s not overriding staff; it’s looking at from a different position,” she said. ■

Vision education



Photo by Alexander Bliven

Tribal Environmental Policy Analyst Keri Handaly, left, tries on a pair of glasses that simulate macular degeneration as Tribal Public Health Educator Chad Mann explains the effect on vision during the Healthy Vision & Bird Watch event at the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Building Thursday, July 23. The event focused on educating visitors about maintaining eye health, common eye diseases and other causes of vision impairment. Several interactive booths allowed participants to learn more about foods that support healthy eyes, colorblindness, ultraviolet light exposure, diabetes-related vision loss and common eye diseases through simulation glasses. The event also featured a bird-themed scavenger hunt, where after completing each activity at a booth, participants received a clue to the location of hidden bird cutouts somewhere on the Tribal campus. Participants who successfully found the birds were entered into a raffle to win bird-themed prizes including board games, puzzles, books and whistles that mimic bird calls.

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Photo by Michelle Alaimo

The Tribe's Health & Wellness Department held a grand opening for its new Salem Primary Care Clinic Monday, July 20. The facility is located at 1011 Commercial St. NE in Salem.

Tribe opens new health clinic in Salem

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

SALEM — The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is adding to its health care options with a new primary care clinic.

An open house was held for the facility Monday, July 20, which is located in the same building as Great Circle Recovery in Salem, at 1011 Commercial St. NE.

"We have many Tribal members who live in Salem and Marion County," Tribal Executive Director of Health Services Kelly Rowe said. "To be able to provide care here really helps us to expand our services, which is something that Tribal Council has long been supportive of."

The clinic will serve Grand Ronde Tribal members and other Natives.

"It's amazing and an honor to be able to expand our reach and services to broader than just the reservation area," Rowe said. "People who can't travel out to Grand Ronde will have easier access. Our membership is everywhere and we need to provide them services."

The new facility has a separate entrance from Great Circle Recovery and is on the top floor, above behavioral health services. Clinic construction was funded by grants. It includes four exam rooms, offices, storage areas, reception and a shared lab.

Tajia Ulestad serves as the clin-

ic administrator and said a soft opening was held for the clinic last month.

"We have been seeing people since the week of June 15," she said. "We're still getting the word out about it and have seen about 10 people so far."

Ulestad noted that part of the time the clinic has been open has been devoted to figuring out office space and stocking up on needed medical supplies.

She said that being a Tribal member makes opening the new clinic very meaningful on both a personal and professional level.

"It's amazing," Ulestad said. "When I started working for the Tribe, I just fell in love with it. It's a really cool thing being able to serve my Tribe and other Natives."

Those who want to establish patient care at the new clinic are asked to call the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center at 503-879-2002. The Salem primary care clinic is open from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday to Friday.

The last Tribal health care facility to open was the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Clinic on the Tribal campus in Grand Ronde, which began services in May 2024. The building has six examination rooms, two dental rooms, a dental lab and community room. It is used to meet the public health needs of the Tribal community. ■

Elder Honor Day



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians Elder Eddie Helms waves after being crowned king during The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Elder Honor Day at the Spirit Mountain Casino Event Center Monday, July 13. A king and queen were crowned through a random drawing during the event. The Tribe's Elder Board organize the annual event that included a welcome by Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, raffle drawings, lunch, cultural sharing and bingo. About 550 people were in attendance.



Tribal Elder Arlettia Krehbiel sings along with drummers and singers during the Tribe's Elder Honor Day at the Spirit Mountain Casino Event Center Monday, July 13.

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Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Kimberly Jurado puts a life jacket on her one-year-old daughter, Delia Jurado, as they prepare to leave on the 2026 Paddle to Nisqually Medicine Creek Potlatch canoe journey from Rogers Landing County Park in Newberg Friday, July 24.

Canoe Journey launches from Rogers Landing

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

NEWBERG — Giggling children spent the afternoon swimming and splashing in the river at Champoege State Park Friday, July 24, after the Grand Ronde Canoe Family launched its journey from Newberg, marking the first local launch in several years. The trip was a short one, leaving them plenty of time for putting up tents, resting in the shade or playing in the water.

From there, the Canoe Family will make its way north to Nisqually, Washington, for Landing Day Friday, July 31.

It’s the first time Tribal member Andrew Freeman’s family has made the trip.

“We’re pretty stoked,” he said, standing on the floating dock at Champoege overseeing the children. “We’ve been in the community for a while, we just haven’t made time for this, but now the kids are getting older.”

Nine-year-old Kaylee, his youngest, Isaac, 11, Riley, 14, and Cloey, 16, are busy making lifelong memories, Freeman said, while he and his wife, Brittany, are enjoying a relaxing experience.

“We live on the water, but we’re usually fishing,” Freeman said.

Isaac is learning to pull one of the canoes, while the girls are more focused on visiting their friends and enjoying being in community.

As a ceremonial fisher, Freeman said he has extensive safety training, so he was asked to operate one of the support boats while his wife is driving a trailer.

The support boats bring water to those who need it and carry extra pullers if someone in the canoes tires or needs to get out of the sun for a bit, he said.

“There are a lot of speed boats, so if we see one coming, we might get out in front of the canoes and shield them from the wake,” he said.

He said the experience will be life-changing for all of them, but especially for the kids, who he hopes are busy making lifelong memories of the trip.

Alice Martineau, whose late husband Joe was a longtime Tribal employee, is accompanying her 12-year-old granddaughter, Finley Olson (Anishinaabe), on the trip. Finley is wearing her grandfather’s canoe journey necklace, Martineau said, and making the journey in his memory.

“It was beautiful out on the water today and there was this heron following us,” she said. “It would land about 50 feet ahead of us and wait for us to catch up and then fly ahead.”

After spending the night at Champoege Friday, the group planned to paddle to Boones Ferry Marina, then trailer the boats to Rooster Rock and paddle to Chinook Landing. ■

Youth marketplace



Photos by Alexander Bliven

Tribal member Melinda Mathews, left, looks at merchandise on display at Swag Knickknacks and Things during the hayu-munk skukum Tribal Youth Marketplace, held at the Tribal gym Wednesday, July 15. The marketplace celebrated the entrepreneurial spirit of Tribal youth by allowing them to sell foods and goods to the public. Swag Knickknacks and Things, Snack Shack and Bowl Express were vendors. Pictured operating Swag Knickknacks and Things are, from left, Carter Campbell, Angel Mathews, Tristan Soderberg and Erik Bly. Items for sale included buttons featuring a premade Tribal or hayu-munk skukum logo, beaded necklaces, premade keychains and custom-colored tiny paddles.



Logan Clark, left, scoops rice into a food container for Angel Mathews at Bowl Express during the hayu-munk skukum Youth Marketplace at the Tribal gym Wednesday, July 15. Customers could buy a taco bowl with either chicken or carnitas and their choice of toppings including beans, lettuce, cheese, salsa, guacamole, cilantro, chips, onions, lime or sour cream. Also present during the event was Snack Shack, which sold ice pops, Italian soda, popcorn, brownies and cookies.

Tribe receives \$20,000 grant for rail depot

The Tribe was one of 20 organizations to receive grants totaling \$300,000 for historic properties and archaeology projects from Oregon Heritage, a division of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

The 13 grants in the Preserving Oregon category are for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and for archaeology projects. The other seven grants were awarded in the Diamonds in the Rough category. This grant funds facade enhancements that restore the historic character of the property.

The Tribe received a \$20,000 grant for exterior rehabilitation of the historic Grand Ronde Rail Depot, addressing weather-related deterioration to stabilize historic materials, protect the structure and support long-term preservation. The Tribe is planning to utilize the rail depot for two existing offices currently located in the Tribal Governance Center.

■ Contains information from the Polk County Itemizer-Observer.

Tribal Library merges with Regional Library Service

The Tribal Library has merged with the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Service.

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

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

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

Tribe recognizes 161 employees

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

The Tribe offered its employees something a little different for the quarterly Years of Service awards: a day off to enjoy with family at a new Summer Splash carnival.

Numerous employees brought their children and families to enjoy the bouncy castles, pick up free children's books from the library booth, sample food from various vendors and participate in other fun events.

Tribal offices were closed for the day and employees in attendance received administrative leave. Starting at 8 a.m., doughnuts and coffee were on offer, along with breakfast burritos. Several other food vendors were also on hand to offer a variety of foods throughout the day.

The second quarter Years of Service event began at 9 a.m. and celebrated a collective 2,383 total years of employee service to the Tribe, with 161 employees honored. Vendor booths and festival events opened at 10 a.m. and continued until 4 p.m.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, Tribal Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Secretary Jon A. George and Tribal Council members Toby McClary, Matthew Haller and Lisa Leno attended.

George gave the invocation.

Kennedy welcomed employees, saying she was enjoying hearing children laughing as they began exploring the booths and activities. She reminisced about being one of the first four Tribal employees in 1984, moving her office into the old train depot because she didn't want to work in the cemetery and that was the only other option.

"We have almost 900 employees on the Tribal government side," Kennedy said. "On the casino side, we've also got over 900. It's amazing to see the growth. ... We're still not at the point where we have all the services we envisioned, with housing, fish and wildlife and hunting, so we still have things to look forward to."

The following employees were honored:

38 years: Groundskeeping Supervisor Gregg Leno.

36 years: Housing Maintenance Supervisor Lonnie Leno, Health Benefits Specialist Barbara Steere and Support Services Coordinator Barbara Branson.

35 years: Interim General Manager Bryan Langley.

32 years: Housing Department Manager Shonn Leno.

30 years: Fish & Wildlife Department Manager Kelly Dirksen, Benefits & Safety Specialist Cindy Mitchell, Tribal Attorney Kimberly D'Aquila, Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier and Secretary Caryn George.

29 years: Education Department Manager Angela Fasana and Tribal Council Executive Assistant Lauri Smith.

28 years: Children & Family Services Manager Kristi Petite, Executive Assistant Kathy Doane, Assistant Tribal Attorney Deneen Aubertin Keller and Education Services Coordinator Elaine Lane Raven.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Employment Rights Office Administrative Assistant Kristy Summers looks for a high five as she is recognized during the second quarter service awards ceremony at Spirit Mountain Casino Friday, July 17. Summers has worked for the Tribe for 14 years.

27 years: Network Engineer Jack Dobiash, Production Specialist Justin Phillips and Cultural Protection Specialist Christopher Bailey.

26 years: Facilities Manager Tyson Mercier.

25 years: Self-Governance Program Manager Brandy Humphreys and Rental Housing Coordinator Tara Leno.

24 years: Tribal Navigator Christopher Martin and Teacher Aide/Bus Monitor Roxanne Moniz.

23 years: Gaming Inspector Kary Turner, Cultural Education Specialist Cristina Lara, Natural Resources Department Manager Colby Drake and Benefits & Safety Specialist Peggy Carpenter.

22 years: Children & Family Services Foster Care Coordinator Audra Sherwood, Senior Children & Family Services Intake Specialist Donna Johnson, Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Sydney Clark, Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson, Member Services Program Manager Shannon Simi and Health Information Technician Stephanie Simmons.

21 years: Risk Analyst Tisha Pellett, Secretary Tina Leno and Early Head Start Teacher Jessica Cruickshank.

20 years: Lead Maintenance Technician Randy Bean, Native Plant Nursery Supervisor Jeremy Ojua, Health Coordinator Shelley Clift and Lodge Caregiver Anna Huston.

19 years: Lodge Caregiver Carmen Parren, Biologist Matthew Zimbrick, Fire Management & Protection Program Manager Andrew Puerini, Information Systems Program Manager Alec Palanuk-Mercier and Lead Central Telephone Receptionist Scarlett Holtz.

18 years: Senior Background Investigator Nicholas Bailey, Elementary Lead Teacher Ali Holsclaw, Executive Director Gaming Commission Michael Boyce, Academic Coach George Neujahr and Internal Auditor Kailey Compton.

17 years: Audit Manager Michael Langley, Fire Management & Protection Operation Coordinator James Pinder, Teacher Aide/Bus

Monitor Bradley Robertson and Project Manager-in-Training Andrew Freeman.

16 years: Community Health Promotion Specialist Tammy Leno, Tobacco Prevention Coordinator Shannon Stanton, Restoration Ecologist/Fish & Wildlife Policy Analyst Lindsay McClary, Dentist Erin Lange, Tribal Realty Program Manager Teresa Brocksen, Senior TERO Compliance Officer Marvin Kimsey Jr., Maintenance Technician Gary LaChance Jr. and Maintenance Technician Jason Bailey.

15 years: Maintenance Technician Robert Wiggs, ERSEA/Data Coordinator Amber Wright, Homeownership Coordinator Michele Plummer, Parks and Recreation Specialist Daniel Schramm and Procurement Supervisor Daniel Mooney.

14 years: School Administrator Justine Flynn, Youth Enrichment Program Manager Timothy Barry, Tribal Council Coordinator Chelsea Clark, Administrative Assistant Kristina Summers, Tribal Navigator Denaee Towner, Restoration Technician/Equipment Operator Brady Bruckner, Treasury Department Manager DeAnne Norton and Parks and Recreation Coordinator Jerry Bailey.

13 years: Historic Preservation Technician Nicolas Atanacio, Maintenance Technician James Byars Jr. and Recreation Specialist Leo Ayala-Guillen.

12 years: Records Supervisor Emma Leno, Senior Staff Attorney Holly Partridge, Police Lt. Timothy Hernandez, Second Grade Teacher Hannah Sabey, Pharmacy Technician Randi Keyser-Crocker, Housing Program Accountant Michael Hubbard, Administrative Assistant Public Health Tawna Norwest and Family Practice Physician Lance Loberg.

11 years: Lead Groundskeeper Youvani Ring, Early Childhood Education Program Manager Dawn Doar, Clinical Nurse Manager Christa Hosley, Forestry Technician Lukas Soderberg, Bus Driver Heidi Whittington, Aquatic Biologist Brandon Weems, Cultural Protection Specialist Dustin Hawks,

Preschool Teacher Holly Marler, Housekeeper Sabrina Labonte, Police Sgt. Tokata Tehama and Senior Help Desk Technician Nathan Hoff.

10 years: GIS Coordinator/Drone Pilot Alex Drake, Early Head Start Family Educator Tammy Fisher, Administrative Assistant Shannon Ham-Teixeira, Infant/Toddler Teacher Griselda Perez-Bravo, Chief of Emergency Services Steve Warden, Accounting Clerk Aaron Merrill and TERO Director Harris Reibach.

Nine years: Human Resources Director Sarah Harvey, Maintenance Technician Aaron Anderson, Clinic Administrator Tajia Ulestad, Cook Joshua Baker, Grant Writer Dana Morfin, Cultural Protection Coordinator Cheryl Pouley, Field Biologist Kyle McLaughlin, Silviculture Coordinator Waylon Rich, Groundskeeper Brandon Bastin and Health Information Technician Norma Reed.

Eight years: Elder Enrichment Coordinator Virginia Kimsey-Roof, Training/Development Coordinator Jacob Boekhoff, Communications Director Sara Thompson, Mail Printing Specialist Samuel Thornsberry, Assistant Teacher Mary Lopez, Pharmacy Technician Lindsey Petersen, Pharmacy Technician Carrie Lewis, Lead Certified Medical Assistant Jennifer Lott and Pharmacy Clerk Amber Thiede.

Seven years: Housing Resource Navigator Diana Barney, Central Telephone Receptionist Lisa Schmid, Health Admin Senior Administrative Assistant Alexis Alvarado, Gaming Inspector Jon Kuchta, Domestic Violence Manager Cassie Harper, Detective Clint Cardwell, Natural Resources Specialist Annaliese Ramthun, Native Plant Nursery Assistant Joseph Ham, Applications Administrator Adam Jordan, Member Services Administrator Shayla Murphy, Staff Accountant Casey Case, Senior Executive Assistant Danielle Dickey, Cultural Policy Analyst Gregory Archuleta, Executive Assistant Christine O'Day.

Six years: Lead Driver/Wellness Assistant Damon Dickinson, Foster Care Recruitment Specialist Josie Justen and Infant Toddler Teacher Hannah Nice.

Five years: Dental Office Manager Marti Coblentz, Digital Communications Manager Matthew Williams, Licensed Practical Nurse Vanessa Caudel, Patient Accounts Specialist Koana Leno, Accounts Payable Specialist Emily Sterling, Nutrition Services Supervisor Jose Montano, Administrative Assistant Bryanna Rue, AV Technician/Web Specialist Zachary Poisal, Licensed Practical Nurse Melissa Ramirez, Enrichment Coordinator Elijah Ibarra, Teacher Aide/Bus Monitor Lena Nelson, Assistant Teacher Leah Brisbois, Registered Nurse Manager Crystal Scheese, Health Policy/Grant Analyst Paul Myatt, Legal Assistant Paige Schultz, Equipment Operator David Nelson, Firefighter/Paramedic McKenna Hoy, Assistant Teacher Lana Townsend, Community Resource Officer Derek Trombla and Groundskeeper Matthew Murphy. ■

From left, sisters Juniper Flynn, 5, and Maple Flynn, 7, ride Pirates Revenge with their mother Justine Flynn, Shawash-ili?i Skul school administrator, during Summer Splash 2026, held in one of Spirit Mountain Casino’s parking lots Friday, July 17. The Tribe’s Human Resources Organizational Development & Training team, with employee volunteers, organized the family-friendly event for Tribal employees and their families. The day started with breakfast, including breakfast burritos, doughnuts and coffee, and the second quarter Years of Service awards ceremony. Following that, amusement rides, bounce houses, inflatable water slides, bingo, cornhole and free throw tournaments began. There were also booths where attendees could design their name in a banner, as well as buttons, henna artists and food vendors offering Indian tacos, street tacos, hot dogs, corn dogs, cheeseburgers, cotton candy, caramel apple boats and hand-dipped chocolate ice cream bars.



Summer Splash 2026



Tribal Planner Charity Hervosma makes cotton candy as Jaxon McDonald, 6, watches during Summer Splash 2026 at Spirit Mountain Casino Friday, July 17.



Tribal member AvaMarie Robertson, 6, jumps while playing on an inflatable obstacle course during Summer Splash 2026 at Spirit Mountain Casino Friday, July 17.

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

CTGR Emergency Services, Sheridan Fire District battle three-alarm fire

SHERIDAN — Several homes between Sheridan and Willamina were evacuated due to a wildland fire Saturday, July 11, but families were able to return home shortly afterward. No injuries were reported.

Just before 6 p.m. that Saturday, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Sheridan emergency services crews were dispatched to a possible wildland fire in the area of Rock Creek Road and West Main Street between Sheridan and Willamina.

“Initial information noted heavy smoke in the area, but it was unknown what was on fire,” a joint press release from CTGR Emergency Services and the Sheridan Fire District stated. “Due to the smoke column, the fire was upgraded to a second alarm wildland fire, adding resources from Amity and McMinnville.”

According to the press release, upon arrival, crews found a wind driven fire moving east through vegetation and debris. Due to the fuel loads, wind activity and proximity to structures, it was upgraded to a three-alarm fire.

“This brought resources from all over Polk and Yamhill counties,” it stated. “Additionally, addresses between 1350 W. Main St. and Rock Creek Road were given evacuation notices on both sides of West Main Street. Due to the size of the fire and limited access, the fire was divided into several divisions, allowing more efficient containment and re-

source management. The majority of the fire was contained between Rock Creek Road and Chip Yard Road. There was one small spot fire that crossed Chip Yard Road, however this was quickly extinguished.”

According to an earlier press release, evacuation notices were lifted shortly before 8 p.m. Saturday, July 11.

No structures were lost during the fire, which eventually spread to three acres but as of press time, was not expected to grow further. No injuries were reported during the incident. Crews will continue to monitor the fire throughout the coming days and the cause is under investigation by the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s office, which said it expects it to be completed within 30 days.

There were several explosions, described as small, caused by stored chemicals among the debris, according to the press release, which said the debris “also contained astro turf and other debris that will continue to burn for some time. ... Heavy equipment was ordered to begin pulling apart debris piles for more thorough extinguishment and to reinforce containment lines.”

Tribal Emergency Services Chief Steve Warden said he was grateful for the strong mutual aid partnerships in Yamhill and Polk counties.

“Incidents like this one are prime examples of how important it is to have good relationships with neighboring agencies and those beyond,” he said.



Contributed photo

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Sheridan emergency services crews were dispatched to a wildland fire in the area of Rock Creek Road and West Main Street between Sheridan and Willamina Saturday, July 11. The majority of the fire was contained between Rock Creek Road and Chip Yard Road. The cause is under investigation by the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s office.

Partnering agencies that responded included the Tribal Natural Resources Department, Amity Fire District, McMinnville Fire District, Carlton Fire District, Dallas Fire Department, Dayton Fire District, Polk County Fire District No. 1, Southwest Polk Fire District, Oregon Department of Forestry, Yamhill County Sheriff’s Office, Newberg Police Department and

the Oregon State Fire Marshal. Emergency Services Public Information Officer Mariah Walters asked people to be cautious about any activity that can cause sparks or emit embers during fire season, when fire can spread rapidly through dry grass and brush.

Fire season lasts until fall or winter rains set in, reducing the fuel loads. ■

Measure to ban hunting and fishing fails to qualify for ballot

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

An initiative petition that would ban hunting, fishing and livestock slaughtering in Oregon, and generated strong emotions among both supporters and opponents, has failed to qualify for the November ballot.

The Oregon Elections Division determined Friday, July 24, that only 104,262 of the 142,347 submitted signatures were valid. The petition needed 117,173 valid signatures to qualify.

Tribal Elder Reyn Leno, who served as Tribal Council chairman for many years and now serves as the chair of the Tribe’s Fish & Wildlife Committee, said hunting and fishing kept families in Grand Ronde fed through generations of hard times, including his own family. The initiative felt to him like a personal attack on Tribal sovereignty and culture, Leno said.

Backers of Initiative Petition 28 said they were trying to bring about

Tribal members wanting more information about the ballot initiative can find it on the CTGR alta app as well as the Tribe’s website.

a kinder, more just world, starting by reducing cruelty to animals. Their version of that goal includes eliminating the use of animals for food or medical research, reducing criminal charges and penalties for animal cruelty and offering an alternative sentence, serving community service providing supervised care for animals, to try to teach empathy.

If it had qualified for the ballot, the measure would have asked voters to approve banning hunting, fishing and slaughtering livestock, as well as no longer using lethal methods to control wildlife or animals considered pests. Organizers

note that the state Fish & Wildlife Department has a number of non-lethal methods at its disposal, including contraception.

The initiative also called for creating an oversight council and funding to help with food assistance, provide job retraining for people who work in animal agriculture, and to help cover the costs of caring for livestock and other animals that could no longer be slaughtered.

Backers submitted signatures to the Oregon Secretary of State for validation in June and July.

Even if it had reached the ballot, petitioners said on their website that they didn’t expect it to actually pass, but that they intend to keep trying in the hope that it will succeed in later years. The initiative has generated widespread opposition from hunters, fishers, farmers, ranchers and lawmakers from across the political spectrum.

Tribal Communications Director Sara Thompson said the Tribe was keeping an eye on the measure.

“The Tribe has been closely monitoring IP 28 and its progress through the state’s ballot initiative process,” Thompson said. “We have serious concerns about potential impacts to Tribal lifeways and cultural needs, and we are currently working with other Oregon Tribes to address those concerns. We will continue to monitor IP 28 and share updates with the membership as needed. Tribal members wanting more information about the ballot initiative can find it on the CTGR alta app as well as the Tribe’s website.”

Leno said it felt to him like a continuation of a battle for the Tribe’s rights that never quite seems to end.

He was 6 years old when the federal government terminated the Tribe’s federal recognition. A few years later, his father had to buy a

hunting license for the first time.

“They actually put a gate up across the road so Tribal members couldn’t go in unless they had a license,” Leno said. “So, we’ve had a long battle. Then come Restoration and they blackmailed us,” requiring the Tribe to give up its sovereign hunting and fishing rights in exchange for federal recognition.

“That’s just plain blackmail, to me,” Leno said. “I had a couple uncles who were serving on council at that time. So, to get where we are today has been a real battle for us.”

Today, the Tribe has a memorandum of agreement with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife that continues to be contentious.

David Michelson, the lead activist behind the initiative, said in an email that, while federal treaty rights, which for most Tribes include hunting and fishing rights, would not be affected, “IP28 does not ... provide cultural or religious exemptions for killing animals in situations outside of those treaty rights.”

Instead, he said, “We’d like animals to have in some sense their own sovereignty where they can be free from being hunted, slaughtered and experimented on.”

Michelson said that “We believe that since it is possible to thrive without killing animals, we’d like us all to eat in such a way that doesn’t require anyone to be killed. We are grateful that as human beings we have the capacity to live fully without needing to kill our animal brothers and sisters.”

Leno was unimpressed.

“How can you come in here and say, ‘We want to take away your history, your culture, because we don’t like what’s going on?’ We’ve been here thousands of years, doing what you’re trying to say we can’t do, without really thinking,” he said. “Has there been any negotiation with any of the Tribes, to get our input? No. So, it’s an attack on our sovereignty and an attack on our ways...I was raised right here in Grand Ronde. This was a poor place. We survived on deer meat here. And you’re gonna take all that away from me? And you’re gonna take it away from the reservation that was here for 100 years and (that) survived on all that stuff?” ■

2026–2027

ENRICHMENT
YOUTH CENTER

HAYU-MUNK SKUKUM



* Community * Culture * Fun *

Sign up here or with QR code:

<https://forms.gle/3BTgkySUmDsdYSCA7>



youthenrichment@grandronde.org

PROGRAM DETAILS

Programming will begin on August 24th and is generally Monday-Friday: 3:45 pm-6:00 pm on school days. Full-day programming is available from 8:00 am to 5:15 pm on most no-school days (Willamina School District Calendar is generally followed). We also frequently host Youth Center Saturday activities. Sign-ups are not required, except occasionally for no-school day field trips. Calendar of events coming soon!

Who can participate?

Native students currently in 6th through 12th grade (2026-27 school year) in the local service area. Please note that our Tribal preference policy will be in place as well as preference for parents working during program hours for field trips and activities with limited spots.

Sign up here or with QR code:

<https://forms.gle/3BTgkySUmDsdYSCA7>



Questions? Please reach out to us at
youthenrichment@grandronde.org
or 503-879-2101

Tribal artists and creators invited to showcase goods at casino gift shop

Enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have an opportunity to showcase and sell authentic handmade goods at the gift shop inside Spirit Mountain Casino.

Spirit Mountain Casino is seeking Tribal artists and makers interested in participating in a consignment vendor program.

Accepted items may include artwork, jewelry, clothing, beadwork and other handcrafted goods.

Items will be reviewed by a Tribal committee and selected vendors will meet in person to learn program guidelines. All products will be sold on a consignment basis, meaning artists are paid as their items sell in the gift shop.

This program provides a great opportunity for Tribal members to share their work with thousands of casino guests while supporting authentic Tribal artistry.

For more information, contact Shauna Skinner at 503-879-3916 or email shauna.skinner@spiritmtn.com. ■



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder and U.S. Navy veteran Lonnie Riddle, left, receives a Grand Ronde Tribal logo coin from Veterans Little Miss Queen Elizabeth Ulestad during the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Saturday, July 11. All veterans in attendance were gifted the coin.

Honoring veterans

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

Several families held dance specials at the Marcellus Norwest Veterans Memorial Powwow, held Friday to Sunday, July 10-12, at the uyxat Powwow Grounds.

Among them was the family of 1-year-old Tribal member Ivory Squetimkin, which held a tiny tot special Friday evening, with Ivory’s big brother, Hawk Squetimkin, 19, and big sister and Tribal member Willow Squetimkin, 10, acting as judges. Ivory stood near her brother among the hopping and twirling young dancers for a bit, before toddling toward the sidelines.

“We hosted this special event to commemorate the introduction of Ivory into the powwow circle — a significant milestone that we honor by giving back to the community,” her mother, Tribal member Halona Butler, said. “For our family, the powwow is more than an event; it is a way of life. We travel across the U.S. to participate in these gath-

erings, upholding our traditions and celebrating our heritage as a family.”

The powwow this year was marked by perfect weather, plenty of community and dancing, and the presence of more than 100 student athletes, along with their coaches and administrators, from the Big Ten Conference. The athletes attended powwow Saturday to learn first-hand about Indigenous culture, as part of the conference’s “Big Life Series: Pacific Northwest,” program.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Secretary Jon A. George and council members Lisa Leno, Kathleen George, Tonya Gleason-Shepek and Matthew Haller participated in grand entry Friday evening, as host drum Northern Blackhorse pounded out the rhythm, followed by co-host Bad Soul.

See POWWOW
continued on page 14



Tribal member Joe Ulestad dances in grand entry of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.

Powwow offers som



Big Ten Conference student-athletes dance during the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Saturday, July 11. More than 100 student-athletes, coaches and administrators visited Grand Ronde and the powwow as part of the conference’s “Big Life Series: Pacific Northwest.”

POWWOW continued from page 13

Chet Clark (Navajo), gave the invocation on Friday.

“This powwow’s been going on for many, many years, and I love to see all the people here, and especially our veterans,” Kennedy said.

She reminded attendees that the Tribe has a veterans service office, to help with any needs.

On Saturday, Mercier, Jon A. George, Kathleen George, Glea-

son-Shepek and Haller participated in grand entry.

Dwayne Medicine Cree (Black-foot) gave the invocation for the 1 p.m. grand entry.

The Veterans Royalty Pageant took place Friday morning, with the winners announced Friday evening.

The 2026-27 Veterans Royalty Court includes Tiny Tot Warrior Legend Rimer, Tiny Tot Warrior Milo Murphy, Veterans Little Warrior William Craig, Veter-

ans Junior Warrior Brendyn Smallwood, Veterans Little Miss Queen Elizabeth Ulestad, Veterans Little Miss Princess Aiyana Woodward, Veterans Little Miss Princess Ele-sia Crawley, Veterans Junior Miss Queen Ila Mercier and Veterans Senior Miss Queen Memory Leno.

The outgoing 2025-26 Veterans Court consisted of Tiny Tot Warrior William Craig, Veterans Warrior Brendyn Smallwood, Veterans Lit-

tle Miss Princess Elesia Crawley, Veterans Little Miss Queen Eliza-beth Ulestad and Veterans Junior Miss Queen Ila Mercier.

The annual Veterans Summit was held Friday at the uyxat Pow-wow Grounds, before powwow began. The focus this year was on aging and brain health. It included a veterans sweat, fly fishing demon-stration, Pilates mini classes, neck-lace-making and other activities, as



Tribal member Cecelia Schlappie-Guerrera, 1, gets her headband adjusted by her mother, Tribal member ChyAnne Schlappie, during the 1 p.m. grand entry of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Saturday, July 11.



Big Ten Conference and Howard University student-athlete Skylar Debnam takes video during the 1 p.m. grand entry of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Saturday, July 11.

One-y
memb
circle



Something for everyone



Year-old Tribal member Ivory Squetimkin dances with her cousin, Tribal member Harper Hernandez, 9, during Ivory's introduction into the powwow during the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS AND VIDEO



[@SmokeSignalsCTGR](#) [@ctgrsmokesignals](#) [@SmokeSignalsCTGR](#)

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

well as resource tables, presenters and lunch with live music.

Dancers and vendors enjoy the day

Grand Ronde Tribal member Bryanah Lopez, wearing a jingle dress that she had sewed herself, said she had also brought three other dresses so she could change her regalia periodically. Lopez is serving as Miss Naimuma from Portland State University and plans the annual PSU Naimuma Powwow, held in May.

"I like going to other ones, like, just seeing it from the perspective of someone who has planned them," she said. "It's a lot of work."

Lopez dances old-style jingle and

Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.

said her favorite part of powwow was "probably just community." But as visiting royalty, she was also advocating for higher education.

"I'm just trying to represent higher education for Native youth and let them know that there is space there and they should pursue it, and there's many opportunities waiting for them if they're wanting to pursue anything higher," she said.

Vendor Lola Larson, who lives outside of Eugene, said she attends the powwow every year.

"I started coming up when this powwow was over by the Tribal offices," she said.

Larson, who attends between 12 and 15 powwows a year, said she began beading as a child and got back into it while living in Montana.

"The usual; it was Christmas time,



Grand Ronde Veterans Honor Guard participates in grand entry of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.

I was broke, wanted to figure out Christmas gifts and I started back beading again," she said. "From there, people started seeing my stuff and saying, 'Oh, I want a pair of those and I collected a bunch of beads, so I started selling. I had to come home to take care of my mom and sister, so I kept it up here."

Student athletes learn about Indigenous culture

On Saturday, Big Ten Conference college student-athletes were invited to join in grand entry and then in several dances, which they did enthusiastically, if with limited understanding of the format, forming a conga line at one point and gathering in a circle around several children offering an impromptu dance demonstration, at another.

Omar Brown, the Senior Vice President of Community and Impact for the Big Ten Conference, explained that "for the last five years, the Big Ten has created educational trips for our student athletes. We've gone to Alabama to learn about civil rights; we went to Iowa to learn about farming. And so, we've come out here to learn about Native American culture and the Pacific Northwest culture. And the impetus, I would say, is that with Oregon and Washington joining the Big Ten, this is now Big Ten country."

The group visited Multnomah Falls and the Oregon Historical Society, where they learned about

some of Oregon's uglier history, including treatment of Black residents in the state's earlier years, and the treatment of Japanese Americans, particularly during World War II, as well as treatment of Native Americans. On Saturday, the members came to Grand Ronde, where Tribal Council members talked about termination and Restoration, and gave them lunch in the Tribal plankhouse before powwow.

"It's been amazing, honestly, just to be able to see different cultures," student athlete Caia Elisadez, who plays women's basketball, said. "I was talking to some of the other student athletes and the way that we see things today, just knowing the history behind the way things came to be, has been really interesting to find out. It's really nice to learn about cultures that we don't know as much about, to be integrated into them, to understand more, so we have more respect for one another. Also, it's really gorgeous out here."

She added, "I think my part's just been the people I've met so far. Everyone's been super nice. The people in the conference. But also, learning the history, going to the historical society and then being able to explain everything. They've been so informative and it's also been really interesting to see, like, how much they care about the topic too, so that makes it even more fun for us to learn." ■



Seven-year-old Ziyah Diaz (Navajo) smiles with the elephant he won for competing in William Craig's 2025-26 Veterans Tiny Tot Warrior outgoing special during the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



Joyce Blair (Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians) dances in the 1 p.m. grand entry of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Saturday, July 11.

2026-27 Veterans Royalty



2026-27 Veterans Junior Miss Queen Ila Mercier gets crowned during the 2026-27 Grand Ronde Veterans Royalty coronation before the start of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



2026-27 Veterans Little Miss Queen Elizabeth Ulestad gets crowned during the 2026-27 Grand Ronde Veterans Royalty coronation before the start of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



2026-27 Veterans Junior Warrior Brendyn Smallwood gets crowned during the 2026-27 Grand Ronde Veterans Royalty coronation before the start of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



2026-27 Veterans Little Warrior William Craig gets crowned during the 2026-27 Grand Ronde Veterans Royalty coronation before the start of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



Milo Murphy, left, and Legend Rimer were named 2026-27 Veterans Tiny Tot Warriors during the Grand Ronde Veterans Royalty coronation before the start of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



2026-27 Veterans Senior Miss Queen Memory Leno gets crowned during the 2026-27 Grand Ronde Veterans Royalty coronation before the start of the 2026 Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow at uyxat Powwow Grounds Friday, July 10.



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Drop box installed

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department, 9655 Grand Ronde Road, has a medication drop box located in the front lobby.

Lobby hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The drop box is for any prescribed or over-the-counter medication. If the containers are too large to fit in the drop box, please repackage them in a zip-lock plastic bag.

Needles and liquids are not allowed in the drop box.

Tribal Police suggest mixing liquid medications with cat litter or coffee grounds and then throwing them away with the household trash.

For more information, call 503-879-1821. ■

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. ■

Grand Ronde Contest Powwow August 14-16, 2026



Friday August 14

11 am Royalty Pageant (Governance Center)
5 pm Royalty Outgoing/ Crowning Ceremonies
7 pm Grand Entry (powwow grounds)

Saturday August 15

Grand Entries at 1 pm and 7 pm

Sunday August 16

11 am Indian Auction
1 pm Grand Entry (powwow grounds)

Host Drum
Mountain
Kree

**Invited
Drums Only**
Invited Drums

**Local Host
Drum**
Bad Soul

Bad Nation, Milepost 30, Bad War Cloud, Meskwaki Nation, Little Bear

MC’s

Howie Thompson
Marty Thurman

Head Dance Judge

Tavian Lasley

Head Drum Judge

Randall Paskemin

Arena Director

Anthony
Quenelle

Dance Categories

Elder (65+), Golden Age (55-64), Senior Adults (36-54), Jr. Adults (18-35)

1st (\$1,000), 2nd (\$700), 3rd (\$500), 4th (\$300), 5th (\$200)

Teens (13-17) -Prize Money - 1st (\$600), 2nd (\$400), 3rd (\$300), 4th (\$200), 5th (\$100)

Jr’s (6-12) -Prize Money - 1st (\$150), 2nd (\$125), 3rd (\$100), 4th (\$75), 5th (\$50)

Woman’s Fancy Special Men’s Fancy Special “Feathers vs. Hackles”

1st (\$1,000), 2nd (\$700), 3rd (\$500), 4th (\$300)



Uyxat Powwow Grounds

9600 Highway 22 (Hebo
Road) Grand Ronde,
Oregon 97347



Vendor Information

503-879-2037
Spirit Mountain Casino
800-760-7977



Camping available

\$5 (per vehicle) w/ parking
Opens Wednesday 1pm

Clean and sober event: Thank you for respecting the Grand Ronde community and our culture by not displaying gang affiliation or bringing alcohol/drugs or weapons to this event.

Indigenous Media Conference



Courtesy photo

Smoke Signals won three awards for journalism excellence in the 2026 Indigenous Media Awards given out by the Indigenous Journalists Association. From left, Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Smoke Signals Editor Danielle Harrison, Social Media/Digital Journalist Kamiah Koch and Editorial Board member Andy Jenness collected the awards at the IJA Indigenous Media Awards Banquet Friday, July 24, as part of the 2026 Indigenous Media Conference at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront in Portland. Not pictured are Editorial Board members Tracy Moreland and Shelley Hanson.



Photo by Kamiah Koch

From left, Smoke Signals Editor Danielle Harrison, Editorial Board member Andy Jenness, Mvskoke Media Director Angel Ellis, Grand Ronde Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier and Editorial Board Secretary Tracy Moreland participate in a panel discussion about independent Tribal press and funding strategies.



Photo by Kamiah Koch

Tribal Historic Preservation Office Manager Briece Edwards, right, discusses what's at stake for Tribal nations as federal officials consider various reforms, and ways to help ensure proposed changes don't come at the expense of sacred places and cultural resources strategies during the Indigenous Media Conference at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront Thursday, July 23.



Photo by Danielle Harrison

In addition to Smoke Signals and the Editorial Board, Grand Ronde was also represented at the Indigenous Journalists Association Indigenous Media Conference in Portland by Tribal member and Ampkwa Advocacy Founder and Chair Amanda Freeman, left, participating in a panel presentation about best practices for covering the MMIP crisis, particularly the dos and don'ts for journalists navigating these sensitive cases during the Indigenous Media Conference at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront Thursday, July 23.

Tribe offering support to incarcerated members

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

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

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

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

Hotel room rates increase

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. ■

Smoke Signals wins four awards

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Smoke Signals received four awards – one first, two seconds and one third place – during the 139th annual Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association Summer Convention held Friday, July 24, at the Salem Convention Center.

The awards in the Associate Member category were given for work published in 2025.

Smoke Signals Photojournalist/Assistant Editor Michelle Alaimo received first and second place awards for best news photo. Production Specialist Justin Phillips took second place in the page design category and Graphic Design Specialist Samuel Briggs III received a third place award in the graphics category.

“I’m thrilled with the excellent work Smoke Signals employees produced in 2025,” Editorial Board Chair Mia Prickett said. “I’m so thankful that we have an Independent Tribal Press Ordinance in place that allows the newspaper to do this work for our people. It’s especially important during these uncertain times and I look forward to Smoke Signals winning more awards in the future.”

Smoke Signals was once again the only Tribal newspaper honored in the regional competition, which includes newspapers from Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Earlier this summer, Smoke Signals won three awards from the Indigenous Journalists Association, including first place awards for radio/podcast and layout categories.

Smoke Signals has now won 146 state, regional and national journalism awards. ■

Tribal member loan program

Applications for the Tribal member loan program opened Saturday, June 6. Priority will go to applicants who have not previously received a loan. A loan may be requested for an amount up to \$1,000.

More information about the loan program and the link to the application can be found at www.grandronde.org.

For questions or information, contact the Tribal Finance Department at 503-879-5211. ■

Annual fish distribution

Natural Resources Department

Fish Lab

47010 SW HEBO ROAD

Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347

(503) 879-2424



When:

Thursday, August 13, 2026 9:00am – 5:00pm

Friday, August 14, 2026 9:00am – 5:00pm

Saturday, August 15, 2026 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

GRAND RONDE LIVING and ENROLLED TRIBAL MEMBERS ONLY

Must show current photo I.D.

Fish will be handed out in a drive through system. Please follow the signage up the hill to the fish lab, receive your fish and then follow the exit loop road out.

If picking up for others: A Signed release and *copy of Tribal ID or CIB is required!*

No Early or late Pickups and fish will not be mailed. Fish cannot be picked up in both Grand Ronde and Portland.

CTGR Portland Office

4445 SW Barbur Blvd #101
Portland, OR 97239

Fish will be handed out on a first-come, first-served basis.

No Pre-Registration Required

Contact Crystal Smith
(503)879-1881



When:

Thursday, August 20, 2026 10:00am – 2:00pm

GRAND RONDE LIVING and ENROLLED TRIBAL MEMBERS

Must show current photo I.D.

If picking up for others: A Signed release and *copy of Tribal ID or CIB is required!*

Fish will be handed out on a first-come, first-served basis.

No Early or late Pickups and fish will not be mailed. Fish cannot be picked up in both Grand Ronde and Portland.

2026 Fish Distribution Release Example

I, _____ Roll Number, _____

Give _____ Permission to pick up my fish.

Signature of Tribal Member: _____ Date: _____

Kick the Habit.

Call these numbers for free from anywhere in Oregon:
1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)
Español: 1-877-2NO-FUME (1-877-266-3863)
TTY: 1-877-777-6534
Or register online at: www.quitnow.net/oregon/

Get your Tribal ID at the Portland office & Members Services assistance!

- Eagle Feather Permits
- Medicare Part B Reimbursement
- Elder's Direct Deposit
- And more!

10AM-2PM
During Food Box Distribution

August 13th
September 15th, October 14th, November 19th
& December 15th

Questions? Please contact **Shayla Murphy**, Member Services Administrator
shayla.murphy@grandronde.org 503-879-1364

Spirit Mountain Casino has another clean audit

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Spirit Mountain Casino posted another year of zero findings for its recent audit results.

CEO Camille Mercier said that these are “driven by the coordinated efforts of employees across all departments, who play a critical role in maintaining compliance, accuracy and operational excellence.”

She noted that the casino’s audit and corporate finance employees play a particularly pivotal role by performing daily reconciliations, verifying transactions and ensuring financial records are accurate, complete and audit ready.

“Their ongoing work behind the scenes creates a strong foundation that supports both inter-



Camille Mercier

nal controls and external audit engagements,” Mercier said. “Across the operation, team members contribute by maintaining accurate documentation, following established procedures and supporting auditor requests with transparency and professionalism. This collective commitment to discipline and accountability is what enables Spirit Mountain Casino to consistently achieve outstanding, finding-free audit results and operate at a level that exceeds industry standards.”

This is the fourth finding-free audit in a row for the casino during the years that REDW Advisors & CPAs has been conducting the audit, according to REDW Principal Adam Smith.

“We have not had material procedural findings within the casino for approximately four years,” Smith said. “This is very rare. Probably looking at the top 10% of gaming facilities nationally where they have not had issues/findings in their audits. It’s not uncommon for a casino to have findings, usually due to new staff and training issues, but that’s not been the case (here).”

REDW conducts the annual financial audit of the casino as well as internal testing to help ensure that casino operating procedures meet or exceed industry standards.

Additionally, it was noted that SMC’s operating profit margin of approximately 35% is higher than the casino average of approximately 26% for 2025.

“The integrity and success of our external audit findings are a direct reflection of our personnel’s commitment to accountability by aligning their daily workflows with the specific compliance guidelines set forth in the organizations policies,” an emailed comment from the casino stated.

REDW performs internal control audits for approximately 100 casinos nationwide, both Tribal and commercial, as well as financial audits for 80.

In general terms, a casino audit includes examining and reviewing various documents and processes and is governed by multiple regu-

latory and professional authorities.

“First, the testing of the casino’s operating procedures takes about a month with a week onsite performing walkthroughs of casino processes and comparing to industry standards,” Smith said. “Second, the financial audit, which occurs after year end and takes approximately two months. This entails obtaining financial details and activity from the year and verifying to source documents. For example, confirming purchases, reviewing bank statements, confirming cash on hand, distributions to the Tribe and related parties.”

The auditors also confirm net win calculations for gaming, cash counted, hotel, food and beverage sales, he added.

“We create a balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement to show the casino’s assets, liabilities, revenue, expenses and cash activity,” he said.

The casino is required to provide auditors access to areas across the property, access to all team members and all requested paperwork, which ranges from electronic and paper files from several departments to daily gaming paperwork, internal audits and any regulatory correspondence.

According to the casino, the audit requires review of more than 300 entries including revenue, expense, liability, cash accounts, receivables, billings, assets, loans and dividends to determine the reliability, accuracy and compliance of financial statements with the laws, regulations and accounting standards.■

A MARJORIE ELAINE LABONTE ROBERTSON LEGACY EVENT
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IN MUSIC, FOOD, & ART

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SAT SEPT 5TH 12PM - 10PM

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PORTLAND OR

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Stewie G • Yissel Lopez • YNG Native
Razaman • Thompson Family Fancy Dancers + More TBA

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- Homebuying Education Classes

Willy Rogers - Mortgage Loan Officer

- 30+ years mortgage lending experience
- 3 years Grand Ronde Housing Board
- Free Consultations
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Pictured in the photo are, left to right, Ben Jeffers, Russell Jeffers, Alice Rife, Bertha Jeffers and Ira Jeffers with Georgie Renfrow in the front.

Jeffers 75th family reunion set for Aug. 9

The Jeffers family is hosting its 75th family reunion Sunday, Aug. 9 at the Wildcat Covered Bridge located off Highway 126 and Siuslaw River Road, the old homestead of Ira Jeffers.

From Eugene: Take Highway 126 West towards Mapleton.

At approximately mile marker 27.5, turn left on Siuslaw River Road

From Mapleton: Take Highway 126 East from Mapleton toward Eugene.

At approximately mile marker 26.5, turn right on Siuslaw River Road.

Look for signs and balloons for the turn off. Attendees are asked to bring lawn chairs, a favorite dish to share and their own beverages.

Lunch will begin at approximately noon.

For more information, call Evelyn Seidel at 503-831-4955 or text/call Lori Warren at 541-510-1704.

Upcoming Chachalu Friday Marketplace vendors wanted

Request a vendor application now. Email chachalu.marketplace@grandronde.org or contact Kyoni Mercier for more information at 503-879-2226. ■

Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board of Directors position openings

Spirit Mountain Gaming, Inc. (SMGI), a Tribal corporation chartered by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (Grand Ronde), operates Spirit Mountain Casino – the largest casino in Oregon. Spirit Mountain Casino offers Las Vegas style slots and provides superior entertainment and resort amenities. Spirit Mountain is one of the Pacific Northwest’s premier casinos. Grand Ronde invites applications to serve on the Spirit Mountain Gaming, Inc. Board of Directors. There are board seats available beginning Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026.

The SMGI Board of Directors is responsible to the Grand Ronde Tribal Council. The Board oversees strategic planning, overall fiscal accountability, budgets and operations of Spirit Mountain Casino.

The SMGI Board meets monthly. From time-to-time, additional special meetings may be held. Board members are expected to attend all meetings virtually or in person. In person attendance is strongly encouraged whenever possible. In person meetings are held at Spirit Mountain Casino – although virtual participation will occasionally be permitted with advance notice. Each board member receives a monthly stipend for attending meetings. Travel reimbursement is limited to travel within the six counties of Polk, Yamhill, Marion, Tillamook, Multnomah and Washington.

Board members must have a superior understanding of and experience with financial statements, strong communication and analytical skills, experience in a hospitality or customer service driven environment, 10 years of experience in a senior management position and a solid understanding of the Portland-metro and Salem area economies. Experience in the following areas is also preferred: gaming, tourism, corporate finance and accounting, marketing and promotions, human resources and management of senior executives. Experience with and knowledge of Native American organizations is also preferred. The board of directors may, at their discretion, advertise specialized skills depending on the board’s needs at the time of recruitment.

Ability to pass a thorough background check and obtain a gaming license from the Grand Ronde Gaming Commission is required.

Preference will be given to qualified Tribal members.

Submission Deadline: 5 p.m. PST Friday, Aug. 14, 2026.

These positions may remain open until filled.

Interested individuals should submit a letter of interest describing their qualifications, a résumé and three professional references to:

Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc.

Attn: Stacia Hernandez and Shannon Ham-Teixeira

9615 Grand Ronde Road

Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347

Phone: 503-879-2301

Email: stacia.martin@grandronde.org

shannon.ham-teixeira@grandronde.org

Only candidates who submit complete information will be considered. ■

Chachalu Friday Marketplace

FOOD // ART // CRAFTS



UPCOMING MARKETS

- ~~May 8~~
- ~~June 12~~
- ~~July 31~~
- August 28
- September 11
- October 9
- November 6
- December 11 // Holly Jolly

10 AM–4PM | RAIN OR SHINE
In case of rain, we'll be in the Chachalu Gym.

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

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BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

on the Rez

>>> AUG. 15, 2026 @ 8AM

REGISTRATION DEADLINE - NO EXCEPTIONS

AUG. 9, 2026

Free Registration

YOUTH AND ADULT DIVISIONS

scan me

>>> CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE
9615 GRAND RONDE RD. 97347

CONTACT INFO: 503-879-1369
RECREATION@GRANDRONDE.ORG



Walking On...

Steven Edward Rife Sr.

July 10, 1950 – July 6, 2026

Steven Edward Rife, beloved husband, father, grandfather, veteran, hunter, Tribal member and friend, passed away peacefully on July 6, 2026, just four days before his 76th birthday.

Born on July 10, 1950, to William and Beatrice Rife, Steve was raised in the forests and valleys of northwest Oregon, where he developed a lifelong love for the outdoors. Whether hunting elk in the Coast Range, casting a line into a favorite fishing hole or simply enjoying God’s creation, he found peace in the woods he knew so well.

Steve proudly answered the call to serve his country, completing two tours in Vietnam while serving in both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps. During his military service, he was wounded in combat and was awarded the Purple Heart, a testament to his courage, sacrifice and devotion to his fellow service members and his nation.

His life of service did not end when he returned home. Steve dedicated himself to helping others as a firefighter and emergency medical technician, always willing to answer the call when someone was in need. Those who knew him remember a man who could always be counted on — a dependable friend with a generous spirit and a heart of gold.

Steve was deeply devoted to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, of which he was a proud member. He served on the Tribal Cultural Committee and was a co-founder of the Native American Veterans Association, helping ensure that Native veterans received the honor and recognition they deserved. One of his greatest joys was volunteering for the annual Elders Hunt, harvesting elk to provide traditional food for Tribal Elders, combining his love of hunting with his desire to care for others.

On May 13, 2026, Steve married Virginia Ann Privatsky. Together, they made their home in Grand Ronde, enjoying the simple pleasures of the community they cherished. They lived and loved a lifetime in their short time together.

Steve was preceded in death by his parents, William and Beatrice Rife; former wife, Margie Rife; daughter, Linda; and his siblings, Marcia, Robert, Mike, Ruby and Debbie.

He is survived by his loving wife, Virginia Ann Rife; children, Steven Rife Jr., Christina and Brandy; eleven cherished grandchildren; siblings, Ron and Pearl; along with many extended family members, fellow veterans, Tribal members and countless friends whose lives were enriched by his kindness, generosity and unwavering loyalty.

Steve will be remembered as a man who loved deeply, served faithfully, worked tirelessly and gave freely of himself. Whether wearing the uniform of his country, responding to an emergency, mentoring fellow veterans or quietly helping someone in need, he lived a life defined by honor, compassion and service.

His legacy lives on in the family he loved, the community he strengthened and the many lives he touched.

Funeral Services were held Friday, July 10, at the Grand Ronde Tribal gym. Following the service, a committal service with full military honors was held at the Grand Ronde Tribal Cemetery.

May Steve’s memory continue to inspire all who knew and loved him.



Additional gas discount in effect

Tribal Council has approved a \$1.50 total per gallon gas discount for all Tribal members at Grand Ronde Station (the Tribal gas station at Spirit Mountain Casino) through Monday, Aug. 3, to help ease the financial burden caused by high gas prices.

Previously, Tribal members received a 30-cent per gallon discount at the Tribal gas station.

Grand Ronde Station is located at 26820 SW Salmon River Highway. ■



Grand Ronde Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Open House

August 27th
9am-4pm

Employment Services
Center Room 118

Join us for a day of Cultural sharing, Activities, Program Information, Food and Fun. Come share in the activities or just hang out and visit.

Beading	Crafting
Activities	Food

To RSVP
Contact Flicka Lucero
503-879-2165
Flicka.lucero@grandronde.org

FAMILY NIGHT OUT



FOOD - RIDES - PRIZES - RESOURCES

BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF FUN, FOOD, AND COMMUNITY.

TUESDAY
11
AUGUST

GRAND RONDE GYM
4PM - 8PM

THANK YOU FOR RESPECTING GRAND RONDE COMMUNITY & CULTURE BY NOT DISPLAYING GANG AFFILIATION AND BY NOT BRINGING DRUGS, COMMERCIAL TOBACCO, ALCOHOL OR WEAPONS TO THIS EVENT

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.

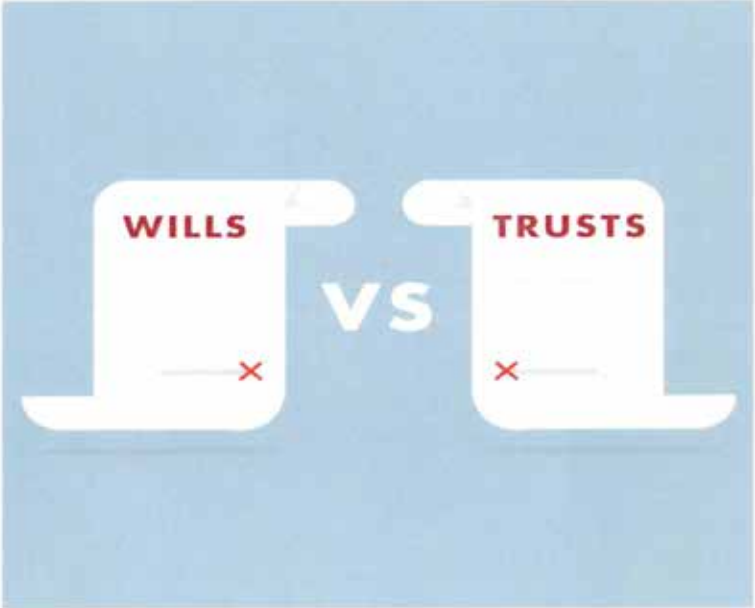


WWW.SMOKESIGNALS.ORG



***Compiled by Grand Ronde Tribal Police
Department Officer Prommissee Thornley***

ATTENTION TRIBAL ELDERS!!



Willamette Law Presentation

When: September 18th, 2026

Where: Elders Activity Center

Time: 11:00

Start with your Durable Power of Attorney, Advanced Directive & HIPPA. Then be assigned a Law Student to create your own Will or Trust free of charge for Tribal Elders & Spouses only.

CALL 503-879-2145

For more information if voicemail is reached, please leave a message and your call will be returned.



What does meaningful change look like?

It looks like open communication.

It looks like leaders who are available and willing to listen.

It looks like supporting our Elders with dignity, creating opportunities for our youth, addressing housing challenges, preserving our culture, and planning responsibly for the future.

Meaningful change isn't about promises.

It's about showing up, doing the work, and earning your trust every single day.

If elected, that is exactly the commitment I will make to every Tribal member.

Together, we can build a stronger tomorrow.

Paid political ad

Great Circle Recovery has updated hours, mobile dosing services

Great Circle Recovery Clinic has updated hours for both its Portland and Salem locations. Open hours are 6 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday to Friday and 7 a.m. to noon Saturday. The clinic is closed on Sunday.

Additionally, for those who cannot make it to the clinic, there are mobile dosing services. These are offered in Grand Ronde, behind the veterans services building in the parking lot, from 8 a.m. to noon Monday to Friday, and from 8 a.m. to noon Monday to Friday at First Baptist Church, 125 SE Cows St., McMinnville.

Great Circle Recovery offers whole person care and medications for opioid use disorder. The Salem office is located at 1011 Commercial St., and the Portland office is located at 3580 SE 82nd Ave.

For more information, call 503-983-9900 (Salem) or 971-339-9240 (Portland). ■

Back To SCHOOL Health Fair & Sports physicals

AUGUST 11TH, 2026

FROM 9 AM TO 3 PM

@ CHERYLE A. KENNEDY PUBLIC HEALTH BUILDING

THERE WILL BE

KONA ICE, RESOURCE TABLES FROM CTGR DEPARMENTS, SPORTS PHYSICALS, CLOTHING SWAP, CAR SEAT CHECKS AND MORE!

SPORTS PHYSICAL APPOINTMENTS WILL BE AVAILBLE BEFORE 9AM AND AFTER 3PM.

CALL 503-879-6701 TO SCHEDULE A SPORTS PHYSICAL OR CAR SEAT APPOINTMENT

FRIENDS OF TRYON CREEK

Join the team at Tryon!

FRIENDS OF TRYON CREEK IS HIRING AN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Our mission, in partnership with Oregon State Parks, is to inspire every community to identify, cultivate, or reclaim their relationship with nature in this cherished urban forest.

As Director, you will provide organizational leadership and vision, fundraising and resource development, oversee human resources and operations, and program management.

Full position description and application instructions at <https://www.tryonfriends.org/jobs>

QUESTIONS:

staff@tryonfriends.org

www.tryonfriends.org/jobs

Paid ad

Medical Transport Services

Medical transportation services are available to Tribal members within the six-county service area when an alternate means of transportation is not available. Advance notice required.

Please call 503-879-2078 to schedule a reservation.





Are you frustrated with your diabetes control?

Do you have questions about diabetes?

Do you need help managing your diabetes?

If so...

Call the Medical Clinic today at 503-879-2002

To schedule an individual diabetes education appointment



We are looking for part time bus drivers during Summer Break 2026





If interested please apply at

When Applying please provide a copy of your CDL-B and CBR if you have one. Please indicate if you don't have a CBR (Central Background Registry) it may take 45 day to process.



Tracy Howerton

Early Childhood Education Transportation and Facilities Coordinator

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

503-879-2285

Tracy.howerton@grandronde.org

Apply for the Temp pool. Driver pay is negotiable.



JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

Apply online at: www.grandronde.org/government/employment



CTGR EMPLOYMENT

Position Title	Grade	Min. Start Wage	Max Start Wage	Closing Date
Administrative Assistant – Voc Rehab/477	8	\$24.60/hr.	\$31.84/hr.	07/27/2026
Administrative Services Program Manager – Education	14	\$60,630.26/yr.	\$116,255.24/yr.	07/27/2026
Asset Inventory Specialist	8	\$24.60/hr.	\$31.84/hr.	08/03/2026
AV Technician/Web Specialist	11	\$32.74/hr.	\$42.16/hr.	Until Filled
College Intern/Aide – Early Childhood Education	2	\$16.00/hr.	\$18.26/hr.	Until Filled
Cook – Sheridan – GCR – Part Time (Weekends Only)	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
Dentist	20	\$151,691.92/yr.	\$205,141.88/yr.	Until Filled
Driver-Wellness Assistant	6	\$20.75/hr.	\$26.42/hr.	08/03/2026
Financial Wellness Coordinator – Limited Duration	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	07/27/2026
Legal Assistant	11	\$32.74/hr.	\$42.16/hr.	07/27/2026
Licensed Practical Nurse – Salem Primary Care	12	\$36.01/hr.	\$46.31/hr.	Until Filled
Licensed Practical Nurse - Salem Detox - GCR	12	\$36.01/hr.	\$46.31/hr.	Until Filled
Lodge Caregiver – Full-Time, Part-Time and On-Call	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	08/03/2026
Maintenance & Safety Technician Supervisor – Sheridan - GCR	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
Medication Aide – Adult Foster Care	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	Until Filled
Mental Health Counselor – Sheridan - GCR	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Milieu Safety Technician – Salem – GCR	6	\$20.75/hr.	\$26.42/hr.	Until Filled
Milieu Safety Technician – Sheridan - GCR	6	\$20.75/hr.	\$26.42/hr.	Until Filled
Nurse Practitioner – Health & Wellness	22	\$176,393.03/yr.	\$248,130.43/yr.	Until Filled
Physician – Health & Wellness	25	\$226,851.26/yr.	\$433,201.52/yr. DOE	Until Filled
Physician – Salem Primary Care	25	\$226,851.26/yr.	\$433,201.52/yr. DOE	Until Filled
Physician Assistant – Salem OTP - GCR	20	\$151,691.92/yr.	\$205,141.88/yr.	Until Filled
Senior Dental Assistant	9	\$27.05/hr.	\$34.95/hr.	Until Filled
Senior Help Desk Technician - Salem OTP - GCR	12	\$36.01/hr.	\$46.31/hr.	Until Filled
Substance Use Disorder Therapist – Salem OTP - GCR	10	\$61,901.69/yr.	\$79,848.88/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.	

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) applies certain preference in all employment opportunities to applicants who meet the requirements of the job by utilizing the following preference tier system:

Tier 1: Enrolled Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde members
Tier 2: Spouses, Parents and/or Legal Guardians of CTGR members, current regular CTGR employees, enrolled members of other Indian Tribes, and Veterans
Tier 3: External candidates and current Spirit Mountain Casino employees not falling within tier 1 or tier 2

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde offers generous benefits and competitive pay. Postings are open until filled and will be removed without notice.

For application assistance or questions, email Employmentteam@grandronde.org or call (503) 879-2109.

LEADING WITH VISION. SERVING WITH INTEGRITY.



taxayam! I am Valeria Atanacio, and I humbly ask for your support and your vote for Tribal Council. I am the daughter of the late Kateri Atanacio, granddaughter of Beryle (Langley) Contreras and Angel Contreras, and great-granddaughter of Roy Langley and Delia LaRose. Grand Ronde has always been home—not simply because I grew up here, but because our people have always been my community. Today, I have the privilege of raising my own children here, while recognizing that many of our Tribal members call other places home. Whether you live in Grand Ronde or hundreds of miles away, we are one Nation, and every voice deserves to be heard.

Over the past several years, I have had the honor of meeting with Tribal members across our communities. Those conversations have strengthened my understanding of our shared hopes, our different experiences, and the responsibility of leadership. If elected, I would be honored to carry your voice to the Tribal Council table and work alongside you to build a stronger future for every Tribal member.



We Are The Future Ancestors.

www.VoteValeria.com | (971)-209-5406 | valeria.atanacio@gmail.com

Paid political ad





SPIRIT MOUNTAIN CASINO CAREERS

POSTING TITLE	CLOSE DATE	WAGE/SALARY
Amore Waitstaff (*Part Time)	7/30/2026	\$15.55/hr. DOE + Tips
Environmental Services Floor Technician	7/30/2026	\$18.29/hr. DOE
Assistant Banquet Manager	Until Filled	\$48,329.22/yr. DOE
Assistant Food and Beverage Manager	Until Filled	\$48,329.22/yr. DOE
Banquet Server (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$15.55/hr. DOE + Tips
Bartender (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$16.50/hr. DOE + Tips
Casino Host	Until Filled	\$19.39/hr. DOE
Cook (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.29/hr. DOE
Host/Hostess Cashier (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Hotel Room Attendant (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Pastry Chef	Until Filled	DOE
Prep Cook (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Sous Chef	Until Filled	DOE
Sportsbook Writer	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Table Games Dealer – Multi-Game (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$15.55/hr. + Tips

\$1,000 Hire-On Bonus All Positions

\$500 Referral Bonus SMC & CTGR Employees

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

SPIRIT MOUNTAIN CASINO EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

✓ SMGI applies certain preference in all employment opportunities to applicants who meet the requirements of the job by utilizing the following preference tier system:
Tier 1: Enrolled Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Members
Tier 2: Spouses, Parents and/or Legal Guardians of CTGR Members, enrolled members of other Indian Tribes, Veterans, and Current Employees
Tier 3: External Candidates – qualified applicants not falling within Tier 1 & 2

✓ 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.
✓ All positions are eligible for an incremental Hire-on Bonus
✓ Please reference the Job Description for job duties, qualifications, and required knowledge/skills.

employmentteam@spiritmtn.com

<https://www.spiritmountain.com/careers>

Call (503) 879-3737 for application assistance.

House for sale

Grand Meadows space #16
4 Bedrooms, 2 baths
27' by 66'
2 sheds on landscaped lot
Handicap accessible
\$150,000
Contact 423-631-2633
Please do not walk the property without an appointment.

Paid ad

TRIBAL COURT

Request for Qualifications

The Tribe is seeking Requests for Qualifications from individuals interested in serving as the Chief Judge of the Tribal Court. This is a part-time, Tribal Council appointed position with a term of two years. To obtain a copy of the RFQ contact Shawn Branson at 503-879-4596 or email shawn.branson@grandronde.org.

Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. on **Monday, September 1, 2026.**

Please Submit Materials to:
Shawn Branson, Court Administrator
shawn.branson@grandronde.org
9615 Grand Ronde Road
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Happy 99th birthday
Rosetta LaBonte Manangan
May all your wishes come true.
Lots of love,
Your family and friends



Join Our Team!

Now Hiring
Medication Aide

Make a difference every day by supporting the health and wellness of our Elders!

About the Role

Wage range: \$22.36 to \$35.65 an hour.

Job Summary: Medication aides are responsible for resident medication administration. Duties include medication administration, assistance with activities of daily living, housekeeping, social-recreational activities, delegated nursing tasks, occasional meal preparation!

Apply Today!

503.879.2109
EmploymentTeam@grandronde.org

Scan QR Code





VOTE DENISE HARVEY
FOR GRAND RONDE TRIBAL COUNCIL



DENISE HARVEY FOR GRAND RONDE TRIBAL COUNCIL

For more than a decade, Denise Harvey has served the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde with integrity, leadership, and a commitment to the community. Her experience and dedication make her a trusted choice for Tribal Council.

EXPERIENCE YOU CAN COUNT ON

- 12 years serving as a Grand Ronde Tribal Council Member
- 9 years as Gaming Commission Chair
- 6 years serving on the Indian Gaming Association Board of Directors
- 3 years as SMCF Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer

SERVICE YOU CAN TRUST

Our people deserve leadership rooted in integrity, compassion, accountability, humility, and service. They deserve leaders who are willing to do the hard things for the right reasons while keeping their eyes on future generations.

Our Tribe deserves leaders we can trust—leaders with the vision, integrity, honesty, and reliability to move our Tribe forward. Denise Harvey is committed to communicating openly, keeping Tribal members informed and involved in the decisions that shape Grand Ronde's future.

LEADS WITH FAIRNESS AND CONSISTENCY.

LISTENS BEFORE MAKING ASSUMPTIONS.

BUILDS TRUST THROUGH ACTIONS, NOT WORDS.





2026--2027 BACK TO SCHOOL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

YOUTH EDUCATION IS NOW OPENING THE "BACK TO SCHOOL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM" FOR THE 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR! THIS PROGRAM IS OFFERED TO ENROLLED TRIBAL MEMBER STUDENTS ENTERING KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 12TH GRADE IN THE FALL OF 2026, AND SUPPORTS OUR YOUTH IN ACQUIRING NECESSARY SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND CLOTHING.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS WILL BE ISSUED A ONE-TIME \$150 WALMART GIFT CARD TO BE USED TOWARDS SCHOOL SUPPLIES OR SCHOOL CLOTHING. WHILE APPLICANTS WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE RECEIPT(S), ALL APPLICANTS ARE SUBJECT TO AUDIT AND MAY BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE RECEIPTS AT A LATER DATE.

REGISTRATION OPENS TODAY AND WILL BE A ROLLING APPLICATION THAT REMAINS OPEN UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30TH. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO THREE WEEKS AFTER THE DATE OF SUBMISSION TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS AND DISTRIBUTE YOUR GIFT CARD. PLEASE REACH OUT TO YOUTH EDUCATION AT 503-879-2101 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

SIGN UP HERE:

[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/RGY553QRD5P1BUNF9](https://forms.gle/RGY553QRD5P1BUNF9)







Paid political ad

HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

International Overdose Awareness Day is Aug. 31

Monday, Aug. 31, is a day set to raise awareness about overdose and encourage communities to support prevention and recovery.

An overdose happens when a person takes too much of a drug or medication, which can harm the body or cause death.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overdose can occur with prescription medicines, illegal drugs or alcohol.

Signs of an overdose

Signs may include:

- Trouble breathing
- Unconsciousness or inability to wake up
- Blue or pale lips and skin
- Slow or irregular breathing

An overdose is a medical emergency and requires immediate help.

Preventing overdose

Health experts from the National Institute on Drug Abuse advise several ways to reduce overdose risk:

- Take medications exactly as prescribed
- Avoid mixing drugs or alcohol
- Seek help for substance use problems
- Learn about naloxone, a medication that can reverse some overdoses

Communities can support prevention by sharing information, reducing stigma and helping people access treatment. ■



Children’s Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month

August focuses on protecting children’s vision and raising awareness about overdose prevention.

Healthy vision helps children learn

Healthy vision helps children learn, read and play. Good eye care is important for children as they grow. According to the National Eye Institute, early eye exams can help detect vision problems before they affect learning.

Signs of vision problems in children

Parents and caregivers should watch for signs such as:

- Squinting often
- Sitting very close to screens or books
- Complaints of headaches or eye strain
- Difficulty seeing the board at school

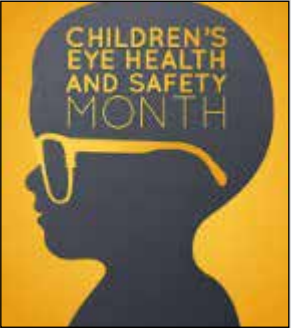
An eye doctor can check children’s vision and recommend glasses if needed.

Protecting children’s eyes

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend several ways to protect children’s eyes:

- Use protective eyewear during sports
- Limit screen time and take breaks
- Encourage outdoor play
- Schedule regular eye exams

Good eye care helps children succeed in school and everyday activities. ■



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. ■

Health & Wellness 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. ■

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AUGUST NEWSLETTER

DIABETES PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Immunization Month

Staying up to date on immunizations is just as important as diet and exercise for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. The American Diabetes Association and the Center for disease control advise patients to maintain the following vaccines:

- Influenza (Flu): Recommended annually. People with diabetes are six times more likely to be hospitalized and three times more likely to die from flu-related complications than those without diabetes.
- Pneumococcal (Pneumonia): Protects against serious bacterial lung infections that frequently affect diabetes patients.
- Hepatitis B: Diabetes patients are at a higher risk for this liver infection, often due to shared blood glucose meters or other medical equipment. The series is recommended for unvaccinated adults.
- COVID-19: Highly recommended to prevent severe respiratory illness and hospitalization.
- Tdap Booster: Protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). A booster is needed every 8/10 years.
- Shingles: Recommended for adults aged 50 and older, as the stress of illness can trigger severe shingles outbreaks.
- RSV: May be recommended for adults aged 50 to 74 who are at high risk, or those aged 75 and older, to prevent severe respiratory illness.

Talk with your provider at your next visit about vaccines you may need.

Reminders

2026 Contest Powwow:
August 14-16 at Fort Yamhill , Wagon Road (near Hebo Rd / Highway 22)

No monthly diabetes meeting this month , we'll see you at Powwow!

Stay Hydrated!

Upcoming Events

- Aug 11 8am-4pm Back to school Event, Cheryl Kennedy building , call to schedule 503-879-2002 to schedule sports physicals
- 2026 Contest Powwow Aug 14-16 Fort Yamhill

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SMOKE SIGNALS

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