



JANUARY 1, 2025



# SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA · MOLALLA · ROGUE RIVER · KALAPUYA · CHASTA

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

## Harvey attends Tribal Nations Summit in Washington, D.C.

By Danielle Harrison  
*Smoke Signals editor*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Staying united, strong and keeping gains made during the past 4 years for Indian Country were key takeaways from



Contributed photo

Above are Tribal Council member Denise Harvey and Tribal member and Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Bryan Mercier.

the White House Tribal Nations Summit, according to Tribal Council member Denise Harvey.

Harvey attended the summit, held Monday, Dec. 9, as well as an Indian Gaming Association Tribal leader meeting the following day. Harvey serves as the Northwest delegate.

“It was a really positive environment,” she said. “We all know we are in for some changes but there wasn’t any negativity in the room. We talked about the accomplishments that Indian County has been able to make in the last 4 years, and really the message was how do we maintain that and hang onto that. We can assume we won’t get a lot of added benefits in the next administration but if we can hang on to

See SUMMIT continued on page 5



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Benefits/Risk Manager Tammy Gould hugs Tribal Council member Brenda Tuomi as Gould is recognized for 29 years of service to the Tribe during the fourth quarter service awards and annual holiday party held at Spirit Mountain Casino’s Event Center on Thursday, Dec. 19.

## Honoring employees

By Nicole Montesano  
*Smoke Signals staff writer*

The Tribe honored 73 employees for more than 1,000 years of service on Thursday, Dec. 19, at the Spirit Mountain Casino Event Center during the quarterly service awards. The event

doubled as the annual employee holiday party and luncheon.

Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Tribal

See AWARDS continued on page 8

## Time is scarce to stave off salmon extinction

**Editor’s note:** Salmon, rain and conifer forests are symbols of the Pacific Northwest. In a three-part series, “The salmon situation,” *Smoke Signals* examines how the region’s signature fish is heading for extinction, with little time left to reverse course and save these ancient species, which are crucial to both the ecosystem and Tribal culture. In the end, the Tribe’s best hope to prevail may lie in winning an epic battle with bureaucracy. Parts two and three will run in the editions of Jan. 15 and Feb. 1, respectively.

By Nicole Montesano  
*Smoke Signals staff writer*

For more than 5 million years, salmon have played a key role in the ecosystem of the Pacific Northwest, providing food for wolves, bears, eagles, sea birds, gulls, orcas, seals, sea lions and sharks, as well as people. Salmon carcasses littering streambanks



See SALMON continued on page 6



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 70% of salmon and steelhead harvested in the state come from a hatchery. Salmon River Fish Hatchery in Otis produces coho and fall Chinook salmon, summer steelhead and rainbow trout.

# General Council meeting

11 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 5

Tribal Council Chambers

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

## NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday Meetings

DATE	TIME
Wednesday, Jan. 15.....	4 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 29.....	4 p.m.

Please note that these times and dates are subject to change if needed. In-person attendance in Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom.

# 31 and done



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier, left, and Tribal Council member Lisa Leno, right, present Tribal Emergency Assistance Programs Coordinator Tammy Garrison with a Tribal Pendleton blanket during her retirement party in the Community Center on Friday, Dec. 20. Garrison has officially worked for the Tribe for 31 years, although she worked at the Tribal Cemetery as a teenager in the 1970s.

## Inclement weather alert!

Please be sure to call the Health & Wellness Center before traveling in to appointments at the clinic during inclement weather.

Health & Wellness Center staff will make every attempt to call patients during closures. Also, sign up for emergency notifications about Tribal campus closures on the Tribal website at [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org) or follow the Tribe's primary page on Facebook. ■

## TRIBAL OFFICE CLOSURES

Tribal offices will be closed on Wednesday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year's Day. Offices will also be closed on Monday, Jan. 20, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde  
OFFSITE GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

---

**Sunday, February 2, 2025**

Monarch Hotel  
12566 S.E. 93rd Ave.  
Clackamas, OR 97015

**Sunday, April 6, 2025**

Lane Community College Longhouse  
4000 E. 30th Ave.  
Eugene, OR 97405

Followed by Community Input Meeting.

[www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org)

# smok signalz

## PUBLICATIONS OFFICE

9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347  
1-800-422-0232 • FAX: 503-879-2173

Website: [www.smokesignals.org](http://www.smokesignals.org)

Email: [news@grandronde.org](mailto:news@grandronde.org)

Email: [Editorial.Board@grandronde.org](mailto:Editorial.Board@grandronde.org)

X (Formerly Twitter): [CTGRsmoksignalz](https://twitter.com/CTGRsmoksignalz)  
[www.facebook.com/SmokeSignalsCTGR/](https://www.facebook.com/SmokeSignalsCTGR/)  
[www.youtube.com/c/SmokeSignalsChannel](https://www.youtube.com/c/SmokeSignalsChannel)

### DANIELLE HARRISON

PUBLICATIONS MANAGER / EDITOR  
503-879-4663  
[danielle.harrison@grandronde.org](mailto:danielle.harrison@grandronde.org)

### MICHELLE ALAIMO

PHOTOJOURNALIST / ASSISTANT EDITOR  
503-879-1961  
[michelle.alaimo@grandronde.org](mailto:michelle.alaimo@grandronde.org)

### JUSTIN PHILLIPS

PRODUCTION SPECIALIST  
503-879-2190  
[justin.phillips@grandronde.org](mailto:justin.phillips@grandronde.org)

### SAMUEL F. BRIGGS III

GRAPHIC DESIGN SPECIALIST  
503-879-1416  
[samuel.briggs@grandronde.org](mailto:samuel.briggs@grandronde.org)

### KAMIAH KOCH

SOCIAL MEDIA / DIGITAL JOURNALIST  
503-879-1461  
[kamiah.koch@grandronde.org](mailto:kamiah.koch@grandronde.org)

### NICOLE MONTESANO

STAFF WRITER  
503-879-1463  
[nicole.montesano@grandronde.org](mailto:nicole.montesano@grandronde.org)

### KATHERINE WARREN

SECRETARY / ADVERTISING  
503-879-1466 • [katherine.warren-steffensmier@grandronde.org](mailto:katherine.warren-steffensmier@grandronde.org)

DEADLINE DATE	ISSUE DATE	MEMBERS OF:
Monday, Jan. 6 .....	Jan. 15	Indigenous Journalists Association
Thursday, Jan. 23 .....	Feb. 1	Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assoc.
Thursday, Feb. 6 .....	Feb. 15	2022 IJA General Excellence
Thursday, Feb. 20 .....	Mar. 1	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.

## 2025 TRIBAL COUNCIL

[tribalcouncil@grandronde.org](mailto:tribalcouncil@grandronde.org)

### CHERYLE A. KENNEDY

Tribal Council Chairwoman  
— ext. 2352  
[cheryle.kennedy@grandronde.org](mailto:cheryle.kennedy@grandronde.org)

### KATHLEEN GEORGE

— ext. 2305  
[kathleen.george@grandronde.org](mailto:kathleen.george@grandronde.org)

### CHRIS MERCIER

Tribal Council Vice Chair  
— ext. 1444  
[chris.mercier@grandronde.org](mailto:chris.mercier@grandronde.org)

### BRENDA TUOMI

— ext. 2300  
[brenda.tuomi@grandronde.org](mailto:brenda.tuomi@grandronde.org)

### JON A. GEORGE

Tribal Council Secretary  
— ext. 2355  
[jon.george@grandronde.org](mailto:jon.george@grandronde.org)

### MATTHEW HALLER

— ext. 1777  
[matthew.haller@grandronde.org](mailto:matthew.haller@grandronde.org)

### LISA LENO

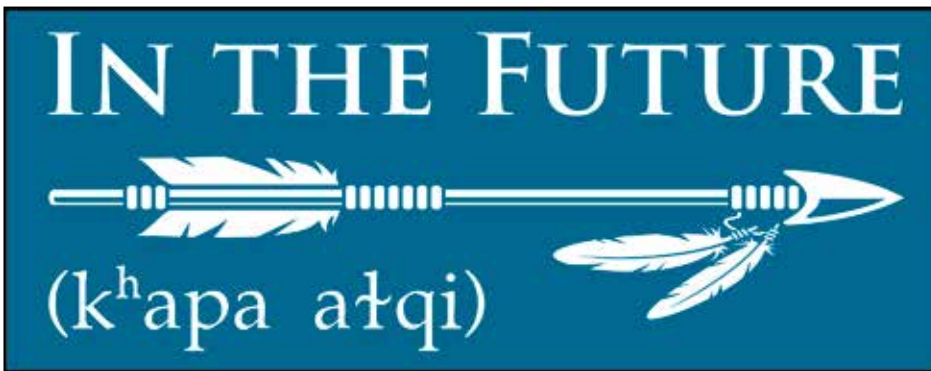
— ext. 1770  
[lisaleno@grandronde.org](mailto:lisaleno@grandronde.org)

### TONYA GLEASON-SHEPEK

— ext. 4555  
[tonya.gleason-shepek@grandronde.org](mailto:tonya.gleason-shepek@grandronde.org)

### DENISE HARVEY

— ext. 2353  
[denise.harvey@grandronde.org](mailto:denise.harvey@grandronde.org)



**ixt-mun (January)**

- Wednesday, Jan. 1 – Tribal offices closed in observance of New Year’s Day.
- Sunday, Jan. 5 – General Council meeting, 11 a.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Tuesday, Jan. 14 – Youth Education Community Night, 5:30 p.m., Tribal gym. 503-879-2101 or youtheducation@grandronde.org.
- Wednesday, Jan. 15 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Monday, Jan. 20 – Tribal offices closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- Wednesday, Jan. 29 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.

**makwst-mun (February)**

- Sunday, Feb. 2 – General Council meeting, 11 a.m., Monarch Hotel & Convention Center, 12566 SE 93rd Ave., Clackamas, and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Wednesday, Feb. 12 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.
- Monday, Feb. 17 – Tribal offices closed in observance of Tribal Chiefs’ Day.
- Wednesday, Feb. 26 – Tribal Council meeting, 4 p.m., Tribal Council Chambers and via Zoom. 800-422-0232.

**To stay informed of future Tribal events, visit [www.smokesignals.org/calendar](http://www.smokesignals.org/calendar).**

## Coho run strong in Agency Creek

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

Agency Creek comprises a mere fraction of the massive Willamette Basin. Yet this pretty, tree-lined stream is home to a unique strain of wild coho salmon that makes up 4 to 6% of the total coho runs in the Willamette — an average of 300 fish annually, although Aquatic Biologist and Tribal member Brandon Weems said it has dropped as low as 200 and has gotten as high as 1,200. “To get that much back is a pretty big deal,” Weems said.

Why the creek hosts such a substantial percent of the run is something of a mystery, but Weems attributes it at least partly to the Tribe’s stewardship. Logging operations on reservation land are required to leave 150-foot buffer along the stream and a 75-foot barrier along any perennial streams, to ensure plenty of shade cover over the water, and the Tribe also operates a water quality program.

Woody debris was added to the stream to create channels and habitat where tiny smolts can hide from high flows during storms and find plenty of insects to eat.

The Tribe improved 14 crossings over the creek to open 23 miles of additional salmon habitat that had been blocked.

Weems said much of the work consisted of replacing culverts that were perched too high for fish to get into, with either round culverts or open bottom culverts, and in a few instances, putting in bridges.

“They spend a full year in Agency Creek as juveniles, fighting for the same resources, so the more area you’ve got, the better for them,” Weems said.

The Tribe also brings in additional coho carcasses from hatcheries, to spread along the streambanks.

“Bears, birds and anything you can think of come and get them, and it does provide some fertilizer

for the riparian area,” Weems said. “You have to remember that historically, the salmon runs were much larger, so they had much more of that.”

The Tribe is careful to bring in only coho carcasses, he said, for fear that species not native to the creek could introduce parasites or viruses to the juvenile fish.

The chances of a juvenile salmon surviving to spawn are not high, Weems said. Out of thousands that leave Agency Creek for the ocean, a mere 300 or so make it back most years. Part of that may be the arduous journey.

“Coho have to travel 250 miles from the ocean to Agency Creek, through the Columbia, the Willamette and the Yamhill,” Weems said. “By the time they get here, they’re pretty tired.”

The journey takes about two months, he said.

Agency Creek also hosts lamprey and a run of winter steelhead, so tiny that just four to eight fish return every year. Rainbow trout — the same species as winter steelhead — live in the stream as well, and it’s unclear why some strike out for the ocean and some choose to remain, Weems said.

In November of last year, with the creek swollen by rains into a rushing torrent, coho leaped up through the rapids again and again, often being swept back over the shelf they had just gotten over. Undeterred, they kept trying, while those that made it rested at the side in a tiny space of quieter water for a while before resuming their journey.

Every year since 2011, the Tribe has held a First Fish ceremony on Agency Creek, leaving the bones in the river to call their kin home for the Tribe, along with their promise to honor the fish, in keeping with the ancient agreement between the Tribe and the salmon people. ■

Find us on 

**OFFICIAL TRIBAL FACEBOOK PAGES**

**Smoke Signals:**

facebook.com/SmokeSignalsCTGR

**The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde:**

facebook.com/CTGRgov

**Grand Ronde Health & Wellness:**

facebook.com/GRHWC

**Grand Ronde Children & Family Services:**

facebook.com/CTGRCFCS

**Grand Ronde Royalty:**

facebook.com/CTGRRoyalty

**Grand Ronde Education Programs:**

facebook.com/CTGREducation

**Grand Ronde Youth Council:**

facebook.com/CTGRYouthCouncil

**Grand Ronde Station:**

facebook.com/GrandRondeStation

**Grand Ronde Social Services Department:**

facebook.com/CTGRSocialservices

**Grand Ronde Food Bank:**

facebook.com/GrandRondeFoodBank

**Spirit Mountain Community Fund:**

facebook.com/SpiritMountainCommunityFund

**Grand Ronde Cultural Education:**

facebook.com/Grand-Ronde-Cultural-Education

**Grand Ronde Community Garden:**

facebook.com/GrandRondeCommunityGarden

**Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department:**

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

**Grand Ronde Employment Services**

Facebook.com/EmploymentServices



## Tribal Library merges with Regional Library Service

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

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

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

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

## REMINDER

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

IT’S TIME TO SEND US A COPY OF YOUR ‘2025’ SOCIAL SECURITY AWARD LETTER!  
If you haven’t received your ‘2025’ Social Security Award letter yet, please contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)  
Your current SSA award letter must reach our office by Wednesday, January 15th, 2025 by 5:00 PM to avoid any future delays in your benefits.

Please send a copy of your 2025 SSA letter to:  
CTGR Member Services  
Attn. Shayla Myrick-Meyer  
9615 Grand Ronde Road  
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

Fax: 503-879-2480 - Email: [Shayla.myrick-meyer@grandronde.org](mailto:Shayla.myrick-meyer@grandronde.org) - 503-879-1364 or 1-800-422-0232 Ext. 1364

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



# 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 January 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.

The Food Bank will be closed on Wednesday, Jan. 1, so there will be no produce distribution on that date.

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](mailto: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 Grand Ronde Food Bank/*iskam məkʰmək haws*, 9675 Grand Ronde Road. Chair: Francene Ambrose.
- **Editorial Board** meets monthly. The next meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Jan. 10 via zoom. Contact Chair Mia Prickett at [Editorial.Board@grandronde.org](mailto:Editorial.Board@grandronde.org) for the meeting link.
- **Education Committee** meets at 5:30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the month in the Adult Education building. Interim Chair: Valeria Atanacio.
- **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 Tuesday of the month in the Molalla Room of the Health & Wellness Center. 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: Raymond Petite.

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



**2020** – Tribal member Allison Empey, who was working part-time as a pediatrician, took job as deputy director of the Northwest Native American Center for Excellence, to oversee a program to help Native American and Alaska Native students prepare for medical school. The center was formed as a collaboration between Portland State University, Oregon Health and Science University and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. It was funded by a 5-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, OHSU School of Medicine and the support of all 43 Tribes in the Pacific Northwest. The program, Wy’East Post Baccalaureate Pathway, began accepting students in 2018.

**2015** – Some in Grand Ronde, including casino employees, reported feeling a 3.2 magnitude earthquake that took place about 6 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 19 near Willamina. However, the quake did not cause damage to Tribal buildings or Spirit Mountain Casino. According to the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network, the quake was about 16 miles deep, about 25 miles west of Salem.

**2010** – Spirit Mountain Casino delivered a semi-truck of new, unwrapped toys to Doernbecher Children’s Hospital in Portland for Christmas. It marked the second consecutive year the casino held an annual holiday toy drive, participated in by both casino guests and employees.



2010

File photo

**2005** – Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy was scheduled to open the 2010 U.S. Figure Skating Championships at the Portland Rose Garden. Tribal Elder and former Tribal Council Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison was to offer the invocation, and the Grand Ronde Veterans Honor Guard presented the flags.

**2000** – The Elders Committee held a surprise recognition ceremony for Tribal Council Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison, who had been recently named one of three Oregon Women of the Year by the Oregon Commission for Women. They presented Harrison with a bouquet of red roses and a beaded necklace.

**1995** – Smoke Signals Editor Tracy Olson announced that the newsletter would begin publishing twice a month, to allow more timely publication of news, and would hire a part-time assistant.

**1990** – No edition available.

**1985** – The Tribe’s ordinance committee announced that an election for the first Tribal Council following Restoration would be held in March. The Restoration Act stated that the election must be held within 120 days of when the Secretary of the Interior signed the Tribe’s Constitution, which had occurred on Nov. 30, 1984. An interim council was serving in the meantime.

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

## Indigenous Place Keeping Artist Fellowship now open

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde’s Cultural Resources Department Indigenous Place Keeping Artist Fellowship (IPKA) is now open.

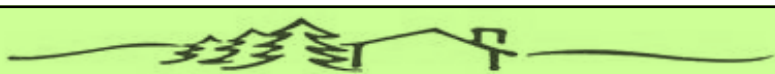
It is expected that two fellows will be named in 2025. Fellows will receive \$20,000 to advance their artistic work. The fellowship exists to develop Indigenous artist capacity within the Grand Ronde Tribe’s homelands.

“The Cultural Resources Department feels that art by Indigenous people is one of the most effective and recognizable ways that Indigenous people of place can hold a place in their homelands and further their own recognition and persistence,” an email stated.

The fellowship is open to anyone who can demonstrate a verifiable Indigenous connection to the ancestral peoples of western Oregon from the lower Columbia River in the north all the way to the Klamath River in the south.

Applications are due on Monday, Jan. 20. Selections will be made in March.

Full details about the 2025 Indigenous Place Keeping Artist Fellowship and how to apply are available on the Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center website, [chachalu.org/programs/ipka-fellowship/](http://chachalu.org/programs/ipka-fellowship/). ■



### 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, pauses Elders Committee

By Danielle Harrison

*Smoke Signals editor*

Tribal Council approved an application to the Federal Highway Administration for a \$9.9 million grant to help with infrastructure improvements at tumwata village during its Wednesday, Dec. 18, meeting.

If the funding is secured, the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant will be used for expenses such as project inspection fees, demolition and removal, construction and equipment costs.

"In particular, this funding will be used for the roadway and utility infrastructure around block six (of the property) that includes four streets," Community Development Manager Kristen Svicarovich said during a Tuesday, Dec. 17, Legislative Action Committee meeting. "So, because the Tribe qualifies as a historically disadvantaged community under this federal funding opportunity, there is no required federal match. We believe this project will be really competitive...so being able to show consistency with a lot of those planning documents really helps in these grant applications...I'm really excited about this funding opportunity."

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved commercial timber sales of the Tseqw Thin Logging Unit and the Paya Logging Unit to Round Valley LLC;
- Approved a \$100,000 grant application to the Oregon Community Foundation for the Arts and Culture Rebuilding Program;
- Approved an interagency agreement between Tribal Council and the Tribe's Engineering and Planning Department due to American Rescue Plan Act funding stipulations in order to carry forward for construction related projects at tumwata village;
- Approved the purchase and sale agreement for the 52.2-acre Deer Path West property near Falls City. The Tribe acquired the adjacent, 57.8-acre Deer Path East property in December 2023 and expects to close on Deer Path West in January;

- Approved an indemnity agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the 6-acre Agency Block 1 property located northwest of Highway 22 and Grand Ronde Road;
- And approved enrolling one infant, enrolling four non-infants and re-enrolling one non-infant because they meet the enrollment requirements in the Tribal Constitution.

In other news, Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier read aloud a statement from the council regarding the Elders Committee.

"Tribal Council met with the Elders Committee this morning and had a productive discussion about the need for Tribal Council to provide clear and consistent guidance to the committee on policies and expectations. We have received reports from Tribal Elders and staff, requiring further attention and we need to update applicable Tribal ordinances and committee bylaws and policies. As a result, it is in the best interest of the Tribe and its Elders for the committee to take a break from all official activities, including the upcoming committee member election, until Tribal Council and the committee have had an opportunity to review and make recommendations on ordinances, bylaws and policies. We discussed with the committee, the upcoming Elders events such as the Christmas party will still continue through Elders Activity Center staff."

Mercier then introduced a motion directing the committee to take a break on official Elders Committee business, including the 2025 election of members until Tribal Council, in consultation with the Elders Committee, has developed appropriate ordinance amendments and revised bylaws and policies, and to direct that the Elders activities continue through Elders Activity Center staff until further notice.

This resulted in an hour-long discussion, with several Tribal Elders expressing their dismay with how the process was handled, including the posting of a letter

about the committee at the Elders Activity Center. However, others thanked council for putting a pause in place until everything could be sorted out.

"I'm sorry we didn't deal with this more promptly," Mercier said. "It's been a long, very un-fun day."

The council approved the amend-

ment 6-1, with Denise Harvey casting the dissenting vote.

Tribal Council member Brenda Tuomi and Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy were out on medical leave.

To watch the entire meeting, visit the Tribal government's website at [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org) and click on the Videos tab. ■



Contributed photo

**Tribal Council member Denise Harvey, front row, fourth from right, joined in a group photo with fellow attendees of the White House 2024 Tribal Nations Summit in Washington, D.C., on Monday, Dec. 9.**

## Summit included panel on investing in Indian Country

SUMMIT continued  
from front page

what we've been able to achieve the last 4 years, that would be great."

The White House Tribal Nations Summit, re-initiated by President Joe Biden in 2021, is a time for administration and Tribal leaders from across the country to discuss ways the federal government can strengthen nation-to-nation relationships as well as ensure that progress made in Indian Country continues.

The summit began with the Native American Women Warriors Color Guard bringing in the colors and the Warpaint Drummers of North Carolina performing an opening song, followed by an invocation.

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna-Pueblo) provided opening remarks.

"Early on in my tenure as secretary – when this building was unfamiliar and the road ahead packed full – I knew one thing for sure: That while my role as secretary was new, my intentions for Indian Country were not," she said. "I knew that it was my job – our job – to achieve enduring progress for our people with the time we were given. ... Transitions are disruptive, regardless of how we might feel about one leader or another. That's true on Tribal Councils, and it's true in Washington. We don't know what the future may hold, but what I want to focus on today is the enduring progress we have made – progress that, no matter what, cannot be taken away, as long as we continue to press our voice and our action forward."

The summit included a panel on investing in Indian Country featuring several federal and Indigenous

government leaders, remarks from White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Director Tom Perez, followed by lunch prepared by Indigenous chefs from the North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems.

The afternoon included remarks from White House Domestic Policy Advisor Neera Tanden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland (Ojibwe) led a panel on strengthening the nation-to-nation relationship between Tribes and the United States.

Harvey also had the opportunity to visit with Tribal member and Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Bryan Mercier, who was selected for the position in September. Mercier previously served as regional director of BIA's Northwest Region.

Harvey had two big surprise moments during the summit: The first was seeing her face on a training consultation video from the Department of Interior and the second was an impromptu selfie with Biden.

"I was surprised the (Secret Service) let me get that close and that Biden knew how to take a selfie," she said with a smile. "I was trying to get someone to take a photo of us with my phone and he just took mine, put it on selfie mode and took a photo."

Harvey spent Tuesday, Dec. 10, at the gaming association meeting.

"Knowing the members of Congress and people who came to speak are looking out for us is good," she said. "They know how things are potentially changing but building on those existing relationships is key...There is a responsibility to carry on the (government's) trust responsibility (to Tribes)." ■

## smok signalz offering fast email subscription

Want to be one of the first Tribal members to receive smok signalz?

Want to receive the Tribal publication on your computer instead of waiting for it to arrive in the mail?

Want to get up-to-date and in-the-know about the Grand Ronde Tribe before anyone else? In an effort to be more efficient and reduce printing and postage costs, smok signalz electronic subscribers receive a PDF (portable document format) version sent to them instead of a newsprint version sent via the mail. All you need on your computer is Adobe Acrobat or another program that can read a PDF and you're set.

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

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

# Estimates put two species at risk of extinction by 2040



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Raceways, such as this one that's holding steelhead at the Salmon River Fish Hatchery in Otis, are used to raise hatchery fish. In 2023 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife hatcheries released more than 44,000,000 fish.

## Tribal Council member wants to explore hatchery business

By Nicole Montesano

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

Fish hatcheries, like most everything else, have two opposing views.

"There's the pro-hatchery folks, who think we could solve all the salmon problems with hatcheries," Grand Ronde Tribal Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen said. "There're other folks who think hatcheries are the only reason we have problems. It's hard to have an open discussion when both sides are so bound to their positions."

Tribal Council member Matthew Haller isn't necessarily in the first camp, but said he is firmly pro-hatchery.

And while he agrees with habitat restoration efforts, Haller said he would like to see Tribal Council explore another option as well: Seeking grants to purchase the Salmon River Hatchery in Otis, which the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking to shutter for at least the next few years due to deferred maintenance costs.

Haller said he can't really remember a time when he wasn't fishing, recalling doing so from an early age. Hunting, fishing, gathering mushrooms and berries are Tribal traditions that kept food on his grandparents' table after Termination and these are traditions he is teaching his son.

"My grandfather always hunted and fished, gathered mushrooms," Haller said. "They relied on that; you couldn't just go to Winco. You had to come home with a box of meat somehow."

That tradition feels bone deep.

"I don't know if we naturally just crave those foods, but I feel a lot healthier when I eat those foods, or meat that hasn't been processed in a plant," he said.

The state's plan to shutter the Salmon River Hatchery, at least temporarily, sets off alarm bells



Matthew Haller

for Haller.

"This is where I fish, where my family and friends fish," he said. "Without those hatcheries, I would never have caught my first fish."

Haller acknowledges that taking over the hatchery is an expensive proposition — an estimated \$30 million or more — and he agrees that the Tribe can't necessarily take on that expense without finding some form of funding for it.

"That would sink us," he said.

However, he would like the Tribe to invest a significant effort into seeking grants for the project.

Haller doesn't oppose the Tribe's Salmon Strength Team's focus on the pushing the Army Corps of Engineers to open more salmon habitat; those spawning grounds are badly needed, he acknowledged. But he said the team could pursue both approaches.

"It's important to have hatcheries so we can still have large enough fish runs to harvest," he said.

The Salmon Strength Team is a partnership between the Tribe's Natural Resources Department, Public Affairs Department, Tribal Council member Kathleen George and others, to advocate for salmon.

"We work at building a consensus and pro-salmon coalition," Dirksen said.

This year, ODFW commissioned a third-party review of the hatchery system. Reports are available at [www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hatchery/relience.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hatchery/relience.asp).

The agency is now gathering public comments and preparing a report for the state Legislature. ■

### SALMON continued from front page

after spawning provide fertilizer for riparian forests and aquatic plants, and food for insects.

According to the Canadian wildlife conservation group Pacific Wild, juvenile salmon are the primary insect predator in aquatic environments but after they die, their carcasses feed more than 60 species of insects.

"Salmon — that's a keystone species," Tribal Aquatic Biologist Brandon Weems said. "A lot of things depend on salmon, not just people."

For at least 14,000 years, Pacific Northwest Tribal people have been part of that cycle, relying on the annual salmon spawning runs for high-quality protein and essential fat, to supplement the deer, elk, lamprey, tarweed seeds, camas, wapato and other first foods the region so bountifully offered.

Salmon, smoked to preserve during the winter, provided important nutrients and was a high-value item for trade.

Before the arrival of Europeans, or pre-contact, the landscape was well-suited for salmon production. Braided river channels across the broad Willamette Valley and surrounding mountain ranges provided numerous streams where salmon fry lived until they were large enough to make the journey to the sea. They could hide there in quieter water when storms churned the river, find plenty of insects to devour and less competition from the millions of their brethren. Gravel beds provided ideal spawning grounds.

European settlers radically altered that landscape, confining rivers to single channels, installing numerous dams to produce hydro-power and control flooding, logging the trees that filtered, shaded and cooled the water, and draining wetlands for agricultural crops. The result has been catastrophic for Oregon's iconic fish.

Without those calmer back channels, Tribal Hydrosystem Compliance Specialist Lawrence Schwabe said, the young fish get pushed out to the ocean when they're much smaller and are subject to higher death rates.

The dams prevent young salmon from getting to the ocean and adult fish from returning to spawn. Few wild runs remain and those are down to a fraction of their historic numbers.

"Historically, Chinook runs were at 300,000 fish, now the 10-year average is 30,000," Grand Ronde Tribal Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen said in the fall of 2024. "Last year (2023), the chinook rallied and they got to 23,422."

Dirksen said the 2024 run was 21,989.

Winter steelhead are in even worse shape: The 2024 run was 8,908, up from 2,039 in 2023.

"In a reasonable year, we see 5,000 fish return," Dirksen said. "But in the winter of 2017, there were 780...It's no longer sometime in the future that we could lose

salmon. It's in my generation, potentially under my watch and while we're all still working."

Both spring chinook and winter steelhead are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Tribal Council member Kathleen George, a member of the Tribe's Salmon Strength team, said experts believe these fish could be extinct within the next 30 years.

The assessments echo a report by the National Marine Fisheries Service published in July 2024, after it finished a 5-year review of the species' status.

In a press release, NMFS quoted lead reviewer Annie Birnie saying, "The real issue is that they need safe connections to and from the high-quality habitat we know is above the dams. As long as they remain cut off, we're unlikely to see signs of recovery."

The agency estimates that the two species are at risk of extinction by 2040.

### Agreement on action, not on the details

Although there's broad agreement that action is needed, the devil lurks where it always does, in the details hidden in the murky backwaters of politics, money and conflicting interests.

Finding a way to increase salmon survival is an issue that often divides Oregonians more than it brings them together.

Hatchery fish have been the state's answer thus far but are a controversial subject. They provide almost all the salmon available for harvest, but are subject to genetic changes caused by the conditions they are reared in. They are also subject to catastrophic losses caused by human error or budget failures, and to the same environmental conditions that threaten wild populations.

According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 70% of salmon and steelhead harvested in the state come from a hatchery.

That's important not only for the genetics of different fish populations, but also for the allies and enemies the issue can attract among various political factions, Dirksen noted.

In some cases, he said, hatchery runs can muddy the situation to casual observers.

"We've had a near-record run of summer steelhead in the Willamette, and sockeye in the Columbia this year," Dirksen said in 2024. "But summer steelhead are not a native run in the Willamette. That's purely a hatchery run. Winter steelhead, which are native to the Willamette, are not in any better shape."

Salmon return to the streams where they are spawned, which leads to selective breeding.

"They're adapted to the pathogens there, the temperatures, the flows," Dirksen said. "Studies show that wild fish do have an edge."

Hatchery fish sometimes dilute those genes.

"Still, it's wrong to write (hatcher-

See SALMON continued on page 7

# Facebook Live event introduces Economic Development Director

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

A Facebook Live event on Wednesday, Dec. 18, served to introduce the Tribe's new Economic Development Director Mike Cully, and to allow Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe to provide an update for members. Rowe will deliver a more comprehensive report at the next General Council meeting on Sunday, Jan. 5.

Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier attended the event.

Some members had questions about the new constitutional amendment on enrollment, but Communications Director Sara

Thompson explained that the Tribe is still waiting for the election results to be certified before it begins addressing how the amendment will be implemented.

Several others, however, had questions for either Cully or Rowe.

Cully, who started in August, said he is excited to be working for the Tribe, and sees both large and small opportunities. For example, he said, one of his goals is to get a coffee shop built on the campus, so that khofi haws operator Ariel Hunt would not have to rely on the small trailer she operates out of now.

"Any support that I can offer to

the entrepreneurs in this community, I'm all for it," Cully said. "(My position) is a fantastic opportunity to build some generational wealth for the Tribe and do some things that are long overdue."

Rowe said that Health and Wellness plans a soft opening for the new residential drug recovery center in Sheridan this month, followed by opening fully in February. Earlier in the week, the department had held a kickoff ceremony for construction of the planned renovation of a second center in Salem, she said.

The centers will improve Great Circle Recovery Clinic's ability to effectively treat Tribal members who need to detox from some types of drugs, while taking methadone for an overall addiction, Rowe said.

She assured people watching that her department is closely tracking news of the incoming Trump administration's plans and making budget plans of its own, something she said it does with every new administration.

"For us, we're always looking at the 'what ifs' to make sure that if something does happen, we have

the resources stashed away," Rowe said. "That's not something we take lightly."

Cully said that his first goal is to develop an over-arching plan for the Tribe's economic development, along with guidelines for the Tribal Council for evaluating new economic opportunities.

In addition, he said, he is meeting with consultants and working with the casino and the Tribe on ideas for reducing reliance on the electrical grid and adding agricultural opportunities.

"Being self-sufficient with agriculture is another of my goals," Cully said.

He said the casino uses 19 million kilowatt hours of power a year. "That's a huge power bill," he said. "If we can put a microgrid in, and solar power to back it up, that's just as good as creating revenue."

Rowe took three questions from audience members and Cully took six.

The Tribe began hosting Facebook Live events during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and these have continued intermittently and cover a variety of topics. ■

## 'Our hatcheries have reached a tipping point'

SALMON continued from page 6

ies) off altogether because they are what's going to be needed to re-establish the populations," he said.

ODFW Communications Coordinator Michelle Denahey said the state is facing some hard questions about its hatchery program.

"Our hatcheries have reached a tipping point," she said. "Many were built in the 1950s and have a backlog of deferred maintenance."

A nearby example is the Salmon River Hatchery in Otis, which needs a fish weir replaced for an estimated \$12,000 to \$15,000, but

which is also increasingly vulnerable to flooding.

"We're seeing increased water temperatures, which are a problem for rearing cold-water fish like steelhead, salmon and trout," Denahey said. "We're also facing, like everyone, inflationary pressures. For example, fish food costs are rising 5% each biennium and utility costs are also going up...Hatcheries are the single biggest expense of the fish division budget, about 40% of that budget."

The agency plans to spend this winter compiling a report on hatcheries' future viability for the state Legislature. ■

## Tribal nonemergency text

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

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

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

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT & PREVENTION

## JANUARY - MARCH 2025 EVENTS

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<p><b><u>Chinuk Winter Gathering</u></b> Dates: TBD</p> <p><b><u>Round Dance Gift Making</u></b> Dates: 1/8 - 3:30-6:30 1/15 - 11:30-1:30 1/22 - 3:30-6:30 1/29 - 11:30-1:30 Location: Community Center</p> <p><b><u>Stick Game</u></b> Dates: 1/16 - 3:30-5:15 1/30 - 3:30-5:15 Location: Youth Ed. Building J</p>	<p><b><u>Love Rocks</u></b> Date: 2/14 - 11am-2pm Location: Community Center</p> <p><b><u>Unity Conference</u></b> Date: 2/6-2/9 Location: Arizona</p> <p><b><u>Youth Native Wellness Day</u></b> Date: 2/28 9am - 4pm Location: Tribal Gym</p> <p><b><u>Agency Creek Round Dance</u></b> Date: 2/28 starting at 5pm Location: Tribal Gym</p> <p><b><u>Stick Game</u></b> Dates: 2/11 - 3:30-5:15 2/27 - 3:30-5:15 Location: Youth Ed. Building J</p>	<p><b><u>Agency Creek Round Dance</u></b> Date: 3/1 starting at 6pm Location: Tribal Gym</p> <p><b><u>9 Tribes Youth Prevention Camp</u></b> Date: 3/24-3/28 Location: TBD</p> <p><b><u>Canoe Journey Prep</u></b> Dates: TBD</p> <p><b><u>Stick Game</u></b> Dates: 3/13 - 3:30-5:15 Location: Youth Ed. Building J</p>

**\*All events are subject to change, please look out for our official fliers on the Youth Empowerment & Prevention Facebook page.**

# 'We really do appreciate you guys'

## AWARDS continued from front page

Council Secretary Jon A. George, and Tribal Council members Lisa Leno, Kathleen George, Denise Harvey and Brenda Tuomi attended the event. Jon A. George gave the invocation, and the Canoe family drummed and sang a meal song.

Assistant General Manager Bryan Langley told the audience that when he was hired by the Tribe in 1991, he was working in the old train depot, noting how far the Tribe has come since then with the development of its campus.

"We really do appreciate you guys," Langley said. "We really could not do what we do without the work that you do. ... you guys all are valuable and important and contribute to the work we do."

He made a point of mentioning employees and departments whose work is often quietly done behind the scenes and said they are vital for the overall operation of the Tribe.

Engineering and Community Development Department Manager Ryan Webb noted that the grants department has applied for more than \$142 million in grants in the past year, and brought in just more than \$62 million, a 42% success rate, which he said is much higher than the average.

"That's no small feat," Webb said.

The December service awards included a lunch of salmon, turkey with stuffing and prime rib, along with cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, salad, rolls and desserts.

Human Resources employees raffled off \$18,000 in cash prizes ranging from \$250 to \$2,000, in addition to administrative leave and prizes including Blackstone grills, televisions, DeWalt tools, gaming consoles and other items.

Additionally, employees participated in an ugly sweater contest and games, for prizes of \$50 to \$100.

Employees who reached a 5-year milestone received checks for \$125. Those who achieved 10 years received either \$50 and a blanket, or \$150. Those who notched 25 years



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal Community Health Driver/Wellness Assistant Solomon George makes a claw as he competes in the ugly sweater contest during the fourth quarter service awards and annual holiday party held at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center on Thursday, Dec. 19. George's ugly sweater won third place in the contest.**

received \$500.

Health & Wellness Department Operations Director Tresa Mercier was honored as the Tribe's longest-serving employee, with 40 years of service to the Tribe, dating back to just a year after the Tribe was Restored to federal recognition. Public Works Coordinator John Mercier was the runner-up this quarter with 34 years.

Together, employees honored have served a total of 1,071 years.

**40 years:** Health & Wellness Department Operations Director Tresa Mercier.

**34 years:** Public Works Coordinator John Mercier.

**29 years:** Benefits/Risk Manager Tammy Gould, Compensation/HRIS Manager Candy Scranton, Senior Administrative Assistant Daphney Colton, Behavioral Health Scheduler Linda Evans, Tribal Lands Department Manager Jan Reibach, Records Clerk Hollie Mercier and Social Services Department Manager Dana Ainam.

**28 years:** Ceded Lands Program Manager Michael Karnosh.

**27 years:** Restorative Assistant Donnette Spaulding, Police

Records/Evidence Technician Egypt Leno, Cultural Center Supervisor Crystal Szczepanski and Judicial Operation Supervisor Julie Boekhoff.

**26 years:** Employment Specialist Tauni Tollas.

**25 years:** Procurement Department Manager Nathan Rolston.

**23 years:** Housing Improvement Coordinator Donald Coon.

**21 years:** Librarian Kathy Cole.

**19 years:** Gaming Compliance Manager Rose Smith, Support Counselor Christopher Holliday Sr.,

Internal Auditor Heather Roberts and Housing Improvement Coordinator Loyal Hamilton.

**18 years:** Utility Maintenance Supervisor Joe Loomis and Quality Coordinator Tauni McCammon.

**17 years:** Administrative Program Manager Joan Dugger.

**16 years:** Cultural Education Specialist Flicka Lucero and Family Partnerships Coach Isaiah Sherwood.

**14 years:** Employment Caseworker Rhonda Leno and Infant-Toddler Site Coordinator Melissa Phillips.

**13 years:** Senior Maintenance Technician Brent Bruckner, Pharmacy Technician Supervisor Stephanie Wolfe, Senior Applications Administrator Jose Luna and Firefighter Daniel Hyatt.

**12 years:** Senior Administrative Assistant Nicholas Kimsey, Pharmacy Technician Cindy Brickell, Utility Maintenance Technician Richard Smith, Education Services Coordinator Devin Boekhoff and

Secretary Jamie Adams.

**11 years:** Communications Specialist Daron Pond Jr. and Payroll Administrator Michelle Peterson.

**10 years:** Senior Peer Support Specialist Shelly Fox, Child Family Services Caseworker Santiago Atanacio, Lead Certified Medical Assistant Amanda Walker and Teacher Aide/Bus Monitor Shantell Ulestad-Salinas.

**9 years:** Teacher Aide Wendy Mercier, Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe, Grant Supervisor Gloria Schwalger, Maintenance Technician Winston Mercier and Lead Housekeeper Coley Parazoo.

**8 years:** Domestic Violence Relief Advocate Leah Bailey, Assistant Emergency Management Chief Torey Wakeland, Data Specialist Sommer Brucker and Tribal Security Officer Derek Ellenwood.

**7 years:** Publications Secretary Katherine Warren-Steffensmier, Certified Medical Assistant Fermin Deras Diaz, Family Partnerships Coordinator Lyndsey Stuckey, Librarian Aide Crystal Bigelow, Dental Assistant Nina Umfrid, Employee Relations Specialist Aaron Bigelow, Housing Safety Specialist Bradley Leno and Phlebotomist/Lab Assistant Kateri Marrufo.

**6 years:** Tribal Veterans Services Officer Ramona Quenelle, Driver/Cook Jason Ibarra, Community Support Specialist Isabell Bobb, Cultural Resources Specialist Christopher Rempel, Lead Patient Insurance and Eligibility Specialist Ashley Stonebrink, Teacher Aide/Bus Monitor Krystal King and Enrichment Coordinator Corina Limon.

**5 years:** Tribal Lead Security Officer Rick Sardegna, Social Media/Digital Journalist Kamiah Koch, Family/Community Partnership Coordinator Rebecca Ambrose, Senior Administrative Assistant Kristina Helfrich and Optometrist Terri Knowles.

After the event, employees were dismissed with pay for the remainder of the day. ■

## STORY IDEAS?

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

Please share your suggestions at [news@grandronde.org](mailto:news@grandronde.org) or by calling Editor Danielle Harrison at 503-879-4663.



[WWW.SMOKESIGNALS.ORG](http://WWW.SMOKESIGNALS.ORG)

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

## Acupuncture in GRAND RONDE

@ Grand Ronde Health and  
Wellness Center

TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS



Mallory Harman, LAC



Alison Healy, LAC



Manuela Terlinden, LAC

Acupuncture can help  
with...

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

Questions or to schedule:

CALL OR TEXT: 503-482-9370

EMAIL: [info@yourdearbody.com](mailto:info@yourdearbody.com)

dearbody

ACUPUNCTURE • NATURAL REMEDIES



# Tribe receives \$20 million grant for rec center

Oregon Rep. Andrea Salinas and U.S. senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley announced a federal grant of \$20 million through the Inflation Reduction Act for the Tribe's new resident recreation center, now under design.

Engineering and Planning Manager Ryan Webb noted that the money is part of a total of \$22.5 million in grants the Tribe has secured for the center.

"This grant is a new program from EPA as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, this level of funding is part of the historic levels of funding we have been seeing from the current administration and is the kind of funding that can enact real change and growth within the Grand Ronde community," he said in an email. "Our grants management team (has) been working diligently throughout 2024 to secure



Contributed graphic

**This is the proposed design for the Tribe's resident and recreation center. The design is for a 47,000-square-foot building and surrounding amenities.**

historic levels of funding for the Tribe and this award is a reflection of their hard work and dedication."

The center is intended to double as a community shelter during inclement weather and power

outages, including not only arctic storms but the deadly heat waves that have swept the region in recent years. Solar panels with a battery backup are intended to ensure electrical systems will stay on during power outages. They are also expected to lower electricity bills.

Earlier this year, Salinas secured \$500,000 in community project funding for the same project.

The \$20 million federal investment is through the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program.

The center, which will include gym and fitness equipment, a walking track, classroom space and a community kitchen, will serve as a center for health, community, education and wellness, the representatives said.

"I am excited to announce new federal funding for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in my district," Salinas said in a joint press release. "All Oregonians are feeling the effects of climate change, particularly those living in rural and Tribal communities with limited access to housing and

services. This resilience center will provide a safe, warm place to shelter during extreme weather and ensure continued access to health, education, and other key services for the Grand Ronde community. I will continue working with my colleagues to secure critical investments like this one for Oregon's 6th District."

"The problems created by the ongoing climate crisis overlap with many issues already threatening Oregonians such as housing and access to essential medical services," Wyden said. "This investment for The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in both community services and housing for Tribal members is a great example of what I fought for in the Inflation Reduction Act. We need more comprehensive solutions like this, and I will continue to fight for more resources to advance similar projects in Oregon and across the nation."

Merkley added that the funding is based on years of work to address the need for a local gathering space in the Grand Ronde community.

"The Grand Ronde's new resident and recreation center will be transformative, serving as a place where they can connect, celebrate their culture, and access resources that strengthen their resilience and well-being for generations to come," he said.

"We are grateful that EPA recognizes the importance of this project and what it means to our Tribal members and the Grand Ronde community," Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said. "This investment ensures that as stewards of the land, the Grand Ronde Tribe will have a safe place to gather and care for our people in the face of increasingly hazardous climate events." ■

## Stickin' it!



Photos by Kamiah Koch

**Agency Anderson, 11, surprises himself and others with the marked piece he was hiding during the Youth Stick Game gathering hosted by Youth Empowerment & Prevention in the Youth Education building on Tuesday, Dec. 17. This was the second stick game event hosted in December as YEP plans to do more indoor activities for Tribal youth during the winter months. Youth who participated in the game were entered into a raffle for prizes after the game concluded.**



**Tribal member Fabian Quenelle hands point sticks to the opposing team during the Youth Stick Game gathering hosted by Youth Empowerment & Prevention in the Youth Education building on Tuesday, Dec. 17. The traditional game uses sticks as a point system and players guess which hand a marked piece is hiding in. Stick game rules can be found in the Smoke Signals video: <https://youtu.be/vQ-jk2x4M68?si=xSYzuPNtLYa08yz>.**

SEE MORE OF THIS STORY



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

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

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

**Simulated Training - Tribal Campus: February 24 - March 7, 2025**

**Land Lab Training - Albany: March 10-14, 2025**

Register for training by calling 503-879-2146 or email [tero@grandronde.org](mailto:tero@grandronde.org)

# Christmas HoliDAZE

**Maddie Thornsberry, 8, and her father, Sam Thornsberry, sing “My Favorite Things” during the Angel Ocasio Christmas sing-along held in the Tribal gym on Wednesday, Dec. 11. About 25 people attended the event where several holiday songs were sang, books were given away and take-and-bake pizzas were available for a take home meal. The event was sponsored by the Tribal Library.**



**Nora Wilson, 6, middle, and Claire Strouse, 4, right, ring bells as Angel Ocasio sings “Jingle Bells” during the Christmas sing-along held in the Tribal gym on Wednesday, Dec. 11.**



**Na’ya Gibbons, 4, waves to her family in the audience as she sings during the Early Childhood Education Program’s Preschool Holiday Celebration held in the Tribal gym on Thursday, Dec 12.**

**Photos by Mic**



**Lisa Fisher (Salish and Kootenai), left, and Tribal Elder Violet Zimbrick look at items that were in gift boxes given to Elders during the Elders Christmas Party held at the Elders Activity Center on Friday, Dec. 20. There were different gift boxes for men and women. Both boxes included honey, berry tea and huckleberry jam made by Tribal Elders, a sugar cookie scrub in the women’s and canned salmon in the men’s boxes. A grocery gift certificate was also gifted and a hamburger lunch was served to approximately 140 Elders who attended.**





Rowdy Rutherford, 2, touches a stuffed reindeer's antler during a visit with Santa Claus, aka Tribal Elder David Clark, during the Tribal Council Christmas Party held at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center on Saturday, Dec. 14. Games, Christmas carols and brunch were also part of the annual party hosted by Tribal Council.

# helle Alaimo

MORE PHOTOS AND VIDEO



CTGR @ctgrsmokesignals @SmokeSignalsCTGR



Izack Farlow, 11, limbos under an inflatable Christmas tree game during the Tribal Council Christmas Party held at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center on Saturday, Dec. 14.

Brady Soderberg, 14, left, picks a toy during the Tribal Council Christmas Party held at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center on Saturday, Dec. 14. Behind him, second from left, are his brother, Carter Soderberg, 5, his father, Tyrell Soderberg, and brother, Tristan Soderberg, 10.



# Indigiqueer artists examine transcending modern barriers

By Nicole Montesano

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

A medicine woman leaps onto her horse into a bank of storm clouds, the ribbons on her dress streaming out to become lightning. A wood carving tells the story of “Ikanum,” the Hazel Drumstick Gambler, who found love with both a man and a woman, the three of them forming a family to raise their children. A quilt pays tribute to powerful women, while a night blue cape bestows joy on its maker.

The “Transgressors” exhibit now on display at Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center in Grand Ronde features an array of mediums by Indigenous queer artists, examining the experience of being two-spirited or otherwise alternately-gendered in the modern world.

The exhibit is on display through April and was curated by Tribal member Anthony Hudson, whose alter ego is Carla Rossi, Portland’s premiere drag clown. Tribal descendant Felix Furby is co-curator.

The exhibit encompasses a variety of art works, a film, a recorded conversation and an invitation for people to draw their own vision of a future including LGBTQ people.

One of the exhibit’s messages is that words such as transform, transition, transport, transcend and tradition, as well as transgress, all take on particular meaning for people who don’t fit into a binary gender system. Yet, historically among the Indigenous Tribes of the Pacific Northwest, people who were trans or two-spirited were taken so much for granted that it appears no word existed for them, according to Hudson and Furby. It was only colonialism, they said, that brought in taboos around crossing binary gender lines.

Hudson and Furby said that while it is deeply validating to rediscover revered historic Tribal members who were able to openly live as transgender, it shouldn’t be required for LGBTQ people to be accepted today.

“We’re not just people stuck in the past ... we are a living culture,” Furby told the crowd that gathered for the exhibit’s opening reception on Friday, Dec. 13. “We deserve



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Kate Barton, left, and Sydney May look at “Fabanaki Flint Corn” by Geo Neptune (Passamaquoddy) during the opening reception for “Transgressors” at Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center on Friday, Dec. 13. The exhibit runs through April 26.**



**Tribal member Anthony Hudson, left, speaks during the opening reception for “Transgressors” at Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center on Friday, Dec. 13. Hudson and Tribal descendant Felix Furby, right, are curators of the exhibit.**



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS AND VIDEO



@SmokeSignalsCTGR



@ctgrsmokesignals



@SmokeSignalsCTGR

to see ourselves in that future, as much as in the history.”

The exhibit opens with an essay about the name “Transgressors” and the definitions of words such as transform and transition, and words with similar roots. They are followed by stunning mural-sized paintings of two honored ancestors, both trans women in the 1800s and early 1900s, who were medicine women: Shimkhin and White Cindy, painted by Tribal member Steph Littlebird.

White Cindy, a member of the Klamath Tribe who lived from approximately 1830 to 1940,

was known for her white dresses adorned with colorful ribbons, a panel explained, despite the repeated efforts of settlers to force her into men’s attire. She was also known for her horseback riding and her medicine work.

Shimkhin, who lived from approximately 1821 to 1904, was an Atfalati Kalapuya healer on the Grand Ronde reservation and was the subject of a previous exhibit by Hudson and Furby.

The current exhibit is marked by its variety of both subject and art form. In a small, closed booth, listeners can sit on benches arranged

in a circle, listening to a recorded conversation between Hudson and Furby. In the center of the room, only one light shines directly down onto an infant’s cradleboard.

“We don’t want gender to not exist, or people to not have a sense of gender,” one of them muses. “We want it to be free and not be a wound. We want people to think about if they would choose that system if they had a choice.”

Among the other exhibits is a night-blue cape of barkcloth, studded with tiny gold starfish, with a full moon centered on the back. It was created by Lehuauakea, a mähū diasporic native Hawaiian artist. The word mähū implies gender fluidity.

“Creating hand stitched garments like this one allows me to transcend any imposed labels and reclaim the narrative of how I see myself and share that with those around me,” Lehuauakea wrote for the exhibit.

Acclaimed McMinnville arts patron Ronni Lacroute said she was delighted by the exhibit.

“I know the curators and am familiar with several of the artists; I have some of their art in my house,” LaCroute said. “I’m interested in the intersectionality of this and the last exhibit. It’s not often you see not only Indigenous art but Indigenous art by artists (who) are queer. I’m impressed by the diversity and the whole different outlook by all these artists. I’m really enjoying that.”

Katie Kissinger said she had come in part to support Tribal Elder Qahir-bejee Peco, a close friend with whom Kissinger co-authored a children’s book about breaking cultural gender barriers. “Beat the Drum” is told in both English and chinuk wawa, and reflects Peco’s own history.

“I’ve been anticipating this opening,” Kissinger said. “There’s so much about this that’s so important and I’m almost speechless because it’s so beautifully done.”

She said she found it especially meaningful that the Tribe was not only open to it but in funding it as well.

Pecos said they really love the title of the exhibit.

“(I) really love...how that fits how we have to be in the world to be seen, and sometimes it feels like we’re being aggressive, but we’re just trying to be seen,” they said. ■

## Youth Education Community Night

Please join the Youth Education Program for an evening of good food, books to take home and lots of great raffle prizes! All are welcome.

**January 14th @ 5:30pm**  
CTGR Gym

youtheducation@grandronde.org  
(503) 879-2101

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

CTGR FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

**RECYCLE**



Bottles and Tubs 4oz or Larger



Metals



Mixed Paper and Cardboard



# Firefighters honor longtime supporter by running for Gaston

By Nicole Montesano  
Smoke Signals staff writer

For months, 55-year-old Tribal member Veronica Gaston had been dreaming about completing the Honolulu Marathon on Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Gaston had a habit of dreaming big and this was no exception. A broken spine had left her in a wheelchair for several years and although she had recovered enough to be able to walk, she was still using a walker. Nonetheless, she was determined to become strong enough to walk 26.2 miles to complete the marathon.

Despite training most of 2024, Gaston was unable to achieve that one last dream: She walked on unexpectedly on Wednesday, Dec. 4, just days before she was to race. So, the Grand Ronde Emergency Services Department decided to finish what she had started.

Gaston had long been a supporter of the department and loved talking to the firefighters.

She suffered a sudden emergency on Tuesday, Dec. 3. Emergency Medical Technician/Firefighter Jennifer Colton was one the first people on the scene.

“I was one of the responders that was there the morning she went to the hospital,” Colton said. “I asked about her training and she was able to answer that she still had been. My hope was that she was going to pull through and make it to the event.”

Colton also has a long-standing dream of competing in the Honolulu Marathon.

“She had told me that she was going to do it this year and jokingly said we should do it together for 2024,” she said. “I honestly didn’t



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Colton

**Grand Ronde Emergency Services Emergency Medical Technician/Firefighter Jennifer Colton, right, and fellow Emergency Services crew ran the equivalent of a marathon to honor Tribal Elder Veronica Gaston. Gaston unexpectedly walked on days before she was set to participate in the Honolulu Marathon in December 2024.**

think she was serious until I saw her on the news about a month ago. Then I was super excited for her.”

KGW8 television in Portland aired a story about Gaston’s plan to walk in the marathon in early November.

“I was not able to get registered for this year’s event as life took me in other directions for a few months prior to the race,” Colton said. “But I was still excited that she was going to do it. I know that most marathons can be live streamed for others to view or give spectators a way to check the status of participants, so that was my plan to see how she was doing and cheer from

the mainland.” Colton said it saddened her that Gaston was unable to achieve her cherished dream.

“She trained so hard,” Colton said.

While talking with a co-worker shortly after Gaston’s death, Colton said, she thought, “Somebody should do her miles for her.”

The fire crews couldn’t fly to Hawaii, of course, but Colton decided they could run the marathon at home instead.

“I spoke to my battalion chief and asked if I could organize a group workout with our crews for that afternoon,” she said. “He was all for it. I did not tell the crew what we were doing but they all know my passion for running so I think they were a bit nervous, as some of them don’t like to run.”

Colton said she was both amused and touched by the reactions of her colleagues.

“When I returned to the station at 1400 hours, I placed all our names on a white board in the workout room,” she said. “At the bottom it said 26.2. Above all our names was this: VGMM. As the crew came in, you could see the sheer terror on some faces. It was priceless. But when I told them how this was going to work and the reason behind this workout, they all got behind it and took on the challenge with a lighter heart. I explained that this was the Veronica Gaston Memorial Marathon and that between the 13 people present, we would each do 2 miles in honor of her.”

Three of the firefighters had to go out on a call, so some people put in extra miles to ensure they completed the marathon, but all 13 people did some portion of it.

“Some ran, some jogged, some walked, some did a little of all three,” she said. “I was so proud of our crew for stepping up and completing her dream. We ended up actually running/walking/jogging a total of 28.5 miles for Veronica.”

Colton said she hopes to make the challenge an annual event. ■

Now accepting applications!

Native American Habitat Restoration Internships at Elderberry Wisdom Farm – Spring and Summer 2025



The Native American nonprofit, Elderberry Wisdom Farm is recruiting interns pursuing conservation career pathways for its 2025 Habitat Restoration Internships. This paid opportunity provides Native Americans and other people of color an opportunity to receive culturally tailored training, experiential service learning, and mentoring. Traditional Ecological Knowledge is integrated with local restoration practices and native plant nursery development in collaboration with mid-Willamette Valley partners.

A \$3,000 stipend will be provided for those completing the nine-week internship. Spring trainings are held three days a week from March 31 to May 30, 2025 and in Summer from June 23 to August 22 for a total of 190 hours of indoor classroom education and experiential service-learning activities.

A highlight of the internship is the emphasis upon Native American habitat restoration practices that integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge principles, climate adaptation practices, and mentoring. The service learning will help you learn to strengthen the biodiversity and sustainability of mid-Willamette Valley ecosystems at our work sites, including wetlands, oak prairie, and organic farmland, plus Elderberry Wisdom Farm’s four-acre native plant nursery and greenhouse south of Salem, OR.

There are opportunities for interns who are motivated to continue their training to become part-time employees or become emerging owners and operators of the habitat restoration or native plant nursery businesses EWF formed. Promising urban forestry and agroforestry opportunities even includes transitioning to organic farming, dry farming, and other practices that help to strengthen Native American food sovereignty as well as social and economic resilience of Native families.

**To apply:** Please complete the [application form](#). Visit our website at [www.elderberrywisdom.org](http://www.elderberrywisdom.org) or if you have questions, feel free to leave a message at [contact us](#).



Paid ad



**TRIBAL COMMITTEE / BOARD & COMMISSION**

Now accepting new applications

- Do you want to be more involved with the Tribe?
- Do you have a desire to be a part of a group to plan and be involved in Tribal activities and events?
- Are you interested in making positive changes for future generations?
- Visit <https://qrco.de/bf49Bl> or scan the QR code for a complete list of committees/boards and apply today.

**Current vacancies:**

- Ceremonial Hunting Board (2) • Culture Committee (1)
- Enrollment Committee (1) • Fish & Wildlife Committee (2)
- Housing Grievance Board (2) • Powwow Special Event Board (1)
- Election Board alternates (2)

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

**Applications available online at:**  
[www.grandronde.org/government/tribal-council/committees/](http://www.grandronde.org/government/tribal-council/committees/)

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



Ad by Samuel Briggs III

# Grant helping Tribe assess herbicide policies

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

A grant from the Environmental Protection Agency is helping the Tribe to plan an updated policy on use of herbicides on Tribally owned lands. It will provide \$1.9 million over five years, from 2024 through 2028.

A work session will be scheduled with Tribal Council in late January to discuss the priorities for the program.

Some Tribal members have raised objections to using herbicides to control weeds around Tribal housing and on the campus. The policy followed by the Facilities Department, which maintains the grounds, states that “Herbicides are often used as a last resort, when other attempts have failed and action is imperative.”

General Manager Angie Blackwell said in a council meeting this fall that the Tribe lacks enough employees to rely on hand-weeding alone, and therefore relies on spraying for weed control. Tribal Housing residents who don’t want herbicides used around their homes can request to opt out, provided they keep weeds under control themselves.

This year, however, the Tribe secured a grant to help it review the existing policies and consider changes.

For the past several months, a team led by the Natural Resources Department, which manages the Tribe’s conservation lands, has been conducting an inventory of current practices and has been putting out surveys to assess member preferences.

Restoration Ecologist/FW Policy Analyst Lindsay McClary, who oversees Natural Resources’ work on conservation lands, said that so far very few people have filled it out. The deadline was Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024.

The Tribe’s Planning and Grants departments worked together to secure the funding from the Environmental Protection Agency through the Clean Water Act.

“EPA offered a competitive grant opportunity for Tribes to reduce water toxins in the Columbia River Basin ... Everything we do drains into the Columbia,” McClary said.

The effort is being driven by a technical team comprising McClary, Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen, Grants Assistant Dana Morfin and consultant Mary Lou Soscia, who worked to build the grant program before she retired from the EPA.

Assistant General Manager Bryan Langley, who oversees both Facilities and Natural Resources, has also been involved in discussions.

By the end of February, McClary said, the team hopes to finish an assessment of the Tribe’s current practices. It plans to have a report ready for the Tribal Council by Friday, Feb. 28.

McClary noted that the Facilities and Natural Resources departments manage very different areas with different needs. Natural Resources uses an integrated pest management plan that guides its herbicide usage, McClary said.

“None of us here want to be in charge of another department or overseeing what they are doing,” she said. “I don’t think NRD is or wants to be in a position of being regulatory... We anticipate conversations around having an organizational wide policy.”

There is some awkwardness in that situation, she added.

However, there could be an opportunity for discussions of how the Tribal campus should look, such as incorporating “more of a native landscape and less manicured,” she said.

Priorities that have been identified so far include holding events on the Tribal campus to collect toxic and hazardous items and creating an overarching Tribal-wide policy for use of herbicides, pesticides and insecticides, McClary said.

A Toxics Take Back Event has been scheduled for Friday, April 11.

Once a plan has been created, the Tribe anticipates putting it into

place by September 2026.

The Facilities Department policy on herbicides authorizes uses of specific products, but states that housing tenants who want to opt out of having their yards sprayed may do so if they agree to the required conditions. Those include submitting a formal written request to the Grand Ronde Housing Department and keeping the area weeded within the bounds of signs that will be placed by the Housing Department.

Tribal member Amber Case said she has collected 128 signatures in opposition to the use of glyphosate around Tribal Housing through Change.org.

Case has spoken out at several Tribal Council and General Council meetings about her objections to pesticide spraying.

“For years Elders and community members have been trying to get a cease spraying of Gly-star glyphosate in our community,” Case said in an email. “We don’t want it; no one is calling the General Manager to say, ‘Don’t stop spraying.’ They are saying ‘Please stop spraying, for

the good of the people and the land.’ With all the knowledge to stop and peer-reviewed scientific reports, it makes (sense) to stop spraying and find an alternative.”

Springer and Sons Pest Services is the Tribal contractor for commercial spraying.

Questions were raised by some in the community regarding whether the business had an active license. A check of the Oregon Department of Agriculture website as well as the Secretary of State’s office showed an active license as of Wednesday, Dec. 18.

Tenants in Tribal Housing who opt out of spraying will have periodic inspections conducted, and once the no-spray signs have been placed, they are not allowed to be moved and must be kept clean and clear.

For more information or to request a copy of the policy or the request form, contact the Facilities Department through the switchboard at 503-879-5211, or Facilities Administrative Assistant Daphney Colton at daphney.colton@grandronde.org. ■




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

503-879-4623  
CourtPrograms@grandronde.org

## Volunteers Needed!

We are seeking volunteers for two of our programs:

**Court Appointed Special Advocate**  
(open to all community members)

**Tribal Member Review Board**  
(must be an enrolled CTGR Tribal member)

If you would like to volunteer:

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

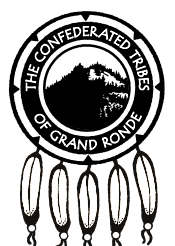
Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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



## Tribal member fundraising to attend Harvard Business School Native-focused program

Tribal member and Tribal Health & Wellness Department HWC Accounting Coordinator Jamie White has been accepted into a weeklong, Native-focused program at Harvard Business School and is looking for help to defray attendance costs.

The executive leadership course, “Leading People and Investing to Build Sustainable Communities Program,” is offered through a partnership between Harvard and the Native American Finance Officers Association.

NAFOA selected attendees for the program, which includes a week of Indigenous-focused speakers sharing insights and guidance in the areas of leadership, peer networking, financial management, strategic planning and community development.

“Being accepted by the selection committee at NAFOA is a great opportunity as they hand-selected those applicants who would bring in knowledge to share with other participants as well as learn from them,” White said. “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in a Tribal financial management certification program, learning from other Tribal business professionals and leaders.”

The cost for the program is \$3,500. White applied for and received a \$1,750 scholarship. She is looking to raise funds to help defray additional hotel, airfare and program costs.

The program runs from Monday, March 24 to Friday, March 28 at Harvard Business School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

“Not only will this program enhance my current skill set, it will also provide a working knowledge of how governance practices can help shape the management of investments, make informed decisions about different approaches to financial management, and utilize valuation techniques for assessing future investment opportunities and financial oversight of these projects,” White said. “This program will also provide a vast array of networking with other Tribal finance managers/leaders.”

White needs to pay the balance for her program costs by Wednesday, Feb. 5. Contributions can be made via Cash App at \$ariesqueen79 or Venmo at @Jamie-White-208. ■



Jamie White

## Helping Hand winners

Every year the Spirit Mountain Community Fund recognizes three individuals, affiliated with nonprofit organizations within the Community Fund’s 11-county service area of western Oregon, with the ye?lan lima (Helping Hand) award. The Community Fund requests nominations from the nonprofits in the categories of volunteer, paid non-management staff and paid management staff. The winners demonstrate dedication, commitment and unwavering effort within their organizations. On Tuesday, Dec. 17, SMCF staff presented the winners with a distinctive recognition award, a one-night stay and dinner for two at Spirit Mountain Casino and \$500. ■



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Constructing Hope Executive Director Pat Daniels, left, is presented the ye?lan lima (Helping Hand) award by SMCF Executive Director Angie Sears at the Portland nonprofit on Tuesday, Dec. 17. Daniels won for the paid management category.**



**Spirit Mountain Community Fund Executive Director Angie Sears, left, presents Loretta Cukale an ye?lan lima (Helping Hand) award at the Dougy Center in Portland on Tuesday, Dec. 17. Cukale has been a peer grief support volunteer at Dougy Center for 37 years. She won the award for the volunteer category.**



**Community Transitional School Transportation Coordinator/Facility Manager Aldin Porcic, left, looks at the ye?lan lima (Helping Hand) award after SMCF Program Coordinator Angela Schlappie presented him with it at the Portland nonprofit on Tuesday, Dec. 17. He won the award for paid non-management staff. In the background are SMCF Board of Trustees member Maria Rojo de Steffey, left, and SMCF Executive Director Angie Sears.**



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

## CLEAR Clinic

All services are free\*



### Services

### Provided:

- Criminal record expungements
- Eviction expungements and tenant advocacy letters
- Court fines and fee waiver petitions
- Legal name and gender marker changes
- Referrals for other legal services

\* There is an Oregon State police charge of \$33 for finger printing for all criminal expungements

Cash, Card or Money order

Wednesday  
15<sup>th</sup> January

@ 3-7pm


Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>  
January @

12-4 pm

At the Grand  
Ronde Gym  
Grand Ronde

This is clinic is exclusively for tribal members and affiliates





### 2025 Veteran Human Library Project

**Seeking up to eight Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde tribal member veterans to participate.**

**What is this project?**  
This project is intended to provide a platform for tribal member veterans to share their personal story about their military service. The interview will be simple and straight-forward with pre-approved questions. The interview is from your perspective and will only contain what you feel comfortable sharing.

**Why?**  
1) These videos will be for veterans to keep and share with their families. 2) We would also like to submit a copy into the Tribal archives for future generations to look back and hear directly from you and 3) We would like to be able to play these videos around campus at the museum or the Casino.

**What is the timeline?**

January 2025	Signs ups for this project will be advertised. Would like to find at least 8 tribal veterans who wish to talk about their military service and are willing to record an interview.
February 2025	Finalize list of participants and begin question review with participants
March & April 2025	Record interviews & take portraits which will be at: Grand Ronde Powwow Grounds, Achaf Hammi, or CTGR Community Center
May 2025	Videos should be ready (if not sooner)

**How do I sign up or get more information?**  
\*Email [CTGRtribalVSO@GrandRonde.Org](mailto:CTGRtribalVSO@GrandRonde.Org) or call (503) 879-1484.

## Walking On...

### Veronica Eileen Gaston

**March 11, 1969 – Dec. 4, 2024**

Tribal Elder Veronica Eileen Gaston passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024, at the age of 55.

Veronica was born on March 11, 1969, in McMinnville, Oregon, to Orin Pichette and Donna (Warren) Casey.

She is survived by her cats Daniel, Patricia and Puddles; and many family members and friends.



Veronica was a huge Oregon Ducks fan. She was known as the snow queen due to her collection of snowmen. She loved crocheting blankets for her community and decorating for Halloween and Christmas.

She was a member of McMinnville Seventh Day Adventist Church. However, the most important thing about Veronica was that she was a Tribal Elder and was very proud of that. She loved her heritage and culture. She loved going to powwows and any event that the Tribe was having.

She had a heart for her people and community. She will be truly missed. Funeral services were held Monday, Dec. 16, at the Tribal gym, with a meal afterward at the Elders Activity Center.

In honor of Veronica's goal to run the Honolulu Marathon, which she had been training for most of 2024, attendees were asked to dress in Hawaiian attire.

A graveside service was held at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24, at the Tribal Cemetery.

Bollman's Tribute Center in Dallas assisted the family.

## 4 Part Basic Cooking Skills Class

**What:** Join your Registered Dietitian Nutritionist for a 4-Part Basic Cooking Skills Series

**When:** 4 Wednesdays in Winter 2025 from 5-7 PM: January 15th, February 5th, February 26th, March 12th

**Where:** Public Health Community Room/Teaching Kitchen

**Who:** CTGR Tribal members and GRHWC-eligible patients ages 16+ interested in enhancing their cooking skills (limited to 12 participants per class series so class can be hands-on).

**You'll learn:**

- BASIC KNIFE SKILLS
- FOOD SAFETY
- MEAL PLANNING
- HOW TO READ RECIPES AND FOOD LABELS
- TIPS FOR SAVING MONEY IN THE GROCERY STORE

and much more!

Dinner will be provided! Participants who attend 2 or more class sessions will be eligible to receive additional incentives (e.g., cooking equipment and cookbooks) to help keep you cooking outside of class!

Sign-up either by email  
[Becky.Johnson@grandronde.org](mailto:Becky.Johnson@grandronde.org)  
or call 503.879.6711

# MONDAY MEET UP

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

---

**MONDAY MORNINGS  
9:50AM - 10:20AM**

FREE BREAKFAST FOR YOUTH

## GRHWC PROJECTED tush lamatsin EVENTS 2025

<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>January</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Pajama Jam 1/10 from 5-7pm @Tribal Gym Fresh Foods Distribution 1/23 Starts 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>February</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Sweetheart's Jam 2/13 from 5-7pm @ Tribal Gym Fresh Foods Distribution 2/20 Starts 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>March</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Fresh Foods Distribution 3/20 Start 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>April</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Earth Day Jam 4/18 from 5-7 @ Tribal Gym Fresh Foods Distribution 4/24 Starts 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building</p>
<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>May</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Fentanyl Awareness Event Mother's Day Tea Canoe Outings Fresh Foods Distribution 5/22 Starts 10:00am @GR Procurement Building</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>June</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Elder Canoe Day 6/18 Location TBD Father's Day BBQ Canoe Outings Fresh Foods Distribution 6/26 Starts 10:00am @GR Procurement Building June Jam 6/27 (TBD)</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>July</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Fresh Foods Distribution 7/17 Starts 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow July 11 - 13, 2025 @Uyxat Powwow Ground Canoe Journey (tentatively)</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>August</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Fun Run / Walk 8/16 - Time TBD @Uyxat Powwow Grounds 3v3 Bball Collab Fresh Foods Distribution 8/21 Starts 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building Canoe Journey (tentatively)</p>
<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>September</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Fresh Foods Distribution 9/18 Starts 10:00am @GR Procurement Building Every Child Matters Jam 9/20 - Location &amp; Time TBD Canoe Races (tentatively)</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>October</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Health and Wellness Centers 28th birthday 10/ 01 Fresh Foods Distribution 10/16 Starts 10:00am @GR Procurement Building Fall Festival - TBD</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>November</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Fresh Foods Distribution 11/20 Starts 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em; color: white; margin: 0;"><i>December</i></p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 5px 0;">Fresh Foods Distribution 12/18 Starts 10:00am @ GR Procurement Building</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Wrap- Up 2024!</p>

\*All events are subject to change, please look out for our official fliers on the GRHWC Facebook page





## Watchlist: ‘The Halluci Nation puts a new spin on a traditional beat’

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

**By Kamiah Koch**

*Social media/digital journalist*

“We’ll throw up our light and then people will gather,” Tim Hill (Mohawk Tribe), also known as “Zoolman” says in a PBS video published in October 2023. Hill and Ehren Thomas (Cayuga First Nation), who goes by, “Bear Witness,” are the duo behind the well-known sound of “The Halluci Nation.”

Songs you may have heard by “The Halluci Nation” are “Electric Pow Wow Drum” and “R.E.D.” In these songs you’ll hear traditional Native American drumming and singing mixed with electronic beats.

“We have helped in building community,” Thomas says. “But we’re part of the wave, not leading it. We react to where people are at.”

In the video, Thomas and Hill agree that the live music they perform helps bring existing Indigenous communities together. In the PBS video, they are playing a show in Brooklyn, New York and the room is packed with people. As they perform, a young woman in regalia joins them on stage to perform a traditional hoop dance to their music.

“With the history that we have had in the past 500 years, it’s become really hard to want to share who we are and representation of Indigenous people has always been through the lens of the other, we have never had control of our own image,” Thomas says. “It’s about us taking that power for ourselves, representing ourselves in the way we see ourselves.”

Their music mixes traditional songs with samples of contemporary sounds like eagle cries and Indigenous pop culture references.

One song shown in the video uses audio from the movie, “The Addams Family.” In the scene, Wednesday Addams goes off-script from her stereotyped Thanksgiving play to tell the Natives, “Do not trust the pilgrims.”

During their high energy performances, the audience is dancing to the same rhythm.

“When I look out in our show and see people from all different nations, all different backgrounds, they are feeling those beats,” Hill says. “They experience what we experience. That’s a common experience.”

You can hear more from “The Halluci Nation” in the video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUtNoDI5cDY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUtNoDI5cDY) or find it linked on our “Watchlist” Playlist on YouTube. ■

## The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde announces availability of ODOT STIF Transit Grant Funds

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Public Works provides this public notice that the Tribe intends to apply for ODOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Plan (STIF Plan), which is due Jan. 16, 2025. The STIF Plan assists the Tribe with funding public transit programs during the next state of Oregon biennium from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

This announcement also notifies other public transit service providers that the Tribe intends to work collaboratively to deliver safe and efficient public transit services in Grand Ronde and neighboring communities. The Tribe’s Public Works Coordinator, John Mercier, who also manages the Tribal transportation programs, will present the STIF Plan to the Transportation Stakeholder Advisory Committee. The committee was established in 2023 to assist the Tribe with transportation planning. The Transportation Stakeholder Advisory Committee will meet to review options with Public Works and make recommendations to Tribal Council.

The next Transportation Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for 11 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025. The meeting location will be at the Elder Activity Center, located at 48940 Blacktail Drive, Grand Ronde, Oregon, 97347. Meeting information is subject to change. Check website address below for any and all updates.

Copies of STIF Plan, meeting agendas and minutes will also be available at the website address. Any questions regarding the STIF Plan application may be directed to:

John Mercier, Public Works Coordinator

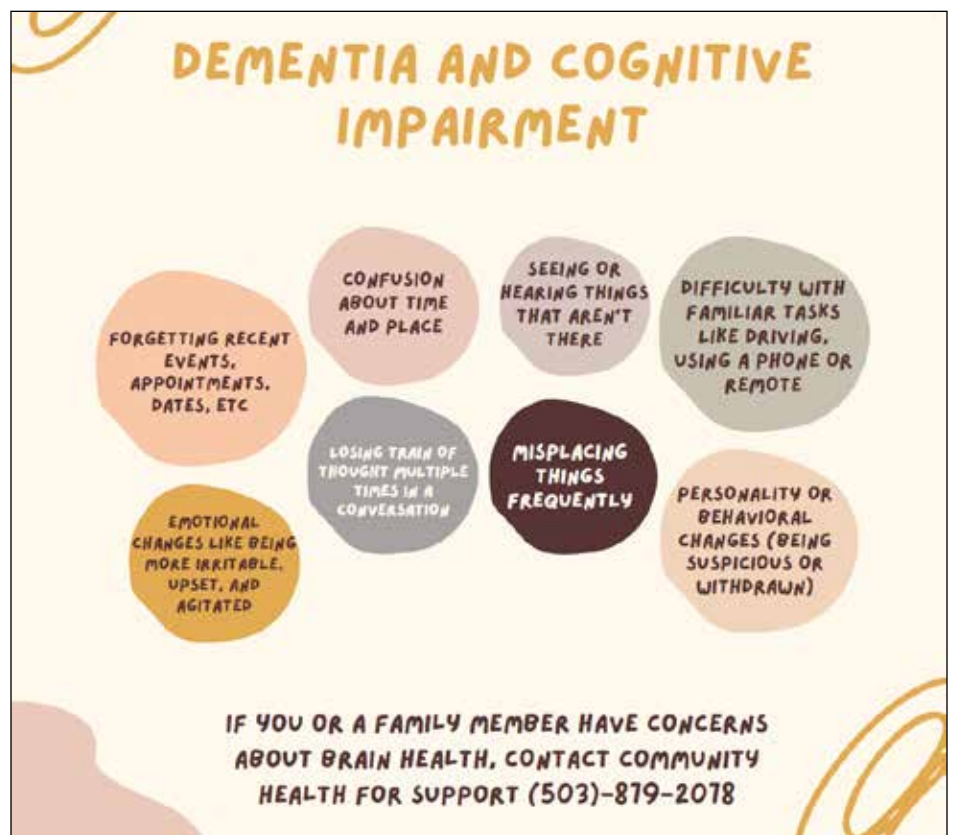
9615 Grand Ronde Road

Grand Ronde, Oregon, 97347

Phone: 503-879-2400

Email (preferred): [john.mercier@grandronde.org](mailto:john.mercier@grandronde.org)

More information will be available at the Tribe’s website: [www.grandronde.org/press-media/project-updates/transportation-projects](http://www.grandronde.org/press-media/project-updates/transportation-projects). ■



## West Valley Veterans Memorial Application

Deadline is January 15, 2025

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male/Female (Circle) \_\_\_\_\_

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

DOE: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of entry: \_\_\_\_\_

DOS: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of separation: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Any applications received after January 15, 2025, will be kept on file for inclusion to the Memorial in 2026.

## MARRIAGES IN TRIBAL COURT

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



### TABLE GAMES DEALER SCHOOL

(One class offered, maximum of 16 students)

**Learn to deal Blackjack and several other games!**

- Deadline to apply is **Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>** at 5pm
- 8 week training begins on **Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>**
- Dealer school ends on **Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>**
- **Class Times Monday-Friday:** Class times will be decided based on availability of applicants, between the hours of 8am and 5pm
- **Location:** Table Games Training Room at Spirit Mountain Casino

**Weekly gas cards and \$1,500 completion bonus for students!**

Fill out an Online Application at:  
**SpiritMountain.com/careers**




For more information or assistance, please email  
**employmentteam@spiritmtn.com**  
or call **503-879-3737**

## 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](http://www.SMARTReading.org). ■



### JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 20, 2024

Position Title	Grade	Min. Start Wage	Max Start Wage	Closing Date
Academic Coach 6-12	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
CFS Investigator	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Therapist	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Client Registration Specialist – Portland – Great Circle Recovery	8	\$24.60/hr.	\$31.84/hr.	Until Filled
Community Transition Case Manager	13	\$39.61/hr.	\$50.87/hr.	Until Filled
Compliance Manager – Gaming Commission	16	\$107,644.28/yr.	\$140,433.67/yr.	Until Filled
Employment Caseworker	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	12/23/24
Enrichment Coordinator Supervisor K-5	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
Health Promotion Specialist – Community Health	7	\$22.36/hr.	\$29.00/hr.	12/30/24
Housekeeper – Swing Shift	5	\$18.86/hr.	\$24.07/hr.	Until Filled
IT Auditor	14	\$90,630.26/yr.	\$116,255.21/yr.	Until Filled
Licensed Practical Nurse – Adult Foster Care	12	\$36.01/hr.	\$46.31/hr.	Until Filled
Mental Health Therapist – Behavioral Health	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Mental Health Counselor – Sheridan – Great Circle Recovery	12	\$74,901.04/yr.	\$96,316.53/yr.	Until Filled
Peer Support Specialist – Behavioral Health	9	\$27.95/hr.	\$34.95/hr.	12/30/24
Police Officer	11	\$32.74/hr.	\$42.16/hr.	Until Filled
Preschool Teacher	10	\$29.76/hr.	\$38.39/hr.	Until Filled
Recovery House Program Manager – Sheridan - Great Circle Recovery	14	\$90,630.26/yr.	\$116,255.21/yr.	Until Filled
Staff Pharmacist – On-Call	19	\$66.30/hr.	\$89.72/hr.	Until Filled
Substance Use Disorder Therapist – Sheridan – Great Circle Recovery	10	\$61,901.69/yr.	\$79,848.88/yr.	Until Filled
Temporary Pool	-2	\$16.00/hr.	\$16.00/hr.	12/31/2024

**We have transitioned to a new applicant portal system. Returning applicants will need to create a new profile in UKG. Previous log-in credentials with Acquire are no longer valid.**

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

INTERVIEWS WILL BE GIVEN IN THE FOLLOWING RANKING ORDER:  
 1. Grand Ronde Tribal members.  
 (Qualified Grand Ronde Tribal members who show they meet the minimum qualifications of the position during the course of the screening and interview process will be given first consideration for hire and the recruitment process will end)  
 2. Tribal member spouses, parents and/or legal guardians of Grand Ronde Tribal member children and current regular employees.  
 3. External candidates.  
 Apply online at: [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org)



Presented by  
**NNACOE**  
NORTHWEST NATIVE AMERICAN  
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

School of  
**MEDICINE**  
OHSU

Applications Close  
January 20th, 2025

## TRIBAL HEALTH SCHOLARS

Tribal Health Scholars (THS) is a paid externship program that supports and inspires AI/AN high school students to envision themselves as healthcare professionals and to pursue education required for a career in healthcare.

Learn more at [nnacoe.org/tribal-health-scholars](http://nnacoe.org/tribal-health-scholars)

For more information or to request an application please contact:  
Katie at [murpkati@ohsu.edu](mailto:murpkati@ohsu.edu) or  
Isaac at [butleris@ohsu.edu](mailto:butleris@ohsu.edu)




POSTING TITLE	CLOSE DATE	WAGE/SALARY
Dealer School Student	1/9/2025	
Amore Buspendon (*Part-Time)	1/2/2025	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Hospitality Attendant (*Part-Time)	1/2/2025	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Amore Waitstaff (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$14.70/hr. DOE + Tips
Assistant Banquet Manager	Until Filled	\$48,329.22/yr. DOE
Assistant Food and Beverage Manager	Until Filled	\$48,329.22/yr. DOE
Casino Beverage Waitstaff (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$14.70/hr. DOE + Tips
Cook	Until Filled	\$18.29/hr. DOE
Kitchen Steward (*Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$18.02/hr. DOE
Pastry Sous Chef	Until Filled	\$48,329.22/yr. DOE
Slot Floor Supervisor	Until Filled	\$23.24/hr. DOE
Table Games Dealer (Full-Time & *Part-Time)	Until Filled	\$14.70/hr. DOE + Tips

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

**NOTICE**

We have transitioned to a new applicant portal system. Returning applicants will need to create a new account on UKG. Previous log-in credentials will not be valid.

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

**SPIRIT MOUNTAIN CASINO EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

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

✉ [employmentteam@spiritmtn.com](mailto:employmentteam@spiritmtn.com) <https://www.spiritmountain.com/careers>  
Call (503) 879-3737 for application assistance.



# HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

## Cervical Health Awareness Month

January is recognized as Cervical Health Awareness Month, a time to highlight the importance of cervical health and encourage proactive measures to prevent cervical cancer.

### Understanding cervical cancer

Cervical cancer occurs in the cells of the cervix, the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. It is primarily caused by persistent infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection. While most HPV infections resolve on their own, some high-risk types can lead to cervical cancer over time.

Globally, cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women, but it is highly preventable and treatable when detected early.

### Key steps to maintain cervical health

#### 1. Regular screening tests

- o The pap smear test detects abnormal cervical cells that may develop into cancer.
- o The HPV test identifies high-risk HPV infections that could lead to cell changes. Guidelines recommend starting screening at age 21, with regular follow-ups based on age and test results.

#### 2. HPV vaccination

The HPV vaccine is a powerful tool to prevent cervical cancer. It protects against the most common cancer-causing HPV types. The vaccine is most effective when administered before exposure to HPV, ideally between the ages of 9 and 12. However, it is available up to age 45 for those who may benefit.

#### 3. Practice safe sexual health

Using condoms and limiting the number of sexual partners can reduce the risk of HPV infection. Open communication about sexual health with partners is also essential.

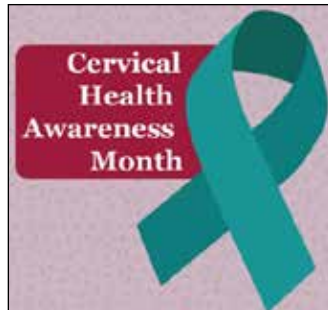
#### 4. Follow-up care

Abnormal screening results may require additional tests or procedures. Timely follow-up ensures that any issues are addressed early, preventing the development of cervical cancer.

### How you can take action

- Schedule your screening: If you're due for a pap or HPV test, make an appointment with your healthcare provider.
- Spread the word: Share information about cervical health with friends and family. Awareness can save lives.

With regular screenings, HPV vaccination, and informed choices, cervical cancer can be largely prevented, empowering women to lead healthier lives. Take action today for yourself and the women in your life — because prevention truly is the best cure. ■



## Attention to Tribal members with Medicare

Previously, Shasta had a contract with Medicare to automatically roll over outstanding balances once Medicare paid. At this point in time, Forest County does not have that in place, but they are working on it. It's a contract, so it's going to take some time. Be sure to take your new cards with you to give to your providers.

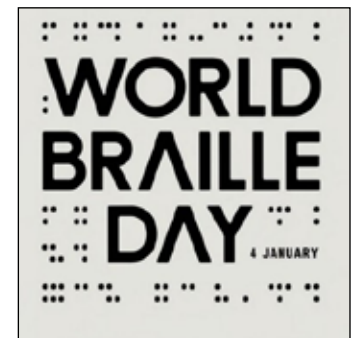
If you are receiving bills from your providers after Medicare processes, you can drop them off here at the clinic (patient check-in) or you can call FCP at 715-478-4610 to provide the information or you can email them if that is an option at [FCPInsurance@fcp-nsn.gov](mailto:FCPInsurance@fcp-nsn.gov).

We know this transition has been rocky and we are right in the thick of it with you. We appreciate your patience! Hopefully we'll start seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

hayu masi,  
HWC Admin

## World Braille Day

Every year on Jan. 4, the world comes together to celebrate World Braille Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of Braille as a means of communication and empowerment for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. This day honors the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of the tactile writing system that has transformed lives globally. Beyond communication and education, Braille also plays a critical role in advancing health equity and promoting well-being.



### The role of Braille in health accessibility

For individuals with visual impairments, accessing health-related information can be challenging. Braille ensures that vital health resources, such as medication labels, appointment reminders and dietary guidelines are accessible.

Consider this: Properly labeled medications in Braille can prevent dangerous errors in dosing, while health pamphlets and nutritional guides in Braille empower individuals to make informed decisions about their wellness. This simple tactile system can mean the difference between independence and reliance on others for health-related tasks.

### Health challenges faced by the visually impaired

Globally, more than 2.2 billion people experience some form of visual impairment. Without accessible health information, these individuals face significant barriers, including:

- Delayed diagnoses due to inaccessible medical forms.
- Increased risk of chronic conditions because of limited access to preventive care and health education.
- Mental health concerns, including isolation and stress, stemming from a lack of autonomy in managing health needs.

World Braille Day sheds light on these issues, advocating for inclusive healthcare practices.

### Have burning questions about Braille?

Are there different languages of Braille like there are sign language? No, Braille is considered a code where there are six dots used and considering their combination, they could represent numbers, letters and even punctuation.

Why is there Braille on the keypads at ATM machines? Depending on the cause of vision impairment, some drivers are able to use special glasses to help them drive. Having Braille on the keypad is also beneficial for people with low vision or those who forgot their reading glasses at home.

What about Braille users and touch screen phones? Most smartphone have something called the Perkins keyboard, which can be set up through the phone's accessibility settings. This type of keyboard utilizes three keys on each side of the screen with a large 'SPACE BAR' in the middle. Users are able to type using combinations of the keys to write their messages.

### A call to action on World Braille Day

World Braille Day is more than a celebration — It's a reminder of the ongoing need for advocacy and innovation to support the visually impaired community. By investing in Braille resources and inclusive healthcare practices, we can create a world where health information is accessible to all, empowering individuals to live healthier, more independent lives. ■

## Attention Tribal members: This is an update on ID cards, past due bills and how to contact FCP.

Great news! We were informed that ALL cards are in the mail, so you should be seeing yours soon.

For those of our members who may be receiving past due bills, or have bills with dates of service prior to the TPA switch on July 1, 2024, contact FCPID at the information provided below:

**Forest County Potawatomi Insurance Department (FCPID)**

**FCPID Customer Service: 715-478-4610**

**Fax number: 715-478-4799**

**Email address: [fcpinsurance@fcp-nsn.gov](mailto:fcpinsurance@fcp-nsn.gov)**

OR log into their portal:

<https://services.hi-techhealth.com/FP1/pages/signon.shtml>

If you haven't logged into the FCP Portal before, your username is GRC0100XXXX (if you live in the seven county service area) and GRT0100XXXX if you live outside of the service area. The XXXX will be your Tribal ID number, just like it was with Shasta.

Password is the Tribal members DOB: (mmddyyyy) no dashes or slashes. You will be asked to reset your password. It should be 11 characters: GRC(or T)0100XXXX (X = Tribal ID)

If you don't see your claims in the portal, use the email above or call FCP to talk with Customer Service.

We know frustration is high. We are in it with you and we thank everyone for their patience. Our hope is that things smooth out quickly.

hayu masi,

**Your skookum Team**



# Tistilal Village

7651 N. Hereford Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97203

**Affordable ONE-Bedroom Apartment For Rent**

**Call or email to request a  
Pre-Application at  
503-405-0384  
or  
tistilal@nwrecc.org.**



**Eligibility Requirements:**

**Occupancy**

- One Bedroom:  
1 to 3 Persons

**Income Limits (50% MFI):**

- 1 Person: \$41,300
- 2 Persons: \$47,200
- 3 Persons: \$53,100

**RENT AMOUNT:**

- One Bedroom: \$990

*Minimum monthly income is 1.5x rent amount unless household has voucher/rent assistance.*

*\*Phone, cable and internet not included.*

*\*Utilities Included*



# Tistilal Village

7651 N. Hereford Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97203

**AFFORDABLE STUDIO APARTMENT FOR RENT**

**First Full Month Rent FREE**



**Eligibility Requirements:**

**Occupancy:**

- Studio: 1 to 2 persons

**Income Limits (50% MFI):**

- 1 Person: \$41,300
- 2 Persons: \$47,200

**RENT AMOUNT:**

- Studio: \$930

*Minimum monthly income is 1.5x rent amount unless household has voucher/rent assistance.*

*\*Utilities Included*

*\*Phone, cable and internet not included.*

**Call or email to request a  
Pre-Application**

**503-405-0384  
or  
tistilal@nwrecc.org**

