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# Smoke Signals

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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

## U.S. House passes bill to amend Reservation Act

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C. – After more than six years of work, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is one step away from streamlining the process of how it takes land into trust.

On Tuesday, Dec. 6, the U.S. House of Representatives approved amendments to the Grand Ronde Reservation Act that mirror those already approved by the Senate.

All that is missing for the amendments to become law is the signature of President Barack Obama.

“The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde would like to thank the Oregon delegation for their support in advancing this important piece of legislation,” Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno said.

The Senate bill, introduced by Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden and co-sponsored by Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley, was approved on July 14, 2016, and sent to the House of Representatives.

The House bill was sponsored by Oregon Rep. Kurt Schrader.

“This legislation is supported by the commissioners in Polk, Tillamook and Yamhill counties, who, like us, are focused on making their governments more efficient and using their revenues more wisely,” Leno said. “This legislation will enable the Tribe to more efficiently move the land it owns into reservation status, which is historically a very complex and time-consuming process.

“The Tribe and its neighboring counties continue to work cooperatively as partners in this and other matters that improve the quality of life for our members and the people of the West Valley.”

The amendments, once signed by President Obama, will end the current two-step process that requires the Grand Ronde Tribe take each piece of former reservation land into trust with approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and

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Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Kalea Liebelt, left, gets help from her brother Nacoma making a snowman after the book “Snowmen at Christmas” was read to children by Tribal Library Aide Rachelle Kellogg during the Tribal Council Christmas Party. See more photos on page 15.**

## Season for Santa

**O**n Sunday, Dec. 4, the annual Tribal Council Christmas Party was held in the Tribal gym. Santa, aka Tribal Elder Steve Bobb Sr., stopped by to visit with children, who had their pictures taken with him and they told him what they want for Christmas. Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno was master of ceremonies, the Tribal Library staff provided a snowman-making activity, lunch was served, drawings for door prizes took place and, as always, children sang Christmas carols to end the party. Almost 400 people attended the event.



**Children sing “Jingle Bells” during the Tribal Council Christmas Party.**

## Tribe to end pre-employment testing for marijuana

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

**T**he Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde will no longer screen for marijuana use during its pre-employment processes at Spirit Mountain Casino and the Tribal government, according to a staff directive included in the Nov. 30 Tribal Council meeting packet.

The directive, approved by six Tribal Council members, instructed General Manager David Fullerton to remove THC – tetrahydrocannabinol, the principal psychoactive



*“The only change is you can test positive for THC at hiring and it won’t impede you from getting a job here, but once you’re hired you fall under the same provisions of a drug-free work environment. ... Everyone who is hired is expected not to have THC in their system.”*

**~ General Manager David Fullerton**

ingredient in cannabis – from the drug screen panel that all potential new employees are screened for before being hired.

The decision is a slight softening of the Tribe’s position on recreational marijuana use that was spurred by Spirit Mountain Casino’s recent

difficulties in recruiting new employees.

“Where it started is with SMGI (Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc.,” Fullerton said. “They implemented the policy change first to address recruitment in some positions. Obviously, the legalization in the state has probably broadened the use of marijuana and they were struggling in getting applicants for certain positions. So our response was for consistency. If we’re not

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