

43 employees honored for 591 years of service

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Forty-three Tribal employees, all hired in the last quarter of the year, were recognized for a combined 591 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe during an awards ceremony held Friday, Jan. 13, in the Tribal gym.

The event was originally scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 12, but Tribal offices were closed by inclement weather on Wednesday, Jan. 11, and did not re-open until 10 a.m. Thursday. However, Human Resources provided Smoke Signals with an advance list of employees being honored.

With every day she works, Health & Wellness Center Business Office Manager Tresa Mercier sets a longevity record with the Tribe that will be difficult to surpass. She was honored for her 32nd year of working for the Tribe.

Two more Merciers – Tribal Librarian Marion and Acting Tribal Employment Rights Office Manager John – were honored for reaching their 26th year of service to the Tribe.

Hitting the 21-year mark were Social Services Department Manager Dana Ainam, Recruitment/Employee Relations Administrator Daphney Colton, Asset Inventory Specialist Jerry George, Employee Benefits Administrator Tammy Gould, Member Services Administrative Assistant Hollie Mercier and Compensation/HRIS Administrator Candy Scranton.

Ceded Lands Manager Michael Karnosh rounded out the employees reaching or surpassing two



Smoke Signals file photo

Health & Wellness Center Business Office Manager Tresa Mercier reached her 32nd year of employment with the Grand Ronde Tribe and was honored for her employment longevity at the quarterly Years of Service Awards held Friday, Jan. 13, in the Tribal gym.

decades of service by reaching the 20-year mark.

All employees reaching 20 years or more received a bonus check and Karnosh received an additional gift card.

Other employees recognized for their service of five years or more during the ceremony included:

19 years: Dental Assistant Donette Spaulding.

18 years: Health Information Supervisor Lillian Engel.

17 years: Chinuk Language Specialist Crystal Szcpanski.

16 years: Planning & Grants Development Manager Kim Rogers, Health & Wellness Accreditation

Coordinator Jill Hafiger and Lead Shipping & Receiving Clerk Nathan Rolston.

15 years: Home Improvement Coordinator Donald Coon.

14 years: Police Chief Jake McKnight and Web Designer Willie Mercier.

13 years: High School Adult Education Chinuk Wawa Teacher Kathy Cole and Employee Relations Specialist Eva Simmons.

12 years: Early Head Start Home-Based Visitor Shawn Bobb and Early Childhood Education Cook Rebecca Goeserich.

11 years: Early Head Start Teacher Jessica Cruickshank,

Child Abuse Investigator John Genera, Home Improvement Coordinator Loyal Hamilton and Gaming Commission Compliance Manager Rose Smith.

10 years: Technology Technician Joe Loomis and Purchased/Referred Care Specialist Tauni McCammon.

9 years: Senior Staff Attorney Jennifer Biesack, Cultural Education Specialist Brian Krehbiel, Housing Administrative Program Manager Joan Dugger and Wellness Driver Arnoldo Moralez.

8 years: Billings/Auditing Specialist Desiree Allen, Cultural Education Specialist Flicka Lucero, Pharmacy Clerk Isaiah Sherwood and Foster Care Coordinator Amanda Mercier.

7 years: X-ray Technician Niki Mosley.

6 years: TERO Secretary Keri Kimsey and Chinuk Wawa Teacher Jeff Mercier.

5 years: Security Officer Daniel Hyatt, Engineering and Public Works Manager Jesse White and Pharmacy Technician Stephanie Wolfe.

Tribal employees were served breakfast and after the awards were handed out a raffle was conducted that included door prizes and awards of additional administrative time.

All employees recognized received a bonus check and those reaching the 10-year mark also received a Tribal Pendleton blanket. ■

Editor's note: This story was written in advance of the event to meet Smoke Signals printing deadlines.

Tribal Council adopts General Council ordinance

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council adopted a new General Council ordinance at its Thursday, Jan. 12, meeting that will govern how the nine monthly meetings are held annually.

Tribal Council held a rare Thursday morning meeting after a winter storm forced closure of the Governance Center in Grand Ronde on Wednesday, Jan. 11, and postponement of the regularly scheduled 4 p.m. meeting.

Staff Attorney Holly Partridge said at the Tuesday, Jan. 10, Legislative Action Committee meeting that only one Tribal member submitted a comment about the proposed ordinance when it was sent out for a first reading.

The ordinance is designed to set forth uniform policies and procedures regarding the powers of General Council and to facilitate orderly and productive meetings, which are usually held the first Sunday of the month from September through May annually. (The June General Council meeting, held the last Sunday of the month, is reserved for Tribal Council nominations only.)

For example, the ordinance states that if a quorum of 30 Tribal members is not present when the meeting is scheduled to begin, the

Tribal Council chair will announce a 15-minute grace period to reach quorum before the meeting is canceled.

The ordinance also designates that every September meeting will be an update from Spirit Mountain Casino, every October meeting will be an overview of Tribal investments and every November meeting will review the proposed budget for the next year. It also requires one General Council meeting be held each year in Portland and Eugene.

Regarding advisory votes, the new ordinance requires community meetings to seek membership input concerning possible advisory vote topics be held in Portland, Eugene and Grand Ronde. Any approved advisory votes will “generally be conducted in conjunction with a September Tribal Council election.”

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Appointed Andrew Freeman to the Fish & Wildlife Committee with a term ending in March 2018;
- Appointed Izaiah Fisher to the Youth Council with a term ending in March 2018 or until he graduates from high school;
- Approved the 2017 annual agreement with the U.S. Department of the Interior totaling \$2.7 million in self-governance funding;
- Approved a contract between the

Health & Wellness Center and OSIS for technical expertise and service management of a new electronic health records system. The \$149,121 contract will save the Tribe about \$45,000 annually by reducing the need for one full-time employee;

- Re-appointed Tribal Council Vice Chair Cheryl A. Kennedy as the Tribe's representative on the Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services with a two-year term expiring in December 2018;
- And approved the enrollment of two infants into the Tribe because they meet the membership requirements outlined in the Enrollment Ordinance and Tribal Constitution.

Also included in the Jan. 12 Tribal Council packet were authorizations to proceed that approved a 1.7 percent cost-of-living increase in 2017 for Tribal governmental employees, approved a comment letter for the Columbia River Systems Operations Environmental Impact Statement, and approved revised imagery and retention of the name “Indians” by the Scappoose School District.

Tribal Lands Manager Jan Looking Wolf Reibach performed the cultural drumming and singing to open the meeting.

The meeting, in its entirety, can be viewed on the Tribal website, www.grandronde.org, by clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

Food & Health Community Conversation
 Thursday, Feb. 9 - 6-8pm
 West Valley Community Campus
 [256 SE Washington St., Willamina]
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 RSVP: FRANCENE AMBROSE, 503-879-3663