

# Education Board OKs Grand Ronde-Molalla mascot agreement

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

WOODBURN — The Oregon Board of Education approved the third Native American mascot agreement between the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and a school district during its Thursday, May 25, meeting held at the Woodburn School District.

The board signed off on the Tribe's agreement with the Molalla River School District, which is changing its logo to a bear and coyote among mountain-side trees in an effort to retain its Indians mascot name.

Tribal Council approved the agreement on March 22 and then it had to be sent to the state Board of Education for approval before it becomes binding.

The Education Board approved the Tribe's agreement with the Banks School District on March 23 and OK'd the agreement with the Scappoose School District on April 27.

The approved 10-year agreement will be reviewed annually for the first five years and again during the ninth year by the two parties. It requires the Molalla River School



District to use the Grand Ronde Tribe's fourth- and eighth-grade history curriculums and create a Native Club for high school students who want to participate.

Molalla River started using the Tribe's fourth-grade curriculum in 2015 and agreed to start using the eighth-grade lessons by this spring.

In 2012, the Oregon Board of Education adopted a rule that prohibited public schools from using Native American mascots on or after July 1, 2017. However, the Oregon Legislature became involved in 2014 and mandated exceptions to the outright ban that allow school districts to enter into agreements with one of

the nine federally recognized Native American Tribes in Oregon to use a more culturally appropriate Native mascot that is associated with or is significant to the Tribe.

School districts that do not enter into approved agreements by July 1 will have to cease using their Native mascots per the original intent of the Education Board's ban.

Cindy Hunt, Department of Education Government and Legal Affairs manager, said in a previous meeting that the department was aware of 16 school districts in Oregon using Native American mascots. So far, she said, eight have entered into or are negotiating agreements with an Oregon Tribe, five have changed their mascots to something not related to Native Americans, and three have unknown plans.

For instance, the Marcola School District northeast of Eugene voted to change its Native American mascot to the Mustangs to comply with the board rule.

Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno testified that the agreement with the Molalla River School District is special to the Grand Ronde Tribe because the Molalla are one of the five prominent Tribes in the Grand Ronde confederation.

"It's one of the feathers on our

medallions," Leno said. "It's a very special one. It's one we felt that needed to really make sure we have it correct and now the special thing is that they will actually be able to teach our history and our culture right there at that school. I would just like to thank the board for their understanding that this is really important to Grand Ronde to have accomplished this one."

Molalla River Superintendent Tony Mann testified that the school district and larger community are grateful for the commitment to "teach the truth" regarding Native American history in Oregon.

"It's a learning opportunity that the community is chomping at the bit to understand more deeply," Mann said. "I see this as a huge opportunity to move a majority white community forward in their own understanding of the history of the Native people."

During the same meeting, the Board of Education approved an agreement between the Douglas County School District in Roseburg and the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians and held a first reading regarding an agreement between the Rogue River School District and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. ■

## Social Services has bike helmets

The Tribe's Social Services Department has bicycle helmets available for distribution. Those needing a helmet should visit the department and sign a helmet application, as well as get fitted.

For more information, contact Social Services at 503-879-2034. ■

### Police Department handing out safety awards

Grand Ronde children who wear a helmet while riding their bicycles may receive a safety award if they are seen by members of the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department.

Lt. Tim Hernandez said Tribal police will start handing out the safety awards immediately to community children found wearing their bicycle helmets on a consistent basis.

The safety award is actually a coupon for a free ice cream at Grand Ronde Station near Spirit Mountain Casino on Highway 18 or at Grand Ronde Market at the corner of Grand Ronde Road and Highway 18.

Hernandez said the Tribal Housing Department donated \$300 to fund the effort.

"The stores are looking into asking their vendors if they would like to participate," Hernandez said. "We also have our officers donating to the cause as well."

For more information about the program, contact Hernandez at 503-879-1824. ■

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Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Dental Clinic  
Phone 503-879-2020  
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