

Veterans news: Recent events include reaching out to Tribal vets about benefits

By Buster Lane, Tribal Veterans Representative

Hello veterans, young and old alike! I want to share some recent events affecting Tribal and non-Tribal veterans.

On Nov. 16, 2024, we hosted a veterans’ booth at Chinook Winds during the day of the Restoration Pow-Wow. Participants included Keith Barnes from the Lincoln County Veterans Service Office (VSO); Jon Taylor, the state VSO for Oregon Tribal veterans; and myself. While I am not yet a VSO, I am working toward that goal with the guidance of both Keith and Jon.

Jon’s primary role is to assist Tribal veterans from all Oregon Tribes. The state of Oregon recognizes the challenges Tribal veterans face when seeking and applying for benefits they’ve earned through military service.

Jon’s position helps bridge that gap as Tribes work to establish their own VSOs. Some Tribes have already reached this goal and now have experienced VSOs in place. Both Jon and Keith bring a wealth of knowledge and are actively assisting both Tribal and non-Tribal veterans.

During the event, we handed out free T-shirts to Siletz Tribal veterans. We still have sizes 2X to 4X available. If you didn’t get one but would like to, please contact me to arrange pickup. You can reach me at VeteransCoordinator@ctsi.nsn.us or 541-272-9054.

We had many good conversations with people asking Keith and Jon questions. It’s important to note that even if you applied for benefits in the past and were denied, recent changes in state and federal VA policies now recognize long-term effects of hazardous chemicals, hearing issues and more.

I encourage every veteran to register with the state and federal systems, even if it’s been a while. The longer you wait, the more time-consuming it becomes. This isn’t just for your benefit – it can also impact your spouse and children in the future. Remember, you’ve earned these benefits through your service.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Dedication – Nov. 22, 2024

I had the honor of attending the dedication of the first phase of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the state capitol in Salem. This beautiful and meaningful memorial is located at the southwest corner of the capitol grounds.

The ceremony was deeply moving with remarks by several notable speakers, including Gov. Tina Kotek, State Sen. James I. Manning, Rep. Rick Lewis, Andrea Summerlin from the Department of Oregon Veterans, and Steve Bates, president of the Vietnam War Memorial Fund.

Thao Duc Tu, president of the Vietnamese Community of Oregon, and several Vietnam veterans also shared personal stories of their service and the difficult receptions they faced upon returning home.

State Sen. Mark Meek, who served as the master of ceremonies, led the crowd in singing “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” It was a powerful moment that reminded me of my grade school days when we sang this song regularly in music class – something you rarely hear now.

The Vietnam War, fought between 1955 and 1975, deeply impacted our nation. More than 2.7 million Ameri-



Courtesy photo

Siletz Tribal Veterans Rep Buster Lane and Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Dedication

cans served, including more than 500,000 on the ground by 1969. The war claimed 58,318 American lives, including 790 Oregonians. Tragically, four Oregon families lost two sons each.

This memorial honors those who served and sacrificed, but it also rep-

resents a place of healing for veterans who faced hostility upon returning to the U.S. For many, the experience was jarring – they went from risking their lives in combat to being met with indifference or even outright anger from the public.

Some were physically or verbally harassed while traveling in uniform through airports and many felt abandoned by the government and society. This memorial acknowledges those sacrifices and offers a space to reflect on what they endured during and after the war.

The names on the memorial wall are listed by hometown, illustrating how deeply the war touched communities across Oregon. If you haven’t visited yet, I encourage you to do so.

If you’d like to support future additions to the memorial, you can make a charitable contribution to the Vietnam War Memorial Fund at Vietnwarmem@aol.com, P.O. Box 1448, Boring, OR 97009, or by calling 503-663-6271.

Thank you for your service and dedication. Let’s continue supporting one another as we honor our shared history and sacrifices.



Homeowner assistance funds available to help with payment

The Siletz Tribal Housing Department is pleased to announce that it has funding available to provide significant mortgage and utility assistance through the Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) Program.

The purpose of the HAF Program is to mitigate financial hardships associated with the coronavirus pandemic by providing funds to prevent homeowner mortgage delinquencies, defaults, foreclosures, loss of utilities or home energy services and displacements of homeowners experiencing financial hardship after Jan. 21, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The HAF Program provides emergency assistance for the payment of mortgages and utilities for low-income Siletz Tribal households who have disproportionately suffered from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The HAF Program is designed to assist Tribal households with incomes at or below 150 percent of the median income who face potential foreclosure or homelessness because they are unable to pay mortgage and utility payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applicants who want to participate in the HAF Program need to com-

plete a written application provided by STHD. The HAF application can be obtained by contacting STHD at 541-444-8310 to have the application emailed or mailed to their home address. Applications are also available at the STHD office at 555 Tolowa Court, Siletz, OR 97380.

Any questions regarding the HAF Program can be directed to:

K.C. Short, Financial Services Manager/HAF Program Processor

Phone: 541-444-8310

Email: kerrys@ctsi.nsn.us

CTSI Jobs – Employment information at ctsi.nsn.us

Note: “Open Until Filled” vacancies may close at anytime. The Tribe’s Indian Preference policy will apply. Tribal government will not discriminate in selection because of race, creed, age, sex, color, national origin, physical handicap, marital status, politics, membership or non-membership in an employee organization.

CTSI constantly is looking for temporary employees to cover vacancy, vacations, maternity leave and extended sick leave. If you are looking for temporary work that can last from 2-12 weeks, please submit an application for the temp pool.