

TRCI: More than 135 people attend

Continued from 1A completely.”

During the grand entry, inmates lined up and stepped in rhythm to the sound of the pulsing drum. Some dressed in full regalia while others remained in their blue TRCI-issued T-shirts and shorts.

Trish Jordan, a member of the Creek Tribe from Oklahoma, serves as director of Red Lodge Transition Services and has spent 17 years as a religious services volunteer for the Oregon Department of Corrections. She and fellow volunteers were hard at work Saturday morning preparing lunch, which included fry bread and traditional First Foods such as salmon, venison and huckleberries.

The powwow is a celebration of life, Jordan said, and offers a chance for American Indian prisoners to reunite with their families and reconnect with their culture.

“It’s important for these men to have that identity of who they are,” Jordan said. “They can hopefully carry that on outside this institution.”

American Indians make up an estimated 1.8 percent of Oregon’s population, yet account for approximately 6 percent of the state’s prison inmates, Jordan said.

“The disparity numbers are huge for Native Americans. It’s hard to find a native family that hasn’t gone through this,” she said. “We recognize the potential in people. We want to give them hope, that their life can be different.”

This year’s TRCI powwow also received a \$1,500 grant from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, which went toward supplies for making homemade gifts and art, such as paintings, beadwork and dream catchers.

One large backdrop featuring bears, wolves and eagles was made by inmate Darren OneAll, affiliated with the Oglala Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. He wore a red ribbon shirt Saturday, which was provided by Red Lodge Transition Services, along with golden eagle feathers at the ends of his braids.

OneAll is serving at least 25 years at TRCI for charges stemming from a kidnapping and sexual assault case. His earliest release date has tentatively been set for 2033.

Hosting a powwow at the prison allows the inmates to be who they really are, OneAll said.

“You can’t even imagine how some of these guys feel out here today,” OneAll said. “You touch the ground, in a reverent way. You breathe the air, in a reverent way ... This is a fulfillment of who



TRCI inmate Darren “Two Bears” OneAll stands near his painting, displayed in an art show at Saturday’s powwow at the Umatilla prison.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



TRCI inmate Rick “White Eagle” Weaver uses a feather to waft the smoke of burning sage into the face of Corrections Officer Key on Saturday before a powwow at the prison. The smudging ceremony uses burning herbs to purify and drive away negative energy.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



Powwow dancers greet native Two Rivers Correctional Institution inmates during Saturday’s powwow at the prison in Umatilla.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

our ancestors were.”

Rick Emerick, TRCI recreation specialist, said the prison had been trying to host a powwow for 16 years prior to last year’s inaugural event. In order to attend, he said inmates have to be actively involved in American Indian culture.

Participation has been strong over two years, Emerick said, and they intend to carry on the powwow as an annual gathering.

“It’s not just an activity. It’s them getting back to their religion,” Emerick said. “I think, all in all, it’s gone very well.”

POT: Other tribes have legalized sale, production

Continued from 1A

dangerous pharmaceuticals for those suffering from diabetes, cancer, migraines and arthritis to name a few,” he wrote. “Youth have the most at stake here, as abuse will always be a concern. Education is important for us to come to a rational majority.”

In her questionnaire, Brigham said she voted against Measure 91, which legalized recreational marijuana in Oregon, but said options on tribal marijuana legalization needed to be developed before the CTUIR government took a position.

If the CTUIR eventually legalizes marijuana, it wouldn’t be the first tribe to

do it. The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation in central Oregon grow and cultivate its own marijuana, although it’s sold off-site at stores in Portland and Bend. Additionally, several tribes in Washington have come to agreements with the federal government and the state to sell marijuana

on tribal land.

Even without the referendums, tribal members will still have choices to make on Nov. 14. All nine positions on the Board of Trustees will be up for election.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

DAY 1: School returns

Continued from 1A

Once all of the students were successfully sent home and Petersen had conducted a quick staff meeting, she said she was anxious to begin applying the curriculum that staff had been working to put together to make each one of the school year’s days count.

Petersen’s background is in English as a second language and literacy development, so getting students reading and writing is a major passion for her. She said the staff’s goal is to get 100 percent of students reading at grade level by the end of the year. To do that she has been working with teachers on “going deeper” in implementing best practices, and has created a small but well-stocked “instructional resource library” adjacent to her office where teachers can check out the array of literature on education that she has built up over the

years. Petersen is also focused on improving attendance, increasing ESL work in the youngest grades and making sure all students are being challenged at their level, whether they are behind their peers or ahead of them. She calls it finding their “productive struggle.” “It’s when they’re getting pushed, but it’s not so hard they’re not learning anymore,” she said.

Petersen said one thing she appreciated about Hermiston School District is that the district cares more about whether something has been proven effective than whether it is the latest educational fad.

Schools across the district, including Sunset and Desert View, also welcomed new teachers on Monday. Petersen said Sunset’s new teachers include a former Sunset student and an educator who came to the school from Malaysia.

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