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SMOKE SIGNALS

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon

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Smoke signals

Historical Marker

Visitors will read the following narrative:

Indians inhabited Oregon's inland valleys for thousands of years before Euro-Americans began to arrive in the late 18th Century. In the early 1780s, and again in the 1830s, diseases spread by seafarers and fur trappers swept through Oregon's valleys killing most of the native population. The opening of the Oregon Trail in the 1840s increased pressure to remove the remaining Indians from their homelands.

In 1856, the U.S. Government created the Grand Ronde Reservation, and in the winter of 1857, federal troops forced the native people to leave their aboriginal lands and march to the reservation.

The Grand Ronde reservation, originally 70,000 acres, was later divided into individual parcels for the Indians, and "surplus" land was sold to non-Indians. In 1954, the Grand Ronde Tribe was "terminated," and all but 7-1/2 acres of the Tribe's land was sold. Termination meant the U.S. Government no longer recognized the Tribe or its people as Indians.

In 1983, after a prolonged and dedicated effort by tribal members and their supporters, the U.S. Government restored the Tribe to federal recognition. In 1988, Congress re-established a 9,811 acre reservation in the mountains north of Grand Ronde. The Tribe has since acquired additional land, built a community center, and developed education, health care, and other programs for tribal members. The Tribe has also embarked upon an ambitious economic development program as part of its plan to achieve self-sufficiency.

Historical Marker unveiled



Tammy Cook, Mark Mercier, Diana Robertson, Kathryn Harrison, and Andy Jenness pose next to the Historical Marker erected last month on Highway 18. The marker depicts the history of the Grand Ronde Tribe.

By Tracy Dugan

A historical marker was unveiled in Grand Ronde on July 18. Located on Highway 18, about one-quarter of a mile east of Grand Ronde Road, this is the 97th marker to be erected in Oregon's Historical Marker Program.

The marker depicts tribal photos and a summary of the history of the Grand Ronde Tribe and its people.

Tribal Council and staff members have been working on this marker project for a couple of years. The process involved meeting about location, text, and design of the marker.

At the dedication ceremony, Ila Dowd delivered the Lord's Prayer in Chinook jargon.

Guest speakers included Tom Bunn of the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners who said, "It has been my great pleasure to watch the growth and development of

this tribal community. My hope is that my children's children will increasingly recognize your rich history."

Other guests included Kris Olson, U.S. Attorney in Oregon; Tim Simmons, Assistant U.S. Attorney---tribal liaison; and Lois Hanson of the Travel Information Council.

Lois Hanson said the Historical Marker Program began in 1939, with the help of the Oregon Historical Society.

The marker program is administered by the Oregon Travel Information Council and is usually co-sponsored by a community group.

Historical markers preserve, honor, and educate the public about the history and geology of Oregon, and the diverse culture of its people.

The Tribe hopes the marker will be a point of interest for many tourists and visitors.