

## — Editorial and Opinion —

### Members' questions about USDA answered

By Tracy Dugan

*Smoke Signals* has received many questions and comments regarding an announcement we printed last month about the USDA Food Distribution Program. It should be noted, that all of our information regarding USDA comes directly from the Siletz Tribe's USDA warehouse in Siletz, Oregon.

Last month we read in the Siletz newsletter that all tribal members are eligible for a **one time** distribution of commodity food per year. We called the Siletz tribal office to verify that: 1) this information is correct; 2) Grand Ronde tribal members are also eligible for this service and; 3) the distribution dates for December are correct. The USDA staff at Siletz verified this information and gave us a phone number tribal members could call for further information.

The staff of *Smoke Signals* was not aware that every tribal member picking up commodities is required to fill out an application form and make an appointment. In fact, we have been told by regular clients that in the past, they simply arrived on a distribution day and were serviced without question.

Consequently, many Grand Ronde tribal members read this information regarding the one-time service and drove

to Salem on the distribution dates under the assumption they would simply have to show tribal identification to receive their commodities.

I spoke with the director of the USDA program and was told that the Salem distribution dates for December were booked solid with appointments. Tribal members who are not regular clients would need to make an appointment for January or pick up their commodities at the Siletz distribution. Again, all recipients of USDA commodities are required to fill out a four-page application form—even if you know you don't qualify for monthly distribution.

We would like to apologize to the members who travelled to Salem without appointments on distribution days and were turned away. This process may seem lengthy and excessive, especially for a one-time distribution.

Here at *Smoke Signals*, we understand how important the commodity program is to many tribal members. We realize that the regular USDA clients should have first priority at distribution.

Below is some helpful information regarding the USDA food distribution program. If you have any questions, please call the number for your area.

### Suggestion cards offered

I am the Quality Improvement Coordinator for the Health and Human Services Division. Many of the patients, clients and overall members do know me, as I have been employed with the Division for nearly two years. I would like your input as to how you perceive the services within the Division. It is the Health and Human Services Division's overall goal to maintain quality services.

There are several suggestion boxes in the departments within the Division. Please take a few moments to offer your comments as I read them monthly. If there is a comment that you would like to see addressed that is not offered from the questions on the suggestion cards, please feel free to contact me by mail or phone.

Thank you,  
Mary Alice Duran  
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde  
9615 Grand Ronde Road  
Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347  
1-800-422-0232, extension 2060

### Note from the editor

❶ **Letters and concerns of gaming commission.** In recent weeks some tribal members have asked us to explain in detail the role of the Grand Ronde Gaming Commission and its purpose in ensuring the security and reputation of the casino.

We hope the article on page 3 answers some of the questions tribal members have. If you have further questions, the phone number for the Gaming Commission is (503) 879-2362. The number for the Spirit Mountain Development Corporation offices is (503) 879-2350.

❷ **Smoke Signals.** Because of the wind storm during the week of December 11-15, the tribal offices lost power and were closed for several days. As a result, we were unable to meet our December 15 deadline. This issue of *Smoke Signals* is a consolidation of December 15 and January 1 issues. The next edition will be mailed out in mid-January. We regret any inconvenience this may have caused.

#### U.S.D.A Distribution

##### SALEM:

January 9, 10\*, 11

(\*distribution until 8 p.m.)

(503) 391-5760 — Only on distribution days.

2580 19th S.E. in Salem.

##### SILETZ:

January 23, 24, 25

1-800-922-1399 or (541) 444-4226

Swan Ave. in Siletz, right next to the new Admin. Building.

#### U.S.D.A Helpful Hints

•If you are having someone pick up food for you, please make sure that person is on your original application as the authorized representative. If they are not listed, your food will not be released to them. Notes will no longer be accepted.

•Clients please make sure that you stick to your appointment time. If you do not come in on your scheduled time, you will have to wait until the next available opening. Being prompt is very important.

•One time service clients will need to fill out an application form at the time of their appointment.

## Smoke Signals SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you have recently moved or plan on moving, let us know so you won't miss a single issue of your favorite newspaper. *Smoke Signals* is available to anyone at no cost. Just fill out this form below with your name and address, then mail it back to the *Smoke Signals*.

OLD ADDRESS:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NEW ADDRESS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SMOKE SIGNALS**

9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347 ATTN: Kim Mueller

#### EDITORIAL POLICY:

##### Letters From Our Readers

*Smoke Signals* is a publication of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. We have established an Editorial Policy to encourage input from readers about stories printed in *Smoke Signals*, as well as other tribal issues.

Letters must be printed or typed, and cannot exceed 300 words. *Smoke Signals* reserves the right to edit any letter for clarity and length, and to refuse publication of any letter or any part of a letter that may contain libelous statements or personal attacks. Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Smoke Signals*, tribal employees, or Tribal Council.

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