

General Council meeting

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 1998

Natural Resources Division gave its program report at the last General Council meeting, held on January 11. Each department within the division updated Tribal Council and the membership on the different areas the Division manages.

Jeff Kuust spoke about the tribal timber harvest and other accomplishments for 1997.

"For the calendar year of 1997, we harvested 3.7 million board feet of timber from the reservation. Our annual allowable cut is 5.7 million board feet," said Kuust. "Although we did not meet our goal this year, we still managed to bring in \$2.5 million dollars in revenue. The main reason why we did not reach our goal is that one of last year's sales will not be completely cut until this year."

Jeff Nepstad, Silviculture and Protection Specialist spoke about the forest work accomplishments in his department which included: pruning 23 acres; slash burning 85 acres; precommercial thinning of 101 acres; fire trailing of 19,000 feet or 117 acres; slashing 117 acres; netting 58 acres; budcapping 110 acres; and planing 110 acres. Mike Wilson, Lands Coordinator, discussed land acquisition activities from 1997, and intended activities for this year.

"This year we initiated discussions with the Forest Service and the BLM concerning the possibility of entering into a stewardship agreement with the Tribe. One goal for 1998 is to complete this agreement. Also, our plans are to aggressively pursue the lands in our Forest Acquisition Plan," said Wilson.

Kelly Doerksen, Fish and Wildlife Coordinator, said that his department continues to conduct surveys regarding all the wildlife and protected species on the reservation, including deer, elk, and the spotted owl. Kelly is responsible for supervising the summer youth crew and working with Kathleen Feehan on environmental quality issues.

"Through use of new equipment, we can monitor the temperature of every stream on the reservation," he said.

Marce Norwest, the reservation patrol officer, said that he continues to enjoy his job patrolling the roads of the reservation. He clears the roads of tree blow-downs, monitors hunters, forest fires, and woodcutters, helps and assists tourists who are visiting the reservation, and replaces signs and mile markers.

Finally, Cliff Adams, Division Manager, wrapped-up the report by saying, "We have a very fine staff and 1997 was an interesting year for us. We finished the year by moving into our new facility on Hebo Road. I know we would all like to thank the membership, Tribal Council, and the committee members for helping to complete such a beautiful facility for our Division."

Door Prize winners were as follows: Camille Mercier won \$75; Suzie Mooney won \$75; and Ken Gregg won \$100, which he donated to the Elders' Committee.

1998 budget approved; increase in Elders' pension

Tribal Council has approved the operating budget for 1998, which was previously published in *Smoke Signals* for tribal member review and comment. The budget includes an increase in the Elders' Pension Fund, which will move from \$300 to \$400 per month for every tribal member age 55 and older.

Questions raised at meeting answered

During the November 9 General Council meeting, tribal members presented Council with a series of questions regarding specific tribal issues. Because the Tribe recognizes the importance of these issues, these questions and their answers are being printed in *Smoke Signals* so all members can receive this important information.

Tribal Council wishes to remind all members that General Council meetings are held for the purpose of helping members become more aware of the current issues that affect them, and encourages members to call or write ahead of time with their questions, or attend a subcommittee meeting to present a particular question or concern. Remember, according to the Grand Ronde Tribal Constitution, tribal members should act as advisors to Tribal Council, and help them to understand particular issues that affect us all. Article II, Section 1, part (f) reads, "...Make advisory recommendations to the Tribal Council upon a majority vote of those usually voting." A copy of the constitution is printed in your Tribal Resource Directory, or you may obtain a copy by calling the tribal offices. Tribal Council encourages all members to be active participants in their tribal government.

1. DO TRIBAL MEMBERS NEED TO WORRY ABOUT LOSING THEIR JOB IF THEY SPEAK UP?

Tribal Policy: The conduct of all employees of the Tribe are guided by the Tribal Ethical Standards Ordinance, the Personnel Management Ordinance and the Human Resources Manual. Ordinances are Tribal Laws that have been reviewed by the General Membership and adopted by the Tribal Council. The Human Resources Manual are the policies issued to comply with the Tribal Law. As long as tribal employees comply with Tribal Laws and approved policies when they raise issues or speak up they should not worry about losing their job. Any employee who is concerned about this issue should review the Tribal Ethical Standards Ordinance, the Personnel Management Ordinance and the Human Resources Manual. The Human Resources Division, the Executive Office and the Tribal Legal Division are also available to employees should they have questions regarding Tribal Law or the Human Resource Manual.

Spirit Mountain Casino Policy: Although we encourage all of our employees to resolve problems at Spirit Mountain through normal, company channels, no one will lose his or her job or incur other disciplinary action for "speaking up." Our policy states as follows: "904.1: It is the policy of Spirit Mountain Gaming, Inc. that employees should have the opportunity to present their work-related complaints and to appeal management decisions through a dispute resolution or grievance procedure...Employees are not to be penalized for proper use of the grievance procedure."

2. HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE SENT TO LAS VEGAS AND WHY?

Twenty-five Spirit Mountain employees attended the World Gaming Congress and Expo. Four Board members and a few Council members also attended the conference. There are two primary reasons why our employees must attend this conference: education and review of new products.

a.) Education: This was the largest and most sophisticated conference in the gaming industry. The speakers are the leading experts in their fields and the subjects cover every aspect of the gaming business. Because we are located in a non-gaming jurisdiction, many of our employees do not have experience in the gaming industry and this conference was the place to acquire this knowledge. Las Vegas is the closest and least expensive place to go for this conference. The conference addressed political and other issues that are important for Council members to stay up on and the general overview helped educate our Board members, none of whom are from the gaming industry.

b.) Product review: This is the exposition where vendors roll out their new products. All of our directors (5 people) and most of our managers (9 people) must at-

tend this event to determine if new products can increase revenue. In the gaming business, products can generate thousands — even millions — of dollars in additional revenue and profits. For example, at last year's Las Vegas Expo we found a new video slot machine that we believe will generate about \$100 per day, per machine in additional revenue for our casino. With only 20 machines, that is about \$700,000 in additional revenue per year. We have to research new products and this is the most efficient and cost-effective way to do it.

3. WHY CAN'T TRIBAL MEMBERS STAY ON THEIR OWN LAND?

Certainly, if a tribal member has title to his/her own land they are entitled to stay on that specific property. The reservation, however, is land where the title is in the name of the United States Government held in Trust for the Tribe. The reservation has been granted for the benefit of all tribal members and not specific individual tribal members. The Tribe regained 9,811 acres of the original reservation when President Ronald Reagan signed the Grand Ronde Reservation Act into law on September 9, 1988. The characteristics of the 9,811 acres is forest land and very little, if any, would be acceptable for homesites. The availability of water, sewer, electricity, and road systems do not exist and would not be feasible to construct on this acreage. Recognizing the need for homesites and housing, the Tribe has been acquiring lands in the Grand Ronde area for the specific purpose of developing housing. These newly acquired lands are being converted to trust and do have water, sewer and electrical service to the site and road systems relatively close. The Housing Authority is currently working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development on developing these sites into multiple housing units. Once these units are completed they will be available for occupancy to Tribal Member families. Many of you who live in the Grand Ronde area are aware of the current moratorium on new water hook-ups. The Grand Ronde Community Water Association controls the current water system and the association is not a tribal organization. The Association is developing new sources of water in hopes of providing adequate supplies in the future.

4. WHY ARE VETERANS LOSING BENEFITS MONEYS BECAUSE THEY RECEIVE TRIBAL MONEY?

The Veterans Administration is operated by the United States Government and operates under specific Federal Law enacted by the United States Congress. Veterans who receive benefits from this agency of the Federal Government are required to report all income to the agency. This is Federal Law and not Tribal Law. The amount of benefits that are provided to the veteran by