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SMOKE SIGNALS

A Publication of the Grand Ronde Tribe
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Float wins prize in Portland's Rose Parade

By Oscar Johnson

Spirit Mountain Casino and the Grand Ronde Tribe graced Portland's Rose Parade with another award winning float telling the story of a Northwest Native pride and prosperity.

Taking Grand Prize for best float over 35 feet long, the display featured a storyteller bedecked for a pow-wow in Northwest Native garb and crowned with a headpiece epitomizing the cunning wisdom of Coyote.

Amidst the sound of traditional drumming, the mountainous figure slowly rose from the crouched posture of his dance to nearly 30 feet tall, stretching his arms outward over the waving tribal royalty that accompanied him on his journey.

Accompanying tribal royalty included Ashley Tuomi, Courtney Warren, Nikki Norwest, Jenny Bailey, Emma Leno and Miranda Provost.

Afterwards, the Grand Ronde Royalty were guests of honor at the Recognition Honors Pow-wow for Portland's Native American Tittle IV Program. Jenny Bailey, Emma Leno, and Miranda Provost all attended, and were welcomed with warm thanks and gratitude for being able to attend after such a long day of festivities.

Veterans' Royalty — Courtney Warren, Ashley Tuomi, and Nikki Norwest — traveled more than 300 miles after the Rose Parade to White City, where they represented the Tribe at the Rogue Valley Veterans' Pow-wow. The veterans, too, appreciated the girls' presence there.

Entitled "Adventures of the Spirit," the float was one of about 90 entries in the Rose Festival's Grand Floral Parade which snaked it's way down



Photo by Oscar Johnson

parts of Martin Luther King Boulevard past the Convention Center and through sections of downtown Saturday, June 6. The event marks 101 years of the city's annual rose activities which has since blossomed into the nation's second largest parade.

The towering float of welded metal frame, moving poulticed figure and bespeckled dried foxglove and irus bloomed with rich floral arrangements of carnations, chrysanthemums, daisies and, of course, roses.

It took about six months for Studio Concepts Inc., in collaboration with tribal and casino officials, to complete the float, said Spirit Mountain Casino Marketing Specialist, Amber Russell.

About 35 casino employees volunteered time to put the finishing touches on the float, Russell said.

In addition to impute and approval from tribal authorities, Russell said that Studio Concepts researched archived photos of Northwest Indian pow-wows to come up with the costume design for the 27 foot tall figure.

Casino officials indicated that costs for large displays can reach the \$50,000 range. However, the overall value of the venture is priceless according to Spirit Mountain Casino Marketing Director, Chuck Galford. He says in addition to a record 550,000 people lining the parade route, 2 million television watchers

took in the view and that makes good advertising sense.

But Galford said having a prominent float in Portland's premiere city event has an even greater value than just bringing in casino revenues.

"The public image the tribe is receiving is really positive. All of a sudden people are seeing you as real people rather than just a 'tribe' or casino," said Galford referring to results from recent public awareness studies.

"They come away with positive feelings about the Tribe. Many people were moved to tears by our float."

For the past two years, the Tribe and Casino walked away with the Sweepstakes Award for the best float.

Member Benefit Fund will increase by \$1,000 in July

The Tribal Council has passed a resolution allocating \$1,000 to each member through the Member Benefit Program. **For those eligible, withdrawal requests received in our offices by June 30, 1998, will generate checks to be mailed on July 15, 1998.** Withdrawal requests post marked June 30, 1998, will not meet the deadline, they must be in our offices by that date.

The Member Benefit Program nor-

mally distributes checks on the 10th of each month for those submitting withdrawal requests by the last day of the previous month. For example, if you wanted to receive a check on September 10, 1998, you would need to have your application to us by August 31, 1998. Because of the high volume of applications we expect to receive requesting payment on July 15, we are moving the check distribution date from July 10 to July 15.

This will only be in effect for July. If you choose not to make a withdrawal at this time, or miss the June 30 deadline, the next payment date will be August 10, 1998.

You should have already received an application and cover letter in the mail regarding this distribution. If you did not receive your application, need to change your address, or have any questions regarding the application process or your beneficiary, you

can contact Liz Leno at 1-800-422-0232, ext. 2082. Any other questions, contact Chris Leno at ext. 2340.

Another Member Benefit Fund distribution of \$1,000 is planned for September 1998, with the first checks being mailed out October 1, 1998. You will receive a separate application for this distribution.

Tribal Community Meetings
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