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"The events of today — the history of tomorrow."



SMOKE SIGNALS

A Publication of the Grand Ronde Tribe
Umpqua • Molalla • Rogue River • Kalapuya • Chasta

Fun in the Sun

Rodeos provide family fun for kids and parents on Father's Day weekend



YEE-HAA!!! More than 2,000 rodeo fans visited the Grand Ronde Pow-wow grounds June 20 and 21 for the Third Annual Spirit Mountain Stampede. Events included steer wrestling, calf roping, bull riding, breakaway, barrel racing, and a clown act for the kids. **LEFT:** A participant does his best to hang on during his saddle bronc competition. **BELOW:** Kids gathered at the Health and Wellness Center for the Bike Safety Rodeo.



Tribe in dispute with Water Association over hook-up costs

By Oscar Johnson

The Grand Ronde Tribe is taking the local Water Association to court over what it deems unfair fees charged for installing a water line to the Grand Meadows housing park and has filed a stipulated temporary Restraining Order to prevent the utility group from shutting off water services to the community.

Tribal attorneys filed a temporary Restraining Order June 18 in response to the Water Association's threat to shut off water service to the residential park which houses some 70 tribal members. The shut off notice is an answer to the Tribe's refusal to pay the alleged excess hookup fees.

A Declaratory Action was filed with the Polk County Trial Court on July 11 by the Tribe with the intent of resolving a 16-month-old debate over how much the Tribe should pay the Water Association for connecting a water line to the new park in Jan. 1997.

The Grand Ronde Water Association, of which the Tribe is a member, has not yet responded to the suit and has 30 days to do so, said Tribal Attorney, Rob Greene. The Tribe maintains the park should only be charged \$2,500, the price for a single water main hook up, since the Association only installed one line. But the Association stands by an invoice sent to the Tribe on Feb. 7, 1997 billing the Tribe \$92,500 — \$2,500 for each of the 37 units in the park. (There are currently 21 occupied units in Grand Meadows.) Tribal attorneys say it is unfair to charge the Tribe as if it were 37 separate members while still allowing them only one vote and that they are being charged more than other Association members for the same service.

Greene said this is contrary to the Association's own bylaws. He also cites a similar 1971 Oregon Supreme Court case which ruled that an attempt by the Knappa Water Association to charge a mobile park multiple fees for each trailer hook up, instead of billing the park as one unit like other association members, was discriminatory.

But Water Association attorney, Jerry Brown, maintains that the fee is fair and consistent with the way the utility group has always done business in Grand Ronde.

"Our intent is not to do anything that would hurt or damage the Tribe in any way," said Brown who insists the fees reflect the long term water needs of Grand Ronde. "The Tribe is merely being asked to carry its fair share."

The lawsuit comes after negotiation attempts by the two parties broke down earlier this month.

Talks began after tribal attorneys notified the Water Association that they would not pay the multiple fees and submitted a check for the price of a single water line hookup. The Association returned the check with an offer to reduce the fee to \$2,012 for each of the 37 units totaling \$74,444. Tribal officials rejected the proposal.

In April the Tribe countered the offer with a proposal to deduct the cost it paid to connect each of the 37 units (\$2,355.37 per unit) to the line installed by the Water Association from the overall charge but the utility company refused the \$5,351.31 offer. The Tribe's proposal to submit the dispute to arbitration was rejected by the Association earlier this month, and tribal attorneys filed a request for a declaratory judgement from the state courts that would back the one-time hookup fee.

Help plan the Tribe's financial future

The Tribal Council is conducting a series of community meetings. The Council recognizes that a critical challenge facing the Tribe is, "How do we utilize tribal revenues to provide benefits to members 'now', while providing for their physical and financial well-being for generations to come?" Through these meetings, Council will ask members, "What is the proper balance of putting money into existing programs, while saving for the future?"

Meetings will be held at the following locations:

July 1, 1998 from 5:30 to 8:30

p.m. in Eugene at Lane Community College, 4000 E. 30th Ave., Phys. Ed. Bldg., Rm 205.

July 13, 1998 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Grand Ronde at the Community Center.

July 23, 1998 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Bend, location to be announced. (This meeting has been rescheduled from July 16.)

The meetings will be conducted in a group format. Members will provide input, which will be recorded and sent back to members. Council will use the information to make decisions about the Tribe's future.

Member Benefit Fund Distribution

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. If you missed the June 30th deadline, the next payment date will be August 10, 1998. You must have your application to us no later than July 31, 1998. If you have any questions regarding the application process or your beneficiary, you can contact Liz Leno at 1-800-422-0232, extension 2082.