

A gathering of governments in Eugene

■ Kitzhaber's mandate aims to help state and tribes work together

Story and photo by Oscar Johnson

Last month a meeting was held to build lasting working relations between the state and tribal governments. Grand Ronde tribal representatives were among the delegations from Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes that met with state officials.

The second annual Government-to-Government meeting was the outcome of Governor John Kitzhaber's 1996 Executive Order mandating that state agencies take sure footed steps to work more closely with their tribal counterparts to address current and future issues of mutual interest.

"We have a shared responsibility to meet the needs to have healthy fish runs and clean water. We need to find a way to keep our children out of the criminal justice system and give them the skills they need to succeed," Kitzhaber told attendees of the Nov. 17 conference.

Representatives from more than 20 state agencies ranging from the Departments of Forestry and Fish and Wildlife Enforcement to Veterans Affairs and Youth Authority were on hand to meet members from tribal agencies.

Agency officials also reported on attempts to comply with the Executive Order such as cultural awareness training, appointing contact persons to work with tribes and regular meetings with tribal representatives.

In affirming the Grand Ronde Tribe's goal of "working together with the state



DISCUSSING COMMON ISSUES

Grand Ronde Chairperson, Kathryn Harrison (second from left, front row) joins representatives from Oregon's federally recognized tribes in meeting with Gov. John Kitzhaber (second from right, back row), U of O president, David Frohnmayer (left of Kitzhaber) and other state officials at last month's intergovernment meeting.

for a better quality of life for all," Council Chairperson, Kathryn Harrison echoed the sentiment of officials from some of the other tribes on hand for the event.

Harrison noted that Spirit Mountain Casino donations to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Nanitch Sahallie's teen alcohol and drug treatment program; and tribal education grants benefit more than just the Grand Ronde Tribe.

"We are building our community not just for the Tribe," said Harrison. "We

are using the money we're making now, not only to better ourselves, but our community and the state as well."

However, officials, such as Confederated Tribes of Umatilla representative, Antone Minthorn, also indicated that past difficulties and present bureaucratic setbacks may be the biggest challenge to getting concrete results from the Executive Order.

"In order not to focus on the negative," Minthorn said in his closing statement, "I'm sure state agencies are aware of what they have accomplished

in implementing this Executive Order."

In anticipation of the rough road ahead for state and tribal negotiators during the day's closed session, Kitzhaber urged participants to help the procedure "move from a reactive process to a pro-active process."

In his closing remarks he asked participants to identify legislative priorities, commit to meeting regularly and warned to expect a tighter budget to work with in the upcoming year.

SMC employee elected mayor of Sheridan

By Oscar Johnson, Staff Reporter

Fighting crime and developing economic opportunities are two of what Sheridan Mayor-Elect Joe Fabiano wants to prioritize while in office.

Fabiano, 50, who works at Spirit Mountain Casino, was just a year into his term as a Sheridan City Council member when he won the three-way race for mayor of Sheridan. He drew 288 votes.

Fabiano, also a volunteer paramedic for the Sheridan Fire Department, has been a resident of Sheridan for just two years.

He said he began his recent career in local politics because he believes, "a person has no right to complain unless they're part of the process of change."

Running on an aggressive platform for change that aims to tackle juvenile crime and kindle economic development, the former California law enforcement officer also advocates strengthening relations between the city

and the Grand Ronde Tribe.

"We've already established a relationship with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. We wouldn't be breaking any new ground there," Fabiano said. "But I want us to continue in that direction. I want us to work more closely with the Tribe."

He said one way to accomplish this might be periodic joint meetings between Tribal Council, Sheridan City Council and perhaps even their Willamina counterpart.

It could be a way to "keep the door open — make sure we're on the same page," he said. "A lot of people that live in Sheridan work at the Casino. This could only benefit everybody."

Fabiano also insists that closer relations between tribal and city leaders should come only with the intent to address areas of mutual interest and benefit.

As an example, he said if the Tribe assisted in equipping the county fire

department it could benefit everyone. He does not favor the city seeking a grant from the Tribe at this point.

"I'm a person that's always believed that a city should take care of itself," he said.

Other ways Fabiano hopes to help the city take care of itself is to attract more businesses by repairing old buildings that he said contribute to downtown Sheridan's "ghost town" look. He also advocates using resources to construct more buildings for businesses and not just homes.

Fabiano also wants a new approach to curbing juvenile crimes such as vandalism.

"I don't think going around arresting a bunch of people is the answer," he said.

Instead he focuses on the lack of activity for Sheridan youth and thinks that options such as a joint community center between Sheridan and Willamina could help solve the problem.

Winter driving tips

Cold nights, heavy moisture and low elevations protected from winds... three elements which can hamper safe driving. Dense fog can be a fact of life here in the northern Willamette Valley. Take a few moments to remember some simple driving tips to save your life or another:

- Headlights are necessary so that you can see, and so that you may be seen by other drivers. Dense fog refracts light, so the only thing accomplished by driving with your brights on is blinding yourself and oncoming drivers in the process.

- Slow down and double your following distance. Your car travels 88 feet per second at 55 mph. If there is only one hundred foot visibility due to fog, you will not see the car in front of you until it is too late to brake.

- Beware of freezing fog. Ground fog contains a fine mist of water, and when it contacts rural roads during freezing nights, it will become ice.