

# SMOKE SIGNALS



A Publication of the Grand Ronde Tribe

December 1, 1999

## Members gather to celebrate Restoration

By Tracy Dugan

More than 200 tribal members and family came to the Grand Ronde Elementary School on November 21 to celebrate the anniversary of Grand Ronde Restoration. This year, the Tribe celebrated 16 years of being federally recognized. The Grand Ronde Royalty Committee and the Royalty participants hosted the celebration.

Signed by President Reagan on November 22, 1983, the Grand Ronde Restoration Act allowed the Tribe to be recognized as a sovereign nation, and function as its own government, as well as allow tribal mem-

bers to receive benefits from federal Native programs such as Indian Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. After federal recognition, the Tribe received 9,811 acres of reservation land in Grand Ronde.

At the celebration, Council Chair Kathryn Harrison thanked the people who were involved in the restoration effort during the early years.

"We should thank those people who worked so hard for all of us," said Harrison. "Not just today, but anytime of the year."

Harrison said that although we can be proud of what we have now, we should not forget the hard times.

"This is the Thanksgiving season. It's a good time to reflect on how far we've come," she said. "Here we are, with our buildings, our land, and resources at our disposal. Let's thank those people who started this effort."

Merle Leno was the announcer for the celebration. Before the feast was served, some prizes were given to tribal members who came to the event. Ila Dowd received a prize for being the eldest woman at the celebration; Leonard Vivette received a prize for being the eldest man. Leonard also won the prize given out for the tribal member who traveled the greatest distance to be at the celebration. He lives in Yakima.

Stan Speaks, Area Director for the  
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Royalty princesses Andrea Childers, (left) and Ashley Bedortha celebrate with family members Angie Ellis (Ashley's mom) and grandma Candy Robertson.  
Photo by Tracy Dugan

**TRIBAL CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
Saturday, December 11 ~ Dinner at 1 p.m.  
Grand Ronde Elementary School  
Tribal members and their families welcome.

## Elders encouraged to apply for housing

By Brent Merrill

The dream of having a place for tribal Elders to live in the heart of the Grand Ronde community will soon come true for many. An area near the current tribal governance center has been cleared and construction is under way, and is scheduled for completion in August of 2000.

The Elders' housing project is a 38 unit rental development, which is receiving funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

The units will be made up of 900 square foot duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes. Each unit will have two bedrooms, one bathroom, front porch and patio and a carport with storage. Gas ranges, refrigerators, dishwashers, washers and dryers, gas forced air heating and air conditioning are featured in each unit.

Units will be handicapped accessible and can be fitted for wheelchairs inside as well.

The housing complex will have walking paths around it.

Tribal Occupancy Specialist Bryan Langley said the process for Elders

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## Spirit Mountain to develop, manage Spokane casino for Kalispel Tribe

Spirit Mountain Casino will serve as the primary management consultant to the Kalispel Tribe in developing the Kalispel's Northern Quest Casino north of Spokane.

Spirit Mountain will help provide equity and other financing to build the casino. It will oversee construction and operation of the casino for five years.

"Spirit Mountain has helped turn things around for the Grand Ronde people," said Kathryn Harrison, chairwoman of the Tribal Council. "We are happy to be helping another tribe work toward self-sufficiency."

"The management team at Spirit Mountain has a firsthand understanding of the economic development and self-sufficiency goals of the Kalispel Tribe," said Glen Nenema, Chairman of the Kalispel Tribal Business Council. "They are a good fit."

The Kalispel Tribe plans to open its casino next fall. It is expected to employ 500 people, with a payroll of \$12 million. Revenue from the casino will fund tribal education and their Camas Institute, developed in association with Dartmouth College and Gonzaga University to provide educational and employment opportunities for the general public and other Native Americans living near the Kalispel reservation. The casino also will provide employment opportunities for the greater eastern Washington community.

"It is unique for a tribe to step in to help out another tribe," said Bruce Thomas, Spirit Mountain CEO. "This is a great opportunity for us to share our experience and expertise with other Native people."

Typically, Indian tribes contract with Nevada or New Jersey firms to oversee casino development. This is one of the first times that an Indian tribe has chosen to contract with another tribe for casino development and management services.

The Kalispel Tribe also considered management proposals from the Mille Lacs of Minnesota and the Oneida Tribe of New York.

"Spirit Mountain has shown that it can build a first-class casino and operate it in a socially responsible way," said Dave Bonga of the Kalispel Tribe.

Spirit Mountain is the largest and most successful casino in the Northwest. It is Oregon's number one attraction, drawing more than 3 million visitors a year. The casino employs 1,500 people. Spirit Mountain is one of eight Indian casinos in Oregon. Grand Ronde was the only Oregon tribe to build and operate a casino without the help of an outside management firm. Instead, the Tribe put together its own financing package and management team to oversee building and operating the \$50 million casino.

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