

# Long-time tribal staff honored

By Brent Merrill

**G**rand Ronde tribal employees were honored at a service award ceremony on Wednesday, January 12 in the Governance Center.

Tribal Chair Kathryn Harrison recognized tribal employees as the main reason for the Tribe's success.

"The Tribal Council may make policy, but it is the tribal employees who implement policy and they are the reason for our successes," said Harrison to the audience. "I remember when we were in a one room building with outdoor plumbing. Now, so many things have changed. We have so many success stories."

Human Resources' data files coordinator Connie Rohde acted as the emcee at the employee recognition ceremony. Rohde introduced each employee as they were recognized.

"This is a very special event for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde," said Rohde. "I am very happy to be a part of this memorable event because it is for the employees. We are recognizing their hard work and efforts to continue to build the tribal community."

Employees with 10 years or more of service to the Tribe were honored with a Pendleton blanket.

Bonnie Tom and Teri Mercier were honored for 15 years of service.

"I am very excited to receive the service award, and I am very grate-



Bonnie Tom (left) and Teri Mercier were honored by the Tribe for 15 years of service. "That was a great day," said Tom. Photo by Brent Merrill

ful to those who have allowed me to learn all that I could during this time," said Teri Mercier. "I have been fortunate to have good friends and mentors here at the Tribe, like Bonnie Tom and Cheryl Kennedy.

"My family and I are grateful for the opportunities the Tribe has given us, and I hope I will be able to serve the Tribe for many more years," said Mercier.

"That was really exciting," said Bonnie Tom. "That was a great day. To be given service awards and to have everybody else given service awards was really exciting. I enjoyed spending that time together.

"My reason for being here is the job has grown steadily through the years," said Tom. "It has never been boring. I don't think I've had a dull moment here. My goal is to see assisted living established before I retire. In my heart, from the work in the field that I do and the people I talk with, we think it is really necessary. I think we have had a lot of Elders pass away and it would have been really vital to them. It would have made such a difference in their lives if we would have had assisted living to help them and make things easier for them. I'm looking for a lot of help to have it happen."

# Staff works together after a water main break at health center

By Brent Merrill

A water main broke on January 12 at the tribal health center and offices were flooded and equipment damaged.

Capital Projects Manager John Mercier said a two and half inch water line near the community center broke and water flowed into the clinic and flooded it.

Mercier said the break was not weather-related.

"It was a water line (pipe) that had a weakness in it and it just gave," described Mercier.

Wellness Coordinator Bonnie Tom said the water damage took out the department's computer system.

"It affected us a lot," said Wellness Coordinator Bonnie Tom. "We didn't have our computers and they had to tear up all the wall boards and suck up all the water. A lot of computer equipment was damaged. We were messed up with our transports and our home visits. Some of our supplies and educational equipment that was on the floor was lost. So, we will be rebuilding our supply of teaching aides."

Mercier said the help from staff in cleaning the clinic up was vital and welcomed.

"I'm really, really happy with the way people pulled together," said Mercier of the clean-up efforts. "They just came right in and started picking things up out of the water to get it dried off. We sucked the water off of the carpet and that was pretty hard

work because there was so much water the equipment would fill up so fast and they had to go and dump it and start again. Everybody who came in just started diving in to lend a hand. They really worked hard to minimize the damage."

"It could have been worse," said Tom. "If the other employees wouldn't have pitched in so much. I got a call early that morning and we (Bonnie and her husband Chip) went down and saw the damage. I went home and got my rubber boots and came back. I asked what I could do to help. We all worked together.

"Bob Schmid pitched in and was sucking up water with one of the vacuums," said Tom of those who helped. "It was nice of those who helped in a crisis situation. Everybody pulled together."

Mercier said the medical and dental wings of the health center were only down for one day.

"For as bad as it was flooded in there, we really pulled off a good emergency management process," said Mercier.

Water damage got up into the sheet rock and meant the entire rubber base had to be torn up from the base of the wall, said Mercier. Fans were brought in to speed the drying process.

"We didn't lose any computer data which is a miracle considering water flowed right into the computer room," said Mercier.



This office was one of many that was damaged by the broken water line. Photo by Brent Merrill

Mercier said a special disaster relief company (Service Master) was called in to help get everything back to normal as soon as possible. Mercier said the company is cleaning furniture, shampooing carpets and repairing water damage.

"Because everybody pulled together the damage was minimal," said Mercier.

The following are Tribal employees that were recognized for their years of service to the Tribe at a service awards ceremony held on January 12 at the Governance Center. Employees recognized were all regular full-time or part-time employees who have worked for the Tribe over 5 years with no more than a two year break in service.

## 5 YEARS

MARY ALICE BOWEN  
DOUG COLTON  
PENNY DELOE  
SHEILA ELLIOTT-MCDONALD  
JON GEORGE  
ROB GREENE  
NANCY HOLMES  
LINDA LAYDEN  
ALLEN NELSON  
SHARMON NERIA  
WENDELL OLSON  
JACKIE PROVOST  
PAM WARREN

## 6 YEARS

JERRY BRANDON  
JILL JEFFERS  
KAREN LARSEN  
LINDA MANN  
ROBERT SCHMID

## 7 YEARS

TRACY DUGAN  
CHRIS HOLLIDAY  
APRIL HOWREN  
SUSAN KLEIN  
RON KUHLMAN  
LIZ LENO  
ELAINE MOORE  
MARY THOMAS  
CINDY WATKINS  
MIKE WILSON  
VIOLET ZIMBRICK

## 8 YEARS

BARBARA LAKE  
BRYAN LANGLEY  
MIKE LARSEN  
KARAN SCHARF

## 9 YEARS

PEGGY BIERY  
TRACY BIERY  
MELANIE EBENSTEINER  
JOHN MERCIER  
MARCELLUS NORWEST  
KELLY HERBER  
LONNIE LENO  
MARION MERCIER  
BARBARA STEERE  
PATSEY WARD

## 10 YEARS

JANELL HALLER  
CONNIE HOLMES  
VERNON KENNEDY  
JEFF KUUST  
JEANNE LARSEN  
JEFF NEPSTAD  
KATHY TOM  
DAKOTA WHITECLOUD  
DARLENE AARON

## 11 YEARS

GREG LENO

## 12 YEARS

CLIFF ADAMS  
LINDA JIREK  
RUSS LENO

## 13 YEARS

JACKIE WHISLER

## 14 YEARS

MARGO MERCIER

## 15 YEARS

TERI MERCIER  
BONNIE TOM