

# CANDIDATE

## □ Leona Jeffers

Hi! My name is Leona Jeffers, roll # 917.

My father is Leo Delbert Jeffers, and my grandfather was Ira Leo Jeffers. Our family history goes back to the early 1700s right here in Oregon. My great ancestors of the Tribe are Tillamook and Chinook.



I currently attend the University of Oregon full-time. I will be receiving my Bachelor of Science in Ethnic Studies with a focus on Native American History in the fall of 2000. I also currently hold a two-year certificate in Medical Office Administration/Medical Records. Besides going to college full-time, I also raise swine for 4-H in Lane County and work part-time in an after school program for at-risk children as a teaching aide.

I wanted to run for Tribal Council because I believe that all voting Tribal members should have a voice in the Tribal government and its policies. I am aware that there have been recent problems with the enrollment issues and many people who should be allowed enrollment are being denied. Tribal Council members also recently voted on a reduction of aide to the Social Services department, specifically the Benevolent Fund and emergency help. There is also the issue of increasing the amount of gaming revenue to the Tribal members.

The point of the recent enrollment changes was, I thought, to keep other Tribes from dropping their enrollment and joining the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) and not to exclude otherwise eligible Tribal members. This has not been the case and there has been many recent problems with enrollment that should and could be very easily corrected. These problems are only causing a division between family members as well as with other Tribal members. This should not be the case. If these possible Tribal members have sufficient blood quantum, can prove ancestry to the CTGR, and have the necessary paperwork then there should be no time limit on their enrollment.

I believe that the recent cuts in the Social Services Department, particularly the Benevolent Fund and emergency aid are detrimental to the well being of the Tribal members who would otherwise be out on the streets. It is my understanding that the better part of Grand Ronde members are below the poverty level in their earnings. Cuts in these two departments need to be reconsidered. I don't believe that anyone should receive a free handout, but there are those times that people just need a handup. Judging a person harshly because he or she might need these funds is wrong. Most people in this position find it extremely hard just to ask for help.

The recent distribution of Tribal gaming revenues to Tribal members is a very hot topic and most of us believe that if the casino is doing well, then there should be a trickle down process whereby all Tribal members should benefit. What I don't believe in is that we, as Tribal members, are not responsible enough to handle any personal taxes that may result from the distributions. If the majority of Tribal members are below poverty level, then the gaming revenue will not effect us tax wise, as the present Tribal Council members would have us believe.

I have also had the opportunity to witness the recent public display of disrespect to Tribal members at the Tribal Council meetings and think that this type of behavior needs to come to an immediate halt! Everyone has a right to his or her opinion and has the right to be heard and if I am elected to Tribal Council, I promise to listen to anyone who wishes to communicate with me. ■

## □ Eugene LaBonte

My name is Eugene LaBonte, I was born and raised in Grand Ronde. My parents were the late Alexander Gus LaBonte and Edna K. LaBonte.

I previously served on the Tribal Council from 1994-1997, during that time I was privileged to be involved with the beginning of our casino — Spirit Mountain. With money generated from the casino we were able to finance the following programs.

- Health Insurance: This program is set up so that all Tribal members living outside the service area can have health insurance no matter where you live.

- Retirement for Elders: With this fund in place Elders have been able to enjoy retirement a reality few of us dreamed possible. I was instrumental in the decision to refund the additional money to the Elders that Social Security took out for Medicare supplemental insurance. If re-elected, I will push to add additional funds to this program and hope to increase the amount that we currently receive. This fund will benefit all as we reach 55 years of age.

- Education: The increased funds added to this program have made it possible for all Tribal members to further their education if desired. Stressing the importance of education for our youth is important to prepare them to be the leaders of our future growth.

- Dividend Fund: I was involved in the first distribution of money to our General Council of \$1,000.

I believe in giving back to the Tribe by being involved in the community and Tribal committees. I am currently the chairman of the Timber Committee and have served for 10 years. I will continue to support the importance of preserving our heritage and culture to pass on to our future Tribal members.

In closing, I ask for your support and would appreciate your vote in September. Gene LaBonte for Tribal Council.

Sincerely,  
Eugene LaBonte ■



## □ Mark Mercier

Dear fellow Tribal members:

My name is Mark Mercier, a candidate for Tribal Council. In 1984, I was one of nine people who were sworn in as the Tribe's first Tribal Council, shortly after the Tribe regained federal recognition since termination in 1953. At that time, the only piece of real estate the Tribe owned was our local cemetery, the Council and staff using a small building for our office. At that time, it was impossible to imagine what the Tribe would have by the year 2000. The Tribe has come a very long way by securing our timberland, land for housing, and the building of Spirit Mountain Casino and lodge. The Tribe has some economic development ventures throughout Oregon as well.

However, I would like to see the Tribe become more aggressive in pursuing further economic development ventures for our long-term future. Establishing economic development takes time and plenty of careful planning and analysis to assure that any venture the Tribe pursues will become an asset instead of a liability. My concern is that Congress is constantly looking at ways to tighten federal funding to Tribes who have successful gaming within their communities or reservations. Over dependence on federal funding could leave the Tribe "holding the bag" if Congress does reduce funding to gaming Tribes. Another form of economic development I would like to see is for the Tribe to explore the possibility of providing some sound technical assistance to the membership who wishes to establish or enhance their private enterprises.

The Tribe should analyze all its endowment funds to ensure that the funding will be adequate for future education, housing and health needs. When these funds were originally established, our membership was approximately 2,500. Now, it's 4,000 or more. There are a large number of Tribal youth who will need a good education which will enable them to become self sufficient when they join the workforce in the 21st century. As for housing, I would like to see the Tribe look at ways to assist the membership to secure adequate funding for purchase or remodeling of homes, regardless of where they live. This is possible, now that the Tribe has its own financial resources.

Yes it's true, the Tribe has come a long way in the past 16 years. Lets not stop now. Let's work to secure an adequate long-term future for the Tribe. ■



## CANDIDATE FORUM

Saturday, July 22 starting at 1 p.m.  
Grand Ronde Community Center

## TRIBAL COUNCIL ELECTION 2000

Saturday, September 9