

## PART ONE

# 2001 TRIBAL COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM

## Issues & Answers — Stumping for Your Vote

### ■ Tribal Council candidate's forum brings people together.

**Editor's Note:** This is part one of a two-part article on the Tribal Council candidate's forum. Part two will run in the August 15 edition of *Smoke Signals*. Our hope is that Tribal members will be able to use this information to help them decide which of this year's 15 council candidates best fits their wants, needs and desires in an elected official. Two candidates were not present at the forum and did not notify Election Board officials. Three other candidates were also not present at the forum, but they provided reasons to the board. (Bob Haller, Fred McGee and Wesley "Buddy" West. West has subsequently dropped his name for consideration in this election due to the same personal reasons.)

We did not edit these statements for grammar — these are the true statements taken from the videotape copy we shot at the forum.

BY JUSTIN PHILLIPS

The Tribal Council candidates for the year 2001 shared their opinions with Tribal members at the candidate's forum held in Grand Ronde on Saturday, July 7 at the Tribal Community Center.

Some questions for candidates were submitted prior to the forum and a small group of Tribal members showed up to ask questions in person.

■ *The first submitted question was for Margaret Provost —*

**"In your continued statement that you made the motion to start our Tribal gaming venture, what was the specific motion and the general date and place?"**

**MARGARET PROVOST:**

"I don't remember the exact date, but that happened over in Salem at one of the places where we have a shop in and the motion was to start our gaming. We weren't really thinking of a full-blown casino at the time — it was a bingo hall — and that was the motion I gave. I made the motion to our director then to go head and research whatever it took to start the bingo hall."

■ *Question from Monty Parazoo, Roll #2620:*

**"This question is for all the candidates, we've been told over the past year or so, that most of our trust funds are getting close to be paid up. I would like a comment from all the candidates on what your feelings are on the situation that is going to happen then, as far as there will be a considerable amount of more money available. How should we determine what the Tribe should do to that and if you have any specific ideas in that area?"**

**VAL GROUT:**

"I think that some of them, I don't know, I'd have to ask some of the current council, some of them (trust funds) are, I think, a couple of years out. But myself, I like to go back and see, because that was set up when our current enrollment wasn't so high. So I think we really need to go back, the Tribal Council needs to go back and look at that and see, we need to update it so that there is enough money there so when our grand kids and great grand kids, and after that is all taken care of forever, then I think we need to look at some more business ventures or something. If there is a big surplus amount then I think we need to share with our Tribal members. But I really think that our endowments need to be looked at and see if we really predicted enough so that there is money there for our future generations."

**CANDY ROBERTSON:**

"I agree with Val on checking on the amounts of them and what has been allocated for the Tribal membership and the count of our roll now. One of the things I would like to look into if I'm elected and propose to council is I've been hearing a lot of services that aren't available to members outside of the six-county service area, and I'm not real sure what these services are as I haven't been involved for quite a few years and I'm sure there have been many changes, but I would like to look into that and see how we can further service regardless of the Tribal member's location."

**MARK MERCIER:**

"If I were on the Tribal Council, or if I get on the Tribal Council, the first thing I'm going to do is review the budget closely and it's going to be my priority to see to it that those endowments are going to be adequate to the current enrollment, which when they were originally established the enrollment was about 3,000 maybe 3,500 and now it's close to 5,000 or better. Also, there was a survey done where the membership indicated they would like to see more housing and education opportunities and I would be advocating making sure those become available to the ones in need. I would like to see a little bit of savings to be set-up because right now the economy isn't really all that good and it may continue to go down. That is something I can't predict. It would be good for some money to fall back on in case some things do get tough, because if the economy starts to sour worse, I don't imagine that the casino is going to be making the amount of profits that it currently is. First of all, I would make sure all the programs are being adequate and if there are people that are outside of the six-county service area that do need education and housing and basic assistance and

health and that's what I'd see we do first."

**JACKIE PROVOST:**

"My name is Jackie Provost and to answer that, I'd have to agree with them. We have to look at the current rate, where the endowments are and the rate that our Tribe has been growing. As you know, I've worked in the health field and there are a lot of people who are not getting their needs met by our insurance or by our clinic here. There is a lot of things that need to happen in that area that could happen, but again we need to set some money aside to take care of our youth, our younger generations so that they have what they need. I just recently heard a comment from a Tribal member saying that this person had been through treatment and been here and one of our counselors said that you are going to have to use your per-capita or Tribal check to take care of your need for mental health or alcohol dependency program. Well, that tells me that the money is not there, and contract (health) they paid for it once, but not paying for it again. I think we need to re-look at this and put more money into the funds, because it's an illness, it's a sickness, it's just like breaking your leg, it mends, but it's always there. Drug and alcohol abuse is in our Tribe and we need to work real hard to give people the help they need. You might not get it the first time through treatment or the second time through your outpatient or counselor. Sometimes it takes people, I know some people it takes fives times or better, but each time they went they learn something or gained something from it. To keep our Tribe healthy and to keep us together, we need to look at that and do what we can to help our Tribal members and as far as the people out of the six-county area, that would take an act of Congress if we need to expand the services out. So, why don't we bring them in? If we have satellite offices in those areas, then we can bring them into a real clinic or into our programs here is my feelings. There is a lot of things that can be said for the health programs and for our Wellness center, I think we do a fine job of what we have, but more could happen there."

**MARGARET PROVOST:**

"Thank you, I'm Margaret Provost. Again, on our endowments I believe like all the other candidates have said, that we need to protect it, put more money aside for it, we need to watch our investments; I don't know if everyone understands how our investments are going, but we need to keep a close eye on that, make sure that our money stays within our Tribe. Our Tribe is growing everyday, we're 5,000 now, like Mark said, when we first started restoration our enrollment was 930 something I believe. Now it's over 5,000 and I don't know how far our money is going to go, but we really need to be watching it. Our investments need to be protected; our people need to get healthy, just like Jackie says. Then we will stay as a Tribe and keep our people healthy and there is a lot of people with many needs out there that aren't being met and I think that if I'm on council that is one things that I will be looking into and make sure Tribal membership is aware of what's going on with our investments and our endowments. There is a lot of people I think that don't understand it. We need some communication to understand and know what we are doing. Thank you."

**RICHARD MCKNIGHT:**

"My name is Richard McKnight. I was there when we set these endowments up, I was on council. At that time it was a 50/50 deal, it was 50 percent went to the programs and 50 percent went into the endowment. Now I think we did set a goal for these endowments, I can't remember what the number was, but we figured it would take about 10 years to establish this amount at that rate. I mean at that time I think it was \$100,000, which we were splitting. So, we figured at that rate it would take about 10 years. Well, I don't know, I've heard that this amount has gone up to like, I think what I heard was like \$150,000 or \$200,000 to each program. Now, even if we do max them out, I think we should be careful on how much we spend of those. I think we should roll them over and maybe take out, maybe 75 percent for the programs and leave the 25 percent in the endowment and that way we will always have some money left in the endowments to fall back on in-case the government does start cutting us, which they could do later on. So, I believe we should leave some of this money alone and just up the ante a little bit to what comes out. Thank you."

**TIM HOLMES:**

"I don't want to sound like a broken record, but I agree with the other candidates, that we need to take a serious look at the endowments, the levels they are funded at and then when we are sure those endowments are secured for the future and the