

New Tribal Council Members Named

■ Tribal Engineer Eric Scott presents cemetery extension plans at the September General Council meeting.

By Ron Karten

The September General Council meeting was held on Sunday, September 12th, at the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde. Here are the highlights:

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy called the meeting to order; former Tribal Chair and Elder Kathryn Harrison offered the invocation.

Tribal Elder Nancy Coleman, Chair of the Election Board, congratulated Tribal Council election winners Angie Blackwell, Christopher G. Mercier and Wesley (Buddy) West. All won a first term on the council.

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy thanked outgoing Tribal Council members Val Grout, Ed Larsen and Bob Haller "for your years of service."

"What the people out here are saying," said Tribal member Monty Parazoo, "is they want change." He encouraged those serving to "take a look at this vote. We want to know what's going on."

Terry Rainey, President of New Mexico-based Automated Election Services (formerly Ink Impressions, Inc.), the Tribal Election Administrator, said that he points to Grand Ronde elections as among "the best in the country, as a model for others."

Tribal Council honored Tribal Elder Russ Leno for "taking care of our cemetery over the years." Vice Chair Reyn Leno presented his uncle with a plaque and jacket with a Tribal logo and noted not only Leno's careful care of the cemetery over the years, but also his "assistance to Tribal families in a time of crisis."

In return, Tribal member Jackie Leno, Russ's oldest daughter, presented a jar of homemade jam to each Council member. "We're all very proud of our father and grandfather," she said.

"I'm very proud to have my family members (in the Tribal cemetery) now," said Tribal Elder Val Grout.

A report from Eric Scott, the Tribe's Engineer, described proposed improvements to the Tribal cemetery. They included an expanded building to make room for more guests at funeral services as well as providing a separate room for bereaved families. The proposed project also will add parking

into two separate positions, and to create a Sergeant-at-Arms position.

Tribal member Ann Lewis described her efforts to obtain documents concerning past Tribal investments.

Tribal member Kathleen Tom described her efforts to resolve a dispute over whether income from billboards

"It's an insult to even think of contracting with an outside agency to run it," said Michael Bolton.

"You do not get the same care (from an outside agency)," said Tribal Elder Betty Bly, "and you do not have the same control (as with Tribal members)."

"There has been no discussion whatsoever of (outsourcing Elder home care)," said Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy. "We also believe that Tribal members are best to serve our Elders."

Tribal member Willard (Wid) Thompson recognized the council "for all they've done in my life." He presented the council with a traditional adz of the Maori (New Zealand) people gifted to him by Native artist Rick Bartow to whom it was originally gifted. Bartow made the gift to Thompson "to help change lives" of the boys Thompson works with at the MacLaren School in Woodburn (see *Smoke Signals*, "Warrior Interrupted," in the 12/15/03 issue). He gave the adz to the Tribal Council in thanks, "and to help Tribal members shape each others lives and work together."

Tribal member Janelle Haller gave "a personal thank you to Mom (outgoing Tribal Council member Val Grout)."

There were many kudos for outgoing Tribal members and much thanks from those who ran for office to those who voted.

Door prize winners included \$50 winners: Duane Coulson and Tribal members Christie Loomis and J.R. Robertson; the \$100 winner was Tribal member Rhonda Leno.

Other announcements:

The next general Council Meeting will be Sunday, October 10 at 11 a.m. the Tribal Community Center. Positions are open on the Rodeo and Royalty Special Events committees and also on the Education Committee. ■



Family—Tribal member Jackie Grant (middle) accepts congratulations from Tribal Council member Valorie Sheker-Robertson with Grant's father, Tribal Elder Russ Leno, nearby.

Photo by Ron Karten

along the entrance and exit roads.

As requested and as currently envisioned, the facility will be large enough for funerals of 300, said Scott.

Tribal member Linda Bean Olson asked that Timber Committee members "be more active, have more hands-on participation." She also said that there is a need to go over the Safety Ordinance with residents of the Tribe's newest housing development because the skills of being a good neighbor need review.

Tribal member Shawn Hostler asked about the process for splitting the council's Secretary/Treasurer position

on property formerly held in trust for the Chemawa Indian School in Salem should all go back to the students of the school.

The signs are now in possession of a corporation, Chemawa Station LLC, formed by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Indians. Chemawa Station LLC is building a multi-use development in Keizer, and the billboards are part of that development.

Tribal members Marcia Bolton and her son, Michael, both spoke against contracting out for workers for upcoming Elder Care facilities.

Blackwell, Mercier And West Take Office

■ Each starts the term with a promise to learn about the office before moving to make changes.

By Ron Karten

Attributing their sweeping victories to a Tribe demanding change, each of the new Tribal Council members took their oath on Wednesday, September 15, and then honored the complexity of the job ahead of them with a recognition of how much they still had to learn.

"Right now, I foresee I've got a lot of work to do learning everything," said new Tribal Council member Chris Mercier. "I've definitely got a lot of things to learn but I'm looking forward to learning everything."

"I don't see any immediate changes," said new Tribal Council member Wesley "Buddy" West. "I believe there will be changes eventually but it's too early to say at this time."

"We're not going to rush into anything," said new Tribal Council member, Angie Blackwell. "I'm just

looking forward to the next three years, one day at a time."

Tribal Court Judge Katharine English said before swearing the three in, "This is a very happy occasion but also a very serious occasion."

Though the candidacies of three long-term incumbents were swept away by the landslide vote that gave the winners 45% of the 3713 votes cast (on each ballot, voters can select up to three candidates), sentiments within and outside of the Tribal Council, said that the vote did not necessarily reflect dissatisfaction with individual council members.

"I'm happy and honored to be selected," said Mercier. "Unfortunately, when you bring in three new people, you lose three others. I hope the Tribe won't forget the contributions of Val Grout, Ed

Larsen and Bob Haller."

"I think the three new council members have some big shoes to fill," said Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno. "The three council members who just left were some of the most caring Grand Ronde Council members, shown by all the good things given to members in the past years, such as per capita, Elders' pensions and health insurance."

Still, Leno said, "I think that change is fine if that's what the membership wants, but we need to hear what the change is." And he added, "With the change, we have to be careful that we don't put the Tribe at risk."

"We need to respect anybody that is elected by the membership," continued Leno, "because to disrespect them is to disrespect the membership, and we can't do that."

This year, 1,342 of 2,128 registered voters and 3,294 eligible voters cast ballots. That was 63 percent of registered voters and nearly 41 percent of eligible voters.

Last year, 1,178 of 2,020 registered voters and 3,206 eligible voters voted. That was 58 percent of registered voters and nearly 37 percent of eligible voters.

The number of registered voters was up to 2,128 from 2,020 last year. The number of eligible voters was up from 3,206 to 3,294 this year.

In all, the Tribe added 88 voters this year over last. Seventeen new voters were added on election day, said Terry Rainey, President of Automated Election Services, the New Mexico-based company contracted by the Tribe to run Tribal elections. ■