

Tribal Council Meets With Membership In Portland

■ Review of Tribal programs is capped by sharing a specific Tribal plan that in the past, would not have been divulged.



Photos by Ron Karten

Leadership—Tribal Council meets with Portland area Tribal members on Sunday, February 6 at the Embassy Suites Hotel at the Portland International Airport.

By Ron Karten

The February General Council meeting was held on Sunday, February 6, at the Embassy Suites Hotel at the Portland International Airport. Here are the highlights:

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy called the meeting to order. Tribal Elder Val Grout offered the invocation.

Tribal member and Director of Operations Chris Leno began the first of four Tribal program summaries: Member Services. Tribal member and Education Division Manager Marion Mercier summarized Education programs. Health & Wellness Department Executive Director Michael Watkins described Health and Wellness Programs. And Social Services Department Manager Dave Fullerton described the Social Services available to Tribal members.

With a full booklet of these services being planned, a summary is presented here.

Member Services include medical and dental insurance, per capita and timber distributions, Elders pension, SSI and SSD, Medicare Part B reimbursement, tax preparation assistance, enrollment services and burial assistance.

Education programs include the early childhood programs for preschool, Head Start and K-5; youth programs include services within each local school district as well as funding available for sports and other extracurricular activities; achievement recognition and help with filling out forms for scholarships or college admissions.

Adult programs include GED services, computer skills, money management, culture and food service classes.

Higher education services include workshops and seminars and support in other venues, with funding available up to \$800/term or \$1,600/term for graduate school. Up to \$7,000 annually is available for four-year degree programs. Continuing education classes for part-time and vocational programs also are available. Currently, the Tribe funds 68 active scholarship students.

Health and Wellness Center programs include medical, dental, pharmacy, optometry, lab, radiology, blood pressure screenings, urban Indian Health Center in Portland (NARA Clinic is at 15 N. Morris Street by Emanuel Hospital), a health fair in early summer in Portland.

Social Services programs include Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability (SSD). A new program marries advocacy with these and Veterans benefits programs. Tribal members will have the help of the Social Services staff in preparing the forms and following up.

Other programs include youth prevention, Indian Child Welfare (ICW) services, domestic violence and vocational rehabilitation.

The department also offers income-based programs including Low Income Energy Housing Assistance Program (LIHEAP) providing main heating source assistance (6 county service area plus Clackamas). Firewood is available for delivery even in the Portland area.

Also offered is the 477 Employment & Training Program (6 county service area), an Emergency Assistance Program for rent, utility and special disaster (all low income Tribal members).

Council Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy reviewed for the Portland audience the progress on the lodge expansion.

"We're making excellent progress," she said, and reported an April 1 opening for the new section.

She said the Tribe had had "an excellent year at Spirit Mountain Casino."

And in a change of practice brought on by input from the membership, Kennedy announced that the Tribe has entered "preliminary negotiations" for a well-known property in Portland (that she named for the membership). She called it "a good future location," and explained why with a most remarkable description: "a mitigation to the minimalization of our revenue flow."

A number of Tribal members expressed gratitude for the council confiding in the membership on this sensitive effort.

Drawings were held: Tribal Elder Val Grout won \$100. Tribal members Deborah Scott, Jordon George and Paul Cooney won \$50.

Fifty dollar Safeway cards went to Tribal Elder Janet Giddings, Tribal member April Snoddy and Richard Begon.

Tribal Elder Patsy Pullin won the Health & Wellness Center's Valentine's Day basket.

Tribal member and Portland State University student Jade Unger thanked the Tribe for his Trust Fund, which he said has been "a big help."

He also described his work at school, which currently includes a race car he is working with a group to design, build and ultimately race.

"We want to use it as a tool to get others interested in science and technology," said Unger.

He also was seeking a motor home to use or share to transport the team to Detroit and back.

"The education programs are great," he said. "I don't know how I would have got this far without them."

Tribal member Val Alexander asked for a progress report on the Tribal plankhouse that has been in process for two years. In response, Tribal Engineer Eric Scott said that Tribal member and University of Oregon graduate student Don Day is spearheading the project. A building site has been secured, said Scott, and "40 to 50 logs are on site and being processed."

Anita Haas, not a Tribal member, spoke on behalf of her son, Tribal member Edward Haas, a five-year-old with autism who is himself non-verbal. In

seeking "more assistance for members with special needs," Haas said, "I'm not sure which direction to go in. I feel kind of out-of-the-loop at times."

Tribal member Diane Smith had a similar question for her son, who has been diagnosed

with an attention deficit disorder who is in need now of individual tutoring on a regular basis.

Tribal member Pearl Mekemson invited Portland-area Tribal members to basket weaving classes held at the Bailey House in Grand Ronde. Housing is available, she said.

Tribal member Eric Fernando was among many who thanked the Tribal Council for coming to Portland and asked about Indian events in the Portland area.

Tribal member Shayla Rogers said that a sweat lodge was really important to her.

Tribal member Mario Martinez said that he had heard of many plans for the Portland area but saw little follow-through.



Social Services Manager Dave Fullerton