

## Honoring Of Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey Highlights General Council Meeting

■ Public Affairs Director, Casino Director make presentations to members.

By Ron Karten

The January General Council meeting was held on Sunday, January 8, at the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde. Here are the highlights:

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy called the meeting to order; Tribal Council member Wesley "Buddy" West offered the invocation.

Siobhan Taylor, Tribal Public Affairs Director, presented an overview of Tribal business from the Public Affairs perspective. She called the Tribal glass, "not half empty, but half full and well on the way toward overflowing."

She said that Cultural Resources is doing good work. She cited the success of the Maori visit and showed a photo of the proposed Cultural Center, which she said is "something that is going to happen."

She also cited the Chinook Wawa immersion program and the Fort Yamhill park project as success stories in process.

In describing the Education Division's "lifelong learning" approach to education, she called the division's programs "incredible."

"We're continuing to work with outside agencies to make sure (the success) continues," said Taylor.

Taylor described "a lot of special

mer youth employment and for having the highest number of Tribal members employed in his department.

Taylor described the "passion" of the *Smoke Signals* staff.

"I want to see *Smoke Signals* taking your news and reporting it to the membership," she said. "I want the news of the Tribe to go to officials at the state and federal levels."

She also noted that the new Tribal Council newsletter, *Tilixam Wawa*, will include news "direct from the council to you."

She compared the work that the Information Systems staff does to "Mission Impossible."

She described honors for and programs of the Social Services Department, including the Annual Youth Conference, the Youth Health Awareness Grant and a Blue Ribbon Award given by the state Supreme Court to the department.

When Cherokee former Principle Chief Wilma Mankiller came to visit the Tribe, Taylor said, she looked at Tribal housing developments and said that Grand Ronde is "an example for the rest of Indian Country."

"I want to brand Grand Ronde," said Taylor. "The public knows what Spirit Mountain is, but they will also know the people behind Spirit Mountain."

The Royalty Committee honored Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey, 95, Grand Ronde's oldest Tribal member.

"She reminds us of where we came from and who we are," said her niece, Tribal Elder CeCe Kneeland.

"My wish is that (Nora's) here for many many years," said Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy, also a niece to Kimsey, "not only for reproofs we may need but also for her wisdom."

The Elders' Committee announced four Elders elected to the committee for this year: Val Grout, Louise Medeiros, Cheri Butler and Beryle Contreras. The committee's next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 31 at 12:45 p.m. in the Community Center.

Tribal members Lorry McKnight, Jared Ripley and William Beaver each won \$50 in the door prize drawings. Pat Kneep won \$100.

Tribal Elder Tom LaChance won a fruit basket in the raffle raising money for his brother, Tribal Elder Gary LaChance and Gary's wife, Linda, to take a little vacation. Tribal Elder Russ Leno won an eagle statue in that drawing.

Tribal member Valorie Sheker-Robertson raised the issue of the Bingo hall shutting down to make room for more slot machines. While there is no question that slots will make the Tribe more money than Bingo, Robertson said that Bingo provides many opportunities for Elders to catch up with each other, and that maybe downsizing the program would be preferable to eliminating it.

"We knew there would be a lot of concern about this," said Kennedy.

"One of the casino's operational goals for this year is to refresh the overall



**Honored** — Royalty members Kallie Provost, (l to r) Nakoosa Moreland and Leah Brisbois honor Tribal Elder Nora Kimsey, 95, the Tribe's oldest living member at the January General Council meeting.

Photos by Ron Karten



**Siobhan Taylor,**  
Tribal Public Affairs Director

projects" from the division, including the internship program with the Museum of Natural History in New York City, college preparation programs, the media center, the father involvement program and the K-5 Christmas card contest.

"The beautiful thing about how this government operates is that no man is an island. We work together," she said.

"We wouldn't have some of the buildings and some of the programs that we have today without Kim Rogers and the planning and grants development work he does," she said. "We're a player at the state and federal level."

She called Tribal Engineer Eric Scott "a one-man powerhouse."

"He has done so much to build our infrastructure," she said.

She noted the new Elder Foster Care facility, the satellite offices, the Meth Task Force, the mentorship program (she cited the success of Tribal member and mentee James Buxman who landed a management position at the casino) and the Gaming Commission as examples of the good work that is coming out of Grand Ronde.

Taylor praised Public Works Director John Mercier not only for the public works and safety measures he has instituted — including defibrillators, benches around campus, a garden house for the community — but also for setting up opportunities for Tribal members to serve community service requirements here in Grand Ronde, completing projects without outsourcing the labor, providing sum-

appearance of the property," wrote Casino Manager and Tribal member Randy Dugger in an email following the meeting. "We will be looking at options for improving the overall appearance of the property, remodeling and improving our food and beverage operations and making improvements on our gaming floor."

"As we look at options, the only space currently available to expand quickly is the Bingo Hall. No decision has been made on the long term future of Bingo, but in the short term, that space will be used to expand our mix of games on the property. The board and council are looking at options for the casino in the near future mindful of changes that may be coming including new casinos. Closing Bingo is a financial decision intended to provide room for new gaming while other expansion

of the per capita checks.

He also suggested that the Casino Board be taken out of the political arena by taking Tribal Council members off the board.

The funding of trusts and endowments was also discussed. Specifically, Kennedy said that the council had been considering quarterly contributions to the funds, though, she said, such a decision requires involvement of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Tribe is developing a way to evaluate program usage, said Tribal Finance Officer Larry Kovach.

Although the Tribe has not yet considered emergency preparations for an epidemic, Health Clinic Director Michael Watkins said that the Indian Health Service is "putting together a plan."

Janet Phillips was concerned that those taking care of Elders in the Foster Care facility, expected to be ready for occupancy in February, will be led by a person with only a Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA) certification, and that others will not even need that.

"I'm concerned that a CNA is running our home," she said.

By state law, all that is required for caregivers is a high school diploma, said Watkins, "but we're looking into making each (caregiver) a CNA."

Tribal Elder Marilee Norwest said that "we never see young people here at the General Council meetings." She asked why Elders couldn't have dances instead of playing Bingo. And she would like to see "more backing for our youth" by the Education Division.

Tribal Elder Charlotte Gray said that the Eugene satellite office "is doing very well. We're beginning to have more classes. It's very delightful."

It was announced that:  
■ The next General Council meeting will be Sunday, February 12 at the Embassy Suites Hotel at the Portland airport (7900 N.E. 82nd Ave).

■ Human Resources Director Judy Zettergren retires at the end of January.

■ Behavioral Health Director Joseph Stone will be leaving to take a similar position among the Navajo people, the Tribe of his children.

■ The day of the meeting, January 8, was the birthday of Tribal member Rod Bly and Elvis. ■



**Casino Manager & Tribal Member Randy Dugger**

options are being considered."

The question was asked but not answered, what happens to staff? The answer is that all staff is being given the opportunity to find other positions in the casino and they also started a special class in Dealer's School for all interested Bingo staff. Any staff member who wishes to keep working for the casino will be given the opportunity to find a position.

"The last day for Bingo is January 26."

Tribal member Rod Bly suggested that per capita amounts be decided early in the year with the rest of the budget built around that to avoid political concerns dictating the amount