

Satellite Services For Tribal Members Outlined At Eugene General Council Meeting

■ Taxes on down payment housing assistance is discussed, loans authorized.

By Ron Karten

The April General Council meeting was held on Sunday, April 2, at the Valley River Inn in Eugene. Here are the highlights:

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

Tribal member and Eugene Satellite Office manager Jon Darcy-Chantell presented an overview of the Eugene programs, including the following services:

- ◆ Applications for all Tribal programs and referrals for services
- ◆ Adult basic education
- ◆ Social Security determination
- ◆ Cultural enrichment classes for making soft and hard sole moccasins, drum sticks, for stretching hides, beading, herbalism, and teaching pow-wow drum songs
- ◆ Computer lab/copy machine & fax
- ◆ Job search databases
- ◆ Community resource manual and human services directory
- ◆ Money management/stock portfolio classes
- ◆ First time home buyers classes
- ◆ Notary public services available

The office also hosts field trips and in-office events, including:

- ◆ Raptor Center in 2005
- ◆ Longhouse Christmas party in 2005
- ◆ White wolf refuge trip this year
- ◆ Weekly Elder lunch and social
- ◆ Yoga, strength training and cardio program
- ◆ Community potlucks are held on the 2nd Saturday of every month
- ◆ Weekly genealogy club
- ◆ Higher education student support group
- ◆ Cultural enrichment program
- ◆ College co-op opportunities for college credits and mentorship programs in collaboration with work experience; a 12-week hourly paid program through a federal grant.

As Tribal Service representative in Eugene, Darcy-Chantell provides information to members regarding all Tribal programs and services; provides referrals; assists with completing applications and other intake services; and works as a liaison between general membership and Tribal departments, government, state agencies and non-profit agencies in the five-county area served by the Eugene Satellite Office.

Tribal Adult Education Coordinator Joann Carr is available in the Eugene office for GED tutoring, supplying funding for GED registration and testing, advising on the food handler's certificate class and testing online, and teaching basic computer, word processing and formatting skills.

Also in Eugene, Julie Singer assists Tribal members in the SSI/SSD application process. She helps determine if SSA disability guidelines are met. And she assists with telephone interviews and the SSA appeals process.

Volunteers in Eugene work with the Native community in Lane and surrounding counties to provide Tribal members and *Smoke Signals* with news of upcoming cultural events and gatherings.

"As we understand more about how we are interrelated," said Tribal member David Lewis, "we will get together more."

"The entire community made (the success of the Eugene office) possible," said Darcy-Chantell.

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy said that Tribal Council meetings are being recorded. The recordings will be transcribed, and the transcriptions will appear on the Tribal website.

Tribal member Deborah Pichey said that the Tribe was "red-flagged" by the IRS in 2005 and many Down-Payment Assistance grants were being taxed because recipients didn't meet low-income guidelines.

"This is an example of a breakdown of communications," said Pichey. "The membership has been left in the dark and this has caused a great deal of stress."

The Tribal Council has had a work session on this issue," said Kennedy, "and the Tribe is prepared to continue to work with the IRS."

The Tribe has scheduled a meeting with the IRS to discuss this issue, said Tribal Attorney Rob Greene.

For Tribal members unable to pay the tax portion of the grant, the Tribe has authorized Tribal Financial Officer Larry Kovach to make immediate 12-month loans of up to \$3,000.

"It is not the Tribe's responsibility to pay the taxes," said Tribal Vice Chair Angie Blackwell. "Reporting and sending 1099s out protects the Tribe and I'm supportive of it."

Tribal Elder Val Grout said, "I wish my grandpa and grandma could have had this problem. We are just so blessed."

"We aren't ungrateful for what the Tribe does," said Tribal member Monty Parazoo. "There are just more than one way to do the things we do."

Mary Ellen Good said, "I flew 2,500 miles in hope of more discussion on 1099 forms."

Tax liability also was questioned regarding the Trust funds.

"As a general rule, the Tribe is not taxed," said Kovach, "but when the Tribe gives money to Tribal members, (that money) is taxable (for Tribal members)."

Tribal Elder Charlotte Gray gave "thanks to the Tribal Council for all the help in bringing the Lewis & Clark event to our grounds. It was a good exhibit and a lot of schools brought busloads to the exhibit." Tribal member Perri McDaniel also thanked the Tribal Council for its support.

Gray also asked about getting copies of the Federal Park Service videos made in the Tent of Many Voices during its Grand Ronde stay.

They will be available on the Park Department's website, said Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy.

Tony Rath, (Chiricahua) sought \$12,000 for living expenses. For the last six years, he has donated his time to carving six totem poles

for the longhouse at Lane Community College. "This work is a living, breathing spirit," he said.

Tribal member David Lewis sought



Tribal member and Eugene Satellite Office Manager Jon Darcy-Chantell

Photo by Ron Karten

approval for another key to the Tribe's Eugene office and another keyholder. "Jon (Darcy-Chantell) is more and more called away," he said. And he thanked the Tribe for the Education Division for approving funds that allow his son to take a class.

Tribal member Rod Bly asked if anything had happened with the idea of getting housing assistance to Tribal college students.

Tribal member and acting General Manager Chris Leno said that a draft policy was set to be adopted and the policy is expected to be ready to go by fall, 2006.

Rod Bly also asked about the idea of getting kids financial training before they receive their Trust Fund money.

The Tribe is seeking "a national group that can handle this kind of thing," according to Kovach, who added that the Tribe hopes to have something in place by next year.

Bly also asked about Tribal members who could use help with taxes. Elders already receive free tax preparation from the Tribe, and Bly suggested that the program be widened.

Kovach said that the service is "gradually evolving."

McDaniel asked, "What's the holdup on picking a manager for the Cultural Resources Department?"

"We have interviewed all internal applicants and will decide about whether to hire or go external" for a candidate, said Chris Leno.

Tribal Elder Karen McCutcheon said, "I feel blessed to be part of this Tribe."

Barbara LaChance, Kathy Patterson and Tribal Elder Steve Bobb each won \$50 in the door prize drawings. Laurie Coggins won \$100.

The next General Tribal Council meeting will be held in Grand Ronde on May 7 in the Community Center. ■

Tribal Member Health Survey Drawing Results Given

By Ron Karten

Allyson Lacatsas, Health Care Benefits Administrator for the Tribe, described an on-going survey to determine if Tribal members have access to other health insurance programs. The information is important for the Tribe because health care costs are rising quickly, said Lacatsas.

At the time of the meeting, the department had sent Tribal members nearly 3,000 questionnaires and had received back nearly 900. As an incentive to return the questionnaires, all those who had finished by March 15 were included in a drawing for some grand prizes.

Tribal member Janell R. Darling won first prize, a \$2,000 trip voucher and \$500 in cash. Two Tribal members won \$500. They were Trixie K. Lopez and Robyn D. David. Thirty others won a \$50 gift certificate. They included Tribal members Deborah L. Scott, Ramona R. Wyman, Dana D. Stephens, Betty L. Curl, Marion W. Davidson, Ronda G. Quintero, Shelley M. Gilbert, Danny A. Pinneo, Georgene L. Gray, Dana L. Parazoo, Regan J.G. Dugger, Allen W. Thomas, Phyllis L. Hemeon, Steve Ibabao Jr., Carol A. Hudson-Grieser, Micky D. Herron, Ann B. Clevenger, Tamera J. Childs, Trina L. Catchell, Glenn W.L. Croy, Gerard C. Bolden, Patricia M. Tasa, Eva P. Weaver, Paxton W. Helton, Judith A. Kansier, Ashley N. Hale, Gail L. Vladyka, Judy M. Wacker, Lana L. Takhar and Tresa L. Mercier.

"Prices are skyrocketing," said Tribal member and Tribal Risk Manager Debby Larsen. "The Tribe is seeking other kinds of coverage to keep the programs going."

Although the prizes have all been given out, the Department continues to request that unfinished questionnaires be filled out and sent in.



Photo by Ron Karten