

Community Policing In Grand Ronde

By Toby McClary

Police efforts in the Grand Ronde community have raised concerns, ideas and questions among community members. But here is one question you might ask; is the Grand Ronde community a safer place to live?

For Tribal member Lori Walker who also serves as the President of the Grand Ronde Coalition for a Drug Free Community (GRCDFC), she says yes.

"I think they are a real asset to the community as well as the community members," said Walker. "I feel a lot safer knowing that they are only a phone call away."

One concern among community members is the interaction between the police force and the community. Although the police protect the community and the crime rate has proven to have gone down, some members feel that when working in such a small community there should be more personal communication.

"I would like to see the police get more personal with the members," said Walker. "A lot of people don't know the officers. I would like to see them interact more."

Walker also explained that the Polk County Sheriff's Department and the Yamhill County Sheriff's Department play very active roles in the GRCDFC.

"They attend all of our meetings," she said. "They are always more than willing to participate in anything we do."

Polk County Sheriff's department is the primary protection service for the Grand Ronde area. Their service area is from milepost 15 on Highway 18 East to milepost 30 on Highway 18 West and from Tyee Road in Grand Ronde

to milepost one on Highway 22.

Although some area residents voice concerns about police involvement, they do participate in many activities throughout the community. They are involved with the Community Meth Awareness Team, Sanction Court, Housing Security meetings, Shop

for the 1994-1995 year. In 1995, the Tribe teamed with Polk County and assigned two full-time deputies to the Grand Ronde community through a Cops Grant.

In 1997, the Spirit Mountain Community Fund had been created and began funding Grand Ronde's protec-

and graduated from Willamina High School, has been working in Grand Ronde for about a year.

"I love working the Grand Ronde area," said Zook. "I know a lot of the people here. It's like being home."

Sergeant Goldberg explained that he has been stationed in Grand Ronde for two years and that it is a "good policing atmosphere."

"I love it out here," said Goldberg. "I've gotten to know a lot of people and I've made a lot of good friends."

Tribal Security Supervisor for Prostar Security Juan Sifuentez works closely with Polk County Sheriff's Department and stated that they have a "good, positive" relationship with each other.

"For the man-power that they have, I feel they do a satisfactory job," said Sifuentez. "They respond to emergency situations in a timely manner."

But Sifuentez also feels that interaction between the police force and the community could be stronger.

"I think a closer relationship with community members would be beneficial to the community as well as the Tribe in general," he said. "I would like to think that the community could trust the individuals that protect them, I feel they do."

So, is there more to policing when it is being done in a small community? Grand Ronde residents need to decide that for themselves. As far as "by-the-book" policing, these officers seem to be doing their job.

If you need to contact the Polk County Sheriff's Department, they can be reached at: 503-623-9251 (Main Office in Dallas, Oregon) or 503-879-2420 (Substation in Grand Ronde). For emergencies, please call 911. ■



As part of an effort to be more involved with the community, Polk County Sheriff's Office had police officers on-hand for the Red Ribbon Rally at Willamina Middle School in Grand Ronde. Police cars were opened for the students to look at and a drug dog demonstration was also made available.

with the Sheriff, the Health and Safety Fair and the Youth Project Team meetings. They will also be involved in community education forums, law enforcement group meetings, Elder lunch education forums and classroom presentations in community schools in the near future.

In 1994, due to the discovery of syringes at local schools, the Tribe requested enhanced law enforcement coverage in the Grand Ronde area. As a result of the Tribe's request, one deputy was assigned to Grand Ronde

tion service through Polk County. In 1999, Grand Ronde's law enforcement expanded to four full-time deputies and there are currently five full-time deputies and a sergeant stationed in Grand Ronde permitting 24 hour coverage.

The officers currently stationed in Grand Ronde include Sergeant Nathan Goldberg, Deputy Kevin Alexander, Deputy Todd Fenk, Deputy David Black, Deputy Bob Evarts and Deputy Shane Zook.

Zook, who grew up in Willamina

Photo by Toby McClary

Elders Annual Christmas Bazaar

AND BAKE SALE

Grand Ronde Tribal Gym

Friday & Saturday

December 1st and 2nd 2006

Friday - 10am to 6pm

Saturday - 10am to 4pm

Concessions:

Coffee - Soft Drinks - Water

Friday - Indian Tacos Saturday - Chili Dogs

Vendors wanted

contact:

Louise Medeiros at 503 979 4312

Cherie Butler at 503 879 6371

Val Grout at 503 879 6371

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