

## The Portland General Council Meeting Welcomed A Full House

By Siobhan Taylor

The February 11, 2007 General Council Meeting of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde was held at the Holiday Inn, Portland Airport Hotel. The hotel is the location of the ATNI Winter meeting. A large crowd packed the conference room.

The minutes from the January 7, 2007 meeting were approved and the new business of the meeting got underway. Carina Kistler Ginter, Executive Director of the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority gave a presentation updating membership on the latest news from her department.

Ginter explained the organization and functions of the Housing Board of Commissioners, where Pete Wakeland, Economic Development Director and a Grand Ronde Tribal member is the Housing Board Chairman. She presented information on the current board, their meeting schedule (monthly on the third Tuesday at 5 p.m.) and her Housing Authority Staff.

The Housing Authority Grant and Service Programs were explained. Programs include home repair and medical adaptation, property management, housing development, HUD Administrative services, student rental assistance and self sufficiency initiative.

In 2005-2006 the housing division provided 140 non-payment assistance grants, totaling \$1,616,933 to

Tribal members. The department served Tribal members in 11 states. Ginter also explained Housing opportunities for 2007. Those opportunities include 146 Tribal rental housing units for Elders and families.

The newest addition is the Raven Loop complex which includes 72 rental units. To date, 27 Tribal families have moved into the new units over the last three months. Ginter also highlighted weatherization projects and medical adaptation projects for Tribal members' homes.

Housing Authority development activities for 06-07 include two new sewer treatment plants, the Elder activity center project and recreation facilities for Tribal families. The design concepts drew close attention from members.

The question and answer session that followed Ginter clarified that the housing improvement grants are available to all Tribal members in Oregon, Washington and California, not just those residing in the six-county service areas.

Tribal member Bryan Mercier thanked the Tribal Council and the general membership for allowing him the opportunity to be a first time home buyer as a result of the housing program.

Other questions involved the administration of HUD contracts and Tribal preference. Ginter assured the membership that Housing scrutinizes their contracts to make sure they are geared toward Tribal



Photo by Siobhan Taylor

**Tribal members lined up to voice comments and concerns during the Sunday, February 11 General Council meeting held at the Holiday Inn, Portland Airport Hotel. The next General Council Meeting will be held Sunday, March 4 in Grand Ronde.**

members, or Native Americans as the HUD contracts stipulate.

A drawing was held for door prizes. The three \$50 prizes were awarded to Darin Blackwell, Bernadine Shriver and Butch LaBonte, Judy Bellini won the \$100.

After a break for lunch, the "other business" session of the meeting got underway and Tribal members lined up to share their comments and concerns until well after 4 p.m. Many members expressed their concern about the Enrollment Constitutional Amendment and the need for education and clarification.

Many members asked council what the education aspect of the Ad-Hoc Committee final report was going to be and when it would get underway. Others shared their stories about families being split due to the current Enrollment policy. The minors' trust funds were discussed as was the extended leases for the Tribe's satellite offices in Eugene and Portland.

A complete recorded transcript of the General Council meetings is available, for a nominal fee, from the Tribal Council Secretary's Office. ■

## Where are they now: A Glimpse At The Success Of The 2000-2001 Hatfield Fellow

By Angie Sears, Tribal Mentee

Alyssa Macy, 2000-2001 Hatfield Fellow, went to work on Capitol Hill to see if it was the type of work she really wanted to do. Although she felt it was a good fit, she found that her passion lies in working for the people at a grass roots level. She realized that she enjoys helping to organize and educate people more on a community level than on a D.C. level.

Macy spent her Fellowship working with Congresswoman Darlene Hooley's staff on Judicial and Native American issues. She spent a lot of her time working closely with the Chief of Staff, Joan Mooney, who taught her the ropes of working in a congressional office.

"She really looked out for me... she helped me to learn to read things without projecting my personal feelings and taught me the importance of seeing both sides of an issue," Macy said.

"Alyssa was an invaluable resource to us and to the office. She brought expertise on a number of issues affecting Native Americans, as well as on Judicial Committee and Justice Issues. We've maintained contact with Alyssa, who has continued to have positions with increasing levels of responsibility in politics," said Joan Mooney Evans, Chief of Staff.

Macy, 31, is an enrolled member of the Warm Springs Tribe. She was raised on the reservation in a political household where her father was very vocal about politics,

talking about policies and what was happening in D.C.

"My father went out of his way to make sure that I understood what politics was and then he discouraged me to get involved," Macy said. "My parents didn't have to do a lot of pushing; I just kind of naturally gravitated towards it."

"My parents and their involvement in politics really had a profound impact on me and the way I viewed the world. I learned a lot from my father; not necessarily from his words, but from his actions and the type of person that he was. That has always been a driving force for me, she said."

Macy encourages Native people to become more involved in politics and advocate for other Native people by learning how the political system works, learning to build allies, and by paying attention to what's happening with appropriations.

She attributes the success of her career to the experiences and opportunities gained during her Fellowship, and feels that the program provides an excellent opportunity to educate other people about the Native people of the Pacific North West.

"I really felt in many senses that not only did I represent my own people in Warm Springs, but that I was an ambassador for Grand Ronde. The Tribe created this program for Native people and it was such an amazing opportunity ... I



Photo courtesy of Alyssa Macy

**Warm Springs Tribal member Alyssa Macy**

was lucky enough to be chosen to go and I felt an obligation to both my community and to the Grand Ronde community," Macy said. "I don't think I'd be where I am today had I not gone. It really was one of those life changing things for me."

After completing the Fellowship, Macy was inspired to return to graduate school where she received a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Minnesota. Upon completion of the master's program, she became immersed in a whirlwind of grass roots organizations including working for National Voice, the largest non-partisan political mobilization effort in 2004.

She was also responsible for running the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Native Vote 2004 campaign, and co-authored the Native Vote post election report. In December of that same year she joined the Center for Civic Participation as the Political Director.

Currently, Macy is working for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in the office of Tribal Affairs and has found the process of that government-to-government relationship an interesting learning opportunity.

She is also a professional photographer and is part of a collective of young professionals that have started a non-profit called NVISION, which is an organization that works with young adults and Native youth around media culture and media justice issues. The group provides trainings and special events, and works to encourage young people to have fun and to remain drug and alcohol free while doing it.

"I just have a passion for working with people at a local level ... I really am grateful that I went to D.C. and I don't think I would be where I am right now had I not had that experience," Macy said. "I have a very strong commitment for my own people and I already know that the rest of my life I will spend doing this type of work. That's just a given for me; that I will work on behalf of my own people." ■