

# Tribes Take Over The Capitol Building

■ Videos, casino giveaways and plenty of conversation all led guests back to the Grand Ronde homelands.



Members of the Grand Ronde Canoe Family were on-hand at the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem on Friday, May 18 to give those in attendance a traditional display of song and dance. The Tribe had a booth at the capitol where Tribal information was displayed and items were given away.

By Ron Karten

On Friday, May 18, a feast for 500 ushered in Tribal Information Day in the Galleria of the Capitol building in Salem this year. Grand Ronde sponsored the breakfast, hosting one and all in the heart of our ceded homelands.

Tribal Council gave Spirit Mountain Food and Beverage Manager Toby TenEyck and Chief Executive

Chef Richard Burr ten days to pull it all together.

"It's kind of a cosmopolitan offering," said Burr. "Northwest fruits and berries, a country paté offering, including rabbit, pork and chicken patés with cranberry jelly and chutney and honey roasted walnuts on the side, a grav-lox prepared the Swedish way, 'green lip' muscles from New Zealand (local muscles

are touch and go at the moment," he said, "great jumbo prawns, a special pickled salmon, and the 'grand finale: Carlton Farms picnic hams."

They put on the final rush starting at 4:30 in the morning and by 9 a.m., the food was all set up, looking good; the ice and fruit had been carved into a variety of forms by sous-chef (assistant) Aaron Guera. The whole team had been prepping on things like the paté and the ham for days.

"I think it was well-received," said Burr when the breakfast leftovers were packed up. "That's what it's all about. You work hard and people enjoy it."

And before this feast had even started, Burr, TenEyck and their team were already preparing the weekend's three nights of VIP dinners scheduled at the casino.

Umatilla Elder and Chair of the state's Commission on Indian Services Les Minthorn said: "It's a great day for all of us Oregon

Tribes. It's good when we get together with one voice. To honor one another, these are the important things today that we have to remember." Then, he commented on the crowd: "It always seems when we put out a lot of food, we get a lot of people."

Nearly every Tribe had a video

or two of their people, of their culture, of their current issues, playing on monitors in the Capitol's Galleria. The Klamath had a video playing and protest signs up: Un-Dam the Klamath.

Native American Rehabilitation Association's (NARA) video featured positive Indian parenting. The Coquille's said that their ancestors had lived on the land "for as long as salmon have returned to the rivers."

The Burns-Paiutes put up posters that showed the many edible spring roots and shoots in their area, and another showing the summer edible fruits and seeds of the Northwest.

Bud Lane, Chairman of the Siletz Tribe, brought more than a dozen baskets that he has made over the years, and they included some that

in my backyard."

Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison offered the invocation, and State Senate Majority Leader Kate Brown said that her long association with the Tribes had "been an incredible learning experience." She shared with the group the Governor's American Indian Week proclamation.

Tribal leaders Alan Foreman (Klamath), Dolores Pigsley (Siletz), Sue Shaffer (Cow Creek), Wanda Johnson (Burns Paiute), Bob Garcia (Coos) and others joined Grand Ronde's Vice Chair Angie Blackwell in describing the past and present of Indian sovereignty and natural resource issues.

"We have distinct visions of our nations," said Blackwell, "and all are very unique. You'll be surprised to learn how different all of them were, so it's important that we do a better job of teaching."

"It is mandatory," said Cow Creek Chair Sue Shaffer, "for Oregon employees to have Indian training. People do not understand sovereignty and it is not their fault." She praised SB 770, the state legislation spelling out sovereign rights for Tribes.

She also reminded the guests that an Oregon advocacy group called, One Nation United, continues to be "the Ku Klux Klan for Indians. They have as their goal the destruction of Tribal rights and Tribal governments."

She said, on the other hand, that "the contributions of Tribes in their neighborhoods are just monumental."

With more than 2,000 employees, said Angie Blackwell, "the Grand Rondes are the largest employer in the area."

"In our case," said Siletz Chair Dee Pigsley, "for the Tribes along the coast, the best way to do business and take care of our people was to work together."

"We have many collaborative programs," she said, "to raise healthy, happy families, something that is very difficult in this day."

"Our number one priority is to provide scholarships for anyone who wants to go to college."

For Grand Ronde, said Blackwell, "our Elders and our children are our most important resources."

Performances came from the Grand Ronde and other color guards, the canoe dancers from Grand Ronde and Umatilla singers and dancers. Lunch was hosted by the Cow Creeks and their Seven Feathers casino. NARA hosted a fry bread tasting.

Though this year's event focused on sovereignty and natural resource issues, observers saw another benefit. "Look at how much communication is going on here among the Tribes," said Joanne Carr, Grand Ronde's Adult Education Coordinator. "That's what it's all about." ■



Tribal Council member Reyn Leno carried the Grand Ronde Tribal flag during the posting of the colors ceremony which kicked off the events for the 2007 Tribal Information Day.



▲ Members of Spirit Mountain Casino's Food and Beverage Department supplied the complimentary breakfast for the day.

had been made into hats, and one into a baby carrier. "What people like," he said, "is that they're made from right around Siletz. They could get the materials



Former Chair of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians Ron Brainard, Council member Cheryl Kennedy, and Siletz Tribal Chair Dee Pigsley posed for a quick photo at the 2007 Tribal Information Day held in Salem.

Photos by Toby McClary



"Today, because we have so much more, we have a lot to share." "We're going to be here forever," said Coos Chair Bob Garcia, "so we consider the best interests for land and water in perpetuity."

▲ Tribal member Alex Foster, K-12 Program Coordinator Molly Matthews, and Tribal member Kyoni Mercier, all members of Grand Ronde's Canoe Family, took part in the activities held on Friday, May 18.