

# Gorge interests focus on the future

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

A mark of progress for Indian communities: Until recently, the call was for self-sufficiency for Indians.

The Future Forum for the Gorge, held Monday, Oct. 29, at the Discovery Center of The Dalles, called for "Tribal prosperity defined by the Tribes."

With many members in the Gorge area and a connection with Celilo Falls as a fishing and trading center dating back to aboriginal times, the Grand Ronde Tribe took the opportunity to make sure that the Tribe's interests placed high among the meeting's outcomes.

Among "visionary ideas," the group suggested "a learning center for Tribal culture and the connections we have with wildlife, plants and water," and "to reinvigorate Celilo Falls" as a place to once again trade, exchange ideas and fish.

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, as main sponsor of the Columbia Gorge Future Forum, brought together a number of Northwest Tribes and government and business leaders to think about the future of this geographically bound area that is a lynchpin not only between Tribal and non-Tribal interests, but also between rural and metropolitan Oregon.

At the same time, the sponsorship supports the Grand Ronde effort to be named among the federally recognized Tribes of the Gorge. Currently, the list only includes the Umatillas, Warm Springs, Nez Perce and Yakama.

To rev everybody up, conference organizer, Portland-based Steven Ames, brought in futurist Rick Smyre. A well-traveled executive of 65, Smyre advised inclusion over competition with results that are not managed from above but emerge from below.

He said the idea of "either/or" should be replaced by "and/both." So language is the problem? "Not the problem, a problem," Smyre said.

He quoted Peter Drucker, another business guru, who said that it's better to change a 1,000 things 1 percent than try to change one thing a 1,000 percent.



Photo by Ron Karten

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy, right, talks with speaker Rick Smyre, left, as Lana Jack, who reported being the last of the Celiloyam people, listens.

Smyre compares the changing times today to only two others in known history: the beginning of agriculture and the beginning of industry.

Things are changing so fast, he said, "A completely new idea has a life of eight days."

As an example, he mentioned how quickly the Internet came on. In the early years, many missed how deeply it would affect society. The question of predicting a future, then, is not possible when you can't even envision some of the discoveries that will have an effect.

It's not a question of whether global warming is man-made or just coming around again in a more or less normal cycle, he said. The question is how to respond.

The way to reorganize our thinking, he said, is to ask questions instead of making statements.

Smyre re-invented his own life after years as chief executive officer of his family's textile operations in North Carolina. It was in the 1980s when he could no longer ignore the pressure to export his mill's work to China and India.

The forum started with Smyre's pitch about setting a context that opens the door to new possibilities. It broke down into essentially two other functions after that. Small group analysis of the values important to people of the Gorge, and suggestions for "visionary ideas"

that will bring those values to daily life in the Gorge area.

"It's a matter of the Tribe continuing to stay engaged in signature events like this, like the Portland Harbor," said Tribal Attorney Rob Greene. "Being engaged is critical."

"Regardless of our interests in halting the casino in the Gorge, we have other interests that tie us to the Gorge," said Siobhan Taylor, Public Affairs director for the Grand Ronde Tribe. "(This conference) underscores for other groups present the unbroken link that Grand Ronde has to this area."

Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy went into the meeting with a long-held question. She's been trying to imagine "the strings you'd need to connect tradition with life today."

Smyre's response, typical of his effort to get questions presented in an appropriate context, asked Kennedy in return: "How did your ancestors deal with changes? Take that information and see how it works in today's world. The process will emerge new ideas."

Similarly, he suggested a potential school exercise that asks students to research and figure out what the job market will look like for them in 20 years, and determines what skills will be needed to get those jobs.

He stays away from specifics. Naming specifics ("either/or") rules

out possibilities ("and/both").

The nod to Indians came in addition to proposals for "vibrant green energy manufacturing" in the Gorge, to establish communities where industries complement the natural landscape and a more flexible regulatory environment, all targeting needs of the wider Gorge population.

"How do we provide for complete communities, each with its own character?" asked one participant.

Umatilla Chair Antone Minthorn saw "this energy, all these people coming together out of concern for the Columbia River Gorge," as the value of the conference. "I think we'll be included but I also say that Tribes have to be at the table."

"This gives us the sense that we're in it together," said Warm Springs' director of Government Affairs and Planning Louie Pitt. However, he also noted that "the solutions are already in the communities."

The group sought a balance between the cost of housing and the wages at jobs. It talked about reduced use of autos. It talked about commuter transports to and from Portland, and about adaptable and flexible sources of energy.

"Human choices matter," said Jeremy Littell, a research scientist with the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group.

"Look at the growth of farmers' markets," said Tim Stearns, a senior energy policy specialist with the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, "people reconnecting with their food."

For the Gorge, the tradeoffs in the future will all look toward water availability, said Littell. Past plans for the area assumed water availability would continue. That's no longer so.

For the Grand Ronde Tribe and possibly others, the meeting had another message, as well.

"It's time to move on," said Tribal Council member Kathy Tom, shifting the discussion from past and continuing federal government transgressions to a new focus for the future.

"Let's be innovators," Tom said. "Let's be our own SOLV." ■

## General Council meeting reviews 2008 Tribal budget

By Siobhan Taylor

Special to Smoke Signals

The proposed 2008 Tribal budget consumed much of the Nov. 4 General Council meeting.

And, since the budget review for Tribal members in attendance occurred in executive session, much of the material is not reportable in *Smoke Signals*. (However, a copy of the preliminary budget has been sent to all Tribal members in the November *Tilixam Wawa*, which was mailed during the first week of November.)

Acting Finance Director Jody Jerger led the review of the proposed Tribal budget with the assistance of Finance Department

members Rick Anderson, Linda Meyer, Larry Leith, Jeff Valentine, Nancy Renfro and Ken Trevino.

An extensive question-and-answer session followed.

After returning to regular session, Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy reminded Tribal members that Tribal offices were closed Nov. 12 in observance of Veterans Day and will be closed Wednesday, Nov. 21, to honor the Tribe's Restoration Day. Offices also will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 22-23, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Kennedy also reminded the audience that the Tribe's Restoration Celebration will be held Sunday, Nov. 18. The feast will be held from 11

a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Community Center and the pow-wow will run from 3 to 11 p.m. in the gymnasium.

General Council door prizes included Pendleton-style blankets from Spirit Mountain Casino won by Delores Knight, Natalie Jackson, Trevino and Lydia Logan. Bonnie Mercier, Linda Brandon and Violet Folden won the \$50 prizes and Garry Williams won the \$100 prize.

The next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 2. ■

► The 2008 Preliminary Budget has already been mailed to Tribal members.

**Tilixam Wawa**  
Tribal News Service

UMATILLA • WICWALLA • WINTUN WYED • KALKAPUYA • CILALAPA

2008 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon	
2008 PRELIMINARY BUDGET	
Revenue	1,200,000
Expenses	1,100,000
Surplus	100,000
Reserve	500,000
Total	1,600,000

2008 Preliminary Budget Comment Period  
When comments from Tribal members are submitted and 11 a.m. THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2007. All written comments must be signed and dated.