

## Public transit comes to Grand Ronde on Dec. 3

By Ron Karten

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

Starting Monday, Dec. 3, the Grand Ronde Tribe, working with and through Yamhill County and the Yamhill Community Action Partnership, is extending public transit bus service to Grand Ronde.

The Action Partnership's previous service route started in McMinnville and ran through Sheridan to Willamina. After the current round of route changes, the service will continue to Grand Ronde, and continue to meet up with connecting services.

The line connects with Cherriot Bus Service in west Salem, stopping at the Lincoln Store and Amity on the way, as well as linking with routes going to the MAX line in Hillsboro, the TriMet line in Sherwood and the SAMT line in Salem.

The Tribe worked with state and federal transit agencies to obtain funding for the service extension. The Tribal piece of the funding comes from annual state Special Transportation Funds earmarked to benefit the Grand Ronde community.

Tribal Council approved entering into a contract with the Yamhill County Transit Area to arrange for the service from the area's local public transit provider (the Action Partnership). The \$42,900 contract comes out of Tribal STF funding.

The schedule includes seven round-trips daily, Monday through Friday, between McMinnville and Grand Ronde. As scheduled, and the schedule is likely to change as the new offerings are evaluated, buses will leave the Grand Ronde Tribal campus at 5 a.m., 6:55 a.m., 9:10 a.m., 11:05 a.m., 1:05 p.m., 3 p.m. and 6:10 p.m. The last bus from McMinnville arrives at 8:05 p.m.

Planned stops include Grand Ronde Station at Spirit Mountain Casino. Riders can walk over or call for the casino shuttle to pick them up.

The bus then goes to Grand Ronde Road and turns right. It goes past Grand Meadows and the Housing Administration building and then turns left into Elder housing and comes around to the Community Center and then back out onto Grand Ronde Road.

The buses have four-way flashers currently used anywhere deemed safe to stop traffic and pick people up on the side of the road along the official route. Stops could be at the southeast corner of McPherson and Grand Ronde Road for Grand Meadows residents heading north or the opposite side of the road heading south. Another stop could be at the southeast corner of Tyee by the Housing Administration building.

Elders, 55 and older, and the

disabled living within three-quarters of a mile of the route who call at least two hours in advance will be picked up at their address.

For more information, check out the Web site at [www.yctransitarea.org](http://www.yctransitarea.org) or call 503-474-4910 or 503-554-7897.

In McMinnville, passengers can transfer to buses that go on separate routes to Salem, Newberg and, from there, to Portland and Hillsboro.

The bus is open to the general public and has a wheelchair lift.

The Tribal Council appointed three members of the Elders Committee to serve as the required STF Advisory Committee and committee members selected this service extension to Grand Ronde as the priority for public transit.

Tribal Elder Val Grout, appointed chair of the STF Committee, said that the extension would be a big help for Elders.

"I think it will help a lot of the Elders who don't drive," she said.

"Transportation is a huge barrier to employment services," said Tribal Social Services Manager Dave Fullerton. "We deal with the transportation barrier all the time. (This bus service) will provide another resource for Tribal members to reach their potential and to reach out for other services and opportunities. Transportation is a barrier that nine out of 10 times

explains people's inability to get to places, whether to work or to be with their family."

The Tribal Council adopted the Tribe's Transit Plan this past summer. The Tribe is looking at arranging for more limited service to Dallas and weekend service to Salem. A local area Grand Ronde dial-a-ride and employee commuter shuttle to the casino are options also being explored for additional transit funding.

Among benefits for the community, planners cite commuters wanting to save on gas, services for people without a second car or driver's licenses, and people needing transportation to appointments and shopping.

Another benefit is that groceries often are more expensive in Grand Ronde. People pay more for the convenience of buying locally. People on limited incomes can save five to 10 times the cost of the bus fare if they can ride the bus to a city or town with lower prices to buy two bags of groceries. The larger the town, the lower grocery prices.

Cost for the service to any stop on the route is \$1 each way, \$2 for an all-day pass, or \$30 for a monthly pass. ■

*Includes information from Kim Rogers, Tribal Planning and Grants manager, who is overseeing the contract.*

## Grand Ronde officials attend 10th Tribal State Summit

By Siobhan Taylor

*Public Affairs director*

This year's Tribal State Summit marked the 10th anniversary of meetings between representatives from Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes and representatives of state government.

Attendees ranged from eight Oregon Tribal chairs to Gov. Ted Kulongoski, and included legislators, state department heads, state agency staff members and Tribal government representatives.

This year's conference was held Nov. 8 at the Kah-nee-ta High Desert Resort and Casino in Warm Springs, hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

The theme was "Looking 10 Years Back and 10 Years Forward." The day before the conference, pre-summit work groups allowed representatives from the Tribes and state agencies to share information and concerns.

The Tribal State Summit was established as part of an executive order that states "the purpose of formalizing the government-to-government relationship that exists between Oregon's Indian tribes and the state is to establish a process which can assist in resolving conflicts, maximize key inter-governmental relations and enhance an exchange of ideas and resources for the greater good of all of Oregon's citizens, whether Tribal members or not."

Kulongoski kicked off the summit after a Tribal invocation, honor song and presentation of the colors by a veterans honor guard, by reminding attendees of the upcoming Veterans Day. He singled out the Confederated Tribes of Grand

Ronde for the honor they give to veterans in the West Valley with the Tribe's Veterans Memorial.

Kulongoski reminisced about his early August trip to Grand Ronde to visit "the Tribal Council, my friend and council member Chris Mercier and Tribal Chairwoman (Cheryle) Kennedy." He also said that if summit attendees had not visited the Veterans Memorial, designed by Tribal Council member Steve Bobb, they owed it to themselves to visit Grand Ronde and see the outstanding way the Tribe honors veterans.

Kulongoski talked about the meaningful dialogue between the state and Tribes that builds trust and mutual respect. He reaffirmed the state's understanding of Tribal sovereignty, and addressed common values and goals that both state and Tribes work together on to solve problems and build and strengthen future relationships.

When Kulongoski touched on the defeat of Measure 50 — the Healthy Kids plan — he mentioned Senate Bill 329, which set up a task force for lawmakers and community leaders

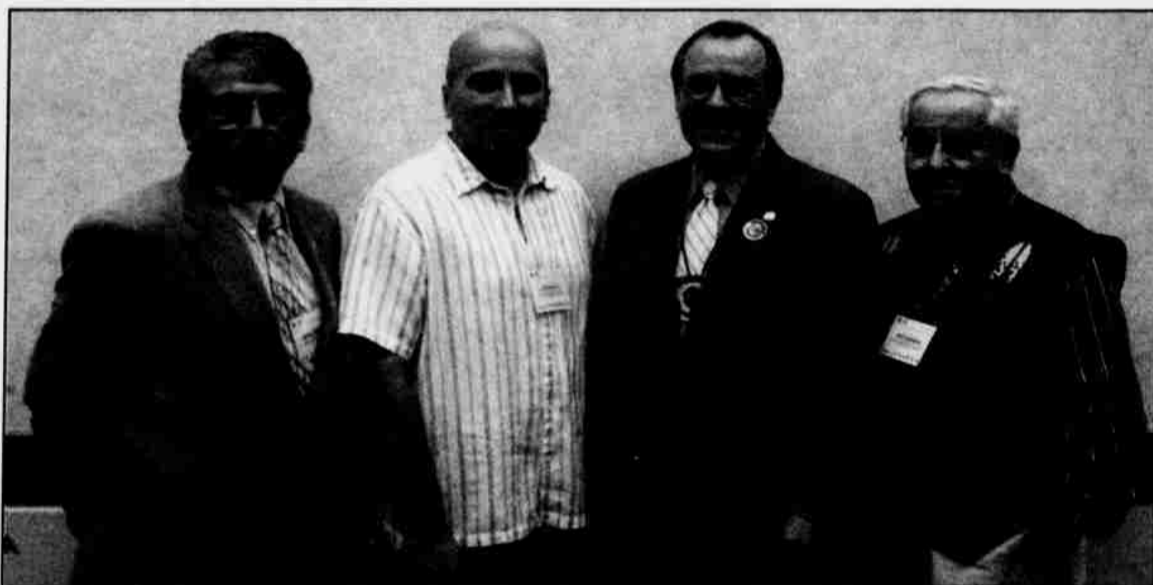


Photo by Angie Sears

**Grand Ronde Tribal Council members, from left, Steve Bobb Sr., Chris Mercier and Wink Soderberg stand with Gov. Ted Kulongoski (second from right) during the 10th annual Tribal State Summit held Nov. 8 at Kah-nee-ta High Desert Resort and Casino in Warm Springs. The event was hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and provides an opportunity for state officials to interact with representatives from Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes.**

to create a strategy to make affordable health care available to all Oregonians. Kulongoski thanked Tribal Chairwoman Kennedy for serving on that Benefits Subcommittee.

After Kulongoski's remarks, Tribal chairs discussed their successes and hopes for the future. Kennedy talked in-depth about the benefits and resources now enjoyed by Grand Ronde Tribal members, including health care, endowments, educational growth and more.

She also discussed the intergovernmental cooperation between Grand Ronde and state and local agencies on projects ranging from environmental quality to animal

habitat to road and highway improvements.

Sessions at the midday break allowed state agency representatives and Tribal members to network and share information about their programs and initiatives.

Grand Ronde media kits, copies of Tribal newspaper *Smoke Signals* and Tribal pins flew out the door as conference participants moved from table to table.

Next year's conference is scheduled for November at the new Three Rivers Resort and Casino in Lane County operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians. ■