

Archery shoot



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Shane Thomas, 11, lines up his shot as he practices at the 3D Archery Shoot held at the powwow grounds on Saturday, July 26.

Honoring heroes



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Tribal member Veronica Gaston hugs McMinnville Police Officer Michael LaRue after presenting him with a Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde blanket on July 22 at the new McMinnville Police Department during a City Council meeting. Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom looks on while McMinnville Police Sgt. Scott Fessler stands draped in his Tribal blanket. Gaston wanted to honor the two officers, who saved Krista Weigel, 38, from a house fire on July 2. Gaston lives four doors away from Weigel in McMinnville. The two officers were the first responders to the house fire and Fessler used a sledgehammer to knock in the back door, allowing the officers to rescue Weigel from the kitchen, which was engulfed in flames. "It was a profound moment in both of our careers," LaRue said before the City Council meeting. Tom said the Tribe wanted to present the officers with blankets because "It's not every day that you meet heroes." Weigel is being treated for her burns at Legacy Emanuel Hospital in Portland. Larry Warren Barnard, 38, who lived with Weigel, is accused of arson and assault in the incident and is lodged at the Yamhill County Jail. "We are both honored and humbled by this recognition," LaRue said. "I told Officer LaRue that he will always be my hero," Gaston said, who added that the officers told her that they will always cherish the Tribal blankets.

Elder Foster Program "A Place To Call Home"



The Tribe's Elder Foster Care lodges are committed to offering quality care to our Elders and help them remain as independent as possible, while providing the personalized assistance they need. At our lodges, a wide range of services is available in a comfortable setting where privacy is respected and maximum independence is supported. For information, contact the Elder Foster Program director, at 503-879-1694.

Unmarked grave sites in Grand Ronde

We need your help — If anyone knows the location of an unmarked grave or knows the name of someone who was buried at the Grand Ronde Cemetery and their grave has not been marked, please contact Mike Larsen, Facilities Manager, at 503-879-2407.

Providers seeing up to 25 patients daily

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long as several hours out in the lobby.

Now, providers are seeing as many as 25 patients daily and they are on a 20-minute schedule per patient, thereby reducing wait times for other patients.

"We're more cognizant of the flow," Johnston says. "There is a fine line between seeing lots of people and providing good care. We set a clear expectation of seeing 15 to 25 patients a day. Industry standard is 15-minute appointments."

To help providers reach that expectation, the clinic has reworked paperwork requirements and other complementary obligations placed on health care providers to maximize their time. In addition, the clinic does a better job of triaging — deciding who gets to see health care providers first based on the seriousness of their symptoms.

However, most Tribal patients can get an appointment within

two days of calling; sometimes on the same day depending on the schedule.

Perhaps most importantly, Johnston says, the clinic recruited new health care providers who were committed to staying in Grand Ronde for a long term, reducing turnover that also affected patronage of the clinic.

"I've heard from past clinic patients that they no longer access care at the clinic because they were tired of new providers coming and going, and that they needed more stability," Johnston says.

To guarantee that new providers were committed to a long-term assignment at the Tribal Health & Wellness Center, a five-tiered interview process was created that included interviews with Tribal Council, Johnston and center employees.

"It made it more difficult for insincere applicants to work their way through," Johnston says.

Susan Wright, a family nurse practitioner who moved to Willamina from Clarksville, Tenn., to work in Grand Ronde in October 2007, says the interview process was "much more rigorous" than any she had been through previously.

"That was a good thing because it helped me get a better sense of things," Wright, 59, says.

Wright says she obtained a sense that Tribal clinic employees not only cared about the people they treated, but also about the people they work with.

"And the physical plant is wonderful," Wright says. "You have medical, dental, optometry and behavioral health all under one roof."

Marjie Mascarinas, a family nurse practitioner who has worked for the Peace Corps in Togo and Turkmenistan, returned to the Tribal clinic after working there from 2000 to 2002 while earning her master's degree from Oregon Health Sciences University.

She says the clinic's workload creates a steady environment for a health care provider.

"It's really steady, sometimes slightly slow, and then pretty chaotic," Mascarinas, 40, says. "You never know what might come in. It can be simple, and then the whole place is upside-down."

Wright agreed about the new workload requirements.

"The workload is about what I'm

accustomed to," Wright says.

And both say they have no plans on leaving anytime in the near future.

Wright, for instance, wanted to move to Oregon and found property in Willamina where her husband and she live with two dogs and three horses.

"I have no intent on going anywhere," she says.

And although Mascarinas says she might one day return to an overseas assignment, at the moment she has no plans to leave the Tribal clinic.

Johnston says he started sensing a turnaround at the Tribal clinic in November and December of last year.

"We have a dedicated, loyal and honest group of employees," Johnston says.

And he pauses to recall a horror story of being told that a Tribal Elder had been sitting in the clinic lobby for two hours, waiting to see his health care provider.

"You don't hear those things from patients anymore," he says, shuddering at the thought. ■