

Film crew documents Contest Powwow

'Oregon Uncovered' to begin airing in January on European Travel Channel

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Grand Ronde's 2009 Contest Powwow might have a decidedly more European feel to it.

Tribal members might hear British accents and an occasional "merci," "donka" and "gracias" from attendees in the stands and milling about the craft and food vendors.

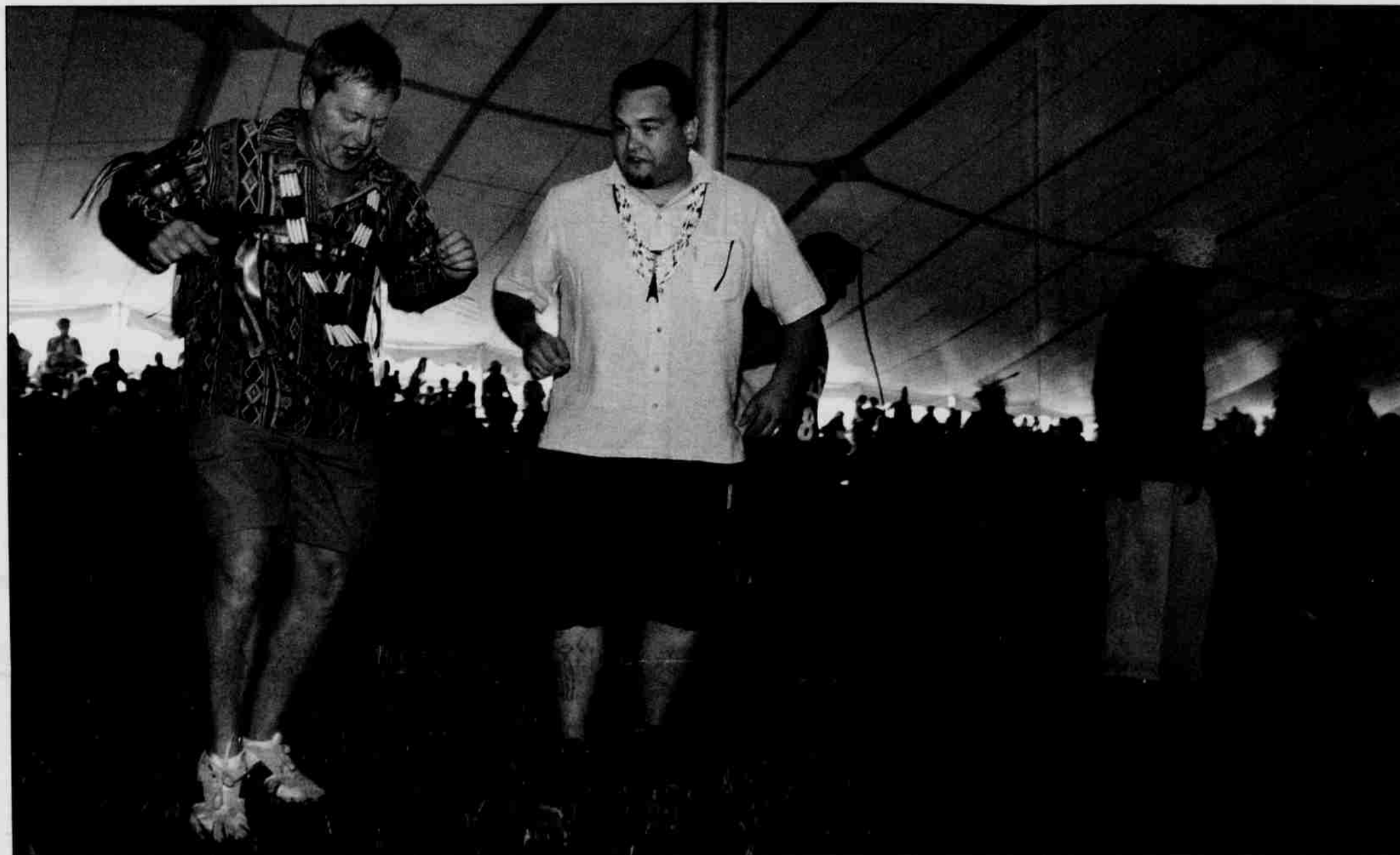
On Friday and Saturday, Aug. 15-16, a four-member crew from the European Travel Channel filmed the 2008 Contest Powwow and visited Fort Yamhill State Park for a Tribal history lesson from Tribal member and Cultural Resources Protection Coordinator Eirik Thorsgard. They also interviewed Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy about Tribal history and current-day cultural and tourism opportunities, Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison about the Trail of Tears and Tribal member Angie Sears about Native products for sale at Spirit Mountain Casino.

The high-definition footage will be edited into a 30-minute episode of "Oregon Uncovered," a 15-part series that will start airing in western Europe in January.

On Friday, the four-member film crew interviewed Sears at Spirit Mountain Casino and then met Kennedy and Harrison at the Governance Center.

On Saturday, their day started at 8 a.m. shooting at Fort Yamhill State Park. The film crew featured producer/director Simon Kane, cameraman Steven Cassidy, soundman Bob McDougall and on-air host Alistair Divall. Executive Producer Jaimie Douglas of Prime Film Sites hovered in the background, ensuring that the crew kept to its busy filming schedule.

At Fort Yamhill, Divall interviewed Thorsgard, who explained the historical significance of the



Tribal member and Cultural Resources Protection Coordinator Eirik Thorsgard, right, teaches "Oregon Uncovered" host Alistair Divall how to dance at Saturday afternoon's interTribal dance.

Photo by Michelle Alaimo

fort as it relates to the ancestors of the Grand Ronde Tribe. Thorsgard also explained why he has a Scandinavian last name despite being a Native American.

In the afternoon, the film crew concentrated on filming Grand Entry underneath the big tent at Uuxat Powwow Grounds. Divall even donned a ribbon shirt given to him by Tribal Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor and danced during an interTribal with Thorsgard as his powwow dance instructor.

"It's absolutely amazing," Divall said about attending his first powwow. "Europeans will absolutely appreciate what you have here."

Not everything went off without a hitch. While trying to film a segment outside the powwow tent, producer Kane worried about eventually editing sequences together because the ambient sound

would not match up.

"The noise never stops," Thorsgard advised Kane. "This will go on until 1 a.m."

Taylor also sprayed aerosol sunscreen on the pale-skinned Europeans, fetched many bottles of water to keep them hydrated and once joined the film crew, holding a reflector to get more light on Divall's face.

"This is a feast of food, dancing, music and culture," Divall said into the camera while filming the show's introduction amid the craft booths. "This is an event not to be missed."

The European Travel Channel crew also filmed and interviewed Tribal member Connie Graves, who was making cedar hats and other Native crafts along with Tribal members Carol Haskins, Diane Smith, Dolores Parmenter and Debbie Bernardo, as well as Native artists Colleen Payne and Rebecca Friedlander.

Toward the end of the day, the film crew drove up to the Tribe's Natural Resources Department to film a Native feast of salmon, fry bread, corn and squash prepared

traditionally by Tribal member Greg Archuleta and Chinook Tribal member Greg Robinson, as well as Tribal members Kristen Ravia, Janelle Gutierrez, Carla Roberts and Deanna Wheeler. Youth Crew leader Alyssa Cudmore and her Tribal crew also assisted by setting up tables for the feast.

The potential viewership for the episode about the Grand Ronde Tribe is enormous, Douglas said.

"Forty-eight million people twice a day in primetime for three years," she said, reeling off the numbers while eating salmon at the afternoon feast.

Douglas said the episode will be translated into 12 languages and played in rotation in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Italy, Germany, France, Spain and Portugal, and perhaps may be distributed in the United States in its second year.

Almost half of the 23.9 million foreign travelers to the United States in 2007 were from western Europe, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

And Taylor said it is important for the Tribe's economic diversification to tap into the state's \$7.9 billion tourism industry.

"Tribal Council feels tourism is a critical aspect," Taylor said. ■



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Above, "Oregon Uncovered" host Alistair Divall talks with Tribal member Connie Graves about her traditional Native crafts on Saturday, Aug. 16. At right, Tribal Elder Kathryn Harrison is interviewed for the "Oregon Uncovered" segment at the Governance Center on Friday, Aug. 15. Below, Tribal Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor, left, becomes a temporary film crew member at the Natural Resources complex on Saturday, Aug. 16.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo



Photo by Dean Rhodes

"Oregon Uncovered" host Alistair Divall, left, tapes the opening sequence to the episode about the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde while film crew members, from left, Steven Cassidy, Bob McDougall and Simon Kane look on.



Photo by Dean Rhodes