

Letters

Dear Grand Ronde Community:

Thanks to the generous cooperation of your community, the American Lung Association in Oregon's 2009 Reach the Beach, an annual charitable bike ride held May 16, achieved record-breaking results. With your support, the event attracted 2,975 riders and raised nearly \$400,000 for lung disease research and education.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for being a part of this event and sharing your community with Reach the Beach riders in support of this worthy cause. Many participants were awestruck by the picturesque scenery in your area and the friendliness of local supporters.

In fact, largely due to the beautiful landscapes through which participants ride, this annual fundraiser attracts cyclists from across the nation and was voted "Best Ride" by Competitor Northwest readers in 2007 and named 2007 and 2008's "Best Cycling Route" by the *Oregonian*.

More than 52 percent of this year's riders (including four unicyclists!) completed the entire 100-mile route option. Six-thousand wheels, 300 volunteers, 8,000 cookies and more than 234,000 miles later, the 19th annual Reach the Beach culminated in a giant beach party attended by more than 6,000 people in Pacific City.

Reach the Beach 2010 is scheduled for May 15, 2010; we sincerely look forward to working with your community again in the future.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Ayleen Crotty

Reach the Beach and American Lung Association of Oregon

Dear Tribal members:

I continue to hear the words "ethics" and "accountability" come up in conversation whether it be a private discussion or in a public forum. It is obvious that Tribal members find these issues to be a very serious matter. It was recently pointed out to me that there is a Tribal Ethical Standards Ordinance of which I obtained a copy and read thoroughly. It states the following on page two of the ordinance:

"The Tribal membership judges its government by the way Tribal officials conduct themselves in the positions to which they are elected or appointed.

"Tribal members have a right to expect that every Tribal official will conduct himself or herself in a manner that will tend to preserve public confidence in and respect for the Tribal government.

"Such confidence and respect can best be promoted if every Tribal official, whether paid or unpaid, and whether elected or appointed, will uniformly: (i) treat both Tribal members and members of the non-Tribal public with courtesy; (ii) carry out the duties of their position with impartiality, fairness and equality under the law; (iii) avoid both actual and potential conflicts between their private self-interest and the public interest."

There are then two full pages of "Standards of Conduct" followed by two full pages of procedures that a complainant would have to follow in order to file a complaint.

What I find interesting is that the complaint would be given to the Tribal Council Secretary, the Tribal Council Chairperson and the Legal Team. After that point, it would be determined whether or not there is any validity to the complaint and if there is, a hearing would then be pursued.

It seems to me that it would be a conflict of interest to have a team of people who report directly to the Tribal Council investigate the complaint and be in charge of whether or not the complaint should be taken to the next step. If the Legal Team decided to take it to the next step, their findings would then be turned over to Tribal Council where they would then vote on an "appropriate" sanction for the guilty person(s). I must not be the only one to find this system incredibly flawed.

I do believe there are some possible solutions to this imperfect ordinance. However, I don't feel like there are any "short-term" solutions. I feel the processes need to be refined and these potential conflicts of interest eliminated. There is only one group of people that can make that happen. Until this problem is fixed, I hope members consider the possible consequences of an ethical free-for-all as we have now.

As I read in a letter in the June 1st *Smoke Signals*, this issue has gotten more than just my attention. Just something to chew on as we enter another election season.

Thank you for your time.

Toby McClary

Roll #1471

Dear fellow Tribal members:

I am probably going to come off as being a grumpy old man in this letter, but there are some things I do feel the need to speak up about. As the eldest member of Tribal Council, I feel very qualified to cover this subject.

Being a part of this Tribe is a blessing in every sense of the word. We all get per capita, health care, scholarship opportunities if one chooses and numerous other benefits. If you are 55 years or older, a Tribal Elder, you get even more. I am pointing this out because there seems to have been a lot of talk about how our Tribe doesn't do enough for the Tribal Elders. As an Elder, and a Tribal Council member, I intend to dispute that right here and now because any claim we don't do enough for our Elders is hogwash.

I took out a pen and paper recently, and to the best of my ability started to list out all the various benefits we, as Tribal Elders, get from our Tribe.

First, once you turn 55, you get \$1,000 per month. You get that whether you work or not, whether you've already got a good retirement or pension, rich or poor. That is in addition to per capita, which everybody gets. The Elders' Security Endowment right now makes up more than 33 percent of our Tribe's portfolio.

Every Monday, I take my wife to the buffet at Spirit Mountain Casino, where we eat for free. That is a \$33 benefit, every Monday, which adds up to nearly \$1,600 a year. Most days of the week, we can go to the Elders' meal site, located in our \$3.5 million Elders' Activity Center, and eat a lunch for which everybody else gets charged \$5. I'll let others do the math on that one. The Activity Center is located right next to our Elders' housing, which cost more than \$3 million and where residents are charged, last I checked, an average of \$100 per month. Earlier this year, we approved more than \$3 million in Housing and Urban Development dollars for another phase of Elders' housing.

As an Elder, I can sign up for concert tickets, sporting event tickets and field trips like the Canoe Journey or the New York Meteorite trip or the Conference on Aging. We also get covered seating at the powwows and first dibs at community meals. We get a lot. While we've been making those unpopular budget cuts, the Elders' Security was one of the few benefits not to get cut back. Per capita, which affects everybody, gets cut before we'd think of cutting the Elders' Security.

I hope that somebody does research on other Tribes and lets me know how we stack up. From what I've learned working with the National Congress of American Indians and other Indian organizations, the package of benefits we offer our Tribal Elders is mighty impressive.

So when people accuse us of not doing enough, I take it personal. And I think it's high time we start thinking of future generations. That is what Tribes are supposed to be doing.

Thank you for your time.

Wink Soderberg

Roll #777

Native Youth Leadership and Athletic Academy

June 29-July 2, 2009

Eligible: CTGR youth ages 12-18 who want to develop their leadership and athletic skills.

Contact Shannon Simi at 503-879-1471 or shannon.simi@grandronde.org for an application.

Tribe holding June 22 orientation on federal stimulus work program

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Tribe's Mentorship & Workforce Development Program will hold an orientation and interviews at 1 p.m. Monday, June 22, for young Tribal and community members interested in Polk Helping Achieve Lifelong Objectives, a summer employment and training program funded by almost \$563,000 in federal stimulus funds.

Polk HALO, a career guidance and employment agency based in Independence, received a portion of money awarded to Oregon through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Seventy-five people between 17 and 24 years of age will work different jobs and take part in various career exploration activities throughout the county beginning in July, said HALO Director Katherine Bartlett.

The Grand Ronde session will be held in Room 126 A&B in the Education Building.

"This is really about training

youth for living-wage jobs, or getting them interested in areas they can further their education in," Bartlett said.

Young adults who meet Workforce Investment Act criteria – low income with barriers to employment and education – may also apply. The federal funds will cover payroll for participants in a number of job opportunities coordinated between HALO and different community partners. The program will run through August or September.

Besides work, youths involved in the program will tour different job sites and career apprenticeship centers in the Willamette Valley, undergo safety training for OSHA certification and take part in a team-building event at the Youth With a Mission campus in Salem.

For more information about the Tribe's involvement in the program, contact Tribal member and Mentorship & Workforce Development Director Denise Harvey at 503-879-2112 or 503-434-3658, or denise.harvey@grandronde.org. ■