

# Tribe, Fire District OK agreement

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Grand Ronde Tribal Council and West Valley Fire District have agreed to an intergovernmental agreement to provide around-the-clock and faster fire and emergency medical coverage in the Grand Ronde area, including Spirit Mountain Casino and Lodge, the Tribe's government campus and Tribal Housing areas.

"The most important piece for me is guaranteeing protection in Grand Ronde," said Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno from Washington, D.C. "That 20-minute commute (from the Fire District's Willamina main station) is the biggest concern. I think it's good for the casino and the community."

West Valley Fire District Chief Chuck Eddings said response times in the Grand Ronde area for emergency medical and fire calls will decrease from more than 10 minutes to almost immediately. The Grand Ronde area, Eddings said, accounts for almost 60 percent of the Fire District's calls.

Tribal Council accepted the agreement in a July 10 directive and the West Valley Fire District board unanimously approved the intergovernmental agreement the same day.

According to the agreement, the Tribe will design and build a new fire substation in Grand Ronde on 2.5 acres of Tribal land at the southeast corner of Grand Ronde and McPherson roads.

The 5,700-square-foot, single-story structure will feature three vehi-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

The West Valley Fire District and the Tribe have reached an agreement to build a new fire station in Grand Ronde. It will be located at the corner of Grand Ronde Road and McPherson Road.

cle bays and living space, including three dormitories. The building will be owned by the Tribe.

In addition, the Tribe agreed to buy one quint (a fire engine that serves the dual purposes of an engine and a ladder truck) and equipment for three firefighters/paramedics, three firefighters/emergency medical technicians and six volunteer firefighters.

Eddings said the importance of the quint is to access to the upper stories and roof for firefighters.

Tribal member and Tribal Director of Development Peter Wakeland said the quint also could provide an aerial stream of water to the lodge's upper floors.

The Tribe also will pay the Fire District before Aug. 1 the balance of the ambulance and associated equipment purchased by the dis-

trict with a 2007 grant from the Tribe's Spirit Mountain Community Fund. The ambulance will be owned by the Fire District and located at the substation.

The agreement calls for the Tribe to fund six full-time employees, at least three of which will be firefighters/paramedics and any remaining positions will be firefighters/EMTs.

In return, the West Valley Fire District "shall provide fire suppression and emergency medical services on Tribal Lands upon request of the Tribe or through notification and activation of 9-1-1 on the same basis as those services are provided to other lands within the District's service area."

"This boosts our manpower pool and increases our abilities at that end of the district," Eddings said, adding that the Fire District will go from having five to 11 employees.

The Fire District also agrees to keep three resident volunteer firefighting positions open for Grand Ronde Tribal members for basic firefighting training.

The substation will be operated and managed by the Fire District and will have two firefighters assigned per shift "with the intent to

provide fire and emergency medical services to Tribal Lands 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Eddings said he hopes the six new Fire District employees will be staffing the substation by March 2010.

The "large garage" owned by the Fire District next to the Grand Ronde post office will become obsolete, Eddings said.

The Fire District also will provide a fire engine for the substation.

The Tribe and Fire District agreed to work together to "recruit Grand Ronde Tribal members for full-time positions at the substation."

The agreement also requires the two entities to meet quarterly to discuss fire and emergency medical needs.

"This has been a long time coming and has required a lot of work to successfully produce this agreement," Wakeland said. "As a result, the western portion of the district and the Tribal community will be much better served where fire and emergency services are concerned."

"I think this is a positive thing for the Tribe and the community," Leno said. "It's being a good neighbor." ■

## Salmon ceremony

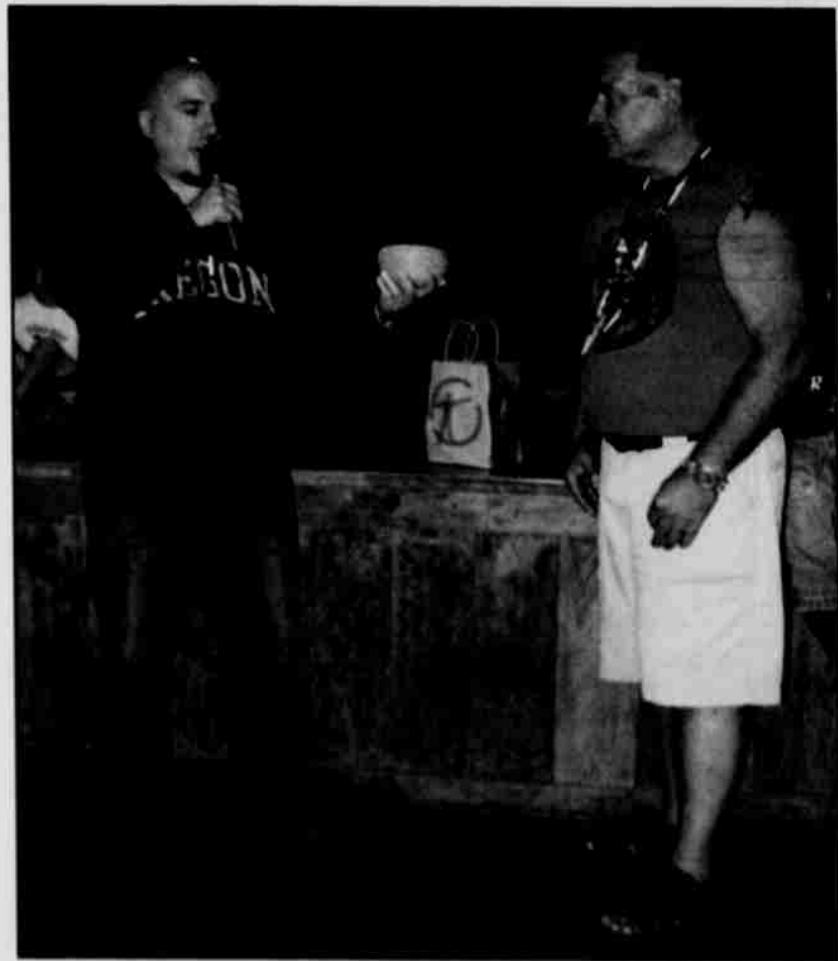


Photo by Siobhan Taylor

Tribal Council member Chris Mercier, (left), presents a pine needle basket to Chinook Chairman Ray Gardner at the annual Chinook Salmon Ceremony held at Fort Columbia, Wash.

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE TRIBAL COURT

**PEACEMAKER PROGRAM**  
BRING PEACE OUT OF CONFLICT

The purpose of the Peacemaker Program is to provide a non-adversarial way to resolve disputes. The Peacemaker Program is intended to reflect the Tribe's tradition of using respected members of the community to heal conflicts among its members.

Trained Peacemakers facilitate the peacemaking process to guide the parties in coming to a mutually agreeable resolution to their conflict.

For more information about this Program, please contact the Tribal Court Program Specialist at the address listed below.

*Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.*

Chief Seattle, 1854

JULIE BOEKHOFF  
TRIBAL COURT PROGRAMS SPECIALIST  
9615 GRAND RONDE RD.  
GRAND RONDE, OR 97347

PHONE: 503-879-4623  
FAX: 503-879-2269  
Julie.boekhoff@grandronde.org