

# Tribal members finishing plankhouse

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

On a recent Thursday, Tribal Elder Jan Reibach stood in a bucket that hoisted him to the top of the Tribal plankhouse near Uyxat Powwow Grounds.

He worked with a simple chalk string, stretching it from the peak to the end of the roof, and piece by piece he snapped that chalk string to mark a line along what would be the roof edge of the Tribe's newest building.

The crew enlisted a chainsaw to cut a straight angle along the roof pitch. It would be the third chainsaw used in the project. The first two burned out cutting through the big logs.

The planks making up the walls weigh as much as 500 pounds each, and the crew members, working through the Tribe's P.L. 102-477 Employment and Training and Voc Rehab programs, said that stacking, sorting and grading the logs were the hardest parts of the job.

Reibach, a contractor and former Tribal Council member, and his crew were on the project, stacking, sorting and grading for a few months before Tribal Director of Development Pete Wakeland let the previous contractor go in June.

The job was just taking too long, Wakeland told Tribal Council at the time, and now, Reibach says, his crew is a month ahead of that contractor's timetable and working hard to finish.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Jason Yarbrough hammers a plug to fill in a hole.

"It got to the point where it was going very slowly," Wakeland said, "but Jan and his crew have done a real good job pushing the project along and getting it to where it is right now."

When Reibach arrived on the job, dozens of heavy planks were stacked on saw horses three feet above the ground, he said. Then, one saw horse and all the planks on top of it toppled over.

"Our first job was to make the work environment safe," Reibach said, "by bringing the planks to the ground. From there the sorting and

grading began, and the team then laid out the sides of the plankhouse on the ground."

Because the trees grow fatter at the bottom, said Tribal and crew member Marcus Gibbons, the pieces must be positioned next to each other "butt to tip."

The work included "finding the right piece for the right fit," Reibach said, but always with the waning side of the board on the outside.

"No two boards are alike," he said, "and you have to keep the grain running up and down."

Since April, the group has fin-

ished the bleachers, the sub-walls and the dressing rooms inside.

After Reibach measured for the diagonal cut along the roof line, the crew got busy inside with the forms for the fire pits.

In addition, the crew still has to finish the roof, the sliding doors, and the floor that will be made of a slurry of gravel, cement and dirt. The gravel already is down.

"This is our spiritual house," Reibach said, and he pointed to a small offering wedged into the wall on the inside. Feathers and beads hung on a rawhide string.

The crew starts every day with a prayer circle, Gibbons said. "There's never been any bad blood or dissension among the group."

Everyday, he added, Reibach selects another crew member to serve as the lead, giving each supervisory experience to go along with the hard labor it is taking to put the building together.

"This is a project that's been in various states of development for 10 years now," Wakeland said. "Getting the project completed is going to put that 10-plus year story to a close and provide the Tribe with a very significant cultural building."

So when will this project actually be finished?

"We're hoping to be finished in 60 days," Reibach said in late July. ■

## ATTENTION TRIBAL MEMBERS COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL EVENT BOARD VACANCIES

The following Committees and Special Event Boards have vacant positions. If you are interested, submit a completed application to Dakota Whitecloud, Tribal Council Relations Coordinator, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347.

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|---------------------------|-------------|
| Rodeo Special Event Board | 1 Vacancy   |
| Timber Committee          | 2 Vacancies |
| Social Services Committee | 1 Vacancy   |

## Basic skills lab

When: Every Wednesday from 1 to 4 p.m./open entry.

Where: Education Building/computer lab.

Computer skills, keyboarding, resume writing, math and writing.

Who: Joanne Carr, 503-879-2282 or joanne.carr@grandronde.org.

Why: It will be easier to get a job! You'll have a resume! You'll be better on the computer! You'll be happier! ■

## Helping hands



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal descendant Lacey Haller, 2, takes a bite of her mother Sandra's Indian taco as her father, Tribal Elder Ken Haller, watches during an Indian taco and fry bread fundraiser for Lacey at the Tribal Community Center on Monday, Aug. 24. The event raised \$1,000 for the family to help pay for medical expenses incurred as Lacey fights against leukemia, which is in remission, but she still receives chemotherapy to ensure it does not come back.



### Traditional Technologies Weekend Workshop

Sept. 4, 5 and 6

Please join the Cultural Resources Department for an informative weekend workshop on traditional technologies. Participants will learn about basketry, carving, harvesting and processing techniques, fishing technologies, and flint knapping. All materials and food will be provided. There is an area for camping and very limited cabin space for Elders and disabled. Event will take place in Alsea, Oregon. A limited amount of transportation will be provided. Please Call Misty Thorsgard to sign up and receive more information. Limit to the first 30 people.

Phone: 503-879-2320  
Fax: 503-879-2126  
E-mail: misty.thorsgard@grandronde.org

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