

Grand Ronde runners come to their Census

Tribal team promotes 2010 population count during 197-mile Hood-to-Coast relay race

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

As a dozen Grand Ronde Tribal runners ran the 197-mile Hood-to-Coast relay race between Mount Hood and Seaside, Ore., in late August, they left behind a message with those standing on the sides of the road, cheering them on.

The runners wore U.S. Census T-shirts in support of full Tribal participation for the 2010 population count.

Census Day will be April 1, 2010. The constitutionally-mandated, once-a-decade count is used to distribute more than \$435 billion in federal funding annually, draw political boundaries and determine each state's allotment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I met with Census representative Michelle Maher on the day of the Grand Ronde Powwow," Tribal member and Tribal Director of Operations John Mercier said.

"I helped Michelle set up an information table for the 2010 Census. Michelle informed me how important it is for the Census to be

visible to the public and our Tribe. She gave me a Census T-shirt and a water bottle.

"I just said, 'Hey, how about we use these T-shirts and water bottles to promote the Census during our Hood-to-Coast run?' I mean, there are 1,000 teams and a lot of public exposure during Hood-to-Coast. The rest is history from there."

The Grand Ronde team, dubbed the Grand Ronde Road Runners, competed in the Mixed Open category. They finished 114th out of 313 teams with a time of 28 hours, 28 minutes and 13 seconds.

The Road Runners, which started in 2002 after a group of local runners approached Mercier about forming a team, finished their sixth Hood-to-Coast relay.

The two-day Hood-to-Coast relay drew 1,000 teams and more than 12,000 runners from all over the world.

The Grand Ronde team included Sandy Bobb, Debbie McColm, Marianne Eichler, Mike Delay, Mercier, Mike Ryan, Nic Wilson, Denny Linton, Jason Jones, Randi Stephens and Janine (unknown last name).



Deni Luna/U.S. Census Bureau

The Grand Ronde Road Runners Hood-to-Coast relay team included, from left, Mike Delay, Marianne Eichler, Debbie McColm, Sandy Bobb and John Mercier. The team wore T-shirts promoting the 2010 Census during their 197-mile run from Mount Hood to Seaside in late August.

Team drivers were Barbara Mercier, Melanie Ebensteiner, Denise Harvey and Jon Chantell-Darcy.

Volunteers were Jilene Mercier, Mandy Mercier and Esther Stewart. ■

Graffiti incident draws \$500 reward

Construction machinery tagged with Indian Pride markings

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Native Pride is getting a secondary meaning these days.

At Grand Ronde Church of the Nazarene on Grand Ronde Road on Wednesday, Sept. 9, it looked more like gang graffiti than a proud sense of self.

"(I'm) not a fan of Native Pride," said Don Risseuw, owner/operator of Risseuw Excavating Co. of Grand Ronde, referring to graffiti thought to refer to Indian gangs.

His company is doing the underground work for the rebuilding of the church that three years ago was destroyed in one of two arson attacks. The other damaged Grand Ronde Middle School across the street.

Risseuw found his excavator spray painted with black paint and red permanent marker. It was tagged with the words "West Side," "W-S" and "IPO," thought to represent the gang, "Indian Pride Organization."

The church's main contractor, Oregon City-based Bar-ZN Inc., owned by Joe Klementis, also found a CAT excavator tagged in red permanent marker with the letters "IPO" and "W/S."

Up the street, signs for crews working on Grand Ronde Road got the same treatment. C&M Construction declined to file a police report. Also along the road, the taggers marked telephone relay boxes and a Tribal Council campaign sign, according to Polk County Deputy Larry Gilmore.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Gang graffiti marks part of the bridge over the South Yamhill River on Grand Ronde Road.

A Tribal member's home up the block also was spray painted with black letters 18 inches tall. "A big, big marking," Gilmore said.

Police estimated damages at about \$3,000.

The time frame for these crimes is thought to have been between closing time for the businesses involved on Tuesday and when the tags were discovered in Wednesday morning.

Nazarene Church Pastor Dave Crabb said that when his last meeting ended at the church at 10 p.m. Tuesday, there was not any graffiti visible on the construction machinery.

In addition, the bridge over the

South Yamhill River had more examples of the gang tags, though it was not clear how many were new. Under the bridge, the walls of the structure are a tangle of tags, probably going back years.

Risseuw and Crabb both took

pictures of the tags, and while Risseuw called the Polk County Sheriff's Office with the information, Crabb sent copies to the Tribal Community Awareness Team, of which he is a member, and also to Polk County Juvenile Parole Officer Rhonda Holder.

Following contact with the police, Risseuw called his son, Darren, to pick up solvents and quickly clean the paint and marker material from the machinery.

"If I had waited for it to bake on, it would have cost me thousands of dollars to get it repainted," he said.

Risseuw is also offering a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the offender(s).

"We'd sure like to put a stop to it," Gilmore said.

"This is the time to intervene," said Dave Fullerton, manager of the Tribe's Social Services Division. "Before it gets out of hand, we need to raise awareness in the community about the upsweep of the gang culture and the criminal activity associated with it."

"Only through prevention and intervention can we stop it." ■

Recycle center hours

The recycle center will be open during the following hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you, but we have found it necessary to put tighter control on this service. NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO DUMP PERSONAL GARBAGE OR YARD DEBRIS AT THE SITE. If you see someone abusing this privilege, contact Mike Larsen at 503-879-2407. ■