

Alton Butler named Tribe's Oregon HEAT board member

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

When the folks from Oregon HEAT approached the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority seeking a representative to sit on their board, Tribal Elder Alton Butler, 59, raised his hand.

Oregon HEAT is the "home energy assistance team" that provides heating help for Oregonians in need.

"I didn't know anything about Oregon HEAT until then," he said, but it is Butler's style to step up when a need is there.

Butler served the country with the Marine Corps in 1969-70, and for the 25 years after he continued to serve in the National Guard and Reserves.

Raising five children over the years, Butler has long volunteered as an official for local Little League football and baseball teams. Now, he's officiating basketball games, too.

In 2005, Butler began serving as a commissioner for the Tribal Housing Authority. He's been so successful there that Housing Authority Executive Director Carina Kistler recommended him for the Oregon HEAT post.

"He's just a terrifically dedicated individual," Kistler said. "He's got a passion for helping Tribal members in need. He's distinguished himself by suggesting improvements in energy efficiency measures of the housing units to benefit our Tribal members, and in lowering the utility costs that are a hardship to families."

Born and raised in Grand Ronde, Butler moved to Sheridan when he was 30 and has lived there ever since. He made his living as a logger for most of his life, setting chokers and running a yarder for many years, and for all the local logging companies — Bethel, Littlejohn and Hofenbredl among them, he said.

Laid off in 2000 when the local industry fell apart, Butler went back to school under the federal Dislocated Timber Workers Act. Attending Chemeketa Community College, he earned an associate degree as a building inspector and began his second career.

He worked five years for the city of St. Helens, and took a similar post in Lincoln City in 2008, just before the bottom of the nation's economy dropped out, building stopped and he found himself laid off once again.

Not to be dissuaded from the working life, Butler now is the Tribe's recreational director, setting up new lunchtime activities, including dodge ball and volleyball, and continuing to sponsor seasonal afterwork activities like baseball and softball for Tribal members and employees.

He also is the force behind the boys' basketball team in Grand Ronde. On Jan. 16, he hosted seven teams in the Tribal gym.

Most recently, Butler was named to the Tribal Timber Committee.

"Oregon HEAT provides heating assistance to Oregon families in need," Butler said. "It's funded by the utilities, by oil reclamation plants and private donations."

"My job is to get the word out about Oregon HEAT, that it's there when it's needed. As a building inspector, I would always recommend ways to save money on energy, and I also intend to do that as a board member of Oregon HEAT."

Butler was attending his first board meeting — in the company of Jim Scherzinger, deputy director of Finance, Oregon Department of Human Services; David Symes, attorney and partner of the law firm Perkins Coie LLP, and Marisa DeCristoforo, low-income program manager of Pacific Power — as *Smoke Signals* went to press. ■



Tribal Elder Alton Butler

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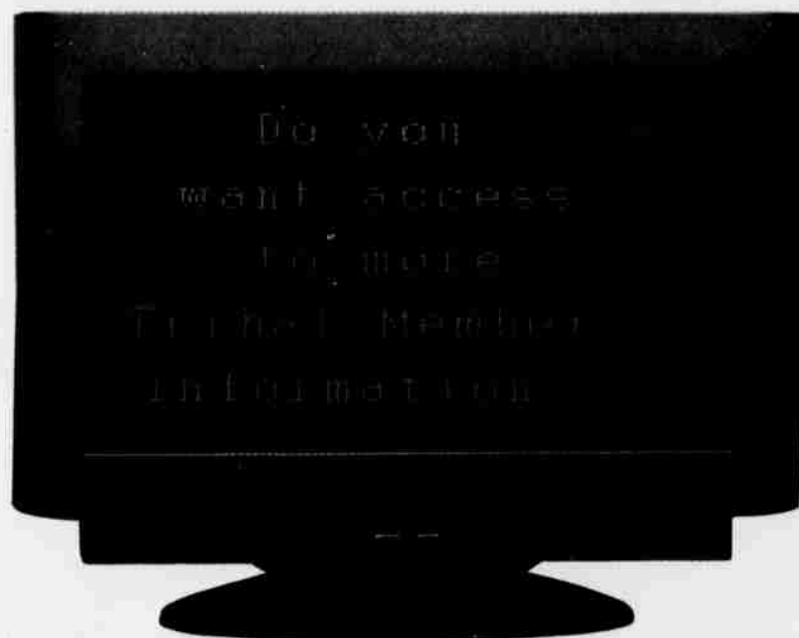
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Graphic by George Valdez

In an effort to more efficiently and more rapidly communicate with Tribal members, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is asking Tribal members to register at the Tribal Web site and allow the Tribe to electronically send them news updates, e-zines and PDFs of *Smoke Signals*, among other news and informational items.

To register, go to www.grandronde.org.

Click on the "Log in here" link in the upper right-hand corner.

Enter your user name and password, and click the "login" button, or if you are not registered, click the link below the login button to register with the Web site.

If you have registered with the site before and have forgotten your login information, you can click the link to recover it by providing the e-mail address that you verified when you registered with the site.

If you have not registered before, you will need to do so to view the Tribal member-only section of grandronde.org.

First-time users will need to fill in the required fields and click the register button at the bottom of the form.

After you click the "register" button, you will need to check the e-mail address that you provided and click on the link in the e-mail that our system sent to you. The e-mail should arrive moments after you click the register button. If you do not see an e-mail you will want to check your junk mail folder/spam filter. Clicking the link will verify that the e-mail address you provided is correct and active, and you will be able to log on to the Tribal member section of the Web site. ■

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.

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Chief Seattle, 1854

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