

Looking Wolf videos
on YouTube — pg. 3



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Smoke Signals

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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Ties that bind

Western Tribes hold second annual Gathering of Oregon's First Nations Powwow

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Indigenous Tribal culture wore a 1,000 faces at the second annual Gathering of Oregon's First Nations in Salem on Saturday, Jan. 30.

And many of those faces were from the Grand Ronde Tribe.

For Grand Ronde Tribal member Joel Selwyn, with camera in hand, some of those faces came from photographic images he took for his

See POWWOW
continued on pages 8-9

Tribal member Deitrich Peters dances in the Grand Entry of the second annual Gathering of Oregon's First Nations Powwow on Saturday, Jan. 30, at the Oregon State Fairgrounds Pavilion in Salem.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

General Council concentrates on health plan

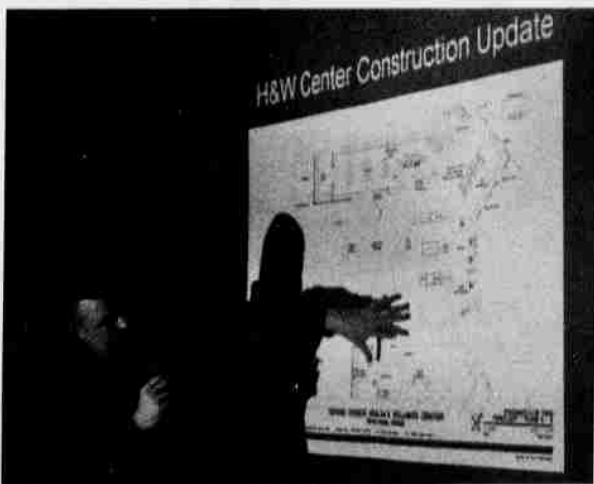


Photo by Dean Rhodes

Tribal Health Services Executive Director Mark Johnston gives an overview of construction projects currently occurring at the Tribal Health & Wellness Center in Grand Ronde during the General Council meeting held Feb. 7 at the Monarch Hotel in Clackamas.

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

As health costs continue to increase, the staff of the Tribal Health & Wellness Clinic is continuing to find ways to save Tribal dollars that fund the Tribal member health plan.

Those cost-saving tactics were the main topic of discussion at the Grand Ronde General Council meeting held Sunday, Feb. 7, at the Monarch Hotel and Conference Center in Clackamas.

Tribal Health Services Executive Director Mark Johnston, Assistant Executive Director Allyson Lecatsas and Pharmacy Director Julie Davis reviewed the cost-saving moves for about 30 Tribal members in attendance.

Johnston briefed Tribal members on the total cost of the Skookum Tribal member health plan, pointing out that the estimated 2010 budget is about \$1.5 million less than 2009's budget.

Johnston said the Tribe has saved almost \$8 million to date by accessing Medicare Like Rates and the other programs.

The most recent cost-savings move, Davis said, is the prescription medication change that requires

Tribal members buy their maintenance drugs via mail order or in person from either Express Scripts or the Tribe's Grand Ronde Pharmacy.

Johnston said the move will save the Tribal member health plan more than \$800,000 annually because the Tribe can purchase drugs at a "deeply" discounted government rate.

Davis said it costs the Tribe an average of \$38.77 per Tribal member prescription when filled at an outside pharmacy and only \$13.85 per Tribal member prescription when filled at the Tribal Pharmacy — about 35 percent of the outside pharmacy expense.

The new prescription rules, which went into effect on Feb. 1, only apply to maintenance drugs, such as those taken for blood pressure, diabetes and depression. Medications for short-term medical problems still can be purchased at outside pharmacies.

Davis said that Tribal members who get their prescription drugs through the Grand Ronde

See GENERAL COUNCIL
continued on page 5