

Tribal members, staff attended event

GOVERNMENT DAY
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Mountain Casino pens.

Green reusable grocery bags given away from the Coquille Tribe proved popular, too.

Meanwhile, as Tribal representatives and state government employees grabbed seats and sat on the stairs, awaiting the beginning of the 11 a.m. ceremony, Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno, Tribal Council Secretary Kathleen Tom and Tribal Council members Chris Mercier, Wink Soderberg, Toby McClary, Valorie Sheker, Steve Bobb Sr. and June Sell-Sherer socialized with other governmental and Tribal representatives.

Tribal staff in attendance included Tribal member and Executive Officer Chris Leno, Tribal Attorney Rob Greene, Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor and Tribal member and Cultural Resources Manager David Lewis.

Tribal members attending included Tribal Elders Betty Bly, Janell Haller, Alton Butler and Leon "Chip" Tom.

At about 10:40, Klamath Tribal Vice Chairman Don Gentry started playing mellow Native flute music that filled the Rotunda and slowly ushered attendees to secure a vantage point from which to watch the ceremony.

At 11 a.m., the ceremony began with a Warm Springs drum playing while the flag procession solemnly marched in. Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno carried the Grand Ronde Tribal flag while Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr., a Vietnam veteran, brought in the POW-MIA flag.

Tribal member and Tribal Lands Manager Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach, 2009 Artist of the Year at the Native American Music Awards, performed "What the World Needs" solo on guitar.

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day), a member of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services, served as master of ceremonies, introducing Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, who welcomed people to the traditional homelands of the Grand Ronde Tribes.

"This is a very important day to celebrate this great event," Kennedy said as she stressed the histori-



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno carries the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal flag during the flag procession of Tribal Government Day at the State Capitol Building in Salem on Friday, May 14.



Tribal Council Secretary Kathleen Tom, right, takes a picture of former Oregon Gov. Vic Atiyeh as he speaks during Tribal Government Day at the State Capitol Building in Salem on Friday, May 14. Also in attendance at the event was Tribal Elder, former Tribal Council member and Kathleen Tom's father, Leon "Chip" Tom, middle, and Tribal Council member Chris Mercier.

cal fact that all of North America was inhabited by Indians before European settlers arrived.

"Our ancestors were welcoming," Kennedy said, "and I want to thank you for coming and learning about what the state is doing with its relationship with the Tribes. Today, we are still carrying on that welcoming tradition and want to be good neighbors."

Ferrioli echoed that sentiment, saying that the land being stood upon in Salem had been Indian land since time immemorial. He

encouraged people to visit the State Capitol's Circle of Flags, which now includes the nine flags of Oregon's Tribes and plaques briefly explaining their history.

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribal Chair Sue Shaffer introduced former Oregon Gov. Vic Atiyeh, who spoke about the beginnings of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services in 1975.

Atiyeh sponsored creation of the commission when he was a state senator and served on it before he became governor.

Now 87, Atiyeh was the Senate Republican leader in 1975 when Senate Bill 386 created the commission. He was the first senator to serve on the commission.

"Vic Atiyeh started the ball rolling on the Commission on Indian Services," Shaffer said. "I am so delighted it's the 35th anniversary of the commission, and (Commission Executive Director) Karen Quigley has put the department where it needs to be in the minds of Oregon's people."

After a standing ovation, Atiyeh reminisced about the commission's creation.

"When I first came into this building in 1959," he said, "Native peoples in Oregon were being ignored, but, gosh, we've come a long

way. We were on the outside. Now, we're on the inside."

He joked that after he was elected governor, he wished the commission's name had been the "Executive" Commission on Indian Services.

"There have been 87 representatives on the Commission on Indian Services who have given their time on behalf of the Tribes of Oregon," Atiyeh said. "I'm proud of the fact that Native Americans have made a major contribution to the state and culture of Oregon."

Secretary of State Kate Brown then read the proclamation naming May 14 as Tribal Government Day and the week of May 15-21 as American Indian Week in Oregon.

The ceremony closed with a circle dance in honor of Umatilla Tribal Elder and outgoing Commission on Indian Services member Jay Minthorn.

Minthorn received a big hug from Sheker and was presented by Kennedy with a certificate for two nights stay at Spirit Mountain Lodge and food certificates at Spirit Mountain Casino's eateries.

As the Warm Springs drums reverberated up and down the Rotunda, attendees started peeling off from the circle dance for a lunch hosted by the Cow Creek and its Seven Feathers Casino. ■



Tribal member and Tribal Lands Manager Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach performs "What the World Needs" during Tribal Government Day at the State Capitol Building in Salem.