

Taking no quarter

Tribe places Mt. Hood coin squarely within its ceded lands

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

More than 100 people came to the World Forestry Center in Portland on Wednesday, Nov. 17, for the release of the U.S. Mint's Mt. Hood National Forest quarter.

The quarter was struck by the Denver mint on Oct. 4 and by the Philadelphia Mint on Oct. 5. It entered circulation on Nov. 15 and was presented to the world in Portland two days later.

It is the fifth in a series of 56 in the U.S. Mint's "America the Beautiful Quarters Program" that began in 2010 and anticipates five new releases annually through 2021.

It comes with interactive history lessons tailored for students in K-12 grades.

The quarter also comes with a history lesson important to Tribes.

"We recognize that most of us are newcomers," said U.S. Mint Deputy Director Andy Brunhart. "We're honored to have two Tribes with us today."

Warm Springs Chief Delvis Heath Sr. brought song and prayer to begin the event.

Grand Ronde Tribal Council members Kathleen Tom, who serves as the governing body's secretary, and Chris Mercier connected Mt. Hood — the mountain and the forest — with the aboriginal home of the peoples of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

"It's an honor to be here," said Tom. "This is a historic moment not just for Tribes, but for all Oregonians. We welcome you to our ceded lands."

"We're all Oregonians," said Mercier, "and hopefully Duck fans, too."

According to treaties, the western slope of Mt. Hood was ceded by Grand Ronde member Tribes while the eastern slope was ceded by the Warm Springs Tribes.

In addition to Tribal Council representation, the Grand Ronde Canoe Family sang a traditional welcome.

Tribal members Brian Krehbiel, Eirik Thorsgard, David Harrelson, Jon George, Greg Archuleta and Tra-



Photos by Michelle Alaimo



Grand Ronde Canoe Family member and Tribal member Amanda Grijalva, left, hands out Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde ceded lands maps to attendees of the Mt. Hood National Forest quarter launch at the World Forestry Center in Portland on Wednesday, Nov. 17.

vis Mercier sang in the drum circle.

About a dozen Grand Ronde Tribal members attended, more than half of them rounded up by Bobby Mercier, a

Tribal member and the Tribe's Language and Cultural specialist, who brought folks in a big van.

Tribal members Kim Contreras and her daughter, Kim Roybal, Amanda Grijalva and Shannon Stanton all came in support and helped sing.

The quarter bears the familiar "restored" 1932 John Flanagan image of George Washington on the face. On the back is the design of Mt. Hood as seen from Lost Lake. It was created by a U.S. Mint sculptor.

Some standing in line remembered the old World Forestry building, made with logs that burned down in the 1960s.

Some were there as coin collectors. "Are you here representing Coin World?" somebody asked.

Mt. Hood National Forest Supervisor Gary Larsen and Brunhart held the newly minted coin between them for photographs.

The purpose of the program, Brunhart said, was "to connect America to its national treasures."

"Mt. Hood is the people's mountain to the 5 million who visit each

Tribal Council Secretary Kathleen Tom says a few words about the Grand Ronde Tribe before she introduces the Grand Ronde Canoe Family during the Mt. Hood National Forest quarter launch at the World Forestry Center in Portland on Wednesday, Nov. 17. Tribal Council member Chris Mercier, left, was also in attendance and spoke briefly.

year," said Larsen. "Each one has an individual relationship with the mountain."

He read a proclamation honoring the coin signed by Gov. Ted Kulongoski and Secretary of State Kate Brown. KGW weatherman Matt Zaffino served as master of ceremonies.

Oregon State Treasurer Ted Wheeler and Congressman Earl Blumenauer's field representative Hillary Barbour sang the praises of Oregon and Mt. Hood National Forest.

"Anywhere you go in Oregon," said Wheeler, "you have a beautiful vista. All 56 coins could have been done with Oregon vistas."

Troop 64 of the Boy Scouts presented the colors and the Welches Middle School choir sang two songs.

Children under 18 attending the event all received an uncirculated quarter. In the next building over, adults could buy the still uncirculated coins at face value.

"Treasure the quarter you receive today," said Brunhart. "Save it. Give it to your son or daughter and have them give it to their son or daughter."

By the next day, Alpine Coin Co. in Portland was selling the uncirculated coin for 65 cents, but that may be the coin's biggest jump in collectible value for awhile. Alpine also was selling the Oregon state quarter issued in June 2005 for 65 cents.

"It will be a marvelous journey," said Brunhart, "as these coins are passed from hand to hand to hand across America." ■



The Grand Ronde Canoe Family performs at the America the Beautiful Quarters Program Mt. Hood National Forest quarter launch.