

Tribe receives funding for new position

Thorsgard adopts new role as Tribal sovereignty increases

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal member and Tribal Cultural Protection Coordinator Eirik Thorsgard is now wearing a new hat as Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.

Thanks to a more than \$27,000 grant from the National Park Service, the Grand Ronde Tribe now has increased sovereignty in controlling its architectural and historic sites on Reservation and trust lands.

Previously, Thorsgard told the General Council meeting held at the Grand Ronde Tribal Community Center on Feb. 6, if the Tribe discovered a potentially historic site on its lands, it had to obtain a ruling from the State Historic Preservation Office before work could continue.

"We would have to wait for the state and that could take anywhere from 30 to 60 days," Thorsgard said.

Now, Thorsgard has the authority to assess potential archeological materials and devise plans to avoid affecting the site or move the materials out of the way of planned development.

Thorsgard said he has been working on obtaining this federal designation since June 2009.

As part of being the Tribe's new Historic Preservation Officer, Thorsgard is seeking Tribal members who would like to serve on an advisory board. Those interested

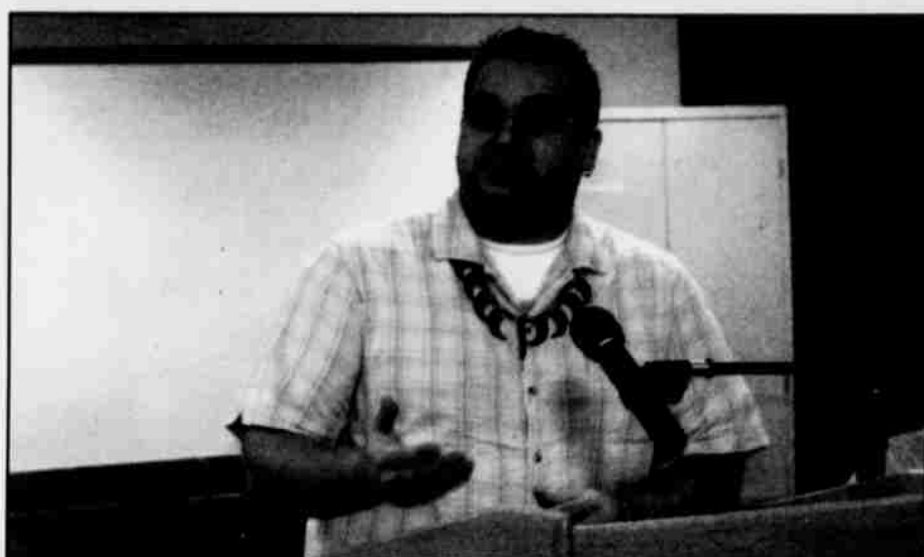


Photo by Dean Rhodes

Tribal member and Tribal Cultural Protection Coordinator Eirik Thorsgard briefs the membership on becoming the Tribe's new Historic Preservation Officer at the Feb. 6 General Council meeting held in Grand Ronde. The Grand Ronde Tribe will receive more than \$27,000 this year from the National Park Service to help fund the effort, he said.

can contact him at 503-879-1630 or eirik.thorsgard@grandronde.org.

Thorsgard said the Grand Ronde Tribe is now one of 103 federally recognized Tribes in the country with a Tribal Historic Preservation Office. There are 565 federally recognized Tribes.

Thorsgard added that the funding is never guaranteed, since it does come from the federal government, and the amount the Tribe receives may either be less than or more than the \$27,000 expected this year.

In other action during the meeting, Tribal Council member Jack Giffen Jr. encouraged Tribal members to support an Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

proposal to revise state water quality standards based on a fish consumption rate of 175 grams a day.

"We've been working on this for years," Giffen said, acknowledging Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy's work on the effort as well. "This is a substantial increase."

The higher fish consumption rate will result in decreasing the levels of toxic pollution that are considered "allowable" in Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams.

The proposed 175 grams per day rate is based, in part, on a study of ceremonial and subsistence consumption habits of Native Americans who reside in, catch and consume fish within the Columbia River Basin. The study found that consumption of 23 eight-ounce servings of fish meals per month is a realistic value that represents consumption habits of Native peoples.

Letters of support will be forwarded to Andrea Matzke at the state Department of Environmental Quality's Water Quality Division, 811 S.W. Sixth Ave., Portland OR 97204.

Tribal Council member Chris Mercier also donated one of his paychecks – about \$2,150 – to the Tribal Library.

"This is going to an area that I am confident that it will make a difference in the community," Mercier said about his donation given to Tribal member and Education Division Manager April Campbell. "The Tribal Library is going through an expansion and they should be able to buy a lot of books with this money."

Tribal Elders Nancy Coleman and Dorothy Shortt and Tribal spouse Duane Coulson won the \$50 door prizes and Tribal Elder Qahira Lorraine Barton won the \$100 door prize.

The next General Council meeting will be held 11 a.m. Sunday, March 6, in either Portland or Eugene. ■

URGENT: Skookum Alternate Resource survey deadline

The Skookum Health Program is funded with Tribal dollars. The annual cost for medical claims has increased dramatically over the past 10 years, and in 2010 the Tribe spent more than \$20 million to operate the Skookum program. To help control costs, effective March 1, 2011, all members who have not completed the Skookum Alternate Resource Survey will not have their claims paid until the survey is completed. Shasta will be notifying members whose claims have been pended via mail, with instructions for completing the survey online or by telephone. Tribal staff will be contacting members who have not completed the survey by telephone as well.

This information is essential if we are going to get the plan back to its original intent of being the primary payer ONLY in cases when other payers (Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance) are not available.

PLEASE NOTE: TRIBAL COUNCIL WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT THIS SURVEY IS CRITICAL AND THAT YOUR BENEFITS OR OUT-OF-POCKETS EXPENSES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO CHANGE.

Here is an example of how this will work and why it is so important:

- A Tribal member who has Skookum as a primary payer must have a back surgery and, due to complications, remains in the hospital for 45 days. Average cost to the Tribe: \$250,000.

- This same Tribal member has the same surgery and complications and remains in the hospital for 45 days. However, the member has access to his spouse's employer's insurance, with a maximum out of pocket of \$5,000. Total cost to the Tribe: no more than \$5,000.

YOU MAY COMPLETE THE SURVEY ONLINE (BY FOLLOWING THE LINK ON THE CTGR WEB SITE) OR OVER THE TELEPHONE BY CONTACTING BARBARA STEERE, JIM HOLMES OR MELODY BAKER AT (800) 775-0095. ■

First Foods Celebration set for March 19

The annual First Foods Celebration will be held at noon Saturday, March 19, at the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde.

Meal service will begin at noon. Tribal members are invited to attend and enjoy traditional foods. All are welcome and the event will be free. For more information, contact Culture Committee member Kathy Provost at 503-857-8440. ■

TAX TIME

Are you a CTGR Elder or do you qualify under CTGR housing guidelines for low income?

CTGR-Portland Office will be having

Doris Rose

at the PAO office on

Feb. 28, 2011

8 A.M. - 5 P.M.

To schedule your appointment, call

503-293-4128

or call Lisa Archuleta for details

503-235-4230, ext.21