

NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday Meetings
DATE **TIME**
 Wednesday, March 16.....4 p.m.
 Wednesday, March 30.....4 p.m.
Please note that these times and dates are subject to change if needed. Call Dakota Whitecloud, Tribal Council Relations Coordinator, at 503-879-1309 to confirm.

Casino becomes 'safe haven' from possible tsunami

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Spirit Mountain Casino became an impromptu emergency shelter for more than 300 Oregon coastal residents fleeing Lincoln City and other low-lying areas on Friday, March 11, after a tsunami warning was issued for most of the western United States' coastline.

"We had a pretty crazy and interesting morning," said Tribal member and Spirit Mountain Casino Director of Security Joann Mercier. "Many people came to Spirit Mountain and found it to be a safe haven. Many people came with their families, seeking shelter, food and comfort."

In response, casino employees obtained cots, blankets and pillows from Spirit Mountain Lodge for their guests, and opened up the Cedar Plank Buffett early to feed them. The Rock Creek Deli was filled to capacity with people waiting to get in, Mercier said.

Playing cards also were distributed to those who wanted to pass the time playing cards and "lots and lots of coffee" was kept brewing for those who needed it.

"We opened up the sports bar so they could watch all the updates on all the TVs," Mercier said. "Everyone was very interested in what was going on both in Japan and locally."

The Mountain View Sports Bar features 17 46-inch high-definition flat screen TVs.

The tsunami warning was caused by an 8.9-magnitude earthquake off the northeast coast of Japan. Oregon coastal residents were subsequently asked to evacuate low-lying areas in the early morning on Friday, leaving many wondering where to seek refuge.

Around noon Friday, state officials announced that it was OK for coastal residents to return to their homes.

Grand Ronde is on the east side of the Coast Range off state Highway 18, a main route between the Willamette Valley and the Oregon Coast.

Mercier, who is a Tribal Elder, said the casino's impromptu hospitality continues the Tribe's well-known tradition of potlatch — sharing with those in need. In the past, the Tribe has made substantial humanitarian donations to help Indian Ocean tsunami victims and Haitian earthquake survivors.

"The staff assisted in every way possible to help these people and make them as comfortable as possible," Mercier added. ■

Chinuk Wawa classes offered

The Tribal Cultural Education Department offers adult Chinuk Wawa language classes from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday in Room 207 of the Tribal Education Building. Language classes can be taken for college credit or for fun. For more information, contact Kathy Cole at 503-879-2249 or 503-437-4599. ■

The Eugene Satellite office will be having a
GRAND RE-OPENING!
Saturday, April 30 11 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Lunch at Noon
 We'll have great food and door prizes too!
 All are welcome, all are invited. Come reunite with your Eugene area Tribal member family



Ad created by George Valdez

General Council meeting
Sunday, April 3 — 11 a.m.
 Portland location: TBA

Smoke Signals

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DEADLINE DATE	ISSUE DATE
Friday, March 18	April 1
Tuesday, April 5	April 15
Tuesday, April 20	May 1

Editorial Policy

SMOKE SIGNALS, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, is published twice a month. No portion of this publication may be reprinted without permission.

Our editorial policy is intended to encourage input from Tribal members and readers about stories printed in the Tribal newspaper. However, all letters received must be signed by the author, an address must be given and a phone number or e-mail address must be included for verification purposes. Full addresses and phone numbers will not be published unless requested.

SMOKE SIGNALS reserves the right to edit letters and to refuse letters that are determined to contain libelous statements or personal attacks on individuals, staff, Tribal administration or Tribal Council. Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Letters to the editor are the opinions and views of the writer. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of **SMOKE SIGNALS**, Tribal staff, Tribal administration or Tribal Council.

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