



June Sherer came in second, receiving 404 votes, in the Tribal Council election on Saturday, Sept. 10. She returns to Tribal Council after taking a year off to spend time with her grandchildren.



Newly re-elected Tribal Council Secretary Kathleen Tom talks with Tribal Elder Raymond Petite after he congratulated her on being re-elected during the General Council meeting held at Tribal Community Center on Sunday, Sept. 11. Tom came in third with 315 votes.

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

1,264 cast votes in 2011 Tribal election

ELECTION continued from front page

was re-elected to a new three-year term, unseating incumbent Wink Soderberg.

Of the top eight vote-getters in the 2011 election, seven were either incumbent Tribal Council members or former Tribal Council members.

In the last four Tribal Council elections, only one political newcomer without previous Tribal Council experience has managed to win election and that was Toby McClary in 2009.

Leno, who captured his sixth straight three-year term in office, led the vote tally with 431 votes.

"To be elected six times to Tribal Council is a real honor to me," Leno said during the Sept. 11 General Membership meeting.

Sherer, who took a year off from Tribal Council to spend time with her grandchildren, returned to Tribal politics with a second-place tally of 404 votes. This will be Sherer's fourth term on Tribal Council.

"I had a lot of support from Tribal members who called me up and asked me to run," Sherer said.

Tom was elected to her third straight term on Tribal Council, receiving 315 votes.

"I'm happy. Very happy," Tom said about retaining her seat.

Former longtime Tribal Council Chairman Mark Mercier finished fourth with 301 votes and former Tribal Mentorship & Workforce Development Director Denise Harvey received 287 votes.

Finishing sixth was former Tribal Council member Jan Reibach with 266 votes followed by Soderberg with 252 votes, former Tribal Council member Buddy West with 206 votes, Brenda Tuomi with 173 votes and Clifford Olson with 144 votes.

The rest of the Tribal Council candidate field included former longtime Tribal employee Dakota Whitecloud, 135 votes; former Tribal Council member Margaret Provost, 129 votes; Tribal Elder Harold Lyon, 91 votes; Tribal employee Perri McDaniel, 90 votes;

Tribal employee Khani Schultz, 66 votes; Michael Bolton, 64 votes; and LeLani Folden, 57 votes.

"I think that people really see what kind of person you are and what you stand for," Tom said about Tribal voters choosing tried-and-true leadership. "I think that, in some cases, big block families vote collectively and some people get reappointed that way. But I also think that people also look at the value of their Tribal Council members and whether they are really supportive of the membership. I

think that has a lot to do with it."

Leno said he thought the continuing difficulties in the national economy prompted Tribal members to favor experienced leadership even if they were not happy with everything a particular candidate stands for.

"I think it is a reflection of the economy where people are not willing to take a risk," Leno said. "They are not happy on some issues, but are not willing to take a risk on a whole total new group of people on Tribal Council."

"I believe that the membership is waiting to get more knowledge from those people who are not elected," Sherer said. "They are not out there enough in the community to try and make their positions well enough known or they are people who have not taken a big part in the government before. ... People are more willing to go with the known than the unknown."

Tom said her priorities for her third term include working collaboratively with other Tribal Council members on enrollment issues and accountability.

"I'm really looking forward to that and having a stronger ethics ordinance to hold Tribal Council accountable, in addition to staff," Tom said.

Leno said the election results tell him that the Tribe wants accountability from Tribal Council members.

"That was what I ran on," Leno said. "My priorities for my sixth term are to rewrite the council ordinance and hold council accountable."

Sherer concurred on Tribal Council accountability being a big issue.

"(The results) said to me that people wanted change," Sherer said. "It said that there are some problems with accountability on council and that they want council to be more responsible for their actions and attendance. I believe that if we work right, work hard, council together, that we can make those changes in our ordinance to protect our membership and protect our council."

"My biggest priorities are to change our Tribal Council ordinance. That's the biggest priority. I think we need to put more input into the needs of the membership and less into Tribal Council's budget."

Turnout in the 2011 election improved slightly over previous years at 32.88 percent, up from 2010's 29 percent. Of the 3,844 eligible members, 1,264 cast votes, said Election Board Chair Penny DeLoe.

However, turnout was still below the highs of 2007 and 2008, when more than 37 percent of eligible voters submitted ballots. ■

Official election results of the 2011 Grand Ronde Tribal Election are:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| *Reyn Leno..... | 431 |
| *June Sherer..... | 404 |
| *Kathleen Tom..... | 315 |
| Mark Mercier..... | 301 |
| Denise Harvey..... | 287 |
| Jan Reibach..... | 266 |
| Wink Soderberg..... | 252 |
| Buddy West..... | 206 |
| Brenda Tuomi..... | 173 |
| Clifford Olson..... | 144 |
| Dakota Whitecloud..... | 135 |
| Margaret J. Provost..... | 129 |
| Harold Lyon..... | 91 |
| Perri McDaniel..... | 90 |
| Khani Schultz..... | 66 |
| Michael T. Bolton..... | 64 |
| Lelani Folden..... | 57 |

*Top seat winners