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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Cutting their losses?

Businesses potentially responsible for Portland Harbor Superfund cleanup are working to limit liability without seeking Tribal input

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

As the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency moves closer to assigning responsibility for cleaning up the Portland Harbor Superfund site in the Grand Ronde Tribe's ceded lands, companies responsible for the pollution have been busy — without Tribal input — mounting a public information campaign that appears aimed at reducing their potential joint and individual costs.

Special report

Last October, 45 businesses that are "potentially responsible" for the cleanup who have become known as "the Gang of 45," pitched a 21-page white paper called "Risk Management Decisions Required" to the EPA.

The white paper challenges the EPA process as well as the risk assumptions and assessments that have been aired in the process of evaluating the site. The white paper's conclusions encourage a less rigorous and less expensive cleanup. There have been suggestions that no cleanup is needed at all.

Not surprising since the stakes are high. Current industry estimates for the harbor's cleanup range from \$440 million to more than \$2 billion although the EPA says those estimates might be on the high side.

"They are kind of steering and framing the questions before EPA gets their hands on it," said Michael Karnosh, the Grand Ronde Tribe's Ceded Lands Program manager and Tribal point man on the cleanup.

The Grand Ronde Tribe has been

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Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Greg Archuleta, right, rolls a poster of the "Chinuk Wawa: As our elders teach us to speak it" dictionary cover for Tribal Elder Dorothy Shortt during the General Council meeting in the Tribal Community Center on Sunday, March 4. Waiting in line behind Shortt is Tribal Elder Marcella Selwyn.

Tribe fetes release of dictionary

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Tribe officially has a new Chinuk Wawa dictionary titled "Chinuk Wawa: As our elders teach us to speak it."

At the Sunday, March 4, General Council meeting held in the Tribal Community Center, Cultural Resources Department employees choreographed a celebration that included drumming and singing, thanks to those who assisted in the decade-long project, honoring of Jackie "Chicha" Whisler's family and, finally, Chinuk Wawa bingo.

The new dictionary is almost 500 pages long and includes about 1,000 core words and about 3,000 compound words documenting the Northwest Indian trade language as it was spoken by past and current generations

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The new Chinuk Wawa dictionary is dedicated to Tribal Elder and Chinuk Wawa teacher Jackie Whisler, who walked on in December 2007. Whisler's family members in attendance at the General Council meeting received a copy of the dictionary. They included her sister, Tribal Elder Cheryl Carl, who is shaking hands with Tribal member and Cultural Resources Program Manager Kathy Cole after receiving her dictionary. Whisler's other family members included, from right, granddaughter and Tribal member Justine Colton, son and Tribal member Mike Colton, and grandchildren and Tribal members Jade and Nick Colton.