

Tribal member Phebi Grude clears hurdle

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

It was a cloudy and rainy afternoon, but in a conference room on the 10th floor of the Portland Building on Tuesday, March 20, the day could not have looked better to Tribal member Phebi Grude and the almost 30 friends, relatives and colleagues who packed the room for the ceremony.

All honors went to Grude for successful completion of a one-year course in the Public Works Construction Inspector training program with the city of Portland. She still has perhaps another year of on-the-job learning before becoming an inspector.

"We'll know when she's ready," said Inspection Supervisor Rick McCoy.

Many enter the program from the construction industry and start with much of the knowledge they'll need on the job.

The close-knit Construction Inspection unit brought Grude into the fold a year ago.

Laurie Allen, vice president of NW Operations for CMTS, LLC, a consulting contractor providing staffing and other professional services to the industry, got the ball rolling with a presentation at the Portland office.

Portland Tribal office staffers Chris Garcia and Tribal member Jon George took it from there. Garcia is an Employment and Training specialist for the Tribe and George is a Vocational Rehabilitation specialist.

"When we told Phebi about the program," said George, "she said, 'I think I can do that.' And that was all the information we needed."

"It's been a good fit," said Garcia.

Both were on hand to mark



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Denise Stone, left, takes a photo of Tribal member Phebi Grude, right, with her aunt Allyn Donaugh during Grude's graduation ceremony from the city of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services and CMTS, LLC, Public Works Construction Inspector Apprenticeship Program at the Portland Building in Portland on Tuesday, March 20. Stone is also Grude's aunt.

Grude's success and celebrated the event with a Tribal blessing drum song.

Calling this "a very special occasion," Grude's daughter, Tribal member Brooke Chavez, presented her mother with flowers. "I'm so proud of her," she said.

Denise Stone, one of two aunts on hand for the ceremony, brought many to tears. "We've been through a lot in our family. We're so proud of her. We've been trying to know the right things to help her. We love you," she said to Grude. And then to the room, "Thank you all so much. You gave her something that we couldn't."

To become an inspector in Portland, a city that McCoy says, "Sets

the standard," for the country, Grude is charged with learning "all of the fundamentals of doing the construction," McCoy said. And everybody continues learning on the job.

"When Phebi started," McCoy said, "she had a lot of personal issues, but she stepped up and decided she wanted to do it. She wanted to work overtime to see how things were done."

He described how attentively she watched the laying of pipe and wire when most other inspectors feel like, "It's all you can do to stay awake."

"When I saw that, I knew this was going to be a fit for her. Everybody is fighting over her because she does such a good job."

"You're not going to learn unless you have it in your heart," said Inspector Nadine Meyers. "You have

Tribal member Phebi Grude gives Jon George, Tribal member and Vocational Rehabilitation specialist at the Tribe's Portland Area Office, a hug after Grude's graduation ceremony from the city of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services and CMTS, LLC, Public Works Construction Inspector Apprenticeship Program at the Portland Building in Portland on Tuesday, March 20. On the right is Chris Garcia, Employment & Training specialist at the Tribe's Portland office. The two brought the program to Grude's attention through their work at the Portland office.

to be creative, resourceful. Well, Phebi knows her stuff. She knows how to hold her ground with contractors. She's really a good asset. I wish she were on my team."

Grude had some apartment remodeling in her background and was a concrete laborer and finisher, but she never thought she had the background to be a building inspector.

"I was looking into the welding program," she said.

Today, she has a wide range of experiences to draw from, and of all the different jobs that one does as an inspector, Grude is drawn to working with the plans, she said. "Making sure it's a buildable project."

Grude has art in her background, too. She's got things she's made all over her home. "There's nothing that hasn't been art-ified in our house," she said.


She once planted succulents in shoes and boots for a succulent farm.

She used to smoke cigars, she said with a laugh.

And on a "Grimm" note, her daughter, Brooke, said she often had to do a parking space tango with the Portland television production that operates right by one of her jobs this last year.

After the certificate and acrylic keepsake presentations, the group shared a pink cake with frosting pictures on the top showing a vest, cap, boots and a tape measure.

Tools for the future. ■



MOVIE NIGHT

Sponsored by Youth Prevention and Community Awareness Team

WHERE: TRIBAL GYM

TIME: This event will start directly after the Child Abuse Prevention Fun Walk & Lunch

Dessert: Sundae Bar, with all the toppings

6 Easter basket door prizes too

Thank you for respecting Grand Ronde Community & culture by not displaying gang affiliation and by not bringing drugs, alcohol, or weapons to this event.

Ad created by George Valdez

GRAND RONDE GAMING COMMISSION POSITIONS

The Grand Ronde Gaming Commission is seeking applications to fill one commission vacancy expiring June of 2015. The Tribal Gaming Ordinance requires this position to be filled by a Tribal member. The Grand Ronde Gaming Commission regulates all gaming-related activities associated with Spirit Mountain Casino. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age. Commissioners may not hold elective or managerial Tribal positions, and may not be employed in or own any interest in or gamble in a gaming operation authorized by the Tribal Gaming Ordinance. Commissioners are independent contractors and expend approximately 30-40 hours per month to fulfill their responsibilities.

The Gaming Commission generally meets on the second and third Fridays of each month. Appointment is contingent upon successful completion of a background investigation. Applications may be obtained by calling Kathy Doane at 503-879-2393. Closing date is April 30, 2012, 5 p.m. ■