

Tribe to receive \$500,000 grant for new food bank

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Grand Ronde Tribe's efforts to continue improving the local community received a \$500,000 boost on May 1 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Tribe has been selected to receive a federal grant that will help it build a new, more accessible 3,000-square-foot food bank capable of handling and meeting U.S. Department of Agriculture commodities program requirements for the local community.

The Grand Ronde Tribal Council authorized applying for the Indian Community Development Block Grant on Dec. 21, 2011, after reviewing project suggestions received in community meetings.

The Tribe will work with the Grand Ronde Community Resource Center, which will operate the food bank in the new facility. The Tribe will match the grant with \$166,667 less any potential assistance that the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority may be able to provide.

The annual operation and maintenance costs of the food bank build-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

The Curl property, located across from the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority's office on Grand Ronde Road, is the leading contender for the new Grand Ronde Food Bank facility.

ing are estimated to be \$30,000.

According to the grant application, the new food bank building will be constructed closer to the Tribal campus because the current location near Uyxat Powwow Grounds is too far away and unsafe for local residents to access on foot.

The current location, in a surplus house the Tribe is letting the food bank use, is less than 2,000 square feet and not designed as a food bank

or a community service building.

The Tribe has identified the Curl property across Grand Ronde Road from the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority's office as the leading contender for locating the new food bank because it is a block from Elder housing and from Chxi Musam Illihi low-income family housing.

According to the grant application, the number of households and people served by the Grand Ronde

Community Recourse Center has increased substantially during the recent recession.

The number of households served has jumped from 397 in 2008 to 471 in 2010 and the number of people served has increased from 1,381 in 2008 to 1,639 in 2010 — both 18.6 percent increases. The pounds of food provided increased from 173,645 to 182,587 in the same time span.

The grant application states that the new food bank will have a walk-in freezer and cooler, which will make it easier to provide healthier fresh produce to area residents who cannot afford to travel to supermarkets. There also will be room for cooking demonstrations on preserving food.

The Tribe plans to construct the new food bank during the summer of 2013.

In recent years, the Tribe has been instrumental in making Grand Ronde a more full-service, safer community. The Tribe led the effort to widen and improve the safety of Grand Ronde Road and build a fire station in the local community to cut down on response times from West Valley Fire District. ■

Tom testifies about Native mascots

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

SALEM — Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom was among 36 people who testified before the state Board of Education at the state Capitol on Friday, April 27, regarding a proposed ban on Native American mascots in Oregon.

Tom said the Grand Ronde Tribe, one of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, opposes "trying to implement a one size fits all solution to the nine individual sovereign Tribal governments in Oregon."

"As a Tribe, we have made a commitment to dedicate ourselves to building positive government-to-government relationships across all levels of government," Tom said. "We are proud of the strides that we have made over the years, and are equally proud of the state of Oregon and their efforts to build and maintain these relationships."

"... We believe strongly that this is an issue that is best resolved with our own local school districts to make sure they accurately and respectfully portray Native culture. We have been able to deal with these situations at the local level, with respect and sensitivity to our Tribal students, all students, our Tribal citizens and all citizens within our shared communities."

"The key to our relationships with all levels of government in the future is through educational outreach. We would suggest to the board that we move past this issue and on to something that truly could make a difference for the benefit of Tribes and Oregonians alike."

"Let's take a strong look at teaching all of Oregon's students about the history and culture of Oregon's nine unique, sovereign governments. The fact is that if more people



Kathleen Tom

were educated about Tribal history, society and culture, it would do much more to solve the problems of Indian mascots than simply outlawing the practice."

At the May 1 Legislative Action Committee meeting, Tribal Vice Chair Reyn Leno complimented Tom on her testimony.

"I think Kathy did a good job delivering her testimony," Leno said.

Both Tom and Leno reiterated the Grand Ronde Tribe's long-standing request that Oregon Tribal history be incorporated into statewide curriculum requirements.

Leno said they put state Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo on the spot regarding that request.

"One of the highlights of her testimony was when it arose that Castillo tried to say they were doing something," Leno said. "Kathy reminded her that she's been here years and I was sitting in the audience and she actually said, 'Well, our vice chair has been here 14 years,' and we haven't seen anything."

"I think I did put Susan Castillo on the spot," Tom said. "We've heard this talk and we've heard this talk, and I've been on here for nine years and our vice chair for 14, and we're still talking about this. Something needs to get done."

Castillo reportedly said that including Native history in statewide curriculum requirements is still being examined.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cher-

yle A. Kennedy said that she thinks high school mascots are meant to inspire teams and not insult Native Tribes.

"We still believe that if you truly want to honor the Tribes of Oregon then put us in your history books," Kennedy said. "That's what we need is that sincere education; that gesture of recognizing who we are and honoring who we are. That will say monuments about Native American Tribes."

"We don't support eliminating mascots because we don't believe that these schools are disparaging us. They wouldn't name their school 'We're Losers' or 'We're Slugs.' You are trying to inspire your team and your school."

The Lebanon Express reported

that Leno told state Rep. Sherrie Sprenger (R-Scio) that he does not object to Native mascots, such as the Lebanon Warriors.

"That's the position of the Tribe and my own personal position both," Leno said. "We have a lot of concern about why our Tribal kids are telling our histories in schools and why our teachers are not teaching our histories in schools."

The state Board of Education is still accepting citizen input at ODE.NativeAmericanMascots@state.or.us.

The board also will hear public comments until noon at the next meeting at 9 a.m. Thursday, May 17, at the Oregon Department of Education, 255 Capitol St. N.E., in Salem. ■

Grand Ronde Health and Wellness Center institutes Broken Appointment Policy

In an effort to make medical services more efficient, the Grand Ronde Health and Wellness Center (H&WC) has approved and instituted a broken appointment policy for medically-related appointments at the H&WC. To qualify as a broken appointment a patient must either not show up for their appointment, show up more than 10 minutes late or give less than 24 hours notice of cancellation. When any of these events occur, the patient is notified in writing. After the third broken appointment in a six-month time frame, the patient will not be allowed to schedule routine appointments. However, they will be offered a "sit and wait appointment" — the chance to sit and wait for an opening with a provider. This probationary period will last for six (6) months. The H&WC has a process for reminding patients of appointments and strives to notify patients of appointments the day before.

The broken appointment policy is very important as broken or missed appointments create unused time in a provider's schedule, which is inefficient financially and leads to barriers to accessing care. Ultimately, a broken appointment policy exists to improve access to care for all patients and is critical to providing responsive, cost-effective health services. ■