

November is Native American Heritage Month

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

President Barack Obama proclaimed November as National Native American Heritage Month on Nov. 1.

His annual proclamation read:

"As the first people to live on the land we all cherish, American Indians and Alaska Natives have profoundly shaped our country's character and our cultural heritage. Today, Native Americans are leaders in every aspect of our society — from the classroom, to the board room, to the battlefield. This month, we celebrate and honor the many ways American Indians and Alaska Natives have enriched our nation, and we renew our commitment to respecting each Tribe's identity while ensuring equal opportunity to pursue the American dream.

"In paying tribute to Native American achievements, we must also acknowledge the parts of our shared history that have been marred by violence and tragic mistreatment. For centuries, Native

Americans faced cruelty, injustice and broken promises. As we work together to forge a brighter future, we cannot shy away from the difficult aspects of our past. That is why, in 2009, I signed a bipartisan resolution that finally recognized the sad and painful chapters in our shared history. My administration remains dedicated to writing a new chapter in that history by strengthening our government-to-government relationship with Tribal nations while enhancing Tribal sovereignty and Tribal self-determination.

"Because we know that the best ideas for Tribal nations come from within, my administration has continued to engage Tribal leaders in developing an agenda that respects their expertise on matters affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives. In collaboration with Tribal nations, we are making critical investments to improve health and education services, create jobs and strengthen Tribal economies. In July, I was proud to sign the Helping Expedite and Advance Tribal

Homeownership Act into law, which will enhance Tribal control over the leasing of Indian lands. Last December, I signed an executive order to expand educational opportunities for Native American students. It aims to preserve Native languages, cultures and histories while offering a competitive education that prepares young people to succeed in college and careers. And under the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Safe Indian Communities initiative, we are continuing to work with Tribes to build safer communities. My administration also supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"Many longstanding Native American legal claims against the United States have been resolved, which help accelerate the restoration of trust in our relationships with Tribal nations. The settlements that came out of these claims

— including the historic Cobell and Keepseagle settlements, as well as more than 50 settlements in cases alleging federal mismanagement of Tribal trust funds and resources — will put an end to decades of litigation and help drive economic development in Tribal communities in the years to come.

"In partnership with Tribal nations, my administration has addressed injustices and built new avenues for American Indian and Alaska Natives. As we celebrate National Native American Heritage Month, let us move forward in the spirit of mutual understanding and mutual trust, confident that our challenges can be met and that our shared future is bright."

Obama also called on all Americans to commemorate the month with appropriate programs and activities, and to celebrate Friday, Nov. 23, as Native American Heritage Day. ■

Foundation seeks Native WWII vets

The Oregon World War II Memorial Foundation is seeking Native veterans of that conflict to appear in a video to increase the visibility of the foundation and help raise funds for establishing the memorial on the grounds of the State Capitol.

Native World War II veterans interested in appearing in the video should contact Foundation Board President Lou Jaffe at 503-310-7904 about available filming dates in Salem at Allied Video Productions, 2121 Front St. N.E. ■

New Oregon tuition waiver

House Bill 3471-Tuition Waiver Bill is a law that gives "tuition waivers" to current and former foster youth for Oregon community college and public universities. This program begins with the 2012-13 academic year.

Requirements: All current foster and former foster youth who have spent at least 365 days in substitute care after age 16, AND either left foster care (had wardship terminated) or completed high school/GED within the previous three years qualify for this program.

Application process: Students must submit their FAFSA (www.fafsa.gov) as soon as possible! DHS and ICW will send a list of eligible students to the Oregon Student Access Commission for prioritization of an Oregon Opportunity Grant.

The school of attendance will be notified of eligible students attending their institution and notify the student of the tuition waiver amount. There is no separate application or steps for students to apply other than submitting their FAFSA.

For more information, contact your ILP worker or the Tribal Scholarship Office at 1-800-422-0232, ext. 1345. ■

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

CEREMONIAL HUNTERS NEEDED



Matthew Thomas with an elk he harvested on behalf of the Tribes

Contact Shonn Leno 503-879-2397

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