

Tribe purchases Shasta Administrative Services

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

REDMOND – Lamatsin LLC, a company with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde as the majority partner, purchased Shasta Administrative Services, a third-party administrator for health care services, from Jeld-Wen Inc. on Nov. 1.

Lamatsin is a partnership between the Tribe's Huyhuy (Chinook for "to do business with or trade with") LLC and Hawaii-Western Management Group Inc. of Honolulu, Hawaii. Huyhuy owns 51 percent of Lamatsin and HWMG owns the other 49 percent.

Grand Ronde Tribal Director of Economic Development Titu Asghar said the acquisition of Shasta Administrative Services is part of the Tribe's two-pronged strategy regarding economic development.

Since Shasta was already processing health claims for the Tribe's self-funded health plans, it was a synergistic purchase, Asghar said. In addition, it will help the Tribe diversify its economic interests beyond gaming (Spirit Mountain Casino) and timber from its more than 10,000-acre reservation.

"Synergy and diversity are keys to the Tribe's economic development philosophy," Asghar said.

Shasta was formed in Jan. 1, 2001,



Titu Asghar

to serve the needs of Jeld-Wen and other self-funded employers in the Pacific Northwest. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde became a

Shasta client on Jan. 1, 2009.

Asghar said Shasta will market its services to other Tribes nationally and other commercial interests, locally and nationally.

Shasta will remain in Redmond, where it has built brand equity, he added.

Asghar said the purchase of Shasta Administrative Services continues the Grand Ronde Tribe's commitment to Oregon, as well as honoring the Tribal culture of planning seven generations into the future to provide for its Tribal membership.

The minority owner, HWMG, provides third-party services for both insured and self-funded employer groups' health plans in Hawaii and viewed the purchase as an exciting opportunity to expand the company's business to the mainland.

Asghar said the current Shasta management team will remain in place and that the Tribe will not actively manage the company. ■

Youth Award winner



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Robbie Rife, a 2009 graduate of Willamina High School who has spent a dozen years involved in Grand Ronde Tribal youth programs, was one of four Oregon youth who received a Governor's Minority Youth Award from Oregon first lady Cylvia Hayes during the 2012 Governor's Summit on Reducing Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System held Nov. 1-2 at Spirit Mountain Casino. The award honors Oregon minority youth and young adults who make positive choices and become successful in their lives, and who contribute to the success of others. It is given to youth ages 14 to 25 who have overcome difficult times and hardships, and have shown consistent progress in dealing with and overcoming adversity. "He's defied many statistics that have been stacked against him, and he is a good role model to our youth who are still at Youth Education," said Tribal Elementary Lead Matt Bucknell. Rife is set to graduate from Chemeketa Community College this year.

Donations wanted

The Tribe's Veterans' Special Event Board is looking for quality items for a Fallen Warriors dinner and silent auction to be held 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall in Willamina.

Donations can be dropped off at the Elders' Activity Center, specified as a donation for the Veterans' board or Fallen Warriors dinner. ■

Necklace-making class set

A necklace-making class sponsored by Northwest Indian College will be held from noon to 3 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, in the Adult Education Building's GED classroom.

The class is free with all supplies and lunch provided. Tribal member Julie Logan will teach the class.

The class is limited to the first 12 people to sign up. Federally recognized Tribal members will receive preference.

To sign up, call 503-879-2282. ■

'Tribes will continue to prepare'

**ELECTION continued
from front page**

However, the It's Still a Bad Idea Committee, supported by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and other Oregon Tribes, started running its own TV ads, questioning whether a private casino in Wood Village would be a benefit to the community and whether it would truly create new funding for Oregon schools.

The pro-measure effort was funded by Canadian gaming firms Great Canadian Gaming Corp. of Vancouver, British Columbia, and Clairvest of Toronto, as well as wealthy Lake Oswego businessmen Bruce Studer and Matt Rossman.

But they found Oregon's political waters turbulent at best. The Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review Commission voted 17-7 against the two measures and a state economic analysis by the nonpartisan Legislative Revenue Office said that a private casino would probably cost state and local governmental entities money and likely shrink the

Oregon economy.

Then, four current and former Oregon governors – John Kitzhaber, Ted Kulongoski, Barbara Roberts and Vic Atiyeh – all came out in opposition to the measures. Kitzhaber recorded a TV ad for the It's Still a Bad Idea Committee in which he expressed his concern that passage of the measures would break Oregon's promise to its nine federally recognized Tribes.

The Grand Ronde Tribe steadfastly opposed the measures, fearing drastic decreases to revenue at Spirit Mountain Casino if a private casino was built near Portland. Those revenues fund Tribal governmental operations, such as education programs and scholarships, health care, housing and Elder pensions for Tribal members.

With mounting political opposition and failure to move polling numbers, private casino backers surprisingly announced on Oct. 16 – three weeks before Election Day – that they were ending their efforts to pass the measures. They

stopped airing the commercials, did not send out any more mailers and took down a Facebook page promoting "The Grange."

"There are some who believe that we never needed to spend money on this because it stood no chance of passing," Bobb said. "My feeling is if not for the very hard work of the team that worked on this on our behalf, from the polling to the commercials, and the many outstanding relationships that we made with the help of Justin Martin, and the televised debates that he handled with clarity and professionalism, the outcome may not have been the same.

"Even another publication referred to the amount of influence the Grand Ronde Tribe carried. All of this together contributed to the end result and they deserve all the credit. My thanks to them."

"I believe it is a reflection of the hard work that the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and its members dedicated to this campaign," McClary said. "To see our Tribal members stand united

and fight to protect our Elders, our youth and our future was very humbling and made me proud to be a member of this Tribe. I also believe Justin Martin and Perseverance Strategies deserve public acknowledgement for their hard work."

In addition to the negative statewide vote on Nov. 6, Wood Village voters opposed allowing a large casino in their community by a 53 percent to 47 percent margin (304-268). Had the two statewide measures passed, the Wood Village vote would have been enough to scuttle the project.

With the avalanche of negative sentiment against private gaming in Oregon, the biggest question is, "Will they be back in 2014?"

"I couldn't speculate as of now if they will be back or not," Martin said. "But they should rest assured that we are planning on their continued efforts to get at the Portland market when it comes to gaming. Strategically, Tribes will continue to prepare for these types of events whether it occurs or not." ■