

Rail Depot named to National Register

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Grand Ronde residents know that the Rail Depot at 8615 Grand Ronde Road is historic.

Now the rest of the United States will know, too, since the depot was named to the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation kept by the National Park Service.

"This means that Grand Ronde is the second Tribe in the United States to present a nomination and the first in the Northwest," said Tribal Cultural Protection Coordinator Eirik Thorsgard. "It means that we are active participants in preserving history for the nation and Tribe, and accepted by the National Park Service."

Grand Ronde Cultural Protection Specialist David Harrelson and Tribal Archaeologist Briece Edwards prepared the nomination form that was submitted in July 2012. The building was entered into the National Register on Dec. 26.

The 1922 Grand Ronde Railroad Depot sits in its original location and maintains its original setting, except for the removal of the railroad lines that used to serve Grand Ronde.

The depot is a two-story, 1,040-square-foot wood frame structure clad in shiplap siding and retains its original Craftsman architectural style and features. It was built



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

The Rail Depot on Grand Ronde Road in Grand Ronde has been named to the National Register of Historic Places. The 91-year-old building was entered into the Register on Dec. 26, 2012.

by Swiss immigrant John Albert Schuerch.

According to the application, the Rail Depot has two areas of historical significance—transportation and politics/government.

Regarding transportation, the Grand Ronde Railway Co. was created about the time that it acquired the land for the rail depot in 1920. The railway company built and operated the Willamina-Grand Ronde Railroad, which was primarily focused on the transport of timber out of the area.

The Grand Ronde Railway Co. was sold to several different corporations through 1984. In the early 1970s,

the railroad stopped being used for freight when the mill in Grand Ronde closed and sometime between 1973 and 1978 the tracks were removed from beside the depot.

"The Grand Ronde Rail Depot experienced a period of significance because of its role in providing for transportation of equipment from the Willamette Valley to the timber-rich Oregon Coast Range and the return of cut timber to meet the needs of a growing urban and rural population in the valley and beyond throughout the country," the Tribal application says.

"Timber defined the community. The timber industry resulted in infrastructure investment, such as the company town of New Grand Ronde, as well as provided jobs and money to the local economy."

The depot's second life began shortly after the Confederated

Tribes of Grand Ronde was restored to federal recognition on Nov. 22, 1983, by President Ronald Reagan.

The depot was the first building the Tribe purchased after Restoration on Dec. 4, 1984, to provide office space for the new Tribal government. The depot was used as office space by the Tribe until 1997.

"The work that took place in this building by Tribal staff in the mid-1980s set the direction and trajectory of the Tribe while defining the Tribe as a sovereign nation and ensuring its growth," the application states. "Over time, the building's use shifted to social and membership services for the Tribe. Today it serves as a storage and meeting space. Maintenance work has begun on the building to return it to use as office space for the Tribal government."

Schuerch designed and built the depot under contract with the Grand Ronde Railway Co. He was born in Switzerland and made his way to Grand Ronde via North Dakota. He was a carpenter by trade and built several structures in the area that are still standing, including the Grand Ronde Hotel, Methodist church and his first home, which is located across from Spirit Mountain Casino on state Highway 18.

Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect America's historic and archeological resources. ■

Elders' garage sale seeking donations

Tribal Elders are regularly seeking donations for fundraising garage sales. To donate an item or items, contact Tribal Elders Linda Brandon at 971-267-0918 or Duane Wheeler at 541-992-3254. ■

Please join us Wednesday, February 20th for Chinuk Family Literacy Night

Dinner will be served.

DOES A KANGAROO HAVE A MOTHER, TOO ?
by Eric Carle



What: Chinuk Family Literacy Night.
When: Wednesday, February 20th at 5pm
Where: CTGR gym
Who: EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!

All attending families will receive a book. We will be having dinner with the Preschool Literacy Night attendees and then breaking into groups for books and activities. We'd love to see you there!

Parents Night: Facts about Sexual Health

Have you ever been asked a question by your youth that you just couldn't answer??

Please join us for an evening filled with sexual health facts! Tami Martin, FNP will be on site discussing current sexual health information and contraception. There will also be a question and answer period at the end of the evening.

Date: February 20

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Place: CTGR Community Center

A light dinner will be provided

Door prizes!!!



If you have any questions you may contact Amber Mercier (503) 879-2162

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