

Campbell testifies in support of education specialist

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

SALEM — Grand Ronde Tribal Education Manager April Campbell testified before the Oregon House of Representatives' Ways and Means subcommittee on Tuesday, March 12, in support of creating an Indian education specialist position within the state Department of Education.

The position has been a sought-after addition at the Department of Education by Oregon's nine federally-recognized Tribes since 2003 as part of the Indian Education Plan, which was developed by Oregon's Tribes as a way to work with their respective local school districts to improve student achievement.

However, the great recession that hit the state, as well as the nation, starting in 2008 sidetracked the effort over the last four years as the Oregon Legislature dealt with declining revenues and shrinking employment in state government.

Now, with the economy starting to rebound and tax revenues increasing, the chances of getting the new position created and budgeted for are improving, Umatilla Tribal lobbyist Phil Donovan said recently at the Tribal Governments Legislative Day held at the state Capitol on Feb. 20.



April Campbell

Education Plan," Donovan said.

Campbell testified with Sonya Moody-Jurado representing the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and Armand Minthorn from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla.

"Today, I am serving as a spokesperson for the Tribal Government-to-Government Education Cluster in support of the Indian education specialist position," Campbell said.

"Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Rob Saxton has shared with you the startling statistics about dropout rates, achievement gaps and alarming disproportionate discipline of our American Indian and Alaska Native students. Others have shared inequities in Oregon's educational system as it relates to underrepresented students. Oregon has an opportunity to begin addressing these needs

"We are working on getting a position, which is not nearly enough but is a starting point, at the Department of Education to focus on implementing the Indian

education specialist position. This position is essential to the success of our youth and help Oregon become a model for other states.

"The Indian education specialist position will be devoted to Indian education issues and will collaboratively work with Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes to develop initiatives which will preserve and foster the teaching of indigenous languages, create and implement accurate and culturally responsive curriculum, and develop effective strategies for the education of American Indian and Alaskan Native students.

"Our people have passed their knowledge, values and experiences to others for generations—some refer to this as 'Indian education.' This information is valued not only among our people, but all Oregonians. One may consider this 'Indian education' as a process in which Tribes are given the opportunity to provide input in classrooms in a way which is inviting and respectful to all youth. As a teacher, Indian education reflects in the academic performance of youth through student outcome and achievement. For administrators, this refers to instructional approaches which will enhance student readiness and learning.

"Ultimately, the Indian education specialist will identify, create and implement strategies to address the deficiencies currently in Oregon's educational institutes, thus meeting the needs of American Indian and Alaskan Native students. The government-to-government cluster continues to support the Indian education specialist position and is currently working on the Oregon Indian Alaska Native state plan to align its efforts with that of the work being created by the Governor's Office and other educational agencies.

"As the plan unfolds we would like to come back to this committee to share the process and how it relates specifically to the duties Tribes envision for the Indian Education State Plan. As noted earlier, the position itself is not a fix-all for all inequities, but is a necessary starting point."

The Education Cluster is comprised of educational representatives from all nine Oregon Tribes, the state Department of Education, Oregon community colleges and Workforce Development, the Oregon Teachers Standards and Practices Commission, the Oregon Student Assistance Commission and the Oregon University System. ■

Tribe, Willamina renew education agreement

By Paul Daquilante

Yamhill County News-Register

WILLAMINA — Angela Fasana, liaison between the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Willamina School District, told the school board on Tuesday, March 12, that she thinks the education agreement between the two has helped them forge a "great partnership." She said other Tribes have used it as a model in developing their own.

With that, the board voted to renew the agreement for the 2013-14 school year.

Current district enrollment is about 800. The Native American component is 193, or almost 25 percent.

The agreement gives the Tribe involvement in several departments and programs offering educational or preventive services, including pre-school, Head Start, Chinuk Wawa immersion, kindergarten language immersion, youth education, the main K-12 curriculum, after-school programs at the K-6, 7-8 and 9-12 levels, Native Club (middle and high school), summer enrichment, credit recovery, youth leadership and culture presentation.

The agreement outlines a process to identify and address educational needs for the purpose of improving academic achievement and success for Native American students.

"Like Angie said, it's a great

relationship," said Willamina Elementary School Principal Carrie Zimbrick. "The Tribe is so supportive.

"Whenever the district has written a grant through the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, it seems like we have gotten it. The Tribe has supported a lot of things we have done."

The Chinuk Wawa immersion program is a critical component. The Tribe provides a staff member to instruct a high school class in the Chinuk language, in addition to sponsoring a blended kindergarten-first grade immersion class.

"We fully want to support the Tribe's effort to restore their language," said Zimbrick, whose youngest daughter fluently speaks Chinuk Wawa. "The Tribe is on the right track. They want to do it with the youth because the language is more easily absorbed at a young age than at the adult age."

As part of the agreement, the Tribe gives the district \$20,000 each calendar year for items that include, but are not limited to, updating textbooks, enhancing educational materials and purchasing minor school equipment. ■

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Council OKs contract with Eugene site for May General Council

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The May 5 General Council meeting will return to the Valley River Inn in Eugene after Tribal Council voted 6-0 to approve a contract with the hotel on Wednesday, March 27.

In other action, Tribal Council also approved the agenda for the Sunday, April 7, General Council meeting that will be held in the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde.

The meeting will include a cultural presentation from Grand Ronde Royalty, a report from the Tribe's Education Committee and a briefing from the new Land and Culture Department. The meeting starts at 11 a.m.

Tribal Council also approved membership for four infants who meet Tribal eligibility requirements.

Among authorizations to proceed included in the March 27 Tribal Council packet, Tribal Council approved moving forward with a constitutional amendment that will ask Tribal voters to approve term limits.

The proposed term limits would limit Tribal Council members to three consecutive three-year terms. A Tribal Council member who hits the limit would have to sit out a year before running for council again.

The amendment would not retroactively count the terms of Tribal members currently sitting on Tribal Council.

Tribal Chairman Reyn Leno said an election date is currently undetermined since Tribal Council elections are quickly approaching.

Another authorization to proceed instructed the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority to commence work on a 28-unit apartment complex in Grand Ronde and released funds for the planning, design and site work on the project.

A staff directive also moved proposed amendments to the Tribal Ethical Standards Ordinance forward to the Legislative Action Committee. The proposed amendments, advertised in two *Smoke Signals*, did not receive any comments from Tribal members. ■

Clean Eating Forum set

The Tribe's Nutrition Department will hold a Clean Eating Forum at noon Monday, April 15, at the Elders' Activity Center.

The forum will be held the third Monday monthly as long as there is not a conflict with other scheduling. The forum will give attendees a chance to share recipes, learn tricks of the trade and enjoy a light snack and refreshment that is clean.

At each meeting, goals will be set for the month.

The forum is open to anyone.

For more information, contact Tribal Food Services Coordinator Kristy DeLoe at 503-879-2018. ■