

# Tribal members graduate from class

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

Members of the Confederated Tribe of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, as well as Grand Ronde and Siletz community members, graduated on Friday, April 19, from a five-week program designed to improve their career skills for well-paying construction jobs.

The Northwest College of Construction, in partnership with the state Bureau of Labor and Industries, Oregon Department of Transportation and the two Tribes, established a specialized curriculum for training that was conducted at the Grand Ronde Governance Center.

The program, "Highway Construction Fundamentals," provided a strong working knowledge of the construction trades with industry recognized certifications, including first aid/CPR, OSHA 10-Hour and flagging.

The program focused predominantly on the fundamentals of carpentry, familiarization with hand and power tools, and paving and heavy equipment – all important skills in rebuilding Oregon's infrastructure.

"Hands-on workforce training helps our state build a stronger economy and middle class," said Brad Avakian, Oregon Labor Commissioner. "The participants learn important career and leadership skills that provide them with greater economic opportunity and hope for a better life."

Operating engineers earn an average of \$53,438, according to the state Employment Department.

Eight Grand Ronde Tribal and community members participated

and nine from Siletz were in the program. Tribal members enrolled included Kyler Thompson, Lewis Riggs, Cameron Riggs and Tribal Elder Scott Lenaburg.

John Mercier, Grand Ronde Public Works Department manager, said he sees the Highway Construction Fundamentals program as a launching pad for Tribal members to learn any one of the trades. A longtime advocate of partnering and training, Mercier said he was excited to host the training and make it more economically feasible and accessible.

Program funding came from an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Federal Highway Administration grant secured by the state Department of Transportation.

The Department of Transportation funds numerous workforce development programs targeted at underserved and underrepresented populations, but, as Equal Employment Opportunity Manager/Officer Angela Ramos said, the public-private partnership is rare.

The Highway Construction Fundamentals Program brought together the Department of Transportation, Bureau of Labor and Industries, two sovereign nations of the Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes and the Northwest College of Construction with the shared purpose of attracting quality workers into construction crews.

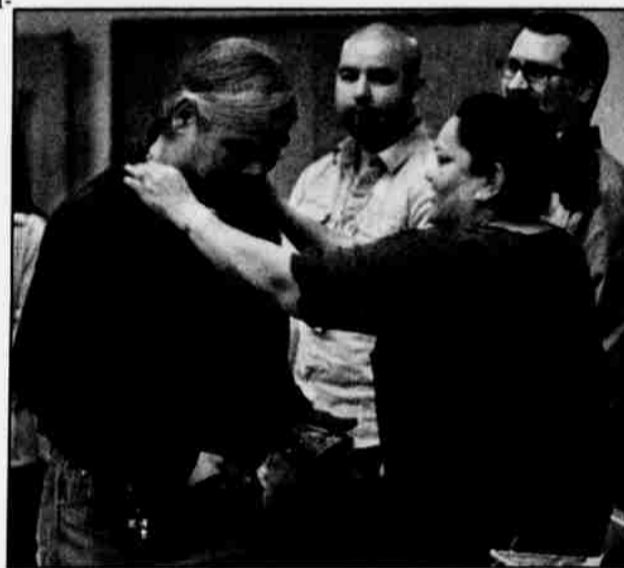
The program was open to Tribal members and other community members living near the Tribes.

"This inclusiveness strengthens the communities as a whole and opens the door of possibilities," Ramos said. ■



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Lewis Riggs V smooths a newly poured concrete pad during a Northwest College of Construction "Highway Construction Fundamentals" class on the Tribal campus on Wednesday, April 17.



Kalene Contreras, Vocational Rehabilitation programs/477 administrative assistant, places a beaded necklace on Tribal Elder Scott Lenaburg during a graduation ceremony for Northwest College of Construction "Highway Construction Fundamentals" five-week program on Friday, April 19. The classes were held in Grand Ronde.

## 2013 Community Input Meeting

The Tribe's annual Community Input meeting will be held in the gym after the Tribal Council meeting on Wednesday, May 8, starting at approximately 6:30 p.m.

6:30 p.m. Community Input Meeting  
Spaghetti Dinner

6:45 p.m. Brief Overview PowerPoint

6:55 p.m. Open house format with several topic tables in the gym including:

- Education Strategic Plan
- Tribal Museum Project
- Women's Transition House Project
- Food Bank Design & Construction Project
- Secondary Payer Transition (Skookum Health Plan)
- Tribal Police Department
- Public Transit
- Other topics table

There also will be a drawing for door prizes (a Pendleton blanket and smaller gifts).

The annual Grand Ronde Community Input meeting is offered as an opportunity for members to provide comments and suggestions that will be used in helping guide Tribal programs and in preparing grant applications, such as the Administration for Native Americans, the HUD Indian Community Development Block Grant and others. Those unable to attend can submit written comments and suggestions to: Mr. Kim Rogers, Planning & Grants Manager, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR 97347. For additional information, contact Mr. Rogers at 503-879-2250. ■

## Elders' Fishing Trip set for May 16

The annual Fish and Wildlife Committee Elders' Fishing Trip and Picnic will be held on Thursday, May 16, at Henry Haag Lake near Forest Grove. Vans will leave the Elders' Activity Center at 8 a.m. for this rain-or-shine event. Transportation, fishing gear and a meal will be provided.

A Tribal fishing license is required. It can be acquired by contacting the Tribal Natural Resources Department at 503-879-2424.

Food will include hamburgers, hot dogs and a picnic-style luncheon.

The event is for Tribal Elders and their spouses only.

To sign up or for more information, contact the Elders' Activity Center at 503-879-2233 or Fish and Wildlife Committee Chair Harold Lyon at 971-237-5775. ■

## Church holding annual ham dinner

St. Michael's Catholic Church in Grand Ronde will be holding its annual ham dinner from noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, May 5.

The menu will include ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, cole slaw, green beans and homemade desserts. Cost will be \$8 per person, \$6 for senior citizens and \$5 for children 6 to 12 years of age; free for 5 and under. A family rate will not exceed \$25.

For more information, call Sally at 971-241-7369. ■

## Sacred Hoop Ceremony set for May 11

The Tribe's Behavioral Health Program is hosting a Sacred Hoop Ceremony at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 11, in the Tribal gym.

The four gifts of the Sacred Hoop are the power to forgive the unforgivable, healing, hope and unity. The hoop brings healing for all recovering from different traumas and it also helps strengthen sobriety or wellbriety in the community. The ceremony is open to all.

For more information, contact Tribal Alcohol and Drug Counselor Karan Scharf at 503-879-2029. ■