

## Education offers Chinuk Wawa classes

The Tribe's Cultural Education Department offers adult Chinuk Wawa language classes from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday in Room 207 in the Tribal Adult Education Building. Language classes can be taken for college credit or fun. For more information, call 503-879-2249 or 503-437-4599. ■

## Volleyball nights held on Wednesdays

The Tribe's Recreation Program holds open volleyball from 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Tribal gym. Volleyball is open to anyone who wishes to participate. For more information, contact Recreation Coordinator Matthew Mosley at 503-879-1369 or matthew.mosley@grandronde.org. ■

# Two officers sworn in on May 1

**POLICE continued**  
from front page

With the two new officers, the Tribal police department now covers the community for 16 hours a day. When Lane comes on, coverage will increase to 20 hours a day.

Tribal agreements with Polk and Yamhill counties and Oregon State Police mean that the Grand Ronde community has 24/7 coverage, said LaChance.

In November, the Tribe selected LaChance, a Tribal Elder, to establish the chief's office and set the tone for the new department. LaChance had already retired once, more than a year earlier from the Redmond Police Department, when the opportunity came up. He had ended his career in Redmond as lieutenant in charge of investigations.

He has said that he brings two goals to the job: to build a "progressive" department, one that will make the community proud, and one that walks a gentle line when possible, but a tough one when necessary; and secondly, to find the right successor when he leaves.

"We're all about education first," LaChance said. "We're not here just to arrest people. We're here to enhance their lives and make (their lives) better. This is community policing. We love people to call us and contact us. That means we're serving the community. The community needs to know that the Tribal police are available to them 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

The non-emergency line is 503-879-2123; emergencies are always 911.

Speeding through Elder housing and along Salmon River Highway are among top issues for the department. Minor personal crimes, such as thefts, also are a part in the department's agenda.

"It's very dynamic," LaChance said. The issues are different in the casino and the government campus, in Elder housing and Grand Meadows and the Tribe's timber lands.

"You would think that weekends would be the high crime time, but it's not necessarily so here. It's always different. It's all about people and their needs," he said.

LaChance, McKnight and Lane are Tribal members.

The two officers sworn in on May 1 were Ron Wellborn, 52, of McMinnville, and Patrick McConnell, 37, of Dallas.

Wellborn retired from the Yamhill County Sheriff's Department at the end April, officially the day before he was sworn in in Grand Ronde. He retired after 29 years with Yamhill County.

"It's a great opportunity," Wellborn said following the swearing in ceremony in Tribal Council cham-



Photo courtesy of Ken Trevino

**Mindy Lane wipes away tears after she was gifted a Pendleton blanket by Tribal Council member Jon A. George, left, Tribal Council Vice Chair Jack Giffen Jr., second from left, Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno, second from right, and Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr., right, during her farewell party in the Governance Center break room on Friday, May 10. Lane resigned her position as Tribal Council administrative assistant and has started training to be a Grand Ronde Police Department officer.**

bers, "to be part of the starting of a new department. When I heard that LaChance was here, I knew I wanted to be here."

The two have known each other for years. Both have taught at the state police academy.

For 10 years, Wellborn served with the Yamhill County Sheriff's Forest Patrol, an important component of the Grand Ronde force's responsibility.

Wellborn also helped start Project Lifesaver seven years ago at the Yamhill County Sheriff's Department. The project gives watch-sized radio transmitters to residents with autism or Alzheimer's and related diseases in case they get lost.

"I'm looking at getting this program started here as well," he said.

McConnell served 3.5 years as a patrol deputy with the Polk County Sheriff's Office before funding shortfalls terminated his position this year.

"Thanks to the casino and Tribal Council members," he said after his swearing in. "This is a big moment for me. I'm very proud to be here. We'll work our hardest to make this one of the great police departments in Oregon."

McConnell brings previous military experience and seven years of police work, two in the area, to this job. "Everything we're doing out here comes from Polk County, so all I had to do was change uniforms and change bosses," he said.

He already has a working relationship with security and surveillance personnel at Spirit Mountain Casino.

"One thing I love about here, it

is a very small community. I like the tightness of the community. We deal with a lot of things. Most small agencies don't see 60 percent of what we see. There's a lot to do here if you just open your eyes. What I brought to the table is already knowing all that. And that's what the chief was looking for."

Lane earned an associate degree at Chemeketa Community College in 2011 and at Western Oregon University last year. She began courses in Criminal Justice leading to a bachelor's degree, expected in summer 2014.

When she was 17, she helped Oregon City police capture an escaped murderer.

She has always been fascinated by police work.

"Law enforcement is a rewarding field with the opportunity to serve the community every day, a job that affords the chance to contribute to society and make a positive difference," she said.

"Chief LaChance and Sgt. McKnight have an optimistic outlook on the department and have set their goals high. My goal is to jump right in and offer my skills and drive to help make the department a successful, community-oriented agency."

In February, Jake McKnight, the Tribe's first police officer, was promoted to patrol supervisor. He started as an officer in 2011.

McKnight served as the Tribe's Forest Patrol officer following the retirement of former Tribal Elder Marce Norwest in 2008, but as the Tribal police force has been established, the Forest Patrol position has been phased out and will now

be among the department's duties. Specifically, Wellborn will be working the forest in consultation with Natural Resources Department Manager Michael Wilson.

Tribal Planning & Grants Development Manager Kim Rogers has written three successful U.S. Department of Justice grants for the Tribal police department.

In 2010, a COPS grant for \$171,903 was awarded to the Tribe for two police vehicles and other equipment.

In 2011, a COPS grant for \$672,525 was awarded to the Tribe to hire two police officers and employ them for three years. These salaries go to Wellborn and McConnell.

In 2012, a COPS grant awarded the Tribe \$378,103 for two police vehicles and to hire an additional police officer for three years. This grant covers Lane's employment costs.

A 2013 application has been submitted for equipment and training.

In addition, LaChance said he already is seeking a permanent funding source for the new police officers.

The Tribe pays salaries and benefits for LaChance and McKnight.

LaChance also said that until a new housing development is completed, the department is fully staffed.

The Tribal Police Department was created by a Tribal Council Resolution on May 5, 2010. It has been a long and arduous road since then, including Department of Justice grants, intergovernmental agreements with Oregon State Police and neighboring county police forces, and a state legislative fix last year, SB 412, that opened the door to Tribal police forces in the state by requiring Tribes to meet the same standards as other state-sanctioned police units, including training.

Tribal Court Chief Judge Suzanne Ojibway Townsend administered the oath of office to Wellborn and McConnell.

"This is very exciting for the Tribal community and for Tribal sovereignty, one of our critical core components," said Assistant General Manager Chris Leno.

"This is a statement for us as a Tribe," said Tribal Council member Jon A. George. "For me, I see a difference in our community already for having a police force. The department is in the great hands of some caring gentlemen. Children can look up to police officers now."

"This is a great day," said Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr. "We've worked on this a long time and it is huge, huge. I'm just glad you weren't here when I was a kid." ■