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'We have become a great nation'

Tribe celebrates 30th anniversary of Restoration during two days filled with reverent events

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

From a sacred healing ceremony to a powwow, plankhouse event and meal and concert at Spirit Mountain Casino, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde marked its 30th anniversary of Restoration to federal recognition on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 22-23, with respect and reverence.

"We have become a great nation," Tribal Chairman Reyn Leno said during an 11-minute speech Saturday afternoon at the 30th Restoration Celebration held at the casino's Event Center before approximately 1,200 Tribal members and invited guests.

"Wow, 30 years of Restoration," Leno added. "Thirty years of Restoration is great, but we can't ever forget almost 30 years of Termination, which actually led to our Restoration."

"Almost 60 years ago was one of the lowest points for this Tribe," he said, referring to the 1954 Termination forced by passage of the Western Oregon Termination Act. "When they told us you can't be a Tribe, you can't be Indian, we said, 'We don't care. We're going to stay here in Grand Ronde and we're going to be Grand Ronde and we're going to be a Tribe with or without your recognition.' I think that is something we always have to remember."

Healing Ceremony

Setting the reverent tone for this year's two-day Restoration Celebration was the first Healing Ceremony held Friday morning at the Atudship Sacred Memorial north of the Tribal Cemetery.

About 120 Tribal members, employees and guests attended the ceremony, which was designed to promote healing for the Grand Ronde Tribal membership, past and current, who have endured many traumas since contact with white settlers began in the early 1800s.

Tribal Council member Cheryl A. Kennedy gave the invocation, Grand Ronde drummers performed a blessing song and Leno welcomed those in attendance.

There were speeches by Kennedy, Tribal Council member Jon A. George, former Tribal Chair Kathryn Harrison, Land and Culture Department Manager Jan Looking Wolf Reibach, Culture Committee



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Kailiyah Krehbiel dances during the plankhouse event of the Tribe's 30th Restoration Celebration on Saturday, Nov. 23.

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and Canoe Family members and Lighthouse Church Pastor Ken Haller.

"The people who spoke shared their feelings and their personal, sometimes life-changing experiences of healing with all present," Reibach said. "Everyone was invited to come up to the microphone and speak. Several nonTribal public officials and guests spoke as well, sharing their impressions and experiences, and all expressing awe at the Tribe for what it was able to accomplish despite the times of hardship and oppression."

George and Tribal Cultural Outreach Specialist Bobby Mercier blessed the stones that were then placed at the memorial by those seeking healing.

Reibach said the heaping of stones and earth as a spiritual practice is



Former U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Furse, left, and Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno talk during the Tribe's 30th Restoration Celebration at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center on Saturday, Nov. 23.

shared by all of Grand Ronde's antecedent Tribes and Bands, and dates back thousands of years.

"The ceremony was beautiful and powerful," Reibach said. "The Tribal

community came together with oneness and unity with recognition of

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