

Winter storm shuts down Tribal offices for 2.5 days

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

In what seems like a quinquennial – occurring every five years – event, a winter storm hit western Oregon on Thursday, Feb. 6, and forced the closure of Tribal offices in Grand Ronde and Portland starting at 1 p.m. and lasting through Monday, Feb. 10.

According to AccuWeather, four inches of snow fell in the Grand Ronde area on Feb. 6 and 6.4 inches fell two days later on Saturday, Feb. 8.

With temperatures hovering below 32 degrees, very little melting occurred.

Grand Ronde was not alone. The winter storm that moved up the Willamette Valley dumped rain over a layer of cold air and the resulting snow and ice virtually shut down activities from Eugene to Vancouver, Wash., for four days. It also made it a dangerous proposition for Tribal employees to drive to work or even attempt to get out of their driveways.

Tribal General Manager Mark Johnston released employees beginning at 1 p.m. Thursday so



Photo by Bobby Mercier

Tribal Maintenance Department employees clear snow from the Tribal campus parking lots on Sunday, Feb. 9. More than six inches of snow fell that day in Grand Ronde, according to AccuWeather.

they could get home safely and closed Tribal offices on Friday and Monday.

In addition, most Willamette Valley school districts, including the nearby Willamina School District, were closed on Friday and Monday,

as well.

But just because Tribal offices were closed doesn't mean every Tribal employee had a 4.5-day weekend.

"I would like to thank all of the team that worked so hard clearing

the campus of snow and ice today," Johnston said in a Sunday, Feb. 9, e-mail. "Tyson (Mercier), Dave (Fullerton), Gregg (Leno), Winston (Mercier), Brad (Leno) and Jesse (White) ... thanks for going above and beyond. Also, Lonnie (Leno) and his team at Housing did a great job of keeping Housing, Adult Foster Care and the Elders' Activity Center cleared."

Tribal Health & Wellness Clinic employees opened the Pharmacy from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10, to allow people to pick up needed prescriptions.

And Finance Department Accounting Specialist Laura Mercier worked on Monday, Feb. 10, to ensure Tribal payroll was processed and that Elder checks were mailed on time. Mail Room Clerk Anna White also came to work on Friday to post checks that needed to be mailed.

The last time that the Tribal offices were closed by such a huge deluge of snow occurred in December 2008 when the Tribal campus was closed for a week after 17 inches of snow and more than an inch of rain, mostly freezing, fell in western Oregon the week before Christmas. ■

Tribal photographer to speak on Feb. 20

Smoke Signals photographer Michelle Alaimo will speak during the Salem Photo League's "Photography Talk" lecture series at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at the IKE Box Coffee Shop, 299 Cottage St. N.E., Salem.

"Photography Talk" is a free lecture series in which gifted photographers discuss their vision.

Alaimo has worked for *Smoke Signals* since 2008 and received many Native American Journalist Association awards for her work. She graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology with a bachelor of fine arts degree in photojournalism.

The Salem Photo League is a collective of local documentary photographers, professional and non-professional.

For more information about the series, call 503-581-6154 or visit www.isaacroom.org/ikebox/ on the Internet. ■

ATTENTION

If you are currently receiving or are in need of SNAP benefits, Social Services provides an Oregon Department of Human Services caseworker who comes to Grand Ronde twice monthly on Wednesdays.

The caseworker may assist with applications, updates, child care, etc.

If you are in need of services, call 503-879-2034 to schedule an appointment or you can reach Michelle Carmona at 503-879-4523. ■

Test fee assistance

Enrolled Tribal members can request assistance with test fees (i.e. GRE, SAT, LSAT, ACT) and admissions application fees.

Contact Higher Education for more information at 1-800-422-0232, ext. 2275. ■

WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

Native American Enlightenment Association
12th Annual Social Pow wow

Saturday March 8, 2014
Grand Entry 4pm
Women's Fancy Shawl Contest

Call 503.370.6265 for information

Native Arts Marketing Strategies for Creative Entrepreneurs

Marketing and professional skill-building workshops for Native artists in visual and traditional arts

CHOOSE ONE OF THREE SATURDAY WORKSHOPS, FROM 9AM - 4PM:

February 1
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Portland Office
4445 SW Barbur Boulevard, Portland, OR
Register by Jan. 27

February 15
Longhouse Education and Cultural Center
The Evergreen State College
2700 Evergreen Pkwy NW, Olympia, WA
Register by Feb. 10

March 1
The Museum at Warm Springs
2189 U.S. 26, Warm Springs, OR
Register by Feb. 24

WORKSHOPS ARE FREE. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
Register online at: <http://tinyurl.com/lw9w3jx>

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Lisa Watt, (503)892-6560 or lisa_joel@msn.com
Laura Grabhorn, (360)867-6413 or grabhorl@evergreen.edu

NATIVE ARTS & CULTURES FOUNDATION

From top left: *Recycled Flying Head* by Linley Logan, Alaska Kuteeyaa Dancers, Longhouse model canoe gifts for Paddle to Quinalt, *Seaweed Gatherer* by Denise Emerson, *Purple Frost* by Alex McCarty, *Honoring Our Ancestors* by Joe Seymour, *Walrus Dance Transformation* by Teresa White