

# 'This tells a pretty complete story'

EXHIBIT continued  
from front page

on the Clackamas and Multnomah, who occupied significant areas on the river that are now part of the Portland metropolitan area and often traveled into the Columbia River.

Artifacts included in the exhibit, curated by Tribal Land and Culture Department staff members, include a stone anchor that was recovered from Sauvie Island.

Tribal members Brian Krehbiel and Travis Stewart contributed their wood carving talents. Canoe paddles by Krehbiel rest inside a carved-out canoe and miniature replica Kalapuyan river canoes created by Stewart and Krehbiel are displayed.

The exhibit gives attendees insight into the Willamette Valley Treaty signed in 1855, origin stories from the Chinook Tribe and an introduction to Tribal historical figures, such as Cascades Chief Tamaquin, Chinook Chief Ciassno and Clackamas Chief Wacheno.

Tribal Historian David Lewis said the exhibit aims to highlight the Tribes that lived on the north Willamette River.

"This tells a pretty complete story of where they were, who they were and what kind of culture they had," Lewis said. "This is more about the cultures and societies of the people, and the trade economy. We really wanted to highlight the unique aspects of these people."

The approximately 150 people who attended the Tribal opening ceremony were greeted by the Tribal Canoe Family, some 25 people strong, playing drums and singing.

Tribal Council members Cheryl A. Kennedy, Kathleen Tom and Jon A. George attended while Tribal Attorney Rob Greene, Health Services Executive Director Jeff Lorenz and Cultural Education and Outreach Program Manager Kathy Cole mingled with guests.

Tribal Elders Betty Bly, Violet Folden, Kathryn Harrison, Val Grout, Gladys Hobbs, Chip Tom and Alan Ham, among many others, also attended the opening. Harrison gave the event's invocation.

The Tribe's Public Affairs Department, headed by Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor and Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark, provided the buffet dinner that offered a choice of salmon or chicken entrees, scalloped potatoes, green beans, salad and bread.

The Tribe's Natural Resources Department sent appetizer samples of smoked salmon and lamprey, traditional foods harvested from the Willamette River and the falls.

After the buffet was served and the Canoe Family performed traditional songs and dances, Willamette Heritage Center Executive Director Sam Wegner thanked the Tribe for the "enduring partnership" that has blossomed.

Willamette Heritage Center Curator Kylie Pine echoed Wegner's sentiments, saying that the Tribe and Heritage Center have formed a "good partnership."



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

The Grand Ronde Canoe Family performs during the Tribal opening for the "kuri-tsəqw tilixaλ: River People of the Willamette" exhibit at the Willamette Heritage Center at The Mill in Salem on Thursday, April, 10.

## If you go

'kuri-tsəqw tilixaλ: River People of the Willamette'

**Where:** Willamette Heritage Center at The Mill, 1313 Mill St. S.E., Salem

**When:** Through Saturday, May 26

**Cost:** \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors 55 and older, \$4 for students with ID and \$3 for youth 6 to 17 years of age.

**More info:** 503-585-7012 or [www.willametteheritage.org](http://www.willametteheritage.org)

Tribal Council member Cheryl A. Kennedy acknowledged Land and Culture staff members who worked on the exhibit – Lewis, Cultural Exhibits Supervisor Julie Brown, Cultural Specialist Veronica Montano and Tribal cultural consultant Greg Archuleta.

"We are here to celebrate the people of the Willamette Valley and the river. We do have a treaty that spans this entire region, the Willamette Valley Treaty," Kennedy said.

"The chiefs of our Tribe were skilled negotiators, skilled strategists and skilled warriors. To defend the area and the commerce that was going on here, our chiefs had to devise ways to make sure that this area remained in the hands of the people who lived here since time immemorial."

Kennedy said the "River People" exhibit should encourage those who see it to seek out more information about the peoples who lived in western Oregon before the arrival of white settlers.

"There is no history that is taught on the Indians of Oregon," Kennedy said. "What you will see today is cutting edge education and information. ... I believe it fosters more acceptance and camaraderie in people."

Kennedy said that although the Tribe has an oral history that comes

from the lips of its ancestors, it is also attempting to ensure that the Tribe's message gets out there in a more modern way so that the Tribe can be involved in the economic development of its ceded lands.

She added that some might think current Tribal interests skew toward the environmental, but people need to remember that Willamette Falls and the rivers of Oregon were a place of commerce for Tribal ancestors.

"Commerce is something we are very interested in," Kennedy said. "However, we know that (the environment) has to be taken care of, it has to be managed and we certainly don't want to see it polluted."

"Our aspirations are to be good partners," Kennedy added. "The importance of this exhibit is paramount to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and what we hope to achieve."

Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom, who also sits on the Willamette Heritage Center Board of Directors, thanked the center for "the friendship and camaraderie they have for this Tribe. It is unsurpassed."

"Our hope is that we continue this relationship for as long as we can," Tom said.

Lewis, the Tribe's historian, said

he and the Cultural Exhibits and Archives Program staff wanted to continue to tell the Tribe's story through this fourth exhibit.

"This is the place that the Tribe comes from," Lewis said about the Willamette River. "We are descendants of those people. ... We really are still here. All of our exhibits have been working to understand the various areas of Tribal history and culture that we feel really have been glossed over or are missing."

"The life of trade 150 to 200 years ago and more was such a significant way of life for all of the Tribes," Brown said about working on the exhibit. "We want people to recognize that we have Tribal members here who lived all up and down the Willamette and that Oregon City and the falls was the main hub for trade. ... Much of the exhibit is representative of that."

The Grand Ronde Tribe first staged an exhibit at the Willamette Heritage Center in 2011 with the award-winning "Grand Ronde Canoe Journey." It followed in 2012 with "Grand Ronde Women – Our Story" and in 2013 with "We Were Here First ... and We Are Here to Stay."

"kuri-tsəqw tilixaλ: River People of the Willamette" will be on display through May 26. ■



A river canoe, fishing net and traditional regalia are part of the "kuri-tsəqw tilixaλ: River People of the Willamette" exhibit.