

# Casino's Rose Festival float offers 'sweet prayers'

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Nikia Mooney, 17, is larger than life and will star on this year's Spirit Mountain Casino float during the June 7 Spirit Mountain Casino Grand Floral Parade.

A model of Mooney, who is the daughter of Daniel Mooney and Egypt Leno, was designed by Tribal Elder Steve Bobb Sr., as was the rest of this year's float, "Sweet Prayers for a Big World."

It responds to this year's Rose Festival theme, "Making Memories."

"I've always liked the look of Royalty performing the Lord's Prayer," said Bobb. He had been working on a statue with that in mind to be cast in bronze when this year's Rose Festival float landed on his plate.

"I wanted to see if that image would work for the parade, too," he said.

Bobb has designed the last six Spirit Mountain Casino floats for the festival. He also designed the West Valley Veterans Memorial, a prized addition to the Grand Ronde campus since 2003.

The side of the float is for memories yet to come, Bobb said.

"If our world doesn't get squared away, there will be no memories for the future," he said.

Bobb received the festival theme in November. In February, his design was approved.

There is a bear at the back of the float, and scattered around are a raccoon, rabbit and a red bird sits

## If you go

**Spirit Mountain Casino Grand Floral Parade**

**When:** 10 a.m. Saturday, June 7

**Where:** Starts at Portland Coliseum, goes down Weidler Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard and across the Burnside Bridge.

**Cost:** Free to watch from sidewalks along parade route.

**More information:** [www.rosefestival.org/grand-floral-parade](http://www.rosefestival.org/grand-floral-parade)

on Nikia's shoulder.

A drum stands up decorated with yellow, red, black and white, the colors of the Native American medicine wheel. Nine elements, depicted as triangles, decorate the bottom of the drum and represent the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.

"I tried to represent Tribal and all Indian people," he said. "There is a lot going on. Native Americans will notice, but maybe not the average Joe on the street."

Because Spirit Mountain Casino is title sponsor again this year, the float will be first to emerge from the back door of the Portland Coliseum at the start of the parade. It then goes down Weidler Street to Martin Luther King Boulevard and across the Burnside Bridge into downtown Portland.

This is Spirit Mountain Casino's

fourth year as title sponsor. It recently signed on for its second three-year contract, which will give the casino six straight years as title sponsor. The casino pays a sponsorship fee and Bobb says that the teaching opportunity and recognition the sponsorship brings to the Tribe and Tribal people makes the money well worth spending.

"You get exposure not only for the casino, but also for our people. Our story hits all the major newspapers, commercials on TV, radio exposure. And this year we've been able to meet with a lot of professional people in the Portland area. That was our goal: finding new and better ways of educating the public about our people and our history.

"We are the people of this area and have been for thousands of

years. This is where we hunted and thrived."

Spirit Mountain Community Fund, always a contributor to worthy causes during the Rose Festival, will this year announce its gift during the Grand Floral Parade. A \$100,000 contribution will be made to OHSU's Knight Cancer Challenge, the first-ever official charity for the festival, said Jocelyn Huffman, the casino's Sponsorship Administrator.

In addition, Tribal Royalty participated in the May 31 Starlight Parade.

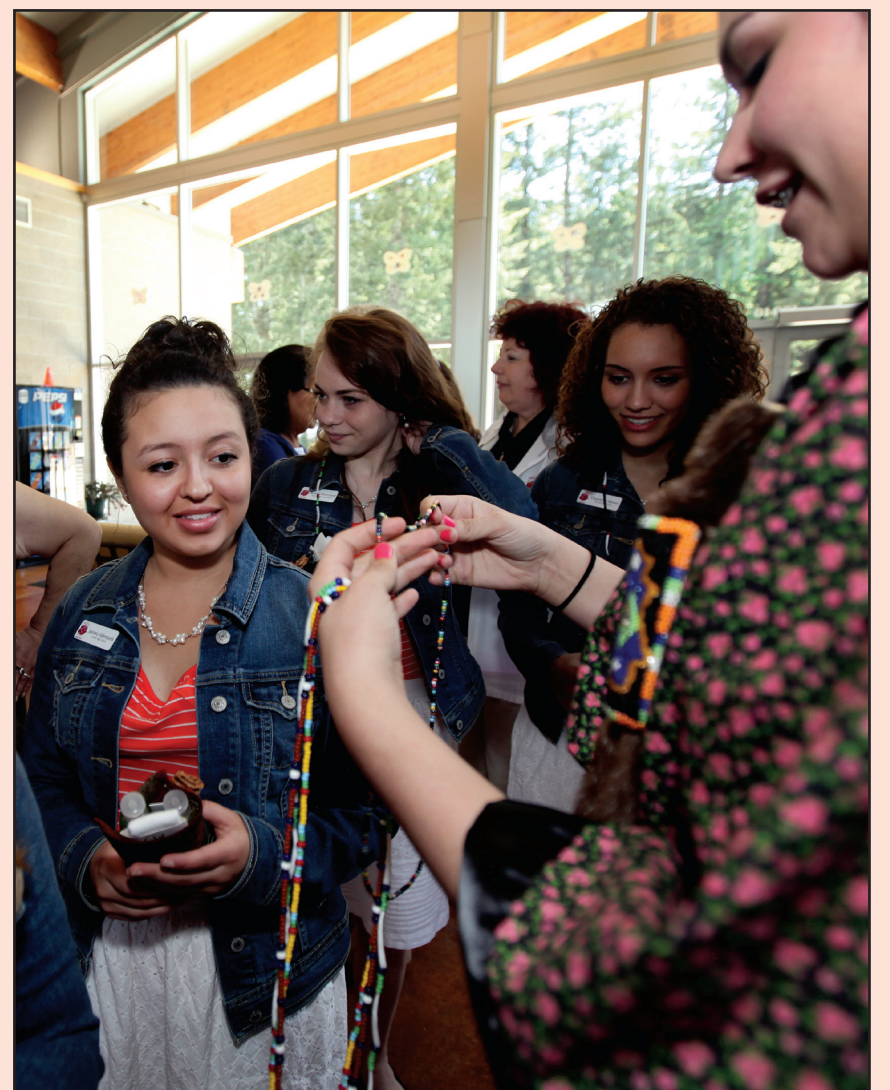
"Be there early," said Bobb about the Grand Floral Parade. "It starts at 10 a.m. and ends at noon. Allow for traffic and parking time. I'd recommend being in Portland by nine." ■

## Rose Festival Court visits



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Veterans Junior Queen Amelia Mooney shakes hands with 2014 Rose Festival Court Princess Samantha Westmoreland, from David Douglas High School, during the court's visit to the Elders' Activity Center on Wednesday, May 14. The group of 15 high school students also toured Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center and Achaf-hammi, the plankhouse.**



**Kallie Provost, right, gifts a beaded necklace to 2014 Rose Festival Court Princess Jasnerly Valenzuela, from Lincoln High School, during the court's visit to the Elders' Activity Center on Wednesday, May 14.**

## West Valley district seeking Fire Explorers

The West Valley Fire District, which covers Grand Ronde, Willamina and Sheridan, is seeking youths for its Fire Explorer Program.

Young men and women age 14 to 20 will become familiar with career opportunities in the fire service through classroom instruction, hands-on training and volunteer work.

The program encourages and promotes accountability, safety, communication, teamwork, fitness and leadership.

Participants must attend weekly drills from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Saturdays, adhere to dress and conduct codes, perform weekly physical fitness and training specific to firefighting skills, and demonstrate a willingness to make improvements and show self-motivation.

For more information, contact Fire Explorer Post 908 adviser Seth Bellarts at 503-437-2046. ■

## CTGR Higher Education Program deadlines set

There are now only two Higher Education programs depending on whether you are full-time or part-time. The deadline for the Full-Time College program is at least 30 days before the start of classes. The deadline for the Part-Time College program is at least 10 days before the start of class.

Visit the Tribal website for more program information and an application. [www.grandronde.org/departments/education/higher-education/](http://www.grandronde.org/departments/education/higher-education/) ■

## St. Michael's offers weekly brunch

St. Michael's Catholic Church offers an open house brunch every Sunday following Mass. The brunch is free to the community.

Brunch begins at about 11:30 a.m. following the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Mass attendance is not required for brunch attendance. For more information, contact Janelle Justen at 503-550-0923. ■