

'This opening is very heartfelt'

MUSEUM continued
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dy, who gave the invocation. "For a long time, people have talked about artifacts that they would donate when a place was built."

Tribal Elder Annabelle (Peachie) Hamm said she intended to gift a traditional deer skin dress to the museum.

"It was made as a copy of my grandmother's dress," said her daughter, Cultural Exhibits Supervisor Julie Brown, who made the dress years ago with sister Khani Schultz and friend Norman Peters.

They stretched the leather for three weeks. Brown, who is also a seamstress, matched it to her grandmother's dress and sized it to fit her mother.

"We cleansed ourselves every day before working," said Brown, "with a good heart."

Chachalu's opening was "everything and more" to Brown.

Guests to the partially remodeled building, which was once Willamina Middle School, walked through a breezeway enclosed by the building on one side and a model cedar plankhouse on the other. The model followed the design of the Tribe's full-sized plankhouse sitting just north of Uyxat, the Tribal powwow grounds.

Guests stopped at the model designed to approximate the plankhouse experience. It was built by staff from the Land and Culture Department. A fire burned in a pit inside, while Tribal drummers and singers worked their magic behind the fire. Then guests moved on to the opening celebration on the other side.

The ceremony started at 4 p.m. with chairs on the grass facing east at Chachalu and the sun warming their backs from the west.

Land and Culture Manager Jan Looking Wolf Reibach described Chachalu as "a place to continue to express our culture and share our story; a place to properly take care of our sacred things; a place for historical research of the over 27 bands and Tribes of the people of Grand Ronde; an opportunity to proudly exhibit the Tribe's cultural collection; a dedicated facility for cultural education; a place to pass down important traditional ways to our children; a platform to honor Tribal Royalty, veterans, Elders and ancestors; a place to help continue to strengthen community and



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Former Tribal Council members, including Tribal Elder Val Grout, left, were recognized during the opening of Phase I of the Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center on Thursday, June 5. Senior Veterans Queen Savannah Ingram presented the necklace to Grout.

provide a foundation for the further progression of Tribal culture; it resides in the hearts, minds and spirits of our people, their practices and connection with Mother Earth."

Chachalu is a Tualatin Kalapuya word meaning "place of the burning timber." It was suggested during a meeting to name the Museum and Cultural Center by Cultural Education Specialist Brian Krehbiel.

"The name is from this valley," said Tribal Historian David Lewis. "There is always a rebirth after a fire, like the Tribe going from Termination to Restoration."

Planning for development of programs for the public, as well as for working with academics to help with continuing research about the history of the Tribe is already underway, Lewis said.

"We're writing our first history now," he said. "We will be publishing many papers. We will have interactions with other universities and the British Museum (that holds many Grand Ronde artifacts). All of us deserve to have that history."

Willamette University anthropology professor Rebecca Dobkins has worked on class projects with the Tribe and had interns working at the Tribe. She called the facility "invaluable." In this facility, she said,

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"People are seeing themselves in the stories told here about the Tribe's past, present and future. This is so big. It is without measure."

Hamm said she was most impressed by the photos of her family members, especially in the section on logging. Photos included many of her relatives; some photos she had seen before, some she had not.

"This has been a dream for years," said Elder Val Grout, who previously served on Tribal Council. "I'm hoping to see some of my grandmother's work. (Maude Warren Hudson) was a great basket maker."

"I've seen pictures of my mom (Elder Joyce Ham) as a little girl that I had never seen before," said Elder Alan Ham, "and of my great-grandpa, John Mose Hudson, and of my grandmother, Ila Dowd."

"I can't speak highly enough of our staff that put this together," said Tribal Elder June Olson, former manager of what was then the Cultural Resources Department. "This opening is very heartfelt."

Olson remembered the long span of time and work that made the building possible. "There were many renderings, and the building was going to be very costly. We knew it would have to be built in stages," she said.

"I can't say how proud and fortunate I am to be a part of this Tribe," said Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom. She also added her gratitude to previous Tribal Council members who foresaw and worked for this day.

"You'll be very happy that I'm losing my voice," said Tribal Council member Jon A. George. "This spot," he added, "was the old BIA school that I went to until sixth grade."

Of two emotional times in his life, McClary said the first was the opening of the plankhouse and the second is "the opening of this Museum and Cultural Center."

"Reclaiming this place as a site of cultural teaching and sharing and affirmation is extraordinarily inspiring," said Dobkins.

Though so many people have worked so hard for so long to bring this facility to life, she added, "In 25 years, the kids here will think it was always here."

Exceptions may be youth from pre-kindergarten to age 5 who performed songs during the opening.

Steve Holmes brought his 4-year-old granddaughter, Angelina, to show her the new Museum and Cultural Center.

After it was all over, Kathy Soderberg, wife of former Tribal Council member Wink Soderberg, said, "That was pretty impressive, wasn't it?"

The list of those who made this project possible is almost endless and includes Tribal Council, staff from Land and Culture, Tribal Engineer Jesse White's office, and staff from Public Affairs, Grants, Planning, Legal, Finance, Education, Procurement, Public Works, Facilities, temp workers, contractors and the Capital Campaign team.

"Without these people," said Tribal Planning Director Rick George, "we wouldn't have a Tribe, no less a museum."

Granting agencies for Phase I included Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the National Park Service, Oregon Cultural Trust, Oregon Humanities, Spirit Mountain Community Fund, USDA Rural Development and Willamette National Forest.

Granting agencies that already have contributed to Phase II include the Three Rivers and Wildhorse foundations.

Add to those funders the Oregon Community Foundation, which made a \$35,000 contribution during the opening event.

Willamette National Forest gifted cedar for the plankhouse replica and more to sheath part of the building. The national forest has also promised to gift the Museum and Cultural Center enough cedar to complete the job.

For the opening, the University of Oregon loaned the Museum and Cultural Center two baskets made years ago by Kitty Tom. Elders, including Chip Tom, had not seen them before.

"It's an emotional day for us," said Brown. "There will never be another day like this."

The celebration scheduled for 45 minutes started at 4 p.m. After all the speeches, it was 5:15 p.m. when the doors to Chachalu opened for the first good look for the first time for many of the first 200 to visit. For another hour and a half, guests toured the new facility.

Chachalu opened to the public on Thursday, June 12. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with exhibits open to the public between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. ■



Tribal Elder June Olson, former manager of the then-Cultural Resources Department, walks through the first exhibit of the Chachalu Tribal Museum & Cultural Center during the opening of Phase I on Thursday, June 5.