

Elder Honor Day draws more than 500

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Elders' Committee Chair Le-onette Galligher and members Linda Brandon, Joyce Ham, Julie Duncan, Claudia Leno and Janet Billey were up past 10 p.m. the night before Elder Honor Day.

They were making centerpiece baskets for 90 tables set up in Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center for the event held on Tuesday, July 15.

"It was a lot of hard work," said Galligher, who said that the Elders' Committee works toward its success "all year."

Many Tribal government departments contributed a host of gift baskets that lined the front of the stage. The Elders' Committee purchased larger gifts, including a television.

More than 500 Elders signed in, said Elders' Activity Assistant Dan Ham. They filled the Event Center almost to overflowing.

"We were shooting for 500," said Ham, "so we did pretty well."

Guests came from many Tribes including Tulalip, Yakama, Nisqually, Nooksack, Samish, Upper Skagit, Quinault, Swinomish and Colville from Washington state.

Others came from the Coeur d'Alene and Kootenai Tribes in Idaho, the Osage Tribe in Oklahoma, and from Siletz, Burns Paiute, Coquille, Cow Creek and Coos Tribes in Oregon.

Tribal Elder Bob Tom again served as master of ceremonies for the day. He was lively, telling jokes and generally charming the audience at every turn.

The day moved along quickly with breakfast served at the Elders' Activity Center and lunch served in the Event Center. The day focused on games, including bingo and "Let's Make A Deal," and the drawing for gifts and prizes. Tom's smooth segues from one activity

to another played like "The Late Show," with the monologues as much fun as the activities.

Rex Haller and granddaughters Breanna Bilbrey and Cheyenne Haller entertained with guitar and song.

Brad Leno, Cultural Interpretive specialist at the Land and Culture Department, set up a camera outside of the Event Center and offered Elders free photo keepsakes.

Oldest man for the day was Herman Hudson Jr. at 89. He received a beaded belt buckle and \$25. Following close behind (by a month) was Harold Jacobs, descended from Seneca and Delaware Tribes in upstate New York where he grew up. He now resides in McMinnville. Both he and Hudson are World War II veterans.

Oldest woman in the room was 102-year-old Pearl Lyon, who won a beaded necklace and \$25. Ed Ashman helped her up to the stage. Second to Lyon was Opal Davidson, approaching her second century at 99.

Tribal Council member Jon A. George gave the invocation.

Royalty performed "The Lord's Prayer" and helped Elders by serving meals and generally running around where they could be of service.

Land and Culture gave tours of the Chachalu Museum and Cultural Center to Elders.

A Grand Ronde Drum performed "New Beginnings." Participating were Michael Karnosh, Jordan Mercier, David Harrelson, Jan Looking Wolf Reibach, Reina Nelson, George, Leslie Riggs, Mike Herrin and Kathy Cole. They con-



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Veterans Junior Queen Amelia Mooney gives Tribal Elder Pearl Lyon a gift as she is honored for being the oldest woman at the 2014 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Elder Honor Day at Spirit Mountain Casino on Tuesday, July 15. Lyon is 102 years old. In the background is Junior Miss Grand Ronde lyana Holmes.

At left, Tribal Elder Jolanda Catabay sings the "The Star-Spangled Banner."



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tinued to play as the Veterans Honor Guard posted the colors.

Tribal Elder Jolanda Catabay sang the national anthem.

Loren Corpuc bugled the signature songs of each of the different military services and then taps, leading into Reibach playing "Amazing Grace" on Native flute.

Before playing, Reibach said, "This is an honor song for all the Elders here today. Our Tribes are connected, and our people are all related."

Children from Mawich (4 to 5 year olds), Chakchak (3 year olds) and Lilu (language class with 3 to 5 years old) sang.

In addition to George, Tribal Council Chair Reyn Leno and Tribal Council members Ed Pearsall

and Kathleen Tom attended.

"Elders carry the knowledge of where we come from, and where, hopefully, we should be going. We Elders are special people," Leno said during his opening remarks.

Elder Steve Rife, temporarily getting around in a motorized wheelchair while awaiting back surgery, promised he was going to make one last Trail of Tears walk in February and March of next year, the months when the original forced march took place. ■

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Call for more information: 503-879-2078

A healthy meal is provided following the meeting!

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If you own a home in Oregon and it needs a little help with things like a worn-out roof or a tired heating system, get in touch with your Tribal Housing Authority and see if you and your home qualifies. 503-879-2401.

Adult Foster Program



The Tribe's Adult Foster Care lodges are committed to offering quality care to our Elders and helping them remain as independent as possible, while providing the personalized assistance they need. At our lodges, a wide range of services is available in a comfortable setting where privacy is respected and maximum independence is supported. For information, contact the Adult Foster Program Director at 503-879-1694. ■