



2010 – After a disastrous 2008 investment year, it was reported that 2009 was one of the best investment years since the Great Depression. The Tribe’s portfolio grew by 16.37 percent after losing more than 25 percent of its value during the recession that gripped the country in 2008. “We recovered all of the paper losses from the big fall and then some,” said Tribal Finance Officer Stanley Arend.

2005 – The Tribe’s Cultural Resources Department received the Mission Mill Museum’s Heritage Education Award. Tribal employees Joan West, Toni Mercier, Kim Mueller, Tiffany Greenburg and Lindy Trolan accepted the award for the Tribe.

2000 – Cultural Resources Manager June Olson was appointed to the Oregon Pioneer Cemetery Commission because of her knowledge of Native American burial sites.

1995 – Tribal Chairman Mark Mercier reported that the Tribe’s gaming facility was taking shape and scheduled to open in mid-October. “There are other issues facing the council,” he reported, “such as what to do with the money once the gaming is in operation. No doubt this will take some serious discussion among council, and it is expected that a survey will be provided to the Tribal membership for your input.”

1990 – Lester Marston was hired as the first chief judge of the Grand Ronde Tribal Court. The tentative date for the first session of Tribal Court was scheduled for June 8 and the court will be in session at least one day each month. The primary purpose of the Tribal Court is to preside over cases involving child custody matters.

1985 – Val Grout donated a seafood basket to be raffled off at the General Council meeting for 50 cents per chance with proceeds going toward the powwow celebration. The lucky winner was Wilma Lacey of Salem.

Yesteryears is a look back at Tribal history in five-year increments through the pages of Smoke Signals.



File photo



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Spirit Mountain Casino’s, front row from left, Janet Shultz, director of Guest Services; Joann Mercier, director of Security; Jannie Tharp, director of Finance; Shawna Ridgebear, director of Marketing, and Mike Colton, Gaming director and second row, from left, Ron Reibach, director of Facilities; Stan Dillon, general manager; and Patrick Dempsey, director of Human Resources, show off the gold medal award the casino received for best casino in the Salem Statesman Journal’s 2015 Best of the Mid-Valley Reader’s Choice Awards on May 1. The casino received six awards total.

Casino wins six Best of Mid-Valley Awards

Spirit Mountain Casino received a gold medal for best casino in the 2015 Best of the Mid-Valley Reader’s Choice Awards handed out Friday, May 1, by the *Salem Statesman Journal*.

In addition, Spirit Mountain Casino won silver medals in the Place to Take Out-of-Town Guests, Casual Dining, Breakfast and Brunch categories, the latter two received for the Cedar Plank Buffet, and a bronze medal in the Day Trip Attraction category.

“We are proud that our guests voted Spirit Mountain best casino,” said General Manager Stan Dillon. “Our goal is to take care of our guests better than anyone else. It’s all about the experience. We strive to provide excellent guest service and a warm, hospitable, fun environment.

“We feature headline entertainment and offer a wide variety of dining options for our guests. As the largest casino in Oregon, we pride ourselves on offering a broad and diverse gaming product featuring slots, bingo, keno, poker and a large variety of table games. With 2,000 slots, we’re able to offer the newest slot games and titles, as well as the latest themed slot progressives.”

Statesman Journal Director of Advertising Ryan Kedzierski said that 5,110 nominations were received and 334,506 votes were cast. This year, the Best of the Mid-Valley awards honored 501 winners from 331 companies.

The awards were handed out at Chemeketa Community College’s Northwest Wine Studies Center in West Salem. ■

Facilities seeks help identifying veterans’ plots

The Facilities Department is asking for help in identifying the plots of veterans buried in the Tribal Cemetery. If your family member or friend is a veteran and there is not a U.S. flag present on their plot on holidays, such as Memorial Day, please contact the department, which will do its best to mark all gravesites of veterans. For more information, contact Facilities at 503-879-2195. ■



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