

'Powwow is family'

2015 Contest Powwow attracts largest crowd ever



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

The newly crowned 2015-16 Grand Ronde Royalty Queens, from left, Little Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi, Junior Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout and Senior Miss Grand Ronde Promise Rimer take their first dance after being crowned before the start of the 2015 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Friday, Aug. 14.

By Brent Merrill
Smoke Signals staff writer

This year's Grand Ronde Contest Powwow at Uyxat Powwow Grounds drew visitors from near and far and may have attracted the largest crowd to gather for a powwow ever in Grand Ronde.

Honorary host drum Bad Soul (formerly The West Coast Boyz) started things off with Friday night's grand entry under the arbor as veterans led the way for dancers into the arena. Grand Ronde Tribal Elder Alton Butler, a Marine Corps veteran, carried the Grand Ronde eagle staff and Wayne Chulik (Tlingit/Haida) walked next to Butler with an eagle staff.

Tribal Elder Steve Bobb Sr. (Marine Corps) carried the American flag, Al Miller (Navy) carried the POW/MIA flag, Mike Lane (Army) the Oregon flag and Tribal Chairman Reyn Leno (Marine Corps) carried the Grand Ronde Tribal flag into the arena.

Tribal Council members Jon A. George, Cheryle A. Kennedy, Denise Harvey, Tonya Gleason-Shepek, Chris Mercier and Jack Giffen Jr. entered the arena to the sounds of Red Hoop followed by Tribal Royalty.

Tribal Royalty included newly crowned Senior Miss Grand Ronde Promise Rimer, Junior Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout and Little Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi.

Longtime Arena Director Freddie Ike Jr. (Yakama/Wasco) guided everyone into the arena while Red Bull drum brought in all the

dancers and the arena was three circles deep by the time everyone had entered.

Charlie Tailfeathers (Cree/Blackfeet) acted as head judge, Sidrick Baker Sr. (Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara) was the head judge for drum groups and Fred Hill (Umatilla) was the master of ceremonies.



Bobb gave the opening invocation and Leno started the event by addressing the crowd.

"I want to welcome you here to our reservation," said Leno. "I want to recognize all the Elders out there and I want to recognize all of our veterans. This is very sacred ground to us; it's not just the powwow grounds. This is actually where our people settled in the 1850s when they came here. We would ask you to recognize this ground.

"I also want to put our prayers and thoughts out to the Warm Springs people. Fire season is a horrible thing and people are losing a lot out there so we want to put them in our thoughts."

This year's dancing started with three straight drum songs by Bad Soul. First up were the kindergartners through fourth-graders,

SEE POWWOW
continued on page 3

Sophia Morningstar Stewart dances in Grand Entry of the 2015 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held on Friday, Aug. 14.