

Smoke Signals

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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Dry conditions kept Tribe's fire crews busy

By Brent Merrill
Smoke Signals staff writer

The Tribe's Fire Protection Program had a record-breaking year this fire season both in the amount of large fires it dispatched crews to fight and the amount of revenue the program earned for the Tribe.

And even this late into October the season isn't over yet.

Tribal firefighting crews were sent to 13 large fires in three states – Oregon, Washington and California. A large fire is considered to be 100 acres or larger.

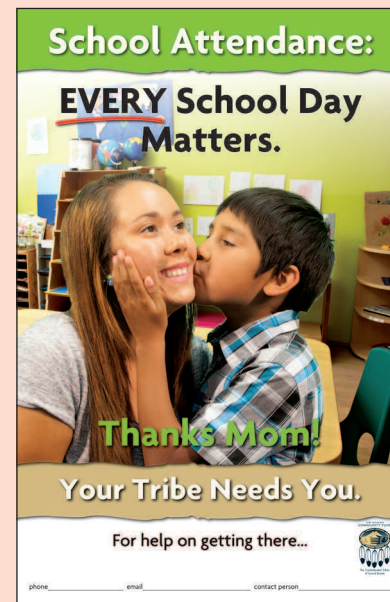
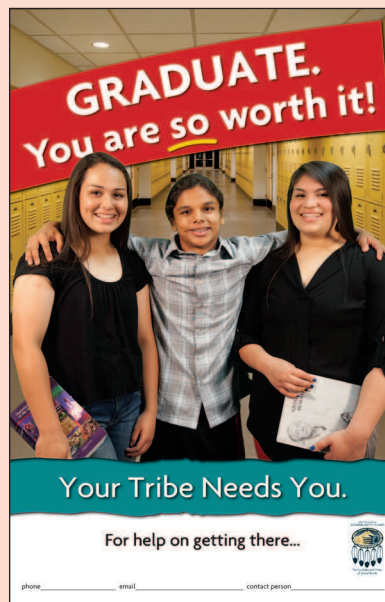
Tribal Silviculture and Fire Protection Program Manager Colby Drake said the revenue generated by the Fire Protection Program could be as much as \$250,000 and it will be the third year in a row that the program has generated at least \$200,000 for the Tribe.

"We definitely had a record-breaking year on the perspective of our engine revenue," said Drake. "That's with only sending three of our four engines out because we kept the fourth engine back all summer to help out with the Reservation patrol.

"Usually, if we can get over \$150,000 that's our main goal. Overall our total reimbursement for the year, which will include the engine crews, the hand crews, gas, lodging and food, will be right around \$1.2 million, which is on the high end. That is the money we put out to run our whole program through the three or four months of fire and then we get reimbursed through the BIA."

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Attacking absenteeism



Spirit Mountain Community Fund created a series of posters to help encourage Native American students to stay in school. Tribal members who were featured include, from left, Miguel Adams and Kaylene Barry; Kaelynn Simmons, Tynan George and Andrea Grijalva, middle; and Halona Butler and Hawk Squetimkin, right. The posters were distributed to the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.

Community Fund creates posters to encourage school attendance

By Brent Merrill
Smoke Signals staff writer

Spirit Mountain Community Fund's work with ECONorthwest to respond to results of a decade-long study into Oregon public schools now includes a series of posters encouraging Tribal students to stay in school.

The study was part of the Chalkboard Project that was established in 2004. According to Community Fund Director Kathleen George, seven of nine Oregon Tribes, including the Grand Ronde Tribe, participated in the Chalkboard Project.

The study's results, published in 2014, from the Tribal per-

spective are that Indian students are not doing as well as they could be, especially when it comes to attendance.

The fund helped pay for the study conducted by ECONorthwest, a consulting firm established in 1974.

"The results of the report were not a surprise to people who work in Indian Country in that it found that our Tribal students, generally speaking, are doing poorly in the Oregon education system," said George.

George said that the study found that only 55 percent of Native students are graduating from high school in the state and that one-third of Tribal students

were chronically absent – missing 10 percent or more of school days – with the highest rate at the high school level.

The results prompted Tribal leaders to start thinking and strategizing about the future of Tribal children.

"It is a tremendous concern," said George.

George said that although educators of Tribal children knew they had a problem, they did not have comprehensive data to support their concerns and often struggled to get the data they needed from the state.

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I'm a Pepper: Performance, workshop honor jazz musician



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

By Brent Merrill
Smoke Signals staff writer

The Jim Pepper Project tour made its way to Grand Ronde for a performance in the Tribal gym on Friday, Oct. 2, and an acting workshop the following morning.

The original play was presented by Don Horn's

triangle productions! to honor the legacy of Native American jazz musician Jim Pepper.

The original production is touring Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes throughout

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Tribal Elder Beverly Kingbird, middle, poses for a family portrait with Matteo Bucknell, left, Maury Evans, middle back, and Matt Bucknell as they act out being a family of monkeys during a workshop with "The Jim Pepper Project" actors in the Tribal gym on Saturday, Oct. 3. Evans plays Pepper's grandfather in the triangle productions! play and Matt Bucknell is the Elementary lead with the Tribe's Education Department and brought his children to the workshop.