

Four employees hit or exceed 25-year mark in Tribal service

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Timber and Roads Manager Jeff Kuust, Health Benefits Specialist Barbara Steere, Finance Department Accountant Melanie Hubbard and Procurement Assistant Kelly Herber were all honored for 25 or more years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe during an Employee Recognition luncheon held Friday, Oct. 23, in the Tribal gym.

In all, 61 employees who have worked a combined 763 years for the Tribe were honored at the event.

Kuust reached the 26-year mark in July and Steere, Hubbard and Herber all reached the quarter-century mark in July, August and September, respectively.

The event honored Tribal employees whose seniority date occurs in the third quarter of the year.

Nutrition Program Manager Kristy DeLoe and her staff prepared lasagna, breadsticks, salad and cupcakes for employees and Tribal Council members Denise Harvey, Chris Mercier and Brenda Tuomi attended.

"I truly appreciate everything that you all do," Harvey said. "We could not be where we are today without you, and I want you to know that I really do recognize that."

"I think our job (as Tribal Council members) would be basically impossible if we did not have a lot of good employees like you guys who work hard and basically do most of our work for us," Mercier said. "You guys provide invaluable support and you guys are like the engine of the Tribal organization."

"I'm probably the newest employee here," Tuomi said, referencing her September election to Tribal Council. "I know that these first two months for me have been amazingly easy and smooth because of our staff. I really, really appreciate that. I appreciate all that you do for our Tribal members."

Assistant General Manager Dawn Doar and Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Martin read



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Procurement Assistant Kelly Herber is congratulated for her 25 years of working for the Tribe by Tribal Council member Denise Harvey during the Employee Recognition luncheon held in the Tribal gym on Friday, Oct. 23. Tribal Council members Chris Mercier and Brenda Tuomi also congratulated employees who marked an anniversary in the third quarter.

the names of those receiving certificates for their years of service.

Other employees honored at the event were:

24 years: Higher Education Program Manager Bryan Langley;

23 years: Natural Resources Department Manager Michael Wilson and Finance Officer Chris Leno;

21 years: Tribal Attorney Rob Greene;

19 years: Assistant Tribal Attorney Kim D'Aquila, Data Entry Specialist Sharon Wattier and Employment Caseworker Pearl Rife;

18 years: Cultural Outreach Coordinator Bobby Mercier;

17 years: Head Start Teacher Toni Lockwood, Family Services Program Assistant Elaine Lane Raven and Senior Dental Hygienist Sheila Blacketer;

16 years: Senior Financial Analyst Jeff Valentine and Procurement Supervisor Kevin Mueller;

15 years: Youth Education Su-

pervisor Matt Bucknell, Senior Network Administrator Jack Dobiash, Optometric Technician Egypt Leno and Judicial Assistant Julie Boekhoff;

14 years: Education Department Senior Administrative Assistant Deborah Bachman;

13 years: Continuing Education Coordinator John Harp, Audit Director Trudi Yoshikawa, Equipment Operator Mark Mercier, Construction Supervisor Thomas Brown and Treasurer Rick Andersen;

12 years: Benefits Specialist Peggy Carpenter, Nutrition Program Manager Kristy DeLoe and Ceded Lands Project Coordinator Brandy Humphreys;

11 years: Enrollment/Member Services Specialist Jolanda Catabay, Health Information Techni-

cian Stephanie Simmons, Finance Department Executive Assistant Ken Trevino, Tribal Council Administrative Assistant Shannon Simi and Employment Specialist Brandy Hembree;

10 years: Rental Housing Coordinator Deborah Kroeker and Contract Health Specialist Erica Mercier;

9 years: Graphic Design Specialist George Valdez and Spirit Mountain Community Fund Program Coordinator Louis King;

8 years: Accounts Payable Supervisor Nicole Bishop, Central Phone Receptionist Scarlett Holtz, Senior Help Desk Technician Alec Palanuk-Mercier, GIS Coordinator Volker Mell, Cook Charles Neujahr, Publications Coordinator Dean Rhodes, Physician Hal Mitchell, Housekeeper Kelly Mercier and TERO Workforce Development Specialist Misty Carl;

7 years: Controller Linda Hanna, Middle School Lead Matt Zimbrick and Pharmacy Technician Kandee Little;

6 years: Groundskeeper/Maintenance Technician Kevin Ruggles and Patient Account Representative Kayla Leno;

5 years: Housekeeper Jason Bailey, Oral History Specialist Stacy Runningbird, Health Information Technician Amanda McMahon, TERO Compliance Officer Duke Kimsey, TERO Administrative Assistant Lori Sterling, Cultural Collection Supervisor Veronica Montano, Groundskeeper/Maintenance Technician Michael Leno and Cultural Protection Program Manager David Harrelson.

Employees received a bonus check and certificate, and those reaching the 10-year mark in service also received Pendleton blankets.

After the awards, prizes were raffled off, including a food saver, walkie-talkies, spice rack, coffee-maker and decorative Christmas wreath, among other items. ■

Thank You!

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