

36 employees honored for years of Tribal service

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Thirty-six Tribal employees were honored for their years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe during a First Quarter Service Awards ceremony held Wednesday, April 6, in the Tribal gym.

Between them, the 36 employees accounted for a combined 466 years of working for the Tribe.

Nutrition Program Manager Kristy DeLoe and Lead Cook Kevin Campbell prepared a breakfast of scrambled eggs, pancakes, bacon, sausage, bagels, yogurt and orange juice for employees. The breakfast was served by DeLoe, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Martin, Tribal Council Administrative Assistant Shannon Simi, Public Affairs Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark and Food Sustainability Administrative Assistant Patricia LeClaire.

After employees ate, Human Resource Department Manager Patrick Dempsey welcomed employees and Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno praised their work.

"I think we have a great staff here," Leno said. "It's been a long road for us. Our whole government used to sit out there, where you turn in from the road, in that little parking lot. That was our whole government. ... How far we've grown, but you only do that with good people and good staff. I learned that from being here 20 years on Tribal Council: You surround yourself with good people and you'll be successful in what you do. You, as employees, are the ones that make us successful."

Leno added that the Grand Ronde Tribe is "well-prepared" for the eventual opening in 2017 of a Cowlitz Tribal casino 15 miles north of Portland off Interstate 5.

"Unless they shut that highway off down there, we're still on the busiest highway to the coast in Oregon," Leno said.

Other Tribal Council members who attended included Jon A. George, who provided the meal



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Education Department Manager Leslie Riggs, right, shakes hands with Tribal Council member Chris Mercier as he is recognized for 10 years of service to the Tribe during a First Quarter Service Awards ceremony held in the Tribal gym on Wednesday, April 6. In the background is Tribal Council member Jon A. George.

blessing, Chris Mercier, Ed Pearsall and Denise Harvey.

Tribal General Manager David Fullerton and Martin read off the list of employees and handed out certificates to those hired in the first quarter of the year – January through March.

Member Services Manager Penny DeLoe was among five Tribal employees who have worked for the Tribe for more than two decades at 23 years. Others included Audio Visual Network Technician Wendell Olson and Records Administrator Kim Mueller, who reached 21 years of service, and Gaming Commission Licensing Program Coordinator Julia Papen and Elders Activities Assistant Dan Ham, who reached the 20-year mark in service.

Other employees honored included:

19 years: Assistant Controller

Jody Jerger and Lands Department Manager Jan Looking Wolf Reibach.

18 years: Health & Wellness Payment Processing Specialist Sunni Ulestad.

17 years: Social Services Administrative Assistant Tammy Garrison.

16 years: Tribal Career Development Program Manager David DeHart and Compensation/HRIS Specialist Becky Mode.

15 years: Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Tyson Mercier and High School Lead Christopher Bailey.

14 years: Tribal Artisan Travis Stewart and Legal Assistant Kerina Mishler.

13 years: Adult Vocational Training Coordinator Joshua Clift and Lead Cook Kevin Campbell.

12 years: Portland Area Office Tribal Services Representative Lisa Archuleta.

11 years: Staff Accountant Nancy Renfrow and Clinical Applications Coordinator Darin Riggs.

10 years: Optometry Receptionist Michelle Sweeney, Natural Resources Secretary Toni Mercier, K-5 Tutor/Adviser George Neujahr, Education Department Manager Leslie Riggs, Full Charge Bookkeeper Debra Nolen and Domestic Violence Relief Advocate Carmen Mercier.

9 years: Adult Foster Care Caregiver Eleanor Ashman.

8 years: Housekeeper Rosie Saldivas, Groundskeeper Tim George, Natural Resources Equipment Operator Bart Bryant, Natural Resources Senior Administrative Assistant Michele Volz,

Human Resources Senior Administrative Assistant Nick LaBonte, Photojournalist Michelle Alaimo and Gaming Inspector Tyrell Soderberg.

7 years: Adult Foster Care/Community Health Director Kari Culp and Hydrosystems Compliance Specialist Lawrence Schwabe.

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

After employees were honored, Tribal Council members drew names for raffle prizes that included a fire pit, gas grill, Fitbit, tablet, tent and sleeping bags, and smoker. ■

Farmers Market!

Dates May 16, June 13, July 11, August 8, and September 19

All Mondays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Location Upper Parking Lot of the Clinic

Cost \$20 per spot per date

Open to Tribal Members first, then community

10 spots available

Contact Kristy DeLoe 503-879-2018

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Hunting & Fishing

Lifeways of the Grand Ronde People

Who: All Grand Ronde Tribal members.

What: We would like to record your family's hunting and fishing stories for inclusion in the Tribe's cultural and historical collections.

Where: Chachalu: Tribal Museum and Cultural Center

When: Starting September 1st, 2015

How: Contact Stacey Runningbird @ 503-879-2381