

# Governor's Proclamation



## CTGR exploring creation of a Tribally owned telecommunications company

Telecommunications — radio, television, Internet, cell phones — is quickly becoming an everyday facet of American life, right alongside many basic utilities like water and electricity. Tribes in particular have a lot of catching up to do, but a handful have tried their hands at establishing telecommunications services in their respective communities, and those which have seen it through express few regrets.

Grand Ronde is currently exploring the development of a possible telecommunications company following last year's Telecommunications Assessment and Strategic Plan. Were it to proceed, this Tribally owned company would allow for the purchase of certain services at wholesale rates. What exactly does that mean? Well, utilizing the combined buying power from both the Tribal government and Spirit Mountain Casino, the Tribe could reduce current operational costs associated with services provided by CenturyLink, which is, to use a telecommunications term, the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier. The Tribally owned phone company could first supply phone and eventually Internet service to Tribal residents and the surrounding community.

Part of creating a Tribal phone company is obtaining Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (CLEC) status, a certification usually granted through either the Federal Communications Commission (more popularly known as the FCC) or the state Public Utilities Commission. The Tribe is presently in the process of developing a Tribal Telecom Full Business Plan for supplying both phone and Internet services to the Grand Ronde community. The initial step of this plan was the formation of a Telecommunications Planning Committee, which first met on April 28, 2016. The purpose of the TPC is to develop recommendations to Tribal Council for the direction of future Tribal telecommunications services. The committee is composed of representatives from nearly all departments of the Tribal government and the Spirit Mountain Information Technologies Department.

The TPC acknowledges the importance of Tribal and community resident involvement, one of the main reasons for this announcement. Such participation in the process, not to mention the future direction of Tribal communications services, is crucial for the development of the Full Business Plan that addresses the needs of the Grand Ronde community.

Grand Ronde businesses and residents interested in participating in this process can e-mail [TPC@GrandRonde.org](mailto:TPC@GrandRonde.org). For those businesses or residents who request it, we can supply monthly reports from the TPC. We would also like to get feedback from residents about their current phone and Internet service.

Follow future issues of *Smoke Signals* for updates on this project as it moves forward. ■