

Triple-digit dancing

Annual Contest Powwow a success despite hot days

By Brent Merrill

Smoke Signals staff writer

Two year-old Tribal member Ila Mercier stood in the center of the Canoe Family drum circle during the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's 2016 Contest Powwow welcoming song on Friday, Aug. 19, looking up at the faces of her family ... her Tribal family.

Ila, who stands about knee-high to most adults, studied the faces of her father, Jordan Mercier, and fellow Canoe Family members Nicholas and Santiago Atanacio, Nokoa and Kaikanim Mercier and Andrea Grijalva one by one. She took her time and examined each face before moving on to the next one.

"She has been coming to powwows since she was eight days old," said Jordan. "I think it's natural for her. It's her home. It's where she feels comfortable and that's kind of how I wanted it to be."

Canoe Family members gathered near the announcer's stand just before drum roll call kicked things off for the Tribe's annual contest powwow on Friday evening and sang three welcoming songs. Kyoni Mercier picked up young Ila and held her for the last of the three songs.

"That first song is called the Old Woman's Song," Bobby Mercier explained to the crowd. "The last song we did was a Warrior's Song and this next song that we are going to do is a Celebration Song as we are celebrating all of us coming here together. We're very happy that everybody is here."

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Above, Ila Mercier participates in an InterTribal dance during the 2016 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Friday, Aug. 19.

The newly named 2016-17 Grand



Ronde Royalty, from left, Little Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi, Honorary Tiny Tot Taylor Ruggles, Little Miss Grand Ronde Princess Sophia Grout, Junior Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout and Senior Miss Grand Ronde Iyana Holmes take their honor dance after coronation, which took place before the start of the 2016 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Friday, Aug. 19.