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# Smoke Signals

A Publication of the Grand Ronde Tribe

JANUARY 1, 2017

www.grandronde.org

UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

## Tribal Council OKs MOU with Portland

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

**T**ribal Council approved a memorandum of understanding with Oregon's largest city during its Wednesday, Dec. 14, meeting, which was held at 11 a.m. to allow Tribal employees to leave early to avoid a snowstorm that hit the Willamette Valley later in the day.

According to the executive summary, the city of Portland adopted

a resolution in 2012 to formalize coordination and consultation with the Grand Ronde Tribe. Portland lies within the ceded lands of the Tribe.

Since then, Tribal Council and staff have participated in numerous meetings and discussions with Portland representatives to formalize a memorandum of under-

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Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno signs a memorandum of understanding between the Tribe and the city of Portland in the Tribe's Governance Center Atrium on Wednesday, Dec. 21. Watching him are, from left, Tribal Council members Brenda Tuomi, Kathleen George and Chris Mercier, Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George, and Tribal Council members Jack Giffen Jr. and Denise Harvey.**

## To telecom or not to telecom?

### *Tribal Council examining business potential for Grand Ronde area*

By Brent Merrill

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

**T**he Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is thinking about getting into the business of providing Internet services to the Grand Ronde area by possibly starting its own telecommunications company.

Part of the process for considering the new venture is gauging community interest.

Tribal Council member Chris Mercier hosted a community meeting put on by the Tribe's Information Services Department at the Tribal gym on Wednesday, Dec. 21. The meeting was originally scheduled for Monday, Dec. 5, but postponed because of inclement weather.

About 20 community members attended, shared a meal and discussed their concerns about current Internet providers in the area



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Kim Contreras fills out a Grand Ronde telecommunications survey as Tribal Council member Chris Mercier gives a presentation during a meeting about the proposed Grand Ronde Tribal telecommunications company.**

and talked about what they would like to see if the Tribe did go into the telecommunications business.

"We're here to talk about whether Grand Ronde should establish their own telecommunications company," said Mercier. "There are only about 10 Tribes that have established their own telecommunications companies."

The Tribe would offer Internet and telephone service in an effort to provide faster broadband Internet and improved telephone service at better rates than those of outside providers.

People in attendance were asked to fill out a survey that asked questions like, "Do you have Internet service? If so, what speeds do you have and how would you rate the quality of your service?"

The survey also asked if people had landlines. People were asked to provide information about how they felt about the cost of their telephone service and rate the quality of the service.

The survey asked if people had satellite or

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## Community Fund grant to help Willamina students



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

**O**ne of the largest grants given out by Spirit Mountain Community Fund on Wednesday, Dec. 21, will potentially help local Tribal students attending Willamina School District by creating a room for special needs students.

The Willamina School District received a \$50,000 challenge grant, which means the district has to put up matching funds

to receive it.

During a recent Willamina School Board meeting, district officials reported that enrollment continues to increase and has reached 924 students with 492 in the elementary school, 150 in middle school and 282 in the high school. The student surge represents an increase of 18 students in the last month.

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**Tillamook County Women's Resource Center Executive Director Kathleen Marvin receives a check from Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees Chairman Sho Dozono during the fund's fourth-quarter check distribution held in the Governance Center on Wednesday, Dec. 21.**