

Grand Ronde Police Station blessed, opened on March 7

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Grand Ronde Police Department has a new home at 9655 Grand Ronde Road, just south of the Food Bank and across the street from the Housing Department's main offices.

Tribal police officers hosted an open house and blessing at 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 7, to introduce the new 4,400-square-foot facility to the community.

Grand Ronde Police Chief Jake McKnight thanked everyone who attended the open house as well as all those who worked to get the Police Department out of the cramped modular adjacent to Spirit Mountain Casino that has been its home since 2012.

During move-in, department personnel experimented to see if they could still communicate with each other by not moving from their desks, McKnight said, like they could at the modular. They couldn't.

The new facility is a major improvement for the Grand Ronde Police Department, featuring modern technology, offices for employees and safety features that will allow employees to perform their jobs in a secure environment. It also allows the Tribe's Emergency Management staff to move from the Housing Department building into the Police Station, providing for better and more effective public safety communication.

Cultural Resources employees David Harrelson, Bobby Mercier, Brian Krehbiel, Travis Stewart and Jordan Mercier and Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George performed the cultural drumming and singing to open the blessing and Tribal Council Vice Chair Cheryl A. Kennedy gave the invocation.

Bobby Mercier, Krehbiel, Stewart and Jordan Mercier then smudged the building before tours were offered to attendees.

Travis Mercier also created the artwork that decorates the station's front eave.

Other Tribal Council members



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Grand Ronde Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight talks about a lock box for weapons that is on the wall outside of the interview room of the new Grand Ronde Police Station as he gives a tour just after the blessing of the building on Tuesday, March 7.

who attended the blessing included Chairman Reyn Leno, Chris Mercier, Brenda Tuomi, Jack Giffen Jr. and Kathleen George.

"A long time ago, Cheryl and I were at a conference and we were told at that conference that if you ever really want to be a Tribe and have the sovereignty of other Tribes that you need to have a court system and you have to have a police department," Leno said.

"I just want to make sure that people understand that is not a police station, it is actually a sovereignty issue, just like we regained our ceremonial hunting and fishing rights. The police department, courts ... those are all sovereignty issues that a lot of Tribes don't get to have. When you recover them, that's a big thing. This is not a police station, it is a recovery of sovereignty."

Leno recalled that the Tribe used to have its own police force that included his great-grandfather, David Leno, as one of the deputies.

"It has gone full circle," Leno said.

McKnight said the new Police Station will save the department money and time in that Evidence

which the Tribe paid to store its evidence because there was no secure evidence room in the modular, or travel to Dallas to conduct interviews in other departments' facilities.

The new Police Station includes an interview room with one-way glass in case a witness needs to identify a suspect, secure evidence room, exercise room, locker facilities for male and female officers, and a Sallyport that allows patrol cars to be brought in out of inclement weather for maintenance.

McKnight, Lt. Tim Hernandez, Sgt. Rod McAllister and Officer James Wolfer gave tours of the facility.

The Police Station was funded by a \$500,000 Indian Community Development Block Grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development and matched by Tribal Housing with a \$167,000 Indian Housing Block Grant. In addition, the Tribe received \$237,594 from the U.S. Department of Justice to build the facility. The Tribe funded the balance on the \$1.185 million structure.

People needing Grand Ronde Police Department assistance should call 503-879-2123 for non-emergencies and 911 in case of emergencies. ■



Clerk Egypt Leno will no longer have to transport and retrieve evidence to and from Independence,

St. Michael's offers brunch

St. Michael's Catholic Church offers an open house brunch every Sunday following Mass. The brunch is free to the community. Brunch begins at about 11:30 a.m. following the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Mass attendance is not required for brunch attendance. For more information, contact Janelle Justen at 503-550-0923. ■

Fee assistance

Enrolled Tribal members can request assistance with test fees (i.e. GRE, SAT, LSAT, ACT) and admissions application fees. Contact Higher Education for more information at 1-800-422-0232, ext. 2275. ■

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde recently implemented a process that will allow all Tribal members who reside in the state of Oregon the option of requesting Oregon income tax withholdings from their Per Capita and Elders Benefit payments. Information regarding this option was mailed to all Oregon resident Tribal members the week of March 6.

While recognizing we have Tribal members who currently reside throughout the 50 states, we will not be offering the state income tax withholding option to Tribal members who reside outside of Oregon at this time. The administrative time, costs, and reporting requirements to implement the option in all states would be very expensive. This is the main contributing factor in our decision not to offer the option outside of Oregon.

There are a couple of options for Tribal members who wish to set aside money in order to cover any potential year-end state tax liability.

- Tribal Members aged 18 and over can defer a portion of their Per Capita payments to their adult savings plan. That money would be available to withdraw from your savings plan as needed. Please note – this option is not available for Elders' payments. Money cannot be deferred to the adult savings plan from Elder payments.

- Open a regular savings account at a bank or credit union and set aside money throughout the year for your use as needed.

- Check with your state's taxing authority to determine if you are able to pay "estimated" taxes throughout the year, which could reduce the amount you are required to pay at year-end.

We encourage you to seek advice from your tax accountant or CPA should you have any questions about your specific state tax liability. ■

TAX TIME 2016

Doris Rose CPA

Tribal Housing Grand Ronde
Feb. 7 thru April 6
Tuesdays & Thursdays
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
503-879-1477

Portland Office
4445 SW Barbur Blvd. #101
Feb. 15 & March 15
9 a.m. – noon

Tigard office
to schedule appointments
503-293-4128

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