

Native Youth
Wellness Day — pg. 11



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Smoke Signals

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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Native grads receive state support for cultural attire

By Brent Merrill
Smoke Signals staff writer

Oregon's Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Salam Noor recently sent a letter to Oregon school districts encouraging them to work with Tribes and Tribal students to allow Native students to wear cultural items at graduation.

"High school graduation is a time of great excitement for students, families and our communities as a whole," Noor wrote in his letter dated March 31. "As we celebrate with our communities and pay tribute to the hard work and achievements of our students, I encourage you to put policies in place that facilitate ceremonies that are culturally inclusive and reflect and honor the diversity of our students and families."

Noor said in the letter, which was the second letter he has sent this year to Oregon schools on the subject, that the state Department of Education values the government-to-government process between state and local governments and Tribes.

"We encourage you to examine your local policies and explore ways for students to honor their heritage, this includes allowing for non-disruptive expressions of Native American culture at commencement ceremonies," Noor

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Gathering season



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Nicolas Atanacio, a senior office assistant with the Tribe's Cultural Resources Department, peels willow at the Cultural Resources Department on Wednesday, April 5.

Cultural Resources collecting traditional materials

By Brent Merrill
Smoke Signals staff writer

The Tribe's Cultural Resources Department has started its annual spring gathering activities in and around the Reservation.

Staff members have been gathering willows and preparing for berry season, said Cultural

Education Coordinator Jordan Mercier and there will be many opportunities for Tribal members to participate in the annual traditional materials gathering rituals.

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Grand Ronde students prepare for solar event

Conrad Farmer raises his hand to cast his vote on what artifact to launch into the stratosphere by balloon during the total solar eclipse that's taking place on Monday, Aug. 21. Farmer was joined by other Native students, including Nikeia Barton, left, and Kailiyah Krehbiel, right, for a lunch meeting at Willamina High School on Thursday, April 6, that decided a small carved wooden paddle would be launched. The students are participating in the NASA-funded project "Our Reservation, Our Eclipse, Our Launch."



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

By Bethany Bea
Smoke Signals Intern

As the nation awaits this summer's total solar eclipse, a group of Grand Ronde students is preparing for it.

The students, along with student groups from nine other Tribes, are participating in a project that combines culture and science against the backdrop of the astronomical alignment.

"Our Reservation, Our Eclipse, Our

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