

Easter egg  
hunt photos — pg. 11



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# Smoke Signals

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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

## Riverbank erosion at Tribal Cemetery a grave concern

*Drone being used to  
survey conditions*

By Brent Merrill

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

**T**ribal Council unanimously signed an authorization to proceed on March 23 allowing Engineering and Public Works Manager Jesse White to seek a geotechnical engineer to help him assess the Yamhill River bank along the west side of the Tribal Cemetery in Grand Ronde.

White is working with River Design Group of Whitefish, Mont., to perform the work and an on-site inspection with the engineer occurred on Wednesday, April 26. River Design Group has a second office in Corvallis.

River Design Group is a private consulting firm specializing in river, stream and wetland restoration projects in the Pacific Northwest and other western states. It will provide White and Tribal Council with a report on the current status of the riverbank where it meets the back side of the cemetery for approximately 850 feet.

White said the report should identify any risks of further erosion in that area and if there are problems identified in the assessment the report also would include recommendations on how to correct or mitigate those issues.

“We’re just being proactive at the cemetery,” White said. “There are graves right on top of that bank and so we’re concerned if the river were

See **CEMETERY**  
continued on page 16



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal GIS Analyst Alex Drake is the Tribe’s first Unmanned Aircraft Systems pilot. Drake obtained license through the Federal Aviation Administration to pilot the drone that the Tribe’s Cultural Resources Department purchased.**

## Fly like an eagle?

*Drake appointed to be Tribe’s first drone pilot*

By Brent Merrill

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

**B**lending ancient values with new technology continues to permeate throughout every program the Grand Ronde Tribe has created for the benefit of the membership.

The latest blend of old and new to benefit the Tribe is the purchase of a drone by the Cultural

Resources Department.

On Tuesday, April 11, Tribal GIS Coordinator Volker Mell and GIS Analyst Alex Drake presented information to Tribal Council at its regular Legislative Action Committee meeting about Drake becoming licensed through the Federal Aviation Administration to become a remote drone pilot.

Mell and Drake work for the

Tribe’s Geographic Information Systems program, which provides a critical tool for Tribal planning and strategic missions.

Tribal Council gave final approval for Drake to become the Tribe’s first Unmanned Aircraft Systems pilot at its Wednesday,

See **DRONE**  
continued on page 15

## Gaming differs in Oregon, Washington casinos

*Spirit Mountain accentuating its Vegas-style machines*

By Brent Merrill

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

**W**ith the opening of the new Cowlitz Tribal casino 15 miles north of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area on Monday, April 24, the differences between gaming in Oregon and Washington are receiving renewed attention.

And, not surprisingly, Spirit Mountain Casino, which has relinquished its 21-year run as the closest casino to the Portland gaming market, is pointing out those significant differences.

Spirit Mountain Casino General Manager Stan Dillon wants guests to know about the differences and has placed large signs throughout the casino and sent out mailers explaining that all slot machines “are not created equal.”

“The truth is we actually do have one thing that they (Washington casinos) don’t have. We actually truly do have traditional Nevada-style slots and they have a version of a video lottery terminal that is being distributed among guests,” Dillon says. “We want to make sure the guests know the difference.”



Stan Dillon

machines and instead offer players scratch ticket

Signs placed around Spirit Mountain Casino point out that Oregon Tribes are allowed Las Vegas-style slot machines in their casinos because of the compacts negotiated with the state.

Tribal casinos in Washington are not allowed by compact to operate Las Vegas-style slot machines and instead offer players scratch ticket

See **CASINOS**  
continued on page 14