

# Board of Education OKs new mascot agreement

By Dean Rhodes  
Smoke Signals editor

SALEM — The Oregon Board of Education approved the second Native American mascot agreement between the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and a school district during its Thursday, April 27, meeting.

The board signed off on the Tribe's agreement with the Scappoose School District, which is seeking to retain its Indians mascot and a logo that uses an obsidian arrowhead-tipped spear and feather as its logo.

The Education Board approved the Tribe's agreement with the Banks School District on March 23 and also held a first reading for the agreement with Scappoose at the same meeting.

The approved eight-year agreement will be reviewed after the first and fourth year by the two parties. It requires the Scappoose School District to begin using the Grand Ronde Tribe's fourth- and eighth-grade history curriculums by the fall of this year and to create a Native Club for all students

in sixth through 12th grades who want to participate.

In 2012, the Oregon Board of Education adopted a rule that prohibited public schools from using Native American mascots on or after July 1, 2017. However, the Oregon Legislature became involved in 2014 and created exceptions to that outright ban that allow school districts to enter into agreements with one of the nine federally recognized Native American Tribes in Oregon to use a more culturally appropriate Native mascot that is associated with or is significant to the Tribe.

School districts that do not enter into approved agreements by July 1 will have to cease using their Native mascots per the original intent of the Education Board's ban.

Cindy Hunt, Department of Education Government and Legal Affairs manager, said that the department was aware of 16 school districts in Oregon using Native American mascots. So far, she said, eight have entered into or are negotiating agreements with an Oregon Tribe, five have changed their

mascots to something not related to Native Americans, and three are unknown as to their plans.

For instance, the Marcola School District northeast of Eugene voted to change its Native American mascot to the Mustangs to comply with the board rule.

Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno and Tribal Council member Tonya Gleason-Shepek attended the meeting, as did Scappoose School District Superintendent Stephen Jupe, and testified before the board. Tribal Attorney Rob Greene also attended, but did not testify.

"This has really been a great opportunity for not only the Tribes to work with the board on something that potentially was not going to happen," Leno said. "I think the opportunity of seeing the state department work with the Tribes and with our local school districts and have the success we are having with this to be able to have everybody reach the ultimate goal of taking away the bad pictures and having something that everybody could agree on ... this is the outcome we were all looking for. I would just like to acknowledge the board for giving us this opportunity to work with you and the school districts."

Jupe said negotiating the agreement with the Grand Ronde Tribe was a "journey of discovery" for himself and district representatives.

"The Native people living in the Scappoose area have a very rich history," Jupe said. "It was an interesting delve and I ended up

walking in the rain, in mud, and finding sites that obviously are still there, still honored by the local community. Some very well-known archaeological sites on Sauvie Island. They were very much a river culture."

Jupe said Scappoose plans on sending its teachers to Grand Ronde to work with the Tribal Education Department on training, as well as instituting the Tribe's curricula.

During the hearing, Board Chairman Dr. Charles Martinez Jr. said he was still concerned that Native mascot agreements allow school districts to continue using inappropriate images for a period of time beyond the July 1 deadline as the district transitions to new, more culturally appropriate images.

He also questioned why the Grand Ronde Tribe was OK with Indians as an acceptable mascot name. Leno said a majority of Tribal Council thought it was appropriate.

During the same meeting, the Board of Education held first readings on the Grand Ronde Tribe's proposed agreement with the Molalla School District, as well as three proposed Siletz Tribal agreements with the Siletz Valley Schools, Amity School District and Philomath School District, and one proposed agreement between the Douglas County School District in Roseburg with the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians. Those agreements will be before the Education Board for final approval during its May meeting. ■

## Spirit Mountain honored by Statesman Journal

Spirit Mountain Casino received the Gold Award in the 2017 Best of the Mid-Valley competition conducted by the *Salem Statesman Journal*, besting Silver Award recipient Chinook Winds Casino.

"Spirit Mountain Casino has a totally new look that rivals any Las Vegas casino," noted the special section that appeared in the Sunday, April 30, edition of the newspaper. "The eight-month renovation transformed 82,000 square feet of gaming space from top to bottom, adding a bright and exuberant color plate, gorgeous lighting fixtures and chandeliers, and a custom color-changing LED lighting system that brightens the room and brings a new level of energy and excitement to the gaming floor."

Award winners are determined by a tally of *Salem Statesman Journal* readers' votes. ■

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## Family Movie Night



When: May 19, 2017

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Where: CTGR Portland Office

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