

Grand Floral Parade float honors Community Fund

Brent Merrill

Smoke Signals staff writer

Members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde are a proud people who have overcome much to achieve Tribal Restoration and carve out a place of respect in Oregon.

This year's annual Portland Rose Festival will culminate three weeks of events on the riverfront in downtown Portland with the Spirit Mountain Casino Grand Floral Parade and the Tribe's pride in telling its story of achievement will be on full display during the parade on Saturday, June 10.

"We are the title sponsor of the Grand Floral Parade," Tribal member and Spirit Mountain Casino Sponsorship Administrator Jocelyn Huffman said. "We prepare for this event all year."

Huffman said that the Tribe's float entry is being designed by a design company instead of having it created by Tribal members, such as Tribal Elder Steve Bobb Sr., as has been done in previous years.

The float company Huffman and the Tribe work with each year is SCI 3.2 of Portland, which is owned and operated by Gene Dent and his staff of designers, builders and artists.

SCI 3.2 is the official float builder for the Portland Rose Festival's Grand Floral Parade and the company creates as many as 60 floats annually for the 4.2-mile parade.

"For the float itself we have gone through a little different design process this year," Huffman said.

If you go

**Spirit Mountain Casino
Grand Floral Parade**

When: 10 a.m. Saturday, June 10

Where: Memorial Coliseum down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to downtown Portland ending at Lincoln High School

Grand marshal: 1977 Portland Trail Blazers

Admission: Indoor: \$30 reserved and \$15 supersaver;

Outdoor: \$30 reserved chairs, \$25 reserved bleachers

More info: www.rosefestival.org

"We went in and spoke with the company about things that were going on in the Tribe. We are focusing a lot on the 20-year anniversary of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund. You'll see that pop up a lot in the Grand Floral Parade."

Huffman said the float is named "Persistence of Culture" and she said the story portrayed in the float concept showcases the Tribe's determination to remain true to who Tribal members are.

"This story shows the continuous struggle to retain culture and traditional knowledge, and for us as people to stay afloat during trying times," Huffman said. "The characters in this story are persistent, as

are their descendants. The knowledge resides inside of us and in the landscape that surrounds us, it is as old as time itself, and our canoes with their strength and beauty were made for these waters."

Huffman said the theme for this year is about people joining together.

"It was kind of an idea of different walks of life coming together and being persistent and determined to work together to get through things," Huffman said. "We've involved the canoe in the float this year."

Dent, whose company has built every float the Tribe has entered in the Grand Floral Parade during the last 21 years, said the Tribe's float entry was not an easy design, but that he and his staff are happy with the outcome.

"This one is one of the really charming ones with the relationship of the animals and the presence of the canoe and the dynamic energy of the water composition," Dent said. "It's got some challenges for us in terms of floral content. It's a really interesting story – the images of the characters in the canoe is really compelling."

Tribal member and Spirit Mountain Community Fund Director Mychal Cherry said she and her staff were honored that the fund is being highlighted on this year's Grand Floral Parade float entry.

"I am thrilled that the Spirit Mountain Community Fund will be highlighted at the Rose Festival this year," Cherry said. "As we embark on our 20-year anniversary with \$74 million in giving, the timing is perfect. We appreciate how the Rose Festival values the diverse culture of the community and the positive impact they have on so many lives. Attending the Grand Floral Parade is an annual traditional favorite and with hundreds of thousands of spectators, we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to show community members how much our Tribe and its members care about Oregon."

Huffman said the opportunities presented by sponsoring the annual event in Portland represent one of the most important, if not most visible, marketing opportunities the Tribe and its main business – Spirit Mountain Casino – have each year.

"For us at the casino it's a great branding tool," Huffman said. "The advertisement and marketing that comes along with the Grand Floral Parade is phenomenal. There really is no way we could go in and do a media buy to get the kind of coverage we get throughout this event."

Huffman said Tribal member and Tribal staff volunteers will be in Portland on June 7-9 to work on the float entry's final touches. There is room for 30 volunteers and a bus departs from the main entrance of Spirit Mountain Casino by the Mountain View Sports Bar at 8:15 a.m. Wednesday and Thursday, June 7-8, and Tribal members are welcome to also help out on Friday, June 9, but they will have to provide their own transportation, Huffman said.

Volunteers will be entered into a raffle to win City Fair passes and unlimited carnival rides or Rose

Cup Race tickets. A continental breakfast and box lunch will be provided for volunteers making the trip. Interested volunteers can register for the trip by contacting Huffman at 503-879-3054 by Monday, June 5.

Before Tribal volunteers can get their hands on the float to decorate, Dent and his team invest massive amounts of time to prepare the float entry for the membership's final decorations.

"We just got the hawk character up and installed on the canoe shape and it's really powerful," Dent said in a telephone interview from his office in Portland. "Animals are my favorite. Animals definitely bring a lot of interest and charm and presence to the floats."

Dent said it takes about 2,000 hours of work to get a float as complex as the Tribe's entry ready to decorate. He said it takes another 2,000 hours of work to decorate it.

"It all comes from the original composition of the image," Dent said of the float-building process from concept through to the day of the parade. "Jocelyn sent us a fairly detailed image of the characters and the canoe and the idea of the water. Then we prepared a blackline and she responded to that with suggestions."

A blackline is a drawing of what the float could look like.

"Once that is approved we develop a color and once that's approved we have a mechanical meeting in-house where we determine how we are going to build the float," Dent said. "It's at that time we select a chassis that is going to propel it and we talk about construction techniques and covering techniques and flowering techniques because what the ultimate surface is determines how something is going to be created."

Dent said float construction is different if they are using fresh flowers versus plant materials. Once the direction of the build is determined, Dent's team has a more detailed meeting to create the different parts of the float and how each will be built.

"Once that's done it gets turned over to the fabricators and away we go," Dent said. "Everything is broken down into really detailed mechanical drawings. That typically takes 30 to 40 hours of drafting to create the float."

Dent said after the prop welders finish their work, the float then goes to the assembly department. After the structural pieces are added, it goes to the art department where three to four people spend two weeks putting it all together for Tribal member and Tribal staff decorators.

Last year, the Tribe's float received the Queen's Award for most outstanding non-animated float during the Grand Floral Parade judging.

This year's parade will feature 16 full-size all-floral floats, 13 all-floral mini-floats, 13 marching bands and 22 equestrian units among the many other entries.

"The Grand Floral Parade is a special partnership because it allows us to tell the Tribe's story," Huffman said. ■



HELP BUILD OUR FLOAT

2017 Spirit Mountain Grand Floral Parade
June 7 – 8, 2017

VOLUNTEERS

Room for 30 Employees (*First Come First Served*). All volunteers will be entered in a raffle for City Fair passes with unlimited carnival rides or Rose Cup Race tickets. Folding chairs will be available for those who can not stand for any length of time.

WHERE

Meet at the Main Entrance (*by Mountain View Sports Bar*) at 7:45am.

The bus departs at 8:15am and returns to the casino at 4:30pm.

A continental breakfast and box lunch will be provided. When calling to reserve your space, please specify what kind of sandwich you prefer (*Ham, Turkey, Roast Beef or Tuna*).

PTO

If this is your regularly scheduled day to work, you must request PTO from your department.

CONTACT

Please call Sponsorship Administrator Jocelyn Huffman at 503-879-3054 by June 5, 2017 to register.

Don't forget to place your lunch order, and get any necessary PTO approved.