

# Employees honored for 959 years of service

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Seventy-five employees were honored on Thursday, July 13, for a combined 959 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe during a lunchtime barbecue picnic held in the Tribal gym.

A record 14 employees were honored for serving 20 or more years, led by Lead Groundskeeper Gregg Leno, who hit the 29-year mark.

Other employees who have reached or surpassed two decades of Tribal service included Housing Department Maintenance Coordinator Lonnie Leno, 27 years; Adult Education Coordinator Tracy Biery and General Manager's Office Administrative Assistant Barbara Branson, 26 years; Member Services Benefits Administrator Liz Leno, 25 years; Dental Director Eric Webster, 22 years; Human Resources Specialist Cindy Mitchell, Vocational Rehabilitation Caseworker Dodie McKenzie, Youth Prevention Supervisor Lisa Leno and Fish and Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen, 21 years; and Tribal Court Administrator Angela Fasana, Tribal Council Senior Administrative Assistant Lauri Smith, Information Systems Operations Manager William Kephart and Health Promotion Specialist Darlene Aaron, 20 years.

The ceremony honored employees hired in the second quarter of the year between April and June.

Tribal Lands Manager Jan Rei-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Lead Groundskeeper Gregg Leno shakes hands with Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George as he is recognized for his 29 years of service to the Tribe during the second quarter service awards held in the Tribal gym on Thursday, July 13. Other Tribal Council members present were Denis Harvey, left, Chris Mercier, third from left, Tonya Gleason-Shepek, second from right, and Chairman Reyn Leno.**

bach gave the invocation before employees were served hot dogs, hamburgers, potato and pasta salad, watermelon, and cookies and brownies for lunch.

Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno said that he appreciates the Tribe's staff, especially when he is in Washington, D.C., testifying before Congress and needs information quickly.

"We've come a long way, but we've come a long way because we have a great staff," Leno said. "We hear that a lot. You guys probably don't get to hear it a lot, but definitely your council and your leadership and your directors do."

Leno added that he thinks the

Tribe as "weathered the storm" regarding the April opening of the Cowlitz casino in southwestern Washington.

"On behalf of the council and on behalf of myself and my 21 years here, you guys have done a great job for me," Leno said.

Other Tribal Council members who attended were Secretary Jon A. George and Tribal Council members Tonya Gleason-Shepek, Chris Mercier and Denise Harvey.

Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson gave a brief cultural sharing presentation, explaining that "ch" means "place of something" in Kalapuyan, so that when employees see a name like Chemeketa (the original name for Salem), it has a meaning.

Employees honored were:

**19 years:** Human Resources Training Specialist Vickie Hernandez, Housing Department Manager Shonn Leno, Senior Staff Attorney Deneen Aubertin Keller, Gaming Commission Executive Assistant Kathy Doane and Children & Family Services Supervisor Kristi Petite.

**18 years:** Publications Production Specialist Justin Phillips and Purchased/Referred Care Supervisor Melody Baker.

**17 years:** Swing Shift Housekeeping Supervisor Ben Bishop.

**16 years:** General Manager David Fullerton, Natural Resources Department Secretary Mary Leith and Staff Accountant Amy Gallant.

**15 years:** Procurement Manager Larry Leith, Vocational Rehabilitation/477 Trainee Chris Martin and Early Childhood Instructional Assistant Roxanne Moniz.

**14 years:** Applications Administrator Candice Olsen, Silviculture and Fire Protection Manager Colby Drake and Gaming Inspector Kary Turner.

**13 years:** Senior Human Resources Generalist Steve O'Harra, Staff Accountant Laura Mercier, Children and Family Services

Intake Specialist Donna Johnson and Family Services Coordinator Audra Sherwood.

**11 years:** Housing Maintenance Technician Randy Bean, Gaming Commission IT Network Analyst Tanner Fish, Health Information Technician Leanna Norwood, Silviculture/Fire Protection Technician Jeremy Ojua, Post Treatment Counselor Chris Holliday, Adult Foster Care Caregiver Anna Huston and Early Head Start Home-Based Visitor Shelley Clift.

**10 years:** Adult Foster Care Caregiver Carmen Parren and Gaming Commission Licensing Manager Tisha Gleason.

**9 years:** Gaming Commission Executive Director Michael Boyce, Chinuk Language Program Manager Ali Holsclaw, Home

Ownership Coordinator Victoria Jones, Senior Records Clerk Dalette Remington-Nash, Spirit Mountain Community Fund Director Mychal Cherry and Gaming Commission Background Investigator Nicholas Bailey.

**8 years:** Adult Foster Care Caregiver Ardyth Hoffer-Hallicola, Certified Medical Assistant Dana Seagrove and Head Start Teacher/Education Coordinator Kristina Jaquith.

**7 years:** Wildlife Biologist Lindsay Belonga, Senior Forester Zach Haas, Realty Specialist Teresa Brocksen, Dentist Erin Lange, Lead Maintenance Technician Andrew Freeman, Health Promotion Specialist Tammy Leno and Adult Foster Care Caregiver Ginger Whitman.

**6 years:** Swing Shift Housekeeper Nathan Mueller, Rental Housing Assistant Michele Plummer, Behavioral Health Director Jan Kaschmitter, Silviculture/Fire Supervisor Jim Pinder, Youth Programs Assistant Shannon Stanton and K5 Tutor Adviser Tiffany Mercier.

**5 years:** Vocational Rehabilitation Administrative Assistant Rhonda Leno, Youth Education Program Manager Tim Barry, Dental Secretary Carrie Brooks, Public Affairs Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark, Chinuk Immersion Teacher Justine Colton, Gaming Commission Receptionist Kristina Summers, Early Childhood Education Program Assistant Denae Towner, K-5 Tutor/Adviser Kyla McCallister and Budget Manager DeAnne Norton.

Employees received bonus checks and those reaching the 10-year mark in service had the option of receiving a Tribal Pendleton blanket or an extra \$100 in their bonus check.

The service awards included a caricaturist and balloon artist and ended with the raffling off of prizes that included a drone, robot vacuum cleaner, HP notebook computer and additional administrative time. ■

## 2017 CLOTHING & SCHOOL SUPPLY DISTRIBUTION

"It's Back to School Time!"

**Social Services 2017 School Clothing Program**  
Program opens July 3, 2017.

This is a first-come, first-served program.  
Child must be an enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member.  
Child must be of school age and enrolled in school (Preschool, Elementary, Middle or High School.)  
Income criteria applies.  
Please contact Social Services at 800-242-8196 or 503-879-2034 for application.  
Deadline for all applications is Sept. 15, 2017.

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**Youth Education 2017 School Supply Distribution Program**  
Program opens July 3, 2017.

Child must be an enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member.  
Child must be enrolled in grades kindergarten-12th grade.  
School Supply Distribution Form and Cover Letter will be mailed on July 3, 2017, to all eligible Tribal member households.

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**Back to School BBQ**  
at Grand Ronde Tribal Gymnasium  
Date: Aug. 15  
Time: 4 - 7 p.m.

Details: Important upcoming information on School, YED and other departments. YED program sign ups.  
Raffle prizes and Checks distributed  
For who: K-12 CTGR Tribal member [2017-18 school year]  
School supply amount: \$100 per student

For General Questions:  
Contact: Amber Yates 503-879-2101

Please contact Tammy Garrison at 503-879-2077 for information regarding forms & check distribution.  
Deadline to apply for the School Supply Distribution program is Sept. 15, 2017.

Ad created by George Valdez