

Previous Tribal Council service an advantage in recent elections

'Experienced' candidates have won almost 70 percent of seats

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Being a Tribal Council incumbent or having previous Tribal Council service on your candidate resume is an advantage in running for a Grand Ronde Tribal Council seat, a *Smoke Signals* analysis of the last 13 Tribal Council elections reveals.

Thirty-nine Tribal Council seats have been contested since September 2004 and 27 have been won by incumbents or Tribal members who had previously served on Tribal Council.

Of that 69.2 percent success rate, 22 incumbents were re-elected and five previous Tribal Council members were put back in leadership positions after breaks in service – Ed Pearsall in 2013, June Sherer in 2011 and 2007, Jack Giffen Jr. in 2010 and Val Sheker in 2006.

Smoke Signals examined the last 13 elections, dating back to 2004 when a slate of three Tribal mem-

bers without previous council experience succeeded in winning Tribal Council seats – Angie Blackwell, Chris Mercier and Buddy West.

In addition to those three Tribal Council newcomers, the nine other successful Tribal Council candidates who did not have previous council experience since Restoration were Kathleen Tom and Wink Soderberg in 2005, Steve Bobb Sr. in 2007, Toby McClary in 2009, Jon A. George in 2012, Denise Harvey in 2013, Tonya Gleason-Shepek in 2014, Brenda Tuomi in 2015 and Kathleen George in 2016.

George, Harvey, McClary and Blackwell were the top vote-getters in the years they were elected.

Being just an incumbent, however, was not as large of an advantage. Over the 13-year period, incumbents won 22 Tribal Council seats while challengers – with previous council experience or not

– won 17 seats for a 56-44 split.

In a much smaller sampling, Tribal Council chairpersons up for re-election retained their seats every time during the 13-year period. Cheryle A. Kennedy won re-election in 2012, 2009 and 2006, and Reyn Leno was re-elected in 2014 while serving as Tribal Council chair.

Leno is not seeking re-election in 2017, freeing approximately 500 Tribal votes to go to other candidates.

This year, three Tribal Council candidates are incumbents or have previous council experience – Tonya Gleason-Shepek, Chris Mercier and Mark Mercier – while three candidates are seeking their first term on Tribal Council – Michael Langley, Lisa Leno and David Lewis.

Tribal Election Day is Saturday, Sept. 9. Ballots were scheduled to be mailed to Tribal voters on Wednesday, July 26. Candidate statements appeared in the July *Tilixam Wawa*, which was mailed first class to Tribal members in mid-July.

Three advisory votes

In addition to voting for three Tribal Council candidates, Tribal voters are being asked to weigh in on three advisory votes with a com-

bined seven questions. A “yes” vote means the voter is recommending Tribal Council consider the specific topic or action.

The first advisory question, which is yes or no, asks if the Tribe should consider investing in Elder market-rate units in Tribal housing.

The second question asks if the Tribe should consider investing in the cannabis industry and gives voters three options: medical marijuana, recreational marijuana or hemp?

The final advisory vote asks if constitutional enrollment requirements should be amended to do a possible three things:

- Remove the requirement that the applicant be born to a parent who was a Tribal member at the time of the applicant’s birth?
- Remove the requirement that the applicant be born to a parent who was a Tribal member at the time the application is filed, if still living?
- Or replace the requirement that an applicant have 1/16th Grand Ronde blood as defined as all Indian blood derived from an ancestor on the Restoration Roll with the pre-1999 amendment requirement that an applicant have 1/16th Indian blood and descend from a member of the Tribe? ■

Elders schedule sewing classes

Tribal Elders will be holding their next sewing classes from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 29, in the Elders Activity Center, 48940 Blacktail Drive.

Lunch will be available and the class is open to everyone, not just Tribal members.

There will be a \$10 fee for each class. Instructor is Susan Clark. Participants are encouraged to bring their own sewing machine.

For more information and to sign up, contact Elders Activity Assistant Dan Ham at 503-879-2233. ■

Ad created by George Valdez

CTGR ANNUAL FISH DISTRIBUTION

NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
FISH LAB
 47010 S.W. HEBO ROAD
 GRAND RONDE, OREGON 97347
 503-879-2424



GRAND RONDE LIVING AND ENROLLED TRIBAL MEMBERS

MUST SHOW CURRENT PHOTO ID.

Thursday, Aug. 17, 2017 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 18, 2017 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 19, 2017 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Elders will have a special line established to expediently fill their requests. To ensure this, only Elder orders will be filled using this line. Thank you for understanding and consideration of others.

PORTLAND SATELLITE OFFICE DISTRIBUTION

Fish will not be available to those who do not preregister.

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017 at 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Preregistration is required BEFORE Wednesday, Aug. 16, 2017 at 4 p.m.

Please contact **Mary Leith** to preregister for pick up. **503-879-2424**

If picking up for others, a signed release AND copy of Tribal ID or CIB is required!

No early or late pickup

Fish will NOT be mailed

If you have any questions please call the Natural Resources Department 503-879-2424.

AUGUST 2017 SALMON DISTRIBUTION RELEASE

I _____, roll number _____,

give _____ permission to pick up my salmon.

Signature of Tribal member: _____ Date: _____

A copy of Tribal ID or CIB MUST accompany this Release. No Exceptions!