

'It's so important'

POWWOW continued
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Elder and World War II veteran Herman Hudson and Korean War veteran Dan Foster were the eldest veterans in attendance.

After Saturday's first grand entry, the Tribal Education Committee held its annual "School Is Cool" special for youth in kindergarten through 12th grade wearing regalia or not. Prizes included backpacks stuffed with gift cards and school supplies, books, lunch bags and pencil boxes. Tribal Librarian Marion Mercier donated the books.

Education Committee Chair Tammy Cook said the special is designed to encourage youth to stay in school. "It's so important," she said.

Saturday afternoon was the beginning of the "contest" in Contest Powwow as dancers started competing in the junior dance competitions and drums were judged on their second of two songs. Golden Age categories were decided Saturday evening and adult dance categories were judged during Sunday afternoon's session that started at noon to accommodate those wanting to get an early start on eclipse traffic.

Powwow attendees had a good choice of food vendors, including Grand Ronde Station and Dutch Bros., and everything to nosh on from curly fries to yakisoba noodles to smokehouse barbecue.

Other vendors sold fidget spinners, shirts, necklaces, Native pottery and jewelry, and Senior Human Resources Generalist Steve O'Harra sold custom-made buttons.

Several Tribal departments, including Children & Family Services and Housing, staffed informational tables during the three days.

Tribal Court Records Clerk Brittany Mock volunteered her hair services on Saturday, performing haircuts, thermal styling and braiding free of charge. "It was boom,

boom, boom," she said. "Five and a half hours of no food, no potty break ... always someone sitting in my chair."

Contest Powwow staff included master of ceremonies Casey Wallahee, Arena Director Fred Ike Jr., Head Dance Judge Charles Tailfeathers and Head Drum Judge Chase Sayer. Besides the regular prizes, specials with prize payoffs included a Round Bustle/Chicken Dance that paid \$800 for first, a Men's Fancy that paid \$1,000 for first and a Women's Basket Cap that paid \$800 for first.

A/V Network Technician Wendell Olson, Senior Help Desk Technician Alec Mercier and Telecommunications Technician Joe Loomis were on hand until 6 p.m. Sunday to ensure the sound system worked properly throughout the four grand entries.

Other Tribal Royalty in attendance included Miss Arrow Lakes Kesawin Washburn, Miss Spirit Omak Isbell Hunt, Portland State's Miss Naimuma Keeli Littleleaf and Grand Ronde Veterans Royalty Hailey Lewis-Little, Tasina Bluehorse and Camas Gibbons.

The only adverse effect of the busy eclipse weekend on this year's Contest Powwow was that no teams signed up for the Recreation Department's 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, which was canceled after a five-year run.

"We believe the eclipse event played a big role in the lack of participation this year," Recreation Specialist Harris Reibach said.

Reibach said the tournament will return in 2018.

Also on Monday morning, a smattering of powwow attendees remained at Uyxat Powwow Grounds to view the total solar eclipse that darkened the skies over Grand Ronde at 10:17 a.m. ■



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Jayden Johnson competes in the Teen Boys Grass dance category during the 2017 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, Aug. 19.



Above, Mabel Brisbois, front, and Makenzie Aaron compete in the Teen Girls Traditional dance category during the 2017 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, Aug. 19. At left, Nacoma Liebelt competes in the Boys Traditional dance category during the 2017 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, Aug. 19. Liebelt placed third in the category.