

Contest Powwow not eclipsed

Everything aligns to create 'tremendous' three-day event



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Halona Butler, left, and Washie Squetimkin (Colville) dance with their daughter Willow Squetimkin during Willow's coming out during the 2017 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Friday, Aug. 18.

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Maybe it was the total solar eclipse occurring on Monday, Aug. 21. Or perhaps it was the fact that there were no competing powwows in the Pacific Northwest.

Or it could have been the presence of renowned host drum Blackstone.

Or you could even chalk it up to the separation of the adult dance categories into junior and senior divisions that increased the total prize money available to \$49,400.

Or, possibly, the 80-degree weather that was much more amenable than last year's triple-digit temperatures.

Whatever the reason or reasons, the 2017 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow was one of the best attended in recent memory.

"This is our biggest Friday night ever," Powwow Special Event Board Chair Dana Ainam said during the 7 p.m. grand entry on Friday, Aug. 18.

There were so many dancers at Uyxat Powwow Grounds for the Friday evening grand entry that it took approximately 20 minutes for them all to enter the Arbor and form three concentric circles.

In all, 275 dancers registered to compete in the Contest Powwow's 26 dance categories. Less than 200 dancers registered in 2016.

Grand Ronde dancers won three prizes, led by Leah Villa taking first place in the Junior Adult Womens Traditional category.

"It was an amazing weekend," Ainam said. "We were prepared for the eclipse impact, but luckily didn't have to put plans into action. My gratitude goes to the hard work and support of the Powwow Com-

mittee, work crew and many of our Tribal staff and programs that made the weekend flow smoothly and a tremendous success."

Royalty Pageant

Contest Powwow weekend activities started at 2 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 17, with the Royalty Pageant held in the Atrium in the Governance Center.

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George was the master of ceremonies and Tribal Council Vice Chair

Cheryle A. Kennedy gave the opening prayer.

Royalty Pageant judges were Tribal Council member Brenda Tuomi, Spirit Mountain Casino Marketing Director Shawna Ridgebear and Tianna Clark.

The only contested position on Royalty was for Senior Miss Grand Ronde with Kailiyah Krehbiel and Isabelle Grout vying for the position. Junior Miss Grand Ronde Kaleigha Simi, Little Miss Grand Ronde Sophia Grout, honorary Tiny Tot Jameson Turner and Grand Ronde Warrior Nacoma Liebelt were unopposed.

On Friday, Aug. 18, Grout was crowned Senior Miss Grand Ronde at Uyxat Powwow Grounds' Arbor after

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Eva Rose Jurado jingle dress dances during the "School Is Cool" K-12 Dance Special during the 2017 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Contest Powwow held at Uyxat Powwow Grounds on Saturday, Aug. 19.

