



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Newly elected Tribal Council member Michael Langley is sworn in by Tribal Court Chief Judge David Shaw in Tribal Council Chambers in the Governance Center on Wednesday, Sept. 13.**



**Newly re-elected Tribal Council member Chris Mercier is sworn in by Tribal Court Chief Judge David Shaw in Tribal Council Chambers in the Governance Center on Wednesday, Sept. 13.**



**Newly elected Tribal Council member Lisa Leno is sworn in by Tribal Court Chief Judge David Shaw in Tribal Council Chambers in the Governance Center on Wednesday, Sept. 13.**

# Turnout in 2017 is 32.6 percent

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received 554 votes, losing by three votes to incumbent Denise Harvey.

Langley, Mercier and Leno were sworn into office on Wednesday, Sept. 13, by Tribal Court Chief Judge David Shaw after Cultural Resources Department drummers performed a warrior song called “The Challenge Song” meant to challenge the council members to “be the best, bring the best and get things done.”

“I was honored,” Langley said after the swearing-in ceremony about receiving more than 700 votes. “I felt pretty good about how things were going, but I wasn’t expecting that. I think I did bring some unique characteristics. I think that hopefully when people were looking at the three people (to vote for), I just appeared more on that.”

Langley said he thought that the experience he garnered from running in 2016 helped him run a better campaign this year, as well as delivering the same message to all Tribal members.

“I feel like I have been preparing for this my whole life, so I’m excited,” he said.

Leno said her campaign reflected who she has been in the community for more than two decades.

“I was very honored and humbled to be elected,” she said after the swearing-in ceremony. “I felt like all of the candidates ran a really positive campaign and I hope that that kind of shift continues for the future. I felt confident going in and I really made sure that I ran a campaign that was congruent with just who I am as an individual and who I have been in this community for 22 years.”

“I felt comfortable with knowing that I had done things the best way that I knew how to do them and whatever the membership decided that was their choice. They get to make the decision and I could live with whatever their decision is.”

Leno said she wants to concentrate on getting accustomed to being a Tribal Council member after spending more than two decades in youth prevention.

Langley and Leno become the 47th and 48th Tribal members elected to Tribal Council since 1983’s Restoration. Their election also reduces

*The only advisory vote question that received widespread support was creating market-rate housing for Elders, which was supported 792-408.*

the average age of Tribal Council members to 54.3 years old and maintains the female majority on council.

Incumbent Tonya Gleason-Shepek received 613 votes for fourth place, ending her first three-year term on Tribal Council. She became the first Tribal Council candidate to receive more than 600 votes and not win a seat.

Former Tribal Historian David Lewis received 533 votes in his first run for Tribal Council and former longtime Tribal Council Chairman Mark Mercier received 525 votes.

Spirit Mountain Casino IT Systems Administrative Supervisor Angela Schlappie, who withdrew from the Tribal Council race in late July but too belatedly to have her name removed from the ballot, received 62 votes.

Of the 4,135 Tribal members eligible to vote because they were 18 years of age or older on Election Day, 1,349 cast ballots for a turnout of 32.6 percent. Turnout in 2016 was 32.5 percent.

With Tribal voters able to vote for up to three candidates each, 4,047 votes were possible, but only 3,784 votes were counted for a 263 under vote.

Langley and Leno replace Gleason-Shepek and Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno, who did not

seek re-election after serving seven consecutive terms, on Tribal Council and Chris Mercier will serve his fifth term. Terms of office will run through September 2020.

The small number of candidates contributed to Langley reaching the 700-vote mark. Tribal voters had the smallest field of candidates since 1993 from which to choose.

“I think the people who won, especially Michael and I, when we campaigned we talked about specific things that we wanted to see done, policy goals” Chris Mercier said. “I think the one theme that I got during the election is ... just the questions directed toward me were about openness. People want to know more about what is going on in the Tribal government. I think they like some of the steps we are taking, but the sense I got is that the government is still not open enough for Tribal members who really want to know about it.”

Chris Mercier said he was not surprised to see a candidate finally shatter the 700-vote ceiling.

“I figured if it was ever going to happen, this would be the year,” he said. “With only six candidates, there was far less vote dilution than you’ve had in the past. I had a hunch one or two people might do it.”

Chris Mercier said this probably

be his last run for Tribal Council while he is young. “I could see coming back post-retirement and doing it,” he said, adding that he wants to obtain his law degree and work in Indian Country.

Gleason-Shepek said she will take some time off before considering another run for Tribal Council.

## Advisory votes

Tribal voters also were asked three advisory vote questions during the Tribal Council election and the results indicate that any changes in Tribal enrollment requirements are going to be difficult to pass considering the constitutionally required two-thirds majority to take effect.

Tribal voters voted “no” on all three parts of the enrollment requirements question. Removing the requirement that an applicant be born to a parent who was a Tribal member at the time of the applicant’s birth was opposed 683 to 541; removing the requirement that the applicant be born to a parent who was a Tribal member at the time the enrollment application is filed was opposed 705-493; and returning to the pre-1999 amendment blood quantum requirements was opposed 654-574.

The three-part question about the Tribe possibly entering the marijuana business received a “yes” vote twice. Tribal voters favored the Tribe getting involved in the medical marijuana business (818-445) and hemp production (761-467), but narrowly voted against becoming involved in the recreational marijuana business (632-601).

The only advisory vote question that received widespread support was creating market-rate housing for Elders, which was supported 792-408.

“I think the two biggest surprises were the enrollment ones. I guess I thought they would be closer to 50 percent on all of them. I didn’t know that any of them would reach the 66 percent that is required to pass a constitutional amendment. I was a little surprised that those all failed,” Chris Mercier said. “And the recreational marijuana surprised me. I didn’t think there would be a big difference between that and the medicinal one and hemp. I thought for sure the votes on all three of them would be about right.” ■

Official election results of the 2017 Grand Ronde Tribal Election are:	
*Michael Langley.....	708
*Christopher G. Mercier.....	695
*Lisa Marlene Leno.....	648
Tonya Gleason-Shepek.....	613
David Gene Lewis.....	533
Mark Mercier.....	525
Angela Schlappie (withdrew).....	62
*Top seat winners	

Graphic created by George Valdez