

# Employees honored for 852 years of service

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Sixty-eight employees were honored for a combined 852 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe during a third-quarter Years of Service ceremony held on Thursday, Oct. 12, in the Tribal gym.

Leading those honored in longevity was Natural Resources' Timber and Roads Program Manager Jeff Kuust, who reached the 28-year mark in working for the Tribe.

Joining him in the quarter-century or more club were Natural Resources Manager Michael Wilson and Finance Officer Chris Leno, who both reached 25 years of service. Higher Education Manager Bryan Langley notched 26 years and Health Benefits Specialist Barbara Steere, Staff Accountant Melanie Hubbard and Procurement Assistant Kelly Leno attained 27 years apiece.

Tribal Attorney Rob Greene notched his 23rd year of employment, Assistant Tribal Attorney Kim D'Aquila reached the 21-year mark of service and Cultural Adviser Bobby Mercier reached 20 years.

Third-quarter recipients were hired between July and September.

Employees received certificates and bonus checks in appreciation for their increasing tenure with the Tribe. In addition, those reaching the 10-year mark received a Tribal Pendleton blanket or an extra \$100 in their bonus check.

The ceremony began with an invocation from Tribal Council member Kathleen George.

Tribal Historic Preservation Office Manager David Harrelson gave a brief historical presentation on trade between Pacific Northwest Indian Nations, and then employees were treated to a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, hash browns, biscuits, bananas, yogurt, and juices and coffee to drink.

Breakfast was served by Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, Public Affairs Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark, Food Sustainability Administrative Assistant Patricia LeClaire, Tribal Council Administrative Assistant Shannon Simi and Economic Development Administrative Assistant



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal Timber and Roads Program Manager Jeff Kuust shakes hands with Tribal Council member Michael Langley during the third-quarter Years of Service event held in the Tribal gym on Thursday, Oct. 12. Kuust was recognized for his 28 years of working for the Tribe. Also there congratulating employees were Tribal Council members Jack Giffen Jr., left, Denise Harvey, second from left, Lisa Leno, fourth from left, Kathleen George, fifth from left, and Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier, right.**

Meghan Zimbrick.

Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier said that council tends to get a lot of credit, but staff does most of the work.

"I can't imagine how much more difficult our lives would be without you," Mercier said. "I know some of you have made your careers here and that is great. Thank you for all that you do."

Mercier also acknowledged other Tribal Council members in attendance, which included Kathleen George, Jack Griffen Jr., Denise Harvey, Michael Langley, Lisa Leno and Brenda Tuomi.

Other employees honored during the third-quarter event included:

**19 years:** Head Start Teacher Toni Lockwood, Family Services Assistant Elaine Lane Raven and Dental Hygienist Sheila Blacketer.

**18 years:** Procurement Supervisor Kevin Mueller.

**17 years:** Elementary Lead Matthew Bucknell, Senior Network Administrator Jack Dobiash, Tribal Court Judicial Assistant Julie Boekhoff and Grand Ronde Police Department Records/Evidence Clerk

Egypt Leno.

**16 years:** Security Officer Roel Hernandez and Education Senior Administrative Assistant Deborah Bachman.

**15 years:** Part-time College Program Coordinator John Harp, Audit Director Trudi Yoshikawa, Natural Resources Machine Equipment Operator Mark Mercier and Treasury Manager Rick Andersen.

**14 years:** Benefits Specialist Peggy Carpenter, Nutrition Program Manager Kristy DeLoe and Ceded Lands Coordinator Brandy Humphreys.

**13 years:** Enrollment Specialist Jolanda Catabay, Health Information Technician Stephanie Simmons, Tribal Council Administrative Assistant Shannon Simi, Finance Executive Assistant Ken Trevino and Employment Specialist Brandy Hembree.

**12 years:** Housing Services Coordinator Deborah Kroeker and Purchased/Referred Care Specialist Erica Mercier.

**11 years:** Graphic Designer

George Valdez.

**10 years:** Central Phones Operator Scarlett Holtz, Senior Help Desk Technician Alec Palanuk-Mercier, GIS Coordinator Volker Mell, Publications Coordinator Dean Rhodes and TERO Workforce Development Specialist Misty Carl.

**9 years:** Controller Linda Hanna and Lead Pharmacy Technician Kandee Little.

**8 years:** Patient Account Representative Kayla Leno.

**7 years:** Maintenance Technician Jason Bailey, Health Information Technician Amanda McMahon, TERO Compliance Officer Marvin "Duke" Kimsey Jr., TERO Administrative Assistant Lori Sterling, Cultural Collections Coordinator Veronica Montano, Education Department Manager Angie Blackwell, Housing Maintenance Technician Michael Lane, Adult and Family Services Supervisor Amber Amouak and Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson.

**6 years:** Early Head Start Home Visitor Amber Mercier, Youth Education Administrative Assistant Amber Yates, Cultural Resources Project Development Manager Julie Brown, Laboratory Manager Sharon Laddusaw, Medical Technologist Staci Robbins, Legal Secretary Susan June and Economic Development Administrative Assistant Meghan Zimbrick.

**5 years:** Child and Family Services Caseworker Tara Verner, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, 477 Employment and Training Specialist Angey Rideout, Registered Nurse Tashina Blair, Spirit Mountain Community Fund Grants Coordinator Julia Willis, Senior Telecommunications Technician Mark Scheelar, Mailroom Clerk Anna White, Parks and Recreation Specialist Jerry Bailey and Forest Technician Andrew Puerini.

Human Resources staff members and General Manager David Fullerton also raffled off prizes that included Amazon Kindle Fires, a Fitbit, Polaroid Cube, crockpot, fire pit, HP Notebook Touch and extra administrative time. ■

## Groups form Helping Hands

The Clothes Closet, iskam mək<sup>h</sup>mək haws, Empowerment Outreach Ministries, Lighthouse Church and A Cause For Paws have joined forces in an effort to support local families.

The group, named Grand Ronde Helping Hands, seeks to bring together those who are supporting families in Grand Ronde to share services and resources, and create a resource guide.

Helping Hands' next meeting will be 10:30 a.m. Monday, Oct. 16, at iskam mək<sup>h</sup>mək haws, 9675 Grand Ronde Road. If you provide any type of services to families in the community, consider attending. The group is looking for meal site calendars, food box sites, clothes closets, showers and laundry services.

There also will be a collection day at iskam mək<sup>h</sup>mək haws from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 14. Donations are being sought of personal care items, feminine products, men's clothing, pet items and newer toys for Christmas presents, as well as tents, tarps, sleeping bags, pillows, warm blankets, rain gear and heavy jackets to restock the shelves.

Helping Hands continues to seek a volunteer with graphic arts skills to create a logo that represents all of the organizations. The logo would be used on business cards, a banner and possibly a website, and the artist possibly would receive a small honorarium.

For more information, contact Food Bank Coordinator Francene Ambrose at 503-879-3663 or by e-mail at fambrose@marionpolkfoodshare.org. ■

## Come and Learn About Food Preservation and Storage



The Oregon State University Extension Service continues to offer a variety of food preservation classes this summer and into the fall. The classes are staffed by trained Master Food Preserver volunteers who provide instruction and hands-on opportunities for participants to practice safe food preservation techniques and build self-confidence and skills. The schedule of food preservation classes for includes:

- **Preserving Meat** — Oct. 21 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Hunting season is just around the corner. Learn to preserve your meat safely in our pressure canning class specifically focused on canning meats.

Pre-registration is required a minimum of 3 days before the scheduled class. Childcare is limited and you must pre-register. Class size is limited. Classes are free and include an instructional packet, recipes, and sample products to take home. The classes will be held at Iskam Mək<sup>h</sup>Mək-Haws, located at 9675 Grand Ronde Road in Grand Ronde. For more information regarding these classes contact Coordinator, Francene Ambrose at 503-879-3663, or [fambrose@marionpolkfoodshare.org](mailto:fambrose@marionpolkfoodshare.org).

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