

# 44 employees honored for 607 years of service

**Tresa Mercier marks 33 years of employment with the Tribe**

**By Danielle Frost**  
*Smoke Signals staff writer*

Forty-four employees, all hired in the last quarter of the year, were honored for a combined 607 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe during an awards ceremony held Thursday, Dec. 14, during the all-staff Christmas party held at Spirit Mountain Casino.

Health & Wellness Center Business Office Manager Tresa Mercier continues to set the employment longevity record with the Tribe, hitting 33 years of service.

Two more Merciers – Tribal Librarian Marion and interim Tribal Employment Rights Office Manager John – were honored for reaching 27 years of service to the Tribe.

All Tribal Council members were present, except Michael Langley, who was out on medical leave. Secretary Jon A. George gave the invocation and Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy thanked employees.

“It is truly a wonderful time. ... It is amazing to me to see how many employees the Tribes has. We are blessed because of all of you, who have come to bring your area of service to the Tribe,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy recalled that during the first year when the Tribe was restored, 1983-84, there were three employees, including herself.

“Tresa Mercier was one of those,” she said. “I want to acknowledge her today and that she remains here. ... For all of you who have selected careers and put forward your energy, intellect and talent, thank you for doing that. Without you, there would be a huge gap in the way we move forward into the



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal Council member Kathleen George, left, hugs Tribal Health & Wellness Center Business Office/Skookum Manager Tresa Mercier during the Years of Service Awards that occurred during the Tribal employee holiday party at Spirit Mountain Casino’s Events Center on Thursday, Dec. 14. With 33 years of working for the Tribe, Mercier continues to set the employment longevity record.**

future.”

Achieving the 22-year mark in service were Social Services Department Manager Dana Ainam, Facilities Senior Administrative Assistant Daphney Colton, Asset Inventory Specialist Jerry George, Employee Benefits Administrator Tammy Gould, Member Services Administrative Assistant Hollie Mercier and Compensation/HRIS Administrator Candy Scranton.

Ceded Lands Manager Michael Karnosh reached 21 years of service. Rounding out employees reaching or exceeding two decades of employment was Dental Assis-

tant Donnette Spaulding.

Other employees recognized for their service of five years or more during the ceremony were:

**19 years:** Health Information Supervisor Lillian Engel.

**18 years:** Chinuk Language Specialist Crystal Szcepanski.

**17 years:** Planning & Grants Development Manager Kim Rogers and Lead Shipping & Receiving Clerk Nathan Rolston.

**16 years:** Home Improvement Coordinator Donald Coon.

**15 years:** Police Chief Jake McKnight and Web Designer Willie Mercier.

**14 years:** High School Adult Education Chinuk Wawa Teacher Kathy Cole.

**13 years:** Early Head Start Home-Based Visitor Shawn Bobb and Early Childhood Education Cook Rebecca Goeserich.

**12 years:** Early Head Start Teacher Jessica Cruickshank, Home Improvement Coordinator Loyal Hamilton and Gaming Commission Compliance Manager Rose

Smith.

**11 years:** Technology Technician Joe Loomis and Purchased/Referred Care Specialist Tauni McCammon.

**10 years:** Senior Staff Attorney Jennifer Biesack, Cultural Education Specialist Brian Krehbiel, Housing Administrative Program Manager Joan Dugger and Wellness Driver Arnoldo Moralez.

**9 years:** Billings/Auditing Specialist Desiree Allen, Cultural Education Specialist Flicka Lucero and Pharmacy Clerk Isaiah Sherwood.

**8 years:** X-ray Technician Niki Mosley.

**7 years:** Tribal Employment Rights Office Secretary Keri Kimsey and Chinuk Wawa Teacher Jeff Mercier.

**6 years:** Security Officer Daniel Hyatt, Engineering and Public Works Manager Jesse White and Pharmacy Technician Stephanie Wolfe.

**5 years:** Secretary/Medical Assistant Jamie Adams, Pharmacy Technician Cindy Brickell, Fire Prevention/Silviculture Technician Logan Kneeland, Maintenance Technician Brent Buckner and Maintenance Technician/Groundskeeping Nicholas Kimsey.

General Manager Dave Fullerton thanked staff members who assisted with organizing the event and Tribal Council for “helping inspire us to do this for you guys this year.”

Tribal employees were treated to a catered buffet lunch, which included ham, turkey, mashed potatoes, pasta, rolls, green beans, salad, fruit and several dessert options.

After the service awards, a raffle was conducted that included Costco, Amazon, Regal Cinema, Panera Bread, Buffalo Wild Wings and Visa gift cards, Portland Trail Blazers’ suite tickets, a Samsung 40-inch TV, Kitchen Aid mixer, TLC Smart TV, trail camera, and trips to Seattle and Sunriver. All employees received a \$150 holiday bonus check.

Employees recognized during the service awards received an additional bonus check and those reaching the 10-year mark also received a Tribal Pendleton blanket. ■

## Medicine Wheel & the 12 Steps to Wellbriety

WHO? ALL ARE WELCOME

WHAT? WELLBRIETY TALKING CIRCLE

WHEN? EVERY SATURDAY AT 1:00 P.M.

WHERE? LIGHTHOUSE RECOVERY ON GRAND RONDE RD. GRAND RONDE OREGON

## UofO teaching program seeks Native applicants

EUGENE – The Sapsik’wala Teacher Education and the UOTeach programs at the University of Oregon are looking for Native American/Alaska Native students who want to become elementary or middle/high school teachers.

Application deadline for the 2018-19 academic year is Monday, Jan. 15.

The Sapsik’wala program offers full financial assistance to eligible American Indian/Alaska Native students. Eligible applicants must be enrolled in a federally recognized Tribe or have an enrolled parent or grandparent.

The program lasts 15 months with a support package of approximately \$50,000 per student. Prospective students must have completed an undergraduate education and apply through the admissions process of UOTeach. Students will earn a master’s degree in education, as well as a teacher’s license.

To apply and review the admission requirements, visit [education.uoregon.edu/uo-teach-k-12-teacher-licensure-and-masters-curriculum-and-teacher-/admissions](http://education.uoregon.edu/uo-teach-k-12-teacher-licensure-and-masters-curriculum-and-teacher-/admissions) by Jan. 15.

To learn more about the Sapsik’wala program, visit [education.uoregon.edu/program/sapsikwala-project](http://education.uoregon.edu/program/sapsikwala-project). The program is entering its 17th year and has a 100 percent graduation rate. The 81 alumni represent 41 Tribes. ■