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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Language Program may expand to fifth-grade students

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Before the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's Restoration in 1983, preserving the traditional language was performed by Elders passing it down to younger family members.

Post-Restoration, ensuring that the Tribe's Chinuk Wawa language, culture and customs continue has been a primary focus, beginning when children are very young.

Since 2000, the Tribe has offered an immersion preschool to teach its youngest members the language. Chinuk High School/Adult Teacher Kathy Cole has been employed by the Tribe for 15 years and teaches in the preschool, and also works with the adult and high school language programs.

"I have a passion for this," Cole said. "With the younger kids, it is like teaching them their culture, too. They have no inhibitions and are not embarrassed. We teach them to dance, too, so it is not weird to them as they get older."

The program has expanded to include kindergarten and first-grade students. Since 2015, second- and third-grade classes have been added, as well as an Early Head Start expansion in the fall of 2017.

Education Department Manager Leslie Riggs said at the February General Council meeting that there are 12 Early Childhood pre-school students in the Chinuk Language

See LANGUAGE continued on page 12

CAPITOL IDEA



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Curt Melcher and Tribal Council member Lisa Leno talk during Tribal Governments Legislative Day held at the State Capitol building in Salem on Thursday, Feb. 22.

Day showcases state's sovereign nations

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

SALEM — Despite snowfall that covered several parts of Oregon, all nine Tribes attended Tribal Governments Legislative Day held Thursday, Feb. 22, at the State Capitol.

This year's theme was "Oregon is Indian Country: Who We Are."

Tribal Governments Legislative Day is designed to be a time for lawmakers, legislative staff, agency

directors and their staff, as well as members of the public, to learn about Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes.

Grand Ronde was well-represented at the event, with eight of nine Tribal Council members attending: Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Kathleen George, Jack Giffen Jr.,

See GOVERNMENT DAY continued on page 13

Planting educational seeds in Tribal children

Zylah Guzman, a Chak Chak class student, adds dirt to cover a bulb she planted as Tribal Lead Silviculture/Fire Protection Technician Jeremy Ojua helps her during a Native Plant Propagation workshop on Monday, Feb. 26. The Natural Resources Department's Tribal Native Plants Materials Program in partnership with the Institute for Applied Ecology of Corvallis put on the workshop for the Early Childhood Education students at the Tribe's Education Department.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

By Danielle Frost

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Most preschoolers won't argue if you encourage them to dig in the dirt, which is exactly what students in Toni Lockwood's Chak Chak classroom had the opportunity to do recently.

The Tribe's Natural Resources Department hosted a Native Plant Propagation workshop in partnership with the Institute for Applied Ecology for students ranging from preschool through fifth grade on Friday, Feb. 23, and Monday, Feb. 26.

The program was started to give local students and community

See PLANTS continued on page 15