

# General Council briefed on Housing, Social Services

## Other Business consumed by Member Services discussion

By Dean Rhodes  
Smoke Signals editor

General Council received a two-for-one deal on Sunday, March 4, in the Tribal Community Center as the membership was briefed on the Housing and Social Services departments before an almost two-hour Other Business session that concentrated on recent staff changes at the Member Services Department and the Tribal press coverage of those high-profile personnel changes.

After Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George and Tribal member Jade Unger performed the cultural drumming and singing to open the meeting, Housing Department Manager Shonn Leno gave a 50-minute overview of his department's programs, which include tenant-based rental assistance in Yamhill and Polk counties, student rental assistance for about 150 Tribal members, a nationwide home repair program, \$10,000 in down payment assistance for purchasing a home and maintenance of the almost 200 units built by the Tribe.

Leno said that the current turnover rate for Housing when a unit is vacated is 34 days. However, if the unit has been contaminated by illegal drug use, such as meth, it takes approximately 134 days and costs the Tribe about \$5,000 to properly prepare the unit for a new tenant.

Leno added that he heard at a recent housing conference that 45 percent of homes in Tribal communities nationwide are contaminated



Photo by Dean Rhodes

**Housing Department Manager Shonn Leno makes a presentation during the Sunday, March 4, General Council meeting held in the Tribal Community Center.**

with drugs.

"That is a staggering number that in our estimation is getting worse," he said.

Leno said the most common obstacles the Housing Department experiences are the homeless population in Grand Ronde, lack of upper-income homes, static waiting lists, self-sufficiency and drug usage.

He added that Housing is looking at building two additional low-income apartment complexes for eight more units as well as determining ways for Tribal members to own their own homes instead of living in Tribal housing to foster self-sufficiency.

Leno fielded approximately 15 questions and comments from Tribal members and Tribal Council members.

Social Services Department Manager Dana Ainam followed with an overview of her department's

wide-ranging offerings, which include emergency assistance, youth prevention, employment services and domestic violence and sexual assault prevention.

Ainam said that Social Services has instituted a trauma-informed practice with a "no wrong door" policy.

"When people are coming through our doors for services they are basically at one of the most vulnerable points in their lives," Ainam said. "And we need to respect that. We need to understand historical trauma, we

need to understand current trauma and we need to provide services in a way that meet people where they are at."

Social Services' stated values are safety, honoring culture and spirituality, being trustworthy, partnership, collaboration and providing choice.

Ainam said that the department's employment services programs had a minimum 65 percent success rate in 2017. Its domestic violence and sexual assault prevention program received about 200 crisis calls in 2017, with 128 related to domestic violence and 65 regarding sexual assault.

The Tribe's Children & Family Services program also has seen a substantial drop in Tribal children in foster care, from 70 children in 2013 to 24 children in 2017. Ainam added that CFS received 364 reports of possible neglect or abuse in 2017 with 102 assigned

for assessment and only six cases required intervention.

Ainam fielded nine questions and comments from Tribal members and Tribal Council members before Tribal member Veronica Gaston gave the blessing for the lunch.

After lunch, Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier announced that the next General Council meeting will be held 11 a.m. Sunday, April 8, at the Many Nations Longhouse on the University of Oregon campus in Eugene.

In addition, the Community Input meeting slated to be held was postponed until the May General Council meeting because of the news of Tribal Elder Marvin Kimsey's passing, as well as anticipated Other Business comment on the Member Services' personnel changes.

Angie Blackwell, Tina Leno and Debi Anderson won the \$100 door prizes while Nichole Liebelt, Lloyd DeLoe, Joe Kellogg, Steve Bobb Sr. and Penny DeLoe won the \$50 door prizes. Bobb donated his winnings to the Elders' fundraising effort to pay for a new pool table.

The 110-minute Other Business session, which occurred after the membership voted to continue the General Council meeting following word of Kimsey's passing was announced, was dominated by input from the membership regarding the process that resulted in the personnel changes at Member Services.

There also was discussion about the continuing after-effects of the enrollment audit that started in 2012 and whether it was appropriate for *Smoke Signals* to report on personnel changes at the Tribe.

The meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribal website at [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org) and clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

## AND SO WE WALKED

AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY ALONG THE TRAIL OF TEARS

For: Middle/High School Native Students

Date: May 3

AND SO WE WALKED: An Artist's Journey Along the Trail of Tears, a frank, heartwarming and inspiring story about a contemporary Cherokee woman and her father who embark on an incredible 900-mile journey along the Trail of Tears to truly understand her own identity and the conflicts of her nation.

**Requirements to attend:**

- Student may not be failing any current classes in the 2nd semester
- 6th grade – upon review
- No more than (3) unexcused absences

**Depart:** Youth Education Dept  
8:30 a.m.

**Arrive:** Back at YED at approximately  
3 p.m.

Transportation and lunch provided

Permission slip due: April 30  
*Limited spots available*

Turn in permission slip/grade sheet & prearranged with school for your absence

For more information call 503-879-2101

Ad created by George Valdez

## Willamette U. grand entry



Photo by Chelsea Clark

**Grand Ronde Royalty and Color Guard members participated in the grand entry at the Willamette University Native and Indigenous Student Union 16th annual Social Powwow held on Saturday, March 10, in Salem. From left are Grand Ronde Junior Warrior Nacoma Liebelt, Grand Ronde Little Miss Sophia Grout, Grand Ronde Junior Miss Kaleigha Simi and Grand Ronde Senior Miss Isabelle Grout. Holding the eagle staff to the right is Grand Ronde Elder Alton Butler.**