

Fifty employees honored for 587 years of service

By Danielle Frost
Smoke Signals staff writer

Records Administrator Kim Mueller and A/V Network Technician Wendell Olson led employees with 23 years of service to the Tribe during the first-quarter Employee Service Awards breakfast held on Thursday, April 5, in the Tribal gym.

The first-quarter awards honored employees reaching their employment anniversary date in January, February or March. Employees who were hired five years ago or longer received bonus checks and other awards.

Fifty employees were honored for a combined 587 years of service to the Tribe during the event.

Elders Activity Assistant Daniel Ham and Gaming Commission Licensing Manager Julia Papen reached the 22-year mark while Lands Department Manager Jan Reibach and Assistant Controller Jody Jerger both were hired in the first quarter of 1997.

Tribal Council member Kathleen George blessed the breakfast and General Manager David Fullerton welcomed a large turnout of employees to the awards ceremony.

Other Tribal Council members who attended and congratulated employees were Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Brenda Tuomi, Jack Giffen Jr. and Denise Harvey.

Mercier thanked employees for all of their work, recalling how as a teenager with long hair in 1991 that he was on the first Tribal youth summer work crew.

“The growth now astounds me,” he said. “The Tribe was restored to help its members and help the community. It wasn’t all about keeping it in the Tribe. I think sometimes Tribal Council gets more credit than we need because what we do would be impossible without our employees. It is great for me to see our employees who have passion for the Tribe.”

Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson also spoke to attendees about what service to the Tribal community has meant during different periods in history.

“We only have (approximately)



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Daniel Ham, Tribal Elders activity assistant, shakes hands with Tribal Council member Brenda Tuomi as he is recognized for his 22 years of service to the Tribe during the first-quarter Employee Service Awards held in the Tribal gym on Thursday, April 5.

5,400 Tribal members, but the work this government does is about the persistence of a people,” he said.

Other employees honored were:

20 years: Health & Wellness Center Payment Processing Specialist Sunni Ulestad.

19 years: Social Services Administrative Assistant Tammy Garrison.

18 years: Compensation/HRIS Specialist Becky Mode and Tribal Career Development Manager David DeHart.

17 years: Facilities Manager Tyson Mercier and Cultural Protection Specialist Christopher Bailey.

16 years: Legal Assistant Kerri Mishler and Cultural Resources Interpretive Coordinator Travis Stewart.

15 years: Post-Secondary Education Program Coordinator Joshua Clift and Nutrition Lead Cook Kevin Campbell.

14 years: Portland Office Tribal Services Representative Lisa Archuleta.

13 years: Staff Accountant Nan-

cy Renfrow, who recently retired.

12 years: Education Department Manager Leslie Riggs, Cultural Resources Administrative Assistant Toni Mercier, K5 Tutor/Adviser George Neujahr, Full Charge Bookkeeper Debra Nolen and Vocational Rehabilitation Caseworker Carmen Mercier.

10 years: Construction Supervisor Bart Bryant, Day Shift Housekeeper Rosie Saldivas, *Smoke Signals* Photojournalist Michelle Alaimo, Gaming Commission Compliance Analyst Tyrell Soderberg, Natural Resources Senior Administrative Assistant Michele Volz and Cultural Collections Specialist Nick LaBonte.

9 years: Hydrosystem Compliance Specialist Lawrence Schwabe.

8 years: Adult Foster Care Administrative Assistant Candi Buswell, Swing Shift Lead Housekeeper Joseph Grammer, Rental Housing Coordinator Leon Ramos and Early Childhood Education Instructional Assistant Lindsay Ramer.

7 years: 477/ Employment & Training Specialist Khani Schultz, Early Head Start Teacher Melissa Phillips, Employment Program Manager Michael Herrin, Dental Assistant Shelby Hoyt and Dental Hygienist Erin Muchmore.

6 years: Youth Prevention Coordinator Cristina Lara, Chinuk Wawa Assistant Halona Butler, Housing Maintenance Technician Gary LaChance Jr., Housing Maintenance Technician Robert Wiggs, Historic Preservation Manager Breece Edwards and Accounts Payable Supervisor Tammy Chavez.

5 years: Utilities Maintenance Technician Richard Smith, Child and Family Services Caseworker Shauna Hastings, Employment and Training Specialist Barbara Gibbons, Swing Shift Housekeeper Gregory Shandy and Human Resources Manager Patrick Dempsey.

Employees were served a breakfast consisting of scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, bagels, sausage, yogurt, fruit and juices by Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, Tribal Council Administrative Assistant Shannon Simi and Administrative Assistant Meghan Zimbrick.

After the awards, Fullerton, Hernandez and Mercier raffled off door prizes that included \$50 gas cards, gift cards to Kofi Haws, a garden tool kit, an insulated hydration pack, memory foam bleacher seat, wind spinner, barbecue tool set, propane grills, waterproof tent, trail camera, \$50 Amazon cards and administrative leave days. ■

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