

Membership briefed on Human Resources, TERO

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde currently employs more than 1,500 people at its three main sites – the Governance Center, Spirit Mountain Casino and Grand Ronde Station – and has a significant effect on the local economy, Human Resources Director Patrick Dempsey said during the Sunday, May 6, General Council meeting.

Dempsey and interim Tribal Employment Rights Office Manager John Mercier briefed the membership on their respective departments, which often collaborate in helping Tribal members find jobs.

Dempsey said the Tribal government currently employs 468 people while the casino has 1,050 employees and Grand Ronde Station has 24 staff members.

“It’s a big population,” Dempsey said. “All of that payroll supports local economies. You have a gigantic impact, which you already know.”

However, Dempsey said, the casino has approximately 50 to 70 open positions and its optimal staffing level is about 1,120 employees.

Dempsey said the tight job market with the state unemployment rate hovering at or below 4 percent is affecting the number of applicants the casino receives for open positions. The casino once received thousands of applications, but that has now declined to hundreds.

Regarding positions at the Tribal government, Dempsey said the Tribe is starting to see multiple qualified Tribal members competing for jobs, which results in managers having to choose between Tribal members for hires.

“I can tell you those have become extremely competitive,” Dempsey said about government jobs. A result, he added, is that Tribal members are now asserting that they should have been hired over the Tribal member who did get offered the job.

Dempsey gave a survey of his



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Interim Tribal Employment Rights Office Manager John Mercier, left, and Human Resources Department Manager Patrick Dempsey briefed the membership on their respective departments during the Sunday, May 6, General Council meeting.

department, which became a “one-stop shop” in August 2015 when the Employment Services building opened and the Human Resources departments at the Tribal government and casino merged. Since then, Human Resources has placed the job application process online and started a Spirit Mountain Casino careers Facebook page.

“We help people from the time they apply until the time we say goodbye,” Dempsey said. “Everything that an employee does or needs while they are employed, most of that comes through Human Resources in some way, shape or form.”

Working in the Tribe’s favor when recruiting employees is the generous benefits package that goes along with working for the Tribe. “That is a big plus for us,” Dempsey said.

Dempsey said there are 350 distinct job descriptions within the Tribal government because jobs are so specialized, from being a nurse to being an aquatic biologist to being an attorney. “It’s very diverse,” he said.

Because of the turnover at the casino and the government, Human Resources holds weekly new hire training sessions for the casino and monthly new hire training ses-

sions for the government. Dempsey said there are about 50 new Tribal employees monthly.

Mercier reported that there are 372 people in the TERO job skills bank who represent 55 different Tribes. He said that TERO earned \$185,845 in revenue in 2017. During the first quarter of 2018, TERO earned \$104,213.

TERO charges a fee on construction projects on the Reservation, such as the Chachalu museum remodel, or within a 60-mile radius of the Reservation on Oregon Department of Transportation projects. Grand Ronde is one of three Tribes that have a TERO memorandum of understanding with the state.

Mercier said TERO is currently concentrating on training people to work in the construction industry, which “is really needing trained employees.”

The TERO Commission, which oversees the Tribe’s TERO program, consists of Russell Wilkinson, Diana George, Camille Mercier, Matt Thomas and Stephanie Craig.

Mercier said that TERO works collaboratively with Social Services, Human Resources, contractors, schools and the Oregon Department of Transportation to “find the best employment opportunities for all our clients.”

Dempsey and Mercier fielded five questions from the membership after their presentations.

In other action, it was announced that Tribal Council nominations will occur at 11 a.m. Sunday, June 24, in the Community Center. The next General Council meeting will be held in September.

Veronica Gaston, Butch Parazzo and Virginia Wheeler won the \$100 door prizes while Grace Lancour-Joles, Peter Grout, Genifer Grout, Linda Olson and Maxine Clements won the \$50 door prizes. Simone Auger and Debi Anderson won two necklaces donated by Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George.

Gaston said her winnings will go toward paying for the restoration work she performed on the Saige Selwyn memorial on the west side of Grand Ronde Road.

After the General Council meeting, Tribal members participated in the third and final Community Input meeting that sought recommendations for advisory votes to be placed on the September Tribal Council ballot.

Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier said Tribal Council will likely decide by the end of June which recommended topics make it to the ballot. Last year, Tribal members were asked for their input about enrollment issues, Elder housing and marijuana-based business opportunities.

The entire meeting can be viewed on the Tribal website www.grandronde.org by clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

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CHACHALU
TRIBAL MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTER

OPEN HOUSE

June 1, 2018

NO RSVP REQUIRED

Please join the Cultural Resources Department in opening Phase II of Chachalu Museum and Cultural Center. The new Grand Exhibit Hall features more than 4,000 square feet of gallery space programmed with the story of our Tribe as well as featuring items from the Summer's Collection.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 3pm | Elder's plus a guest opening
- 4pm | General entry
- 4:30pm | Chachalu reopening presentation
- 6pm | Rise of the Collectors exhibit presentation
- 7pm | Raffle
- 7:30pm | End