

'We like to walk our talk'

SUMMIT continued from the front page

"Today is an example of how supported I am at work," John said. "Mayor (Ted) Wheeler has backed me 100 percent and has a genuine commitment to Tribal people and Tribal nations."

Tribal government officials, Tribal employees and Portland employees also joined the opening ceremony as the canoes ferrying Wheeler and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly came ashore.

Grand Ronde choose to participate in the welcoming portion of the ceremony to ensure proper protocol was followed.

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George, Interpretative Coordinator Travis Stewart, Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier, Cultural Protection Specialist Nicolas Atanacio, Tribal Elder Greg Archuleta, Cultural Resources Manager David Harrelson and Cultural Education Coordinator Jordan Mercier led the singing and drumming.

Bobby Mercier welcomed the canoes in Chinuk Wawa and then English.

"I want to thank our relatives for bringing the canoes today and to bring them ashore and have a good time today," he said.

Also attending the waterfront opening ceremony were Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Tribal Attorney Rob Greene and Historic Preservation Manager Briece Edwards.

The riverfront delegates, flanked by members of the Royal Rosarians, came ashore for the second portion of the ceremony, which included welcoming remarks from representatives of the Grand Ronde, Yakama, Siletz, Cowlitz, Umatilla, Nez Perce and Warm Springs Tribes.

"I want to thank Portland for



Tribal member Nicolas Atanacio, left, greets Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler during the opening ceremony of Portland's first Tribal Nations Summit at Tom McCall Waterfront Park on Friday, Sept. 28.



Siletz Tribal member Tammy Fisher, from left, Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George, second from left, and Travis Stewart, center, sing and drum as canoes from the Warm Springs and Cowlitz Tribes come ashore at Tom McCall Waterfront Park on Friday, Sept. 28. Portland hosted its first Tribal Nations Summit.

Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

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hosting this event and our drummers and singers who kicked this off," Chris Mercier said. "Portland is a part of our ancestral homelands, and we have been coming here long before this was known as Portland. ... After Grand Ronde, Portland is our biggest concentration of Tribal members. When our Tribe was restored, we had a lot

of assistance from the nonTribal community, and today we are continuing to forge a good relationship with Portland."

Chris Mercier added that with civility seemingly having "gone out the window" at the national level, it was refreshing to attend events such as this one.

"It is not a pleasant time, but Tribes can be leaders in bringing civility and decorum back to government," he said. "We like to walk our talk."

Wheeler said he enjoyed the canoe ride to the beach and joked that he really appreciated those who had to tolerate his paddling.

"The theme of this inaugural event is 'Coming Together as One,'" he said. "This summit is a monumental event built on a culture of trust and reconciliation. ... Our time to deliver on a meaningful relationship has come. Our hope is that this Tribal Nations Summit can rebuild trust between the city of Portland and Tribes."

After the opening ceremony concluded, Tribal representatives, including Grand Ronde Tribal Council members Kathleen George, Jon A. George and Chris Mercier, met with city government officials to continue the summit. John, the city's Tribal relations coordina-

tor, moderated the summit.

"I want to welcome everyone to City Hall," she said. "Seeing all of you here is truly an amazing sight. ... I want you to get to know what the city does and talk about opportunities to partner with the city."

The morning session included presentations from Government Relations Director Elizabeth Edwards, as well as Eudaly, and directors from the city's water, parks and recreation and finance bureaus.

Jon A. George noted that as urban areas expand, it is important to have opportunities to gather traditional Native plants.

"With some of the Native plants, it is very important to have clean water so we can access Native foods," he said. "If you develop an area, our Tribal Historic Preservation Office should be contacted. If you remove items, there are opportunities for us to gather these types of things so we don't have to go into other areas. It helps us with cultural education projects and gives us opportunities to gather cedar for hats and basket making."

After the morning session concluded, delegates took a trolley to the Portland Opera to enjoy a first foods luncheon that included salmon, bison, green salad, rice, succotash, elderberry teacakes and sweet grass tea.

They were joined by approximately 100 employees from the city who attended a Confluence Workshop at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in conjunction with the Tribal Nations Summit. Confluence is a community-based nonprofit connecting people to a broader story of the Columbia River ecosystem.

Participants had the opportunity to learn more about the history of Tribes in the region and the Canoe Family culture.

Grand Ronde Tribal member and Native history researcher David Lewis was one of the three guest speakers, which included National Indian Education Association President Patricia Whitefoot of the Yakama Tribe and Potlatch Fund co-founder Aurolyn Stwyer of the Warm Springs Tribe.

Lewis said via e-mail that the panel discussed Native issues with city employees and that Wheeler attended part of the session.

"Basically we discussed what the rivers meant to the Tribal people," he said. "I discussed the history of the Grand Ronde Tribes, the Clackamas people who lived at the falls and their removal to Grand Ronde, how deeply these removals affected all Native people and how we still feel that loss today even if we are now restored. The lack of rights to fish and practice our cultures was talked about a lot."

In the afternoon, Wheeler met with Tribal representatives back at City Hall. A closing ceremony and Tribal flag exchange were held at the end of the summit. ■



The opening ceremony for the city of Portland's first Tribal Nations Summit was held at Tom McCall Waterfront Park on Friday, Sept. 28. Members of the Grand Ronde, Cowlitz and Warm Springs Tribes participated in the summit.