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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Community meeting focuses on opioids

New treatment and support options discussed on Dec. 13

By Danielle Frost
Smoke Signals staff writer

Oregon has the highest rate in the nation of senior citizens who are hospitalized for opioid-related issues. The state also has the sixth highest percentage of teenage drug users, according to a recent audit from the Secretary of State's office.

Across the United States, the problem of opioid use has become so pervasive that it has been declared an "epidemic" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with 2017 seeing the highest number of drug overdoses – 72,000 – in U.S. history.

Native Americans have the highest overdose rates of prescription opioids, according to Oregon Health Authority data.

With these sobering statistics in mind, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center sponsored a town hall-style discussion about the state's efforts to reduce opioid addiction and overdoses, and how local communities can assist in the effort. Thirty-two community and staff members attended the event.

"There are lots of services we provide around substance use," Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe said. "What we want to do is inform the community about opioids. It's a crisis that is happening at every level and we want to be able to have a conversation about it."

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine and many others.

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Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board member Sho Dozono is presented with a saddle blanket by Tribal Council member and former Community Fund Director Kathleen George and Spirit Mountain Casino Facilities Manager Ron Reibach as Tribal Council member Denise Harvey looks on during an appreciation luncheon held at Spirit Mountain Casino on Wednesday, Dec. 12. Harvey, George and Reibach all serve on the fund's Board of Trustees. Dozono is retiring after serving on the Community Fund Board of Trustees from the very beginning in 1997. The former owner of Azumano Travel agency plans to continue doing volunteer work.

Community Fund readies for no Sho Dozono retires from Board of Trustees after 21 years of service

By Danielle Frost
Smoke Signals staff writer

Sho Dozono could be considered one of the most generous philanthropists in Oregon. During the past 21 years, he has helped give away almost \$80 million.

But none of it was his own money. Dozono, 74, is retiring from his position

as chairman of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees. He is its longest-serving member, appointed in 1997 when the fund was established.

Kate Brown is the next longest-serving

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44 employees honored for 625 years of service



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tresa Mercier marks 34 years of working for the Tribe

By Danielle Frost
Smoke Signals staff writer

Forty-four Tribal employees, all hired in the last quarter of their respective hire date years, were honored for a combined 625 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe at an awards ceremony held Thursday, Dec. 20, during

the Employee Christmas Party at Spirit Mountain Casino.

Health & Wellness Center Business Office Manager Tresa Mercier continues to set the longevity record of working for the Tribe with

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Health & Wellness Center Business Office Manager Tresa Mercier embraces Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy while being recognized for 34 years of service during the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Employee Christmas Party held at Spirit Mountain Casino on Thursday, Dec. 20. Mercier was one of the first three employees hired by the Tribe when she was 19. She was hired as the first health clerk for the Health Department.