

Tribal Legislative Information Day set for Feb. 21

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

SALEM — “Who We Are” is the theme of Tribal Legislative Information Day to be held on Thursday, Feb. 21.

Held annually at the State Capitol in Salem, the event provides an opportunity for Oregon’s nine federally recognized Tribes to highlight who they are and what makes Tribal governments different from the various special interest groups and stakeholders with whom legislators and state agencies mostly interact.

“This is an opportunity for Tribes to educate those in the building, including legislators, lobbyists and constituents,” said Danny Santos, interim executive director of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services. “To this day, most Oregonians are just starting to learn about the nine Tribes.”

Grand Ronde Tribal Council members and Tribal lobbyist Justin Martin usually attend to meet with veteran and newly elected legislators. The Tribe plans to provide light morning refreshments, as it has in the past.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy is the longest-serving member of the com-

If you go
Tribal Legislative Information Day
Where: State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem
When: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21
More info: 503-986-1067

mission, and in the past has served as event host along with fellow commission members and staff.

Tribal Legislative Information Day has been held for more than 13 years.

“Legislative Day is also an opportunity for both new and veteran legislators to learn more about the nine Tribes and the government-to-government responsibilities,” Santos said. “If the governor is in the building that day, she is also planning to stop by.”

In addition, the event provides an opportunity to visit Tribal informational tables and ask Tribal leaders and staff members questions from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. All nine Tribes usually participate in the event.

Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier said that the public still



Smoke Signals file photo

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Director Curt Melcher and Tribal Council member Lisa Leno talk during Tribal Legislative Information Day held at the State Capitol building in Salem last February.

knows far less about Tribes than they could.

“Most people are unaware of the Tribal presence in the region,” he said. “They’re not familiar that there are nine Tribes and in what areas. You usually have to associate location with a casino.”

Mercier said he is taking a Tribal law class at Lewis & Clark Law School and that even those students know “surprisingly little” about Tribes.

“Since Tribal people comprise only 2 or 3 percent of people here, it’s important to get the word out about our history with the region and the state of Oregon,” he said.

Mercier’s favorite part of Legislative Information Day is sitting at the Grand Ronde booth.

“When you see people you don’t see

often, that is always fun,” he said. “You always get people who genuinely want to know as much as possible. It’s good talking to people who are interested and eager to learn more.”

During past events, some Tribes have displayed and shared thoughts about their baskets, cradleboards, native plants, first foods, youth and Elders programs, partnerships with their neighbors and other governments, fisheries, health programs and governmental organization.

Although the Native American Rehabilitation Association’s serving of mini frybread was cancelled last year due to inclement weather, Santos said he is expecting to see them this year providing Mother Nature cooperates. Other Tribes provide donations for coffee and water. ■

PROPOSED ELECTION ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS OPEN FOR COMMENT

The Tribal Council, in consultation with the Election Board and the Tribal Attorney’s Office, has proposed amendments to the Election Ordinance. The first reading of the proposed amendments was made at the Jan. 23, 2019, Tribal Council meeting.

The proposed amendments:

- Provide for use of Ballot Boxes in Tribal elections.
- Provide a process for collection of Ballot Box ballots.
- Allow processing of ballots of voters who are living when they vote but are deceased on Election Day.
- Add an additional transfer of voters address to the mailing service.
- Remove the requirement that new Signature Verification Forms be sent to voters whose forms on file are five years or more old.
- Add definitions for Ballot Box, Election Day and Post Office Box.

For a copy of the proposed Election Ordinance amendments, please contact the Tribal Attorney’s Office at 503-879-4664. The Tribal Council invites comment on the proposed amendments. Please send your comments to the Tribal Attorney’s Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347 or by e-mail to legal@grandronde.org.

Comments must be received by March 4, 2019. ■

LEASING ORDINANCE OPEN FOR COMMENT

The Tribal Council, in consultation with the Tribal Attorney’s Office and Tribal Lands Department, is considering adoption of a Leasing Ordinance. The proposed Ordinance was given a First Reading at the Feb. 6, 2019, Tribal Council meeting.

The purpose of enacting this Ordinance is for the Tribe to assume authority to process and approve leases on Tribal Trust lands. Under the Leasing Ordinance, the Tribe will assume the authority to process and approve leases on Tribal trust lands, as provided for by the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (“HEARTH”) Act of 2012. The Ordinance defines the types and terms of leases and licenses, describes the process for applying for both residential and non-residential leases, sets forth the lease and lease amendment processing requirements, and includes recordation and reporting requirements as well as enforcement provisions. Once enacted by the Tribe, the Ordinance must receive review and approval by the Bureau of Indian Affairs prior to becoming effective.

For a copy of the Leasing Ordinance, please contact the Tribal Attorney’s Office at 503-879-4664. The Tribal Council invites comment on the Ordinance. Please send your comments to the Tribal Attorney’s Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347 or by e-mail to legal@grandronde.org.

Comments must be received by March 15, 2019. ■

St. Michael’s offers brunch

St. Michael’s Catholic Church offers an open house brunch every Sunday following Mass. The brunch is free to the community. Brunch begins at about 11:30 a.m. following the 10:30 a.m. Mass.

Mass attendance is not required for brunch attendance. For more information or for kitchen and hall rental, contact Janelle Justen at 503-550-0923. ■

Snow day!



Photo by Jennifer Clark

Tribal member Benjamin Powley, 13, takes advantage of a snow day as he snowboards down a hill in Grand Ronde on Monday, Feb. 4. Both the Willamina School District and Grand Ronde Tribal government closed for the day because of the snow and icy road conditions. It was the first measurable snow in the Grand Ronde area this winter. The school district and Tribal government both re-opened at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5.