

Fifty-seven employees honored for 655 years of service

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Records Administrator Kim Mueller and A/V Network Technician Wendell Olson led employees with 24 years of service to the Tribe during the first-quarter Employee Service Awards breakfast held on Thursday, April 11, in the Tribal gym.

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

Fifty-seven employees were honored for a combined 655 years of service to the Tribe.

Gaming Commission Licensing Manager Julia Papen reached the 23-year mark while Lands Department Manager Jan Reibach attained 22 years. Health & Wellness Payment Processing Specialist Sunni Ulestad was hired in the first quarter of 1998 and hit her 21st year of employment with the Tribe.

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

"Thank you for your service," Fullerton said. "We really appreciate you for that."

Other Tribal Council members who attended and congratulated employees included Vice Chair Chris Mercier, Denise Harvey, Jack Giffen Jr. and Kathleen George.

Before the awards celebration began, everyone in attendance sang "Happy Birthday" to Mail Room/Printing Clerk Anna White.

Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson gave a brief cultural presentation about the spring gathering season and the importance of reciprocity as a cultural obligation.

"When you are taking something from the land, you need to give back," he said. "This is not a field to



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

A/V Network Technician Wendell Olson shakes hands with Tribal Council member Jack Giffen Jr. after being recognized for 24 years of service during the Employee Service Awards event held in the Tribal gym on Thursday, April 11.



harvest, but a patch to gather from. These teachings are very valuable. You need to think about what you are taking and what you will give back."

Other employees honored during the Service Awards were:

20 years: Social Services Administrative Assistant Tammy Garrison and Purchased/Referred Care Supervisor Melody Baker.

19 years: Compensation/HRIS Specialist Becky Mode and Employee Relations Specialist David DeHart.

18 years: Spirit Mountain Community Fund Program Coordinator Angie Sears and Cultural Protection Specialist Christopher Bailey.

17 years: Legal Assistant Kerri-na Mishler and Cultural Resources Interpretive Coordinator Travis Stewart.

16 years: Post-Secondary Educa-

tion Program Coordinator Joshua Clift and Nutrition Lead Cook Kevin Campbell.

15 years: Portland Office Tribal Services Representative Lisa Archuleta.

13 years: Cultural Resources Administrative Assistant Toni Mercier, K5 Tutor/Adviser George Neujahr, Full Charge Bookkeeper Debra Nolen and Domestic Violence Relief Advocate Carmen Mercier.

12 years: Employment Specialist Jesse Powley.

11 years: Construction Supervisor Bart Bryant, Day Shift Housekeeper Rosie Saldivas, Gaming Commission Compliance Analyst Tyrell Soderberg, Natural Resources Senior Administrative Assistant Michele Volz, Employee Relations Senior Administrator Nick LaBonte, Member Services Administrative Assistant Melanie Monson and Billing and Audit Specialist Desiree Allen.

10 years: Hydrosystem Compliance Specialist Lawrence Schwabe.

9 years: Adult Foster Care Administrative Assistant Candi Buswell, Swing Shift Lead House-

keeper Joseph Grammer, Rental Housing Coordinator Leon Ramos, Early Childhood Education Instructional Assistant Lindsay Ramer and Shipping/Receiving Clerk Seth Mercier.

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

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

6 years: Utilities Maintenance Technician Richard Smith, Child & Family Services Caseworker Shauna Hastings, Employment and Training Specialist Tiny Gibbons, Swing Shift Housekeeper Sean Sell and Risk Manager Patricia Mercier.

5 years: Groundskeeper Joseph Kelley, Tribal Police Officer Tyler Brown, Chinuk Immersion Apprentice Jade Colton, Dental Secretary Whitney VanArsdel, Groundskeeper Anthony Henry and Adult Foster Care Caregiver Pearline Metzker.

Employees were served a breakfast consisting of scrambled eggs, biscuits, sausage, gravy, yogurt and fruit by Public Affairs Administrative Assistant Chelsea Clark, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, Deputy Press Secretary Sara Thompson and Administrative Assistant Shannon Ham-Texeira.

After the awards, Fullerton and Hernandez raffled off door prizes that included gift cards to Walmart, Lowe's and Cabela's, Portland Trail Blazer playoff tickets, a tent, backpack, stadium chair, water bottles and portable phone chargers. ■

Game available on iTunes and Google Play

VIDEO GAME continued from front page

1890s who is displaced from Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota. The game features more than 20 indigenous writers.

Lewis, 53, became involved with the project after LaPensée contacted him online to write several game scenarios. It is his first foray into gaming.

"This was a great way to pass on knowledge in an educational and engaging format," Lewis said. "I would do it again."

LaPensée, 35, who is Anishinaabe, Métis and Irish, has been designing indigenous video games for several years. The assistant professor at Michigan State University made national headlines in 2017 when oil industry representatives, as well as state legislators in Minnesota, claimed her video game, "Thunderbird Strike," was encouraging eco-terrorism. LaPensée said she was only passing on stories from her indigenous commu-



David Lewis

nity, and that anyone who had actually played the game could see it advocated for healing the land.

"When Rivers Were Trails" has

been far less controversial and focuses on challenging players to balance their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being with foods and medicines, while making choices about contributing to resistances as well as trading, fishing, hunting and honoring the people they meet as they travel through several states to get to California.

The journey can change from game to game as players randomly encounter indigenous people, animals, plants and run-ins with Indian agents. The lessons of sovereignty, nationhood and being reciprocal with the land are interwoven

throughout the adventure.

"David Lewis was invited to write for the game because of his knowledge about history and his ability to develop characters who would represent experiences in the 1890s," LaPensée said.

She added that since the game was released in March, Lewis has shared the game at events in Oregon.

"That was exactly the hope, to build capacity by paying Native people for their work in team roles and not just as consultants, while determining their own self-representations for a sovereign educational game," LaPensée said.

Lewis' 14 game narratives included Battle Rock at Port Orford, Chetco/Brookings, Smith River Tolowa near Crescent City, Klamath River (Yurok, Hupa Valley, Shasta), Cascade Rapids, Portland, Willamette Falls, Champoeg, French Prairie, Grand Ronde and Siletz Reservations, Brownsville, The Applegate Farm and Table Rock.

"I had to write greetings in numer-

ous, different Tribal languages and address the places they were from appropriately for the time period of 1890," Lewis said. "It's interesting that the game is structured so late, the 1890s, which is when colonization was happening in the Midwest, while our colonialization in Oregon had happened 40 to 50 years previously. ... I wrote the narrative and tried to be true to the time period."

After playing the game, Lewis said it's challenging, but incredible at the same time. He has decided to assign the game as a regular part of all of the Native studies classes he teaches.

"To find all of these peoples in one game is amazing," he said. "I hope the kids get involved with the game, and that it is offered as part of the indigenous education of our children so they grow up learning about the many Tribes."

"When Rivers Were Trails," is available for download on iTunes and Google Play stores, and for PC/MAC play at <https://indianlandtenure.itch.io/when-rivers-were-trails>. ■