

Tribal Council approves budget to purchase Noble Oaks property

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

The Grand Ronde Tribe is one step closer to owning the entire 667.5-acre Noble Oaks Preserve outside of Willamina after Tribal Council approved a supplemental budget for 2019 to purchase an additional 2.75 acres at the site.

During its May 15 meeting, Tribal Council approved a resolution to accept a donation of most of the preserve from The Nature Conservancy and assume wildlife management at the site.

However, the conservancy’s donation to the Tribe did not include the additional acreage that includes a 4,502-square-foot home. The supplemental budget change is for \$542,400.

Noble Oaks Preserve was home to endangered animals and operated by former Portland lawyer Richard Noble and his wife, Nancy. The Nature Conservancy purchased the property in October 2014 for \$1.5 million.

Once the Noble Oaks Reserve property is acquired, it will join Chahalpam, Chankawan and Rattlesnake Butte as the Tribe’s land holdings that are being managed for wildlife and conservation purposes.

The purchase passed in a 3-2 vote with Tribal Council members Steve Bobb Sr. and Jack Giffen Jr. dissenting. Bobb and Giffen later recanted their “no” votes because they said they thought they were voting on the supplemental budget to purchase Blue Heron Paper Mill.

Tribal Council also had another “noble” action on its agenda in naming Cynthia Kaufman-Noble, a McMinnville Municipal Court judge, to succeed David Shaw as the Tribal Court’s chief judge.

Kaufman-Noble was admitted to the Oregon State Bar in 1992 after earning a law degree from Willamette University in Salem the same year. She graduated from Syracuse University in New York with a bachelor of fine arts degree in 1981. She also has a family law practice in McMinnville.

Kaufman-Noble takes over as

chief judge on July 1 and her term runs through June 2021. Shaw served the Tribe as chief judge for five years, beginning as interim chief judge in May 2014.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved applying for a \$50,000 Tribal Heritage Grant from the National Park Service for the Grand Ronde Depot, which is the only local building on the National Register of Historic Places. The grant, if received, would be added to a \$75,000 Spirit Mountain Community Fund grant to repair the foundation, cedar roof, gutters, siding and trim, windows and doors, among other needed repairs;
- Appointed Steve Bobb Jr. to the Fish & Wildlife Committee with a term expiring in March 2021;
- Appointed Mike Colton to serve as an alternate on the Election Board with a term expiring in March 2021;
- And appointed Brian Krehbiel to the Tribal Employment Rights Commission to serve out the term of Matt Thomas through March 2020 and Simone Auger to a full three-term expiring in March 2022.

Also included in the June 26 Tribal Council packet were approved authorizations to proceed that authorized purchasing a sign for the Bob Mercier logging unit to recognize his commitment to and service on the Timber Committee and Tribal Council, OK’d the Tribe’s participation in the 2019 American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experience Survey and authorized Economic Development Director Bruce Thomas and the Lands Department to pursue a solar leasing opportunity on up to 78 acres of the Risseeuw property for a minimum of 25 years. The Risseeuw property is located northeast of the Grand Ronde and Hebo roads intersection.

A video of the entire meeting can be viewed on the Tribal government’s website at www.gran-dronde.org by clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

Election Office opens July 22

The Election Board office has a new schedule for 2019. It will be open every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from July 22 through Aug. 30. Office hours are from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with lunch from noon to 12:30 p.m. The Election Office is located in the Tribal Community Center, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, and the phone number is 503-879-2271.

For convenience, blank signature verification forms will be placed in a hanging basket outside the Elections office door. Completed forms — with a notarized signature or legible copy of ID, including your signature (driver’s license, member ID card, passport, etc.) attached — need to be mailed to the Election Board for processing. The form will not be processed unless it has been notarized or includes a legible copy of ID and your signature attached.

Ballots will be mailed to voters with verified signatures on July 24. Tribal members may submit a verified signature card at any time up to and including Election Day on Saturday, Sept. 7. The Grand Ronde post office is no longer open to accept your ballots on Saturday, Sept. 7.

For our members convenience there will be a ballot box in the Governance Center during the election season and also on Election Day we will have a box in the Community Center where completed ballots can be dropped. We will have ballots available, as we have done in the past, for those members who want to come in and vote in person.

It is the voters’ responsibility to ensure the ballot is received by the Election Board on Election Day – be sure to allow adequate time for the ballot to reach the Election Board by Sept. 7. ■

Statue prep



Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Billy Bobb of Salem Signs installs the lettering for the Visionaries statue in front of the Governance Center on Wednesday, June, 26. The statue of Restoration figures Margaret Provost, Merle Holmes and Marvin Kimsey will be installed at 11 a.m. Tuesday, July 2.



Rolling the dice



Photo by Jennifer Clark

The Veterans Special Event Board Roll the Dice Car Show was held at Spirit Mountain Casino on Saturday, June 15. The car show was organized by Tribal Council member and Marine Corps veteran Steve Bobb Sr. and drew a crowd of approximately 300 people.



The letters for the Visionaries statue are installed in front of the Governance Center on Wednesday June, 26.

