

Tribal Council adopts changes to COLA allocations

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Some Tribal employees received an early Christmas present.

Tribal Council approved final adoption of amendments to three ordinances that will, among other things, ensure that all Tribal employees receive the same cost-of-living adjustments granted to governmental employees during its Wednesday, Dec. 4, meeting.

The amendment to the Governmental Corporations Ordinance mandates that Tribal employees at Spirit Mountain Casino and Grand Ronde Station receive the same COLA as governmental employees.

In the last couple of years, Tribal governmental employees have received 2.5 percent COLAs in 2019 and 2018 and a 1.7 percent COLA in 2017. The largest COLA ever granted Tribal employees was 4.1 percent in 2004.

COLAs are not guaranteed, however. During the depths of the recent recession, COLAs were not granted in 2009 and '12.

Tribal Council also adopted the new General Welfare and the Elders' Retirement and SSI Program ordinances that make benefits under the Elders' and SSI programs available on a tax-free basis and the new ordinance affirms the Tribe's inherent sovereign right to promote the general welfare of the Tribe and provide qualifying assistance and program benefits on a tax-free basis to the fullest extent permitted by law.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved a \$350 timber revenue member benefit distribution that accompanied the Dec. 13 per capita distribution of \$1,650;
- Approved an agreement that transferred an unspecified amount of Tribal funds into the

Baird Venture BVP V limited partnership investment;

- Approved a membership roll correction that corrected a number assigned in error;
- Approved the enrollment of an infant into the Tribe because he or she meets the requirements outlined in the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance;
- Approved applying for two grants from the Environmental Protection Agency. The first grant, for \$350,000, would fund further environmental assessment work of remediation areas at the former Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City purchased by the Tribe in August. The second, valued at \$500,000, would fund cleanup of the Water Street block of the Blue Heron property;
- Approved applying for a \$25,000 Business Oregon Brownfields Redevelopment Fund integrated planning grant that would help fund brownfields planning activities at the Blue Heron site;
- Approved a contract with Whisler Construction for siding and roof repair work at the Noble Oaks conservation property outside of Willamina;
- And approved applying for federal Title VI Older Americans Act funding that would help pay for Elder site and home-delivered meals and caregiver services for Tribal members suffering from arthritis, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. During the last three-year funding period, the Tribe received \$348,840 for meals and \$134,430 for caregiver services.

The entire meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribal government's website at www.grandronde.org and clicking on the Government tab and then Videos. ■



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde officially took over ownership of the 62-acre Ahsney conservation property within the Rickreall Creek watershed in Polk County on Thursday, Dec. 5.

Tribe takes possession of Ahsney conservation property

RICKREALL – The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde officially took over ownership of the 62-acre Ahsney conservation property within the Rickreall Creek watershed in Polk County on Thursday, Dec. 5.

As with other conservation properties acquired by through Bonneville Power Administration's Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program, the acquisition is funded by the BPA and includes funds for the Tribe to manage the properties ranging from Rattlesnake Butte in Lane County to Noble Oaks property outside of Willamina.

The Tribe's ownership of externally funded conservation lands now encompasses 1,885.33 acres.

Tribal management of the property will protect savanna and oak woodland habitat, native birds and threatened native plants.

The Power Administration acquires conservation properties as partial mitigation for wildlife habitat losses caused by the construction and operation of hydroelectric facilities in the Willamette River Basin.

Tribal Council approved acquiring the conservation property during its Sept 11 meeting. "Ahsney" means coyote in the central Kalapuya language.

The Ahsney property is less than a mile from the Basket Slough Wildlife Refuge north of Highway 22 between Grand Ronde and Salem.

"There are many benefits to Mother Earth, our relations, communities and the Tribe from this effort which, under the leadership of Tribal Council, is administered through the Tribal Lands and Natural Resources departments with the support from the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Facilities, Finance and Tribal Attorney's Office," said Tribal Lands Manager Jan Looking Wolf Reibach. ■

Attention: Native American Artists

Hatfield Fellowship Logo Contest

Prize: \$500

Logo designs must be submitted in .JPEG file format to info@thecommunityfund.com, no later than 5pm on Monday, December 23, 2019

A panel of judges selected by the Spirit Mountain Community Fund will determine the winning logo design

All entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- * Relevance of Artwork
- * Clarity of design in conveying the theme
- * Overall creativity & concept
- * By visual appeal/impact

TO SEE A LIST OF CONTEST RULES, VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.thecommunityfund.com

QUESTIONS? Please call 503-879-1400 or email us at info@thecommunityfund.com

If your logo is selected, it will become the sole property of the Spirit Mountain Community Fund for use in promoting the Hatfield Fellowship Program.

Winner will be notified by January 6, 2020

About the Hatfield Fellowship

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde established the Mark O. Hatfield Fellowship in 1998 as a living tribute to Senator Hatfield to honor his accomplishments as Governor of Oregon and United States Senator.

Each year, the Spirit Mountain Community Fund sponsors a highly motivated Native American to serve as the Hatfield Fellow, and intern in a congressional office for an eight-month term.

Placement of the Fellow rotates through the Oregon congressional delegation to enhance the mutual understanding between leadership in Washington, D.C. and Indian Country, providing them with an invaluable opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of how to navigate the political process in Washington, while working on issues that directly affect Native Americans.

'Tis the season

Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tribal member Veronica Gaston decorates a tree she named Ponderosa Pine Sol outside of the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Station on Grand Ronde Road on Wednesday, Dec. 4. Gaston donated the tree three years ago and has been decorating it for the past two years. She said that she spent \$100 on decorations.