

**TRIBAL CORONAVIRUS
HELP LINE**

503-879-4357 (HELP)

(NON-MEDICAL AID ONLY)

PRESORTED
STANDARD MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT NO. 700



SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA · MOLALLA · ROGUE RIVER · KALAPUYA · CHASTA

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE · SMOKE SIGNALS.ORG

MAY 1, 2020



Tribal Council OKs \$400 virus relief payments

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

During a special meeting held Thursday, April 23, Tribal Council approved a \$1.8 million supplemental budget that will fund \$400 COVID-19 coronavirus relief payments to all adult Tribal members.

Tribal Council initially approved the program during its April 1 meeting, but details about how it would function still needed to be worked out.

During a Facebook Live event held Wednesday, April 22, it was announced that all Tribal members 18 and older will receive one-time payments of \$400 to help with the financial toll the coronavirus pandemic is taking on individual Tribal members and their families.

Tribal members were encouraged to update their contact information with the Member Services Department by sending an e-mail to memberservices@grandronde.org.

Checks were mailed and direct deposits were made on Wednesday, April 29, Finance Officer Chris Leno said. He added that the payments are tax-free since they are considered general welfare payments.

The payments were made to approximately 4,500 Tribal members.

During the same Facebook Live event, Leno and Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said the likelihood of a June per capita distribution is miniscule since Spirit Mountain Casino closed in mid-March and any extra revenue made before then was almost non-existent. No firm date has been set for the casino's re-opening. ■

Record-setting service

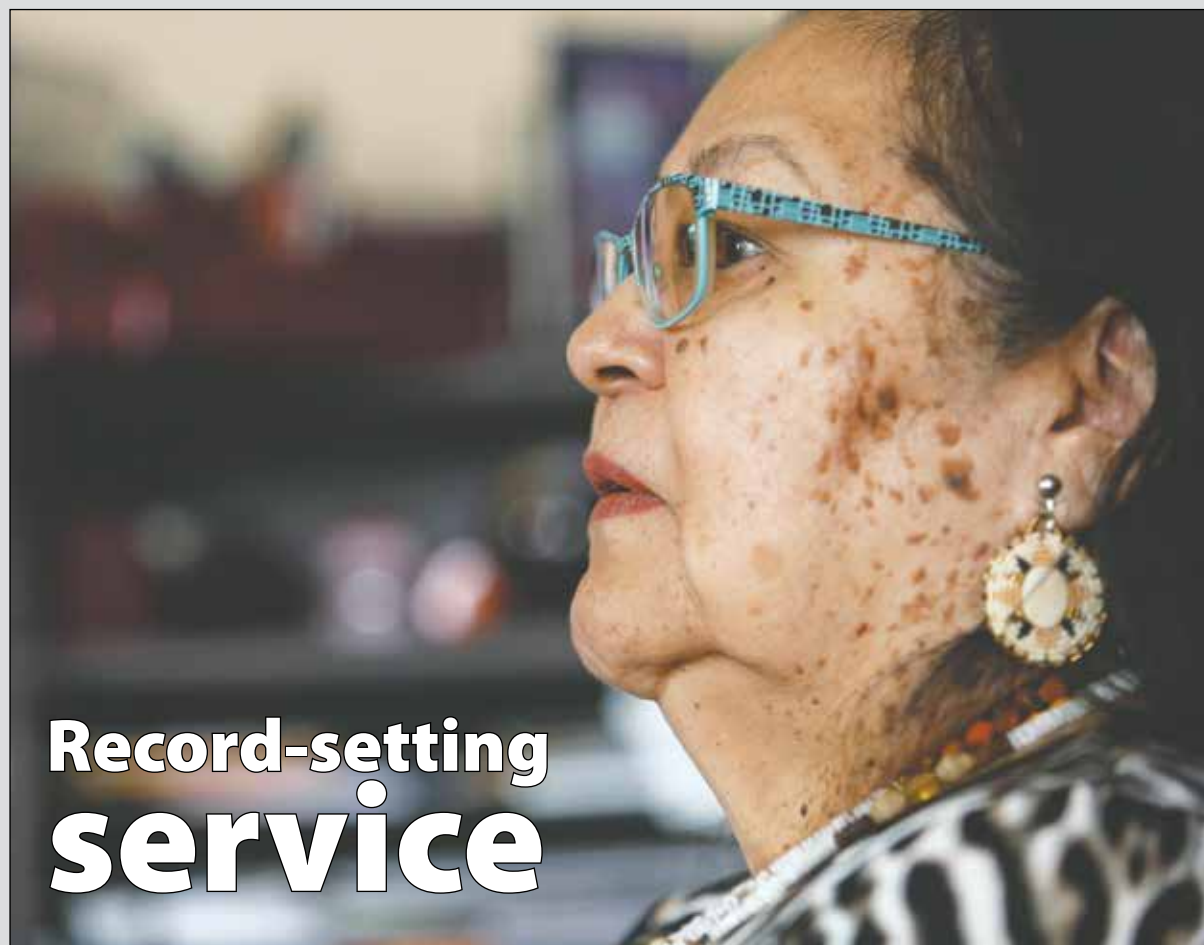


Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy discusses her record-setting service on Tribal Council at her Governance Center office on Tuesday, April 21.

Kennedy becomes longest tenured Tribal Council member

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Sometime in April, while she was leading the Grand Ronde Tribe as it navigated its unprecedented response to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic that included closing Spirit Mountain Casino, Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy unceremoniously became the longest-serving post-Restoration Tribal Council member.

Kennedy, who also turned 72 in early April, served on an early post-Restoration Tribal Council from May 1985 through September 1986 – one year and four months. Add that time to her consecutive years of service starting in September 2000 and Kennedy has surpassed former Tribal Council member Reyn

Leno, who served 21 consecutive years from 1996 through 2017.

Kennedy has received more than 3,800 votes during her eight runs for Tribal Council and holds the record for most votes ever received in an election – 712 in 2018. She has been the No. 1 recipient of votes five of the last seven times she has run for Tribal Council and has lost only one recent election, finishing fourth in 1999.

Her service even pre-dates Restoration, having been appointed to serve one year in 1979 on an honorary Tribal Council.

Kennedy also has been elected by her fel-

**See SERVICE
continued on pages 8-9**

Schools considering options to celebrate seniors

Iyana Holmes on the first day of the 2019 Grand Ronde Contest Powwow when she was named as 2019-20 Miss Grand Ronde at uyxat Powwow Grounds on Friday, Aug. 16. Holmes is one of many Tribal member seniors who will not to get to cross the stage and accept her high school diploma due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez



By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

For high school seniors, April, May and June are typically filled with fun events like breakfasts, proms, celebrations and graduations.

With the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic resulting in mandatory school closures statewide for the remainder of the year, educators and families are grappling with how to honor graduating seniors

and also ensure they have the tools needed to successfully complete high school.

Grand Ronde Tribal Youth Education Manager Tim Barry has three staff members connecting with seniors on a regular basis.

"We launched a 'Connect With All Kids' project these past couple of days through personal phone

**See SENIORS
continued on page 12**