



Tribe closes on properties — pg. 8

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Casino running smoothly six weeks after re-opening

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Six weeks after Spirit Mountain Casino re-opened on June 1 after an unprecedented 74-day closure due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, operations are running relatively smoothly.

“We have had thousands of people come through the doors and only one or two has had to be turned away due to having a high temperature,” General Manager Stan Dillon said during the Grand Ronde Tribe’s ninth Facebook Live event held Wednesday, July 8.

Dillon said that the casino is operating at about 40 percent capacity due to the reduction in available table games and the number of patrons who can play while adhering to social distancing guidelines. The casino recently added 200 slot machines to give customers more variety, which brings the number of slot machines to 1,370 instead of the usual 1,750.

“We are also having younger people coming through our doors now, probably because bars are now closing at 10 p.m.,” he said. “So far, we are doing very well. There was pent-up demand of people wanting to come out.”

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Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Spirit Mountain Casino maintenance personnel adjust a new banner over the casino’s main entrance indicating that masks are required on Monday, July 5. The casino’s decision, which went into effect on Friday, July 3, coincides with Oregon Gov. Kate Brown’s July 1 announcement of mandatory mask requirements for all indoor public spaces in the state to stem an increasing number of diagnosed COVID-19 cases.

Masks required

Spirit Mountain Casino institutes new rule

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Spirit Mountain Casino is now requiring its customers wear a mask while indoors on the property to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Grand Ronde Tribal Council discussed a

mask requirement at the casino in executive session on Thursday, July 2. The mandate took effect the following day.

The casino joins the ranks of states such as Or-

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Tribe hires Veterans’ Services Officer



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Navy veteran Ramona Quenelle began her new role on July 6

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

Navy veteran Ramona Quenelle is the Grand Ronde Tribe’s first Veterans’ Services Officer.

“This is a real opportunity for development and growth,” Quenelle said. “Ultimately, I want people to understand I am really pas-

sionate about serving Tribal veterans and that will be my number one goal.”

She has worked for the Tribe for two years as Tribal Court Programs coordinator and has a background in veterans’ education

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Ramona Quenelle stands next to the Navy pillar of the West Valley Veterans Memorial on Monday, July 13. Quenelle, a Navy veteran, has been hired as the Tribe’s first Veterans’ Services Officer and will help Native veterans access the benefits that they earned through their military service.