

LCIS executive director resigns

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

SALEM — Legislative Commission on Indian Services Executive Director Mitch Sparks has resigned after less than a year in the position, according to information shared by Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy during a Tuesday, Sept. 22, Legislative Action Committee meeting.

Kennedy is the longest-serving member on the commission and also served on the selection committee when Sparks was chosen for the job.

On Friday, Sept. 18, the commission held a special meeting to discuss whether to proceed with the immediate hiring of an interim director, with a commitment to do a full recruitment and hiring process within a certain period of time.

On Tuesday, Sept. 29, the commission met again to discuss the issue and unanimously approved hiring Danny Santos as interim director until March 2021, and for an extension of that employment be allowed as needed until the commission can fill the position.

Santos previously served as interim director in 2019. He currently serves as co-chair of Gov. Kate Brown's task force on Oregon Tribal cultural items.

"We're really looking at options for the next step," Commission Chair Brenda Meade (Coquille) said. "We went through this process a little over a year ago. This interim position can be as long as we want."

Kennedy said that much of the work the commission has done in the past has changed due to the pandemic.

"I was heavily involved in the last hiring process," she said. "This time, it's an opportunity to take another look at the work of the commission. (The pandemic) is a paradigm shift in how we look at those things. Moving forward, I support inclusion. We eliminate many problems if we stay connected and on the same page. I am confident we will attract a good candidate (for the executive director) position."

Sparks' departure marks the second time in less than two years that the commission will search for a replacement executive director. Longtime director



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Mitch Sparks (Oglala Lakota Nation) resigned as executive director of the Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services after less than a year on the job. The commission is starting the process of recruiting a new director.

Karen Quigley retired in late 2018 and the search began for a replacement.

Sparks, a retired Navy veteran and Oglala Lakota Nation member, accepted the job in late 2019. Before that, he worked for the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs as a veterans benefit counselor beginning in 2007. Eventually, he became interim director and then deputy director.

Sparks' goals for his first year at the commission were focused on co-chairing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Task Force and encouraging Native American participation in the 2020 Census.

He served on active duty in the Navy for 26 years and had several deployments overseas, including five in the Middle East.

The Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services was formed 45 years ago and was the first of its kind in the country. It continues as a forum for consideration of Tribal-state government relations and consultation.

In 2001, Oregon was the first state in the nation to pass a state-Tribal government-to-government relations law, which required ongoing state consultation with its nine federally recognized Tribes. The commission has been a key partner in furthering these efforts. ■

Tribe offering flu shots as autumn arrives

By Danielle Frost

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To help ward off the flu and keep people from becoming more susceptible to COVID-19, the Health & Wellness Clinic has free flu shots available to Tribal members and employees.

As an added perk, employees who get a flu shot will be given a coupon for a 16-ounce drink from Kofi Haws, which recently re-opened after a six-month closure due to the pandemic.

To get a flu shot, an appointment must be made by calling 503-879-2032, Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe said in a Facebook Live event on Wednesday, Sept. 23.

"Everyone six months or older should get a flu shot," Rowe said. "Also, people who are at high risk for the flu are also high risk for COVID. A flu shot gives the ability to protect against one respiratory illness that can make you more susceptible to contracting COVID. Both of these illnesses are incredibly dangerous to vulnerable populations."

It was the Tribe's 12th Facebook Live event, with approximately 127 people logged in to watch. Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George chaired the meeting. Also in attendance were Tribal Council member Michael Langley, Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez and General Manager David Fullerton.

George reminded those watch-

ing that the Tribe had sent out a COVID-19 application for its Virus Relief Payment program, which will send adult Tribal members two more \$600 payments on Oct. 16 and Nov. 16. An application must be submitted for each payment and is also online at grandronde.org. These payments will bring the total to \$4,400 that the Tribe has given its members in relief money since March using its CARES Act funding.

Rowe announced that the clinic has conducted 659 COVID-19 tests. Of those, 647 were negative, seven were positive retests and five were positive tests.

Fullerton reminded Facebook Live viewers that the Tribe was still in a state of emergency as it has been since March.

"Remember to keep wearing your masks, social distancing and washing your hands," he said. "We're still under Phase Two of our plan and don't expect to move into Phase Three until the end of the year."

Fullerton also thanked the 60 employees and volunteers who helped while the Tribe was hosting firefighters battling the Echo Mountain Complex blaze west of Grand Ronde in Lincoln County. The fire is now 100 percent contained.

"I really appreciate the people who stepped up to help," he said. "It reflected well on the Tribe." ■

Officials encourage Oregon residents to register for disaster assistance

FIRES continued front front page

Additionally, state and federal officials are encouraging Oregon residents to register for disaster assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

There is an individual assistance program for survivors in Clackamas, Douglas, Jackson, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Linn and Marion counties.

"Disaster assistance may include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the

effects of the disaster," a FEMA press release stated.

More information can be found at the following:

- Browsing DisasterAssistance.gov or FEMA.gov.
- Downloading the FEMA app.
- Calling 800-621-3362. The toll-free telephone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.

Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also are available to homeowners, renters and businesses. Call the SBA at 800-659-2955 or visit www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance for more information. ■

Community Health Program

Medical Transport Services

Medical transportation services are available to Tribal members within the six-county service area when an alternate means of transportation is not available. Advance notice required.

Please call 503-879-2078 to schedule a reservation.



History and Culture 2020
SUMMIT
The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

VIRTUAL EVENT OFFERINGS

OCTOBER 14TH / 7PM
Marys Peak Group of the Sierra Club, The Spring Creek Project, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde present the October 2020 Virtual Champeñefu Lecture!

Changes in the Land: Oregon 1800 to 2020
Presented By | Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham
Professor Emeritus of History at Lewis & Clark College

OCTOBER 22ND / 6PM - 7:30PM
The Oregon Historical Society & The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde present!

The Surprising Adventures of George Gibbs, 1816-1873, on the Oregon Frontier
Presented By | Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham Professor Emeritus of History, Lewis & Clark College, with a panel discussion to follow.

Panelists | Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham, Dr. Sara Gonzales (University of Washington), Dr. Shannon Tushingham (Washington State University), and David Harrelson (Grand Ronde Tribes)

NOVEMBER 18TH / 7PM
Marys Peak Group of the Sierra Club, The Spring Creek Project and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde present the November 2020 Virtual Champeñefu Lecture!

StoryMap: Indigenous Naming of Creeks on Marys Peak
Presented By | Grand Ronde Tribal Members (Jesse Norton and Greg Archuleta)

Valley of the Willamette River, 1848 by Henry J. Warre & Thomas Miles Richardson, Jr. Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society

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