

Grand Ronde Road repair delayed indefinitely

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

First it was smoky skies after Labor Day caused by numerous wildfires in western Oregon.

Then it was a lack of potential bidders.

The scheduled repair work on Grand Ronde Road has been delayed for the foreseeable future, Tribal Public Works Coordinator John Mercier said on Thursday, Oct. 8.

“Polk County sent the project out to bid and received zero bids,” Mercier said. “We attempted to sole source the project, but was unsuccessful. We plan to maintain a ‘patch-as-we-go’ process until the pavers are ready to bid the project.

“I believe the lack of bids was mostly due to shutdowns resulting from COVID and wildfires. Polk called one paver and they answered with a ‘we are not working at all’ response.”

Tribal Council approved a memorandum of agreement with Polk County on repairing pothole-marked Grand Ronde Road during its Aug. 19 meeting.

Polk County, which has jurisdiction over the roadway, was to perform engineering and project management while the Tribe paid for the estimated \$45,000 in repairs as part of its Long Range Transportation Plan/Tribal Transportation Program.

Polk County Public Works Director Todd Whitaker said the repairs involve patch paving to fix the pot-

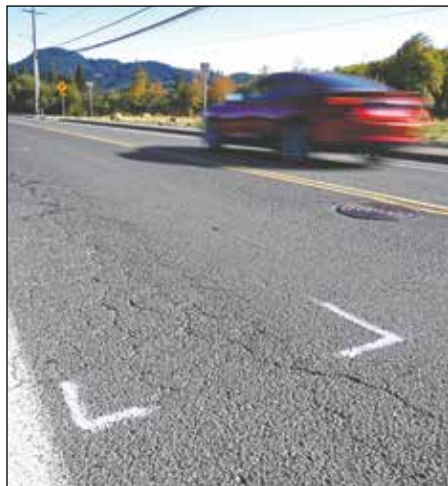


Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Although white paint outlines the alligator cracking on Grand Ronde Road that needs to be repaired, the work will have to wait until pavers are ready to bid on the project.

holes and replacing the “alligator” cracking – interconnected cracking of the asphalt – to help keep the road in shape for a few more years.

Road repair work was originally set to begin in the second week of September and be completed by Sept. 30.

Grand Ronde Road was last significantly reconstructed in 2009 and completed in 2010 for \$4.8 million using a mix of Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service and Polk County funds.

The two main culprits causing the potholes and alligator cracking are a combination of moisture issues with Grand Ronde-area soil and heavy trucks using the road as a shortcut to Highway 18. ■

Tribe receives grant to fund domestic violence efforts

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde received a \$789,997 U.S. Department of Justice grant that will help fund the Tribe’s efforts to reduce domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking and stalking.

The Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation grant is designed to enhance law enforcement and Tribal justice practices, expand victim services and sustain crime prevention and intervention efforts.

The Tribe’s grant was part of the \$39.1 million administered by the Justice Department’s Office on Violence Against Women.

“OVW’s funding supports Native American and Alaska Native communities as they work across their communities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence,” said Office on Violence Against Women Principal Deputy Director Laura Rogers. “These awards represent the strong commitment that OVW has made to help protect the most vulnerable members of Tribal communities.”

The federal funds will help Grand Ronde hire a domestic violence relief advocate, domestic violence-focused police officer at the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department and supplement the salary of the current domestic violence manager in the Social Services Department. ■

Health Authority offers safe trick-or-treating tips

This year, it is more important than ever to put safety first because of COVID-19 cases that have increased recently and holiday gatherings on Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day that led to more cases, says the Oregon Health Authority.

The Health Authority suggests choosing low-risk Halloween plans that can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, decrease the impact on Oregon’s health care system and save lives.

This year, the Health Authority is recommending that Oregonians avoid traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating because it is a high-risk activity for crowding among people outside your doorway. The recommendation aligns with the federal Centers for Disease Control, which also recommends families avoid traditional trick-or-treating.

Some ideas for safer, low-risk activities include holding online costume contests, watching a scary movie online, carving pumpkins with people in your household, decorating your house or apartment, or touring the neighborhood to look at decorated houses with members of your household.

“If you dress up in a costume, be careful to plan a costume that allows you to wear a face covering,” said State Health Officer Dr. Dean Sidelinger. “Halloween masks will not protect you or others from coronavirus. Wearing a cloth or disposable face mask that fits snugly and covers your mouth and nose is still required while wearing a costume, no matter how scary or silly your costume is.” ■

WIC visits Community Center monthly

Pregnant? Breastfeeding? Does your family include a child under the age of 5? If so, you may qualify for the Women, Infants and Children program.

With WIC, people can receive answers to nutritional questions and access fruits and vegetables, whole grains, eggs, milk, cheese, juice, cereal and more.

A WIC representative visits the Tribal Community Center on the third Tuesday of the month, which will be Oct. 20.

Walk-ins are welcome between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 503-879-2034. ■

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Grand Ronde’s COVID-19 Relief team you probably haven’t heard of.

Grand Ronde hired Sam Thornsberry and Stephanie King as the new COVID-19 Relief Community Health Representatives

(COVID-19 CHRs). They are responsible for safely assisting the other CHRs with Tribal Elders’ needs, disseminating up-to-date COVID-19 information to Grand Ronde and connecting members to the appropriate medical resources. In their unprecedented positions, King and Thornsberry told the Smoke Signals podcast they are “here and ready to help.” You can contact King at 503-879-2016 and Thornsberry at 503-879-1693.

For more information, contact Kamiah Koch at 503-879-1461 or kamiah.koch@grandronde.org



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