

## Kuust becomes the third employee to reach the 31-year mark

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reached the 31-year mark in working for the Tribe.

Kuust becomes the third employee to reach the 31-year mark, joining Health & Wellness Business Office Manager Tresa Mercier and Head Groundskeeper Gregg Leno as having worked more than three decades for the Tribe.

Joining Kuust in the three decades or more club were Health Benefits Specialist Barbara Steere, Staff Accountant Melanie Hubbard, Procurement Assistant Kelly Leno, General Manager's Office Administrative Assistant Barbara Branson and GED Coordinator Tracy Biery, who attained 30 years apiece.

In the quarter-century or more club were Tribal Attorney Rob Greene at 26 years, Social Services Administrative Assistant Tammy Garrison with 27 years and Natural Resources Department Manager Michael Wilson and Finance Officer Chris Leno, who both reached 28 years of service. Higher Education Manager Bryan Langley and Chinuk Immersion Preschool Teacher Jeff Mercier notched 29 years.

Achieving 20 or more years of service are Assistant Tribal Attorney Kim D'Aquila and Cultural

Advisor Bobby Mercier, who both reached 24 years. Family Services Assistant Elaine Lane Raven, Dental Hygienist Sheila Blacketer and Swing Shift Supervisor Ben Bishop reached the 22-year mark and Procurement Supervisor Kevin Mueller and Cultural Resources Specialist Christopher Bailey reached 21 years.

Elementary Lead Matthew Bucknell and Facilities Manager Tyson Mercier hit 20 years of service.

Third-quarter award recipients were hired between July and September.

Employees received certificates and bonus checks in appreciation of their increasing tenure with the Tribe. In addition, those reaching the 10-year mark received a Tribal Pendleton blanket or an extra \$100 in their bonus check.

Employees honored during the third quarter included:

**19 years:** Security Department Supervisor Roel Hernandez, Purchase/Referred Care Health Care Payment Specialist Erica Mercier and Interpretive Coordinator Travis Stewart.

**18 years:** Audit Director Trudi Yoshikawa, Swing Shift Housekeeper Nathan Mueller, Treasury Manager Rick Andersen and Cook Kevin Campbell.

**17 years:** Benefits Special-

ist Peggy Carpenter and Nutrition Program Manager Kristy Criss-Lawson.

**16 years:** Health Information Technician Stephanie Simmons, Member Services Administrator Shannon Simi, Finance Executive Assistant Ken Trevino and Employment Specialist Brandy Hembree.

**15 years:** Housing Services Coordinator Deborah Kroeker and Health Information Technician Leanna Norwood.

**13 years:** Natural Resources Department Secretary Scarlett Holtz, Senior Help Desk Technician Alec Palanuk-Mercier, Publications Coordinator Dean Rhodes, Preschool Bus Driver/Aide Jennifer Jerabek and Employment Specialist Misty Carl.

**11 years:** Mail Room/Printing Clerk Anna White, Help Desk Technician Spencer Olson and Maintenance Supervisor Andrew Freeman.

**10 years:** Maintenance Technician Jason Bailey, Health Information Technician Amanda McMahon, TERO Administrative Assistant Lori Sterling, Member Services Department Manager Veronica Montano, Maintenance Technician Gary LaChance Jr., Early Childhood Education Department Manager Angie Blackwell, Housing Maintenance Technician Michael

Lane, Young Child Wellness Community Coordinator Keri Kimsey and Adult and Family Services Supervisor Amber Zimbrick.

**9 years:** Vocational Rehabilitation Trainee Amber Yates, Medical Technologist Staci Pemble, Family Support Services Specialist Joanna Brisbois, Maintenance Technician Daniel Mooney and Legal Secretary Susan June.

**8 years:** Child and Family Services Caseworker Tara Summers, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, 477 Employment and Training Specialist Angey Rideout, Registered Nurse Tashina Blair, Senior Telecommunications Technician Mark Scheelar, Parks and Recreation Specialist Jerry Bailey and Social Services Secretary Darla Patterson.

**7 years:** Cultural Education Coordinator Jordan Mercier.

**6 years:** Health & Wellness Clinic Medical Director Lance Loberg, Curriculum Specialist/Academic Adviser Mercedes Jones and Food Sustainability Program Assistant Patricia LeClaire.

**5 years:** Housekeeper Jonathan Baker, Senior Help Desk Technician Braden Ebensteiner, Lead Chemical Dependency Counselor Joe Martineau and Tribal Police Officer Tokata Tehama. ■

## 'We needed to tell the whole story'

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she says. "We are a thankful people, even in hardship. For we know it has made us stronger and has given us the ability to succeed."

The 37-minute film was financed through grants, matching funds and in-kind donations.

"We've very close to completing it," Yazzolino said. "Cheryle's holograms are perfect and bring credibility to the film. We are very grateful for the involvement of the Grand Ronde Tribal leaders and staff."

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George serves on the Clackamas Heritage Partners Board of Directors, which operates the museum.

"I want to thank Cheryle," he said during a Legislative Action Committee meeting. "It's a great opportunity for us to be able to tell our story at the falls."

George and Yazzolino have been working on ideas for a film premiere, along with other projects.

Yazzolino first became interested in including more Tribal history at the museum after joining the staff in 2004. The museum temporarily closed in 2009 due to the recession and low visitor numbers. With the help of grants, it was able to reopen, and Yazzolino subsequently redid the business plan and pored through consultant reports to see where it could improve.

"One thing we needed to change was the programming," Yazzolino said. "We needed to tell the whole



Contributed photo

**Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, dressed in regalia, was filmed for the End of the Oregon Trail Museum's "Oregon's First People" movie. Kennedy will be transformed into a hologram and continually introduce the movie to museum visitors.**

story. We made major changes and also reached out to the Tribe, and to the Oregon Black Pioneers."

The Tribe partnered with the museum on different projects, including signage describing the Tribe's ceded lands and the effects of westward migration. Tribal Elder and artisan Greg Archuleta,

Tribal Historian David Lewis and Ceded Lands Manager Michael Karnosh led those efforts.

"It is historical signage that depicts the Native experience," Yazzolino said. "We wanted to enhance that again. Jon and I discussed future exhibit opportunities with the Tribe, and Cheryle and Greg talked about how cool it would be to have their story told. That dream never left us."

In early 2019, Yazzolino applied for and received a Metro Enhancement Grant for the film. Between the \$40,000 received from that, \$78,000 in matching funds from the Clackamas Heritage Partners general fund and \$15,015 of in-kind donations from the Tribe, the interpretive center

had enough funds to begin production of the film.

"The end of the Oregon Trail story gives us an opportunity and responsibility to educate visitors of the human core, persistence, resilience and other qualities that are universal to our humanity," Yazzolino stated in the grant ap-

plication. "In a time where many people are focused on differences and difficulties, there are many forgotten virtues to our differences to celebrate. The Native American stories of then and now illustrate vibrantly resilience, persistence and life."

When it opens, the film will be shown on the big screen in the interpretive center. It is being produced by Cinemagic Studios of Portland.

"The in-kind donation from the Tribe was huge, but the relationship we have formed is the most important part of all of this," Yazzolino said. "I want what I say to be followed up by actions."

In addition to Kennedy, historical scholar and expert on Oregon Native American history Dr. Stephen Beckham and George, others involved in the film included Tribal Council members Kathleen George, Denise Harvey and Michael Langley, Tribal Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier, Communications Director Sara Thompson and Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez.

"Every step of the way brought me to more of an understanding of the Tribal culture and how it works," Yazzolino said. "This is sometimes a difficult story to tell because of all the negative things that happened in the past. But when Cheryle was here, we worked through all of that. We went full circle with it. At one point, I was beginning to wonder if it was too hard a story to tell, but now I feel really good about all of it." ■