

Tribe joins effort to hold vaping firm responsible for targeting Native youth

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde has joined a list of Tribal and non-Tribal governmental entities in the United States going after Juul, which reportedly controls 75 percent of the e-cigarette market in the country.

Tribal Council voted on Wednesday, Nov. 4, to retain the services of law firm Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Endreson & Perry of Anchorage, Alaska, and two of its co-counsel firms to investigate and file potential legal claims against Juul Labs Inc. and its related companies and management.

Assistant Tribal Attorney Kim D'Aquila said during the Tuesday, Nov. 3, Legislative Action Committee that the firms would receive payment for reimbursable costs associated with investigating potential Tribal claims and be paid 25 percent of any financial settlements that the Tribe receives as a result of those claims.

The Tribe is going after Juul because Congress released evidence showing that Juul Labs targeted Native American Tribes and American Indian/Alaskan Native youth in promoting its products as a safe alternative to tobacco products.

However, the products actually are highly addictive and cause sig-



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Juul products are offered for sale at Grand Ronde Station on Tuesday, Nov. 3. Tribal Council has hired an Alaskan law firm to investigate whether any claims can be made against the manufacturer of the vaping product for targeting Native American youth to use its products.

nificant health issues.

"Juul and other manufacturers ... falsely marketed and sold these products causing Tribes to suffer damages, including increased costs for health care, prevention and intervention programs," states the executive summary regarding the issue.

Lawsuits have been filed against the e-cigarette manufacturer by

other entities, accusing the company of failing to clearly state the dangerous chemicals contained in its products.

World Health Organization statistics show that vaping use has increased dramatically from about 7 million users in 2011 to 41 million in 2018 with the United States being the largest market in the world for vaping products.

Juul products are sold at Grand Ronde Station, the Tribally owned convenience store adjacent to Spirit Mountain Casino. However, General Manager Tim Jackson said the products are only sold to customers 21 or older who provide identification to prove their age.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved an amendment to clarify an easement on the former Lennis Mercier property that the Tribe purchased in 2012. The new language will provide Hubert Road landowners insurable access;
- Approved applying for a \$160,715 grant from the Bonneville Power Administration's Willamette River Anchor Habitat Investments program to reconnect the North Santiam River to a back channel pond at the Chahalpam conser-

vation property near Stayton in Marion County. Tribal Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen said the project hopefully will help flush predatory non-Native bullfrogs out of the back channel pond and enhance the environment for the once-endangered Oregon chub fish;

• And approved the 2021 Department of the Interior funding agreement that will bring the Tribe \$2.886 million in funding, an \$88,425 increase from 2020.

Also included in the Nov. 4 Tribal Council packet was an approved authorization to proceed that authorizes General Manager David Fullerton to start a child care pilot program that would include procuring a modular building to accommodate children and staff. The pilot program, which would address a significant need in the Grand Ronde area for working parents, would be funded using CARES Act and Bureau of Indian Affairs COVID-19 funding through the end of 2021.

To view the entire meeting, visit the Tribal government's website at www.grandronde.org and click on the Government tab and then Videos. ■

CTGR Academic Advising and Coaching Important Services Update

The program has assessed the amount of requests for academic coaching and advising services and believe we have the capacity to expand these services to CTGR Tribal descendants and other Native students at our local schools we serve. Please contact the Youth Education Program for more information or to request services.

Also note that the current Internet classroom held at the Tribal gymnasium has adjusted and expanded hours of operation to serve our youth better.

Contact information: Administrative Assistant – 503-879-2101 or Devon.Mercier@grandronde.org
We look forward to hearing from you. ■

Visioning Project creates West Valley calendar

SHERIDAN – The West Valley Visioning Project has partnered with the Bulletin Board's community calendar to create an online West Valley community calendar that includes events from Sheridan, Willamina and Grand Ronde. To view the calendar, visit wvproject.org/communitycalendar. ■



Sapsik'wala Teacher Education Program: Recruitment and Informational Sessions

Sapsik'wala is recruiting applicants for the 2021-22 cohort!

We are offering Zoom informational sessions for interested parties. Please join us for any of our three opportunities to learn more about our program!

- **Tuesday, October 20th 5:30-6:30**
<https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/93377936198>
- **Tuesday, November 17th 5:30-6:30**
<https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/99866891283>
- **Tuesday, December 15th 5:30-6:30**
<https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/97078392630>

- Federal grant covers education expenses including tuition, books, computer, living stipend, and dependent allowance
- Program participants do service payback by teaching for 2 years in schools with high Native American student populations
- 12 month master's program: MEd degree and teacher licensure in the following areas: elementary, middle-high school social science, English and language arts, mathematics, science, world language (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, or Spanish)
- All participants earn English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsement
- Program is a Native cohort within UO Teach Master's Program
- Program runs from June - June each year

Applications open each September through January, please contact us today!

Email: sapsikwala@uoregon.edu

Phone: 541-346-2454

Website: education.uoregon.edu/sapsikwala



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Education Strengthens
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Oregon has more than 700 deaths attributed to virus

COVID-19 continued from front page

ee announcement that the Tribal clinic's operations would not be not affected by his essential employee-only order.

The Tribe limited access to the Tribal campus to only essential employees in mid-March when the COVID-19 pandemic became a major public health concern in Oregon. After the Tribal government reopened in mid-May, employees have had to undergo daily temperature checks, been asked to wear masks and encouraged to wash their hands frequently and keep socially distant.

"Although we are confident in our testing and contact tracing, we are going to limit campus access," Fullerton said. "Please take all appropriate actions related to protecting yourself, family and co-workers from this virus. ... We have done a great job keeping the virus contained to this point, but for the next few days and weeks, it will be critical that we all do our part."

The Tribe has kept the identities of any employees who contract COVID-19 confidential because of

federal health privacy guidelines. The Tribe has consistently said that people who contract the coronavirus should be supported and cared for and not identified and possibly ostracized.

The Grand Ronde Tribal campus includes several buildings, including the Community Center, Employment Services building, Education building, Governance Center, Health & Wellness Center and the Natural Resources building off Hebo Road. Where the two employees worked has not been disclosed.

Oregon has recorded more than 47,839 confirmed COVID-19 cases and more than 740 deaths attributed to the virus.

Fullerton also announced that the Tribal government will be closed the entire week of Thanksgiving, Nov. 23-27. Tribal employees were already scheduled to have Monday, Nov. 23, off in celebration of Restoration and Thursday and Friday, Nov. 26-27, off in observance of Thanksgiving.

Tribal members should check the Tribe's Facebook page for clinic and Pharmacy hours of operation during the Thanksgiving week. ■