

# 53 employees honored for years of service

**Tresa Mercier marks 36 years of working for the Tribe**

**By Danielle Harrison**

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

Fifty-three Tribal employees, all hired in the last quarter of their respective year, were honored for a combined 721 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe at a virtual awards ceremony held Wednesday, Dec. 16.

In past years, the ceremony was held in conjunction with the Tribe's annual employee Christmas party held at Spirit Mountain Casino. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person event was canceled in favor of an online one.

Health & Wellness Center Business Office Manager Tresa Mercier continues to set the employment longevity record with the Tribe with 36 years of service.

One other Mercier – Public Works Coordinator John – was honored for reaching his 30th year of service to the Tribe.

Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr. led the invocation dressed as Santa Claus and Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy thanked employees for all of their hard work during 2020.

"My hands are raised to you, the employees of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde," she said. "It's an honor and a privilege to welcome you to this celebration. Today, I see the list of employees and I am humbled by every one of you. You are able to adapt and change. When you reflect back on the hard times, it is when you become stronger. Today, we are here to honor and thank you. This is a year we will always remember."

Tribal General Manager David



*Smoke Signals screenshot*

**Tribal General Manager David Fullerton announced raffle winners during the virtual Years of Service Awards held Wednesday, Dec. 16. Fifty-three Tribal employees were honored for a combined 721 years of service.**

Fullerton said that 2020 had been a stressful year on multiple levels, but employees have helped keep things running smoothly.

"It's pretty amazing times thinking back to when this began to where we are today," Fullerton said. "We've been basically in deployment for a year now. Hands up to you, our staff and employees. We are really proud of you. Thank you for your service. How fortunate we are to have long-term employees, and that trend continues. To all of our staff, what an amazing job you have done. As with everyone else, we are looking forward to 2021."

Other Tribal Council members in attendance during the virtual event included Vice Chair Chris Mercier and Secretary Jon A. George.

A week before the online ceremony, Fullerton sent an all-employee

e-mail with event details.

"We all understand that this year has not been a 'normal, business as usual year' due to the pandemic. We have faced a year of learning how to work in a different way than we have in years past. COVID-19 is forcing us to alter the way we celebrate. Your safety, the safety of guests, the Tribal membership and our community is of the utmost importance to us as we consider how to celebrate the holiday season and recognize our employees."

In lieu of an onsite meal, each employee was given a \$20 voucher to use at any of Spirit Mountain Casino's restaurants or food venues. Additionally, every employee received a \$300 holiday bonus.

Achieving the quarter-century mark in employment were Social Services Department Manager Dana Ainam, Facilities Senior Administrative Assistant Daphney Colton, Employee Benefits Administrator Tammy Gould, Records Clerk Hollie Mercier, Compensation/HRIS Administrator Candy Scranton and Lands Department Manager Jan Reibach.

Ceded Lands Manager Michael Karnosh reached 24 years of service. Rounding out employees reaching or exceeding two decades with the Tribe were Dental Assistant Donnette Spaulding, Cultural Education Specialist Crystal Szczepanski, Tribal Court Judicial Assistant Julie Boekhoff and Records Clerk Egypt Leno with 23 years of service; Procurement Department Manager Nathan Rolston with 21 years; and Planning & Grants Development Manager Kim Rogers with 20 years.

Other employees recognized for their service of five years or more during the ceremony included:

**19 years:** Home Improvement Coordinator Donald Coon.

**17 years:** Librarian Kathy Cole.

**15 years:** Home Improvement Coordinator Loyal Hamilton, Gaming Commission Compliance Manager Rose Smith and Post Treatment Counselor Christopher Holliday.

**14 years:** Technology Technician Joe Loomis and Purchased/Referred Care Specialist Tauni McCammon.

**13 years:** Housing Administrative Program Manager Joan Dugger and Community Health Events Coordinator Kandee Little.

**12 years:** Cultural Education Specialist Flicka Lucero and 6-12 Tutor Isaiah Sherwood.

**10 years:** Vocational Rehabilitation Trainee Rhonda Leno and Early Head Start Teacher Melissa Phillips.

**9 years:** Security Officer Daniel Hyatt, Pharmacy Technician Stephanie Wolfe, Senior Applications Administrator Jose Luna and Maintenance Technician Brent Buckner.

**8 years:** Maintenance Technician/Groundskeeper Nicholas Kimsey, Pharmacy Technician Cindy Brickell, Secretary/Medical Assistant Jamie Adams, K-5 Tutor/Advisor Lead Devin Boekhoff and Utility Maintenance Technician Richard Smith.

**7 years:** HVAC Technician Daron Pond Jr., Payroll Administrator Michelle Peterson, Groundskeeper Anthony Henry, Youth Education Tutor/Advisor Emily Rawls and Housing Groundskeeper Edward Denhem II.

**6 years:** Day Shift Housekeeper Shelly Fox, Medical Assistant Amanda Walker, K-5 Tutor/Advisor Santi Atanacio, Community Fund Administrative Assistant Marissa Leno and Chinuk Immersion Preschool Classroom Aide Shantell Ulestad-Salinas.

**5 years:** Dentist Ryan Davis, Classroom Aide Wendy Mercier, Housing Maintenance Technician Winston Mercier, Gaming Commission Licensing Specialist Brittany Mock, Lead Housekeeper Coley Parazoo, Executive Director of Health Services Kelly Rowe and Staff Accountant Gloria Schwalger.

Raffles also were conducted during the event and included cash prizes of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500 and \$1,000. There were also drawings for a day's worth of administrative leave.

Employees recognized during the awards received an additional bonus check and those reaching the 10-year mark also received a Tribal Pendleton blanket or \$100.

After the Years of Service event concluded, employees were dismissed with pay for the remainder of the day. ■

## Childcare Reimbursement Program

Applications accepted September 1, 2020



**Purpose:** Tribal Funding allocated to assist families with high costs of child care through a partial reimbursement program through the Social Services Department.

- This is a first come first serve program
- Full applications and supporting documents must be received to process application
- Approved applicants will receive the reimbursement September 1 through August 31 of the current year
- Each household will receive up to a \$100 monthly reimbursement per eligible child
- Social Services will maintain a waiting list based on date/time of application in the event that approved applicants become ineligible at any point during the current application year

### **Eligibility:**

- The child receiving childcare must be a Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) member and 12 years old or younger
- Child must attend a Certified Licensed Childcare Facility
- Parent (s) / Guardian must be currently employed at least 20 hours per week or more and /or attending school as a part-time student minimum
- Two parent/guardian household, both parents/guardians must be working or attending school
- Household must meet the income criteria of 185% of Federal Poverty Level

### **Documentation required:**

- Completed Application
- Verification of child(s) residence or custody agreement (ie. 2019 Taxes, Rental Agreement, Snap report etc.).
- Copy of childcare facility license
- Release of Information for the childcare facility
- Copies of wage stubs for the past 30 days and current classroom schedule. For two parent/guardian households, both parents must provide documentation

**Contact Social Services at (503) 879-2034**



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