

# College naming Welcome Center after Grand Ronde Chief Wachenno

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

OREGON CITY — Dan "Old Man" Wachenno signed the Willamette Valley Treaty as chief of the Clackamas on Jan. 22, 1855.

Almost 166 years to the date of that important Tribal event, the Clackamas Community College Board of Education approved naming its under-construction Welcome Center after the Wachenno family during its Wednesday, Jan. 20, meeting.

The building will honor Dan, who signed the treaty that ceded a sizable swath of the northern Willamette Valley to the federal government and was later removed to the Grand Ronde Reservation, as well as his family, which included his son, John.

Former Tribal Council Chair Reyn Leno and current Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy are direct descendants of the Wachenos.

"It's humbling to have my grandfather, Chief Wachenno, recognized by

Clackamas Community College in this way," Kennedy said. "The Wachenno Welcome Center will stand as a reminder of the Tribal history surrounding the area, recognition of his significance within that history and serve as a platform to tell the story of the Clackamas people."

"I think it is great any time or-



Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

**The under-construction Welcome Center at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City will be named after Clackamas Chief Dan Wachenno, who signed the 1855 Willamette Valley Treaty and was subsequently removed to the Grand Ronde Reservation.**



**Workers lay the brick facade on the under-construction Welcome Center at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City on Wednesday, Jan. 27.**

tions to this country and this state."

The Wachenno Welcome Center will house most of the college's student services. Though the college wanted the building's name to be easily identifiable for students as an obvious place to get started, there also was a desire to demonstrate inclusivity and honor those who occupied the land before the college existed.

Early in 2020, the college conducted face-to-face interactions, surveys and presentations with students, employees and the Board of Education to explore names that most resonated within the college community. One popular suggestion was to name the building after Wachenno.

A cohort from Clackamas Community College met with the Grand Ronde Tribal Council with the

proposal and received support. The Tribe has a long history with the college, including being involved in its Environmental Learning Center and collaborating on art projects.

Grand Ronde Cultural Resources Manager David Harrelson wrote: "Naming the Welcome Center after the Wachenno family not only honors the first people of the land that Clackamas Community College sits on. It also follows the traditional cultural customs of the Clackamas as the Indigenous people of this place. These customs include the obligations of the people of a place to be good hosts by welcoming and caring for their guests."

"Naming the Welcome Center after the Wachenno family allows for this cultural teaching to be represented on the college campus named after the people and customs it will honor."

College President Tim Cook said the Cascades and Tumwater bands of the Chinooks, as well as the Tualatin and Pudding River bands of Kalapuya and the northern Molalla people also shared the land where college campuses are now located.

"I am honored to affirm our ties to the Clackamas people ... which the college is named after," Cook said. "I look forward to continuing our relationship with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and educating our students about the Native Americans who lived on these lands before us."

Construction of the Wachenno Welcome Center is part of a \$90 million bond approved by voters in 2014. The college, at 19600 Molalla Ave., had 5,187 undergraduate students enrolled in 2018-19. ■

*Includes information from Pamplin Media Group*

## Virtual sharing

Steph "Littlebird" Fogel  
Grand Ronde Member  
-Chinook  
-Kalapuya  
Grew up between Banks, Seaside, McMinnville, Vernonia Oregon.  
Descendant of Kilakotah LeBonte, the eldest daughter of Chinook Chief Coboway

*Smoke Signals screenshot*

**Tribal member Stephanie Fogel, second from bottom on right, spoke about her artwork during the Winter Cultural Sharing virtual meeting held on Wednesday, Jan. 20. The event was held on Zoom and sponsored by the Chachalu Museum & Cultural Center. Twenty-six Tribal members participated in the event, said Cultural Education Specialist Cristina Lara.**

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