

# General Council briefed on Health & Wellness efforts

By Dean Rhodes  
Smoke Signals editor

Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe briefed General Council on initiatives her department has been working on during the last year, but not surprisingly spent most of her time discussing the Tribe's efforts to get COVID-19 vaccinations into the arms of Tribal and community members.

As of Friday, Feb. 5, the Tribal health clinic had delivered 1,168 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine since late December with 824 of those going to Elders 55 and older, Rowe said during the 80-minute virtual General Council meeting held on Sunday, Feb. 7.

In addition, 954 of those vaccinations were first doses and the balance—214—were second doses. Both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines require two doses given approximately 21 to 28 days apart to attain more than 90 percent effectiveness.

Rowe said 839 of those doses have gone to Tribal members, descendants, spouses or parents while 162 have gone to Tribal employees. The former group has seen 71 second doses and 40 employees have been fully vaccinated.

Meanwhile, the clinic continues to test for COVID-19 and recently received a second rapid testing analyzer that permits staff to perform 56 tests per day. Rowe said the Grand Ronde community is still seeing occasional positive COVID-19 test results.

The clinic has conducted 1,837 COVID-19 tests with 1,668 of them coming back negative. Rowe said that there were 15 active cases and 65 people have recovered from contracting the virus.

Rowe said the two-day mass Vaccination Clinic held on Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 3-4, delivered 1,636 doses (see story on page 1). Another 750-dose clinic occurred Wednesday, Feb. 10, in the Tribal gym and the Tribe reached out to veterans and other marginalized communities to give them first dibs on appointments.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy thanked the Health & Wellness staff in helping the Tribe through the pandemic, which became widespread in Oregon in mid-March of 2020.



Kelly Rowe

"I just have to take this opportunity to thank all of our professional medical providers. Everyone who works out at the clinic and Community Health are all professionals," she said. "In my opinion, they have been fighting this battle valiantly and that they have gone well above and beyond their call of duty."

Rowe also discussed the expansion of the Behavioral Health wing at the Health & Wellness Center. Finished in late January 2020, the 4,125-square-foot addition provides staff with eight additional offices that provide increased privacy for patients.

Rowe also said that the Tribe's first medication-assisted clinic in Salem is close to opening to treat people who have become addicted to opioids. The Great Circle Recovery Clinic on Commercial Street in Salem has almost met all of its licensure and regulatory requirements to open.

"It's been a labor of love," Rowe said. "This program will save lives."

Tribal Council member Michael Langley said he is happy that the Tribe purchased an office adjacent to Mill Creek so that water can be incorporated into traditional Native healing practices.

The Tribe also plans to open a second clinic in east Portland sometime this summer.

Rowe also complimented her employees, who have not only continued working through the pandemic, but through smoke from wildfires and adverse weather conditions.

"I can't say enough about how well the team has been performing, but also coming together as a family to do this," Rowe said. "For me, they are all health care champions."

In other action, it was announced that the Sunday, March 7, General Council meeting will once again be held using the Zoom teleconferencing program. The report will be from the Tribal Lands Department.

Robert Wiggs, Judy Ballini, Veronica Gaston, Nicomi Levine and Kathie Levine won the \$50 door prizes while Shayla Murphy, Jessica Maldonado and Stefanie Shandy won the \$100 door prizes. ■

# Back to school



Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

**Tribal member and second-grader Evey Bishop, 7, has her temperature taken while being dropped off as Willamina Elementary School welcomed first- and second-graders back to in-person learning on Tuesday, Feb. 9. First- and second-graders are joining kindergartners in attending school for half-day, morning or afternoon sessions for four days a week – Tuesday through Friday. Higher grades are expected to return in Willamina in early March.**



**Tribal member and second-grader Makalee King and her brother, kindergartner Kolton, get off a school bus as Willamina Elementary School welcomed back first- and second-graders to half-day in-person learning on Tuesday, Feb. 9.**

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### VIDEO GAMES WITH NATIVE AMERICAN INFLUENCES



As we reach the one-year mark of the world facing COVID-19, many people may have exhausted the things they can do at home and are looking for ways to continue entertaining themselves. Smoke Signals came across a list by Vision Maker Media of video games influenced by Native Americans. This video shares the game narratives, their origins and where you can play them.

Watch Video games with Native American influences on the Smoke Signals YouTube channel or social medias.

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



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