

## Tribal Council OKs demolition contract for Blue Heron site

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

Tribal Council approved an \$847,852 contract with Elder Demolition of Portland during its Wednesday, May 5, meeting that will start the process of rehabilitating the former Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City.

The Tribe purchased the former paper mill site, which includes 23 acres and more than 50 buildings, in August 2019 for more than \$15 million. At that time, Tribal representatives said the Grand Ronde Tribe was committed to spending up to \$3 million to clean up the property.

According to the company's website, Elder Demolition has been in business since 1997 and is a fully licensed and insured Oregon demolition contractor.

"Returning a commercial or industrial site to flat dirt is a complex task, especially when hazardous materials are involved," the company's website states. "Precision and experience are necessary. ... As a full-service demolition company in Oregon, you can count on us to manage every aspect of your project, from the initial salvaging of building materials to the groundbreaking ceremony."

The Blue Heron site has significant historical importance to the Grand Ronde Tribe. It was once home to the Charcowah village of the Clowewalla (Willamette band of Tumwaters) and the Kosh-huk-shix village of Clackamas people who were eventually removed to the Grand Ronde Reservation.

Even after removal, Tribal members would walk from the Reservation to the falls to fish.

However, since the arrival of European settlers, the site has been used for myriad industrial purposes, resulting in numerous environmental concerns, such as asbestos and lead-based paints in the buildings to mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls in the soil.

Soon after purchasing the site, the Tribe agreed with the state Department of Environmental Quality to "conduct investigation and remediation utilizing cleanup standards most applicable to the type of development, and in a phased approach over the course of the property's future redevelopment and reuse."

In other action, Tribal Council approved the use of two Tribal credit cards by Emergency Operations Coordinator Steve Warden and Emergency Management Assistant Brandy Bishop.

The credit cards will be used for emergency repairs, purchase of items needed quickly, purchase of supplies like batteries and medical items, filling propane tanks and paying for lodging and travel expenses in emergency situations.

Both cards have a \$5,000 limit and Finance Officer Chris Leno can authorize temporary increases when necessary.

Tribal Council also approved a resolution making Juneteenth – June 19 – one of the Tribal government's 14 paid holidays. The day celebrates the emancipation of African-Americans from slavery in the mid-19th century. Tribal Council first granted employees the day off in 2020 during the Black Lives Matter movement following the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota.

Also included in the May 5 Tribal Council packet were approved authorizations to proceed that recommend Vice Chair Chris Mercier as Gov. Kate Brown's appointment to the Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Advisory Committee and approved a sole source contract with Scholten Construction of Willamina to perform \$402,900 in roof repairs to achaf-hammi, the Tribal plankhouse.

To watch the entire meeting, visit the Tribal government's website at [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org) and click on the Government tab and then Videos. ■

## Fittest cop in Oregon

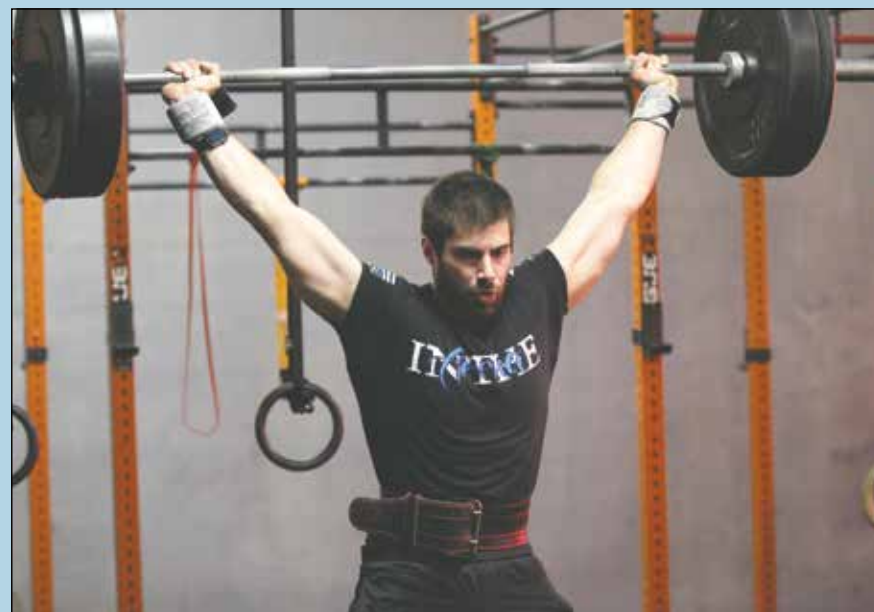


Photo by Justin Phillips

**Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department Officer and Tribal member Tyler Brown lifts 165 pounds during the virtual Occupational CrossFit Games for Law Enforcement at World Gym in Dallas, Ore., on Saturday, May 8. Brown started participating in the games in March as the international competition whittled down participants from approximately 2,500 law enforcement officers around the world to the top 200 who participated in the finals that ran from Thursday, May 6, through Saturday, May 8. Brown finished 29th and was the only Oregon law enforcement officer to qualify for the finals. Brown says he has been doing CrossFit, which is a form of high-intensity interval training that promotes strength and conditioning, for three years. "It creates a really good work ethic," Brown says. "It helps me be disciplined and able to do hard work." CrossFit also held occupational competitions for those in the military, firefighting, health care, college students and teachers.**

## Watchlist: 'Aotearoa to Canada: A Tribal Canoe Journey'

By Kamiah Koch

*Social media/digital journalist*

A film published to Facebook on April 20, 2021, shares the documented experience of Noel Woods (Ngāti Porou, Te Ātiawa, Ngāruahine) joining the 2017 Canoe Journey with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Toi Māori Aotearoa is an independent nonprofit Māori arts organization located in New Zealand that partners with the Grand Ronde Tribe to share the mutual indigenous histories and cultures.

Back in 2017, Toi Māori Aotearoa sponsored two Māoris to join the First Nation canoe journey with Grand Ronde Tribal members, paddling 250 kilometers (155 miles) up Pacific Northwest waterways, gathering and visiting other Tribes on the 12-day journey.

"It was a good way to connect with other cultures around the world, but also share our stories because a lot of Indigenous nations look to Māori people," Woods said in the video.

The video is shot in a "vlog" style with interviews including Grand Ronde Tribal member Brian Krehbiel and a Tribal youth. Wood's film also shows the experience of paddling, traditional protocols and the many opportunities for sharing stories, songs and dances. Most notably, at the 8:40 time stamp in the video, the traditional Māori dance, the "haka," is seen being performed by Woods and Grand Ronde Tribal members in a longhouse.

The video showcases Tribal people partaking in this journey as a way to reconnect with their culture and other Tribes of the region. With the Māori joining, it's also an opportunity to learn about Indigenous people internationally.

The Tribal members interviewed for this video expressed sentiments of growing confidence in their Tribal identity as the Canoe Journey was a place for the First Nations people to share traditions, artwork, stories and histories together.

The 11-minute video can be watched on the Toi Māori Aotearoa Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/ToiMaoriAotearoa/videos/300164501547258](http://www.facebook.com/ToiMaoriAotearoa/videos/300164501547258).





# Free Playgroup in Grand Ronde!




Children & Family SERVICES



Family Building Blocks  
Keeping Children Safe and Families Together

**When:** First Thursday of each month 10:00 am-11:30 am

**Where:** CTGR – Community Service Center 9625 Grand Ronde Road Grand Ronde, OR 97347

**Who:** Parents and caregivers of children under 5 years.

**Why:** Come to play, have a snack and have fun!