

Tribal members
harvest lamprey
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SMOKE SIGNALS

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Incumbents, two challengers seeking council seats in 2021

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council incumbents Cheryle A. Kennedy, Jon A. George and Steve Bobb Sr. and two challengers, Spirit Mountain Community Fund Executive Director Michael Cherry and Tribal Elder Perri McDaniel, are seeking election during the Sept. 11 Tribal Council election in what ties as the smallest candidate field in the history of the Tribe since Restoration.

Kennedy, 73, is the longest serving Tribal Council member in Grand Ronde history. She will be seeking her eighth consecutive three-year term on Tribal Council.

During the 2018 election, Kennedy set a record for the most votes received by a Tribal Council candidate at the time with 712 votes. That record was surpassed in 2020, which also saw only five candidates run for Tribal Council, when Lisa Leno received more than 1,000 votes and Chris Mercier and Michael Langley both received more than 900 votes.

Kennedy has served as Tribal Council chair for 15 years, including the last four years. She was nominated by Langley.

George, 60, is the current Tribal Council secretary and will be seeking his fourth consecutive three-year term on Tribal Council. During the 2018 election, he finished second to Kennedy. He has served as Tribal Council secretary for the last five years. He was nom-

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Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tribal Homeownership Coordinator Michele Plummer is sharing her story of addiction for the first time in the hope that it will help other Tribal members who are addicted to drugs. "I believe stories of recovery are the hope that we give to the addicts who are still suffering," she says.

Tribal member used prison time to confront her addiction

(Editor's note: This is the first in a series of Smoke Signals stories in 2021 that will examine addiction and recovery. If you have a recovery story to share or if you work with Tribal members in recovery, contact reporter Danielle Harrison at Danielle.harrison@grandronde.org.)

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals staff writer

Michele Plummer's addiction story began with her birth in 1971.

"My parents were alcoholics," Plummer, 49, says. "I didn't have a stable beginning. A week

before my second birthday, I was dropped off (to be baby-sat) and my dad didn't come back for me. I entered the foster care system that way. I was in 13 different placements."

The couple who had baby-sat her, the Bradshaws, had four boys

and wanted to adopt a little girl, Plummer says. When she was 4 years old, that adoption was official.

Although Plummer doesn't

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Thomas named casino interim general manager

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal member Bruce Thomas, former chief executive officer of Spirit Mountain Casino from 1993 to 2000, has been named interim general manager of the Grand Ronde Tribe's gaming facility.

Thomas succeeds Stan Dillon, who resigned effective June 3 after six and a half years at the helm.

Thomas' first day on the job



Bruce Thomas

A. Kennedy said during the Tuesday, June 22, Legislative Action

was Wednesday, June 16, Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board Chairman Andy Jenness said.

"We're happy to have him on board," Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle

Committee meeting.

"I am extremely excited to be able to help Spirit Mountain Casino navigate through these changing times," Thomas said. "Spirit Mountain has evolved in amazing ways since the early days and I am extremely impressed with the organization and all of the people in it. I've only been here for a short time and it already feels like home again. I appreciate the opportunity to finish my career as part of such

a wonderful place."

According to his LinkedIn profile, Thomas developed Spirit Mountain Casino from the very beginning with consulting assistance.

"We obtained one of the first direct loans in Indian gaming without the use of a management company," he says on LinkedIn. "I oversaw construction, built the manage-

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