

Tribal Council OKs contracts to restore conservation properties with additional federal funding

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals staff

It's not often that Tribal employees come back to Tribal Council, asking it to amend a contract because the funding agency involved has found more money than originally contracted.

But that is what Tribal Fish & Wildlife Program Manager Kelly Dirksen did during the Tuesday, July 20, Legislative Action Committee meeting.

Tribal Council approved the Natural Resources Department entering into the two amended contracts that will restore oak and upland prairie habitat, respectively, on two of the Tribe's six conservation properties during it Wednesday, July 28, meeting.

The agreements with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program involve sharing costs in which the Conservation Service contributes funds toward implementation of conservation practices and the Tribe provides any remaining resources necessary to complete the projects.

The first contract will help restore oak habitat on 41 acres of the Rattlesnake Butte conservation property northwest of Junction City in Lane County. The Tribe obtained three separate parcels at Rattlesnake Butte in 2012 and 2015 totaling a combined 269.5 acres.

The work at Rattlesnake Butte would improve the forest stand, treat woody residue, and manage brush and plants for wildlife habitat. The cost-share amount was originally not to exceed \$72,000, but the Conservation Service offered the Tribe \$34,776 more in grant funding.

The second contract will help restore upland prairie habitat at Noble Oaks, a 667.5-acre conservation property in Polk County obtained by the Tribe in 2019.

The work over 40 acres would include mowing, weed control and

conservation cover. The cost-share originally was not to exceed \$25,000, but the Tribe will receive an additional \$373 to accomplish the work.

- In other action, Tribal Council:
- Approved a new agreement with the Oregon Department of Human Services to provide for payments for foster care maintenance, independent living programs for children, adoption assistance for children with special needs and kinship guardianship assistance;
 - Approved issuing a Tribal credit card to Alec Mercier, who was recently named the new manager of the Information Systems Department;
 - Appointed Levi Liebelt to the Powwow Special Event Board with a term expiring in March 2023 and appointed Perri McDaniel to fill a vacant TERO Commission seat with a term expiring in March 2022;
 - Approved the Tribe's application to the Oregon Department of Justice's Victims of Crime Act grant program for \$225,000. The two-year grant would support a full-time victim's advocate and some client support services;
 - And approved applying for a \$51,000 Low Income Home Water Assistance Program grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. If received, the grant would provide home water assistance to lower income Tribal member households in the seven-county service area that includes Clackamas County and other Native Americans living on the Tribe's Reservation lands.
- Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy also announced that meetings will return to the 4 p.m. starting time in August with limited in-person attendance and a mask-wearing requirement.

The entire meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribal government's website at www.grandronde.org and clicking on the Government tab and then Videos. ■

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tax Preparation Request for Proposal

The Request for Proposals (RFP) is being conducted by the Member Services Department for the purpose of obtaining a licensed contractor who has 5+ years of experience preparing tax returns.

Qualified applicants shall possess the ability to:

- Provide tax preparation services to Tribal Elders and foster youth living on and off Tribal lands.
- Assist Tribal members in completing tax-related paperwork.
- Serve as a resource to Tribal members who have questions regarding payment and filing of state and federal tax returns.

Preference will be given to members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and/or Indian-owned businesses registered with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde TERO office.

Please contact Veronica Montano for information. All proposals must be submitted by 5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 16, 2021.

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Election Day is Sept. 11

FORUM continued from front page

This year's field of five candidates ties for the smallest slate since the Tribe's Restoration in 1983. There were only five candidates in 2020, which saw three candidates receive more than 900 votes.

Kennedy is seeking her eighth consecutive term on Tribal Council while George is seeking his fourth consecutive term. Bobb is running for his fourth non-consecutive term.

Cherry, who is making her first run for Tribal Council, and McDaniel, who is making her fifth run, have never been elected previously to Tribal Council.

The Candidates Forum was recorded and will be posted at www.grandronde.org under the Government tab and then Videos.

Tribal voters also can read can-

didate statements in the July *Tilixam Wawa* that was mailed out in mid-July and listen to *Smoke Signals'* podcast interviews with each candidate at www.spreaker.com.

In addition to electing three Tribal Council members, voters are being asked four advisory vote questions on the Sept. 11 ballot. They are:

- Should the Tribe increase the minors' trust distribution age from 21 to 25?
- Should the Tribe establish a small business loan program for Tribal member startups and businesses?
- Should the Tribe establish an endowment for land acquisitions?
- Should the Tribe provide expanded health services for Tribal Elders including, but not limited to, dementia care and hospice services? ■

Buffet closure not affecting casino business

Tribal Council member Kathleen George, who also sits on the Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board of Directors, reported during the Tuesday, July 27, Legislative Action Committee meeting that the closure of the Cedar Plank Buffet on July 11 is having little effect on Spirit Mountain Casino business.

George said that after two weekends of no buffet, the casino continues to do a brisk business and that customer head counts have remained close to the same since before the buffet's closure.

"There doesn't appear to be any negative business or financial impacts in association with the closure of the buffet," George said.

The casino announced the closure of the buffet in late June because of health concerns prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that the eatery was losing money. In addition, a survey of Coyote Club members found that few, if any, patronized the buffet and that few buffet customers actually spent money gaming.

Interim General Manager Bruce Thomas announced that a new multi-outlet food service area eventually take the place of the buffet. ■



SERVICES OFFERED:

Children's Clothing
Women's Clothing
Men's Clothing
Blankets
Free Dog & Cat Food

Diapers and Toilet Paper
Emergency Hygiene Kits
Camping Supplies (Tents, Tarps, Wood)
Small Appliances and Household Items
Toys

SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Backpack & School Supply Giveaway
For children ages K-12 at the start of school

Christmas Shop
Adults can pick out 1 new gift for each child in their household. Children can shop for 1 gift for each adult in their household.

The Grand Ronde Clothes closet is located on the Tribal Campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive. The Clothes Closet accepts donations in clean and good condition. Please put donations in plastic bags for sanitation purposes and drop them off during open hours. Please use the Community Board to post large items. For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565.