

Years of Service awards honor 73 employees

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals staff writer

Seventy-three employees with a combined 1,138 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe were honored during the third quarter of 2021.

Pre-COVID, honorees and other Tribal employees typically enjoyed a hearty breakfast served in the Tribal gym. However, due to the pandemic, large indoor group gatherings are still not occurring at the Tribe.

Leading those honored in employment longevity are GED Coordinator Tracy Biery, General Manager's Office Administrative Assistant Barbara Branson, Benefits Specialist Barbara Steere and Staff Accountant Melanie Hubbard, who all reached the 31-year mark in working for the Tribe.

Joining them in the three decades or more club were Higher Education Manager Bryan Langley and Chinuk Immersion Preschool Teacher Jeff Mercier, who each notched 30 years of service.

In the quarter-century or more club were Assistant Tribal Attorney Kim D'Aquila and Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier, who both reached 25 years, Tribal Attorney Rob Greene at 27 years, Social Services Administrative Assistant Tammy Garrison with 28 years and Finance Officer Chris Leno, who reached 29 years of service.

Achieving 20 or more years of service are Security Department Supervisor Roel Hernandez, Purchase/Referred Care Health Care Payment Specialist Erica Mercier and Interpretive Coordinator Travis Stewart with 20 years while Elementary Lead Matthew Bucknell and Facilities Manager Tyson



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tribal Security Supervisor Roel Hernandez is congratulated for his years of service with the Tribe during the third quarter Employee Recognition event held in the Tribal gym in 2019. Hernandez reached the 20-year mark this year and was among 73 employees honored by the Human Resources Department.

Mercier hit 21 years of service. Procurement Supervisor Kevin Mueller and Cultural Resources Specialist Christopher Bailey reached 22 years. Family Services Assistant Elaine Lane Raven, Dental Hygienist Sheila Blacketer and Swing Shift Supervisor Ben Bishop reached the 23-year mark.

Third-quarter award recipients were hired between July and September.

Employees received certificates and bonus checks in appreciation of their increasing tenure with the Tribe. In addition, those reaching the 10-year mark received a Tribal Pendleton blanket or an extra \$100 in their bonus check.

Other employees honored during the third quarter included:

19 years: Audit Director Trudi

Yoshikawa, Swing Shift Housekeeper Nathan Mueller, Treasury Manager Rick Andersen, Cook Kevin Campbell and Firefighter-EMT Jennifer Colton.

18 years: Benefits Specialist Peggy Carpenter and Nutrition Program Manager Kristy Criss-Lawson.

17 years: Health Information Technician Stephanie Simmons, Member Services Administrator Shannon Simi, Finance Executive Assistant Ken Trevino and Employment Specialist Brandy Hembree.

16 years: Health Information Technician Leanna Norwood and Housekeeper Susan Sabey.

14 years: Central Phones Receptionist Scarlett Holtz, Senior Help Desk Technician Alec Palanuk-Mercier, *Smoke Signals* Editor Dean Rhodes, Preschool Bus Driver/Aide Jennifer Jerabek and Employment Specialist Misty Carl.

12 years: Mail Room/Printing Clerk Anna White, Help Desk

Technician Spencer Olson and Maintenance Supervisor Andrew Freeman.

11 years: Maintenance Technician Jason Bailey, TERO Administrative Assistant Lori Sterling, Member Services Department Manager Veronica Montano, Maintenance Technician Gary LaChance Jr., Early Childhood Education Department Manager Angie Blackwell, Housing Maintenance Technician Michael Lane, Young Child Wellness Community Coordinator Keri Kimsey and Adult and Family Services Supervisor Amber Zimbrick.

10 years: Vocational Rehabilitation Trainee Amber Yates, Medical Technologist Staci Pemble, Family Support Services Specialist Joanna Brisbois, Maintenance Technician Daniel Mooney and Legal Secretary Susan June.

9 years: Child and Family Services Caseworker Tara Summers, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez, 477 Employment and Training Specialist Angey Rideout, Registered Nurse Tashina Blair, Senior Telecommunications Technician Mark Scheelar, Parks and Recreation Specialist Jerry Bailey and Social Services Secretary Darla Patterson.

8 years: Cultural Education Coordinator Jordan Mercier.

7 years: Health & Wellness Clinic Medical Director Lance Loberg and Food Sustainability Program Assistant Patricia LeClaire.

6 years: Housekeeper Jonathan Baker, Senior Help Desk Technician Braden Ebensteiner, Lead Chemical Dependency Counselor Joe Martineau, Help Desk Technician Nathan Hoff and Tribal Police Officer Tokata Tehama.

5 years: Infant/Toddler Site Coordinator Star Weatherall, Staff Attorney Brooks Wakeland and Great Circle Recovery Client Registration Specialist Jesseca Curiel-Taggart. ■

VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS!

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR INTRODUCTION TO YOGA (A HYBRID CLASS)

Hybrid means we are offering a limited number of in-person sign-ups and/or the option to participate via Zoom. The link will be sent upon registration.

We will explore breathing techniques, mindfulness exercises and provide an introduction to basic yoga poses. Each veteran or family member who signs up will receive a yoga mat, a sport towel, a water bottle and a pair of headphones.

FIRST CLASS: December 3, 2021, at Noon.
(Sign up by Nov. 19th, 2021)

SECOND CLASS: December 14, 2021, at 5 p.m.
(Sign up by Dec. 3rd, 2021)



Introducing our yoga instructor.

My name is Diana Robertson. I started practicing yoga in 2018 and it has been one of my strongest tools to healing. I've been teaching yoga since January 2021. My focus is foundational yoga. The core of my teaching is to offer the fundamentals of yoga to allow your body, mind and spirit to heal and align naturally. Anyone can learn this practice. It's simple and the healing benefits are so rewarding. I am excited to be able to bring this to our community and look forward to connecting with others who want to learn about yoga.

Contact CTGRtribalVSO@GrandRonde.Org or call 503-879-1484 to sign up!

Ad by Samuel Briggs III

Free Playgroup in Grand Ronde!

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!