

Tribal Council OKs seventh supplemental budget of '21

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved the seventh supplemental budget of 2021 to allocate \$455,000 to purchase the six-acre Walton property in Grand Ronde during its Wednesday, Nov. 17, meeting.

Tribal Council approved buying the property during its Oct. 27 meeting, but a purchase price was not disclosed at the time.

The Walton property is located southeast of the Grand Ronde Fire Station off Grand Ronde Road. It was part of the original Richard Cook allotment and adjacent to property the Tribe owns.

“While the property is not in a prioritized area of land acquisition, it does fall within our land acquisition strategy in that it is adjacent to existing Tribal lands,” the staff report stated.

Previous supplemental budgets in 2021 have allocated an additional \$300,000 to the Small Loan Program, funded a cost-of-living increase for the Elders’ pension program, allowed the Natural Resources Department to purchase a new 500-gallon wildland fire engine, funded the purchase of properties in Grand Ronde and Wood Village, allocated \$486,000 to cover Tribal salaries because of an increase in the minimum wage and funded the purchase of the 37.65-acre Bateman property in Grand Ronde.

- In other action, Tribal Council:
- Approved the Community Development Plan, which has been three years in the making. Approval allows Tribal staff to finish the final layout so that it can be distributed to the Tribal membership in 2022;
 - Approved an amendment to the Tribe’s Self-Governance funding agreement with the Department of the Interior. The Tribe is slated to receive a record \$2.911 million in 2022;
 - And approved the Tribe applying to the Department of Housing & Urban Development for a \$4.27 million Indian Housing Block Grant that would be used to build 20 more apartments – five four-plexes – in the Wind River Apartment development north of Tyee Road.
- Tribal Council also approved the agenda for the 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, General Council meeting, which will feature a presentation by the Social Services Department. Elder Committee nominations also will be accepted during the meeting, which Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez said may be a hybrid virtual-regular meeting with about 30 Tribal members allowed to attend in person.

To watch the entire meeting, visit the Tribal government’s website at www.grandronde.org and click on the Government tab and then Videos. ■

Tribal member’s regalia stolen in Salem

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals staff writer

SALEM – When Tribal member Auburn Logan walked out of her apartment on Saturday, Nov. 20, and saw that her car was gone, at first she tried to be optimistic.

“I thought maybe I might have parked too close to the mailbox and it had been towed,” she said.

After confirming with the towing company that was not the case, Logan had a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach. What made the theft even more of a violation, however, was that most of her regalia was inside the vehicle.

“I was in the middle of moving and got back to the apartment late at night, and just figured I would finish in the morning,” she said. “When I realized my car had been stolen, my stomach just dropped. I could care less about my stolen car (however), I care about the traditional regalia pieces that are in it.”

Logan quickly posted the information to her various social media channels and called the Salem Police Department to report the theft. Within a few hours, her posts had spread and Logan was contacted by various media organizations to share her story.

Her car was found two days later on Monday, Nov. 22, abandoned on a road near Chemawa Indian School. The regalia was not in the trunk where she had left it.

“There were my grandfather’s shell necklaces from his Tribe, my shawls, otter boots, several pair of earrings, leggings and moccasins,” Logan said. “I just want someone to see it and hopefully someone can recognize it. I don’t want anything else but my regalia back.”

Logan said that in the days since her story has been shared online, she has started to receive



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tribal member Auburn Logan dances in her regalia during the third annual Indigenous Peoples’ Day held on the Capitol Mall in Salem in October 2020. Logan recently had her car stolen and when it was returned, her regalia was missing from the car’s trunk.

a backlash of racist and misogynistic comments, while others have blamed her because the regalia was in her vehicle.

“I want people to know this could happen anywhere and to anyone,” she said. “Someone could break into your home and steal it.”

Logan works at Spirit Mountain Casino and said it has been challenging to focus on work when she feels as if a piece of herself has been taken away.

“People don’t understand the importance or really about Native culture at all,” she said. “I’ve been trying to pull it together, but I need to find my regalia.”

If anyone has seen any of the items, Logan asks for them to call her at 503-569-2169. ■

Oregonian publishes Tribal op-ed about ‘unjust consent decree’

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Oregon’s largest newspaper published an op-ed by Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy on Sunday, Nov. 28, in which she argued that the “unjust consent decree” that the Grand Ronde Tribe had to agree to in the 1980s should be renegotiated.

The Oregonian ran Kennedy’s “In My Opinion” column on the cover of its Opinion section.

Kennedy wrote that the mid-1980s effort to obtain Reservation land following 1983’s Restoration cost the Tribe a “significant price.”

“The state demanded that the Tribe sign a consent decree that severely limits our sacred rights to hunt and fish,” she wrote. “Unless we agreed, the state would not support establishing a Reservation; forcing us to remain a landless people and suffer the unbearable loss of our heritage and identity.”

Kennedy said the Tribe has been bound by the “biased” rules within the consent decree for almost 40 years. Tribal members’ ability to hunt and fish is confined to Reservation land and nearby areas and Tribal members cannot hunt or fish in culturally significant

areas or during appropriate times of the year for ceremonial purposes.

Kennedy said the Grand Ronde Tribe is seeking restoration of its ancestral rights to hunt and fish and is encouraged that Oregon Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden have submitted a bill in Congress that would give the Tribe an opportunity to review the consent decree and work with the state of Oregon to update the Tribe’s hunting and fishing rights.

“Restoring our rights ... will allow us to nourish our Tribal members, provide for our community and honor our ceremonial teachings,” Kennedy wrote. “Restoring our hunting and fishing rights will help correct the injustice that has been perpetuated against our people for decades, it will strengthen our traditional role as caretakers of the land and begin to heal past wrongs. ... Through this new legislation, we are only asking for the chance to work with the state of Oregon to regain what was taken from us.”

To read the entire op-ed, visit <https://www.oregon-live.com/opinion/2021/11/opinion-grand-rondes-ancestral-hunting-and-fishing-rights-should-be-restored.html>. ■

FUEL TAX ORDINANCE OPEN FOR COMMENT

The Tribal Council, in consultation with the Tribal Attorney’s Office, is considering adopting a Fuel Tax Ordinance. The proposed Fuel Tax Ordinance was given a first reading at the Nov. 10, 2021, Tribal Council meeting. The proposed ordinance establishes a tax on motor vehicle fuel sold on Tribal land and provides a means for collection thereof to provide a revenue source to fund transportation.

The Oregon State Legislature amended the state’s fuel tax statute to provide a motor vehicle fuel tax exemption on fuel delivered to a service station owned by a Tribe or Tribal entity operating on such Tribe’s Reservation or trust land effective Jan. 1, 2022. In order to be eligible for the exemption, the Tribe must impose a motor vehicle fuel tax at the same rate as the state and use fuel tax revenue consistent with state fuel tax authorized use. The proposed Fuel Tax Ordinance establishes the tax and use provisions necessary to qualify for the exemption.

Tribal Council invites comment on the proposed Fuel Tax Ordinance. For a copy of the ordinance, please contact the Tribal Attorney’s Office at 503-879-4664. Please send your comments to the Tribal Attorney’s Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347, or by e-mail to legal@grandronde.org.

Comments must be received by Friday, Dec. 31, 2021. ■