

Grand Ronde chairwoman included in Biden's brief visit

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals staff writer

PORTLAND — Grand Ronde Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy joined other state and congressional leaders at a brief visit by President Joe Biden on Thursday, April 21.

"The president was very congenial," Kennedy said. "He gave me a hug and was very nice. I welcomed him to our homelands and he said, 'I know. You're the Willamette Valley Treaty Tribe.' I was impressed and thanked him for the work he has done on the part of Native people with the choice of Deb Haaland (first Native American Secretary of the Interior). He has elevated the needs of Native people."

Biden's visit began at the Oregon Air National Guard hangar in Portland, where he spoke to a small crowd for approximately 30 minutes about his bipartisan infrastructure plan passed by Congress last year. The visit was part of two-day trip to the Pacific Northwest that also included a visit to Seattle.

Biden noted how Oregon will receive \$211 million for the state to modernize Portland International Airport for both travelers and cargo. Oregon also will receive \$662 million for fixing roads and \$53 million for bridges.

During the speech, Kennedy was seated near the front row next to Oregon Secretary of State Shemia Fagan.

"I was just amazed Biden could recall all of those facts and figures," she said. "The speech was fast and he never stuttered or slipped. ... He mentioned Tribes will have portions of the infrastructure appropriation."

Kennedy said she was also impressed to see so many tradespeople there, including a young woman who had recently completed an electrical apprenticeship program and was selected to introduce Biden.

"She stayed near me the whole

time and we had a good time talking and making the best of our time together," she said.

Approximately 150 to 200 people were invited to the event. Kennedy, Warm Springs Chairman Raymond Tsumpti and Umatilla Board of Trustees Chair Kathryn Brigham were the only Oregon Tribal leaders in attendance.

Biden is the fifth president that Kennedy has met over the years. Previously, she attended events with George Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde received \$2 million in federal funding for its redevelopment of the former Blue Heron Paper Mill site at Willamette Falls as a part of the 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill, secured by Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley, who also attended the presidential visit Thursday.

Kennedy said that infrastructure improvements at the once empty and abandoned site are necessary to someday open it to the public.

"It's a huge need there," she said. "There is lots of road work that needs to be done."

The Tribe started demolition of the more than 50 abandoned and dilapidated buildings in September and phase two of the project kicked off in April.

The Tribe purchased the 23-acre Blue Heron site in August 2019 for \$15.25 million. In addition to the \$2 million in federal funding, the Tribe received an \$800,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency in May 2021 to begin environmental remediation at the site, which has been home to a paper mill and other industrial and commercial uses since the arrival of European settlers in the mid-1800s. ■

Includes information from The Oregonian.

Winner winner, chicken dinner



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Construction continues on the Chick-Fil-A restaurant at Chemawa Station in Keizer on Tuesday, April 12. The Georgia-based fast food company received approval to build at Chemawa Station, which is co-owned equally by the Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes, in April 2021. There are currently two Chick-fil-A eateries in Beaverton and one each in Hillsboro, Bend, Medford and Clackamas. The restaurant chain specializes in breaded, boneless chicken sandwiches with two buttered buns and has more than 2,400 outlets in 47 states and the District of Columbia, according to its company website.

Drop box installed

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department, 9655 Grand Ronde Road, now has a medication drop box located in the front lobby.

Lobby hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The drop box is for any prescribed or over-the-counter medication. If the containers are too large to fit in the drop box, please repackage them in a zip-lock plastic bag. Tribal Police employees cannot handle the medications so the person dropping them off must repackage them.

Needles and liquids are not allowed in the drop box.

Tribal Police suggest mixing liquid medications with cat litter or coffee grounds and then throwing them away with the household trash.

For more information, call 503-879-1821. ■

Ceremony will be open to the public with no restrictions

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Center served under a tent by Tribal Nutrition Program employees. It will be followed by the 1 p.m. ceremony, which will be open to the public with no attendance restrictions or mandatory mask wearing or social distancing.

The four pillars at the West Valley Veterans Memorial feature the names of Tribal and community members from Grand Ronde, Willamina and Sheridan who served in the four major branches of the U.S. military – Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. The addition of 12 names total in 2020 and '21 increased the number of those honored on all four pillars to 2,374.

This year, four names will be added – Air Force veterans Henry Edwin Sjogren and Chester Dale Bowyer, Navy veteran William Albert Hulling and Army veteran Larry Eugene Darling – and increase the number of names to

2,378. Darling is the sole Tribal member being honored this year.

The memorial was designed by Tribal Elder Steve Bobb Sr., a Vietnam War-era Marine Corps veteran, and features a man and woman dressed in traditional Native clothing standing side by side while reaching for the sky.

Bobb will once again serve as the master of ceremonies and provide the invocation. The Grand Ronde Color Guard will bring in the colors and Tribal youth JC Rogers returns to sing the national anthem. Tribal members Anthony Quenelle and Travis Stewart will provide the drumming and Bryan Shirley has been tapped to play taps.

This year's keynote speaker will be Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Rod Beach, who served two tours of duty in Vietnam and worked for the Oregon State Police.

This will be the 19th Memorial Day celebration at the West Valley Veterans Memorial because the 2020 event was not held because of the pandemic. ■

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