

Tribal Council appoints new chief judge

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

During a rare early morning meeting, Tribal Council appointed Hoopa Valley Tribal member Patrick Melendy of Springfield as the new Tribal Court chief judge on Wednesday, Aug. 24.

Melendy, 51, grew up in Independence and started law school at the University of Oregon in 1993, graduating in 1996. He had previously received an undergraduate degree in history from Western Oregon University in Monmouth.

He has lived in Springfield since 1997 and currently is a partner with the Leahy Cox law firm. He is a member of the Oregon State Bar and Lane County Bar Association. He also was admitted to practice law before the Oregon Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon.

He also has volunteered with the Oregon chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. In his spare time, he plays drums in two bands, hikes and camps in the summer, watches University of Oregon football and spends time with his wife, Laurie, and two children.

Melendy succeeds Cynthia Kaufman Noble as Tribal Court chief judge. She resigned earlier this year to take a position on the Yamhill County Circuit Court and previous Chief Judge David Shaw has been filling in since March. Melendy's two-year contract will run from Sept. 14, 2022, through Sept. 14, 2024.

The Tribal Council meeting was held at 9 a.m. instead of the usual 4 p.m. starting time to accommodate the 11 a.m. funeral service for three-term Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr., who walked on Aug. 11.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Re-appointed former Oregon State Sen. Arnie Roblan and Clackamas County Commissioner Martha Schrader to the Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees. Portland attorney Chip Lazenby will continue on the board



Patrick Melendy

as the governor's appointee. The Community Fund will need to find a replacement for outgoing Oregon State Rep. Karin

Power, who declined to serve another term on the board;

- Sent proposed amendments to the Tribe's five-year-old Independent Tribal Press Ordinance out for a first reading, which will give Tribal members 30 days to review the suggested changes. The five-member Grand Ronde Editorial Board reviews the ordinance annually and suggested the amendments, which include emphasizing the Tribal press as a critical and essential service, ensures all *Smoke Signals* staff adhere to professional journalism ethics and increases the years of experience for the editor from five to 10 years;

- Approved the fifth supplemental budget of 2022 for \$570,000 that will help fund the Community Center expansion to add offices for the Warriors of Hope Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Program;

- And approved a memorandum of understanding for the Tribe to participate in Polk County's coordinated homeless response system that will create a centralized point of contact. Other governments and entities participating include the cities of Dallas, Monmouth, Independence, Willamina and Falls City, Polk County and the Mid-Valley Community Action Agency.

Also included in the Aug. 24 Tribal Council packet was an approved authorization to proceed that directs General Manager David Fullerton to establish a working group to evaluate and address homelessness and emergency housing opportunities for Tribal members among several other housing-related priorities.

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



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

More than 260 educators registered to attend the Grand Ronde Education Summit held in the Event Center at Spirit Mountain Casino on Wednesday, Aug. 24. This year's summit was the sixth hosted by the Tribe's Education Department and the first in-person event since 2019.

Tribal families have more than 500 generations of history living in the Willamette Valley

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questions. I promise we will do our best to answer them."

The summit opened with an invocation delivered by Cultural Resources Department Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier.

Cultural Resources Department Manager David Harrelson then gave a 15-minute crash course on Tribal history in western Oregon, telling attendees that Tribal oral histories date back to recount the Missoula floods that occurred between 13,000 and 18,000 years ago.

Harrelson said Tribal families have more than 500 generations of history living in the Willamette Valley.

Grand Ronde Tribal teacher Adam Langley delivered the keynote address, talking about being a Native American student who turned into an educator and his experiences in both roles.

After the opening introductions, educators were offered four groups of breakout sessions with one being offered in the morning and three in the afternoon.

Morning sessions included Heidt giving an overview of the Grand Ronde Tribal history curriculum and Natural Resources Department Restoration Ecologist Lindsay McClary talking about Tribal lands management.

After a lunch that featured a pasta primavera buffet, attendees choose from 12 more breakout sessions that ranged from discussing the past and present of the Tribal language Chinuk Wawa to utilizing Native plants to infusing Native American culture into the classroom.

Presenters also included Grand Ronde Education Department Manager Angela Fasana, Cultural Education Specialist Cristina Lara, Chinuk Wawa Education Program Manager Ali Holsclaw, Language Preservation Specialist Zoey Holsclaw, Field Biologist Matt Zimbrick, Chachalu Cultural Center Supervisor Crystal Szczepanski, Chinuk Wawa Language Immersion Program teachers Jeff Mercier

and Halona Butler, Native Plant Nursery Supervisor Jeremy Ojua, Youth Education Program Manager Justine Flynn and Chachalu Cultural Center Specialist Dakota Zimmer.

Carrie Zimbrick, superintendent of the nearby Willamina School District, said that the annual Education Summit helps her teachers incorporate more Native American culture and history into their lessons and classrooms.

"I think, for most of them, they have been exposed to some professional learning when it comes to the Tribal history sharing initiative and just our local history," Zimbrick said. "But not to the depths that we expect to implement some of Bill 13 to its fidelity. So I think exposing them to the resources here, the people who are experts that they can pick up a phone or e-mail 'How can I align this standard with a cultural perspective?' Those are the things I am hoping they just have those 'aha' moments and can really make that connection."

Zimbrick said that since the Education Summit started in 2017, the Willamina School District has created a Native American first foods garden and almost all of the signage at the district has been translated into Chinuk Wawa and English.

"(Tribal artisan) Brian Krehbiel also has a big canoe on the playground," she added.

The Willamina School District is approximately 40 percent Native American students, with most of those students either being members or descendants of the Grand Ronde Tribe.

Senate Bill 13, passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2017, requires the Oregon Department of Education to develop curriculum relating to the Native American experience in Oregon. This includes Tribal history, sovereignty, culture, treaty rights, government, socioeconomic experiences and current events.

The summit wrapped up around 4 p.m. with a question-and-answer session and closing remarks from Heidt. ■

School clothing program opens

Social Service's school clothing program opened on July 30. This is a first-come, first-served program and children who benefit must be an enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member. The child must be of school age and enrolled in school (preschool, elementary, middle or high school). Income criteria applies. Contact Social Services at 800-242-8196 or 503-879-2034 for application. Deadline for all applications is Sept. 30, 2022. ■