

Tribal Council OKs Shasta agreement in special meeting

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved two items during a special meeting held on Wednesday, Nov. 2.

Tribal Council approved an agreement with Redmond-based Shasta Administrative Services, a third-party administrator for health care services, regarding a \$350,000 capital contribution to the company using the Tribe's line of credit that will eventually be paid back. Tribal Council approved making the contribution during its Oct. 12 meeting.

The loan will help Shasta address cash flow issues stemming from system upgrades and litigation expenses, a background statement included in the Tribal Council packet said.

In return, Shasta agreed to release the Tribe and its entities from any claims Shasta or its parent company, Lamatsin LLC, have against the Tribal entities arising out of a lawsuit filed by QualiCenters Salem LLC against Shasta and First Choice Health Network.

QualiCenters Salem is owned by Waltham, Mass.-based Fresenius Medical Care North America. Fresenius, founded in 1996, specializes in the care of people suffering from chronic renal disease.

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court in Oregon, alleges Shasta and First Choice have "regularly failed and refused to fulfill their contractual obligations" in paying QualiCenters Salem network rates for the treatment of a patient who worked at Spirit Mountain Casino. It is seeking approximately \$1.5 million for past billing and payments for services it provided for the patient.

Shasta, however, asserts it is the payor of last resort and Quali-



Michael Langley

Centers Salem failed to bill Medicare first for the patient's treatment before attempting to collect from Shasta.

The Tribe has co-owned Shasta Administrative Services since November 2012 in partnership with Hawaii-Western Management Group Inc. of Honolulu, Hawaii.

Lamatsin is a partnership between the Tribe's Huyhuy LLC — Chinook for "to do business with or trade with" — and Hawaii-Western Management Group. Huyhuy owns 51 percent of Lamatsin and Hawaii-Western owns the other 49 percent.

"The specific terms of the release, working capital, as well as other Tribal contributions, are set forth in a settlement agreement between the Tribe, Shasta, Lamatsin LLC and Huyhuy LLC. The Tribal Council, in consultation with the Tribal Attorney's Office, has reviewed the terms of the settlement agreement and believes it is in the Tribe's best interest to execute the agreement," the background statement added.

Shasta employs approximately 60 people and makes about \$17 million in annual revenues, according to the website Datanyze.

The other item involved paying the Tribe's \$30,000 annual dues to the National Congress of American Indians and appointing Tribal Council Secretary Michael Langley as the Tribe's principal delegate to the organization.

Langley and Tribal Council member Denise Harvey attended NCAI's 79th annual convention held in Sacramento, Calif. ■

Health award winners



Photos by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Grand Ronde Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe, above, and Tribal member Dr. Ashley Tuomi, below, who is director of the Office of Clinical Support for the Portland Area Indian Health Service, both stood for photos with Capt. Marcus Martinez, director of the Portland Area Indian Health Service, after receiving Portland Area Director's Awards during the 2022 Indian Health Service Portland Area Director's Recognition of Excellence Ceremony held on Friday, Nov. 4, in Portland. Rowe received her award for 2020 and Tuomi's award was for 2021. Tribal member Samantha Thammavong, acting Human Resources director for the Portland Area Indian Health Service, also was recognized as part of the 2020 Portland Area Director's Awards for a COVID-19 Pandemic Heroism group award.



University of Oregon begins scholars program

EUGENE — The University of Oregon started its Home Flight Scholars Program on Monday, Oct. 10, that is immediately available to currently enrolled eligible undergraduate students and was built in consultation with its Native American Advisory Council.

Through a combination of federal, state and institutional grants, the Home Flight Scholars Program will cover full tuition and fee costs for American Indian/Alaska Native residents, create a new academic advisor position, enhance mentorship opportunities and develop a culture-rich program for new students to help them start successful academic careers.

The program became available immediately to an estimated 150 to 175 self-identified American Indian/Alaska Native undergraduate students who are Oregon residents.

Under the program, once state and federal options are exhausted, the University of Oregon will waive remaining tuition and fees for Oregon residents who are enrolled citizens of any federally recognized Tribe.

"The university is dedicated to the success of Oregon's American Indian/Alaska Native students," said Interim President Patrick Phillips. "The Home Flight Scholars Program tackles the unique challenges these students face and prepares them to graduate with an education and the experience that empowers them to return home and make a positive impact in their communities and for their families." ■

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