

Tribe's takeover of West Valley fire, emergency services is now complete

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Grand Ronde Tribe's assuming of all fire and emergency medical response services in the West Valley is nearing completion after Tribal Council approved a new intergovernmental agreement with the West Valley Fire District that will see the Tribe operate the fire station in Willamina for the next five years.

According to the agreement, the Tribe will staff and operate fire services in Willamina starting on Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2027.

"Tribal Council believes it is in the best interest of the Tribe to enter into the intergovernmental agreement ... because the five-year fire service agreement provides an enhanced level of fire and emergency medical services to the local communities and promotes Tribal sovereignty," the resolution states.

The agreement caps a 12-year evolution of the Tribe becoming a major provider of fire and emergency medical services in the West Valley.

In June 2010, the Tribe opened the \$1 million fire station in Grand Ronde at McPherson and Grand Ronde roads and provided funding to staff it in an effort to reduce response times to the community.

In 2020, the Tribe and West Valley Fire District agreed to a transition plan under which the Tribe would assume control and operations at the Grand Ronde Station.

Earlier this year, the Tribe and district agreed that the Tribe would expand its emergency medical response services and provide staffing for those services at the Willamina station.

The new agreement consummates the Tribe's and district's "desire to transition complete control and operation" to the Tribe.



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Tribal Council approved an intergovernmental agreement on Wednesday, Nov. 9, that will see the Tribe operating the Willamina Fire Station for five years beginning on Jan. 1, 2023.

Tribal Council also approved a \$687,800 contract with Scholten Construction of Willamina to provide early work and construction at the site of the new Grand Ronde Fire Station and emergency management facility expansion project that will be built immediately east of the current fire station at McPherson and Grand Ronde roads.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved an amendment to the cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency that will bring the Tribe \$277,563 to pay for its Portland Harbor cleanup consultant;
- Approved applying to place 884 acres of Tribal Tillamook County forestlands into trust with the federal government; The Tribe has owned the property since December 2016;
- Appointed Tribal Council member Brenda Tuomi to replace Jack Giffen Jr. on the Spirit Mountain Community Fund Board of Trustees with a term that expires in September 2023;

- Approved a pipeline easement with the city of Keizer at the Chemawa Station property co-owned by the Grand Ronde and Siletz Tribes. The easement will allow for installation of water lines to the property;
- Approved amendments to the Independent Tribal Press Ordinance that governs the operations of *Smoke Signals*. The amendments designate the paper as an essential service, clarify the process for appointing Editorial Board members, ensure all staff members adhere to journalism

ethics and increase the years of experience necessary to be the editor from five to 10 years;

- Approved a new five-year memorandum of agreement with the Willamina School District, which is comprised of approximately one-third Native students who are mostly Grand Ronde Tribal members or descendants;
- Approved a maximum \$2.5 million loan to Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. to build an outdoor smoking lounge at Spirit Mountain Casino. The Tribe will use its line of credit to fund the loan;
- And approved amendments to the Fish & Wildlife Ordinance that update ceremonial hunting and fishing programs, limit the number of transfer tabs a Tribal member can carry at one time and restrict the use of drones for hunting and fishing, among other changes.

Also included in the Nov. 9 Tribal Council packet was an approved authorization to proceed that allows the Emergency Services Department to apply for an Oregon Fire Service Capacity Grant that would fund two additional firefighter positions.

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

Drop box installed

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department, 9655 Grand Ronde Road, 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. ■

Grand Ronde Community
Clothes Closet
• Open to All •

Open on
Fridays
9 a.m.
-Noon

SERVICES OFFERED:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Children's Clothing | Diapers and Toilet Paper |
| Women's Clothing | Emergency Hygiene Kits |
| Men's Clothing | Camping Supplies (Tents, Tarps, Wood) |
| Blankets | Small Appliances and Household Items |
| Free Dog & Cat Food | Toys |

SEASONAL PROGRAMS

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| Backpack & School Supply Giveaway For children ages K-12 at the start of school | Christmas Shop Adults can pick out 1 new gift for each child in their household. Children can shop for 1 gift for each adult in their household. |
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The Grand Ronde Clothes closet is located on the Tribal Campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive. The Clothes Closet accepts donations in clean and good condition. Please put donations in plastic bags for sanitation purposes and drop them off during open hours. Please use the Community Board to post large items. For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565.



YAHOO continued from front page

"When you're in the discipline of art, those are very different disciplines and it's cool to cross over."

Although Littlebird has worked with large clients in the last few years, Yahoo using her art as its social media profile picture and publishing her in an article is going to be the largest audience to see her artwork.

In 2021, Deschutes Brewery in Bend, Ore., selected Littlebird to design the label on their popular seasonal ale, the Jubelale.

But for Littlebird, this is just the beginning.

"I have some pretty exciting stuff coming out next year that will likely supersede this," she hints with a laugh.

Although she is unable to discuss some projects now, she shares she is looking forward to the publication



Steph Littlebird

of her first fully-illustrated book called "My Powerful Hair" in March 2023.

The book is a collaboration with Carole Lindstrom, who also wrote

the award-winning children's book "We Are Water Protectors" published in 2020.

Littlebird will be busy next year working on her artwork and going on a national book tour.

"I'm getting a lot of opportunities to represent our community and I'm really proud of that opportunity," she says.

Yahoo is an online service provider co-owned by Apollo Global Management and Verizon Communications Inc. ■