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Tribal Council approves 2023 spending plan

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Deciding not to wait until the “last minute” – or at least its next regularly scheduled Dec. 28 meeting, Tribal Council approved the 2023 final budget during a special meeting held 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 21.

The 2023 draft budget was mailed to Tribal members in early November in the *Tilixam Wawa* and Tribal Finance Officer Chris Leno briefed the membership on its specifics in executive session during the November General Council meeting.



Chris Leno

Adult Tribal members had until Monday, Dec. 5, to comment on the draft spending plan, which included a 6.5 percent increase in appropriations over the 2022 budget.

During the Tuesday, Dec. 20, Legislative Action Committee hearing, Tribal Council member Lisa Leno thanked Tribal members who commented on the draft budget. She added that she appreciated the number of comments, as well.

The Tribe received nine comments regarding the draft budget, said Budget Manager Veronica Montano, and the final budget reflects an 8.5 percent increase in spending more than in 2022. Adopting the 2023 spending plan was the only item on the Dec. 21 Tribal Council agenda.

The final budget is traditionally mailed to Tribal members in the February *Tilixam Wawa*. ■



Photo by Kamiah Koch

The Tribe’s longest-serving employee, Health Services Operations Director Tresa Mercier, received loud applause and hugs from Tribal Council members for her 38 years of service during the fourth-quarter Years of Service Award portion of the Employee Appreciation Holiday Party held on Thursday, Dec. 15, in the Spirit Mountain Casino Event Center.

Celebration of service

Tresa Mercier marks 38 years working for the Tribe

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals assistant editor/staff writer

Tribal employees gathered at the annual holiday party on Thursday, Dec. 15, at Spirit Mountain Casino to share a meal and celebrate 64 Tribal employees honored for a combined 897 years of service to the Grand Ronde Tribe during the fourth quarter of 2022.

Health Services Operations Manager Tresa Mercier continues to set the longevity record with 38 years of service.

One other Mercier – Public Works Coordinator John – was honored for reaching his 32nd year of service to the Tribe.

“It’s been awhile since we’ve all been in the same

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Public hearing addresses Tumwata Village cleanup



Smoke Signals file photo

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals assistant editor/staff writer

Ever since the Grand Ronde Tribe purchased the former Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City in 2019, it has been making site improvements with the ultimate goal of creating a public space where everyone can learn about the original peoples who inhabited the land.

On Monday, Dec. 19, the Tribe

held a virtual public hearing on the Zoom teleconferencing application, led by Tribal Engineering and Planning Department Manager Ryan Webb, who updated the 32 online participants on the environmental assessment and cleanup efforts.

The Tribe purchased the 23-acre former Blue Heron Paper Mill site

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The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde held an online public hearing regarding the cleanup efforts at Tumwata Village — the former Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City — on Monday, Dec. 19. The Tribe has owned the property since August 2019.