

Spring Break
photos
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SMOKE SIGNALS

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Mercier named new CEO of Spirit Mountain Casino

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The proverbial glass ceiling at Spirit Mountain Casino has been shattered. Tribal member Camille Mercier has been named the new chief executive officer of the casino, becoming the first woman to lead the Tribe's gaming facility since it opened in October 1995.



Camille Mercier

Mercier, 52, will formally take over on May 1, Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board of Directors Chair Andrew Jenness said.

Mercier succeeds Tribal member Bruce Thomas, who has been interim chief executive officer at the casino since June 2021 when Stan Dillon resigned.

"I am honored and humbled at the opportunity to serve Spirit Mountain Casino and the Tribe in the role of chief executive officer," Mercier said. "My gaming career began in 1996 and I have been dedicated to understanding and the learning the many different facets of the casino business since then.

"I've been fortunate enough to work with some talented mentors and leaders at three Tribal and nontribal casinos in three different jurisdictions. I look forward to continuing the collaborative work with the team at Spirit Mountain to maximize revenues, create operational efficiencies and recognize our dedicated team members."

Jenness said the board received two Tribal member applications for the job and Mercier was selected because of her depth of experience, education, ongoing professional development and commitment to the Grand Ronde Tribe.

"We are proud to be able to hire a skilled, experienced Grand Ronde Tribal member to such

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Taking root



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Grand Ronde Tribal members, from left, Jesse Norton, Cultural Policy Analyst Greg Archuleta, Tynan George, Tribal Council member Jon A. George and Cultural Resources Manager David Harrelson drum during the Wapato Lake National Wildlife Refuge open house held in Gaston on Saturday, March 18. Harrelson also made opening remarks about the Tribe's history at the lake since time immemorial when the Atfalati people would winter there because the root vegetable was abundant in the area. The Grand Ronde Tribe has been involved in the process of creating the new wildlife refuge in Washington County for about 10 years and Tribal members planted wapato bulbs in the lake in April 2022. Story and more photos on page 7.

Tribe pausing enrollments until April 2024

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals assistant editor/staff writer

Tribal Council will pause enrollment actions in early April that contain a blood quantum component until April 28, 2024, affecting enrollment applications, blood quantum correction applications and Restoration Roll corrections – essentially anything that has to do with enrollment.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy made the announcement during the Wednesday, March 22, Tribal Council meeting, stating that almost 70 percent of current living Tribal members have lower provable blood quantum than what is on file with the Tribe.

"Enrollment has been an ongoing issue since before we were terminated," she said. "Eleven years ago, an audit was done that found errors in our files. There are still questions that are

day, March 22, Tribal Council meeting, stating that almost 70 percent of current living Tribal members have lower provable blood quantum than what is on file with the Tribe.

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An egg-cellent event returns April 8

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals assistant editor/staff writer

The popular Tribal Housing Department Easter Egg Hunt will be held 10 a.m. Saturday, April 8, since Easter is Sunday, April 9, rain or shine, at the covered area in Tribal housing on Raven Loop.

As usual, organizers want to remind participants to arrive early or risk going home empty-handed as the young participants are very

egg-er about scrambling about for the treats quickly.

In past years, the time for all the candy to be spoken for is about one minute after the hunt begins. Attendees are also asked to bring their own basket or bag to carry their treasure home.

This is one Tribal event that requires hard-boiled promptness on

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Tribal youth search for Easter eggs during the 2022 Easter Egg Hunt held in Tribal housing. This year's event will be held on Saturday, April 8, which is the day before Easter. Organizers suggest attendees arrive early for the 10 a.m. hunt.

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