



Special edition insert inside

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Lineal descent amendment vote on the horizon

By Dean Rhodes
Publications coordinator

Grand Ronde Tribal members will be voting in 2024 on a major overhaul to the Tribe's membership requirements, potentially moving away from blood quantum toward lineal descent.

Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier read an announcement during the Oct. 25 meeting outlining the plan.

"During a work session on Oct. 12, Tribal Council met with staff regarding the advisory votes on enrollment," Mercier said. "Based on the results of the vote, council has decided how to prioritize our work on the next constitutional election for enrollment. We will be focusing on



Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier

lineal descendency, including exploring options that will address the '99 amendment issue. Staff is already working on putting these options together."

Mercier added that Tribal Council would discuss the options during the week of Nov. 6 and plan for engagement with the membership.

In response to an online question from Tribal member Eric Bernando, Mercier said he expected another Bureau of Indian Affairs-supervised election to occur in early 2024 after the holidays conclude. "The last time we've tried doing a constitu-

tional amendment around Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks, BIA has not always been amenable to do that," Mercier said.

During the Sept. 9 Tribal Council election, Tribal members were asked five questions regarding enrollment.

The results found that more than 70 percent of Tribal members who voted – 1,295 for a 29 percent turnout – favored changing current enrollment requirement and more than 65 percent supported moving toward lineal descendency for enrollment.

Lineal descendency also was the most favored

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Kennedy receives Community Visionary Award

By Sherron Lumley
Smoke Signals staff writer

Grand Ronde Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy received a standing ovation on Friday, Nov. 3, while accepting the 2023 Community Visionary Health Impact Award from Salem Health West Valley Foundation.

The award is in recognition of her distinguished career and exemplary contributions to improve health care in the region.

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Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy was awarded the Salem Health West Valley Foundation Community Visionary Health Impact Award during the Community Health Impact: Spotlight on Polk County event held at Western Oregon University in Monmouth on Friday, Nov. 3.

Harvesting crab



Tribal Dental Assistant Sam King reaches into a crab trap to release a female crab back into the water during the Grand Ronde Fish & Wildlife Committee crabbing trip in Netarts on Monday, Oct. 30.

The Tribe's Natural Resources Department employees set up traps on four boats in Netarts Bay to collect crab for harvest on Monday, Oct. 30, during the Tribe's Fish & Wildlife Committee crabbing trip. The four boats were not enough for all the Tribal members and staff who attended this year's trip. Some boats took turns switching out attendees so everyone had an experience on the water. Most of the Tribal members received their shellfish licenses through the Natural Resources Department, after a memorandum of agreement was signed by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in 2022, permitting Tribal members to harvest shellfish under a special gathering permit rather than a recreational shellfish license in the Trask Hunting Unit and the ocean adjacent to the unit.



Photos by Kamiah Koch