

## General Council briefed on 2024 draft budget

By Danielle Harrison

*Smoke Signals editor*

Finance Officer Chris Leno briefed Tribal members on the draft budget for calendar year 2024 during the Sunday, Nov. 5, General Council meeting held in a hybrid format at the Governance Center and on Zoom.

The draft budget portion of the meeting was held in executive session, which limits how much *Smoke Signals* can report on the details.

Leno's draft budget presentation ran approximately 45 minutes and he fielded 12 questions and comments regarding next year's Tribal spending plan.

Tribal members interested in obtaining the slides of Leno's presentation should contact Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez at [stacia.martin@grandronde.org](mailto:stacia.martin@grandronde.org) or call 503-879-2304.

The November *Tilixam Wawa* also features a detailed look at the 2024 draft budget and adult Tribal members have until 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 4, to submit written comments.

The final 2024 budget will be adopted on or before Dec. 31. Written comments can be submitted to 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, OR, 97347; or emailed to [chris.leno@grandronde.org](mailto:chris.leno@grandronde.org).

In other action, Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier announced that the next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, with a report to be determined. The meeting will again be in a hybrid format.

Kathie Levine, Ashley Tuomi, Ron Tuomi, Catrina Palachuk and Veronica Gaston won the \$50 door prizes.

Lyliana Rideout, Andrea Knight and Darlene Aaron won the \$100 door prizes.

Ron Tuomi and Gaston donated their winnings to the Grand Ronde Food Bank.

The non-executive session portion of the meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribal government's website at [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org) and clicking on the Government tab and then Videos. ■

## Reservation Act amendment to fix Thompson strip error approved in House of Representatives vote

By Dean Rhodes

*Publications coordinator*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – An amendment to the Grand Ronde Reservation Act that would fix a mistake incorporated into the act in 1994 was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday, Nov. 8.

The amendment now heads to the Senate for consideration.

The Bureau of Land Management discovered a survey error on the Grand Ronde Reservation that dated back to 1871. The error was discovered after passage of the Grand Ronde Reservation Act in 1988 that returned 9,811 acres to the Tribe.

Surveyor David Thompson had incorrectly surveyed the eastern boundary of the Reservation, leaving 84 acres unsurveyed. The land also was excluded from a 1904 sale of unallotted lands within the Reservation and Grand Ronde was not compensated for it.

Until the error was discovered, BLM treated the land as Oregon and California Railroad Grant Lands and permitted private companies to harvest timber on the acreage.

After being informed of the survey error, the Grand Ronde Tribe determined the parcel, called the Thompson Strip, was unmanageable because of narrow boundaries and divided ownership interests. The Tribe agreed to accept a 240-acre parcel of grant lands adjacent to the Grand Ronde Reservation in exchange and surrender its claims to the Thompson Strip.

However, the Department of the Interior in 1994 "developed broad language that relinquished any future claims of this type within the state of Oregon" by the Grand Ronde Tribe.

House Resolution 1722 replac-

es the phrase "state of Oregon" with the phrase "84 acres known as the Thompson Strip" in the Grand Ronde Reservation Act. It also would prohibit any property obtained by the Grand Ronde Tribe as part of a land claim settlement from being used for gaming activities.

Oregon Rep. Andrea Salinas introduced legislation to fix the mistake on March 22. Her bill was co-sponsored by Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, and Reps. Suzanne Bonamici, Earl Blumenauer, Val Hoyle and Lori Chavez-DeRemer.

"Today is a monumental day," Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said. "We are grateful that the U.S. House of Representatives has helped pass legislation for the Grand Ronde Tribe that will help right this historic wrong. Words cannot express what this means to us and the gratitude that we have for Sen. Merkley and Rep. Salinas, who championed this legislation from the beginning."

The bill, if signed into law, would allow the Grand Ronde Tribe to pursue future fixes within the state if other errors are found.

In the House, the bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, which passed it out of committee to the full House in September.

A companion bill also was introduced in the Senate in March by Merkley and heard by the Committee on Indian Affairs in July.

The Committee on Indian Affairs advanced similar legislation in July 2020 and it was approved by the entire Senate. However, it was not passed by the House of Representatives and the bill died at the end of the 117th Congress. ■

## Tribal trick-or-treating



Photo by Danielle Harrison

**Spirit Mountain Community Fund Program Coordinator Angela Schlappie, dressed as a squirrel, hands out candy to eager trick-or-treaters on Monday, Oct. 30, at the Tribal Governance Center. Approximately 75 youth participated in the annual event, which also included stops at the Tribal gym, Community Center, Youth Education, Elder Activity Center, Adult Foster Care, Housing, Tribal Police, Human Resources, Health & Wellness and Procurement. It was sponsored by the Tribe's Youth Enrichment Program.**

## Kotek issues Native American Heritage proclamation

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek issued a proclamation in honor of Native American Heritage Month in November.

The proclamation reads: "The state of Oregon recognizes the rich and diverse heritage of Native American communities who have called this land home since time immemorial; and Oregon is home to many Native peoples including the members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes: Burns Paiute Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, Coquille Indian Tribe, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of (the) Grand Ronde Community, Klamath Tribes, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; and Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes are sovereign nations whose inherent rights are not only grounded in legal obligation, but represent a moral imperative that requires acknowledging the rights of Native American Tribes to self-govern and make independent decisions about the lands, laws, resources and cultural preservation; and Oregon reaffirms our commitment to support Tribal sovereignty and promote respect for the people who first called our great state home."

The proclamation was signed and dated on Tuesday, Nov. 7. ■



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