



Blind Date  
with a Book  
— pg. 9



MARCH 1, 2024

# SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA · MOLALLA · ROGUE RIVER · KALAPUYA · CHASTA

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE · SMOKE SIGNALS.ORG



Tribal member Cheyanne Heidt holds her four-month-old daughter, Lexi Heidt, as she follows along while “Coyote ties up Skunk” is read aloud during the Chinuk Wawa Education Program’s *ikanum pulakʷli* (Winter Stories Night) at *achaf-hammi* (Tribal plankhouse) on Saturday, Feb. 17.

## Winter stories

Tribal Language  
Preservation Specialist  
Zoey Holsclaw reads  
“Coyote ties up Skunk”  
during the Chinuk  
Wawa Education  
Program’s *ikanum  
pulakʷli* at *achaf-  
hammi*.



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS  
Find us on  
@SmokeSignalsCTGR

TO SEE MORE PHOTOS  
VISIT US ON  
@CTGRsmokesignals

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

## Tribe changing health benefits administrator



Photo by Tim Trainor/Redmond Spokesman

On Wednesday, Feb. 21, an announcement was made that the Tribe is transitioning away from Redmond-based Shasta Administrative Services as the third-party administrator for its employee and Tribal member health plans. The Tribe will instead utilize the services of Wisconsin-based Forest County Potawatomi Insurance Department for its third-party administrator.

By Danielle Harrison

*Smoke Signals* editor

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is transitioning away from Redmond-based Shasta Administrative Services as the third-party administrator for its employee and Tribal member health plans.

Tribal Human Resources Director Sarah Harvey sent out an all-employee email on Wednesday, Feb. 21, regarding the change.

“Over the last year or so there have been issues with Shasta’s ability to timely process claims resulting in customer complaints and loss of revenue,” Harvey said. “In 2023, we heard from several members and employees that their medical claims were not being processed. This was the result of a problematic software conversion Shasta made which caused them to fall behind. As a result, some of our employees and members report they have lost their doctors or (were) sent to collections. In the end, we feel this decision is one that is in everyone’s best interest.”

The Tribe will instead utilize the services of Wisconsin-based Forest County Potawatomi Insurance Department as its third-party administrator. Harvey said that transition is expected to be complete by mid-summer.

See SHASTA  
continued on page 7

## Agency Creek Round Dance set for March 8-9

By Danielle Harrison

*Smoke Signals* editor

The 19th annual Agency Creek Round Dance will be held Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, in the Tribal gym.

Friday’s events will start with a pipe ceremony at 5 p.m. and a traditional dinner served at 6. Round dancing will begin at 7. On Saturday, the schedule is the same except there will be no pipe ceremony.

Head staff for this year’s Round Dance will be Tribal member and

Cultural Resource’s Cultural Advisor Bobby Mercier as pipeman, Garnett Whitecalf and Anthony Ironchild as stickmen and Devon Bellrose as master of ceremonies. Eighteen guest singers have been invited.

The event is hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and its Youth Empowerment & Prevention Program.

See ROUND DANCE  
continued on page 8



Smoke Signals file photo

Attendees dance in a circle around drummers during the 18th annual Agency Creek Round Dance held in the Tribal gym last March. This year’s Round Dance is Friday and Saturday, March 8-9.