



Earth Day
cleanup event
— pg. 9



SMOKE SIGNALS

UMPQUA · MOLALLA · ROGUE RIVER · KALAPUYA · CHASTA

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

MAY 1, 2024

Shasta to close, plan participants asked to consider delaying non-essential medical care

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde provided an employee update on the status of its health insurance plan on Wednesday, April 24.

“Over the last few months, the Tribe has been working to transition the administration of its health care plans for both Tribal members and employees away from Shasta Administrative Services and over to our new administrator, Forest County Potawatomi,” an all-employee email said. “While we are happy to report that the transition is still progressing as planned, the situation at Shasta has slowly deteriorated and we are actively looking to find ways to support Shasta in its efforts to keep processing claims as it winds down.”

As a precaution and to help minimize issues with claims processing, the Tribe is asking Tribal members and employee plan members to consider the postponement of elective or non-essential services until July 1, when the transition to a new health insurance plan occurs.

According to the American Medical Association, a non-essential service is, “a surgery or procedure that can be delayed without undue risk to the current or future health of a patient.”

“This will help smooth the transition until we begin service with our new administrator,” the email said. “We are working diligently to support the transition in the best way we can and understand that many of you will have questions and concerns. Please be patient with us and with staff as we navigate this challenging situation. We

See SHASTA
continued on page 3



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member and Willamina High School senior Cohen Haller has received numerous awards for basketball during his high school career. Some of these include selection as an all-league and all-state player every year since he was a freshmen, most valuable player at Willamina for the past 3 years and being named the News-Register Athlete of the Year.

Baller for life

Tribal member Cohen Haller scores prestigious all-league, tournament honors

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

While in elementary school, Tribal member Cohen Haller remembers a fellow basketball player that he really admired telling him he would never be a point guard.

“He looked like he was ready to cry when I picked him up from school that day,” his dad, Tribal member Rich Haller, said. “He told me what had happened and I asked him a question. ‘Do you believe that?’”

The answer was no.

“Well, I don’t believe it either,” Rich said.

Fast forward several years and Cohen, 18,

is one of the most celebrated 2A league point guards in the state of Oregon and has received numerous awards for basketball during his high school career. These honors include selection as an all-league and all-state player every year since he was a freshmen, most valuable player at Willamina High School for the past 3 years and an array of senior year accomplishments.

He scored a quarter of all of Willamina’s points during the regular 2023-24 season, was selected to first team all-league, second team

See BALLER
continued on page 5

Six names being added to Veterans Memorial



Smoke Signals file photo

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

Six names, including that of Tribal member Robert E. Patterson, will be added to the West Valley Veterans Memorial during the Monday, May 27, ceremony being held on the Grand Ronde Tribal campus.

Patterson’s name will go up on the Navy pillar along with the names of Scott B. Leclair and

Timothy R. Linn.

The six pillars at the West Valley Veterans Memorial feature the names of Tribal and community members from Grand Ronde, Willamina and Sheridan who served in the four major branches of the U.S. military – Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

The addition of six names this year will increase the number of those honored on all pillars to 2,388.

Tribal member JC Rogers sings the national anthem during the Memorial Day observance held at the West Valley Veterans Memorial last May. This year’s Memorial Day observance will begin with a meal served in the Tribal Community Center starting at noon and the ceremony occurring outside at the Veterans Memorial starting at 1 p.m.

The memorial had four pillars until 2023, when the Tribe received a \$33,000 grant from Oregon State Parks to install two new black granite slab pillars at the memorial because the ones containing names of Army and Navy veterans were reaching capacity.

Other names being added include Curtis J. Hubbell on the Army pillar and Joseph E. Gaines and Megan A. Davis on the Air Force pillar.

The Memorial Day ceremony will begin with a meal being served in the Tribal Community Center starting at noon and the ceremony occurring

See MEMORIAL
continued on page 7