

Tribal member raises more than \$37,000 to expand small business

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

Grand Ronde Tribal member Troy Douglass employed some creativity when deciding to expand his Portland-based small business, Back to the Basket, which specializes in 1990s and 2000s basketball memorabilia, and features an impressive wall of hooping shoes and new apparel.

Rather than trying to obtain a conventional business loan, Douglass decided to try an investment campaign using web-based Honeycomb Credit instead, with the goal of raising at least \$25,000. By the time the campaign ended on July 14, he had raised \$37,537.

Douglass, who founded the business in 2020, plans to use the money to purchase more items that tend to sell faster.

“For example, because it’s summer time, people are buying slides, jerseys and T-shirts more than any other time of the year,” he said. “The added capital from the Honeycomb investment gives us the ability to purchase these items up front, and in turn allows us to reap a larger profit margin when sold.”

Douglass was searching for grants in May and during his browsing, Honeycomb Credit popped up with a spring 2024 grant. He filled out the application.

“A couple weeks went by and someone from their team (Jon Hanks) reached out via text,” Douglass said. “He messaged, ‘I work for a separate department at Honeycomb and my job is to research businesses that I think would be a great fit for the Honeycomb platform and you check all of the boxes. You have a great branding, community backing and an amazing business that I know people would be excited to support.’”

Douglass decided to start the fundraising campaign because



Troy Douglass

of the ability to use funds for inventory purchases and the concept of having a crowd-funded public investment.

“I believed it would show publicly that we are looking to grow, we are investable and it would open the door to conversations with private investors,” he said. “The benefit for the investors is that they actually get a return on their investment, 10.5% over 36 months. Most crowdfunding campaigns work on a donation basis, whereas with Honeycomb, those donations are actually investments. Not only do investors receive a return, they are also investing in the well-being of community based small businesses, which I believe are vital to the local economy.”

He added that Back to the Basket isn’t looking to expand to another location at the moment.

“We’re looking to stay put and refine all of our current operations,” he said. “I like to make basketball analogies. We’re like a very good team, looking to become a great team. That requires not only knowing the plays, but also how everything works. We are a profitable business. Infusing cash toward our own inventory will allow us to make that refinement in our inventory offering and will get us closer to being that ‘great team.’ I want Back to the Basket to be around for generations. Whether I’m at the helm or not is unimportant to me as long as it operates in the right way. Taking care of your customers, growing community and sharing the love of basketball are important elements to me.”

For more information, visit www.backtothebasket.com. ■

Chipper fire quickly extinguished

The Tribe’s Emergency Services Department responded swiftly on Wednesday afternoon, July 24, to a report of a fire in a chipper at Coastal Fibre Inc. outside Willamina.

Emergency Services Public Information Officer Mariah Walters told Smoke Signals the fire, which started inside the chipper, was called in by people who were driving past the mill.

“The exact cause of the fire is still under investigation,” Walters said.

The department sent two water tenders, two engines, one ambulance and two command vehicles.

“Water was on the fire within one minute of our crews arriving, with the fire considered out within nine minutes,” Walters said.

Because of the confined location and swift response, there was a fairly low danger of it spreading to the nearby structures or vegetation, she noted.

Walters said that the Tribe has nine of its personnel deployed to other fires around the state.

“We are proud to be able to provide this level of service,” she said. ■

Tribal Council approves home removal in Grand Meadows

By Danielle Harrison and Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff

Tribal Council approved the removal of a home deemed uninhabitable and approved removal of any other homes that don’t meet livable standards in its Grand Meadows manufactured home subdivision during its Wednesday, July 24, meeting.

The Tribe is in the process of purchasing back some of the homes that have been in financial distress and/or the homeowners are deceased.

Housing staff received an estimate of \$100,000 to repair the unit and also researched removal. During that process, they found a company that will remove the home for free and attempt to rehab it for sale.

“It’s been vacant for years,” Housing Department Manager Shonn Leno said at a Tuesday, July 23, Legislative Action Committee meeting. “It didn’t make any sense to improve the home based on the cost of the repairs that were presented.”

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved an intergovernmental agreement with the city of Milwaukie for the First Fish Herons cultural art program;
- Approved starting the process of transferring the nearly six-acre Agency Block 1 property located northwest of Highway 22 and the Grand Ronde Road intersection into trust;
- Approved entering into a memorandum of understanding between the Tribal Employment Rights Office and the Oregon Department of Transportation. The MOU will run from 2024-29 and has been in place since 2014;
- Approved a 2-year contract renewal for Court of Appeals Judge

Patricia Davis, Patricia Paul and Robert Miller.

- Approved renewing a 2-year contract for Tribal Court Chief Judge Patrick S. Melendy;
 - Approved an application for a \$675,000 Office on Violence Against Women Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program grant;
 - Approved a first reading of two proposed amendments to the Independent Tribal Press Ordinance which would provide that no member of the Editorial Board be currently serving on Tribal Council and allow for an Editorial Board member to retain their seat while running for council provided that it become immediately vacated upon being sworn in to Tribal Council; and amend all references to the Native American Journalists Association to the Indigenous Journalists Association;
 - Approved an amendment to the General Council ordinance changing the date on which Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. presents an overview of its operations from September to March;
 - Approved an amendment to the Government Corporations Ordinance changing the budget reporting date for corporate boards from Oct. 31 to Oct. 1;
 - Approved an amendment to the Freedom of Information Ordinance reducing the number of years in which certain documents would be declassified from 15 years to 3 years;
 - And approved enrolling one infant into the Tribe because they meet the enrollment requirements outlined in the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance.
- To watch the entire meeting, visit the Tribal government’s website at www.grandronde.org and click on the Videos tab. ■

WIC

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Infants & toddlers
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First & last Friday of every month
10:00–2:00 at Adult Education

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Please bring:

- Oregon Health Plan card (if you have one)
- A form of ID (driver’s license, tribal ID, birth certificate, vaccination record, WIC ID, etc.)
- Proof you reside in Oregon (a piece of mail with your name and address on it)
- Paystubs for the last 30 days (if you have them)




Clothes Closet open

The Clothes Closet is open from 9 a.m. to noon Friday on the Tribal campus near the Elder Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive.

The Clothes Closet accepts clothing, small appliances and pieces of furniture, electronics and household goods that are clean and in good condition.

For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565. ■