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Tribe restores bus route to coast and Salem

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

A new bus route running between Lincoln City and Salem, with a stop in Grand Ronde, is tentatively scheduled to begin operating on Sunday, Oct. 6, once again making it easier for anyone living on the reservation to get around without a car.

The Northwest Connector, operated by Pacific Crest Bus Lines, will be making three daily trips from Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City to the downtown Salem Transit Mall, seven days a week. The bus will not operate on Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year's Day.

The buses will stop at Rose Lodge on the coast, the Grand Ronde Community Center, Spirit Mountain Casino, Rickreall Fairgrounds Park & Ride, Edgewater at Rosemont in West Salem and the Greyhound Amtrak Station in Salem.

The Rickreall stop is a curbside bus stop where riders can catch the Chemeketa Area Regional Transit System van service that makes six stops per day between Dallas, Rickreall and Salem, between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. From Rose Lodge, riders can catch a bus route running along the coast between Newport and Rose Lodge. From Chinook Winds, riders can catch a bus to Safeway in Lincoln City, as well as up and down the coast.

Buses leave from the Grand Ronde Community Center heading east daily at 6:54 a.m., 12:24 p.m. and 6:04 p.m. They return to the community center, heading toward the coast, at 9:26 a.m., 3:06 p.m.

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Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Grand Ronde Tribal Wildland Firefighters Athusoss Gilbert (Passamaquoddy), left, and Brendan Shaw (Warm Springs) use a torch connected to a propane tank to start a prescribed cultural burn on the Bateman camas field near uyxat Powwow Grounds on Tuesday, Sept. 3.

Cultural burn

By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

As the utility terrain vehicle moves forward slowly in the wide strip of mowed grass, a firefighter walks alongside, spraying water just ahead of the nearby back wheel to create a barrier to the flames creeping behind.

It is Sept. 3 and the Tribe is conducting a controlled burn, sometimes called a cultural burn, on the Bateman camas field near the uyxat Powwow Grounds. Two firefighters with propane burners walk behind the vehicle, spreading short lines of fire, then backing off to let the flames spread. Smoke billows northwest across the field as the wind rises and other firefighters use hoes to pull

dried cut grass away from the line of approaching flames.

Fire begins to spread into the tall grass inside the rectangle formed by the mowed track. Observers are told to retreat to Highway 22 if the flames escape containment. The blaze moves slowly and for the most part, stays inside the lines drawn for it.

Fire is an ancient tool Tribes used to shape the landscape of the Willamette Valley into a park-like setting of oak savannah and fields of camas and tarweed that supplied them with an abundance of food. However, after 200 years of fire suppression

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Tribe honors 95 employees for 1,383 years of service



By Nicole Montesano
Smoke Signals staff writer

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde took time to honor 95 employees for their service on Thursday, Sept. 19, with certificates, drawings and games, along with a hearty breakfast.

Tribal Health Benefits Specialist Barbara Steere hugs Tribal Council member Tonya Gleason-Shepek as she is recognized during the third quarter Years of Service awards breakfast held in the Tribal gym on Thursday, Sept. 19. Steere has worked for the Tribe for 34 years.

Photo by Michelle Alaimo

The employees, who have worked from 5 years to 34 for the Tribe, have a combined total of 1,383 years of service.

"Forty-one years ago, this was not here," Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy told the audience. "None of this was here. There were cow fields, primarily."

The newly-restored Tribe started with just two employees, a general manager and an accountant, according to Kennedy.

"And then there was the third one, who was the one who put together all the programs, and that was me," she said.

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