

Tribe receives \$20 million grant for rec center

Oregon Rep. Andrea Salinas and U.S. senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley announced a federal grant of \$20 million through the Inflation Reduction Act for the Tribe's new resident recreation center, now under design.

Engineering and Planning Manager Ryan Webb noted that the money is part of a total of \$22.5 million in grants the Tribe has secured for the center.

"This grant is a new program from EPA as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, this level of funding is part of the historic levels of funding we have been seeing from the current administration and is the kind of funding that can enact real change and growth within the Grand Ronde community," he said in an email. "Our grants management team (has) been working diligently throughout 2024 to secure



Contributed graphic

This is the proposed design for the Tribe's resident and recreation center. The design is for a 47,000-square-foot building and surrounding amenities.

historic levels of funding for the Tribe and this award is a reflection of their hard work and dedication."

The center is intended to double as a community shelter during inclement weather and power

outages, including not only arctic storms but the deadly heat waves that have swept the region in recent years. Solar panels with a battery backup are intended to ensure electrical systems will stay on during power outages. They are also expected to lower electricity bills.

Earlier this year, Salinas secured \$500,000 in community project funding for the same project.

The \$20 million federal investment is through the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program.

The center, which will include gym and fitness equipment, a walking track, classroom space and a community kitchen, will serve as a center for health, community, education and wellness, the representatives said.

"I am excited to announce new federal funding for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in my district," Salinas said in a joint press release. "All Oregonians are feeling the effects of climate change, particularly those living in rural and Tribal communities with limited access to housing and

services. This resilience center will provide a safe, warm place to shelter during extreme weather and ensure continued access to health, education, and other key services for the Grand Ronde community. I will continue working with my colleagues to secure critical investments like this one for Oregon's 6th District."

"The problems created by the ongoing climate crisis overlap with many issues already threatening Oregonians such as housing and access to essential medical services," Wyden said. "This investment for The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in both community services and housing for Tribal members is a great example of what I fought for in the Inflation Reduction Act. We need more comprehensive solutions like this, and I will continue to fight for more resources to advance similar projects in Oregon and across the nation."

Merkley added that the funding is based on years of work to address the need for a local gathering space in the Grand Ronde community.

"The Grand Ronde's new resident and recreation center will be transformative, serving as a place where they can connect, celebrate their culture, and access resources that strengthen their resilience and well-being for generations to come," he said.

"We are grateful that EPA recognizes the importance of this project and what it means to our Tribal members and the Grand Ronde community," Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said. "This investment ensures that as stewards of the land, the Grand Ronde Tribe will have a safe place to gather and care for our people in the face of increasingly hazardous climate events." ■

Stickin' it!



Photos by Kamiah Koch

Agency Anderson, 11, surprises himself and others with the marked piece he was hiding during the Youth Stick Game gathering hosted by Youth Empowerment & Prevention in the Youth Education building on Tuesday, Dec. 17. This was the second stick game event hosted in December as YEP plans to do more indoor activities for Tribal youth during the winter months. Youth who participated in the game were entered into a raffle for prizes after the game concluded.



Tribal member Fabian Quenelle hands point sticks to the opposing team during the Youth Stick Game gathering hosted by Youth Empowerment & Prevention in the Youth Education building on Tuesday, Dec. 17. The traditional game uses sticks as a point system and players guess which hand a marked piece is hiding in. Stick game rules can be found in the Smoke Signals video: <https://youtu.be/vQ-jk2x4M68?si=xSYzuPNtLYa08yz>.

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