

General Council briefed on Health & Wellness

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe briefed General Council on accomplishments her department made during the past year as well as future plans during a Sunday, Jan 5, General Council meeting.

“I can’t tell you how wonderful it is to be able to serve my Tribe every year,” she said. “I’ve come to talk about the things that we’ve accomplished at Health & Wellness. I lead a great team, very hard-working, intelligent and innovative people who provide these services and programs dedicated to our membership.”

Rowe said that Health & Wellness continues to grow with the opening of the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Clinic, expanding mental health services in Salem, adding a dietician, launching two new mobile medication assisted treatment units and opening Black Bear Foster Care Lodge on the Tribal campus.

In total, the department hired 58 new employees in 2024.

The department’s tush lamatsin (Good Medicine) events have continued to increase in popularity, with approximately 4,600 participants. These include monthly food distributions with 6,750 boxes given out to the Tribal community.

Lastly, Health & Wellness transitioned from Shasta Administrative Services to Forest County Potawatomi for its Skookum Tribal member healthcare.

During her presentation, Rowe shared several other accomplish-



Kelly Rowe

ments of 2024, one of which was the department becoming self-sufficient, a goal for several years. This is due largely to third-party revenue. Being self-sufficient means that the department doesn’t utilize any gaming revenue to run its services for the Tribe.

“There’s been a lot of talk about third-party revenue and how we’ve become self-sufficient,” she said. “Third-party revenue is something that is anytime we bill for our services outside of the different programs that we provide...These are services that we send out to third-party billers such as insurance or any type of payor that will provide the payout for these services that we provide to our members or other Natives. Revenue must be used for improvements to Tribal health programs.”

Other highlights of the presentation include:

Residential treatment and recovery services: The Tribe has been renovating the former Sheridan Country Inn for approximately a year and plans to offer inpatient addiction treatment and intensive outpatient services.

“It will mean no more fighting for beds,” Rowe said. “It will expand our ability to offer these services.”

There will be a total of 25 beds available for Tribal members battling addiction. The facility will

also include a workout room, family visitation room, communal dining and group areas. A cultural practice area is being developed outside.

“This gives us the ability to have control over what we can do and plays into having this whole continuum of care,” she said.

Salem detox clinic: This will be housed on the top floor of Great Circle Recovery in Salem. The expected opening date is the winter of this year. It will serve Grand Ronde Tribal members and other Natives to start with and expand to non-Natives if there are extra beds available.

“My intent is to serve our populations because we are the ones fighting the hardest for those beds,” Rowe said.

Community Transitions Program: This program offers temporary, supportive housing in both group and private settings for Tribal members seeking to make the transition into living independently. There are four different homes on four properties in Grand Ronde and one apartment complex in Salem near Great Circle Recovery with six, one-bedroom/one-bath units.

These provide for a variety of housing needs and offer services which range from building daily living skills and offering mental health supports, to cultural opportunities and preparation for

independent living.

Good Medicine events: It was the second full year of the events and the goal has been trying to improve each one. There is a tentative calendar for 2025 on the Health & Wellness Facebook page. Approximately 4,600 people attended the events in 2024.

“These are events that have really brought the community in and we’ve been able to create momentum for new events,” Rowe said.

After the 26-minute presentation, Rowe took 13 questions and comments from the audience.

“Thank you for your report and for being here,” Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said.

In other action, Shawn Hagerty, Bill Stephens, Kathie Levine, Dustin Leno and Diane Smith won the \$50 door prizes. Claudia Leno, David Leno and Darla Reynvaan won the \$100 door prizes.

The next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 2, with a tentative location at the Monarch Hotel & Conference Center, 12566 SE 93rd Ave., Clackamas, in person and via Zoom. The program report will be the Tribal Housing Department.

To watch the entire meeting, visit the Tribal government’s website at www.grandronde.org and click on the Videos tab. ■

Health & Wellness Center entrance

Reminder: The drive-through entrance at the Health & Wellness Center is for loading and unloading only. The entrance was built with our Elders and those with mobility issues and their ease of access in mind. If you are coming to the center to pick up prescriptions, please park in one of our regular parking spaces. ■

PGE argues that it must obtain title to the property

PGE continued from front page

Tribe opposes that lawsuit because it would cut off public access to the falls for fishing.

PGE argues that it must obtain title to the property for safety reasons and that it would grant a “perpetual cultural practices easement to facilitate safe and equitable access for all Tribes with cultural ties to the falls.”

The Tribe has intervened in the lawsuit, claiming that PGE is acting in bad faith and has produced almost no evidence of its alleged safety concerns. It noted to the court that PGE made no effort to acquire the property within five years of obtaining its license to produce power at the site in 2005.

PGE pointed to internal emails from 2017 indicating safety concerns about the fishing platform. The Tribe argued that it’s not safety PGE is concerned about, but rather its business relationship with the Confederated Tribes

of Warm Springs, which opposes Grand Ronde’s fishing platform. PGE conceded that relationship was a consideration, but not the primary one, an argument that District Court Judge Michael H. Simon wrote in his judgement was “a nuanced distinction, at best.”

In December, both the Tribe and PGE requested summary judgement, a decision issued in favor of one party when the judge finds there is no genuine dispute over the facts in a case and therefore no need to go to trial.

However, Simon ruled that neither side had proved its case sufficiently to win outright.

“The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde respects the court’s decision and appreciates the careful consideration of the issues presented in this case,” Tribal Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez said in a press release. “We remain committed to protecting our interests and the public gem that is Willamette Falls, and we look forward to presenting our case at trial.” ■

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