

Youth Ed. community party



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Youth Education K5 Academic Advisor Devon Mercier helps Remington Mercier, 9, choose a raffle prize during Youth Education Community Night held in the Tribal gym Tuesday, Jan. 14. More than 100 people attended the event that featured free books, raffle prizes, a reading of “Critter Counting,” which was written by Tribal member Cheyanne Heidt, and a Chipotle dinner.



Bonnie'Lee Mathews, 7, right, checks out the mountain bike that Saedy Smith, 8, left, won during Youth Education Community Night held in the Tribal gym Tuesday, Jan. 14.



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Tribal Council approves Fort Yamhill transfer agreement

By Danielle Harrison
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved the transfer of the 107.22-acre Fort Yamhill State Heritage Area from the state of Oregon to the Tribe at its Wednesday, Jan. 22, meeting.

The park is located near the uyxat Powwow Grounds and achaf-hammi Tribal plankhouse off Hebo Road.

The transfer process began in 2022 but was halted as there was no Oregon law that provided authority for the state Parks and Recreation Department to transfer the property to the Tribe.

Following that decision, state Rep. Tawna Sanchez (Shoshone-Bannock/Ute/Carrizo) sponsored legislation to update the law and allow the state to convey real property and mineral rights to eligible Tribes. The legislation passed in 2023 and was enacted in 2024.

In the interim, a memorandum of understanding was approved in 2023 between the Tribe and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to jointly manage the property with the eventual goal of the Tribe taking over ownership.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously voted to approve the transfer in November 2024.

The sale was expected to close Friday, Jan. 31.

Tribal Lands and Self-Governance Manager Jan Micheal Reibach has said that it had been “a lengthy, multi-layered project,” and that “Our hearts are full of gratitude.”

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved the sale of the 111.6-acre Win Thin logging unit;
- Approved an application to the National Telecommunications

and Information Administration’s Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program for up to \$2 million to support efforts to achieve digital equity, promote digital inclusion and provide funding for a digital equity coordinator for four years;

- Approved an application to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Partnerships for Success grant for up to \$1.25 million to help reduce the onset and progression of substance misuse and related problems;
- Approved changes to the Spirit Mountain Community Fund articles of incorporation to include organizations designed to serve addiction prevention and local governments with jurisdiction within the counties of where Tribal lands are located as eligible to receive grants;
- Approved reappointing Tribal Council member Denise Harvey as a delegate to the Indian Gaming Association and approved paying annual membership dues;
- And approved enrolling three infants into the Tribe as they meet the previous enrollment requirements under the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance as well as the requirements under the constitutional amendment.

In other news, Tribal Council set the next General Council meeting date for 11 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 2, at the Monarch Hotel & Convention Center in Clackamas with a program report from the Housing Department.

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

Coquille Tribe contends that area is a part of its ancestral homelands

CASINO continued
from front page

believe Oregonians are not interested in setting off a race to build casinos in cities across the state.”

Kennedy was joined by Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden in opposing the decision.

“The Biden administration’s approval of the Coquille Indian Tribe’s Medford casino is highly damaging,” Merkley said. “It sets in motion a competition that pits Tribe against Tribe and endangers the special framework Oregon has supported for Tribal casinos. I will be working with my colleagues, including Senator Wyden, to explore pathways to block or reverse this wrongheaded action,” Merkley said.

“This reckless choice by D.C. bureaucrats catapults Oregon into an uncontrolled escalation of gambling with no end in sight,” Wyden said. “And it compounds the collateral damage from this casino arms race by cavalierly tossing out our state’s time-honored agreement that balances all Tribes’ equal

opportunities to achieve economic independence and prosperity. I will fight this senseless decision with all the options available, including the Congressional Review Act that empowers elected representatives to battle back against rogue federal agency decisions just like this one.”

The press release quoted Karuk Tribal Chairman Russell “Buster” Attebery.

“By approving the Coquille Tribe’s application to build a casino in Medford, far outside that Tribe’s territory, the DOI is knowingly impeding the Karuk Tribe’s cultural sovereignty, frustrating its ability to provide governmental programs and impoverishing the Karuk Tribe in order to enrich a Tribe that has one-third the number of Tribal members and a casino twice as large as Karuk’s,” he said.

The Coquille Tribe contends that the Medford area is a part of its ancestral homelands, and that it should have the right to determine what is best for its people and to provide for their economic security. ■

Minors'

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