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AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE · SMOKE SIGNALS.ORG

Memorial Day remembrance honors fallen and living

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff

Grand Ronde Tribal members honored the Tribe's soldiers on Memorial Day with a ceremony at West Valley Veterans Memorial on the Tribal campus.

Tribal Elder and Marine Corps veteran Reyn Leno spoke to the crowd and said he hopes Tribal Council will consider partnering with Courtney Place Veterans Housing in Salem.

"Looking at the flags in the cemetery, you can see how many of our people went to war for this country, and fought and died," Leno said.

He recalled being on Tribal Council when the memorial was first proposed. The Tribe held spaghetti dinners, bake sales and other events to raise money for the memorial, designed by the late Tribal Elder and Marine Corps veteran Steve Bobb Sr., who walked in 2022. It features a man and a woman in traditional Native attire, standing side by side and reaching toward the sky.

Speaking under a partly sunny sky with a light breeze billowing the flags overhead, Leno told the modest crowd that in addition to the fallen, it's important to recall, and care for, living veterans. He recalled that his father, also a veteran, rarely left Grand Ronde, noting that getting him to travel to Portland for care "wasn't going to happen." Instead, Leno said, the Tribe was able to obtain au-

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Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder and Marine Corps veteran Reyn Leno speaks during the Memorial Day Ceremony at the West Valley Veterans Memorial on the Tribal campus Monday, May 26.



Senators, governor raise concerns about health services, Medicaid

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

A bipartisan group of senators, including Oregon's Jeff Merkley, have been raising the alarm about staffing shortages in the Indian Health Service.

Merkley, a ranking member of the Senate Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, was joined recently by Senate Indian Affairs Vice Chairman Brian Schatz (D-HI), and Senate Indian Affairs Chairman and Senate Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in demanding that Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. ensure the Indian Health Service has the necessary resources and staffing to fully deliver health care services for American Indians and Alaska Natives, as required by federal law.

In a letter to Kennedy in early May, the group called for IHS to immediately halt any further actions affecting Tribal health care delivery without first engaging in "meaningful Tribal consultation."

Grand Ronde Tribal Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe said in an email that approximately one-third of the Tribe's Health & Wellness Clinic funding comes from IHS while the remaining two-thirds comes from third-party revenue.

"While the freeze at IHS is very concerning for Indian Country, there have been no impacts to our



Kelly Rowe

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Bureau of Indian Affairs election set for July 9

Registration forms must be received by 3 p.m. Monday, June 2

By Nicole Montesano

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal members who wish to vote in the upcoming Bureau of Indian Affairs constitutional amendment election Wednesday, July 9, must register to vote, even if they are already registered to vote in Tribal elections.

If approved, the constitutional amendment

would remove the BIA from future constitutional amendment elections.

In order to amend the Tribal Constitution, it must be approved by at least two-thirds of the voters, provided that at least 30% of eligible voters cast ballots.

Registration forms must be received by the BIA Secretarial Election Board's office in New Mexico by 3 p.m. Monday, June 2. Registration may be sent by priority mail to ensure timely delivery. Forms should be sent to: Secretarial

Election Board, P.O. Box 44607, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 87174-9931.

Tribal members should have received their registration packets in the mail. Voters must be at least 18 by or on election day.

In April, the Tribal Council authorized an election to amend the Tribe's Constitution, to remove BIA oversight from future elections

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