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Want to get up-to-date and in-the-know about the Grand Ronde Tribe before anyone else? In an effort to be more efficient and reduce printing and postage costs, smok signalz electronic subscribers receive a PDF (portable document format) version sent to them instead of a newsprint version sent via the mail. All you need on your computer is Adobe Acrobat or another program that can read a PDF and you're set.

Why would you want to do that? The PDF version is available before the newspaper is sent to our printing contractor in Salem. You can read the paper on your computer or print out a copy of individual pages yourself. And you will receive Tribal news much faster than the current standard mailing utilized by the Tribe.

If you would like to receive an emailed PDF version of smok signalz and stop receiving a mailed newsprint version, send your email to esubscription@grandronde.org. Stopping mailed delivery of the newspaper will not affect other Tribal mail. ■

Tribe purchased the former Blue Heron Paper Mill in 2019

FALLS continued from front page

“This legislative appropriation was made without any engagement with Grand Ronde, despite the Tribe’s ancestral connection to Willamette Falls or meaningful public input from Oregonians,” she said in an emailed statement. “Gov. Kotek’s decision represents indifference about Oregon’s true Tribal history and sends a message to Oregon Tribes like Grand Ronde that our documented and indisputable ancestral connections to Willamette Falls and our treaties do not matter. This decision reaffirms the premise that political opportunism by affluent Oregonians will win over honoring Oregon Tribal homeland integrity. It rewards backroom deals while critical state-wide programs such as transportation and education remain unfunded.”

Grand Ronde Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy had asked Kotek in an early June letter to deny or at least delay funding the Willamette Falls Trust, stating, “This project is misguided, disingenuous and comes at a time when our own Tribe is in litigation with the state’s largest utility over our ability to practice our culture.”

Willamette Falls Trust is a non-profit organization comprising the Yakama, Siletz, Umatilla and Warm Springs Tribes, along with government representatives from Oregon City, Metro and the state. It was established in 2015, with Grand Ronde as a member and stated its mission was to re-open the falls to the public and provide more Tribal input to management of the area. However, relations soon became rocky.

A year or two after the Trust was established, Grand Ronde began negotiating with Portland General Electric to place a fishing platform at Willamette Falls. Although negotiations initially went well,



Cheryle A. Kennedy

hydroelectric complex on the Deschutes River, in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

Grand Ronde then sought and received authorization from the state to install its fishing platform. That authorization was opposed by PGE and all four of the other Willamette Falls Trust Tribes, who filed an unsuccessful appeal of the decision.

In 2019, Grand Ronde purchased the former Blue Heron Paper Mill and announced plans to demolish the mill structures and restore the property, including public access to the falls.

In 2021, Grand Ronde withdrew from the Willamette Falls Trust. Kennedy accused the Trust of undermining the Tribe’s sovereignty and complained of “micro-aggressions” from staff and board members. The withdrawal left the Trust without property on which to conduct its mission.

In 2022, PGE sued the state of Oregon, seeking to seize ownership of the falls. It was supported by the Tribes involved in the trust. The Siletz participated as a friend of the court, siding with PGE. Grand Ronde contended that PGE is misusing the federal condemnation process to intervene on behalf of the Tribes with whom it has business dealings.

The case went to trial in federal court this past April in Portland. The judge is expected to issue his decision sometime this summer. ■

Back-to-school fair



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Amy Danforth adds scissors to a backpack as she fills it with school supplies during the Back-to-School Health Fair at the Cheryle A. Kennedy Public Health Building Thursday, Aug. 7. The event was in partnership with other departments from the Health & Wellness Center and featured health and wellness resources, sports physicals with optional dental screening, fluoride varnish, sealants, a limited supply of free school supplies, free roadside safety kits and a visit from Kona Ice. Almost 100 backpacks were given away during the event.

Clothes Closet open

The Clothes Closet is open from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 2 p.m. every Friday on the Tribal campus near the Elders Activity Center at the end of Blacktail Drive. The Clothes Closet accepts clothing, small appliances and pieces of furniture, electronics and household goods that are clean and in good condition. It does not accept books, large TVs or furniture, but there is a community board where people can post those items. For more information or emergency clothes, contact Lori Walker-Hernandez at 559-847-7565. ■



2025-2026 Back-to-School Assistance Program

Youth Education is now opening the “Back to School Assistance Program” for the 2025-26 school year! This program is offered to enrolled Tribal member students entering Kindergarten through 12th grade in the fall of 2025, and supports our youth in acquiring necessary school supplies and clothing.

Eligible students will be issued a one-time \$150 Wal-Mart gift card to be used towards school supplies or school clothing. While applicants will not be required to provide receipt(s), all applicants are subject to audit and may be required to provide receipts at a later date.

Registration opens today and will be a rolling application that remains open until September 30th. Please allow up to three weeks after the date of submission to process applications and distribute your gift card.

Please reach out to Youth Education at (503) 879-2101 with any questions.

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/LbnvtZ9pLyUrtV1U8>



youtheducation@grandronde.org