

# Economic Development Program undergoes transition

By Danielle Harrison

*Smoke Signals editor*

The Tribe’s Economic Development Program has a new look, a new leader and a new name.

In June, Tribal Lands Manager Jan M. Reibach took responsibility for the program, becoming the Economic and Lands Director. He said that the lands team is ready to manage the program as he has been working with economic development centered projects since 1997 and the lands department has been involved in several large Tribal projects, as well as managing real estate which has netted \$15 million in profits.

Now called EcDev, it functions as a program within the Tribal Lands Department with the goals of “improving efficiencies, better aligning with the Tribe’s economy and increasing operational effectiveness.”

“I am grateful to be part of this incredible team to move the Tribe’s economy forward in a good way,” Reibach said. “There are some incredible projects in motion with so much progress being made and good things to come. The Tribe has always been at our best when we work closely together in solidarity. The energy of this movement



Jan M. Reibach

is amazing. With the leadership of Tribal Council, EcDev is collaborating with Finance, Engineering and Planning, Lands, Natural Resources Department, Spirit Mountain Casino, Tribal Attorney’s Office, TERO and many other areas to strengthen and diversify our economy.”

He added that since the merger earlier this year, his team has hosted external economic development agencies including the Yamhill County Economic Development Alliance, Oregon Entrepreneur Network and Business Oregon.

According to a recent program update, the main objectives are to “exercise CTGR sovereignty by identifying, analyzing and providing recommendations for economic development related projects” and to “coordinate with departments and programs to fully vet potential projects and related impacts to Tribal operations and finances.”

As part of the move, now-former General Manager’s Office Executive Assistant Barbara Branson transferred to the Lands Department, with the title of Services Coordinator. Central phones and the Records Management Program, which were previously under the purview of the General Manager’s Office, were also moved under the Lands Department.

“Moving EcDev into the Tribal Lands Department is part of a strategic focus to further align its operations to support the Tribe’s economy,” Reibach said. “The merge of these areas resulted in a substantial budget savings for the Tribe while increasing efficiencies and output. While reducing these operational costs from the merge, we were able to fill two positions in lands, including an administrative assistant and economic development analyst, who will be assisting with opportunity assessments and project evaluations.”

Part of revamping the EcDev program included updating the website to include a new description, mission statement, project highlights, transportation projects, conservation property recovery statistics and the Tribe’s community development plan,

Grand Ronde 2033. “We just updated the webpages for EcDev and the Lands Department with expanded information about the program and several projects to highlight large Tribal project collaborations that include updates for our profitable commercial real estate projects,” Reibach said. “The team continues to move existing projects forward while refining our opportunity assessment process. Every opportunity is assessed for its potential while we are preparing to launch development of a Sustainable Economic Development Strategy, also known as a SEDS, for the Tribe that will provide a pathway for long-term economic success.”

He noted that the creation and adoption of the new strategy will take a few years and will include community meetings with input from Tribal members.

“In the meantime, I am always available to meet and share information with our members,” Reibach said. “Also, we look forward to providing an EcDev update that will include project details at the January General Council meeting.”

Reibach can be reached at 503-879-2394 or Jan.Reibach@grandronde.org. ■

# Spirit Jam



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal member Willow Squetimkin, 9, dances during the Native American Heritage Month Spirit Week jam at the Willamina High School gym Friday, Nov. 14. The jam was attended by all Willamina School District students. Additional activities throughout the week included rock your ribbon skirts or ribbon shirts, necklace making, rock your beaded bling, stick game, rock your mocs and storytelling. The Tribe’s Youth Empowerment & Prevention and Public Health programs and shawash il?i skul were among some Tribal programs that hosted the activities. November is Native American Heritage Month.**



**The Grand Ronde Canoe Family drums and sings during the Native American Heritage Month Spirit Week jam at the Willamina High School gym.**

# Hotel room rates increase

As of January 2025, the Spirit Mountain Hotel at Spirit Mountain Casino has implemented a revised pricing structure for the Elders discount, which has remained unchanged since the hotel’s opening in 1997. The new discounted rates are \$99 for mid-week stays, \$109 for weekends and \$129 for holidays.

This adjustment is necessary to better align room rates with the actual cost of room upkeep, while still offering competitive pricing, according to Spirit Mountain Casino Chief Executive Officer Camille Mercier.

The Tribal member discount will reflect a 10% discount on standard room rates. The RV park will offer Elders and Tribal members a \$10 discount off the standard rate at the RV lot.

“The changes ensure that we continue to provide valuable services while maintaining financial sustainability,” Mercier said. ■



Visit  
Member Services  
at  
**The Elder Christmas PARTY!**

**Tuesday, December 23rd**

- SET UP/UPDATE DIRECT DEPOSIT
- UPDATE PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL, ADDRESS, & OTHER DETAILS
- UPDATE YOUR TRIBAL ID (& PHOTO!)
- SIGN UP FOR THE MEDICARE PART B REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM
- GET ALL YOUR MEMBER SERVICES QUESTIONS ANSWERED WHILE YOU ENJOY THE CHRISTMAS PARTY!

Questions? Please contact Shayla Murphy  
Phone: 503-879-1364  
Email: shayla.murphy@grandronde.org