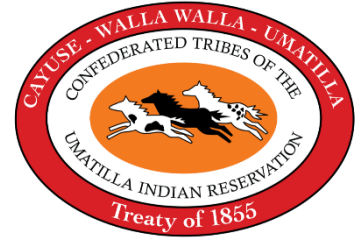


Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



46411 Timíne Way
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-276-3165 • CTUIR.org

June 13, 2025

Contact: Travis Snell • 541.429.7394 • travissnell@ctuir.org

CUJ, CTUIR Communications Wins Indigenous Journalists Association Awards

MISSION – The Confederated Umatilla Journal (CUJ) and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's (CTUIR) Communications Department combined to win five 2025 Indigenous Journalists Association (IJA) awards.

Announced on Thursday, June 12, the CUJ won third place for general excellence in the Professional Division II – Print/Online, while CUJ Reporter Chris Aadland took second place in the division's best news story contest with his story about a derailed CTUIR solar energy development. The CUJ also won third place for best page layout in the Professional Division II – Print/Online.

"I'm incredibly proud of the CUJ and Communications team for their talent and commitment to telling important stories. This recognition is well-deserved," Communications Director and CUJ Publisher Kaeleen McGuire said. "In an industry that continues to face tough challenges, the CUJ has remained committed to informing our community of issues vital to it, and I thank all those who had a hand in growing the publication and enhancing our storytelling abilities."

For a photo of a spring Chinook smolt in someone's hand that the CUJ published, Communications AV Support Specialist Lee Gavin won second place for best news photo in the Professional Division II – Print/Online. He also took second place in the division's best multimedia category with a video story about the Pendleton Round-Up & Happy Canyon.

"Winning these awards really solidifies my passion for photography and videography," Gavin said. "When I started here three years ago, I never would have thought my love to create would become a facet in my career and that would bring me to this point."

But he wasn't the only one in his family to win IJA hardware. His sister and fellow CTUIR member Jill-Marie Gavin, who is the public information specialist for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, won four awards.

In the Professional Division I – Media, she won second place in the best multimedia category. And in the Professional Division I – Print/Online, she won second and third places for best news story, as well as third place in the division for best feature photo.

With a record 871 entries, IJA will recognize the winners of its 250 awards during its 2025 Indigenous Media Conference Aug. 13-15 at the Isleta Resort and Casino in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The annual awards contest recognizes excellence in reporting by Indigenous and non-Indigenous journalists from across the globe.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla Tribes, and formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.

###

Caption1: Chris Aadland

Caption2: Lee Gavin