

GARRETT: New SPRD director is happy to be here

Continued from page 1

with his parents and two sisters to Montana, where he ended up graduating from the University of Montana in Missoula with a degree in recreation management. Garrett said that even as a boy he was busy organizing games in the neighborhood or making up his own games. His summer jobs were at the YMCA and guiding raft trips, and in the winter he taught skiing.

"It just made sense to get a degree in doing what I love," Garrett said.

Fire, his 8-year-old Dutch shepherd dog, who was a rescue, accompanied Garrett in his move to Sisters. They have completed advanced obedience training together. If asked, Garrett is happy to share photos of Fire, a beautiful brindle, flat-coated herding dog.

Garrett knew he was accepting a position that came with some challenges, including a low tax base for funding and a history of frequent staff turnover.

"If it (the job) wasn't a challenge, I wouldn't be here. You only do great things when you're challenged. Everywhere I've been, it's been challenging," Garrett said.

"A dynamic organization in a time of transition and change means there is the possibility that great things can happen," he continued. "I like to think of challenges as opportunities

requiring my diligent effort." Acknowledging how new he is to Sisters and his job, he looks forward to conferring with his staff, board, and the community at large. He plans to capitalize on the vast knowledge and wealth of skills of people in the community to help grow programs.

Garrett is impressed with the abundant resources available in Sisters, simply by virtue of the location of the Coffield Center near the schools, the local people, the climate, and the overall environment in Sisters.

"At our current headquarters we have the amenity of a trail system right out our door," he pointed out. "The activities we can do are endless."

If the levy option passes on May 15, Garrett said he has so many ideas for classes, programs, senior activities, and staffing. He indicated some of his long-term ideas would rely on future expansion of the facilities.

He would particularly like to see the SPRD building become a main hub for community activities and a place for socialization for all ages. He wants to be sure to not duplicate services and

activities already being provided in the community.

If the levy is not approved, Garrett said, "No matter what, we'll continue to enhance the quality of life in Sisters."

He indicated there would probably be a need for more fund-raising activities. And he would be interested in meeting people who would like to help out. Garrett wants to see available funds "go directly to the kids," making sure "the funding makes it to the ground."

The bottom line for Garrett is that "the future is so bright." His dream is to "build upon what we have, including the Coffield Center, and answering requests from the public as best we can.

"I want to make this a place where many activities and services are all under one umbrella, whether it is an art class or tai-chi for a one-year-old with her parent or someone over 100. If SPRD can be a gathering place where all people hang out, that translates to town at large, building relationships."

Garrett envisions the former teen room, which he thinks is underutilized, as a viable space to create a gathering place.



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Todd Garrett and Fire are settling into Sisters.

The new ED is fully aware that "Shannon (Rackowski) is synonymous with SPRD. It was immediately apparent that Shannon is not only respected, but truly loved by the community."

Although Rackowski resigned from her full-time position with SPRD effective mid-May, Garrett said, "Fortunately, she is still going to do her classes and cook wonderful meals on contract for us. She is so gracious she's

even going to work for the GNW Sports Camp."

Garrett is very appreciative of the help Shannon has provided him to go forward with this summer's programs, particularly the Glory Daze Car Show, with which he is excited to be involved.

He shared that, "Everything happens for a reason. I knew immediately Sisters was my place. Whether I got the job or not, I was coming to Sisters regardless."

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