

# Smith pursues heavy equipment operator trade as one of few women in field

## She knew what she wanted and used Tribal programs to help her obtain the training, skills for the job

By Natasha Kavanaugh

Tonya Smith is a heavy equipment operator apprentice with major work and certification as a crane operator. She is one of the few women in this specific trade.

A heavy equipment operator describes the many types of machines used on a construction site, including cranes, forklifts, bulldozers, excavators, backhoes, graders, front-end loaders and paving equipment.

Smith has built a knowledge base in grades and stakes, health and safety, project organization and production tasks to meet the needs of the industry.

"I knew what I wanted to do, I just didn't know how to obtain it," said Smith.

### The big tractor at the house

"I got the idea of her getting into this line of work when she was my client and in interviewing her for her case plan, she stated that one of the things she really enjoyed doing was playing on the big tractor at her house," said Anna Renville, Tribal services specialist in the Portland Area Office.

"Another woman that has helped Tonya a lot and other of our folks with apprenticeships is Penny Painter, workforce development specialist with Cooper Zietz Engineers, Inc. A Native American-owned small business was also very encouraging, motivational – and resourceful. Penny helped her get in touch with the right companies," said Katy Holland Kaady, Tribal education specialist who's also in Portland.

"I had just spoken with Penny, who was recruiting women in the area of



Courtesy photo by Anna Renville

Tonya Smith

the trades and so I put Tonya in contact with her and that is how it got started," said Renville.

First recruited from the Siletz Tribe's Self-Sufficiency Program, Smith immediately went to work with Campbell Crane, where she learned to operate a large crane, and then was accepted to and graduated from heavy equipment operators' training school.

Renville had referred Smith to the Tribe's adult vocational training (AVT) program, which helped pay for various costs from lodging and transportation to

CDL license fees. Then with Painter's help, Smith was accepted for an apprenticeship with Operating Engineers Local 701.

Smith is one of several American Indian apprentices Painter has recruited to the trades since 2005 through an Oregon Department of Transportation grant administered through its American Indian employment initiative. Renville recommended Smith for the ODOT program.

In a letter of recommendation, Painter said, "Tonya is very focused, self-motivated and a determined individual."

### 'Awesome' program helps Smith give back

While working to get into the heavy equipment operators' training school, Smith utilized the Grant Assistance for Single Adults to meet her basic needs. She is quick to recognize the assistance she has received from the 477 Self-Sufficiency Program.

"The staff, the programs – they are all awesome," said Smith.

The Tribe's program helps clients find not just a job but a lifelong career that pays a living wage.

Smith also participated in the Work Experience Program, obtaining her CDL permit and flaggers certificate.

Smith shared as her way of giving back, not just taking. She participated in the "Women in Trades Fair" held in Portland, spending the day promoting and recruiting other women in the trades, demonstrating her skills on a crane and talking with hundreds of women from throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"Tonya did so much herself by following through with everything, applying for the apprenticeship, getting references/recommendations from us all, going through her interviews and making it through orientation," said Kaady. "Tonya was on top of her training and being at her apprenticeship sites and working with her co-workers and also all of her volunteering with Women in Trades organizations and talking to other young women to encourage them in their pursuits."

## Salem state title roots grew from Chemawa win

By Chris Hagan from the Statesman Journal in Salem, Ore.; originally published Nov. 26, 2010

Streaks, droughts and precedents get thrown around a lot during playoff time.

South Salem is in the quarterfinals after 19 years, Scio is trying to become the first repeat Class 2A champion since Amity in 2001 and Santiam Christian is trying to win its first title.

As time grows longer and memories fade, sometimes it's good to go back to the beginning and see where the histories started. For Salem-area football teams, playoff success starts not with the Vikings or Saxons or Foxes, but the Braves.

On Thanksgiving 1944, the Chemawa football team beat Reedsport, 12-6, setting up a contest that has yet to be repeated in the school's history, sending Chemawa to the Class B title game.

"The Indians immediately accepted the pre-game challenge from Eastern Section Champion Arlington eleven for a December 2 title game," the Oregon Statesman reported the next day.

Despite a 2-3-2 record in the Duration League playing against Class A Woodburn, Silverton, Canby and Molalla (hybrid leagues have been around for a long time) the Braves had improved on a winless 1943.

Coach Tommy "Chief" Thompson came into the season knowing his team needed a boost, and set out to install the T offense.

Thompson turned to Reuben "Rube" Sanders, a former Chemawa and Willamette star – eventually a charter member of the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame with Jim Thorpe and an Oregon Sports Hall of Famer – who had retired three years earlier and agreed to be an assistant coach.

Despite playing a league up, Chemawa held its own. The team lost 7-0 and 7-6 to Duration champion Woodburn, with the six points in the second game being the first that had been scored on the Bulldogs all year.

"Such odds would ordinarily and automatically squeeze an 'uncle' from

chicken-hearted footballers even before they played a game," Statesman sports editor Al Lightner wrote Nov. 25. "No such blubbing came from the Indians."

In between their league schedule, they played what amounted to Class B playoff games for the Western Oregon title, beating Amity 13-0 before getting past Reed-sport to set up the tilt with Arlington.

The game, to be held at Willamette's Sweetland Field (now the school's Quad), attracted a lot of interest from Salem residents. Parrish and Leslie middle schools adopted the teams, with the Parrish band playing for Chemawa while the Leslie cheerleaders supported Arlington.

Even Gov. Earl Snell, an Arlington native, agreed to hand out the trophy.

The Honkers came in outscoring their opponents 256-0, although the Statesman noted that Chemawa had a slightly larger team, outweighing them on the line by an average of 169.6 to 165.8 pounds.

Around 2,000 people came to Sweet-

land. With World War II still raging, admission was \$25 in war bonds for adults and \$5 in war stamps for students.

Chemawa overcame four first-half fumbles and a penalty nullifying a 50-yard touchdown run by Cal Simmons to take a 7-6 halftime lead on a Merle Williams-to-Chet Ashman touchdown pass.

Arlington nearly took a lead but missed a field goal after picking up a Chemawa fumble at the 9-yard line. It would be their last chance to go ahead.

Ashman soon after caught another touchdown pass after a Chemawa interception, the first six of 19 unanswered points as Chemawa cruised to a 26-6 win.

"It was a dinger of a ball game," the Statesman wrote. "2,000 fans will tell you so today, as well."

The two games are still the only playoff contests in Chemawa history, although the Braves remain the only Oregon high school team with an undefeated post-season record.