

Keeping Tabs On STEDCO

The Siletz Tribal Economic Development Corporation entered Spring, 1990 under the direction of a nearly brand new Board of Commissioners and with two new people in top management offices. Below is a report of STEDCO activities from the last quarter.

The Revolving Door Board

Last winter's outbreak of resignations and replacements has left Pat Morrell as the sole 1989 veteran on the 1990 STEDCO Board of Commissioners.

During the early months of 1990, Morrell shared the STEDCO Board room with a series of interim appointees, including Joe Lane, tribal member from Portland, Manny Rilatos, Tribal Council member from Siletz, Dolly Fisher, Tribal Council member from Siletz, and Frank Simmons, Tribal Council Vice-Chair who served as Tribal Council representative and Interim-Chair of the STEDCO Board.

Lane, Rilatos, and Fisher resigned from the Commission as new appointments were made. Simmons gave up his STEDCO position on April 21, 1990 citing an reluctance to hear any more talk about his position as Tribal Council Vice-Chair and Chair of the STEDCO Board constituting a conflict of interest.

Along with Morrell, Tim Viles of Milton-Freewater and recently-elected Tribal Council member Lillie Butler of Siletz are tribal members now serving as STEDCO Commissioners. Butler presumably will fill Simmons' slot as Tribal Council representative, leaving vacant two tribal-member commissioner positions.

Rounding out the STEDCO Board of Commissioners that currently controls assets in excess of \$3 million and oversees four business ventures are Dan Van Otten of Portland, John Miller of Siletz, and Bud Shoemaker of Newport. One non-tribal "at large" position remains vacant.

Salmon Woes Continue

"STEDCO bought a pig in a poke" is the way former Commissioner Manuel Rilatos evaluated the current situation of the STEDCO Salmon Enterprise. No one argued with Rilatos, least of all Michael Freels, the Saleperson turned Seafood Director hired in January.

Freels' monthly reports to the Board have included urgent requests for additional equipment such as metal drying trays, larger smokers and coolers, a vacuum pack machine, an electronic scale, and a fax machine.

With the exception of the scale and fax machine, the Board has taken the equipment requests under advisement, instructing Freels and his new boss, Executive Director Curt Mader who was hired 3/10/90,

to first develop a detailed production and marketing plan before committing the Enterprise to any additional equipment costs.

At the April 14th Board meeting, Freels reported sales of \$4,500 and a customer list of 61, including Salishan Lodge, Made In Oregon, and Ron Paul Catering, Inc. Freels, citing the help of laboratory consultant Steve Bernstein, also reported success in creating a standardized smoking method, instituting a system of quality control, creating a employee training manual, and reworking the labelling process to include a recall system that will make possible the fast retrieval of any problem products.

The bad news is that the Salmon Enterprise reportedly continues to show net operating losses. For the three member salmon production team, the first months of 1990 have meant repeated lay-offs and reduced work weeks.

A Stronger Cousin

According to STEDCO Manager Frankie Rilatos, the Evergreen Enterprise showed a net profit of \$122,000 for the ten month period ending March 1, 1990. After subtracting a \$75,000 grant award from the B.I.A., the Enterprise appears to have cleared \$47,000 in "stand alone" profits from marketing moss, salal, fern and other forest products.

Rilatos' also was proud to report that the Enterprise employs only Indians—all Siletz tribal members with the exception of two members of the Grand Ronde Tribe.

On Feb. 10, Rilatos won Board approval of a contract with buyer Harding Green. The STEDCO Board also approved a plan for the Enterprise to sell cascara bark to Richard Miller.

Both moves are part of Rilatos' plan to create an expanded market for Evergreen products and to create year-round jobs for pickers and production crews.

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