

Cultural Renewal

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This spring, volunteers will plant traditional first foods, including 16 species of heirloom tomatoes, which have already begun to take root in small plastic pots inside the Wisdom of the Elder's house.

With the Native community dispersed all over the metro area, High Bear said ultimately, her goal is to "form one big group of gardens, so that wherever someone lives, they can be close to a garden."

Wisdom of the Elder member, Portland State University educator and herbalist, Judy BlueHorse Skelton of the Nez Perce and Cherokee tribes, also spoke at the meeting.

As part of Portland's Plan for 2014, she said the good news is the city is interested in hearing from local tribal representatives on ways to re-indigenize the urban landscape, or in other words, bring the indigenous and urban community together.



PHOTO BY CARI HACHMANN/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Among other traditional first foods, Native volunteers plant 16 species of heirloom tomatoes, which have already begun to take root in small plastic pots inside Wisdom of the Elder's house at 3202 S.E. 109th Ave.

Through specialty block grant programs funded by the federal government, High Bear plans to offer micro-enterprise opportunities in agriculture through the community gardens.

She sees the Wisdom Garden, not only as a place where people can learn to plant first food species like berries, but as an "urban incubator in agriculture," that exposes more Natives into the field.

"The average farmer [in Oregon] is 58-years-old," said High Bear. Eventually they will turn their farms over and not likely to their kids, she said. "We want to encourage Native families and Native youth in that direction."

High Bear has also submitted three grants to the National Science Foundation, in hopes to host two, one-week summer camps on climate change at the Wisdom Garden.

The two, one-week camps would be in tandem with the Wisdom of the Elder's radio broadcast program, which offers scholarships to Native youth interested in Video Production and TV Studio production.

The camp would act as a pilot program directed towards Native youth, who could take video camera into the field and cover

climate change issues and possible local sustainable responses.

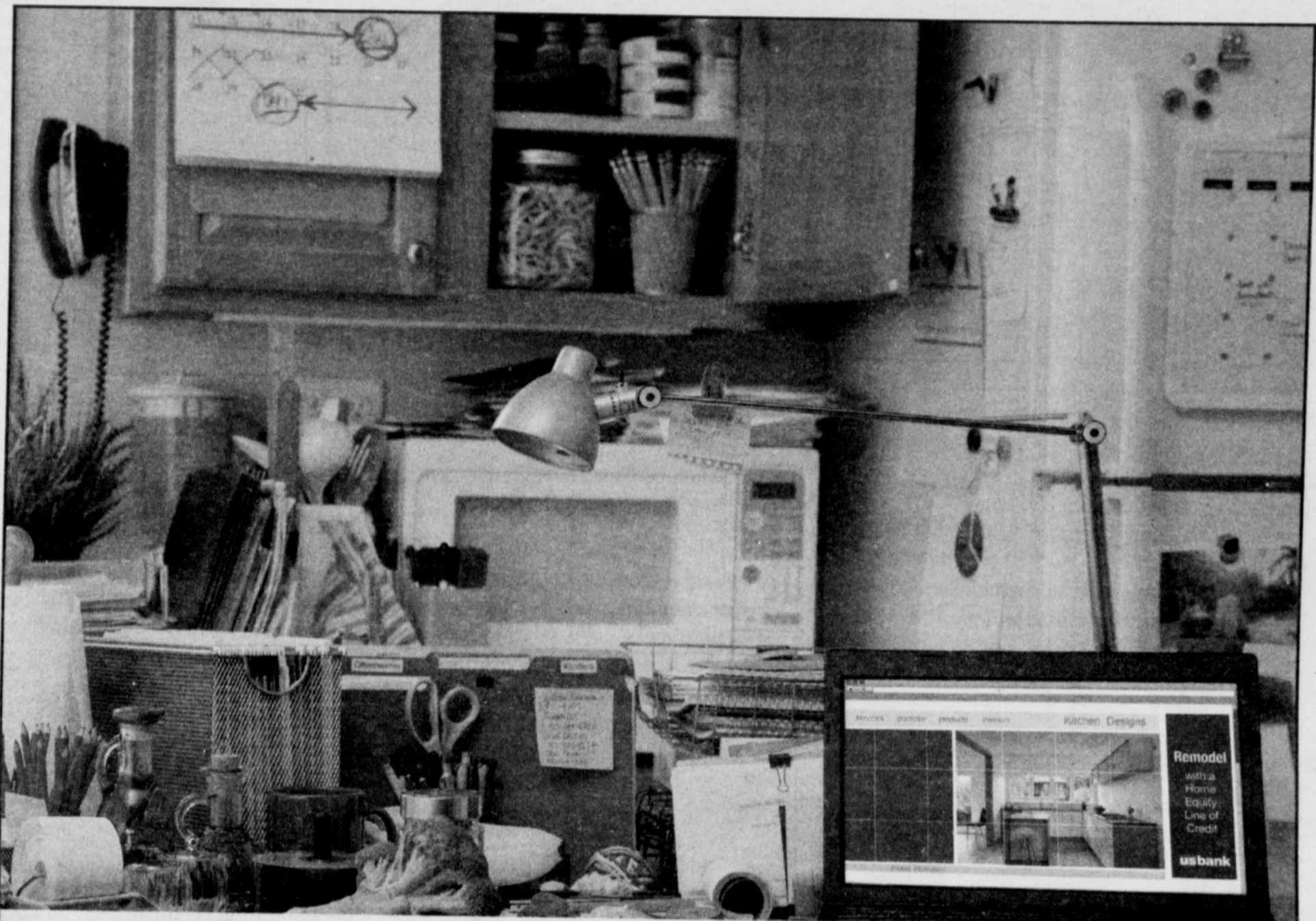
However, Wisdom of the Elders waits on

funding to continue the eight planned radio programs. Right now, they only have enough money for two.

In the end, after stories, cookies and juice had been shared; the meeting's discussion covered less about the logistics of the garden and more about sustaining grants and

funding to continue the garden and Native programs.

One elder suggested asking the Spirit Mountain Casino for a grant. She said they offer grants up to \$25,000. Another member said most tribes are lucky if they get \$5,000.



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