

Information center more than a gift shop

by Marsha Shewczyk

Gift ideas of the finest abound upon entering the Warm Springs Information Center. From beaded wallets made of cut glass beads, to dolls in Indian attire, there's a gift for everyone.

But the Information Center did not originate with the idea of just selling gifts to passing motorists. Construction of the Information Center four years ago was intended to provide a place for tourists to learn about the Warm Springs Reservation, its people and the surrounding area.

Information Center manager Faye Waheneka has worked at the shop for the four years it has been in existence. She commented that the shop started merely as an information center. Then, at the suggestion of then enterprise manager Ed Manion, the shop began carrying a few inexpensive items. And little by little more items were added to the shop. Faye says, "I noticed our inventory building up."

With local artisans looking for an outlet for their work, and with encouragement from Manion, the Information Center staff began selling some of the local craftwork. The shelves began to fill up, and with Faye's displaying abilities the crafts of the Warm Springs people became enough reason for many people to stop at the Information Center time-and-time again.

One customer, Caroline Anderson from Winston, Oregon, enthusiastically commented, "I go bananas when I come in here." She went on to say, "This is a lovely place. Last year I spent \$500 in one-half hour."

Mrs. Anderson also remarked during her Christmas shopping stop, "Everyone that has been in this shop has been so helpful and courteous." Being helpful seems to come naturally for those at the Information Center. The entire staff likes dealing with people. Manager Faye Waheneka worked at the Kah-Nee-Ta gift shop before coming to the Information Center. She says she enjoys that kind of work.

Often tourists entering the doors of the Information

Center have some major misconceptions about the Warm Springs Reservation. Faye explained, "Many people think we're so isolated. Some people wonder if we live in teepees." She continued, "People ask some strange questions."

Helping people realize the nature of the reservation is the primary function of the staff at the Information Center. Much of the job is P.R. work. "We do a lot of advertizing for Kah-Nee-Ta. We have done a lot of research on this whole state," Faye mentioned. Such research is necessary because she says, "People from all over the world come here."

In the four years the Information Center has been in operation thousands of people have passed through the doors. In just the first ten months of this year 27,693 have stopped. That's up 2,247 from the entire year of 1980.

Many changes have been made since the Information Center's beginning. The Deschutes Crossing restaurant has been built which helped increase business, Faye says. The new sign recently erected indicating to motorists that they are entering the Warm Springs Reservation has helped to draw customers. Cigarette sales have also drawn many people to the Information Center.

Even with a large inventory, shop workers look for additions to their display cases. Faye says she looks at bazaars for interesting items and artisans who might wish to place some of the handcrafted items in the store. She says, "We're trying to get local Madras people to bring things in." She also makes a point of buying items from other reservations.

Not only do local people bring their wares in for sale, but they also spend their money at the Information Center. Many gifts are purchased by the tribe for retiring employees. Accoutrements for dancing regalia are also popular. Having a lay-away plan helps local people to make these purchases.

"People seem to be watching how they spend their money," Faye observed. She hopes the



JUST LOOKING—Local residents find a variety of beadwork for personal use and gift-giving at the Warm Springs Information Center.

state of the economy will not cause the shop to eventually close its doors since the Information Center appears to have value beyond sales. It provides information and an initial exposure for many to the Warm Springs Reservation and its people.

Plans for the future include a display of old Klickitat baskets and old corn husk bags. Other handmade articles on display, but not so old, include an elk-skin wedding dress, paintings by local artists, beadwork of intricate design, hand-tanned moccasins and original sculptures of Indians in full regalia. If a shopper doesn't see what he wants he merely has to ask. Faye may be able to locate the desired item.

A visit to the Information Center can stimulate interest in the Warm Springs culture. Visitors are awed at the fact that people still take the time to put so much effort into their work. There is no indication that technology has taken over here.

Providing a factual exposure for the Warm Springs Reservation, its people and its artisans is the function of the



"I GO BANANAS"—Caroline Anderson of Winston, Oregon commented while talking to Information Center manager Faye Waheneka that she goes bananas when she shops at the center.

Information Center. It has been doing this since its beginning, with many people returning for just one more

look at the Warm Springs people and their lives as exhibited and explained at the Information Center.

Christmas tree common sense

Common sense must be used when it comes to Christmas trees. Acting fire chief at the Warm Springs Fire and Safety department Jerry Huff gives some advice.

Tree should be cut only a couple of weeks before Christmas and kept in water. A sugar and water mixture is suggested for keeping the tree fresh longer.

Placement of the tree is important. It should not be placed near convected heat sources. If it is too close to baseboard heaters, fireplaces or others heating sources it will be more combustible.

Strings of lights on the tree should be checked regularly. Excessively hot light bulbs should be replaced. "Faulty

bulbs will burn hotter," Huff says. And if bulbs have to be replaced don't turn the light back on with any of the sockets open. Leave the burned out bulb in until another can replace it.

There are some fire-retardant sprays on the market to spray on trees, according to Huff. There is only one, however, that has been approved by the state fire marshall. It is a product called Flamout.

When it is time for trees and greens to be discarded take them to the dump. With so much pitch in the trees it is dangerous for them to be burned in a wood stove or fireplace.

Have a safe and happy holiday.

New post office due for W.S.

The U.S. Postal Service is developing plans to build a new post office in Warm Springs, Oregon, Salem Postal Sectional Center Manager, E.D. Spencer, said Oct. 15.

In a letter to the Warm

Springs Tribal Council, which Council apparently never received, Spencer asked for community suggestions and offered to meet with local officials or attend public

discussions to review plans for the project.

Preferred location for the new facility is within the business area of the community.

The present post office is deficient because of lack of operating space, Spencer said, adding, "a new, larger building and site are needed to eliminate the deficiencies and provide better security for the mails."

Spencer said the new building should contain approximately 2000 sq. ft. of interior space and be situated on a site of about 17,000 sq. ft. It will provide workspace for four employees and a larger lobby for customer services, including 908 lock boxes. Fourteen spaces for off-street parking are planned for customers in addition to adequate parking for employees and postal vehicles.

W.S. news aired

The voice of Warm Springs' own Tom Estimo is heard once a week every Thursday on radio station KRCO (690) as he reports on the events happening in the Warm Springs community.

The report heard at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 noon; and 3:45 p.m. concerns anything from baby showers, special visitors to the area and community activities.

No announcements with political overtones are permitted.

The tape for broadcast is made on Monday of each week. Any announcements to be included must be submitted before the taping session. Contact Tom Estimo or Judy King at the Community Center for further information. That telephone number is 553-1161, ext. 243.