

Construction is answering concerns of community

The tribal Construction Department has made its mark on the Warm Springs reservation. On any street or roadway, passersby can see the work of the department as new homes, office buildings, streets, subdivisions and other projects have popped up.

The department was formed in 1979 to ensure that tribal members receive a quality product. With each year that has passed since then, the quality of the finished product has improved, thus providing residents and businesses alike better facilities. Also during those years, an inspector's position was established. The inspector ensures that all work, done by the department or by private contractors, meets building regulations. All work exceeds uniform building code specifications, say department heads.

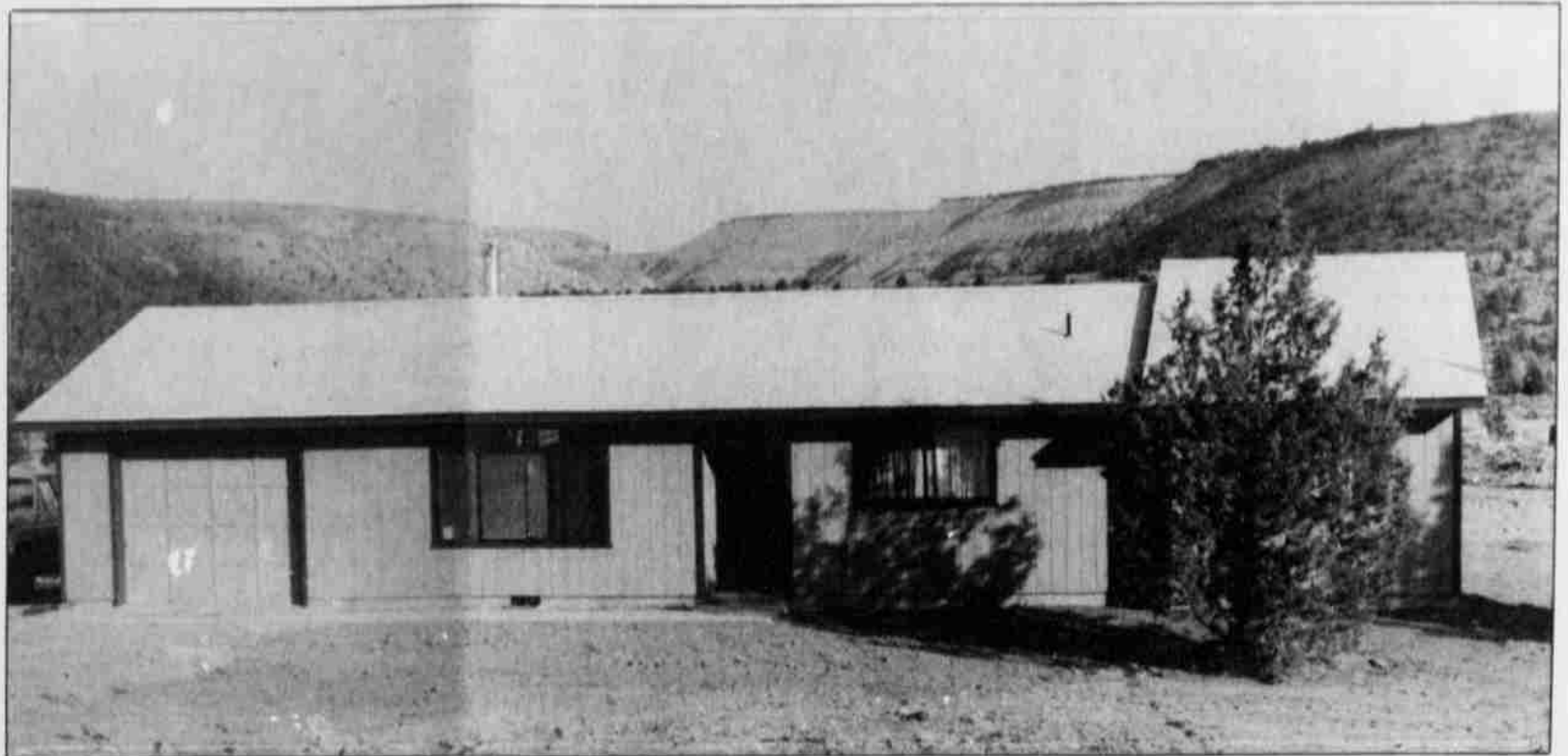
Recognizing the need for tribal member employment and the need for additional housing on the reservation, the department is committed to hiring tribal members. During peak construction times, the department has up to 40 employees, most of whom are tribal members. In addition, much of the equipment the construction department uses is owned by tribal members.

Residents living in homes built by the Construction department site satisfaction, noting few major problems. Delford Johnson, Enterprise Branch Manager, stated that he had his home built by an outside contractor prior to the development of the Construction department. In looking at the quality of his home, compared to what the department is doing today, he stated, "I wish I had had Construction build my home. The quality of my home is nothing compared to what construction does today. The department builds homes that will last and have a quality that future generations will appreciate."

The department's first project was the detention center which was built with Public Law 638 contract funds. It was the first 638 contract in the United States to be completed by a tribal construction department that came in on schedule and within the budget, the department boasts proudly. The department continues to hold true to this philosophy as nearly all projects have come in on schedule and within budget. According to the BIA contracting officer, the detention center project was a success for the Bureau and for the Tribe as well.

The list of accomplished projects is extensive. The department worked on the Tenino apartments, tribal garage, old administration building remodeling, built the new BIA land operations, roads and facilities management buildings in the industrial park, remodeled lookout towers for fire control, remodeled the apparel factory building, constructed the forestry complex and built the 53 HUD homes in Greeley Heights as well as numerous other projects.

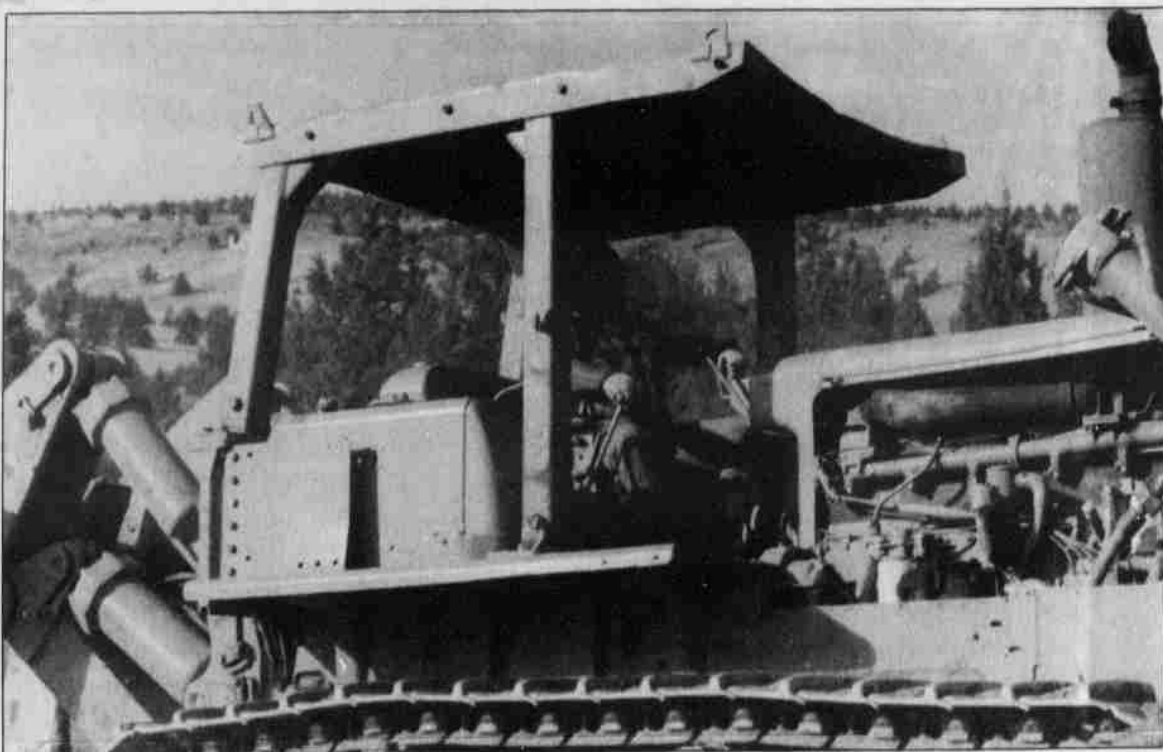
Before the weather prohibited work, crews were working on roads in the Sunnyside subdivision on Highway 3. The tribal credit department will finance five "spec" homes in the subdivision once all the utilities are in. When those five homes sell, another five will be built. The lots will be about two acres in size and will be available to tribal members on a 30-year lease basis. The subdivision has all the earmarkings of a first class residential area, say construction managers.



Donna Torres' home in Dry Creek was built this summer.



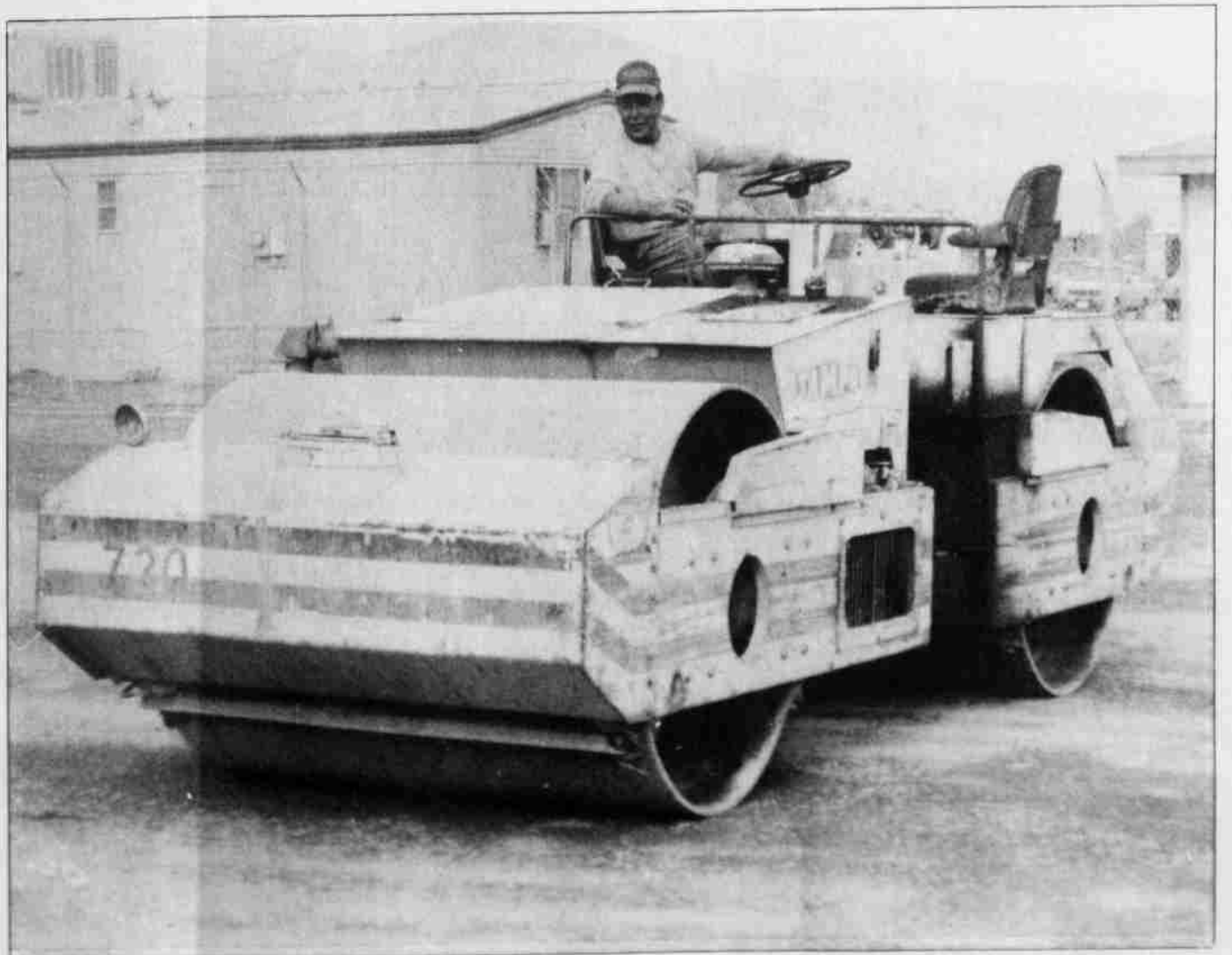
Noree Kalama, seated, and Mernie Polk work together on the computer. Both enjoy their jobs with the Construction Department.



Hobo Patt drives a CAT.



Marvin Meanus and Jerry Polk.



Ernie Henderson prepares gravel base for the asphalt at the industrial park.

Photos courtesy of the Construction Department