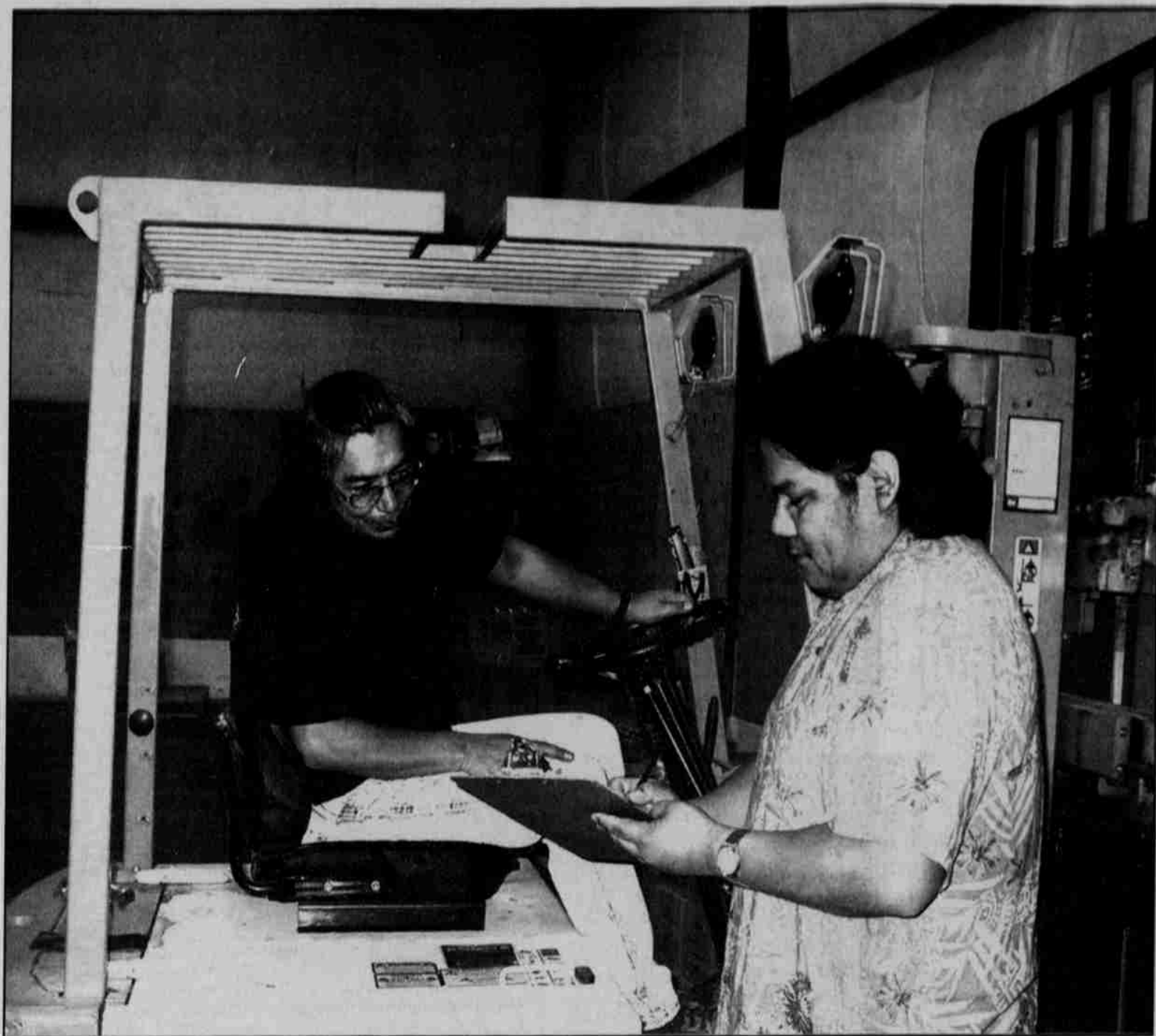


Commodities - come on over!



John Finch and Jon Brown - the men to see at Commodities

What could possibly be interesting about the "Food Commodities Program?" The name itself evokes a dull, bureaucratic operation employing humorless, pencil-pushing administrators who thrive on paperwork.

Not here at Warm Springs! The program with the unromantic title is actually an exciting and thriving operation run by two men determined to spread the word about all "Commodities" has to offer.

Jon Brown, Program Director, and John Finch, Commodities Assistant, are the two personable fellows who welcome you at 4217 Holiday Street (down the road from the Fire Management complex). You are

treated as a valued guest as they describe their operation over cups of coffee - and often home-cooked snacks. Basically, Commodities is run under the auspices of U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and of-

fers foodstuffs to individuals in need. Indians of any tribal membership living within 15 miles of Warm Springs are eligible, as are non-Indians living on the Reservation.

An outstanding array of food is available: fresh vegetables and fruits, at least two fresh-frozen meats and an assortment of canned and packaged goods. Both the Warm Springs office and the USDA are constantly adding and deleting products in an effort to carry items that appeal to consumers. Also the menu of available foods changes each month.

To apply is easy - just visit the Commodities building where Brown and Finch will help you fill out a brief questionnaire. Bring proof of your income. Your tribal per capita or pension do not count as income and your child- or dependent-care costs will be income deductions. If you are eligible, your application will be approved within two or three days.

Brown and Finch point out another benefit of their program: you can qualify while earning more income than you are allowed under the Oregon Trail Program (food stamps). Although it is best to analyze your specific income and needs, some clients have found that it is far more beneficial for them to enroll in the Commodities rather than the Oregon Trail program. You cannot join both plans. However, you can partake of Commodities and still receive other Adult and Family Service Benefits from the state.

Once approved, you can come in each month and choose among the items available on that month's menu. Finch will take your order, pack it up for you and even carry it to your car. You are on your way with food valued at about \$100 per person. If you are a family of six, quick multiplication shows what a benefit this can be. You will be eligible to receive the same amount of food each month, even if your income rises - as long it does not go above the proscribed limit.

Finch and Brown are enthusiastic about the merits of the program they operate. They believe their challenge is to spread the word so more will take advantage of it. The two are concerned that many "aren't benefit-

ing to the full degree that they could food-wise." Currently about 250 people are enrolled in the program. This number often rises during the winter months as seasonal employees are laid off.

In an effort to bring more people over to their building Brown and Finch are planning monthly food demonstrations using groceries available on the current menu. Although they agree that Finch is the "chef" of the two, they will both be pitching in to create some tempting dishes. In conjunction, they plan to provide the monthly recipe to Spilyay.

Their next "event" will be a Valentine's Surprise. They are keeping the recipe secret until Wednesday the 14th when they hope to be joined by many members of the community. All are invited, you don't have to be an enrolled client to attend.

The event begins at noon and goes "until"....until the food is gone, so you might want to get there early so as not to miss their latest creation.

To call either Brown or Finch, dial 553-3422. Their hours are 8:30 - 4:30, but they are closed from noon to one. Or, drop by and see how a bureaucracy should be run!



John Finch warms up for future food demos

Local agencies meet with workers

The planned shut down of the second shift at Warm Springs Forest Products Industries (WSFPI) will bring dramatic changes to the lives of at least 51 workers. On January 25th, in an effort to ease the transition, WSFPI sponsored an informational gathering for employees scheduled to be laid off in February. Representatives from 12 state and tribal organizations were present to assist workers with plans for their future and inform them of the available resources.

Theresa Van Pelt, WSFPI Human Resources Manager, and fellow members of the WSFPI Transition Team are concerned with the impact job losses will have on the employees and their families. She likened the loss to the death of a loved one, involving denial, anger, acceptance and, ultimately, the need for appropriate action to get on with life.

It is this need for action that was addressed on Thursday afternoon. Van Pelt's plan was to get all cooperating agencies in one room, so that workers could avoid the frustration of visiting an agency in one town such as Redmond, only to find they first needed to talk to someone at an agency in Madras.

The spirit of cooperation and information-sharing among the representatives was a positive note in the

otherwise negative situation. Although each group represented a different aspect of aid - from job retraining to food assistance - a common theme was for workers to start planning now for the months to come.

The most immediate concern for workers - the stoppage of their weekly paycheck - is somewhat relieved by unemployment compensation. Kathy Morales and Patti Cook of the Oregon Employment Department were present to assist workers in applying for these benefits which run 26 weeks. Cook and Morales also reported that WSFPI has applied to the US Department of Labor for funds under the NAFTA Trade Act for retraining or relocating employees negatively affected by importation of foreign products. If those funds are approved, training programs would be implemented by Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC).

Employee concerns about job-related benefits were addressed by Lupe Katchia of the tribe's Comp and Benefits Department. She is the person to answer any questions about the status of retirement benefits or possibility of early pension withdrawal.

Also present was Penny Rogers from the Madras office of COIC which offers retraining funding and assistance. Rogers and her colleagues

help clients assess skills, identify the type and availability of work they are seeking, as well as the training required. COIC also has funds available for relocation if a worker secures a new job out of the area and needs financial help to move.

Rogers works closely with Carlos Calica and Melinda Poitra of the Warm Springs Workforce Development Office. Among the many other tools they employ as job placement specialists, Calica and Poitra are using the tribal and federal funds they administer to assist displaced workers with application and interview assistance, resume development, job training, and referral to other appropriate sources of help.

Resources are also available at Central Oregon Community College (COCC) at Warm Springs to enable a displaced worker to prepare for new positions. John Hicks and Marilyn Hart can help assess the educational routes that would best lead to the type of employment desired or to more advanced studies.

Gene Keane of the Warm Springs Small Business Development Center points out that some workers have already been operating small businesses to bring in supplemental income. An event like a lay-off can be the stimulus to try to turn that business into a full-time venture. His office provides a vast array of services to anyone interested in such a move, including temporary office space, use of telephones and computer equipment, as well as business planning advice.

Aware that a layoff can affect a person's credit, Bruce Engel of the Tribal Credit Department encourages his clients to come in and review the status of their loans before problems can develop. Possible solutions could be refinancing, extension of the term of the loan with correspondingly lower payments, consolidation, or, in extreme cases, a moratorium. Engel states that a client's "good-faith efforts" like job searching or retraining gives him "something to work with" in restructuring loans. Addressing these issues early-on is important, says Engel.

Lori Walker shares with Engel a similar area of expertise. She is a

counselor for Bend's independent, non-profit Consumer Counseling Service. Her organization helps its clients develop budgets, manage their relationships with creditors, and financially survive the layoff.

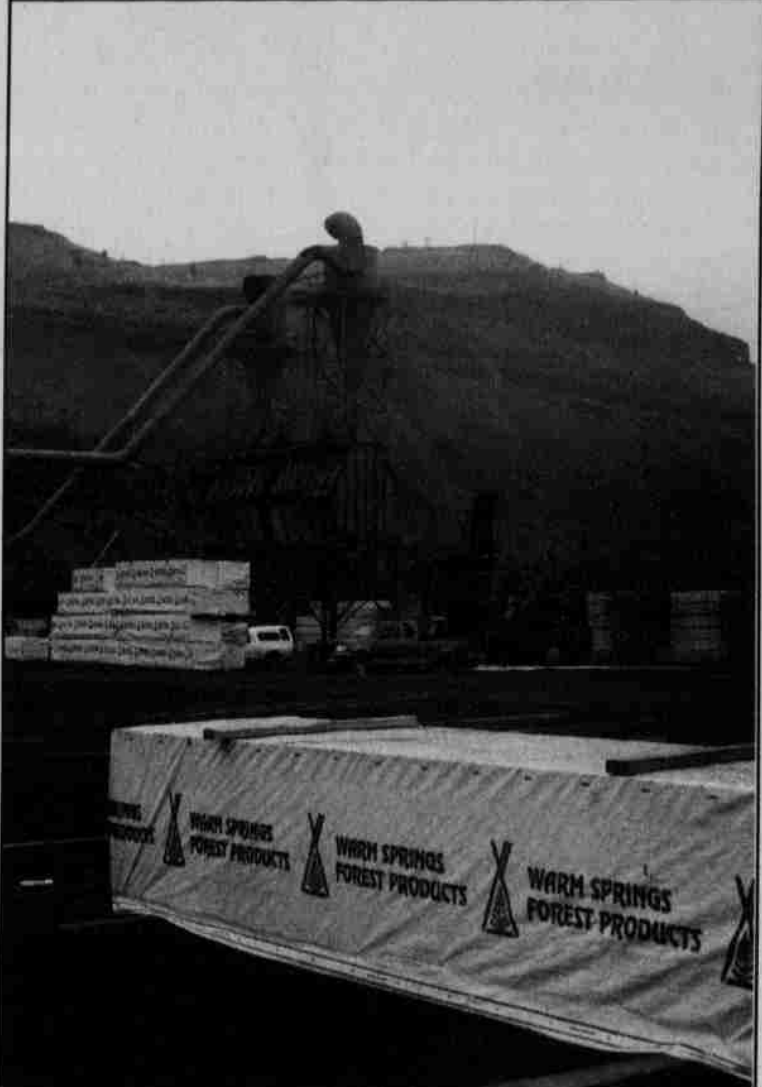
Jobs are available through the Tribal Personnel Office and also at Kah-Nee-Ta. Lois Lesarley of Tribal Personnel urges people to come in to the administration building and either fill out or update their applications for positions posted through her office.

Ka-Nee-Ta's Fran Ahearn (Recreation), Chuck Schmidt (Grounds), Scott Moses (Rooms), and Kevin Coimer (Food and Beverage) were present to point out that between now and mid-March, the resort will be hiring approximately 140 new people as it gears up for the summer season. Although much of Kah-Nee-Ta's work is seasonal, the four noted that employees who are effective and conscientious often stay on as part of the year-round crew.

Both Oregon's Office of Adult and Family Services and Warm Springs's own Commodities Food Program strive to provide a safety net as workers search for new employment. Janet Scott of Family Services described programs such as temporary financial assistance to needy families, daycare, food stamps, and medical programs. It is necessary to apply for the benefits available from these programs. Thus Scott encourages people to begin the application process as soon as possible.

John Finch of Warm Springs' Commodities Food Program described the opportunities under his program, a joint effort of the tribes and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. An array of fresh-frozen meats, fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables, and more are available once a month to both Indians and non-Indians on the reservation, and Indians within a 15-mile radius of Warm Springs. Finch hopes more people will come in and apply so they can take advantage of this program.

Although the negative impact of the WSFPI layoff cannot be minimized, the people present at Thursday's gathering are ready to use all their available resources to provide whatever assistance they can:



A grey January afternoon at WSFPI before scheduled shift shutdown



Penny Rogers discusses COIC programs with mill employees

- Oregon Employment Department - Kathy Morales & Patti Cook - 475-2382
- Warm Springs Comp and Benefits - Lupe Katchia 553-3327
- COIC, Madras - Penny Rogers - 475-7118
- Warm Springs Workforce Development - Carlos Calica and Melinda Poitra - 553-3324
- COCC - Warm Springs - John Hicks and Marilyn Hart - 553-1428
- Warm Springs Small Business Development Center - Gene Keane - 553-2229
- Tribal Credit Department - Bruce Engel - 553-3202
- Consumer Credit Counseling Service - Lori Walker - 389-6181
- Tribal Personnel Office - Lois Lesarley - 553-3262
- Kah-Nee-Ta Personnel Office - Scottie Miller - 553-1112
- Oregon Adult and Family Services - Janet Scott - 475-6131
- Warm Springs Commodities Program - John Finch - 553-3422

Multi-family yard sale at Courtney's on Tenino Road scheduled for Monday, February 26, 2001, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (no early birds, please). A craft table will be set up also.