

The Branch Reports

Business and Economic Development

The role of the Confederated Tribes' Business and Economic Development Branch is of increasing importance on the reservation. The branch was formed in 1989, when the economy of the reservation was declining.

Since that time, Economic Development has accomplished a number of goals, but many challenges are still ahead. Growing and diversifying the local economy of the Confederated Tribes remains the overall goal and purpose of this branch.

Business and Economic Development employs 13 people. Twelve of them are tribal members.

The branch's Small Business Center has three employees, two of them tribal members. The branch also includes an administration office, employing four tribal members.

Included in Business and Economic Development is the Simnasho Store, which employs six people, all tribal members.

The annual budget of the



Business and Economic Development Director Mike Clements

In reviewing some of the most recent accomplishments of his branch, Clements mentioned the following:

Establishment of Warm Springs Ventures, a corporation dedicated toward diversifying the economy of the reservation, and generating revenue for the Confederated Tribes.

The tribal construction program was established as a new enterprise.

Plans for Warm Springs Environmental Services, a new tribal business operation, were finalized. This program has been funded, and now employs eight people.

The Small Business and the Grant program have progressed.

In looking toward the future, Business and Economic Development will be focusing on the Economic Revitalization Initiative.

Part of this initiative involves planning ways to increase tourism and travel on the reservation. Another part of the initiative focuses on

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commercial and retail business, and development of the downtown area of Warm Springs.

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branch is \$500,000. A challenge for the long-term future will be maintaining financial resources sufficient to produce successful results in strategic economic areas, said Mike Clements, general manager of the branch.

Already, the downsizing of tribal government, due to budgetary limitations, has resulted in the revising of one job position at the Small Business Center, said Clements.

Compensation and Benefits

The Comp and Benefits/Managed Care Program has eleven full-time employees and a part-time physician who assists at the Health and Wellness Center. The staff includes four tribal members, three married into tribe, one other Indian and three non-Indians.

Group Benefits has a budget of \$1,245,000, Comp and Benefits is \$129,000; Workers Comp \$460,500; 401(k) pension \$1,998,218 for a grand total of \$3,833,618. The Managed Care Program is operated by the Confederated Tribes, but funding is through the federal government. The budget at the beginning of 2001 for patient referrals for health care was \$2,605,830.

A major accomplishment at Comp and Benefits was the establishment and implementation of a 401(k) retirement plan. The staff also managed to maintain accurate records and update data for all pension plans. On-going support was provided to the Tribal Pension Committee, enterprises, and current and former employees. The staff monitored and tracked all new hires and personnel actions, while ensuring

salary administration compliance. They also monitored and updated vacancy listings for down-sizing efforts. Another major accomplishment of the department was to maintain competitive benefits levels at the least possible expense to the Confederated Tribes.

Managed Care operated within its budget while facilitating the referral of eligible patients to specialists off the reservation without resorting to deferred services. With dollars retained through efficient operations the department was able to pay for numerous on-site specialty clinics conducted by specialists in the fields of rheumatology, nephrology, ENT, oral surgery and endodontistry, and physical therapy. Staff assisted IHS effort to sign up all community members eligible for the Oregon Health Plan. The staff's close perusal of bills and cooperative efforts with a medical claims auditor ensured that reasonable prices were paid for medical services rendered.

In the future Comp and Benefits hopes to implement a

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Essential Education

A couple of years ago, the ever-changing face of tribal education and its components, split the Education Branch into two branches. The Essential Education branch is comprised of Higher Education (tribal college scholarships, etc.), the 509 J Jefferson County School District (K-12), the Tribal Trust Fund and Early Childhood Education.

Early Childhood Education includes Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Development Center (infant/toddler care and school age care), Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education, Child Care Development Fund and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

The Early Childhood Education Center has 74 employees with more than half (45) being tribal members. The annual budget for the entire branch includes slightly more than \$1 million in tribal dollars. There are a number of other funding sources for this most important branch.

Julie Quaid, the Essential Education Director, said the downsizing efforts over the last few years have had a dramatic impact on the program. One childcare classroom has closed, resulting in fewer childcare slots being available. There are two less Preschool and school age childcare classrooms available due to eliminating positions. This has resulted in class sizes reaching the maximum allowed for this age group. Routine office duties fall to supervisors and non-teaching staff due to the elimination of the secretarial staff. This results in less time for administration, planning, and fiscal responsibilities. There isn't enough money for groceries for ECE meals because food costs increased as the budget decreased. This resulted in reducing other operational costs to shift funds to buy groceries.

Another challenge is hiring. The downsizing and the two-year hiring freeze have resulted in lengthy delays in filling vacancies. During the approval,

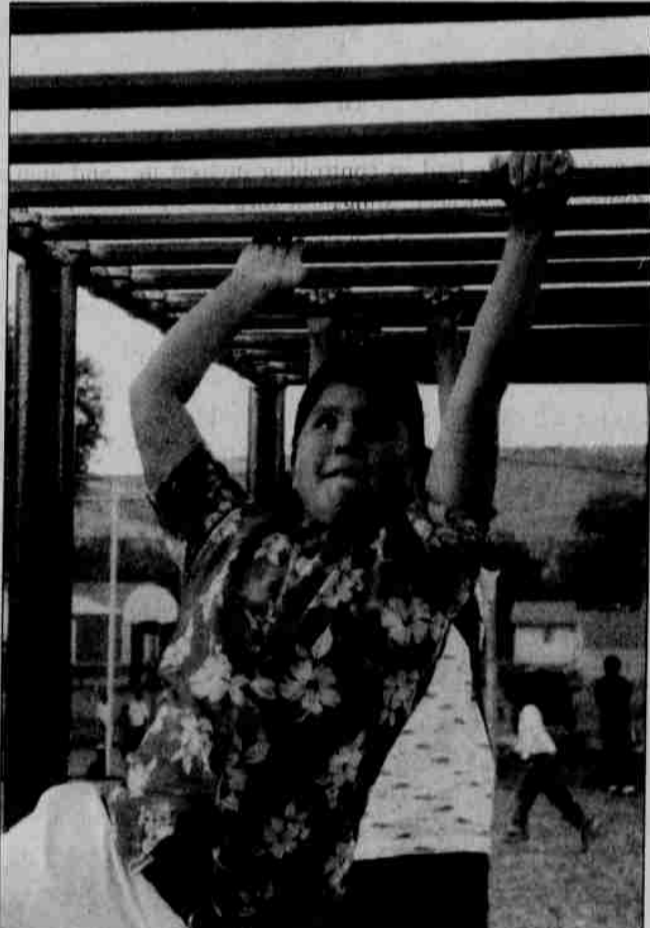
advertisement, selection, and hiring process, a temporary replacement assumes classroom responsibilities. This negatively impacts the quality of the early childhood education and care each child receives. Quality is difficult to maintain with an untrained and inexperienced temporary staff. Despite these many challenges, the staff at Early Childhood take pride in their work and every day, good things happen for children. The program supports staff in pursuing their higher education in an effort to increase their own knowledge and abilities for working with children. Regularly scheduled in-service trainings provide the entire staff with additional knowledge and practical information about supporting every child's healthy development and early learning.

"Quality early childhood education is one of the best investments Warm Springs can make for our children's future," said Julie Quaid. Research shows that children attending high quality programs are more likely to develop the language, pre-mathematics and social skills they need to succeed in school. The Kindergarten teachers at Warm Springs Elementary have commended the Head Start preschool program for the excellent skills they are seeing in children as they transition into the public school system. If we value our children, our families, our schools, and our community," says Quaid, "we must make accessible, affordable, high-quality early childhood education a priority." Warm Springs ECE advocates a comprehensive effort to improve the quality of early childhood education, including:

Providing professional development opportunities and adequate compensation for teachers and staff;

Improving the health and safety of programs;

Using developmentally appropriate practices to encourage literacy and learning from birth; and,



Warm Springs Elementary School student enjoys recess.

Supporting the family's crucial role in early education.

When asked about accomplishments in the last two years, Ms. Quaid said she took great pride in the fact that Essential Education branch organized a successful campaign to build a new elementary school, maintained an effective partnership with the Jefferson County School District, and held the first annual Education Summit focused on public school education in Warm Springs. Other accomplishments include the Early Childhood Education Center providing high quality early care and education programs to the Warm Springs community by collaborating resources with tribal, state, and federal funding agencies. The Higher Education department provides individualized post-secondary and vocational education planning and preparation activities for eligible tribal members. The Essential Education office staff improved tracking of tribal member high school graduates in order to implement the Tribal Council educational requirements to re-

ceive the minor's trust fund.

The tribal organization focused its emphasis on essential education services from infancy through higher education by organizing similar programs under one department. This addressed the need to maintain an effective partnership with the Jefferson County School district for K-12 education.

In the future, Julie Quaid foresees a number of exciting improvements. As an example, there is a complete new Warm Springs elementary school project. She also has plans to develop resources to open and maintain a Warm Springs Library. Another goal is to seek additional funds to maintain delivery of quality early care and education programs. The branch will maintain a student-tracking database of middle and high school students to ensure participation and completion of high school.

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Information Systems

The Office of Information Systems (OIS) has eight employees and an annual budget of \$655,724. Two positions have been cut during the past two years, so branch employees are extremely busy trying to provide technical support for the entire organization.

During 2001, OIS responded to over 1,300 service requests in support of eight Local Area Networks, 480 microcomputer users, 370 electronic mail users, and 210 Internet users. The branch also supported the upgrading to network-based systems of the Financial Management System, Credit Office and Vital Statistics appliances, which enables the Confederated Tribes to phase-out central computer operations.

The Wide Area Network (WAN) was expanded to include Early Childhood Education, Housing and Community Counseling buildings. Most of the tribal offices now have the ability to share computer resources and files, and communicate over the WAN.

OIS has managed and maintained the Warm Springs web site, expanded the Electronic Tribal Library, and offered starter web sites to local businesses, so as to encourage e-Commerce in Warm Springs.

The branch has been extremely productive over the past two years and the challenge that lay ahead will be to remain on the cutting edge of technology. Goals for the immediate future are as follows:

Continue to maintain and support the information technology base of the tribal government including PCs, networks, database structures and telecommunications.

Maintain and support the development, implementation, and operations of the tribes' critical systems such as Tribal Enrollments and Finan-

cial Management System.

Support the development and implementation of the Community Benchmark Reporting System (Report Card to the Community).

Support efforts to preserve and maintain tribal culture and heritages resources through the use of electronic records storage and retrieval systems.

Enhance the usefulness of the tribal web site and electronic library by applying electronic document management methods and functions including imaging and full-text retrieval systems.

To help reduce organizational cost while improving service, begin exploring application for e-Government (24/7 service to the community). Pilot projects to include online job listing with job applications and listing with application for bidding on tribal contracts.

Information processing, reporting systems, and communications networks are valuable components of the tribal infrastructure. Tribal programs and managers are better able to support Tribal Council priorities through the effective use of these technologies to support sound decision-making. By providing technical services and support of these systems, OIS indirectly supports all of the Tribal Council priorities.

Computer and Internet technology is an essential part of the economic and employment health of a community. Its importance will continue to grow significantly over the next 5-10 years. Investing in technical infrastructures today is an essential ingredient for future economic health. It does not appear this investment is being given a priority at this time. We need to keep pace if we are to take advantage, but with the budget cuts growing, this will be difficult.