

# W.S. Construction angles to catch more jobs

## Application for 8a status almost complete

By Maren Cohn  
Warm Springs Ventures

Past years of frustration and inactivity have handed some tough times to Warm Springs Construction, but the combination of perseverance and strong leadership is positioning the enterprise to become a real asset for the tribes.

Construction general manager Glenn Carpenter and assistant manager Leslie Cochran-Davis are cautious in predicting a significant turnaround, but their steady and committed work is quietly paving the way for success.

"Leslie has shown incredible determination in leading Construction through numerous obstacles" says Jeff Anspach, chief financial officer of Warm Springs Ventures. "She's a natural leader and she doesn't give up. Even after giving birth to her daughter last fall, she was back on the job within a week, coming in to take care of payroll and other accounting duties. She has a great work ethic and good business instincts. Her ability to track costs makes a huge difference in our ability to manage the business and assess our strengths and weaknesses. What more can you ask for?"

Cochran-Davis's account of herself is a little briefer: "I needed to come in after the baby was born. I was the one most familiar with the software. I was happy to do it, too. I like working here."

Cochran-Davis's accomplishments include passing the Oregon Construction Contracting Board's licensing exam. Getting

her CCB license will have significant implications for the future of Construction. With a licensed manager, the enterprise has met one of the requirements for the Small Business Administration's section 8a certification. Once obtained, new opportunities for jobs will open up, enabling Construction to grow and acquire greater stability and autonomy.

"I'm really excited about the prospects for Construction," says Ventures board member and tribal chief financial officer Ray Potter. "It's one of the few areas where the tribes can increase job growth in the short to medium term. We have lots of long-range ideas, but this one is happening right now. I believe that Construction can realistically quadruple its staff over the next three years. And I'm talking about good, high-paying jobs, Davis-Bacon jobs," Potter affirms, referring to the Congressional act whereby companies receiving federal monies must pay competitive wages in their field.

Ventures chief executive officer Clyde Hamstreet likes Construction's potential, too. "They are well-focused in a niche market of road-building and utilities," he says. "They offer the kind of outdoor, seasonal, work that many tribal members like, and they're very well-managed by Glenn and Leslie. The 8a status will help them expand."

### Change for the better

Dependence on others has hampered past efforts.

As things stand now, Construction gets most of its jobs and money through the BIA, relying on a steady annual revenue stream of about two to

two and a half million dollars. The allocations can only be drawn down, however, once plans for specific projects have gone through a complex approval process that involves both tribal and federal authorities. The process is slow and gets bogged down frequently. But until all the approvals come through, Construction can only wait. Its role doesn't start until the very end, when the bidding process begins.

"The problem with the current situation," says Anspach, "is that Construction's workload totally depends on other people, and sometimes they don't act very quickly."

As a result, Construction never knows when a job is going to come through. Last year was particularly tough, with the enterprise drawing down only one million dollars from the BIA allocations.

The lack of control is frustrating for the company, which has to wait out the permitting process. Carpenter and Cochran-Davis keep things running with an occasional job or land works project, but they find it difficult to deal with a chronically uncertain workload. So do the field crews, who get hired and laid off in unpredictable cycles, as the need for their services rises and falls. With the recent addition of crews coming over to Construction from Geo Visions, that problem affects even more people now than in the past.

"We'd like to create a more structured work environment over there," Anspach says. "The limited-duration status of the crews is hard on everybody - not efficient for Construction, which always has to train new staff, and obviously not great for

the workers either."  
**Strong start in 2006**

Despite these built-in problems, Construction has gotten off to a profitable start this year and is running ahead of budget. The enterprise has used deferred funds to build infrastructure for the Sunnyside subdivision, expected to be done by July 4, and it just got started on a new \$1.3 million Seekseequa project. Those two jobs will add lots to the reservation housing pool, and they will keep Construction crews busy through August.

What happens after Seekseequa, however, is still up in the air. It's that kind of uncertainty that Construction and Ventures hope to change by obtaining the 8a status. If granted, the certification will entitle Construction to compete for off-reservation jobs as an economically and socially disadvantaged company against a limited field of other 8a firms. Construction would use the new jobs to boost and stabilize revenues.

One Ventures enterprise has already embarked on a similar course. Warm Springs Geo Visions obtained 8(a) certification in November, 2005. Where Geo Visions once fell within Natural Resources, it now operates quasi-independently as a Ventures entity. Its field crews have been moved into Construction, where they work on outdoor jobs like fencing and tree-planting alongside the road crews. The rest of the staff, consisting of technically skilled workers, is freed up to compete with professionals in the same field from all over the world.

Although Construction is not as specialized in its work as Geo Visions, achieving 8(a) status should also bring autonomy in

competing for jobs.

"We'd like to have more control over our own fate," Carpenter says. "Being able to bid for off-reservation projects should help us get that. Then if we don't have any work at least it will be our own fault and not because of someone else not doing something."

Construction's 8(a) application is nearly complete. Ventures Administrative Officer Sandra Danzuka expects to send it off within a few weeks.

"Assembling the documentation takes a while," Danzuka says. "One hurdle was Leslie getting the state certified contractor's license. Also, since it's a Tribal construction company, we had additional obstacles to overcome, but we've worked through most of those. Receiving 8(a) is not guaranteed, but the approval process should be expedited because of Geo Visions paving the way. We won't have to prove the "economically disadvantaged" requirement this time around."

Danzuka also points out that once Construction achieves 8(a) status, it will automatically receive the valuable Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) certification, which is recognized by the State of Oregon and Oregon Department of Transportation.

If all goes well, the 8a certification will supplement a workload already in the process of growing. Potter, for one, is confident: "We have some jobs in the works for tribal funds, some for 638 and other federal money, and once we get the 8a certification we'll be able to get sewer and road work in Madras and highway projects around the reservation. All of this means a lot more high-paying jobs on the reservation. I'm excited about it."

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## Shuttle service available for workers at Kah-Nee-Ta

A shuttle for Kah-Nee-Ta youth and college employees launched the maiden trip on Wednesday, June 14.

The shuttle is a pilot project funded with tribal operational savings at a total cost of \$23,830. The project will determine the impact of providing transportation on retention of student employees, number of tribal members employed, and workforce stability throughout the summer season.

The project was initiated by

Julie Quaid, Chairman of the Warm Springs Community Action Team, as part of a larger effort to establish transportation supports for Warm Springs. Due to the high cost of gas and a focus on tribal member employment at Kah-nee-ta, the time was right to work together on the shuttle. Janell Smith and Scott Moses played a key role in focusing summer employment efforts on youth and college age tribal members.

The resort set aside \$125,000

for tribal member youth and college employment. The group met over three months to discuss timelines, work schedules, vehicle leases, and prepared a funding proposal, which was approved by Jody Calica, tribal secretary/treasurer.

The shuttle will provide three shuttles a day through Monday, September 4 and will operate weekends and holidays. The drivers are Brenda Scott and Esten Culpus and the substitute driver is Jonathan Culpus. The

vehicle is a dual-wheeled twelve-passenger van leased from the tribal vehicle pool.

A primary goal of the shuttle is to provide youth a job at Kah-nee-ta without the anxiety of how to get to and from work each day; reduce the amount of money earned spent on gas to get to work, and to provide

Kah-nee-ta with a reliable tribal member workforce.

Please encourage youth to ride the shuttle to and from work every day. It leaves from the Family Resource Center on the campus and there is a parking area to park and ride.

(See the shuttle schedule on page 10.)

## WARM SPRINGS June 21-July 8 Keep the Kids Busy SUMMER PLANNER 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thr	Fri	Sat
			21	22	23	24
A collaborative effort between all the programs, departments and individuals who work with children and youth in the Warm Springs Community, to help families involve their children in positive and healthy activities this summer.			PI-Ume-Sha Health Fair 9-2 Community Center Booster Seat Distribution 10am	PI-UME-SHA 6pm Outgoing Queens-2006 Royalty-Round Dancing-Youth Night/Concert	Boarding School Orientation at Education Center	
Summer Meal Program 6/19-7/28 for anyone 18 years and younger Breakfast 8-9 Lunch 11-12:30 WSE Cafeteria			Summer Library BEGINS 11am @ The Family Resource Center		PI-UME-SHA 7pm-Grand Entry	PI-UME-SHA Grand Entry 1pm & 7pm 8am-10k/5k Run 8-Horse Race 11am-Parade Skate Park Fun 1pm Rodeo 4pm - Boxing
	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Swim Lessons of Kah-Nee-Ta		Suicide Prevention Camp at He He Longhouse		Recreation KNT Play Day Trip	
PI-UME-SHA 1pm Rodeo 2pm-Grand Entry	Recreation Old Mill Movies Trip TUES 6/27-->	Kah-Nee-Ta Junior Golf Begins	Summer Library 11am @ FRC	ECE 9:30AM "Don't Ditch the Dinosaurs" FUN RUN	Warm Springs Head Start is accepting registrations for the 2006-2007 school year for 3 and 4 year olds	
Summer School programs: Madras High School June 26th - July 1st: High School Credit Recovery 8th Grade Summer School; 6-7 Title 1-C Summer School; and Special Ed Summer School. Warm Springs Elementary Summer Academy July 5-28th 9am-noon daily						
July 2	3	4	5	6	7	8
NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES IN DENVER	Warm Springs Boys and Girls Club Closed this week-->	<b>4th of July - Tribal and National Holiday</b>	PAWS CLAWS SCALES & TALES @Summer Library 11am	<b>Warm Springs Summer Academy July 5-28 9am-noon BUSES WILL RUN A HALF HOUR LATER THAN DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR</b>		SUMMER HOOP Co-Ed League Saturday Nights 6pm July 1st - August 26th
Boys and Girls Club Opens at new location at Vern Jackson Home 7/10	MONDAYS @Summer Rec Golf, Kickball, Scooter Games, SPARKS Carol's Room "Book Games"	TUESDAYS @Summer Rec Dodgeball, Archery, Badminton, Carol's Room "How Now Brown Cow"	WEDNESDAYS @Summer Recreation Weights, Hoops, Carol's Room "How Now Brown Cow"	THURSDAYS @Summer Recreation Carol's Room "Nothing to Do Activities" <b>Multnomah Falls Trip</b>	FRIDAYS @Summer Recreation Carol's Room "A Stitch In Time-Saves Nine"	
For Updates - Tune in for the Community Calendar on KWSO 91.9 FM						

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