

Economic Center Plans To Help

By Brent Merrill

Tribal members with enterprising business ideas can soon take advantage of those ideas at the Tribes' new Economic Development Center. The Economic Development Program currently is housed in the Tribe's Forestry Center and is directed by Mitch Conley.

The Tribe applied for a 1.5 million federal grant to develop a small business center that would benefit the community as well as Tribal members. The initial phase of the development process involved the establishment of a training course that targeted Tribal members who were interested in developing a small business plan. According to Conley, the classes, which were held in November and December, were fairly successful.

"I have been very impressed with the entrepreneurial spirit of the Tribal members that I have come in contact with," said Conley. "The classes were designed to help people come up with a good solid business plan that would be functional and realistic. Conley said that at least 5 solid business plans could be developed from the first class. "I was happy that we were successful with this program. Everyone who completed the class can now write their own business plan." Conley likes to refer to the business plans as one's roadmap to success. "These people learned a lot about themselves and they learned how much work goes into developing a solid business plan," said Conley.

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Conley said that much of the credit for the success of the classes belongs to Wes Patterson. "Wes Patterson is a remarkable man," said Conley. "I have been impressed with his knowledge and practical ability." Patterson has worked with the economic development department of the Siletz Tribe through Lincoln City Community College. Patterson and Conley have developed a concept paper on their Tribal economic assistance project. Conley said that the paper has been put before a National Small Business Organization as well as other Oregon Tribes. "They got to see that this project has tremendous merit." The pilot model for this project was completed at the end of January and the response has already started. "All the Tribes in Oregon have gotten involved with us and the Small Business Administration is 100% behind us. In fact, they have expressed an interest to use this concept on an even greater scale so we're very pleased."

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If you are interested in looking at the projects concept paper, stop by the Economic Development Program located at the Tribal Forestry office. Conley can also provide information on when the next business class will take place and he has also expressed an interest in talking to Tribal members about their ideas for small businesses. "We're here and we are willing to listen and we want to help," said Conley.



John Mercier

Tribal Planner Comes Home

By Brent Merrill

After spending six years working for Cooper Consultants Incorporated, in Portland, Tribal member John Mercier has come home. In November of 1990, he was hired by the Tribe as the Tribal Planner and since that time he has been working on the office relocation project.

Mercier has a clear idea of what his job responsibilities are. "I'm definitely a planner, as far as the Tribe is concerned. Our short term plans called for getting the staff into the new facilities at the new site." Mercier said that his long term projects include the completion of an assessment of all Tribal properties and establishing zoning ordinances. Mercier is also working on a computer networking system.

"Administratively I'll be working with just about all of the program directors in the establishment of a computer networking program," said Mercier. The system Mercier is working on would allow the different programs to update current computer capabilities at a lower cost as well as many other benefits.

Mercier is happy to be living in the Grand Ronde area once again and said that he appreciates the opportunity to get in touch with his past. "My heritage is real important. I was raised here following termination and the only cultural awareness I had at the time was a little bit of the Chinook jargon." Mercier explained that he was working in Warm Springs when he witnessed cultural activities for the first time. "I was totally impressed with how they managed to stay in contact with their heritage." What he saw awakened his urges to experience his own culture. When the chance to work for his Tribe came along he jumped at it.

As the Tribal Planner his work recently has consisted of coordinating and finalizing the Tribes' office relocation. "I've been through several of these moves," said Mercier. "The move itself is usually smooth but, the transition is difficult. Once everybody gets settled in then things begin to shape up."

"One of the things that John brings is a wide range of skills to his position," said General Manager Jim Willis. "He has handled various details of this office relocation that somebody without his experience and background would probably have overlooked. We were lucky to get him when we did."

Penna New Court Clerk

By Brent Merrill

New York born Maxine Penna, 20, has recently been hired by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde as a Tribal Court Records Clerk. Penna's responsibilities include updating client files and filing client records as well as preparing court dockets. She will also be asked to be a liaison between the Tribal Court and the State Court.

Penna is familiar with how the State operates based on her experience working at the Oregon State Police Department. She feels that this experience will help her with her new position. "I'm looking forward to working for the Tribe and my background with record keeping should help me with keeping court documents consistent with Tribal policy," Maxine said.

Penna likes her new surroundings. "The atmosphere here is a good one and everybody has been so nice. I'm looking forward to learning everything that goes with this job." Maxine's enthusiasm is hard not to notice. "She is so energetic and quick to learn," said Jackie Colton. Colton, who is the Tribal Council Secretary, works very closely with Penna. "She is always willing to give that extra effort to complete whatever task is assigned to her," said Colton. "Her pleasant personality makes her a joy to work with. I've already grown secure in depending on her."



Maxine Penna



Natives Concerned By Recycling Plant

PORT ANGELES, Wash.-Construction of a 440 million recycling plant could be delayed by Indians' concerns that the site is rich in native history and artifacts.

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is fighting permits that Daishowa America Co. needs to build the recycling mill and power substation next to its existing pulp and paper mill on Ediz Hook.

The Tribe wants a professional archaeologist to examine the site.

"It's not a strategy on the part of the Tribe to stall Daishowa," Tribal lawyer Russell Busch said. "They're just interested in getting protection for their cultural values."

Evidence of Indian activity on what is now Daishowa property is unclear, but Tribal leaders said the industrial area was once a natural sandpit extensively used by Indians.

The company is considering the situation and has been meeting with the Indians.