

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Entrepreneur of the Month: Elinore Jenness



Elinore Jenness

Tribal member Elinore Jenness is enjoying her life-style these days. She has a successful business caring for five elderly people in her home. GOLDEN AGE ACRE is her caregiving business, and has been in existence since 1981.

Elinore's home and business are located in Dexter, Oregon, but it seems strange referring to GOLDEN AGE ACRE as a business. After visiting the establishment, I felt as comfortable as I do in my own house, which may be why she is so successful. Elinore herself speaks of her clients with an unusual fondness...it is immediately evident she cares about the people and her work.

"I care about the (five) people who live here. I am interested in their beliefs, and needs. It is really amazing the lives they have led," said Elinore.

Elinore used to work in a nursing home, but says a home-based care facility is the greatest alternative for older people who don't want to live in a nursing home, or those who are denied entry into one.

She and her husband had a cabinet business and prior to the assisted living business, her husband converted his cabinet wood shop next to their home into a living area. At the beginning of this business, the Jenness family didn't have to invest much money. Most home-based businesses are less expensive to operate. However, for assisted care facilities, there are all types of legal issues facing a prospective caregiver.

"I didn't even need a license for this business when I started," said Elinore. "But the rules Oregon enacted are for everyone's good. There used to be all kinds of people who took money from the elderly, and just let them sleep in their house. There was no concern for their personal or medical needs."

Oregon State laws require home-based care facilities to provide fire drills, rotating menus, medications administered daily, and a daily log on each person. "If one of my clients has to go to the hospital or has an emergency, everything is recorded in the daily log. His or her entire medical history is here, right up to the medications that person has taken that day," she said.

Elinore and her son Andy have been seriously interested in opening their own assisted living facility for a long time. "It would be so nice to touch more lives. Right now, my maximum is five clients, and I have a waiting list," she said.

Elinore consulted the Tribe's Economic Development department on that possibility.

"All the people in Economic Development were so eager to help me. They are very knowledgeable, and I just don't feel enough people take advantage of their services. They have the ability to do so much for tribal members."

Elinore Jenness is still working on opening a business outside of her home. For now, she's very happy working with a handful of clients. It must show, because in 1991, she was nominated for Caregiver of the Year by Senior Services in Lane County.

Arts & Crafts Co-op Forming

November 10th is your chance to register with the new tribal arts & crafts cooperative. At this meeting the group will elect its Board of Directors, and begin establishing the policies and procedures of the group. If you are interested in selling arts & crafts items, take this opportunity to invest in future sales possibilities. Members will work with Economic Development staff on targeting new markets for product sales, obtaining retail space in Grand Ronde, and bulk purchasing of supplies—specifically the cooperative will enable you to increase your sales and lower your costs. Attend the Tuesday, November 10 meeting so you can input ideas and get the benefits from future cooperative activities. If you have any questions about the co-op, please call Shelley Hanson at 1-800-422-0232.

Small Business Financing Class

The 3rd Tuesday of each month is a golden opportunity for those of you interested in owning your own business. Economic Development sponsors a small business development class at the Tribal Community Center. October's class dealt with small business financing. John Safstrom of the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Mike Knighton of SBA, and Mark Houston of the Oregon Economic Development Department educated class participants on the various financing options available throughout their agencies. If you missed the meeting and would like information on their programs, contact Debby at Economic Development.

November 17 Economic Development will be sponsoring a Small Business Accounting/Record keeping class. Anyone interested in owning their own business should attend. An inadequate accounting system is the downfall of many small businesses. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn the basics, and ask questions. If you live out of state or are unable to attend the class, contact Economic Development. They may be able to provide literature or other sources of the information you are seeking.

Discover Economic Development

"We want all tribal members to know our services are available for them. If they have a question, it will be answered," said Mitch Conley, Division Manager of Economic Development at the Tribe's main offices.

Economic Development has a mission: the people who work there want to help tribally-owned business grow, start new businesses, and increase employment opportunities for members of the Tribe.

Services they offer include business counseling, training classes, and personal finance counseling and advising. If someone comes to them with a marketing idea or question, they're interested.

The heart of Economic Development is its employees: Mitch Conley, Shelley Hanson, (Business Program Specialist) Elaine Moore, (Economic Development Specialist) and Debby Childers, Division Secretary. Although each person has his/her own specialized area, they all work together to help their clients as fully as possible and to answer questions. "We refer to each other a lot," said Shelley.

Currently, part of their budget is being used to finance a library and a computer lab located in the tribal offices. The library will contain various reference tools, documents, video and cassette tapes, all related to finance, business, or arts and crafts. It will be available to all tribal members.

At present, the Tribe doesn't have a program to authorize loans to tribally-owned businesses or potential businesses, but it is a major priority for the future. Surveys were recently mailed to many tribal members asking about business problems and areas of concern. "The number one response on the surveys was problems with financing," said Mitch. "We want to be able to consult tribal members, help them with their business plan, and help them get the loans they need. We are available by FAX, phone, or mail."

The department encourages attendance at their monthly meetings, and stresses confidentiality. "If a person came to us with a marketing idea, we can assure that person the idea will remain confidential. It is not uncommon for people to steal ideas from someone else," said Elaine Moore.

The people working in Economic Development are eager to work with tribal members and help them realize their goals. Said Mitch, "Our program is a national model. We have one of the best programs in Indian Country today."



Economic Development Staff: Shelley Hanson, Debby Childers, Mitch Conley, and Elaine Moore.