

Business

Tribe secures grant for water system

The Tribe has been awarded a construction grant of nearly three-quarters of a million dollars from a federal agency, the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The grant is for major improvements to the Grand Ronde community water system, including a 500,000 gallon water tank and pipeline to deliver water from the tank to the Tribal headquarters area.

"The Tribe is happy that EDA understands the importance of water development to the future of our Tribe as well as the Grand Ronde community. This grant will provide the foundation for development that is needed to offset the timber industry downturn," said Mark Mercier, tribal chairman. "Improving the water system is absolutely critical to the construction of housing and other forms of economic development."

The Grand Ronde water system is owned and operated by the local water district, the Grand Ronde

Community Water Association, which is also adding a tank to the system. The Tribe has worked closely with the association during the past year on planning and fundraising. Ed Larsen who is on Tribal Council and the Water Association Board of Directors said, "With over 1,000,000 gallons of new water storage coming on-line, the water association can lift the moratorium on water hook-ups. People will be able to build homes and start businesses in our community."

The new grant of \$724,000 from EDA will be combined with other federal grants the Tribe has received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and a loan from the Farmer's Home Association to the Water Association, as well as financial contributions from both the Tribe and the association. The total package of water system improvements is expected to cost about 1.7 million. Construction on

the tank and lines may be started this winter and will likely be finished next year.

Chairman Mark Mercier said the Tribe had substantial support for the project from the Oregon Congressional Delegation. He also attributed some of the Tribe's success to the Statewide Economic Revitalization Team, which is President Clinton's effort to assist communities affected by the downturn in the timber industry. The federal agencies on the team coordinated with each other, and gave the Tribe technical assistance which enabled the project to be put together in less than a year. Constance Albrecht, the grantwriter for the Tribe, prepared the grant applications and an environmental assessment, with the Public Works Division, and the Tribe's engineering firm, Mater Engineering.

Entrepreneur of the Month: Mike Reibach

Mike Reibach, founder of *Standing Elk Incorporated*, is in the business of barn wood salvage sales. He and his crew tear down older, unwanted barns and sell the wood product to interested buyers and developers.

"There is a big market for older wood," said Mike. "People want a certain look to their business or home, and barn wood is some of the best and the strongest."

Standing Elk, Inc. recently sold some wood to an owner of a small grocery store, who wanted the older "general store" country look to his business.

Mike is a wholesaler who runs advertisements in large newspapers. People all over the west are interested as well as other parts of the U.S. Mike will deliver the wood to a destination or port.

"This type of wood is not available in many foreign countries," he said. "There is a demand for it abroad, too."

Mike says the reason for the wood's popularity has to do with its age. "It's already seasoned," he said. "It won't crack or rot. It's



Mike Reibach

totally solid."

Mike works as a firefighter for the Tribe as well as run this business, and is busy working every day of the week.

"It takes a lot of hours, but if you put enough energy into something, it will pay off."

Fortunately, Mike resides in Grand Ronde and can access the Small Business Development facilities often. He has also attended several of the monthly seminars.

"I've used the materials, phones,

equipment, and have gotten a lot of advice," he said.

Embodied in *Standing Elk, Inc.* is *Red Threads Designs*, a business in which Mike is co-owner. Mike has a lot of business ideas regarding the Tribe, and youth in particular. He sees this community as his home, which holds and endless string of opportunities for tribal members.

"I want to help enhance the quality of life for our people," he said. "I want to contribute to the economy and community."

Timber Committee position open

Applications are now being accepted for one position on the Timber Committee. We will be accepting applications until December 31. For an application you may contact Connie Holmes, Timber Committee Secretary/Treasurer at 879-2381 or 879-5522.

Christmas Bazaar coming soon

Friday, December 2, and Saturday, December 3, Small Business Development is sponsoring the Second Annual Christmas Bazaar. This year's bazaar will be held at St. Michael's gymnasium in Grand Ronde from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday, and 10-5 on Saturday. Tables are available for \$25 for both days. There will be two complimentary tables for elders. If

you are a tribal elder and wish to sell some crafts at the bazaar, contact Penny DeLoe at SBD offices to reserve a space.

Your \$25 fee pays for advertising, rental space and rental of tables and chairs, and festive decorations that liven up the building. For reservations contact Penny at the Tribal offices. Phone is 1-800-422-0232, extension 2476.

Business Loan money available

If you are looking for business financing, now is the time to get busy! ONABEN financing will be offering several small loans in early November to qualified Native Americans in the state. The minimum term is three years, and the maximum loan amount is \$2,500. For more information and application materials, call Small Business Development.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs will also have business loan dollars soon. Guaranteed loans through your local bank, and a limited amount of Direct Loan money will be available for Native American business loans. There are a variety of rules and regulations concerning these programs, so contact Small Business Development about eligibility requirements.

Computer training classes

Regularly scheduled computer classes for November are full. Never fear, it is not too late to sign up for those computer classes you have been yearning to take. Classes in Basic Computers, Word for Windows, and Printshop Deluxe are all scheduled, so if you are interested in one of those classes, call Small Business Development to get on a waiting list for a new class time. Classes consist of three people, so if you and two friends would like to schedule a "private class" call Debby Childers at Small Business Development.

ONABEN Business classes

If you are interested in starting a business, but are not sure how to get started, or if you have wondered about what it really takes to own and operate a business read on.

The Oregon Native American Business and Entrepreneurial Network is sponsoring a two-part "Going Into Business" class. Classes are held Tuesday nights at the Community Center from 6:30-9:30. Contact Penny DeLoe for more information.

Lost: Bronze medallion

A bronze military-style medal was found at the Tribal Community Center in October. It is a pin and has an inscribed message on the back. If you have lost such an item, call Tracy Olson at the Tribal offices.