

Quality of life for members is first priority for SMDC Chairman

By Tracy Dugan

Tribal member **MIKE LARSEN** is very busy these days. As Chairman of the Spirit Mountain Development Corporation (SMDC) Board of Directors, his duties keep him on a rigorous schedule.

Four years ago when SMDC was first being formed by Tribal Council, Mike Larsen was asked to serve on the Board of Directors, and Tribal Council subsequently appointed him as a member. The Board elected him Vice-Chair, and elected Bob Mercier Chairman. About two years ago, Bob had to leave his position, and Mike became Chairman, a job which he has been enjoying a great deal, though it's very hard work. The Board has changed over the years, but Mike says that the people who serve have always been very dedicated to the Corporation's mission and have provided valuable business expertise.

"Currently, the Board is preparing to make three position recommendations to Tribal Council," said Mike. The current Board members, in addition to Mike, are Ed Pearsall, Ed Larsen, and Jim Sizemore — owner of *Sizemore Associates*, a company that has provided financial consulting for the Tribe.

Mike says the Board will begin meeting twice per month, and his duties as Chairman include, "...making sure there is proper and accurate communication between the Board and Tribal Council, running the meetings and supervising the

surveillance department at the Casino."

Mike also hosts a "welcome aboard" orientation for the Casino's new employees every month, so he can meet each of them personally and let them know that the Board wishes them success in their employment endeavors.

One of Mike's main responsibilities is to act as liaison to Tribal Council concerning the Board's decisions and recommendations about what types of economic opportunities the Board wants to pursue.

Mike said, "I really want to thank Tribal Council, both past and present, for their support of the Board and its ideas."

Mike feels that economic development is one of the contributing pieces necessary to help the Tribe achieve self-sufficiency and keep the tribal programs going strong. He's very proud of the Casino and what has been accomplished so far.

"Seeing all the good things that happen within the Tribe as a result of our business ventures is rewarding," he said. "We should all feel happy about the jobs that have been provided for people in the community." Mike said that many people have had the chance to improve their quality of life, and he feels good about that. "As Chairman, I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to help effect changes for the good of our people and our community. And there's nothing holding us back. We can go even further."



A Compass to Steer By: The Tribe's Mission

As the first year of the Casino comes and goes, it is time to reflect on the guiding force of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, **the Tribal Mission Statement**. What does the Mission mean? How does the Mission impact the Tribe and the community? What role does Spirit Mountain Casino play in the mission's goals?

This article will be the first of an ongoing series, answering many of the questions about the Tribe's mission, and the guidance it lends to all tribal plans and projects.

The Tribe's Mission: A multitude of plans and projects can overwhelm the most efficient of organizations. Organizations using mission statements as a guide have the ability to take a wider view, breaking down the plans and projects into vehicles for achieving goals. Mission statements are created primarily by setting key values, and integrating the values into statements that express the organizations view of the future. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's mission is:



To be a tribal community known as a caring people, dedicated to the principles of honesty and integrity, building community and individual responsibility and self-sufficiency through personal empowerment and the responsible stewardship of human and natural resources; a community willing to act with courage in preserving tribal cultures and traditions for all future generations.

This statement identifies important attributes such as caring, honesty, integrity and courage, but more importantly, along with the Tribe's Strategic Plan, it identifies the key principles that should be applied in all tribal endeavors:

BUILDING COMMUNITY

- Spirit of community, strengthening the tribal center at Grand Ronde
- Facilities that allow a community to interact and grow
- Increasing communication and participation among tribal members

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- Provide opportunities for tribal members to develop into capable people
- Programs/ventures that encourage physical and emotional health

STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES

- Develop revenues from tribal sources, rely less on federal sources
- Evaluate tribal activities for cost effectiveness
- Encourage independent decision make by staff

PRESERVATION OF CULTURE

- Programs/ventures that provide a sense of tribal history, culture and traditions
- Build on tribal tradition of cooperation

The Casino's Mission: Spirit Mountain Casino is an important part of the tribes economic development plan, and has a mission statement that reads:

The corporation's mission is to generate income to the Tribe and provide jobs to tribal members and others in the community.



Spirit Mountain Casino's mission statement identifies two very important key principles:

- **THE GENERATION OF INCOME FOR THE TRIBE.**
- **PROVIDING JOBS TO TRIBAL MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY.**

The primary goal of Spirit Mountain Casino is profit, since funding important tribal programs is the first step to the Tribe's goal of self sufficiency. The secondary goal of the Corporation is to create employment for the community and particularly for tribal members.

Mission statements allow organizations to focus on their values and goals, and offer guidance and direction for any plan or project. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Spirit Mountain Casino have taken great strides towards their goals, thanks in part to the guidance and value setting their mission statements provide. The meaning of the Tribe's mission statement is made clear by Chris Leno, assistant to the Executive Officer, "Our mission acts as a compass to steer us in the right direction." The Tribe and Casino move towards an unknown future, guided by the values and goals of their missions, with the hope of continued benefits to tribal members and the community. Next issue will focus on key points of the Tribe's mission, how the Casino relates, and the projects and programs which help make the Tribe what it is today, and in the future.