

Tribe's new Financial Officer adds up

By Oscar Johnson
Staff Reporter

Bob Saunders, the Tribe's new Finance Officer, is geared up, ready to go, and looking forward to sharing his 25 years of professional experience with the Accounting Division.

Saunders came on board in December after spending 20 years as Chief Financial Officer for St. Vincent Hospital in Portland.

He says he heard a lot about the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and jumped at the opportunity to work here.

"The Tribe gets very favorable press," says Saunders. "The Government to Government compact, the six percent of casino revenues they give away (to local non-profit groups) each year — it just seems like a lot of good things are going on here."

A resident of Canby who is originally from Kansas City, Saunders earned a degree in accounting from the University of Kansas in 1963.

He got his Masters in Business



Bob Saunders, Financial Officer

Administration at the University of Nebraska where he later worked as Financial Director for the school's medical facility.

Saunders is also a graduate of Yale University's advanced management program.

As the Tribe's new Financial Officer he heads both the Accounting and General Services divisions.

In other words, he oversees everything from administrative services and purchasing equipment to outside audits and working out the annual budget.

Saunders looks forward to the challenging work that is ahead of him.

"This is a fascinating organization. It has grown so tremendously in just a few years," he says. "And my role right now is to help put all the infrastructure in place."

He is also impressed with the Tribe's practice of looking to the future when it comes to financial matters such as self-sustaining trust funds that will help defer dependency on casino revenues.

He says he looks forward to working for an organization with that kind of foresight because it matches his own philosophy.

"I bring a strategic approach," he says. He describes this approach as long range planning "from two, three,

four years out" into the future.

But that is not all he hopes to bring to his new job.

"I enjoy developing people," he adds, noting that about half of the 20 or so people under his supervision are furthering their education. "I think there's a lot of good people here and I think I can be a good mentor."

But, like a good financier, Saunders is also thinking about his own returns.

So what does he get out of it all?

"I'm at a point where making a contribution is more important than just cashing a pay check," he says.

Saunders looks forward to gaining "the satisfaction of knowing I made a major contribution to something worth while."

And he says that working for the Tribe has already started to pay off.

"This is a very enjoyable place to work. One thing I really enjoy is the people," says Saunders. "I feel like I should have been here a long time ago."

Dealer's School grads ready to get on the floor

By Tracy Dugan
Editor

At the end of January, another Dealer's School finished up its 12-week session at Spirit Mountain Casino. Six tribal members participated in the class, and are expected to be out on the floor dealing those table games.

Participants of the Dealer's School learn three different games: Blackjack, Big Six, and Let It Ride. Tribal members just finishing up the latest class are Matt White, Troy Fuller, Rich Colton, Kateri Atanacio, Angela Shultz, and Randy Leno. The class was held three days per week, and taught by instructor Tom Riley.

Kateri Atanacio, who's favorite game is Blackjack, said she isn't nervous at all about beginning work on the Casino floor.

"I am a people-person," she said. "I have been raising my kids at home for a long time, and now I'm looking forward to having a career."

Rich Colton said he's also confident about being a dealer. He started work on January 24.

"Tom, our instructor, was great. By the end of the class, we all knew the games and could do it without even thinking about it."

Tribal member Angela Shultz, who currently works in the kitchen at the Casino, said she wanted to be a



Another group of tribal members ready to deal cards at Spirit Mountain Casino. From left: Rich Colton, Angela Schultz, Randy Leno, and Kateri Atanacio.

Photo by Tracy Dugan

dealer ever since the Casino opened.

"I started working here when I was 19," she said. "I had to wait to take this class, because Dealers have to be 21. But now I am getting the job I really want."

And Randy Leno, who has also

worked at the Casino for a while, said he wanted to be a Dealer because "it's an exciting job" and a chance to earn more money.

All the participants said the class emphasizes customer service, and that it's the Casino's top priority to

treat guests well.

Said Atanacio, "Knowing that I am working for my own tribe's casino, and being part of the community gives me a lot of pride. I just want to strive to be the best employee I can be."