

Housing Authority Looks Forward With New Staff

Housing continued from front page

blessing yet, include expanding the geographic area where the Tribe will make grants available for Down Payment, Home Repair, and Rental Assistance programs.

These plans, of course, are not to say that GRTHA is abandoning Grand Ronde. The Ilip Tilixam Elder Housing complex potentially includes two more developments and following the low-income family rental houses now under development, the Tribe is behind plans to develop a mixed income housing project and such community-building facilities as a senior center and an adult foster care home.

To make the local plans possible, the Tribe's Director of Public Works Eric Scott considers both immediate and long-range solutions to the ever-present issue of making sufficient water available for Tribal projects. However, he said, "The cost-benefit analysis we do considers more than simply revenues."

A government like the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde sees benefit in providing families with places to live and facilities that make those homes part of a vibrant community.

Also, because a lot of staff changes accompany the planned growth in projects, GRTHA is developing a new home for itself within the low-income rental housing project underway. The 1,800 square foot building now occupied by the housing staff will be replaced by a facility with 5,400 square feet making room for current and anticipated staffers. In addition, the new development will also provide the Housing Authority with a shop area.



Greg Martin

Greg Martin has been on board as Layden's assistant director since last October. Martin came from 27 years as a higher education administrator, most recently as chief financial officer and vice president of administration for Teikyo Lorreto Heights University in Denver. He now has oversight for all of the division's programs, specifically operations and compliance issues, as well as developing policies and procedures for the division's operations on a day-to-day basis.

Duane Hussey, Development and Construction coordinator, has now been with GRTHA for almost three years. Third generation in the construction business, Hussey most recently worked as a consultant for "flash track" construction, coordinating between local governments, designers and owners to help turn agricultural land into half million square foot high tech plants in 10 1/2 months.

For GRTHA, Hussey works with Public Works Director Eric Scott to take care of infrastructure issues like roads and sewers that pave the way for GRTHA projects. Among those infrastructure issues and possibly the biggest of them, is



Duane Hussey

the availability of water.

"Two years ago, we started meeting to identify alternative water sources," said Scott. "Ultimately, a three-part plan was adopted to create a 20 to 30 year solution. That plan, he said, includes development of a water treatment plant for the casino, which will free up a lot of local water resources for Tribal needs."

Nancy Holmes, who has been with the Tribe for eight years and with the Housing Authority since its inception, has for the last six months taken over as Home Ownership Coordinator. In this capacity, Holmes implements the Down Payment Grants



Nancy Holmes

Program, an \$800,000 a year program. Initially, down payment grants totaled \$5,000 for each Tribal member buying a home. Today, \$10,000 grants are common, but the Tribe also matches an additional \$2,500 contributed by the potential homeowner, making total grants as high as \$12,500.

Tribal member Lonnie Leno has been working on housing issues with the Grand Ronde community since before GRTHA started in 1996.



Lonnie Leno

He implemented the home repair program that transferred to the Housing Authority when it was formed. Now Housing Maintenance Coordinator, Leno contracts with independent companies for maintenance and repair work for GRTHA programs and in some cases, he takes care of the work himself. Since the first phase of the Elder housing development was completed, Leno has been taking care of maintenance issues there. When the current family housing project is completed, Leno will take care of maintenance and repair work on this project, too.

Administrative Assistant Shawn Kennedy, with GRTHA for one and a half years, is receptionist for the division and also assists with an array of jobs. She helps Leno keep track of work orders and she shuffles the paperwork for home repair grants, now handled by Don Coon, the agency's new Housing Improvement Specialist.



Shawn Kennedy

"Whatever somebody needs to have done, I do," said Kennedy.

At the end of last year, GRTHA added Don Coon in the new position of Housing Improvement Specialist. In this position, Coon administers the Home Repair Grant program to Tribal members in the



Don Coon

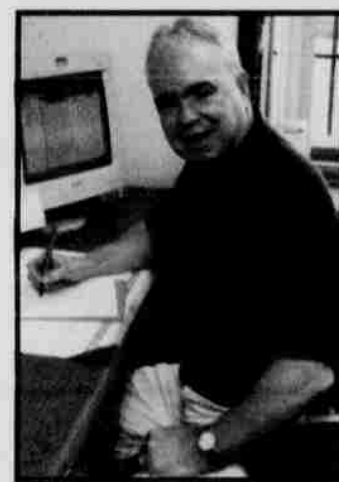
GRTHA ten-county area. He inspects homes, obtains bids and oversees repair work. In addition, Coon manages the Minor Medical Adaptation Grant program, through which Tribal members are entitled to funding for medically required improvements on their homes.



Terri White

Coon was a general contractor in Benton County area prior to joining GRTHA.

Terri White has been executive assistant for GRTHA for more than five years. One of her specialties over the years has been preparing contracts for the agency. White worked as a paralegal for 17 years before joining GRTHA and though her drafts of contracts go to the legal department before being printed, once approved, these contracts become forms reproduced many times for many projects. Her work has saved the division a lot of time and expense, said Layden.



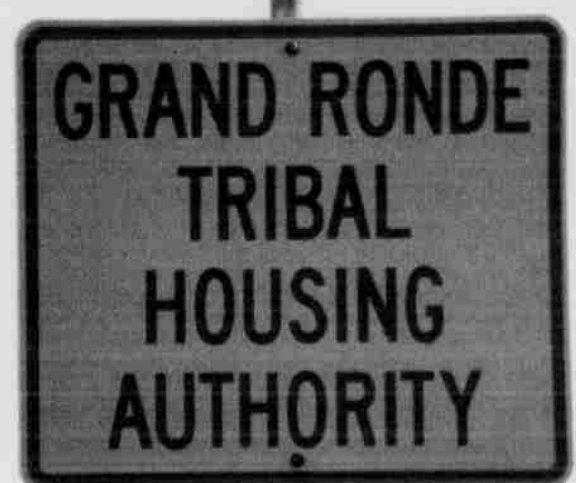
Larry Leith

as she does, she said, "I'm kind of hidden. People are sometimes surprised to learn that I work here."

Starting in April, Larry Leith became GRTHA's Rental Housing Coordinator. As such, he manages the rental housing units. There are now 38 in the Elder Housing project and 36 going up for low-income families. He also handles the leasing of Grand Meadows properties.

"I make it a point to be in the neighborhoods everyday," he said.

Previously, Leith operated lumberyards and for most of the last ten years, he has managed his own rental properties. ■



Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority
 9615 Grand Ronde Road
 Grand Ronde, Oregon
 Toll-free: 800-422-0232, ext. 2401
 Phone: 503-879-2401
 Fax: 503-879-5973
www.grandronde.org/housing

Photos by Ron Kanten