

New Director At Spirit Mountain Started Out As A Dealer, Worked His Way Up

■ Mitch Goldstein has worked in Atlantic City, Louisiana, Illinois and now Oregon.

By Peta Tinda

Mitch Goldstein is the new Gaming Director for Spirit Mountain Casino. He got his start in gaming 23 years ago as a craps dealer in Atlantic City.

Since then he's worked at Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, spent four years working on the riverboat casinos in Louisiana and worked at Players Island Casino in Metropolis, Illinois.

He is familiar with Tribal gaming and was employed for four years at Prairie Nights Casino in South Dakota and experienced work at Lakeside casino in Baroma, California, the third largest casino on the United States.

He moved to Oregon and "just fell



Photo by Peta Tinda

Mitch Goldstein

in love with the place," he said.

He also has praise for Spirit

Mountain. "There's a tremendous amount of style, and it's very uniquely designed, and I like how it's planned with the future in mind."

Goldstein met with the Tribal Council and says he looks forward to working with his fellow managers.

He said he thought there was still a lot of untapped potential at the casino.

"The potential is there," he said. "There's still a lot of room to move forward."

As Gaming Director, Goldstein said he will be looking at new and creative ways to expand the business.

"I want to look at upgrading the machines and finding different ways to reach customers," he said.

With the additional rooms that the expansion will provide, Goldstein sees Spirit Mountain Casino as a more upscale, destination resort.

"If you look at Vegas, they target they're marketing strategy to attract families. The hotel was key to that."

In his spare time, Goldstein enjoys camping, fishing and visiting new places.

Goldstein said that he looks forward to meeting and working with the casino staff, "with the goal of improving the casino floor." ■

Tactical Approach, Research Are Strengths Of New Casino Marketing Director

■ Sharon Farrell promoted fights in Vegas. Will boxing come to Grand Ronde?

By Peta Tinda

Sharon Farrell is the new Marketing Director for Spirit Mountain Casino. She brings with her 15 years experience in marketing for some of the largest casinos in the nation.

Her intent was to go into the family catering business when a friend who worked in marketing asked her to help during an especially busy weekend. She soon learned she had a knack for marketing and took it up full-time.

She has been with some of the county's largest gaming companies, having worked at Circus Circus in Reno and Industrial Gaming Technologies, the world's largest maker of gaming machines.

She was in charge of marketing at the Las Vegas Hilton, a 3,700 room hotel with seven restaurants.

Farrell said marketing comes in two parts. The first is "marketing is the overall communication, image and public relations for the business. It's the heartbeat of the

business because it reaches out to everybody."

The second part, she said "is branding, recognition and loyalizing."

I work very hard to make sure to reach the right audience at the right time with the right message," said Farrell.

She says that she is very tactical in her approach to marketing.

"I have a firm belief in research; I spend time with focus groups and in general, base the majority of my decisions on research," she said.

She said that she is very impressed with the experience of some of her fellow Spirit Mountain employees.

The most challenging aspect of marketing, she said, is that "Everything I do is subjective — something I think is creatively superior may not be the best solution."

Farrell was very impressed with the enthusiasm of the employees.

"This has been the warmest welcome I've ever received," she said.

"This property rates very high in customer satisfaction," she said. "The employees are very enthusiastic and I see that spill over into the floor."

Farrell lives in Tillamook with her husband and two sons.

"My hobbies are my kids, taking them to sports, school and the like. I also collect sports memorabilia."

Farrell has an extensive collection of signed boxing gloves and other items from her days promoting fights in Las Vegas.

She has plans to "really step up the marketing," for the casino.

"We have to stay on top of our direct marketing and public relations efforts by showcasing our key selling points: food, entertainment, the new rooms and the events. We want to change the billboards and commercials to get people off of the highway and into the building."

Her other main responsibility is to make sure that Spirit Mountain casino is in the top of customers'



Photo by Peta Tinda

Sharon Farrell

minds.

"We do that by formulating a plan and provide an image that fits with the overall business strategy of the property." ■

Tribal Member Lives His Sovereignty

■ Ronny Riggs-Johnson "raises his people" with a gas pump in his hand.

By Jack Ham and Ron Karten

Around mid-July, Public Information Manager Brent Merrill came back from the Tribe's convenience store amazed by his encounter with Fueller Ronny Riggs-Johnson. The service was so good that he wanted a story on this Tribal member.

As a Fueller at the Spirit Mountain Convenience Store, Riggs-Johnson indeed shows great people skills to the customers who pass through Grand Ronde.

Riggs-Johnson's typical day includes hustling from car to car to meet customer's needs. Through the hustle, Riggs uses a good attitude to impress his customers:

"I like to show the image that we are a kind and generous people," he said. "We can be professional and intelligent."

"When people pass (through) Grand Ronde for a moment they

leave with a good feeling," said Riggs-Johnson. "This isn't minimum wage work. It's my sovereignty."

"I try not to shoot arrows at people. We all got to work together to raise our people," he said.

"(I can) share good spirit with people," he said.

"(I am) walking in the spirit of my Grandfather," he said.

"Spirit Mountain, my grandmother. I look up to her," he said.

"I can uncle up to all of these young nephews, plant some good seeds of life to inspire these young guys," he said.

"I believe in showing that the Grand Ronde people are kind and generous like a family," he said.

"I like to be out here with the people, be with the brothers," he said.

And then he was off to serve another guest, another brother. ■

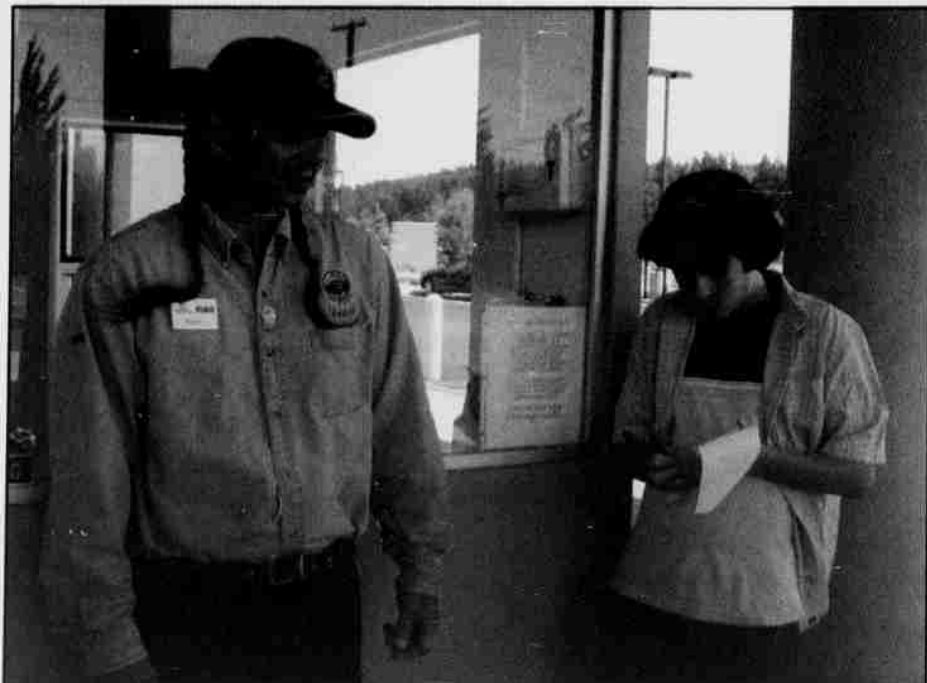


Photo by Ron Karten

Ronny Riggs-Johnson is interviewed by Jack Ham