

# Elder Care Homes Set for Summer Completion

**HOMES continued  
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tion of three buildings and site preparation for a fourth was about \$2 million, said Carina Kistler Ginter, Executive Director of the Tribal Housing Authority, and the Elder's community center budget is about \$2.4 million, both divided between Tribal funds and federal government funds.

Particularly for the housing part of this project, the Tribe is recasting and updating an old, family style of taking care of Elders at home. With each housing unit designed for five Elders and a caretaker, it aims to succeed where larger, more impersonal, single building facilities have proved overwhelming an unattractive for aging and fragile Elders.

Guiding the process is a steering committee comprised of Elders both who will live in the facility and those who are not scheduled to live there, as well as representatives of Tribal youth, Health and Wellness, Social Services, Cultural Resources and others who will be involved with the lives of Elders living there.

"It took incredible Tribal collaboration among Tribal departments, the Tribal government and the Housing Authority to make this happen," said Kistler Ginter.

As project leader, Duane Hussey's ideas have popped up from everywhere.

The idea of incorporating color into the design for the hard-of-seeing came from his wife, who works at the Optometry School at Pacific University. Items like railings will have colors or shades of their own, and shiny, not matte, surfaces to help those without the greatest vision to learn, almost instinctively by the colors and shades, to know what is what.

Tribal Grant Writer Bob McElderry (Flathead) suggested money in the Tribal diabetes project be used to buy picnic tables and benches for the outside areas, with the idea that diabetes patients will benefit from going out and exercising, enjoying the fresh air, said Hussey. Tribal Elder and Wellness Manager Bonnie Tom approved the idea that will tie

walkways from the new units to an existing path designed to encourage Elders to get out and walk more.

The plan provides for the "dignity, privacy and respect that should be shown Elders," said Hussey. As a result, every room will have wheelchair accessible private shower and bath facilities, cable television and internet services, and the facilities are wired to provide nurse call stations if they are ever needed. The hallways are six feet wide allowing wheelchairs to pass each other.

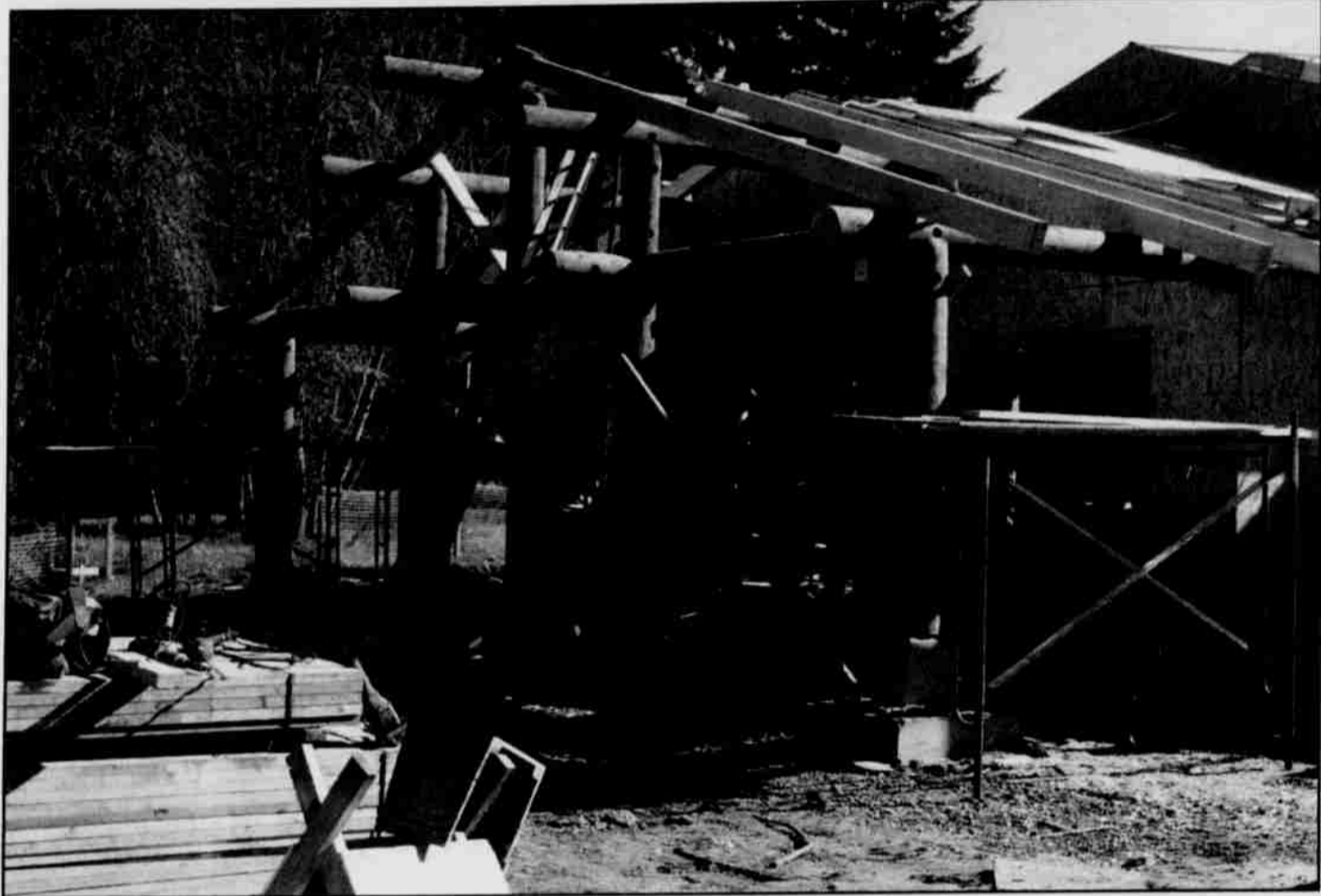


Photo by Toby McClary

From a cultural standpoint, the homes include elements of longhouse design with logs strategically placed. They are designed to be removed, carved, and replaced as time and interest allow.

From an environmental standpoint, the facility will have its own sewer system with a treatment plant for recycling water that then may be reused for things like wash-

bunch of issues that Elders shared in the discussion process.

"There's isolation in aging," said Hussey. "A lot are thinking they're heavy burdens on their families, that they're not physically able to keep up." So, the question came up: "How do we reach them?"

One way is to bring the activities to the least mobile, instead of the other way around. Another is pro-

said Hussey. "I can build the best place in the world but you still need caring individuals to operate it."

Enter Michael DeShane, president of Clackamas-based Concept in Community Living (CCL). The company operates High Lookee Lodge, the assisted living facility for Warm Springs Elders. But CCL is only helping to design and train employees for the operation here in Grand Ronde. Ultimately, said DeShane, CCL expects to turn over operations to the Tribe.

Where the Warm Springs facility has more rooms than Elders to fill it, an advantage of the Grand Ronde facility is that because each building holds only five Elders, Grand Ronde "can build it until they don't have any more market."

CCL is currently evaluating possible ways of staffing the facilities. The firehouse model, where employees work for three days on and three days off "is clearly more expensive," said DeShane. Still under consideration, however, is one model where generalist staffers live at the cottages more or less around the clock with breaks provided by other staffers. The other model under consideration seeks people to work specific

shifts, so that those with more specific skills would work during the waking hours and those with more general skills might sleep at the facility in case an emergency comes up.

"We want (the project) to have an immediate message," said Hussey, "that it is absolutely friendly."

Tribal members potentially interested in the assisted living facility for themselves or a family member should contact the Tribal Housing Authority to get on an interest list.



**Homeplace** — Early Spring weather has been a blessing for making progress on the Elder Foster Care Facilities and has made it possible for the project to be well ahead of schedule. One of three initial buildings is seen here in a photo taken on Thursday, April 7.

Photo by Marty George

ing cars.

Raised flower beds and plants will be placed both for the views and for the privacy of the occupants, said Hussey.

And all this is only the beginning. Studies show that eventually, the three planned buildings serving 15, could be expanded to serve some 50 anticipated to be needed in the Tribal community in the years ahead.

Included in the calculations for developing this project were a whole

vide "a comfortable place where you could gather, like city centers with parks," said Hussey. Later this year, a community center will be built here for these Elders with the idea that all community center functions will be not only inviting but very near to these Elders. Crafts will take place here. Initially scheduled for a May groundbreaking, the schedule for this building has slipped a little, said Hussey.

"They want to live in a country home with a caring environment,"