New Geographic Information Services Analyst In Policy & Planning Department

■ Time spent working with Natural Resources and Culture has kept Jeff Arnst busy so far.

By Toby McClary

The Planning & Grants Development Department has a new employee. Jeff Arnst has taken on the role as the GIS Analyst with over 14 years experience in the field. GIS stands for Geographic Information Systems which includes creating maps of the land acquired by the Tribe as well as map features with database links, special data and special analysis.

Arnst has recently been doing work for some land acquisition projects and explained that he has already been working with a couple of departments very closely.

"Projects through both the Natural Resources Department and the Cultural Resources Department have been my biggest projects yet," said Arnst, "but they (staff members) have been very easy to work with."

Photo by Toby McClary

GIS Analyst Jeff Arnst

This is a map created of the casino land created by GIS Analyst Jeff Arnst.

He is currently designing maps of all Tribal lands including the Spirit Mountain Casino site. As part of creating these maps, Arnst has to get an overhead photo of all designated property and highlight property boarders between Tribal and non-Tribal lands. He then adds titles to all major buildings, highways, access roads and gives a total amount of Tribal acreage in the photo. The art of making such maps is known as cartography.

Another job duty for Arnst is to create an Annual Report for all land acquisitions by Tribal government.

Arnst, 45, grew up in La Grande, Oregon. He graduated from La Grande High School before picking up some side jobs around the area. He then enrolled into Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) in Pendleton, Oregon where he received his Diesel Mechanic Degree. While earning his degree at BMCC, he also enrolled into the Army National Guard. Arnst has been working in the National Guard for 24 years and is currently a Marksmanship Instructor.

After receiving his degree, he became a Mechanic for four years. With a burning desire to go back to school, Arnst then enrolled into Oregon State University in Corvallis where he earned a Bachelor of Geography Science Degree. In 1990, he got his first taste of GIS while working for the Siuslaw National Forest.

After two-and-a-half years with the forest service, Arnst began working for CH2M Hill in Corvallis as their GIS Analyst. He did project work for CH2M Hill for six years until 1999. He then found that he wanted to be closer to Portland, so he found work at URS, an engineering and consulting firm. He was hired on as the Lead GIS Analyst and received some experience in managing, hiring, budgets and was able to bring GIS capabilities to their growing office. Arnst explained that after a crash in the economy, he was temporarily out of work.

"In 2003, the economy dumped and I was laid off," said Arnst.

Arnst then began working as the Regional GIS Analyst at the regional headquarters for Boise Cascade in Medford, Oregon. After Arnst trained them on how to develop their GIS functions, Boise Cascade sold some of their timber lands and had to make a large employee cut.

"They cut two-thirds of their employees and I guess I was in the wrong third," said Arnst.

Arnst then turned to the employee department where they turned him on to the open position at the Tribe. He put in an application in August and was hired shortly thereafter.

Arnst lives in Lake Oswego with his wife Marnie and their two boys Benjamin, 6, and Kyle, 3. He is an avid fisherman and explained that Benjamin is following in his footsteps.

Working for the Tribe has been a good experience for Arnst and he feels thankful that the Tribe has provided him with employment and presented him with an opportunity for him to share his expertise.

"There is lots of potential here," said Arnst. "The GIS needs to be coordinated a little better and with my experience, we can make it very beneficial to the Tribe."

The experience and positive outlook that Arnst brings to the table has brought notice from his peers.

"Jeff has been a good addition to the department," said Jeff's supervisor and Planning and Grants Development Manager Kim Rogers. "Public Works and Natural Resources were represented on the interview panel and we liked his enthusiasm as well as his technical knowledge. On the job he has made an effort to improve the skills of GIS users within the Tribe." ■

Photo by Dale Peterson

Spirit Mountain Tribal employees posed for a picture this last fall. All of the 148 Tribal members were not able to take advantage of this photo opportunity.

Spirit Mountain Casino's Tribal Development program will be highlighting individual Tribal employees in up-coming *Smoke Signals* through out 2006. The articles, "Tribal Employee Profile", will give our readers an opportunity to meet some of the hard working Casino Tribal members.

Sanda L. "Sam" Henny, (front, third from the left) Tribal Developmentor, manages the Tribal Development Program at Spirit Mountain. The "Program of One," encompasses: Tribal employee career planning, Tribal employee Protégé Program, SMGI Mentorship Program, and partners with CTGR Work Experience Program, Summer Youth and INROADS, Oregon Internship. Sam works with any Tribal member who is seeking development opportunities. The Program of One, is designed for many, managed by one, and customized to the individual.

Stay tuned. You will be meeting some wonderful people over the coming months!