

## Sheridan Resident "Welcomed" Into Tribal Housing Authority

■ Loyal Hamilton is the new Housing Improvement Specialist.

By Toby McClary

Housing Improvement Specialist Loyal Hamilton is helping make Tribal homes more efficient. Hamilton is the newest employee at the Tribal Housing Authority but explains that he has been made to feel at home.

"I worked with this department a lot when I was a contractor," said Hamilton, "so I knew they were a great bunch of people. They have made me feel very welcome."

As a contractor, Hamilton has done many things for the Tribal Housing Department. In the past, he did the maintenance for Elder housing working a lot with Tribal member and Housing Maintenance Coordinator Lonnie Leno. He has also done some of the construction for the newest Tribal housing project which should be completed near the end of 2006.

Hamilton received his contractor's license in 1997 and has traveled all around the state for work. He said that he wanted a job "a little more stable and closer to home, something permanent." Hamilton found an area that he could share his expertise and job knowledge and has made himself comfortable working for the Tribe.

Hamilton is in charge of the home improvement grants given by the Tribe. After being pre-approved for the home improvement grant, Tribal members can receive up to \$10,000 for home repairs. It is Hamilton's responsibility to oversee all that is involved. After approval, Hamilton receives the customer's file and visits the home in order to write up the job specifications. He stated that he will usually counsel the home owner on long-term and short-term effects of



Loyal Hamilton

the repairs and try to find the best fit for the specific job. Hamilton then writes all the paperwork for the grant and receives three bids

from outside contractors. He and the home owner will then pick who they feel is best suited for the job based on experience, reputation and expense.

Hamilton moved to Sheridan in 1983 and graduated from Sheridan Baptist High School. He married his wife Kristy in 1987 and they currently live in Willamina with their three daughters Janelle, 12, Morgan, 9, and Karli, 6.

Based on his positive attitude and the kind words he has said about all of his peers and the families he has worked with, Loyal Hamilton seems happy about becoming a permanent fixture at Grand Ronde's Housing Department.

"I work really well with people," said Hamilton. "With my knowledge of remodeling and construction, I am here to help in making local homes more efficient." ■

## Local Livestock Farmer Will Help Tribal Families With Housing Needs

■ Deborah Kroeker is the new Housing Services Specialist.

By Toby McClary

Self sufficiency for Tribal families is something that Deborah Kroeker is striving to achieve. Kroeker is the Housing Services Specialist for the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority (GRTHA) and has been working with Tribal families since October of 2005. But her experience in the field goes back much further.

Kroeker has 22 years of experience working in social and housing related service agencies. For the last eight years, she was working as the Family Self Sufficiency Coordinator for the West Valley Housing Authority providing her experience and knowledge to various housing programs. Prior to that, Kroeker worked for the Dallas Retirement Village as a social



Deborah Kroeker

worker for six years.

Kroeker explained that her main objective is to work with Tribal families and promote self

determination through homeownership trainings, financial literacy and related educational and referral networks. Kroeker seems to be enjoying her position here at the Tribe.

"This job has been a lot of fun," said Kroeker. "I like working with the families and helping folks with their self sufficiency."

Kroeker grew up in Bakersfield, California and spent five years working for the Grand Canyon right out of high school. She then enrolled into California State University of Bakersfield where she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology. Right out of college, she was hired as the Intake Coordinator for Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance.

Kroeker then married her hus-

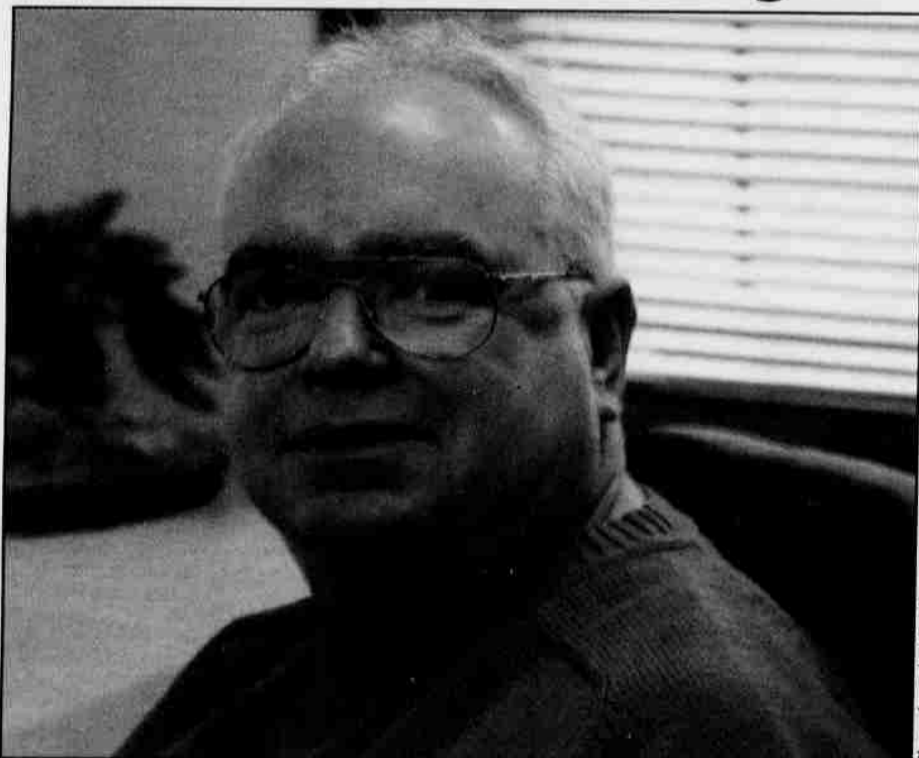
band Dennis and decided to move to Oregon where she found a job at Marion/Polk Legal Aide. She worked there for a year before entering the world of housing.

Some of Kroeker's goals while working for GRTHA include hosting financial skills trainings (which began in February), teaching home-buying classes beginning in April and helping local families with credit counseling.

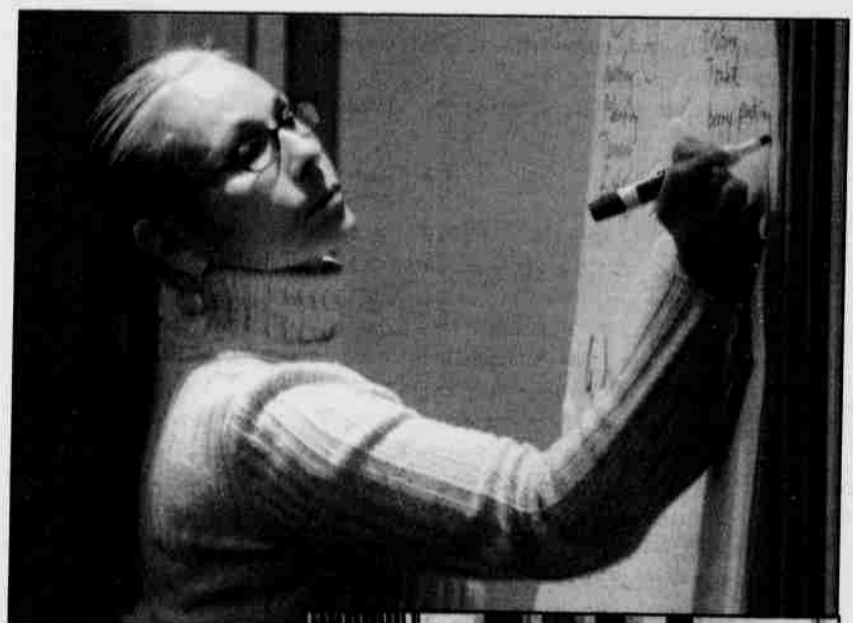
"I love working here," said Kroeker. "I enjoy meeting all the folks."

Kroeker and her husband are currently living on a farm in Willamina where they raise hormone-free beef, pork and lamb. They run their own business titled DK Farms and sell locker meat, retail it by the piece and hydroponic produce as well. ■

## New Procurement Manager



**Professional Shopper** — Larry Leith, former Tribal Housing Authority Rental Housing Coordinator, is the Tribe's new Procurement Manager. He started on February 15. The Procurement Office where he works on Grand Ronde Road is the old Housing Authority Office.



### Learning Curve —

Grand Ronde Tribal member Carmen Pearsall teaches Tribal and community members financial skills in this February session here in Grand Ronde.

