

Holmes Returns to Tribe

■ Tribal member comes home to administer financial risk, insurance

By Erika Merrill

Summer Youth employee

Tribal member Jim Holmes has returned home.

After working for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde as a community health representative for three years starting in 1992, Holmes left to work for PacifiCare, dealing with health care and benefits, in Seattle, Wash.

Holmes stayed with PacifiCare for about seven years until he went to work for CIGNA, another health care company. After working for CIGNA for about five years, he decided that he wanted to return to Grand Ronde and find a job.

In addition, Holmes said he wanted his 2-year-old son, Jarrett, to be around the reservation and Tribal members so he could learn more about his own culture.

Holmes, 42, was hired as Finan-

Name: Jim Holmes
Age: 42
Born: Salem
Tribal job, phone & e-mail: Financial Risk and Insurance administrator; 503-879-2221; jim.holmes@grandronde.org.
Education: Attended Chemeketa Community College and Western Oregon College.
Family: Married to wife, Shari; 2-year-old son
Quote: "I'm glad to be back. It's a lot of fun seeing longtime employees and also meeting new people."

cial Risk and Insurance administrator and started on Aug. 1. Holmes' job responsibilities include assisting Tribal employees and members with their benefit issues

and helping create beneficial coverage plans for the future.

Holmes grew up in Salem, where he attended North Salem High School. After he graduated from high school in 1983, he attended Chemeketa Community College and then Western Oregon College.

Holmes said he has been interested in health care since high school and was excited to have a chance to work for the Tribe.

"The thing I enjoyed most was working with the Elders, talking with them and learning from them," he said.

Holmes and his wife, Shari, have been married for about three years. He said that his wife and son are his life, and that they are very supportive of his career moves.

Some of Holmes' hobbies include spending time with his family and



Photo by Dean Rhodes

Tribal member Jim Holmes

watching sports. He is a huge baseball fan and his favorite team is the Seattle Mariners.

"I'm glad to be back. It's a lot of fun seeing longtime employees and also meeting new people," Holmes said. ■

All Over the Maps

■ Mell joins Tribe as Geographic Information Systems coordinator

By Ariel Bailey

Summer Youth employee

Maps can sometimes be confusing, difficult to read and almost impossible to refold.

However, the Tribe's new Geographic Information Systems coordinator has dedicated his life to making maps easier to read.

"We work to make maps easier for people to use," said Volker Mell, who goes by just "Mell."

Mell, 36, comes to the Tribe with a master's degree in forestry engineering. He is currently working on his second master's degree in geographic information systems through the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.

Mell works to produce maps that incorporate information from land databases. He said his main task is to create an enterprise system in Grand Ronde.

"More Tribal employees will be able to use extended services in geographic information systems to help them in their daily jobs," he said. "It will become easier for people to print their own maps and use GIS in conjunction with databases in decision-making processes."



Photo by Toby McClary

Volker Mell

Mell is currently working with the Tribe's Cultural Department on maps detailing the reservation's

ceded land. He also is working on maps that will depict the diversity of Native languages spoken throughout western Oregon.

In addition, Mell is working with the Forestry Department to integrate timber harvest data onto maps. He is already thinking of future projects that he would like to tackle.

"I hope to work with the wildlife people to map wildlife habitat," Mell said.

Originally from Germany, Mell earned a forestry engineering degree in his native country at the University of Applied Science in Rottenburg. He spent a semester in Australia and another in the United States. While in the United States, he volunteered with the U.S. Forest Service in Washington state and also met his wife, Mariann.

Mell previously worked at the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribe in northwestern Montana, which is on the Flathead Reservation, for more than four years as a geographic information systems analyst. He then spent two years at Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska, as a GIS and remote sens-

Name: Volker Mell
Age: 36
Born: Germany
Tribal job, phone & e-mail: Geographic Information Systems coordinator; 503-879-4636; volker.mell@grandronde.org.
Education: Master's degree in forestry engineering
Family: Married to wife, Mariann
Quote: "We work to make maps easier for people to use."

ing instructor.

Mell said he moved to Grand Ronde because of his love of the Northwest and his enjoyment of working with Tribes. Another draw to the Northwest was the proximity to his wife's family, which lives in Vancouver, Wash.

Mell's hobbies include geocaching, which he describes as "a treasure hunt with a GPS." He said anyone who is interested should contact him or check out the Web site www/geocaching.com.

With more than 60 treasures hidden within the 10-mile radius of Grand Ronde, geocaching is a sure way to become familiar with global positioning systems and spend time outdoors, he said.

Mell lives in Sheridan with his wife, a pet dog and two ferrets. ■

Buddy Haskins Jr. Memorial Dinner & Giveaway

Community Center, noon — Dinner
 Giveaway following dinner.
 Saturday, Sept. 15

For more information, call 503-879-6468.

Attention Tribal Veterans

Applications now being accepted for the Veterans' Special Event Board. If you are interested, please contact Dakota Whitecloud at 503-879-1309 or dakota.whitecloud@grandronde.org

Podiatrist To Be At Tribe's Clinic

The clinic has contracted with podiatrist Jeffrey Russo to be on site two days a month starting on Tuesday, Sept. 18. At this time, only Tribal members are eligible for podiatry services. Dr. Russo will be on site for 2007 as follows: Sept. 18, 25; Oct. 9, 23; Nov. 13, 27; Dec. 11.

Tribal members can make an appointment by calling 503-879-2002.