

Tribe donates \$155,000 to fight hunger over holiday season

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde did its part in battling statewide and local hunger over the holiday season.

On Dec. 17, the Tribe presented Oregon Food Bank Chief Executive Officer Rachel Bristol with a \$155,000 check representing a \$40,000 donation from the Tribe, \$40,000 from Spirit Mountain Casino and \$75,000 from Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the Tribe's philanthropic arm.

"Our Tribe has always supported the mission of the Oregon Food Bank," Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy said. "It's an important part of our Tribal culture to share and give back. That's why we're making this contribution, and our casino is matching it."

The Tribe challenged its vendors and other Oregon businesses to support the Oregon Food Bank with a contribution.

"People are hungry," Kennedy said. "The recent winter storm has displaced many of our fellow Oregonians. They need our help."

The Oregon Food Bank donation came on the heels of a \$10,000 Tribal donation made in late November to the Grand Ronde Food Bank and a \$250 donation by Tribal Elders to the local food bank.

The \$75,000 donation from the Community Fund brought the total the fund has donated to the Oregon Food Bank to \$470,000 since its inception 10 years ago.

Bristol said the Oregon Food Bank has appreciated the long-term support of the Tribe and casino.

"These gifts come at a critical time for Oregon Food Bank when supplies in our warehouse have dropped significantly," Bristol said.

"We know families in the storm-stricken areas will need emergency food for many months to come. These gifts will make a major difference in the Food Bank's ability to respond to families in need."

The Oregon Food Bank Network supplies 20 regional food banks and 919 hunger-relief agencies and programs serving Oregon and Clark County, Wash. ■



Photo by Dean Rhodes

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde made a presentation on Dec. 17 signifying the Tribe's donation of \$155,000 to the Oregon Food Bank over the holiday season. The Tribe donated \$40,000 and Spirit Mountain Casino added another \$40,000 while Spirit Mountain Community Fund gave \$75,000. Attending the event, from left, are Tribal Council members Reyn Leno, Val Sheker and Wink Soderberg, Oregon Food Bank Chief Executive Officer Rachel Bristol, Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy, Tribal Council member Chris Mercier, Spirit Mountain Community Fund Director Shelley Hanson and Tribal Council member Steve Bobb.

Casino brings in veteran from Las Vegas

Joe Mascellino accepts position of gaming director

By Angie Sears

Smoke Signals staff writer

Joe Mascellino, 51, is the new gaming director for Spirit Mountain Casino.

Mascellino grew up in Las Vegas and has 30 years of experience in gaming. He moved to Las Vegas at an early age.

"My father was Frank Sinatra's bass player; that's what brought us to Las Vegas from Pennsylvania," he said.

"We traveled with Sinatra to places like Palm Springs and Lake Tahoe."

Mascellino has a degree in finance and personnel management from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and attended numerous leadership training classes at institutions such as Dale Carnegie and the MGM Grand Leadership Institute.

He began working in the gaming industry as a craps dealer on the Strip, working at places such as Caesars Palace, The Mirage and Golden Nugget.

When the MGM Grand opened in 1983, he went to work for the casino as a supervisor, and was eventually promoted to dice manager and assistant casino shift manager.

When the MGM Grand bought New York New York, he transferred there as a casino shift man-



Photo by Angie Sears

Spirit Mountain Casino Gaming Director Joe Mascellino

ager and was later promoted to casino manager.

Eventually, MGM bought Mandalay Bay properties and Mascellino went to work at the Luxor as director of casino operations.

About the time that Mascellino had decided he was finished with the Vegas scene, he received a phone call about an opportunity at Spirit Mountain Casino.

"As soon as I walked onto the

property, I knew this was a place I wanted to work," said Mascellino. "The people here are extremely friendly; the property is immaculate; and the people who interviewed me, I just knew that we would be a great fit. They're great people. It was a win-win for everybody."

Mascellino began working at the casino in mid-November. His goal is to keep the department moving forward with improvements. He pre-

fers to use the word improvements over changes because he believes people tend to get a little scared when they hear the word "change."

"I'm not here to change the world. I'm just here to assist in making Spirit Mountain Casino the best it can be," he said.

"It's a very successful property. All I'm going to do is just come in and try to improve what they've already done.

"Change is a word that a lot of people don't like. We'll make changes, but they'll be slow. And I believe that every change should be communicated.

"I'm real big on communication with the employees because most changes are going to benefit them. They don't realize it, but in the long run it's to benefit them and make their job easier.

"That's my goal, to make their job simple and fun. You've got to have fun."

Mascellino is single, which, he said, has made his professional life easier.

"With me being single, I don't have to worry about dragging my family with me," he said. "I can do whatever I need to do. It makes life easy. My life is simple ... very good and simple. I've made it that way." ■