

# 'Our Store' grows deeper into culture

By Ron Karten

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

At Spirit Mountain Lodge's gift shop, Ntsayka makuk haws (Our Store), a renewed effort to bring in items rich in Northwest culture and art is under way.

Marie Oswald and Tribal member Perri McDaniel are on the same page when it comes to stocking Spirit Mountain Casino gift shops. Oswald is Guest Services manager and McDaniel is buyer for the shops.

"It's more than a gift outlet," said Oswald, more particularly of the Lodge gift shop that has always been more of an outlet for the cultural and artistic while the gift shop at the old Coyote's Buffet entrance has always been more commercial.

"We're not always out to make a buck," Oswald said. She quoted the department's mission statement: "To provide a unique shopping experience through unsurpassed customer service while pursuing a role in sustainability within our community." "We also hope to educate our customers on the local Tribes and create an awareness of the issues facing Native Americans today," she said.

"I've been in this department for two-and-a-half years," Oswald said, "and this is what they tell me they have been craving."

Today's offerings at the Lodge gift shop include Tribal member Chuck Williams' 2008 Celilo Falls Calendar, and will offer his classic book on the historic Columbia River Gorge, "Bridge of the Gods, Mountains of Fire: A Return to the Columbia Gorge," when the next printing becomes available.

Original art, including greeting cards and prints by Tribal member and watercolorist Terri Dilts, a powwow calendar by Seattle photographer Ben Marra and traditional and contemporary Native American music from Bond's Indian Supply all are at the Lodge store now.



**Above, beef jerky made by Umpqua Indian Foods has been added to the gift shop in the Lodge at Spirit Mountain Casino. Umpqua Indian Foods is an enterprise of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the product fits into the shop's effort to specialize in products inspired, designed and/or made by Native Americans.**



**Watercolor paintings by Grand Ronde Tribal member Terri Dilts have been added to the gift shop in the Lodge at Spirit Mountain Casino. Having products made by Tribal members fits into the shop's effort to specialize in products inspired, designed and/or made by Native Americans.**

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

McDaniel traveled the Northwest coast, including the Cow Creek's Umpqua Indian Foods in Canyonville, for "locally produced green products," and to county museums in search of books covering all of the Grand Ronde's Tribes.

"We now have a small library relevant to our Grand Ronde history," McDaniel said.

"Perri is very diligent in researching where these things come from,"

Oswald said.

"We bought CDs from the Canoe Family," McDaniel said. "I bought them to retail in our gift shops, but also to support the Canoe Family."

Native art, dentalia and other jewelry made by Tribal member Josephine Ingraham, and sold through her Chinook Frontier Traders company, are featured.

The Pinnecoos family, who have

"deals like no other on bead work," according to McDaniel, are represented.

Alaskan Native Jessie Hunt's Native Wild healing oils and lotions are for sale. Many Elders may remember Hunt's demonstrations at the Tribal Community Center.

For Restoration's 25th anniversary, McDaniel is developing a commemorative coin collection. Chief Alquema of the Santiam Band of Kalapuya and Chief Henry of the Chasta and Henry Yelkes of the Molalla are among the historic Native leaders featured on the coins.

"Table Games (section at the casino) is making a collectible \$25 chip featuring Lon Mercier's art work. That prompted the idea to do a companion coin, as well as the entire collection of commemorative coins," said McDaniel.

As envisioned, the coins will be available in gold, silver and Merlin gold, and each will feature an important historical figure from the Grand Ronde's predecessor Tribes.

The art used in designing the commemorative set is based on original art by Grand Ronde Tribal member Lon Mercier, the great-great-great-grandson of Martha Jane Sands. The statue is on display outside of Legends Restaurant at the casino.

Also, on the Contest Powwow weekend, Aug. 15-17, the gift shops will feature a Tribal member/Tribal and casino employee sale on everything but books, edibles and sundries.

That includes a line of Pendleton products, and a tie-in to the Pendleton Round-Up and the Miss American Indian Beauty Pageant held at the Round-Up.

Can culture compete with profit?

"Personally, I feel there is no contest," McDaniel said. "Culture will always prevail over profit!"

The experiment is under way at Our Store. ■

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