

Pullin promoted to Employment program manager

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal Elder Patsy Pullin's new job title is a mouthful — Program Manager for the 477 Employment and Training Act and Vocational Rehabilitation.

For many of the last nine years, Pullin, 65, has held the shorter title of Employment and Training Specialist, a job she now has to fill. That job is a case worker position that started with the title "coordinator."

As program manager, Pullin will supervise a staff of six — four in Grand Ronde, two in Portland — and two programs whose aims are "to help Tribal members toward their goal of achieving self-sufficiency."

"She has a proven record of working with Tribal members and helping them become self-sufficient in a positive manner," said Dave Fullerton, manager of Social Services and Pullin's direct supervisor. "And given the opportunity, it's good to promote from within and bring Tribal members up into upper management."

Years ago, Pullin replaced two staffers and within the first two years had 90 clients to serve. Today, she said, three positions handle that load, though the entire client base today is more than 125. While getting her old position filled, Pullin today is handling the manager role and taking care of 22 clients that her successor in the specialist position eventually will be assigned.

Pullin has worked hard reaching out to hiring halls as far away as Portland and Salem to find jobs for clients. Over the years, she has

placed clients in the Salem Social Security Office, at Spirit Mountain Casino and in Tribal offices, in Portland shipyards and other welding businesses, at Chemeketa Community College and the city of Salem.

"We make it attractive for employers to hire our clients," she said. "We provide tools, a UA, union dues if necessary, even interview clothes for those who need them."

The Tribe also provides clients with assistance for "anything else that will help you get a job," for those who are underemployed. That might include paying utility bills, Pullin said.

For the Work Experience Program, currently providing temporary or trial jobs for clients, the Tribe pays half of salaries up to \$8.50 an hour for 90 days. Hopefully, after 90 days, they'll get hired full time, Pullin said.

From her point of view, her success has resulted from "beating the bush (for jobs) and making herself available (to hiring managers)."

As she looks forward to her role as manager, she said that she would like to see the department develop a hiring hall that attracts jobs from the six-county area, and maybe beyond.

With Portland in play, she said, there are three more potential counties where jobs may become available for clients from Pullin's programs.

"We work on case-by-case basis," she said. "It's not one size fits all."

"I'd like to see us become a one-step career center with our own library, with books providing job in-



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder Patsy Pullin was promoted from Employment and Training specialist to Program Manager of 477 Employment and Training Act and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Tribe.

formation. I'd like to see us have one room with a video camera so clients can see how they look interviewing. Interviews are very hard and it's a real benefit for them to see how they come across."

Funding for the program comes from the federal Department of Human Services and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"With the economy the way it is," she said, "the need is increasing. Still, we try to find work for everybody who comes through the door."

Pullin came here nine years ago from Alaska "to be here with my people." She and husband, Gene,

had made a living for many years as a band with her singing covers of Patsy Cline songs.

"I changed the life path of myself and my husband (to come work for the Tribe)," she said. "He agreed to do that."

Pullin is the daughter of Tribal Elder and longtime Tribal Council Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison. She has four grown children, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Her charge in the manager position is to "maintain and improve services already in place," said Fullerton, "and to continue to provide quality services to Tribal members." ■

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