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UMPQUA ■ MOLALLA ■ ROGUE RIVER ■ KALAPUYA ■ CHASTA

Gaming veteran takes reins at casino



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Rodney Ferguson is Spirit Mountain Casino's new chief executive officer. Ferguson took the job in October after a successful five-year run at Isleta Pueblo seven miles south of Albuquerque, N.M.

Rodney Ferguson's varied experience includes working for 'The Donald'

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Rodney Ferguson, new chief executive officer at Spirit Mountain Casino, looks southward out his second-story office windows the week before Christmas and envisions what the property might look like in a few years under his experienced supervision.

A spa and swimming pool facility, and an 18-hole golf course, are among the additions Ferguson sees in Spirit Mountain's possible future, transforming it into a destination resort for gamers and their families alike.

Ferguson, 52, was named chief executive officer in October after a

successful five-year stint at Isleta Pueblo seven miles south of Albuquerque, N.M.

"I'm happy I came here," Ferguson says. "It's a very nice property. The employees are extremely friendly. Probably the friendliest employees I've worked with."

What drew him?
"The position and the opportunity to help further enhance what is here," he says. "I saw the potential when I first came out here a few years ago and then when I came out for the interview, they had just expanded. I thought, 'They're very progressive and there's the potential of a few more things that can be done to enhance the overall amenities here.'"

Ferguson graduated in 1978 with a bachelor of science degree

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Storm shuts down Tribal campus for a week

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

An Arctic blast that moved into the Pacific Northwest the week before Christmas buried the Grand Ronde area beneath

several blankets of snow and shut down the Tribal campus between Friday, Dec. 19, and Friday, Dec. 26.

Although AccuWeather.com reported almost 17 inches of snow and more than an inch of rain, mostly

freezing, falling in Grand Ronde between Dec. 18 and Christmas Eve, most of that snow (15.5 inches) fell between Dec. 20-22. Many area

See SNOW continued on pages 6-7

A Tribal pickup with snow up to its bumper sits in the Governance Center parking lot on Tuesday, Dec. 23.

Photo by Bob McElderry