

Food Bank seeks help

The Grand Ronde Community Resource Center is seeking additional part-time volunteer help at the Food Bank in Grand Ronde.

Help is needed in various activities, such as unloading freight, stocking and labeling shelves, food distribution activities and clerical work.

Duties will be assigned based on volunteers' skills and abilities.

If you have the time and would like to volunteer a few hours per week, call the Resource Center on Monday or Friday at 503-879-5731 for more details or to obtain an application. ■

Unmarked grave sites in Grand Ronde

We need your help — If anyone knows the location of an unmarked grave or knows the name of someone who was buried at the Grand Ronde Cemetery and their grave has not been marked, contact Mike Larsen, Facilities Manager, at 503-879-2407.

Census job opportunities

The Census Bureau is recruiting now for the 2010 Census and you can be a part of it. Data gathered during the census is essential to determining how federal monies are spent on the things that matter most to you. The Census Bureau offers great pay, flexible hours, paid training and an amazing opportunity for you to further your career and improve your community.

Wednesday, Jan. 7 — Noon Adult Education Room 126

Field positions: Lister/Address Canvasser — \$15.25/hr, Crew Leader — \$16.75/hr, Crew Leader Assistant — \$15.25/hr, Recruiting Assistant — \$16.75/hr, Field Operations Supervisor — \$18.25/hr

Office positions: Office Clerk — \$11.50/hr, Office Operations Supervisor — \$15.75/hr

The U.S. Census Bureau is an equal opportunity employer. Bilingual applicants are encouraged to apply at www.census.gov/rosea/www/emply.html. Call 1-866-861-2010 for more information. For applications and more information about testing, call Denise Harvey at 503-879-2112.

'I like a stable company'

FERGUSON continued
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in Accounting from Virginia State University. In college, his goals were to either become a partner in a large certified public accounting firm or chief financial officer for a privately owned company.

He started his career working as a certified public accountant for Coopers & Lybrand, an international public accounting firm, with no thoughts of working in the gaming industry.

After five years, he was hired by Harrah's, the largest gaming company in the world, in its Atlantic City properties.

"An executive recruiter, a headhunter as we called them back in the day, basically contacted me in the office out of the blue and said they have an opening for a financial accounting and reporting manager at Harrah's," Ferguson says.

He took the job, working at Harrah's for a few years in what would be the beginning of a gypsy-like career. He then went to work at the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City under Wynn Las Vegas Chairman Steve Wynn as the financial reporting manager.

"I learned a lot from (Wynn) in terms of how to treat employees and guests, as well as what to expect from guests," Ferguson says. "I learned from Harrah's the actual reporting and accounting structure that is being used by a lot of casinos around the country today."

From there, Ferguson started working for "The Donald" at Trump Plaza as financial controller, rising in the ranks to director of finance.

After five years, he decided to open a certified public accounting firm in his Atlantic City home that "went well."

"I decided I wanted to be my own boss," he says.

But a phone call from a former Trump Plaza president who had moved to Denver to work for a company that was opening a riverboat casino in New Orleans enticed Ferguson back into the gaming industry. He joined the effort as chief financial officer.

Name: Rodney E. Ferguson
Age: 52

Residence: McMinnville

Education: Bachelor of science in Accounting from Virginia State University

Family: Married to wife, Doreen; one adult child who is 27.

Professional experience: Worked for, among others, Trump Casino Resorts, Hyatt Gaming, Harrah's and Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico.
Contact: Rodney.ferguson@spiritmtn.com or 503-879-3067

Quote: "I like a stable company. I like a company that treats its employees well. And so far they have treated me extremely well here."

"That was one of my goals in college," he says. "I went down to open the property. It took about a year to open the property, and about nine weeks to close it. It was a good learning experience because I had my hands in a lot of different things, particularly opening a property and building two \$30 million riverboats from scratch."

He returned to New Jersey to work for Trump as chief financial officer for his new riverboat casino project in Gary, Ind. Subsequently, he became vice president of corporate finance for Trump and then moved to a Hyatt casino property as chief financial officer in Rising Sun, Ind., outside of Cincinnati.

In July 2003, he became chief financial officer for the Isleta Tribe outside of Albuquerque.

"The general manager, marketing director and I started on the same day," Ferguson says. "They left in nine and seven months, respectively. I was the last man standing. So I kind of filled in as the acting general manager until I was appointed GM in April 2005."

At Isleta Pueblo, Ferguson took a standalone one-dimensional casino and supervised changing it into a full-service resort. The Isleta Casino & Resort now features the

Isleta Eagle Golf Course, which is a 27-hole championship golf course; the Isleta Lakes Recreational Complex, which features year-round fishing, picnicking and RV campsites; and Isleta Fun Connection, which features a state-of-the-art bowling alley, laser tag, billiards and arcade.

He also oversaw the building and opening of a 300,000-square-foot, 201-room hotel and convention center that includes a spa and pool. That effort won Isleta Pueblo a 2008 Hospy Award for best boutique hotel and hotel lobby.

"During his interim here, he impressed the council," says Isleta Pueblo Gov. Robert Benavides. "His job performance here was really good. You can't find a smarter man or a more honest person. I hated to see him go."

So why did Ferguson leave for Spirit Mountain?

"I'm always hungry," Ferguson says. "I always challenge myself with different goals and always look for new opportunities. Once you do so much for so long and it comes to an end, you're like, 'OK, I'm kind of bored.'"

Ferguson says he was attracted to Spirit Mountain because he had previously visited the casino while checking out the childcare facility for Isleta Pueblo.

Ferguson also likes that Spirit Mountain is close to the Portland metro area, with a population of about 2 million, as opposed to only about 800,000 residents in and around Albuquerque.

"This is like a gold mine," Ferguson says, "but never really has had the opportunity to push the limit with more amenities, which is part of what I discussed with the Board, that if we further enhance (the property) we can further capitalize on the market."

That is where a spa, pool and golf course come into picture.

Ferguson said the casino is trying to acquire property for an 18-hole golf course and other amenities to lure conventioners and attract a younger clientele.

"By adding a spa and a pool, you have other draws to get people in

the door," he says.

In addition, Ferguson likes the idea of installing a sports bar and nightclub to attract younger gamers to Spirit Mountain.

"Many gamers around the county are in their mid-40s," he says. "We can capture more of those folks and have another revenue source coming in the door than we do currently."

He also supports the new Spirit Mountain Casino sign built along Highway 18.

"It's to capture drivers," he says. "About 7 million individuals drive by Spirit Mountain every year. If you can give a message and have images on the screen that can tell those riders what is going on inside, the likelihood of them coming here is enhanced. With the graphics and technology today, we feel that sign will help drive those people in here and stop them from going to the coast."

Ferguson says he also favors serving alcohol on the casino floor, which will add value to visiting Spirit Mountain.

"It has to be something that is done right," Ferguson says. "One thing I told the team was that we will not roll it out until we're prepared. Servers will be re-trained to make sure they understand what to look for and how to properly serve. All employees will get an overview in terms of service training that the OLCC (Oregon Liquor Control Commission) provides."

"If we can't ensure the safety of the guests, we won't do it. ... I've worked at places that have served alcohol on the floor and it has been done responsibly."

Considering his previously peripatetic lifestyle, Ferguson says he plans on remaining at Spirit Mountain.

"I always keep my options open," he says. "I like a stable company. I like a company that treats its employees well. And so far they have treated me extremely well here. And the older you get, the more you don't want to move."

Ultimately, another possible move might not be his decision.

"My wife doesn't want to move either," he says. ■