

# Human Resources teaches work skills

*First of seven sessions aimed at helping Tribal members keep jobs once they have been hired*

By Ron Karten

*Smoke Signals staff writer*

Human Resources Generalist Steve O'Harra facilitated the first of seven Work Skills workshops on Thursday, Jan. 29, in the Governance Building on the Tribal campus.

Eleven Tribal members, along with Social Services staff members Chris Garcia, an Employment and Training specialist, and Dodie McKenzie, a Vocational Rehabilitation specialist, participated in the program that included lecture, video and audience participation.

Tribal departments specializing in education, social services, mentorship and human resources have been meeting for two years developing programs that help Tribal members obtain jobs.

The Work Skills program takes a step forward, said O'Harra, because it helps Tribal members keep a job once they've landed it.

"Our help doesn't stop when you get a job," McKenzie told the group. "Our programs are there to support you after you get the job, too."

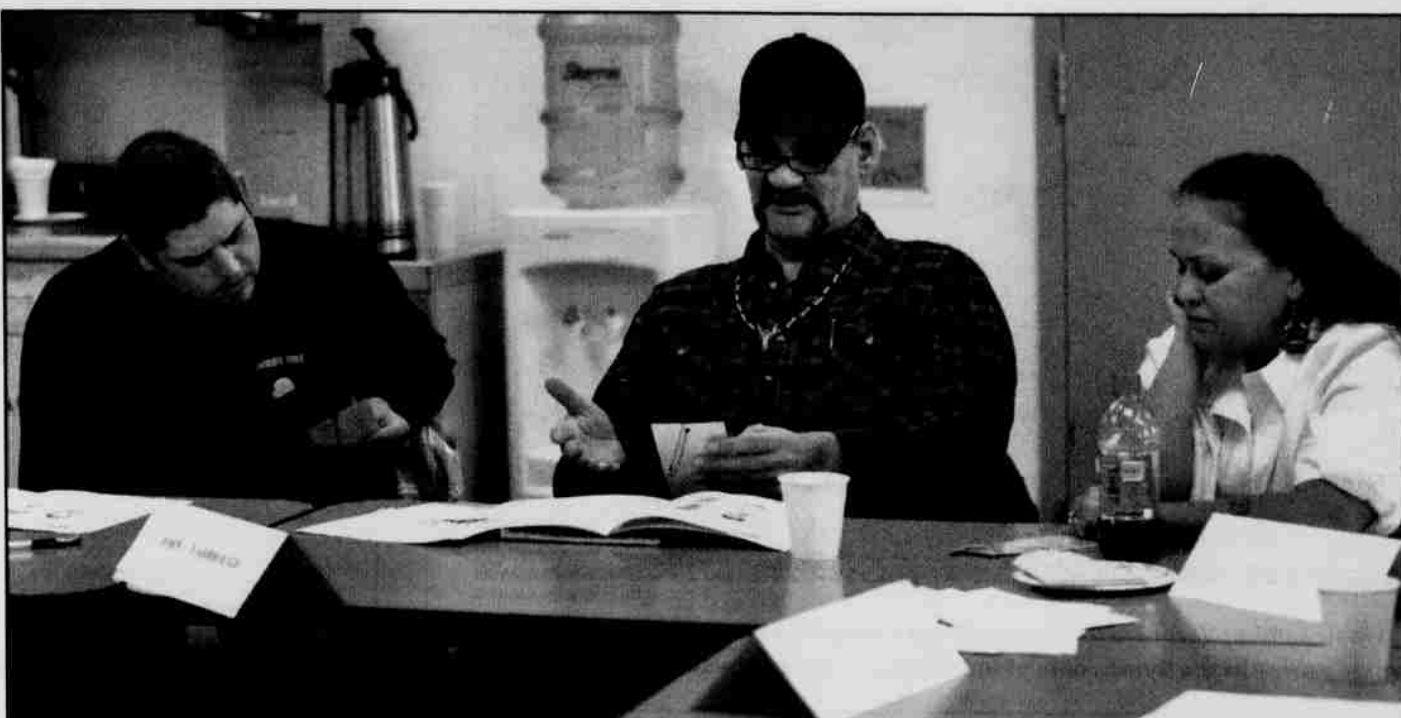
"With unemployment at 9 percent," said O'Harra, "it's pretty rough out there."

And O'Harra pointed out that he himself had been laid off from a previous job and spent a few months looking for work. "I know what it's like," he said.

The video segments portrayed a company with many divisions, from professionals to clerical staff to stockers. The first segment featured a supervisor asking an employee to get a card signed for a retiring employee. The supervisor had delayed getting the card going and now the retirement party was that afternoon.

Michael, the employee who took the card around, encountered all sorts of attitudes from other employees, many of them harried by deadlines, and others harried by co-workers who weren't holding up their end of things.

Each one told him to leave the card and he or she would sign it later, but Michael persisted, knowing if he left the card, he would never get all the signatures by the time of the retirement party. Some employees just



Tribal members from left, Dustin Billings, John Yarbrough and Pearl Boswell discuss a situation and apply the five basic principles for success to it during a Work Skills workshop in the Governance Center on Thursday, Jan. 29. At left, Steve O'Harra, Human Resources Generalist for the Tribe, teaches the workshop. It was the first of seven classes.

Photos by Michelle Alaimo

took the card and signed it, but one, Cheryl, let Michael have it between the eyes because she had had to do some stocking by herself, broken two fingernails and hurt her back.

"How did they treat each other?" O'Harra asked the group when the segment ended. "Not well," he answered.

"They would end up killing each other," said Tribal member Kimberly LaBonte.

"Cheryl's going to go postal," said Chris Garcia.

"It's an unhealthy atmosphere," said O'Harra. "They're not on the road to success."

"Michael was getting it for being the messenger," said Tribal member William Beaver.

O'Harra asked the group about the keys to success.

Tribal member Dustin Billings said a good work attitude, punctuality, being respectful of one another and being sociable because "grumpy people make you unsure of yourself."

Tribal member Raymond Duran listed communication, dressing appropriately, acting professionally and getting a mediator for problems with a co-worker.

Tribal member John Yarbrough added, "Do what you say you're going to do."

This led to the heart of this first segment of the program, the five basic principles for success:

- 1) Focus on the situation, issue or behavior, not on the person.
- 2) Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.
- 3) Maintain constructive relationships.
- 4) Take initiative to make things better.
- 5) Lead by example.

"These principles minimize the influence that others can have on you," said O'Harra.

Pointing to the first principle, O'Harra asked, "Why is it important to be in control of yourself? What happens when somebody pushes your buttons? They have control of you as long as they get the reaction they are looking for."

Regarding the second and third principles, he said, "Show only sincere appreciation of others. If it's not true, don't say it because they'll know."

"If you think it," said McKenzie, "say it."

On the fourth principle, said O'Harra, "taking initiative, this is where you get ahead."

"It was kind of like orientation," said Tribal member Tom LaChance of the Work Skills session, "but more in depth."

At the end, O'Harra reminded the group, "None of this is going to do us any good if we tuck these principles away in the sock drawer. Try using them."

The workshops will continue with more sections, as follows: Getting the information you need for taking on a new assignment; speaking with confidence; positive responses to change; defusing emotionally charged situations; helping your team work; managing life outside of work; and handling emergencies and resisting temptations.

The sessions are open to all, and O'Harra will announce new sessions to employees via e-mail. To secure a spot, contact O'Harra before each session at 503-879-2113 or by e-mail at [steve.oharra@grandronde.org](mailto:steve.oharra@grandronde.org).

This program is funded through the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program from a federal Department of Education 121 grant.

Sessions are expected to be held from 2 to 4 p.m. in Room 204 of the Governance Building, but the popularity of the first session has opened the possibility that sessions will be repeated and available in different places, as long as employee demand is strong. ■

## Tribal tie-dye



Photo by Brenna Stone

From left, Tribal Elders Carl "Bob" Gregg, Delmer Croy and Bill Simmons make tie-dyed shirts at Adult Foster Care recently. The Adult Foster Care residents and staff made tie-dye shirts for Valentine's Day to raise money for their upcoming activities.