

COMMUNITY

Distant Drum RV Resort has a new manager

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

When you first meet Shane Ray, the new manager of the Distant Drum RV Resort, you detect a slight Southern drawl of his voice. That's because he's from Cookeville, Tennessee and he makes one feel welcome at his office. It's this character and persona that goes well with his new assignment. Shane has been at the RV resort now going on 2 months.

"I'm a country boy from Tennessee," he proudly exclaims as he points out that Cookeville is about an hour and fifteen minutes southeast of Nashville. His family still lives in Tennessee. "They're all back there except for me and my uncle."

Shane devotes most of his free time to his 3 little girls.

The wild west drew Shane out to Arizona about 12 years ago and when he arrived here in 2007 at 22 years old he started work at the Verde Valley Medical Center as pharmacy technician. Instead of continuing on with his school certification to become a pharmacist he switched careers and became a firefighter and EMT specialist.

The fact that his uncle preceded him in arriving in Verde Valley made Shane's adjustment easier as he managed his uncle's Sunset Tree and Landscaping business "for a while", he says. After that, he went over to the Ft. Verde State Park and took on the

role as Park Ranger for 6 months. "I learned a lot about the Native history," he says about his time at the state park. "I love learning about the traditions and history of the Yavapai-Apache."

Shane also brings with him an academic background with a Business Administration and Public Administration Degree from the College of Business at Northern Arizona University where he graduated from. It comes in handy when he is doing financials and public relations for the RV resort (The days of the 'trailer park' is gone forever).

"I'm newer to the RV industry outside of me owning my own new 2018 travel trailer," he adds. But along with that is his camping experiences and all the other events in his life which has contributed to his continued success with his new job.

"I love working with people. I love helping them succeed and that was my biggest reason for taking this. I had another opportunity—but I'm a local guy and I've been in Camp Verde for 12 years. When I see business that has this potential, I want to help it succeed," he says.

Shane is proud of the RV resort's national ratings which places the business up there with the best of the best across the country. "We're the number 8 resort in the Nation right now. We have a lot of potential and a lot of room to grow. We have a ten-ten-ten rating which



Shane Ray is the new Distant Drum RV Resort manager.

is a highest score you can get," he adds with a smile. "I want to continue on the path that we're going because we do have that perfect score with Good Sam," say Shane referring to a travel rating that has been bestowed upon Distant Drum RV Resort a sort of 'Golden Glove Awards' of RV resorts.

This time of the year is when the RV resort arrivals slows down due to the hot weather in Verde Valley. But that doesn't stop Shane from dealing with the on-going operations and the upkeep of the property. "We have big groups coming in the fall. They come from all over the

country—the world". For now, Shane says the brief lull in RV bookings gives him and his crew time to revamp everything around the park. Shane has a paid crew but also utilizes 'work campers' who do small chores around the park in exchange for their monthly parking rent. "They really help us a lot by working so many hours a week. It can be husbands or wives splitting their time," says Shane about volunteer help around the resort. "It really works out really well for us too and if we were to pay them, it would really be expensive. So, when we get really busy, they are like

a life line".

There are 158 spaces at the RV resort and now the TV reception channel expansion from 27 channels to over 50 channels is a blessing for the tenants. Shane also says that the revamping of the fiber optics for the Wifi system will be a drawing card for campers which means faster responses on the internet. The fact that the RV resort is located right off I-17 makes it very convenient for travelers as well.

When Shane says, "Stay'in ahead of the curve", he literally means it as 2 new RV parks are popping

up in the Verde Valley with Blood Moon and Rain Spirit in nearby Clarkdale. This means more competition.

"I'm really rolling up my sleeves and committed to giving stability. I have nothing but good things to say about the previous management. I believe in a team and I want to make sure I'm here a long term because I'm local and to make this place grow," says Shane.

Finally, Shane emphasizes his family roots: "I've learned a lot from my Southern heritage of being a people person and treating other people like how you want to be treated".

Artistic abilities/talent abounds Yavapai-Apache Nation

BY DON DECKER,
YAN News

August 8th brought several outstanding YAN artists together to the Tunlii Community Center. This was an opportunity for them to show their most recent works. Everything from silversmithing to painting gourds, making traditional designer dresses and woven baskets got the attention of invited community members. This was also a time for the artists to see each other's work and to share common knowledge.

Some of these artists included Jerry Whagado who is a noted silversmith who just returned from the Sante Fe Outdoor Indian Market last week. Others included Josephine Honwyteva Trujillo who is a noted basket weaver. She brought a small basket to the art opening along with her dresses and bead work. Josephine learned much of the basket weaving techniques when she lived in San Carlos for several years. Josephine's daughter, Violet Diaz is also following her



Silver-turquoise ring by J. Whagado

mother's footsteps by weaving small baskets. Both. Josephine and her daughter are excellent basket weavers as evidenced by their tightly woven baskets.

Troy Kaska is an outstanding traditional artist using multi-media approaches such as incising gourds with designs and making artistic rattles. He is also a bead designer stringing up various colorful beads and making necklaces.

Linda Russell is also an accomplished bead artist and she showed

some of her beaded belts that were completed on a loom. She is also adapt to beading rosettes—the round well-designed pieces utilizing various color schemes. Linda also brought some painted hiking canes/poles that were highly decorated with traditional designs.

Dawn Rocha, Elizabeth Rocha's granddaughter also brought some traditional women's clothing that she designed and had sewn together. An inter-



Santee Spurgeon checks out the fashion by Josephine W. Trujillo at the art show.

SEE TALENT PAGE 7



Bead work by Josephine H. Trujillo.



Diane Diaz basketry.