

Judy Graham is the Lakeview school district former superintendent. This interview was done at Pacific Pine products, after she retired; she wanted something to keep her going. That is why she is working at Pacific Pine.

LOG: Talks about her transition from being in the school district from principal to superintendent. She was a superintendent for 8 years. She grew up in powers, she first moved here in the Fall of '91. She has also worked in John Day, Mill City, Washington school district. Her husband works for the forestry department so they move around a lot.

Colleen A. Johnson [03:37]: Since we are focused on the food system. Do you know how Lakeview puts together it's budget for food?

Judy Graham: You mean the school district? (Yes) Colleen it is so simple we get a large amount of commodity foods from the Oregon Department of Education. That is free to us, I think we might get minimally charged. We might pay the freight I'm not sure. And we also work with conjunction with the Oregon Department of Education Nutrition folks to develop our menu. And to develop our fats and protein and carbs (the nutrition content) yeah, and there is a lot of reporting done on that. The budgeting process just is a lull over from year to year to year and we budget everything that the food service ladies want. Taking a look at what was budgeted in the prior year and what was used since the prior year because they also develop an inventory and carry over inventory. So there isn't a lot of pain except that we've lost a lot of students in Lakeview over the last 16 years. When I started in the school district we had a high school of 465 student and we now have 250 or so. Plus or minus that is excluding tuition students from Adel, Plush and Alturas. So we've really gone down in our food service. We went way down in the service for kids a few years ago and then we had some staff change. A little more was taken on by our head cooks and cooks to try and put together some ideas that the kids would eat. While the elementary cafeteria was pretty consistent with their attendance over the years, the high school and middle school cafeteria have increased considerably. Mainly because they are getting a salad bar, and not so much burgers and fries and for awhile we were even doing some BBQing for them. Getting back to your original question, how is the budget put together, the budget is put together by prior use, prior consumption, and a wish list of what is wanted based on what we think the kids will eat.

CAJ [07:00]: How many student are actually provided food? Do you know the percentage of kids that get lunch at school versus bring their own lunch or?

JG: I can tell you, we serve a breakfast, and we serve at the high school a mid-morning nutrition snack, and I can't tell you for sure about those numbers but what I can tell you that district wide, we qualify for about 63% free and reduced lunches, now that doesn't mean the kids are always going to eat. I can tell you that the percentage is pretty consistent at the elementary level, but it isn't at the middle-high level because the kids don't want to be classified, you know. But the way it is worked out now id that there is no distinction and nobody knows whether you are free, reduced, or paid because we have an automated system. They go to the office and sign up for their lunch. What percentage of kids actually eat? I'm going to tell you 60% or less. And the rest of the kids either bring a cold lunch or eat downtown. Now out at Union School, out on the Westside, we have anywhere from 45-57 kids out there every year and they free and reduced lunch is

very high and she feeds almost everyone of those kids everyday. I would guess that she feeds in the neighborhood of 40-45 kids everyday.

CAJ: Do you know what the state average is for free and reduced lunch?

JG [09:06]: You know I can't answer that because it depends greatly on where you are geographically and how many people you have in your community. I don't know what the average is, I just know that we are high at 65%. And a lot of that is due to the economics of our community and we've lost a lot of employers in our community and we've had people that have had to move out. It's just been kind of a tuff thing.

CAJ: I think in general rural communities would be higher.

JG: Yeah in rural communities in general and in Lakeview there is some seasonal work, now it's not migratory work, but (Like ranch hands) yeah they may be real busy in the spring and summer and not so busy in the winter. And depending on the wood products in the community, if the mill lays off a shift or something we have more and more kids sign up for free lunch. Are you going to ask me some more budget questions? (I don't know, why?) because I wanted to add this. Our cafeterias and we have three in the school district run in the red. And they have run in the red forever. Our elementary will run in the black our middle-high school and the Westside small school cafeteria will almost always operate in the red, so overall the total is a negative number. The school board every year has decided, in at least the eight years I was superintendent, that it is necessary to feed the kids. It is really necessary for the kids to have a hot lunch at noon and to have a good breakfast, because we feel that that enhances their educational opportunity. And so we transfer money from our general fund into our food service funds in order to keep it up and running. We've separated out into a special revenue fund just for the reason of seeing what it's doing rather than incorporating it into the general fund. So from any year we transfer 40-45 thousand dollars into the cafeteria fund to keep it going. We employ five people, one out on the west side, two in the elementary and two in the high school. It's just worth it for us to feed the kids. I can't imagine anytime in the near future that the board would be willing to change that.

CAJ: So part of your budget is the transfer of money. (It is) So part of your allotment fund, the food fund, why is it so small, why is it necessary to transfer?

JG: This is not mandated by the state department of Ed or the state department of revenue but this school district had done is put all the budget into a fund, a food service fund. That includes salaries, benefits, and of course the cost of food, equipment, etc. Many schools will pay the salaries of the cooks in the general fund. Which if we were to do that we would probably operate the cafeterias in the red, but to offset the amount for the salaries and the benefits that go with it. The food service program cost the district around, I wish I could tell you exactly, but around \$255,000. Probably 75% of that is salaries and benefits, it might even be 80%.

LOG: She talks about separating the funds more.

JG: Now if we could build up a student participation and have more kids eat lunch then you could probably offset that number. (???) But we are getting better. Actually this last '06 '07 year we were very close to making it. But you know there is a real fine line about what you can charge for a lunch in a school cafeteria, versus what the community

is willing to pay before the kids actually what to go downtown and spend their \$2.50 on junk or whether or not they want to pay for it.

CAJ: How do you get the food to the cooks? Where does the food come from, do you know that?

JG: I'm thinking they do that commodity order every quarter. So they'll get commodities, they'll get frozen hamburger and they'll get cheese and jars of mayonnaise, or whatever they get from commodity. The rest of it is all purchased through a vendor. And here in Lakeview I believe our bread we get from Safeway, our milk we get from K and K in Klamath Falls we get our produce from Klamath, maybe Alturas. That's what we do.

CAJ: Do they ship it in?

JG: Yes they help freight it in, it comes on a truck. And in some cases if our ladies are our like at Costco or something they'll buy something and they'll get reimbursed. But primarily that's not true. Primarily it's all local vender or a vender either Klamath or Alturas and it's USDA. And then we have, this is for commodity. They are brought in and off loaded at the school district office and then we transport them from school to school. And we have to do it on the day it arrives because much of it is frozen.

CAJ: What type of nutrition standards to you follow?

JG: You may have to be more specific, because I may not be able to answer your question. All I can tell you is that we do what the USDA tells us to do.

CAJ: How does that get reinforced?

JG: Kind of a chain of command if you will, though those aren't the right words. Mike Getty in the districts office is the cafeteria director basically, and he does all of the paper work he does the ordering he does the distribution, he does the reporting of all of the lunches but backing that up a ways. He also does all the stuff about ??? nutritional requirement, hires someone to train our cooks, or he trains the cooks. And or he gets the information and goes to cafeteria to cafeteria and works out all of the nutrition information. They are always up to date. The other things is we subscribe to an emergency broadcast system so any sort of hazard that happens in the world we will get that information, or we will get pull the spinach packages off the shelf because of whatever happened with spinaches. That's relayed to the cooks directly. We are lucky that we are small enough, because anything and everything that comes into the office can easily get to the cooks the same day. And we usually see Michael go and personally go deliver all the information to them. We are also audited by food service out of ODD??? In fact we had a food audit this last fall.

LOG: Talk about record checking, they physically check the cooks. The cooks keep a log. She talks about Mike and how much of an expert he is. I bring up Pop machines, and she tells that they make a lot of money for the school, though now pop is out of school completely. They serve water and juice. They are probably making 4-5 thousand dollars a year. We talk about her classroom time and if she noticed a difference in nutrition of the students. She didn't notice much of a difference. Though she heard that the mid morning snack is making a big difference. It was discussed a lot in meetings.

CAJ: Do your cooks try to accommodate ethnic diversity, or do the commodity foods, do they try to do what they can with that?

JG: No, especially at the mid-high level they try to be creative with the food. Now ethnic diversity, I don't know if you mean the nationalities that we may have in our community, or in general. Now for instance, spaghetti, yes they serve spaghetti, tacos, they serve tacos, they serve burritos. Chinese food, no they don't make Chinese food.

CAJ: If there is a higher amount of Hispanic kids at your school, do you try and serve in that tradition?

JG: Yes, I think they do. Is it any different today than it was 8 years ago 15 year ago I couldn't tell you that. Because we've had Hispanic kids in our school district the entire time. Really the population hasn't increased greatly. We have anywhere from 40-65 Hispanic kids a year. The difference we find with them had nothing to do with food service, but in the cafeteria they don't integrate at all it's just something that they are most comfortable sitting at tables with their own nationality and their own friends.