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Gov. Kitzhaber signs SB 770

■ The bill is intended to help state agencies and American Indian governments work with each other

By Sue Ryan
Oregon Daily Emerald

Representatives from the nine American Indian tribes of Oregon convened at the state Capitol Thursday to celebrate Oregon Indian Week. This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the legislative Commission on Indian Services.

Former Oregon governor Vic Atiyeh helped to start the commission in 1976 because of his concern that the state wasn't serving the tribes.

"It wasn't a matter of usurping their sovereignty but working with their governments," he said. "It was around a period of time when there was a movement going on to restore tribal status — I think Siletz

was the first."

During Thursday's ceremony, Gov. John Kitzhaber signed Senate Bill 770 into law, which will establish a formal process for government-to-government relations between the state and tribes.

"The idea is to have all future governors work together with the tribes with mutual understanding on issues of substance through a clear process," said Louie Pitt Jr., director of Government Affairs and Planning for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

The new law requires state agencies to work with tribes that are affected by state programs. A key part of the law mandates that state agencies make reasonable efforts to cooperate with tribes in developing programs.

"It lessens the chance that state and tribal disputes will land in court," said Sen. Kate Brown, D-Portland, the bill's sponsor.

Commission on Indian Services

director Karen Quigley said the commission has supported SB 770 on its path through the Legislature.

"Part of the bill will require state agencies become informed about the legal rights, the standing of and issues affecting the tribes," she said.

These issues vary from tribe to tribe. For example, said Carolyn Slyter, vice-chairwoman for the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw tribes, issues in the Coos Bay area center on forest lands and education.

The nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon include: the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw tribes; the Burns Paiute tribe; the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla; the Siletz tribe; the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians; the Coquille tribe; the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde; and the Klamath tribe.

Safety kits meant to educate parents on electrical dangers

■ The National Electrical Contractors Association celebrates its 100th anniversary by helping others

By Lindsay Buchele
Oregon Daily Emerald

Each year, hospital emergency rooms see many cases of toddlers and babies who have been electrocuted. Some of the incidents even result in permanent brain damage, disfigurement or death.

In response to this, and to celebrate its 100th anniversary and National Electrical Safety month, the National Electrical Contractors Association has started the Born for Safety program.

Working in conjunction with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, NECA is distributing electrical safety kits to health-care facilities throughout Oregon and the nation, NECA spokeswoman Kim Altridge said.

The kits include 12 plastic outlet covers, general electrical safety information and home protection kits. There will be a total of 35,000 outlet covers distributed in Oregon, Altridge said.

Larry Brabham, an electrical contractor and member of NECA, presented Sacred Heart Medical Center with 12,000 of the safety kits Thursday.

"By making these kits available and providing information, NECA will hopefully bring about electrical safety awareness,"

Electrical safety tips:

Cover all unused electrical outlets that are accessible to children.

Do not leave appliances plugged in where they might come in contact with water.

Never use an electric blanket in the bed or crib of a small child or infant.

Never force a plug into an outlet if it doesn't fit.

Unplug all power tools when they

are not in use.

Have a Class C fire extinguisher in your home to extinguish electrical fires, and check it periodically.

Don't run extension cords under rugs or furniture because they may overheat.

Screw in light bulbs securely. Loose bulbs may overheat and burn shades, drapes or nearby furniture.

Source: National Electrical Contractors Association

Brabham said.

Altridge said Sacred Heart is giving the kits to families with newborn babies because these families may not think about baby-proofing their houses until their children are toddlers.

"It's sad when you see a newborn leave the hospital, only to come back with permanent damage from an electrical shock," Altridge said.

Sacred Heart spokesman Brian Terrett said the safety kits will be included in a discharge kit that is given to all new mothers when they leave the hospital.

"We have the opportunity to give parents information and products that can help create a safe environment for their child," Terrett said.

Brabham said NECA and IBEW are distributing the kits not only to celebrate NECA's centennial, but also because the organizations care about child safety.

"Toddlers can't protect themselves when they don't know the consequences of their actions," he said. "NECA has done so many good things for the industry, and now they're doing something for the community."

Many people are becoming more aware of the harm caused by electrocution, Altridge said, and this awareness can help save children's lives.

"The most important thing is that every parent can protect their child from an electrical current injury," Altridge said. "It only takes one second to do, but it could save a child's life."

Terrett said there are emergency room patients with electrical injuries each year, with several of these patients needing prolonged care.

"Electrical safety is something people take for granted," Terrett said.



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