

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



*Chairman Delores Pigsley*

### **Newly Elected Council Members**

First, I want to congratulate incumbents JoAnn Miller and Gerald Ben and newly elected member Reggie Butler for being elected to Tribal Council.

I want also to commend the Election Committee for carrying out this important responsibility, one of the most important, for the Siletz Tribe. We had an excellent turnout for the election and although there were the usual assertions of unfairness by a few members, the process proved successful.

A dedicated Election Committee and an independent, unbiased election director conducted a fair and smooth election in accordance with a carefully revised ordinance governing the election process. The newly elected members were sworn in on Feb. 10, 2000, at the tribal administration office to serve three-year terms.

### **The President's Budget Request**

On Feb. 7, President Clinton submitted his FY 2001 proposed budget to Congress, which includes a \$9.4 billion budget request for new and existing Indian programs.

The budget represents an increase of \$1.2 billion over the FY 2000 budget and includes a multitude of Indian programs and services, ranging the entire gamut from school modernization and other education programs to Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement, from Indian housing to tribal environmental programs to trust services.

To ensure that Indian people acquire the skills they will need in this rapidly advancing technological age, the president's initiative also includes a request for

\$10 million to prepare Native Americans for careers in information technology.

What Congress will do with the president's request is an open question. Individual tribes, national Indian organizations, and our friends in Congress must vigorously fight for the budget increases the president has requested for the needed programs.

### **Census 2000**

Some people may wonder how important the census is to the Indian people. Based on past experience, information gathered by the Census Bureau is very important. The following are just a few examples of how census information is used:

- Billions of federal dollars are allocated for various federal programs based on census information, including education, housing, and community development, health care services for the elderly, job training, and many others.

- Tribal, state and local governments use census information for planning purposes and to allocate funds for schools, public transportation systems, etc.

The last time the census was taken, 10 years ago, the Indian population was seriously undercounted and Indian programs were adversely affected. It's for this reason there is a determined effort this time to make sure all Indian people are counted.

You may be concerned, however, about how confidential the information will be that you, as an individual, provide to the Census Bureau.

By law, the Census Bureau cannot share your answers with the IRS, the FBI, BIA, tribal officials, tribal police, or the welfare or any other government agency. No court of law, not even the U.S. president, can find out your answers. Census workers are sworn to secrecy and face severe penalties if they give out any information from your census form.

Because of the importance of the upcoming census, I urge all Siletz members to make sure you are counted by filling out the census questionnaire that will be mailed to each household. On Indian reservations, census takers will hand-deliver these questionnaires.

Lisa Norton, tribal enrollment specialist, and former council member Mike Darcy attended meetings to help the Siletz Tribe gear up for Census 2000. Lisa is prepared to answer questions regarding the

census and can be reached at 1-800-922-1399, ext. 258, or 541-444-8258.

### **Importance of the Coming Election**

Once again, I remind our members and friends of the importance not only of registering to vote but of being informed on Indian issues and the candidates' positions on these issues, and to cast your votes accordingly on election day.

### **Measure 92, to Make Video Poker Illegal**

We were pleased to hear that Greg Kafoury, principal proponent of Measure 92, announced he is withdrawing the measure from the 2002 election. He withdrew the measure because of the failure to generate support from churches. Support declined when some influential supporters, who understand the economic importance of gaming to Indian tribes, learned that the passage of this measure could adversely impact Indian casinos.

According to tribal attorney Craig Dorsay, who with Council member Jessie Davis was active in strategizing against the measure, "It was not video poker in particular that concerned the tribes, but that video gaming obviously is a major part of tribal casino revenue, and anything that could affect that gaming was a concern to the tribes."

I suspect that those opposed to gambling in general and Indian casinos in particular are already plotting their next move. Even though Measure 92 has been withdrawn, tribes must be ever alert to future attempts to introduce legislation that would negatively impact Indian casinos.

### **Salem Property to be Put into Trust**

On the evening of Feb. 10, I signed the deed to the North Salem property, which means that the Bureau of Indian Affairs will take the 20-acre parcel of land into trust within the next month.

Although our original plan to establish a gaming center on the Salem property was not approved, the Siletz Tribe decided to retain ownership of the property. We therefore now own a prime piece of land within the city of Salem that will be under federal trust status, strategically located for economic development purposes adjacent to the I-5 interchange.

We have tentative plans for developing the property and will provide information regarding these plans, as appropriate, in future issues of Siletz News.