

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Chairman Delores Pigsley

Appropriations Hearings

Of great importance to the Siletz Tribe and to tribes across the country were the appropriations hearings that Bonnie and I attended in March in Washington, D.C., because they relate to the National Academy of Public Administrations Report on the BIA and administration.

Kevin Gover, assistant secretary, testified before the Interior and related committees on appropriations. He addressed two major areas of concern: the need for additional funding to meet critical needs of Indian tribes and secondly, the results of the NAPA study. This is the independent non-partisan organization chartered by Congress to help federal, state,

and local governments improve their management systems.

In its evaluation of the BIA, NAPA found that without additional personnel and major management reforms, the BIA will be unable to fully meet its responsibilities to Indian tribes.

Gover testified that although NAPA found serious problems with the BIA, it also found some hopeful signs of improvement. Implementing NAPA's many recommendations will require a considerable amount of work. In response to NAPA's review, Gover recommended establishing an Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Management and Budget.

Gover said that, with NAPA's help, the BIA's management and administrative systems are being reviewed and plans developed for improving them. The BIA's information technology, for example, is underdeveloped compared to other federal agencies and this need will be addressed.

One factor that has contributed to the BIA's management problems, according to Gover's testimony, is the "geographic distance between BIA's Washington headquarters and its administrative operations located in Albuquerque." It is interesting to note that several years ago, these officials were moved out of Washington in order to decentralize the BIA to get management closer to the tribes. It was argued that this would facilitate administrative operations. Now, however, it's been determined that it's better to centralize.

These are issues that are grappled with at the Washington, D.C., level and as we can

see, sometimes result in conflicting solutions.

Housing Program

Funding for the Housing Improvement Program has been drastically cut for this year. The BIA recognizes the problems involved in allocating funds from its meager housing budget and is determined to increase funding for the following budget year.

Community Input on Comprehensive Plan

On the home front, we have concluded a round of community meetings on the tribe's Comprehensive Plan at each of our four area offices. The purpose was to get additional ideas from community members on the Comprehensive Plan's 17 provisions that define our objectives and activities.

In this connection, copies of surveys were distributed to tribal members to get their input on updating the Comprehensive Plan. One question in the survey asks how gaming revenues, available for tribal purposes, should be distributed.

The deadline for returning the completed questionnaires is March 31, 2000. I urge all tribal members to complete and return the questionnaires. This is another opportunity for our members to express their views on important tribal issues.

Economic Planning and Law Enforcement

I'm proud of the fact that as a government entity, the Siletz Tribe is slowly but surely developing its law enforcement system to complement the already viable judicial system. Recruitment will begin soon to add two new police officers to the one the tribe currently has on board. Tribal Council recently approved funding for these new positions.

We also have recently signed agreements with the city of Toledo for dispatch services. This will facilitate communications, especially in cases of emergencies. We also have negotiated with Lincoln County to use its jail facilities. An agreement with the city of Siletz to extend police services to Siletz is also in the works.

Regarding economic development, we have been without a specialist for this purpose for some time. The position is essential if we are to maximize our economic potential. Our Tribal Council recently approved the position of economic development coordinator to operate out of the Planning Department.

To the editor:

The Secretary of State's Office, Archives Division, is planning an exhibit called "They Sacrificed For Our Survival: The Indian Boarding School Experience." We just firmed up the dates, which will be April 12 through May 10, 2000, at the State Archives Building.

The exhibit traces the boarding school experiences of Indian pupils at various boarding schools, including Chemawa Indian School. As you may know, federal Indian policy in the late 1800s and early 1900s sought to "kill the Indian and save the man" by using boarding schools to acculturate Indian children to "American" ways of thinking and living. Many Indian children (including my grandmother and all her brothers and sisters!) were sent to such schools at a very young age, often to schools that were very far from home.

I would like to get the word out to folks on your list who might be interested in

seeing the exhibit, to put these dates on their calendars and plan to stop by during the exhibit. Also, we are hoping to have some speakers and maybe a "panel" discussion to kick off the opening of the exhibit. I would be interested in hearing from anyone in the area who lived through the boarding school experience (or whose relatives did) who might want to be part of the panel to discuss the impact of the policy. Also, any suggestions are welcome!

Thanks in advance for your help in spreading the word about this. If you need more information, please let me know. Best regards,

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