

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Chairman Delores Pigsley

In a gesture of appreciation to our loyal clientele, Chinook Winds staged several special events during the fifth anniversary celebration on June 23-25. We paid tribute to those original employees, tribal officials, staff, and consultants who made Chinook Winds possible. The celebration also included fireworks, dancing, and J.T. Taylor, formerly the voice of Kool and the Gang.

Chinook Winds Casino & Convention Center is a priceless economic asset to the Siletz Tribe and the broader non-Indian community of Lincoln City and Lincoln County. It has provided meaningful employment to tribal members and non-Indians alike.

The Oregonian published the tribally authorized economic impact study in an Op-Ed piece over my name on June 22. The reputable Portland-based economic research firm ECONorthwest conducted the independent study. I urge you to read the full text of the Op-Ed piece following my column.

Chinook Winds enjoys a unique attribute because of its location overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It is a tourist-centered operation and we are intensifying our efforts by coordinating with Lincoln City and the county in promoting increased tourism.

Through tightened management and marketing practices, it is projected that Chinook Winds' operation will result in increased revenues to the tribe beginning in 2000.

The Tribal Council will continue to work vigorously to enhance the economic viability of the tribe's gaming enterprise. We must not forget, however, that national forces are committed to the erosion, if not the elimination, of Indian gaming.

It's often easier to push complicated issues to the background during the summer doldrums, but I wish to emphasize that it's

not too early for us to begin thinking about the general election to be held in November 2000.

A new president will be elected, either Al Gore or George Bush, as will one-third of the U.S. Senate and all 435 members of the House of Representatives. The outcome of the election will have a profound impact on Indian affairs - remember your vote is important!

I urge you to examine the candidates' positions on Indian affairs at all levels and to vote accordingly.

Indian lobbying contributed substantially to the defeat of a recent amendment sponsored by a Florida congressman that would have been detrimental to Indian gaming nationally. This is a positive example of tribes understanding the issue, standing together, and working with our friends in Congress to help defeat negative legislation.

The Op-Ed piece from The Oregonian follows:

Tribal Casino Has Big Positive Effects on Lincoln City

On Chinook Winds' fifth anniversary, evidence offsets concerns about problems

When the Siletz Tribe began planning a gaming center in Lincoln City, there was general apprehension that a casino would ruin the city's quality of life - cause traffic jams and environmental problems; attract alcohol, drugs and organized crime, and be a financial burden on the city.

With a study on the impacts now complete, we are proud to say that none of these dire predictions has come to pass. Instead, ECONorthwest found that Chinook Winds Casino and Convention Center is making significant positive contributions to Lincoln City and Lincoln County.

- ◆ Without Chinook Winds, there would be 1,173 fewer jobs, and paychecks totaling \$23 million would disappear from the county. This is of particular importance because the county has been hard hit by the decline in the timber and fishing industries.
- ◆ Chinook Winds attracted 475,000 new visitors to Lincoln City in 1998; they spent nearly \$10 million at local non-tribal businesses.
- ◆ Housing occupied by Chinook Winds employees contributes 14.3 percent of all property taxes collected in Lincoln City; the city government collected \$356,000 a year more in taxes

and fees than it spent in serving the additional residents.

In fact, Chinook Winds was awarded "1998 Business of the Year" by the Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce.

Despite these positive impacts on the economic well being of the city and county, we realize some detractors remain. One even claimed after the study's release that the only new businesses in Lincoln City are pawnshops - although there isn't a single licensed pawnshop in town. Furthermore, according to ECONorthwest, since Chinook Winds opened, the number of commercial business listings in Lincoln City had increased 28 percent while the number of taxable hotel and motel rooms had gone up more than 17 percent.

In addition, the study found that the crime rate in Lincoln City grew only 3 percent compared to a 4 percent rise statewide. Chinook Winds was identified as the last place to serve a drink to a person later charged with drunken driving in only 10 percent of the cases.

In fact, Indian casinos in Oregon, as a matter of public policy by tribes, do not serve alcohol to customers while they gamble.

In addition to the casino, the Siletz Tribe itself has had a social and economic impact on Lincoln County. ECONorthwest found that in 1998 alone, the tribe spent \$20.4 million on human and natural resources programs that benefited Indians and non-Indian residents of Lincoln County, accounting for \$34.4 million in net economic output in the county and \$32.2 million in wages to county residents. It is no surprise that one out of every 11 full-time workers in Lincoln County can attribute his or her employment to the Siletz Tribal government.

In 1991, we opened a health clinic in Siletz, extending medical services to our members and to non-Indian Medicaid patients who were encountering difficulty receiving primary health care. In fact, 57 percent of the 27,000 patient visits in 1998 were by non-Indians. Our action in the field of health care speaks volumes to our concern for the well being of everyone on the coast.

Finally, while corporations such as Wal-Mart and factory outlet stores send profits to corporate headquarters outside the area, Siletz revenues remain mainly in, and benefit, Lincoln County and Oregon.

As we celebrate the fifth anniversary of Chinook Winds this month, the Siletz tribe is proud to be identified as a major, positive economic force in Lincoln County and the state of Oregon.

I believe other Oregon tribes can be similarly proud of their contributions.