

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Tribal Electoral System

For many years, a great deal of discussion has swirled around the Siletz Tribe's electoral process. Some members have been critical of our present system and have advanced ideas on how it can be improved.

One thing we should have learned from the Florida debacle is that finding a foolproof solution is not as simple as some people think. Adopting an electronic system, for instance, is not the answer either. We did amend our Election Ordinance to strengthen the process.

Under our system, every qualified adult tribal member has the right to vote for one or up to three candidates. At least one thing the Florida election has made clear – every vote counts! Participating in the election is one important way that tribal members can have input into our tribal affairs.

No one can tell the member whom to vote for. That is a private, individual right.

We are currently advertising to fill Election Board positions.

Regulatory Agency Replaces Gaming Commission

As a result of changing circumstances, including increased regulatory responsibilities, the Siletz Tribal Gaming Commission has been



Chairman Delores Pigsley

restructured and renamed the Siletz Tribal Gaming Regulatory Agency (STGRA). This was accomplished with the help of Sharon House.

Tribal members may recall that Sharon has provided consultant services to the Siletz Tribe on gaming regulatory matters off and on for the past five years. She not only serves as attorney for the Oneida Gaming Commission, but also has provided legal consulting services to the National Indian Gaming Association.

When Chinook Winds first opened in 1995, we only had 250 machines and a few table games in a small facility. We now have 1,250 machines, many more table games, and increased regulatory responsibilities.

The new organization will include three part-time gaming commissioners with final hearings authority, each serving 40 hours per month. These positions will be advertised and Tribal Council will appoint the commissioners.

An executive director position will be added. The executive director will have authority over the operations of the agency, which includes, in addition to the support staff, the Surveillance, Licensing, Compliance, and Enforcement departments. The Surveillance Department will be led by a director who reports directly to the executive director and also coordinates with the general manager of Chinook Winds.

The three current commission positions will be re-classified as agents for the Licensing, Compliance, and Enforcement departments. Other new positions will include an investigative auditor, an inspector, and an investigator.

We believe that when fully staffed and in operation, the STGRA will be one of the strongest tribal regulatory bodies in the nation.

ATNI Annual Conference

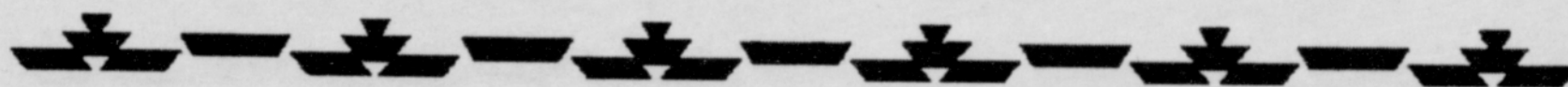
I can't conclude my report without commenting on the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians annual conference, hosted by the Siletz Tribe at Chinook

Winds during the week of Sept. 17. Remember, the conference was held just one week after catastrophe struck New York; travel nationwide was drastically curtailed and people's nerves were on edge.

I was, of course, proud of the fact that the Siletz Tribe received so many words of appreciation for putting on what became a very successful conference. But I am especially proud – we all should be proud – that despite that national catastrophe, more than 300 tribal officials representing 55 tribes attended the conference! This remarkable turnout and the work the conferees produced just goes to show how deeply tribal leaders throughout the Northwest are committed to working on critical Indian issues despite the crisis situation.

To show how productive we were, the conference generated more than 30 resolutions that covered a wide gamut of Indian issues – Indian Child Welfare, education, fisheries, law enforcement, trust responsibilities, and tribal sovereignty.

Although our focus was on critical Indian issues and our thoughts naturally were full of the tragic events of Sept. 11, we did share a lighter moment during the conference – free entertainment so the conferees could laugh with Williams and Ree.



To the editor:

Although Tribal Council members commented on my letter (September issue), no one justified spending so much to give so little to the membership. No one even addressed the \$99,609 increase in wages and travel. And, what is the source of "misinformation" when my comments are based on what I read in tribal publications?

I know there is a certain amount of necessary travel. When I served previously on the Tribal Council, we assessed the importance of the meetings and conferences, and limited travel authorization to one or two council members. Now, resolutions for travel most generally include any council member who wants to go. At the meetings, what did they say on behalf of our tribe? What did they learn? How did the travel benefit the membership? I know Lillie and Reggie Butler provide written trip reports.

I believe there needs to be a complete change in the way our tribal dollars are spent. Currently, we have our casino and are developing an RV park in Salem. Why are we relying on people with disposable income during a time when the unemployment and utility rates are so high? Rather than taking advantage of our \$50 million business by investing in our people and reinvesting for the future, the Tribal Council is just spending more and more.

Let's stop unnecessary spending and use our tribal dollars to:

- Diversify our business ventures so that we don't have to rely solely on our casino. We need to allow good business decisions to overrule political decisions.

- Restore adequate health care coverage within the service area and provide the same benefits for all our membership, no matter where they live. In addition, we need to make some changes in our clinic's operation to stop the drain on our resources.
- Provide adequate funding for any tribal member who wants an education. Each and every student should receive funding for tuition and books for the full school year.
- Provide monthly dividends to all elders. The only recognition all our elders receive is a \$100 Christmas bonus. Lillie Butler made a motion, seconded by Reggie Butler, to double the bonus this year to \$200, but it failed. Guess who voted against it.

Tribal resolutions should be published in the newspaper immediately after the meetings so that we have current information on Tribal Council activities and how the members vote. With your support in the upcoming election, I am committed to making these and other changes to be accountable to the membership and improve the quality of life for all our members, now and for the future.

Sincerely,
Pat Duncan