

## Elders Eligible for Help with Medicare Coverage

by Judy Muschamp, Health Director

Do you pay for Part B Medicare coverage? If so, the tribe will reimburse you for the monthly cost of this coverage. Please send me (one time only) a copy of your Medicare card and proof of cost to you, and I will send you a check for every month you maintain coverage.

Are you eligible for Part B Medicare coverage, but declined it because it costs too much? You can sign up in January 2002 and the tribe will reimburse you. All you have to do is send me a copy of your Medicare card and proof of payment one time only, and I'll automatically process it each month.

Tribal Council set aside these funds from the 2000 excess gaming revenue. **Any tribal elder living inside or outside the service area is eligible.** The tribe benefits from reduced Contract Health Service expenditures for services to eligible elders. Please consider taking advantage of this benefit. Once acceptable documentation is received, it takes about 10 days to process a check.

If you have any questions, please call me at 541-444-9655 or 1-800-648-0449, ext. 655. Mail your documents to:

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians  
Attn: Judy Muschamp  
P.O. Box 549  
Siletz, OR 97380

To the editor:

Elections for Tribal Council are next month, so please contact the Enrollment Department at 1-800-922-1399 if you are not registered to vote. I have seen many elections that were lost by just a few votes; your vote really does count and does matter!

I would like to thank Reggie and Lillie Butler for initiating a larger financial return to tribal members from the casino. Thankfully, the Tribal Council decided to give tribal members a per capita of \$500 plus interest instead of \$100 with no interest. Their decision was made on June 15, 2001, in a vote of eight for and one against (Resolution #2001-213).

The Siletz Tribe is a self-governance tribe. The most important aspect of being a self-governance tribe is the opportunity to provide the kind of services that are needed and wanted by the tribal membership and for financial stability.

The only way to accomplish this is to have tribal membership input and involvement. I would like to see the General Council structured so that tribal members vote on matters that affect them. Tribal members are very diverse and have many great ideas and, of course, many concerns. A fully informed membership will strengthen our tribe.

Tribal Council members are duty-bound to be responsive to the membership. We cannot be an effective self-governance tribe without knowing who our tribal members are. If the membership had more of a voice in our tribe's direction, as individual members we would feel better, no matter what the outcome. Although, I feel the outcome would definitely be good!

I enjoy reading Siletz News and Nesika Illahee, published by the Siletz Tribe. However, I find reading the resolutions voted on by the Tribal Council much more informative. The resolutions and corresponding minutes show how a council member votes and how they feel about issues. The tribe should make copies available of resolutions, minutes, program and financial reports at the General Council quarterly meetings, for the previous quarter. This would improve the quality of communication between the Tribal Council and the membership.

There are many common goals we as tribal members all want, such as prosperity for the tribe, services delivered to the membership that are respectful, helpful, and meaningful, and a fair and honest government. We can all help achieve these goals together by voting and holding our Tribal Council accountable.

I'm running for Tribal Council and hope for your support.

Respectfully,  
Lori A. Johnson

## Another Year of Wisdom Happy Birthday!

Chester Butler, 1/3  
Delmer Butler, 1/12  
Ialeen Collins, 1/22  
Duane Depoe, 1/30  
Richard Dodds, 1/18  
Emmet Douthit, 1/6  
Leroy John, 1/24  
Vera Lafferty, 1/7  
Clark Martin, 1/26  
Diane Robertson, 1/4  
Sharon Schneider, 1/10  
Rosalie Sepulveda, 1/1  
William Service, 1/18

Frances Severson, 1/13  
Wilma Strong, 1/17  
Darlene Taylor, 1/21  
Sherryl Thies, 1/2  
George Thompson, 1/19  
Ernestine Wooten, 1/7

### Elders Council Meeting

Jan. 12, 2002  
Chinook Winds Casino  
2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

## What is Self-Governance?

by Rosemary Breon Landis

I received a letter from a new tribal member with a question about what "SG neg" meant on my time sheet. Since others may have questions, I will briefly discuss self-governance negotiations and self-governance itself.

Self-governance is not a program. It does not mean that Tribal Council can do whatever it wants, even if it is wrong or illegal. Tribal Council has to obey tribal and federal laws and as citizens of Oregon, we obey state laws.

The legislation for self-determination passed during the Nixon presidency. At that time, tribes became eligible to contract programs from the federal government for services for their people instead of having the BIA run the programs.

In 1994, legislation passed that permitted tribes to enter into self-governance compacts with the federal government to administer BIA programs. The IHS had demonstration projects and by August 2000, permanent legislation had been enacted.

Since that time, tribes are commonly called direct service, Title I, or self-governance tribes. The distinctions cover the amount of control that IHS or BIA has over the programs and dollars.

Self-governance fall and spring conferences are a portion of the travel that I do for the tribe. We are one of the 10 earliest tribes in the nation to enter into self-governance compacts. We have compacts with both the BIA and IHS.

We negotiate an annual funding agreement for our share of the dollars.

Self-governance is designed to provide tribes with the flexibility to redesign and reprioritize federal programs and reallocate federally appropriated funds to programs that best meet our tribal priorities.

Self-governance legislation also makes it clear that self-governance will in no way terminate a tribe. The federal government has the responsibility to protect the trust functions of a tribe because of treaties, statutes, and executive orders. Inherent federal functions are only those duties that the federal government is responsible to provide to self-governance tribes. Through our self-governance compacts, we are responsible for managing our affairs for the betterment of our tribe.

The late Joe De La Cruz, former president of the Quinault Nation, states it best: "No right is more sacred to a nation, to a people, than the right to freely determine its social, economic, political, and cultural future without external interference. The fullest expression of this right occurs when a nation freely governs itself."

Before the United States came into being, each Indian tribe freely governed itself. After the formation of the U.S., the Constitution gives the federal government the right to deal with foreign governments, Indian tribes, and states.

Tribes across the nation are exercising their right to be self-governing. In fact, approximately 248 of the 556 tribes have entered into self-governance agreements with the federal government.