

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On July 3, I, together with other tribal chairmen from across the country, was invited to the White House to begin the commemoration of Lewis & Clark's journey across the country.

First Lady Laura Bush welcomed the guests to the White House with a very nice reception. Sam Penny, chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe, gave a moving speech about the role that the Nez Perce played in the expedition.

The commemoration of the expedition is expected to draw millions of tourists to the landmark trail left by Lewis & Clark. President Bush closed the ceremony with remarks about the expedition and expressed his support for Indian education in general and specifically for tribal community colleges.

Once again, anti-Indian, anti-Indian gaming, and anti-tribal sovereignty forces have reared their ugly, collective heads in the U.S. Congress. This time, it's Rep. Frank Wolf of Virginia who, along with 13 co-sponsors, introduced H.R. 2244, an amendment to the FY Interior Appropriations bill that would establish a Commission on Native American Policy to study issues relating to Indian gaming. The problem



Chairman Delores Pigsley

is that right from the start, the bill has serious flaws.

Arizona Rep. J.D. Hayworth, a Republican, and Rep. Dale Kildee, a Democrat from Michigan, pointed out to the House Appropriations Committee that the amendment violates its own House rule that relates to legislating on appropriations. They urged "the committee to uphold the integrity of the authorizing committee by not allowing legislative language into the Interior appropriations bill."

If passed, the amendment would establish a Commission on Native

American Policy. The fact is that the federal government in 1996 established the National Gaming Impact Study Commission (NGISC) with an appropriation of \$5 million. The commission was charged with conducting a comprehensive gambling study, a large part of which involved the impact of Indian gaming on Indian and non-Indian communities.

As Reps. Hayworth and Kildee pointed out to the committee, the NGISC report found that "gambling revenues have proven to be a very important source of funding for many tribal governments," just as the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act intended.

Rep. Wolf seems to have an unfounded and stubborn belief that organized crime has infiltrated Indian gaming. Reps. Hayworth and Kildee reminded the committee that just last year, the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General – in consultation with the Criminal Division, the FBI, and the Office of Tribal Justice – sent a memo to Rep. Wolf stating that there was a "lack of evidence to conclude that involvement of organized crime into Indian gaming operations has occurred." Bruce Ohr, the chief of the

Dept. of Justice's Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, confirmed this report in a letter to the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

Obviously, Rep. Wolf and his cohorts refuse to accept the truth.

Another issue involves Rep. Bob Goodlatte of Virginia's Internet Gaming Bill, H.R. 3215, which as amended retains provisions that would unfairly limit tribal Internet gaming to "Indian lands" in the same state.

As Ernest Stevens, chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association, stated in his June 10, 2002, letter to the House Judiciary Committee, the bill would "actually infringe on existing tribal rights by amending the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act to outlaw existing linked bingo and other games between tribes in different states." Our tribe, as well as other Oregon tribes and gaming tribes nationwide, would be adversely affected by the bill.

Although anti-Indian forces continue to be active, we must keep in mind the positive efforts being made in Congress by Republicans and Democrats alike. The Tribal Government Tax Fairness Act of 2002, introduced on June 6, 2002, by Rep. Phil Crane of Illinois, a Republican, exemplifies just such an effort.

Rep. Crane's bill would rectify an error made by the Supreme Court on Nov. 17, 2001, in *Chickasaw Nation vs. United States*. In that case, the Supreme Court ruled that tribal governments are not exempt from the federal wagering excise tax even though IGRA states otherwise. Rep. Crane's bill would exempt tribes from the federal wagering excise tax in addition to other federal taxes from which tribes are already exempt. His bill addresses the Supreme Court's error and would treat Indian tribes the same as state governments for purposes of federal wagering taxes.

The importance of this bill is not only specifically about exempting tribes from the federal wagering excise tax, it also acknowledges the principle of respect for Indian tribes as governments no less than state governments.

The pending bills aren't done deals. There is a need to continue to advocate for or against them as appropriate and to ensure they represent the tribes' interests in the end. I will report on the status of these bills in upcoming issues of *Siletz News*.

### Answers to Questions About New Computers

As was published in the July issue of *Siletz News*, the tribe is purchasing 1,000 computers to distribute to tribal members. An application form was published in the July issue of *Nesika Illahee*, the tribe's confidential quarterly newsletter.

We have received many questions about applying to receive a computer and about how they will be distributed.

Here are some answers.

You must complete the entire application form. Verification of your **physical address must** accompany your application. Acceptable verification includes utility bills, lease or rental

agreements, and mortgage documents. Only one **original** application per household will be accepted.

Tribal member children who live in non-Indian custodial parent or guardian households should contact Darlene Carkhuff at 1-800-922-1399, ext. 201, or 541-444-8201 for an application form.

Applications are due at the close of business on Aug. 16, 2002. Based on the number of applications received, a determination will be made on how to distribute the computers. If we receive more than 1,000 requests, a drawing will be held.

**Computers will not**

**be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.**

In September, the tribe will notify by letter those tribal members who will receive a computer. The computers will be distributed by the company selected direct to the household.

