

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Since September 11 and throughout 2002, we were reminded of the threat of terrorism – rising medical costs, a huge federal budget deficit, and many other troubles. On top of all that, we begin 2003, the new year, teetering on the brink of another war with Iraq.

For these and other reasons, it's been a year of uncertainty and an uncertain future. But the 25th Restoration anniversary, which we celebrated on Nov. 16, was a fitting way to remember and say farewell to the past and despite the uncertainties, to greet the New Year – the new era – with confidence. In the 25 years since we were restored, it was undoubtedly the largest Restoration gathering we've had. Everyone seemed to sense the special significance of that day.

Our wonderful Restoration speakers, former Gov. Vic Atiyeh and Rudy Clements, reminded us of the inner



Chairman Delores Pigsley

strength with which the Siletz people have dealt with adversity throughout our history. They spoke of what we have accomplished since Restoration and their confidence in our ability to continue the process of growth.



To the editor:

My name is Maria Godines. I am the outreach liaison for National FSA American Indian Credit Outreach Initiative, which is a cooperative agreement between the National Tribal Development Association (NTDA) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). This program first began among the tribes of Montana and proved to be very successful. Based on the success in Montana, the outreach program has expanded to other states.

As an outreach liaison, I'm ready to assist potential American Indian borrowers in the development of a complete loan package. I serve the state of Oregon; my duty is to ensure American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth have access to the full range of FSA credit opportunities.

Currently, six types of loans are available:

- ♦ Direct Farm Operating Loans
- ♦ Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans
- ♦ Beginning Farmer and Rancher Loans
- ♦ Rural Youth Loans (not limited to farming/ranching/agriculture)
- ♦ Direct Farm Ownership Loans
- ♦ Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loans

The ultimate goal of this project is to establish a cooperative working relationship with the local FSA service providers to guarantee adequate resources are accessible to American Indian farmers, as well as future generations of American Indian agriculture producers.

This program helps borrowers in the following ways: by providing trained outreach liaisons who will help during the FSA loan process; by providing the borrower with up-to-date information about the availability of FSA agriculture credit programs; by offering on-on-one credit application preparation assistance; by accompanying the potential borrower to the FSA county office to help facilitate communication; by bridging those cultural barriers that exist between American Indian borrowers and the FSA; and by providing on-site presentations to schools and other youth organizations about the availability of the FSA Rural Youth Loan Program.

Please contact me at the address below to schedule a presentation or if you have any questions. Thank you.

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We should be thankful that our governmental institutions, including our Constitution, have withstood the test of time. Our tribal elections have encountered some problems. The election results have even been challenged in Tribal Court, which is not unlike a lot of other tribes or, for that matter, state, federal, and local governments. But through it all, our tribal institutions have seen us through whatever challenges we have faced. Nonetheless, the Election Board's job has not been easy. It's generally considered a difficult and thankless job that very few want to tackle.

For the upcoming General Election, however, the Tribal Council was fortunate in recruiting Dan Van Otten to serve as election director. Dan comes to us with superb credentials. Although he has never before served in this particular capacity, he's a person of impeccable integrity, ability, and wisdom, and we're confident he will do the job well.

Dan recently retired from the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management as associate professor at the University of Oregon. Prior to that, he was a manager with the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department. He served for a number of years as an evaluator for federal grant proposals for the U.S. Department of Human Services' Administration for Native Americans.

Dan is no stranger to the Siletz Tribe, having served as our consultant on a number of important tribal projects. We are fortunate that Dan is available and willing to serve as the tribe's election director.



To the editor:

I just want to take a little time to thank my mother, Martha Case (Moody), and Joe to let them know how much I love them and thank them for always being there when we need them. The universe isn't big enough to show how much we love you both.

I also would like to thank my big sister, Loraine, and Lavonne, my little sister, for getting my grandchildren X-mas presents this year. The universe isn't big enough to show how much we love you both also.

Spudnic, Robert, Jacob Holmes, Sage Butler, Alan Kentta, and all our brothers and sisters who are locked up – remember, all of you who pray for our family, a great big hugs and kisses.

Love, The Butlers – Laverne, Bird, Levi, Sophia, Salinna, Sabrina, Poopie Nana, Secilla, Boo, Tiny Bear, and Baby Freedom

Siletz School Closure

On another matter, the Lincoln County School District office recently announced that Siletz School, which has served Siletz and the surrounding community for many years, has been targeted for closure. This was a devastating blow to the Siletz Tribe.

To address a situation that would be extremely damaging to our community and our children's future, the Tribal Council and Education staff enlisted the assistance of Van Peters to help plan for a charter school.

Van is a professional educator, having served as the area director of Education for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for many years. He's knowledgeable about charter schools, certification requirements, funding sources, and of putting together a viable curriculum and budget. With his educational expertise, Van will be indispensable in helping us implement a plan for a Siletz charter school.

Time Cover Story

Finally, in addition to the many problems I mentioned when I began this column, we continue to face anti-Indian forces intent on undermining tribal self-determination and sovereignty. A glaring example is the extremely damaging article about Indian gaming that appeared in *Time* magazine dated Dec. 16. It's a cover story to which *Time* devoted 13 pages. It's the first part of a two-part series, full of misleading half-truths and distorted information intended, I'm afraid, to do away with Indian gaming, for starters.

The National Indian Gaming Association, the National Congress of American Indians, tribes across the country, the Siletz Tribe, and our non-Indian friends will respond appropriately. Hopefully, so will you.