

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It was the largest general election turnout the Siletz Tribe has ever had. This may indicate increased interest among our members in our tribal affairs, and that's good and something to be proud of.

I want to congratulate the incumbents – Reggie Butler Sr., David Hatch, and JoAnn Miller – for being re-elected for another three-year term each. Their re-election helps ensure continuity in addressing pending tribal projects and issues.

Also, I appreciate the council members for their vote of confidence in re-electing me as tribal chairman. It'll be good to serve with JoAnn Miller as secretary, Jane John as treasurer, and Jessie Davis as my right-hand "man" who will continue to serve as vice chairman.

I accept the chairmanship with humility and with the full realization that this office comes with heavy responsibilities. I assure you that I will continue to serve the Siletz Tribe to the best of my ability.

Regarding the proposal to increase council members' compensation, I regret that this ballot measure was defeated. Our tribal members have



Chairman Delores Pigsley

spoken; in fact, they did so by a vote of two to one. The proposal sparked a great deal of discussion and a number of creative solutions. If and when another change in council members' compensation is proposed, we'll take these and other suggestions into consideration.

As explained earlier in *Siletz News* and other reports, the proposal was based on a compensation study conducted by a committee appointed by the Tribal Council. We need to give recognition to these committee members – council members Lillie Butler and Jessie Davis, Administrative

Officer Sharon Edenfield, and Human Resources Director Michele Rowan – for the difficult job they willingly tackled and for giving our members an issue to seriously think about.

Federal Budget Crisis

I'd now like to turn to an issue that may have unfortunate consequences for Indian tribes – the federal budget crisis. I'd like to share with you how Franklin Ducheneaux, our Washington, D.C.-based consultant, views this crisis and how it may impact Indian tribes. Franklin explained that he couldn't share much with us at this point, but was able to provide the following information?

"As of Feb. 13, the Congress is still trying to pass the appropriations for FY2003 that began on Oct. 1, 2002. Except for two defense appropriation bills that were passed last year and signed into law, all the other federal agencies have been operating on continuing resolutions since then. This also includes the BIA, IHS, and HUD programs.

"A catch-all omnibus bill was being negotiated in a Senate-House conference at this time. Because of the homeland security costs and the

proposed Bush tax cuts, we can expect very little growth in program funds for Indian programs in the remainder of fiscal year 2003 if they do pass the omnibus bill, and may well see some cuts from the 2002 levels.

"The same is going to be true of the fiscal 2004 budget. President Bush sent his 2004 budget proposal to Congress in early February. While we haven't been able to see detailed information about proposed program funding, the overall figures for BIA, IHS, and other agencies funding Indian programs are not promising. The Bush figures, overall, limit growth to around 2 percent. This would not even cover inflation costs. When we are able to see more detailed figures in 2-3 weeks, I'm afraid we will see even more cuts for Indian programs."

Because of the possibility of war looming on the horizon, costs of homeland security, and many other factors, federal funding of Indian programs doesn't look very promising. We're fortunate that we have Chinook Winds, which generates much-needed revenue that can be used to supplement funding of our tribal programs.

To the editor:

Would like to thank the council and tribal members for the nice Pendleton blanket and the memories of being on the council when we built and opened the tent and new casino because our work is now bringing benefits for tribal members.

A couple of things of concern from our 25-year celebration:

1. The casino general manager needs to be reminded that casino small repairs need to be taken care of so that they do not become major repairs that will cut into his bonus.
2. The discussion of our descendants came up because of the comments made by tribal members as to how they felt lost during termination. We have children and grandchildren who will be terminated when they turn 18 because they lack the proper blood degree to become tribal members. How will they feel? This letter will not get in the paper until after the council elections, so you need to think about a special election or wait until next year's election. American Indians are the only people in the United States who have to have a blood degree to be citizens, a ploy by someone long ago to assimilate Indians into white society and thus avoid paying for treaty obligations arranged by our ancestors to help pay for our lost lands. Some of these young people may be the strong future leaders as those who fought for restoration. Ask the council members if they support descendency, but put them on the spot by asking if they would vote for descendency because if we lose our tribal status for lack of blood, we will never again become or stay Siletz Indians. Think about it, then let the council know your thoughts. It is our future.

Thank you,
Bensell Breon

Firewood Available by Mid-March

A new firewood area, the **South Fork #2** unit located about 11 miles from Siletz, is expected to open in early to mid-March for tribal member firewood cutting. Available wood is a mixture of conifer and hardwood located in decks at four landings in a recently logged unit.

Permits are required. Permits, maps, directions, fire season restrictions, and equipment requirements can be obtained at the tribal Natural Resources office in Siletz from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekdays once the unit is open.

Permits will be issued only to tribal members, who will need to show their tribal ID card and provide the license number of the vehicle used to haul the wood. Out-of-the-Siletz-area woodcutters may call the Natural Resources office to have a permit mailed to them.

The permits are for tribal member wood-

cutting for **personal use only**. This firewood **may not be sold**. The person named on the permit must be present when cutting and hauling the firewood. Tribal members wishing to cut wood for a tribal elder must present a signed note from the elder stating the individual is authorized to cut firewood on his/her behalf and must include the elder's tribal ID number.

Permits are good for two weeks and up to two cords of wood can be cut on each one. Each tribal member is allowed up to four cords total from this unit.

Tribal members are encouraged to get this firewood as soon as possible as the unit will be burned in either the spring or early fall to prepare for planting.

For more information, stop by the tribal Natural Resources office or call Natural Resources Manager Mike Kennedy at 1-800-922-1399, ext. 232, or 541-444-8232.

