

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## ATNI's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – Celebrating Tribal Unity

The year was 1953. The U.S. Congress passed House Concurrent Resolution 108, the ill-advised federal policy that targeted Indian tribes to be "terminated," according to the resolution, "as rapidly as possible."

That same year, tribal leaders in the Northwest who had been meeting informally until then on Indian issues, formally established the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), primarily to fight against termination – a policy they knew meant disaster for all Indian tribes.

The Affiliated Tribes, along with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), mounted a major campaign to fight against termination and sought to have officially reversed a policy that was proving so disastrous to Indian tribes.

Unfortunately, however, Congress already had targeted a handful of tribes to be "terminated," passing laws several months after the resolution was proclaimed to "terminate" the Menominee, the Utes, the Klamath, the Siletz, and other western Oregon tribes.

Some years later, through concerted intertribal effort, Congress reversed its termination policy and adopted instead federal policies reaffirming tribal sovereignty and tribal self-determination. In this collaborative effort with NCAI, the Affiliated Tribes became one of the most, if not **the most**, influential regional Indian organizations in the nation.

Presidents of ATNI went on to become presidents of NCAI, including Joe Garry of Coeur d'Alene of Idaho, Earl Old Person of the Blackfeet Tribe of Montana, and from the state of Washington, Joe DeLaCruz of Quinault.

For the past 50 years, ATNI has served as a watchdog to alert member tribes of critical Indian issues and to make certain that tribal rights, programs, and services are protected and promoted.

During the week of Sept. 22-25, more than 400 tribal leaders, hosted by the Umatilla Tribe, gathered at the Wildhorse Casino and Resort to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ATNI. We not only reflected on the organization's past, but also discussed



Chairman Delores Pigsley

the many important issues that lie before us.

Earl Old Person from the Blackfeet Tribe reminded us of the difficulty tribes had in the old days of getting and disbursing information, unlike today in our world of instant communications.

The agenda covered a wide range of tribal issues. Stan Speaks, regional director of the BIA, explained what the bureau's organization is expected to look like after reorganization. Tribal leaders were upset that the administration seemed not to have listened to them during the many sessions

that were held across the U.S. It was announced that official tribal consultation sessions would be held in Las Vegas at the end of October.

During the convention, ATNI members were pleased by the Department of Education's presentation of a check for \$30.4 million under the No Child Left Behind Act to be used by BIA schools over the next six years.

We're proud of the fact that ever since we were restored nearly 26 years ago, the Siletz Tribe has been an active and contributing member of ATNI.

## Senate Native American Caucus

In early October, along with other tribal leaders, I was invited to attend a meeting of the Senate Native American Caucus in Washington, D.C. The caucus is composed of a group of senators and was organized last year along the same lines as the House Caucus, which has been in existence for a number of years.

Both the House and Senate caucuses keep abreast of, and address, Indian issues that come before Congress for the purposes of protecting tribal rights and promoting tribal programs and services.

Sens. Tom Daschle and Hillary Clinton chaired the meeting, with Sens. Daniel Inouye, Daniel Akaka, Jeff Bingaman, Harry Reid, Barbara Boxer, Tim Johnson, and Byron Dorgan among others participating.

Approximately 12 tribes and leaders of Indian organizations attended. Tribal testimony covered six areas of particular interest to Senate leadership, including FY04 appropriations, BIA trust reform, energy, health, welfare reform, Head Start, transportation, and Native Hawaiian recognition.

Sen. Clinton opened the discussion, followed by presentations of issues by tribes and Indian organizations. At the conclusion of the formal discussion, legislators and tribal officials had an opportunity to talk informally with each other on a face-to-face basis, which often proves of greater value than formal presentations. After lunch, we met with staff from the senators' offices, which was followed by a reception at the Senate office hosted by the Pechanga Tribe of California.

It's encouraging to know there are senators and representatives on both sides of the political fence who understand Indian issues and are working for the benefit of Indian tribes. It's incumbent on us – the tribes – to recognize, support, and express appreciation to these congressional people for their efforts on our behalf.

## Siletz Restoration – 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

On Nov. 15, we'll celebrate the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon.

Unlike the non-terminated tribes with a long, unbroken history of development under federal recognition, the Siletz Tribe suffered more than 20 years during which we had no tribal land and as a "terminated" tribe, had no federal programs to assist us. Since we were "restored," however, we've made remarkable progress of which we should be proud.

On Nov. 15, we'll celebrate our restoration of 26 years ago and our accomplishments since then. It'll also be an opportunity for us to commit ourselves to do what remains yet to be done.

Please come and celebrate with us on this important date.

## 26<sup>th</sup> Restoration Celebration

Chinook Winds Casino  
Lincoln City, Oregon  
Nov. 15, 2003

### Agenda

11 a.m.	Opening Remarks Invocation: Royalty Welcome
11:15 a.m.	Guest Speakers
12 p.m.	Special Entertainment
12:30 p.m.	Buffet Luncheon
2 p.m.	Recognition of Special Guests
2:30 p.m.	Closing Prayer
6 p.m.	Pow-Wow Grand Entry

### All-Day Events

Culture Room with displays and tribal video  
Pow-wow vendors