

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Last month, we celebrated the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of the Siletz Tribe. It was a day to recall the dark days of termination, reminisce about our successful but difficult struggle to be restored, and celebrate our achievements since restoration. We reminded ourselves that we had much for which to be thankful.

And as we counted our blessings, we were particularly mindful of the hundreds of Indian families made homeless by the fires in Southern California as they fled the burning inferno with only the shirts on their backs. The suffering of others – our fellow Indians – helped put into perspective how fortunate we are, and how humble and thankful we should be for what we have.

Since I've been chairman and with active Tribal Council involvement, we became the first in Oregon, and within the first 20 in the nation, to become a self-governance tribe. As such, we're able to exercise greater self-determination and flexibility in operating federal programs and funds.

More than 10 years ago, the council decided to pursue gaming. Chinook Winds has become a highly successful gaming enterprise despite fierce competition from our close neighbor, which has a greater metropolitan market area to draw from.



*Chairman Delores Pigsley*

Our gaming revenues have enabled us to create and dispense housing grants, and establish an Economic Development department that is implementing plans for diversifying our tribe's economic base.

Chinook Winds has made possible the funding of endowments, the interests from which will be used to enhance health, education, and culture programs. A wide variety of programs now are available for our elders, including many trips for entertainment, education, special programs, and Wal-Mart gift cards for whatever purchases the elders wish.

And of course, we were able to distribute nearly 2,000 computers to

Siletz Tribal households that have helped put information at the fingertips of all tribal members, especially our school-age children.

And of great importance, out of the total amount of gaming revenues generated for tribal use (called excess pledge gaming revenues), 35 percent annually is committed to per capita. With Tribal Council oversight and competent Chinook Winds management, gaming revenues for tribal use have significantly increased each year.

This doesn't mean that gaming revenues will continue to increase in the future. Many things will determine how much Chinook Winds will make for us. It's not only how it's managed, but also market conditions.

New casinos are under way just north of the Columbia River that may have an impact on our Oregon casinos. Also, enemies of tribes continue to be intent on destroying Indian gaming not only at the national level, but here in Oregon as well. As chairman, it's been my responsibility to see that these issues are dealt with.

Last month, Vice Chairman Jessie Davis, council member Jane John, and I attended an Oregon Gaming Alliance meeting. We discussed with other tribal leaders the recent and very serious anti-Indian gaming activities in Oregon that have the potential of seriously undermining Indian gaming.

And also last month, I wrote letters to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs detailing the Siletz Tribe's concerns about Senate Bill 1529 which, if passed by Congress as written, will be extremely harmful to Indian gaming. Also, I suggested items to be added to the bill to strengthen Indian gaming.

Not only has Indian gaming been in danger, but also the funding of Indian programs and services. Recently, I attended two special meetings where tribal leaders expressed their concerns about certain Indian issues.

In Washington, D.C., I was among tribal officials who laid out for congressional leaders, including Sens. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) that tribes have many critical unmet needs that Congress must somehow address. And also last month, I spoke at the so-called consultation session in Las Vegas on BIA reorganization, convened by the Department of the Interior. I used the opportunity, as chairman of

the Siletz Tribe, to express our concerns about the proposed reorganization.

You notice I used the term "so-called consultation." This is because the department had already decided to move forward with its reorganization plan, which for one thing involved the creation of several new positions in Washington, D.C., whether or not the tribes agreed.

In addition to expressing concern that this wasn't true consultation since decisions had already been made, I asked specifically how the plan benefits tribes. No explanation was given.

Regarding funding, the assistant secretary said that the new positions would be paid out of carry-over funds and from FY2005 appropriations, which should be directed to benefit Indian tribes. Further, she said she couldn't promise that funds normally dedicated to tribal priority programs wouldn't be used to implement the reorganization plan. The fact is that the cost of reorganization, totaling between \$15 million and \$24 million, would, if shared with the tribes, help reduce our tribal unmet needs.

Our position is that carry-over funds and any new funds should be used for regional and field office positions that assist and strengthen tribal governments, not central office staff. I said that to do anything different would be a step back in time.

I concluded by stating that the reorganization at this point is totally unrealistic since there is no real budget and the BIA has no real assurance there will ever be enough money to make these changes. Further, I and other tribal leaders firmly believe that decision-making authority should reside in the regional and field offices rather than in Washington, D.C.

I include these comments from the Las Vegas meeting to show that the Siletz Tribe must deal with many critical issues that are created not only by outside anti-Indian forces, but by the federal government itself.

But over the years, I as tribal chairman with supportive Tribal Councils have dealt constructively and effectively with the many critical federal, state, and tribal issues that have confronted us.

I believe, based on our strength as a tribe and as a people, that we can look to the future with confidence.

### 2004 Charitable Contributions Advisory Board

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon has established a Charitable Contributions Advisory Board to distribute profits from Chinook Winds Casino. The advisory board will consist of one Siletz Tribal Council member, three Siletz Tribal members, two non-tribal members from Lincoln County, and one member of the general public from the tribe's service area.

Term of office is three years. Siletz Tribal members interested in serving on this committee must fill out the following form and return it to the address below by Jan. 30, 2004.

Please send your application to Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, Attn: Christine Goodell, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380-0549; Fax: 541-444-2307

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Roll Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

Tribal Council will review applications and approve appointments at the regular Tribal Council meeting on Feb. 20-21, 2004. If you have any questions, please call Christine Goodell at 1-800-922-1399, ext. 200, or 541-444-8200.