

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Siletz Veterans Attend National World War II Memorial

On May 29, 2004, during the Memorial Day weekend, a major celebration was held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to dedicate the National World War II Memorial in honor of all veterans who served during that war.

Congress authorized the memorial in 1993, about 40 years after the end of World War II. Construction began in September 2001. This war is the only 20th century event commemorated on the mall's central axis.

According to the American Battle Monuments Commission, the memorial "honors all veterans of the war, the citizens on the home front, the nation at large, and the high moral purpose and idealism that motivated the nation's call to arms."

Six Siletz veterans – Ken Hatch, Buck Downey, Eddie Collins, Ed Ben, Alfred Lane Jr., and Calvin Van Pelt – accompanied by their spouses and or attendants represented the Siletz Tribe at the dedication. Bud Lane and I also attended for the Siletz Tribal Council.

The bravery and patriotism of American Indians is demonstrated by the fact that historically, more Indians per capita have served in the U.S. Armed Forces than any other ethnic group, a large number of whom were volunteers. We're happy and proud that our veterans, representing our tribe, were able to participate in this historic event.

ATNI

During May 17-20, the Siletz Tribe hosted the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) at Chinook Winds.

ATNI's membership includes most Northwest tribes. It deals with a wide spectrum of issues, focusing primarily on the Northwest, although it's actively involved with the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Gaming Association when we're confronted with burning national issues.

On May 17, as is customary, the first session was set aside for the host tribe. The session included words of welcome by Mayor Lori Hollingsworth of Lincoln City.

Robert Kentta provided important information about the history of our tribe, followed by an Elders Panel of



Chairman Delores Pigsley

Rosemary Landis, Jane John, and JoAnn Miller. David Hatch, now a recognized authority on sea otters, spoke on behalf of the organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of sea otters, the Elahka Alliance. Jessie Davis provided a profile of the economic development efforts of the Siletz Tribe.

Testimony Before Administration on Aging

At an Administration on Aging meeting in Rapid City, S.D., in April, I provided testimony on Siletz elder care issues.

I began by stating how increasingly important it's become to collaborate with the Administration on Aging, Indian Health Service, HUD, USDA, Medicare, Medicaid, the BIA, and others to address issues in health care, housing, diet and nutrition, transportation, and social service needs.

I stated that the tribe operates a small ambulatory health clinic and contract service program, both of which are grossly underfunded to meet the health care needs of our population. The last several years of funding for specialty or referred care has been exhausted, or nearly so, months before the end of the fiscal year.

I pointed out that when this occurs, only patients at risk of life or limb (designated as priority I) receive such care, and even then it may be delayed. As for Medicaid, continued funding decreases to states and uncertainty regarding Medicaid reimbursements are reducing the number of providers willing to care for our patients.

I spoke about the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003. Although

it didn't meet the expectations of many aging organizations, we see this as a first step in addressing tribal health care needs. We look forward to working closely with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid as this legislation is implemented.

As for housing, the Indian Health Service doesn't fund long-term care. Many Siletz elders live far below the poverty level, some in deplorable conditions, but are reluctant to leave their homes.

The tribe is only able to meet a limited number of requests from tribal elders each year. Our current housing plan allocated funding for replacement housing of four elders homes. Unfortunately at this rate, the majority of tribal elders will continue to reside in sub-standard housing unless additional funds can be legislated through HUD.

In the areas of diet and nutrition, transportation, and social services, I stated that the Siletz Tribe is doing what it can to meet those and other unmet needs of our elders from limited tribal funds and will continue to do so. But we're counting on help from adequate and meaningful federal appropriations.

We're fortunate in having gaming revenues that help meet some of our tribal needs. Unfortunately, our elders are only a part, though a very significant part, of our tribe. We have health, education, housing, and other unmet needs of our general tribal population that also must be addressed with the very limited resources available to us.

Tribes Honor Sen. Inouye

At a dinner sponsored by the Warm Springs Museum, Sen. Daniel Inouye was honored for his dedicated service to Indian people while on the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

Inouye was instrumental early on in preventing legislation that was detrimental to Indian tribes and in creating and sponsoring legislation beneficial to Indian tribes and their members. Reflective of his advocacy of tribal sovereignty, he has urged tribes to take a strong governmental posture and act like sovereigns.

Though personally opposed to gambling, Inouye was consistently a strong advocate of Indian tribes' sovereign right to engage in gaming and fought in Congress to protect that right.

We're honored to participate and gifted Sen. Inouye with a Siletz blanket.

Most of Oregon's nine tribes were represented at the dinner held at the Hilton in Portland, Ore. Former Governor Vic Atiyeh, a member of the museum's Board of Directors, served as the master of ceremonies. Council members Dave Hatch, Bud Lane, and I attended this event.

Annual Student Gathering

The Annual Student Gathering is an event that honors our college-graduating seniors as well as all students attending college and vocational schools. It's sponsored by our tribe.

We're proud of the fact that the number of tribal members going on to higher education has steadily increased. In this day and age, education is of utmost importance not only for the skills and knowledge to be able to compete in the job market, but also to better understand and live constructively in the complex world in which we live.

The tribe is committed to providing at least the tuition and books for every tribal student who has the desire to pursue his/her education. We're also proud of our tribal staff and the parents who provide the motivation and assistance to our young members.

Tribal Council members Rosemary Landis, Reggie Butler, Lillie Butler, Dave Hatch, and I participated in this year's gathering in Siletz.

General Council Meeting

Aug. 7, 2004

1 p.m.

**Siletz Tribal
Community Center
Siletz, Oregon**

**Additional details will
appear in the July
issue of *Siletz News*.**