

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## Tribal Involvement in Political Process

As you all know, we recently went through a number of very important national, state, and local elections. By the time this issue of *Siletz News* is published and distributed, we will be heading into the Siletz general election.

I believe that all these recent elections brought home to us how important they are and how important it is for us, as a tribe and as individual citizens, to be involved in the political process.

At the federal level, the U.S. Congress has a solemn obligation to fulfill its treaty and other obligations to Indians. We have learned through bitter historical experience, however, that Congress often has not lived up to its treaty and other obligations to Indian tribes.

The extent to which Congress fulfills these obligations depends not only on how well our legislators understand Indian tribes and Indian issues and on their good will, but also on how effectively we on the tribal side can communicate and work with our legislators.

In Oregon, we have had congressional representatives who were willing to learn and be supportive. Sen. Mark Hatfield, of course, comes immediately to mind. Some current members of Congress also are supportive, among them Sen. Gordon Smith, who has not only been named chairman of the Senate Committee on Aging, but also serves on the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

With the retirement of Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell and the withdrawal of Sen. Daniel Inouye from the Senate Indian Affairs Committee – who have



*Chairman Delores Pigsley*

served with commitment and distinction as strong Indian advocates – the committee will be somewhat less effective than we have known it to be in the past. We are very fortunate to be able to still count on the support of Sen. John McCain and Sen. Inouye in the Senate.

We also are fortunate that Sen. Smith has been demonstrating a keen interest in Indian issues and has actually been instrumental in assisting tribes with the funding of important Indian projects. As a member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee and chairman of the Senate Committee on Aging, Sen. Smith can be a very influential and important advocate for tribes.

At the meeting with Sen. Smith on Jan. 12, most Oregon tribes contributed funds to show our early support for his re-election. We took the opportunity to discuss with the senator critical issues involving the funding needs of health and education programs and services.

We also discussed with the senator two important technical amendments, one involving fee-to-trust and the other the handling of timber sales funds. As many of you may know, the fee-to-trust process is fraught with many obstacles. The proposed technical amendment would give us a more efficient process for taking land into trust, especially for the tribe to meet such critical tribal needs as housing and economic development.

## Services for Members Outside the Service Area

In December, the Tribal Council held a community meeting in Brookings, Ore., with many tribal members from that area in attendance.

Program managers were present to review programs and services that are available for those members who reside outside of the 11-county service area. Because many in attendance live outside the service area and therefore are not eligible for certain programs under the Indian Health Service, the staff did an excellent job of identifying parallel services that can be obtained in the surrounding communities. There also are members who live outside the area, however, who travel a great distance to obtain services at our clinic and other departments in Siletz.

The meeting was an opportunity for us to meet new members, as well as to renew acquaintance with members we already know.

## Meeting with Willamette National Forest; Craig Whitehead recognized

In early December, the tribe held its annual meeting with managers of the Willamette National Forest. These annual meetings are held to review the memorandum of understanding we have with the forest service.

On this occasion, Dallas Emsch, district manager, presented a plaque in memory and appreciation of Craig Whitehead, who worked closely with the forest service over the past several years on cultural matters.

Craig's family was present to receive the plaque and to hear the tribute that was paid to him for his service. The tribe also received a plaque in recognition of the cooperative relationship the Willamette National Forest has with the Siletz Tribe.

At this meeting, Bud Lane and Robert Kentta discussed the issues involved in gathering basketry material, specifically hazel sticks. Bud brought a collection of baskets that he has made to show forestry officials what the end products look like.

He also displayed bunches of basketry material that he had gathered in preparation for weaving. These helped give forest service officials a better understanding of the need for good quality materials that are necessary to create traditional basketry.

## General Council Meeting

**Feb. 5, 2005**

**Siletz Tribal Community Center – Siletz, Oregon**

**1 p.m.**

Call to Order	Audits – Sharon Edenfield
Invocation	Investments – Gregg Gubuan
Roll Call	Tribal Member Concerns
Approval of Agenda	Chairman's Report
Approval of Minutes	Announcements
Program Reports	Adjournment

## Tribal Election Deadlines

Dec. 22, 2004, 4 p.m.	Deadline to file for candidacy
	Deadline to submit a photo and/or candidate's statement for inclusion in the Tribal Voter's Pamphlet
Dec. 27, 2004, 4 p.m.	Deadline to withdraw name from candidacy and not have your name appear on the ballot
Week of Jan. 3-7, 2005	Absentee ballots mailed out
Jan. 8, 2005, Noon	Candidate's Fair, Siletz Tribal Community Center
Jan. 14, 2005	If you do not receive your ballot via mail by this date, please contact the tribal election director
Jan. 28, 2005, 4 p.m.	Deadline to request a mail-in ballot
Feb. 5, 2005, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.	In-person voting at Siletz Tribal Community Center
Feb. 5, 2005, 4 p.m.	Deadline for returning absentee ballots
Feb. 6, 2005, 1 p.m.	Special Tribal Council Meeting – Swearing-in Ceremony and Election of Officers