

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## NIGA Annual Meeting

Two meetings of national importance to Indian tribes during the past couple of months made it necessary for me to travel from one end of the U.S. to the other – to San Diego, Calif., and to Miami, Fla.

In April, I represented the Siletz Tribe at the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) annual meeting in San Diego. As readers of *Siletz News* know by now, NIGA has become the most important national inter-tribal organization that addresses national Indian gaming issues.

NIGA just celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It operates as a "clearinghouse and educational, legislative, and public policy resource to tribes," specifically on Indian gaming issues. Although NIGA's focus is gaming, many of the issues in which it is involved go beyond gaming.

NIGA, which represents more than 200 gaming tribes, complements and works hand-in-glove on many issues with the oldest, prestigious national inter-tribal organization, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). NCAI's history includes, among other important activities, mobilizing tribes during the 1950s and 1960s against the federal government's ill-conceived termination policy.

At the conference this year, Ernie Stevens was re-elected chairman and Lyn Valbuena was re-elected secretary, both by acclamation. Their re-election confirmed the confidence the NIGA members placed in them during their past terms of office.

The next few years will be difficult ones for Indian tribes because of a basically conservative congress, courts, and a huge federal deficit. It was encouraging, however, to hear presentations by several senators and congressmen at the conference who spoke on serious Indian gaming issues and are committed to work on behalf of Indian tribes.



Delores Pigsley

## BIA/Tribal Budgets

On May 10-11, at the request of Northwest Regional Director Stan Speaks, I participated in a review of the BIA budget at the BIA/Tribal Budget Advisory Council meeting in Miami.

I filled in as a member of the budget committee. We are all aware that federal agencies are faced with budget cuts and the Siletz Tribe is not immune from the funding crisis. The BIA is asking the tribes to assist in identifying where tribes want the 2 percent (or more) budget cuts to be made in their funds.

The meeting was animated and full of lively discussion. The bottom line was that tribes want increased budgets and do not want to assist in cuts. A budget subcommittee was formed to deal with this specific issue.

The advisory committee also called for the removal of a deputy director who has not been tribal-friendly. All regions of the U.S. presented their priorities and called for budget increases. A BIA official said that the amounts we are dealing with have come down through the Secretary of Interior and the Office of Management and Budget.

The budget battle for 2007 isn't over yet and tribes agreed to work with congressional representatives to increase funds.



To the editor:

My name is Renee Flores and I would like to give much thanks to the CTSIA&D and TLC programs, especially my counselor, Sandy Gordon, and TLC Coordinator Lynn Whitlow for helping me get my life together after attending and graduating from NARA. That in itself was a life-changing program.

I also want to express my gratitude to Valerie Hibdon for the support she gave through the Self-Sufficiency Program.

I appreciate everyone who stuck with me and helped me get my life on track.

Thank you,  
Renee Joy Flores

To the editor:

My name is Renee Flores and I want to say thank you to the Indian Child Welfare staff.

I am saddened by hearing negative feedback about the ICW program. My experience of having my children taken from me, because of my past behaviors, was a nightmare. It has been a long and painful road.

Finding that the Oregon DHS was not working out for myself or my children, I did some research as to the laws of the Indian Child Welfare Act and took my findings to ICW. They went to court for me to help reunify my family.

As soon as they stepped in, that reunification started to be fulfilled. Each

## Commission on Indian Services

With Jessie Davis no longer on council, Dave Hatch has been named the official delegate to the Commission on Indian Services representing the Siletz Tribe.

It might be good to review the background of the commission. Briefly, the commission was established by the legislature in 1975 to improve services to Indians in Oregon.

There are 13 members appointed jointly by the senate president and the speaker of the house to two-year terms. All nine Oregon tribes nominate candidates to serve on the commission and they are then officially appointed by the Legislature.

The commission has been in existence for the past 30 years and actively serves as the main forum in which Indian concerns are aired. In 1996, Gov. John Kitzhaber issued an executive order that recognized tribes as sovereign governments with which the state has government-to-government relations. In 2001, the legislature passed SB770, which codified that executive order.

The commission therefore plays a vital role in the tribe's relationship with the state of Oregon. We appreciate the time and energy Jessie devoted to the commission. We are confident that Dave also will serve as a productive member of the commission.

## City of Toledo

The City of Toledo, just off Highway 20, is the closest neighboring town to Siletz and has important connections to the Siletz Tribe historically, educationally, and economically. Because of this connection, I'm proud to say that Toledo has become an inspiration to many small towns in the west.

It now has beautiful floral displays along the main street that have set the tone for beauty/improvements. Our tribe has sponsored one of the flower baskets. If

you have the opportunity to drive through Toledo, please do so and view the beautiful flower baskets on display.

## Chemawa Station

I am pleased to report that the joint Siletz/Grand Ronde tribal project, the Chemawa Station, in Salem is moving forward. Representatives of both tribes recently met in Lincoln City to discuss progress on our joint venture.

Bid documents should have been released in mid-May for a 30-day period. Construction should start in late June.

The joint Chemawa Station project is a clear demonstration that although our two tribes may have differences of opinion and are competitive in some matters, we have the good judgment, vision, and capability of working cooperatively on an economic enterprise such as this that will benefit both our tribes.

## Chemeketa

Recently, Chemeketa Community College involved both the Siletz and Grand Ronde tribes in a ceremony in recognition of the college's use of the Kalapuya name for the past 30 years.

The college honored us with necklace gifts. In return, the tribe presented necklaces as gifts as well as a Siletz blanket to the college president. Both our tribal staffs worked with a group of student representatives to plan an event that was very well attended by students, staff, and the community. It was a very memorable event.

## Chinook Winds Golf Resort

Finally, I would like to report that the purchase of the golf course was finalized in April. New signs bearing the name Chinook Winds Golf Resort already are in place in several locations.

The purchase complements the full resort concept that we have described in previous *Siletz News* articles. You will be notified of the open house that will be held later in the summer.



minute of every hour, every hour of every day, every week of every month, I now live with and for my children.

I've learned if you comply with the requirements ICW puts before you, if you are open, honest, and respectfully speak up for what is right, they will go all the way to support you and your family, like they did for mine. Much thanks, more than you will ever know!

The Flores family – Renee, Kayonda, and Rudy

