

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

During January and February, I attended a number of meetings that are of vital importance to our tribe. I would like, in this issue of *Siletz News*, to report on those meetings.

## Congressional Action on Chemawa Station Project

Council member Bud Lane, tribal attorney Leroy Wilder, and I met with the Oregon delegation in Washington, D.C., to discuss several critical issues.

Among them was an issue involving the Chemawa Station LLC property in Keizer across from Keizer Station, an economic development project of high priority not only to our tribe but to the Grand Ronde Tribe as well. The Chemawa Station LLC is unique in that it involves joint tribal ownership and developmental responsibilities.

Although the project has been described in previous tribal publications, I would like to briefly review what has already been done and what the particular obstacle is that took our Siletz delegation to Washington, D.C.

The land on which the Chemawa Station property sits was federal property. A great deal of progress has been made in developing the site since ownership of the property was turned over to Siletz and Grand Ronde tribes in 2002.

According to the approved comprehensive plan, this is a "high quality light industrial park" with related retail and other services. Issues involving the master plan, including variances, were resolved by city action a couple of years ago.

The construction of roads and installation of water and sewer systems and lines have been completed and currently are in service. The tribes together already have invested more than \$3 million in these developmental activities.

Because of the variety of businesses and multi-tenant potential, the property when completed is expected to generate significant employment opportunities for members of both tribes as well as Chemawa students.

As we reported to tribal members a year ago, however, we encountered a major obstacle in developing and using the property for economic development purposes. The quitclaim deed



*Delores Pigsley*

that conveyed the property to the tribes contains what is called a "reversionary clause."

Specifically, it prohibits use of the property for economic development or natural resources purposes. The term quitclaim deed itself means that it doesn't provide a guarantee or warranty of title.

A monkey wrench was therefore thrown into further implementation of our project, not only putting in jeopardy substantial funds the tribes already have invested, but discouraging any lender from providing needed supplemental financing for the project.

It was determined that the restrictive clause in the quitclaim deed could only be removed by congressional action, not by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

It was for this reason that we went to Washington, D.C., last month to appeal to our congressional representatives to push a bill to remove this obstacle.

Our appeal was successful. Legislation has been introduced and is headed for markup with a very good chance of quick passage.

## San Diego Tribal Leaders Forum

What is the state of Indian affairs in the new Congress? This is the burning question that brought together

tribes from across the country to the Tribal Leaders Forum in San Diego in early January.

Five Siletz Tribal Council members were among hundreds of other tribal representatives who attended this important conference. Although our Siletz delegation was prepared to present our tribal needs and legislative priorities, we were reminded by various presenters that there was very little chance the Indian affairs budget will increase. The Democratic Congress understands tribal needs and priorities, but the reality is not bright for tribes.

High priorities discussed were passage of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, trust reform, and settlement of the Cobell lawsuit. Because of the money being spent on the war in Iraq, tribes' budgets will suffer.

Our tribe's highest priority has to be increased health care for our members. Yet we know that this year's budget will be flat and won't keep up with inflation. The leadership forum focused on the priorities that all tribes need to weigh in on.

## USDA Funding Re-organization

The Siletz Tribe receives U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds that have served the pressing needs of our members who live in a congressionally established multi-county service area.

USDA now intends, however, to change the method of distributing funds, which will seriously and adversely impact the Siletz Tribe's food distribution program.

A meeting was held in San Francisco recently at which USDA reported on its plan for re-organizing and re-allocating its funds. Under this new methodology, it's likely the Siletz will lose funding that has historically been available to meet our members' needs.

## Concluding Personal Remarks

Regarding the recently held tribal election, I want to congratulate my two colleagues and incumbents, Lillie But-

ler and Bud Lane, for being re-elected to council.

In addition, Lillie has been elected secretary and Bud, vice-chairman. I also am pleased but humbled at being re-elected to the council and once again as tribal chairman.

Although I appreciate the confidence of those who voted for me, I am mindful of my obligation to represent all members of the tribe, whether they voted for me or not, and to be chairman of the Siletz Tribe as a whole.

Also, although the recent re-election of the incumbents represents continuity, it doesn't mean we will maintain the status quo. Under my chairmanship, the council will continue to be innovative, forward-looking, responsive to new challenges, and willing to seek new opportunities.

On another matter, I also would like to express how proud and honored I was to be named one of the Ten Great Women of Gaming, having been nominated by Ernie Stevens, president of the National Indian Gaming Association. On Feb. 13, I attended the event held in Las Vegas to honor the 10 named women.

I understand that it wasn't only the nominees' involvement in gaming but other factors as well that determined the final selections.

The fact that I was involved as a member of the council in the fight to be restored in 1977 following the ravages of termination, in the tribe being designated one of the first 20 self-governance tribes in the country, and in the many tribal accomplishments leading up to and including the establishment of Chinook Winds – all these factors may have played a part in the determination.

However, whatever the criteria, the most point I have to make is that throughout the more than 27 years I served on the council and the past 10 years that led to the establishment of our gaming enterprise, nothing could have been accomplished without the dedication, the sacrifices, and the shared leadership of all the Tribal Council members and our staff.

I will accept the honor not for myself, but on behalf of the "Great Men and Women of the Siletz Tribal Council" who served with me during the past 27 years.

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### Job Opening

CTSI is constantly looking for temporary employees to cover vacancy, vacations, maternity leave, and extend sick leave. If you are retired, a homemaker, or a student and are looking for temporary work that can last from two weeks to 12 weeks, please submit a temporary application for the temp pool.

Note: "Open Until Filled" vacancies may close at any time. The tribe's Indian Preference policy will apply. Tribal government will not discriminate in selection because of race, creed, age, sex, color, national origin, physical handicap, marital status, politics, membership or non-membership in an employee organization.

## Most Often Requested Numbers

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians	1-800-922-1399
Salem Area Office	503-390-9494
Salem Finance Office	1-888-870-9051
Portland Area Office	503-238-1512
Eugene Area Office	541-484-4234
Springfield Siletz Tribal Head Start	541-747-0161
Contract Health Services (CHS)	1-800-628-5720
Siletz Community Health Clinic	1-800-648-0449
Siletz Alcohol and Drug	1-800-600-5599
Chinook Winds Casino Resort	1-888-244-6665
Chemawa Health Clinic	1-800-452-7823
Bureau of Indian Affairs	1-800-323-8517
Web Site	<a href="http://www.ctsi.nsn.us">www.ctsi.nsn.us</a>