

Oregon Tribes Sign MOU to Combat Meth Epidemic in Indian Country

All nine Oregon tribes have signed a memorandum of understanding to defeat the methamphetamine epidemic in Indian Country.

The signings took place in March, mainly at the Oregon Tribes quarterly meeting at Chinook Winds Casino Resort.

"Our tribe is especially concerned about the meth problem because 80 percent of our Indian Child Welfare cases involve the use of meth," said Delores Pigsley, chairman of the Siletz Tribe. "We've got to stop this drug so we can increase our chances of keeping our families together."

The MOU includes the following goals and objectives:

- Educate tribal members about the dangers of meth abuse, the long-term effects of the drug, the negative effect on family and community, and how to tell if family members or friends are using the drug.
- Prevent American Indian youth from using meth by establishing and supporting youth programs and activities, raising parental awareness and involvement, engaging the community in prevention activities, and encouraging cultural and community pride.
- Establish and support effective treatment programs for American Indian drug abusers, including culturally appropriate, affordable treatment programs for adult addicts; treatment programs designed to address the special needs of tribal youth; spiritual healing programs; and ongoing support programs **within tribal communities** for recovering addicts, such as transitional housing for individuals leaving residential treatment centers, halfway houses, group and family counseling, and employment services.
- Gather statistical data about the scope of the meth problem on each reservation in Oregon, available law enforcement resources, and the impact on tribal health, community and social service agencies, etc. Make this data available to Oregon tribes for use in seeking funding, resources, and other support.
- Research and share information about possible grant or other funding sources available to Oregon tribes in support of this effort.
- Coordinate efforts among various tribal agencies and groups; work closely with state agencies ... by participating in groups such as the governor's meth task force; and work with federal law enforcement and social service agencies in the spirit of government-to-government cooperation and the federal government's trust obligation toward Indian tribes and peoples in order to combat the meth epidemic.
- Support tribal, state, and federal law enforcement activities by shar-



L to r: Howard Arnett, attorney, Warm Springs; Louie Pitt, legislative affairs officer, Warm Springs; Paiute Chief Joe Moses, Warm Springs; Ed Metcalf, chair, Coquille; Buck Smith, vice chair, Warm Springs; Delores Pigsley, chair, Siletz; and Bud Lane, vice chair, Siletz - all await the signing of the Meth MOU.

ing information about suspected meth dealers and combining resources to the extent possible.

- Follow state and federal legislative efforts to address the meth epidemic, inform Oregon tribes about such efforts, and engage legislators to ensure the specific needs and concerns on Indian tribes are addressed.

The term of the MOU is two years and it can be extended for another two years upon agreement of all Oregon tribes.



Delores Pigsley signs the meth MOU.

Restoration, con't from page 1

programs aimed at improving our people's lives."

Despite generations of federal policies aimed at breaking down the tribe, success is being achieved today.

In 1997, Tribal Council member Lillie Butler said, "Tribal members are working together to achieve a brighter future for generations to come. Just as the visionaries worked toward Restoration, so are the members working toward a future for the Siletz Tribe. We are achieving what the past councilmen worked toward - a better life for the Siletz people."

Today, tribal population is more than 4,300 people, 2,500 of whom make

up the adult population. Nearly 70 percent of the population lives in Oregon, but tribal members also live in 40 states throughout the nation. The majority of membership resides on land that is or at one time was recognized as reservation land in Lincoln County.

The majority of the tribal population is young - between 21 and 40 years old. Despite the overall youth of today's tribal membership, elders are honored in every aspect of tribal life.

Each elder is considered a living treasure and when benefits or accolades are in order, elders always are considered

first and foremost at each opportunity, public or private.

Today's tribal programs are aimed at health, education, and culture. The tribe's mission in wellness efforts is aimed at continuing the development of its health care program with the goal of ensuring that each member of the tribe has access to proper, quality care.

Currently, all members receive medical, dental, and vision plans that include many other benefits for their families.

Tribal education programs are providing lifelong learning opportunities that are both formal and informal. All education efforts are culturally based and grounded in traditional values.

Tribal education programs in the modern-day tribe include members of all ages and take advantage of modern technology while blending ancient inspirations that are not only cultural in nature, but spiritually based as well.

The anniversary of Restoration has brought about a renewed effort to honor tribal history and heritage by retrieving and preserving the cultural and spiritual values and practices that make the tribe a unique part of history for future generations.

The leaders of the modern day tribe have developed a plan for success. They are building programs within the tribe that focus on key age groups and need-based tribal members.

They approach business with local municipalities with a generous, sincere desire to accomplish great things. Current tribal leadership supports the economic development efforts of all tribes.

Tribal leaders in Siletz have always offered their help to emerging tribes like Grand Ronde, Cow Creek, Umatilla, and Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw. They continue to carry the olive branch today.

The true spirit of the Siletz Tribal leadership's desire to help sister tribes is documented. In 1975, Siletz Tribal leader Joe Lane offered the emerging Grand Ronde Tribal Council help by sharing his tribe's experiences in their Restoration efforts. He said, "I can tell you what we did in Siletz. You're welcome to anything we've struggled through."

Lane explained that the leadership of the people would come forward from within the tribe. He explained what was available to the people in the form of federal aid and he explained that his people would be there to assist all tribal people. "You will be able to run your own programs, to decide who's working in your local area."

He shared the vision of his people with the others in the room - "I hope you reorganize. Now is the time for Indians ..."



Tribal leaders in Washington, D.C. - March 1976