

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Education is the focus of my report this month. In addition to briefly commenting on Van Peters' report about Siletz Valley School that appeared in the April issue of *Siletz News*, I would like to review what has happened to the educational level of the Siletz Tribe since we were restored 30 years ago.

SVS Progress and Problems – The First Year

In the April issue of *Siletz News*, Van Peters, administrator of Siletz Valley School, reported that, "The students did great and the school met Annual Yearly Progress as required under the No Child Left Behind Act and also received a 'Strong Rating' from the Oregon State Department of Education."

However, Peters also reported, regretfully, that an organization of Toledo community members called Save Our Schools (SOS) had submitted a proposal to the state Legislature to create a school district, separate from the Lincoln County School District, which, according to Peters, would negatively impact both Siletz Valley School and Eddyville Charter School.

I won't restate the reasons why the proposal would be detrimental to the tribe's educational objectives and programs. Peters already has explained those reasons in his April article.

I do think it's important, however, to remind our readers of the crisis our tribe and the Siletz community faced and the fierce struggle we were engaged in when we learned that Siletz School was doomed to be closed.

For the sake of our children and the future of our tribe, the Tribal Council and the Siletz community mobilized to save Siletz School. It was out of that desperate struggle that our charter school was born.

This is the first year that Siletz Valley, which includes the high school, has been in full swing. It's doing very well, with all test scores higher than the state average.

My hope is that there are no negative impacts if SOS is successful in its desire to establish a separate school district. Without disparaging in any way SOS' basic intent, my hope also is that SOS members will bear in mind what the Siletz Tribe and the Siletz community have had to endure in establishing the charter school. We trust SOS members will not want to jeopardize the goodwill that has been built between our communities.

Tribal Higher Ed, AVT, and Adult Ed Programs

The question is often asked: Is the Siletz Tribe making any progress in our education programs? Are Siletz students really graduating from high school and going on in significant numbers to colleges, universities, and adult vocational institutions?

The answer is definitely – Yes!

To understand what's happened – education-wise – to our tribe, all we



Delores Pigsley

need do is go back to what our tribe was like when we were restored.

The Siletz Tribe's Reservation Comprehensive Plan, published in March 1984, gives us a clue: The report states:

The 1978 SERA Report found 24.8 percent of the 855 surveyed left high school prior to completion and that very few of the tribal members are involved in any form of technical training or enrolled in four-year colleges, negative school-related experiences turn a significant number of people away from seeking further education, and many people reported a poor background in the basics necessary for higher education. The conclusion is that the fundamental lack of funds necessary to complete a prospective student's education combined with little or no career guidance are negative experiences that curtail the student's education.

The Siletz Tribe's 1992 annual report reported 22 students enrolled in higher education and 18 in adult vocational schools.

Significant progress has been made since that annual report. In a period of just 15 years, **instead of just 22**, the tribe currently has **more than 160 students enrolled in colleges and universities** and **instead of just 18 in adult vocational schools, there are now more than 50**.

This remarkable increase can be attributed to the fact that students have greater positive school-related experiences, stronger backgrounds in the basics for higher education, and greater access to financial resources.

The dramatic increase also can be attributed to strengthened family ties and support, and skillful guidance and assistance by our capable staff.

Education has been a high tribal priority ever since we were restored and is reflected today in numerous programs that promote education, i.e.:

- An endowment fund in which we invest a substantial amount of gaming revenues annually to the fund, with only the interest used for higher education purposes
- Issuing to every Siletz household a computer for the informational and educational enrichment of all tribal members
- Providing every higher ed student with a laptop to facilitate his/her education
- The Tribal Youth Employment Program under which we offer meaningful employment and motivation to high school students
- The Summer Employment Program for college students
- Annual awards recognition at which college graduates are recognized and honored
- Stipends for certain levels of achievement from kindergarten through high school
- The Tribal Council also has talked about specifying and offering full scholarships to students in certain high priority trades and degrees. We aren't there yet but soon will be.
- The Mentor/Protégé Program under which current employees of Chinook Winds undergo training to become managers

Oregon Coast Community College

Finally, I would like to mention that I have been invited to be this year's Oregon Coast Community College (OCCC) graduation speaker.

For those of you who may not be familiar with this relatively new, small but unique community college, it's headquartered in Newport, Ore., and its district encompasses all of Lincoln County. In addition to Newport, the college has satellite facilities in Lincoln City and Waldport.

The college has approximately 3,000 students and a faculty of 45. It's unique in that OCCC has the only aquarium science program in the United States.

It presently holds classes in temporary facilities, but voters passed a \$23.5 million bond levy in 2004 that has made possible the planning and construction of permanent college facilities.

We, members of the Siletz Tribe, who have experienced the pangs of growth over the past 30 years, from virtually nothing to what we have today, can empathize with the pangs being experienced today by the officials and faculty of OCCC. We wish them well.

Congratulations to all the students who graduate this year!

Restoration Committee Working on 30th Anniversary Celebration

by Tina Retasket

The Tribal Council has appointed a committee to work on this year's Restoration Celebration. As you may already know, this year marks the 30th anniversary of Restoration. The committee is working on many events leading up to the Restoration event in November.

If you have any photographs of people or events that are significant to pre- or post-restoration, we would like to make a copy of them.

Please bring your photos to the Public Information office in the administration building in Siletz. Diane or Laurel will scan your photo, ask you who the people are in the picture and what the event is, and return the photo to you. They will forward the copies to the committee and you will have the original.

We appreciate everyone's assistance in this event and hope to use as many pictures as possible to show the recent history of the Siletz Tribe.

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	www.ctsi.nsn.us