

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Introductory Comments

The focus of my remarks in this issue of *Siletz News* relates to the management of our gaming enterprise, Chinook Winds. Although I will discuss other important gaming and tribal issues as well, I will first begin with important personnel issues.

From the time Chinook Winds was established, the Tribal Council and the management of our casino have had to deal with personnel issues. After all, it was understood that establishing a major casino would require the hiring of a large number of competent employees. Later in this article, I will describe how the Siletz Tribe has established rules and regulations governing how personnel issues are dealt with.

Just as we have today, the tribe has had, as expected, a variety of personnel issues from the beginning of our gaming enterprise. The issues affect many of us, but must be dealt with in a professional and equitable manner.

Unfortunately, some tribal members are determined to raise highly confidential personnel matters, about which we the Tribal Council cannot comment.

Current Personnel Decisions and Confidentiality

Though I try not to intrude into personnel issues, I must as tribal chairman at least speak about these troubling personnel issues raised publicly by our tribal members that should be dealt with privately by management according to our established policies and procedures.

The basis for personnel actions can't be revealed, or discussed, in any public forum. The confidentiality of any employee must be protected. I must interject at this point that adversaries/members of our tribe have publicly complained about the tribe to various public officials and agencies and to the media.

Readers are reminded that false allegations were made public in the Aug. 9, 2007, *Newport News-Times* that the Tribal Council used \$14 million of the



Delores Pigsley

tribe's gaming revenues to purchase 3,851 acres of timberland for marbled murrelet restoration. The declaration was that tribal funds should have been used for health, education and other essential tribal purposes instead of for the purchase of land for the restoration of birds and their habitat.

The allegations ignored the already published fact that federal funds were made available by the Coast Guard to purchase the property for environmental restoration. No tribal funds were used for this purpose. Failure to get the facts before making false allegations is injurious to the tribe. This is just an example of someone not getting the facts straight or listening.

In the same way, serious unjustified allegations have been circulated publicly about Chinook Winds personnel actions. I would like to remind our readers that from the time Chinook Winds was established, the Siletz Tribal Council devoted considerable time and effort to putting together comprehensive policies and procedures for the hiring, promoting, demoting, suspension and firing of casino personnel, and beyond that, for a carefully devised process through which employees can appeal adverse personnel decisions.

Tribal Gaming Accomplishments

Beyond the personnel issues with which I began this article, I would like to state that the tribe's gaming enterprise has been in operation now for more than 10 years. During that period of time, Chinook Winds' financial, employment and community relations record has far exceeded everyone's positive expectations.

Our tribal members are fully informed about the significant revenues generated by Chinook Winds. The five general categories to which gaming revenue is allocated were established when the tribe's gaming enterprise began 10 years ago. The five categories are Tribal Government Operations, General Welfare, Economic Development (including Investments), Charitable Donations and Per Capita Distribution.

These categories are listed together with their subcategories, percentages and appropriated amounts and published annually in *Nesika Illahee*, the tribe's confidential newsletter, for all tribal members to examine. These reports are mailed to every adult member of the tribe.

The Siletz Tribe not only has been able to allocate gaming funds to enhance federally allocated funds for health, education, housing, the elderly, culture, etc., funds also have been allocated every year for education endowments, investments and economic development.

Within 10 years, the Siletz Tribe has been able to purchase a first-class hotel adjacent to the casino and to enhance casino revenues. The tribe's long-range plan was to purchase and the professional development of the golf course that sits close to the casino. (It must be noted here that rumors circulate that the tribe paid \$45 million for the golf course; in actuality, it was \$4.5 million.) The tribe's acquisition of an ocean-side lot next to the casino will be developed to contribute substantially to the casino.

The property on which the casino sits is not a foreign piece of land with no relationship to the Siletz Tribe. It was, at one time, an allotment of a Siletz Tribal member that the Siletz Tribe has re-acquired as part of its reservation.

Planning for 2008

In addition to dealing with personnel and other issues that are always on our agenda, the Siletz Tribe must deal with various challenging issues raised by the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Chinook Winds management and staff have developed a comprehensive plan for 2008. The previous year was analyzed in terms of increased costs and related problems. On the agenda for 2008 are such items as:

- A business plan with a strategy of highly focused marketing
- Sales and operational business objectives of increasing market shares and recruiting new gaming guests, etc.

- A top priority will be the hiring of a player development manager
- Increased creativity in the area of casino marketing
- Establishing the Winner's Circle as a focal point
- Sales focusing on conventions
- Entertainment continues to be a key marketing component
- Service, product and presentation upgrades of the buffet, deli and banquets
- Replacement of old slots
- Replacement of the escalators
- Superior guest services

My article this month has dealt with a variety of what might seem like unrelated topics. I started with a discussion about Chinook Winds' personnel issues and the confidential nature of personnel decisions, the details of which can't be discussed publicly.

I also noted that the Siletz Tribe devoted a considerable amount of time to developing personnel policies and procedures, including the opportunity for employees to take advantage of the hearings process when they are faced with adverse management decisions.

Personnel issues are always serious, personal and complex, but they must be considered in the context of the tribe's overall record of the accomplishments of our gaming enterprise.

Past and Future Accomplishments – Cooperative Spirit and Support

I commented on the success of Chinook Winds during 10 years of operation and provided an outline of what management and staff foresee as their vision and plan for 2008.

Just imagine what the Siletz Tribe was like 30 years ago. Our tribal members generally are proud and appreciative of the tribe's accomplishments during the 30 years since we were Restored and the 10 years since we began operating our gaming enterprise.

I appreciate the fact that what we have accomplished and will continue to accomplish is because of the cooperative spirit and support of our general membership.

Tribal Children Need You

Do you value Siletz Native culture and want to help preserve it? If so, please consider fostering for the tribe. The Siletz Tribe needs loving, stable, nurturing homes in all areas.

If you are interested, please contact Shawna Nagunst, Foster Care Certifier, 800-922-1399, ext. 1275, or 541-444-8275; or visit www.ctsi.nsn.us/icw.html



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Siletz News

P.O. Box 549

Siletz, OR 97380-0549

541-444-8291 or

1-800-922-1399, ext. 1291

Fax: 541-444-2307

E-mail: pias@ctsi.nsn.us

Deadline for the March issue is Feb. 11. Submission of articles and photos is encouraged. Please read the Passages Policy on page 20 when submitting items for Passages.



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