

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Since bidding farewell to 2007, we not only welcomed 2008, we conducted another Tribal election and installed a new Tribal Council. Like everyone else, we also have been witness to spirited Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns. In March, I attended meetings of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in Washington, D.C., on critical national Indian issues.

NCAI Executive Council Winter Session

In this issue of *Siletz News*, I will briefly comment on these important issues, when members of the NCAI Executive Council were joined by certain members of the U.S. Congress to help strategize on Indian legislative issues.

NCAI President Joe Garcia called on Native communities "to keep focus on our children, our youth and ... put forward children's agenda, share the future for our kids, ensure their health, safety, education and path to their future careers."

Garcia stated that members of Congress will work with Indian country in educating lawmakers on Indian issues and to continue fighting to improve the lives of Native people.

"Indian country has really moved into a more productive means of dialogue recently, Tribal leaders have become more engaged, more solution-oriented and much more forward thinking," he said. "This will result in positive outcomes for Tribes. We are moving more and more in the right direction."

Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) said he will propose \$1 billion to support health care for Indians, declaring that the United States has "a trust and treaty responsibility for health care for our first Americans. This isn't just a luxury but a promise this country made to Indian Tribes."

Regarding the need "to reform law enforcement in Indian country," Sen. Dorgan was joined by other senators to make "Indian communities ... a safer place for families. Law enforcement reform is on the Senate agenda for the remainder of the congressional session."



Delores Pigsley

Congressman Norman Dicks (D-Wash.), a strong supporter of Tribal self-governance who chairs the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, expressed pride in "the cooperative relationships forged between Tribes and local governments in Washington State."

He encouraged that kind of cooperation on the federal level. The Tribes have a compelling case against reductions in education, health care and law enforcement.

Reaffirming his long-standing pledge in support of Tribal rights, Congressman Dale Kildee (D-Mich.) said, "There's much to be done in Indian country. All of you will be voting for a new president and we must continue to work together to make sure the new president understands you are sovereign Tribes and not a social club. Someone at the top should recognize sovereignty."

In addition to legislative issues, NCAI took time to pay tribute to certain individuals for their contributions to Indian causes. Native World War II hero Woodrow Wilson Keeble, who was recently and belatedly awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Bush for his bravery and patriotism during the war, was honored.

NCAI also recognized certain individuals for their "outstanding service to Indian people and ongoing support of initiatives that promote sovereignty and government-to-government relationships honoring those who have gone the extra mile to support efforts of the NCAI and Tribes across the country ..."

The recipients included Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) and Alan Parker, who have played a significant role in Indian country.

Proposed Warm Springs Tribal Casino in Cascade Locks

Bud Lane and I attended the public hearing on the Warm Springs Tribe's effort to build a casino at Cascade Locks. There were five public hearings on the Environmental Impact Statement. Our testimony was in support of the Warm Springs Tribe as we have publicly stated many times in the past few years. They are facing many of the same issues we faced when we opted to build a casino in Lincoln City.

I stated that the Siletz Tribe strongly supports the right of every tribe to improve the lives of its members through any legal economic development means available. We believe the right of Warm Springs to establish a casino at the Cascade Locks site is a right that should not be denied.

Many Oregon Tribes have gone through a difficult fee-to-trust process in order to establish our casinos. The Warm Springs Tribe completed every step of that complex process. I said that were it not for a new administration, the process would have ended successfully for Warm Springs long ago, just as it did for Siletz.

Unfortunately and unfairly, the Bureau of Indian Affairs changed its rules after Warm Springs had its state/tribal gaming compact negotiated and approved.

I stated that I have personally walked the site of the proposed casino next to a mill on industrial-zoned land. The area has the potential of being beautifully improved by the Warm Springs Tribe. Those who oppose this proposed site are unreasonable.

I stated that the Warm Springs Tribe has an established reputation of commitment to a stable, safe living environment and facilities that are ecologically and beautifully constructed.

The Tribe's Kah-Nee-Ta Resort, established in 1964, is an outstanding and beautiful resort facility that's been recognized for its compatibility with nature, and the Tribe's museum at Warm Springs, constructed in 2003, has been recognized nationally for its cultural, environmental and architectural excellence. We can predict, I said, that the Warm Springs casino will be another award-winning facility.

I also stated that Warm Springs members already have generously planned to commit casino revenues not only to the City of Cascade Locks and the port, but to Oregon education and the environment while, at the same time, ensuring that the beauty of the Gorge will be maintained. The Tribe deserves much credit for its forward thinking.

I concluded my testimony by saying that above all, we need to remember who the first people were on this land, give them the dignity and respect they deserve, and support locating the casino at Cascade Locks as the best available site for the Warm Springs Tribe, for Cascade Locks and for the State of Oregon.

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

Nuu-wee-ya'

(our words)

Introduction to the Athabaskan Language Open to tribal members of all ages

Siletz

Siletz Tribal Community Center
April 8 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
May 6 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Salem

Salem Area Office
April 15 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
May 13 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Portland

Portland Area Office
April 14 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
May 12 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Eugene

Eugene Area Office
April 7 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
May 5 – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Athabaskan Language class started for beginners in January 2008. These classes began with basic instruction and will progress over the next year. It also will be a refresher course for those more-advanced students. Come and join other members of your community and tribe in learning to speak one of our ancient languages.

For more information, contact Bud Lane at the Siletz Culture Department at 541-444-8320 or 1-800-922-1399, ext. 1320; or e-mail budl@ctsi.nsn.us.