

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## Siletz Tribal Election

The General Election for our Tribe will be held Feb. 7. On the following Sunday, three members elected to the Tribal Council will be sworn in after taking the oath of office.

## Obama Inauguration; Election of Merkley and Schrader

*Siletz News* already was in production when the teeming millions converged on Washington, D.C., and the mall during Barack Obama's inauguration as our 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States on Jan. 20.

Those of us who couldn't attend watched the inauguration and other events on television. In a sense, we may have had an advantage over those who were actually on the Washington mall. We were able to actually see what was going on as the television crews spanned the mall and focused on events.

And although we appreciated the efforts of Sen. Gordon Smith on behalf of Oregon Tribes, we now will be well-represented by our new legislators, Sen. Jeff Merkley and Congressman Kurt Schrader. Merkley served 30 years ago as an intern for Sen. Mark Hatfield and has been assigned the Senate seat formerly occupied by Sen. Hatfield.

He has been named to the Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) and the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. HELP deals with legislation on health, education, welfare and pensions, and shares both health and pension functions with the Finance Committee. He also has been named to the Banking, Housing and Urban Development Committee and to the Budget Committee.

Meanwhile, Schrader, who replaced Congresswoman Darlene Hooley (who retired), defeated Mike Erikson in Oregon's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Schrader, an Oregon veterinarian and farmer, has been appropriately assigned to the Farming and Forestry and Small Business committees.

Additional committee assignments will be made and announced when the committees meet and discuss their individual issues, priorities and agendas.

We look forward to both Merkley and Schrader for support on important issues that



Delores Pigsley

affect our Tribes. And as stated in our recent congratulatory letters to them, we anticipate getting together with each of them when the National Congress of American Indians convenes in Washington, D.C., in March.

## Economic Crisis, Congressional Action and Tribal Needs

Regarding the economic crisis, the first billions of bailout money were released by the administration. The general consensus, however, is that Paul Paulson, former Secretary of the Treasury, and the Bush administration failed to craft and execute the bailout for Wall Street and the global financial system in a way that would protect the American taxpayers' billions.

The first billions of bailout money were distributed with virtually no accountability required of how they were spent. A highly critical report by an oversight board declared that "Treasury had failed to track the money."

President Obama has been left with an immediate and desperate need of additional bailout funds. The bill as finally adopted by the Senate did, indeed, include requirements of greater accountability and reports on how the money will be used.

On Jan. 15, the bill authorizing the second bailout funds of \$350 billion was released by the Senate with certain conditions imposed.

## Economic Stimulus Package and Tribal Needs

As for the \$800 billion proposed stimulus package, its immediate passage is in doubt. Tax breaks are expected to account for about \$300 billion of the overall cost of about \$750-\$800 billion. Other major components include infrastructure projects and assistance to states for increasing unemployment and health care costs.

According to Phillips, Chairman Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Vice Chair Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in a letter urged Obama to include \$3.58 billion for Tribes specifically to support increased health care funding. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) was one of 15 senators who signed that letter.

The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held a hearing to address job creation and economic stimulus in Indian country. This was an important opportunity for Tribes to be heard.

The National Congress of American Indians and the Intertribal Transportation Association have been actively involved in pressing for the inclusion of Tribes in the economic recovery package. The Appropriations Committee was scheduled to meet Jan. 21 to mark up the massive bill, formerly titled the Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009.

According to Chairman Dorgan, "The Senate Appropriations Subcommittees are now busy shaping their stimulus provisions and no sector of the U.S. needs basic infrastructure more than Indian country."

## Personnel Matters, Nominations

Salazar confirmation hearing: On Jan. 15, a confirmation hearing was held for Secretary of the Interior nominee Sen. Ken Salazar (D-CO). Salazar, who was introduced by Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO), has been a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

In his opening testimony, Salazar summarized his written statement by including the cleanup of the illegal issues of the Interior Department; pursuing energy independence; protecting lands of natural significance; resolving complex and long-standing water challenges, improving Indian affairs and

developing programs to engage America's young people in the environment.

Salazar said that, "Native Americans have been left behind and are most vulnerable." He said he "will pursue a new agenda, fostering economic development within reservations and improved schools and education ... and end criminality and bring more law enforcement to Indian country."

David Getches, dean of the University of Colorado law school and founding executive of the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), was rumored to be considered for the interior solicitor's position.

## Chinook Winds, Inclement Weather and Possible Use of Alcohol

Regarding the situation at home, Chinook Winds was hit by recent highway closures because of winter storms. Severe inclement weather affected all Oregon casinos and businesses generally.

Major rain, snow and wind storms caused disastrous landslides, damaged homes and closed highways. In spite of these catastrophes, Chinook Winds had a very good New Year's Eve and our casino has not had to lay people off as other casinos have had to do this past year.

Area meetings were held a few months ago to discuss and get advice on the sale of alcohol on the gaming floor of the casino in order to supplement revenues. An advisory vote by the membership will be held in March to determine whether the Chinook Winds Casino will allow the sale and consumption of alcohol on the gaming floor.

Currently, three casinos in Oregon serve alcohol on the gaming floor - Seven Feathers in Canyonville, Three Rivers in Florence and The Mill in Coos Bay. All three say that since offering alcohol, there have been no adverse consequences.

Most all casinos in Washington, California, Arizona, Montana, South Dakota and many others sell alcohol on the gaming floor. Compacts with the state of Oregon allow Tribes to serve alcohol for sale - drinks cannot be given away.

There would be a definite increase in revenue. At present, alcohol sales in the Rogue River Room are very good. The Tribe actually has four venues where alcohol is currently sold - the hotel lounge, the Rogue River Room, the Siletz Bay Buffet and Aces Bar & Grill at the golf course. All involved staff would be required to have OLCC training.

### Siletz News Letters Policy

*Siletz News*, a publication of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, is published once a month. Our editorial policy encourages input from readers about stories printed in *Siletz News* and other tribal issues.

All letters must include the author's signature, address, and phone number in order to be considered for publication. *Siletz News* reserves the right to edit any letter for clarity and length, and to refuse publication of any letter or any part of a letter that may contain profane language, libelous statements, personal attacks, or unsubstantiated statements.

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Please type or write legibly. Letters longer than 450 words may be edited for length as approved by Tribal Council Resolution #96-142.

Please note: The general manager of the Siletz Tribe is the editor-in-chief of *Siletz News*.

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Deadline for the March issue is Feb. 10. Submission of articles and photos is encouraged. Please see the Passages Policy on page 20 when submitting items for Passages.



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