

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Tribal Meetings and Contacts in D.C.

During the week of March 2, Council Member Bud Lane, General Manager Brenda Bremner, Tribal Attorney Craig Dorsay and I attended the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C. Chris Lundberg, our STBC attorney, also was in town and joined us for some of the visits. We also attended other official meetings, including contacts with our own legislators.

As most of you know by now, the administration's stimulus package has been a hot and controversial topic of congressional and national concern.

The Obama administration has been relying on the success of the fiscal stimulus package of \$787 billion as well as counting on the administration's efforts to revive many of the nation's floundering banks. Also of high priority for Obama, in addition to rescuing the banking system, is creating millions of jobs, revitalizing the housing market, restructuring the auto industry and overhauling financial regulations.

But as the *Washington Post* said in its March 9-15 Weekly Edition editorial, "We live at a time of extraordinary economic distress and extraordinary economic uncertainty. Most of the surprises lately have been on the down side."

So while the stimulus package has been a major topic of concern, the adoption of a new continuing resolution was critical. The 2009 Omnibus Bill was passed March 10 and will fund the government through Sept. 30, 2009.

In kicking off the NCAI meeting, the director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was present to explain the process of how the appropriated funds will flow to Tribes.

As for the '09 Omnibus appropriations bill of \$410 billion, the Democratic leadership had to prevent amendments that would have undermined the bill, the sole purpose of which was obviously to block passage of the bill.

The effort included an amendment by the senator of South Dakota who attempted to provide an additional \$540 million for Indian Health Services and



Delores Pigsley

Indian water projects. According to Mark Phillips, Tribal lobbyist, although everyone knew the money was needed, the actual intent of the amendment was to significantly change the bill already agreed on in its final form. It would have forced the bill into conference, he said, "where it could be further changed and politicized." To prevent that, Senate Democrats had to reject the amendment with all other amendments proposed mainly by the Republicans.

There were many notable guest speakers at this year's NCAI that included not only congressmen but also Cabinet members, including secretaries of the Interior, Housing and Agriculture, appointed by the president.

While in Washington, we visited our congressional delegation, including Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden. We provided information and asked to have our Tribal initiatives considered in this Congress.

One initiative is to allow the Tribe to enter into 99-year leases with businesses and the second is to have decisions on requests to take land into trust made in the regional office vs. the central office in D.C. Both initiatives require congressional legislation.

Kraxberger Retirement

It was truly a pleasure to attend the retirement reception for one of our own Tribal members, Command Sergeant

Major Denise Kraxberger of the Oregon National Guard. Her commanding officers, peers and Gov. Ted Kulongoski cited her achievements during her 35 years of service in the Guard.

Along with her family, friends and hundreds of others, Robert Kentta and I attended and bestowed upon her, on behalf of the Siletz Tribe, a gift of a Treaty blanket. It was indeed a proud and memorable occasion for Robert and I.

We should all be proud of Denise, who serves the state, country and our Tribe in her capacity as a National Guardsman.

Terrill Award

The Siletz Tribal Council and the Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund were recently invited to attend an honoring dinner hosted by the North Lincoln Hospital Foundation. We were surprised to learn that the Tribe was being presented with the Terrill Award, which recognizes organizations for their contributions to the hospital and foundation over the past several years.

Through the Tribe's charitable donations program, the Siletz Tribe has contributed more than \$99,000 to this worthy organization that helps fund Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City, one of five hospitals of Samaritan Health Services, which is based in Corvallis.

I accepted the award on behalf of the Tribe and the committee with much gratitude.

Kikumoto's Resignation

As most of you know, Jim Kikumoto resigned as general manager of Chinook Winds effective Feb. 28 (see story on page 21). Jim did not announce any immediate plans for the future, but said he would stay in the community for a period of time, adding, "The time is right to move on to pursue my other interests, including spending more time with my family."

During the eight years under Jim's management, the casino was very successful. We were grateful for the increase in the casino's revenues that enabled the Tribe to

allocate significant funds annually to vital Tribal programs and services.

While general manager, Jim played a significant role in the acquisition of a first class ocean-front hotel and golf course, transforming Chinook Winds into the Oregon coast's premier luxury resort. We are also grateful for the fact that Jim was recognized for his active participation in, and positive contributions to, the non-Tribal city and county communities.

Although we will miss Jim's leadership, we are fortunate to have Sar Richards as interim general manager of Chinook Winds. As stated in my news release of March 2, "I expect a smooth transition ... we will continue to ensure that leadership is committed to creating a positive environment for team members and guests."

Sar is a Tribal member who will serve while the position is advertised and filled. Sar is knowledgeable of federal, state and Tribal gaming regulations, having served as a gaming commissioner for the Siletz Tribe for three years before being hired by Jim for his Chinook Winds management staff.

I have every confidence Sar will continue to pursue our performance objectives and make every effort to execute our key initiatives effectively.

Kortlever Retirement

Our agency superintendent, Ron Kortlever, announced his retirement in March. Ron served admirably in this important position.

He was honored at a retirement luncheon by BIA Regional Director Stan Speaks, his peers, employees and other agencies, along with our Tribe. We wish Ron well in his retirement. Stan said the position will be advertised and the Tribes will have input on filling the vacancy.

A BIA superintendents meeting was held the following day at Chinook Winds. I welcomed our guests and was able to sit in on part of the meeting. The stimulus funds also were discussed at this meeting as was the process by which they would become available to Tribes.

Expulsion Hearing

We as a Tribe cannot and should not allow our elected officials to speak out in a manner that embarrasses the Tribe. The making public of a racist statement that offends our youth, elders, employees, customers and our Tribe has triggered an expulsion hearing against Lisa Brown.

The statement along with other gaming-related charges of violations evolved in addressing the matters in an expulsion hearing held March 19 in Siletz.

The motion for the hearing was passed Feb. 21, 2009, at a Regular Tribal Council meeting.

The hearing that started on March 19 was continued on March 28. Based on the evidence presented, the Tribal Council voted to expel Lisa Brown from the council. The information presented at the hearing is part of the record and is open to the public.

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.

Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *Siletz News*, Tribal employees, or Tribal Council.

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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