



Siletz Youth Conference
Nov. 8-9, 2014
B'nai B'rith Camp
Lincoln City, Oregon

Photos by Diane Rodriguez

Above: Drummers Ron Butler Jr., Isaac Butler and Izaiah Fisher invite the group back from a break.

Above: Glenn LaMotte from the Native American Youth and Family Center makes a presentation.

Below: Youth meet in small groups to discuss various topics.

Below (both photos): Youth enjoy a round of Sweep the Tipi.



Housing, continued from page 1

non-Indian rates in the same areas. The poverty rate in Indian Country is 25.3 percent – nearly three times the national average. In many communities unemployment is as high as 50 to 70 percent.

The Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) remains the dominant framework for the delivery of housing assistance in Indian Country to its most vulnerable citizens.

NAHASDA reauthorization has been the top legislative priority for the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC), the only national organization representing the housing interests of American Indians, Alaska Natives and native Hawaiians with a membership of 466 Tribes and housing entities.

Throughout 2012 and early 2013, NAIHC conducted a national outreach effort to solicit input from its membership and developed a consensus-based position including many provisions and amendments to improve NAHASDA.

Highlights in the pending reauthorization include strengthening Tribal self-determination, expediting approvals by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, streamlining environmental requirements and authorizing Tribes to blend funds for housing construction and sanitation facilities.

Additionally, reauthorization legislation includes a provision to create new opportunities for Indian Housing providers to serve Native American veterans modeled on the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program.

Throughout this process, NAIHC worked with lawmakers in hopes of quick action on reauthorization. Bills were introduced in both the House (HR 4277 and HR 4329) and Senate (S 1352) to reauthorize NAHASDA and included many reforms put forth during NAIHC's outreach.

When the House returns for its lame duck session in November, it will consider, among other bills, HR 4329, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2014, legislation introduced by Rep. Steve Pearce, R-N.M., and favorably reported by the House Financial Services Committee in July 2014.

NAIHC endorses House passage of HR 4329 and urges Tribal leaders and housing authorities to contact their congressional delegation to discuss the importance of Indian housing programs in your community.

So far in the 113th Congress, 12 Tribal bills have been enacted into law, with no bill of general applicability making it to the president's desk. By enacting NAHASDA reauthorization, we can take a big step forward in promoting Indian self-determination and reforming the main federal statute governing how low-income housing assistance to Indian families and communities is administered.

Sami Jo Difuntorum (Kwekaeke Shasta) serves as chairwoman of the National American Indian Housing Council and executive director of the Siletz Tribal Housing Department.