

Council '77

Larry Calica:

The Soft Spoken Man From Simnasho



COUNCILMAN LARRY CALICA

He may not speak with the booming voice of the stereotype politician, but the Tribal Council's youngest member, 30 year old Larry Calica, brings to the Council some sound ideas, a sensitivity for community values, and a willingness to consider all aspects of an issue.

As he said he would, it is of note that Calica quit his full-time job as Director of Child and Family Services to devote his efforts entirely to Council business. He had held that position for the past four years, three of which he also served on the Health and Welfare Committee.

"It was a practical decision," says Calica. "My former position required a lot of time and there was no way I could do justice to that job while trying to do Council work at the same time. Also, I felt that the people made it quite clear that they did not want people working and holding a Council seat simultaneously." In line with that decision, he has also not accepted any paid committee appointments.

On a day to day basis Calica already takes Council business pretty much in stride, though he does say he feels overwhelmed by the amount of information to be consumed. "I think that much of this information should be condensed for the Council," he asserts.

"Council is going to have to better organize itself and its way of doing work," maintains Calica. "The workload increase on the last Council was so great they were falling behind in their agenda, and the load on this Council will be even greater. You'll find issues that need a lot of time, thought and exploration that aren't being given that."

Calica envisions that the workload is going to increase to the point where, within one and a half or two years, Council is going to have to extend its work week from two to four or five days as one way of dealing with this problem.

"And if that doesn't happen," predicts Calica, "you'll find that Council will have to delegate more responsibility and authority out to manage-

ment. Even at the present time the amount of authority and responsibility now being delegated out to management is being questioned by the people."

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In terms of significant changes within the next three years, Calica thinks the Tribes should "take a good, long look at the kind of organization we are, which direction we're headed, and do some re-evaluation."

He feels there will be a major change in organizational direction because "too much is happening too fast for people to effectively participate in their own government."

And the youthful Councilman sees participation in tribal government by all age groups as fundamental and important. He says the needs of senior citizens throughout the reservation are being expressed for them, not by them.

"Before, senior citizens constituted a large segment of the population — they spoke while others listened. Now that's changed," said Calica. "Older people represent just a small portion."

"Yet age has always been of value to this particular set of tribes, and this interest is shown in a continuation of that value. The thing that seems to run into conflict with this value is that programs today are mostly youth-oriented," observes Calica. "The philosophy of protecting resources for future generations has existed for years."

Though one might assume that Calica's major interest lies with health and family

(This is the second in a series of articles introducing the five newly elected Tribal Council members who took office May 2, 1977. Nearly half of the previous council was replaced by these individuals, some of whom are seasoned public officials and others who are new to government.)

During the next four years, events on the Warm Springs Reservation will be shaped in part by these people. True to the climate of improved communication the new council is attempting to create, here is one opportunity for the public to become acquainted with the views of their new representatives.)

services because of his former job, his concerns range over a broad spectrum. "Community problems are interrelated and require a total concern," he says. "My interest has to be total because there are so many changes that it's important to have a good knowledge of the overall picture. Things have to happen totally."

As a Simnasho representative, he has some definite ideas about the future of that district. Calica sees Simnasho development as both desirable and realistic.

"It's desirable because there are a lot of people who have their roots in the Simnasho-Schoolie area who would like to return there," he says. "In addition, there are a lot of people not satisfied with present housing resources, and Simnasho-Schoolie may be one of the few low density housing areas that may be available."

He feels strongly that the Simnasho school should remain in operation there. "The Simnasho school issue is tied in with people wanting to move back there," says Calica. The question of the school hinges upon the number of children who would be attending, and that depends directly upon the number of families living there.

"It's all interrelated," he reasons. The number of families living there relates directly to the number of houses, and upon an improved water system. Calica would like to see water system and housing improvements in that district. "but what I could do about it I couldn't say yet. A lot will depend upon how effectively I work with other Council members."

Calica sees Simnasho development as both desirable and realistic.

The new councilman recognizes that there will be some major issues coming up which Council will have to grapple with. "These will make a difference and could get a little scary," he admits.

One of these issues is reapportionment — one man, one vote. Calica's position is that things should be changed because change will be mandated by court if the present system is not changed. "It'd be hard for someone to say the existing system is fair," he claims. "There's that numerical inequity — just the numbers."

The proposed shopping center will be another of the many things the Council will be taking into consideration. Calica says he's not flatly for or against it, that "it would be presumptuous without looking at all the aspects before drawing conclusions."

Calica looks at a development such as a shopping center in terms of how it will fit into the framework of community values, not just how much money it will generate.

He explains that an architect can design the place, and economists or market experts can make it a profit-making place, "but after it's all set up I don't know for sure if the people would be able to call that theirs. Would they have a sense of belonging there and that it belongs to them?"

"You could probably take a look at Macy's parking lot which is just asphalt, but the space there provides a place for people to interact, for them to meet people. It's a place — they feel comfortable with that."

He says that architects always try to create "places" when they design buildings and often it doesn't work. Calica's sensitivity to community values motivates him to try to understand how such a project will affect the people socially and what kind of impact it will have upon the quality of their daily lives.

At present, Calica has no sense of economic development project priorities that he could feel confident in until more facts are presented. "In fact,"

he smiles, "what I gather now from the way priorities are arranged is that they are based on a lot of opinion and some facts."

He asks for facts to demonstrate how projects would benefit the community in terms of people — both present and future. He asks, "How do these projects enhance desired values of the community?"

For example, on something such as the proposed nursing home, for argument's sake one could say there would be a question as to the number of people who would be residents benefiting from the facility.

"The cost would be high on a per person ratio, but if people here value their older people being here in the community, they would be willing to pay that price because they would value that."

Community values have to be taken into consideration.

So Calica maintains that in order to gain a sense of priority on those kinds of projects, community values would have to be taken into consideration.

As a young person, the process of growing and developing values is a continuous one for Calica. Starting with personal growth and awareness, it has worked its way into ever widening circles — from self, to family, to community.

He expects to see himself growing into his present Council responsibilities through personal effort, listening to people, and being able to feel comfortable about mistakes he may make. "There is the constant reminder," says Calica, "that ultimately wisdom is not only facts and information, but experience with which one can act upon with confidence."