

Conference focuses on education

Meeting at Kah-Nee-Ta seeks range of solutions

Over 250 people attended the recent 28th Annual Oregon Indian Education Conference at the Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino to discuss solutions for Indian Education on a local, state, and national level.

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs hosted the event.

The two-day event covered issues ranging from kindergarten readiness to the Jefferson County Truancy board to higher education preparation for Native American students.

Warm Springs students kicked off the conference with a pow wow on Wednesday night.

The highlight was keynote speaker Susan Castillo, state superintendent of public instruc-

tion.

She spoke over breakfast on Thursday morning, setting the tone for the next two days.

Castillo spoke of achievements Native American students have made in the past years.

"American Indian students have made outstanding progress in recent years, and you, their teachers, administrators, parents and community advocates have demonstrated that the achievement gap can be closed," she said.

Castillo said she hoped that Oregon's weak economy would not be used as an excuse to slow the progress that is being made.

Castillo was presented with a Pendleton blanket from the tribes.

Local teacher, Arlene Graham, was given the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award.

Recognition was given to many other outstanding Oregon Native Americans in the form of an award.

The additional award categories and recipients were as follows:

Outstanding Indian Elder of

the Year, Bill White Eagle Wilson; Outstanding Indian Educator of the Year, Ann Goddard; Outstanding Indian Parent of the Year, Susan Whetstone; Outstanding Administrator of the Year, Doug Smith; and Outstanding Student of the Year, Appollonia Lane.

The Oregon Indian Education Association (OIEA) also granted 13 \$200 scholarships to Oregon Indian students. Four of the recipients are Warm Springs tribal members.

The following students from Warm Springs were awarded a \$200 scholarship in 2003: Jessi Fuentes, Scott Kalama, Arthur Mitchell, and Shmawmpt Sahme. OIEA officers re-elected were Lynn Anderson, secretary; Urbana Ross, treasurer; and Ellen Hansen, president. OIEA is a Oregon Department of Education program designed to address the needs of Native American students throughout the state of Oregon.



Above: Susan Castillo, state superintendent of public instruction. Below: Charlotte Herkshan thanks Warm Springs chiefs for their interest in the community's education. Photos by David Jackson.



Non-profit promotes wind power

Native organization tours colleges near tribal lands to promote awareness of sustainable energy resources, donates proceeds to the cause

By Shannon Keaveny
Spilyay Tymoo

Recently two-time Green party vice-presidential candidate and Anishinaabe Native American, Winona LaDuke, spoke at Central Oregon Community College in Bend on a promotional tour with the non-profit organization Honor the Earth. LaDuke is director of the non-profit organization.

Honor the Earth raises funds for Native environmental groups.

The April tour was to support the concept of wind power on Native lands as an alternative form of energy. The tour targeted colleges close to Native lands. All proceeds from the tour were donated to the cause.

Honor the Earth claims Native Nations hold only 4 percent of the land in the U.S. but produce almost 20 percent of all U.S. energy resources.

The organization strives to phase out harmful nuclear power and dirty fossil fuels such as coal, and dams in exchange for renewable energy technologies such as wind and solar power. Honor the Earth claims a switch to wind and solar power would aid tribes in sustaining cultural resources such as fish by keeping rivers healthy.

LaDuke sited the Yakama Nation as an example of a territory that has been devastated by using contaminating energy resources.

The Yakima reservation, immediately downstream from the Hanford Nuclear Facility, is poisoned with radioactive runoff, according to the group.

LaDuke says wind power would also help jump-start a multi-tribal sustainable economic development initiative. Wind projects would be Native projects, providing Native income, jobs and educational opportunities.

Wind turbines have been set up on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota with the help of proceeds from Honor the Earth. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe Wind Turbine Project is the first large-scale Native American wind turbine in the country.

Honor the Earth is also working on several projects with the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. KILL Radio, the largest Native radio station in the country, is erecting a small wind turbine near the station.

Warm Springs is already exploring the possibility of wind generation potential. Warm Springs Power Enterprises recently set up test towers at various locations on the reservation. Power Enterprises is contracting with a Seattle company to determine whether power-generating windmills would be profitable on the reservation. They were funded by a \$460,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

The acoustic duo, The Indigo Girls, who are partners with Honor the Earth and a part of the tour, gave a concert after LaDuke spoke.

Also, the natural resources specialist for the Klamath Tribes spoke about the current water crisis between the farmers and local Klamath tribes.

For information about Honor the Earth, visit honorearth.org or call 1-800-EARTH-07.

LCpl. Tashna Hicks, on duty in Iraq

The first woman marine from Warm Springs uses her military-acquired electrician skills to help dismantle landmines in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime

By Shannon Keaveny
Spilyay Tymoo



Lance Corporal Tashna Hicks

Tashna Hicks, of Warm Springs, had a hard time not sharing the sweet candies her parents sent her with the begging children as her convoy drove through a war torn Iraqi town.

Her commander advised them not to because the children would flock to their tank, possibly causing an accident.

Help would come soon. The U.S. Marines had arrived and Saddam's regime was gone.

That was after the Marines captured the Baghdad International Airport, a pivotal point in the war. A part of the effort, Hicks' unit landed a C130 plane at the airport.

Before that, Hicks was based

in Kuwait at the only airbase that offers showers and full electricity.

Not surprising since Hicks is a Marine-trained electrician. Her "shop" in Kuwait consisted of electricians and people who are in charge of purifying water. She runs with the MWSS 373, a military engineering company that finds land mines. A couple weeks ago they moved into Iraq.

Now in Iraq, Hicks directs military personnel via radio on how to dismantle landmines. Women are still not allowed to be in combat zones, but women in the marines are trained to be riflemen.

She's also a participant in the

Nuclear Biological Chemical Team, the team responsible to searching out chemical weapons in Iraq.

Lance Corporal Hicks, 20, joined the marines two years ago. A Madras High graduate, she was an ROTC sergeant for 4 years.

An outstanding student, Hicks was nominated Whose Who Among High School Students by one of her teachers. She was an active participant in the program SMART.

Two weeks after graduation, Hicks went to Portland only to call her dad with the news.

"Tashna called and said, 'Dad, guess what I signed up for four years, eight years total with the reserves,'" shared her father, LeRoy Hicks II.

She would become both the first woman marine from Warm Springs and a third generation marine, following the path taken by her father and grandfather.

Joining the marines would not only educate her, but also be a place for her to learn skills and discipline.

Hicks was in boot camp at Parris Island in South Carolina when tragedy hit American soil

on Sept. 11, 2001. Soon after, President Bush campaigned for the War on Terrorism.

After training, she was stationed at the Miramar Marine Base in San Diego until January of this year when she was deployed to Kuwait.

"She was excited to go, because that's what she was trained to do," said her father.

Life isn't easy in the deserts of the Middle East.

Temperatures soar above 100 degrees. At the height of conflict in Iraq, soldiers frequently had to put on full body suits protecting them from the use of chemical weapons.

Inside the suit, the temperature quickly escalates to 120 degrees or more.

Nearby, they keep an atropine shot, to be plunged into the leg as an antidote to some chemical warfare.

Hicks had to use her suit about one time a week, leaving her dead tired and homesick. Food consists mainly of Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), a military freeze-dried meal.

"She told us she can't wait to come home and cook potatoes, gravy, and venison for us," said

her mother, Marla Hicks.

Her parents have had the opportunity to send Hicks some necessities at her base. Packages take about two weeks.

Hicks has expressed her gratitude for her family's love as her fellow Indian soldiers remain without mail.

An Alaskan Native, who hasn't received any mail, wept when she shared her dried salmon with him, saying it reminded him of home.

"We call it Tashna's Outpost and Mercantile," jokes her father.

Hicks met the commander of the Marine Corps in Kuwait before leaving for Iraq.

The four-star general shook her hand, and based on positive comments from her superiors said, "I wish there were more marines gung-ho like you."

"We're extremely proud of her and all the people in the services," said her father.

Hicks has three younger brothers and two sisters that also live in Warm Springs. She hopes to return to Warm Springs some day and maybe get into the trucking business.

See related letter on page 4.

Truancy board sees success in first year

By Shannon Keaveny
Spilyay Tymoo

Sometimes it's as easy as a wakeup call.

Other times, it's as complex as encouraging a parent to get help for drug and alcohol dependency.

Whatever it takes, the Warm Springs Truancy Board has worked to obtain positive results after just one year on the reservation. The board's focus is getting kids to school.

"I'd say out of 50 families, we see some level of success in 35 to 40 of them," said Butch David, Warm Springs liaison for the 509-J Jefferson County School District and a volunteer on the board.

In the last school year, a Warm Springs student had missed over 40 days of school and was skipping classes at an alarming rate.

After the Warm Springs Truancy Board took action and started working with the mother, it was brought to their

attention the mother needed help. The board directed the mother to the social services office operated by the county.

With the improved stability of the mother, dramatic results were seen in the student. Since then, the student has missed only five days of school.

"The student has done almost a complete turnaround," said David.

The truancy board is intended to be a mediating tool for parents before legal action is taken, which includes a monetary fine and, in some cases, an arrest. It is illegal not to send your child to school.

According to Oregon law, school officials can take legal action against parents after five school absences.

On the reservation 10 or more unexcused absences can result in legal action. A fine anywhere from \$1 to \$5,000 can be issued.

In a worse case scenario, a parent or student can find himself or herself in jail for up to a year. Once families are brought

into the juvenile court system, there aren't many choices. In rare cases, a non-cooperating family is referred to criminal court.

"I'm the end of the line," said Daisy Ike, juvenile coordinator, who addresses cases in the legal system.

The Warm Springs Truancy Board, which consists of eight local volunteers, pinpoints cases before they are turned over to the juvenile court.

After the board reviews the student's referral papers, contact with the student is made. If that doesn't work, someone from the board makes a home visit.

A letter is issued requesting the parents or guardians to attend a board meeting. The parent is allowed to discuss their point of view regarding their child missing school.

The board formally recognizes the student has an attendance problem and the reasons why.

Reasons vary from a student not having a ride, to no family income, to a parent working a

night shift, to not having an alarm clock.

The board signs an agreement with the parents that they will with the Warm Springs juvenile coordinator and the truancy committee on getting their child to attend school.

"We let them know, that we can work with them if they work with us," said David.

"We try to use the law as the last step," he added.

Before signing the contract the board explains to the parents the contract process and what the consequence could be if the contract is not met. The hearing contract is written with the family.

It's an opportunity for parents to become more educated about what the school system expects from them and what the legal process is, said David.

Students are given incentives to succeed. Local businesses and organizations have donated over \$6,000 for an incentive program.

The truancy board, said David, also tries not to step on the parents' toes and gives them