

Tribal summit spotlights trust fund, asset management

Indian leaders, Sen. Smith find common ground in opposition to reform bill

Restoration of forestland, health care and education dominated a roundtable discussion hosted last week by Sen. Gordon Smith with leaders of Oregon's Indian tribes.

The tribal summit is the fourth annual forum hosted by Smith, and representatives gathered at Chemawa Indian School in Salem for this year's meeting.

"We respect the sovereignty of these tribal nations," said Smith, a member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

Federal representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services also were present to give Smith reports about ongoing problems and updates on new programs and services.

The nine tribal representatives unanimously supported Smith's stance on a Senate bill that would reform management of Indian trust funds and assets. Smith opposes the bill, authored by Sen. John McCain and Sen. Bryan Dorgan. McCain is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Smith wrote a letter to McCain saying

that the bill could interfere with a lawsuit settlement regarding trust funds with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

About \$20 million is at stake for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in the settlement. Tribal chairman Ron Suppah said that if the bill passes, that money could be in jeopardy.

A tribal consultation hearing will be held with BIA representatives in Portland on Friday about the matter.

Other issues tribal representatives raised included forest restoration and natural resource uses.

Chairman Christopher Mercier of Grand Ronde asked Smith if hunting and fishing restrictions could be reviewed in order to extend rights for the tribe. Mercier would like to see some off-season hunting permitted in order to coincide with cultural ceremonies, some which occur in the summer.

Doni Wilder, a director for Indian Health Services, gave an overview of tribal health-care access. Wilder said a pending federal policy change could alter how health-care facilities are built. She said more priority would be given to smaller tribes to build new facilities, and Oregon tribes are larger in com-

parison. Because of this change, Wilder said, she hoped to see plans for regional facilities and an Indian Health Services hospital.

Stan Speakes, the regional BIA representative, said methamphetamine use is a problem on reservations and trust lands, just like the rest of the state. He recommended that preventive action should be taken. Speakes said tribal representatives already have met with law enforcement agencies to help curb the drug problem.

Representatives also addressed funding of education, primarily for the Chemawa Indian School. Many of the leaders said their family members had attended the school, which has been faced with ongoing budget shortfalls. Students come from more than 70 tribes and 18 states.

Smith said the roundtable was a good opportunity for the individual leaders to hear about issues which affect all Oregon tribes.

"Where there's unity, there's strength," Smith said.

(This article, by Ruth Liao, appeared first in the Salem Statesman Journal, and is reprinted here with permission.)

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Memorial

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The Shaker Church on Thanksgiving will be serving dinner followed by Shake. There will be supper on Friday, Nov. 24, Shake afterwards. The following day, Saturday, Nov. 25, is the Cecil Tulee Jr. Memorial with dinner. Sunday will be Sunday Service and Sunday lunch. Any donations are welcome.

Birth

Jesse D. Greene and Desirae N. Greene of Warm Springs are pleased to announce the birth of their son Yisidro Yoryboy Greene, born October 24, 2006. The father's parents are Jesus Madrid Sr. of New Mexico, and the late Georgia Ann Greene of Warm Springs. The Mother's parents are Robert Smith, and Natalie Johnson of Warm Springs.





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