

## Sen. Smith, tribes discuss Indian Affairs

*From the Office of Tribal Governmental Affairs.*

Tribal leaders met recently at the Celilo Longhouse with U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith and BIA regional director Stan Speaks.

Sen. Smith presented an update on Native American-related legislative work pending in the Senate.

Smith is the ranking minority member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. Highlights of his report include:

### Bringing IHS construction funds to Oregon

Sen. Smith is leading the effort to secure more funding for construction of Indian health facilities in Oregon.

Currently, the facilities budget for the Indian Health Service (IHS) is locked into projects mostly in the Southwestern U.S., and Oregon is not in line to receive any funds for 20 to 30 years.

Sen. Smith is working to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to allow the IHS to fund projects more equitably across the country. Both the Indian Affairs and Finance committees have passed the bill, and the full Senate is expected to vote on the proposal this year.

### Helping tribal veterans with health care costs

Sen. Smith recently introduced the American Indian Veteran Health Care Improvement Act, which would encourage collaborations between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department



Tribal Council Chairman Ron Suppah meets with Sen. Gordon Smith at Celilo Village.

of Veterans Affairs (the VA).

The legislation would result in greater access to health care services for American Indian veterans of federally recognized tribes. The legislation also would ensure that Native American veterans eligible for VA health care benefits will not be liable for individual co-pays for VA health services delivered by the Indian Health Service, an Indian tribe or tribal organization.

### Columbia River treaty fishing access and in-lieu sites

Sen. Smith is working with the Senate Indian Affairs Committee and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission to maximize operation and maintenance funding for Columbia River treaty fishing access and in-lieu sites.

The proposed change in law

would allow already appropriated funding for the sites to be invested, providing higher yields and additional years of operational funding.

It is expected that this provision will be included in a technical amendments bill being drafted by the Indian Affairs Committee.

### Tribal adoption

Under current law, tribal nations do not have direct access to federal Social Security Administration Title IV-E foster care and adoption funds. Instead, the tribes must develop negotiated agreements with states to access these funds.

As a result, most Native American children placed in out-of-home care through tribal courts are not eligible for federal funds for foster care main-

tenance or adoption assistance payments, and tribes do not have adequate funding to provide for the needs of children in care.

Sen. Smith and Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) introduced the Tribal Foster Care and Adoption Access Act, which will ensure that tribes receive direct reimbursement for costs related to foster care services, including adoption assistance services, employee training and education, administrative costs related to case planning and case management, and developing and maintaining data collection systems.

## Museum at Warm Springs to host Star Light Dinner

The Museum at Warm Springs will host the Star Light Dinner on Friday, December 7.

The dinner is held in the museum lobby, as a fundraising event for the Museum at Warm Springs.

Dinner will include turkey and ham and all the trimmings, and devine desserts. Tickets are available from the museum staff.

Ticket prices are \$15 for adults (13 and older), \$10 for senior citizens, and \$5 for children.

The evening schedule includes a visit to the museum by Santa (from 3 to 4:30 p.m.), silent auction (from 3 to 5 p.m.), and dinner from 5-6:30 p.m.

For more information call the museum at 553-3331.

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## Workshop on Native women's personal finances

The U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau is sponsoring a workshop, "Moving Beyond Survival to Financial Stability," to be held from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the Warm Springs Community Center.

Topics to be covered include: credit in a money world, identification theft prevention, sound savings, and home ownership as a tool for financial success.

The free financial skill-building workshop is part of an effort to provide financial education to Native American women.

The Women's Bureau is working with Native public media, community groups and local employment offices to bring

information to Native American women through a series of public service radio announcements and classes designed to increase financial literacy.

"The Women's Bureau is proud to be a catalyst for this unique collaboration with Native public media and Native communities," said Shinae Chun, Women's Bureau director.

"By funding this project, we hope that more rural Native women will learn about the WiSe Up financial literacy program, which can provide them with the tools they need to gain control over their finances and save for the future," said Chun.

Since the Women's Bureau launched WiSe Up in 2004, more

than 3,500 women have participated and the program's Web site has received more than one million hits. Under Chun's leadership, outreach has been expanded to target the Native American community and others.

Toward that end, the bureau has joined forces with local partners including One-Stop Career Centers, community groups and Native public media's network of radio stations.

To sign up for the Warm Springs workshop, contact Julie Quaid at 553-3438 or jquaid@wstribes.org; or Alicia Diefenbach at (206) 295-2189 or ach@aliciahaus.com.

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