



Tribal Council Chairman Ron Suppah and other tribal officials met recently with BPA Administrator Steve Wright. The meeting was a chance for the tribes and BPA to assess additional ways to collaborate for the benefit of salmon. Tribal Council and the BPA officials met at the Round Butte dam, where the tribes and PGE have developed a new fish collection and passage facility.

Chairman states BIA Forestry, other funding concerns at hearing

A Congressional subcommittee on Interior Appropriations conducted a hearing in Washington, D.C., recently on proposed 2011 federal appropriations affecting Indian Country.

Tribal leaders from several tribes including Warm Springs attended in order to give testimony on the appropriations issues of importance to the tribes.

On behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Tribal Council Chairman Ron Suppah testified before the subcommittee, stressing the importance of adequate funding for forestry management.

“Warm Springs is a forestry tribe,” Chairman Suppah said. “Timber is a principal source of our revenue and jobs, and the health and good management of our forest is very important for us.”

Unfortunately, he said, “BIA has been starving its forestry program for years. It gets only about one-third of the per-acre funding of the Forest Service.”

Since 2003, inflation has gone up 17 percent, “while BIA Forestry has only gone up 5.3 percent,” Suppah said.

“At Warm Springs, this unfair treatment of BIA Forestry funding has seriously eroded our forestry staff. Eleven of our 27 full time positions are permanently unfunded. Our ability to plan and manage our forest has been crippled.”

To correct the situation, Suppah recommended to the subcommittee that the BIA Forestry budget see a substantial increase.

“The Intertribal Timber Council suggests increasing Forestry to \$31.2 million just to keep up with increases given other agencies in recent years. That, we believe, would be a start, and we support that.”

Suppah recommended restoration of \$1 million to the Timber Harvest Initiative program.

“And add \$5 million to Forest Development,” he said, “to reduce the national thinning and replanting backlog of 900,000 acres.” On the Warm Springs Reservation, Suppah said, the thinning and replanting backlog is 60,000 acres.

He spoke to other issues as well, including the need for adequate funding of law enforcement on the reservation, health care, and education.

Regarding education funding, Suppah said, “For BIA Johnson-O’Malley, Warm Springs urges it be funded at \$25 million. That is the only BIA elementary and secondary support for the great majority of tribes whose children are in public schools, and its decline must be reversed.”

— by Dave McMechan

Indian health improvement act made permanent

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Indian Health Care Improvement Act—the cornerstone legal authority for the provision of health care to Native Americans—was made permanent when President Obama signed the bill on March 23.

The authorization of appropriations for the Indian Health Care Improvement Act had expired in 2000, and while various versions of the bill were considered by Congress since then, the act now has no expiration date.

“We are grateful to President Obama for his unwavering and long-standing support for the enactment of the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

“This is critical to modernizing and improving the health care we provide to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

“This administration is intent on honoring the obligations of our government-to-government relationship with American Indian tribes, including the promise of adequate health care.”

Since 2000, tribes and tribal organization have been strongly advocating for the updating and reenacting of the IHCIA, said Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, director of the Indian Health Service.

“The provision of health care services to American Indians and Alaska Natives is a key component of the federal government’s trust responsibility, and the updating and permanent authorization of the IHCIA helps to fulfill this responsibility,” said Roubideaux.

The version of the IHCIA signed into law on March 23 differs in several respects from the original version passed by Congress in 1976.

The new law includes many major changes and improvements to facilitate the delivery of health care services, such as:

- Enhancement of the authorities of the IHS director, including the responsibility to facilitate advocacy and promote consultation on matters relating to Indian health within the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Provides authorization for hospice, assisted living, long-term, and home- and community-based care.
- Extends the ability to recover costs from third parties to tribally operated facilities.
- Updates current law regarding collection of reimbursements from Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) by Indian health facilities.
- Allows tribes and tribal organizations to purchase health benefits coverage for IHS beneficiaries.
- Authorizes IHS to enter into arrangements with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense to share medical facilities and services.
- Allows a tribe or tribal organization carrying out a program under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and an urban Indian organization carrying out a program under Title V of IHCIA to purchase coverage for its employees from the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.
- Authorizes the establishment of a Community Health Representative program for urban Indian organizations to train and employ Indians to provide health care services.
- Directs the IHS to establish comprehensive behavioral health, prevention, and treatment programs for Indians.

The IHS provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 1.9 million of the nation’s estimated 3.3 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

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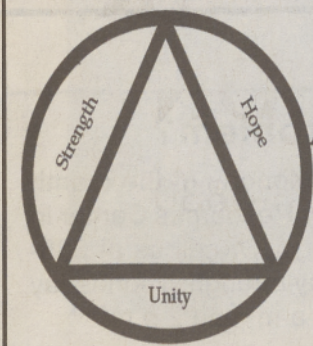
Charles Thomas Edwards passed from this life peacefully with his loving family at his side, on Nov. 14, 2009 in Chester, Calif. He was 76.

Mr. Edwards worked on the Warm Springs Reservation starting in 1983. He found his work in the Utility Department to be most rewarding. He retired in 1997 to Lake Almanor, Calif.

Mr. Edwards was born on Nov. 23, 1932 in Santa Monica. He and his family

later moved to Redmond, Oregon. He was married to Jessie Acord, a longtime childhood friend, and they had two sons and a daughter.

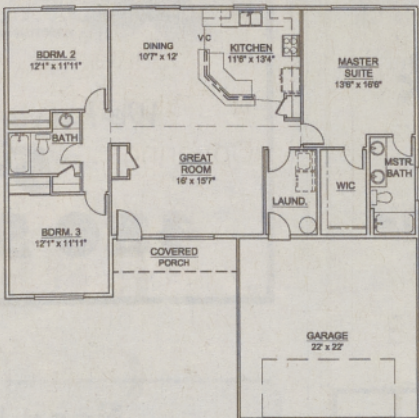
In passing Mr. Edwards leaves his loving wife of 56 years; son Fred and his wife Brenda of Lake Almanor; daughter Nona and her husband Paul Daley of Rockwall, Texas; his grandchildren.



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