

NEWS BRIEFS FROM INDIAN COUNTRY

Tribal Chair testifies in Washington, D.C.

■ Harrison asks congressional subcommittee to go beyond their proposed budgets for Indian Health Care.

By Brent Merrill

Tribal Chair Kathryn Harrison traveled to the Nation's capitol to testify before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Health Services (IHS). Harrison gave testimony in regards to budgets for the year 2001.

The Grand Ronde Tribe, through Harrison's testimony, asked the subcommittee to add funds to the BIA's Tribal Priority Allocations.

Tribal Priority Allocations are intended to meet tribal needs for community services, education, natural resources and tribal court services.

The Tribe asked the subcommittee to increase the IHS budget by an additional \$89 million more than President Clinton's recommended 2001 budget for IHS. The Tribe also asked the subcommittee to increase support for the Catastrophic Health Emergency Fund beyond Clinton's proposed \$18 million budget.

The Tribe asked the subcommittee to support an increase of \$3.8 million

towards the prevention and education about diabetes.

The Tribe asked the subcommittee to spend \$10 million to fund drug and alcohol treatment centers.

The Tribe informed the subcommittee of their support for Clinton's \$40 million Contract Health Services budget for 2001.

"The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde support the President's FY (Fiscal Year) budget recommendation for Contract Health Services," said Harrison in her testimony.

The Tribe sent a message to the subcommittee that it supports increases to the IHS budget, but they also feel more is needed.

More importantly, the Tribe sent a message to all of Congress that the government-to-government relationship is working, as it should be. Harrison explained the Tribe's role in building the government-to-government process.

"In 1954, members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde lost fed-

eral recognition under the Western Oregon Termination Act," said Harrison. "This legislation destroyed our Tribal Government, took away remaining tribal lands and brought about numerous socio-economic problems to our members. In 1983, the Tribe regained its rightful place among Indian Nations when Congress passed the Grand Ronde Restoration Act.

"A survey of our tribal membership in 1985 revealed the ugly impacts of termination," continued Harrison in her testimony. "The Tribe's unemployment rate was 23 percent. Of our population 19 years or older, 38 percent had not completed high school. Finally, 34 percent of our households had an income below the poverty level. The survey also revealed serious health issues including high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis, failing vision and hearing, and alcohol and substance abuse problems."

Harrison informed the subcommittee that the Grand Ronde Tribe has

turned things around for their membership since restoration. But, she said there is still unmet need in the tribal community.

"We have come a long way in fighting the problems that we have had to face with respect to termination," explained Harrison. "Despite some of the current positives that are taking place in Indian Country, and specifically Grand Ronde, there is still a great deal of unmet needs that exist with our tribal community. We have the unfortunate task of trying to make up for 29 years without support or services, and while we do our best to provide for our membership, as well as the community, we still fall short. We will continue to strive for the best, and we are proud to be a self-governance Tribe with both the BIA and the IHS."

Harrison concluded her remarks by reassuring the subcommittee that the government-to-government process is working and that the Tribe looks forward to continuing that relationship.

Tribal leader passes away unexpectedly

■ The defiant and charismatic Joe Dela Cruz's fight for Indian Rights made him a legend in the Northwest.

By Brent Merrill

Indian activist and tribal leader Joe Dela Cruz died of a heart attack at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Sunday, April 16 while preparing to attend the annual Tribal Self-Governance Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Dela Cruz, former president and member of the Quinault Nation on the Western Washington Coast, was a long-time fighter for Native issues including self-governance, fair logging practices and treaty fishing rights. Dela Cruz, 62, was known as an outspoken advocate for Tribes who never backed down, but still showed compassion and understand-

ing for all people — not just Native Americans.

"The death of long-time Indian leader Joe Dela Cruz is a major loss to both the Tribes and the non-Indian community," said Billy Frank, Jr., chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. "His untimely passing is a great shock to us all."

Dela Cruz served as president of the Quinault Indian Nation from 1971 through 1993 and president of the National Congress of American Indians from 1981 through 1985. He also was the president of Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians from 1989 to 1990.

"Joe Dela Cruz was one of the greatest Indian leaders who ever lived in the United States," said Frank. "He served us all with his extensive experience, his wisdom and his courage, to the very end of his life. He was my friend and my ally, my teacher and my comrade."

Frank said Dela Cruz dedicated his life to improving the lives of all people.

Dela Cruz was the oldest of ten children born to Edna (Lane) and Joseph Dela Cruz in 1937. He grew up in the reservation village of Tahola and was student body president and four-sport athlete at Moclips

High School.

After two years in Germany serving the U.S. Army, Dela Cruz attended Portland State University and worked for the federal government before returning to the Quinault Nation as the Tribe's business manager. He was elected president of the Tribe four years later in 1971.

Dela Cruz married his wife Dorothy in 1959 and is survived by his wife, three daughters, two sons, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted on Saturday, April 22 at Ocean Shores, Washington.

Warm Springs Tribe, PGE, and Interior sign agreement

On April 12, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Portland General Electric Company (PGE), and the U.S. Department of the Interior approved an agreement providing for the Tribe and PGE to share the 408-megawatt Pelton Round Butte hydroelectric project near Madras, Oregon. Under the agreement, PGE and the Tribe will pursue a joint license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Last year they had filed competing license applications. The agreement is also subject to approval by the Oregon Public Utility Commission and FERC.

The Tribe will purchase portions of the project from PGE over a proposed 50-year license period. On December 31, 2001, the Tribe would acquire one-third interest. Twenty years later, the Tribe has the option to increase their share to 49.99 percent plus an additional option to their ownership to 50.01 percent by 2037. The Tribe would purchase all shares at net book value (initial investment minus depreciation). In turn, the proposal provides that PGE's current payments of approximately \$10 million to the Tribe for the use of tribal lands and resources would cease on December 31, 2001.

Pelton Round Butte is the largest hydroelectric project located entirely in Oregon. Its generators convert the energy of Deschutes River water into 1.5 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity power per year, enough to supply a city the size of Salem.

Native American applicants sought for Hatfield Fellowship

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon is now accepting applications for the third Mark O. Hatfield Congressional Fellowship. Each year, a Hatfield Fellow is selected from Native American applicants to serve as an intern for a member of Oregon's Congressional delegation.

The Fellowship honors Mark Hatfield for his accomplishments as a U.S. Senator and Governor of Oregon and for his mentorship of many members of his staff who became leaders in their own communities. The Fellowship also honors the memory of former Hatfield aide Susan Long.

Applicants must be enrolled adult members of federally recognized Tribes in Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Washington, with preference given to the nine federally recognized Oregon Tribes.

Highlights of the Fellowship include:

- The Hatfield Fellow will be rotated every year among the House and Senate members of the Oregon delegation.
- Each Hatfield Fellow will serve for ten months and will receive a stipend, moving and travel expenses, and participation in a special American Political Science Association Orientation.

Application packets may be obtained by contacting Angela Ellis at Spirit Mountain Casino, P.O. Box 39, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347; or call 1-800-760-7977, ext. 3957.