

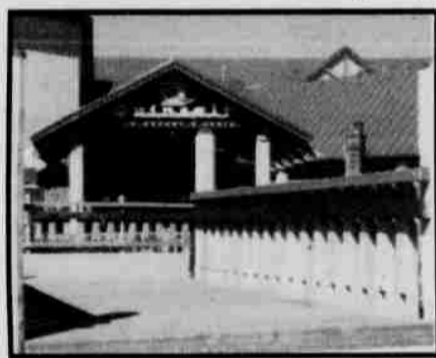
# ATNI Conference Tackles Big Issues

■ Columbia River contamination, trust reform and Elder abuse all part of the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at the Quinault Indian Nation in Washington State.

By Ron Karten

The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) tackled a host of issues, including contamination of the Columbia River, trust fund issues, the future of the Grand Ronde Tribes' Youth Treatment Facility - Nanitch Sahallie, support for a Youth Commission that fosters Indian kids interested in leadership, information to help Tribes form their own financial institutions (many may recall a recent poll here in Grand Ronde soliciting interest in such an institution), as well as an update on financial issues at the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the implications those issues may have for Tribes.

Regarding Nanitch Sahallie, according to Tribal Council Coordinator Charles Haller II, the group



agreed to form a consortium to make sure that Indian youth have a place for treatment, but the question remains whether to combine all available funding and develop a region-wide program, or for each Tribe to pull together what funding it can and compete.

Information shared regarding the development of Tribal financial institutions was preliminary to a full-fledged conference on the subject scheduled for October, according to Haller.

While school schedules kept many Tribes from bringing youth interested in leadership to the conference, CTGR Youth Education supervisor Lisa Leno reported that a contingent of 20 students showed the value of the Youth Commission project.

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) were well represented at the weeklong event in September, including an Elder Abuse video entitled, *Restoring the Sacred Circle*, introduced within the tape by former CTGR Tribal Chair Kathryn Harrison. Many Tribal Council members attended, in addition to the Tribe's executive staff as well as Tribal members



"It's Good To See You" — Tribal Elder and council member Val Grout extends a greeting to a friend at the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Conference in Washington on Wednesday, September 18.

working in Education and Culture.

In all, 265 from ATNI's 54 member Tribes attended the event hosted by the Quinault Indian Nation at Washington's north coast Quinault Beach Resort and Casino. Elections named Ernest L.

Stensgar, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, president; Mathew Tomaskin, Yakima Nation, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President; Norma Jean Louie, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Secretary; and Doris J. Milles, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Assistant Secretary.

## Indian Housing Authority Conference Names Tim Holmes Commissioner of the Year

■ Group also laments HUD tactics and faces up to the issue of mold.

By Ron Karten

September 4-6 marked the first time that the Housing Authority of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) hosted others from the Northwest Indian Housing Authorities Association (NIHAA), according to Executive Director Linda Layden.

"We had the opportunity to show other housing authorities our campus and the things we have been doing," she said. The 3-day event drew 25 of 33 members of the NIHAA. "They were really complimentary," said Layden.

Business reports during the meeting indicate that the coming year remains "iffy" with regard to Congressional priorities for the group, according to Brooke Kristovich, chair of NIHAA, because of the many international and domestic uncertainties at the top of the current Congressional list.

In addition, differences between NIHAA and the Seattle-based regional office of the federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) continue to fester. As Indian housing authorities across the Northwest chafe under HUD's heavy-handed oversight of Indian housing authorities, calls for change by this group apparently await the appointment of a new deputy assistant secretary of the department, according to Kristovich. The position has been vacant for 1-1/2 years.

"Each regional office does it its own way," said Joseph Diehl, NIHAA staffer. "The biggest thing for us is the philosophy. (We believe that) HUD should take an overview (of our projects), not check every receipt."

"This has been a really hot issue for the last six months to a year," said Layden. The Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) recognized Tribes as sovereign nations, according to Layden, but recent HUD oversight efforts seem to roll back that recognition. In addition, the extra attention that Indian housing authorities across the Northwest have had to pay to HUD's oversight staffers translates into less time for building houses and managing projects already completed.

"It takes the housing staff out of the loop," said Diehl.

The other important issue of the meeting — mold — is not much of an issue for CTGR's Housing Authority, according to Layden, because Housing Authority buildings are all new, and have been designed with dehumidifiers to keep mold from getting started.

The issue has grown in importance in wet areas in recent years for three reasons, according to Rich Prill, a Washington State University extension specialist: first, the health effects of mold in housing remains unclear, though we are learning that some people are affected more than others, and for some, the health effects can be devastating; second, these ill health effects are opening up a new front for lawyers willing to sue housing authorities to provide remedies, and third, because insurance companies have said that mold is not a covered problem. ■



### Family Representation

— Nancy Holmes (above) accepts the Housing Authority's Commissioner of the Year Award on behalf of her husband Tim Holmes. At left, Tim and Nancy's son Joey Holmes takes part in a drumming session at the conference dinner.

### Tim Holmes: Twice A Star

And speaking of toxins, Housing Authority Commissioner Tim Holmes caught something going around on September 4, and went home to rest. It was a pity because his son, Joey, was scheduled as one of four youthful drummers set to entertain at the quarterly meeting of the Northwest Indian Housing Authorities Association (NIHAA). An equal pity, however, was that he also missed his own election by the group as Commissioner of the Year. He did not even know that he had been nominated.

"This will make him feel a lot better when I get home," said his wife, Nancy Holmes, staffer for the Tribe's Housing Authority, in accepting the award for her husband.

"I was totally surprised," Tim Holmes said later. "It was a tremendous honor. Any time any member of the Tribe is recognized for any of the work they've done, it's a great reflection on the Tribe as a whole."

In July, Holmes also was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). The board meets four times a year, according to Holmes, and among his responsibilities will be "to serve on one committee of the association, and be an active participant," Holmes said.

"The importance of AAPD is to raise level of awareness in Indian country of the challenges that their members with disabilities face," said Holmes.