

Smith meets with Oregon Tribes

Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy seeks notification on Tribal issues before Congress

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Ten miles east of The Dalles, across the railroad tracks, past a new construction site for Phase Two of the Celilo Village housing project and at the end of a dirt road, the beautiful and holy Celilo Village longhouse welcomed Tribes from across Oregon and Washington for Sen. Gordon Smith's fifth annual Tribal Summit on Oct. 11.

The holy place is so close to the highway that participants could feel the trucks pass by. It is also within eyeshot of the Columbia River where Indians have fished from time immemorial.

It was here that Smith, a Republican from Pendleton and the nine Tribes' choice for re-election in 2008, requested to meet for his annual Tribal summit.

This year, the group also included the Washington-based Yakamas, while the Klamath and Nez Perce Tribes did not send delegates. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service also were represented at the summit.

"Promises — some explicit and some implicit — have been kept, others not," Smith said. "My focus is on those not kept. This facility, restored and renewed, is a symbol of the government's commitment to fulfill its promises."

Smith reviewed actions Congress

had already taken and, in many cases, were still working on for the Tribes, including health care and economic development efforts. He quoted Chief Joseph (Nez Perce) saying, "Good words do not last long unless they amount to something."

"I'm here mostly to listen, and then go to work," Smith said.

A wide range of issues emerged from Tribal chairs.

Grand Ronde Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy sought a mechanism by which the Tribes could be notified when a bill concerning Tribal well-being or sovereignty is discussed in Congress.

Kennedy also pursued stronger environmental standards.

"The standards set for air and water quality are not protecting the quality of the air and water," she said. "They are not going to preserve us into the future that our grandchildren and great grandchildren can thrive in."

And like many Tribal chairs, Kennedy cited constant underfunding of federal guarantees to Tribes. "Budgeting at the U.S. level — the OMB, the BIA, the IHS — never get a true budget that meets our needs. Never ever," she said. "We have treaties that somehow need to be honored."

"I look at the billions and billions going to Iraq to build clinics and roads and buildings, and I think that

even one billion to the Tribes would go a long way to filling our needs," said Siletz Chair Dolores Pigsley.

The Umatillas sought technical legislative fixes for health and economic development needs, not all of which were new requests.

Don Sampson, executive director of the Umatillas, sought approval for Tribal tax-free foundations and bonding authority that have helped cities and counties build public facilities before they have the money to pay for it (fixes that Smith is already working on).

The Grand Rondes do not need bonding authority. Because of Spirit Mountain Casino, the Tribe has a line of credit that allows it to borrow large sums, and enough income to pay loans back in short order.

Paiute Tribal members, on the other hand, can't afford a dialysis machine. Members travel 132 miles one way from Burns to Bend three times a week for dialysis, said Pai-



Photo by Ron Karten

Grand Ronde Tribal Council member Wink Soderberg and Chairwoman Cheryle Kennedy talk with Oregon Sen. Gordon Smith, R-Pendleton, after an Oct. 11 summit held with Tribal leaders in Celilo.

ute Chair Wanda Johnson.

Yakama Chair Lavina Washines said, "The Yakama Nation owns most of the property of Celilo Village. We don't recognize the river as a border. Our concern is how we are treated by the BIA ... our land allotments; they're being taken and given to Oregon Tribes."

"I can't change the past," said Smith, "but I can work to see that we keep promises in the future. You've given me my marching orders and I'm going to work." ■

Smoke Signals changes explained

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Smoke Signals readers noticed a change in the Oct. 15 issue.

The mailing address box moved from the bottom left corner of the front page to the top left corner.

The reasons for this move were twofold: aesthetic and financial.

Aesthetically, the mailing box in the lower left-hand corner of the front page created problems in designing an eye-pleasing cover. With the mailing box now in the upper left-hand corner, Smoke Signals page designers have a well-defined and unobstructed space in which to create attractive layouts without having to account for the pesky mailing box.

More importantly, however, moving the mailing box reduces the cost of sending out Smoke Signals and Tilixam Wawa. The Publications Office mails almost 6,800 copies of the newspaper twice a month and more than 3,200 copies of Tilixam Wawa monthly.

With the postage box in the upper left-hand corner, Smoke Signals and Tilixam Wawa are now designated "automated" items by the Postal Service, thereby cutting costs. The Postal Service has specific rules about where the address block must be to obtain the less expensive postage rate, and those rules state that it needs to be on the "top half" of the page. Placing the mailing box above



▲ Old design



▲ New design

The new design of Smoke Signals moves the mailing label box to the upper left-hand corner of the page. By doing this, Smoke Signals page designers have an unobstructed area in which to design attractive front pages. In addition, the move allows Tribal publications to be handled as "automated" items by the Postal Service, which will save about 24 percent in postage costs over the course of a year.

flag is a logical placement.

As an example, postage costs for the Oct. 1 issue were 35 percent more than the cost to mail the Oct. 15 issue. Although the Oct. 15 issue was four pages smaller than the Oct. 1 issue, which accounted for some of the substantial savings, we still expect to save about 24 percent

annually in postage for similarly sized editions.

With postage the second largest expenditure in the Publications Office behind personnel-related costs, it made fiscal and design sense to move the mailing box, which is now located above the Smoke Signals flag.

Tribal Council has urged all Tribal

departments to think outside of the box to save Tribal dollars. With this simple redesign, the Publications Office is saving money and improving the look of Smoke Signals.

Over the course of a year, Publications expects to save more than \$40,000 in Smoke Signals and Tilixam Wawa postage with the mailing box located on the top half of the page.

In addition, this office recently rebid the contract to print Smoke Signals and Tilixam Wawa. Although the Tribe is remaining with its longtime provider, Eagle Web Press in Salem, Tribal members can be assured that we are receiving competitive rates for their Tribal dollars.

Another change is in the works. Beginning with the Nov. 15 issue, Smoke Signals and Tilixam Wawa will begin being printed on a slightly heavier, whiter paper. This change will hopefully make the newspaper easier to read for our Tribal Elders and will give the publication a crisper look. In addition, the new paper will reduce printing costs while giving Tribal members a better product.

Both of these changes are win-win situations — a better product for less money.

If you have comments or input on the look and content of Smoke Signals, call me at 503-879-1463 or send an e-mail to dean.rhodes@grandronde.org. Reader input is always welcome. ■