

New Interior Secretary promises attention to issues

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

From the Secretary's Conference Room in Washington, D.C., newly installed Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar told reporters from across the country that "restoring the relationship with Indian Tribes" was one of President Barack Obama's top priorities.

The news conference on Jan. 28 addressed reporters on the scene and by teleconference across the country. It did not hear any questions about Native American issues.

Priorities that Salazar named during the news conference included "reform of the Department of the Interior to restore the confidence of the American people."

"We need to make sure we establish ethical standards," he said, and added that decisions must be "based on good science."

He also listed an effort "to become



AP photo

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar

an energy independent nation."

"There are major opportunities to move forward," he said.

"There is a tremendous amount of work that has to be done," he said, in

preserving national landscapes and conservation areas. His programs would "mimic Colorado's Great Outdoors Program, the nation's premier land preservation effort" that he championed for preserving farm and ranch lands when he was senator for his home state.

He said the department would "work to implement President Obama's vision for community service," particularly in the national parks division.

Fifth on the list was "to restore the relationship of the United States of America with Indian Tribes across the country."

"Where we can collaborate, we will," he said. "Our tough challenges for our Native American families ...

include health care and the issue of lawlessness."

Following the teleconference, *Smoke Signals* asked two questions of Salazar spokesman Matt Lee-Ashley:

◆ What is the Secretary's position on off-reservation Tribal casinos?

◆ What is the plan for dealing with Tribal casino proposals left over from the Bush administration?

Salazar's response was similar to answers on many subjects asked at the conference, including federal spending for Everglades restoration, domestic drilling for energy independence and changes in the Endangered Species Act.

"These are issues we are carefully reviewing," Lee-Ashley said. ■

Park tour



Photo by Siobhan Taylor

Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, left, stands with Clackamas County Commissioner Charlotte Lehan and Friends of Champoeg Chairman Greg Leo on Friday, Feb. 13. Kennedy spoke at the opening of the renovated visitor's center at Historic Champoeg. Tribal Cultural Resources Department staff members were instrumental in the Tribal history section of the museum at the visitor's center. The Grand Ronde Tribe and Spirit Mountain Community Fund were contributors to the project. The Community Fund awarded the renovation \$50,000 in November 2008.

West Valley veterans sought

Veterans from or currently living in the West Valley area — Willamina, Sheridan and Grand Ronde — are being sought to have their names engraved on the West Valley Veterans' Memorial.

Veterans can be either Tribal members or non-Tribal members.

Veterans who would like their names etched on the memorial should submit a copy of their discharge papers to Tribal Elder Gene LaBonte and his wife, Billie, by calling 503-879-5342.

New names of veterans will be added to the memorial in April.

Work will be among the photo and paper archive

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accepted to work as an intern at the National Museum of the American Indian, the newest building on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C.

Her office, however, will not be exactly in the nation's capital, but in Suitland, Md., where the museum houses its Cultural Resource Center. Her boss will be another Grand Ronde Tribal member, Jennifer O'Neal, who has been head archivist for the museum since last July (see story in Jan. 1 issue of *Smoke Signals*).

"I am excited," said Wood, "but I'm calm about it, too. I'm excited, but I'm not worried about anything. I'm ready for the next phase of my life to begin."

Wood's work will be among the photo and paper archives, she said, "going through the accession records, categorizing and cataloguing them." She has done "a little" of that work at the University of Oregon's museum, where she worked with Oregon indigenous baskets.

Wood's duties also will include processing collections for proper storage, as well as preparing finding aids. She will interact daily with the Archives staff and researchers.

She will be preserving a small series of textual records within the Museum of the American Indian in the Heye Foundation Collection. She will work closely with the Photo Archives staff on creating a detailed finding aid for the Ann Pearse Hocker photograph collection.

And she will answer reference inquiries and assist researchers in the Archives reading room.

The internship is scheduled to last 10 weeks, from March 16- May 22.

When she returns, she has a three-month internship at Tamastlikt Cultural Institute with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. She will be working in the Collections Department, again cataloguing artifacts and documents, and researching ongoing projects for the institute.

"I think it's important to know the stories and histories of all Native indigenous peoples," she said, "to understand your own people's culture better."

After that, she said, "I'll be looking for a job — probably either in a Native American museum or in the Cultural Department at an Indian Tribe. I would love to come home and work for the (Grand Ronde) Tribe."

As early as grade school, she remembered, she went over to the Cultural Resources Department and talked to Tribal Elder June Olson, who headed the department when it was housed in the Community Center.

"I've always been interested in my Tribe," she said. "And because my Tribe helped me financially through college and emotionally supported me, I'd like to give back."

Two summers ago, Wood traveled for four days to Washington, D.C.

"It was my first flight. My first everything. It was fun but it wasn't enough time to look at everything. But I never thought I'd have the resources to go back. Now it's two years later and I'm going back there to work."

"Everyone says the cherry blossoms are beautiful." ■

7th Annual Native Youth Wellness Day

March 20

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Tribal Gymnasium

Native American Middle and High School Youth

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