

NOTICE — Monthly Tribal Council Wednesday Meetings

DATE	TIME
Wednesday, Dec. 16	5 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 30	5 p.m.

Please note that these times and dates are subject to change if needed. Call Dakota Whitecloud, Tribal Council Relations Coordinator, at 503-879-1309 to confirm.

Letters

Dear Smoke Signals:

This letter is in response to a discussion which took place at a Wednesday night Tribal Council meeting regarding Tribal employment.

According to the Oct. 14, 2009, Tribal Council minutes, a Tribal member asked if a non-Tribal member is being "groomed" for the Enrollment Manager position and stated her opinion that it should be filled by a Tribal member. The minutes also state that Tribal Council member Val Sheker said she contacted the Executive Officer and was assured it was a rumor. It was also noted that Executive Officer Chris Leno said he intends to fill both Enrollment positions with Tribal members who are recruited, not transferred.

My question is, why? Why this position and why not all management positions then? Is this the only position that is of such importance that it should require a Tribal member?

One of the employees currently working in the enrollment office is a mother and wife of Tribal members. She is a great employee; one of the best in the Member Services Department and in my opinion should be groomed as the enrollment manager. Why ask her to do the job and then grant it to someone else whom she will have to train? That doesn't seem fair; it seems like a waste of time and money. She is a very bright, competent, dedicated, loyal employee of the Tribe who deserves the opportunity to advance in her career.

As former manager of the Member Services Department, I can honestly say that each and every area in the Member Services Department is just as crucial and sensitive to confidentiality as the other. There are currently non-Tribal members working in the department in other areas. Both of these employees have access to just as much confidential information as anyone else in the department and also work closely with our Tribal investments, specifically with our children's trust funds. Should Tribal members fill those positions too? I can think of at least 15 key positions within the Tribe that are held by non-Tribal members. So why is the enrollment position treated differently?

The Enrollment Department now has policies and procedures and checks and balances in place that drastically lower the chance of enrollment mistakes occurring. The enrollment manager does not make decisions alone and does not have the ability or control to interfere with the enrollment process. The enrollment process goes through many different channels and recommendations to Tribal Council are made after at least three staff people have reviewed the application, and when the recommendation is to enroll a member, the recommendation has to be approved by each Enrollment Committee member, too, before approved by Council. We already have an Enrollment Committee made up of only Tribal members; that's the way it should be. They are the recommending body to council when enrolling or dis-enrolling anyone, not the staff. The enrollment manager along with the assistant simply handle the paperwork and research for the committee and council.

I've thought about the pros and cons of having a Tribal member vs. a non-Tribal member in this position and vice versa. Maybe the position should be filled by a non-Tribal member. While chairing the enrollment ad hoc committee a few years ago, I remember hearing many unsubstantiated claims about the Enrollment Department at the time. Claims that the staff was discriminating against certain applicants and that applications were purposely "lost." Employing an impartial non-Tribal member in this position who may not have all the history and knowledge that a Tribal member would have might be good for the Tribe. The only disadvantage I can think of at this moment is that the non-Tribal member may not feel as protected as an employee of the Tribe and may be an easy target of unfair politics. I'd hate to see that happen to someone; no one deserves that and all employees should feel safe from the politics in their jobs.

I debated with myself on whether to send this letter, but why not? If there are actually really good, objective reasons to hire only a Tribal member for this position, I would like to know. Like many Tribal issues, I believe this one is a simple one being blown out of proportion by few select members and not giving a current employee the chance to advance is not a fair result.

I'd also like to know how many employees work at the Tribe, how many are Tribal members vs. non-Tribal members and of those non-Tribal members how many are spouses and/or parents of Tribal members? I'd also like to know what the employee handbook states about transferring within the Tribe and what the current hiring policies are. If I remember correctly, I believe non-Tribal members who have Tribal families are given preference for jobs after Tribal members are considered and before other non-Tribal members. Of course I support Tribal employment, but I support it for Tribal families as well as just members. If possible, can the appropriate person respond and place the response in the next *Smoke Signals* for all to read? Thank you.

Respectfully,

Debbie Larsen
Roll # 1090

Tribal Office Closures

Tribal offices will be closing on Thursday, Dec. 24, at noon and closed on Friday, Dec. 25, in observance of Christmas. Offices also will be closing on Thursday, Dec. 31, at noon and closed on Friday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year's Day.

General Council meeting

Sunday, Jan. 10 — 11 a.m.
Tribal Community Center

Smoke Signals

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DEADLINE DATE	ISSUE DATE
Friday, Dec. 18	JAN. 1, 2010
Wednesday, Jan. 5	FEB. 1
Friday, Feb. 5	FEB. 15
Friday, Feb. 19	Mar. 1
Friday, Mar. 5	Mar. 15
Friday, Mar. 19	April 1

Editorial Policy

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Our editorial policy is intended to encourage input from Tribal members and readers about stories printed in the Tribal newspaper. However, all letters received must be signed by the author, an address must be given and a phone number or e-mail address must be included for verification purposes. Full addresses and phone numbers will not be published unless requested.

SMOKE SIGNALS reserves the right to edit letters and to refuse letters that are determined to contain libelous statements or personal attacks on individuals, staff, Tribal administration or Tribal Council. Not all letters are guaranteed publication upon submission. Letters to the editor are the opinions and views of the writer. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of **SMOKE SIGNALS**, Tribal staff, Tribal administration or Tribal Council.

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2009-10 Tribal Council

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