

'We're getting half of the \$8 billion we were promised'

ATNI continued
from front page

ing some 27 Tribes from Alaska, California, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

The seven federal treaties with the Grand Ronde Tribe were on display.

Mornings included traditional video or letter welcomes from Oregon's congressional delegation, along with Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown, who spoke in person.

Congressman Kurt Schrader was introduced by Tribal member, current Hatfield Fellow and Schrader's Public Affairs intern Stacia Martin.

Mornings also were devoted to Tribal leader discussions along with updates from the nation's capital, including a conference call from Kimberly Teehee (Cherokee), White House Senior Policy adviser for Native American Affairs, and in-person updates from Commerce Department Senior Adviser for Native American Affairs Don Chapman (Mohegan), National Museum of the American Indian Director Kevin Gover (Pawnee/Comanche) and Federal Communications Commission Special Counsel Lauren Kravetz.

In a welcoming address, Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryl A. Kennedy related Grand Ronde history to the group, speaking for many in the Northwest when she said, "We've been in the throes of nation building for the last 26 years."

Those throes led Jewell James, policy analyst and master carver from the Lummi Nation in Bellingham, Wash., to say, "We have to overcome the schizophrenia of who we are and who we owe allegiance to."

"We're getting half of the \$8 billion we were promised," said ATNI 2nd Vice President Harvey Moses Jr. "Indians need to be on a par with others. We need to quit settling, to start fighting like good old Indians."

Moses also is a Tribal Council member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

"We're as close as we've ever been with federal Tribal consultation," said Brooklyn Baptiste, vice chairman of the Nez Perce Executive Committee, explaining, "I used to bring a pipe because this is what we believed was the truth. I don't bring my pipe no more. I



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Senior Miss Grand Ronde Halona Butler hands a West Valley Veterans' Memorial pin to veteran Dan Gleason (Chehalis) during the lunch break of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians' Mid-Year Conference at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center on Monday, May 17. Butler, along with Junior Miss Grand Ronde Nakoosa Moreland and Little Miss Grand Ronde Isabelle Grout, handed out the pins to veterans.

bring my attorney."

He acknowledged, however, the other edge of that sword when he added, "Sometimes we lose that trust between Tribes because we're fighting over land or water rights."

Mathew Tamaskan (Yakama) said, regarding unfulfilled treaty promises, that he was "still waiting for the blacksmith to come," and added, "There is nothing in the treaties that said we would compete with other Tribes for funding."

The reality of the need for Tribal grant writing, where Tribes compete for federal dollars, came through when Commerce's Chapman pointed to \$500 million in grants obtained this year by the Navajos and said, "Indian Country is starting to succeed. It's time Tribes improve their grant writing departments."

Money is still available in the last round of federal stimulus funding, he said.

"We're in the second year of the Obama administration," said ATNI President Brian Cladoosby (Swinomish), "and there is every reason to be optimistic."

The White House's Teehee said

the administration continues to look for qualified candidates to fill top posts. It continues to promise "regular and meaningful" consultation opportunities with Tribes.

"Collaborations are taking place across the board," Teehee said, and mentioned the Department of Interior working with the Department of Education to address educational opportunities in Indian Country that will lead to improvements in public safety, health care and economic development.

Concerning the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007 by the U.N. General Assembly but opposed by the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Australia and New Zealand, in 2009 and 2010, respectively, changed their votes to support the declaration), Teehee said that the administration had charged U.S. agencies involved with internal legal reviews, now ongoing, and remains open to consultation with the Tribes.

"We are winning. We are taking control of our history," said Kevin Gover, director of the Smithsonian's Museum of the American Indian and former Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Clinton administration's Interior Department. "Our version is becoming the accepted view." (See sidebar)

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FCC Special Counsel Lauren Kravetz described the bureaucratic maze into which the congressionally mandated National Broadband Plan has fallen. Drafted earlier this year by FCC staff and delivered to Congress in March, the plan already has been dealt a judicial setback over its effort to achieve a concept known as "net neutrality." (Net neutrality says that Internet providers must provide service without restrictions on any particular group.)

The broadband plan also aims to improve rural health care by enabling specialists from around the world to participate in delivering state-of-the-art medical procedures by teleconference; and it aims to guarantee every American equal access to the Internet.

Before all this happens, however, the plan still has to pass through some 60 FCC rule-making procedures and extensive congressional legislation, said Kravetz.

The plan places a "new focus on Tribal lands," she said, but also acknowledged that the commission does not have enough data on broadband use in Indian Country to make an informed proposal.

Meanwhile, attorney Loretta Tuell (Nez Perce), partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm, Anderson Tuell LLP, encouraged ATNI members to make their voices heard on the 2009 Carcieri Supreme Court decision that ruled that trust lands may only be acquired by the Secretary of Interior under the Indian Reorganization Act for Tribes that were "under federal jurisdiction" in 1934. The way that "under federal jurisdiction" is defined could have a major effect on Tribes across the country.

"One thing that we are certain of," Tuell said, relaying the words of House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Nick J. Ra-

haH, "this decision may result in many frivolous lawsuits being filed to challenge the status of virtually every Tribe."

The words could be defined with an administrative solution, by the courts or by Congress, said Tuell. "It is critical for Indian Country to get Congress to act first," she said.

The conference, designed to develop principles and policies in every area of Indian endeavor, broke into groups each afternoon to hash out policy details on everything from natural resources to Internet gaming.

Yakama Legends Casino's Human Resources Director Phil LaCourse (Yakama) said that pooling resources among Tribal human resources departments could be a good thing.

"There are wonderful resources out there," LaCourse said. "All we need to do is start thinking creatively."

ATNI's Economic Development Corporation Director Mike Burton was doing just that. He said that ATNI is looking into creating a regional employee benefits pool with potentially 40,000 Tribal employees across the region achieving potential savings of \$500,000 a month.

Tribal Elder Betty Bly and Tribal Council member Val Sheker, a former ATNI third vice president, described their travails with Indian Child Welfare services.

"They have the white man thinking," said Shirley Charley (Colville) on the same subject. "We need to fight against rules that non-Natives put in the book."

"They dragged my niece (who had run away from a foster home) down the driveway with her arm bent up behind her like she was a criminal when all she wanted was to live with family," said Jewell James.

Tribal Elder Carolyn Logan prescribed a "return to alternative medicines, learning the old ways to be doctored."

"I'm hearing a lot of frustration," said Don Hatch Jr., a member of the Tulalip Tribal Board of Directors, "but are we just going to talk about it and go home?"

Tribal Elder Cherie Butler followed the Indian Child Welfare discussions day after day.

"They want us to get busy," she said. "Well, I can make a phone call."

She also said that Teehee on

Tribal member and Language and Cultural Specialist Bobby Mercier shows Tulalip Tribal members Jackie Hatch, middle, and Rocio Jack a bag that was woven by a Grand Ronde Tribal member during a tour of the Reservation on Tuesday, May 18. The girls attended the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians' Mid-Year Conference at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center and Tribal member and Self-Governance Coordinator Janell Haller gave them a tour of the Tribal campus.

Gover: 'Our view is becoming the accepted view'

By Ron Karten
Smoke Signals staff writer

Native artists today are "helping Native people reclaim the real history of who we are," says Kevin Gover, director of the National Museum of the American Indian. "We know a different truth," he says.

In remarks before the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians' Mid-Year Conference held May 17-20 at Spirit Mountain Casino and in a separate interview with *Smoke Signals*, Gover described a facility developing a new round of exhibits that will present a deeper look into Native American culture and history.

The museum, he said, is rushing to keep pace with the possibilities of technology as it continues educating a public without much exposure to high art or, surprisingly, the Native view of American history.

"Americans have been misled by an aggressive program of indoctrination," Gover told the group. "We have been defined by others."

Some of the myths include the ideas that the continent the Europeans came to was mostly empty, that Natives they encountered were uncivilized and, by nature, inferior, and that the destruction of the Native peoples was inevitable.

"What happened was not inevitable," he said, "and we have the right to assess the moral judgments" of people who made it happen.

"Columbus, Custer, Andrew Jackson — they are being seen for what they were," said Gover.

"There were as many people in the Americas when the Europeans came as there were in Europe," he said. And far from being uncivilized and inferior, Native Americans were responsible for sustainable developments in agriculture, environmental sciences and food development.

"Native foods now feed 60 per-

cent of the world," said Gover.

And finally, after hundreds of years of indoctrination, "Our view is becoming the accepted view."

In the art world where the museum lives, "People take it on themselves to talk about themselves, to say, 'This is who we are.'"

The museum had its beginnings in 1989, and opened on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C., in 2004. Gover came on to lead the museum in 2008.

"It was a steep learning curve," he said.

Today, the early permanent exhibits are in the process of being replaced.

In the beginning, exhibits made two points: one, that Indians are still here, "which was a surprise" to many of the museum's 2 million annual visitors, said Gover; and, second, "that Indians are very diverse; that knowing about one Tribe tells you little about another, which also came as a surprise to many."

Gover said he foresees "a clearer, edgier presentation" in the years ahead. He sees the museum heading toward presentations "in a more sequential style," with more information about Native American history, its culture and leading up to Native identity today. Much of that story is told with contemporary examples of Native art.

He describes the work of sculptor Brian Jungen (Dunne-za of north-east British Columbia) that the museum embraces as the Native art of today. "He makes totem poles out of old golf bags. He's wonderfully Indian," Gover said. "His work is a



Kevin Gover

comment on consumerism."

"Most people don't expect contemporary art in the museum," said Gover. They are looking for traditional arts like basket weaving, carving and jewelry that the museum also champions.

The museum's curators, however, include the works of several Natives who are forward thinking about Native exhibitions, and the results are likely similar to choices that might be made by classic art historians.

Gover's own tastes go to Southwestern art, where he lived when he was teaching law at Arizona State University. Tony Abeyta (Navajo); Abeyta's sister, Pablita Abeyta (Navajo); Sam English (Ojibwe); and Mateo Romero (Cochiti Pueblo) are among his favorites.

Native art styles are driven, he said, "by the materials available," so Indians in the Northwest make use of plant material available here and are influenced by the colors of those materials.

If the museum hosts some 2 million visitors annually, Gover knows that some 298 million Americans will never likely see the collection in person. As a result, he ponders the best use of today's technologies to bring the museum's gifts to the country.

Part of that outreach translates into school lessons with the Native view of the American Revolution, and environmental sciences, food and agricultural studies for teachers across the country.

"People are proud of the museum, but they would like to see us be more candid and more aggressive in our messaging," he said.

"Congress created this museum a quarter-mile from the Capitol and required that a majority of trustees be Natives. They were saying to us, 'Tell us the truth.'"

"We are chartered to be controversial." ■

the teleconference from the White House "seemed to be on it."

This was the first ATNI conference for Tribal Elder Louise Coulson, who said she came because it was local and convenient, and "I wanted to see it and learn."

Tribal member and Spirit Mountain Community Fund Director Shelley Hanson addressed the conference on Monday at lunch. She described the workings of the

Community Fund and some of what has been accomplished with more than \$50 million that has been distributed so far.

Tribal Elder Charlotte Gray, one of many vendors lining the hall outside of the casino's buffet, said business had been brisk.

"Sales are great, for everybody," said Tribal Elder Pat Allen, also with crafts to sell.

The Grand Ronde Honor Guard,

Canoe Family and Royalty all were on hand to welcome attendees to the conference and, later, to send them on their way, and award-winning musician and Tribal member Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach performed at a welcoming reception on the conference's second evening event.

Tribal Elder and former Chairwoman Kathryn Harrison provided an invocation for the group.

Helping coordinate the event were members of the ATNI Planning Committee, led by Tribal Council Administrative Assistant Lauri Smith and Tribal member and Executive Office Assistant Barbara Mercier.

The Tribal Public Affairs Office, led by Public Affairs Director Siobhan Taylor and her assistant, Tribal member Kristin Ravia, lent a hand.

The Planning Committee also included Tribal Council members and Opal Hale, Spirit Mountain Casino Banquet and Events coordinator. ■



Tribal Elder Betty Bly talks about an Indian Child Welfare issue during a discussion on ICW and Social Services during the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians' Mid-Year Conference at Spirit Mountain Casino's Event Center on Monday, May 17. Waiting to share her thoughts on the topic is Tribal Council member and former ATNI Third Vice President Valorie Sheker.