

MINUTES

IDAHO COUNCIL ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

JUNE 6, 2006

PONDEROSA ROOM
COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE HOTEL AND CASINO, CONVENTION CENTER
WORLEY, IDAHO

(Subject to approval by the Council)

Task Force members present were Senator Michael Jorgenson, Chairman of the Council; Co-chair Chief Allan, Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council Chairman, representing the Coeur d'Alene Tribe; Fort Hall Business Council Chairman Blaine Edmo, representing the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes; Attorney Darren Williams, representing the Nez Perce Tribe; Attorney Russell Westerberg, representing the Kootenai Tribe; Representative George Saylor; and Representative Joseph Cannon. Paige Alan Parker of the Legislative Services Office was present as staff.

Also present were Julie Kane and David Kerrick, representing the Nez Perce Tribe; Bill Roden, Francis SiJohn, Norma J. Peone, Margaret SiJohn, Valerie Fast Horse, Norma Jean Louie, Laura Stensgar, Cliff SiJohn, Ernie SiJohn and Leta Campbell, representing the Coeur d'Alene Tribe; Bill Bacon, Lee Juan Tyler, Delbert Farmer, and Gary Gould, representing the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes; Mark Grannis, representing the Idaho Petroleum Marketers' Association; Mitch Silvers, representing Senator Mike Crapo; Representative Joseph Cannon, representing District 28; Jason Walker, Treasurer of the Northwest Band of Shoshone Nation; Dean A. Ferguson, representing the Lewiston Tribune; and Meghann Coniff, representing the Spokesman-Review.

Chairman Jorgenson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Cliff SiJohn of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe gave the invocation.

Co-chairman Allan introduced Laura Stensgar to provide an overview of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's gaming operation. Ms. Stensgar stated that the tribe takes pride in customer service. The casino has been in operation for thirteen years. The tribe's gaming operations provide jobs and a source of revenue for the tribe's social program. The facility includes the hotel with 207 rooms, an 18 hole championship golf course, over 1,800 gaming machines, off-track betting and bingo on weekends. Many of the facility's guests come from the Tri-cities and Spokane in Washington state and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Buses are used to facilitate transportation for these guests. The tribe also provides regular bus service to Coeur d'Alene to transport tribal members to jobs in Coeur d'Alene and to bring guests to the facility. There are approximately 2,000 tribal members.

In response to Chairman Jorgenson, Ms. Stensgar stated that the casino employs approximately 800 persons during its peak season, with approximately 45% being tribal members. The last expansion of the facility cost in the neighborhood of thirty million dollars, and included expanding the casino and adding 100 hotel rooms and restaurant service. The tribe is planning future expansions. The entire construction and operation has been a tribal operation. No joint venture has been involved. In response to Representative Saylor, Ms. Stensgar noted that the tribe recently contributed \$45,000 to the city of Coeur d'Alene for a new library. The tribe has also continued its pre-gaming compact practice of giving five percent of its gaming revenues to local schools. Close to ten million dollars has been contributed to the schools to date.

Co-chair Allan stated that gaming revenues have also been used for law enforcement, social services and roads. Norma Peone, a member of the Tribal Council for 21 years, informed that the Benewah Medical Center is supported by gaming revenues and is open to non-Indians, along with chunks of these revenues going to children's programs. Due to the gaming revenues, Co-chair Allan said that the tribe can now offer free higher education to tribal members and that he was the first individual to graduate under that program. Since then, the tribe has contributed to the education of tribal members who have graduated as doctors, lawyers and engineers. Leta Campbell stated that the tribe is currently assisting 73 students in colleges and universities being supported by scholarships. Ms. Peone added that 55 of these students are full time with full-ride scholarships. Prior to the full-ride scholarships being added, there were only 12 tribal members attending higher educational institutions.

Tribal Council member Valerie Fast Horse stated that the tribe is using the gaming revenues to provide additional opportunities by diversifying the tribal economy beyond gaming. The tribe is recruiting industries to come to the reservation and is seeking to develop a knowledge based economy. The tribe has a technology center in Plummer, Idaho, which is available to children. The tribe also provides high speed internet service to all residents on the reservation on a fee basis.

Norma Jean Louie, a member of the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council, told the Council that part of the gaming revenues are being used to purchase lands located within the reservation boundaries which were lost to the county when tribal members, who held fee simple title to the lands, were unable to pay the property taxes. Only about 25% of the lands located within the reservation boundaries are owned by tribal members.

Francis SiJohn is the Vice President of the Tribal Council, having served on the Council for approximately eight years. He is also the tribe's planning director. Through tribal support, he was able to obtain an undergraduate degree in planning and is now seeking a master's degree. Gaming has provided the revenue source to provide the services that the tribal members need. The fuel tax is also a revenue source that can be used by the tribe.

Ernie SiJohn stated that he hopes that the Indian Affairs Council can head off the fuel tax issues. Tribal-state relations are important. The dialogue must stay open so that the parties can

stay out of the courts.

In response to Chairman Jorgenson's question, Co-chair Allan stated that over the next five to ten years, the tribe hopes to do bigger and better things. The advances experienced by the tribe are credited to a stable Council which has had the foresight to allow the diversification program to proceed and to expand the tribe's participation in the community. In response to Representative Cannon's question, Ms. Stengar said that the casino has a guest tracking system which indicated that the guests spend between \$20 to \$1,000 during their stay. The golf course has attracted more affluent guests. In response to Representative Salyer, Ms. Peone stated that the tribe is making efforts to preserve its cultural heritage and language, which is still developing.

Chairman Jorgenson asked whether the Coeur d'Alene Tribe was working with and talking to the other tribes. Co-chair Allan responded that the various tribes respect each other, applaud each other's achievements, and join to support common issues such as gaming. Ernie SiJohn listed the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's participation in the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest and in the National Congress of Indians as examples of the tribe's work with other tribes. He added that the Upper Columbia United Tribes work together on traditional issues such as fishing and hunting.

Lee Juan Tyler inquired as to how the Coeur d'Alene Tribe handles its casino. Co-chair Allan commented that the tribe seeks to separate the business of the casino operation from the politics of the Council. Francis SiJohn added that adhering to an organizational chain of command was the key to the tribe's success story.

Representative Salyer reported on the meeting of the Fuel Tax Task Force earlier in the day. The Task Force received reports from the individual tribes regarding the status of their negotiations with the Governor's office. The Task Force also received brief comments from Chairman Jorgenson regarding his role as a conduit with the Governor's office, the format of the proposal to be submitted by the tribes, and the follow up expected by the Governor. Representative Salyer concluded by saying that progress was being made.

Chairman Jorgenson asked the Council's pleasure with regard to scheduling its next meeting. Co-Chair Allan encouraged the Council to meet prior to the next legislative session. After a discussion, the Council agreed to meet next on September 20, 2006, in Lapwai, Idaho, on the Nez Perce Reservation, beginning at 1:00 p.m. The exact location of the meeting will be announced later. A discussion was then held regarding agenda topics for that next meeting. The Council members agreed that the agenda for the next meeting would include: the meth epidemic including the topics of treatment and enforcement (the Coeur d'Alene Tribe will present a 15 minute video and Mr. Parker will contact the Department of Law Enforcement to secure a knowledgeable speaker); the efforts of the Idaho Tribes, through the Council, to support an office of Indian Affairs in the Idaho Department of Education; the allegations that the Blackfoot school district is attempting to exclude Indian children from its schools (Chairman Jorgenson will contact the Blackfoot school district to invite a representative to attend the meeting); and a final status report on the individual tribe's negotiations with the Governor's office on the fuel tax

issue. Chairman Jorgenson will contact the Governor's office to insure that a new representative of that office be appointed to the Indian Affairs Council.

Representative Cannon moved that the minutes of the March 8, 2006, meeting of the Council be approved. Co-chair Allan seconded the motion. Jason Walker requested that his title in those minutes be corrected to reflect that he is the Treasurer of the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation Tribal Council. **With that correction the minutes were unanimously approved.**