

NCAI Sentinel

A Report on Indian Issues

Winter Edition 2004

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From the

President

Tex G. Hall



NCAI Embarks on Crucial Time in History

I want to offer my greetings and thanks to all of the member tribes and individuals of the National Congress of American Indians who came to Albuquerque to join in NCAI's 60th Annual Session. I am pleased and honored to have the opportunity to serve a second term as President of NCAI, and I look forward to working with all of you in advancing the organization's goals over the next two years.

We have a busy year to come, and NCAI is working hard to ensure that the issues of concern to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and individuals are addressed at the national level. This January we are once again issuing a State of Indian Nations Address to coincide with the President's State of the Union Address, highlighting issues of

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The National Congress of American Indians swore in Executive Board Officers during the NCAI's 60th Annual Convention and Tradeshow held Nov. 16-21 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. From left to right are: Ron Allen (Jamestown S'klallam Tribe), Treasurer; Juana Majel (Pauma-Yuima Tribe), Recording Secretary; Tex Hall (Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation), President; and Joe Garcia (San Juan Pueblo), First Vice President.

US Presidential Candidates, Native American Health Day Highlight NCAI's 60th Annual Convention

American Indian power at the polls was the dominating theme at the National Congress of American Indians 60th Annual Convention and Tradeshow in Albuquerque, New Mexico Nov. 16-21. The Convention, themed "Sovereign Nations, One Enduring Voice," was attended by US Presidential hopefuls and saw the release of the NCAI Native Vote 2004 notbook and related materials.

All resolutions passed at the NCAI 60th Annual Convention are available for viewing at the NCAI website -- www.ncai.org

Tex G. Hall, NCAI President, said the goal of the meeting was to promote unity and awareness in Indian Country. He said American Indian tribes must unify as one cohesive force to build stronger government-to-government relations with federal and state agencies in order to shape the future of Indian Country.

"Each and every tribe is its own sovereign entity, but collectively through NCAI

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NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

Jacqueline L. Johnson, Executive Director
John Dossett, General Counsel
Robert Holden, Director, Emergency Management &
Radioactive Waste Programs
R. Aura Kanegis, Director of Operations and Programs
Lillian Sparks, Legislative Associate
Irene Masayeva, Legislative Associate
Adam Bailey, Legislative Associate
Sarah Hicks, Director, Welfare Reform Program
Nketia Agyeman, Office Manager
Jamie Gomez, Convention Coordinator
Jason McCarty, Communications Specialist
Sharon Ivy, Accountant
Janice Caldwell, Accountant
Jaime Loretto, Membership Coordinator
Bernida Humetewa, Development Director
Cherie Ike, NCAI Fellow
Okwaho (James) Washinawatok, NCAI Fellow
Christina Morrow, NCAI Fellow
Sequoyah Simermeyer, NCAI Fellow
Gyasi Ross, NCAI Fellow
Amber Ebarb, NCAI Fellow

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Tribal Leader

GUEST EDITORIAL

Haunani Apoliona,
Chairperson, Office of Hawaiian Affairs

KAKOU: All of us Together

Aloha pumehana kakou (warm greetings to all of us). My name is Haunani Apoliona. I am Native Hawaiian and my family for generations has resided on O‘ahu Island in Hawai‘i. I have been a Trustee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs since 1996 and am beginning my fourth year as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). OHA is a unique, quasi-state entity established in 1978 by amendments to the Hawai‘i State Constitution that were ratified by all voters in Hawai‘i. OHA’s mission is to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians, and nine Trustees elected by all Hawai‘i voters have that fiduciary responsibility and obligation. OHA’s vision is to HO‘OULU LAHUI ALOHA: To Raise a Beloved Nation. I write to thank you on behalf of OHA and all Native Hawaiians for the support you have given us in our struggle for recognition.

Mahalo (thank you) i ke Akua (to our creator and higher power). Mahalo to our ancestors. Mahalo to our Alaska Native and American Indian sisters and brothers who have joined with Native Hawaiians in support of Native Hawaiian self-determination and sovereignty. In prior years and again in 2003, native organizations, tribes, and individuals have acted with unconditional support urging passage of the Native Hawaiian federal recognition bill, to assure Native Hawaiians have parity through U.S. law. The current federal recognition bill, S. 344, expresses the Native Hawaiians’ political status within the United States and the option to seek federal recognition. You have passed resolutions, spoken to members of Congress, and introduced us to native and non-native allies with influence and decision-making authority in Washington, D.C. and throughout the United States. The National Congress of American Indians and Alaska Federation of Natives have included our native leaders, voiced public support for our strategies, taught and joined with Native Hawaiians as ‘ohana (family) at every step of the way, and for this Native Hawaiians will be eternally grateful.

As of January 5, 2004, S. 344, known as the “Akaka Bill,” is pending placement on the calendar for a Senate floor vote. Our U.S. Senators from Hawai‘i, Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inouye, introduced S. 344 in the U.S. Senate, and are working tirelessly for its favorable passage. S. 344 co-sponsors include Senators Ted Stevens (AK), Harry Reid (NV), Orrin Hatch (UT), and Gordon Smith (OR). The House version, H.R. 665 was introduced by Representatives Neil Abercrombie(HI) and Ed Case (HI). Work on getting votes for both bills continues, and I request that individuals (native and non-native), native organizations and tribes continue to email and fax their U.S.

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Haunani Apoliona, Office of Hawaiian Affairs Chairperson, (left) joins NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson during an address to NCAI delegates at the NCAI annual convention.

Senators and Representatives and urge them to support the Akaka Bill.

Native Hawaiians are poised to design a self-determined Native Hawaiian governing entity. Native Hawaiians are mindful that Alaska Natives and American Indians have followed similar paths, even into this century. On January 17, 2004, Native Hawaiians launched an effort to elect Native Hawaiian delegates to come together to design a proposal for a Native Hawaiian governing entity for approval by all Native Hawaiians. We know the development of a Native Hawaiian governing entity will take perseverance and discipline, and that we must always be mindful of the good of the whole.

Success in bettering conditions for all indigenous peoples is best achieved by working together. It is a lesson we continue to learn at home in Hawai'i. And as Native Hawaiians, in our homelands and elsewhere, placing respectful disagreement, honest communication, compassion for the individual and the group, patience, focus on the issues and the goal, counsel from our elders,

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From The Executive Director Jacqueline L. Johnson

As we enter 2004 and the second session of the 108th Congress, we have a great deal to do and a very short legislative year to address the priorities before us. Congress plans to be in session for only 121 days in 2004—and in that brief time they will need to address major appropriations issues, tackle a comprehensive taxation package which leadership plans to advance, reauthorize the laws governing transportation, welfare reform, and Head Start, and complete action on dozens of other priorities which must be addressed before the end of the session or will expire and need to be reintroduced in the 109th Congress.

With a presidential election season before us, partisan politics will be at a fever pitch—making it even more challenging for legislation to advance. In this climate, it will be critical for tribes to be unified and organized in their strategy. If we are to see action in areas such as tribally-driven provisions on trust reorganization, tribes must move quickly to advance a coordinated proposal and call upon members of congress and committee leadership to address our top priorities as early in the session as possible. Legislation such as the Indian Health Care Improvement Act Reauthorization will be difficult to advance without a concerted commitment by congressional leadership early in the session, and tribal provisions within major legislation such as

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concern to tribes and educating the public on contemporary Native nations.

With the U.S. election season swinging into high gear, NCAI's NativeVote2004 initiative will be critical to ensuring that our issues have a place on the national agenda. NCAI will continue its leadership in the Sovereignty Protection Initiative as the Supreme Court considers *U.S. v. Lara* and efforts advance on a number of fronts to preserve and restore tribal jurisdiction on our lands. Trust reform, federal appropriations, and health care and related human needs will remain high on our agenda in the year to come.

NCAI's legislative updates and broadcasts serve as a tool for all of us to join in advancing a united message to Congress and the Administration on issues impacting us all. NCAI accomplishes a great deal of work with a small staff and budget, and it is through the support and engagement of all of our members that we are able to magnify our impact well beyond our size.

I thank you for your support, and for the work that you do as NCAI members to make this organization effective as a united voice for us all. I look forward to serving all of Indian Country as we step forward to face the challenges before us.

Masehgedataz.

discernment and spiritual enlightenment at the forefront as values that guide our work, we will better ensure our success.

Our kupuna (elders) remind us that finding the common ground in our differences is essential for us to move beyond survival into flourishing together. Together we can set aside fears, greed and lack of information that have caused attacks from others in the form of litigation and detrimental changes in laws and policies to separate, undermine and terminate indigenous peoples, their self-determination, rights, homelands and culture. Indigenous peoples are one with their higher power, ancestors, families, communities, homelands, environment, traditions and culture, and flourish when balanced by these aspects of life and the world.

Working together collectively - families, communities, peoples - is the core of our native cultures. Native peoples do not flourish and move forward strongly when we are divided into factions and our spirituality is disturbed. It is imperative to keep informed and stand up to be counted as natives of our homelands. Native people must and will continue to influence public policy if each of us votes in every possible 2004 election.

"Political activism" must continue and should not just be saved for elections. From 2004 going forward, it is just as essential that we listen and be guided by our na'au, our ancestral soul, to find the ways to work together every day, even as we may differ about the best way to achieve sovereignty, preserve our precious culture and homelands, and flourish. All of us together, "kakou", must continue to move forward and advance...not recede.

State of Indian Nations Address Available at NCAI Website

Tex G. Hall, President of the National Congress of American Indians, will deliver the second annual NCAI address taking stock of the state of American Indian and Alaska Native nations in the U.S. on January 21st at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

The address, advanced in tandem with President Bush's State of the Union address, is designed to relay to the President and the general public a comprehensive, contemporary picture of the challenges and opportunities before today's American Indian and Alaska Native nations.

The address focuses on a theme of understanding tribal governance, and is scheduled to be delivered following oral arguments at the Supreme Court in *U.S. v. Lara*, a case with critically important implications for both tribal self-government and public safety in Indian country. Building upon themes laid forth in last year's inaugural State of the Indian Nations Address, these will remarks advance concrete examples of the critical impacts of tribal governance on key areas of education, health care, infrastructure, and law enforcement, and offer solutions for addressing the core quality of life issues tribes are facing in their communities today.

The address will be available for download from the NCAI website, www.ncai.org, after January 21.

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those sovereign voices can and do unify to send one clear message,” said Hall. “The development of a strategy responsive to ongoing attacks on tribal sovereignty must have a unified front in order to establish an agenda for creating open dialogues with federal and state government agencies, especially in the wake of critical issues facing Indian tribes.”

Hall Re-elected NCAI President

Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, was sworn in to another two-year term as NCAI President on the final day of NCAI’s 60th Annual Convention.

“I am very honored to continue the hard work and successes NCAI has accomplished in the past two years,” said Hall, who won his first term as president in 2001. “I look forward to providing proactive leadership to the nation’s oldest and largest American Indian organization as we move forward in the battle for tribal sovereignty protection, trust reform, and federal appropriations.”

Also earning re-election bids were NCAI First Vice President Joe Garcia of the San Juan Pueblo and NCAI Recording Secretary Juana Majel of the Pauma-Yuima Tribe. Former NCAI President Ron Allen was elected to the position of Treasurer.

Allen is the chairman of the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe.

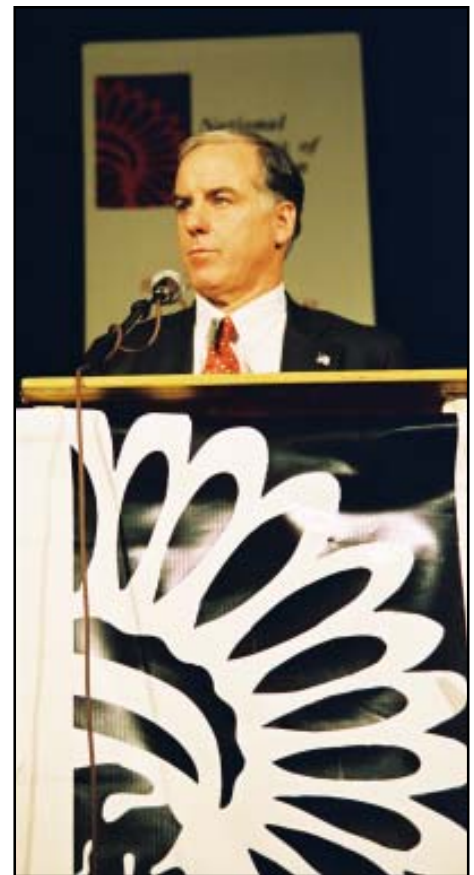
US Presidential Hopefuls Address NCAI Delegates

Democratic Presidential candidates and representatives from the Bush Administration addressed the NCAI’s delegation about their vision and platform for issues facing Indian Country. Among the Presidential hopefuls to address the general assembly were Governor Howard Dean, General Wesley Clark, and Congressman Dennis Kucinich (OH); Senator John Kerry (MA) joined the annual session via live satellite feed. Congressman Richard Gephardt (MO) addressed NCAI in a taped conversation with NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson, and Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT) gave a taped address.

Kucinich was the first presidential candidate to address the opening session of NCAI, pledging to reaffirm tribal sovereignty.

“When you don’t respect sovereignty, it leads to exploitation,” Kucinich told delegates. “There are billions of dollars owed to the tribes. I intend to see this country keeps its agreements.”

Retired General Wesley Clark addressed the issue of Homeland Security. He told NCAI that tribes are responsible for hundreds of miles



US Presidential Candidate Howard Dean addresses delegates during the NCAI Annual Meeting in Albuquerque. “Traveling across the country during this campaign, I’ve met so many Americans who are struggling. The truth is, the government is only working for the interests of a privileged few and the people are being left behind. In tribal communities, it’s been happening for 200 years,” Dean said.

of borders, missile sites, power plants, dams and other likely targets for terrorist attacks.

“So for the life of me, I cannot understand why the federal government has given first responder funding to states and municipalities, but hasn’t given a single penny of this funding directly to tribal governments.”

Clark promised, if elected president, to fight for equitable funding and full consultation with tribal governments on homeland security.

Gov. Dean began his address to NCAI with assurances that previous reports

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Walkers carry rally signs advocating healthy lifestyles for American Indians. The First Annual Native American Health and Fitness Day was organized by the NCAI, the Indian Health Service, and Nike to raise awareness of the health disparities faced by American Indians.



that he is opposed to Indian gaming are not true, saying, “tribes are not special interest groups, but sovereign governments that deserve to be treated with dignity and respect,” Dean said.

Dean made a specific promise in relation to the trust fund litigation and the loss of billions in trust fund dollars.

“I will settle Cobell in the first two years of my administration,” Dean said of the Cobell vs. Norton federal lawsuit.

“Too many Native American communities are lagging behind and it is because the United States has not followed through on promised services. President Bush’s administration has created an environment that undermines America’s forward progress,” Dean said. “He has allowed the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, and the Administration for Native Americans to languish for months without leadership. This has fostered challenges to the sovereign rights of tribal governments, which undercuts a tribe’s ability to provide for the well-being of its people. The attack on tribal sovereignty must stop.”

Senator Kerry joined NCAI by satellite from Washington, DC and took questions from attendees. He said the Bush administration destroyed the good work of the Clinton administration, which brought justice for American Indians.

Speaking as a war veteran and war protestor, Kerry criticized the Bush agenda, saying the it is tied to special interest groups.

“I’m proud I led the fight we won to stop drilling in the Arctic National Wilderness,” Kerry said. “I remember



Prairie Island Tribe Makes Donation to Defend Sovereignty

NCAI Executive Director Jaqueline Johnson (left) and NCAI President Tex Hall accept a \$100,000 gift from the Prairie Island Indian Community, based in Minnesota. Presenting the check are former Prairie Island Indian Community President Audrey Bennet (second from left) and current President Doreen Hagen. The donation is one of the largest in NCAI history and will support the continuation of NCAI’s critical work in 2004.

the struggle of Wounded Knee and Mount Rushmore and Russell Means.”

NCAI Hosts National Native American Health and Fitness Day

Hundreds of NCAI participants took a break from the various business efforts of the day to participate in the first annual Native American Health and Fitness Day. The “Wellness Walk” was led by Dr. Charles Grim, Director of the Indian Health Service, NCAI President Tex Hall, and Native American professional golfer Notah Begay.

Problems with Indian health care were highlighted in the NCAI general assembly. Grim pointed to statistics showing that Indians are disparately impacted by diabetes, cancer, and a range of other health risks. He noted that the average life expectancy of Indians is 71, six years less than other Americans.

Hall said the walk allowed leaders the chance to “walk the talk” and demonstrate the importance of regular physical activity. All walkers received Nike hats and socks for participating.

“We hope the National Native American Health and Fitness Day can help to motivate many of our community members on their personal path toward wellness,” Hall said. “Building healthier lifestyles takes more than a one-time effort—NCAI will be standing with tribes to promote a variety of community wellness programs and events over the next year.”

At the 2004 NCAI Annual Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, NCAI, the IHS, and Nike plan to host a special recognition for those that have achieved their community and personal goals.



photo: Bob Rubin/NativeAmeriCom

NCAI President Tex Hall joins the parents of Army Specialist Lori Ann Piestewa, Terry and Percy Piestewa, during a tribute to American Indian veterans. Hall praised Piestewa, calling her a true American hero. "Lori Piestewa is a stellar example of the courage and dignity demonstrated by American Indian soldiers in the United States armed forces throughout this country's history. Her sacrifice will not be forgotten."

Veterans Honored At 60th Annual Convention

A tribute to American Indian and Alaska Native veterans, including tribal members currently serving in the armed services, was part of the opening ceremonies at the 60th Annual NCAI Convention and Tradeshow. More than 20 tribes were represented among the Color Guard coordinated by the Southern Ute Veterans Association.

An NCAI proclamation was read by President Tex Hall honoring Hopi tribal member Army Specialist Lori Ann Piestewa, who was killed in Iraq, and all Native American fallen warriors. Sadly, during the NCAI Convention, tribal leaders were informed of the death of Army Pfc. Sheldon Hawk Eagle, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, who also was serving in Iraq. Specialist Piestewa was the first Native American woman to die in combat in the service of the United States. Her parents, Percy and Terry Piestewa, spoke to the General Assembly about the courage, pride, and humility of their daughter. A flyover at the Albuquerque Convention Center in honor of Pfc. Piestewa by the 150th Wing Squadron, Kirtland Air Force Base, took place during the NCAI First General Assembly. At the time of her death, Spec. Piestewa held the rank of Private First Class, but was promoted posthumously to Army Specialist.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman and NCAI Executive Board Member Harold Frazier called Pfc. Hawk Eagle, an Army Ranger who served in the 101st Airborne Division, "a hero who defended our country and protected our freedom."

transportation and welfare reform reauthorization will be challenging to address in a sea of controversial issues on these broader measures.

We will also need to work hard to address appropriations shortfalls—with the U.S. Civil Rights Commission's clear documentation of a "quiet crisis" afoot in diminishing federal funding for its trust commitments to tribes, we have an important opportunity to bring attention to the budget crisis we have experienced for years. We must also remain vigilant for a new round of legislative riders on appropriations bills—particularly any resurfacing of the troubling riders seen in the FY04 budget process which would have seriously damaged funding mechanisms for tribes in Alaska, setting a terrible precedent for tribes nationwide.

NCAI's Executive Council Winter Session in February will provide an excellent opportunity for tribal leaders and advocates to visit with members of congress and weigh in on issues of concern to tribes. With the President's budget set to be released in late January, the Winter Session will be a particularly critical window of time for visiting with budget and appropriations committee members to highlight tribal priority concerns for the FY05 budget.

NCAI's Native Vote 2004 campaign is now in full swing with the election year upon us, working to put the local foundations in place to ensure that we are ready to generate strong voter turn out in Indian Country. We are also working to address any potential barriers to voting rights now, so that these do not become impediments to the ability of tribal members to exercise their right to vote in November.

I urge all of you to join us in Washington the week of February 23 to attend NCAI's Executive Council Winter Session and participate in visits with your congressional delegation and other key members of congress while you are in Washington to ensure that your voice is heard in the din of this busy legislative session. I also encourage all tribes who have not yet become engaged in Native Vote 2004 efforts to do so—exercising tribal muscle in the 2004 elections will be one very important way to make our voices heard in Washington in they years to come.



- ATTENTION -



National Congress of American Indians Executive Council Winter Session

February 23-25, 2004

Registration begins on Monday, February 23 8:30 a.m.

First General Assembly begins on Monday, February 23 at 1p.m.

All meetings and General Assemblies will be held at the Host Hotel:

Wyndham Washington D.C. Hotel

1400 M. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
202.429.1700 Phone
202.728.0530 fax

Reservations can be made by calling 1.800.996.3426 or visiting www.wyndham.com and referring to group code, "NCAI". Make your hotel Reservations before January 29, 2004 to receive Room Block Rates.
NCAI Room Rate is \$150

DRAFT AGENDA IN BRIEF

Monday, February 23

8:30am-5:30pm	Registration
8:30am-5:30pm	Rules & Credentials
9:00am-Noon	Effective Lobbying Workshop
1:00-4:30pm	1st General Assembly

Tuesday, February 24

8:30am-5:30pm	Registration
8:30am-5:30pm	Rules & Credentials
9:00am-Noon	Scheduled Hill Visits
1:00-5:00pm	2nd General Assembly
7:00-10:00pm	NCAI 5th Annual Leadership Awards Banquet

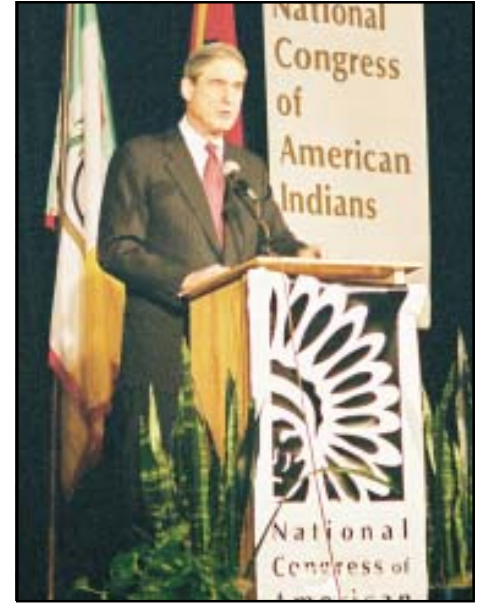
Wednesday, February 25

8:30am-Noon	Registration
8:30am-Noon	Rules & Credentials
9:00am-1:00pm	3rd General Assembly
1:00pm	Adjournment
1:00-5:30pm	Scheduled Hill Visits

Highlights from the NCAI Annual Convention



photo: Bob Rubin/NativeAmeriCom



Robert Mueller, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, addresses tribal delegates on the need for increased Homeland Security efforts in Indian Country. Mueller stressed the need for tribal and federal officers to work cohesively in solving crimes in Indian Country. Mueller's appearance marked the first time a director of the FBI addressed an NCAI assembly.

Retired Four-Star General and candidate for US President Wesley Clark shows the blanket bestowed to him by NCAI after his address to the NCAI Convention. Joining Clark is NCAI Eastern Oklahoma Area Vice President Jefferson Keel, Lieutenant Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. During his speech Clark memorialized American Indian Code Talkers from each war and slain soldiers Lori Piestewa and Sheldon Hawk Eagle. "You serve this nation with honor," Clark told American Indians. Clark said the United States, however, has not returned the honor. Instead, the United States has denied Indian nations the resources due to them.



Rep. Richard Pombo, chair of the House Resources Committee, (left) speaks with NCAI attendees during a break in the General Assembly schedule. During his address to NCAI delegates, Pombo stressed the need for improved government-to-government relations by highlighting the incident when the Narragansett Tribe's smokeshop was raided by Rhode Island police. "I would apologize that we allowed that situation to degenerate as bad as it did before we stepped in. Under my watch, I will be vigilant and make sure we don't allow that to happen again."



photo: Bob Rubin/NativeAmeriCom

Department of the Interior Representative Aurene Martin relays information on trust reorganization during the NCAI meeting in Albuquerque.



NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson rallies walkers at the First Annual Native American Health and Fitness Day. Johnson said the walk, sponsored by NCAI, IHS and Nike, was a tremendous success. "So much of our cultural, social, and economic well being is dependent on our individual and collective physical and behavioral health," Johnson said. More than 500 walkers participated in the 3K and 1K walk during the NCAI meeting.



Juana Majel, of the Pauma-Yuima Band of Luiseno Indians, takes the oath of office for NCAI Recording Secretary. During the convention Majel rallied support for tribal communities in California whose lands were devastated by wildland fires. Several tribes and organizations, including NCAI, made pledges ranging from donated goods to substantial financial contributions. The Grand Traverse Band of Chippewa Indians donated \$10,000 for relief efforts, and the Prairie Island Indian Community made a donation of \$2 million for tribal members who had lost homes and all personal belongings. Fourteen of the 18 reservations in San Diego County were crippled by home and vital infrastructure loss, and wildfires left almost 30,000 acres of destroyed tribal land in their wake. The California Nations Indian Gaming Association has created a disaster fund to help the tribes. For more information call 916-448-8706.



Elsie Meeks, member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, addresses members of the media on the shortcomings of federal funding for American Indian programs highlighted in the Commission's report, "A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country", which found that the lack of federal funding has been a key factor in perpetuating the high poverty and unemployment rates, low high school and college graduation rates, shorter life expectancy, and higher rates of disease and illness that plague Indian Country.



photo: Bob Rubin/NativeAmeriCom

Tex Hall unveils a bumper sticker that reads, "I'm Indian and I Vote," produced in conjunction with the NCAI's Native Vote 2004 campaign. Joining Hall is Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), a US Presidential Candidate. NCAI's Native Vote 2004 campaign was a central theme of the NCAI Annual Convention. Stickers, buttons, and Native Vote information notebooks were distributed in the NCAI general assembly. For more information on Native Vote 2004, or to order any of the Native Vote materials, visit www.nativevote.org.



Richard West, director of National Museum of the American Indian, gives an update on the museum's opening, which is scheduled to take place in September of 2004. NCAI is taking a large role in coordinating the events surrounding the museum's opening.

New Miss NCAI Is Crowned

Cheryl Dixon, Isleta Pueblo, was crowned Miss NCAI at the National Congress of American Indians Annual Convention and Tradeshow held recently held in New Mexico. Dixon is the 36th Native American woman to serve as Miss NCAI. She attends the University of New Mexico and is majoring in Biology/English and pursuing a pre-medicine degree. Dixon is a fluent speaker of her language and an active community member. The message she plans to champion in the upcoming year is “sustaining education in American Indian communities” throughout Indian Country.

Twelve contestants from across the country competed for the title. Prior to pageant night, the contestants competed in an essay competition, were interviewed by a panel of judges, and made several public appearances. The frist runner-up was Barbara Lynn Abrams from the Seneca Nation in New York and the Best Talent award went to Maurisa Red Deer Two Two from the Tohono O’odham Nation. Miss Congeniality was awarded to Tiffany Dawn Stuart from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in Oregon.

Dixon will represent NCAI and Indian Nations as a youth role model, educator, and ambassador, and was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship to help meet her educational goals.

The Miss NCAI Scholarship Pageant was created to recognize outstanding young Indian women and was first held in 1968 making it the longest running pageant for American Indian women. The Miss NCAI Pageant focuses on both traditional and contemporary knowledge of tribal culture, government, current tribal issues, and the current challenges that face American Indian Nations.

Pageant coordinator Alyssa Burhans said the pageant is a means of highlighting tribal cultures. “Miss NCAI is selected on the basis of her knowledge of tribal government, culture and history, her concerned interest in conditions affecting the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native governments and people, as well as scholastic achievement, communication, presentation, and personality.”



Miss NCAI Cheryl Dixon is a 19-year-old student at the University of New Mexico.

Finding Legislative

Information on the Web

NCAI.....www.ncai.org
Information on legislation effecting Indian Country.

THOMAS.....www.thomas.loc.gov
A comprehensive legislative information site maintained by the Library of Congress.

House of Reps.....www.house.gov
Schedule information and links to Member, Committee, and Leadership Offices.

Senate.....www.senate.gov
Schedule information and links to Member, Committee, and Leadership Offices.

White House.....www.whitehouse.gov
Links to Executive Branch agencies, press releases, and document database.

Other Sources of Legislative, Governmental, and Political Information:

C-SPAN
www.c-span.org

Washington Post Political Section
www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/politics

Federal Consumer Information Center
www.info.gov

Political Information
www.politicalinformation.com

Senate Committee On Indian Affairs
www.indian.senate.gov

CNN/Time Political News and Info
www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS

CQ’s Campaigns and Elections site
www.campaignline.com

Speak Out Political Activism Center
www.speakout.com



Native Vote 2004 Every Vote Counts

On November 2, 2004, American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and individuals will have a historic opportunity to step forward and reclaim control of their own destinies with the power of the Native Vote.

Recognizing the critical importance of Election Day 2004, the Native Vote 2004 campaign, a non-partisan effort spearheaded by the National Congress of American Indians, is working to coordinate Native voter education and mobilization efforts on a national, state, and tribal level.

Now is the time to begin grassroots mobilization for the 2004 campaign cycle, and NCAI is gearing up for these efforts in collaboration with regional organizations, local tribal governments, centers serving urban Indian populations, and non-governmental organizations that focus on democracy initiatives. Candidate forums and events also offer unique opportunities for individuals to raise issues of concern to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and individuals before the public and those who seek to lead our country.

Native Vote 2004 is working to ensure

that Indian Country is ready to exercise its strength in this exciting election year.

On February 3rd, several primaries and caucuses will take place in states that have large Native populations. From Arizona to Oklahoma, this will be the first nationwide test of Native Vote turn-out in 2004.

Voters eligible to participate in these Democratic primary races should take this important opportunity to ensure that Native voices are heard at the polls. While there is no Republican primary challenge, there is still a great deal of work to be done by GOP voters in raising the profile of issues impacting tribes in anticipation of the Republican convention later this year.

In the wake of an NCAI Annual Convention that featured nearly all of the major Presidential candidates in person or via satellite, NCAI is, in conjunction with the Mohegan Tribe, updating its NativeVote.org website. The update to NativeVote.org will enable NCAI to communicate more closely with Tribes and individuals and will help to ensure that tribes and individuals can more easily navigate

the increased amount of content within a more accessible interface. The update will become active in the near future; in the meantime, however, there is still plenty of useful information pertaining to the upcoming primaries nationwide.

NCAI is also continuing its efforts to distribute Native Vote 2004 notebooks, bumper stickers, buttons, and posters. The Native Vote 2004 notebooks were created and compiled by NCAI staff and were distributed to individual tribal delegates at the November NCAI Annual Sessions. Native Vote 2004 buttons, bumper stickers, and posters are now available for bulk ordering by tribes, schools, organizations, and individuals. Consider creative ways to use these tools to raise the profile of Native voters in 2004.

On January 8, 2004, Holly Cook, Native Vote 2004 Co-Chair, and Cheryl Dixon, Miss NCAI 2004, will participate on a panel at the College Conference 2004 in Manchester, New Hampshire.

For more information on NV'04 or NCAI initiatives, please contact Lillian Sparks at lsparks@ncai.org, or call (202) 466-7767.

Omnibus Appropriations Unfinished as Congress Wraps Up First Session

The First Session of the 108th Congress drew to a close with a flurry of last minute activity prior to the holiday recess. Congress passed numerous measures on unanimous consent, but could not reach consensus on the \$820 billion Omnibus Appropriations bill for FY 2004, which was crafted behind closed doors to address the seven most controversial FY 2004 appropriations bills yet to be addressed.

Several provisions in the omnibus adversely affect tribes—particularly Alaska tribes. One provision of concern would establish an Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission. A panel of tribal, state, and federal officials would be charged with making recommendations about a “unified law enforcement system, court system, and system of local laws or ordinances for Alaska Native villages and communities of varying sizes including the possibility of first, second, and third class villages with different powers.” The commission would be comprised of only three representatives from the Alaska Native community out of nine total representatives, despite the focus on issues directly impacting Alaska tribes and Alaska Native people.

This language, advanced by Senator Ted Stevens (AK), replaces an earlier rider that would have denied federal funding to tribal courts and justice systems. The new provision denies funding to tribes with less than 25 members and those located within a list of seven municipalities and boroughs. It also requires a General Accounting Office (GAO) study on how Alaska Natives receive

Issues UPDATE

Senate Passes PACT Act

In December 2003, the Senate passed S. 1177, the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking Act, with Tribal Exclusions. S. 1177 is intended to address concerns over the sale of tax free cigarettes over the internet, but amends the Jenkins Act and the Contraband Cigarette Trafficking Act in ways that will impact all tobacco sales in and out of Indian country. The bill, as originally reported by the Senate Judiciary Committee in July, gave broad new enforcement powers to state governments and would have included Indian tribes within the scope of state enforcement powers. The legislation has had broad support for its goals and has been heading for the fast track since early in the year.

Tribes objected to the new provisions for state enforcement that would violate fundamental principles of federal Indian law, would impair tribes’ ability to collect revenue from cigarette taxes, and could upset the tax compacts and agreements that tribes have worked hard to create in many states. (See NCAI Resolution ABQ-03-087). The Senate Committees on Judiciary and Indian Affairs, along with the National Association of Attorneys General, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, tribal governments and NCAI worked to develop changes in the bill language to address tribal concerns. While concerns remain, these efforts resulted in several improvements to the bill. Specifically, the bill now ensures tribal sovereign immunity and Section 9 of the bill provides (in summary) that nothing in the Act will affect, amend, or modify:

- (1) any agreements or compacts or State laws that authorize such agreements;
- (2) any limitations under existing Federal law on state tax and regulatory authority in Indian country;
- (3) any existing Federal law, including Federal common law and treaties, regarding State jurisdiction, or lack thereof, over any Tribe, tribal members or tribal reservations; and
- (4) any existing State or local government authority to bring enforcement actions against persons located in Indian Country.

Even with these changes, tribes remained concerned that the legislation has not had the benefit of hearings, and are troubled by uncertainty in the tribal exclusions language and the listing provisions for noncompliant delivery sellers. NCAI continued to urge further amendments and ask for hearings, but with the bulk of tribal concerns addressed by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs approved amendments, the legislation was adopted by unanimous consent in the Senate.

Consideration of this issue will turn to the House of Representatives next year and similar legislation, H.R. 2824, which is sponsored by Representative Mark Green (R-WI). This bill is more limited in its scope than S. 1177, but it has similar problems with state enforcement and tribal jurisdiction. A key question is whether the House will push its own version of the bill or consent to the Senate version. NCAI will continue to address this bill in the coming year and we would encourage tribal leaders to communicate with their Representatives in the House about the concerns listed in NCAI Resolution ABQ-03-087 (available at www.ncai.org).

Transportation Reauthorization Update

Four months after the expiration of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21), Congress has yet to complete work on reauthorization of this measure governing the nation's transportation infrastructure. In the Senate, S. 1072 (SAFETEA) has been advanced by Senators Inhofe, Reid, McConnell, and Jeffords. In the House, HR 3550 (TEA-LU) has been introduced by Representative Young. S.1072 was reported out of the Environment and Public Works Committee and placed on the calendar of the Senate on January 9, 2004. By most accounts from committee staff, the bill will go to the floor of the Senate in the first week of February. There is some talk that the bill will make it to the floor, but will fall to a point of order on the Budget Act because the committees of jurisdiction have not devised a way to pay for the programs in the bill.

NCAI and tribal transportation officials are working with bill managers to change parts of the Senate Bill that are in opposition to tribal priorities. Advocates are working with committee staff to include several no-cost provisions such as relief from the obligation limitation, direct contracting, and advanced funding for tribal projects, and we are optimistic about these efforts.

Unfortunately, funding authorization levels for the IRR program in the Senate bill are to be set at \$300 million for the first year after enactment, with moderate increases each year through FY08. For the first few years of the authorization, several changes to the funding mechanism for tribal transportation included in the mark for SAFETEA would actually result in a decreased authorization level. The current language would provide \$15 million for the reservation bridge program, around \$25 million for the obligation limitation, and \$22.5 million for administrative funds for BIA and Federal Highways. That would leave Indian Country with only \$237.5 million in direct funding for Indian Reservation Roads in FY04—\$37.5 million less than the current authorized level for the IRR program, and \$52.5 million less than the level appropriated in fiscal year 2002.

Other provisions in the Senate are good for the IRR program, however. The bill clarifies the level of administrative expenses the BIA is permitted to expend, extends eligibility for bridge pre-construction activities to come out of IRR funds, and dedicated funding for safety projects on IRR roads.

The current House version of the bill provides for much more funding for the IRR program than the Senate version. The IRR program would receive \$375,000,000 for fiscal year 2004, \$425,000,000 for fiscal year 2005, \$475,000,000 for fiscal year 2006, \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2007, and \$550,000,000 for fiscal years 2008 and 2009. However, there are no specific set-asides for ancillary IRR programs such as maintenance, planning, bridges, or administrative funds. Thus, the house numbers will presumably be subject to the same takedowns as the Senate version.

The House version of the bill also includes funds for tribal transportation bonds, extends contracting authority (PL 93-638) to DOT, creates a deputy assistant secretary for tribal transportation in the Department of transportation, and provides a process for determining the inventory of roads in the Alaska region. However, the House bill is still under committee consideration, and is still relatively malleable. Committee staffers indicate that the House aims to complete action on the bill in late spring. For more information on transportation reauthorization, contact Adam Bailey at NCAI at abailey@ncai.org.

Anderson Confirmed As Assistant Secretary For Indian Affairs

On November 9, 2003, the Senate confirmed David Anderson to the position of Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Mr. Anderson, a Choctaw and Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa who is from Minnesota, will head the Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Senate confirmation vote for Anderson was tied to a partisan debate on whether to approve controversial judicial nominations also made by President Bush. The final vote for Mr. Anderson's confirmation was unanimous with no objections. Lawmakers praised Mr. Anderson's nomination and expressed their desire to support him in his new post.

During the Senate Committee's October 22 hearing on Anderson's nomination, Anderson and those who testified on his behalf expressed his strong commitment to improve the quality of life for Native American youth.

"Mr. Anderson has a great deal of experience as a businessman and entrepreneur, and tribes are looking forward to hearing his insights on opportunities for economic development in Indian country,"
— NCAI President Tex Hall

Anderson, whose philanthropic efforts include leadership programs for Indian youth, stated to the Committee that problems of alcoholism, suicide, and drop out rates in Indian Country "are not because the federal government is non-responsive or that the BIA is inefficient, but because many of our youth are growing up without hope

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federal funds.

Other significantly troubling language in the measure would treat Alaska Native corporations as tribes for purposes of certain funding streams. The bill states that the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) should consult with the ANC corporations.

On December 8, the House adopted the omnibus appropriations conference report by a vote of 242-176. Some GOP conservatives criticized the spending levels and earmarks in the massive measure, while Democrats protested the GOP leadership's decision not to extend unemployment benefits for jobless workers whose regular 26 weeks of benefits are ending and a range of other provisions added by leadership that were not included in either the House or Senate-passed appropriations measures that were drawn together in the omnibus conference report.

On December 9, Senate leaders delayed final consideration of the fiscal 2004 omnibus appropriations package (HR 2673) until late January, despite requests for action from the White House. Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN) filed a cloture motion to limit debate on the measure, with a vote set for Jan. 20, the day Congress reconvenes for the second session. As expected, Minority Leader Tom Daschle (SD) objected to Frist's unanimous consent request that the Senate clear the omnibus without a roll call vote.

When Congress returns, it is expected to take up a controversial corporate tax bill, HR 2896, in addition to the Omnibus appropriations measure.

NCAI to Conduct Emergency Preparedness Training

The National Congress of American Indians has scheduled a Tribal Response/Emergency Preparedness (TREP) Training Workshop the week of March 1, 2004 at the Mississippi Choctaw Indian Reservation.

The TREP Workshop is conducted with the assistance of professional Hazardous Materials and Emergency Preparedness trainers, and will focus on developing and enhancing comprehensive tribal comprehensive emergency response plans. The 3 ½ day TREP Planning and preparedness training will include response to natural and manmade hazards and incidents; weapons of mass destruction and a terrorism; pre-disaster mitigation planning; a limited exercise and exercise evaluation; and, tribal government rights and responsibilities.

The NCAI has arranged for participants successfully completing the program to receive HAZMAT Awareness certification from the University of Illinois Fire Service Institute. The NCAI has conducted this program for several years and more than 190 tribal officials have received Hazmat Awareness certification.

The TREP Training Session will be held at the Mississippi Choctaw Pearl River Resort. Acceptance will be on a first-come, first-served basis, with a view to national participation.

The NCAI TREP Training Session is supported by the Xavier University (New Orleans) Center for Environmental Programs, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the Department of Homeland Security through a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Cooperative Agreement between the NCAI and FEMA. For application forms or further information, please contact Robert Holden at the NCAI, (phone) 202.466.7767, (e-mail) rholden@ncai.org.

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of living lives of achievement or accomplishment." Anderson also spoke passionately about the need for the BIA to assist in innovative and positive economic development in Indian Country. During his testimony, Anderson refrained from making any comments on the current trust reform issues that include the Department's reorganization.



David Anderson

Anderson brings prior business experience as well as his philanthropic efforts in Indian Country to the BIA. His

previous experience includes his business success as the owner and founder of the national restaurant chain *Famous Dave's of America*. Anderson also has experience as a gaming compact negotiator and an investor in gaming enterprises that include a casino on the Mille Lacs Reservation. Anderson testified to the Senate Committee in October that if he gained appointment he would resolve any conflicts of interest between the position and his former activity in gaming enterprises before he would begin work with the BIA.

To find out more information about Anderson's October testimony before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs visit the Senate Committee's webpage and download testimony from past hearings at <http://indian.senate.gov/mainpage.htm>.



Sakakawea Statue Dedicated in U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall

In October a statue of Sakakawea was unveiled in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol Building. NCAI President and Chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, Tex G. Hall called the special ceremony "a great honor for the indigenous people of this great nation, because it highlights the contributions that we all have made to our country's history. She will stand there on behalf of all tribal people."

Two hundred years ago,
Sakakawea, a young Hidatsa
woman, accompanied

Merriwether Lewis and William

Clark on their "Voyage of Discovery" from the Knife River Indian Villages to the Pacific coast and back. She was instrumental in the success of the journey and was the only member of the group that was not compensated.

She is the first Native American woman to be honored in Statuary Hall, a collection of statues donated by each state to honor notable people and their place in history. The collection consists of 97 statues contributed by 50 states. North Dakota joins 47 other states with two statues in the Hall, leaving only Nevada and New Mexico with one each.

Hall said Congressman Earl Pomeroy (ND) proposed the state's second statue be dedicated to Sakakawea and her infant Jean Baptiste. He secured a special exemption to have the two-person statue in the Statuary Hall.

"Our young people need heroes and Sakakawea is indeed our hero. Now the world will learn of her strength, her knowledge, and the many contributions she made to the Lewis and Clark expedition."

More Dedication Photos on Page 19

NCAI

**Future Conference Dates
Mark Your Calendar!**

2004

Executive Council Winter Session

February 23-25, 2004
Wyndham Washington D.C.
1400 M Street
Washington, D.C. 20005
202.429.1700

Mid-Year Session

June 20 - 23, 2004

Mohegan Sun
1 Mohegan Sun Blvd
Uncasville, CT
877.204.7100

61st Annual Session

October 10-15, 2004
(Pre-U.S. Presidential Election Meeting)
Greater Ft. Lauderdale
Convention Center
1950 Eisenhower Blvd.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316

2005

Executive Council Winter Session

February 28 - March 2, 2005
Wyndham Washington D.C.
1400 M Street
Washington, D.C. 20005
202.429.1700

Mid-Year Session

June, 2005

Oneida, WI
To Be Announced

62nd Annual Session

November, 2005
To Be Announced

National Holiday Sought to Honor Native American Contributions to the U.S.

By Tex Hall, NCAI President and Ernie Stevens Jr., NIGA Chairman for *Indian Country Today*

As the first Americans, Native Americans have a proud story of perseverance and achievement. We have an important place both in the history of the United States and in the governmental framework of the Nation. It is time that the United States designate a national holiday to honor Native Americans and our contributions to America. To honor our Indian nations, our grandfathers and grandmothers, and the contributions of Native American people from yesterday and today, we call upon Congress and the President to designate the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day.

Before Columbus, our Indian nations had made remarkable artistic, scientific, political and cultural achievements. For example, in the 1400s, Cahokia, the Native American city that was located near present-day St. Louis, was larger than London was in its day. Through generations of agriculture, Native American peoples developed staple crops, including corn, beans, squash, tomatoes, potatoes, and peppers, that make up 60 percent of the food found on tables throughout the world today. Our Indian nations were among the first to recognize the status of women as political leaders, and the Founding Fathers came to the Six Nations Confederacy in New York to learn about our unique system of democratic confederacy, with our system of divided powers and checks and balances. They used the lessons they learned there in framing the Constitution of the United States.

In times of need, our Native American

We believe that the President, the Congress, and the American people should honor ALL that Native Americans have done to shape the fabric of the United States. The right way to do that is to designate a day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, as Native American Heritage Day to honor Native American contributions - past and present - to the life of the nation.

people were there to teach essential skills to the newcomers from Europe and later, the leaders of the United States. The Thanksgiving story tells of Squanto and Massasoit who shared the bounty of their lands with the Pilgrims to help them survive their first difficult years. The story of the American Revolution reflects an important alliance with Indian nations. George Washington and his starving troops at Valley Forge may not have survived the harsh winter were it not for the Oneida Nation who brought them food and essential supplies. The story of Lewis and Clark, who explored the West, is also the story of Sakakawea, the young Indian woman, who served as their ambassador of peace and friendship to the Indian nations. The story of Ulysses Grant and the Civil War is also the story of his aide, Ely Parker, a Seneca Indian attorney who made history by writing the terms of the final Confederate surrender. The story of the World Wars is also the story of the code talkers from the Navajo Nation and other Indian nations. And, the story of Iwo Jima is also the story of Ira

Hayes, the Pima Indian soldier, who helped raise the United States flag on Mt. Suribachi. Last spring, Native Americans and all Americans honored Lori Piestewa, a Hopi Indian soldier and the first American woman who died in combat defending the United States. Last week, we honored Sheldon Hawk Eagle, a Cheyenne River Sioux soldier, who died in a helicopter crash in Iraq. Our Native American story of friendship and aid to our great nation has been repeated down to the present, as our Native American sons and daughters continue to join the United States military to defend our nation at the highest per-capita rate of any group in America's history.

There is also the story of our long struggle to maintain our original right to self-government and our unique culture and traditions in the face of adversity and forced assimilation. There were as many as 20 million Native Americans in North America when Columbus landed, yet at the dawn of the 20th century, only 250,000 of our people had survived the genocide, plagues of small pox and cholera, forced relocation, and the scourge of warfare as the United States hungered for our lands. Yet, with the help of our patriot chiefs, Pontiac, Tecumseh, Red Jacket, Osceola, Red Cloud, Crazy Horse, Chief Joseph, Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Four Bears, and others, we survived. And, today our Native American peoples continue to live according to

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our traditions and culture. Today, our Indian nations continue to strive for a better life for our people through our original, inherent right to self-government as partners in the federal family of governments.

Thanksgiving should be about giving thanks, but too often the history of Native Americans is reduced to a short story about a feast with the pilgrims. We believe that the President, the Congress, and the American people should honor ALL that Native Americans have done to shape the fabric of the United States. The right way to do that is to designate a day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, as Native American Heritage Day to honor Native American contributions - past and present - to the life of the nation.

Tex Hall is the president of the National Congress of American Indians. He was re-elected to serve a second two-year term during NCAI's 60th Annual Convention held in November in Albuquerque, N.M. Hall is also the chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation in Fort Berthold, North Dakota.

Ernie Stevens Jr., a member of the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, is the chairman and spokesman of the National Indian Gaming Association in Washington, D.C. His work involves protecting and enhancing the sovereignty of Indian Nations and their right to conduct gaming as a means for economic development.

Visit Our Website at
<http://www.ncai.org>



Above: Members of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation of North Dakota, including Chairman Tex Hall (center, on horse) celebrate the dedication of a statue memorializing Sakakawea in front of the US Capitol Building. Joining tribal members is North Dakota Congressman Earl Pomeroy (left), North Dakota Governor John Hoeven (second from right) and National Indian Gaming Association Chairman Ernie Stevens (right). Below: Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation tribal members inside the US Capitol Building.



Membership and Contribution Form

I would like to support the continuing work and purpose of the National Congress of American Indians.

I am willing to make a tax deductible contribution of:
_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ Other

I want to become a member of the National Congress of American Indians:
_____ \$40 Indian Individual Member _____ \$500 Associate Organization
_____ \$40 Associate Member (non-Indian) _____ \$1,000 Lifetime Member

Name _____

Tribe or Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Telephone - Home _____ **Office** _____

E-Mail Address _____

- Make Contribution Checks Payable to: **NCAI Fund, Inc.** Make Membership Checks Payable to: **NCAI Congress**
- Mailing Address: **NCAI**, 1301 Connecticut Ave., NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20036
- For more information, please call our office at 202.466-7767 or fax to 202.466-7797



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