



National Congress of American Indians

Sovereignty in Action

76TH ANNUAL CONVENTION & MARKETPLACE

NCAI 76th Annual Convention & Marketplace Wrap Up Newsletter

Albuquerque, NM | Albuquerque Convention Center

Sunday, October 20

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 76th Annual Convention & Marketplace kicked off on Sunday, October 21, 2019 in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Albuquerque Convention Center. Several task force and workshop meetings were conducted, including the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Tribal Broadcast Radio and Broadband Spectrum Workshop and an all-day civic engagement workshop featuring working sessions on Native Vote and Census Complete Count.

Monday, October 21

On Monday, the agenda kicked off with multiple concurrent breakout sessions in the morning, including the first of the “Train the Trainer” workshops held by Bank of America and Google. The Marketplace Grand Opening Celebration was held at lunch complete with singers and drummers for the ribbon cutting, led by NCAI Treasurer W. Ron Allen. Monday afternoon the First General Assembly was called to order by NCAI President Jefferson Keel. Local officials took the podium first to welcome attendees to Albuquerque. Mayor Timothy Keller and the State of New Mexico Indian Affairs Department Cabinet Secretary Lynn Trujillo both spoke about New Mexico’s commitment and leadership in championing the government-to-government relationship between the state and tribal nations.

“We are trying to lift up our community for everyone,” said Keller. “We celebrate that diversity every day.”



NCAI President Keel speaking at the FCC Tribal Broadcast Radio and Broadband Spectrum Workshop.



Albuquerque Mayor Timothy Keller



Marketplace Grand Opening with NCAI Treasurer W. Ron Allen



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NCAI Rules and Credential Committee Chair Yvonne Oberly and NCAI Resolutions Committee Chair Sandra Eichelberg announced the rules of the convention and reviewed the resolutions process. President Keel then provided the NCAI President's Address and Kevin Allis provided the Chief Executive Officer's Report. A last and first for both Keel and Allis, respectively, and each of them touched on the past and the future with a special recognition for Juanita Ahtone. President Keel honored the NCAI matriarch in his remarks and mentioned something she said to him years ago that "still sticks with him" now:

"Things don't happen because I'm a good little Kiowa sitting at home, or whatever tribe you are sitting there. It doesn't happen. Somebody makes it happen. Who? A group of people get together and they work together," Ahtone told Keel. "They have common needs, and they say, 'Let's get together and let's find out how we're going to provide for these needs.'"

Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney, Department of the Interior, closed out the First General Assembly with her remarks and took questions from the floor. Tribal leaders shared the most important issues in their communities. For example, Alaska is facing rising tides and a lack of food resources due to climate change.

The remainder of the afternoon was reserved for Full Committee Meetings held from 4:15 - 6:00 p.m. to allow for discussion time for tribal leaders to talk through the issues most important to their communities. The night ended with a packed Welcome Reception featuring the Isleta Pueblo Children's Dance Group.



NCAI President Keel honored NCAI matriarch Juanita Ahtone during the President's Address.



Juanita Ahtone memorial video played at General Assembly.



The Isleta Pueblo Children's Dance Group at the Welcome Reception hosted by the 76th Annual Local Planning Committee.



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Tuesday, October 22

Tuesday started with early morning Regional Caucus Meetings and the Second General Assembly which was called to order by 1st Vice President Aaron Payment. Following the invocation, NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women Co-Chairs, Juana Majel-Dixon and Michelle Demmert led an event where female tribal leaders were presented with red shawls that read "Sovereignty & Native Women's Safety" and male tribal leaders were presented with red ribbons. The Co-chairs called on all tribal leaders and citizens to join in the efforts to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act with enhanced protections for tribal women, children, and police officers.

Next, IllumiNative Executive Director Crystal Echo Hawk and Wend Collective Director of Indigenous People's Initiatives Jodi Archambault took the stage to highlight the new report [*Becoming Visible: A Landscape Analysis of State Efforts to Provide Native American Education for All*](#) that was completed in collaboration with NCAI about the current state of Native American education in all K-12 schools.

The American Red Cross Tribal Relations Lead and Division Disaster State Relations Director Chele Rider provided an update regarding the partnerships between the Red Cross and tribal nations. Following her remarks Ms. Rider and NCAI CEO Kevin Allis renewed the NCAI and Red Cross Memorandum of Understanding, which include updated provisions that increase tribal nations' access to culturally appropriate disaster trainings, plans, and much more.

Taking a pause from the order of business, the General Assembly crowd took a moment to honor two people who have given a lifetime of service to Indian Country – Fredericks



NCAI 1st Vice President Aaron Payment called the Second General Assembly to order.



Red shawl demonstration in support of reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act and in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.



NCAI CEO Kevin Allis and The Red Cross Tribal Relations Lead and Division Disaster State Relations Director Chele Rider sign the NCAI & Red Cross MOU, which included language on disaster preparedness on tribal lands.



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Peebles & Patterson LLP Partner Thomas Fredricks and NCAI Office Manager Nketia Agyeman.

Chairperson Jamie Stuck from Nottawwaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi then presented to the Second General Assembly on the public education strides of his community to bring forward Native history and representation to surrounding communities. Then leadership from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) asked an important question:

“If you could bring high speed to your land, school, business, every structure, every building on your tribal lands...would you do it?” said FCC Deputy Bureau Chief and Chief of Staff Dana Shaffer when she announced the new tribal-specific Spectrum broadband program and encouraged all tribal leaders in the room to contact her at ruraltribalwindow@fcc.gov.

Civic engagement was up next, and the topic of choice was Census and Native Vote.

“[The Census] is safe, secure, and protected by law,” said U.S. Census Bureau Director Dr. Steven Dillingham and he stressed the importance of partnerships in achieving a successful complete count in the 2020 Census.

NCAI’s Vice President of Research Dr. Yvette Roubideaux said: “We need to be counted and we need accurate data.” during her overview of the Indian Country Counts campaign during the Second General Assembly.

Four Directions Co-Executive Director OJ Semans discussed the Native Vote grassroots movement and resources available for the upcoming 2020 Native Vote campaign.



Chairperson Jamie Stuck from Nottawwaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi presenting on public education.



FCC Deputy Bureau Chief and Chief of Staff Dana Shaffer announced the new tribal-specific Spectrum broadband program.



NCAI’s Dr. Yvette Roubideaux giving an update on the 2020 Census Indian Country Counts Campaign.



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Indian Country Today Editor Mark Trahan presented on the Native Vote landscape following the 2018 election and the strides taken by Native elected officials in state legislatures around the country.

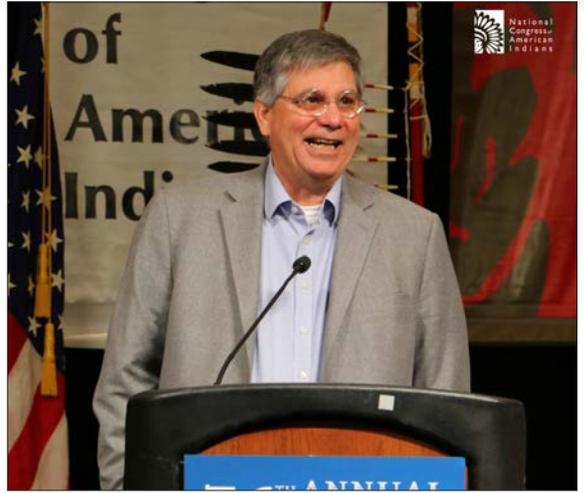
Moving into the topic area of health care, Principal Deputy Director Rear Admiral (RADM) Michael D. Weahkee spoke to the Second General Assembly about actions being taken in the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Indian Country and outreach being conducted with at-risk community members.

Tribal leader discussion followed the RADM Weahkee's remarks and then attendees transitioned to the sold out Youth Honoring Luncheon where National Indian Gaming Association Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr. gave out the Youth Leadership Awards.

The afternoon Concurrent Breakout Sessions and the "Grow with Google" Train-the-Trainer Workshops were at full capacity. New to this convention, Subcommittee Meetings started earlier in the afternoon to allow more time for tribal leaders to conduct business as a Congress. The sold-out Gala Banquet rounded out the evening featuring Navajo songstress Radmilla Cody as the headlining entertainment.

Wednesday, October 23

The energy was palpable on Wednesday morning as attendees gathered outside of the Albuquerque Convention Center for the 15th Annual National Native American Health & Fitness Walk, Run, Rally co-hosted by the Indian Health Service, and Nike N7, and NCAI. Special musical guest, Emcee One, was spinning tunes at the DJ booth and got everyone moving for the day.



Mark Trahan, Editor of Indian Country Today, gave an update on the impact of the Native Vote since the 2018 election.



Youth Honoring Luncheon presentation by National Indian Gaming Association Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr.



Grow with Google "Train-the-Trainers" Workshops.



Sold-out Gala Banquet.



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Also new to this convention, the Regional Caucus Meetings started later at 9:00 a.m. and then the Third General Assembly was called to order by NCAI Recording Secretary Juana Majel-Dixon.

In a surprise appearance, two 2020 Presidential Candidates provided remarks. Montana Governor Steve Bullock gave remarks in person and attendees heard from Senator Kamala Harris via a video message introduced by Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians Tribal Chairman Mark Macarro.

Keith Anderson, Vice Chairman of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, then presented NCAI with a check for \$100,000 to help support and advance NCAI's work.

Stressing the continued investment into public health professionals in Indian Country, Dr. Robert Burnette challenged tribal nations to donate \$1,000 each to educational sponsorships to assist Native students in the medical field during his NCAI Native Graduate Health Fellowship update.

U.S. Minority Business Development Agency Expert Carolee Wenderoth introduced her office's body of work at the Office of Native American Business Development as a resource to Indian Country economic development.

NCAI Elections Committee Co-Chair Patrick Anderson then opened the floor for nominations of candidates running for the NCAI Executive Committee for the positions of President, 1st Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer.

There were a total of four nominations for the office of President, four nominations for the office of 1st Vice President, two nominations for the office of Recording Secretary, and



The 15th Annual National Native American Health & Fitness Walk, Run, Rally. Participants crossing the finish line.



Vice Chairman, Keith Anderson of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, presented NCAI with a check for \$100,00 to help support and advance NCAI's work.



Dr. Robert Burnette challenged tribal nations to donate \$1,000 each to educational sponsorships to assist Native students.



U.S. Minority Business Development Agency Expert Carolee Wenderoth speaking during the Third General Assembly.

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one nomination for the office of Treasurer. Since there were no opposing nominations for Treasurer, the Congress elected Clinton Lageson, Tribal Council Treasurer, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, as the next NCAI Treasurer by unanimous voice vote.

Following candidate speeches, the Third General Assembly came to a close.

The afternoon included eight Concurrent Breakout Sessions that were followed by Subcommittee Meetings that again started earlier than in past meetings to allow more time for discussion. The evening ended with the annual Cultural Night hosted by the Local Planning Committee featuring an artist demonstration and dance groups from the Dine Nation and Zuni Pueblo.

Thursday, October 24

NCAI Executive Board Elections were held on Thursday morning and members in good standing lined up to cast their votes.

The Fourth General Assembly was called to order by NCAI Treasurer W. Ron Allen. Following the invocation, partner organization reports were given by their respective representatives. The NCAI Youth Commission Report was presented by Co-Presidents Sophie Tiger and Rory Wheeler.

“We are not a social circle. We are a working body of NCAI,” said Tiger.

UNITY, Inc. Co-President Brittany McKane and Southeast Representative Kierra Toya provided their annual report to the congress followed by the Tribal Supreme Court Project Update by Native American Rights Fund (NARF)



NCAI Elections Committee Co-Chair Patrick Anderson opened the floor for nominations for candidates running for NCAI Executive Board.



NCAI Treasurer W. Ron Allen called the Fourth General Assembly to order.



NCAI Youth Commission Co-Presidents Sophie Tiger and Rory Wheeler presented the Youth Commission Report.



UNITY, Inc. Co-President Brittany McKane and Southeast Representative Kierra Toya provided their annual report at the Fourth General Assembly.

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Executive Director John Echohawk, NARF Staff Attorney Dan Lewerenz, and NCAI General Counsel Derrick Beetso.

The following partner organizations also provided their reports: Native American Finance Officers Association, American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Indian Education Association, National Indian Health Board, and the National Indian Gaming Association.

Election results were in by the end of the partner organization reports with the additional call for a run-off for the 1st Vice President seat. Elections were concluded by the end of the Fourth General Assembly and the results were read out by the NCAI Election Committee Co-Chair Patrick Anderson. The newly elected Administrative Officers provided remarks.

While some enjoyed a meal and entertainment at the Elders' Honoring Luncheon, Kevin Allis hosted the first ever NCAI CEO Town Hall Meeting. He addressed key topics and invited all members to visit the Embassy of Tribal Nations in Washington, DC on their next visit.

Final Committee Meetings ended the day with recommendations on all resolutions for consideration ready for the following morning in the General Assembly.

Friday, October 25

The Fifth General Assembly started with a memorial video honoring those community members who have walked on in the last year. NCAI Treasurer W. Ron Allen gave the Treasurer's Report which was adopted by unanimous voice vote by the congress.



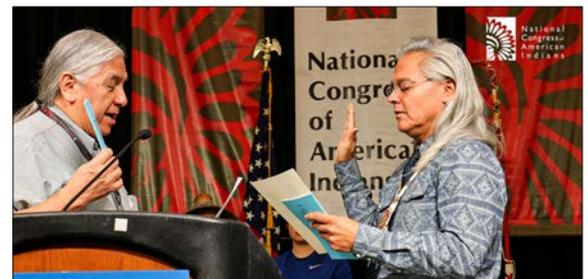
NCAI CEO, Kevin Allis answered questions from the audience during the first NCAI CEO Townhall Meeting.



Friday began with the honoring of those community members who had walked on in the past year.



NCAI President-elect, Fawn Sharp.



Re-elected NCAI 1st Vice-President Aaron Payment.



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Elections Committee Co-Chairs Yvonne Oberly and Patrick Anderson then swore in the NCAI Executive Committee Administrative Officers including NCAI President Fawn Sharp (Quinault Nation), 1st Vice President Aaron Payment (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians), Secretary Juana Majel-Dixon (Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians), and Clinton Lageson (Kenaitze Indian Tribe). The NCAI Regional Vice Presidents and Alternates were then sworn into office.

Final resolutions were then brought to the floor for discussion and voting. A total of 61 resolutions and 3 amended resolutions were passed by unanimous consent after a discussion on the floor.

Prior to the closing of the Fifth General Assembly, a special tribute was held by the family of Juanita Ahtone on the main stage where stories, memories, tears, and laughter were shared by the room that honored a great lady who left a lasting impression on the organization.

Please visit www.ncai.org for a full list of the Executive Committee, Resolutions, future dates, and more.



Re-elected NCAI Secretary, Juana Majel-Dixon.



NCAI Treasurer-elect, Clinton Lageson.



Newly elected NCAI Regional Vice Presidents.



Newly elected NCAI Regional Vice President Alternates.



Fawn Sharp delivered her first remarks as NCAI President.



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NCAI Youth Commission

The NCAI Youth Commission had a jam-packed schedule to support the group in their capacity as a working body of NCAI. The Youth began the week learning leadership skills from Jeri Brunoe (Youth Trainer Extraordinaire), as well as participated in overviews of the Resolutions and Committee meeting processes. Throughout the week, Youth focused on college and career readiness, heard updates on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), participated in an Elder and Youth roundtable discussion, and attended the annual Youth Honoring Luncheon. In addition, the Youth were able to partake in a session focused on the importance of ensuring Indian Country is visible and our voices are heard through the Native Vote and Indian Country Counts campaign. As part of the census session, special guest artist Steven Paul Judd (Kiowa/Choctaw) led special art projects, which included creating customized stickers and painting a collective tile canvas, as fun and innovative ways to show why Natives count. To round out the week, the youth engaged in a strategic session to outline their priorities for 2020.



National Indian Gaming Association Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr. presented the Ernie Stevens Jr. Award during the Youth Honoring Luncheon to Destini Reynaud, Kaylee Schuyler and Sam Schimmel.



Guest artist Steven Paul Judd educates youth on the importance of a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census.



Youth Commission Tile Art Project with Steven Paul Judd.



Youth Commission "I count because..." Sticker Project with Steven Paul Judd.



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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS, ATTENDEES, VOLUNTEERS, AND SPEAKERS FOR MAKING THE NCAI 76TH ANNUAL CONVENTION & MARKETPLACE A SUCCESS!



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