



Securing Our Future

NCAI Mid Year Conference

June 24-27, 2013

Reno, Nevada

On Tuesday, President Jefferson Keel addressed the General Assembly delegates by reminding them that in order to secure a future for Native people, “our resolve must be even more focused, and our unified voices even louder.” President Keel encouraged the audience to become even more proactive and engage on important issues in order to protect our communities and our children.

Earlier that morning the United States Supreme Court upheld the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in a 5-4 decision in *Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl*. However, they reversed and remanded the case back to the South Carolina Courts. President Keel addressed the morning’s news with a statement, “Today’s decision sends a clear message that there is no question of ICWA’s role as the most important law to protect Native children and families. The decision also affirms Congressional authority to protect Indian children. We remain committed to Native families and we will continue to support Dusten Brown’s fight for his rights as a father and for Veronica to remain with her loving father, grandparents, and community.”

President Keel concluded his speech emphasizing that the work we do during the conference and throughout the year is a critical component in our future success and that success wouldn’t be possible without the partnership with tribal communities.

Mark Trahant, independent journalist who will soon join the University of Alaska Anchorage as the Atwood Journalism Chair, continued the message of securing the future in his keynote speech by reminding the audience of the importance of investing in the youth of Indian Country. He also stressed the need “to rally our voters as if our entire future depended on the outcome. There is nothing more powerful than dedicated, community, Native activists.”



NCAI Youth

NCAI Youth Commission Draws Large Crowds

NCAI Youth Commissioners hosted nearly 30 young Native leaders throughout the week. During their daily meetings, the youth heard about the newest initiatives, including a new bereavement project by the Center for Native American Youth and a leadership initiative by George Washington University.

Youth Commissioners also participated as panelists, bringing youth voices to the broader debates of NCAI, especially around youth financial literacy. Additionally, young leaders spent time planning for their next meeting in Tulsa, OK, to continually improve the youth agenda.

Please continue to follow the Youth Commission on Facebook and NCAI's website for updates about their session at the 70th NCAI Annual Convention in Tulsa, OK.

Google Mapping

As a follow up to the 2012 NCAI Google Tools Summit, hosted at Google's Mountain View headquarters in conjunction with the NCAI Annual Convention, NCAI worked with Google to schedule our first official MapUp. A MapUp is an event where a group of people come together to improve the places they know and love on Google Maps by using Google Map Maker.

Over 60 youth – and the young at heart – gathered at a Monday pre-meeting, hosted by our friends at Google. The event provided youth with an introduction to the Map Maker tool and showed them how Map Maker has put communities on the map around the globe.

Lori Savegeau from Google provided a presentation introducing Map Maker and the impact of putting your community on the map. Map Maker is a tool that allows anyone to take ownership of how their communities are represented on Google Maps, Google Earth and Google Maps for Mobile. It allows you to add to, edit, and improve your local maps by mapping tribal

offices, medical facilities, local roads, and everything in between!

After seeing how it was done, youth took to their computers and started submitting map edits. One group shared how poorly mapped roads affect how firefighters and other first responders are able to respond to emergencies. Another youth mapped ATM locations in their community, and another added the local names to roads that previously only had the Bureau of Indian Affairs names.

Young people left the session with a better understanding of mapping, a sense of the difference they could make in their communities, and a cool Google soccer ball! NCAI's Tribal Technology Taskforce will continue to work with Google – and other partners in the tech world – to ensure Indian Country is equipped to succeed in the 21st century.

Indigenous Mapping Day is August 9, 2013. Visit this site to sign up: <https://sites.google.com/site/mapyourworldcommunity/indigenous-mapping>



Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum

The Eighth Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum began with a dynamic panel of three innovative approaches to growing economic development in tribes, including: a discussion of an Indigenous community development fund, an effort to establish a creative economy based on arts, and an initiative to establish sustainable tribal housing. Chairman Melendez (eno-Sparks Indian Colony) and Councilman Joe Garcia (Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo) gave tribal leader responses focused on the “entrepreneurial spirit” of Native peoples and the need to plan for change by fostering synergy between business and political development. The lunchtime poster session featured exciting projects exploring topics as diverse as tissue donation, surveying at-risk youth, tribal indicators in the US Census, researching historical trauma, and community indicators in economic planning.

Afternoon sessions were filled with large crowds made up of tribal leaders, youth, culture bearers, Elders, and university-based researchers. The Advancing Health from Within session featured tribal youth presenting on an extreme sports program; emerging Native scholars sharing about their journeys; and presentations on tribal-

university partnerships that included a role play between an outside researcher and tribal leader that got the crowd fired up. The Measuring Success in Native Education session focused on core content standards; discussions about how to center culture amidst rapidly changing national science policy; and efforts to link health with education. Tribal leaders emphasized the importance of culturally-based education and science innovation within Native communities.

The Agriculture, Water, and Timber: Stewarding Our Natural Resources session featured discussion about a sustainable model for managing natural resources like food resources and energy; two presentations that focused on climate change, including local Pyramid Lake Paiute and a partnership between university researchers and American Indian Higher Education Consortium that is using a MOOC (massive open online course) to engage tribal college students in research on climate change; and another focused on the status of Indian forests that referenced new research and the importance of the Our Natural Resources alliance to bring together tribes and intertribal organizations. In the discussion, there were questions focused on how to get young people engaged in natural resource management.

Voting Rights

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court issued a decision in *Shelby v. Holder*, which determined that the formula found in Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) is unconstitutional. That section identified certain states and counties with historical records of discrimination against voters, and compelled them in Section 5 of the VRA to seek approval from the Department of Justice or a DC court before making any changes to their voting laws. To be a “preclearance” jurisdiction under Section 4 of the VRA, a state or county must have once required some form of a voting test or device (e.g., literary tests) which correlated to extremely low minority voter turnout. There are nine states that were covered by Section 4 and more than 50 counties.

The Court ultimately held that discriminatory practices in elections are no longer present to the degree that permits the Federal government to impede on state sovereignty in an unfair and unreasonable manner. NCAI will continue to monitor developments in voting rights and it will be increasingly more critical for tribes and their citizens to engage in Native Vote at all levels – increased voter registrations and turnout, data gathering, and election protection.



Affordable Care Act

First ACA Tribal Employer Responsibility Session Hosted at NCAI

The National Indian Health Outreach and Education Initiative – a partnership between the National Congress of American Indians, National Indian Health Board, and National Council of Urban Indian Health – hosted the first Affordable Care Act Tribal Employer Responsibility Session on Monday, June 27, 2013.

As new provisions of the Affordable Care Act are implemented in 2014, there are many responsibilities for tribal governments, entities, and businesses to provide quality and affordable health insurance coverage. There are no exemptions for tribal governments or businesses, however there are some tax credits and specialty opportunities for small tribal businesses. As Indian Country prepares for 2014, tribal governments must be ready to enroll individuals in insurance marketplaces, to provide insurance, and to expand their revenues through third party billing.

To find additional information please visit www.tribalhealthcare.org.

Patchak Patch

On Monday, June 24, Assistant Secretary Kevin Washburn held a consultation with tribal leaders on the “Patchak Patch.” This proposed amendment to the land to trust regulations is a reaction to last year’s Supreme Court decision in *Patchak v. Salazar*, which held that the Quiet Title Act does not bar opposing parties from challenging a land to trust acquisition. Patchak created the possibility that legal challenges could be filed up to six years after land is acquired in trust.

NCAI President Jefferson Keel petitioned the Department of Interior to change their regulations and require parties opposing a land to trust acquisition to exhaust administrative remedies before contesting in federal court, filing any appeal within 30 days as required by 25 CFR Part 2. The proposed amendment is in direct response. At the consultation, the reaction from tribal leadership was positive. This amendment will bring greater certainty for the vast majority of trust land acquisitions.

Tribal leaders also voiced the continuing need to streamline the process of land to trust. Ninety-nine percent of land to trust acquisitions have no controversy, are never appealed, and they take too

long. Tribal leaders also called for continuing efforts on legislation from Congress on the Carcieri Fix and the need for an amendment to the Quiet Title Act.

The proposed amendment can be found in the Federal Register from May 29, 2013. It has a 60-day notice and comment period, and comments are due by July 29, 2013.



White House Council on Native American Affairs

The Council has been a top priority of tribal leaders from the very earliest days of the Obama Administration. At the NCAI Annual Convention in 2009, anticipating the first annual White House Tribal Nations Summit, the membership of NCAI passed resolution PSP-09-008 "Reaffirmation of the Nation-to-Nation Relationship." The resolution called upon the President to establish an Executive Branch Nation-to-Nation Council chaired by the Secretary of the Interior.

In 2012, following the President's successful reelection campaign, NCAI urged the President to "Create an Interagency Native Policy Council" as one of nine transformative actions that would strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship

On Wednesday, June 26, President Obama established by Executive Order the White House Council on Native American Affairs.

"This order establishes a national policy to ensure Federal Government engages in a true and lasting government-to-government relationship with federally recognized tribes in a more coordinated and effective manner, including by carrying out its trust responsibilities.

This policy is established as a means of promoting and sustaining prosperous and resilient tribal communities. Greater engagement and meaningful consultation with tribes is of paramount importance in developing any policies affecting tribal nations.

Department of Interior, Secretary Sally Jewell addresses Tribal Leaders

On Thursday, Secretary Jewell spoke for the first time at a tribal nations' conference since being confirmed in April. The Secretary gave a heartfelt speech after listening to tribal leaders' concerns, telling the audience "I can't reverse all of that in a four year period of time, but I can make important progress."

Secretary Jewell noted that President Obama and former Secretary Ken Salazar "opened a new chapter" in relations with tribal nations and she promised to "keep that chapter open" and "take it to the next level."

While giving more detail on the Executive Order announced the day before, the Secretary pledged to advocate on behalf of the tribes by stating "You know better than any of us do what you need in your tribes and communities."

The Secretary drew applause from the packed general assembly when she touched on education. "We want to partner with you not only on bringing a strong academically rigorous education but culturally appropriate education that you direct."

If you didn't attend this year's Mid Year Conference you missed:

- More than 200 tribal nation
- Two welcoming cultural celebrations with dancing, karaoke, and a packed powwow event
- Nearly 100 youth leaders networking with each other
- Key federal announcements related to health, child welfare, and Native affairs
- Sold out trade show
- Cross-region sharing about best practices
- Intertribal coordination around key policy initiatives
- Over 40 Resolutions passed

For more information please visit <http://www.ncai.org>



A special thank you to Christian Gomez who took many of the photos for this publication. To find more of Christian and NCAI's photos, visit <http://www.Flickr.com/NCAI>