



— TOWARD A —

NEW ERA

• ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011 •



National
Congress of
American
Indians

*“We stand at the beginning of
a new era for Indian Country,
and for tribal relations with
the United States.”*

- 2011 State of Indian Nations Address, Delivered by NCAI President Jefferson Keel



ABOUT NCAI

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians serves the broad interests of tribal governments and communities. As a representative congress of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, we are united to advance policy and programs that:

- Protect and enhance treaty and sovereign rights;
- Secure our traditional laws, cultures, and ways of life for our descendants;
- Promote a common understanding of the rightful place of tribes in the family of American governments; and
- Improve the quality of life for Native communities and peoples.

NCAI is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization. By advocating for strong tribal nations, we strengthen the United States of America.

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NOVEMBER 2010



NCAI President Calls for Indian Country to Get Out the Native Vote

President Keel releases an audio PSA to encourage Indian Country to Get Out the Native Vote.



67th Annual Convention: Strong Tribal Nations, Strong America

The Southwest region hosted the 67th Annual Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Convention speakers emphasized the important role of tribes in building a stronger nation.



White House Announces Tribal Nations Summit

Attendees of the NCAI Annual Convention learn of the next White House Tribal Nations Summit. Planning sessions followed in the days after.



Cobell Settlement Signed into Law

Elouise Cobell meets with President Obama after he signed the Claims Resettlement Act of 2010.

JANUARY 2011



Murkowski Delivers Congressional Response

Senator Lisa Murkowski, whose reelection reflected the power of the Native Vote, delivers the Congressional response to the 2011 State of Indian Nations.



NCAI Releases Indian Country Budget Request

NCAI's 2011 Indian Country Budget Request outlined the fiscal needs of tribal nations to support crucial services and programs for Native communities.



One Year Mark of Indian Health Care Improvement Act

NCAI, the National Indian Health Board, and the Indian Health Service release the report, "Moving Indian Country Forward: Health Care Reform One Year Later."



NCAI Executive Council Winter Session

Former Senator Byron Dorgan (ND) speaks at the NCAI Executive Council Winter Session.

MAY



Keel Honors Native Veterans at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

President Keel and Native veterans present a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Memorial Day 2011.



NCAI Helps to Launch *Let's Move!* in Indian Country at White House

First Lady Michelle Obama, President Keel and Native youth plant the "three sisters" in the White House kitchen garden.



NCAI Delegation Attends Australian Indigenous Congress

NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson Pata gives a keynote address at the inaugural meeting of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples.



Mid Year Conference: Native Resources

Conference focuses on tribal cultures and the economy. The 6th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum hosted by NCAI's Policy Research Center was one of the many highlights.

AUGUST



NCAI States Opposition to Keystone XL Pipeline

NCAI expresses tribal opposition to the Keystone XL Tar Sands Oil Pipeline, and calls for energy demand to be met by responsible energy development.



White House Native American Business Leaders Roundtable Discussion

Tribal leaders shared ideas on ways to bolster economic development, while seeking guidance from tribal business leaders with expertise in economic development and job training.



NCAI Launches National Tribal Communicators Network

The network was launched to support communications professionals and those performing public relations work in Indian Country.



Amazon Indigenous Leaders Visit Embassy

Sheyla Juruna, a leader of the Juruna Indigenous people of the Xingu River Basin visited NCAI to discuss the construction and opposition to the Belo Monte Dam in Brazil.

SEPTEMBER



NCAI Hosts Tribal Leader Summit Preparatory Strategy Meetings

In days leading up to the Tribal Nations Summit, NCAI and regional intertribal organizations brought together tribal leaders to establish a unified vision for Indian Country.

Photo by Tami A. Heilemann-DOI



President Obama Holds Direct Talks at White House

President Obama meets with 12 tribal leaders in advance of the 2010 White House Tribal Nations Summit.

Photo by Pete Souza-White House



Obama Announces Support for UN Declaration

During his opening remarks at the second White House Tribal Nations Summit, the President announces support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Photo by Tami A. Heilemann-DOI



State of Indian Nations Address

NCAI President Jefferson Keel delivers the 2011 State of Indian Nations Address from the Newsweek television studio in Washington, D.C.

APRIL



Indian Country Leadership Awards Announced

Billy Frank, Jr., advocate of tribal treaty rights and natural resources, was one of five recipients to receive a Native American Leadership Award.



Native Nations Tribal Leaders Tax Summit

Sponsored by USET, NCAI, and ATNI, the Tax Summit at Miccosukee brought tribal leaders together to discuss tribal economic independence and develop an economic development strategy.



First Meeting of the Indian Law and Order Commission

The Indian Law and Order Commission, established in 2010 with the signing of the Tribal Law & Order Act, plays a critical role in implementation of the law.

MAY



Department of Energy Summit

With assistance from NCAI, the U.S. Department of Energy hosted tribal leaders from 54 tribes to address critical energy and environmental issues in Indian Country.

Photo Credit: Department of Energy

JULY



Carcieri Rally on Capitol Hill

Tribal leaders gather on Capitol Hill to rally against the *Carcieri v. Salazar* decision.



International Indigenous Summit on Energy & Mining

President Keel joins Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo to host Summit that includes German Ambassador (pictured above) and other international participants.



One Year Anniversary of Tribal Law & Order Act

Tribes applaud the important achievements of the first year since enactment. Pictured above, Lisa Marie Iyotte and President Obama at the Tribal Law & Order Act signing ceremony in 2010.



National Intertribal Youth Summit

Tribal youth tackle some of the biggest issues facing Indian Country by devising solutions and ideas to bring back to their communities.

NATIONAL CONGRESS of AMERICAN INDIANS TIMELINE OF PROGRESS 2010-2011



National
Congress of
American
Indians

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF NCAI

Dear members, friends, and supporters,

The incredible history of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is humbling and instructive all at the same time. When tribal leaders came together in November of 1944 in Denver, Colorado, they envisioned a new era for the tribal relationship with the federal government, with their neighbors, and with the rest of the world. Since that time, nearly seventy years ago, our members have come together in unity to carry forward this vision of a new era. As a result, NCAI has become a permanent fixture in setting the course of tribal policy and strengthening Indian Country and our nation.

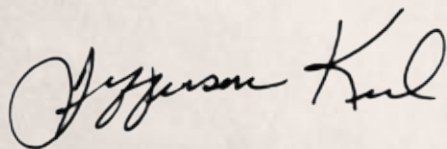
When we met for our 67th Annual Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Indian Country had secured unprecedented legislative victories and a new focus on tribal issues from the federal government and the Obama Administration. Many people wondered if Indian Country could translate this momentum to further advance the protection of tribal sovereignty, while directly impacting the lives of our nations, our communities, and our peoples.

Starting with the Convention, we developed a vision for a new era for tribal nations and American Indian and Alaska Native people. At the second White House Tribal Nations Summit we took that vision directly to President Obama, and it has shaped our ongoing engagement with the federal government. As the U.S. Congress reconvened with a new balance of power in the winter of 2011, I laid out the vision for this new era in the State of Indian Nations.

NCAI has worked tirelessly to ensure that the vision we developed together would begin to be implemented in our nation-to-nation relationship with the federal government. In the pages that follow we've outlined the incredible events, advocacy efforts, partnerships, and initiatives that we have worked on in the past year, and that we know will serve as the foundation for the beginning of this new era.

For your role in these efforts and for your support, we thank you and ask that you join us in the coming years to see this vision unfold, so that our nations advance, our peoples prosper, and our cultures grow stronger every day.

Sincerely,



Jefferson Keel
President
National Congress of American Indians
Lt. Governor, Chickasaw Nation



NCAI EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

Jefferson Keel, Chickasaw Nation

1st Vice President

Juana Majel-Dixon, Pauma Band - Mission Indians

Secretary

Matthew Wesaw, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

Treasurer

W. Ron Allen, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

NCAI AREA VICE PRESIDENTS

Alaska

Bill Martin, Central Council Tlingit-Haida

Eastern Oklahoma

Cara Cowan Watts, Cherokee Nation

Great Plains

Patricia "Patti" Douville, Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Midwest

Marge Anderson, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Northeast

Lance Gumbs, Shinnecock Indian Nation

Northwest

Brian Cladoosby, Swinomish Tribe

Pacific

Don Arnold, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo

Rocky Mountain

Scott Russell, Crow Tribe

Southeast

Larry Townsend, Lumbee Tribe

Southern Plains

Robert Tippeconnie, Comanche Nation

Southwest

Joe A. Garcia, Ohkay Owingeh

Western

Irene Cuch, Ute Indian Tribe

VICE PRESIDENT ALTERNATES

Alaska

Mary Ann Mills, Kenaitze Indian Tribe

Eastern Oklahoma

Jason Dollarhide, Peoria Tribe - Oklahoma

Great Plains

David Gipp, Standing Rock Sioux

Midwest

Eugene "Ribs" Whitebird, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Northeast

Randy Noka, Narragansett Tribe

Northwest

James Steele, Jr., Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Pacific

Mark Macarro, Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians

Rocky Mountain

Ivan Posey, Shoshone Tribe

Southeast

Lagaylis Harbuck, MOWA Band of Choctaw

Southern Plains

Bill Kekahbah, Kaw Nation

Southwest

Derek C. Valdo, Pueblo of Acoma

Western

Phillip Chimburas, Ute Indian Tribe

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear members, friends, and supporters,

Over the past decade, through the support and hard work of all tribal nations, NCAI has envisioned and put into action impressive ideas to support the future of Indian Country. Our work as an organization has strengthened tribal nations, advanced the work of our many partners, and expanded opportunities for our peoples in new and dynamic ways. As a result of our members' determination, NCAI has played an important role in establishing the momentum and the hope which defines the emerging era of opportunity for Indian Country.

Tribal governments' place in the American family of governments has become more visible. In the past ten years, the Native Vote has shaped the course of national, state, and local elections in new ways, in both Presidential and non-Presidential election cycles. With the upcoming 2012 elections, Indian Country will lead the way into this new era poised to reaffirm our unique and powerful voice as empowered citizens.

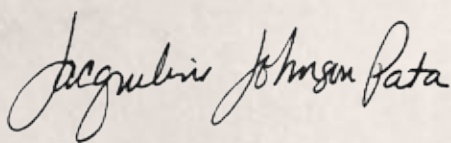
Protecting the sovereign rights of tribal nations remains at the forefront of all NCAI's advocacy efforts. In the past ten years we've facilitated the evolution of consultation between tribes and the federal government. As you'll read in this report, the past year has been critical in the implementation of Indian Country's most impactful legislation in recent history.

Among our many initiatives, the establishment of two major efforts in the last ten years is leaving an indelible legacy for future generations of leaders. With the establishment of our Policy Research Center in 2003 and the Partnership for Tribal Governance in 2009, we're providing resources for tribal leaders rooted in the very best practices Indian Country offers.

Lastly, NCAI has elevated our work with international partners to advance Indigenous self-determination throughout the world. With the recent support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, these efforts will be strengthened. Our joint board meeting with Canada's Assembly of First Nations in June and a keynote address to the inaugural National Congress of Australia's First Peoples are both signs of NCAI's important role in the global community in the years to come.

Our executive board, members, partners, supporters, and staff can all be credited for carrying forward the unified voice of Indian Country. As we stand on the threshold of a new era for Indian Country, I thank you for your efforts and invite you to continue setting the future direction of our great nations with the resolve and hope that will carry us forward, together.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Johnson Pata
Executive Director
National Congress of American Indians



THE EMBASSY OF TRIBAL NATIONS IN 2011

The Embassy of Tribal Nations, now in its second year of existence, continued to establish itself as the Washington institution that physically embodies the nation-to-nation relationship. The Embassy not only serves as headquarters for NCAI staff and operations, but as the nation's most prominent center for advocacy work related to tribal nations. Tribal leaders from Indian Country, and Indigenous leaders from around the world, have come to know the Embassy more and more as their home away from home.

Throughout the year, the Embassy of Tribal Nations served as a central point for tribal citizens, leaders, scholars, young people from all backgrounds, and the general public to engage in the work of NCAI and our members.

Over 20 groups formally visited the Embassy from states throughout the nation and over 10 different countries. Sessions included educational presentations, meetings, discussions, planning sessions, and Embassy tours. The groups included over 80 students from the Close Up Foundation, Udall Foundation, Native American Political Leadership Program, and Washington Internships for Native Students. International visitors came from Armenia, Australia, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Germany, Mexico, Peru, Turkey, and Venezuela, among others, to learn from the nation-to-nation relationship between tribes and the federal government.





—TOWARD A—
NEW ERA



TOWARD A NEW ERA

Tribes have long understood the importance of protecting our nation-to-nation status. Since 1944, this has been NCAI's primary mission. As the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization, our methods and approaches have evolved with the times, but our approach to convening the highest level meetings between tribal governments and other governments continues to serve as the fundamental tool for spurring national and local action. NCAI's unrelenting determination to protect and enhance the nation-to-nation relationship is a critical part in supporting Indian Country's progress toward a new era.



2010 ANNUAL CONVENTION AND MARKETPLACE – ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Strong Tribal Nations, Strong America

The 67th Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians set a historic tone for the year to come and looked to build on the significant milestones reached during 2010. Reflecting on the momentum and gains in what he called a “signature year” for Indian Country, NCAI President Jefferson Keel welcomed hundreds of tribal nations that gathered in the Land of Enchantment for the Convention.

“The result of (NCAI’s) outreach and partnership... we are respected as members of the American family of governments,” Keel said in his opening remarks to the members of NCAI. “Most recently in the mid-term elections we have firmly stated that the federal trust responsibility of the United States government is a nonpartisan issue. We expect that moving forward our partners in all levels and agencies of government will work to ensure the trust responsibility and treaty rights are upheld.”

“A new chapter of American History”

- Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar

Among the highlights of the opening general assembly were presentations by the Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Senator Byron Dorgan, Census Director Robert Groves, Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Kerlikowske, and officials from the White House. Outgoing Governor Richardson, longtime advocate and friend of Indian Country, was honored by the All Indian Pueblo Council. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar briefed the audience about the Recovery Act, the Indian education reform initiative with the Department of Education, land-into-trust, revising BIA land leasing regulations, and finalizing water rights settlements accomplished in what he called the “new chapter of American history.”

2010 ANNUAL CONVENTION AND MARKETPLACE – ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Strong Tribal Nations, Strong America (continued)

The many issues covered in afternoon breakout sessions included violence against American Indian women; preventing suicide and drug use in American Indian communities; sharing tribal codes and constitutions; homeland security and emergency management; the Affordable Care Act; tribal tourism and international trade; marketing American Indian-owned enterprises; preparing for the 2012 farm bill; and securing tribal access to water.

The week's other activities included an All Indian Pueblo Council Chairman's Ball; a full youth agenda including a music fundraiser and comedy performance; the National Native Prayer Breakfast; and the Native American Health & Fitness Walk which was part of the new Healthy Conference Challenge.

White House Tribal Nations Summit Announced; NCAI Leads Summit Preparation

In a news-making announcement, the 67th Annual Convention served as the venue for the Obama administration to confirm that the President would host his second annual White House Tribal Leaders Summit.



"We all know that the need exceeds our resources and we will continue to look to your wisdom and experience to set a policy agenda," said Kimberly Teehee, the White House Domestic Policy Council's Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs.

As a result, the NCAI Annual Convention was the ideal organizing venue for NCAI to convene tribal leaders and policy makers to begin setting the agenda for the remaining years of the Obama Administration.

NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson Pata kicked off a daylong vision session, known as a "World Café," by encouraging tribal leaders to focus on priorities to take to the President that could be accomplished before 2012.

"We feel with this Administration that we could set a tone and a direction that could really change the future of Indian Country," said Johnson Pata in a later interview. "We're asking tribal leaders what are the highest priorities? What can we do now? And, what will have the most impact?"

Kevin Gover, Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian and former Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, delivered the keynote address Tuesday.

Breaking into 150 discussion groups after the keynote, tribal leaders and policy makers focused on issues including sovereignty, tribal self-determination, federal trust responsibility, treaty rights, nation-to-nation rights, tribal lands, economic self-sufficiency, and healthy communities.

"We feel with this Administration that we could set a tone and a direction that could really change the future of Indian Country."

- NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson Pata



WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS SUMMIT

In December of 2010, over 300 tribal leaders and representatives from the 565 federally recognized tribal nations convened meetings with the Obama Administration at the Department of the Interior's Yates Auditorium at the Stewart Lee Udall building.

In opening remarks, President Obama made a historic and long-awaited announcement that the United States would lend its support to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Following the opening session, leaders met throughout the day with agency officials from the Obama Administration.

Organizing the Unified Voice of Indian Country:

Tribal Leader Preparatory Meetings for the Second Tribal Nations Summit

Following the vision conversation in New Mexico, NCAI convened tribal leaders and regional organizations over a three-week period in the lead-up to the Tribal Nations Summit. This unprecedented collaboration established a new level of engagement between the regional organizations and NCAI and distilled a truly unified vision for Indian Country. Through a set of conference calls and strategy meetings, tribal leaders identified and refined a series of key messages to share with President Obama and Administration officials at the White House Tribal Nations Summit. What began as hundreds of messages developed by over 150 discussion groups at NCAI's Annual Convention evolved into a briefing book developed by NCAI that distilled key messages in 31 issue areas. Eventually these findings and proposals emerged as a clear and synthesized set of core messages to be delivered to the President himself, the Obama Administration, the U.S. Congress, and later to national media.

In the days prior to the Summit, NCAI and regional intertribal organization partners co-hosted a Tribal Leader Preparatory Meeting that brought tribal leaders together from across the country to finalize core messages for the Summit.

The key messages were developed to communicate the high-level policies that the President of the United States should consider when directing agencies and Congress to fulfill the core principles of tribal sovereignty and meet the federal government's responsibilities on hundreds of specific issues. The following were the top-level priorities which were drawn from the specifics laid out in hundreds of pages of recommendations submitted to the White House:

1. Establish a Nation-to-Nation Relationship for the 21st Century
2. Reinvigorating the Trust Responsibility
3. Negotiation of Agreements and Tribal Consent
4. Enforceable Consultations
5. Restoration of Tribal Lands and the *Carcieri* Fix
6. Consistent Long-Term Funding
7. U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
8. Invest in our Children
9. Law Enforcement and Public Safety
10. Economic Development, Finance, and Taxation

WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS SUMMIT (continued)

The Nation-to-Nation Dialogue with the President and 12 Tribal Leaders

Tribal Leader Preparatory Meetings for the Second Tribal Nations Summit

On the eve of the second White House Tribal Nations Summit, President Obama met directly with 12 tribal leaders at the White House. The meeting with the tribal leaders from 12 regions of the United States included NCAI's Northwest Area Vice President Brian Cladoosby, Chairman of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, and former NCAI President Tex Hall, Chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation: Three Affiliated Tribes. Key Administration officials participating in the meeting included Attorney General Eric Holder, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, White House Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett, and White House Domestic Policy Council Director Melody Barnes.

Following the meeting with the President, members of the group of tribal leaders returned to NCAI's Embassy of Tribal Nations to brief the group gathered for the Tribal Leaders' Holiday Reception.



Attendees of the Nation-to-Nation Dialogue with President Obama included: Earl J. Barbry, Sr., Chairman, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana; Cedric Black Eagle, Chairman, Crow Nation; Brian Cladoosby, Chairman, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community; Karen Diver, Chairwoman, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; Brenda Edwards, Chairperson, Caddo Nation; Tex G. Hall, Chairman, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation: Three Affiliated Tribes; Gary Hayes, Chairman, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe; John Red Eagle, Principal Chief, Osage Nation; Joe Shirley, Jr., President, Navajo Nation; Robert H. Smith, Chairman, Pala Band of Mission Indians; Edward K. Thomas, President, Tlingit Haida Central Council; Mervin Wright, Jr., Chairman, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe of Nevada

Photo Credit: Official White House Photo by Pete Souza



Tribal leaders listen from the audience. Photo Credit: Tami A. Heilemann - DOI

WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS SUMMIT (continued)

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

President Obama's announcement that the United States would lend its support to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was a significant moment in the new era of cooperation between tribal nations and the U.S. government.

As one of the top priorities outlined by tribal leaders in preparation for the Summit, and a long-standing priority of NCAI, Indian Country, and Indigenous peoples throughout the world, the announcement signaled that the United States would no longer be the lone holdout of the original four nations to vote against the adoption of the Declaration by the UN General Assembly in 2007; the other three (Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) had all since reversed their position.

President Obama was clear that the aspirations in the Declaration were ones that all Americans should vow to uphold. Immediately after he made his announcement of support, the President emphasized that "what matters far more than words...are actions to match those words."

The Declaration, for the first time, gives international recognition to the collective human rights of Indigenous peoples, including treaty rights, land rights, and, perhaps most importantly, the right of self-determination.

The Declaration calls for the maintenance and protection of Native cultures, languages, and identities; the fulfillment of treaty obligations by nation states; the equal treatment of and end to discrimination against Indigenous peoples; and the rights of Native peoples to meaningfully participate in the decision-making process and to be consulted on all matters that concern them.

NCAI played an important role following UN Ambassador Susan E. Rice's announcement that the United States was going to revisit its negative stance on the Declaration, ensuring that a thorough review of UNDRIP included input from tribal leaders. In the year leading up to the President's announcement, the first formal tribal consultation was held at NCAI's 2010 Mid Year Conference in Rapid City, South Dakota, and later, two subsequent consultations in Washington, D.C. on July 7 and October 14 of 2010.

Following the announcement, NCAI took immediate action and helped organize a visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, to a number of tribal nations to discuss the implementation of UNDRIP and how it might help tackle the real challenges facing communities.

***"What matters far more than words...
are actions to match those words."***

- President Barack Obama



2011 STATE OF INDIAN NATIONS ADDRESS: “SOVEREIGN INDIAN NATIONS AT THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA”

NCAI President Jefferson Keel delivered the 2011 State of Indian Nations to a live audience of tribal leaders, members of Congress, students, and a live video audience from the television studios of the Newseum in Washington, D.C. Keel called for a new era in U.S.-tribal relations defined by optimism and economic opportunity. Just months after the Native vote returned her to the Senate in a historic write-in re-election campaign, Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska delivered the Congressional response to the State of Indian Nations, acknowledging the critical role tribes play in the American family of governments.



Senator Lisa Murkowski

In his speech, Keel called for the federal government to focus on Indian Country as a place where infrastructure challenges could build the foundation for sustained economic growth that benefits all Americans.

“Unemployment [in Indian Country]... is often four to five times the national unemployment rate,” said Keel in his address. “Tribes care for approximately ten percent of America’s energy resources, including renewable energy, worth nearly a trillion dollars in revenue...[this] will mean long-term economic development, and in turn the United States will become stronger.”

President Keel outlined other economic opportunities including broadband infrastructure, “which is the back-bone of the new economy. Across the nation, broadband is available to 95 percent of Americans. But in tribal communities, it’s only 10 percent,” Keel explained as he spoke to the nation via a live web broadcast and through radio stations across the country. “Broadband is the pipeline to progress, and we need investment, but first we need an end to barriers that stand in the way of that investment.”

“Our nation-to-nation relationship presents a unique responsibility and great opportunity, and that is the gateway to a new era of opportunity and self-reliance.

Today we call on our federal partners to clear the way for us to expand economic opportunity through entrepreneurship, so that we might compete.

Clear the way for us to develop energy on our own lands, build commerce and create jobs, so that we might contribute more to the economy of America. We can create more opportunity for energy independence, and a larger recovery.

Clear the way for us to build public infrastructure for our communities, so that our children might thrive and our culture enrich all those around us.

Clear the way for us to build up our own communities.

When you invest in Indian Country, you will be astounded at the economic strength we bring to America. It is time to harness that power and realize the tremendous return on that investment.

The United States and Indian nations are partners and neighbors, we are bound by the Constitution, we are bound by our great and shared commitment to liberty—and that includes economic liberty.”

- President Jefferson Keel, excerpt from 2011 State of Indian Nations address.

Coming off an exceptional year of bipartisan policy achievements for tribal nations in 2010, Keel pointed out that the momentum must be sustained if tribal nations and tribal citizens were to feel the impact in their communities. He called on Congress to seize the opportunity by sustaining investment in Indian programs and provide funding for infrastructure, law enforcement, health care, job creation, and education.

Keel concluded the speech saying, “The Indian nations can do the work - if the federal government will clear the way for us to exercise our liberty and thus make a new era and a more perfect union.”



Members of the NCAI Board join President Keel on stage for a photo following the State of Indian Nations address.



Area Vice President Cara Cowan Watts asks a question of Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services, at the winter meeting.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WINTER SESSION – WASHINGTON, D.C.

Indian Country Celebrating Together

Monday, February 28 – Wednesday, March 2, 2011

NCAI's bipartisan legislative summit, Executive Council Winter Session, held in Washington, D.C. this past year, brought together tribal leaders and cabinet members, members of the U.S. Congress, and federal government agency officials to discuss priorities just weeks after the 2011 State of Indian Nations address.

The three-day legislative summit included presentations from Secretary Kathleen Sebelius (Department of Health and Human Services), Secretary Shaun Donovan (Department of Housing and Urban Development), Senators John Barrasso (R-WY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Congressmen Dan Boren (D-OK) and Doc Hastings (R-WA). Larry Echo Hawk, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, and David Hayes, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior, both addressed the three-day summit on the range of issues facing the Department. Many of the presenters engaged in direct question and answer sessions following their presentations.

Two evening activities highlighted the progress being made by Indian Country as a whole and honored the individuals and organizations making direct contributions to the advancement of tribal issues.

"Celebrating Indian Country Together," NCAI's legislative reception held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, focused on the major legislative victories of the past year and brought together Indian Country advocates and representatives from the federal government.

The organization's prestigious Indian Country Leadership Awards were presented at the event's annual awards banquet. The awards were presented to Senator Daniel Akaka, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Associate Attorney General Tom Perrelli, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and longtime tribal leader and advocate Billy Frank, Jr. Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation who passed away in 2010, was recognized posthumously among the 2011 recipients. NCAI announced it would name the organization's fellowship program in her honor. The organization named its fellow program, "The Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Program for Tribal Policy and Governance." Kimberly Teehee, the White House's Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs, a longtime friend and mentee of Mankiller, accepted the award on behalf of her family.

2011 MID YEAR CONFERENCE — MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Indian Country's Unified Voice - Our Greatest "Native Resource"

NCAI's Mid Year Conference brought together members in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for meetings being held during a year that NCAI said would be defined by "how we envision Indian Country's collective relationship to our 'Native Resources.'"

"We are our Native Resources...our most vital resource is our relationship with each other," said President Keel outlining the progress of efforts since the State of Indian Nations. The conference focused on identifying issues where follow-through would be critical, including energy, youth engagement, a *Carcieri* fix, education policy, natural resource management, stemming the epidemic of violence against women, economic development, and tax issues.

***"We are our Native Resources...
our most vital resource is our
relationship with each other."***

- NCAI President Jefferson Keel

Just a day after hosting a tribal youth summit during the Mid Year pre-sessions, former Senator Byron Dorgan spoke to the conference about the formation of the new Center for Native American Youth. Dorgan emphasized the importance of Indian Country helping young people, expanding internal capacity to sustainably develop energy resources, and enhancing economic and community development.



Following reports from NCAI President Keel and Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson Pata, members of the Obama Administration, including Kimberly Teehee, spoke about consultation, the Tribal Nations Summit, and the importance of a *Carcieri* fix. Charlie Galbraith of the White House reviewed the successful launch of the First Lady's *Let's Move! in Indian Country* initiative and the kick-off celebrations held at the White House and at the Menomonee Nation. Deputy Associate Attorney General Sam Hirsch spoke about the Department of Justice consultations addressing violence against Native women, and the prospect of VAWA reauthorization.

Larry Echo Hawk, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, announced the Department of the Interior's review of off-reservation gaming applications and the plan to "process off-reservation gaming applications in a transparent manner consistent with existing law and reservations."

NCAI's Native Vote initiative hosted a national press conference that highlighted the potential impact of the Native vote in the Midwest region, including Wisconsin's 2011 special elections and the 2012 general elections in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In both states, requirements set out in voter identification laws were outlined as one of the most significant challenges for regional Get Out the Native Vote efforts.

The conference also marked the 6th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum. The Forum included presentations addressing consumer financial protection efforts and tribal management of health care systems. Both research presentations to General Assembly generated significant discussion. The Forum also laid out a vision for data that empowers tribal communities. This future, as explained by the Forum participants, was one where researchers work with communities to collect the data that Indian Country needs.

NEW TRIBAL PROSPERITY: INFLUENCING GOVERNMENTS IN AMERICA AND AROUND THE WORLD



A core conviction of our work at NCAI is that tribal nations offer innovation to other American governments and Indigenous nations around the world.

The Administration's decision to lend its support to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in December 2010 was an important milestone in a year of historic collaboration between NCAI and Indigenous nations around the world. We deepened our ongoing collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations in Canada, co-hosting an energy summit (below left) and hosting a joint board meeting in advance of our Mid Year Conference (above). NCAI provided a keynote address to the inaugural meeting of the newly formed National Congress of Australia's First People (below right). We also hosted numerous meetings with Indigenous visitors from around the world at the Embassy of Tribal Nations.

Notable visitors include a delegation of Indigenous leaders from Latin America, and Professor Mick Dodson, a prominent Australian Indigenous leader who was the 2009 "Australian of the Year."

Our international partnerships paralleled our increased influence over efforts to build sustainable prosperity for all Americans. The newly formed White House Rural Council, launched by the President in June 2011, has been a critical lens to highlight the innovations tribes offer to our nation and the world. NCAI has served on the Steering Committee of the National Rural Assembly since 2007 and released a paper in late June titled *Innovative Native Nations in Rural America: Key Partners in Building Sustainable American Prosperity*. The paper highlights key tribal innovations and shows how inclusion of tribal nations is essential to a strong economic recovery. As part of the efforts of the White House Rural Council, the Administration also hosted a White House Native American Business Leaders Roundtable in August 2011.

To highlight the importance of tribes and other rural communities in creating jobs and strengthening the American economy, President Keel joined President Obama at his White House Rural Economic Forum in Iowa in August 2011. NCAI continues to work with the Administration to ensure tribes are included in the American Jobs Act and other efforts to promote economic growth.





NCAI President Jefferson Keel and First Lady Michelle Obama surrounded by Native youth, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry Echohawk, IHS Director Yvette Roubideaux, and NFL Quarterback Sam Bradford

LAUNCH OF *LET'S MOVE! IN INDIAN COUNTRY*

The health and wellness of Indian Country is one of NCAI's most important priorities.

This couldn't be exhibited more explicitly than when First Lady Michelle Obama and NCAI's President Jefferson Keel walked together from the White House to the White House kitchen garden for an event to celebrate the importance of healthy eating and active lifestyles for Native youth. Mrs. Obama and President Keel, along with leaders from the Native community, joined with American Indian and Alaska Native children to plant the "three sisters"- corns, beans and squash - in the White House kitchen garden. In addition to speaking with the First Lady to the youth, President Keel provided the event's prayer and blessing. The event came one week after the launch of *Let's Move! in Indian Country*, a new initiative by the First Lady to reach Native young people.

Getting Indian Country active and teaching wellness to young people is part of a hopeful vision that corresponds with the dawning of a new era for tribal nations. From its inception to its launch, NCAI supported the *Let's Move! in Indian Country* effort through public education and outreach, highlighting the positive benefits of reinvigorating traditional ways of healthy living.

The *Let's Move! in Indian Country* effort, with the assistance of many organizations in Indian Country including NCAI, has already started to reach a generation of tribal youth to connect them with a healthy, traditional path in life.

The First Lady addressed the children and introduced the *Let's Move!* initiative for Indian Country, saying, "This planting is a special way to highlight (the) new initiative. And this is the first time ever that we're going to do a three sisters planting here in the White House kitchen garden. And you all are going to be a part of making that happen."





EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

— IN THE NEW ERA —



EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY IN THE NEW ERA

NCAI's comprehensive approach to advocating on issues impacting Indian Country has evolved over the last sixty-eight years, but one objective remains the same – to protect the sovereignty of tribal nations. As Indian Country has evolved, NCAI's approach to advocacy and education has grown to incorporate a range of approaches to advocating for its members, Indian Country as a whole, and Indigenous rights globally.



Photo Credit: From Flickr user - C George

LEGISLATIVE & ISSUE ADVOCACY

Based in Washington, D.C., NCAI advocates for the critical legislation and policy that impacts the nation-to-nation relationship between tribal nations and the federal government. We work to educate and inform all branches of the federal government, non-governmental institutions, and the general public.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A STRONGER INDIAN COUNTRY

The growth and effectiveness of tribal governments relies on the ability of tribal leaders, citizens, and governments to respond to new opportunities and challenges. NCAI's advocacy efforts include developing initiatives and supporting programs that enable Indian Country to meet the demands of nation building.

CONSULTATION SUPPORT

At the 2009 Tribal Nations Summit, President Obama declared his commitment to fulfilling the consultation requirements of Executive Order 13175, a directive originally issued by President Clinton on November 6, 2000. NCAI has actively engaged in supporting and facilitating consultation between tribal entities and the federal government.

IMPLEMENTATION

NCAI knows that building strong tribal nations extends beyond legislative and issue advocacy. Once legislation or programs are enacted, implementation is the key to success. That is why NCAI has become a leading institution to support and facilitate implementation of some of Indian Country's most vital legislation.



ADVOCACY: A YEAR IN REVIEW

Over the past year, NCAI's advocacy efforts sought to build upon the incredible success of recent years including historic legislative success and the resolution of long-standing contentious issues such as the *Cobell* litigation.

While NCAI worked tirelessly on the implementation of last year's Tribal Law & Order Act and the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, we also worked energetically to protect tribal interests in the federal budget and to challenge the federal government to meet its trust responsibility to tribal nations. NCAI's advocacy efforts continued to cover the entire breadth of the opportunities and challenges facing Indian Country with progress this year being critical in setting the tone for the years to come.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

The obligations to tribal citizens funded in the federal budget are the result of treaties negotiated and agreements made between Indian tribes and the United States in exchange for land and resources, known as the trust responsibility. The authority to fund programs that fulfill this responsibility is founded in the Constitution. With a fickle political and fiscal environment, the budget process was often delayed in 2011 and raised the specter of federal government shutdowns on more than one occasion. In the face of one of the most partisan and contentious budget cycles in memory, NCAI has worked to unify tribal leaders, organizations, and advocates to ensure the promises made to Indian Country are honored throughout the federal budget.

In the past year, the budget process has borne the weight of intractable political battles.

Although the President's own FY 2012 budget proposal provides some increases or level funding for most Indian programs, several Congressional proposals threaten to undermine the trust responsibility. As was the case this year, one of the signature products NCAI releases each year is the comprehensive Indian Country Budget Request, which guides recommendations throughout the appropriations hearings and budget cycle. Tribal leaders and federal officials found this publication a critical resource in the last year.

Throughout the ensuing debates and controversies, NCAI has monitored the implications for Indian programs and the trust responsibility, from the President's budget, the budget resolutions, the inevitable continuing resolutions and finally the Budget Control Act of 2011. With significant proposals to change the federal budget process in the coming years, NCAI will continue to make this a top priority.

A NEW TRIBAL ENERGY

Tribal energy resources and our management of them will determine how we move forward as sovereign nations. One of the major tenets for success for the year was an increased focus on tribal energy issues.

In the 112th Congress the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (SCIA) took on developing tribal energy legislation as a follow up to the Indian Energy Parity Act of 2010 (IEPA). The result from the committee was a “staff draft” titled “Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 2011.”

NCAI engaged in discussions with tribal leaders and representatives to develop a response to the proposed legislation. In submitted and oral testimony to a SCIA hearing, NCAI offered a robust set of provisions and issues to be included in tribal energy legislation, prioritizing many of the IEPA provisions, tax and finance issues, and new issues reflective of ongoing developments.

This approach addressed the full spectrum of obstacles to tribal energy development long identified as barriers. The House Subcommittee on American Indian and Alaska Native Affairs also held two oversight hearings in April on tribal energy development and jobs on Indian land. Though no legislation has been passed, NCAI continues to share legislative proposals with both parties in both chambers with the hope that tribal energy legislation could be introduced in the near future.

Advocating for energy issues has included assisting with capacity and consultation efforts led by the Department of Energy (DOE). Upon the establishment of its Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs in December 2010, NCAI partnered to facilitate DOE’s Tribal Energy Summit in 2011. At this summit DOE launched its support and actions to assist tribes in energy development, including the creation of a Tribal Clean Energy Task Force, the channeling of DOE’s technical assistance to tribes, and strategies to spur the purchase of tribal renewable energy.



INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS SUMMIT ON ENERGY & MINING

NCAI co-sponsored the International Indigenous Summit on Energy and Mining, hosted by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), our sister organization in Canada. NCAI and AFN committed to working together to build the capacity of tribal peoples to understand and negotiate on an informed basis with mining and energy interests.

Over 800 Indigenous leaders and citizens, as well as people from industry and government gathered at this first-of-its-kind summit. Several initiatives emerged from this meeting including: goals for each organization to help tribes strategize for responsible development of resources by increasing access to experts, possibly forming a North American Indigenous Task Force on Energy, and participating in global leadership forums so that others can become more aware of strategies that include tribes.



Ms. Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, addresses the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' Tribal Council. NCAI 1st Vice President Juana Majel-Dixon accompanied Ms. Manjoo to share with her stories of the high rates of violence against Indian women and what can be done to safeguard the human rights of Native women.

SAFETY FOR NATIVE WOMEN

Despite the federal trust obligation to protect Indian communities, violence against Native women in the United States has reached epidemic proportions and greatly exceeds that of any other population of women in the United States – 34 percent of Native women will be raped in their lifetimes and 39 percent will be the victim of domestic violence. According to a 2010 GAO Study, U.S. Attorneys decline to prosecute 67 percent of sexual abuse and related matters that occur in Indian country. These appalling statistics demonstrate the urgent need to address the legal and resource barriers that prevent tribal nations from protecting their female citizens.

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 clarified that the unique legal relationship of the United States to Indian tribes creates a federal trust responsibility to assist tribal governments in safeguarding the lives of Native women. Yet, the ongoing violence against Native women shows that this responsibility has not been fulfilled.

While many issues need to be addressed to confront this human rights crisis, it is clear that limitations placed on tribal government jurisdiction by the United States are a key contributing factor, with non-Indian perpetrators falling through the cracks in the system time and time again.

Over the past year, the NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women has vigorously advocated for congressional restoration of tribal authority to prosecute non-Indians who commit domestic violence and related crimes on tribal lands. Our requests have not fallen on deaf ears. In July, the Department of Justice formally released a legislative proposal to restore tribal criminal jurisdiction over all persons, non-Indian and Indian alike, who perpetrate domestic and dating violence on tribal lands. NCAI staff continues to advocate on Capitol Hill for passage of this legislative proposal, along with other statutory and policy changes that would provide tribes with the resources needed to prosecute violent crimes committed against Indian women and to adequately serve Native victims.

IMPLEMENTING HISTORIC LEGISLATION

2011 represented one of the most important years in the new era of two laws that were passed in 2010. When fully realized, these laws will yield incredible advances for tribal nations.

Public Safety and the Tribal Law & Order Act

Public safety problems in Indian Country remain a critical concern, particularly domestic violence and violence against women, drug crimes, and gang-related crimes. July 2011 marked the one-year anniversary of enactment of the Tribal Law & Order Act (TLOA), and this new law took its most important step as NCAI helped facilitate the law's implementation. In the past year the Indian Law & Order Commission – authorized by the Act – was funded, the long-term plan for detention in Indian Country was finalized and key provisions were implemented, and consultations are ongoing.

Of equal importance are the new initiatives and improvements to public safety in Indian Country that are developing, largely as a result of TLOA enactment. Over the past two years, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has shown extraordinary leadership by launching new law enforcement initiatives in Indian Country, proposing much-needed legislation, and advocating for increased funding for tribal programs within the federal budget. At the core of this multi-faceted approach is DOJ's pledge to work together with tribal nations to improve the overall administration of justice in Indian Country.

Progress is also being made on the local level to combat crime on reservations, due in large part to guidance from the Attorney General's office to build permanent infrastructure in Indian Country that will sustain tribal nations long after President Obama's time in office. A surge in the number of tribal prosecutors appointed as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys under the TLOA has enabled cases to be tried in federal courts.

The epidemic of crime and violence still drastically impacts our people. However, the force of leadership from tribes and the federal government is becoming stronger and more effective, and NCAI is dedicated to do everything we can until crime rates drop and every tribal community is safe.

Health Care

Since its passage in 2010, NCAI has been an active partner in facilitating the implementation of key provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Indian Health Care Improvement Act. In addition to hosting several listening sessions and consultations during our Annual Convention and Mid Year Conference, NCAI has provided guidance to the agencies on several topics including state-based health insurance exchanges, efficient implementation of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, and tax credits. In partnership with our sister organization, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), and the Indian Health Service (IHS), NCAI released the 2011 report, "Moving Indian Country Forward: Health Care Reform One Year Later," to highlight implementation successes including improved coordination of health care services such as cancer screenings and dialysis treatment, increased resources for tribal, urban, and IHS facilities, authorized development of long term care programs, and expanded workforce initiatives in tribal communities.

Additionally NCAI, NIHB, and IHS provided training on ACA workforce investment opportunities, developed a tribal health care implementation website, and hosted several teleconferences in preparation for consultation and implementation. As health care reform implementation progresses, active tribal engagement and understanding of the law will be essential to ensure tribal communities and citizens have access to adequate, culturally-sensitive health care.

COBELL

The *Cobell* lawsuit, initially filed on June 10, 1996, was settled on December 8, 2009, approved by Congress on November 30, 2010, and granted Final Approval by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia on June 20, 2011. Under the terms of the settlement, the federal government will create a \$1.5 billion Accounting/Trust Administration Fund and a \$1.9 billion Trust Land Consolidation Fund. The settlement also creates an Indian Education Scholarship fund of up to \$60 million to improve access to higher education for Native people.

Payment from the settlement, however, has been slowed by recent appeals. In August, class member and objector Kimberly Craven appealed the settlement as approved by Congress and the DC District Court. In September, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia filed a schedule for briefings which will conclude in early January. After briefings are completed, the appeal will be calendared for oral arguments. NCAI will continue to keep its members updated on the status of the *Cobell* Settlement.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Tribal communities continue to experience unemployment levels well above the national average. However, there have been advances and growth in tribally owned and operated businesses over the years. NCAI continues to support initiatives that will spur economic development within their respective communities by continuing to advocate for government contracting, loan guarantee programs, and education of tribal leaders and members on the different financing options available to them. This is a key stepping stone to bring tribes into markets not only at the local, state, and national level, but to also encourage participation in the global economy. Although Native 8(a) contracting continues to come under scrutiny by a few members of Congress, NCAI and our partner organization, the Native American Contractors Association, will continue to protect this vital tool for economic development in tribal communities.

NCAI is also committed to urging federal agencies to collect and compile a list of programs and financing options available to tribes, and to coordinate meaningful consultations between the federal government and tribes to determine methods of educating and improving tribal participation in these programs.

EDUCATION

Tribal governments are vested in improving the education of their students and are taking an active role in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. As a direct result, the recommendations that NCAI and our partners, the National Indian Education Association, and the United South and Eastern Tribes, received from tribes were incorporated into the recently introduced Native CLASS Act – Indian Country's education bill. The bill incorporates a number of the provisions that tribal leaders have long sought, including increased control over the education of their citizens, a formula grant program for language immersion schools, and comprehensive wrap-around services for our youth. The Department of Education also increased their visibility in Indian Country by continuing their consultation series, focusing on urban schools with a high concentration of Native students. NCAI will continue to urge the Department of Education to host a national tribal budget consultation with the Secretary of Education in the near future.

HOUSING

NCAI and the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) have been working in partnership to ensure tribal housing conditions and needs are addressed by the U.S. Congress and Obama Administration. Our efforts have focused on federal appropriations and the passage of the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act (HEARTH Act).

HOUSING (continued)

Another key issue for tribal governments is the housing needs survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). NCAI and our partners have worked with the Department to launch consultation efforts surrounding the study. NCAI and NAIHC coordinated a national call and tribal leaders consultation meeting on this issue to ensure that tribal leaders conveyed their concerns about the housing needs survey and to provide input to HUD as they proceed with the study.

LAND RECOVERY

In a 2009 decision regarding *Carcieri v. Salazar*, the U.S. Supreme Court limited the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) to only those tribes who were “now under federal jurisdiction” when the law was enacted in 1934. This decision has created harmful uncertainty and confusion about the ability of Indian tribes to restore their tribal land base and maintain public services and economic development.

Land to trust came to the forefront for tribal leaders during last year’s NCAI Executive Council Winter Session. A letter from NCAI to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar resulted in a commitment to assertive action when processing tribal land acquisition applications. Indications, based on Interior efforts, are positive that land will be placed into trust and that applications are finally being processed. However, the Secretary’s authority to take land into trust for all tribes is currently being challenged.

This year, legislation including a fix to the *Carcieri* decision has been developed in both the Senate and the House. Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Senator Akaka, continues to prioritize a resolution to this issue. Through a number of public advocacy events, including a “Fix *Carcieri* Now” Rally on Capitol Hill, NCAI worked closely with regional intertribal organizations to prioritize advocacy on land recovery. We are confident of the day when the law recognizes tribal land rights consistent with their status as sovereign governments.



Carcieri Summit & Rally

With impacts across tribal economies, the unresolved *Carcieri* issue has served as a rallying point for tribal leadership. In collaboration with the United South and Eastern Tribes, NCAI hosted a “*Carcieri* Fix” Summit and Rally from June 21-23, 2011. The event focused on educating members of Congress and elevating the issue in the media, with a message to urge passage of legislation to address the *Carcieri* decision. The event focused on legislation introduced by Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI), and H.R. 1291 and H.R. 1234, introduced by Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK) and Congressman Dale Kildee (D-MI), respectively.

After a day-long strategy session, tribal leaders and citizens gathered for a rally in front of the U.S. Capitol, with cheers of “Fix *Carcieri* Now” echoing on the Capitol grounds. Following the rally, participants heard a series of presentations on the importance of this legislation in the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing room. Tribal leaders spent the remainder of the day with congressional offices explaining the importance of a *Carcieri* fix. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs also held an oversight hearing titled, “The Indian Reorganization Act – 75 Years Later: Renewing our Commitment to Restore Tribal Homelands and Promote Self-Determination.”

NATURAL RESOURCES

The health and sustainability of natural resources is inextricably linked to the cultural and spiritual practices of Indigenous peoples. Tribal natural resource management practices are increasingly recognized as exemplary examples of cost-effective, ingenious, and sustainable stewardship. Paradoxically, these recognitions have not been met with commensurate support, but rather, historical patterns of disregard or neglect which find tribal natural resource programs disproportionately under-represented, under-funded or excluded from federal support.

To comprehensively address the opportunity tribally driven natural resource management presents, NCAI has facilitated Our Natural Resources (ONR) an alliance of over a two dozen intertribal organizations (*See page 37*). ONR has developed a draft national tribal natural resources strategy, is consolidating and unifying the tribal voice, and is engaging the federal government to address these ongoing inequities. NCAI and ONR representatives have testified before Congress and the Administration regarding tribal management practices and funding inequities; helped place dozens of tribal representatives on several interagency climate change advisory boards (National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Plan, National Oceans Council, National Climate Assessment, and Climate Science Centers); undertaken initiatives and joined coalitions enhancing youth involvement in natural resources; and provided unprecedented input to USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

TAX & FINANCE

This past April, NCAI, along with the United South and Eastern Tribes, and the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, hosted a Native Nations Tribal Leaders Tax Summit in Miccosukee. From this tax summit a working group was developed as well as a list of short-term tax initiatives to address. This list includes the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) taxation of education benefits provided to tribal members by tribal governments; the restrictive policies surrounding issuances of tax-exempt bonds by tribal governments, state taxation of permanent improvements to tribal trust land, and the PACT Act/tobacco compliance issues. Since then, the tribal tax work group has held several meetings with the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the IRS regarding these issues. Also, NCAI submitted a letter to the Treasury asking for completion of a study on Tribal Economic Development Bonds. Once this study is concluded, NCAI will use its findings as support for proposed amendments to the Internal Revenue Code.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The country overall has continued its transition from analog to digital services. To ensure tribes are prepared to lead the way in America's digital future, NCAI has continued to advocate for increased broadband deployment and access for tribal communities. Following recommendations proposed by NCAI, Native Public Media, and the New America Foundation on the National Broadband Plan, the FCC announced numerous Notices of Proposed Rulemaking, Notices of Inquiries, and the creation of a Native Nations Broadband Task Force to obtain feedback on important steps to improve broadband deployment and access on tribal lands.

NCAI has coordinated with our partner Native Public Media to submit comments detailing the need for sound regulations that would benefit tribes across the country. NCAI has also worked in coordination with the FCC's newly established Office of Native Affairs and Policy to serve as a focal point for consultation with tribes, tribal groups and organizations, and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian entities. NCAI President Jefferson Keel also testified during the Native Nations Day gathering on March 3, 2011 to voice tribal concerns pertaining to lack of access to broadband services, and how this is preventing tribes from participating in the national and global economies.

TRANSPORTATION

It has been over three years since the current transportation authorization, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Public Law 109-59, expired on September 30, 2009. Since 2009, SAFETEA-LU has been extended seven times. NCAI has been collaborating with the Intertribal Transportation Association by forming a NCAI-ITA Joint Task Force. This Joint Task Force has been preparing and advocating for tribal transportation priorities for the next highway reauthorization legislation. The U.S. Congress has held several legislative hearings on the upcoming transportation authorization and NCAI has provided several testimonies on tribal transportation issues. There have been many political and budget changes since the last transportation authorization; however, the Joint Task Force is working on ensuring that the next highway reauthorization bill continues to build upon the progress made in SAFETEA-LU.

In addition, NCAI has joined the Transportation for America Equity Caucus to ensure tribal positions and views are reflected in the Equity Caucus. The caucus is comprised of national civil rights organizations and community development groups collaborating to make certain the next transportation bill will ensure access and create affordable transportation for all people.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

NCAI manages a cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Information to assist tribes to develop capacity and facilitate tribal access to resources and programs for improving environmental data management, advocate for tribal interests on Exchange Network governance bodies, and promote data management and exchange solutions that address the needs of all tribes. The Exchange Network (EN) is a secure Internet- and standards-based approach for exchanging environmental data and improving environmental decisions. In addition to serving on a national EN governance board and attending national EN meetings, NCAI staff coordinates the EN Tribal Governance Group (TGG), an array of tribal program and policy officials who are members of the EPA Exchange Network governance boards, serving alongside state and federal representatives. The mission of the TGG is to support better management, sharing, and communication of environmental data in order to preserve tribal lifeways, maintain cultural integrity, and enhance tribal members' sense of place.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Tribal nations were impacted by natural disasters at devastating levels this past year and NCAI provided information and support to many communities. Fires, floods, tornados, and oil spills that originated outside tribal boundaries all affected tribal nations and NCAI members came forward to help both Native and non-Native communities that were impacted.

Beyond supporting tribal nations during times of crisis, NCAI has an active strategy to proactively equip tribal leaders before challenges arise. NCAI coordinated sessions at each of NCAI's major conferences in 2010-2011 to assist leaders implementing tribal homeland security and emergency management policies. Some of the key topics included tribal documentation for Indigenous border crossing rights, multi-purpose acceptance of tribal IDs by the federal government, and the unfunded mandate to develop federal Enhanced Tribal Cards. NCAI continues to assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Institute in developing tribal emergency management planning courses including a Continuity of Operations course for tribal officials and a recently developed pilot course on emergency management for tribal leaders. The tribally focused course helps tribal leaders to understand how an effective emergency management plan might better protect their tribal citizens, lands, culture, and sovereignty.

TRIBAL HOMELAND SECURITY

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is one of the largest agencies of the federal government and NCAI has been working to ensure equitable tribal inclusion in federal program funding and development of national homeland security strategies. NCAI was successful in advocating for the increased annual funding of the DHS Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program from \$1.3 million to \$10 million. Though inadequate to fully build tribal capacity, it is a sign of progress. NCAI testified to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs regarding the lack of federal coordinated and substantial financial and technical assistance to address the unprecedented number and strength of recent natural disasters in Indian Country.

One of the priority issues in tribal emergency management is to change the existing law that precludes tribal nations from seeking a Presidential disaster declaration in the event of a catastrophic natural disaster or manmade incident. This flaw in the Stafford Act creates an unnecessary loss of valuable response time in seeking federal assistance. Only a state governor can request a declaration and a tribal government has to seek the approval of a governor. NCAI continues to advocate for the right of a sovereign government to seek assistance for its citizenry when a tribe's internal capacity to deal with an emergency situation is overwhelmed.

CULTURAL PROTECTION

Protection of Native cultural resources is necessary for the survival of traditional Native religions, customs, languages, and status as sovereign nations. This year, NCAI advocated vigorous enforcement of the recently enacted amendments to the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, legislation aimed at protecting the cultural integrity of American Indian and Alaska Native artisans and preventing economic encroachment by non-Indians and non-Natives engaged in false labeling and misrepresentation of arts and crafts. The amendments increased the penalties for counterfeiting and misrepresentation, expanding federal investigation authority.

Sacred Places: While NCAI has a Policy Statement on Sacred Places to protect locations and landscapes, no federal statute expressly protects these sacred places from being destroyed by development, pollution, recreation, vandalism, and other public and private actions. NCAI continues to advocate for the enactment of legislation that would create a right of action for tribes and individual tribal members to sue in federal district court if their right to exercise their traditional Native American religion is violated. We are also working to develop alternative ways of improving the current system, especially exploring models of tribal-federal co-management of sacred places.

Eagle Feathers: American Indians and Alaska Natives are subject to laws governing use and possession of eagle feathers and many other protected species that are integral to Native religion and ceremonies. In partnership with tribal leaders and practitioners, Indian organizations, and federal officials, NCAI is working to adapt current laws and regulations, as well as develop new policies, to better secure tribal rights to use and possess eagle feathers.

Native Language: Protection of less tangible tribal cultural resources is also a core component of preserving tribal culture. Specifically, Native languages are an irreplaceable part of Native religions, ceremonial practices, and cultural heritage—and they are in a state of emergency. Seventy of the remaining 139 spoken tribal languages could become extinct by 2015, and all of these languages need immediate support at the local, tribal, state, and national levels. NCAI supports the creation of more Native language immersion and revitalization programs and will continue to advocate for the protection of these and other critical tribal cultural resources.



NCAI Sgt at Arms, Vietnam Vet, Dan King speaks at Mid Year as Area Vice-President and former NCAI President Joe Garcia looks on.

SUPPORT OF AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE VETERAN PROGRAMS AND ISSUES

In January, at the 2011 State of the Indian Nations address, President Keel acknowledged American Indians and Alaska Natives for their continued service to Indian Country and this nation. Tammy Duckworth, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), was present at the address and informed attendees of the selection of the new director to head the newly established VA Office of Tribal Government Relations.

The NCAI Veterans Committee meets at both Mid Year Conference and Annual Convention and has been tracking development of Native memorials in tribute to the military service of Native people. NCAI assisted Betty Jack of Lac du Flambeau Band of Chippewa Indians in obtaining U.S. flags from the Department of Veterans Affairs to honor members of her family who had served our nation. Among those honored was Betty's father, Ben Chosa, Sr., a founding member of the NCAI who was present at the NCAI Constitutional Convention in 1944 in Denver, Colorado. A lifelong tribal advocate, Jack's father and uncle served in the U.S. Cavalry along the Mexican border in 1916 but did not receive flags at their burial.

A flag ceremony was conducted at the NCAI Mid Year Conference in Milwaukee by members of the NCAI Veterans Committee for the family and was attended by the Lac du Flambeau Chairman and other tribal members.

NCAI is currently working to secure resources for tribal communities to establish Veteran Treatment Courts, an important tool to support veterans; increase the number of tribal Veteran Service Officers; increase funding for VA tribal home loan programs and the homeless veteran initiative; and oppose the Department of Defense's inappropriate use of derogatory terminology in combat protocol – specifically in the operation to remove Osama bin Laden.

In addition, the NCAI has been working with federal agencies and the Department of Defense to monitor and keep up to date the most accurate information regarding Native veterans and active duty service members. In a historic and moving moment, President Keel was invited to place an American Indian wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery on Memorial Day 2011.



INITIATIVES

— IN ACTION —



INITIATIVES IN ACTION

NCAI's initiatives blend together the knowledge of our members and our organization with the power of direct and on the ground efforts in tribal communities. As a unifying entity, NCAI has the ability to bring government and public sector partners together to take on some of Indian Country's greatest challenges.



Native Vote organizers Sarah Gonzales (photo left) and Tana Aguirre (photo right) uploaded these photos from GOTV efforts to NativeVote.org.



NATIVE VOTE

This past year, Native Vote, the national non-partisan initiative led by NCAI, followed up on Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts of the 2010 election cycle. The Native Vote initiative focused on analyzing the impact of efforts while also parlaying lessons learned into plans for the 2012 presidential election season. Native Vote also provided support to 2011 voter education efforts for special elections in Wisconsin and stayed active on combating voter disenfranchisement related to voter ID laws being passed in a number of states. These laws requiring voter identification directly threaten tribal citizens.

In reviewing the impact of Native Vote on the 2010 elections, Get Out the Vote efforts had a significant impact on the write-in campaign of Lisa Murkowski (R) in Alaska; the Alaska Native vote has been credited with turning the tide in that historic campaign. The 2010 elections also demonstrated that, even in states where redistricting efforts have been successful, voter engagement is critical.

In the state of Montana, the Native legislative delegation shrunk from nine legislators to six because of low turnout on Indian reservations (the three races were decided by a total of less than 500 votes).

This analysis led the Native Vote initiative to build its capacity in 2011 for the Get Out the Vote efforts for the national, state, and local elections taking place in 2012, a presidential election year.

Native Vote is a nonpartisan initiative organized by NCAI to encourage American Indians and Alaska Natives to exercise their right to vote. Due to historically low voter participation and severe infractions committed against Native voters, tribal leaders created an initiative that would increase voter participation and protect voters in Indian Country. Since then, Indian Country has become a powerful voting bloc and encourages candidates to recognize the needs of their American Indian and Alaska Native constituents.

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION INITIATIVE

Tribal leaders formed the Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative (TSPI) in September of 2001 in recognition of the fact that protection of tribal sovereignty is fundamental to the continued existence of Native American tribes as distinct peoples and cultures. Two central components of the TSPI continue to flourish today: the Tribal Supreme Court Project and the NCAI Project on the Judiciary (originally known as the Federal Judicial Selection Project).

The Tribal Supreme Court Project

A collaboration between NCAI and the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), the Tribal Supreme Court Project was formed to promote coordination and improve strategy on litigation that may affect the rights of Indian tribes and to strengthen tribal advocacy efforts before the U.S. Supreme Court. The highlight of the 2010-2011 term was a case that was not decided. The Supreme Court granted review in *Madison County v. Oneida Indian Nation of New York* over whether the Nation was entitled to assert sovereign immunity in foreclosure proceedings for non-payment of property taxes on fee land. The case threatened to diminish tribal sovereign immunity; however, the Oneida Nation recognized the severe challenges and determined that the best strategy was to waive its sovereign immunity. As a result of the waiver, the Court vacated the judgment and remanded the case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The remand prevented what could have been a substantial setback for the Oneida Indian Nation and for all of Indian country.

The Tribal Supreme Court Project is anticipating a busy upcoming session of the Supreme Court with eleven petitions for review filed in Indian law cases before the October start of the term and a number of important Indian law cases moving forward in the lower federal and state courts.

Project on the Judiciary

The NCAI Project on the Judiciary is a comprehensive effort that, until now, has primarily focused on ensuring that the federal judiciary is composed of judges that understand federal Indian law and the contours of tribal sovereignty.



Justice Alito, Chief Judge of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals William J. Riley, and former Nebraska District Court Judge Warren K. Urbom lay sage and sweetgrass wreath at the Wounded Knee burial site.

With the generous support of the Open Society Institute, the Project has sustained its early efforts to partner with other communities and organizations to become informed about the federal judicial selection process and to educate policy makers and federal judges about federal Indian law and the role of tribal courts. Building upon this early success, the Project has expanded its work, hosting several groundbreaking meetings between tribal leaders and federal appellate judges.

This year, in addition to launching a new website (www.judiciaryproject.org), the Project helped to organize a daylong tour of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation as part of the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference. On August 17, 2011, three busloads of judges, accompanied by their spouses and other family members, took a tour of Pine Ridge, which included a trip to Red Cloud Indian School, a visit with tribal leaders and judges, and a trip to Wounded Knee. Along for the trip was U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito. The culmination of the day's events came when Justice Alito, Chief Judge of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals William J. Riley, and former Nebraska District Court Judge Warren K. Urbom—the judge who presided over the Wounded Knee Trials in 1973—laid a sage and sweetgrass wreath at the burial site, while a local tribal member performed a traditional offering ceremony.

The Project looks forward to expanding upon current outreach efforts. At the upcoming Annual Convention in Portland, the Project has arranged for judges from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to meet with tribal leaders and representatives during the Litigation & Governance Committee meeting.

NCAI POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

A Year of Transitions and Accomplishments



The vision for the NCAI Policy Research Center came directly from the wisdom of tribal leaders. Almost 10 years ago, the NCAI Executive Board and other key leaders in Indian Country identified the need for credible and timely data to support their policymaking. Leaders of tribal nations saw that we were fighting the same policy battles, and when we lost those battles, we were losing because we did not have the data and research needed to support our case.

The solution that tribal leaders identified was to launch a national policy center as a program of NCAI that would conduct and support tribally driven research in service to communities. Over the last eight years, that program—the NCAI Policy Research Center—has grown to have a significant impact on Indian Country and throughout the larger research community. We have grown from a staff of one to a staff of seven who are working on projects accounting for an annual budget of almost \$1 million.

This year was also a time of transition for the Center as our founding director, Dr. Sarah Hicks, departed NCAI in December 2010 to embark on an exciting new position as Chief of Staff for the National Indian Child Welfare Association. After an extensive national (and international) search, NCAI identified Dr. Malia Villegas to serve as the second director of the Policy Research Center.

Dr. Villegas is no stranger to the Center, having presented at the Center's second Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum and worked with our long-time partner, the Alaska Native Policy Center. She received her doctorate in education from Harvard University, completed a Fulbright Scholarship in New Zealand, and a postdoctoral position at Queensland University of Technology in Australia. Dr. Villegas began at the Center in October 2011.

The NCAI Policy Research Center has enjoyed a remarkable year as we continue our important work to support Indian Country in shaping its own future. Key accomplishments for 2010-11 were as follows:

Enhanced the research capacity of tribal communities

Our research curriculum *Research that Benefits Native People: A Guide for Tribal Leaders* stands out as an important in-community training program that equips tribal leaders to better understand and manage research. In September 2011, NCAI and Montana State University's Center for Native Health Partnerships was awarded a grant from the National Institutes of Health to allow NCAI to offer three independent trainings to three tribes in the state of Montana.

Continued to invest in the next generation

Over the past three years, NCAI has partnered with the Urban Institute to host a joint fellow who learns critical skills to conduct policy research. Fellows go through an intensive eight-week policy research training program to prepare for future careers in policy research. In summer 2011, we mentored Blythe George, a member of the Yurok Nation who conducted a project analyzing efforts to address achievement gaps in Indian education. Two previous fellows, Brian Howard and Tiffany Smalley, joined the NCAI staff this year as Wilma Mankiller Fellows.

NCAI POLICY RESEARCH CENTER (continued)

A Year of Transitions and Accomplishments

Partnered with research institutions to promote tribally-driven research

We continued our national study of community-academic partnerships funded by the Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) and conducted in partnership with the University of New Mexico and University of Washington. The project seeks to understand the range of ways that communities are engaged as partners in their own health research and intervention projects. A website (narch.ncaiprc.org) was developed to share information about the study and about community-based participatory research in Native communities and other communities of color. We also concluded a two-year collaborative project with the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire that included partnerships with tribes to explore inclusion in a national survey of rural Americans. In 2011, Carsey released an important research brief noting the heightened levels of civic engagement among Native people compared to their non-Native neighbors in southeast Alaska.

Expanded our Indian Country Counts Campaign

While NCAI's Indian Country Counts campaign initially focused on the 2010 Census, this year we continued our work to analyze the results of the Census and equip tribal leaders to understand and utilize Census data. We will continue this work in 2011-2012 as Census data impacts redistricting, funding allocations across federal programs, and the power of the Native vote.

Produced Indian Country Budget Request

The FY 2012 Indian Country budget request document benefitted from our expanding partnership efforts with other Indian organizations and our enhanced internal research capacity. The document provided the foundation for President Keel's second State of Indian Nations address and underscored the potential tribal nations offer to contribute to a robust economic recovery for the nation as a whole.

Improved our capacity to collect information on top tribal research priorities

At the October 2010 NCAI Annual Convention, the Center concluded a pilot of its annual Tribal Research Priorities Survey. This survey provides us with a better understanding of the most pressing issues facing tribes and where research is needed to help address those issue areas. Using tablet personal computers, new survey software, and t-shirt gifts, we were able to capture more than 800 perspectives on research priorities—a record in this history of this survey. Survey results were published from both conferences and continue to help guide our work.

Began development of web-based genetics research guide

The Center received funding from the National Institutes of Health National Human Genome Research Institute to create a web-based resource guide about genetics research for American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The goal of this two-year project is to provide Native communities with a variety of tools to make informed decisions about genetics research. The guide will provide information in an unbiased way without taking a stance for or against genetic research. In the first year, website content was developed by an array of Native scholars, educators, and scientists.



PRC staff member Amber Ebarb presents to the 6th Annual Tribal/Leader Scholar Forum at Mid Year, Matthew Wesaw looks on.

Produced Suicide Prevention Toolkit

To address the growing challenge of suicide facing our communities, we developed a resource directory on suicide prevention for tribal nations. Tribal communities know what suicide prevention approaches are most effective. The directory seeks to provide tribal nations with tools and information, collected from a variety of sources and interviews, which can be used to support their own policymaking and programs in working toward preventing suicide in their communities.

Developed relationships with mainstream think tanks that resulted in research products to support Indian Country

We continued our partnership with the Economic Policy Institute to generate a policy brief on American Indian and Alaska Native unemployment and partnered with the Center for American Progress to produce an important report on the opportunities presented in tribal energy.

Represented Indian Country on an array of national boards and advisory groups

PRC staff represented the interests of Indian Country on the following boards/advisory groups: Rural Policy Research Institute national advisory board; National Rural Assembly steering committee; 2010 Census Advisory Committee; Department of Health and Human Services American Indian and Alaska Native Health Research Advisory Council (HRAC); Closing the Racial Wealth Gap initiative; Race and the Economy Forum; Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures national advisory board; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy national advisory board; and Social Services Research Clearinghouse technical workgroup.

A Special Thank You

The accomplishments of the past year, and each of the last eight years, have been possible only because we are guided by a talented and dedicated Advisory Council of tribal leaders, scholars, and leaders in state government, nonprofit, and business contexts. We especially benefited from the wisdom and leadership of Dr. Eddie Brown who has served as the Advisory Council co-chair, along with Jacqueline Johnson Pata, since the PRC was founded in 2003. Thank you to all Advisory Council members for their tireless service.



PRC Advisory Council co-chair Dr. Eddie Brown visits with NCAI Executive Board Members.

Refined the successful Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum

Our 6th annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum, held at Mid Year Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, included a new model for the General Assembly that included two respondents who were elected tribal leaders and/or experts in the field. This model promoted substantial discussion among tribal leaders who engaged deeply in the discussions of tribal healthcare management and regulation of lending practices on tribal lands. The General Assembly also included a presentation about the importance of Census data and the significant challenges for tribes to access accurate data to guide tribal policymaking. Two new additions to this year's forum were a breakout session on measuring success in culturally based education and the development of a pre-Forum webinar to help speakers guide their presentations for tribal leaders.

Produced reports to influence national policy dialogues

When President Obama announced the White House Rural Council in June 2011, the NCAI Policy Research Center had already been working with the National Rural Assembly to make sure rural policy agendas included tribal nations. At the National Rural Assembly meeting a few weeks later, NCAI released a discussion paper titled *Innovative Native Nations in Rural America: Key Partners in Building Sustainable American Prosperity*. The paper highlights key tribal innovations and shows how inclusion of tribal nations is essential to a strong economic recovery. PRC staff also led the development of the briefing paper prepared for the White House Native American Business Leaders' Roundtable in August 2011, a convening organized by the Rural Council.

PARTNERSHIP FOR TRIBAL GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

Planned as a long-term commitment by NCAI, with generous support by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Partnership for Tribal Governance (PTG), officially launched in 2009, seeks to increase, organize, enhance, and make accessible the resources necessary to support tribes' efforts to strengthen their governance. Through partnerships with tribes, tribal intergovernmental and national Native organizations, academic and policy centers, practitioners, policymakers, and other resources, the PTG will:

- Make investments in self-determined tribal efforts to strengthen governance
- Support increased education, training, and technical assistance for tribes
- Enhance communication, coordination, and collaboration among groups working to support tribes' efforts
- Support the development and sharing of new knowledge
- Develop and promote a policy research agenda to strengthen tribal governance
- Advocate policies to enhance and strengthen tribal governments
- Encourage increased public and media education about tribal governments
- Support the internal capacity-building of NCAI as an institution

In its second year of implementation, the Partnership for Tribal Governance increased its impact on NCAI's mission in a number of areas.

- **Promoting Tribally-Driven Policy:** Convened an interactive session of tribal leaders at the 2010 Annual Convention that initiated a process to prioritize actions the Administration and Congress can take to advance self-determination and re-examine the trust relationship. This conversation provided the foundation for the pre-summit planning session and policy briefs developed for the second annual White House Tribal Nations Summit, held in December 2010.
- **Working with Tribal Leaders and the Administration:** Played a critical role in helping to organize and coordinate the tribal leaders' involvement in the White House Tribal Nations Summit. NCAI worked with the executive board, other tribal leaders, intertribal regional organizations, and the Administration on the Summit.



Members of the Our Natural Resources alliance gather for a meeting. NCAI's PTG is a coordinating member of the group.



PARTNERSHIP FOR TRIBAL GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE (continued)

- Partnering with Native Organizations:** Worked in partnership with regional and national Native organizations to help coordinate efforts and enhance communications. The PTG, working in concert with other NCAI program staff, instituted regular communications, developed joint training opportunities, convened special meetings, and developed special networks. The National Tribal Communicators Network is supported by the PTG.
- Working in Collaboration on a National Strategy:** Facilitated an alliance of Native natural resource organizations to develop a national natural resources strategy that includes increasing tribal capacity. The PTG implemented a website for Our Natural Resources (ONR) that shares information to a broader tribal audience.
- Convening Around New Ideas and Models:** Worked with the Law Library of Congress, tribal leaders, and tribal legal organizations to pilot an effort to help tribes make their primary legal materials (codes, constitutions, court decisions, and others) more accessible to tribal governments, citizens, businesses and other publics. The “Sovereigns Within a Sovereign” project is a long-term partnership effort.
- Providing Resources in Areas Critical to Tribal Leaders:** Worked collaboratively with Kaighn Smith, Jr. and Richard Guest, author and editor respectively, of the new book titled *Labor and Employment Law in Indian Country*. PTG sponsored a series of three special webinars on this critical topic. In September 2011, PTG sponsored a joint workshop on this topic with Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and is working with other regional intergovernmental tribal organizations on additional workshops
- Building Capacity in Governance:** Provided capacity-building sessions for tribal leaders at a variety of venues focusing on topics of critical importance to strengthening tribal governance. PTG developed and presented 16 pre-, breakout, and special sessions including two special one-day youth leadership and governance training.
- Making NCAI Resources More Accessible:** Supported the redesign of the NCAI website as an online resource to provide tools and information to increase tribal government efficiency and effectiveness. The PTG is also supporting the implementation of a new membership system to provide better and increased services to tribes.
- Improving NCAI’s Organizational Effectiveness:** Worked to enhance the internal capacity of the organization. The PTG provided support for critical internal systems improvement in technology, finance, and administration.



New members of the Youth Commission are sworn in at NAIA's 67th Annual Convention



YOUTH COMMISSION

About the Commission

The NAIA Youth Commission is designed specifically for college and high school students ages 16-24 with an interest in political science, tribal government, and Native American legislative and governmental affairs.

The Youth Commission provides a unique perspective on issues relevant to tribal youth and a resource to NAIA and tribal leaders. Many of the youth involved engage in the Youth Commission because of the opportunity it presents to learn directly from tribal leaders about NAIA's processes and the structure of tribal politics. Most importantly the NAIA Youth Commission is a mechanism for achieving a unified voice for all American Indian and Alaskan Native youth.

Youth Commission 2010-2011

The Youth Commission took new shape over the past year, expanding the size and scope of the Commission's role, as well as changing the age range to 16-24. This was important to the Youth Commission as it provides additional resources and knowledge. The expanded breadth of the Commission has allowed for members to more effectively voice their concerns for Indian Country and the youth of today and about issues the youth will face tomorrow. Along with the new shape of the Youth Commission, members dedicated themselves to focus on issues in their own home areas and throughout the nation.

The topics that the Commission focused on in 2010-2011, in addition to facilitating full agendas at the Annual Convention, Executive Council Winter Session, and Mid Year Conference, were bullying, youth suicide and prevention, education, health, and economics. In addition, the Commissioners and other youth attendees heard from representatives from national Indian organizations, federal agencies, and the private sector. These meetings are interactive, informative, as well as educational. These opportunities provide hands-on information for the youth to share with their own communities or youth councils.

The purpose of the NAIA Youth Commission is to offer Indian Country youth the following opportunities:

- **Mentoring Program:** spending time with an elder, leader or delegate.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** a valuable learning experience working "behind the scenes" to see NAIA in action.
- **Informative Workshops:** learn from leaders in an array of fields important to Indian Country.
- **Leadership Training:** hands-on experience in leadership development.
- **Youth Luncheon:** keynotes, honoring elders, mentors, and youth.
- **Addressing Issues:** learning through resolutions, lobbying, and sharing
- **A Voice Within NAIA:** participants learn about the important work of NAIA and are able to contribute to changes that will move their communities forward.

Current 2010-2011 Youth Commissioners:

Co-President

Randi Begaye, San Ildefonso Pueblo

Co-Vice President

J'Shon Lee, White Mountain Apache Tribe

Secretary

Jalea Walker, Smith River Rancheria

Member at Large

Taylor Thomas, Shoshone Bannock Tribes

Member at Large

Chad Martinez, Tohono O'odham Nation

Co-President

Quintin Lopez, Tohono O'odham Nation

Co-Vice President

Tyson Johnston, Quinault Nation

Treasurer

Heather Farver, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

Member at Large

Danee Walker, Ho-Chunk Nation

Member at Large

Trenton Little George, Ho-Chunk Nation

FELLOW PROGRAM

For more than a decade, NCAI's fellow program has provided the opportunity for bright young Native leaders to gain experience in policy advocacy, applied research, communications and development, and an array of other aspects of NCAI's work to make a difference in Indian Country. This unique, 11-month program has served over 30 young people, helping to provide young professionals with the tools and networks to take the next step into influential careers in Indian Country advocacy in the government, business, private, and civic sectors. Fellows work on a wide range of issues across all of the organization's departments, ranging from telecommunications and juvenile justice to cultural property protections and education policy.

The program has evolved significantly over the past few years as the profile of the fellowship has grown. In addition to a growing reputation and exponential growth in the number of applicants, this year the NCAI Fellow Program was renamed in honor of Wilma Mankiller (the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation) and her outstanding contribution to Indian Country and tribal relations with other sovereign nations.

In summer 2011, NCAI welcomed our largest ever class of fellows with four new fellows – Brian Howard (Gila River Indian Community), Katie Hoyt (Tlingit), Katie Jones (Cherokee Nation), and Tiffany Smalley (Aquinnah Wampanoag). These fellows join our existing fellows – Derrick Beetso (Navajo Nation), Kellcee Baker (Cherokee), and Terra Branson (Muskogee Creek) and a visiting fellow from Peru, Abel Hurtado Espinoza.



NCAI fellows gather for a photo on the stairs of the Embassy of Tribal Nations



COMMUNICATIONS

— & EXTERNAL RELATIONS —



COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

“To enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people”

This quote from the preamble of NCAI’s constitution continues to inspire NCAI and our members to stay true to our mission to enlighten the general public. With each successive year, NCAI works to become more innovative and effective in its external engagement efforts and the tools we provide to our membership.

In 2011, we built on the previous year’s efforts to take our communications efforts to the next level. NCAI’s approach to education and information dissemination takes shape in our events, the media and press relations we engage in, our efforts to build our communications capacity, and our online presence and publications.

Events/Meetings

The strength of our organization is our ability to convene stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and interests. Whether it is tribal officials, political leaders, our members or partners, NCAI’s conferences, meetings, and events are the foundation for our members and other partners to advance the causes of Indian Country. The organization continues to convene its regular and annual events seeking to innovate and become more effective. NCAI has become a leading organization for assisting with event management and logistics coordination surrounding tribal events. We have also increased our use of online tools to convene meetings and educational sessions through tools such as webinars. While this will never replace our in-person meetings, these supplemental educational sessions provide for yearlong engagement for membership.

Building Capacity

NCAI proudly announced the launch of the National Tribal Communicators Network in the fall of 2011. The network is a nationwide collaboration of public information officers and communications professionals from across Indian Country. With close to one hundred individuals participating in the network already, the future for coordinated public relations efforts is bright. In the lead up to launching the network, NCAI hosted a series of communications trainings at Annual and Mid Year, focusing on increasing awareness about the use of new media. NCAI also released a series of Communications Toolkits.

Media and the Press

NCAI continues to be identified as one of the leading sources for issues impacting Indian Country. In addition to providing regular updates to our members and informing the media of breaking news, NCAI has continued to educate the media on tribal governmental parity and sovereignty, while correcting misinformation when it occurs. The communications staff have expanded our ability to reach members of the media through the use of video, web content, social media, and digital media, in conjunction with other traditional forms of communication.

Online Communications and Publications

NCAI’s use of new media and online communications continues to expand as social media, the web, and digital learning become major tools to serve our members. The 2011 State of Indian Nations was a perfect example of this new direction. Tens of thousands watched President Jefferson Keel deliver the State of Indian Nations from the Newseum’s television studio in downtown Washington, D.C. via NCAI’s live web cast service. In addition to broadcasts on C-SPAN, thousands more have watched the speech on the internet, making the 2011 State of Indian Nations one of the most widely watched in the event’s nine-year history.

The organization moved closer to a major overhaul of the NCAI website and we anticipate a late 2011 launch. In addition, the organization has made significant investments in our membership management systems, which will be unveiled in 2012.

MEMBERSHIP

NCAI is a membership-driven organization. Our membership is a strong representation of the many nations that constitute the whole of Indian Country.

NCAI membership is made up of tribes and individuals who have met the eligibility criteria and paid dues as outlined in the Article III of the NCAI By-Laws. Members are determined to be in good standing upon full payment of dues and having fulfilled the requirements of the Credentials Committee.

NCAI's membership consists of six categories:

1. Tribe Membership

Recognized as a tribe or other identifiable group of American Indians by the Department of the Interior, Court of Claims, the Indian Claims Commission or a State.

2. Individual Indian Membership

Recognized as a member by an Indian tribe or band, or combination of tribes and bands, recognized by the Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, Court of Claims, or a State.

3. Individual Associate Membership

Individuals that do not qualify for membership for lack of Indian ancestry. Non-Indian applicants are admitted as non-voting associate members.

4. Individual Indian Lifetime Membership

Recognized as a member by an Indian tribe or band, or combination of tribes and bands, recognized by the Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, Court of Claims, or a State.

5. Individual Associate Lifetime Membership

Individuals that do not qualify for membership for lack of Indian ancestry. Non-Indian applicants are admitted as non-voting associate members.

6. Associate Organization Membership

Organizations have the same rights and privileges afforded to Individual Associate members.

In 2010-2011, NCAI membership continued to grow to new levels. This demonstration of tribal unity strengthens NCAI as we continue to work together to protect tribal sovereignty and advance the well-being of Indian Country.



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