



The Council's Voice



This month's feature story was prepared by *Council Member Mike Miller*. Mike is currently the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's representative on the SEARHC Board of Directors and his article focuses upon the collaborative relationship between the Tribe and SEARHC. Also featured in this month's edition of the *Council's Voice* are the results of the 2008 Tribal Council Election, summaries from October's regular Council meetings and information about Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) and National Diabetes Month - both of which are recognized each November.

Contributions Made by Entities which Exist to Serve Tribal Citizens Enhance Sitka's Overall Quality of Life

Article contributed by: Mike Miller, Sitka Tribal Council Member

Often there are concerns in our community that affect both Tribal and non-Tribal residents of Sitka. The economy and health care, two such issues, were showcased in our recent local, regional, and national elections. In this article I will focus on the impact that Federally Recognized Alaskan Tribes (such as the Sitka Tribe of Alaska) and the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) have in terms of our local and regional economy and health care.

While I listed Tribal governments and SEARHC separately, the Tribes in our region and SEARHC are inherently connected to each other. It is also important to stop from time to time and consider the SEARHC mission and to recognize that SEARHC exists because Tribes and Tribal citizens exist. SEARHC is a Tribally authorized health care provider and each member Tribe in our region of Southeast has one seat on the SEARHC Board of Directors. This Board aids the consortium's administration to steer the corporation in the best possible course regarding its mission to provide its beneficiaries with the best possible health care.

While the missions of both the Sitka Tribe and SEARHC are to provide services to beneficiaries, I feel that it is also important for Tribal citizens and the community as a whole to recognize the improved quality of life as a result of the programs and services provided by both entities. Things such as healthy lifestyle initiatives, tobacco cessation efforts, advocating for the use of traditional foods for a healthy diet and the protection of these foods and their habitat are just a few examples of programs that are beneficial to the entire community.

Another area of importance is the overall economic impact resulting from the partnership between Tribes and SEARHC. With a combined annual 2008 operating budget of over fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000), SEARHC and the Sitka Tribe - and by extension our mutual beneficiaries - are major contributors to the economic viability of our community of Sitka. And, unlike other industries, where a large portion of funds might leave the area, the vast majority of funds that both the Sitka Tribe and SEARHC expend each year remain in our community.

Tribal citizens and beneficiaries are the priority for both the Sitka Tribe and for SEARHC, however, both entities are also interested in discussing ways that we can and do help to make the community of Sitka a better place to live for everyone who resides here. In doing so, we encourage open dialogue with governmental and community groups which also strive to maintain and improve Sitka's quality of life.

November is Native American Heritage Month. In this article I have spoken briefly about the care and investments that the Sitka Tribe and SEARHC make in Sitka. However, it would be short-sighted not to draw attention to the impact and contributions made by other local and regional organizations that serve Tribal citizens such as Shee Atika, Inc., Sealaska, Inc., Tlingit and Haida, the Baranof Island Housing Authority (BIHA), the Sitka Native Education Program (SNEP) and, the founding fathers/mothers of all of these organizations, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Sisterhood.

In closing, I encourage you to take a moment this month to reflect on the importance of our Tribal citizens, to the organizations who work hard to serve them recognize the contributions made by the organizations who exist to serve Tribal citizens in regard to our local economy and to the health and quality of life for those of us who call Sitka our home - Native and non-Native alike.

The Creation of National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month: A Brief History

Source: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Early Proponents: One of the early proponents of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian who was the Director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, New York. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the "First Americans," and for three years the Scouts adopted such a day. In 1915, at the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting in Lawrence, Kansas, a plan celebrating American Indian Day was formally approved.

The Association then directed its president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, to call upon the country to set aside a day of recognition. Rev. Coolidge issued a proclamation on September 28, 1915, which declared the second Saturday of May as American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of American Indians as citizens. The year before this proclamation was issued, Red Fox James, a Blackfeet Indian, rode horseback from state to state, seeking approval for a day to honor American Indians. On December 14, 1915, Red Fox James presented the endorsements of 24 state governments to the White House. There is no record, however, of such a national day being proclaimed.

State Celebrations: The first American Indian Day to be celebrated in a state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. Several states celebrate the fourth Friday in September. In Illinois, for example, legislators enacted such a day in 1919. Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day, but it continues to be a day we observe without any legal recognition as a national holiday.

Heritage Months: In 1990 President George Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 as "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations have been issued each year since 1994. National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month is celebrated to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of the American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Tribal Council Meeting Summaries: October 2008

October 1, 2008	October 15, 2008
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<p>Government to Government: Consultation between the Council and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding the proposed Sitka airport expansion project.</p> <p>Motion to draft a letter to Sitka Trail Works was instead referred to the STA Cultural Committee.</p> <p>Motion made and passed to approve, on third and final reading, the STA Budget Ordinance.</p> <p>Motion made and passed to forward written comments regarding the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed airport expansion.</p>	<p>Government to Government: United States Forest Service provided an update and overview.</p> <p>Meeting minutes from the Council's September 17, 2008 and October 1, 2008 were accepted by motion. Persons to be heard: (1) Harriet Beleal; (2) Pat Svetlak; and, (3) Dan Moreno. The Council received updates: (1) concerning the protection of herring and herring eggs; and, (2) regarding Sitka's 2009/2010 Transportation Plan for Human Services.</p> <p>Motions to ratify phone polls: (1) for resolution supporting the Alaska Federation of Natives' (AFN) efforts to lift a freeze on the local hire authority which exists through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA); and, (2) for resolution regarding the proposed lease between the City and Borough of Sitka and the Tribe at the Saw Mill Industrial Park in order to continue the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant submission process.</p> <p>Motions to approve: (1) the Baranof Island Housing Authority's (BIHA) Board appointments - Josh Arnold and Mick Dimond; (2) approval of Tribal Election Judges - Pam Steffes and Liz Howard, with Bertha Karras as an alternate; (3) authorization and support for applying to the US Environmental Protection Agency for grant funding; (4) approval of commercial lease agreement between the Spruce Glen Apartments and the Tribe; (5) acceptance of the suggested Election Officials in the event of a protest; (6) motion to approve the STA Legislative Affairs Committee Ordinance Governing STA Committees, on first reading, with a motion made and passed to add to the Health Committee to the Ordinance; (7) Authorization and Support for the Tlingit and Haida Regional Housing Authority to administer the region's Alaska Heating Assistance Program; (8) confirmation of new Kayaani Commission members - Al Gray and Libby Watanabe; (9) resolution affirming STA's support and partnership regarding the 2010 Census; and, (10) six enrollment resolutions authorized.</p>
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<p>2008 Tribal Election Results</p> <p>On November 11, 2008, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska held its annual election for Council members. There were six Tribal citizens who ran for four Council positions and two Tribal citizens who ran for the Chairman position.</p> <p>The Chairman candidates were George Paul and Lawrence ("Woody") Widmark. The Council candidates were Michael Baines, Dennis Demmert, Tom Gamble, Clara Gray, Sharon McIndoo, and Rachel Moreno.</p> <p>Christine Harrington, a local CPA, supervised the election for the Sitka Tribe. The unofficial results of that election are as follows:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>Chairman:</u></td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 30%;"><u>Council:</u></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>George Paul</td> <td style="text-align: right;">110</td> <td>Michael Baines</td> <td style="text-align: right;">168</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lawrence Widmark</td> <td style="text-align: right;">171</td> <td>Dennis Demmert</td> <td style="text-align: right;">164</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Tom Gamble</td> <td style="text-align: right;">175</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Clara Gray</td> <td style="text-align: right;">215</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Sharon McIndoo</td> <td style="text-align: right;">101</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Rachel Moreno</td> <td style="text-align: right;">206</td> </tr> </table> <p>NOTE: There were also eighteen votes for various write-in candidates.</p> <p>The Tribal Council certified the Election results on November 19, 2008 at their regular monthly meeting held at the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi. The term of office for the elected Chairman/Council members will start December 1, 2008 and go through November 30, 2010.</p> <p>The Tribe plans to swear-in the newly elected Council members on November 22, 2008 at a reception at the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi to follow the Annual Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) parade which begins at 1 p.m. Please, join us in welcoming our new and returning Council members.</p>	<u>Chairman:</u>		<u>Council:</u>		George Paul	110	Michael Baines	168	Lawrence Widmark	171	Dennis Demmert	164			Tom Gamble	175			Clara Gray	215			Sharon McIndoo	101			Rachel Moreno	206	<p>Upcoming Tribal Council Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>12 p.m. - December 3, 2008 @ 456 Katlian Street</u> • <u>6:30 p.m. - December 17, 2008 @ the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Community House 200 Katlian Street</u> <p>Annual Children's Party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>5:30 p.m. - December 22, 2008 @ the Centennial Building</u> <p>NAHM Parade & Reception - Nov 22</p> <p>Join the Sitka Tribe and your community of Sitka for the annual Native American Heritage Parade event! The parade line-up will take place on November 22 at the SJ Campus at noon. The parade will begin at 1 p.m. and the route will lead to the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Community House.</p> <p>A reception at the Community House will take place immediately following the parade. There will be light refreshments at the reception and the newly elected Sitka Tribal Council members will be officially sworn in with for terms which will begin on December 1, 2008.</p> <p>Questions about the parade can be directed to Gerry Hope and questions about the reception can be directed to Christine Paul. Both can be reach by calling 747-3207.</p>
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November is Native American Heritage Month and it also is American Diabetes Month

Since Alaska Natives and Native Americans have some of the highest rates of diabetes for any ethnic group in the country, the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) Lifestyle Balance Diabetes Prevention Program invites community members to join them in participating in the Native American Heritage Month Parade on Saturday, Nov. 22. Marching in the parade will help bring awareness to the impacts of diabetes and pre-diabetes on the Alaska Native and Native American community.

"Walking in the Native American Heritage Month Parade is a great way to honor our ancestors and encourage a healthy lifestyle to ensure the future of our people," said Heleena vanVeen, SEARHC Lifestyle Balance Diabetes Prevention Program Recruiter. Recent research shows more than half of all Type 2 diabetes cases can be prevented through increased physical activity (such as marching in the parade) and healthy eating habits. The Native American Heritage Month parade is organized annually by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska.