

Indian Time Newsletter

Spring 2015

Letter from the Desk of the Executive Director

On February 4, 2015, the commission was advised that there will be an impending change within the Department of Administration (DOA) which is associated with the realignment of functions of state government. The notice indicated that select divisions within the Department may be transitioned out of DOA to some other state agency, in our case, the Commission will be transferred to the Governor's Office effective July 1st, if Senate Bill 713 is adopted by the NC General Assembly. The Commission was originally transferred to DOA in 1977 and was transferred under a Type II transfer. Senate Bill 713 would transfer the Commission to the Office of the Governor under at Type I transfer.

The NC Commission of Indian Affairs held its quarterly meeting on Thursday, March 19th, in conjunction with the 2015 NC Indian Unity Conference. The NC Indian Unity Conference was held March 19-21 at the Hilton North Raleigh, Raleigh, North Carolina. Governor Pat McCrory attended the Scholarship and Awards Breakfast on Saturday March 21st. Over \$5,000 in scholarships were awarded to Indian students during the Award Breakfast. Bill Daughtridge, Secretary of the NC Department of Administration kicked off the conference with opening remarks. The conference was well attended and the workshops held were well received, covered such topics as Federal Recognition, Indian Child Welfare, Indian Education, Environmental Justice and Indian Housing.



The Commission's State Recognition Committee is continuing to evaluate the Tuscarora Nation of North Carolina's Petition for state recognition. The committee has completed its genealogical and historical research and is now proceeding to complete its findings. The Chairman of the State Recognition Committee has appointed a subcommittee to review and analyze the criteria and bring their findings back to the full committee for review and consideration. The committee members are:

- Chairman Larece Hunt
- Commissioner Marvel Welch
- Commissioner Charlene Jacobs
- Commissioner W.D. Baucom
- Commissioner Connie Mitchell

Finally, I am pleased to acknowledge following staff who received services awards for their years of service to the commission this year:

Mickey Locklear	20 years
Latesha Middleton	10 years
Consuela Richardson	10 years
Sonya McIver	10 years
Stephen Maynor	2 year

I will also be receiving a service award this Spring for 35 years of service with the NC Commission of Indian Affairs!

Greg Richardson

2015 Session of the NC General Assembly

Senate Bill 97 – This Bill proposes to change the makeup of the State Advisory Council on Indian Education. There has been some controversy regarding the proposed bill, however, there appears to be a consensus reached between tribal leaders and the authors of the bill and it is on track for review and/or adoption by the General Assembly.

House Bill 95 – The Bill, if adopted by the NC General Assembly would authorize the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Tribal Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission, to issue wine and shipper permits and commercial ABC permits.

House Bill 523 – The Bill, if adopted, would direct the Division of Motor Vehicle to use a certain designation on the NC Driver’s License when listing the race of an American Indian on the license. The identification code would be AI for American Indians. This change is necessary because data on license holders with Middle Eastern ancestry (India) is being tabulated with data on American Indian drivers at the DMV.

House Bill 734 – This bill would require the NC Commission of Indian Affairs to coordinate a task force to study the feasibility of establishing a NC American Indian Heritage Center.

House Bill 736 – This bill would provide an exemption from hunting, trapping and fishing license requirements for American Indians.

Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) for Commission Members

This quarter all Commission members were reminded about the requirements to complete their Statement of Economic Interest by the April 15th deadline and submit it to the Ethics Commission. Members of the Commission are covered by the Ethics Act.

The State Government Ethics Act requires the disclosure of financial and personal interests by most covered persons. Public servants who are covered by the Ethics Act but who make less than \$60,000 per year, and ex-officio members of university and community college boards of trustees do not have to make these disclosures. Covered persons who are required to file an SEI must do so **prior to** their initial appointment, election, or employment. SEIs must be filed annually no later than April 15th.

The Ethics Commission evaluates the SEIs of public servants for actual and potential conflicts of interest between the public servant's public duties and private interests. The Commission may assess a \$250 civil penalty for late or non-filing. Criminal penalties apply to concealing information or providing false information.

Beginning in 2015, a filers CONTACT INFORMATION is being collected separately and will not be provided to the public as part of the online access to SEIs.

Indian Child Welfare Memorandum of Agreement

The Commission's Indian Child welfare Committee is developing a joint Memorandum of Agreement between the Commission, the NC Department of health and Human Services and Indian tribes. The purpose of the MOA is to put into place some specific procedures that will guide the process of how Indian children will be placed into foster care and adoptive care in the state. Additionally, the MOA will spell out the duties and responsibilities of each party to the agreement. The MOA will become a historic document and will serve to assure that American Indian children are given every opportunity to be placed or adopted in Indian communities, where their culture and heritage can be preserved. This effort is led by Ms. Marvel Welch and Sherry Bradsher, Co-Chairs of the Commission's Indian Child Welfare Committee.

2015 American Indian Heritage Month Celebration Plans

2015 American Indian Heritage Celebration will be held November __ at the NC Museum of History. Elk Richardson, Director of the Commission's workforce programs is providing staff support to the Indian Heritage Month planning Committee.

Commission Appointment Recommendations as required by NC General Statute:

NC Indian Housing Authority Appointment Recommendation: (Forwarded to Governor McCrory) (One Vacancy)

Priority 1 – Dr. Joseph O. Richardson

Priority 2 – Archie Lynch

State Advisory Council on Indian Education Appointment Recommendations: (Forwarded to Mr. Bill Coby, Chairman, State Board of Education (Six Vacancies- all incumbents and eligible for re-appointment)

Margo Howard – Parent of a student – Meherrin Tribe

Alisa Hunt-Lowery-Parent of a student – Lumbee Tribe

Kamiyo Lanning- Parent of a student – Eastern Band of Cherokee Tribe

Sharon Williams-Parent of a student – Coharie Tribe

Josephine Graham-Educator – Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe

Kara Stewart-Educator – Sappony Tribe

None Statutory Appointments

United Tribes of North Carolina Appointment by NC Commission of Indian Affairs

Greg Richardson, Executive Director, by NC Commission of Indian Affairs

Legal Aid of North Carolina, by NC Commission of Indian Affairs

Tony Clark, NC Department of Corrections (American Indian Spiritual Leader)

Recognition of Outstanding American Indian Student



Megan Lowry, Lumbee tribal member and daughter of Stuart & Dena Lowry of Garner, North Carolina, was selected to membership in the Honors College at East Carolina University, class of 2018. Admission is extremely competitive and by invitation only. The Honors College at East Carolina University is a diverse intellectual community for academically talented students of strong character. Honors students engage in stimulating coursework that spans disciplines across campus, providing for a challenging and innovative curricular and co-curricular model. These students are provided with the opportunity to engage in immersive service-learning, undergraduate research, and internship experiences throughout their four years. We are pleased to acknowledge the outstanding accomplishment of Megan Lowry!

Educational Talent Search Program Highlights

The Educational Talent Search Staff met with the North Carolina Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO) and the location of the 36th Annual NCNAYO Youth Unity Conference was decided. The conference will be held June 17 -20th on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, the side of the very first NCNAYO conference.

The Director has been busy obtaining quotes from charter bus companies to take Educational Talent Search, NCNAYO and other Indian Education youth to the United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITYI) national conference to be held in Washington, DC during July 10 – 14, 2015. Many of our students plan to participate in President Obama's White House Tribal Youth Gathering prior to the UNITY Conference.

Educational Talent Search Staff have been busy working with 8th grade students to ensure that they are ready to transition to high school in the appropriate program of study and that they are registering for the higher levels of math and advanced level courses.

Preparations are being made for the final campus visits as students will soon begin to prepare for end of grade and end of course tests. Students in Hoke and Columbus County will travel to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and also visit Fort Fisher. Students from the Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School will visit Nash Community college and then tour the Children's Museum of Rocky Mount.

- The Educational Talent Search Program counselors were busy last week assisting students with FAFSA submissions and corrections. Several students received their Student Aid Reports (SAR) and counselors had to explain those to students and parents on numerous phone calls.
- Student workshops presented to 8th, 9th and 10th graders centered on selecting career goals and the steps to take to realize those goals. Students were presented with a list of American Indian (most from North Carolina) who had succeeded in the careers the students selected.
- The Education Committee held a conference call on Tuesday and the report was presented to the full Commission during the meeting on Thursday. The Director reported that the North Carolina American Indian Scholarship application was online and the application deadline is May 1st.
- Staff met with the North Carolina Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO) and the group selected the University of North Carolina at Pembroke as their host university for the 36th annual NCNAYO Youth Unity Conference. The conference will be held on June 17 - 20 and we anticipate having between 250 - 275 students and chaperones in attendance. Staff members have begun work on the conference application that will be available the first week of April.
- Twelve ETS students (representing all five of our target counties) attended the 45th Youth Legislative Assembly and had the opportunity to act as legislators for the weekend. Students worked on drafting, debating and voting on bills just as the General Assembly does.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Update

Staff met with fiscal staff and Abdul to discuss the reconciliation and 2014 audit preparation.

Staff prepared April Housing Assistance Payments for over 800 families.

A Section 8 staff meeting was held to discuss the new application process. Applications will be taken in Hoke County ONLY this year. Staff had initially determine that they would take applications in Halifax, Warren, Granville, and Person, however, it was determined that we already have a sufficient number of applicants on file to support the program through May. Staff anticipates that they will be taking applications in the other 4 counties next year, based on current projections.

The Program Director participated in the NC Indian Unity Conference and provided staff support to two workshops.

Staff contacted Bo Marshall with NC Health Care Reform Advisors about having his group set up in our Raeford office. Applications are being taken in May to see if any applicants could use help signing up under the Affordable Care Act.

The staff scheduled interviews for the vacant clerical position (Hermione's old position) for next Tuesday and Wednesday.

Community Development Program

Staff participated in the 40th Annual Indian Unity Conference and the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs' Quarterly Commission Meeting. Staff made presentations on the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, provided technical assistance to other presenters/participants of the conference, networked with other vendors that deal with the socioeconomic issues that the American Indians of NC are faced with. During the conference, and networking opportunities, the upcoming American Indian Energy Conference was promoted by inviting vendors, exhibitors and participants. Staff participated in the New Vision for Native Students Workshop, The Impact of Diabetes-Alzheimer's and Dementia Diseases for American Indians Workshop (staff served as moderator and recorder) and Native Culture and Mathematical Practices Workshop. Each of the workshops contained pertinent information in which the American Indian population has a great concern.

Staff is currently working with the Cumberland County Action Program (CCAP) in Sampson, Columbus, Bladen, Harnett and Cumberland counties on several different projects. The Commission's staff is working with CCAP to facilitate and coordinate taking Weatherization Assistance Program Applications. Staff is also working with the ASPIRE program, which provides assistance to individuals who are at or below poverty level, who want to continue their education and become successful in opportunities for career advancement. This program has a limited amount of funds and resources that provide housing, transportation and education to the participants. The commission staff also provides referrals to CCAP's food bank program for nutritional needs.

Staff continues to evaluate the needs of the community, and a few issues that have surfaced recently include hearing loss, loss of vision and life/estate preparedness. The Commission is working with agencies across NC to provide screenings, counseling and equipment that is low cost or now cost at all for individuals that qualify. Services are provided by Legal Aid of North Carolina in regards to living wills, simple wills and estate planning. The questions concerning

wills and estates have been asked more frequently since the Sampson County Community has experienced a high number of deaths in the last week.

2015 NC Indian Unity Conference Feature

FVAMC Rural Health Team Attends NC Indian Unity Conference in Raleigh March 19-21

Fayetteville VA Medical Center's Rural Health Outreach team enrolled several new Veterans in VA healthcare while supporting the North Carolina's Indian Unity Conference March 19-21 in Raleigh. Since 1976, the Unity Conference has gathered North Carolina's eight tribal leadership teams with the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs to address issues affecting Native American communities in the state.

According to NCCIA Executive Director Greg Richardson, this year's event provided a great opportunity for VA staff to meet and get to know tribal leaders and about 250 attendees. Richardson said, "Each year, we strive for an agenda at that helps our leaders learn more about VA benefits like education and housing, compensation, access to health care," adding "Having the rural health team here adds great value to conference."

Rural Health Teams complement the care Veterans receive in the community. They integrate the services Veterans can get at VA medical centers and outpatient clinics with care available to them in their community. The effort is focused on enrolling Veterans, offering health-related education and solving Veteran's problems.

People interested in hosting the Rural Health team should contact Melvin Peterson, at (910) 308-1183, Michael Shaw at (910) 488-2120, extension 7098 or Jeffery Thomas, at (910) 488-2120, ext. 5746.



DSSC_1122a – Lumbee Warriors Association member Harold Hunt talks to Sonya Oxendine and Melvin Peterson at the North Carolina's Indian Unity Conference March 19. (Fayetteville VAMC Courtesy Photo)



DSSC_1079a -- Sonya Oxendine and Melvin Peterson of the Fayetteville VAMC Rural Health Team distribute literature and engage passersby at the North Carolina's Indian Unity Conference March 19. (Fayetteville VAMC Courtesy Photo)