



SAC & FOX NEWS

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CHIEF'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

Hello Tribal Members:

Winter is certainly upon us across the United States, as most of you have experienced in the last few weeks. Our tribal



Chief George Thurman

complex was closed for several days due to inclement weather and dangerous road conditions and I

sincerely apologize to you for the interruption of services provided by our tribal government. I make the decision of whenever we need to close due to inclement weather, but I do so with the thought of our employees' and tribal members' safety foremost. Many of our employees were on the job however, clearing snow and ice, preparing payroll, opening the BHHC pharmacy on Saturday for four hours, checking on RAP requests, Juvenile Center and Police employees, and security. I extend a heartfelt "thank you" to those individuals who responded when called upon, demonstrating true teamwork within our government.

News from Indian Country

This month I will be sharing news from articles across Indian Country, one of which has dealt with a class action law suit of

Individual Indian Monies (IIM) accounts, better known as the Cobell case, and reprinted by permission separately in the newspaper. The second topic is the *State of Indian Nations Address*, delivered by National Congress of American Indian (NCAI) President Jefferson Keel, Lieutenant Governor Chickasaw Nation and the Congressional response by Alaska Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski.



Near blizzard weather conditions with 10 - 12" of snow starting Monday, January 31 and an additional 5" Friday, February 4, sent the majority of the Sac & Fox tribal complex into hibernation.

State of the Indian Nations Address Highlights Productive Year in Native American Policy

Thursday, January 27, 2011. Posted with permission from APRN-Alaska Public Radio Network. Story by Libby Casey, APRN - Washington D.C.

The President of the country's largest group representing Alaska Natives and American Indians says they have fresh momentum, and are at the dawn of a new era.

Jefferson Keel, president of the National Congress of American Indians, gave the annual "State of the Indian Nations" address on Thursday, which traditionally comes on the heels of the U.S. President's State of the Union speech.

Keel says last year was marked by huge leaps forward in policies that will help Native Americans, from passage of the Tribal Law and Order Act to the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, to the long-awaited settlement of the Cobell case over the federal government's mishandling of billions of dollars in Indian trust funds.

Keel says the key now is making sure Indian Country actually sees the money for the new laws to make a difference.

"But this work is not complete," Keel said. "We call for these actions to be fully funded, and fully implemented."

Keel says tribes hold "unrealized potential" in areas like energy, since they're stewards for 10 percent of the country's energy resources, but only a handful of tribes have been able to use them.

He says they're hampered by federal bureaucracy and lack of access to programs and funding. Today we call on our federal partners to clear the way for us to expand economic opportunity through entrepreneurship, so that we might compete," Keel said. "Clear the way for us to develop energy on our lands, build commerce and create jobs, so that we might contribute more to the economy of America."

Alaska Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski gave the Congressional response this morning to Keel's "State of Indian Nations" address, and warned tribal leaders that it will be a battle to get adequate funding

for Alaska Native and American Indian programs in these tight budget times.

"And you'll need to fight hard to keep what you have and even harder to get what you need," Murkowski said.

Murkowski says there's a reason to be concerned about getting adequate funding.

"I understand this is a cause of great anxiety throughout Indian country. Indian programs remain the most underfunded in the entire federal government," Murkowski said. "And in spite of the Administration's efforts to improve funding for Indian Health Service, the funding gaps we understand are quite significant."

"The same can be said for nearly every other federal Indian program."

President Obama called for a five-year freeze in domestic spending during his State of the Union address this week. And the new Republican majority in the House is vowing to drastically cut the budget. Their plan to defund or repeal the national health care law would also throw out the Indian Health Care Act.

Some new conservative House members ran on platforms of funding only what's mandated by the Constitution. But Murkowski

says the federal responsibility for the well being of Native people is in the Constitution, so she had a tip for tribal leaders.

"So my suggestion to you as you visit the offices of my colleagues this year, I invite you, keep your handy-dandy copy of the Constitution with you," Murkowski said. "Bookmark the provisions that I've discussed."

"I think that would be helpful as you point out those obligations there."

Murkowski also touched on the epidemic of suicide in Native communities, and said it will take a community effort to fix it. Next month the former head of the Senate Indian Affairs committee, recently retired North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan, will open a new Center for Native American Youth at the Aspen Institute.

Our Future

I quote Tribal Chairman Derek J. Bailey of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, "A Nation grows stronger when built upon shared visions." As we begin to progress into this year 2011 and the next decade, I once again reiterate that we need to have a "vision" of where our Sac and Fox Nation is headed and how we are to

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Reprinted with permission from Indian Country Today Media Network

Cobell's Final Toll

By Rob Capriccioso, RSS posted January 17, 2011

For most Americans, securing a \$3.4 billion payout and getting the federal government to admit it had screwed up would be a major achievement, but for many Native Americans still haunted by a "beads-and-trinkets" past, the Cobell settlement feels like yet another bad deal.

That's the blunt truth about the agreement approved in November and lauded by glowing Obama administration officials, a grinning lead plaintiff, and, of course, the many well-paid lawyers.

Widely reported as a "victory" for Native Americans, the settlement was supposed to bring sweet justice for the mismanagement of gas, mineral and other land-based royalties held in trust for Indians by the Department of the Interior since the 1800s. Indeed, restitution will be offered to the individuals who had been cheated—of which there are estimated to be more than 300,000—and the Interior Department is supposed to set up a program to buy back land interests from individuals and bundle those properties, with the hope of returning them to tribes.

But as is often the case in Indian country, there have been complications—of time, of interests, and especially, of money. Even the slickest salesman would have a tough time convincing all the aggrieved parties here that this is a good deal.

Judging from the mainstream coverage, however, the settlement is a triumph: A "landmark," hailed The Christian Science Monitor. "The best solution," argued The New York Times's editorial page. "This is an historic, positive development," Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said in a statement. Most news accounts didn't spend much time explaining the portion of the deal that will eat up the majority of the settlement funds—the \$1.9 billion earmarked for the new Interior Department land-consolidation program. When that

part of the deal was announced, many Indians shook their heads, knowing there would be a new devil to deal with in the details of that program for years to come.

Interior officials said the funds would help them conduct, "voluntary buy-back and consolidation of fractionated land interests," adding that the plan should, "provide individual American Indians with an opportunity to obtain cash payments for divided land interests and free up the land for the benefit of tribal communities." What exactly that means, and how it would be implemented, remains to be seen, and explained. Indians were quick to note that this seemingly complicated program would be run by the very agency that had so horribly mismanaged their royalties in the first place, and that implementation would require years of careful analysis—the very kind of scrutiny Interior resisted over the course of the 14-year-long Cobell case.

On top of those concerns, no one has explained what would happen if Interior was slow in spending the \$1.9 billion, or if there were not enough individuals eager to sell their lands to an agency that many of them distrust. Would the money revert back to the government, as the settlement documents suggest? Interior officials have said answers will come—but won't say when.

Many Indians agree that the Cobell deal is "historic," but for them history bears a much more nuanced meaning than it does for many U.S. citizens. The dark folds of America's past hold much pain, especially since their ancestors—their family members—were cheated.

Tricks are on the minds of many Indians when it comes to Cobell. The lead plaintiff has made statements that ring hollow for some; lawyers seemed to care

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The Iowa Tribe recently gave a presentation to The Sac and Fox Nation concerning the Iowa's construction company, "BAH-KHO-JE". Also discussed, among the tribes, was the Public Law-102-477-Employment and Training Program. Pictured left, front to back: Janice Rowe-Kurek, Chairman, Shawnee; Nancy McAlister, Attorney, Ada; Daryn Sweeten, CEO, BHJ Solutions, Inc., Harrah; and Perri Ahhayan, Vice-Chairman, Perkins. Right, front to back: Chief George Thurman; Sue Johnson, Title IV Elders' Coordinator; Marilyn Spoon, Social Service Director; Jacklyn Williams, Sac and Fox Nation Secretary; and Stella Nulllake, Committee Member.