

# SAC & FOX NEWS



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## Chief's Address To The Nation

Tribal Members,  
 This month I am reporting on a very important piece of proposed legislation on the national scene which could affect Native Americans; because of the length of this article it will be the only topic. NCAI News Sept. 15, 2011 News & Updates for Indian Country.

**Indian Country Benefits in the American Jobs Act of 2011**  
 The American Jobs Act as proposed by President Obama has the potential to strengthen



Chief George Thurman

the economic viability of tribal nations. Tribal governments create jobs for tribal citizens and their non-Native neighbors across the nation. As tribal governments make tough choices to spur

economic growth and close budget gaps, NCAI supports the American Jobs Act and urges our colleagues in the Congress to reach across the aisle, get this bill passed, and put America back to work.

### SUMMARY OF AMERICAN JOBS ACT OF 2011

Native people are America's most rural population and represent more than 5 million Americans, 1.7 percent of the population. Tribal lands cover over 100 million acres, or more than 5 percent of the nation's land base, an area comprising more than 100 million acres. Taken together, this area would make Indian Country America's fourth largest state behind only Alaska, Texas, and California. This sizable land base and the unique status of tribes as members of the "American family of governments," acknowledged in the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, Indian Country is a key incubator for policy innovation to build a strong American economy. An abbreviated profile of Native economic conditions provides a backdrop for the importance of the American Jobs Act of 2011 for tribal economies.

#### Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau's most recent 5-year estimates show the poverty rate for American Indian families living on reservations was more than three times the rate for the rest of the country.

#### Workforce Development

Native communities have faced Depression level unemployment for generations. In 2000, when the national unemployment rate was less than 3.5 percent, the on-reservation unemployment rate was 22 percent. The Economic Policy Institute reports that the Native unemployment rate has risen at a rate 1.6 times the size of the white increase during the recession (to 15.2 percent for all Native people).

#### Business Development

2007 data from the Census Bureau identified 236,967 businesses owned by individual American Indian and Alaska Native people. While this figure was an increase of 17.7 percent from 2002 (on par with national growth), these data excluded tribally-owned businesses and represented a significantly decreased rate from that seen in the 1990s. Individually-owned American Indian and Alaska Native businesses generated \$34.4 billion in receipts in 2007, a 28 percent increase from 2002.

#### Access to Capital

Native people are among America's most under banked populations with a full 44.5 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native households under banked, and 15.6 percent completely unbanked. Eighty six percent of Native communities lack access to a single financial institution (with a broad definition that included a simple ATM). Fifteen percent of Native community members need to travel over 100 miles to access a financial institution. The Department of the Treasury estimated a \$44 billion unmet capital need in Indian Country in 2001.

### AMERICA JOBS ACT: IMPLICATIONS FOR

### INDIAN COUNTRY

#### 1 Title I: Tax Relief for Workers and Businesses

Section 102, of the Act reduces the amount of taxes employers, including tax-exempt organizations as defined in Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), and employees, including self-employed persons, contribute to social security. If passed, this section also seeks to offset these reductions by transferring from the general fund amounts "that replicate to the extent possible" the amount that would have been contributed to the social security trust fund had this section not been enacted. This section also provides employers with tax credits in lieu of the amount they would normally be required to pay for increases in payroll.

Subtitle B of the Act provides other business incentives such as: 1) extending the 100 percent bonus depreciation under IRC § 168(k) through the end of 2012; 2) increasing the size of contract surety bond that the Small Business Administration (SBA) can guarantee from \$2 million to \$5 million (this section will sunset at the end of FY 2012); and 3) delaying the date when federal, state, and local government entities are required to begin withholding 3 percent in income tax from payments made to any person for services or property (if enacted, the withholding requirement would apply to payments made after December 31, 2013).

Both of these sections are available to "qualified employers" which do not include Federal or State governments, possessions of the United States, or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof. *Implications for Indian Country*

#### Subtitle A

Individual tribal members, like other federal taxpayers, are eligible for the reduced tax rate. Also, due to the transfer of funds provision intended to offset the impact of these reductions to the general social security fund, individual members benefiting from social security will not be affected by the proposed reductions. Tribes are not specifically mentioned in the proposed legislation which pertains to employers. However, tribes are neither a political subdivision nor an instrumentality of any state government. Also, tribes are not possessions of the United States. As a result, these tax incentives are most likely available to Indian tribes, as well as corporations and entities established under tribal law. While it would help to have tribes explicitly included within the definition of "qualified employer," as written, tribal governments are eligible for these payroll tax reductions.

#### Subtitle B

All three of these sections do not implicate tribes significantly. They are each targeted towards either private businesses, small businesses, or withholding requirements affixed to payments made by federal, state, and local governments. The increased (Continued On Page 5)



Jim Rydland, Superintendent of West Aurora High School presents Principal Chief George Thurman with a replica of the statue of Black Hawk.

## Black Hawk Bust Unveiling

Principal Chief George Thurman attended the dedication of a Black Hawk statue at the West Aurora High School in Aurora, Illinois on September 9, 2011. Black Hawk is the school's mascot and the nickname for the school teams.

"It was really emotional on both sides," said Chief Thurman, who also expressed his pride in being present as both a descendant of Black Hawk and Principal Chief of the Sac and Fox Nation, who are the descendants of Black Hawk's band. His son Shawn and daughter-in-law Socia Love Thurman accompanied him.

The event also included the Native American drum group, Salt Creek Singers, with accompanying dancers from the American Indian Center of Chicago.

The statue is a gift from West High's Class of 1958 to commemorate its 50th anniversary and honors the person of Black Hawk. Class of '58 members Jean Alexander Goehlen, Nancy Sjostrand Jones, and Donna Savage McDonald spearheaded this ambitious effort. The statue is considered an opportunity to educate about Black Hawk and his people, the Sauk.

"Black Hawk was an important Native American leader whose life was impacted by tribal displacement during the period of westward expansion," says the alumni newsletter. "The Black Hawk [Conflict], which took place in northern Illinois

and southern Wisconsin in 1832, was named for him because of his leadership. ... After his capture, President Andrew Jackson had Black Hawk sent east, where he was cheered as a man of courage, integrity and dignity by crowds in Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York. His 1833 autobiography quickly became a literary classic and is credited with infusing the Native American perspective into the national consciousness."

While conducting research about Black Hawk and his tribe to make sure the statue would be historically correct, sculptor Gareth Curtiss and West officials contacted the Sac and Fox Nation in Oklahoma and discovered the familial connection.

The new Black Hawk statue is not only a symbol of school pride but also an opportunity to educate and a reminder to students that history encompasses multiple perspectives.

"It was really inspiring that what Black Hawk did back in that time still comes forth with a different race," Chief Thurman said. "They hold Black Hawk in such esteem as a great leader. They want to instill his values of fighting for his people and his patriotism for his people in the students. It's not about war - it's about his humanity."

Superintendent Jim Rydland presented a replica of the Black Hawk statue to Chief Thurman at the dedication ceremony and will be sending it to the Nation where it will be on permanent display.



L to R: Principal Chief George Thurman, Shawn Thurman and Sculptor Gareth Curtiss. (Photos and article courtesy of Mike Chapin, Community Relations Director for the School District)

## Upcoming Events

### Elders Activities Planned

- Oct. 7** White Elephant Bingo/Potluck-Shawnee 10am
  - Oct. 12** Regular EAB Mtg - Shawnee 10am
  - Oct. 21** White Elephant Bingo/Potluck - Shawnee 10am
  - Nov. 4** Chili Supper - Shawnee 3pm-8pm
  - Nov 9** Regular EAB Mtg - Stroud 10am
  - Nov 14** Elder's Thanksgiving Dinner/Bingo Community Bldg 11:30am /1:00pm
  - Dec. 3** Elder's Christmas Pow-Wow - Stroud Community Bldg 2pm-?
  - Dec 9** Elder's Christmas Dinner/Bingo Community Bldg. 11:30am/1:00pm
  - Dec 14** Regular EAB Mtg - Shawnee 10am
- For information contact  
 Gloria Ellis EAB  
 Chairperson @  
 405-878-8534  
 or Stella Wilson Sac and Fox Elders Bldg. (Stroud @ 918-968-2583 Tues-Thurs. 8:00am - 4:30pm

**Veterans Gourd Dance**  
 Friday, Nov. 11, 2011  
 Starting at 1:00pm

**RAP Council**  
 November 12th  
 Communiyy Bldg.  
 10:00am

**RAP COUNCIL**  
 November 12, 2011  
 Community Building  
 10:00am

