

## **NOTES TO THE NATION OCTOBER 8, 2008**

### **TRIP TO OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA OCT. 4, 2008**

I attended the United Osages of Southern California fall meeting last Saturday and spoke on current Osage issues. The UOSC President, William Myers, had expressed a desire to incorporate some information about the ongoing Osage culture and traditions, so the first part of my talk was about this. This seemed to be well received. I am told William wants to exhibit pictures of the June dances and encampment at the next meeting in April 2009 and devote more time to culture.

The balance of my talk was about the Tsi Zho Session that had just ended and the legislation passed and still in committees. We reported that the amount available for college tuition and expenses had been raised to \$7,400 per year beginning Oct. 1, 2008; A health benefit bill had been passed that will provide up to \$500 per person annually; an election law and ethic law had passed and appropriation bills covering about 98 individual budgets were completed.

Appropriations totaled about \$16,667,000 Federal, \$ 545,008 State, \$24,552,000 Tribal and \$8,960 013 was authorized to be spent from income generated by income producing entities of the Nation. Budgets approved do not include the gaming operation which is one of the subjects to be discussed in a 10 day Special Session which began yesterday, Oct. 7.

Practically all the Tribal funding comes from gaming. The projected tribal distribution from that source is about \$45,000,000 for FY 2009. The accounting issue is not resolved so we can't be sure how reliable this figure may be.

While in California I failed to mention the effort being made by the language department to develop a program that will enable students anywhere in the U. S. to participate by computer. When fully implemented, a student will be able to hear and see the ongoing discussions and converse with the instructors. They don't know when this will be ready but it is in the planning stages.

### **HEALTH BENEFITS BILL PASSED**

The Health Benefits Act has passed in Congress and was signed by the Chief. The Act provides for a maximum of \$500 per person for a specified list of eligible expenses.

This goes into effect about Dec. 1 but for all practical purposes it will be Jan. 1, 2009 before it is operational.

The Health and Wellness Board of the Osage Nation had suggested some changes in the bill and they can easily be made before the Act becomes law.

Funding of the Act is now being considered by the Appropriations Committee. The question being considered is how much should be adequate to cover anticipated claims.

I have received four emails from citizens that indicate that they think that funding is holding up the bill. This is not the case. There may be some misinformation being sent out, but in any event, expect the Health Benefits Act to be available on Jan. 1.

## **THOUGHTS ON THE ECONOMY**

While I was in California I had time to watch the televised events leading up to the passage of the Bailout/Rescue bill by the Congress. Early Friday everyone was saying that the plan would help everyone and it had to be done. Immediately after the vote, everyone was sure that it would help the investment bankers, but then they weren't so sure about you and me.

No one really knows where the economy is going. We all know this is a global problem. The consensus seems to be that things are likely to get worse before they get better. Gaming operations all over the country are cutting back on expansion plans. Business 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter reports are expected to be dismal.

I'm only sure of one thing and that is that it is a time to be cautious. We don't know how much you may have to rely on the Osage Nation for economic help in the future. I only hope that we can be good stewards of the assets of the Nation and be able to help if needed. Some have the attitude that "if we've got it we should spend it." Others want to be conservative and may be attacked for it.

## **A SAMPLE OF WHAT WE HAVE TO PUT UP WITH**

Tomorrow we will vote on amendments to bills introduced in Congress. One of those bills is ONCA 08-30 Osage LLC Act. This is an Act to set up a board that will hire a CEO who it is hoped will look for opportunities to diversify by possibly starting businesses or investing in business opportunities.

The board will consist of five members. Three have been appointed by the Chief and confirmed by Congress. Two more are to be appointed. To my knowledge, the board had not met, but when they have a full board they will—to develop a budget for the LLC, get an operational plan approved and begin a search for a CEO. That search could take months and when a CEO is hired, it could take many more months for him to select a suitable investment. Why would we want to tie up \$3 million when we may never use it for the LLC? If and when additional amounts were needed, it could be appropriated.

The Act authorized a maximum of \$3 million dollars but provided no appropriation. I introduced an amendment to appropriate \$250,000 to get the board organized and to start the enterprise.

Within a few hours, the following letter was sent out by Executive Branch staff on the tribal email. We have inquired as to who authorized this type of attack using the assets of the Nation. We also asked if we use the same resources and public list to respond to the charges. I will let you know if we get an answer

The letter follows for your reading pleasure. I have answered each bullet in blue type.

From: "Paula M. Stabler" <pmstabler@osagetribe.org>  
To: "Paula M. Stabler" <pmstabler@osagetribe.org>  
Subject: FW: Lobby for Support of LLC Appropriation  
Date: Wed, 08 Oct 2008 19:03:39 +0000

## **SUPPORT THE ORIGINAL OSAGE LLC APPROPRIATION BILL**

**CALL TODAY—THE VOTE IS THURSDAY OCTOBER 9, 2008 AT 10 A.M.—CALL TODAY**

- Congressman Raymond Redcorn introduced an appropriation bill calling for the full authorized **\$3 million to begin Osage economic diversification** through our Osage, LLC.
- Congresspersons Supernaw and Andersen have introduced an amendment to reduce the initial capitalization investment in our Osage LLC from \$3 million to \$250,000, or **one twelfth the original proposal**.  
I offered the amendment. It was seconded by Anderson. All amendments are seconded and the second is not even recorded. Seconding is a Congressional courtesy, often necessary for discussion. Many times the second will vote against an amendment. You will see this is being written as if there is a sinister conspiracy. Nonsense.
- The Osage LLC was created to fulfill the promise to the Osage people that the Nation would separate politics from business. By underfunding the Osage LLC, the professional Board will have to return to Congress for approval of every business venture causing customers and business partners to go elsewhere to avoid our costly delays and unpredictable outcomes. This is par for the course in Supernaw and Andersen's **consistent attempts to micro-manage the businesses the Nation owns** in spite of clear direction from the Osage people to the contrary.  
The letter is pure politics and nothing more. The board might have to come to Congress to fund the first enterprise. I'm confident that the board understands this. No individual Congress member can micro-manage anything. All votes require a majority or more.
- Section 1 of ONCA 08-30 defines the Congressional intent to enable Osage LLC to "enter into legally-binding contracts and commercial relationships without the need for formal Tribal Government action." By reducing the capital budget of the company to a fraction of the authorized amount, **the original intent of the Congress will be defeated**.  
The original intent of Congress was to have a board that operates independently without the interference of the Executive Branch. I am confident that deals will be funded as needed and nothing has been changed to alter the authority of the board.
- One twelfth of the originally proposed appropriation is inadequate because in today's economy "**cash is king**," meaning credit is very difficult to come by; especially for start-ups.  
We agree that cash is king and fortunately the Nation has some now. We hope we and the board will protect it and use it wisely.
- One twelfth of the originally proposed appropriation is inadequate because Supernaw has introduced a resolution to study per capita payments that could lead to directly competing against future capital from the Tribe, **crippling our ability to conduct business**.  
I submit this statement is pretty silly. A per capita payment study is to avoid anything like a direct competition. It is those who do not do a study that sometimes get into crippling themselves. .
- One twelfth of the originally proposed appropriation is inadequate because **real business opportunities exist now** that require at least half a million dollars in bonding to be a competitor in the bid process. We will miss these opportunities and the Board will be unable to achieve the kind of **hundred million dollar successes** that Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Alaskan Native companies have achieved.  
Who has determined this—not the board. Is there already an attempt to run over the board even before they hire a CEO?
- One twelfth of the originally proposed appropriation **is a recipe for failure**, unless your sights are set on running small retail operations in direct competition with Osage entrepreneurs on the reservation.  
Keep this statement in mind because there already are indications that the Executive Branch has already approached the new board to do this very thing by taking over the money losing Gift Shop and the Palace Grocery. Certainly not what the Congress envisioned. Our vision was businesses with the potential of growing to major corporations.
- **Say NO** to Congresspersons Supernaw and Andersen's **arbitrary one twelfth formula**, and demand full funding for our LLC.

If anything is arbitrary, it is the \$ 3 million dollar figure. This figure was totally grabbed out of the air.

- **Say NO** to Congresspersons Supernaw and Andersen's arbitrary one twelfth formula, and demand Congress **fulfill its promise to the Osage people to separate business from politics.**  
If anyone is playing politics it is the Executive Branch and avoiding that is the main idea of the LLC legislation.
- **Call and E-mail the Osage Congress now** to voice your outrage at their anti-Osage proposed amendment.  
**Call and E-mail the Executive Branch now to voice your outrage at their anti-Congress, anti-Osage rhetoric.**

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If you or your friends would like to be added to the Notes to the Nation mailing list just  
email: [Supernaw@flash.net](mailto:Supernaw@flash.net)