Oregon
John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Veterans' Affairs
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SERVING
OREGON VETERANS
SINCE 1945

Government-to-Government Relationships
2011 Annual Report

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) mission to serve veterans, their dependents and survivors has always included veterans of Oregon's Native American tribes. It is the Department's policy to promote positive and cooperative government-to-government relations with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes. Our mission to advocate for all of Oregon's veterans includes ensuring all military receive the benefits they have earned through their military service.

ODVA values its relationships with the Native American tribes of Oregon and understands the unique historical role Native American veterans have played in the United States Armed Forces. The Department continues to work with the Northwest Indian Veterans Association (NIVA) which the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians formed in 1989.

Per Oregon statutes ORS 182.162-182.168, this annual report for the year 2011 is respectfully submitted to Governor John A. Kitzhaber, MD and the Legislative Commission on Indian Services. The report highlights ODVA's activities that involved or were related to Native Americans. The report closes with projected government-to-government actions for 2012.

2011 Government-to-Government Related Activities

- ODVA Director Jim Willis and the then Deputy Director Paula Brown, other administrators and selected staff attended the 2011 Tribal Information Day at the Oregon State Capitol. The event highlighted the richness of Native American heritage and the need for protecting and enhancing their cultural and natural resources. (May 13)
- Gene LaBonte, a U.S. Navy veteran of the Vietnam-era and member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, is the first Native American to sit on the Governor's Advisory Committee to the Director. He is in his in his fourth year on the Committee.
- Director Jim Willis and current Deputy Director Val Conley attended the Government-to-Government Summit held in Lincoln City. (November)

- Director Jim Willis attended and spoke at the 19th Annual Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Veterans' Pow-Wow. ODVA Veterans' Services staff also provided direct outreach about veteran benefits and services at the event. (July)
- The Department requests a proclamation from the Governor's Office each year that recognizes National Native American Veterans' Day. (November 7)
- Director Jim Willis attended and spoke at a dinner honoring veterans at the Seven Feathers Casino and Resort in Canyonville. (July)
- Each year in the spring and fall, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) provides County Veterans' Service Officer (CVSO) training conferences. Veteran representatives of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes are invited to attend. (April and October)
- The Department worked closely with the staff of Chinook Winds in planning a conference for the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs that was held this fall. Participating in the opening ceremonies were the Siletz Tribal Honor Guard, Siletz Tribal Drum Bear Spirit and Delores Pigsley, the Siletz Tribal Chair. (September)
- ODVA continues to invite the members of tribal governments to attend quarterly meetings of ODVA's Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC). (Quarterly)
- ODVA continues to publish the contact information of the nine federally recognized Oregon tribes in the Veterans' Service Officers Directory. (Ongoing)
- ODVA regularly communicates with the nine federally recognized Oregon tribes emailing press releases, legislative updates and other veteran-related information. (Ongoing)
- ODVA continues to promote and report on tribal veteran issues, news, and events online at http://www.oregon.gov/ODVA/Events.shtml and in the bi-monthly *VETS NEWS* publication. (Ongoing)

Planned Activities and Interactions for 2012

- ODVA will continue to extend invitations to members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes to attend quarterly VAAC meetings.
- ODVA will continue to encourage participation in the Tribal Information Day at the Oregon State Capitol.
- The Director, Deputy Director, and other staff will continue to attend meetings and events held by tribes or pertaining to tribal veteran affairs.
- ODVA representatives will continue to be involved in the Oregon Government-to-Government Summit.

- ODVA will continue to promote and report on tribal veteran issues and events both online at www.oregon.gov/odva and in the bi-monthly *VETS NEWS* publication.

- ODVA will continue to share materials, press releases and other information on a routine basis with Tribal Chairs and tribal veteran representatives on issues relating to veterans.

- ODVA Veterans' Services section will continue to invite the Tribal Veterans' Service Officers to CVSO training conferences.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Willis
Director