



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

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SERVING  
OREGON VETERANS  
SINCE 1945

## **Government-to-Government Relationships 2009 Annual Report**

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs' (ODVA) mission of outreach to all veterans has long included members of Native American tribes. It is the Department's policy to continue to promote positive and cooperative government-to-government relations with the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon. ODVA continues these efforts by building on and strengthening its working relationships with the Oregon tribes.

Per Oregon statute ORS 182.162-182.168, this 2009 annual report is respectfully submitted to Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski and the Commission of Indian Services. The report highlights ODVA's activities that involved or were related to Native Americans. The report closes with projected government-to-government related actions for 2010.

ODVA values its relationships with the Native American tribes of Oregon and feels it beneficial for providing quality service and outreach to all veterans in Oregon. The Department has worked closely with the members the Northwest Indian Veterans Association (NIVA) for several years. The Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians formed NIVA chapters to serve the needs of the Indian veteran community in 1989.

### **2009 Government-to-Government Related Activities**

- On January 10, Director Jim Willis attended a ceremony to honor Tribal Elder Marce Norwest, a Korean veteran and member of the Grand Ronde Tribe. (January)
- On March 19, a remembrance ceremony was held at the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial on ODVA grounds in Salem. The Grand Ronde Honor Guard participated in this event. (March)
- ODVA Director Jim Willis, Deputy Director Paula Brown, and other administrators and staff attended the 2009 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)



- Also on Memorial Day, the Grand Ronde Honor Guard posted the colors at a ceremony honoring the fallen Oregon service members of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. The ceremony was held at the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial located on the grounds of ODVA. (May)
- 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. His fellow committee members elected LaBonte as Chair, effective September 2, 2009. (June)
- Director Jim Willis attended and spoke at the Seventeenth Annual Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Veterans' Pow-Wow. ODVA Veterans' Service staff also provided direct outreach about veteran benefits and services. (July)
- In October, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) provided County Veterans' Service Officer (CVSO) training. Veteran representatives of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes are invited to attend. The fall 2009 training was held in Hood River. (April).
- On Veterans Day, the Grand Ronde Honor Guard posted the colors at a ceremony to recognize Oregon's fallen service members of Operation Iraq and Enduring Freedom. The ceremony was held at the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial located on ODVA grounds. (November)
- In November, Director Jim Willis and Deputy Director Paula Brown attended the 2009 Government-to-Government Summit held at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem. (November)
- ODVA continues to invite the members of tribal governments to attend quarterly meetings of ODVA's Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC). (Quarterly)
- Maintained the contact information of the nine federally recognized Oregon tribes in the Veterans' Service Officers Directory published by ODVA. The tribal information is also accessible through the ODVA website. (Ongoing)
- ODVA maintains an email contact list to regularly send communications to tribal chairs and representatives regarding information and news about veteran issues and events. Also, during Legislative Session weekly updates are provided. (Ongoing)
- ODVA continues to promote and report on tribal veteran issues, news, and events online at [www.oregon.gov/odva](http://www.oregon.gov/odva) and in the bi-monthly *VETS NEWS* publication.

## **Planned Activities and Interactions for 2010**

- ODVA will continue to extend invitation to members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes to attend quarterly Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee meetings.
- ODVA will continue and 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](http://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.