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**American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS**

*“Respect, Harmony, and Beauty”*

**AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKA NATIVE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
FOR NRCS  
NATIONAL COUNCIL TELECONFERENCE  
April 14, 2006**

**Those present:** Crystal Leonetti, David Elliott, Leota Burnett (just briefly prior to the official start of the meeting), Pat Broyles, Pat Green, Millie Titla, Ciro LoPinto, Felix Nez, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen.

President, Crystal Leonetti called the meeting to order at 11:35 am CST. She welcomed all and conducted the roll call. **Action items are noted in red.**

**Approval of Minutes**

The March minutes had been reviewed and revised prior by Council members. David Elliott made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ciro LoPinto seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Tanya reviewed the Treasurer’s Report that was emailed prior to the teleconference. She reported that the scholarship CD was renewed for 6 months. Also, that we are still awaiting reimbursement from one more tribal scholar recipient. She reported that bank statements should start being delivered to her new address and the money market account statements are now being delivered.

Tanya reported that she has almost completed the list of treasury transactions in order to provide to the Audit Committee for the 2005 audit. As requested, she reviewed the requirements for official auditing for non-profit organizations and found that, according to Circular A-133, the audit requirement is dependent on expenditures. If expenditures equal or exceed \$300,000, an official audit is to be conducted by an independent public accounting firm. If expenditures are less than \$300,000, an official audit is not required.

David Elliott made the motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Pat Green seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Region Reports**

**Southeast Region** – Pat Green has been tying up loose ends on the David Howe Memorial Scholarship, two scholarships in the amount of \$250. Pat contacted Kurt Cates, Scholarship Committee Chair. The scholarships will be awarded sometime in May. Pat received a bio sketch on Howe’s career to give to whomever is the appropriate person to write a letter to his family announcing the recipient. **Kurt will send a letter to the recipients and Crystal will send a letter to David’s family.**

**Northern Plains Region** – Pat Broyles reported that there have been AIANEA members requesting information about the training session in Alaska. Pat sent the correct registration form to all Northern Plains members. Pat wrote the Kansas American Indian SEPM requesting that a state bulletin be sent out announcing the joint training conference.

**East Region** – Ciro LoPinto reported that NY officially requested NEDC course "Consultation with American Indian Governments" and still has not received word on scheduling. He spoke to the instructor and he hasn't been informed about scheduling course.

Meeting with Seneca Nations Tribal Historic Preservation Office regarding installation of some EQIP practices. Ciro since has had this meeting and most sites will have an on-site monitor during construction. NY is trying to see who would pay for the monitor. Most sites have artifacts and culturally significant plants.

April 25-27 will meet with St. Regis Band of Mohawks for a GPS Symposium.

NY will receive a new State Conservationist this month, he has worked in AZ and understands working with Indian Nations.

**West Region** – Felix reported that he received proposals from the Sheraton and Radisson regarding the 2007 training conference to be held in the Phoenix area. **Felix will email the information to all National Council members. The 2007 conference will be an agenda item on the May teleconference.** Both facilities have been built recently and have a resort theme and are located close to a casino. The casino is located on resort property, within walking distance.

Felix shared that the Sheraton is owned by the Gila River and he could get tribal sponsorship. It is only available the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> weeks of July. It is 15 minutes from downtown Phoenix.

The Radisson is owned by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and opened in Dec. 2005. It is available the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June. Felix feels confident that he can get tribal sponsorship. The Radisson is 35 minutes from downtown Phoenix. **Felix will ask the Radisson to hold the dates, until a decision can be made during the May teleconference.**

Both resorts have a super shuttle available for \$25-\$30 per person each way.

**Midwest Region** – No report.

**South Central Region** – No report.

**NHQ/Tribal Liaison** – Crystal reported that Edith Morigeau, from the Forest Service in Montana, will begin duties as the National Tribal Liaison May 1. **Crystal will contact Edith to inform her of AIANEA, invite her to the training conference, and invite her to our future teleconferences.**

### **Teleconference Costs**

During the March teleconference, discussion took place regarding AIANEA paying the costs of the monthly teleconferences. Tanya researched this and reported on the costs. Tanya worked through FTS Communications, the company that supplies the teleconferencing for federal agencies. AIANEA would need to go through the commercial, non-government section. The cost is significantly higher than for federal agencies at \$.50 per line per minute to have a toll free number and a minimum of 20 lines. We would only pay for the number of lines actually used even if less than 20. For example, if we used 15 lines for 2 hours, it would cost \$900 per month. If we did not have a toll free number, it would cost \$.26 per line per minute, requiring each participant to also have a long distance charge on their phone bill.

Pat Broyles shared that there is an instant messaging type method that can be used on the computer that also includes voice and costs nothing. This is available world wide. Could this be done on a government computer?

Crystal stated that the teleconferencing is cost prohibitive and we are not being required to make changes at this time so we will continue as we have.

## **Membership Drive**

There are currently 104 members, per the report that Yvette Dulle sent out. There was also a draft letter sent out that John McCoy developed with the goal of sending it to all Tribal Liaisons and SEPMS to encourage AIANEA membership.

Buster Landin made some suggestions by email and the National Council agreed with the comments. **Crystal will inform John and Buster that they should work together to incorporate Buster's ideas into the letter.**

## **Visioning**

Crystal reported that Buster's earlier email encouraging development of a vision for the future was inspirational. We don't have a defined vision, mission and focus. Buster proposed conducting a visioning process. All National Council members agreed this is needed.

All agreed that the visioning process would be appropriate for the 2007 conference since we began with a conference in 1997 in the Phoenix area and are there again 10 years later. Millie added that the organization needs to be more than planning the conference. We need a strategic plan and it would be good to start this in 2007.

Crystal talked briefly about the Seven Generations planning process that Dick Gooby and Louie Dick conduct. It is a good process that takes a look at the current situation and what is desired in seven generations. It requires development of a 5 year, 10 year etc. plan to create the vision for seven generations.

This should include the past presidents and Elders. Ciro added that the process should include members who have let their membership lapse. We must keep sight on the original vision that was developed in the beginning and don't completely start over.

David stated that potential members ask "What's in it for me?" How do we answer them. There needs to be more for them than the conference as many are not approved to attend.

Ciro suggested that we first approach this with the membership at the business meeting in AK to discuss it briefly and have a vote on which method to use in 2007. There have been 3 methods proposed: Seven Generations; Appreciative Inquiry (Ciro); and Vision Quest (Buster).

It was decided that there will be 10 minute presentations given at the business meeting in Anchorage on each of the 3 methods. **Crystal will let Dick Gooby know that he needs to develop a presentation on Seven Generations. Ciro will develop a presentation on AI and he will let Buster know that he needs to develop a presentation on Vision Quest.** The membership will have the opportunity to ask questions and will make a decision on the method to use at the business meeting. This will allow adequate planning of the preferred method. It will also be determined if we need to bring in an outside facilitator to conduct the process.

## **2008 Conference**

David reminded the council that a location for the 2008 conference will need to be determined at the 2006 conference. Discussion took place regarding the questionnaire that Herb and Buster developed that was supposed to be distributed with the election ballot in 2005 and was not. This questionnaire meant to poll member interest in various scenarios for the 2008 conference. **Crystal will locate the proposal/questionnaire that Herb and Buster developed and this will be discussed during the May teleconference.**

## **USDA Recognition**

Crystal discussed an email that she received regarding being a recognized group by USDA, which AIANEA currently is not. The information provided a contact person to go through the recognition process. In Department Regulation, it says that if a group is recognized, they are under less scrutiny. No other NRCS employee organizations are USDA recognized. **Crystal will forward the information to the National Council and it will be added to the agenda of the May teleconference with the goal to make a decision.**

### **Poster and Committees Proposal**

Millie and David completed this and emailed the proposals to the National Council. **A decision will be made during the May teleconference. National Council members will review the information prior to the teleconference.**

### **2006 Conference**

Crystal reported that there will be two planning committee teleconferences the last full week of April. The AIANEA/APIO on April 25 and the AIANEA only on April 26.

Bob Jones presented the powerpoint at the NLT meeting in Portland and got good reception. State Conservationists stated they will attend and will send some employees. The drum group performed for the NLT. An email was distributed by Gina Kerzman to thank them.

Tanya reported that the registration form is now complete and on the websites. An email went out inviting AIANEA and APIO members to submit posters. Prior to the teleconference, Leota came on to say that she and Angela Biggs (APIO) determined that there will be a joint live auction and joint silent auction at the conference.

### **Other Business**

Crystal discussed an item that had been raised previously by Jerry Rouse, that the association should have an Historian. We don't currently have a person to keep good records of the association's history. It was determined that we should fill this position in the same method as the Secretary and Treasurer, in which the President selects the individual and receives council approval. The Association Historian will be a non-voting member of the National Council and will serve the same term as the Secretary and Treasurer. The duties will include recording and maintaining association history.

The Constitution will need to be amended to add this position. **Millie will develop the necessary Constitution amendment as a separate update and will submit to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.**

Crystal also initiated a discussion regarding lifetime member recognition such as a special nametag or gift item. Pat added that founding members also need to be recognized. Ann Perales would know who the founding members are. **The membership committee will work on this.**

### **Adjourn and Next Meeting**

Ciro LoPinto made a motion to adjourn at 1:05 pm CST. Felix Nez seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting is on May 12 at 8:30 am Alaska time. Same call in number.

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Respectfully Submitted by  
Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Treasurer