

DRUMS ACROSS ALABAMA



ALABAMA INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1

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Governor Riley meets with the
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission

This is the inaugural issue of our agency's newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep our Indian people informed of the many activities ongoing in this state. We also intend to send this newsletter out to the many individuals who have requested that they be kept informed of our activities via email.

To all our people we need to stress the use of electronic means to keep ourselves informed. Visit our web site at www.aiac.alabama.gov to keep current on the Commission's events, as well as the tribal activities. Our web site has received numerous favorable comments about its informative nature. We strive to keep it updated, within the budget limitations under which we operate.

This year of 2009 will present our people with many challenges. Our agency will maintain actively and effectively engaged with our tribal communities. Our Scholarship

program continues to be an effective means by which our young tribal members can get funding to assist them in accomplishing their educational goals. This year's program will be open from January 1 to March 6, 2009. Last year 2008 the Commission awarded \$30,000 for a total of 48 scholarships. The recipients are:

Van Stephens, Sarah Erdner, Joshua Hood, Angie Chappell, Paige Taylor, Magon Oliver, Audra Oliver, Kalli Terry, Stephanie Byrd, Morgan Hall, Charles Mullenix, Katherine Brumley, Edward Copeland, Herbert Holloway, Courtney Grant, Charlie Chestang, Emily Taylor, Holley Banks, Lauren Peebles, Joshua Peebles, Talley Gibbs, Marlana Mullenix, Elizabeth Namie, Jessica Walters, Elizabeth Holder, Tara McDaniel, Collins Montgomery, Courtney Partridge, Haley Clinard, Laura Sanders, Daniel Ritch, Robert Woods, Faron Barnes, Caleb Banks, Matthew Pugh, Chris Pugh, Brandi Howard, Lindsey Abernathy, Alan Chamblee, Paige Simpson, Miranda Sparks, Cheryl Purdy, Kristen Collins, Nicholas Washburn, Whitney Montgomery, Mikayla Snow, Candice Moses and Charmin Richardson

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The Miss Indian Alabama was held in November 13, 2008 at the State Capitol. Three young ladies represented their tribes, with great skills and grace. The competitors were Florence Rivers, Charmin Richardson and Laura Sanders. The competition consists of four events evening gown appearance, talent, personal regalia and extemporaneous speaking. Miss Indian Alabama serves as a Goodwill Ambassador representing all of Alabama's Indian people and the nine Alabama Indian tribes. This year the winner was Miss Charmin Richardson a member of the Echota Cherokee tribe. She is 19 years old and attends Shelton State Community College where she studies music education.



Charmin Richardson
Miss Indian Alabama 2009

So far Charmin has been busy representing the Native people at a number of events, including the NAACP State Formal, Wear Red Day 2009 and meeting Governor Riley at the Statehouse.



The AIAC staff and Tribal Chiefs attended a conference held by the US Census Bureau at Raleigh NC in July

2008. The purpose of the conference was to discuss and coordinate the state recognized tribal census programs which will be implemented during the 2010 census. The Chiefs were informed of the requirements to ensure that all their tribal members participate in the population count during the census. Ensure you keep current on the issues concerning the 2010 census by visiting the agency's web site.



This past year of 2008 saw a member of the Cher-O-Creek tribe, Mrs. Lynn Carter the CEO of Southeast Cherokee Construction Company, Inc., selected as the Alabama Small Business Person of the Year. She was honored by both the state and the US Small Business Administration. This once again demonstrates that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well within our Indian communities. If you own and operate



any type of business, complete our Native American Business profile which is found on our web site, so that your business may be included in the agency's Native American Business Directory.



Ag census tribal meeting is held with the MaChis Lower Creek tribe.

The tribes participated with the National Agricultural Statistics Service in conducting its biennial census of all agricultural producers of the nation.

The work performed by the tribal census coordinators lead to a significant increase of reporting by Indian people involved in agricultural business for Alabama.

AIAC partnered with the Alabama Department of Public Health to produce the first ever profile of the health of the American Indian population in the state. Thanks to the terrific work of the tribes' Community Health Navigators (CHNs) who went into the Indian community to conduct surveys specially design to gauge the overall health trends of the Indian community as a whole and then specifically for each tribe. This project took over 18 months to accomplish. The actual publication entitled Health Survey of American Indians in Alabama will be available from your tribal office beginning in May 2009.



The CHNs meeting with the representatives of ADPH Miss Indian Alabama represented the Indian community during the annual gathering in Montgomery, sponsored by the ADPH, for women's heart health. On that day everyone is encouraged to "Wear Red" to show support for women's heart health issues. Miss Charmin Richardson addressed the gathering which was held in the State Capitol Auditorium.



State Senator Vivian Figures was the

principle guest speaker of the event. Over 150 people attended the event.



The tribes continue to host their traditional annual gatherings and festivals in their historical areas. The following is a list of when the tribes normally sponsor these events:

- UCAN – April
- CTNEAL – May
- MaChis – May
- MOWA – June
- Echota – October
- Poarch – November
- Oakville Mounds – May

These gatherings serve as a means to bring together tribal members and their families to renew old friendships and begin new ones. But at the heart of these events is the learning and passing on of the traditions, customs, culture and ways of the Indian people. These Pow Wows always brings together a good mix of music, traditional dancing, dazzling regalia, vendors and food. AIAC always encourages the general public to visit and participate in these events to get a better understanding of the Native people and their ways. But always remember that at these events the vendors must be available to prove to you that they are either federally or state recognized to sell any of their crafts as Indian made. The proof is their individual tribal roll card which they carry to prove they are members of recognized tribes. To find further information on when the Pow Wows will be held go to the agency's web site and open the section entitled

Special Events. There you will find contact information concerning the event. The following is a montage of pictures of the different gatherings:



And Life Continues

A major event that draws thousands of participants, from throughout the Southeast region, is the Alabama – Tennessee Trail of Tears Association motorcycle ride commemorating the trek of the Alabama Indians on the infamous Trail of Tears. The ride is held every year in late September and follows the Alabama Trail of Tears Corridor (along US 72) beginning in Chattanooga, TN and ending at the final embarkation point for the Indians Waterloo, AL. This event is officially sanctioned by AIAC as the only true replication of the trail taken, over 170 years ago, by our Native American ancestors. It is with great honor and reverence that Miss Indian Alabama leads the reenactment of the bridge crossing in Waterloo.



Megan Rolin, Miss Indian Alabama 2007, stands before the historical marker

designating the original embarkation point to the Indian territories from Alabama. Mikayla Snow, Miss Indian Alabama 2008, leads the reenactment of the bridge crossing to the embarkation point in Waterloo, AL.



At this years event a special person made a visit to Waterloo. Mikayla Snow poses with Lariat Geronimo,



Great Grandson of the famed Apache War Chief. This event is a significant economic stimulus for North Alabama in that the event

brings approximately seven million dollars into the local economies.



Miss Indian Alabama greets the riders.

AIAC was actively involved with the State Legislature during its 2008 session. With the help of our legislative Commissioners Harry Shiver and Pat Lindsey the agency was able to get the needed funding to continue to deliver its services to the Indian people. In addition our Miss Indian Alabama 2008 addressed the House of Representatives and once again reminded the

Legislators that the American Indian population of Alabama



takes great pride in their heritage. Also the agency worked closely with the Alabama Joint Historical Cemetery Commission to amend the laws concerning the desecration of Indian burial sites and remains. The law is working its way through the current legislative session.

The agency has been requested to provide its expertise to the Alabama Department of Corrections (DOC) when it pertains to issues involving Native Americans inmates. We have worked over the last two years to ensure that native inmates have the necessary materials and facilities to practice their Native American beliefs. This effort has allowed DOC to meet the requirements set out by several Federal Court decisions concerning these matters.

AIAC strives to represent the Indian people in all areas of concern so we

are actively involved simultaneously with numerous state and Federal government agencies and private organizations.

Editorial By Executive Director

The present day budget situation has necessitated that the agency cut back on a number of crucial items that we use for outreach to our constituents. First, we have only one telephone line (334) 242-2831. We no longer have the in-state toll free line. Next, our outreach visits to the tribes will have to be curtailed, which most likely means you may not be seeing us at your tribe's Pow Wow, this year. We do not really know what's in store for us when it comes to funding of the agency but you can be assured that we will, as best we can, continue to represent and advocate for the Indian people of this state. As we work our way through these hard times I again remind you to visit our web site to keep abreast of the latest in Indian country. Keep in touch with your tribal office and most importantly attend your tribal activities and get involved to help your tribe move forward. If not you, a tribal member, then who? Our tribes need the energies of all their members to progress in their journey to self-sufficiently. Work hard to benefit your tribe and do not allow anyone or any organization to question your claim to your heritage, but also work against those individuals and organizations that misrepresent themselves as recognized when they in fact are neither federally nor state recognized.

This May will be the 25th Anniversary of the creation of the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission and state's recognition of Alabama's Indian Tribes. This recognition was diligently fought for by many of your

tribal elders.

The original AIAC Board members were:

Gallasneed Weaver, MOWA Choctaw Chief Joe Stewart, Echota Cherokee Dr. Johnny Wright, MaChis Creek Jaynn Kushner, N.E. Cherokee Chief Deal Wambles, S.E. Cherokee Chief Tommie Davenport, Star Clan Eddie Tullis, Poarch Creeks Senator Francis Strong Representative Patricia Davis

Please remember there were many who fought your recognition.

“Be Proud of Your Heritage.”

Eloise Josey, Executive Director

AIAC COMMISSIONERS

C. Scott Sanders, Board Chairman (334) 399-4928 – Star Clan of Muscogee Creeks
Cindy Samples, Vice Chairman (256) 593-8102 – Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama
Nancy Carnley, MaChis Lower Creek Indian Tribe (334) 894-0108
LaGaylis Harbuck, Governor's Appointee (251) 247-2375
Charlotte Hallmark, Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama (205) 663-5089
Peggy Couch, Poarch Band of Creek Indians (251) 294-5561
Violet Hamilton, Cher-O-Creek Intratribal Indians (334) 712-1795
Wilford Taylor, MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians (251) 829-5500
Senator Zeb Little, Lt. Governor's Appointee (334) 242-7855
Richard Greybull, Commission Appointee (334) 347-5564
Representative Harry Shiver, Speaker of the House Appointee (334) 242-7843
Don Rankin, Piqua Shawnee Tribe (205) 979-6581
Gina Williamson, United Cherokee Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation (256) 582-2333