Outgoing President Jefferson Keel opened the 70th Convention by reflecting that NCAI has been fighting for sovereignty for almost 70 years, becoming the “powerful collective voice of Indian Country and Native peoples.”

President Keel’s comments resonated through the week as we gathered in groups large and small to discuss our common challenges and debating how to overcome them. We are strongest and our voices loudest when we work together towards common goals. Our powerful, unified voice will be crucial to our success in the battles facing tribal nations in the coming days, weeks, and years.

“In Indian Country is common ground for all members of Congress…common ground is all too rare in Washington and that is how we can – and will – affect positive changes in policy.”

– President Jefferson Keel

**Tulsa By The Numbers**

- **70** Resolutions Passed
- **204** Members Participated in the Health Walk
- **179** Volunteers donated time and energy to make the week a success
- **17** Artists featured in the Marketplace
- **42** Press Credentials granted

**Honoring Our Own**

Veterans and drum came together to sing songs to honor Dusten Brown. Dusten was feathered and given a star quilt to comfort him during this time. And he was given a feather for Veronica to keep until she comes home for her naming ceremony.
The Future Is Now

NCAI is engaged in several proactive advocacy initiatives that will help propel the concerns of Indian Country into the national – and global – spotlight.

White House Tribal Nations Conference

Tribal leaders from around the country will meet in Washington, DC to discuss issues from Indian Country with President Obama, senior Cabinet officials, and members of Congress.

United Nations

The United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples will meet September 22-23, 2014 in New York City, NY. That this international meeting is occurring in the United States gives American Native peoples a unique opportunity to engage on a global scale.

Memorandum of Understanding

NCAI Executive Director Jackie Pata signed an MOU with the University of Arkansas School of Law for cooperative work on the school’s Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative. The agreement is to help support Our Natural Resources, a partnership of Native natural resource organizations, with research provided by the school’s law students. Co-signing the MOU was Stacy Leeds, Dean of the School of Law and the only Native law school dean in the country.

Every Native Vote Counts!

NCAI Elects New Leadership

It was an exciting Election Day as thousands cast their ballots for new leadership. We didn’t need to be told that every vote counts – but were given a reminder as the office of President was decided in a close runoff.

Congratulations to the new Executive Board and Regional Vice-Presidents!

President: Brian Cladoosby
1st Vice President: Michael Finley
Secretary: Robert Shepherd
Treasurer: Dennis Welsh

Regional Vice-Presidents: Jerry Isaac, Aaron Payment, Rosemary Morillo, Steven Smith, S. Joe Crittenden, Randy Noka, Manuel Heart, Leander McDonald, Fawn Sharp, Ron Richardson, & Arlan Melendez
Breakout Sessions & Subcommittees

Native Vote Counts Breakout Session

“One of the best ways we can turn Native people out to vote is to have a Native person on the ballot. We need to work to get people in the pipeline – have Native people run for and win school board, city council, tribal council, and state legislative elections. Those are the people we can run for Congress in the next decade. And it’s work that has to start now.” – Courtney Ruark-Thompson, Government Relations Director at Cherokee Nation & Cherokee Nation Businesses

Native Foods session

“We are starving ourselves out of our sovereignty.” – Native Foods session

It’s not about the struggle, it’s about what you learned and growing from those struggles.” – Dana Jim, Youth Commission

ICWA is in a child’s best interest. Placing a child with a parent or grandparent is in the child’s best interest.”
Chrissi Nimmo
Assistant Attorney General, Cherokee Nation

Native Women’s Caucus

“I don’t use the word suicide – those people chose to leave. There are no alcoholics or drug addicts in my community, there are only people in pain. Changing the language changes the ways in which the rest of us reach out to help and support our loved ones.”
Cecelia Fire Thunder, Oglala Sioux
Know Your Rights, Demand Your Rights

There is nothing more tragic than losing a child. The Baby Veronica case has touched each of us in a very personal way and brought us together to fight to preserve our culture.

The Indian Child Welfare Act is still the law of the land and we must work together to assert our rights and values. We need to shed light on the adoption industry that is buying and selling our children. We must educate ourselves on the details of the law to better protect our families and communities.

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) Director, Terry Cross, and the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) Executive Director, Jack Trope, partnered together in urging NCAI to join together to stand up for our rights and refuse to allow this to happen to another family.

We Will Be Heard – Because They Are Listening

The Baby Veronica case rightfully gained national attention and motivated many in Indian Country to get involved in the legal process. Many more cases are before judges whose decisions will have a lasting impact on our communities. We have to work together to ensure our rights are preserved.

Michigan v. Bay Mills Indian Community

This case is a direct threat to the doctrine of tribal sovereign immunity and would expand the states’ ability to gain federal court jurisdiction over tribal governments. The Supreme Court has not been friendly to tribal nations in recent years and the decision in this case could have disastrous results for tribal sovereignty, Indian gaming, tribal sovereign immunity, Indian land status, and federal jurisdiction.

Tribal Supreme Court Project

We are committed to proactive strategies to address cases like Bay Mills. The NCAI Tribal Supreme Court Project provides information and support around cases like this – and sends “Action Alerts” to focus our energy into productive efforts to engage in the legal process.

More Work To Be Done

We cannot take our foot off the pedal. There are many cases that need our attention and hard work, including:

- Grand Canyon Skywalk – Conflict over eminent domain
- National Labor Relations Board – NLRB attempting to assert jurisdiction over tribal employment
- Wandering Medicine v. McCullough – Voting Rights

Take Action!

Make sure you are receiving NCAI Action Alerts. In these emails are ways to get involved and engage with the legal system, for example:

* Work with the NCAI legal team to jointly file a single amicus brief.
* Provide examples to illustrate the viewpoint of Indian Country.
* Consider offering financial support for the legal work.
Celebrating Our Cultures

The World Was Watching

Press was everywhere during Convention week. Whether they were packed into a press conference, glued to the honor ceremony for Dusten Brown, or interviewing attendees, there were media clamoring to highlight and feature Native peoples and our priorities.
Deepest Thanks To Outgoing Leadership

As our 2011-2013 Executive Board steps down to make way for newly elected leadership, NCAI wants to express our deepest gratitude to Jefferson Keel, Juana Majel, Ed Thomas, and Ron Allen, and the outgoing regional Vice Presidents for their service to Indian Country.

Don’t Miss These Upcoming Events!

2014 NCAI Executive Council Winter Session
March 10-14, 2014
Washington, DC

2014 Mid Year Conference
June 8-11, 2014
Anchorage, AK

71st Annual Convention & Marketplace
October 26-31, 2014
Atlanta, GA

72nd Annual Convention & Marketplace
October 18-25, 2015
San Diego, CA

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