Securing Our Futures

Native Americans are as diverse as America itself—an array of cultures, each with its own rich heritage, its own proud history.

And all of our vibrant threads, our stories and traditions, our struggles and triumphs, are woven into the fabric of America.

Every day, we are reminded of how far we’ve come, and the great journey we have ahead of us. And though we’ve walked dark roads, and overcome great challenges and tragedies, our future holds great promise.

- Jefferson Keel, NCAI President
2013 State of Indian Nations Address
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Dear Members, Friends, and Supporters,

Over the past year we have taken important steps to advance our sovereignty and secure the futures of our tribal nations. During the 2013 State of Indian Nations, I helped chart out a path for securing our futures, showcasing the importance and strength of tribal self-determination in achieving our vision for the future.

It is not without challenge, but our nations continue to persevere, carrying that same determined spirit of our ancestors to not only survive, but thrive as we continue to move forward and establish our rightful place by making our own decisions and driving our own future.

As we reflect over the past year, let us remember the path paved by those before us. It has been half a century since our parents and grandparents worked with Presidents Kennedy and Johnson’s administrations, helping blaze the trail toward tribal self-government. Today, our ongoing work is a reflection of those before us and serves as a promise to those coming after us, as we continue to extend the path of self-determination.

When we met at the 69th Annual Convention in Sacramento, California we honored all that has been done before us and prepared ourselves for the important work ahead, preparing to protect and advance our rights as sovereign nations. Since then, we have seen the passage of several important pieces of legislation and the formation of new platforms for dialogue between the Administration and our tribal nations, all important steps in recognizing our sovereignty and helping to strengthen tribal self-government.

We still have much work ahead of us, but working together we will succeed as we continue to usher in this new nation-to-nation era, unlocking our immense potential, and securing our futures as sovereign nations.

In the following pages, you will read a comprehensive review of the incredible work NCAI has done over the past year to help strengthen our tribal nations, and we thank you for your support and contributions to these efforts. As always, we will continue to work tirelessly to build a stronger Indian Country, and appreciate your continued support as we move forward, working to build a brighter future for the generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jefferson Keel, President
National Congress of American Indians
Lt. Governor, Chickasaw Nation
NCAI Executive Board

President
Jefferson Keel, Lieutenant Governor,
Chickasaw Nation

1st Vice President
Juana Majel-Dixon, Legislative Council Member,
Pauma Band - Mission Indians

NCAI Vice Presidents

Alaska
Mike P. Williams
Akiak Native Community

Eastern Oklahoma
Joe Crittenden, Deputy Chief,
Cherokee Nation

Great Plains
Robert Shepherd, Chairman,
Sisseton Wahpeton

Midwest
Matthew Wesaw, Chairman,
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi

Northeast
Lance Gumbs, Tribal Trustee,
Shinnecock Indian Nation

Northwest
Fawn Sharp, President,
Quinault Nation

Pacific
Don Arnold, Chairman,
Scotts Valley Band of Pomo

Rocky Mountain
Ivan Posey, Chairman,
Shoshone Tribe

Southeast
Larry Townsend, Veteran Services Officer,
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

Southern Plains
George Thurman, Principal Chief,
Sac and Fox Nation

Southwest
Joe A. Garcia, Head Councilman,
Ohkay Owingeh

Western
Ned Norris, Chairman,
Tohono O’odham Nation

NCAI Vice Presidents

Secretary
Edward K. Thomas, President,
Central Council of Tlingit & Haida

Treasurer
W. Ron Allen, Chairman,
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

Alternates

Charles Locust, Assistant Chief,
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians

A. Gay Kingman
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Diane Gibbs, District III Representative,
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Randy Noka, Council Member,
Narragansett Tribe

Aaron Hines, General Council Chair,
Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation

Leonard Masten, Jr., Chairman,
Hoopa Valley Tribe

Lagaylis Harbuck, Chairwoman of Federal Recognition, MOWA Band of Choctaw

Amber C. Toppah, Chair,
Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma

Manuel Heart, Council Member,
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

Bernadine Burnette, Vice President,
Fort McDowell Yavapai
Dear Members, Friends, and Supporters,

We are on the threshold of celebrating 70 years fighting to strengthen tribal sovereignty. The pages of this Annual Report tell a story our founders could scarcely have dreamed of – tribes are working on a true nation-to-nation basis to improve public safety, create jobs, and deliver quality health care. In 1944, our very status as governments and nations was under threat. Today, we are acknowledged as important members of the American family of governments, making invaluable contributions to a strong and prosperous future for Native peoples and all Americans.

This success does not belong to NCAI; it belongs to all tribal nations and Native peoples. The successes you read about in this report are only possible because of our unified efforts – guided by the enduring wisdom of tribal nations – that has shaped NCAI’s work from the very beginning.

You will read about victories we have won on Violence Against Women and the Stafford Act. We report on our ongoing engagement with the President and his Cabinet as part of the Annual White House Tribal Nations Summit. You’ll read about our strategic efforts to invest in Native youth and equip tribes with the data they need to address the policy challenges of the future.

The success of all these efforts highlight the fact that Indian Country is unique common ground for policy makers from all political ideologies. We will continue to work together to protect the Indian Country budget, address barriers to economic development created by the Carcieri decision, and ensure our governmental rights are respected in tax and other policy areas.

Thank you for your partnership to take these many great strides to secure the future of our tribes and peoples.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Johnson Pata, Executive Director,
National Congress of American Indians
Over the past four years, the Embassy of Tribal Nations has become the embodiment of the vision of NCAI’s founders to not only protect and advance tribal rights but to educate the American public. The Embassy is an important symbol of our nation-to-nation relationship with the United States and stands as a key institution to inform America – and the world – about the importance of tribes and Native peoples to our nation’s past, present, and future.

The Embassy has hosted tribal leaders, senior Cabinet officials, international Indigenous leaders, senior UN personnel, ministers from foreign governments, and school children from throughout the nation. This year, over 25 groups formally visited the Embassy from states throughout the nation and more than a dozen different countries. Sessions included educational presentations, discussions, planning sessions, and Embassy tours. The groups included over 250 high school and college students and international visitors from Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Denmark, India, Kazakhstan, and Russia, among others.

The 2013 technology upgrade of the Embassy allowed for the use of video conferencing to extend the impact of our work. The newly equipped conference room enabled NCAI leadership to host a virtual strategy session on jobs, provide presentations to student groups, and engage with international scholars.

Above: Indigenous visitors from Russia with NCAI Deputy Director Robert Holden.
Securing Our Futures
Securing Our Futures

When 80 tribal leaders gathered as delegates to launch the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 1944, “securing our futures” was a hope that faced an uncertain outcome. In the shadow of the termination policy, those tribal leaders were unfazed. They established an organization that would present a unified front in the struggle to protect and advance tribal sovereignty.

Almost 70 years later, when tribal leaders describe the work before them today, the discussion is no longer just about survival. Though there are real problems that face our nations, today “securing our futures” is a discussion that focuses on what tribes have already achieved.

During 2012-13, NCAI used our meetings, events, and programs to draw attention to and invest in the areas where tribes are exercising their sovereignty right now. Tribes have won important victories and are diversifying their revenue base and bringing economic success to their nations and surrounding communities. While the circumstances of each tribal nation are unique, the importance of tribal unity to these successes for Indian Country is undeniable.

Investing in promising young leaders and supporting tribes as they prepare the next generation of leaders for their communities is an important goal of the work of NCAI. We envision Native leaders who are prepared to steward their nations for generations to come and we work hard to prepare them to seize the opportunities and address the challenges to securing our futures.
Every day, in ways big and small, we are strengthening the unique nation-to-nation relationship tribes enjoy with the United States—a relationship of mutual respect, mutual obligation and mutual trust. We’ve come a long way, but there’s much more work to do. And I am convinced, now more than ever, that we must protect and strengthen tribal sovereignty.

The trust responsibility is not a line item and we are not a special interest group. As budget discussions continue, we urge Congress to acknowledge their constitutional responsibility to honor our sacred trust by holding tribal governments harmless in the sequester and beyond. As President Obama said in the State of the Union address, just two days ago, the federal government must keep the promises they’ve already made.

- Jefferson Keel
NCAI President

2013 State of Indian Nations Address

Just two days after the State of the Union address by President Obama, NCAI President Jefferson Keel delivered the 2013 State of Indian Nations address entitled “Securing Our Futures,” in which he outlined a course for America and tribal nations to reach three shared goals: “to secure our communities, secure our nations, and secure our future.” The State of Indian Nations address started eleven years ago and gives a yearly update on the progress and challenges faced by tribal nations and the over 5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Broadcast live from the Newseum Knight Studio in Washington, DC, Keel delivered the address to an audience consisting of tribal leaders, members of Congress and the Administration. Thousands of people joined the broadcast by radio and online broadcast.

President Keel spoke with enthusiasm of the progress and strength of Indian Country today. He praised tribal leaders for their drive and continuous momentum in shaping their communities.
President Keel also spoke of the greater trust between tribal nations and the United States and how they can create more possibilities for even greater partnership and measurable positive impact on Indian peoples’ lives.

He recounted his own family’s history in working to build a better life – an experience common in many Native communities. The efforts of the past generation led Native nations from poverty to becoming a major force in the economic recovery, and a driving force in each tribe’s local economy. Because of this, tribes have experienced much growth and have much potential. “Today, more tribes are managing resources instead of managing poverty programs,” explained Keel.

The organization released a companion report titled Securing Our Futures which focused on tribal nations securing the future – from education to food security, climate change to workforce development. In addition to being an economic force, President Keel highlighted the unprecedented turn out for the Native Vote, and the strong contribution to America’s military by American Indians and Alaska Natives

President Keel spoke of the critical role that NCAI plays in bringing tribal citizens and leaders together to stand as the voice of America’s tribal nations in protecting sovereignty, affirming the rights of tribes, and their constitutional place in the American family of governments.

In describing the difficult challenges facing Indian Country, he called on Congress to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, to respect the nation-to-nation relationship in shaping immigration policy, and to promote fair tax policies.

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) provided the Congressional Response following President Keel’s address. During her first official speech to NCAI in her new role as the Chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Cantwell committed to making sure that “Indian Country grows even stronger.” She outlined several important issues for the 113th Congress, including: passing a Carcieri fix; strengthening the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government; taking action on climate change; and reauthorizing the Native American Housing Assistance Self-Determination Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Cantwell also called for the US House to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act with strong tribal protections and send it to the President for his signature.

To watch a video of the 2013 State of Indian Nations and to read the speech visit www.ncai.org.
2012 Annual Convention and Marketplace

Our Rights, Our Sovereignty

NCAI’s Pacific region and the California tribes hosted NCAI’s 69th Annual Convention & Marketplace in Sacramento, California under the banner of “Our Rights; Our Sovereignty.” In opening remarks, President Keel set the tone for the Constitutional Convention, calling for members to protect the sovereignty and strength of Native America through unity. With only weeks remaining until a national election, Keel reiterated his call from earlier in the year for Indian Country to turn out the largest Native vote in history and announced the release of a new report entitled, *Voter IDs and Indian Country: States of Concern.* The report listed six states where voter ID laws could have a major impact on Native Voter engagement.

Monday’s full-day General Assembly included Jacqueline Pata’s Executive Director Report and an address by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, who introduced newly confirmed Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Kevin Washburn. Jodi Gillette, the White House Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs, capped off the morning. In the afternoon, representatives of both US Presidential campaigns outlined their visions for strengthening Indian Country and the nation-to-nation relationship. Rebecca Moore of Google Earth Outreach provided a presentation outlining innovations in mapping technology that had been used to support Indigenous peoples around the world. And Shawn Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, addressed NCAI at the end of Monday’s session. Atleo committed to continued work directly with NCAI on a variety of initiatives in energy, education, and cultural exchange.

Above: Native youth from California perform as part of the Welcome Reception at the 2012 Annual Convention.
On the second day of the Convention, NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Pata and Dr. Eddie Brown led the General Assembly in a tribal leaders strategy session entitled “Refining Our Unified Vision.” The focus of the session was to bring tribal leaders together to discuss objectives and priorities primarily for the next four years. In between presentations delivered by Kevin Gover, Director of the National Museum of the American Indian; Megan Gregory, Council of Youth Leaders of Opportunity Nation; Melvin L. Sheldon, Jr., Chairman, Tulalip Tribes; and Gregory Mendoza, Governor, Gila River Indian Community, tribal leaders were posed questions that prompted candid discussion about the future of Indian Country.

General Assembly highlights throughout the remainder of the week included addresses from Thomas Perez, Assistant Attorney General with the US Department of Justice; Lillian Sparks, Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans; and Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, Director, Indian Health Services, Department of Health and Human Services. NCAI, IHS, and Nike N7 once again hosted an exhilarating morning of exercise and healthy activities as part of the National Native American Just Move It! event, sponsored by Roche Diagnostics.

Native Vote 2012

As part of NCAI’s efforts to turn out the largest Native Vote ever, throughout the 69th Annual Convention the Native Vote initiative held a phone banking operation in the tradeshow exhibit hall. NCAI leadership, tribal leaders, youth, and local volunteers visited the booth throughout the week to make calls to their home communities and encourage fellow Native voters to participate in the election on November 6, 2012. In total, attendees conducted over 1,500 calls.

Constitutional Convention

The membership of the organization concluded a year and a half long NCAI Constitutional Convention process. The votes by membership indicated a clear consensus on the nine proposed amendments to the NCAI’s Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. When the final votes were tallied, NCAI members had accepted eight amendments and voted no on one amendment – an amendment to limit NCAI Tribal Membership to federally recognized tribes and exclude state recognized tribes from voting membership.
President Obama hosted the fourth annual White House Tribal Nations Summit on December 5, 2012. It was one of his first public meetings after winning re-election and emphasized the importance his Administration placed on the nation-to-nation relationship with tribes.

The Summit was attended by hundreds of tribal leaders representing the 566 federally recognized tribes. The meeting was also attended by eight members of the President’s cabinet (Secretaries Salazar, Duncan, Sebelius, Vilsack, LaHood, Solis, Acting Secretary Blank, and EPA Administrator Jackson), several members of Congress, and a range of senior Administration officials.

As in previous years, NCAI held planning sessions during the Annual Convention in advance of the Summit. Leading up to the Summit, NCAI convened regular briefings and phone conferences between national organizations and regional tribal organizations to collect tribal leader input into the development of the Tribal Leader Briefing Book, a resource compiled by NCAI and distributed at NCAI’s tribal leader briefing meeting in advance of the Summit.

As he has in each annual Summit, President Obama addressed tribal leaders directly. He reiterated his commitment to the “unique nation-to-nation relationship” between tribes and the federal government. The President, and many senior Administration officials, expressed strong support for tribal priorities including: protecting the Indian Country budget, passing a clean Carcieri fix, and passage of the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization with the tribal provisions intact.

"Now, three years ago, I was proud to see that this conference was the largest gathering of tribal leaders in our history. And back then, an event like this was rare. Today, it’s gotten routine. What I told you then is that I was committed to more than a unique nation-to-nation relationship — I was committed to getting this relationship right, so that your nations can be full partners in our economy and your children can have a fair shot at pursuing the American Dream and that no one has to live under the cloud of fear or injustice."

- President Barack Obama
The Summit was also an important moment to announce progress on tribal priorities. In the opening session, Secretaries Salazar and Vilsack announced an interagency policy on sacred places. Secretary Vilsack noted that “the President is very, very insistent that these sacred sites are protected and treated with dignity and respect.” Deputy Treasury Secretary Wolin later announced the release of the Treasury Department’s new proposed guidance on tribal government benefits that fall under the general welfare exclusion from income.

Following the Opening Session, tribal leaders met with senior Administration officials in five concurrent breakout sessions. While the sessions were not broadcast publicly, readouts were provided and NCAI created a report outlining key themes from the discussion. The focus of each session was as follows: Strengthening and Advancing the Government to Government Relationship; Protecting Our Communities: Law Enforcement and Disaster Relief; Securing Our Future: Cultural Protection, Natural Resources, and Environmental Protection; Strengthening Tribal Communities: Economic Development, Housing, Energy, and Infrastructure; and Building Healthy Communities, Excellence in Education, and Native American Youth.

In introducing the session readouts, Deputy Interior Secretary Hayes described the purpose of the breakout sessions as “what we’re aspiring to—true government-to-government discussion and consultation between sovereigns.” He pointed to the Summit report as a “living reminder” of the dialogue, urging tribal leaders to hold federal officials accountable and use the discussion as a “scorecard” for the next Summit.

After the session summaries and remarks from Secretaries LaHood, Solis, and Administrator Jackson, President Obama provided closing remarks.

The President underscored how the tribal-federal collaboration of the last four years meant that we have moved from 2009, when the Tribal Nations Summit was “unique,” to the fourth Summit that is almost “routine.” He recalled his 2009 remarks, noting that he was “committed to more than a unique nation-to-nation relationship” and making sure that tribal nations “can be full partners in our economy and [Native] children can have a fair shot at pursuing the American Dream.”

To ensure follow-through on his commitments, the President highlighted his appointment of key White House staff and Native people throughout his Administration. He noted the changes ushered in by the Tribal Law and Order Act and pointed to efforts to expand economic opportunity for Native people. He said that he has “never been more hopeful” about the prospect of building a brighter future for all Americans because of the “solemn commitment of tribal leaders” and the “rising generation” of Native young people who are “ready to take ownership of their future.”

NCAI looks forward to the ongoing work with tribal leaders and the Administration to ensure the success of these Summits for the remainder of President Obama’s second term and for many years to come.
Native Youth: Impacting the Future

NCAI & Native Youth

Over 1.7 million Native youth under the age of 18 comprise nearly one-third of the entire Native population. This reality means that a vision for our next generation of leaders is a top priority for Indian Country.

Although many statistics portray the challenges faced by Native youth, NCAI is working to not only tell a story of hope and opportunity but to create an environment for Native youth to succeed and thrive. Native youth are the future of tribal nations, but many are not content to wait until tomorrow to affect change—they are serving as leaders and agents of change in their communities at this very moment. NCAI is there to meet those who wish to advance the cause and lift up those seeking solutions for their nations and their lives.
Youth Commission

Established in 1997, the NCAI Youth Commission has been a space for tribal youth to come together and discuss solutions to the unique opportunities and challenges they face within their communities. The Youth Commission has served as a space for Indian Country’s young people to stand together, empowered, to inform Indian Country’s decisions regarding the future. Youth Commission members have often informed NCAI’s general membership on various issues, influencing and informing key advocacy decisions. The Youth Commission also provides leadership development and a forum for Native youth networking.

Youth Commission Members

Kristen Sally Dosela, Co-President
Gila River Indian Community

Jared Massey, Co-President
White Mountain Apache

Jaymee Moore, Co-Vice President
Colorado River Indian Tribe

Chad Martinez, Co-Vice President
Tohono O’odham Nation

W. Alex Wesaw, Treasurer
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians

Jarred Winchester, Secretary
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians

Skyler Bourdon, Member-At-Large
Ho-Chunk Nation

David Colbert, Member-At-Large
Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Alyssa Garcia, Member-At-Large
Ak-Chin Indian Community

Jalea Walker, Member-At-Large
Smith River Rancheria

National Native Youth Cabinet

In its inaugural year, the National Native Youth Cabinet (NNYC) – a competitively selected group of Native youth leaders ages 17-25 – met to identify youth policy research and data priorities, organize a series of professional trainings, and develop a method to communicate with other regional and tribal youth cabinets. In conjunction with other Native youth leaders, the NNYC identified three policy priorities that affect Native youth across the nation, including: increased funding for tribal higher education; revitalization of culture and language; and curtailing bullying and emotional stress. The NNYC will continue to meet virtually throughout the year and provide findings from their work to other youth cabinets to inform future tribal policymaking.

2013 Youth Leadership Trainings

Building on two years of successful national youth leadership trainings, NCAI, the Department of Justice, and several tribal organizations hosted three regional events over the summer of 2013. Beginning in Fairbanks, Alaska, NCAI staff worked closely with the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. to develop a week-long training series for National Intertribal Youth Summit alumni and other Native youth that included presentations to build resiliency among youth leaders, strengthen leadership skills, and end unhealthy relationships and habits. Other youth trainings included a day-long training at the NCAI Mid Year Conference, and a training at the National UNITY, Inc. Conference in Los Angeles, CA. These events reached nearly 150 youth representing more than 35 tribal nations. Participants received critical training related to leadership, public speaking, community planning, and resiliency.
2013 Executive Council Winter Session

Tribal leaders and NCAI members from across Indian Country came together in Washington, DC for the 2013 Executive Council Winter Session to celebrate early legislative victories in the 113th Congress, all of which had come as a result of years of hard work. NCAI President Jefferson Keel recapped the State of Indian Nations address and reflected on the recent Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Stafford Act victories.

Over a dozen members of Congress, several Cabinet officials, and other senior agency officials addressed Indian Country issues and spoke to the importance of the historic effort to advocate and pass a VAWA with comprehensive tribal provisions. During the three-day legislative summit, tribal leaders conducted nation-to-nation meetings with their congressional delegations.

President Obama Signs Violence Against Women Act into Law

Prior to the conference in February, VAWA was passed by the 113th Congress in bipartisan support of the Senate version. During the week of the legislative summit, President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, members of Congress, the Obama Administration, and NCAI’s Executive Committee came together to celebrate the reauthorization of VAWA, a historic moment for Indian Country.

Today represents a historic moment in the nation-to-nation relationship between tribes and the federal government. Now that the tribal provisions have been enacted and protection for all women reauthorized, justice can march forward.

- Jefferson Keel
NCAI President
In addition to programmatic support for Native survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, the law includes constitutionally sound tribal jurisdiction provisions authorizing tribal governments to prosecute non-Indian defendants involved in intimate relationships with Native women and who assault these victims on tribal land.

**Indian Country Leadership Awards**

During the conference, the NCAI acknowledged the recipients of the prestigious Indian Country Leadership Awards. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), The National Taskforce to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, Andrew Lee of the Seneca Nation, and FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate were honored at the organization’s Indian Country Leadership Award Banquet held on Tuesday March 5, 2013.

The Congressional Leadership Award reflected Senator Murray’s leadership on a range of issues of importance to tribal nations. As a champion for tribal sovereignty and Native women, the Senator was instrumental in the passage of the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. She is also a key Indian Country partner currently serving as the first female Chair of the Senate Budget Committee.

The Public Sector Leadership Award to The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women acknowledged their important partnership to elevate protections of Native women in the national conversation about the VAWA reauthorization.

Andrew Lee of the Seneca Nation received the Native American Leadership Award in recognition of his leadership in highlighting tribal governance by launching Honoring Nations at the Harvard Project. As well as, for his business leadership as the first Native American to be named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.

Craig Fugate was honored with the Governmental Leadership Award for his work as FEMA Director to strengthen intergovernmental collaboration with tribal nations and champion amendments to the Stafford Act.

Above: Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) is honored by Chairman Mark Macarro of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians.

Above: President Obama is joined by tribal leaders and other senior policymakers as he signs the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization that includes strong tribal provisions.
The Nevada tribes and NCAI’s Western region welcomed over 1,000 participants and members to the Mid Year Conference in Reno. With NCAI’s 8th Annual Tribal/Leader Scholar Forum hosted by NCAI’s Policy Research Center as a central focus, the conference drew prominent leaders from across Indian Country. During the conference, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing the White House Council on Native American Affairs. New Interior Secretary Sally Jewell delivered her first address to Indian Country, noting that President Obama and former Secretary Ken Salazar “opened a new chapter” in relations with tribal nations. Jewell promised to “keep that chapter open” and “take it to the next level,” emphasizing the importance of the new Council in addressing the priorities of tribal nations.

Agenda highlights included a cultural night hosted by the local planning committee, presentations by author Mark Trahant; Assistant Secretary Kevin Washburn; Jodi Gillette, White House Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs; and Sam Hirsch, Deputy Associate Attorney General, Department of Justice, and the passage of 40 resolutions.

President Obama’s Executive Order represents a very strong step forward to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship. The Council has been a top priority of tribal leaders from the earliest days of the Obama Administration. It will increase respect for the trust responsibility and facilitate the efficient delivery of government services.

- President Jefferson Keel

The 8th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum began with a dynamic panel of three innovative approaches to growing economic development in tribes, including a discussion of an Indigenous community development fund, an effort to establish a creative economy based on arts, and an initiative to establish sustainable tribal housing.

Chairman Melendez (Reno-Sparks Indian Colony) and Councilman Joe Garcia (Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo) gave tribal leader responses focused on the “entrepreneurial spirit” of Native peoples and the need to plan for change by fostering synergy between business and political development.

A lunchtime poster session featured diverse projects exploring topics including tissue donation, surveying at-risk youth, tribal indicators in the US Census, researching historical trauma, and community indicators in economic planning.
Mid Year Conference (continued)

Afternoon breakout sessions included tribal leaders, youth, culture bearers, Elders, and university-based researchers. The “Advancing Health from Within” session featured tribal youth presenting on an extreme sports program; emerging Native scholars sharing about their journeys; and presentations on tribal/university partnerships that included a role play between an outside researcher and tribal leaders. The “Measuring Success in Native Education” session focused on core content standards; discussions about how to center culture amidst rapidly changing national science policy; and efforts to link health with education. Tribal leaders emphasized the importance of culturally based education and science innovation within Native communities.

Throughout the conference, the Youth Commission hosted nearly 50 young Native leaders holding daily meetings, sessions, and discussing newest initiatives, including a “Map Up” hosted by Google. Youth Commissioners also participated as panelists, bringing youth voices to the broader discussions of NCAI, especially around youth financial literacy.

Financial Literacy

In 2013, NCAI organized a number of different financial education efforts into a broader Native Financial Education Initiative that seeks to advance financial capability in Indian Country through advocacy, outreach, education, and partnerships. This initiative includes ongoing advocacy, policy, and research along with the work of the Native Financial Education Coalition, a focus on April as Financial Literacy Month, the Protect Native Money campaign, and the youth-focused Tribal Exchange Stock Market Game.

NCAI continued efforts to bring together a partnership of tribes, regional and national organizations, federal agencies, and others with the Native Financial Education Coalition. NCAI worked with other organizations and federal agencies to identify efforts to raise awareness of financial education in Indian Country during April as Financial Literacy Month.

In 2012 and throughout 2013, the Protect Native Money campaign focused on consumer financial protection efforts related to the Cobell, Keepseagle, and tribal trust fund settlements. Consumer alerts, public service announcements, tribal leader toolkits, and other resources along with training sessions at the tribal, regional and national conferences kept a focus on the importance of raising consumer financial awareness. As the second of two Cobell settlement payments are expected to reach over 400,000 Native individuals in fall of 2013, NCAI will continue to provide critical consumer outreach information.

The youth-focused Tribal Exchange Stock Market Game is in its sixth year with more than 1,500 high school students participating during that time. This initiative directly responds to tribal leaders’ recognition of the importance of financial education for tribal youth. Two to five member student teams work over a semester to learn about real-life investing while enhancing basic academic skills. The winners of the competition participate in a trip to Washington, DC with recognition by tribal leaders at the Executive Council Winter Session. In 2013, teams from Ganado High School in Arizona placed first and third with a team from Oneida Nation of Wisconsin taking second.
The Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Program for Tribal Policy and Governance

Since its inception, the Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Program has provided opportunities for rising leaders to gain experience in public policy, advocacy, applied research, communications, and development. Throughout the 11-month program, young Native professionals earn skills and develop subject matter expertise in various policy and research areas that assist NCAI membership in their advocacy and policy development.

Having influenced more than fifty young professionals over its history, the 2012-2013 Wilma Mankiller Fellowship cohort continued the long legacy of commitment, excellence, and professional achievement. This year, NCAI hosted five fellows working on various projects, teams, and legislation. Together, the 2012-2013 cohort worked on legislative topics such as workforce development, immigration, gun control, and the Farm Bill. Fellows also worked on issues ranging from Native Vote to implementation of the Affordable Care Act and tribal data management.

Originally founded in response to tribal leaders’ desire to build a pipeline of young professionals with extensive public policy, advocacy, and leadership skills, the Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Program has graduated many of today’s leaders in Indian Country across the public and private sector.

The Wilma Mankiller Fellowship Program has graduated many of today’s leaders in Indian Country across the public and private sector.
The second annual NCAI Native Graduate Health Fellowship continues to fulfill NCAI’s commitment to equip the next generation of Native leaders. The fellowship aims to address the stark disparities in Native health by building a pipeline of Native health professionals who are prepared to lead in formulating and promoting health policies and practices that address the unique needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

NCAI received over 30 applications from students representing 22 tribes for the 2013 NCAI Native Graduate Health Fellowship. The students included an array of health backgrounds ranging from genetics to public health. Chosen based on her commitment to American Indian and Alaska Native health, academic achievement, and community leadership, Brittany Simplicio was named the second NCAI Graduate Health Fellow. Ms. Simplicio, a citizen of the Navajo Nation, obtained her Master in Nursing degree with a Nurse-Midwifery concentration from the University of New Mexico, and became the eleventh Native nurse-midwife in the United States.

Ms. Simplicio and four other top tier candidates participated in a unique week-long tribal sovereignty workshop hosted at the Embassy of Tribal Nations. Together the group learned the critical role of tribal sovereignty, local and national advocacy, and public policy in improving the health and welfare of tribal communities across the country.

The Native Graduate Health Fellowship is made possible through the generous support of Robert Burnette and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. NCAI deeply appreciates these donors’ essential role in establishing and sustaining the endowment that supports the fellowship.
Effective Advocacy to Secure Our Futures
Occasionally it is worthwhile to gain perspective beyond the efforts of one year. Most accomplishments take many years to develop, and there are some years during which progress is not obvious, even after a great deal of hard work. But today, we are in a period of time in which tribal nations are making historic gains in self-determination and respect for sovereignty. It has been NCAI’s great honor to be involved in advocating for all of the following:

- **Tribal Law & Order Act of 2010**
- **Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013** – at long last, restoration of criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians who commit crimes of domestic violence
- **Stafford Act Amendments** – requests for emergency response declarations directly from tribes to the President
- **Indian Health Care Improvement Act reauthorization**
- **Cobell Settlement** – $1.4 billion – including Trust Reform Commission; $1.9 billion for Buy Back Program to consolidate fractionated interests in Indian land
- **Tribal Trust Settlements** – over $1.1 billion, with more settlements to be finalized
- **HEARTH Act** – leasing without Secretarial approval under tribal regulations
- **New Leasing Regulations** – to speed economic development
- **Land into trust** – over 1,200 applications approved amounting to more than 200,000 acres – 325 square miles of new land in trust
- **Water settlements** – $2 billion for nine tribes
- **Energy** – large-scale photovoltaic facility launched by Moapa Band of Paiutes; oil refinery construction by Three Affiliated Tribes; and many other projects underway
- **General Welfare Guidance from the Treasury Department** – progress on important tribal priorities with more to come
- **IRS Guidance on trust settlement payments**
- **Marketplace Fairness Act** – tribes included in Senate passed bill addressing online sales tax collection
- **Tribal Supreme Court Project** – although outright victories are rare, tribes continue to successfully defend fundamental principles of tribal sovereignty
- **Patchak Patch** – regulatory amendment to correct problems with appeals of land to trust decisions

There are many reasons for these recent successes. President Obama and his Administration have prioritized the government-to-government relationship; we’ve had remarkable support from many Republicans in Congress—without our champions Tom Cole and Darrell Issa the VAWA bill never would have become law; we’ve prioritized research and data that help us make our arguments; we’ve increased our sophistication in working with the media; we’ve built coalitions with many other groups; and we’ve had the grassroots support of Native people from all over the country. There is one factor, however, that is perhaps most important: tribal leaders have united their efforts on all of these initiatives, and that is the key to our success.

Of course, our work is not finished. The federal budget is a major problem. The Carcieri Fix and many tax issues need to be addressed. We still have much work to do to improve education and bring economic development and jobs to Native people. However, a review of our recent successes shows that when we work together, change is possible.
Violence Against Women Act Passage

What a difference a year can make! Led by the NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women, tribal leaders across the country saw their advocacy efforts come to fruition with the bipartisan Senate version of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (VAWA 2013) passing in both chambers with resounding votes of 286-138 in the House and 78-22 in the Senate. Indian Country was represented on stage as President Obama signed the bill into law on March 7, 2013. VAWA 2013 makes several key improvements to help bridge the gaps that have left Native women vulnerable to violent crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault. The most significant section of Title IX, Safety for Indian Women, is section 904’s Tribal Jurisdiction Over Crimes of Domestic Violence, which recognizes the inherent power of tribes to exercise criminal jurisdiction over all persons who commit crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, or violations of protection orders in Indian country.

Shortly after the passage of the bill, NCAI staff began assisting with implementation, including hosting an in-person meeting of tribal leaders interested in implementing Section 904 on an accelerated basis at its Mid Year Conference in June 2013.

Additionally, NCAI solicited input from Indian Country and drafted comments in response to the Department of Justice’s framing paper on implementation. NCAI staff is working to support the Intertribal Technical Assistance Working Group, in which participants from 36 tribes interested in implementing VAWA 2013 have come together to discuss issues, share information, and work together on best practices in implementing special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction. NCAI, in partnership with the Tribal Law & Policy Institute, was recently awarded a substantial grant from the Office on Violence Against Women to continue this implementation work.

NCAI will continue to advocate for other statutory and administrative changes that would provide tribes with the resources needed to prosecute violent crimes committed against all Native women and to adequately serve all Native victims—including Alaska Natives. With the passage of Mid Year Resolution, REN-13-006, “Protect Alaska Native Women,” NCAI staff will continue to advocate for full and equal inclusion of Alaska Native women in VAWA’s protections.
**Emergency Management**

The determined efforts of the NCAI and tribal governments to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Assistance Act to authorize tribes to directly seek federal disaster declarations was rewarded with congressional approval of the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 (P.L. 113-2). The bipartisan legislation supported by tribal leaders and the Obama Administration was signed into law in January and acknowledges tribal sovereignty and our nation-to-nation relationship. The Federal Emergency Administration Agency (FEMA) is currently drafting the regulations to implement tribal provisions regarding damage assessment threshold criteria, cost-share, and other considerations applicable to tribal governments.

The Emergency Management Institute developed and delivered courses at the NCAI Mid Year Conference and Annual Convention for tribal leaders. The four-hour course, *Emergency Management Overview for Tribal Leaders* (L583), is designed specifically for tribal officials who may be interested in emergency management concepts and operations but do not have the time to attend the standard four-day course. The course is free and includes 0.4 hours of CEU credit for registered tribal officials.

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate received the 2013 NCAI Governmental Leadership Award for his consistent advocacy for our nation-to-nation relationship, work to strengthen FEMA-tribal relations through instituting a FEMA Headquarters Office of Tribal Affairs, appointment of a tribal legal advisor in the FEMA Office of the Chief Counsel, and efforts to make the Stafford Act tribal amendments his agency’s top priority.

**Tax and Finance**

NCAI’s tax initiative has worked tirelessly with tribal leaders and technical experts to develop a strong tribal tax policy that furthers tribal self-governance, protects treaty rights, and provides new opportunities for economic development and job creation in Indian Country. In doing so, tribes have made significant gains with the Administration and Congress.

Over the past few years, the general welfare exclusion as it is applied to Indian tribes and the Per Capita Act as misinterpreted at the regional levels by IRS field agents, has consumed much of the Treasury Department and IRS’ consultation agenda with tribal governments. Specifically, tribes are looking for a finalized general welfare guidance that acknowledges tribal decision making and protects vital programs from federal tax implications.
Tax and Finance (continued)

In regards to the Per Capita Act, tribes seek clarification that the Treasury Department and the IRS are committed to following the letter of the law, as codified in the Per Capita Act of 1983 – which exempts non-gaming distributions made from trust assets from taxation. NCAI, in collaboration with tribal nations, has put forth comprehensive recommendations on each of these issues.

Legislatively, the 113th Congress has included important tribal tax bills, each coming directly from the work of tribes participating through NCAI’s tribal tax initiative. Currently, there are three bills within the House’s Committee on Ways and Means:

- H.R. 3043, the “Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act of 2013” – that protects programs that tribes offer to their citizens from taxation.
- H.R. 3030, the “Tribal Tax and Investment Reform Act of 2013” – that eliminates the burdensome “essential government function” threshold from government bonds and pension plans, creates incentives to develop renewable energy and gives equal authority to tribal child support enforcement agencies.
- H.R. 2332, the “Adoption Tax Credit Tribal Parity Act of 2013” – that treats tribal court determinations of “special needs” on par with similar determinations made in state court.

Finally, efforts to include tribes in S. 743, the Marketplace Fairness Act of 2013 were successful. The bill passed the Senate with broad bipartisan support and currently awaits action from the House. The Act recognizes tribes alongside states in authorizing the collection of sales tax from online retailers.

HEARTH Act

The Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act became law on July 31, 2012. The Act authorizes surface leasing of tribal lands without approval from the Secretary of the Interior. Instead, tribal leases can be approved by the tribe under tribal leasing regulations. The new law enables tribes to move more quickly on leasing and economic development, while maintaining the Secretary’s trust responsibility to oversee trust lands. The BIA has already approved several tribal leasing codes.

NCAI worked with tribes in 2012-13 to encourage adoption of tribal leasing codes under the HEARTH Act that comply with the BIA’s recently updated leasing regulations, 25 C.F.R. 162. In March 2013, NCAI conducted a webinar that included discussion of Navajo’s leasing-code development and implementation process over the past ten years. The webinar can be viewed at NCAI.org. The BIA has also published a National Policy Memorandum containing a list of criteria that should be considered. NCAI staff will continue to work with tribes on the implementation of this important law.
Water/Trust Settlements

NCAI maintains a close working relationship with an ad hoc Indian water rights settlement group, which is made up of the Native American Rights Fund, the Western Governors Association, and the Western States Water Council. Shortly after the 113th Congress convened, NCAI joined this group for meetings on Capitol Hill to discuss the need for the federal government to ensure funding is available for tribes to quantify their water rights through the Congressional settlement process. Even in this challenging budget climate, it is important for tribes to tell Congress that the right to water is a fundamental need, and that as first stewards of this land, tribal rights to water relate back to – at a minimum – the establishment of the reservation, often superseding the tribe’s neighboring non-Indian communities’ rights to water. This makes the settlement process even more crucial because water rights left unsettled leads to uncertainty for all, and often costly and time-consuming litigation.

NCAI also continues to reach out and work with technical experts, tribal water resource managers, and policy advocates to help engage its members in discussions on best practices for developing water codes. In doing so, we have hosted several webinars and outreach meetings on the importance of quantifying water and the importance of developing sound water management tools within the regulatory jurisdiction of the tribe.

Securing Our Futures Using Technology

In advance of NCAI’s 2012 Annual Convention, NCAI partnered with Google to host the NCAI Google Tools Summit at Google’s Headquarters in Mountain View, CA. Two dozen tribal leaders and tribal technology experts joined Google staff for a day of discussion and presentations. The event focused on how tribes can use cutting edge technology to advance their priorities and build a brighter future for their citizens.

As a result of the summit, NCAI’s Executive Committee launched the Indian Country Technology Taskforce that led ongoing efforts to engage Google and other technology partners. The work of the Taskforce resulted in a youth “Map Up” at NCAI’s Mid Year Conference and the partnership between NCAI and Google to host the inaugural Indigenous Mapping Day in August 2013.

In the year to come, the Taskforce will engage additional technology partners and work with Google on projects ranging from tribal access to Google Apps, including tribes in Google’s cutting edge projects, representation of tribal lands on Google Maps, and inclusion of tribes and Native peoples in Google’s diversity initiatives.
Budget & Appropriations

Honoring the Promises, Finding Common Ground

In the last year, NCAI stood united with tribal leaders, national tribal organizations, and intertribal organizations in calling for Congress and the Administration to honor the promises to tribal nations in the federal budget, in the face of another year fraught with fiscal disagreements. Forced spending cuts from sequestration implemented in FY 2013 continued to threaten the trust, treaty, and statutory obligations to tribal nations. Not only do funding shortfalls sacrifice trust obligations, but they hamper tribes’ ability to promote economic growth or plan for the future of Native children and coming generations. In the beginning of the FY 2014 appropriations cycle, NCAI coordinated national recommendations for programs critical to Indian Country in a 100 page document, the FY 2014 Indian Country Budget Request. The plan, titled, “Supporting Economic Security and Prosperity,” outlined which programs require continued investment. In April, NCAI released a briefing paper enumerating impacts of sequestration and other reductions to Indian Country at a joint tribal budget briefing on the Hill with seven intertribal organizations. NCAI again participated in numerous budget and appropriation hearings in the House and Senate, sharing the recommendations of tribal leadership.

The message that the constitutionally based federal responsibilities to Indian Country in the budget should be protected was reported in media at both the local and national levels. Some of the headlines highlighting the precarious situation facing tribes due to the fiscal cliff and sequestration include: “Tribes plan for worst with looming budget cuts” (AP),1 “Indian Nations Squeezed by Sequester” (NPR),2 and “Pain on the Reservation” (New York Times).3 The New York Times Editorial Board wrote, “…Congress, heedless of its solemn treaty obligations to Indian tribes, is allowing the across-the-board budget cuts known as the sequester to threaten the health, safety and education of Indians across the nation.”4 The editorial board agreed that Congress should exempt Indian Country from sequestration. Although Congressional champions worked hard in the last few years to stop deep cuts to Indian Country, the larger political impasse continues to affect tribes. NCAI in conjunction with tribal leaders and our sister organizations will continue working with decision-makers to find common ground to protect tribal treaty and trust obligations in the federal budget.

**Housing**

The authorization of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 2008 (NAHASDA) expired on September 30, 2013. NAHASDA authorizes the administering of the Indian housing programs for low-income American Indian and Alaskan Natives to provide safe and decent housing. At the 2012 Annual Convention, a resolution was passed to establish the NCAI Task Force on NAHASDA Reauthorization. The NCAI Task Force on NAHASDA Reauthorization has been working jointly with the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC), bringing together tribal leaders and tribal housing entities to develop tribal housing provisions to be included in the upcoming reauthorization of NAHASDA. Joe Garcia, Head Councilman of Ohkay Owingeh and NCAI Southwest Area Vice President; and NAIHC Executive Director David Sanborn, currently co-chair the Task Force. Since the inception of the Task Force, NCAI has held several meetings and monthly teleconference calls to coordinate the advocacy efforts of tribes for the NAHASDA reauthorization. NCAI will continue to work with tribes on the NAHASDA reauthorization and other NAHASDA related implementation such as the negotiated rule-making so that tribal housing issues are effectively addressed.

**Education**

Tribal nations have a tremendous stake in an improved education system. Education prepares Native children not only for active and equal participation in the global market, but also to be positive, involved members of their communities. Equally significant, an investment in education equips the future leaders of tribal governments. There is no more vital resource to the continued existence and integrity of tribal nations than Native children.

NCAI and its Native education partners, including the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), worked together to develop Indian Country’s education priorities and to advocate policy changes to improve education opportunities and access for all Native students. This work includes ensuring that the Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian sections were improved and remained intact, in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This is critical to upholding the federal trust responsibility to American Indian and Alaska Natives.

Additionally in 2012, NCAI secured a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to work with tribes in Washington State to develop strategies on how to increase their roles in the education of their citizens and build the capacity of their education systems. In particular the grant focuses on strengthening tribal control over education by partnering with tribes in Washington to develop cooperative agreements with the state that would allow tribal operation of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) title programs. The work will culminate with the publication of a report looking at best practices in tribal education in Washington state.

In acknowledging that tribal nations are best suited to determine how their own youth are educated, NCAI and its education partners will continue to advocate for the increase of tribal control over ESEA programs and expanded funding and opportunities for all Native students.
Land Recovery

Tribes continue to make progress on land recovery. Since the start of the Obama Administration, the Secretary of the Interior has approved over 1,200 applications for land into trust, amounting to more than 200,000 acres – 325 square miles of new land in trust.

Also in response to requests from NCAI and many tribal nations, the Department of the Interior has proposed a procedural amendment to the Land to Trust Acquisition regulations. The amendment is a reaction to last year’s Supreme Court decision in *Patchak v. Salazar*, which held that the Quiet Title Act does not bar opposing parties from challenging a land to trust acquisition. The Supreme Court decision created the possibility that legal challenges could be filed up to six years after land was acquired in trust. The amendment will require parties opposing a land to trust acquisition to exhaust administrative remedies before contesting in federal court, filing any appeal within 30 days. The Department of the Interior held a consultation with tribal leaders at the NCAI Mid Year Conference in Reno, Nevada, and we expect the new rule to become final soon.

The “Carcieri Fix” remains a top priority of NCAI. In 2009, the Supreme Court issued a decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar*. The Court held that the phrase “now under federal jurisdiction” within the Indian Reorganization Act limits Interior’s ability to acquire land into trust. The decision creates uncertainty and risk of litigation for many tribes. NCAI has been working to support the “Carcieri Fix.” At the end of the 112th Congress another effort was made to bring the legislation to the Senate floor, but it fell short.

This session of Congress, the legislation is pending in the House of Representatives, where there are two different versions. H.R. 279 is sponsored by Representative Tom Cole, and H.R. 666 is sponsored by Representative Ed Markey. H.R. 666 now has 30 co-sponsors including both Republicans and Democrats. We anticipate that legislation will soon be introduced in the Senate. NCAI encourages all tribes to maintain their strong efforts to gain co-sponsors and to pass this important land restoration legislation.

Energy

NCAI continues to advocate for tribes to achieve energy security and independence through tribal control of natural resources and energy assets; capacity building efforts involving federal agencies, universities, and the private sector; removing barriers to the deployment of tribal energy resources; and affirming tribal taxing authority over energy development activities on Indian lands.

NCAI submitted comments to the State Department on April 22, 2013, voicing our concerns with the development of the Keystone XL pipeline, primarily due to potential environment impacts to water quality; impacts on sacred places; spill prevention control concerns; and the failure to consult with tribal governments.
Energy (continued)

NCAI has also identified guiding principles for the ongoing discussion on hydraulic fracturing, encouraging policy makers to recognize that the regulatory jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is over federal lands and although tribal lands are held in trust, they are not federal or public. The regulatory scheme for hydraulic fracturing should reflect this reality. Moreover, tribes should be permitted to opt out of federal regulation and use their own regulations so that tribal regulatory authority is maximized and regulatory duplication is avoided.

Natural Resources

NCAI believes that sustaining our natural resources remains a vital part of tribal self-determination and sufficiency for our communities, cultures, and economies.

In that vein, NCAI continues to work in partnership with other organizations that share similar beliefs, like Our Natural Resources (ONR). NCAI is working with ONR to establish efforts to promote social economic self-sufficiency in tribal communities through SED grants.

Native people understand the challenges posed by federal budget constraints and that is why tribes have identified low and no-cost policies that can aid in developing tribal natural resources. NCAI has identified the following principles for policy makers:

1. Respect tribal authority and tribal regulations that may already be in place;
2. Ensure equitable access to federal programs for natural resources to tribes;
3. Respect that tribes already have sufficient expertise to oversee mineral and oil and gas production on their lands;
4. Respect and honor tribal sovereignty;
5. Allow tribes to negotiate directly with developers without federal or state interference; and
6. Provide resources for tribes to continue their participation in Our Natural Resources, advancing the sustainability of tribal natural resources.

The vitality and sustainability of natural resources is integral to the health of all American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. The benefits of federal investment in tribal natural resources management reverberate widely and will support tribes in creating jobs, maintaining tribal societal cohesion, and forming healthy tribal communities.
Telecommunications

Tribal and rural communities continue to experience disparate levels of access to high-speed Internet and broadband applications compared to urban and metropolitan areas. Recognizing the importance that broadband speeds and technologies have on the economy, education, healthcare, and public safety, the United States has continued to pursue policies to connect the entire nation to these vital tools. Federal agencies taking the lead on broadband initiatives include the US Department of Agriculture, the National Telecommunications & Information Administration, and the Federal Communications Commission.

From reforms to modernize the Universal Service Fund to support robust broadband deployment, to the formation of FirstNet creating a nationwide public safety broadband network, NCAI has worked tirelessly to ensure tribal inclusion and participation. During NCAI’s 2013 Executive Council Winter Session the Executive Committee created the Technology Task Force to garner further interest in telecommunications policy and how technology aspects play a vital role in its development. The Task Force’s mission is to continue advancing tribal-centric approaches to broadband deployment on tribal lands and highlight technology/telecommunications benefits to education, healthcare, mapping, and economic development. Advancing tribal self-determination in these fields continues to be a key focus of NCAI’s telecommunications advocacy.

Farm Bill

Agriculture is critical to Native economies and is the economic backbone of more than 200 tribal communities. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) houses programs that touch every aspect of Native communities and work with other related federal agencies. It is vital that federal support is enhanced for agriculture, ranching, subsistence fishing and farming, forestry, housing, water, broadband, and related activities through USDA programs. Doing so would generate significant benefits for tribes, rural communities, and the nation by promoting economic development, job opportunities and growth, community revitalization, self-sufficiency, youth engagement, and healthier eating.

Working closely with tribal stakeholders, NCAI developed an advocacy document outlining Farm Bill reforms to encourage and support the continued development of Indian Country food and agriculture resources. Reforms in the Farm Bill and in the USDA implementation of farm programs will assure that tribal resources can be optimized in the food and agriculture sector in ways that will support sustainable economic development and create jobs in Indian Country. In addition, NCAI continues to advocate for Nutrition Title programs that affect many American Indians and Alaska Natives, particularly the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

NCAI will continue to fight for parity, opportunity, and consistency in USDA programs for Indian Country.
Transportation

Last year, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (P.L. 112-141) was enacted. This two-year transportation authorization is set to expire in 2014. NCAI has been monitoring and working with the Department of Transportation as they implement MAP-21, and working to ensure that tribes are able to effectively implement the law by providing regulatory notices and information related to the implementation efforts of the Tribal Transportation Program and the Tribal Transit Program. In the coming months, NCAI will continue to work with tribes to organize tribal provisions for the upcoming reauthorization of MAP-21. It is critical tribes come together to articulate a consensus position and sustain the momentum made in improving tribal transportation infrastructure.

Environmental Quality

This year, NCAI completed a five-year cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Information. The cooperative agreement was to increase awareness throughout Indian Country about the National Environmental Information Exchange Network (Exchange Network). The Exchange Network is an internet and standards based approach for exchanging environmental data designed to improve environmental decisions and facilitate compliance with federal environmental quality data reporting requirements.

NCAI instituted the Tribal Governance Group (TGG) within the Exchange Network. The TGG is comprised of tribal program and policy officials who are members of the Exchange Network governance board along with state and federal representatives. The TGG’s purpose is to assess Exchange Network policy, program developments, and initiatives, and to provide feedback to EPA officials through recommendations about tribal impacts.

Another achievement of the NCAI cooperative agreement was the completion of a national tribal capacity survey to assess tribal governmental capacity and desire to collect environmental data to share with tribal, federal, and state partners (Report on the National Tribal Capacity Survey). The survey showed that tribes are generally interested in collecting and sharing environmental data but have concerns about privacy, security, data quality, and protection of tribal sovereignty.

Above: Angie Reed, Water Resources Planner, Penobscot Indian Nation.
Tribal Law & Order Act (TLOA) Implementation

July 29, 2013 marked the three-year anniversary of enactment of the Tribal Law & Order Act (TLOA). Extended sentencing provisions included in the TLOA were the precursor to the VAWA jurisdictional expansion over non-Indian domestic violence offenders. A number of tribes have implemented extended sentencing authority, and two tribes (Umatilla and Eastern Band of Cherokee) have already sentenced defendants to federal prison under TLOA’s Bureau of Prisons pilot project (which will sunset in July 2014). As NCAI has been working to facilitate and support information-sharing among tribes interested in VAWA implementation, TLOA has been a regular part of conversations. Many tribes are considering implementing the interrelated provisions of TLOA and VAWA together.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) continues to utilize TLOA’s provisions regarding appointment of Special Assistant US Attorneys to help fight crimes in Indian country. On June 5, DOJ’s Office on Violence Against Women announced that four tribes in Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota and South Dakota will be awarded cooperative agreements to cross-designate tribal prosecutors to pursue violence against women cases in both tribal and federal courts under the Tribal Special Assistant US Attorney program. The goal of this program is to train eligible tribal prosecutors in federal law, procedure, and investigative techniques to increase the likelihood that every criminal offense is prosecuted in tribal court or federal court.

NCAI staff worked to ensure the timely release of TLOA mandated declination statistics by the Department of Justice. In late May 2013, DOJ released its report tracking government investigations and prosecutions in Indian country. The report showed that federal prosecutions had increased 54 percent for cases from Indian country between fiscal years 2009 and 2012. While this is a definite improvement, there is still work to be done, and NCAI staff will continue to monitor DOJ’s progress on this issue to ensure that Indian country crimes remain a priority of the Department.

Tribal Homeland Security

Officials from agencies and components of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) attended the NCAI Mid Year Conference and Annual Convention to brief tribal officials on continued implementation of recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-53), which includes use of tribal IDs and improving communications with tribal, state, and local governments for homeland security purposes. NCAI continues to work with DHS and provide opportunities for DHS officials to hear from tribal officials about the shortfall in providing tribes with resources to protect and manage border security, and continued problems regarding the sovereign rights of tribal members to cross international borders for traditional, work and social purposes.

NCAI worked closely with the Director of the Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) within the DHS Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. The OTA is the designated lead for tribal relations and consultation in the continuing effort to improve nation-to-nation relationships by coordinating department-level engagement of DHS and tribal officials.
Tribal Homeland Security (continued)

NCAI staff attended the annual meeting of the International Association of Chiefs of Police Indian Country Section in February. The purpose was to hear about the issues and initiatives tribal police chiefs are addressing. NCAI shared the work being done in supporting tribal representation to SAFECOM, as a part of the FirstNet Public Safety Advisory Committee in support of the National Response Framework. SAFECOM is a public safety-driven communications program managed by the DHS Office of Emergency Communications and the DHS Office for Interoperability and Compatibility. SAFECOM is working to build partnerships among all levels of government, linking the strategic planning and implementation needs of the emergency response community with tribal, federal, state, local, and territorial governments to improve emergency communications. NCAI focused on overcoming policy and programmatic gaps resulting from the omission of a tribal government representative on the Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Cultural Protection

NCAI’s role in the preservation and protection of American Indian and Alaska Native cultural heritages, languages, and sacred places and objects continues to be a cornerstone of our advocacy efforts. Over the past year NCAI has worked with tribes, tribal organizations, and federal agencies to address these issues.

Eagle Feathers

In December 2012, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced a new policy on tribal member use and possession of eagle feathers. This new eagle feathers policy affirmed that DOJ would not prosecute members of federally recognized tribes using these feathers for ceremonial and cultural purposes, and uphold previously established violations such as the buying or selling of feathers or parts and the killing of eagles without a permit. Since the announcement, NCAI has been working with DOJ and other federal agencies regarding implementation of this policy to ensure that tribal members are able to gain access to eagle feathers and parts for ceremonial and cultural uses.

Native Languages

During NCAI’s 2013 Executive Council Winter Session the Executive Board created the Native Languages Working Group to develop policies to preserve and protect Native languages. The first official meeting of the Native Languages Working Group was held during NCAI’s 2013 Mid Year Conference in Reno, Nevada. Attendees discussed policy initiatives including support for the reauthorization of Esther Martinez, the need for funding of tribal immersion schools, and recommendations to address language retention and preservation.
Support of American Indian and Alaska Native Veteran Programs and Issues

NCAI joins with Indian Country and all Americans in honoring the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. NCAI extends the deepest gratitude to our nation’s veterans and to their families.

In 2012-13, NCAI provided testimony on several issues. An important priority is the Native American Veterans’ Memorial Amendments Act of 2013, which removes technical barriers hindering completion with regard to location and fundraising. NCAI President Jefferson Keel also provided testimony addressing the challenges related to homelessness among Native veterans.

International Advocacy

NCAI’s international work has focused recently on providing technical assistance and education for tribal leadership interested in engaging in international Indigenous discussions within the United Nations. This work has been guided by the upcoming high-level plenary meeting to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014, where members of the UN will convene to discuss outcome recommendations on how to implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In late May, NCAI, along with more than 70 tribes, as well as a broad representation of Indigenous organizations, submitted a joint statement to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues which recommended three items:

1. That a new monitoring body be incorporated within the UN to help guide implementation of the Declaration by members states of the UN;

2. That the UN take action to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, including convening a high-level conference to discuss this matter, ensuring any monitoring mechanism of the Declaration pay particular attention to Article 22, and tasking a Special Rapporteur to focus specifically on violence against Indigenous women and children; and

3. That action be taken to give constitutional and customary governments of Indigenous Peoples a dignified, permanent status within the UN which acknowledges their sovereign rights as self-governing nations.

Each of these recommendations remains the driving force behind our advocacy efforts on the international front. Specifically, with regards to the third item listed above, tribal governments need and deserve a clear and effective voice in all UN processes and/or discussions that potentially affect their peoples and homelands.
Service to Community
Tribal leaders formed the Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative in September of 2001 in recognition of the fact that protection of tribal sovereignty is fundamental to the continued existence of tribal nations as distinct peoples and cultures. Two central components of the Initiative continue to flourish today: the Tribal Supreme Court Project and the NCAI Project on the Judiciary (originally known as the Federal Judicial Selection Project). While the NCAI Project on the Judiciary continues as a comprehensive judicial diversity project, it is the Tribal Supreme Court Project that has seen the most action over the past year.

The Tribal Supreme Court Project

The Tribal Supreme Court Project has continued its work to coordinate tribal efforts and defend the rights of tribes before the United States Supreme Court. This year, the major focus of the Project was on a single case, *Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl*, that challenged the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). After a massive advocacy effort that included a diverse array of tribes and tribal organizations, numerous allies and nineteen state governments, on June 25 the Supreme Court upheld ICWA, but reversed and remanded the case back to the South Carolina courts on a technical question. The narrow decision focused on the standard to determine whether a particular father’s parental rights could be terminated.

Protection of tribal sovereignty is fundamental to the continued existence of tribal nations.
We continue to support the efforts of Our Natural Resources (ONR), a partnership of Native and tribal natural resource organizations. NCAI and the University of Arkansas’ School of Law’s Indigenous Food and Agricultural Institute entered into a Memorandum of Agreement using Native law students to conduct natural resource research to support ONR’s work. The website, www.ournaturalresources.org, is being maintained by NCAI. At the 2013 Mid Year Conference, a pre-session on natural resources brought together more than 50 participants to determine key priorities for natural resources policy.

The Supreme Court decision was handed down during NCAI’s Mid Year Conference in Reno, Nevada and was much discussed. On the positive side, the decision sent a clear message that there is no question of ICWA’s role as the most important law to protect Native children and families. The decision also affirms Congressional authority to protect Indian children. But tribal leaders are equally disappointed for Dusten, Veronica, and the Brown family that the Court decided to send the case back to the South Carolina courts on a technicality. The case has now descended into a morass of legal battles in multiple jurisdictions. We remain committed to Native families and we will continue to support Dusten Brown’s fight for his rights as a father and for Veronica to remain with her loving father, grandparents, and community.
Research is a critical component in NCAI’s work to affirm and uphold tribal sovereignty. This is particularly true at a time when the Administration prioritizes federal research and development investments. A major part of the work of NCAI’s Policy Research Center (PRC) is to demonstrate the value of tribally-driven research for tribal leaders and federal policymakers.

In an era characterized by sequestration and fiscal instability, federal agencies, Congressional leaders, and the American public are calling for increased accountability in government spending. This pressure for return on investment creates challenges for tribes given the lack of necessary investment in tribal data systems or capacity building for tribal staff. Tribes also face a federal policy environment where there are simultaneous threats to tribal program funding and new research investments that raise concerns for tribes.

In spite of these challenges it is increasingly clear that tribal insights can produce major advances in research impacts and lead to innovation. In some places, pharmaceutical companies and other industries go to great lengths to secure patents to Indigenous knowledge about food (e.g., seeds) and medicinal plants and others seek out information on land stewardship (e.g., watershed management) and other ecological insights. As local leadership institutions, tribes hold the key to improving health and community wellness.

The following pages describe efforts of the NCAI PRC to add value to the work of NCAI over the past year and to exemplify why our work to expand the research capacity of tribal nations is a critical component of tribal sovereignty.
Advancing Effective, Tribally-Driven Policy

Promoting Self-Determination with Data Analysis. While American Indians and Alaska Natives are an integral and unique part of US society, we continue to be invisible to most other Americans due to an absence of data, inaccurate media images, and limited historical and contemporary awareness about Native peoples. There is a critical need for accurate, meaningful, and timely data collection and analysis in Native communities.

The PRC supports NCAI’s legislative and policy agenda by providing economic, social, and population data analysis to NCAI’s legislative staff and to the public in its role as a Census Information Center. This analysis is critical for tracking the status of Indian Country and for mapping the need for new and different policy interventions. Among laws important to tribes that were up for reauthorization between 2012 and 2013, the PRC provided data and analysis for the Farm Bill, the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act, the Violence Against Women Act, the Workforce Investment Act, and the budget and appropriations work of NCAI.

As a Census Information Center, the PRC works to provide tribal leaders with access to information and data products to use for research, planning, and decision-making purposes. Census data is the main source of objective, consistent, and comprehensive information about Native social, economic, and demographic characteristics at the reservation and tribal tract level. Census data analysis informed ongoing development of an NCAI Jobs Agenda, youth leadership development, a Native voter registration and turnout webinar, and Native child welfare protection efforts.

Preventing Violence Against Native Women. In February 2013, the PRC released a Policy Insights Brief to address data misinformation that was stalling the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). By using research and data analysis, the PRC worked to clear the path for appeals to decision-makers’ hearts and minds to take root so that this critical legislation would be reauthorized. The PRC continues its work to gather the data and research to assist with implementation and prepare for the next reauthorization process.

Shaping a Broader Youth Agenda. NCAI joins other national Native organizations in stewarding the Native Children’s Agenda and advancing legislative policy to support Native youth. The PRC works to advance NCAI’s comprehensive approach by offering tools, resources, and data analysis. Through the National Native Youth Cabinet (NNYC) – funded by the Administration for Native Americans – the PRC engages Native youth, supports adult leaders in developing initiatives based on Native youth perspectives and experiences, and uses technology in meaningful ways to amplify Native youth voices. The NNYC coordinates with other youth leaders affiliated with NCAI’s Native Youth Commission and Boys and Girls Club partnership. In partnership with the PRC, federal agencies, and other organizations, NNYC members critically evaluate the data relevant to their policy priorities, identify gaps and impacts, and develop “data stories” for advocacy and planning.
**Improving Diabetes Translation Research.** As effective policy increasingly relies on research evidence, the PRC has invested in working with Native researchers and partners at Washington University in St. Louis to improve the translation of diabetes research in Native communities and in policy. We hosted a scholar seminar in St. Louis and co-hosted a writing retreat for affiliated scholars at the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health at the University of Colorado Denver, with staff from the National Council of Urban Indian Health participating.

**Strengthening Tribal Research Governance & Infrastructure**

**Delivering Research Regulation Curriculum Training.** Staff of the PRC delivered training to a tribal community in Montana using our research regulation curriculum and submitted a Native American Research Center for Health grant application to provide training to up to four tribes and/or Native organizations per year for four years. This research curriculum is intended to be a resource for tribal leadership as they fulfill their role as responsible and proactive stewards of their Native communities. The curriculum helps start a dialogue in reconciling Indigenous and Western worldviews and provides practical information on how to engage with research. It was developed in response to requests from tribal leaders who wanted resources to make better decisions about the proposed research in their communities.

**Improving Data Quality.** Accurate data collection and community-based planning captures true needs, and thus can drive larger programmatic investments resulting in a cost-effective use of tribal, federal, and private resources. Without quality data, policymakers and community planners cannot set policy goals, monitor implementation, measure impact, or plan for demographic shifts in an effective way. The PRC stewards a national data quality agenda to address priority issues and preserve existing data collection efforts that serve Native people from being threatened.

For example, there were Congressional efforts over the past year to make response to the American Community Survey (ACS) optional. This would result in ACS response rates plummeting; costs rising substantially; and data quality diminishing to the point where the Census Bureau might not be able to produce any data for the nation’s small and remote areas, which would directly impact Indian Country.

In partnership with the Census Project, the NCAI Policy Research Center educated members of Congress about the need to protect the American Community Survey and its funding. Additionally, the PRC also continues to monitor the availability and credibility of data at the local and reservation levels from the ACS, the American Indian Population and Labor Force Report, and other federal surveys.

**Strengthening Tribal Public Health Codes.** Data systems that include tribal codes, regulations, and statistics are vital to help tribal leaders improve community health. The PRC is developing a tribal public health law database that will host legal information on publically-available tribal public health laws to support the work of tribal leaders in strengthening health and coordinating effective practices across regions.

Above: Native youth participate in a resiliency training hosted at the 2013 Mid Year Conference.
Currently, we have identified 383 tribal codes, representing 82 tribal nations. NCAI regions with the largest number of codes in the database include: the Midwest (111 codes); Northwest (95 codes); Western (44 codes); and Pacific (36 codes) regions. The most consistent types of codes included are those related to alcohol and drug policy, animal management, traffic and road safety, agriculture, environment, public health, research, and infrastructure.

In June 2013, the PRC published a draft Policy Brief featuring this work entitled *Preventing Unintentional Injury & Death on Reservation Roads*. This brief includes a discussion of contributing factors to unintentional injury and injury-related death on reservation roads; a summary of tribal public health law in seat belt use, child passenger restraint, pedestrian safety, and distracted driving prevention; and recommendations for tribal leaders committed to improving tribal codes and regulations to prevent unintentional injury and injury-related death.

**Contributing New Insights about the Role of Tribal Governance of Research.** The Native American Research Center for Health that the PRC leads with researchers from the University of New Mexico and the University of Washington seeks to reduce health disparities by strengthening academic and community research partnerships. Part of that effort is contributing new understandings about the role of tribal and community governance of research in strengthening health.

Specifically, this project is beginning to demonstrate that tribal governance of research does not negatively impact the research produced, and can have positive effects like the inclusion of tribal members in both research partnership and research design, and the development of structures to monitor research that impacts the tribe. We are also learning that tribally-partnered projects receive less money than other projects. This information is essential to push back against the narrative that research partnerships with tribal communities take more time, cost more money, and lead to fewer research outcomes than those with other communities due to the perception that tribal sovereignty over research places undue burden on researchers. NCAI’s Policy Research Center, along with its academic partners, are finding that federal investments in tribal research generate significant and meaningful returns and should continue and be expanded.

**Producing Regular Research Updates.** The PRC began providing Research Updates to participants in NCAI’s three annual conferences to describe tribal research priorities, research regulation practices that can inform tribal policy development, federal research priorities, and professional development opportunities for emerging and established Native researchers. These Research Updates complement the Legislative Updates provided at NCAI’s convenings.
The Partnership for Tribal Governance assists tribes with their efforts to strengthen governance and at the same time supports the institutional development of NCAI as a critical anchor institution for Indian Country.

**Partnership for Tribal Governance**

The Partnership for Tribal Governance (PTG) is a multi-year initiative that seeks to identify, increase, organize, enhance, and make accessible the resources necessary to support tribes’ efforts to strengthen their governance. Through partnerships with tribes, tribal intergovernmental and national Native organizations, academic and policy centers, practitioners, policymakers, and other resources, the PTG:

- Makes investments in self-determined tribal efforts to strengthen governance
- Supports increased education, training and technical assistance for tribes
- Enhances communication, coordination and collaboration among groups working to support tribes’ efforts
- Supports the development and sharing of new knowledge
- Develops and promotes a policy research agenda to strengthen tribal governance
- Advocates policies to enhance and strengthen tribal governments
- Encourages increased public and media education about tribal governments
- Supports the internal capacity building of NCAI as an institution

The PTG serves as the organizational focal point within NCAI to assist tribes with their efforts to strengthen governance and at the same time support the institutional development of NCAI as a critical anchor institution for Indian Country. Much of the work of the PTG is possible only through integration and coordination with all programs and activities of NCAI, not as a stand-alone program.

During 2012-2013, the PTG increased its impact on NCAI’s mission in a number of areas.
• **Addressing Issues Critical to Tribal Leaders:** Launched in August 2012, the Protect Native Money campaign is an effort to raise the visibility of financial education and consumer protection in Indian Country and to provide critical information and resources to tribal leaders and their citizens. As the result of both the Cobell and Keepseagle class-action lawsuit settlements, Native individuals began receiving significant financial resources starting in August 2012. Additional Cobell settlement payments will be issued again in the fall of 2013 and the campaign will again raise awareness. As a part of this campaign, the PTG is supporting the relaunch of the Native Financial Education Coalition and providing workshops and other training opportunities.

• **Promoting Tribally-Driven Policy:** The PTG supported efforts to engage tribal leaders in diverse policy discussions through special and interactive sessions at NCAI Mid Year Conference and Annual Convention. At the 70th Annual Convention, NCAI will highlight excellence in tribal governance and have related policy discussions in breakout sessions.

• **Working with Tribal Leaders and the Administration:** The PTG played a critical role in helping to organize and coordinate tribal leaders’ involvement in the White House Tribal Nations Summit. NCAI worked with the board, other tribal leaders, intertribal regional organizations, and the Administration on the fourth White House Summit.

• **Working in Collaboration on a National Natural Resources Strategy:** The PTG continued support of an alliance of Native natural resource organizations to develop a national natural resources strategy that includes increasing tribal capacity. NCAI entered into a partnership with the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Institute at the School of Law at the University of Arkansas to engage Native law students in conducting research to inform the national strategy.

• **Building Capacity in Governance:** The PTG provided capacity building sessions for tribal leaders at a variety of venues focusing on topics of critical importance to strengthening tribal governance. NCAI was selected as one of six training and technical assistance providers for tribal designated housing entities and has since provided one-on-one and larger training and technical assistance in six locations to more than 200 tribal and community leaders and tribal housing staff.

• **Making NCAI Resources More Accessible:** The PTG supported the integration of technology at the Embassy of Tribal Nations to support NCAI’s capacity to conduct “virtual institute” training and distance meetings. The PTG is also supporting efforts to expand and further engage membership through special activities in the 70th Anniversary year.
Public Education
External Affairs / Public Relations

Educating the general public toward a better understanding of tribal nations and Native peoples is a fundamental part of NCAI’s mission. Communicating the shared value of “Securing Our Futures” to Native and non-Native audiences alike has been a central focus of the External Affairs team over the last year. We have focused on bringing the unified voice of Indian Country to as many audiences as possible through conferences, educational events, meeting support, publications, press relations, national issue campaigns, and online engagement of members and individuals.

State of Indian Nations Broadcast

For a third straight year the State of Indian Nations Address was broadcast from the Knight Studios at the Newseum in Washington, DC, to a national and international online audience. This event continues to reach tens of thousands of people via a live and archived broadcast. Tribal government and community centers, as well as educational institutions such as elementary schools, high schools, and colleges host viewing events across Indian Country. C-SPAN also continues to make the State of Indian Nations an important event on their national calendar. The External Affairs team plays a central role in producing the event and engaging community members, the general public, and the national press in this annual media event.

Driving Grassroots Engagement & Advocacy

In order to speak as the unified voice of Indian Country, NCAI membership and supporters must remain informed, engaged, and involved in advocating for Indian Country’s most important priorities. Online engagement with members is a critical feature of this effort – including social media and action focused communications. This year’s efforts included support for the national Native Vote campaign, the Protect Native Money Campaign, the Tribal Supreme Court Project, and the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization efforts.

Educational Events & Meetings

The External Affairs team also leads important work to ensure the success of the organization’s core national member driven events - the Annual Convention, Executive Council Winter Session, and Mid Year Conference. NCAI also assists with a range of national meetings and educational events. Events such as preparation for the White House Tribal Nations Summit, Tribal Unity Impact Week, and quarterly meetings of Tribal/Interior Budget Council are all part of the portfolio of event management efforts. NCAI also continues to increase the number of online educational webinars and conference calls.

Media and the Press

Securing the future of Indian Country requires telling our own story to the world. NCAI focused over the past year on elevating not only the profile of NCAI, but the top legislative priorities of Indian Country to a national audience. Public relations and campaign support for the national Native Vote effort led to the widest coverage by national and local media on the impact of the Native Vote in recent history.

Continued education and outreach to the national media resulted in unprecedented coverage of the tribal provisions in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, more balanced reporting on child welfare and the Tribal Supreme Court Project’s focus on the Baby Veronica case, attention to the impact of budget cuts on tribal nations, tribal perspectives on natural resource management and responsible energy development, and regular responses to issues related to anti-defamation and harmful sports mascots.
External Affairs / Public Relations (continued)

Media and the Press (continued)

In 2013, NCAI’s communications efforts continued to be proactive, releasing opinion pieces, briefing documents, press releases, and statements to national and Indian Country media outlets on important news stories. Our efforts continue to involve providing resources for media to easily access materials such as video, audio, and photography for use in reporting.

Publications

NCAI’s staff continued to produce leading publications and analysis on important issues. Our 2012-13 publications focused on comprehensive analysis on the issues that matter most to our membership, including economic development, conference proceedings, research standards in Indian Country, the organization’s Annual Report, and the Indian Country Budget Request.

Visual Storytelling and Communications

NCAI’s commitment to education extends to our drive to produce compelling visual learning tools and educational products for the general public and our members. Video archiving of the 69th Annual Convention in Sacramento, California was made possible by the generous support of Walmart. These included the first in a series of videos that will be used by NCAI for online education.

The success of NCAI’s Native Vote campaign was also possible as a result of a national grassroots media campaign and partnership with Native and non-Native media outlets to distribute public service announcement videos and audio clips across Native radio and television stations. Partners included the First Nations Experience Television Network, Kohanic Broadcast Corporation, Native American Public Telecommunications, Native American Times, NativeNewsNetwork.com, Native Public Media, and Native Sun News.

The USA Network’s Characters Unite Campaign also helped distribute a national Native Vote 30-second public service announcement across their network in the weeks leading up to the 2012 national election.

Enhancing Communications Capacity

NCAI continued to develop and enhance tribal communications capacity in Indian Country through the National Tribal Communicators Network. As part of the DC Native Public Relations Roundtable, NCAI also contributed to the national and local efforts to educate the general public during Native American Heritage Month.

Social Media

NCAI engages online through a variety of new media. NCAI and many of our initiatives can be accessed by visiting the following locations:

www.facebook.com/ncai1944

www.twitter.com/ncai1944

www.flickr.com/ncai

www.youtube.com/ncai1944
NCAI is a membership-driven organization. In 2012-2013, NCAI membership continued to grow to new levels. This demonstration of tribal unity strengthens NCAI as we continue to work together to protect tribal sovereignty and advance the well-being of Indian Country.

Especially as we approach our 70th anniversary, it is critical that tribes and tribal citizens participate in the ongoing work of NCAI. It is only through our membership that NCAI can build the foundation for ongoing success in our work to advance tribal sovereignty. Our membership is a strong representation of the many nations that constitute Indian Country.

NCAI membership is made up of tribes and individuals who have met the eligibility criteria and paid dues as outlined in the Article III of the NCAI By-Laws. Members are determined to be in good standing upon full payment of dues and having fulfilled the requirements of the Credentials Committee.

NCAI’s membership consists of six categories:

1. **Tribe Membership**
   Recognized as a tribe or other identifiable group of American Indians by the Department of the Interior, Court of Claims, the Indian Claims Commission, or a State.

2. **Individual Indian Membership**
   Recognized as a member by an Indian tribe or band, or combination of tribes and bands, recognized by the Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, Court of Claims, or a State.

3. **Individual Associate Membership**
   Individuals that do not qualify for membership for lack of Indian ancestry. Non-Indian applicants are admitted as non-voting associate members.

4. **Individual Indian Lifetime Membership**
   Recognized as a member by an Indian tribe or band, or combination of tribes and bands, recognized by the Department of the Interior, the Indian Claims Commission, Court of Claims, or a State.

5. **Individual Associate Lifetime Membership**
   Individuals that do not qualify for membership for lack of Indian ancestry. Non-Indian applicants are admitted as non-voting associate members.

6. **Associate Organization Membership**
   Organizations have the same rights and privileges afforded to Individual Associate members.
Partners & Supporters

In November 1944, tribal leaders faced the terrible threat of the federal termination policy but they responded by making a tremendous sacrifice that would change the history of Indian Country. In spite of the cost, they traveled to Denver, Colorado to gather with other tribal leaders and establish the National Congress of American Indians. They invested in the future, and our communities are still reaping the benefits of that investment today.

The success of NCAI’s work since that time is built on the foundation of the generosity and ingenuity of tribal leaders, tribal nations, foundations, businesses, Native citizens, and non-Native allies. We are deeply grateful for the investments of the following NCAI partners:

Tribal Investors
- Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Central Council Tlingit & Haida Tribes of Alaska
- Cherokee Nation
- Chickasaw Nation
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Coeur D’Alene Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
- Elk Valley Rancheria
- Forest County Potawatomi Community
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- Ho-Chunk Nation
- Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe
- Kaw Nation
- Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
- Lummi Nation
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
- Osage Nation
- Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
- Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation
- Prairie Island Tribal Council
- Pueblo of Isleta
- Redding Rancheria
- Reno-Sparks Indian Colony
- Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- Santo Domingo Tribe
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Seneca Nation
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians
- Swinomish Tribe
- Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- The Tulalip Tribes
- The Ute Indian Tribe
- Tohono O’Odham Nation
- Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribe
- Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians
- Ute Mountain Ute

Foundation Partners
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Open Society Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Northwest Area Foundation
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Nathan Cummings Foundation

Native Organization Partners
- Native American Financial Services Association
- Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations
- AMERIND Risk Management Corporation
- Native American Contractors Association
- Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Federal Government Partners
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Defense
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Justice
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Peace Corps

Business Allies
- Bank of America
- Walmart
- Wells Fargo
- Key Bank
- University of Phoenix
- Roche Diagnostics Corporation
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oklahoma
- BNSF Railway
- Dentons
- Google
- Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, LLP
- Lewis, Brisbois, Bisgaard, & Smith
- North Star Group
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About NCAI

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) serves the broad interests of tribal governments and communities. As a representative congress of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, we are united to advance policy and programs that:

- Protect and enhance treaty and sovereign rights;
- Secure our traditional laws, cultures, and ways of life for our descendants;
- Promote a common understanding of the rightful place of tribes in the family of American governments; and
- Improve the quality of life for Native communities and peoples.

NCAI is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization. By advocating for strong tribal nations, we strengthen the United States of America.