



A Year for Unity in 2012

by Steve Cadue

Unity is the strength of our Indian people and the teaching of the sacred circle connection to all things. The legendary Holy Man Black Elk of the Sioux spoke of the sacred circle that must be kept strong. Connection in spirit and action must be practiced by our Indian people. In the year 2012, we should all strengthen each other by listening to our Indian people as we speak of our unique needs and goals.

During the recent White House Tribal Nations Conference, I listened to the unique needs of each eloquent speaker as they brought their story to President Obama and the appointed federal agency officials. I also spoke during the session and pointed out the diversity that each speaker represented. My thoughts were of the sacred circle and the need for Indian unity spoken by Black Elk.

As Indian people we came together strongly in our fight to establish Indian gaming and we prevailed due to unity. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was passed by the United Congress on October 17, 1988. We joined in unity – the sacred circle. Some of the Sioux people have called Indian gaming the economic white buffalo miracle. Today we experience how greatly Indian gaming revenue has uplifted our respective communities.

Indian gaming has allowed our Indian tribes to build homes, schools, roads, bridges, health clinics, develop tribal courts and

tribal law enforcement, libraries, cultural centers and the list goes on. We are now able to explore and invest in economic ventures to diversify from Indian gaming. But as we move toward economic diversity let's not forget the strength of our tribes, our Indian people and their health and well-being.

One of the findings of the 100th Congress in passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was: "a principal goal of federal Indian policy is to promote tribal economic development, tribal self-sufficiency, and strong tribal government." Indian people are our strength and we must focus tribal unified efforts to improve the health of our Indian people to reach genuine Indian self-determination.

On the health front, diabetes is a major killer of Indian people and is devastating to our circle of nations. The Kickapoo Tribe has joined the Association of American Indian Physicians to develop a national plan to fight diabetes. In unity, we will be requesting the National Indian Gaming Association and Indian nation members join in the fight against diabetes. In unity we can win. ♣

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