



Monthly President's Report

Dear AFN Co-Chairs, AFN Board Members & Membership,

Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed a warm and relaxing holiday, and we look forward to sharing the new year with all of you.

The final months of 2011 have been eventful, to say the least. Activity in Washington DC and within our own state borders is picking up, and AFN is committed to ensuring that our Native voices are heard at every opportunity.

Please read on for an update on our staff activities and a preview of what's coming up in 2012.

Operations Report

AFN staff and board members have been active this month in reviewing outcomes from the AFN Convention and resolutions referred to the Board. AFN staff have set a goal of initial responses to go out for every resolution by the end of this month. Some resolutions will require fuller briefings to highlight the urgency of the concerns, and an updated set of 2012 AFN Federal and State Issue Papers will include all the top issues coming from the AFN Convention and the AFN Board. Look for this document in January. It will form the basis for many discussions in 2012 with policy makers in Juneau and Washington D.C. It will also be used internally as a way to prioritize and focus our work.

Earlier this month, AFN staff created and distributed a special targeted Federal Issues Packet focused on immediate actions that Congress could take as they considered their Omnibus Appropriations bill before Christmas. A key issue we tried to build support for was a national demonstration project to expand compacting of federal programs outside of BIA and IHS. We felt in this political climate, showing how Native people through compacting can stretch federal resources further, demonstrate responsible management and get more resources to the villages and grassroots level, would be relevant and timely.

December 2011 Update

Upcoming AFN Meetings

2012 BOARD MEETINGS

FULL BOARD
DATE: February 21-22
PURPOSE: Regular quarterly meeting
LOCATION: Juneau

FULL BOARD
DATE: May 2-3
PURPOSE: Regular quarterly meeting
LOCATION: Anchorage

FULL BOARD
DATE: October 16
PURPOSE: Regular quarterly meeting
LOCATION: Anchorage

AFN CONVENTION
DATE: October 15-20
PURPOSE: Annual Meeting
LOCATION: Anchorage

FULL BOARD
DATE: December 5-6
PURPOSE: Regular quarterly meeting
LOCATION: Anchorage

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In our December meetings in DC, we received significant support for this effort. Chairman Daniel Akaka, of the US Senate Indian Affairs Committee told us in private meetings that he will champion this in 2012 and hold hearings to help raise visibility. Chairman Akaka also stated he will entertain hearings on subsistence in 2012. He remains concerned with our villages and with the wellbeing of our people. This is very good news.

We had a very good meeting with Congressman Ed Markey (Massachusetts) on unresolved issues from ANCSA, including food security; strengthening subsistence protections; further discussions on his request to the General Accounting Office (GAO) requesting a report on regional corporations and governance; and a discussion on climate change and arctic policy. Congressman Markey is currently the Ranking Member on the House Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over Alaska Native issues. At his request, we will be providing additional information and input concerning our views on climate change and arctic policy. Congressman Markey stated very clearly that he will help us with the Obama Administration and subsistence protections.

Our Congressional delegation has continued to work hard to ensure Alaska's needs were addressed in the Appropriations Omnibus bill, and has fought against various amendments, which would have had a negative impact on our people.

The Congressional process continues again in January and will be a very difficult period for all of the country. The Congressional "Super Committee" failed to deal with the federal deficit, and therefore automatic cuts will begin taking effect. These cuts are in the billions of dollars -- whole departments of the federal government, and many programs we have taken for granted, could be on the chopping block. AFN is working closely with the National Congress of American Indians, and the Navajo Nation, to protect vital Native programs. 2012 will probably be a year unlike any we have seen for a very long time. We will need all our leadership to step up and help. Everyone will be needed. AFN will be developing ACTION ALERTS to send out when we see critical opportunities for everyone to step in. These action alerts will clearly state the issue, who needs your input and views, and how to convey them. They will also let you know how time sensitive the issue is so we can all move fast.

Upcoming Outside Meetings

ALASKA DAY (planned)
DATE: Early 2012
PURPOSE: To raise the visibility of Alaska Native issues so they don't get ignored! More details to come in our January Report.
LOCATION: Washington, DC

AFN CONGRESSIONAL
RECEPTION -- Honoring
Congressman Don Young
DATE: March 7, 2012
LOCATION: Washington, DC

AFN CONGRESSIONAL
RECEPTION -- Honoring
Senator Mark Begich
LOCATION: Juneau, AK
DATE: February, 2012

Photos: Clark Mishler

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Operations Report, Continued

The AFN Board is committed to protecting and improving funding streams for vital Native programs. The AFN Board and its Committees' will be actively engaged in both Washington DC and in Juneau to do this.

SUBSISTENCE UPDATE:

- In late November we learned that Bob Anderson, AFN's long-time lawyer (remember Katie John subsistence victory? Bob was our lawyer who helped win this!), was appointed to the new 5-member Secretarial Commission on Indian Trust Administration and Reform. This new Commission will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Interior's trust management and provide recommendations on how to improve performance. We congratulate Bob and we look forward to providing support and engagement with the Commission as-appropriate. See the Commission's official Charter attached (PDF).

8(a) UPDATE:

- AFN joined the National Congress of American Indians, Native American Contractors Association, and Navajo Nation in opposing amendments #1431 and #1432 to S.1867, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2012, offered by Senator McCaskill. Read the full text of our joint letter to The Honorable Carl Levin and The Honorable John McCain attached (PDF).

FEDERAL CALL TO ACTION:

We hope you will join the AFN staff and Board in Washington DC in the coming year. Our voice is stronger when heard from many committed advocates. 2012 is our year to be active. If we do not mobilize, we will lose critical resources to improve the lives of our people. **We have no choice! We must step up and do everything in our power to protect our interests.**

We've included a "Congressional Tool Kit" produced by the Northstar Group for AFN with this report. This informative document serves as an excellent primer and starting-point for developing an effective advocacy strategy for 2012. Please print this out and use it. It has names, addresses and numbers of many of the key officials who need to hear from us. They are decision-makers who absolutely need our input.

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Key Outlays & Expenses

FINANCIALS

AFN's recently transitioned to a fiscal year that runs January through December. Altman, Rogers & Co., certified public accountants has been engaged to provide audit services. The audit will begin in the new year and hopefully be ready for the AFN Board at our next meeting.

Thank You

Thank you all for your tireless commitment to our people. We wish you all staggering success and great joy in 2012!

Sincerely,

Julie Kitka

Alaska Federation of Natives

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