

Tribal Committee Report to the Delegates

*Jimmy Matta, Assistant to the EST/CEO
Jim Wallace, Chair Tribal Committee*

In the lower five states of our Council there are 49 tribes and in Alaska there are 229 tribes.

- **IN IDAHO** there are 5 tribes and on 3 of those reservations, our contractors do work on a regular basis. The other two are in remote areas.
- **IN OREGON** there are 10 tribes and we have good contacts within those tribes. There is very little tribal work taking place in Oregon state at this time.
- **IN WASHINGTON** there are 26 tribes with many on the westside of the state that do a lot of work on a regular basis with several of our union contractors. The Puyallup tribe is the only one that has signed a TLA for all of their projects on the reservation. This is a multi-trade agreement.



Signing the Puyallup TLA in February 2013.

Other tribes in Central and Eastern Washington are much more remote. This makes training and keeping tribal members in the union more difficult.

- **IN MONTANA** there are 7 tribes in the very large geographical area of Montana state. Some of the tribes are remote. This makes it difficult to establish working relationships with tribal leaders in these remote areas. Many of the tribes do use union contractors on reservation work, but even so it is hard to train and keep apprentices in our program from these remote area tribes.
- **IN WYOMING** there is only one large reservation with two different tribes on that reservation: the Eastern Shoshone and the Northern Arapaho. They are always busy doing projects on their reservation. The condition of the carpenter pension in that state is a roadblock in working with those tribes.

With the addition of Alaska to our Council we have 229 tribes of Alaskan native people. UBC membership is 28% Alaska natives. This should help with our ability to create a dialogue with the tribes and invest them in our willingness to work with them on Tribal Labor Agreements in the future.

Getting educated on the demographics of the Alaska tribes should be one of our short-term and long-term goals.

The tribal committee is small in size but very active in seeking to increase the amount of work that our contractors do on tribal lands and reservations in our Council.

We do need one more person on the westside of Washington state to make contact with those North Puget Sound tribes like the Lummi and Nooksack among others.

Our biggest challenge with the tribes is to make sure that we are in contact with tribal leaders so we know about projects on their reservations long before they break ground. We do not want to be the trade that only stops on their reservation when we see a project coming up to build. That is why it is so important to be involved with the tribes at conventions and meetings throughout the year. The committee has talked about this at length many times.

Our goal is to increase membership and market share in partnerships with the tribes within our Council.

The second biggest challenge with tribes is the constantly changing tribal council members and chairpersons that may or may not have relationships with our union, and may or may not want that relationship. Tribal councils may elect new council members every year to two so you are building that rapport with new tribal council leaders all over again. This is where the relationship with others in that tribe is very important.

The committee is also working on descriptions for a qualified journeyman carpenter in all of the parts of our trade. This is very helpful making tribal members aware of all the crafts we cover and just what an individual needs to know in each of our crafts to be a journey-level carpenter on the job.

This is very helpful when we are talking to the tribes about the apprenticeship and training and what we have to offer tribal members. We emphasize that training is needed for an individual to become a career union carpenter and a productive worker for contractors with projects on tribal lands.

“Part of our TERO mission statement is to provide tribal members with self-sufficiency. Being able to offer our tribal members opportunities to become skilled journeymen through apprenticeship is one way we can fulfill that obligation.”

*Ronice Goforth, TERO Director
Puyallup Tribe of Indians*

The committee is also finding ways to distinguish those tribes that may be willing to work with us and those that may not. As mentioned before, tribal leadership sets the tone for developing relationships. We track visits to all the tribes and the information we glean from these visits will help our committee better manage our time spent on tribal matters in the future.

We need to mentor the new tribal apprentices to help them succeed in apprenticeship and becoming strong union journeymen and women in our Council.

The meetings and conventions that the Tribal Committee is attending on a yearly basis are as follows:

- ATNI – Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
- Washington State Apprenticeship Tribal Sub Committee
- PNW Regional TERO (Tribal Employment Rights Office) Meetings – Spring and Fall
- Rocky Mountain Regional TERO Meeting – One meeting a year
- WSDOT/TERO Meetings – Quarterly
- ITD/TERO Meetings – Twice a year

- ODOT/TERO Meeting
- MSDOT/TERO Meeting
- National TERO Convention – Summer
- Legal Update Conference – December
- Renewable Energy Conference
- UBC Tribal Committee
- Tribal Trade Fairs take place in areas where our contractors are doing work or are going to do work in the future, or where we are asked to participate through a tribal Council.
- We also have a Two Day Tribal Outreach Class that we put together to find the best candidates from the tribes for the apprenticeship in hopes of having a better success rate in the program.
- Discussion with the Makah and Quinalt tribes in Washington state on upcoming work moving tribal facilities out of the tsunami zone.
- Invited to National Convention of Council for Tribal Employment Rights (CTER) by Lee Adolph, who is the CEO of CTE.

In conclusion, the Tribal Committee has come a long way in the last few years and has increased the market share on Tribal Land in our Council. We were the first Council to get four tribes to sign an agreement for a project in the country and the only one that has ever signed a tribe to an agreement for all of their projects on their tribal lands going forward.

Thank you to the delegates and members that keep us informed of upcoming projects on tribal lands.

Continued feedback and guidance from Regional Council leadership will help us focus our efforts and meet expectations.

Jim Wallace,
Chairman of the PNWRCC Tribal Committee