State Tribal Relation Interim Committee
North American Indian Days

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs Report

2015 Activities

as of 7/9/15

State Tribal Relations Committee
July 9-10, 2015
EXHIBIT 19

This report provides information on the activities of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs as required in MCA, 90-11-102.

Director of Indian Affairs

The Office of Indian Affairs was established in 1951 by the Montana legislature to facilitate effective tribal-state communications with special attention to the discussion and resolution of issues that Indian peoples face regarding their unique political status and as full citizens of the state of Montana. The Office of Indian Affairs serves as a liaison between the state and the tribes and promotes economic development, environmental protection, education, support for social services, and enduring good will.

Director's Responsibilities (MCA, 90-11-102)

The director is tasked with:

- Meet with Tribes quarterly to be acquainted with issues confronting the Indians of Montana;
- Meet with executive branch directors on issues arising between Montana's Indian citizens, tribes and state agency personnel and programs;
- Report to the Governor's cabinet meeting concerning issues confronting Indian people and tribal governments;
- Advise the legislative and executive branches of the state of Montana of those problems and issues
- Make recommendations for the alleviation of those problems and issues;
- Serve the Montana delegation in the federal congress as an adviser and intermediary in the field of Indian affairs;
- Report in detail at every meeting of the interim committee of the legislature responsible for acting as a liaison between the legislature and the tribal governments those actions taken by the state-tribal economic development commission established by 90-1-131 to carry out its duties;
- Hire, with the concurrence of other members of the state-tribal economic development commission, a tribal business center coordinator and a federal grants coordinator, and subsequently provide administrative support for both positions.
- All executive and legislative agencies of state government may within the area of their expertise and authority provide assistance to tribal councils or their official designees requesting assistance on any matter relating to education, health, natural resources, and economic development on Indian reservation lands.

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs

Our office is discussing ways to be more effective on state-tribal relations with tribal governments, tribal communities, and issues.

2016 State-Tribal Relations Report

The process of the report begins in April.

- June 17th State agencies and Governor's Office narratives/photographs submission deadline
- July 17th section I internal review deadline—submit text & photos to graphic/design staff
- August 12th section II internal review deadline
- September 2nd section III and Governor's message internal review deadline
- September 15th report statutory deadline and post online
- October 14th distribution of hardcopies

We had our annual meeting with our narrative coordinators. We have been in the process of receiving agency narratives and photographs.

The 2015 State-Tribal Relations Report was printed and in the process of being distributed.

Ft. Belknap Assiniboine and Gros Ventre Bison
19 bison died and are being tested for Anthrax. More testing has been done and results will be issued later this week

<u>Health Care</u>
Office of American Indian Health

On August 25, 2014 Governor Bullock met with Tribal Health Directors and Tribal Leaders to discuss health disparities. ***The State of State's Health—A Report on the Health of Montanans and the subsequent follow-up plan to improve the health of Montanans titled " Big Sky. New Horizons. A Healthier Montana. A Plan to Improve the Health of Montanans"*** was a focal point of discussion. The health disparities include American Indians leading in the mortality rate causes such as cancer, cardiovascular, respiratory, vehicle injury, suicides, and homicides.
Governor Bullock issued an Executive Order establishing the State Office of American Indian Health in the Department of Health and Human Services. The responsibilities of the created office are as follows:

- Overseeing the development and implementation of an action plan that identifies specific factors contributing to health disparities and strategies DPHHS will pursue for addressing those factors;
- Coordinating efforts within DPHHS branches and divisions to develop, implement, and monitor strategies that reduce health disparities;
- Establishing regular and consistent opportunities for consultations with and input from tribal government leaders, tribal health leaders, urban Indian health centers, American Indian health experts, federal government agency representatives and other stakeholders committed to reducing health disparities in Indian Country;
- Coordinating efforts with other State agencies whose work is critical to reducing health disparities through policies and practices that address social determinants of health in areas such as commerce, insurance, housing transportation, criminal justice, and education;
- Identifying and developing a list of eligible state programs that are accessible to tribal health programs and communicating such information directly to tribal representatives;
- Providing annual updates on actions taken and progress made in reducing disparities in American Indian health.

Suicide Prevention Program

Governor Steve Bullock has directed to the Department of Health and Human Services to establish program to address suicides in Indian Country. The department is in the process of collecting information from each tribe to identify their current suicide prevention activities and funding to better assist DPHHS in addressing the needs of the tribal community. The Legislature passed $250,000 to address suicide prevention issues in tribal communities.

The department will be seeking tribal government input developing the program.

Economic Development

Native American Gap Financing Program

The Native American Gap Financing Revolving Loan Program is designed to address the lack of access to capital for Native American owned businesses. This program was developed from feedback from a diverse set of Native American organizations including the State Tribal Economic Development, Montana Indian Business Alliance and an native owned businesses, economic development offices from the Native nations in the state, tribal councils, tribal colleges, and directly from tribal communities through the Main Street Montana Project tribal forums. These entities prioritized the identification and development of a financial product and/or pathway for native businesses to access financing and adequately capitalize the launch and growth of their businesses.

The program addresses access to capital issues by providing collateral support security for lenders making loans with native owned businesses that only lack in sufficient collateral/equity according to their loan risk profiles. (All other aspects of the credit analysis are in place: cash flow, climate, character, and credit-worthiness). The program is in development. $500,000 was passed by the legislature for the program.

Boards and Appointments

Governor Bullock continues to increase Americans Indians serving Montana. A total of 118 Native Americans have been appointed to various board and commissions.

On August 18, 2014 Governor Bullock submitted the *Gender and Racial Balance in Appointments Report* to the legislature. This is one page report of the positive actions taken to attain gender balance and racial balance to the legislature.