

Society of American Indian
Government Employees

P.O. Box 7715, Washington, D.C. 20044



Honoring Our Ancestors
Through Government Service

www.saige.org

SAIGE Annual Report Fiscal Year 2008

Dear SAIGE Members:

2008 was an eventful year for our organization. As you are aware, I assumed the duties of Chairman when Pat Broyles accepted an assignment with the State Department as the Agricultural Advisor on one of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Iraq. I was greatly honored to follow in the footsteps of my predecessors. And, I strove to continue to build upon the growth, development and expansion of SAIGE.

I believe that SAIGE is a valuable tool for the professional growth and development of Native government employees, at all levels: federal, state, local and tribal. Our national training conferences go a long way towards fulfilling our stated mission. They are indeed well-attended and much-needed. But, the true impacts of SAIGE should be felt year round, not just for three and half days each June. We should be a constant resource for our members. I wanted our members to be more knowledgeable and involved with our organization throughout the year. With that in mind, I began to issue monthly updates from the Chairman. On the first Tuesday of each month, the SAIGE Board of Directors meets via conference call. I began issuing summary notes of those meetings in an effort to share information about SAIGE's current events and activities. It is my sincere hope that the future Chairs will keep this practice.

Another point of emphasis for me was to impress upon our membership that the SAIGE is a member-driven organization. The last day of the 2008 conference was dedicated to organizational training for the Board of Directors. During this session, the Board discussed our leadership and organization structures. We decided that we wanted to be organized in traditional Native paradigm of communal leadership. We discussed ways in which to develop and foster that relationship throughout our organization. In keeping with that decision, one of my key initiatives was to more proactively engage our general membership. SAIGE is not *my* organization. It is *our* organization. It is guided by a Board of Directors. But, that Board is elected to represent the wishes of our entire membership. I strove to be inclusive, responsive and respectful of that tenet at all times.

Now then, on to our 2008 accomplishments:

5th Annual National Training Conference – Traverse City, Michigan

SAIGE convened our fifth national training conference, “Blessed by Tradition: Honoring Our Ancestors through Government Service,” at the Grand Traverse Resort, on June 2-6, 2008. I would like to take this opportunity to thank, and commend, Danny Garceau and the rest of the Planning Committee on a job well-done. The 2008 conference followed SAIGE’s tradition of growing and building upon the success of the previous year. 2008 was no exception. It brought together more than 250 Native employees and other professionals for a most informative conference. Our attendees are still complimenting SAIGE. I would also like to thank our conference sponsors, including: Geico; US Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining; Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration; US Department of Agriculture, Secretary of Civil Rights; Department of Defense; Department of the Navy; Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; US Postal Service; and the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program.

Environmental Protection Agency/SAIGE Career Fair

SAIGE again co-sponsored a career fair, in partnership with the US Environmental Protection Agency, during the summer of 2008. This event, hosted at USEPA Headquarters, brought together over 50 Native interns with 25+ federal agencies. It was an excellent opportunity for Native professionals and students to interact. It also afforded SAIGE the opportunity to thank one of our most valuable and loyal sponsors, USEPA. This Agency provides a large portion of the financial support to SAIGE’s Youth Track. I would like to offer a special thanks to Jo Ann Brant for her unceasing efforts behalf of SAIGE. Jo Ann oversees the Youth Track, in all aspects. Her tireless efforts make it possible for 20 – 30 students to attend the SAIGE conference each summer.

Memorandum of Understanding with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society

SAIGE formally signed an MOU with AISES during the AISES National Conference, convened in Anaheim, CA on October 31, 2008. I would like to recognize Cheryl Cobell-Zwang who was instrumental in the creation of this document. Formalizing our relationship with AISES strengthens both organization. We have an established conduit that allows freer access to information, mentoring, professional development, and offers many other intangible benefits. Among the more concrete benefits is the increased presence and profile at each other’s conferences. This presence will undoubtedly lead to enhanced awareness and knowledge of our respective organizations. It assures SAIGE of broad and continuous access to developing Native students. From the AISES perspective, this MOU ensures that our Native students will have broad and continuous access to internship opportunities, as well as professional development and networking opportunities.

Expanding our Membership

SAIGE continues to grow its membership rolls. We gain a lot of new members each year through conference registrations. But, in addition to those efforts, we sponsored or co-sponsored a number of activities that led directly to our membership growth. The SAIGE name is getting more widely known through the efforts of our current members. (Thank you) We have established new relationships with employees at the Department of Commerce, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the US Agency for International Development, just to name a few. Our members have also been spreading the word through their respective colleagues. Our reputation as a valuable organization has continued to grow, each year. Our partners within the other affinity groups (BIG, FAPAC, FEW, and National Image) are agog at our development, in such a relatively short period of time. They are most complimentary and impressed by the broad array of speakers and concurrent sessions that are offered at our training conferences. Thank you, to each and every member of SAIGE for helping to grow and develop.

New Board

In 2008 the new board was elected for the years of 2009 and 2010: The Board consists of Cliff Church, Shawna Clay, Max Collier, Phil Hamel, Luke Jones, Georgia Madrid, Duane Matt, Jinny Shulenberger, Brenda Takes Horse and Veronica Vasquez. Officers elected were Shana Barehand/Treasurer, Fredericka Joseph/Secretary, Lori Windle/Vice Chair and Danny Garceau/Chair.

This was just brief summary of some of the things we accomplished during 2008. SAIGE is a growing, dynamic organization. We have a bright, bright future. What makes our organization special and meaningful are our members. Each one of us has a voice and say in the direction of SAIGE. The Board of Directors does not meet secretly, making arbitrary decisions. We listen, carefully, attentively, and responsively. The more our members speak to us, the better. With that in mind, I would like each of you to consider running for a Board position during the next election cycle. Yes, we are all busy with our respective lives and careers and activities. But, participating on the SAIGE Board of Directors is not an additional task or burden. And, it should not be viewed as such. Serving on SAIGE Board of Directors is a fulfilling, responsible and rewarding activity. It offers you the opportunity to serve your community in a sincere and unique way. Again, thank you to you all. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as Chairman of the Society of American Indian Government Employees.

Sincerely,

Jason M. Edwards
Former SAIGE Chairman