



Society of American Indian
Government Employees

The Talking Leaf

FALL ISSUE

SAIGE Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2016

*Message from
the Chair,
Fredericka
Joseph*



Dear SAIGE Members:

As 2016 is ending and we begin preparing for 2017 and the events that lay ahead, I can't tell you how much we appreciate your membership and continued support to SAIGE. Without that support it would be difficult for us to carry on the important mission of SAIGE.

This year, we had a successful 13th Annual National Training Program (NTP). We offered excellent plenary speakers and informative workshops to help enhance attendees'

understanding of the Federal Trust Responsibility, professional career choices and steps in managing their career.

We have started working on next year's NTP which will be held June 5-9, 2017 at the We Ko Pa Resort in Scottsdale, AZ. If you are interested in volunteering to help we welcome your assistance.

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) has officially begun. SAIGE has been involved with CFC for three years and we appreciate all you do in donating and making your contributions to us. There are many charities to choose from and SAIGE ensures these donations are available for program development with a small portion for operations of our non-profit. These days everyone is doing more with less and like other charities SAIGE operates with 100% Volunteers to make SAIGE successful. These volunteers serve as Board of Directors, Officers, planning committee Members, NTP workers, trainers, and attend CFC campaigns whenever and wherever they can. If you would like to donate to SAIGE our CFC number is 26052.

SAIGE will hold our annual elections for Board of Directors and Officers. Information on the elections will be sent out the first week of December. As a volunteer board we are expected to attend monthly meetings, serve on

planning committees, and attend and work onsite at the NTP. Please review the candidates' short bios when they are posted to the website and please vote for your SAIGE leadership.

This year SAIGE worked to improve how we operate at no extra cost to the organization. We changed Certified Public Accountants (CPA) and banks. Ms. Callie Catcher joined SAIGE to help us to better structure our funds and continue to be accountable for the funds SAIGE processes during the year. Our address changed from Washington, D.C. to an address in Oklahoma where our Treasurer resides. At the same time, SAIGE also changed banking services for better access for our Treasurer, CPA, and bank to work efficiently together. We are pleased to announce we have a new partner with the Greenberg Taurig LLC law firm in Denver, CO. We are excited to have them as partners and we welcome Ms. Laura Jones who works with us to oversee contracts and other legal issues that may arise.

On behalf of SAIGE's Board of Directors I wish you and your family Happy Holidays. Please keep our military in your thoughts as they serve abroad and at home throughout the year.

We look forward to providing more updates in the spring when our newsletter returns with information on the NTP and all the great things SAIGE is doing!



SAIGE 2016 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Philip Hamel - Award Category: Leadership



Photo: Phil Hamel, Environmental and Safety Compliance Administrator, Federal Correctional Institutions, Ray Brook, NY.

Phil to his SAIGE family, is a “Can Do” person. At SAIGE NTP, Phil can be found taking the initiative, seeking tasks that need to be done, and doing them to benefit SAIGE, its partners, students, and participants. No job is too major or minor for Phil to tackle and accomplish promptly, with grace and professionalism. At work, during American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month, Phil demonstrates true commitment and an understanding for the program by attending various events often on his own time, using his own monetary resources. “He has assisted the Religious Services Department by putting them in contact with potential speakers for the inmate population who have designated American Indian as their religious preference. This assistance has been critical to demonstrate that the native inmates are receiving adequate resources for their program. Phil keeps close contact with numerous Native organizations such as the Mohawk Nation Office (the traditional government on the Akwesasne Reservation), Six Nations Indian Museum, the Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center, the Native North American Traveling College and Iohahii Akwesasne Adult Education Center. Phil participates in the Iohahii career fair held every other year and continues to look for new avenues to increase a positive image of the Bureau to potential employees.”

Robin Hairston - Award Category: GS-1 thru 10



Photo: Robin receives award from Danny Garceau.

Robin has served as a Federal civil service employee at Edwards AFB, CA for the last 15 years. He is employed by the 412th Civil Engineer Squadron as an Engineering Equipment Operator. Robin served 20 years in the military and retired in 2003. He began his journey of service to his country as a United States Marine for 10 years before swapping uniforms and transferring to the Army. He spent his last three years of duty in the National Guard. During this period he was a first responder to Louisiana in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. He was awarded The Governor’s Award for his part in securing businesses and property while also protecting lives.

Robin saved the life of a co-worker who had suffered a heart attack. As he drove on the flightline, Robin spotted a co-worker in another sweeper vehicle who appeared to be slumped over the steering wheel. Without hesitation he drove to the aid of his co-worker where he found the individual unconscious. He quickly began CPR while calling for help. He managed to remove the individual from the vehicle and continued lifesaving activities until medical aid could arrive. Without these actions the individual would not have survived.

Robin founded a well-known Native American band called The Blue Mountain Tribe. The band was recently honored with six Grammy nominations. The band spreads the contributions of Native Americans through their music and perform at numerous charitable events.

Marcellus Proctor - Spirit of SAIGE Award

The “Spirit of SAIGE Award” is an award for those members who go above and beyond the normal duties of SAIGE. This award is decided by the SAIGE Board. It is not given out every year and formal nominations do not take place.



Photo: Marcellus Proctor presenting at SAIGE.

This year, Fredericka Joseph presented the award to Marcellus Proctor. Marcellus is a SAIGE lifetime member, volunteers to do workshops and has for the past three years donated significant personal funds to support travel for students in the Youth track. Marcellus is an enrolled member of the Piscataway-Conoy. He is the Assistance Chief of the Electrical Engineering division at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, and is the current co-chair of the AISES Government Relations Council. He is also a lifetime member of AISES and the National Society of Black Engineers.

By Director Danny Garceau

The SAIGE Warrior Society is well into the planning for the 2017 SAIGE NTP at the WeKoPa Resort in Scottsdale, AZ.. Veteran organizations in and around the Phoenix area have already been contacted and their participation pledged. We are expecting a great turnout and hope you will make plans to join us.

We had a very successful Veteran's Track where three generals gave presentations. We plan to bring back some very popular speakers and invite a strong core of new presenters. We will also have a new category for Veterans as part of the Military Meritorious Award program. This will allow veterans to be recognized for doing great work to serve our people and promote our culture. Award nomination information will be posted in January via our SAIGE listserv and web site.



Photo: Attendees at the Veteran's Track.

The Warrior Society continues with its growth and development. The numbers of members are increasing along with organizational involvement. Society members have the opportunity once a month to participate in a teleconference where planning and veteran issues are discussed. For those who use Facebook, you now have an option to like, join and follow us with our own page.



Photo: Rita Aragon, Major General (retired) talks to an attendee.

If you are a SAIGE member and a veteran contact danny.garceau@saige.org for more information on joining the Warrior Society. If you know someone currently serving in uniform or a government employee who is a veteran, encourage them to join SAIGE and our Warrior Society.

MILITARY MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

The Award honors military members and Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees, men and women, who have supported the DoD mission, overseas contingency operations, or whose attributes best epitomized the qualities and core values of their respective Military Service or other DoD Component.



Photo: Recipients of the 2016 SAIGE Military Meritorious Service Award pose together in Catoosa, Oklahoma on June 9, 2016 during the 13th Annual SAIGE NTP. From left to right; SSgt Thereasa M. Barker-Figueroa United States Air Force, CPT Warren C. Queton Oklahoma Army National Guard, TSgt Ragina A. James United States Air Force, MCPO Timothy W. Vickers Special Agent Defense Intelligence Agency, CPT Anna C. Cichocki Connecticut Air National Guard and MSG James Dean Badwound South Dakota Army National Guard. Photo by 1st Lt. Leanna Litsch / Oklahoma Army National Guard.

“For American Indian veterans to be recognized is very special to me,” said Queton. “I think we get over looked sometimes, or people don’t recognize that we have American Indians serving in the military, when we actually have a lot more than any other ethnic race.” Army National Guardsman Capt. Warren Queton, of Blanchard, OK

2016 SAIGE NTP - AN EXCELLENT LINE UP - Reflections from the NTP Co-Chairs



Photo: Freddie, Sue Morris and Jay Spaan NTP Co-Chairs, and Danny Garceau.

SAIGE held its 13th NTP June 6-9, 2016, at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Catoosa, OK.

SAIGE was honored to offer attendees an excellent line up of speakers and presenters covering a variety of topics that fit with the 2016 NTP theme—*Serving Our Nations*. For example, Karen Diver, Special Assistant to the President on Native American Affairs, reminded us of the importance of American Indian and Alaska Native federal government employees to always ask the question “what about the tribes?” within their agencies and their programs. LaDonna Harris, founder and President of Americans for Indian Opportunity, shared her life story as a remarkable statesman and national leader—reminding us that dedication and hard work makes it possible to enrich the lives of thousands. The NTP also brought tribal dignitaries, who thanked and voiced support of the work SAIGE does for Indian Country, including Principal Chief Bill John Baker, Creek Nation Chief James Floyd and Osage Nation Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear. Further, Keith Secola, an icon and ambassador of Native music, spent time with our youth participants and entertained attendees at the Awards Ceremony.

The NTP was a great success with approximately 275 registered attendees and an inspiring group of more than 40 youth participants. Participants in this year’s program represented numerous federal agencies and tribal governments—providing an opportunity for participants to build relationships and learn from one another. Travis Jansen, Director, Rosebud Sioux Tribe Legislative Affairs Office stated that the NTP was a “unique opportunity for tribal, state, and federal government employees to interact and learn from each other.” In addition to the professional development and growth opportunities, this year’s silent auction raised more than \$2,000 for scholarships and the Golf Tournament raised more than \$3,000 for the Warriors Society.

Following the NTP, attendees were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. The results of the survey provided valuable feedback and respondents overwhelmingly expressed positive

sentiments. Nearly 90 percent of the survey respondents reported that the NTP met or exceeded their expectations, with more than 91 percent stating they would recommend the NTP to a colleague. The survey results also provided valuable feedback that will help the NTP planning committee in its efforts to make continual improvements to future programs. We look forward to seeing you in 2017 in Scottsdale, AZ!



Photo: Karen Diver gives her talk, “Moving from Tribal Chairwoman to White House Advisor.”



Photo: LaDonna Harris shares her very inspirational life story.



Photo: Don Chapman and Keith Secola perform at the Recognition and Awards Reception.

SAIGE Youth Track - Stepping Out of My Comfort Zone

by Kevin Coeoyate, SCC Zuni SAIGE Representative- Taken from Ancestral Lands, FY 2016 Report

Ancestral Lands members were invited to be a part of the 2016 SAIGE Conference again this year and found it to be a transformational experience in both personal and professional growth and development. SAIGE is the first national non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native Federal, Tribal, State, and local government employees. SAIGE provides a forum on the issues, challenges, and opportunities and works to foster a professional network among government employees. As part of this program, SAIGE offers special training sessions for veterans, Youth, and in Federal Indian Law. The conference gave members the chance to network with current tribal leaders, connect with peers, set goals and glean inspiration from the gathering of leadership.



Photo: Kevin Coeoyate with mentor.

“To be myself was never easy. I was always shy. However, day by day, I broke that habit. While at SAIGE I developed a sense of familiarity: getting familiar with stepping out of my comfort zone. Public speaking, networking, and group activities were some ways to practice my communication skills.

To my surprise, I was asked to talk about my experience with SCC. I was put on the spot and rose to the occasion. I started with a subtle introduction in my language (Zuni). Then I went on, speaking of my life seasons. I shared, with a crowd of strangers, a personal story about my battle with alcohol and how I would have continued to struggle if it weren't for SCC. I cried through some of my speech. I have never talked about my life stories in that fashion.

I received a positive response after my talk. Numerous people walked up to me saying “thank you” and “I like your story”. One of those individuals was JoAnn Brant, SAIGE Youth Program Director. We talked for a while, exchanging stories. We both share a passion to help others, a need for a positive future, and life in general. From then on, positivity filled the air. I connected with others by simply talking with them. I never knew I had that ability.

I met students from Arizona, Oklahoma, and California. We all experienced SAIGE together and together we have memories to last. Throughout the conference, we would regroup to work on projects or just to laugh. Often times, we helped each other. Whether it be speaking in public, creating ideas, or telling jokes, we encouraged each other to step out of our comfort zone. The camaraderie we built was a bonus for the whole trip.

The SAIGE Conference was a great way to see the career possibilities for Indians. No longer shall we be content with just living in “Indian Country”. We need to expand to help our people! My experience at SAIGE was phenomenal. My peers and family see me as a changed person. They can see I want to help others around me. I only pray I shall be a source of inspiration for some like others inspired me at the SAIGE Conference!”



Photo: 2016 Youth Track Participants with JoAnn Brant, SAIGE Youth Track Coordinator.

SAIGE NTP EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

“I think my favorite speaker was Matika Wilbur. Her presentation was beautiful to see and hear. I appreciated her message and really believe it was more of a ceremony rather than a presentation. It made me feel uplifted!”

“Since I am not Native American, the Indian Country/Indian law was the most helpful and interesting. It increased my knowledge of the many issues that Indians face each day.”

“I was very impressed with the college students. They appeared to demonstrate the sense of empowerment and were grateful for the opportunity.”

“Loved the movie!!! Well done, and would like to share during a meeting...with popcorn.”

SAIGE NTP in the News:

Foley Speaks Against Native Mascot Use at SAIGE
<http://www.cherokeephoenix.org/Article/index/10371?>

Native American Airman Recognized
<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/2960684/native-american-airman-recognized>

SAIGE Promote Recruitment, Advancement of Natives
<http://www.cherokeephoenix.org/Article/index/10356>

DVIDS: Tribal members recognized for their service in US military
<http://www.indianz.com/News/2016/06/16/dvids-tribal-members-recognized-for-thei.asp>



Photo: USDA employees with Miss Indian Oklahoma's.



Photo: Matika Wilbur (center) with Jay and Freddie.



Photo: “Red Power Energy” film discussion with Kaden Walksnice (right) and Director Larry Pourier.



Photo: Students jamming with Keith Secola and Don Chapman.

All Photos in the Fall Newsletter (unless indicated) were taken by Rick Chavez, photographer and retired USDA employee. He was the official photographer at SAIGE.

CALENDAR OF AMERICAN INDIAN EVENTS- 2017

Date	Event/Conference	Location	For More Information:
March 19-21, 2017	American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) Spring Student Conference	Rapid City, SD	www.aihec.org
June 5-8, 2017	Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) National Training Program	Scottsdale, AZ	www.saige.org
July 7-10, 2017	UNITY (United National Indian Tribal Youth) National Conference	Denver, CO	http://unityinc.org/event/2017-national-unity-conference/
Sept. 21-23, 2017	American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference	Denver, CO	www.aises.org
Oct. 2017	National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Annual Convention		www.niea.org
Oct. 15-20, 2017	National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Convention	Milwaukee, WI	www.ncai.org
Oct. 19-21, 2017	SACNAS Devoted to Advancing Opportunities for Hispanics, Chicanos and Native Americans in Science National Conference	Salt Lake City, UT	www.sacnas.org

Meetings: Native Style

Blog by Richard Regan

The council circle has been a mainstay of American Indian/Alaska Native culture. This cultural meeting setting built around a fire has served Indigenous people as a place where stories are shared, strategies agreed upon and emotional connections strengthened.

Although the council circle may differ based on its cultural context, each gathering is grounded in the following traditions.

A group of people come together to discuss a particular issue. Everyone around the council circle has an equal chance to speak. A “talking stick” is circulated in clockwise fashion around the circle to identify the speaker. Oftentimes, the talking stick is an object of particular cultural significance to the group.

Participants speak only when it is their turn. While they are awaiting their opportunity to speak, they are encouraged to listen intently to others without interrupting the person who has the talking stick.

Members of the council circle are not required to speak at all. They can remain silent and forego their chance to talk until their turn comes around again.

The leader of the council circle is responsible for maintaining the circle protocol.

According to the Ojai Foundation Center for Council Training, the council circle improves meetings in the following ways.

It enables people to speak from the heart by pushing feelings into the conversation. It forces contributors to come out from behind themselves in moments of truth. This increases the meaningfulness of individual experiences.

Secondly, the council circle empowers members to listen from their hearts when a fellow colleague has the talking stick. This requires listening without judgement in the spirit of open mindedness even if you disagree with the speaker’s words.

Thirdly, the council circle creates an environment of spontaneous

conversations. It places participants in the moment as they avoid thinking about what they are going to say. This forces associates to listen completely when their comrades have the talking stick. They learn to wait their turn until the talking stick comes to them to decide what they want to say.

Finally, this contemplative process guides talkers to speak “leanly” by cutting to the chase and avoiding the need to put a little mustard on their comments. By being cognizant of the need for others to make contributions to the discussion, you will use the minimum amount of words to communicate your point. Speaking leanly may mean not talking at all.

Try the council circle practice at your next staff meeting. You will create more honest discussions, realize increased efficiencies and build increased engagement while getting meaningful work accomplished.

Talking Leaf Newsletter

A Note from the Editor:

As a member of SAIGE, I know there are a lot of news items that can be shared, e.g. member profiles, outreach activities, recognitions, training events, agency highlights, new Native hires, job opportunities. What is happening in your Region? The *Talking Leaf* is your publication. It is published twice a year. I welcome your stories, suggestions, and ideas. You can email me at: georgia.madrid@noaa.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, Georgia Madrid

SAIGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Contact board at:
chair@saige.org

OFFICER POSITIONS

- **Chair:** Fredericka Joseph (Kaw Nation)
- **Vice Chair:** Danny Garceau (Lake Superior Chippewa)
- **Secretary:** Lori Windle (White Earth Chippewa)
- **Treasurer:** Sue Morris (Comanche Nation of Oklahoma)

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

- Kathleen Bergeron (United Houma Nation)
- Teresa Estoril (Cherokee)
- Phil Hamel (Mohawk ancestry)
- Duane Matt (Confederated Salish Kootenai)
- Jay Spaan (Cherokee Nation)
- Brenda Takes Horse (Kenaitze)
- Veronica Vasquez (Chumash)
- Herb Webb (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)

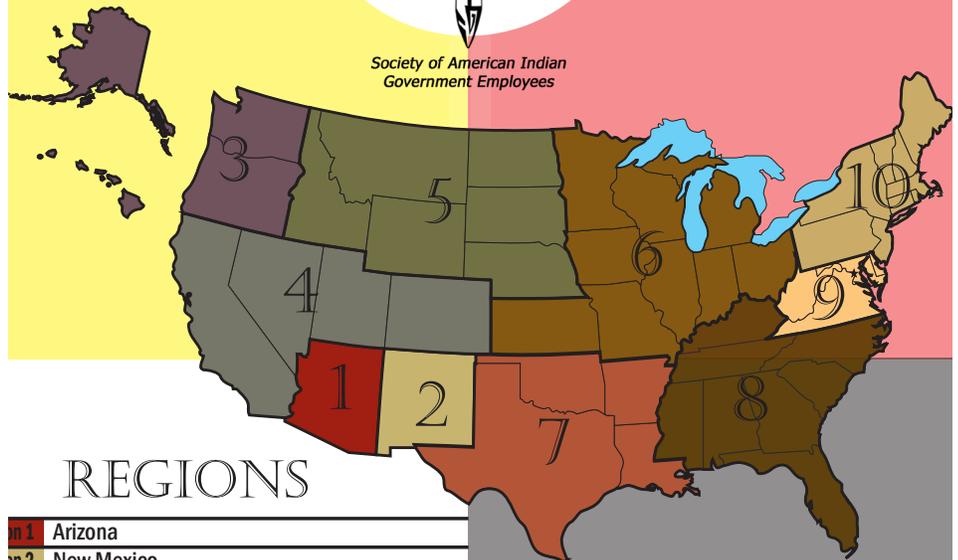
About SAIGE

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) is the first national non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Federal, Tribal, State and local government employees. Formed in 2002, SAIGE provides a forum on the issues, challenges and opportunities of American Indian Tribal Nations and the government workforce, and to foster a professional network among AI/AN government employees.

JOIN THE SAIGE NETWORK
www.saige.org



Society of American Indian
Government Employees



REGIONS

Region 1	Arizona
Region 2	New Mexico
Region 3	Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii
Region 4	California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado
Region 5	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska
Region 6	Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
Region 7	Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana
Region 8	Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida
Region 9	Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Washington D.C.
Region 10	Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts