

# 2017 STATE-TRIBAL LEADERS SUMMIT

## Summary Report

Suzette A. Shije, NM Indian Affairs Department Acting Cabinet Secretary

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The State-Tribal Collaboration Act provides for an annual State-Tribal Leaders Summit at least once a year to address issues of mutual concern. The themes chosen for the 2017 State-Tribal Leaders Summit stemmed from a survey which identified areas of interest that had not been discussed during previous summits. In the past, the main areas of focus had been Water Rights/Natural Resources, Education, Economic Development and Health. While these topics were also discussed during the 2017 State-Tribal Leaders Summit, there was an emphasis on new opportunities for collaboration. During the morning of the Summit, presenters highlighted progress that had been made in the areas of mutual concern identified during the 2016 Summit. During the afternoon of Summit, presenters identified new areas of mutual concern that posit opportunities for collaboration this year. The following topics were discussed during Summit:

### Morning of June 9, 2016: Considerations from Last Year's Summit

- Water Rights and Natural Resources
- Education
- Economic Development
- Health

### Afternoon of June 9, 2016: New Areas for Collaboration this Fiscal Year

- Tribal Collaboration for Successful Transportation Projects
- Utilization of Veteran's Services
- Behavioral Health Services in Indian Country
- Agriculture as a Native Resource

## CONSIDERATIONS FROM LAST YEAR'S SUMMIT

### Water Rights and Natural Resources

Governor J. Michael Chavarria, Pueblo of Santa Clara  
Tom Blaine, State Engineer, Office of the State Engineer



- The significance of water and its uses are an important topic in the state of New Mexico. Agriculture is a basis for culture in New Mexico, and agriculture makes up 75% of the water use within the state.
- Crop irrigation and traditional gatherings include water use. Recreational uses are important and can present economic opportunities as well.
- The state must manage its water use, and the State and tribes, nations and pueblos need to collaborate to address shortages. Water is the center of many practices and a core feature for New Mexico governments at all levels.
- The state and tribes have been successful in sharing water resources.
- It is important that children are educated about the importance of water management. The state and tribes, nations and pueblos should work together to understand the threats to water quality.

## Education



Chris Ruskowski, Acting Cabinet Secretary, Public Education Department  
 Latifah Phillips, Assistant Secretary for Indian Education, Public Education Department

- Tribal language learning has been identified as a priority area in schools throughout the state, along with nutrition. In the summer of 2017, many schools are providing meals to BIE students who are eligible for free lunch programs.
- PED respects tribes' sovereign interests in language promotion. The Bureau of Indian Education focuses on English learners. The BIE partners with other native entities, conducting research to support English learners.
- PED uses listening sessions to garner feedback to develop professional learning communities.
- PED is also updating language policy MOU's. Cultural competency and college and career readiness are being implemented into a school-based process.
- PED recognizes the value of the "Indian Education Act". Record high graduation rates are occurring and we have seen improvements in reading scores and attendance.
- The "Every Student Succeeds Act" helped PED meet last year's smart goals.
- PED is committed to tribal consultation. PED adopted a state plan that shows where districts and charters are conducting tribal consultations. PED did gather feedback on the state plan with tribal schools here in New Mexico.
- PED is working with the governor of Jemez to explore assessments in Native Languages.
- PED recognizes the need for more Native American teachers.

- With the “Principles Pursuing Excellence” program, 20% of these students are Native American. There are 90 schools that are part of that program and many of the schools have, through collaboration, raised their own grade point averages.
- \$750,000 has been put into multicultural education and PED has seen improvements. Currently there are about 8,000 students that are supported through “Heritage Language Program” initiatives.
- There have been no reductions in funding and PED would like to expand further so that every Native student can benefit from the heritage program.

## Economic Development

Matt Geisel, Cabinet Secretary, Economic Development Department  
Lieutenant Governor Birdena Sanchez, Pueblo of Zuni



- Raytheon has partnered with tribal communities such as Picuris and Zuni. Raytheon has been in business for 25 years and has shown considerable expansion over the years. These types of partnerships provide employment and other economic opportunities in native communities.
- Trading posts and grocery stores have provided opportunities for economic growth. Local grocery stores not only promote economic development but have the side-benefit of promoting diabetes management. This has been accomplished by making sure that healthy foods are available and by providing organic and wholesale foods.
- Technological expansion has allowed communities to employ more people on the reservation.
- Ecological studies and environmental assessments are also important when implementing environmentally friendly initiatives in tribal communities.
- One way to encourage economic growth on tribal land is for tribes to lease land from individuals that have land rights: The Pueblo of Zuni has taken this route.
- 25% of profits from local businesses go to tribal governments. That revenue helps the tribe with financial costs.
- Religious and cultural practices also play a role in assessing the impact of economic development.
- Tribes must ensure that they limit expansions near sacred land for economic development. Currently economic incentive programs are available and EDD is ready to assist.

## Health

Brent Earnest, Cabinet Secretary, Human Services Department  
Governor Kurt Riley, Pueblo of Acoma



- There are almost 900,000 people in the Medicaid program; 40,000 of them are Native Americans
- The Human Services Department is focusing on providing and improving access to support programs for the elderly or disabled and to improve those services for tribal communities.
- In July, the “Advancing Tribal Healthcare” conference will be at the Buffalo Thunder. Tribal providers can also enroll in Centennial Care.
- Tribal leaders are often over-stretched, which can present challenges with tribes providing essential services.
- The Pueblo of Acoma has some hesitation when working with the federal government. The Pueblo of Acoma health services decided to start billing for services that had previously been provided for free. Indian Health Services needs to consider looking at the type of care that is provided to tribal members, and tribes must consider self-governance in the face of budget cuts.
- Tribes still want to expand services, and had the opportunity recently to draw down some additional funding.
- HSD has a broad array of services and would like to expand its healthy community coordinators which will help to reduce the incidents of diabetes.
- HSD works with emergency response teams to update the planning capacity and would like to incorporate their surveys.
- All the tribes have different levels of capacity to undertake emergency and disaster situations. HSD is completing the last phases of emergency response implementation with Laguna. It is currently unclear where the tribe would find resources if a catastrophic event were to happen.

## NEW AREAS FOR COLLABORATION THIS FISCAL YEAR

*Opportunities exist for mutual benefit at all governmental levels in New Mexico. The following areas of mutual concern were identified during presentations by tribal leaders, cabinet secretaries and other presenters:*

### Tribal Collaboration for Successful Transportation Projects

Loren Hatch, Former Deputy Secretary, NM Department of Transportation  
 Ron Shutiva, Tribal Liaison, NM Department of Transportation  
 Bernadino Chavarria, Chairman, North Central Solid Waste Authority  
 Lawrence Lopez, Acting Region Manager, NM Department of Transportation



- The NM Department of Transportation and the New Mexico tribes, nations and pueblos collaborate on ongoing road projects. DOT recognizes that areas of cultural significance to tribes require special consideration to protect the cultural integrity of these sites for religious purposes. For example, following the Los Conchas fire, DOT initially suggested that Santa Clara build a bridge to prevent further flooding in the region, however, it respected Santa Clara's opposition because of the cultural importance of existing markers where fatalities had occurred.
- DOT recognizes the need for stronger policies regarding right of way issues and the need to improve the coordination of meetings.
- DOT also seeks further collaboration with Navajo Nation in the future. Navajo Nation recognizes that land jurisdiction issues associated with the checkerboard area, and training with respect to the state procurement code need to be addressed.

Moving Forward: 

- Promote further collaboration between local and tribal governments.
- Maintain cultural sensitivity and respect cultural guidelines that are in place for Tribal communities.
- Develop meaningful dialogue between state agencies and tribes so that complex processes are understood.
- Improve right of way policies and improve communication for coordinated meetings. Track all progress.
- Work with Navajo Nation to address checkerboard land jurisdiction issues and clarify procurement code guidelines.
- Complete the Department of Transportation road project with Santa Clara Pueblo and expand the road to include San Ildefonso.
- Joint Powers of Agreement should continue to be utilized.
- Set goals to improve the area around the Santa Clara Watershed that were damaged during the Los Conchas fire. Work with the tribe for culturally sensitive solutions.

## Utilization of Veterans' Services

President Danny Breuninger, Sr., Mescalero Apache Tribe

Vice President Gabe Aguilar, Mescalero Apache Tribe

Jack Fox, Cabinet Secretary, Department of Veterans Services

Kelton Starr, Education Director, Mescalero Apache Tribal Education Manager



- The Department of Veterans Services exists to help all service members

- Outreach is currently being conducted within Native American Communities and benefits are available through the State Benefits Division and the Healthcare Division of Veterans Affairs.
- Services are also available to help veterans develop business models to start small businesses. Twenty-two veteran-owned businesses were set up in 2016 and usually veterans hire other veterans.
- Veterans Services are available for educational benefits as well.
- There is a push to establish more national cemeteries in New Mexico.
- Veterans Services also recognizes the needs that female service members have and that most veterans do not like to ask for assistance even when it comes to benefits.

Moving Forward: 

- Ensure all veterans enroll with Veteran's Services
- Develop communication techniques to encourage veterans to utilize available services within the state.
- Develop a Native American Veterans Summit.
- Create outreach programs to address PTSD
- Continue outreach within Native American Communities to inform veterans of their benefits.
- Communicate that state services are available in addition to federal Veteran Affairs services.
- Relay outcomes of newly developed Veteran-owned businesses.
- Continue to support the needs of female service members.

## Behavioral Health Services in Indian Country

Brent Earnest, Cabinet Secretary, Human Services Department  
Governor Kurt Riley, Pueblo of Acoma



- Indian Health Services and Behavioral Health Services work hand-in-hand. Currently there is a statewide "Crisis and Access" line, which offers professional peer support and works with the Network of Care to serve the community.
- Several types of grant funding are available for prevention in suicide, opioid use, prescription drug overdose. There are also grants that offer assistance for telehealth webinars.
- Third-party billing for BHS in Indian communities has begun.
- Meth usage has taken the place of alcohol usage.

- Connectivity for telehealth is limited within the state and becomes less accessible in rural communities. Native Americans in rural areas share the same needs as those in metropolitan areas such as housing, good education and job availability. Even if rural community members can complete higher education goals, the challenge then becomes finding suitable employment in the rural area.
- Tribes have expressed interest in reestablishing the teen center at the high school for childhood behavioral healthcare.

Moving Forward: 

- Create and implement social assistance for families left behind due to suicide, particularly in Native American Communities.
- Continue education and prevention methods to address alcohol, drug, prescription drug/opioid addiction in Native American Communities.
- Identify ways to improve access to behavioral health assistance in rural areas such as telehealth.
- Promote the Crisis and Access Line as a resource.
- Promote access to grant funding for prevention measures and telehealth assistance.
- Assist Native Communities in third-party billing.
- Increase connectivity and access to broadband in rural areas for telehealth initiatives
- Re-establish teen center at the Pueblo of Laguna an in other communities.

## Agriculture as a Native Resource

Jeff Witte, Cabinet Secretary, Department of Agriculture  
Governor Mark Mitchell, Pueblo of Tesuque



- The Tesuque Seed Bank and surrounding farm offers support to farmers through integrated programs. Many local farmers did not have access to their own equipment and the program rendered assistance.
- Students were encouraged to grow and harvest crops, and they were also instructed about seed protection, why to plant and how to harvest crops, food distribution to elders, and how to maintain orchards.
- Classes are also held on how to create a seed bank and there is a push to educate youth to assist in building an agriculture force- education would include market analysis.
- Other products aside from organic fruits and vegetables that were produced from harvesting include honey, and apple cider vinegar.

- The orchard was planted in 2006 and water conservation is practiced and used for irrigation.
- Soil management is utilized and a seed exchange also took place with the Six Nations Tribes and Indigenous Tribes from Mexico. This is part of a global initiative, seeds are often handed down from generation to generation to ensure preservation and utilization. Seed exchanges take place annually.

Moving Forward: 

- Renewable energy production is becoming more viable.
- There is a need for awareness of GMO's, how they affect us and how to prevent terminator seeds from integrating into the crop.
- We must continue the collaboration in New Mexico, we need to create local opportunity to sell and buy produce. NMDA is a great resource for marketing and block grants. Tourism Department and Economic Development Department could provide assistance in promoting farmers markets in native communities.
- Conduct a study to identify where local food deserts exist and work to promote healthy eating initiatives.
- Continue collaboration between the State, Tribes and legislature to create awareness of the project initiatives. Be sure to track the progress of projects.
- Further promotion of the agricultural tool kit to promote increased agricultural production within native communities.
- Continue mentorship opportunities that educate children on food opportunities.
- Educating youth to build agriculture force- education to include market analysis.
- Restore irrigation ditches and acequias.