



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tribe Holds 81st Annual Tribal Assembly



Executive Council taking their Oath of Office

JUNEAU, AK (April 26, 2016) – Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Central Council) held its 81st Annual Tribal Assembly April 20-22, 2016 in the Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall. Over 100 Delegates from Southeast Alaska, Anchorage, Washington, and California gathered in Juneau to conduct tribal business and elect new officers.

The opening day of Tribal Assembly included a special welcome from Governor Bill Walker and Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott which reaffirmed the state's committed to strengthening its relationship with tribes.

Governor Walker also announced the appointment of President Richard J. Peterson to his 11 member tribal advisory council.

The commencement day also included a State of the Tribe Address by President Peterson followed by a series of reports covering tribal operations, financials, and the Tribe's business enterprise. In line with this year's theme, *Prosperity through Sovereignty*, the State of the Tribe Address covered the governmental activities of the Executive Council, significant accomplishments of the Tribe, and top administrative priorities. Areas of accomplishments covered the new Tribal Title IV-E Maintenance Agreement with the State of Alaska and the Alaska Supreme Court's recent ruling that reaffirms Central Council's Tribal Court has the authority to issue child support orders which must be recognized by the State of Alaska's Child Support Services Division. Priorities identified include tribal court expansion, land into trust, language preservation, improving and expanding program services, and economic development through strategic business acquisitions and continued exploration of alternative sources of revenue.

A special report from Tlingit Haida Tribal Business Corporation (THTBC) CEO Richard Rinehart and Business and Economic Development Manager Myrna Gardner provided an update on THTBC's subsidiary and limited liability company T&H Services, the development of the Tribe's cultural immersion park, and the upcoming acquisition of an accomplished and profitable government contracting company that will generate unrestricted revenue for the Tribe.

"This is going to change the face of the Tribe and we expect to see returns as early as next year," said President Peterson. "The board has done its due diligence and thoroughly vetted out the government contracting company which we expect to close on next month."

On Thursday, tribal elections resulted in the unanimous reelection of incumbent President Peterson who ran unopposed. Delegates also seated 1st Vice President (VP) Robert Sanderson Jr. of Ketchikan, 2nd VP

William Micklin of San Francisco, 3rd VP Ralph Wolfe of Yakutat, 4th VP Jacqueline Pata of Juneau, 5th VP Marvin Adams of Anchorage, and 6th VP Edward (Sam) K. Thomas Jr. of Craig; Chief Justice Michelle Demmert of Washington and Tribal Court Judge Lisa Lang of Hydaburg; Delegate Citizen of the Year James Jack Sr. of Juneau; and Emerging Leader Miciansa Hutcherson of Washington.

On the final day of Tribal Assembly, reports covering National Congress of American Indians, transboundary rivers and mining, language preservation, herring population, United States Forest Service, and the Department of Education were heard. Following a moving presentation provided by former Juneau Delegate Lance (*Xh'unei*) Twitchell on recent language preservation efforts and subsequent funding challenges, Delegates responded and approved a \$250K budget from the Tribe's expected Ramah class action lawsuit settlement.

"I am confident 50 years from now we will have speakers of our languages," said Twitchell. "We are not there yet, but we will get there."

Delegates also considered a number of resolutions that ranged in topic from the United States Fish and Wildlife's blood quantum definition for hunting sea otter, establishing a Southeast Alaska Native Youth Summit for leadership development, and advocating for the restoration of ferry service to Southeast Alaska. A total of 32 resolutions were introduced—27 were adopted, three were deferred to the Executive Council, and two were tabled. A full list of resolutions can be found on Central Council's website: www.ccthita.org/government/assembly/resolutions/2016resolutionlog.html.

Following the adjournment of Tribal Assembly, a closing banquet was held to honor award recipients for the President's Lifetime Achievement Award and President's Everyday Hero Awards. Marlene Johnson of Juneau received the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for her lifelong dedication to the betterment of the Tlingit and Haida people along with seven tribal citizens who were recognized as Everyday Heroes—Doug Chilton of Juneau (Brother's Keeper), Ruth Demmert of Kake (Culture Bearer), Devlin Anderstrom of Yakutat (Emerging Leader), Marti & Jessie Fred of Juneau (Hold Each Other Up), Jonathan Rowan of Klawock (Inspiring Educator), and Linda Schrack of Ketchikan (Language Warrior).

Some additional highlights included a grand entrance performance by the newly formed dance group *Has Du Eetéex' X'aakeidix Haa Sitee* led by Mary Folletti; introduction of Tribal Host Harold Martin of Juneau and Tribal Hostess Lavina Boe of Seattle, WA; and a word of the day in Tlingit, Haida, and Sm'algyax.

"It is truly amazing to witness our Delegates come together and tend to the business of the Tribe through dialogue, debate, and the resolution and budget process," said President Peterson. "Seeing the President's Lifetime Achievement and newly minted Everyday Hero awardees being honored at our closing banquet was inspiring, their words were humbling—one of the best experiences of my life."

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Media Resources:

Webcast Recording: www.livestream.com/accounts/507620/events/5233434

Flickr Gallery: www.flickr.com/photos/ccthita

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