



Indian Country Update

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

NOVEMBER 2005



Medicare Prescription Drugs For All Seniors

Medicare reform has been a top priority for President Bush. Millions of Americans are already taking part in Medicare's expanded range of health care services. Medicare offers a variety of new programs, including a prescription drug discount card, preventive care like the "Welcome to Medicare" physical, and cardiovascular and blood sugar screenings that can help identify and prevent life threatening diseases. Unlike programs in the past, the Medicare Modernization Act signed by President Bush on December 8, 2003 focuses on preventive health measures including using the best medical technology to avoid unnecessary healthcare costs.

The new drug coverage will allow seniors with no drug coverage and average drug expenses to cut their drug costs by half or more. Enrollment for seniors is required and a late-fee will be assessed if enrolled after the original seven month window. The Enrollment period for the new Medicare program begins on November 15, 2005 and runs through May 15, 2006. The Prescription Drug benefit for all enrolled seniors will start on January 1, 2006. Those with Indian Country questions can also call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov or www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships.

Fostering Economic Growth Through Indian Country Energy Development

On October 18, 2005, the Domestic Petroleum Council teamed up with the Department of Interior to host a roundtable discussion on the new opportunities available in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The event, Indian Energy Opportunity Roundtable: Tribes, Companies, and Governments Explore Oil and Gas Possibilities, was held in Denver, Colorado to encourage Tribal and energy industry leaders to work together to achieve economic development in Indian Country.

President Bush signed into law the Energy Policy Act on August 8, 2005, thereby creating unprecedented opportunities for Energy economic development in Indian Country. Title V of the Act has eased the regulatory barriers associated with tribal energy development. It replaced federal decision-making with tribal management for energy purposes

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Bush Administration officials discuss Indian Country polices with members of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe at Indian Energy Opportunity Roundtable in Denver, CO. Pictured from left to right: Bob Middleton, Director of Indian Energy and Economic Development at the U.S. Department of the Interior; Bruce Valdez, Growth Fund Director, member of the Southern Ute tribe; Valeria Arkinson, Eastern Shoshone Tribal Councilmember; and Nick Sinatra, Deputy Associate Director of White House Intergovernmental Affairs.



On October 3, 2005 members of the Global Glory Ministries visited with Ruben Barrales, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. Pictured from left to right: Dr. Flo Eilers, director of Global Glory Ministries and of Klinket and Cherokee descent; Pastor Dewey Kirstein, a member of the Cherokee Nation; Rev. George Kallapa, Sr, a member of the Macaw tribe; Chief Anne Richardson, chief of the Rappahannock tribe; Ruben Barrales; Deputy Assistant to the President; Linda Doxtator, a member of the Cherokee Nation; Rev. Ivan Doxtator, is a Oneida from the Iroquois Confederacy; Bishop Glen Anniskette, member of the Klinket tribe.

Fostering Economic Growth Through Indian Country Energy Development

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and allocated \$2 billion in the form of grants, loans, and loan guarantees for exploration, development, and production of energy. The bill will help ensure the latest energy technologies are being used in all corners of our country. The new Act also established an Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs within the Department of Energy that will work with tribal leaders to help diversify and improve tribal economies.


Through efforts in Indian Country energy development, the Bush Administration remains committed to continuing to recognize the defining principles of tribal sovereignty and the right to self-determination.

Hurricane Update Corner

President Bush would like to thank Indian Country for the compassion it showed in the wake of three recent major hurricanes; Katrina, Rita and Wilma. Tribes have contributed millions of dollars to the national relief effort and opened their doors and arms for the victims of the three devastating hurricanes.

The following tribes were directly affected by the storms, but no serious injuries or deaths were reported from the reservations impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma:

- Chitimacha Tribe—LA*
- Coushatta Tribe—LA*
- Tunica Biloxi Tribe—LA*
- Jena Band of Choctaw—LA*
- Poarch Band Of Creek Indians—AL*
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw—MS*
- Alabama-Coushatta—TX*
- Seminole Tribe—FL*
- Miccosukee Tribe—FL*



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President George W. Bush
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
 Washington, DC 20500 14 OCT 05

Dear President Bush:


On behalf of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and my entire administration, I am writing to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the assistance that you provided to us recently in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. We thank you and your White House staff, particularly Mr. Nick Sinatra, whose personal efforts were very helpful to the Tribe. The evening following the storm, Mr. Sinatra called me to ask what types of emergency assistance were needed on the Choctaw Indian Reservation. He served as the key person within your administration who coordinated the rapid federal agency response.

FEMA worked quickly to provide us with emergency resources and information on how to recover from our losses. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Eastern Area Office, under the able leadership of Mr. Franklin Keel, sent its first responders team from Florida; these dedicated individuals arrived quickly and did an excellent job. Other agencies of the federal government also provided extraordinary services. The Miccosukee and Seminole tribes of Florida, the Cherokee Tribe of North Carolina and Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and friends of the Tribe, both corporate and private, rushed to our aid, as well, in the face of disaster without having to be called upon. The response by everyone was outstanding, and we will long remember the help that we received.

We realize that the federal government is a large and complex organization with its own inertia. To effectively respond to a major disaster is very challenging, especially to a storm with the enormity that Hurricane Katrina had. Given the large scope of this storm, I believe that the overall federal response could not have been better for us.


Please accept our gratitude for the concern and assistance provided in behalf of the Choctaw people of Mississippi in our time of need.

Sincerely,


 Chief Phillip Martin

C: Mr. Nick Sinatra, The White House
 File

Yes, I would like to become informed about White House activities...



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