

HowNiKan March (Nmebne Gises) 2009, vol. 30 issue 2 - page 19

Bozho,

How do we become better CPN members? What is expected of each of us to insure that our efforts will continue on in the future as we seek excellence, prosperity, future medical needs, a better quality of life, continued educational opportunities, housing - the list goes on and on.

These things didn't just appear overnight. All we have as a Nation has taken hard work, dedication, expertise, planning, long-range vision, and steadfastness of the management team to bring it to current fruition.

As you know from my columns, I would like to see more involvement of our members in VOTING and actively voicing your concerns and ideas for our nation.

Do you realize that, of our 27,471 Potawatomi member base with 21,590 eligible voters, usually fewer than 3,000 members cast absentee ballots or vote in person in the CPN executive elections nationwide? In addition, fewer than 400 cast their votes in the last CPN election for legislative seats from Oklahoma.

Let's look at the past years on just the number of students who received education benefits through the scholarship program administered by Tribal Rolls Director Chuck Clark:

1979 - 14 students - total grants of \$1,200 - \$250 per semester
2002 - 343 students - \$100,120 - \$300 per semester
2003 - 430 students - \$325,000 - \$500 per semester
2004 - 610 students - \$520,000 - \$500 per semester
2005 - 689 students - \$947,000 - \$1,000 per semester
2006 - 799 students - \$1,426,000 - \$1,000 per semester
2007 - 1,103 students - \$2,466,000 - \$1,500 per semester
2008 - 1,041 students - \$2,829,000 - \$1,500 per semester
Just this spring, 2009 - 1,048 students - \$1,209,000 - \$1,500 per semester

You can see that we have increased our scholarship participation and dollar amount steadily over the past 30 years. Since we started this program, probably more than 6,000 members have received aid. Do you see what I'm trying to state, in black and white? My point is: where are all those members' votes.

Let's start another new year in growing our nation. To do so, we need all of you to take an active part in voting. Let's commit to voting in this election.

Now, which candidate should we vote for? Who has grown the Nation? Let's keep our current Chairman and his leadership in place and continue our Nation's advancement in the future.

All of you, young people, should vote. If you do, what a statement that will show the Nation - that we are developing a lifeline of young people to "step to the plate" to protect the future of our Nation.

As your representative, I will always do what is best for the Nation. That's why we who represent you need to hear from you. Your voice on different issues can be heard by two ways. One is by speaking; the other is by voting. Voting should be treated with the honor it earned on battlefields where it was won and protected. My e-mail is DBarrett@potawatomi.org

Megwetch,
David Barrett/*Mnedobe*
Legislator, District #10