



Carolina Indian Voice

Robeson County

"Building communicative bridges in a tri-racial setting"

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Federal Acknowledgement: What It Really Means

Will Federal Recognition of the Lumbee Tribe mean free health care, free education aid and supplemental income from the Federal government because you are an American Indian?

If you are Lumbee and have been led to believe, by the media or other sources, that if the Lumbees are federally recognized as a tribe you will finally get your "Indian Money" forget it. We are not on a reservation with vast natural resources such as oil, uranium, or timber on our land and under our jurisdiction.

With the poverty and despair throughout Indian country today the "Indian money" was evidently mailed by way of the final pony express in the 1800's and the rider found a short cut to Mexico. There is no "Indian Money" and there never will be in Lumbee land.

However, if the Lumbee tribe becomes federally recognized there will be certain federal services, made available to the tribe to help it begin a concerted social and economic development effort, within a long range planning strategy to address the needs of the nearly 40% of those tribal members who live in poverty.

The social needs of the poor must be met to the extent federal funds would be available as a result of recognition, but there must also be a dual approach to promote and enhance opportunities for economic development in tribal communities that leads to jobs expansion and the social and economic self-sufficiency of tribal families and individuals who make up the tribal community.

What kind of federal services are we talking about that would be accessible by the tribe? As a non federally recognized tribe we currently cannot receive funding from the Indian Health Services agency, a federally funded agency charged with the responsibility to take care of the health care needs of federally recognized tribes.

What health problems among the Lumbee has this lack of access to services historically lead to among our people? Lumbees live an average of eleven (11) years less than the average white in North Carolina. Lumbees have the highest rates of heart disease, diabetes, kidney failure, and infant mortality of any other race in the State.

Lack of access to proper health care beginning at the prenatal level is the

culprit in the web of these afflictions that kill our people at a higher rate than others. Those who would question our heritage should have to look in the eyes of those very afflictions that kill us unduly because of the color of our skin.

Federal Recognition would make available to the tribe federal Indian health services aimed at basic preventive health care and limited treatment. The design of the tribe's programs for health care delivery would be implemented after a lengthy needs assessment and prioritization. Services could range from dental care to prenatal treatment and care.

Would these health services be free? To establish a health care program to serve the needs of a tribe as large as the Lumbee would take several years to evolve to needs response and efficiency. For example, the tribe may decide to provide health services initially on "provider of last resort" basis. This would mean that those who have their own health care insurance who would receive insurance eligible services in a tribal health clinic, if such was operated by the tribe, would have billed to their insurance company reimbursement for the services rendered. Insurance reimbursements to the tribal health program would go into the programs operations cost.

For those without health care insurance, these services would be free and not based on income. Any service the tribe might provide that ones insurance company would not cover would be provided at no cost. This system of "provider of last resort" may be required of all Indian health services nationwide in light of national domestic programs budget cutting in the future. It should be noted that how health services will be provided is a decision the tribe

will have to make. Would free educational aide be available to tribal members to further their education? The tribe will be in a position to initiate programs that enhance and promote educational achievement within the tribe. One of the trust responsibilities of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is the educational needs of tribes as promised in treaties and mandated by legislation. Federal recognition would bring the Lumbees within the scope of this trust function of the B.I.A. The tribe could, dependent upon funds, establish programs to address illiteracy, adult edu-

cation, GED studies and cultural heritage appreciation and self image improvement programs for youth.

Financial aid for students to go to college or technical schools would be available through the B.I.A. or other sources the tribe would seek to tap. The tribe would be able to present its educational needs to foundations as a Federally recognized tribe in ways heretofore available to us. This financial aid through the B.I.A. would be free to those who receive it. It should be pointed out that currently Lumbees are eligible for scholarships and financial aid from the Indian Health Services and the Office of Indian Education outside the B.I.A. Indian Health Service scholarships have a "service payback" requirement in tribal Indian services designated area.

If the tribe is federally recognized Indians in the service area will still have available to them all those services currently provided by Lumbee Regional Development Association and those currently provided by county governments for which they might be income or poverty eligible. There will be no monthly check in the mail to tribal members because of a new federal government label.

However, if the tribe is recognized it would become eligible to apply for federal aid to promote economic development from such federal agencies as the Economic Development Administration, Farmers Home Administration, and the Community Development Block Grant Program.

The tribe would be eligible to have land put in trust for economic development, jobs creation projects and have preference in certain set aside contracting opportunities with the federal, state, and local governments. One thing will come to the Lumbee with Federal Recognition as a tribe, that is more value than money.

That will be the improved image of who we are as a people. No longer under the veil of this country's question of who we are; the day our elders can finally say our trials and tribulations for over 100 years to achieve federal recognition has not been in vain.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This week's question is answered by James Hardin, Executive Director of Lumbee Regional Development Association.



Shown left to right: SSG Waymond McNeill presenting Plaque to Sgt. Albert C. Woods.

Woods Retires From North Carolina National Guard

Recently SGT. Albert C. Woods of Wakulla NC retired from the N.C. National Guard. A.C. as he is commonly known among his friends was a member of HHC DET. 1, 2/252 Armor, Red Springs NC. He also served with A-Co 2/252 Armor in Laurinburg. Included in A.C.'s 20 years of Military Service was 2 years active duty in the U.S. Army including a tour in Vietnam. A.C. was a member of the support and platoon and one of its team leaders.

On January 31, 1992 the support platoon gave a retirement dinner for A.C. at Lakeside Restaurant at Antioch in appreciation of his service to the Guard and support platoon. Prayer was by SFC. John Brayboy. He was presented an award by SSG. Waymond McNeill on behalf of the support platoon.

A.C. stated that he was thankful, and thanked God for having served 20 years in the service. He said, "There have been some enjoyable times and there have been some times that were not so enjoyable. All in all, however, it has been fun."

Woods stated that he is now looking forward to spending more time with his family and having more time to devote to his church. He is a member and Sunday School teacher at Sycamore Holiness Church of Maxton.

The Support Platoon will miss Woods, but many of them are looking forward to the day when they retire their BDUs and become plain old civilians. The Platoon offers congratulations and a long and happy life to Woods.

County Commissioner Noah Woods to Host Public Forums

Mr. Noah Woods, will hold Public Forums in Robeson County Commissioner District 4 at the following locations on dates and at times listed: RED SPRINGS MARCH 18, 1993 7:00 PM Red Springs District Court Room 218 South Main St. Red Springs, NC.

PROSPECT MARCH 23, 1993 7:00 P.M. Prospect Elementary School. MAXTON MARCH 29, 1993 7:00 P.M. Maxton District Court Room 123 Florence St. Maxton, NC. PEMBROKE MARCH 30, 1993 7:00 P.M. Pembroke District Court Room Main St. Pembroke, NC.

The purpose of the Public Forums is to receive comments, input, and to answer questions from constituents regarding matters of interest to citizens of Robeson County.

Commissioner Noah Woods welcomes your attendance.

Notes From N.C. House District 85

by Rep. Ron Sutton

The North Carolina General Assembly has been in session for slightly over a month now and members have been busy getting organized. Since this is my first term, I have had to attend orientation in addition to my regular activities.

The Government Performance Audit Committee (GPAC) report has been a major item on everyone's agenda. The GPAC was a group of 27 public officials and private citizens appointed by the 1991 General Assembly to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of major management policies, practices and functions of state government.

The committee's year-long effort resulted in a major report to the 1993 General Assembly. They proposed recommendations in the area of budgeting, planning, personnel, purchasing, transportation, education, Medicaid, public safety, staffing and health and human services.

A major part of the first month has been spent receiving briefing on the GPAC studies and their recommendations. More detailed exposure will be forthcoming as GPAC recommendations are made into bills and brought before appropriate committees and subcommittees. Speaking of committees, my committee assignments are to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation; the

Business and Labor Committee; the Public Employees Committee; the State Government Sub-committee on the Military, Veterans and Indian Affairs; and the Judiciary II Committee. Bills are just now getting to the various committees and we are actively discussing and debating them.

The Local Delegation, consisting of Senator David Parnell, Rep. Daniel DeVane, Rep. Frances Cummings and I met with the Lumbermen City Council for breakfast on February 15, 1993, to discuss their potential legislative concerns. Likewise, we met with the Raeford/Hoke Chamber of Commerce on February 13, 1993, for a similar purpose.

The full Robeson County Delegation, including those previously mentioned and Rep. David Redwine and Rep. Dewey Hill is scheduled to meet with the Robeson County Commissioners on March 8, 1993, to discuss their legislative agenda. All these meetings are important and informative to the members as this is one key way we have of finding out what local government officials want and need.

On Wednesday, February 24, 1993, I filed the Golf Course/Cultural Center Bill. This Bill represents the agreement worked out by the Joint Senate and House Legislative Study

Committee that held public hearings on the subject in Robeson County last fall. The House Bill was sent to the Appropriations Committee and will be reviewed and debated at a later date. The Bill, HB295, has no surprises and tracks directly along the recommendations of the Joint Study Committee.

On Thursday night, March 4, 1993, I attended the swearing in ceremony for Major David Green of Parkton to the North Carolina Board of Transportation. On the same occasion, another Robeson County native,

Alexander Kellins was sworn in as the Commissioner of the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). I wish to congratulate both of these Robesonians on their appointments. I intend to make periodic reports via the local press to keep you informed about legislative matters affecting District 85 in Robeson and Hoke Counties.

Should you have concerns about matters before the House, drop me a line. Send it to Rep. Ron Sutton, Legislative Building, Room 1321, Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096. Rest assured I will read and consider each item received.



Mrs. Mary Roberts, a legal secretary with Locklear, Jacobs, Sutton and Hunt law firm, visited the kindergarten classes at Prospect School. She showed the children the various equipment that a legal secretary uses. She also told the classes of her many responsibilities as a secretary.



Dr. Ferris Locklear, an Emergency Room Physician at Southeastern General Hospital, visited the kindergarten classes at Prospect School. Dr. Locklear gave an exciting talk about medicine. He demonstrated giving shots to an orange. He also taught the children some first aid techniques to use in case they get hurt.