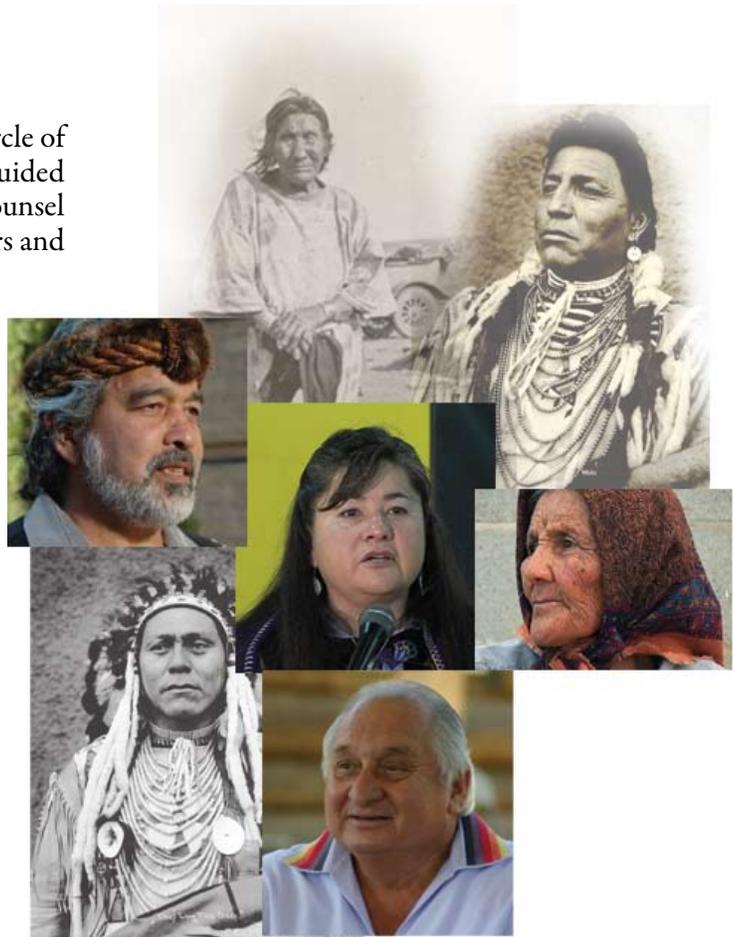


American Indian Institute
Report 2009

Above All, Respect

The American Indian Institute and Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth continue along a wisdom guided journey into mutual respect; following the Elders counsel that above all else, respect for self, respect for others and respect for Mother Earth must guide our lives.



Mission

The mission of the American Indian Institute is to perpetuate the ancient wisdom and cultural heritage of North America's Native people, and to promote a greater understanding of that wisdom among all people. The Institute achieves its mission by serving as the administrative agency and support source for the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth, a coalition of grassroots spiritual leaders from Indian nations throughout North America.

Vision

The American Indian Institute recognizes traditional Indian wisdom as an endangered human resource that is relevant to today's world and that holds keys to our common survival. Looking seven generations into the future, we see a world in which the values and traditions of indigenous people are respected for the wisdom they hold for the Earth and all its peoples.

We pursue this vision by supporting the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth as it teaches, motivates, and celebrates traditional Indian peoples today. We act as facilitators of gatherings of traditional peoples, promoters of healing of Indian communities, and supporters of efforts to educate non-Indians about the wisdom and harmony inherent in the traditional indigenous worldview.

Report from the Chair

We are pleased to submit this report on the activities of the American Indian Institute for the year 2009. In a year of unprecedented financial uncertainty we are grateful to relate that the revenues, expenses, and general operations of the Institute remained remarkably stable.

Thus far, the American Indian Institute has weathered the recent recession that plagued so many people and organizations these past few months. With reductions in revenue caused by the economic downturn, we managed to survive by freezing our general operating expenses and reducing program expenses across the board.

Fortunately, funding sources for the Elder's Circle continued during the recent national economic recession. These sources have historically been about evenly split between individuals and foundations, the former being a very committed group of long-time supporters who we were pleased to see continue their support of Indian Elders despite all odds.

In January 2009 the American Indian Institute went public with our \$500,000 Capital Campaign for a permanent headquarters building in Bozeman, Montana. Our capital campaign has been one of the most difficult fundraising tasks we have ever attempted, and the economic environment of '09 made it even more challenging. We are grateful to all of you who have participated in the campaign thus far.

Our challenge in the current year is to keep momentum going, and to complete the capital campaign by the end of 2010. Revenues raised at year-end 2009 were \$320,000. By our next year-end, we hope to report that we have consolidated 35 years worth of work under one roof.

The 32nd International Elders & Youth Council was held in early June at Big Mountain, Navajo Nation, hosted by Diné Elder Pauline Whitesinger and her extended family. Big Mountain, part of an area referred to as the Hopi/Navajo Joint-Use Area, provided a powerful backdrop for this important spiritual union of traditional leaders. Prayers and healing were done to address the pain, suffering and grief suffered by people

of both Hopi and Navajo nations over the past 35 years as a result of political fighting over artificial boundaries on the land.

The 2010 Council will be held at Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation in July.

The Traditional Youth Leadership Initiative of the American Indian Institute remains one of our highest priorities along with our support for the Elders' Circle. It is becoming more apparent how important (for all people) it is for Native youth to acquire "traditional knowledge" alongside the "higher education" they receive in public schools. The former knowledge, passed eye-to-eye and breath-to-breath between Elders and youth, is what Circle Elder and Mohawk Chief Tom Porter is referring to when he says:

"Our songs and ceremonies are what recharge the world with love. That's why there are people who still believe in the old traditions. Universal truth knows no time, and it doesn't get old or lose its fashion."

While the Two Circles did not conduct an Ancient Voices Forum in 2009, one was held in February of 2010. The three-day gathering was held in Navajo Country at the mouth of the sacred Canyon de Chelly, where prominent traditional Elders from the four-directions gathered with members of the larger society in a cross-cultural exploration around the theme of "Women's Ways of Knowing." A summary of this event will appear in next year's annual report.

The American Indian Institute and its followers stand on behalf of the dominant society to extend a lifeline to traditional Elders who carry the heavy burden of cultural survival on their shoulders. We give every possible encouragement to those Elders who remain faithful; who are keeping alive a rich and truly American heritage which can be found nowhere else on earth, and which can provide values sorely needed by our society.

We thank our many friends and supporters who make our work possible. We welcome your comments or questions about this report, and look forward to our unfolding work together.

Steve Browning
Board Chair
Tucson, Arizona

August 31, 2009

To - All who share our vision of unity and respect among human beings
From - Bob Staffanson, President, American Indian Institute
Re - A momentously symbolic event largely unrecognized

On August 2, 2009 Joe Medicine Crow, 95, Patriarch of the Crow Nation and one of the founding members of the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama along with other distinguished individuals. The event was televised. Indelibly etched in my mind is the picture of President Obama placing the medal around Joe Medicine Crow's neck. This is my reflection on a highly symbolic event.

Our planet is a small speck in an endless universe. We may be alone in our part or any part of space. We know that life on our little space ship is fragile and dependent upon delicately balanced elements that are both tenuous and finite. We also know that actions of human beings can upset that balance and threaten life. Those factors, the miracle of our existence on a tiny space ship and our increasing threat to the elements that sustain us should bring all strata of humanity together to recognize our common destiny, to celebrate our commonalities as human beings and to work together in respect and harmony for the benefit of all, and the future of all. Given the stakes, cooperation and obeisance should be driving factors but history and our own experience testify that power and greed, racial hatred and prejudice have prevailed far too often and are a continuous threat.

Consider our own history. Slavery ended only 150 years ago; lynching much later and discrimination is still alive although moderated by law. Indian wars ended not much more than a century ago. My grandfather helped move wounded soldiers from Montana's Big Hole battlefield where in 1877 Colonel Gibbon's men tried to stop Chief Joseph's Nez Perce, including women and children, from escaping to Canada. Two generations separation from infamous atrocities. Guilt, hate, fear and prejudice are powerful emotions acting on the spirit as cancer on the body. Our organization devoted to reconciliation of the races and to survival of the wisdom of Native Americans was met with open hostility in its early years, a condition now softened but not eliminated.

In the late fifties and sixties minority grass roots groups began demanding Recognition, no condescendence; freedom, not oppression; a right to sit at the table of all races and ethnicities, not receive its scraps; a right to equal treatment under the law, not racial profiling. Periods of political and social change are filled with turmoil. Some, like Martin Luther King, Jr. used non-violence and the power of the spirit, others used repressed anger and vengeance to strike out violently, a counter-effective tool. Civil rights became the law of the land, and inch by inch a more equitable racial and ethnic relationship emerged affecting the most populous minorities but leaving Native Americans still mired in prejudice and anonymity because they didn't want a seat at our table, only to be let alone to live a life grounded differently from ours.

Joe Medicine Crow is my senior by eight years but we are of the same generation, having begun life in the early 20th century absorbing its mores and perspectives. To our generation, and those arriving before World War II, the idea of an African American President was as likely as the Missouri river changing direction, and the idea of a Native American receiving the nation's highest honor was equivalent to the Missouri flowing backward. But current political, professional and social leaders – baby boomers – grew up in the midst of societal change. While racial prejudice and hatred is still alive although less visible, society has become more tolerant and inclusive by many degrees.

The fact that Joe Medicine Crow's honor at the hands of an African American President got only cursory notice in the press is in one sense a good sign. It means that it was taken for granted by those who record events of the day. But it may also mean that today's generation has no clue regarding the depth of the chasm of prejudice, hate and guilt symbolically closed by that gesture. To my generation, and especially to me having dealt with the chasm of hate for much of a lifetime, it was a miracle we never expected to happen in our lifetime of any future time. We know that centuries of racial hatred and antagonism are not closed by one symbolic gesture or many gestures but we see light at the end of the tunnel and we are heartened and inspired to work harder.

We are pleased for Joe Medicine Crow, a colleague whom we love, but the stunning reality of the event has ramifications for all people.

Bob Staffanson

Elders and Youth Council

The annual Elders & Youth Council constitutes the continuation of an ancient practice of joint council among the most respected traditional Indian Elders and spiritual leaders from across North America. It is the only time when such an extensive assemblage of Indian Elders gathers together in a spiritual body to strengthen traditional values and to consider from the spiritual perspective issues involving and effecting indigenous people and the larger society. It is a time of prayer, of focusing on the young people, and of remembering the teachings of the Old Ones, the ancestors.

The 32nd International Elders & Youth Council was hosted by Diné Matron Pauline Whitesinger and her extended Todichinii (Bitter Water) Clan on the Tsé Ta *a*, Thin Rock Lands, Big Mountain, Diné Nation, part of an area more recently referred to as the Hopi/Navajo Joint-Use Area. The Traditional Circle last gathered in Diné country in 1982 at the Yazzie Ranch at Dove Waterflow. From June 10-14, 2009 on Big Mountain, the Council fire burned brightly.

The gathering was an important spiritual union of traditional leaders on the sacred but politically disputed lands of Big Mountain. Prayers and healing were done to address the pain, suffering and grief suffered by people of both Hopi and Navajo nations over the past 35 years as a result of political fighting over artificial boundaries on

the land. The spiritual strength brought by four-directions Elders, together with the energy of Earth and wind on this sacred ground, made for a powerful Council.

Other than the wind, the only sounds on these sacred ancestral lands are from the sheep and goats and the dogs that watch over them; even these sounds disappear quickly into the canyons. The vistas are sweeping in each direction, layer upon layer, and the sky is big – especially at night. For everyone that came from the four directions, Big Mountain felt like home.

Horses play an important role in the spiritual and material lives of the Navajo, and this was reflected at the Council where ceremonies, songs, and prayers were done for all the horses in the camp. Having horses in camp amongst the people added a special dimension to this Council. Their enriching presence was felt at all times, and people moved even more fluidly and quietly because the horses were present.

There are many years of experience represented by Circle Elders around the fire. The collective wisdom is not merely the sum of all present, but represents through those present many long lines of living knowledge going back to earliest times. And not just from one village, one tribe, or even from one area of Indian Country, but from the four directions emanating out from that fire all across Turtle Island.

“For some of us, the Circle is all we have.”

-Bennett Lyons, Akimel O’otham, Gila River Community

“Many of our young Indians today have higher degrees; they know law; they know medicine and business; but they don’t know how to be Indian. That’s why the Circle is so important.”

- Oren Lyons, Onondaga Nation



Traditional Youth Leadership Initiative

The American Indian Institute's Traditional Youth Leadership Initiative provides Native youth with a powerful opportunity to preserve, strengthen and renew Native cultural and spiritual practices, beliefs, values, world-views, and languages. The youth camps are a powerful setting for learning from Elders, for healing, nurturing, and praying in a nurturing environment.

These camps, which run throughout the year, provide a cultural focus and framework for young people just at the age when drugs, drinking, crime, and other troubling influences begin to mesmerize them. In the long-term the outcomes we hope for are cultural and spiritual de-

velopment of Indian youth, and the resiliency in them that leads to positive life choices; an integration of this spiritual and cultural wisdom into their lives, the lives of their families and their communities.

Current programs are under way in these Native communities:

- ♦ Bitterroot Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai (Flathead Reservation)
- ♦ Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation
- ♦ Akimel O'otham, Gila River Reservation
- ♦ Skarū'ren' (Tuscarora) Nation

"If there is but one, any one, of my Indian children who wants to go back home, back to our tradition, I will take that hand. I will guide that hand home with me."

- Phillip Deere, Muskogee/Creek Spiritual Leader, Early Traditional Circle Elder



Ancient Voices - Contemporary Contexts Forum

The *Ancient Voices - Contemporary Contexts Forum* Series was mandated by Traditional Circle Elders who said “help us get the message of the Elders out to the larger society and get dialogue started across cultures.”

The indigenous voice, ancient and proven, takes a holistic view of environmental and social destruction. It is a spiritual voice unencumbered by religious dogma. It is not parochial or selfish, and can be a saving factor in meeting the issues that threaten Earth.

Held on fertile grounds of Indian Country, the *Ancient Voices Forums* in 2006, 2007, and 2008 were hosted by the Anishnabe, Haida, and Salish/Kootenai/Pend d’Oreille respectively. Nearly 150 non-Indian partici-

pants have had the rare opportunity to sit with Elders and discuss the future of Earth and the life it sustains. Elder speakers at these Forums have included Tom Porter (Mohawk), Oren Lyons (Onondaga), Wilma Mankiller (Cherokee), Guujaaw (Haida), Angaangaq (Inuit), and the late John Mohawk (Seneca).

The next *Ancient Voices Forum* will be a three-day gathering in Diné (Navajo) Country at the mouth of their sacred Canyon de Chelly in early 2010. Prominent traditional Elders from the four-directions will gather with members of the larger society in a cross-cultural exploration around the theme of “Women’s Ways of Knowing.”



Completing the Circle

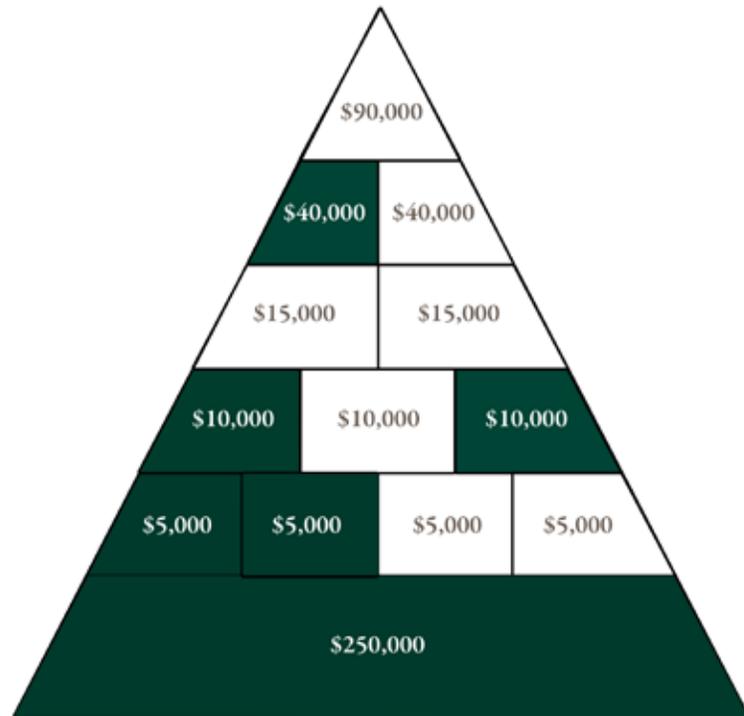
American Indian Institute Headquarters Project
502 West Mendenhall Street, Bozeman, Montana

In January 2009 the American Indian Institute went public with its \$500,000 Capital Campaign to complete the acquisition of and make needed renovations and upgrades to a permanent headquarters building in Bozeman, Montana.

The Institute ended last year with the Capital Campaign on track and on schedule, having pushed hard for funding all year from individuals and foundations. At year-end, total Capital Campaign funding raised to date was \$319,000.

Known around town as “the old stone house”, the property is a 1901 “historic registry” building made of block siding that gives it a timeless appearance. The ground floor of the new work place will consist of three offices, a work/supply room, kitchenette, bathroom, and reception area. The upper floor level will be an open, welcoming area that will serve as a library and conference room complex.

José Lucero, a Santa Clara Pueblo Elder and Traditional Circle leader... said it gave him a feeling of permanence, like the old stone houses in the Hopi villages.



Thanks to the Many Who Helped in 2009

Individuals

Anonymous
James A. Babson
Joane Bayer & Thomas Waigand
Walter & Carol Beebe
Elizabeth Boland
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Walter Bortz
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Christensen Fund
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Jewish Communal Fund
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Grace Jones Richardson Trust
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Ruth Danley & Enoch Moore Charitable Trust
OneFamily Foundation
O.P. & W.E. Edwards Foundation
Philanthropic Collaborative
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Triskeles Foundation
Sample Foundation
Seventh Generation Fund

Corporate Grants/In-Kind Contributions

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Archer Construction
Insty Prints

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2009 Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position
As of 12/31/09

Statement of Activities
January through December 2009

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
General Account	\$ 135,638
Checking	4,150
Money Market & CD	<u>358,452</u>
Total Checking/Savings	\$ 498,240
Accounts Receivable	
Endowment Earnings Due From	
Montana Community Foundation (MCF)	36,119
Restricted Fund Earnings Due	<u>24,007</u>
Total Current Assets	\$ 558,366
Fixed Assets	
Land - 502 Mendenhall	\$ 68,828
Real Property - 502 Mendenhall	300,425
Art - 502 Mendenhall	11,995
Equipment	24,173
Program Equipment	35,095
Leashold Improvements	9,024
LESS - Accumulated Amortization	-156
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-59,532</u>
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 389,852
Other Assets	
Montana Community Foundation (MCF)	
Agency Endowment	\$ 820,352
Restricted Fund	576,178
Loan Origination Fees	1,250
Art Investments	140,325
Organizational Costs	<u>1,003</u>
Total Other Assets	\$ 1,539,108
Total Assets	\$ 2,487,326
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	\$ 306
Security Deposits	<u>800</u>
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 1,106
Long Term Liabilities	
502 Mendenhall Property	\$ 92,924
Total Liabilities	\$ 94,030
Equity	
Temporarily Restricted Funds	
Restricted Fund	\$ 576,178
Temporarily Restricted	
Program Funds	277,699
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investment	<u>6,648</u>
Total Temporarily Restricted Funds	\$ 860,525
Unrestricted Funds	
Permanently Restricted Funds -	
MCF Agency Endowment	820,352
Net Income	<u>144,997</u>
Total Equity	\$ 2,393,396
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 2,487,326

Income

Individual Donors	\$ 105,455
Corporate & Foundation Grants	279,826
Contributions - In Kind	1,758
Registration Fees/Publications/Products	18,126
Interest & Dividend Income	64,603
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments	70,689
Rental Income	<u>9,743</u>
Total Income	\$ 550,200

Expenses

Direct Program Expenses	\$ 170,696
General & Administrative Expenses	
Bank/Financial Advisor Charges	17,542
Consultants	11,253
Fund Development	1,754
Insurance	25,050
Commercial Building Insurance	422
Office Supplies	3,965
Postage and Freight	1,462
Printing & Publications	2,209
Professional Fees	4,660
Public Relations/Marketing	2,429
Repairs & Maintenance	3,144
Rent	3,034
Payroll Tax Expenses	11,340
Salaries and Wages	
Payroll Expense	137,673
Simple IRA Company	2,537
Taxes and Licenses	1,113
Telecommunications	3,187
Vehicle Expense	<u>1,733</u>
General Operating Expenses	\$ 234,507
Total Expenses	\$ 405,203
Net Income	\$ 144,997

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