



Society of American Indian  
Government Employees

# The Talking Leaf

Issue #3

SAIGE Newsletter

November 2010

## Message from the Chair



Aanii (hello) SAIGE family,

WOW, what a second half of the year it has been for SAIGE. So many things have been done and so much progress made and we continue to move forward. I will attempt to capture a few of those items so I don't monopolize the entire "Talking Leaf."

- This past June we had a conference at the Mohegan Sun which made many of our attendees say "wow!" If you weren't there you can read more about it in this newsletter and hear what you missed.
- We seem to be making some real progress with the removal of the offensive Murals. This has been a long battle and it is not over yet, but we have gained some real movers and shakers in our corner. It will be a good day when we can

final say they have been removed from a government work place.

- We have many new MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) established and in the works which will increase our support and encourage more SAIGE participation throughout the government workforce.
- It is election time for SAIGE. There are 5 board positions up for election along with our officer positions. The election committee is gathering nominations and in November a ballot will be produced for our membership to have its say on who will be serving us. I encourage everyone who is a member to vote.
- As I write this letter I am at the Hard Rock Hotel in Tulsa, OK participating in a site visit. During this site visit we are meeting with members of the local community to ensure we have the best support possible and encourage maximum participation by Oklahoma Indian Country. If you were impressed with last year's conference and the venue I can assure you that in 2011 you will be equally impressed. We are going to provide you a conference that you will not soon forget. So make your plans to attend, request those travel funds now so that it gets put into the training budget and get ready to Rock your

career at the SAIGE Conference June 13-17, 2011 in Tulsa.

As you know we have our web site at [www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org) where we publish most of our organizational information along with photos from past conferences. You also have the ability to download SAIGE brochures from this site. This past spring we launched our own SAIGE Facebook page, so for all you FBs out there come check us out and become a friend. Our Facebook page is a lot less formal but we use it to pass on some of the news and events from around Indian Country to include sometimes short notice items from SAIGE. So rest assured that your board and SAIGE organization is staying busy. I encourage you to volunteer and get involved when possible. Please always spread the good word of SAIGE and encourage others to join. Next June I hope to see you all along with some new members in Tulsa.

Miigwech (Thank you!)  
Danny Garceau, SAIGE Chair

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- PAGE 2 & 3 - 2010 Conference highlights
- PAGE 4 - In the Spotlight: Jesse James
- PAGE 5 -Featured Leader: Julia Pierce, SES
- PAGE 6 - SAIGE In the News
- PAGE 7 - Film Review & Calendar of Events

## Walking in Two Worlds: A First Time Experience with SAIGE

By Donna Nelson, USDA Forest Service (USDAFS), Northern Research Station's SEPM for Native Americans

As USDAFS Northern Research Station's SEPM for Native Americans, I was asked to attend the 2010 SAIGE National training conference in Uncasville, CT. Not knowing what to expect, I emerged with deep respect for the dedication



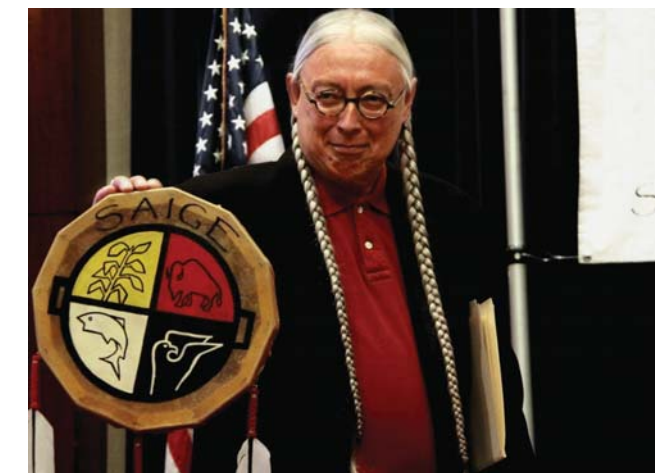
Mark Brown, Mohegan Tribal Ambassador

that makes such a conference possible and an excellent preparation to advocate for Native people. Following is a synopsis of my week.

Mornings began with general plenary sessions. A few highlights:

Mornings began with general plenary sessions. A few highlights:

**Walter Echo Hawk, Jr.**, Justice, Supreme Court of the Pawnee Nation; Attorney,



Walter Echo-Hawk - Attorney, Tribal Judge, Author

*Law Reform for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, and *A Native Land Ethic*. *A Native Land Ethic* which was a more personal sharing of thoughts "as a learned American rather than scholar", earned a standing ovation.

**Stephen Pevar**, National Staff Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union, and author of *The Rights of*

*Indians and Tribes*, (New York University Press, 2004), the ACLU's guide to Indian law in the United States. He spoke on *Treaty Rights and Federal Trust Responsibilities*.

**Veronica Villalobos**, Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, EEOC, presented *The State of American Indian Participation in the Federal Workplace*. She chided federal agencies for an "abysmal" level of inclusion of Native people and "the failure to provide a bridge between lower to higher grades in service".

Afternoon sessions covered six tracks: Culture and Diversity, EEO and HR, Health and Wellness, Indian Country, Natural Resources, and Professional Development. Some sessions attended:

*Doctrine of Discovery Panel: "The Theory upon Which Indians Were Conquered by Discovery"*, conducted by Jim Sappier and John Dieffenbacher-Krall. Jim is representative and former chief of Penobscot Nation; John is Executive Director of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission.

*Penobscot Culture and the Indigenous*, another presentation by Jim Sappier. Jim presented many of the same ideas again, but atmosphere and tone were markedly different this time. The content of the first class appeared to serve as platform from which the different sensing, thinking and speaking of an indigenous elder could be introduced. Excellent training for government employees; who would experience precisely this cultural dissonance upon meeting traditional people.



Veronica Villalobos, OPM

*Resource Managing Agencies and Trust Responsibilities—USDA Forest Service and NRCS*. Faline Haven, Office of Tribal Relations, USDA Forest Service, and Herb Webb and Don Liptack, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Faline emphasized the need for federal agencies to be aware of trust responsibilities and the authorities that enable them.



## Walking in Two Worlds (con't from page 2)

Other training conducted: leadership training for Native youth; a workshop for Native veterans; another for American Indians with disabilities. This describes a very full week!

Donna's report was condensed for the SAIGE newsletter. If you would like to read Donna's detailed conference report, please email SAIGE Editor, Georgia Madrid at [georgia.madrid@noaa.gov](mailto:georgia.madrid@noaa.gov).

Photo Credit: All conference photos, pages 1 to 3, by Caitlin Windle.



Mohegan Color Guard



L to R: Winona Dick, Tlingit Tribe; Angelina Lammers, Haida and Nish gaa Tribes; (2) Mohegan fancydancers; Teddy Castillo, Tlingit Tribe



Dept. of Defense (DOD) Banquet and Awards Ceremony.

## Youth Track 2010



Youth track participants with speaker, James W. Anderson.

There were twenty-one students that participated in the 2010 Youth Track. The students represented 14 different tribes and Alaska Natives. Four of the students were from Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU). The students participated in leadership skills training by James Anderson (Ojibwe/Choctaw), the son of America's Rib King, 'Famous Dave' Anderson.

## Join Us for the 2011 Conference

*By Fredericka Joseph, Planning Co-Chair*

It is my honor to serve as the Co-Chair for the Planning Committee for the 2011 SAIGE National Training Conference that will be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 13-17, 2011 at the Hard Rock Hotel Casino. We are off to a great start having held several meetings this year. We have begun to establish leads for various committees along with those volunteers who graciously agreed to work on the committees in making this conference a huge success. Sue Morris who works for the US Army in Tulsa, OK has accepted the offer to work as the Co-Chair and is helping work with local tribes, federal agencies, and organizations within the greater Tulsa area and throughout Oklahoma.

We recently held a meeting with various tribal representatives from Oklahoma. The SAIGE Chair, Danny Garceau, provided an overview of SAIGE followed by a question and answer period. The tribal representatives who were present were excited to learn about SAIGE and offered suggestions and assistance for the 2011 conference. We walked away with several volunteers ready to join in and help with wherever SAIGE needed the assistance.

The planning committee still needs volunteers for various subcommittees so if you're interested, please contact: Fredericka Joseph at [freddiejoseph51@yahoo.com](mailto:freddiejoseph51@yahoo.com) or Sue Morris at [sue.morris@SWT03.usace.army.mil](mailto:sue.morris@SWT03.usace.army.mil).

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Lifetime Member - Jesse James, Jr.

By Georgia Madrid



Jesse James, Jr., is an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Nation, Pine Ridge, S.D. He was born to Jesse James (Creek/Uchee Nations - Deceased) and Minerva Bergen James (Oglala Lakota Nation). He recently retired from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) in January 2010, after completing over 35 years of Federal civilian service. While at NOAA, he received the 2000 Dept. of Commerce Bronze Star Award and the 2005 NWS EEO/Diversity Award. He was also a founding member of NOAA's EEO Council.

Not only is Jesse a lifetime member but he is a founding member of SAIGE. He was the first Vice Chair of SAIGE from 2003-2004. "I joined SAIGE in hopes of making a difference in the way Native peoples were represented, looked upon, and dealt with within the federal government. SAIGE is a much needed support group to assist Indian peoples with their federal careers and job opportunities." He said he became a lifetime member because of the joy of knowing that he is a part of an ever expanding and growing organization dedicated to helping and working with American Indian federal employees and their families and retirees.

Jesse started his Federal career with the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), now the Dept. of Energy, in 1975. "After graduating from Haskell Indian College, the opportunity to work in the Kansas City area, near my family's home in Lee's Summit, MO was extremely attractive to me. AEC was a prestigious federal agency that I could not pass up at the time; it offered good pay and benefits for a young man just starting out on his Federal career." He said one of his favorite

positions was with AEC as a Quality Assurance Specialist. "I was able to travel extensively around the country while in this position. I got to see many a unique and intriguing places, as well as, meet many interesting and important peoples." Jesse sees SAIGE as a way to provide support and motivation for Indian youth in their quest to secure federal jobs, academic funding, training, and internship opportunities.

While at NOAA, Jesse was a strong advocate for educating the workforce on the unique issues of American Indians. He said that SAIGE must continue to provide and recommend Federal Indian Policy training for all Federal agencies. "We need to continue to educate with respect to Federal Trust Responsibility, promote a better understanding of Tribal sovereignty issues within federal agencies, and support the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) initiatives with respect to working with Federal agencies."

Jesse's contributions for the betterment of the Indian community do not end with SAIGE. He was involved in the establishment of many American Indian councils. Some of these organizations include: founding member of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission/Dept. of Energy's Native American Minority Advisory Council (NAMAC); Vice-Chair of the Kansas City Federal Executive Board American Indian Federal Employee Council; Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Heart of American Indian Center, Kansas City, MO; and American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Government Relations Board member and Sequoyah Fellow.

Currently, Jesse resides in Lawrence, KS, where he is actively involved in the Eagle Talon Brotherhood of Kansas City, a not-for-profit organization of Native American men from federally recognized tribes, dedicated to the preservation of Native American cultures. He is also a founding member of this organization. He is married to Anita Arkeketa-James (Kiowa/Delaware/Otoe) of Lawrence, KS, and has two stepdaughters, Krystin and Ahli. He also has one Maine Coon Cat named "Buttercup" and one Pug Dog named "Gadget". He is a Private Pilot & Amateur (Ham) Radio Operator.

When asked what he would like to share with other SAIGE members, he said, "Take one day at a time. Taking little steps will eventually turn into long strides. As SAIGE grows in numbers, its name will grow as well. I encourage each and every SAIGE member, and potential SAIGE member, to persevere. Do what you can, when you can. Every little bit helps."



## FEATURED LEADER: Julia Pierce, Lumbee, Senior Executive Service Member

By Shana Barehand

As many of us know there is a severe shortage of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) career SES members in the Federal government. While the Obama Administration has been successful in bringing in AI/AN SES political appointees, few have braved the arduous years of rigorous training, obtaining the right network and receiving management support to join the ranks of the SES. While many AI/AN SESers are in the Indian preference agencies, not all are, and even those Indian Preference agencies do not give preference to citizens of non-federal recognized tribal citizens. Being federally recognized does not preclude AI/AN people from being an integral part of the AI/AN community. This is certainly the case with Julia Pierce, Lumbee tribal member.

Mrs. Pierce is the Deputy Associate General Counsel for the Office of the General Counsel, Indian Health Service (IHS). She is the daughter of deceased attorney Julian Pierce, founder of the Lumbee River Legal Services in the Lumbee tribal community. She was raised in Robeson County, N.C. and attended college and Law School at the University of Virginia. In 1998, she rejected an offer to enter the Presidential Management Program and instead went to work for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in Washington to continue her family's legacy of public service to American Indians. Until her promotion she was a senior attorney with the DHHS, Office of General Counsel. Her client for the last 12 years has been the IHS.

The IHS provides health care services for all of the Nation's federally recognized tribes, either directly through IHS run facilities, or indirectly by contracting with tribes in accordance with a law called the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDA). Under the ISDA, the IHS is required to enter into contracts and funding agreements with tribes that want to operate their own health programs. These ISDA agreements are negotiated on a government-to-government basis.

Mrs. Pierce began negotiating these agreements in 1998 and developed a process to ensure more consistency among the tribal contracts. She established a practice group composed of all the attorneys (20-30) who provide advice to the IHS negotiation teams that contract with tribes. These attorneys are located all over the country. She chaired this practice group for years before training her own replacement so she could start a family and enter the SES training program.



Julia Pierce and Secretary of HHS, Kathleen Sebelius

In addition, to numerous other accomplishments, Mrs. Pierce, like her father, had a case that was heard at the Supreme Court of the United States. This case was one of the seminal cases in the Government's contract support costs litigation, *Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation v. United States, et al. (F.D. Oklahoma)-Class Action*.

From 2000-2005, Mrs. Pierce served as a Commissioner for the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs. She was appointed by the Governor of Maryland to initiate and direct projects that further the understanding of American Indian history and culture in Maryland. The Commission was to undertake a comprehensive study of American Indian tribes in Maryland including the Accohannock, Creek, Cherokee, Chippewa, Choptank, Delaware, Haliwa, Lumbee, Nanticoke, Piscataway, Pocomoke, Potomac, Rappahannock, Seminole, Shawnee, Susquehanna, and Wicomico, and explore their influences upon Maryland history and culture.

During her time on the Commission she worked with Indians in Maryland to accomplish a variety of goals from establishing correct burial procedures for indigenous remains that are found in Maryland to amending state regulations regarding state recognition of Indian tribes in Maryland. The latter was the most important of her tasks because Maryland Indians were primarily concerned with the fact there were no recognized tribes in Maryland. Mrs. Pierce's interest both in her personal and professional life demonstrates her desire to promote the interests of Native Americans.

## SAIGE - In the News

### SAIGE Announces Carol Jorgensen Memorial Scholarship Winner

SAIGE is pleased to announce that Cherie De Vore-Bitahey has been selected as the inaugural recipient of the Carol Jorgensen Memorial Scholarship. Ms De Vore-Bitahey (Navajo) demonstrates thoughtful blending of Native and “western” cultural and scientific values and experiences. She exemplifies the goals of stewardship of the environment while generously sharing her time, energy, and knowledge for which the scholarship’s namesake was so well known. Although her interests are in environmental issues, she has worked, taken courses, and volunteered in many disciplines, so she has broad knowledge that she intends to use to help her people. Ms De Vore-Bitahey is a student at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. She is an excellent role model.

We acknowledge the dedicated group of applicants and wish each of them success in their personal, family, and career lives.

### Lori Windle Receives Department of Interior (DOI) “Diversity Champion” award



L to R: John Burden, Chief Diversity Officer, DOI, Rhea Suh, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, DOI, Lori Windle, SAIGE Vice-Chair, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation & Enforcement (OSMRE), Glenda Owens, Deputy Director, OSMRE.

At a ceremony on Oct. 12, 2010, at the Main Interior Building Auditorium in Washington, DC., SAIGE Vice-Chair, Lori Windle, was one of ten individuals recognized by Interior Secretary Salazar, with special awards given by DOI Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget Rhea Suh, and John Burden, DOI Chief Diversity Officer. Lori was recognized for her work in SAIGE,

as well as for local and agency diversity efforts. The awards presentation was the Kick-off event to DOI’s Diversity Days, a two-day event with a number of activities, honoring America’s heritage and culture.

### Colorado Front Range (CFR) SAIGE Chapter

On October 27, 2010, ten employees from various Federal agencies in the Denver/Boulder/Ft. Collins area met at Tocabe, an American Indian eatery, to discuss the formation of a Colorado chapter. All agreed to move forward and help with the 2012 training conference in Denver, CO. The following individuals volunteered to



Nancy Berryhill, Kurt Barton & Carl Etsitty (CFR Officers). Photo Credit: Georgia Madrid

serve as officers: President, Carl Etsitty, USDA APHIS; Vice President, Kurt Barton, BLM, Secretary, Nancy Berryhill, SSA and Treasurer, Christopher Carusona, DOE. If you are in the Colorado Front Range area and interested in joining, please email Carl at [carl.etsitty@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:carl.etsitty@aphis.usda.gov).

### Sue Marcus Receives Partners in Conservation Award

Read full article at USGS Newsroom: <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=2613>

Sue Marcus, now retired and SAIGE Board Member, was one of the awardees of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council-USGS Water Quality Monitoring Program. They were recognized for helping the people of the Yukon River Basin gain a better understanding of the river’s environmental health, increasing their skills and abilities in water quality sampling and empowering them as stewards of their environment. The Council supports the tribal and First Nations’ efforts to preserve the relatively pristine conditions of the Yukon River and their traditions, subsistence and economies.



## FILM REVIEW: All Roads Film Festival Features Indigenous Peoples

*Review by Sue Marcus*

The National Geographic's All Roads Film Festival screening in Washington, DC, included several films about Native Americans. *Up Heartbreak Hill* is a documentary that follows three Navajo students through their senior year of high school. Viewers watch their lives evolve, together and separately, as they strive to determine their future paths. Two of the students are athletes, training and competing on the hardscrabble dirt trails of the Rez. Each student struggles with family issues. Will they leave for college? Or not? If so, will they make a successful transition to college life?

Although most of the filming was done in 2007-2008, the outcomes—or what happened after they made their decisions—was brought out at the end of the film. Even more timely, the three students and the film's producer were part of a panel discussion. They spoke movingly of their current lives and their experiences with the transitions.

*We Live by the River* is a story of the peoples of the Yukon River watershed and how they have dealt with their changing environment. The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council includes 70 tribal and first nations governments in the US and Canada. Working together, and with support from the Environmental Protection Agency, the film documents the grassroots effort to clean up their watershed for the people and animals that depend on it. The Watershed Council has overseen

removal of toxic and hazardous waste, inspired youth and learned from elders about environmental stewardship especially necessary for life in remote, rural villages. The film shows the wide reach of the cleanup, which extends to formal and informal educational programs, international partnerships—including some with large companies—and scientific data-gathering. The Yukon River has been a highway for its people since time immemorial. Using canoes to bring the message of stewardship to the River's villages lead to cooperation between the Watershed Council and the U.S. Geological Survey to document the quality of the River's water. The canoes create no wake or pollution so, serendipitously, became a means of data gathering. The annual Healing Journey, by canoe, brings awareness to the needs to heal people, society, and the river.

Like the Heartbreak Hill film, the screening was followed by a discussion with Jon Waterhouse (Salish), Director of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council.

For More Information:

All Roads Film Festival: <http://events.nationalgeographic.com/events/all-roads/>

Up Heartbreak Hill: <http://www.upheartbreakhill.com/>

We Live by the River: <http://multinesia.wordpress.com/projects/we-live-by-the-river/>.

*Reel Injun*, another Indie film was also shown during the festival, though this reviewer did not see it. This 2009 film, which takes a lighthearted look at stereotypes, may be shown in November on the Public Broadcasting System.

### CALENDAR OF AMERICAN INDIAN EVENTS FOR 2011

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event/Conference</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>For More Information:</i>
<b>Feb. 2011</b>	American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) <b>Leadership</b> Conference	Albuquerque, NM	<a href="http://www.aises.org">www.aises.org</a>
<b>Apr. 16-19 2011</b>	American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) Spring Student Conference	Bismarck, ND	<a href="http://www.aihec.org">www.aihec.org</a>
<b>June 13-17, 2011</b>	Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) National Training Conference	Tulsa, OK	<a href="http://www.saige.org">www.saige.org</a>
<b>Oct. 27-30, 2011</b>	Society for the Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans (SACNAS) National Conference	San Jose, CA	<a href="http://www.sacnas.org">www.sacnas.org</a>
<b>Oct. 27-30, 2011</b>	National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Annual Convention	Albuquerque, NM	<a href="http://www.niea.org">www.niea.org</a>
<b>Oct. 30-Nov. 4, 2011</b>	National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Convention	Portland, OR	<a href="http://www.ncai.org">www.ncai.org</a>
<b>Nov. 10-12, 2011</b>	AISES National Conference	Minneapolis, MN	<a href="http://www.aises.org">www.aises.org</a> <b>7</b>

## About SAIGE

### THE TALKING LEAF NEWSLETTER

The *Talking Leaf* newsletter is a publication of SAIGE. The name Talking Leaf is derived from the Cherokee paper that Sequoyah started. We invite you to submit articles and provide suggestions and comments. Please send to Georgia Madrid at [georgia.madrid@noaa.gov](mailto:georgia.madrid@noaa.gov)

### MISSION

*To promote the recruitment, retention, development and advancement of American Indian and Alaska Native government employees, and work to ensure their equal treatment under the law; to educate federal agencies in the history and obligations of the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility and to assist them in its implementation; to assist government agencies in the development and delivery of initiatives and programs which honor the unique Federal-Tribal relationship; and to provide a national forum for issues and topics affecting American Indian and Alaska Native government employees.* For more information on SAIGE, please visit our website at [www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org).

SAIGE is on facebook!

### SAIGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Contact board at: [chair@saige.org](mailto:chair@saige.org)

#### OFFICER POSITIONS

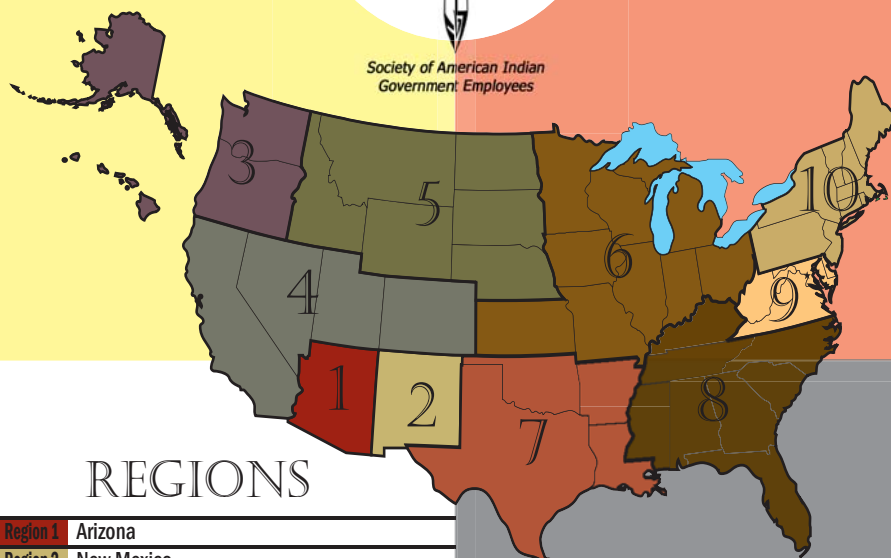
- Chair:** Danny Garceau (Lake Superior Chippewa ancestry) - [danieau@msn.com](mailto:danieau@msn.com)
- Vice Chair:** Lori Windle (White Earth Chippewa)
- Secretary:** Fredericka Joseph (Kaw Nation)
- Treasurer:** Shana Barehand (Mono)

#### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

- Shawna Clay (Choctaw)
- Phil Hamel (Mohawk ancestry)
- Miguel "Luke" Jones (Pamunkey, Chickahominy, Cherokee ancestry)
- Georgia Madrid (Taos Pueblo/ Navajo)
- Sue Marcus
- Duane Matt (Confederated Salish & Kootenai)
- Jinny Shulenberger (Echota Cherokee of Alabama/Creek)
- Brenda Takes Horse (Kenaitze)
- Veronica Vasquez (Chumash)
- Kimberly Yellow Robe (Rosebud Sioux)



Society of American Indian Government Employees



### REGIONS

Region 1	Arizona
Region 2	New Mexico
Region 3	Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii
Region 4	California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado
Region 5	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska
Region 6	Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
Region 7	Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana
Region 8	Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida
Region 9	Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Washington D.C.
Region 10	Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts

BECOME A MEMBER!

[www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org)

