



A vision...

Tribal Energy Sufficiency by the Year 2010 is the positive message of the National Indian Tribal Energy Vision that informs and motivates the activities of the Council of Energy Resource Tribes whose Board of elected leaders of North American energy Indian Tribes adopted in February 1999. This *Vision of Energy Sufficiency* came as a result of the work undertaken by the National Intertribal Energy Network that CERT and other regional intertribal organizations formed in 1998. With a history of injustice born of misguided federal control of Indian resources as the backdrop, and with a future of great promise for Indian Tribes in securing the blessings of energy self-determination as the foreground, Tribes, energy companies and federal officials joined together in the annual National Tribal Energy Roundtable and Summit.

The National Tribal Energy Summit 2000 took place in San Francisco, California at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero with a theme of "Indian Energy 2000: Cooperative Partnerships in a Competitive Marketplace." Sponsored by the Council of Energy Resource Tribes and Chaired by the Navajo Nation's President Kelsey Begaye, the summit provided the opportunity for an open exchange of information and views about the energy development opportunities for Indian Tribes — opportunity to secure their energy future; opportunity to diversify their local economies with ample supply of reasonably priced electric power; and opportunity to build energy ventures in partnership with private industry. Successful partnerships already developing between Tribes and energy companies were showcased at the Summit.

The Diné Power Authority, Wells Fargo Bank, Southern California Edison, El Paso Merchant Energy, Caterpillar International Power Systems, US Department of Energy, Peabody Coal, BHP, Pittsburgh & Midway Coal Mining Company, Arizona Public Service, Salt River Project, BP Amoco, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Sempra Energy, Texaco Natural Gas, Cook Inlet Energy and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory all made short presentations on the benefits of Tribal-industry partnerships. These presentations highlighted the fact that while embracing energy sufficiency built on a foundation of Tribal sovereignty, Indian Tribes across North America are beginning to use their

natural resources and their strategic geographic locations to achieve long-term benefits for their Tribal economies while also helping America achieve energy security.

The Department of Energy

"CERT has been around for 25 years," stated Derrick Watchman, director of Indian affairs for the US Department of Energy. "They've been influential in keeping the federal government apprised of energy issues. CERT has brought several areas of energy issues into focus to (then) Secretary Richardson and the Department of Energy. A lot of Tribes say that CERT is helpful. They form strong alliances with market players such as those participating at this National Indian Energy Summit." Former Secretary Richardson has endorsed the National Tribal Vision of Energy Sufficiency by 2010 and has begun a number of initiatives in its support (See RedEarth Magazine inaugural issue "Political Scene").

According to Watchman, the Department of Energy supports the establishment of an Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs with a specific mission to assist Tribes achieve energy sufficiency. The Secretary in his proposed energy legislation promoted the implementation of a minimum requirement of renewable energy by requiring that 7.5 percent of US electric power to be "green" power by the year 2010. In Richardson's proposal, Indian Country would get double tax credits as incentives to investors to develop Indian renewable energy resources. And the Department is continuing its initiative to fund Tribal renewable energy projects in fiscal year 2001.

In June of 2000, Secretary Bill Richardson announced the release of the Energy Information Administration's report on Indian Energy Consumption and Renewable Energy Development Potential on Indian. "This study catalogues, for the first time, the actual energy needs of Tribes, which historically have suffered from lack of access to electricity and other basic infrastructure needs," Richardson said. "I'm committed to helping the Tribes meet their own energy needs and to encouraging sustainable development. Every Tribe must have access to sufficient, affordable and reliable electricity."

In particular, this study showed that many Tribes are isolated and that serious economic development opportunities are limited because of a lack of equal access to services such as electricity. However, the study also showed a great potential for renewable energy development on some Tribal lands. A fact that when combined with Tribal conventional energy resources makes the Vision of energy sufficiency for America's Indian Nations a practical goal.

"Sixty-one Indian Reservations appear to have renewable resources that might be developed for power generation at a cost of less than two cents per kilowatt-hour above regional wholesale prices," according to information from the study. About half of the Native American population on Tribal lands live on these 61 Reservations. While increasing the cost of power for America's poorest may seem on the surface a counter productive alternative, it has some advantages. First, it eliminates the costs of transmission from distant generation sources creating greater efficiency and systems

"We need to continually make Tribes aware of the opportunities they have and help them to capitalize on their advantages. The business opportunities are what will bring the Tribes economic development and will make them self-sufficient. We have to bring the partners together because that is how opportunities are established."

*— Steve Grey, program manager,
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory*