

June 15, 2009
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NATIVE VOICE



Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians, 131 Benjamin Drive Moncks Corner, SC 29406

Healthcare Officials Here to Help You

The Center for Disability Resources @ USC School of Medicine – Ms. Karen Irick and her team will be holding one-on-one help sessions for the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians on Saturday, July 11, 2009 to ensure everyone who needs additional help to cover medication, healthcare costs, etc. are given resource assistance. Karen can work with people on medicare or disability to ensure they have the right/best coverage, people who need general or additional healthcare assistance for medications, as well as people who are self employed without insurance to help to get you medical benefits and medications that you need.

Anyone who would like to ensure they are getting the best coverage through Medicare, anyone who needs help to get help with medications, and anyone who would like to find resources to assist with medical needs not covered by Medicare should call so they can meet one-on-one for health care assistance. So we can ensure that there is no wait time for your personalized meeting, please call Loretta Leach so she can schedule a time for you to come to the Tribal Office on July 11 to have someone meet with you. Her number is 843-509-4685. Or you can email the tribe at wassamasaw@hotmail.com. We encourage all tribal members, especially the elders, to take advantage of this help that is being provided to our tribal members.

Upcoming Events in July.....

July 6, 2009 – All nominations are due for upcoming tribal elections. Nominations are accepted by mail or by email. Please remember that potential candidates must be active tribal members and must meet qualifications for nomination as outlined in the tribal by-laws: *All nominees must currently be an active member of the tribe. An active member is defined as a member who has volunteered and participated in all tribal meetings and events held during the previous 12 months. (Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).*

July 6, 2009 – Our State Recognition Petition to upgrade from Group Status to Tribal Status will be reviewed. We encourage all tribal members who can make it to attend the review in Columbia at the Commission for Minority Affairs. If you would like directions, please contact Lisa Leach at 843-364-7041.

July 11, 2009 – Health Care Assistance Sessions starting at 10 AM at the Tribal Office. Please see Article in this newsletter regarding how these sessions can help you. We strongly encourage tribal members to set up a session to ensure they get resources available to them. Also, on this date, the current Executive Board will meet with all potential nominees for the upcoming election. A letter will be sent to these nominees letting them know of the meeting timeframe.

July 18-25, 2009: United Methodist Church will be working within the community helping to repair up to 4 homes. Please see Article in this newsletter outlining the details of this program. A tribal potluck / fish fry dinner will be held for us to thank the volunteers for their help in improving our community. Please show your support!

July 25, 2009 – Tribal elections will be held at the tribal office from 10 AM – 3:30 PM. Please remember that you will need to bring your picture Tribal Card to be eligible to vote.

Varnertown Community Development: Home Repairs

The United Methodist Church sponsors a program called the Salkehatchie Work Camp. This program is aimed at identifying damaged and unsafe conditions in the home and making these repairs for community members in need. Tribal Member Chris Weik is a part of this program and helped to bring this resource to our community. Tribal members who reached out to the tribe for home assistance and who qualified for this program have been placed on the list and representatives from the organization have done onsite visits and are choosing homes that meet the requirements and skills of the workers in the camp. We deeply appreciate any help that this organization can give our community members. We will be showing our appreciation on Wednesday, July 15th.

From the Desk of Lisa...

I have been receiving many calls about the Tribal election scheduled for the last Saturday of July. There seems to be some misinformation circulating in the community about who is eligible to run on the ballot and who can vote. By our by-laws, any bloodline member who has been an active member of the tribe can run for elected office. Active member means that as a member, you have supported the tribe by participating in the events and programs for the last 12 months. The executive board felt that it would be extremely difficult for any member to be effective in any position of the board if they had no idea what the tribal goals are and what we as a board and a tribe have been doing to meet these goals for the last year. Nominees will meet with the board at a scheduled time to make sure they have met these requirements before adding them to the ballot. Any member 18 years and old with a current tribal card can vote in the election. This means that you **MUST** have a current tribal card with a picture ID to vote. We informed the whole community and membership in 2006 and every tribal event since, that the new picture ID card was mandatory. The cut off for current members to get their new cards and be able to vote in the election was January 15, 2009. The next set of ID cards will be issued on July 31st for current members. The only persons that are exempted from this requirement are new members and those persons turning 18 years old and needing their ID cards. There is an amendment that will be placed on the ballot this year. The amendment is to vote whether to reinstate tribal membership dues. In the past we had a requirement of membership dues to keep a member status as active. The tribe voted to not charge membership dues because of complaints that persons could not afford the fee. We tried to offer a program of volunteer hours to waive the fee, but community and family members did not participate in the program. Now, after recognition and the increase of availability of programs, the tribe needs to be able to support programs such as facility rental, outreach, and information dissemination. As we apply for grants and other resources, we are asked to supply information on how we are able as an organization to continue to support such programs. Most organizations have the ability to support themselves through membership dues and fundraisers. Therefore, the board has decided to place on the ballot the option to reinstate tribal dues of \$25.00 per year. This is basically \$2.00 PER MONTH. If every member paid their dues, we would have about \$6500 per year to help support our tribe and community. Please pray that the board and elected officials continue to work together for the common good of the community. We strive to bring resources and promote advancement for the Varnertown Indian people. ----Sincerely, Lisa Leach

Please Help the Tribe By Participating in Our Fundraisers:

Tribal T-Shirts for Sale: Colors are Black or Grey. Tribal Name on Front and Tribal Seal on Back of Shirt. All Sizes Selling for \$15.00. Koolzies with Tribal Name and Seal also for sale. For more information or to order, please contact Janie Shumak @ 843-553-1993



What Have We Accomplished Since 2005?

It is hard to believe that 4 years have already gone by since our last tribal election. For the tribal members who have been participating in tribal activities and meetings, we see how much has been accomplished and how far we have come. For other members, who have not reached out and fully participated in tribal activities, there may be questions on what has been done over the past 4 years. We would never be able to write in one article all the hard work and efforts that have taken place, but we will highlight for you a few of the bigger accomplishments. Also included are some snippets from Newspaper Articles, to show how significant some of these accomplishments have been:

State Recognition as Native American Group:

Newspaper Article: State recognition first step in bringing better services to local Native Americans, region's tribal leaders say

"The leader of one of four newly state-recognized Native American tribes says the designation serves as a stepping stone toward increased economic development and revitalization of tribal heritage.

The Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians was one of six entities that applied in the first round of recognition since the legislators approved the process in May 2004. South Carolina had not recognized any Native American tribes until this year..."

Wassamasaw Tribe Awarded Apprenticeship Grant:

Newspaper Article: Tammy Hutto of Orangeburg County, SC, Completes South Carolina Arts Commission's Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Initiative

"Tammy Hutto, a member of the Varnertown Indian community and a resident of Orangeburg County, is learning Native American traditional beadwork from Dr. Goins, a Native American of Cherokee descent. Dr. Goins of the Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois and United Tribes of South Carolina, Inc., under a grant awarded to the Wassamasaw Indian Tribe of Varnertown by the South Carolina Arts Commission serves the apprentice by imparting his artistic prowess, technique, advisement, wisdom, skills and assistance in learning this ancient form of expression..."

Tribal Office:

The tribal office located at Benjamin Drive was dedicated in 2006. Building provided by in kind donation by Mr. Jimmie Leach.

Tribal Website:

All Tribal Members can now check the status of meeting and events online at www.wassamasawtribe.com or at www.wassamasawtribe.org. This website also helps support our efforts in informing others of our mission and contributions to the community.

Strategic Planning & grant writing training classes for tribe.

Members who submitted or participated in Books/Videos Published:

SC Native Pathways – A Visitor's & Resource Guide to American Indian Heritage & Historical Sites in South Carolina: Community historic sites, churches and cemeteries listed.
SC Native American Cooking: Submissions by tribal members, Loretta Leach and Chris Weik
SC Native American Sacred Music Concert and Statewide Indian Gospel Sing: The tribe participated and helped to sponsor event at Charleston Southern University.

Governor's Proclamations:

We are specifically listed as a Native American Group in all Governors Proclamations for November as Native American Heritage Month

"...currently, five tribes, the Waccamaw Indian People, the Pee Dee Indian Nation of Upper South Carolina, the Pee Dee Indian Tribe of South Carolina, the Santee Indian Organization and the Beaver Creek Indians; six groups, the Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois & United Tribes of South Carolina, Inc., the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians, the Chaloklowa Chickasaw Indian People, the Piedmont American Indian Association, Lower Eastern Cherokee Nation of South Carolina, the Natchez Tribe of South Carolina, and the Pee Dee Indian Tribe of Beaver Creek..."

State Historical Marker erected in 2007 with the efforts of Ms. Heidi Varner and the Berkeley Historical Society.

Needs Assessment Survey:

Newspaper Article: Effort underway to strengthen state's American Indian communities

"COLUMBIA — The state Commission for Minority Affairs is trying to get a better handle on how many American Indians live in South Carolina and what they need to make their communities stronger. American Indians in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties are invited Saturday to a needs-assessment survey. The event is being hosted by the Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians and the Edisto Tribe..."

501 © 3 Status Gained by the diligent efforts of Ms. Janie Shumak, CFO for the tribe.

New Tribal Cards Distributed in 2006 and presently by Ms. Tammy Hutto, enrollment officer.

GED classes began in 2008 at the Community Center with the efforts of Ms. Heidi Varner and Ms. Molly Varner.

Many **cultural classes** through the years for regalia making, beadwork, drumming and dance.

From The Desk of Your Spiritual Leader, Charles E. Rodgers, Sr.

Hi Everyone - This is a poem I wrote back in 2000:

DOWN THE ROAD OF LIFE WE GO, MEETING PEOPLE WE DO NOT KNOW,
A FRIEND WE SAY, HOW NICE IT SOUNDS, CROSSING THE DISTANCE BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS;

THEIR VOICE IS LIKE THE SUMMER BREEZE, TICKLING THE LEAVES UPON THE TREES,
LIKE WATER TRICKLING IN A BROOK, THAT LOVELY VOICE, NEVER BE MISTOOK;

TRUTH IS A VIRTUE OF A FRIEND, SOMEONE UPON WHOM YOU CAN DEPEND,
AN EAR TO HEAR THE WORDS YOU SAY, FINDING TIME TO LAUGH AND TIME TO PLAY;

BE KIND, YOU HEAR, BE KIND, I SAY, FOR FRIENDS DON'T COME BY EVERYDAY,
BUT WHEN THEY DO, BE SURE YOU SEE, THAT SURELY THIS FRIEND WAS MEANT FOR ME!

I am sure we all have special friends in our life, but let me tell you about a friend that sticks closer than a brother. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He will be with us, no matter what we are facing in life. And that person's name is JESUS. So may God's blessings be upon us all, and if you don't have the peace within of knowing Christ as your personal Savior, I pray that will be a reality in your life.

Wassamasaw Tribe

of Varnertown Indians

131 Benjamin Drive

Moncks Corner, SC 29461

Events are always posted online at:

www.wassamasawtribe.com

You can reach the tribe by email at:

wassamasaw@hotmail.com

*For tribal questions, please
contact: 843.364.7041*
