



MESSAGE FROM THE SAIGE CHAIR

Fredericka Joseph

GREETINGS!

In a short six weeks, SAIGE will be hosting their 21st Annual National Training Program (NTP) at the Northern Quest in Spokane, WA from June 3-6, 2024. The Board of Directors are working hard to complete confirmation of our speakers and trainers. Our theme for this year's event is: "Affirming Native Voices, Visibility-Leadership-Service."

For the first time we have three Co-Chairs working together to bring experts to our plenary sessions and presenters who are subject matter experts to our training tracks which include: Federal Indian Law/Indian Country; Natural Resources/Culture; Equal Employment Opportunity/ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility; and Professional Development.

If you work with tribes or are serving in Special Emphasis Programs, work in Civil Rights or Human Resources or are interested in the American Indian/ Alaska Native community this is the training you need to attend.

I encourage you to read the articles on pages 2-4 of this newsletter about the current line-up of presenters and sessions for both the General Track and Warrior Society Program. We offer training that is not typical, but I can guarantee you will walk away at the end of the week with a positive attitude and a new view of what is going on in Indian country.

Our Student Program will be hosting 30 students ranging from ages 20 -25. These students come from colleges and universities across the country and are searching for knowledge and career opportunities. The Career Day on Wednesday is a great opportunity for your agency to purchase a booth to highlight your agency's mission and careers. It is also a great opportunity to offer internships to students while they are in college and begin pipelining them into your agency.

We want to thank our partners and sponsors who have made a personal commitment to support our mission. Without these partners or sponsors we wouldn't be able to offer this

national training event. SAIGE appreciates your continued support and commitment.

I also want to thank the planning committee for their hard work in ensuring invitation and agreement letters were sent in a timely manner to our invited speakers. They worked hard in coordinating and collaborating between speaker's topics and dates for their presentations. I want to thank the Board of Directors for serving as committee leads. It takes a village to plan and execute a training program on a large scale and this year they far exceeded the task.

Remember to reserve your room by May 20th, Call 866-298-1941 and ask for the SAIGE Block to register. The rooms are at per diem rate for our government employees. Be sure and go to Eventbrite to register to attend our NTP.

We look forward to seeing you in Spokane June 3-6, 2024! Safe travels!

WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE SAIGE 2024 NTP

Transformative Professional Development Meets Native American Cultural Enrichment: The SAIGE National Training Program Beckons

As June approaches, a remarkable opportunity emerges for those eager to intertwine professional growth with the rich tapestry of Native American culture. SAIGE proudly presents its 21st annual National Training Program (NTP), a one-of-a-kind event set against the stunning backdrop of Spokane, WA, at the Northern Quest Hotel, owned by the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. This year's theme, "Affirming Native Voices: Visibility-Leadership-Service," encapsulates the essence of the event, held June 3-6, 2024. You will find this event promises to be an immersive and enlightening experience for participants hailing from diverse governmental backgrounds.

The SAIGE NTP commences on Monday, June 3rd, which will be a travel day for most people. Attendees will have time to settle in, check-in at registration, and see an introduction to the mission of SAIGE. The day culminates in a culturally enriching kick-off reception, setting the tone for the days ahead, where people network and enjoy good food and fellowship.

The NTP opens on Tuesday morning, including an early morning ceremony to ensure a week free of negativity. The solemnity of the occasion is marked by the Spokane VFW Color Guard's ceremonial flag posting, signaling the program's official commencement. Fredericka Joseph, SAIGE Chair, will welcome attendees and illuminate the week's itinerary.



Photo: Chuck Sams,
National Park Service

Chuck Sams, the first Native American Director of the National Park Service, will offer an update on co-stewardship of public lands at the Interior Department. Stephen Pevar, renowned for his legal expertise in advocating for Indigenous peoples, will focus on the rights of Indians and Tribes. Arlando Teller, Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs at the Department of Transportation, will delve into crucial topics like Tribal Transportation Safety.



Photo: Arlando Teller,
Dept. of Transportation

There will be a diverse array of afternoon breakout sessions covering topics in Federal Indian Law, Equal Opportunity/Diversity, Professional Development, and Natural and Cultural Resources. For example, luminaries like Kristine Harper of the USDA Forest Service will shed light on Colville Tribe land arrangements. At the same time, Nieva Brock, the first Native American Associate General Counsel for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and Senior Counsel at the Defense Intelligence Agency will impart invaluable insights on Effective Leadership Strategies particularly in times of crisis. Popular experts such as Dexter Brooks from the EEOC and Cynthia Dunn from the IRS will give spirited sessions bound to motivate you.



Photo: Dexter Brooks,
EEOC

The NTP also concurrently hosts a dedicated Student Program, providing Native American college students with a unique opportunity to gain firsthand experience in understanding the positive role that Native employees can have in agencies and to explore careers within the Federal Government. Led by JoAnn Brant of the Environmental Protection Agency, this 19-year



Photo: Cynthia Dunn, IRS

program provides leadership training, networking, and mentorship opportunities. The Student Program culminates in a career fair on Wednesday afternoon, where they visit with recruiters from government agencies and other institutions.

The SAIGE Warrior Program, spearheaded by Ed Blauvelt, Nieva Brock, and Jeff Johnson, offers a platform for leadership development and personal growth for our military warriors. See the Warrior Program article in this newsletter, pages 3-4, to read more about the program.

The 2024 SAIGE NTP is an unparalleled opportunity to engage, learn, and grow in a supportive and inclusive environment. By joining us in Spokane, you will embark on an unforgettable journey that will leave a lasting impact on both personal and professional fronts. If you are considering one professional development event this year, make it the SAIGE NTP. For more registration and hotel booking information, see our event page at saigettraining.org.





From the SAIGE Warrior Society
 Director
 Edward Blauvelt

2024 SAIGE NTP - Warrior Society Program

In the realm of professional development and empowerment, few opportunities offer the unique blend of cultural enrichment, leadership insights, and practical knowledge as the SAIGE NTP. During the NTP, there is a special day on June 6th; Warrior’s Day! Set against the picturesque backdrop of Spokane, WA, this event promises a transformative experience for attendees from diverse backgrounds. Here’s why you should mark your calendar for this invaluable gathering.

Cultural Enrichment and Identity Affirmation

The SAIGE NTP is not just another training event; it’s a celebration of our Native heritage and resilience. Participants can connect with their cultural roots by attending, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. Through engaging workshops, discussions, and performances, attendees gain a deeper understanding of Native American traditions, values, and contemporary issues. This cultural immersion enriches personal identity and promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among attendees.

In addition to inspirational talks, the SAIGE NTP offers diverse workshops and sessions tailored to address pressing issues affecting Indigenous communities and military personnel, such as Federal Law and Policy, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Professional Development, Cultural and Natural Resources, and Student and the Warrior Programs.

Warrior Program Leadership Perspectives from Distinguished Speakers



Photo: Major General William E. Souza III



Photo: CSM Eric Chastain

The lineup of guest speakers at the Warrior Program is nothing short of remarkable, featuring esteemed leaders from various spheres focusing their presentation on how we can be visible and valued leaders in service to our nation and what it takes to get there. Warriors will learn about new initiatives, programs, and personal journeys to assist in building their leadership qualities, networking with others, and critical insights for future success. Major General William E. Souza III’s keynote address sets the tone for the event, offering invaluable insights into visible leadership and service. Complementing his perspective, Sergeant Major Eric Chastain, U.S. Army White House Senior Enlisted Advisor will provide an enlisted leadership viewpoint, bridging the gap between ranks and emphasizing the importance of mentorship and camaraderie.

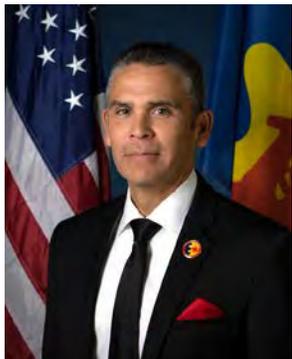


Photo: Mark Woommavovah, Comanche Chair, and former Army Lt. Colonel



Photo: Ms. Jacqueline Melcher, Indigenous Nations Equality Team

Mr. Mark Woommavovah, Comanche Chair, and former Army Lt. Colonel brings a Native American leadership perspective, highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Indigenous leaders in today’s world. Through his experiences and wisdom, attendees gain invaluable lessons on navigating professional landscapes while staying true to their cultural heritage.

From the Indigenous Nations Equality Team (INET), Ms. Jacqueline Melcher and Master Sergeant Frances Dupris will discuss the mission and goals of an all-volunteer organization aligned under Headquarters Air Force. INET serves as a resource group for the indigenous nation’s community, reviewing and analyzing guidelines, programs, data, and other information that stand as barriers to employment, advancement, and retention of American Indian, Native American, and Alaska Native employees and military members. Major Patrick Sorensen and Staff Sergeant Marvis LaMere will delve into the complexities of military cultural waivers, shedding light on the nuances

Continued on page 4

of cultural diversity within the armed forces. By equipping attendees with a deeper understanding of these issues, the program empowers them to advocate for inclusivity and equity within military structures. Rounding out our speakers is Ms. Emily Stulz, from the University of Maine, who holds a vital discussion on suicide awareness and prevention strategies for attendees to gain practical knowledge and tools to effect positive change in their respective spheres of influence.

Recognition and Inspiration

The Warrior Program culminates with a luncheon and the prestigious 2024 SAIGE Military Meritorious Service Award presentation, honoring ten military and veterans who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and service. This celebration of excellence

is a source of inspiration for attendees, motivating them to strive for greatness in their endeavors.

The SAIGE NTP is a beacon of empowerment, enlightenment, and inspiration for Indigenous individuals and military personnel. Through its unique blend of cultural enrichment, leadership perspectives, practical knowledge, and recognition, the event offers an unparalleled opportunity for personal and professional growth. Attendees will depart with enhanced skills, insights, and a renewed sense of purpose and pride in their heritage. Don't miss out on this transformative experience—join us in Spokane and embark on a journey of empowerment and excellence.



Photo: Major Patrick Sorensen



Photo: Dr. Emily Stulz

Pioneering Inclusivity: Native Representation in the Military

Hensci Warriors!

Our Warriors have made a transformative stride towards inclusivity within the U.S. military service branches. Recent changes in military regulations have granted Native American service members the right to wear traditional regalia during specific events and ceremonies. This pivotal shift, outlined in DAFI 36-2903, marks a milestone in recognizing and respecting the cultural heritage of indigenous service members within the armed forces.

Leading the charge are individuals like Ms. Jacqueline Melcher, (Oglala Lakota) from the 88th Civil Engineers Group, Major Patrick Sorensen (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde) from the U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command, Master Sergeant Francis Dupris (Sicangu Lakota and enrolled Northern Arapaho) from the U.S. Space Force, and Staff Sergeant Marvis LaMere (Nakoda, Aaniiih, Cree and Chippewa), a U.S. Space Force Recruiter. Together, they have initiated pivotal changes to foster a more inclusive environment for Native American service members in the military. In an exclusive interview, Ms. Mechler and Major

Sorensen shed light on their journeys and motivations for advocating for these changes.

Launching these changes within the Air Force and Space Force was Ms. Jacqueline Melcher and her Indigenous Nations Equality Team (INET). Ms. Melcher hails from the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and her role as the civilian Co-Lead of INET, together with MSgt Dupris as the senior enlisted Co-Lead and INET team member SSgt LaMere, highlights the collaborative effort of INET to advocate for policy changes and cultural recognition. A 20-year military spouse and DAF employee Ms. Melcher's dedication to advancing indigenous rights within military institutions is unwavering.

Through INET's initiatives, significant strides have been made in policy changes and cultural awareness programs, fostering partnerships with recruiting services and expanding outreach to tribal communities. The impact extends beyond policy reforms, with INET spearheading cultural shifts within the Air Force and Space Force, challenging the appropriation of Native American symbols, and fostering a more respectful

and inclusive environment for indigenous service members. Ms. Mechler told me, "INET hasn't just advocated for policy change; we have shifted the "culture" in the Air Force/Space Force. Senior enlisted leadership is taking a hard look at, and even eliminating, the use of Native American icons/symbology."

Ms. Melcher's vision for the future is one of continued growth and empowerment, with indigenous voices at the forefront of advocacy and policy reform. The recognition received by INET, including the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Government Partnership Award, underscores the importance of grassroots efforts in effecting systemic change.

Aside from Policy changes, INET established an excellent relationship with the Air Force Recruiting Services and was invited to the 372 RCG Annual Conference in November 2023. Ms. Melcher said, "We briefed over 800 hundred of their members on INET initiatives and educated them on Indigenous cultures/values. We've partnered with them to expand their recruiting area to tribal communities and reservations."

From the SAIGE Warrior Society Director - Pioneering Inclusivity: Native Representation in the Military

Accompanying Ms. Melcher in this transformative journey is Major Patrick Sorensen. Hailing from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Oregon, Major Sorensen shared the harrowing history of his tribe's forced removal from ancestral lands. Despite adversities, their resilience and determination have fueled efforts to reclaim their cultural identity and heritage; Sorensen's journey embodies resilience and cultural pride. Major Sorensen traces his ancestry back to the Rogue River and Umpqua peoples.

Reflecting on his motivations, Major Sorensen recounted his unexpected, but welcomed first encounter with INET members. MSgt Dupris was recording the audience at the American Indian Science and Engineering Society conference (AISES); Maj Sorensen was doing his war cry and said, "Hey Air Force!" MSgt Dupris invited Maj Sorensen to the Air Force's panel and the Government Relations Council. During the talking circle and panel, MSgt Dupris and Mrs. Melcher talked about the religious accommodations. This sparked Maj Sorensen's desire to apply it in the Army and the rest is history. Major Sorensen began working with the United States Military Academy at West

Point to establish a Native American graduation ceremony, a testament to the importance of honoring indigenous traditions within military institutions. Major Sorensen told me, "The biggest thing we can do is embrace our cultural hair and other customs." His advocacy extends beyond ceremonial recognition; Major Sorensen aims to raise awareness about the possibility of ethnic and cultural accommodations for Native Americans, challenging archaic policies that restrict practices integral to their identity.

The impact of Major Sorensen's actions is reverberating throughout the military community, with dozens of service members reaching out for assistance in navigating the accommodation process. His efforts underscore the importance of representation and empowerment for indigenous soldiers, paving the way for a more inclusive and culturally sensitive environment within the armed forces. Major Sorensen said, "The future is strong. I'm very proud to join in and continue the accommodation work spearheaded by the Air Force INET team, to whom I also owe a huge debt of gratitude."

As we reflect on the journey of Ms. Melcher, Major Sorensen, and their fellow advocates, we are reminded of the resilience and strength inherent in our Native American communities. Their tireless efforts to reclaim cultural identity and advocate for equitable treatment serve as a beacon of hope for future generations of Native American service members.

The recent changes in military regulations regarding wearing traditional regalia represent a significant step toward honoring indigenous traditions and fostering a more inclusive environment within the armed forces. Through the dedication and advocacy of individuals like Major Sorensen, Ms. Melcher, MSgt Dupris, and SSgt LaMere, we move closer to realizing a future where Native American service members can proudly embrace their cultural heritage while serving their country.

Thank you, Warriors, for your ardent work emphasizing the importance of Native American culture in our military. Your achievements are vital and inspiring to us all. Mvto!

SAIGE Warrior Knighted into Order of St George by United States Armor Association

In a distinguished ceremony at Fort Irwin, CA, Staff Sergeant Evan Blauvelt, an esteemed member of the military community, has been bestowed with the prestigious Saint George medallion. This accolade marks a significant milestone in his career, symbolizing his exceptional contributions to the United States Army's mounted force.

As a Lifetime SAIGE member and recipient of the 2023 SAIGE Military Meritorious Service award, Staff Sergeant Blauvelt has consistently demonstrated unwavering dedication and exemplary service. His recent knighthood into the U.S. Army's Order of St George by the United States Armor Association stands as a testament to his outstanding achievements.

The Saint George medallion, named in honor of the legendary patron of mounted warriors, is the highest honor bestowed

upon members of the Army's mounted force.

The medallion, presented in varying levels of prestige—black, bronze, silver, and gold—reflects the recipient's eligibility and meritorious service. Staff Sergeant Blauvelt's remarkable performance at the National Training Center with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, coupled with his leadership as Dealer company's serving as Platoon Sergeant for First Platoon, has earned him the distinguished black medallion.

The significance of this award extends beyond mere recognition; it underscores Staff Sergeant Blauvelt's profound dedication and exceptional leadership within the cavalry and armor domain. His name now joins the roster of distinguished soldiers, a testament to his exemplary

service and commitment to the Army's mission.

Staff Sergeant Evan Blauvelt's induction into the Order of St George exemplifies the pinnacle of achievement within the cavalry and armor community. His unwavering commitment and outstanding service reflect great credit upon himself, Fort Irwin, and the United States Army as a whole.



SAIGE Student Program Update

This year, SAIGE awarded two Carol Jorgenson Scholarships. The recipients are Aiyanne Tanyan and Denise Flores-Frazier. Each student received \$1000.00.

Aiyanne Tanyan is from Wewoka, Oklahoma, also known as Barking Water. She is an enrolled Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and Mvskoke Creek member. She received an associate's degree in Natural Resources of Sustainable Agriculture from the College of Muscogee Nation. She is attending the Haskell Indian Nations University, working on her Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science. She anticipated graduation in May 2025.

Denise Flores-Frazier is an enrolled member of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and a full-time student at Haskell University pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science. Through the HERS2023 Internship, She was able to research an environmental issue that was affecting her tribe and their resources, explore her interest in prehistoric aquatic life, and restore her connection with the environment.

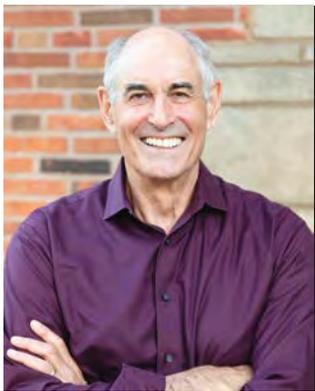
The Rights of Indians and Tribes by Stephen Pevar

Stephen Pevar recently published the 5th edition of his authoritative and popular book, *The Rights of Indians and Tribes*. Stephen is generously offering SAIGE an opportunity to benefit from sales of his updated book.

The 540-page book discusses every significant issue in federal Indian law. This book sells for \$29.95. Stephen will personally autograph the book if ordered from his website:

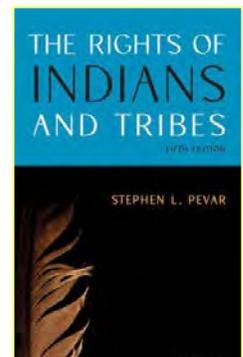
<https://www.therightsofindiansandtribes.com>

SAIGE will receive a part of the proceeds of each book sold. After you click on "Buy Now," you will be asked if you want the book autographed. Click "Yes." Then, in the autograph box, place SAIGE followed by the name of the person receiving the book. Stephen will sign the book to that person and share some of the proceeds with SAIGE as a donation. This does not increase the price of the book for you.



Also, you can send this information to your friends and relatives and suggest that they purchase the book by entering SAIGE in the autograph box. Each of those books will also generate money for SAIGE.

The back cover of Stephen's book contains several testimonials, including one from Lori Windle: "I highly recommend this book. Many federal employees, including myself, rely on it. The book gives clear, useful, and well-documented answers for anyone approaching the vast and often intimidating subject of federal Indian law."



Stephen has been a friend of SAIGE for many years, and we are proud that he will be a keynote speaker at our National Training Program in Spokane in June. Thank you to Stephen for these generous contributions to SAIGE.

SAIGE NTP SILENT AUCTION

The Silent Auction has been part of the SAIGE National Training Program for many years. All auction proceeds go to the Carol Jorgenson Scholarship for Native students. Now's your chance to join the fun. If you make Native crafts, have surplus Native-made items, or even want to purchase Native-made items to donate to the auction, we are inviting your donations. Donations may be tax deductible. Please contact Sue Marcus at akumaldream@gmail.com for further details. Coming to the Training Program? Bid early and often at the auction. Do good and have fun doing it!

In Memoriam - Herb Webb

It is with deep sadness that I share the news of Mr. Herbert "Herb" Webb's passing on Saturday, January 6, 2024, at St. Patrick's Hospital in Missoula. Herb was a cherished member of the Society of American Indian Government Employees and a talented artist whose contributions have left a lasting impact on our community. His Meritorious Military Award feather shadow boxes and SAIGE drums and drumsticks are some of the most prized awards within our communities and military circles.



He graduated from high school in Wagner, OK, attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and completed his master's in Range Management from North Dakota State University.

On May 27, 1989, Herb married Vickey Skelton in Chinook, MT. Herb retired from USDA on December 31, 2022, after 39 years having worked in Choteau, Chinook, and Ronan/Pablo. Herb was active in the Facebook group the Cardiac Athletes

and was a member of AIANEA and SAIGE. Herb was very artistic and created shadow boxes and awards for AIANEA and SAIGE. He did custom framing and matting and created art in many different mediums, including pen and ink, beads, watercolors, and many others. Herb also worked with taxidermy and was proficient in carpentry and woodworking. Herb enjoyed fishing Flathead Lake with his brothers-in-law, playing poker with friends, and attending mountain man rendezvous. He had a great sense of humor and loved pulling a fast one on friends and family.

Herb was not only a dedicated member of our organization, serving as a Term Board member, but also an individual whose passion for his work and commitment to the betterment of our society were truly commendable. He was a bright and shining light, full of joy and good humor, and his dedication to SAIGE was unwavering.

Herb's wife, Vickey said, "He loved going to SAIGE and AIANEA and doing the awards. He loved talking to the people at those meetings. He loved the people at those meetings. You were all very important to him."

His years of service and the valuable insights he brought to our discussions will be sorely missed.

Vickey told us that Herb did not want a funeral or service; however, if anyone wanted to do something in Herb's name, please donate in his name to the SAIGE or AIANEA scholarship funds. He very much believed in these organizations. Or you could help someone in need.



Photo: Herb Webb (standing with blue shirt) with 2016 SAIGE Board Members.

SAIGE IN THE NEWS



Photo: Nieva (ribbon skirt) and training participants at Harvard.

Nieva Brock, SAIGE BOD member, was selected by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency to attend a 60-hour certificate program at Harvard University. The program was called *Leading When it Matters Most* at the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative of Harvard University. The program provided in-depth clinical and practical education, training, and networking with the

Nation's leaders in crisis management. Nieva attended in her role as a Senior Counsel in the Intelligence Community but made sure to represent SAIGE in her graduation ceremony! Congratulations Nieva!



Photo: Nieva, White Earth Nation Chairman, Michael Fairbanks, and Freddie

Freddie Joseph, SAIGE Chair and Nieva Brock attended a U.S. Navy ceremony naming a ship in honor of the late Master Chief James D. Fairbanks, White Earth Nation, on February 21, 2024 at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

Read more: [U.S. Navy names ship in honor of Master Chief James D. Fairbanks, White Earth Nation citizen | MPR News](#)



Mitchelene BigMan, Founder of Native American Women Warriors, was recently selected as Top Advocate of the Year for Veterans and Native Americans for 2024 by the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP) for her outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to the industry. Mitchelene received a **SAIGE Meritorious Service Award in 2012** for her efforts in advocacy and representation.

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ONE STEP AHEAD



We are proud to support the Society of American Indian Government Employees and their 21st Annual National Training Program.

 BlueCross
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Federal Employee Program. fepblue.org

UPCOMING NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN CONFERENCES

- Native American Fish & Wildlife Society National Conference, May-13-16, 2024, St. Paul, MN, <https://nafws.org/product/2024-national-conference/>
- National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 2024 Mid-Year Convention & Marketplace, June 1- 6, 2024, Cherokee, NC at Harrah's Cherokee <https://www.ncai.org/event/2024-mid-year-convention-and-marketplace>
- The National UNITY Conference, June 29 – July 3, 2024, Portland, OR, <https://unityinc.org/national-conference/>
- Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress (NYCALC), June 23-28, 2024, Shepherdstown, WV. This program is created in partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Forest Service, and New Mexico Wildlife Federation. <https://www.nycalc.org/>
- The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) 2024 Biennial National Tribal and Indigenous Climate Conference (NTICC), September 9 -12, 2024, Anchorage, AK, https://sites.google.com/view/nticc2024/home_1
- AISES National Conference, October 3 - 5, 2024, San Antonio, TX, www.aises.org
- National Indian Education Association, October 9-12, 2024, Palm Springs, CA, <https://www.niea.org/>
- SACNAS National Diversity in STEM Conference, October 31- November 2, 2024, Phoenix, AZ, <https://www.sacnas.org/conference>



Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

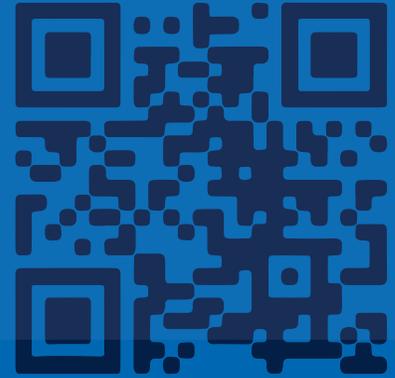
At OSMRE, we ensure that coal mines are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment and assure that the land is restored to beneficial use. We mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.

Interns and recent graduates are needed nationwide. Come join our team:
<https://www.osmre.gov/get-involved>





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²Application and disbursement for Signature will result in up to a 1% discount. Application and disbursement for an Auto Loan will result in a .25% discount. Application must be made within the first 90 days of membership. No discount may take the rate under the floor rate in accordance with FedChoice Federal Credit Union's rate floor policy. All credit is subject to approval. FedChoice normal underwriting requirements apply. This discount may not be combined with any other offers and is subject to change at any time. Please speak with a Financial Service Advisor for full terms and conditions in relation to this offer. Not everyone will qualify for the lowest loan rates. Final rate will be determined by creditworthiness of the applicant.

³Member must be employed by a federal agency. Verification of employment will be required and there is a required amount of disposable income. Additional underwriting requirements may apply.

All offers subject to change at anytime. Membership required to take advantage of offers.

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SAIGE PARTNER - Fed Choice

The Credit Union Advantage: What's the Difference

Everyone's heard of traditional banks, but not everyone's heard of credit unions. They both deal with money, but they are not the same. At FedChoice Federal Credit Union, we believe in ensuring that people understand key differences in their banking options and why credit unions like ours offer benefits that can make a real difference in your financial journey.

So, what sets credit unions apart from banks? Let's break it down:

Ownership and Structure: Banks are typically owned by a corporation which consists of employees and (more importantly) shareholders and investors seeking profits. Credit unions are member-owned cooperatives which means they put the needs and interests of their membership above all else.

Community Focus: Credit unions have deep roots in the communities they serve. For example, FedChoice was founded nearly 90 years ago by federal employees, so we understand the unique challenges they face. From offering financial education programs to participating in local initiatives, credit unions play an active role in fostering economic growth and member empowerment.

Personalized Service: One of the most significant advantages of credit unions is the personalized service they provide. Unlike larger banks where customers are often treated as just another account number, credit unions will take the time to understand your unique financial needs and goals. Whether you're opening a savings account, applying for a loan, or simply seeking financial advice, you'll receive personalized attention and support every step of the way.

Working Together: You'll find that credit unions are good at working together. Shared Branching gives you access to your accounts at locations across the nation. With shared branching, you can visit any credit union that participates in the network and access your accounts just like you would at your home branch. Plus, our network of ATMs allows you to withdraw cash, check your balance, and make deposits whenever you need to, giving you more flexibility with your money.

Competitive Rates and Fees: Credit unions are known for offering more competitive rates and lower fees as compared to banks. Because credit unions are not-for-profit organizations, any profits earned are reinvested back into the institution to benefit members. This allows credit unions to offer higher interest rates on savings accounts, lower interest rates on loans, and fewer fees for services like checking accounts and ATM withdrawals.

Financial Education and Resources: At FedChoice Federal Credit Union, we're passionate about providing our members with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed financial decisions. We're here to help you build your financial literacy and confidence. Our goal is to equip you with the skills to take control of your finances and achieve your dreams.

Now you know that credit unions like FedChoice can offer a great alternative to traditional banking institutions. With a member-focused approach, community involvement, personalized service, competitive rates, and a commitment to financial education, we're ready to help you achieve your financial goals and build a brighter future. Want to learn more? Visit fedchoice.org today!



Talking Leaf Newsletter

The **Talking Leaf Newsletter** is issued twice a year - Spring and Fall. Do you want to contribute to the newsletter? SAIGE welcomes your stories, suggestions, and ideas. Please contact Georgia Madrid at newsletter@saige.org for information and newsletter guidelines.

About SAIGE

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) is the first national non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Federal, Tribal, State and local government employees. Formed in 2002, SAIGE provides a forum on the issues, challenges and opportunities of American Indian Tribal Nations and the government workforce, and to foster a professional network among AI/AN government employees.

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