



Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative

Regional Meeting - Rapid City, SD

May 19, 2003, 9:30am – 5:00pm

May 20, 2003, 9:30am – 3:00pm

Hosted by the United Sioux Tribes

Best Western Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center
2111 LaCrosse Street, Rapid City, South Dakota
(605) 343-8550 (Room block reserved under Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)

The Tribal Sovereignty Protection Initiative will hold a regional meeting to consult with tribal leaders on the drafting of legislation to reaffirm tribal sovereignty. All tribes from throughout the country are invited and welcomed to participate. In addition, the legislative drafting subcommittee will meet beginning at noon on Monday the 19th, so attorney-drafters are encouraged to attend.

Background: In decisions such as *Nevada v. Hicks* and *Atkinson Trading Co. v. Shirley* the U.S. Supreme Court has demonstrated that it is on an accelerating trend toward removing tribal jurisdiction. On September 11th, 2001, tribal leadership from across the country met in Washington, DC to discuss these cases and to develop strategies to protect and reassert tribal jurisdiction. The assembled tribal leaders reached a consensus to begin an organized effort to reverse the Supreme Court's erosion of tribal sovereignty and developed a comprehensive strategic plan for unified tribal action. In summary, the strategic plan is to develop federal legislation to reaffirm tribal jurisdiction, maintain a Supreme Court Project to support tribal Supreme Court advocacy, implement a media campaign to support tribal government, promote strategies for tribal governance that will protect tribal jurisdiction, increase tribal participation in the selection of federal judiciary, and implement a fundraising campaign.

The TSPI completed its legislative proposal in December of 2002, and Senators Campbell and Inouye are prepared to introduce the bill. However, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has raised substantive concerns with the language of the bill and has asked for further consultation. At the last TSPI meeting in Albuquerque, NM, the Steering Committee agreed to further hold further consultation meetings. In addition to this meeting in Rapid City, we will discuss the bill again at the NCAI Midyear in Arizona on June 16-18. The Co-Chairs would encourage all tribes to attend these meetings, as we are likely to make changes to the language of the bill. You can find a copy of the current draft as well as a recent memorandum from the legislative drafting committee co-chairs on the NCAI web site at www.ncai.org/main/pages/issues/governance/supreme_court.asp

NCAI President Tex Hall and Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr. are the co-chairs the Sovereignty Protection Steering Committee. This is a committee of tribal leaders to oversee and promote the efforts. All tribal leaders are invited to participate in this oversight committee. Attorney Susan Williams, who is co-chair of the legislative drafting committee, as well as NCAI staff, will also be attending and participating in the discussion.

For more information, please contact Irene Folstrom, NCAI Legislative Associate, at 202-466-7767.