



Sovereign Nations

TribalSelfGov.org

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2019: Unique Opportunities & Shared Responsibilities

A message from
SGCETC Chairman
W. Ron Allen



In 2018, Tribes successfully celebrated 30 years of Self-Governance within the Department of the Interior while working in the halls of Congress to expand Self-Governance through the 2018 Farm Bill Reauthorization. This expansion will support Tribal management of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and programs within the U.S. Forest Service.

We celebrated increases to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Health Services (IHS) Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations. Finally, Self-Governance Tribes worked collaboratively with federal partners to develop and change policies and regulations that support tribal self-determination, self-governance and enhance our economic capacity to become self-reliant. As we reflect on and celebrate 2018 accomplishments, now is a good time to prepare for new opportunities in the upcoming year as the federal government ended the 35-day partial shutdown.

Impacting Tribal communities across the country, the long-term effects of the partial shutdown are yet to be realized. Concern amongst Tribes continues to grow as the uncertainty of whether or not we will be facing another government shutdown is imminent given the absence of a congressional deal on border security and the short-term Continuing Resolution that is set to expire on February 15, 2019. We have already seen immediate deadlines missed and critical infrastructure policy halted at the Department of Transportation (DOT), as well as, other hardships imposed on our community services.

What this shut down highlights is the disparity in funding vehicles within the federal government and how it continues to try and rationalize its failure to uphold Trust and Treaty obligations to Tribes. Other federal health programs are specifically exempted during a shutdown, however, the severely underfunded IHS continues to operate without funding or guaranteed of payment to their health care providers who deliver care for an already vulnerable population.

Nevertheless, in the upcoming days and weeks, Tribes must stay diligent and leverage our networks to advance Self-Governance tenets. This year will call on all of us to communicate, to engage, and to promote Tribal needs, priorities, and successes. In 2019, Self-Governance Tribes must continue to engage with Congressional members to amend Title IV of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) by advocating for passage of the Progress for Indian Tribes Act, S.209. Tribes also need to urge the Administration and Congress to maintain and increase funding for critical Self-Governance programs.

As always, our work does not end with legislative priorities, we must utilize our collective voices to guide implementation of the expanded Self-Governance authority within the DOT and USDA. Self-Governance Tribes must stay alert and assertive to ensure the newly expanded 477 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and policy changes within the twelve agencies who are signatories to the Agreement uphold the intent of P.L.102-477 and honor the principles of Self-Governance. The MOU in its current form is inconsistent with the law and significantly undermines the intent of Congress.

We each have a shared responsibility to see legislative successes through the policy development process. Our best bet to make sure our legislative wins become opportunities in our individual communities and ensure our goals are realized is to promote successes and leverage regional and national networks to communicate when potential obstacles surface.

In this spirit SGCE joined seven sister Native national organizations during the partial shutdown in a joint press release and letter to Congress to urge the President and Congress to reopen the government. Read the full documents here: <http://bit.ly/SGCEResources>.

Together, we can make the future brighter and continue to pursue expansion of Self-Governance across the federal government. Sometimes we may be disappointed in some of our efforts to make constructive change, but we never get discouraged. We unite in our collective vision for a respectful government-to-government relationship honoring our sovereignty and treaty rights. I raise my hands to you and yours as we look forward to our work together over the next year to support the next generations of our collective communities.

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Upcoming Events

2019 Tribal Self-Governance Annual Consultation Conference
Traverse City, MI
March 31-April 4, 2019

Advisory Committee
April TSGAC/SGAC Meeting 2019
April 23 – 24, 2019

Advisory Committee
July TSGAC/SGAC Meeting 2019
July 15, 2019

Advisory Committee
October TSGAC/SGAC Meeting 2019
September 30, 2019



New Era, New Leadership Getting to Know SGCE Director Jay Spaan

Sovereign Nations sat down with the new SGCE Executive Director Jay Spaan to talk about his experience, his SGCE vision, and the future of self-governance.

The best advocate for a cause has detailed knowledge of the system in which they work. Understanding successes and challenges is paramount in properly advancing any interest, particularly so for Self-Governance Communication & Education's newest leadership.

Taking the helm of SGCE mid-way through 2018, Jay Spaan has spent more than a decade working the Government Accountability Office (GAO), often working directly on federal programs impacting Tribal Nations.

"For several years, I was involved with evaluations that reviewed federal administration of programs that serve tribal nations and their citizens," says Spaan. "I was able to meet with tribal leaders and visit tribal nations across the country. Seeing first-hand the benefits and success of tribally administered programs contributed to my desire to help tribes enhance current Self-Governance mechanisms, expand the number of tribes participating in Self-Governance, and expand Self-Governance initiatives to additional federal programs and agencies."

Currently based in Phoenix, Arizona, Spaan has roots across the country, spending 15 years in Dallas and Washington, DC. His travels

across the country evaluating federal programs, along with ties to several tribal communities, have contributed to his vision for future of SGCE.

"It is important for SGCE to build upon the foundation developed by the strong leaders that previously served in this role and to identify opportunities to grow the organization and explore new ways SGCE can support tribal leaders and officials—such as producing more independent research to support the expansion and furtherance of Self-Governance initiatives," said Spaan.

With the past three decades as preamble, Spaan believes the next three will bring us to new heights and is taking his cue from those who paved the way for Self-Governance to become what it is today, he's both hopeful and excited for what is to come.

"I believe that tribal leaders will continue to be the visionaries for identifying new opportunities for tribal nations to exercise their inherent sovereignty, and for ensuring that the Federal government upholds its trust responsibilities while also respecting and encouraging opportunities for tribes to be in the driver's seat when it comes to their communities and the services provided to their citizens."

Have a question for Jay? Contact him at jays@tribalselfgov.org.

2018 Self-Governance Strategy Session Recap

New leadership and new energy filled the room in St. Paul, Minnesota during 2018 Self-Governance Strategy Session with more than 100 tribal participants in active discussion surrounding a new format for the long-standing planning meeting for Self-Governance Communication and Education Tribal Consortium (SGCETC).

During the three-day Self-Governance Strategy Session, tribes leveraged new technology via GroupMap to review the current National Self-Governance Strategic Plan priorities, measured successes, identified barriers, and propose new ideas and actions for the next iteration of the Strategic Plan.

Day 1: Self-Governance Coordinator Roundtable

The day before the official Strategy Session began, a diverse group Self-Governance Coordinators from several regions gathered to discuss common issues, concerns and opportunities that Coordinators are experiencing through a roundtable discussion. Although utilizing new technology to help facilitate the conversation, the discussion between Coordinators returned to the roots of the Self-Governance movement through collaboration and open discussion.

Coordinators tackled and troubleshot the most difficult of issues and identified opportunities to create effective change collectively. This discussion provided meaningful opportunities for the Advisory Committees to understand the breadth of issues from freshman and veteran Coordinators alike.

Day 2 & 3: Planning Session

Over the next two days, tribes dove deeply into many of the top legislative and administrative priorities. New SGCE Executive Director, Jay Spaan, led the group discussion and encouraged new approaches to longstanding priorities. Participants proposed new and unique actions and tried to focus on measurable goals to advance the Self-Governance mission and vision.

Next Steps

The 2019-2020 Strategic Plan will leverage information and ideas from this session to formulate top priorities, goals and objectives. Be sure to check back on www.tribalselfgov.org for a copy of the final document and proposed actions.





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SGCE Welcomes New Deputy Director Travis Jansen



In December 2018, SGCE Director Jay Spaan announced the newest member of the SGCE staff, Deputy Director Travis Jansen.

Jansen will serve in a supportive role to the Director in legislative activities, enhancing SGCE goals and initiatives, and refining resources, materials, and tool deployment to tribal leaders.

Travis can be reached via email at travisj@tribalselfgov.org.

Meet SGCE Deputy Director Travis Jansen

Travis Jansen was born and raised on the beautiful Rosebud Reservation located in South Central South Dakota. He enjoyed a childhood experiencing the natural wonders of the Great Plains as he grew and learned the importance of respect, family, and hard work on the family ranch. From a young age, Travis recognized that his fellow tribal members were underserved and aspired to see the United States honor its promises. He decided that the greatest way for him to help effectuate change was through civic engagement and the pursuit of a greater understanding of the relationship between the federal government and tribal nations.

Travis has nearly seven years of experience working within Legislative Affairs at the Rosebud Sioux Tribe—most recently serving as the Director of Rosebud Sioux Tribe's Office of Legislative Affairs. In leading the Office of Legislative Affairs he engaged in advocacy efforts, monitored state and federal legislation, and acted as a liaison between the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, state, and federal governments. In addition, Travis serves on the Advisory Council to the US Indigenous Data Sovereignty Network hosted by the Native Nations Institute.

Travis holds a Master of Legal Studies in Indigenous Peoples Law from the University of Oklahoma and a Bachelor of the Arts in Business Management from Sinte Gleska University. Jansen looks forward to contributing his experience, developing his skills, and furthering his knowledge as he joins the SGCE team.

Many Nations, One Goal: Self-Governance



2019 Tribal Self-Governance Annual
Consultation Conference

March 31 - April 4, 2019
Grand Traverse Resort
Traverse City, Michigan

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