



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

Chief James W. Ransom
Chief Monica M. Jacobs
Chief Mark H. Garrow
Sub-Chief Ron LaFrance Jr.
Sub-Chief Pamela D. Brown
Sub-Chief Stacy A. Adams

PRESS RELEASE

For release:
Seskehko:wa/September 2, 2009

For more information:
David T. Staddon, Director
Public Information Office,
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
Tel: (518) 358-2272 ext. 286

TRIBAL OFFICIALS ATTEND WHITE HOUSE MEETING

"Listening Sessions" Start Process of Increased Dialogue

Akwesasne Territory. St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Chiefs James Ransom and Mark Garrow attended a meeting at the White House on Monday, August 31st. The meeting was part of the Obama administration's efforts to reach out to Indian tribes and improve dialogue. "I think they were a little overwhelmed with the response from tribes," noted Garrow. "Tribal officials clearly felt that this was an important step in improving communications between the federal government and tribal governments." Kimberly Teehee, Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs, led the dialogue.

The White House held two sessions on Monday, with tribal leaders from across the United States attending each session. White House officials asked tribal representatives to provide accounts of good experiences and constructive criticism about any negative experiences with federal agencies. "We were happy to be part of this process," stated Ransom. "Our understanding is that the federal government is looking to improve communications with tribes. So this the first 'listening session' will be followed up by other meetings between White House and tribal officials."

Chief Ransom presented information during the afternoon session describing the rich history of the Mohawk and Haudenosaunee people in building relationships with others. He made specific reference to the Two Row Wampum Treaty Belt as a powerful example of the types of relationships the Mohawks strive for. He went on to list some of the relationships the tribe has with various agencies, including the EPA, the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, the New York State Police, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and local public school districts.

Ransom also discussed some of the problems the tribe is experiencing with the Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Homeland Security. Ransom feels that these agencies could be more responsive to the tribe's efforts to contact them and to address tribal issues in a timely fashion.

"All in all, this listening session is a very positive development," said Tribal Chief Garrow. "We plan on continuing to be part of the process in the future and hope that it will improve communications." No schedule has yet been set for any future meetings between White House and tribal officials.

#

The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the St. Regis Mohawk People.

Helping Build A Better Tomorrow

412 State Route 37
Akwesasne, New York 13655
Phone: 518-358-2272