

## **Coeur d'Alene Tribe response to Gregg Mathews of Valleyford, Wash.**

I wanted to address the email you received from Mr. Matthews.

Sadly, it reflects a lack of knowledge and understanding about Indian tribes in this country that is commonplace.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is a sovereign nation. It is a federally recognized tribe and its members are citizens of the United States. Indian tribes are recognized in the U.S. Constitution and Indian legislation that followed throughout the history of this country.

Coeur d'Alene Tribal members pay federal income taxes. They do not pay state income tax for work done on the reservation. They do pay property taxes on land not held in trust by the federal government.

Indians have a proud history of defending the United States against all enemies. There are nearly 200,000 Indian veterans in the U.S. who served in various wars. Currently five members of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe are in the military.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe employs nearly 2,000 people and 65 percent of those people are non-tribal. The Tribe's economic impact on North Idaho is huge. We are talking hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation is a checkerboard reservation. Many people don't realize that 80 percent of the land on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation is owned by non-Indians.

The Tribe will pay roughly \$125,000 in property taxes to Benewah County on land it owns in 2010. That doesn't include individual parcels owned by tribal members. The federal government hasn't place any land into property tax exempt status in more than 20 years. Those tax dollars go to support county services, including law enforcement. It is more than reasonable for the tribe to be concerned about bad law enforcement policies.

The tribe coordinates with local highway districts to maintain roads on the reservation. It donates thousands to local fire protection districts.

Every year the tribe spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on road projects that benefit everyone. The tribe has spent millions on CityLink, a free public transportation. Most of CityLink's riders use the service to go to destinations in Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls and Hayden.

The Tribe has poured millions into education. It also offsets financial losses of the Benewah Medical and Wellness Center every year. Those facilities are used by the entire community.

The idea that the federal government will cut the cord from tribes is silly, ignoring the history of Indians in this country. The notion that the tribe should start paying is absurd, ignoring the facts. I

challenge anyone to find a government or an organization that gives  
back to the entire community more than the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

Marc Stewart  
Public Relations Director  
Coeur d'Alene Tribe