

# Coeur d'Alene Tribe, H&W sign consultation agreement

**Heather Keen, Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe**

**Plummer, Idaho** – Yesterday, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and Idaho Department of Health and Welfare held a ceremonial signing of an historic government-to-government consultation agreement. Chairman Chief Allan of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and Richard Armstrong, Director of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare were present to sign the agreement, which went into effect in September.

“This agreement brings us together and marks the beginning of a new, important relationship. Through consistent and open communication with each other, we can be much more successful in addressing issues that impact tribal social services or health programs,” said Health and Welfare Director Richard Armstrong.

Coeur d'Alene Tribe Chairman Chief Allan agreed, adding, “Through this policy, we have strengthened our ability to resolve issues that concern both parties. We are appreciative of this agreement and the efforts the State has made and we look forward to a good working relationship with the State as we move forward.”

Tribes have a unique status as independent sovereign governments and as such, often have similar consultation agreements with federal government agencies that are providing services alongside tribal governments.

However, the scope of the agreement between the Tribe and the State is unprecedented and this agreement is one of the first to be signed on the state level in Idaho. It is structured to open up the lines of communication between parties and ensures the State will include the Tribe in “decision-making when changes in IDHW programs or IDHW’s implementation of federal programs have an impact on Native Americans and Tribal social service or health programs.” Ultimately, both parties hope it will ensure the smooth provision of services that the State and Tribe implement together.