

## NAFOA Energy Summit, Albuquerque, NM

June 10 – June 12, 2013

Written by then-Oneida Business Committee Treasurer & current OBC Chair Cristina Danforth, who is also 2nd Vice President of the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) and Board Chair of the Native American Bank NA in Colorado.

I was asked to be a speaker at the NAFOA Energy Summit to talk about renewable energy sources. The source of my inspiration was the Oneida Seven Generations Corporation Gasification Plant. Converting recycled food grade plastics into base oil, char ash and vapor gas is the basic model for this energy source. The base oil would be sold to oil refineries or a reseller of synthetic oil. With many of the newer cars requiring synthetic oil, the use of this oil is increasing. Char ash which is high in carbon would be sold to paving companies for driveways, parking lots, and roads. The vapor gas burns cleaner than propane gas and could be sold as a replacement for propane. The concept of using recycled food grade plastics and converting it to a renewable energy source not only keeps items from landfills but would provide a more economical product to the general population.

Despite our own trials and tribulations with the OSGC project, many of the other Tribes in attendance were eager to learn more. It was a great opportunity to highlight a project QSGC has been working on for some time and to get people to start thinking about how important it is to recycle our waste products.

Some of the other Tribes also had recycling projects in the works to provide energy for their reservations. By doing so, the reservations would no longer be tied to the large corporate energy suppliers and a savings potential maybe available for many tribal members. There are many great projects out there and I am proud of how many Tribes see the benefits of recycling and saving our environments.

There were other attendees gaining knowledge to start addressing their own recycling projects. Recycling waste is such an important step in maintaining Mother Earth for all our futures as well as our descendants. Providing for the future is not only important for our Tribe but to every other Tribe as well.

Some of the meetings I had with other Tribal members mentioned partnership projects between Tribes. Many of the ideas centered on Tribes located near each other in an attempt to not only share resources but to focus their plans on cleaning up greater parts of the United States. With some of the California Tribes being very close in proximity, it is only natural they work together. The same could be true of us and Menominee, Stockbridge, and/or Potawatomi. A joint effort amongst our four Tribes could go a long way to cleaning up the entire state of Wisconsin and could extend to Lac Courte Oreilles and other outlying Tribes.

My attendance at the NAFOA Energy Summit was very beneficial not only for me to gain knowledge of what other Tribes are working on but also to gain perspective on how important it is to be working on such projects. So often we are reactive to situations rather than being pro-active. Even though our own Sevens Gens Corporation has been the target of negative press and conversations, they are the only entity connected to our Tribe that thought outside the box and did their best to make something

happen that would generate additional revenues for our Tribe. Even though we all do not see the value in their work, they did the best they could with what they had. Their project may not be welcome on our reservation but other Tribes liked the idea and wanted to learn more. It is just unfortunate for us that we were unable to bring this technology to light.

I believe the greater question we must ask is; what is our Oneida's energy policy?