

James Marquez 4-8-14 #7

Good Morning members of the Board of Supervisors

My name is James Marquez. I am of Lakota and White Mountain Apache heritage. I am the Director of the Foothill Indian Education Alliance, and the El Dorado/Amador Counties Indian Education Project.

With me are John McGregor, Miwok and Chair of the El Dorado County Indian Council, and Jim Snoke, Member of the El Dorado County Indian Council.

Foothill Indian Education Alliance and the El Dorado County Indian Council have collaborated to form the Festival of the Americas Pow wow Committee.

I would like to thank the Board for this time to present our Pow wow and ask for financial support of the Board.

The 2014 Pow wow will be the 10th time we have presented this event in El Dorado County. It will be held at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds on October 4 and 5th. Unfortunately it has been a several years since our last pow wow. Many of our past financial supporters were unable to participate due to the financial crisis that affected our entire country. As things have improved, we have been approached by many people locally to bring back the Pow wow, and our local Native community agreed it was time.

The Festival of the Americas pow wow is a free two-day inter-tribal event designed to showcase Native traditions, music, dance, art and culture practices representing tribes from all over our country. We do so by creating a village atmosphere that draws Native dancers, drummers, and families from many parts of California, Nevada, and even Oregon. The Pow wow includes demonstration dances, dance contests, drum contests, and honor dances or specials. Dance contests are open to dancers from tiny

tots to golden age and in eight different dance categories. Native food and arts and crafts vendor are set up in concentric circles around our dance arena and offer a vast variety of Indian made goods for sale.

Native head staff is selected to serve as role models, displaying the Native qualities of respect, integrity, sobriety, spirituality, and reflect the best Indian Country has to offer. The head staff includes headman and woman, head teen boy and girl, head youth boy and girl, and host southern and northern drums. A master of ceremonies helps keep the pow wow on schedule and offers information regarding what will be happening in the dance arena. The Arena director is responsible for making sure everything is going as planned and as per Native protocol.

The foundation of the pow wow is built on the songs offered by the drums. A drum can be made up of up to 12 or more singers sitting at a drum. A well-prepared drum is ready at all times and can be called upon to offer whatever kind of song is needed at any moment. The songs of the drum are like nothing else you've heard. When one stands near a drum while they are singing, the beat of the drum and the power of the combined voices will lift your spirit and carry you to another time and place.

The pow wow begins with Grand Entry as a procession of military veterans carry into the dance arena the American flag, California state flag, and the Eagle feather staff, followed by local Miwok dancers representing the indigenous people of this area, head staff, and then all dancers by dance category and age. Flags are posted and an invocation is offered, followed by a flag song and a retreat song. From this point on, the pow wow consists of a regular interval of dance contests, inter-tribal dances, friendship dances, and an ongoing and lively play by play from the MC.

Although this may seem like an event just for Native people, that is not the case. All people are invited to come and enjoy the activities and can even dance in the arena during special friendship dances.

The first day of the pow wow is broken into two sessions with a two-hour dinner break in between. During the break we present performing dance groups. On Saturday evening, the Committee offers a free dinner to all our guests for as long as the food lasts.

Sunday is a single day long sessions beginning with Grand Entry and culminates around six o'clock with the announcement of all dance and drum contest winners.

Our financial support comes from both businesses and individuals from around El Dorado and neighboring counties. This year we have estimated that the event will take \$44,000 to present it in a way that we feel our community deserves. The hard work our Pow wow committee devotes to fundraising and its 16 other subcommittees, will allow us to continue to present this two-day event free to the public. Our Pow wow committee considers this event as our gift to the community.

Depending on the weather, past pow wows have drawn from 4,000 to 10,000 people over the two-day weekend. Our guests have filled local hotels and restaurants. The event provides a unique opportunity for school teachers and students to not only observe, but experience traditions that are alive and well in Native America.

It is my hope that the Board will see this as an important and meaningful use of county funds and approve our request for financial assistance. Regardless of the outcome, I would like to personally invite the Board and their families to join us in October for the 2014 Festival of the Americas Pow wow.

Thanks you for your time and consideration.