

# NCAI implements emergency survival plan

by Nancy Butterfield

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Newly elected officers for the National Congress of American Indians have implemented an emergency survival plan that has included laying off all staff members, seeking tribal financial and staff contributions and meeting with federal and state officials to work out payment schedules for back taxes.

The organization's financial records are in such disarray it is difficult to determine just what its status is, according to William Ron Allen, NCAI treasurer, but he estimates it is as much as \$200,000 in debt.

The most urgent issue is some \$100,000 NCAI owes in federal and state withholding taxes, FICA and unemployment insurance, Allen said.

The 46-year-old organization is the nation's oldest and largest representing American Indian/Alaska Native interests. Its members elected President Wayne Ducheneaux and other new officers at the annual convention in October after they campaigned for reform of the organization.

The employment contract of Suzan Harjo, former executive director, was not renewed following the election, and NCAI Natural Resources Coordinator Gail Chehak resigned shortly afterward.