

TONY NERTOLI: If you come to see us I will give you fish.

MR. BOST: Are you saying I won't get fish if I go to the Navajo Reservation? I have had the opportunity of visiting the Navajo Reservation, not when I was Under Secretary, but when I was working in the State of Arizona. So I have spent sometime on the reservation. Anyone else?

TONY NERTOLI: Somewhat of a summation, I think MR. Secretary's opening comments are more true than ever. You have heard the value of this program to the tribes, and its membership to the people it serves and I think it would be -- I think the other thing is the diversity of the different nations; we have heard from different parts of the country, and I'd like to thank you on that.

In my thinking, I heard a lot that's going to help me. And one of the things I have known, and this is my third term, last term as president, it's a very active board, and once you get these people, fellow tribal members, friends I've asked Red to be on some committees with me, and his tribe should be very proud. He's had a lot to do nationally with the organization. The only thing I had trouble with, he can't play golf for beans. Some of the things, definitively, again I ask you to come so you can have a flavor of who we are, and what we represent and the diversity among our tribes and traditions.

I think there is definitely a need for this plan. There are poor people in this country, and people that need help, and this program delivers that in a very unique way. I love comods.

In closing, five things that come out to me that I've heard. Number one, the necessity to establish a government-to-government relationship with the tribes. That's very important to us, because of the treaties and uniqueness that are in them. We are now educated and know the law and have taken great advantage of those treaties.

I think the funding formula was pointed out or methodology and that changed at the national convention. It is a very divisive issue because of the programs like in Michigan and the Midwest we have people that are working part-time because they can't receive the funding to serve the tribal members. We have programs that are supersized that need more employees to service them. I think within it, there is a necessity for nutrition education and funding.

Infrastructure is very important, just to deliver the services to the many people in a fast and efficient manner, and to have it all available. We have listened to THOMAS speak here, and his great tribe, the Navajo Nation, getting coolers and freezers to take advantage of this program, and I think that's really, in many cases is to retain the program. And I agree with his great wisdom, it doesn't have to be every year, but maybe every second or third year.

All our computers were out of date when we signed on. I think the Food Package Review has to be looked at. And one of the things that I would ask and not to be redundant, is take a look at the prime vender, what it did offer and the unique warehouse project that you now have, and it should be nationally.

USDA TRIBAL LEADER NUTRITION ROUNDTABLE

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I know our tribes in the Midwest are not being served adequately, but the prime vendor and warehouse has looked at it offers a unique opportunity. In other words, you get food in the system quicker, but offer regional -- make available traditional foods to people; bison and fish and deer, rabbit, rice. We have woods. The other thing I'd like to do before I'm done talking is express a thank you to our tribal leaders that are here. And without our program directors, they spoke well for themselves, and I thank you for being here.