



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 3/21/2022**  
**Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation**  
**12801 Mouth of Smith River Rd.**  
**Smith River, CA 95567**

**Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation is awarded the 2022 Del Norte Pride Award.**

The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation was awarded the 2022 Del Norte Pride Award for the positive aesthetics and improvements their new building made to Del Norte County. The new government headquarters building is 14,000 square feet and was designed for future expansion. The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation official seal stands three stories high just off Highway 101. The image leaves a positive impact and reminder to those who pass by. The office building itself is centrally located on trust land, across the street from reservation lands. This building is an accumulation of a long journey for the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation whose goal was to return services to tribal lands over ten years ago.

“The first office we had was over where the clinic is now, in this modest building with two offices and a reception,” Dorothy Wait, Tolowa Citizen, former Council Chair and current Director of Community Family Wellness, chuckled as she looked back on the humble beginnings of the Nation's home base, “we moved offices again in the 1990s, and our next office was a yellow double wide mobile home in the Casino parking lot.”

The Nation has seen a significant growth in the last decade; going from under 40 employees in the 90's to well over 150 today in 2022. It was in 2004 when the Nation purchased a two-story office building located just off the main highway on non-tribal land to serve as primary offices and moved from the double wide. From there the Nation's continued growth continued to play a factor in the decision-making process of needing more space and wanting to return services to tribal lands.

“When the Nation purchased that last building in 2004, they also purchased the land where the new office now sits,” said Tim Hoone, the Nations Community Development Director who oversaw the project, “and that land was put into trust in 2008.”

In 2020, the CARES Act allowed the Nation to finally be able to fulfill its long-standing plan on constructing a primary office building on tribal lands. The construction began in December 2020 and wrapped up in January 2022. This project produced 3 million dollars into the local economy, the Nation strategically choose to go with all local subcontractors and purchase all materials for the building locally.

“This will serve as a welcome place for Tribal Citizens to conduct their government business, the whole idea was to provide more comfortable space, and to come back to the reservation in a central location to make it easier for people to access services,” said Hoone. Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation's Executive Director, Troy Ralstin shared “It's worth noting that the Nation itself was the general contractor on the building, and the construction crew is made up of 100 percent Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation Tribal Citizens”. Allen Bommelyn a Tribal Citizen, and construction lead for the

Nation managed the crew that was responsible for the construction of the new building, and it was a task that neither Bommelyn, nor his crew took lightly. “To build a commercial building with our tribal work force, and get our government campus back on trust land is big for us,” said Bommelyn, “our whole construction crew are Tribal Citizens, and they took pride in their work knowing that they were building this for future generations.”

The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation's story is one that will continue to grow with this new piece of history and visible sense of identity in Del Norte County, California. “To non-native residents it’s a reminder that Tolowa people continue to inhabit this place since time immemorial,” said Scott Sullivan, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation Vice Chair, “for Citizens, it’s a centralized place on tribal lands they can come for services.”

“It’s a symbol of our self-determination, a representation of our people and our government,” said Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation Chairperson, Jeri Lynn Thompson, “we did this ourselves.”

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The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation is a federally recognized Indian Tribe of Tolowa Dee-ni' People. The Nation is headquartered 3 miles south of the Oregon-California border in Northwest California. The Nation's general membership consists of over 1,900 Tribal Citizens.