



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Protecting Sovereignty • Preserving Culture
Educating Youth • Building Capacity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES 10TH ANNUAL REPATRIATION CONFERENCE AGENDA

Native Country, Turtle Island, Monday, January 13, 2025 - The Association on American Indian Affairs (the Association) is pleased to announce the release of the agenda for the 10th Annual Repatriation Conference: *Igniting Change*. This year's conference will be held February 25-27, 2025, at the Paragon Resort in Marksville, Louisiana, hosted by the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe. The agenda offers a dynamic lineup of training, workshops, and cultural events aimed at advancing repatriation efforts and fostering collaboration.

This year, the conference provides comprehensive training on the new Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) regulations, which were issued in January 2024. Attendees will walk through the step-by-step process through hands-on training sessions led by NAGPRA experts, covering the practical implementation of the new regulations, which includes strict timelines, deference to Native Traditional Knowledge, and enhanced consultation protocols requiring consent. The conference will also provide methods to create a healthy environment for repatriation practice, as well as explore topics such as international repatriation, illicit trafficking, hazardous treatments, working with the media and other topics related to the protection of Native cultural heritage.

"As we prepare to host the 10th Annual Repatriation Conference, we are honored to welcome Native Nation leaders, cultural practitioners, and advocates from across the country," said Tunica-Biloxi Chairman Marshall Pierite. "This milestone gathering underscores the vital work of reclaiming and protecting our Ancestors, sacred items, and cultural heritage. It is a profound responsibility and privilege to continue these efforts together, fostering collaboration and shared purpose in restoring what is rightfully ours."

The conference also includes a variety of immersive events, such as a special screening of *The Great Salish Heist* on the first night of the Conference at the Paragon Theater. This gripping story follows Steve Joe, a traditional archeologist, as he teams up with unlikely allies to reclaim stolen ceremonial items. On the second evening, a cultural event with dinner will provide attendees with an opportunity to connect and immerse themselves in the heritage of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe. Attendees will also have the chance to visit the Tunica-Biloxi Cultural

& Educational Resource Center, home to the "Tunica Treasure," a repatriated collection of trade and funerary items.

Keynote speakers include Abigail Echo-Hawk, Executive Vice President at the Seattle Indian Health Board, and Chip Colwell, former Senior Curator of Anthropology at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science and a leading voice in the fight for repatriation.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided each day, with dinner included during the cultural event. Native Nation officials and representatives are invited to attend free of charge, and regular registration is available for all others until registration closes on February 19, 2025. Limited exhibitor and vendor spaces are also available.

For more information on the agenda, sponsorship opportunities, and registration, visit [Indian-Affairs.org/10thannualrepatriationconference](https://www.Indian-Affairs.org/10thannualrepatriationconference).

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The Association on American Indian Affairs is the oldest non-profit serving Native Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth, and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its 100-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Native Nations to support the implementation of programs that support Native Peoples.

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