

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
BROADCAST LOCALISM HEARING
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA
MAY 26, 2004**

**STATEMENT OF
THOMAS SHORT BULL**

It is unfortunate that there is a significant percentage of the non-Indian population in South Dakota that has a negative perception of Indian people. The most common perception is that "Indians are drunks and good for nothing people."

This perception is reinforced when the only time they see Indians is when they see Indians drunk on the streets or sleeping or passed out in city parks.

Although the number of Indian people who are seen inebriated are only a small percentage of the total Indian population, many of the non-Indian people nonetheless believe that all Indian people are like this.

The other problem is that when much of the news reports are about crimes committed by Indian people, this also reinforces negative perceptions about Indian people.

There are a number of us as Indians who have complained that both the print and broadcast media spend too much time reporting bad news about Indians and not enough time on positive news about Indians. As a result of this situation, much of the non-Indian population is unaware that there are many hard working and respected Indian people in Rapid City and on the surrounding reservations.

When there are positive stories on the reservations, there has been a reluctance on the part of the broadcast media to come to the reservations, because it takes too much of the day to come onto the reservations. An example of this is that Oglala Lakota College annually sends out a press release on its graduation, and I know of only one time the broadcast media came down to cover our graduation.

Oglala Lakota College has been much more successful when it has had press conferences in Rapid City, and I want to thank the broadcast media for this coverage.

As a means of portraying a more positive image of Indian people, I would like to suggest a once-a-week series that would highlight individual Indian people who are hard working and respected Indian people. This series would go a long ways in helping improve the image of Indian people.