

College speech contest that requires video entries to award scholarships

Speakin' in Indian encourages Native youth to showcase skills

SUQUAMISH, Wash. – Cut Bank Creek Press, a Native-owned publishing company, will award two \$1,500 college scholarships to the winners of its first speech contest titled *Speakin' in Indian*.

Currently enrolled college students will upload five-minute video entries to YouTube in response to one of two theses:

1. Native people and Tribes should expend substantial resources on the preservation/restoration of Native languages and make it a top priority because ..."
2. "Native people and Tribes should not expend their limited resources on the

preservation/restoration of Native languages and make it a top priority because ..."

One scholarship will be awarded for each argument – the best argument in favor of language preservation and the best argument against making language preservation a priority.

Spokespeople for the contest are Dallas Goldtooth (Dakota and Diné), a renowned speaker and language preservation advocate; Mike LaFromboise (Blackfeet), Blackfoot language scholar and computer nerd; Gyasi Ross (Blackfeet), author of *Don't Know Much about Indians (but I wrote this book about us anyways)*; and Steven Paul Judd (Kiowa and Choctaw), a renowned visual artist and filmmaker.

Goldtooth, Ross and Judd also will serve on the final panel of judges.

Ross created the scholarship specifically to increase the number of young Native people who feel confident speaking for themselves and for Native people.

"It's a very small step. Still, those that can speak persuasively and passionately tend to be leaders within our communities. Native people are, and always have been, perfectly capable of speaking for ourselves, yet we haven't had a formal pipeline to develop strong Native speakers and leaders," said Ross. "Now, of course we have some amazing and great Native leaders, but they succeeded through sheer will and without a formal mechanism to develop them. This scholarship is a start to creating a formal program because the leaders of today need to take the initiative to help mentor and cultivate tomorrow's leaders."

Contest rules will be announced Jan. 1, 2013. Submissions will be accepted from Jan. 15 through Feb. 15 and will be reviewed from Feb. 15 to April 1. Finalists will be announced during the first week of April.

In late April, four finalists will be flown to Albuquerque, N.M., to present their speeches, after which the two winners will be selected. Finally, scholarships will be awarded at the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year.

Speakin' in Indian is presented in partnership with Red Eagle Soaring Native Youth Theatre, a progressive 20-year-old Seattle nonprofit engaging Native youth in creative self-expression and critical discussions about the issues affecting their lives.

For more information, e-mail speakin-inindian@cutbankcreekpress.com.

Interior launches Land Buy-Back Program for Tribes to consolidate lands

Plan helps unlock lands for various Tribal uses

WASHINGTON – The Department of the Interior announced on Dec. 18 the initial framework of the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal nations that will purchase fractional interests in American Indian trust lands from willing sellers, enabling Tribal governments to use the consolidated parcels to benefit their communities.

The initial implementation plan, based on consultation with Tribes, outlines how Interior will carry out the land

consolidation component of the Cobell Settlement, which provided a \$1.9 billion fund to purchase the fractionated interests in trust or restricted land, at fair market value, within a 10-year period. These acquired interests will remain in trust or restricted status through transfer to Tribes.

Fractionation of Indian lands stems primarily from the General Allotment Act of 1887 that allotted Tribal lands to individual Tribal members, often in 80- or 160-acre parcels. The lands have been handed down to heirs over successive generations, causing the number of shared

interests in one parcel to grow exponentially. Currently, more than 92,000 tracts of land held in trust for American Indians contain 2.9 million fractional interests.

When tracts have so many co-owners, it is often difficult and impractical to obtain the required approvals to lease or otherwise use the lands. As a result, highly-fractionated tracts lie idle.

The Buy-Back Program will be structured to allow as much opportunity for Tribal participation and assistance as practical, including consulting with Indian Tribes to identify acquisition priorities.

The program will actively report progress and communicate with Tribal communities throughout the life of the initiative.

Interior will host three consultation sessions in January and February to discuss the initial implementation plan and receive Tribal feedback – on Jan. 31 in Minneapolis, Minn.; on Feb. 6 in Rapid City, S.D.; and on Feb. 14 in Seattle, Wash.

The initial implementation plan is available for public comment for 75 days.

For more information on the Buy-Back Program and to view the plan, visit doi.gov/buybackprogram.

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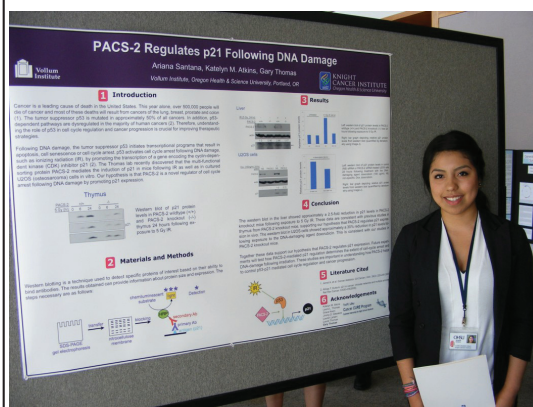
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