CHEROKEE, N.C. (AP) — Cherokees tribal official showed up in federal court Thursday to meet with tribal leaders who are accusing him of mismanaging tribal funds.

The Cherokees tribe has been in the news recently after a federal judge ruled that tribal officials had misused funds to pay for private jet rides and other expenses.

Cherokee officials said they were surprised by the charges and denied any wrongdoing.

The tribe's revenue is heavily dependent on gaming, which generates the majority of the tribe's income.

Refined whiskey would be a first

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — A state environmental board on Thursday approved plans to allow the construction of a new distillery in the state to produce refined whiskey.

The move is part of an effort to attract new businesses to the area and boost the local economy.

The distillery is expected to create hundreds of jobs and generate millions of dollars in revenue.

The tribe is one of the largest Native American tribes in the U.S. and has a long history of distilling whiskey.

The tribe will work with a state liquor board to ensure that the distillery is properly regulated.

Cherokees fight meth with policing, treatment

BRUNSWICK, Maine (AP) — Twelve Cherokees tribe members in Maine have been arrested on charges of drug trafficking and distribution.

The bust comes as part of an ongoing federal investigation into the tribe's illegal drug activities.

The tribes in the area have struggled with high rates of methamphetamine use, and the Cherokees tribe has been trying to address the problem through increased policing and treatment options.

The tribes have also been working with state and federal law enforcement agencies to combat the drug problem.

The arrests are part of a larger effort to curtail the flow of illegal drugs into the area, said a spokesman for the tribe.

The tribe has a large territory and has been working to prevent the spread of methamphetamine.

The tribes are also working with local law enforcement agencies to improve coordination and share information on drug-related issues.

The tribes have also been providing support to families affected by drug addiction through a network of support groups and counseling services.

Rehberg takes back money from Abramoff clients

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Rep. Dana Rehberg has returned $14,385 in campaign contributions from two individuals linked to lobbyist Jack Abramoff and his clients, a spokesman for the Montana Republican said.

The donations were made to Abramoff's clients in 2000, the spokesman said.

Rehberg's office has been under pressure to return the money, which was given to Abramoff's clients in 2000.

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