

U.S. House says tribal casinos roam too far

ANTHONY, N.M. (AP)—Legislation approved by a U.S. House committee could hinder Jemez Pueblo's plans to build a casino on New Mexico's southern border.

The bill by House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo, R-Calif., takes aim at the trend of off-reservation gambling—what some critics call "reservation shopping."

The bill, which passed the committee 27-9 on July 26, would amend the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 to

eliminate an exception that allows tribes to build off-reservation with the approval of the Interior secretary and the state's governor.

Jemez Pueblo and Santa Fe art dealer Gerald Peters are seeking permission to build a casino in Anthony—300 miles from the northern New Mexico pueblo—under the provision. Their proposal calls for the land in Anthony to be put into trust for the pueblo.

The House measure would allow applications submitted

before March 7 to move forward as long as the tribe has primary geographical and historical ties to the land.

Jemez Pueblo submitted its application in December of 2004, meeting that cutoff date, but it's unclear whether the tribe's application meets the land condition.

At least three tribes have ties to the land, including the Fort Sill Apache tribe in Oklahoma, which opposes the casino.

Paul Chinana, former Jemez Pueblo governor and chairman

of the Jemez Gaming Enterprise Board, said the pueblo can prove its historical ties through oral history if it needs to. Chinana said he would need approval from the tribe's religious council.

David Wilson, a spokesman for Peters, contends Jemez does have the necessary ties. Tribal members from several pueblos, including Jemez, traveled with Territorial Gov. Don Antonio de Otermin 325 years ago, establishing settlements along the lower Rio Grande, Wilson said

in a news release.

A group that opposes the Anthony casino, the Committee to Protect Dona Ana County, said the House bill "spells death" to the Anthony proposal.

"They have no ties to the area, and that's why Congress has tried to put this to an end," said Joe Monahan, a spokesman for the group. "If that's going to be the law, we challenge the Jemez Pueblo and Gerald Peters to show direct historical or geographical ties to the area."

Rep. Steve Pearce, R-N.M.,

a member of the Resources Committee, said the House committee's approval is a step toward closing loopholes that allow casinos in communities without residents' approval.

"These loopholes are wrong not only because they violate fundamental principles of local control but also because they threaten the long-term economic health and sovereignty of Native American tribes," Pearce said.

Scholarship fills wish of late Indian woman

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP)—As Pauline Miguel lay on her deathbed in 1999, she looked lovingly at her eight daughters, living embodiments of one of her life's goals achieved.

From the first day her oldest daughter, Mary, went to school more than 50 years earlier, Miguel had sworn to keep her girls from making the same mistakes she made as a young Tohono O'odham student.

She wanted all of them to graduate from high school instead of dropping out and living with an eighth-grade education.

The family realizes now that Miguel was trying to make sure her descendants wouldn't be subject to the worst American Indian stereotype: lazy, illiterate and delinquent.

But on another level, Miguel, who would have been 79 July 18, knew it really wasn't enough to motivate her family to get the best education possible.

The week before she died, she made a request of her daughters: Sell her red Nissan truck, as well as the home in Phoenix, and put the money into a scholarship to help Tohono O'odham students pay for college.

Seven years later, the Pauline Miguel Scholarship Fund is still giving \$1,000 annually to a deserving student—sometimes two if the committee can't pick just one. The fund is handled by the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona.

The three daughters who contributed \$4,000 each to the scholarship—Alberta Flannery, Neddie Blaine and Mary Bliss—spoke recently of a mother who never gave up on her daughters, even when they begged for just one day away from school.

"She was very pro-education," said Flannery, now 58 and a retired administrator for the Tucson Unified School District. "We never missed a day of school. Every year we'd get those little certificates on the last day of school."

And their mother, who attended the Tucson Indian Training School before it closed in 1960, was a shining example of community involvement.

She participated in the women's rights movements in the 1960s. She spoke on welfare rights. She helped the Tohono O'odham Nation's elderly with the creation of a nursing home.

Miguel's scholarship isn't the only grant for Tohono O'odham students. It's one of a growing number of scholarships created to help these students, who often struggle on standardized tests and attend schools that earn poor marks, too.

Schools in the Indian Oasis-Baboquivari Unified District, where many O'odham students go, regularly have more students fail the state AIMS test than pass it.

They've been labeled "failing" in state and federal accountability reports, too. And even if students make it through school, the dream of college often is washed away by lack of money.

Mary Juan, 19, last year's recipient of the Miguel Scholar-

ship, said it would have been difficult to pay for books at the University of Arizona without the \$1,000.

American Indian students often have a tough time believing they can succeed in college, said Maria Valencia, field coordinator in the Native American Education Program in the Sunnyside Unified School District.

"They're very shy," Valencia said. "They're really the minority in the big schools. They're just a speck in a sea of blond and red hair, and for some of them, that's very uncomfortable."

Those who have spent their entire lives on the reservation find less help with school, too, Valencia said, though she noted that's changing.

"Deep in the reservation, there aren't enough libraries and resources to become successful," she said. "Sometimes, they believe they aren't going to make it, and that's when you have to guide them."

About 4 percent of Sunnyside's 16,800 students are American Indian, the

third-largest ethnic group in the district.

Some 43 percent of American Indian students in Sunnyside graduated in 2003, according to the most recent data available.

In the Indian Oasis-Baboquivari district, 99 percent of students are American Indian and 43 percent graduate.

To qualify for Miguel's scholarship, applicants write an essay about their community outreach projects and academic accomplishments as well as what they expect to do with a college degree.

Applicants also need to have a GPA of at least 2.5. The sisters—who aren't involved in picking the recipients—said their mother wouldn't stand for her money to go to a student who was just getting by.

"She always emphasized the importance of hard work," Blaine said. "She never liked seeing people just sitting in front of the TV."

Michigan man killed by enemy gunfire

HESPERIA, Mich. (AP)—A Native American man from a small town in west Michigan was killed while fighting in Iraq.

Army Spc. Dennis K. Samson Jr., 24, of Hesperia in Oceana County, was killed Monday by enemy gunfire in Taqaddum. He was assigned to the 4th Brigade Troop Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Samson, a 2000 graduate of Hesperia High School, was described as a kind person and a "free spirit" who excelled in cross country, his coach said.

"He was a four-year varsity runner for us," Doug Baird said.

"He had a smile on his face. He was up to the challenge. It didn't matter how hard the workout would be. He was Native American and had this jet black hair about shoulder length. He would come bouncing along into practice, hair blowing in the wind. That's how I'll remember him," Baird said.

Investigation finds Indian trust officials broke rules

WASHINGTON (AP)—Officials in the federal agency that oversees American Indian trust assets had an improper social relationship with an accounting firm and pressured subordinates to give the firm preferential treatment, a government investigation found.

Senior managers in the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians based in Albuquerque golfed, drank and partied with the executives of the New Mexico accounting firm Chavarria, Dunne & Lamey, which won \$6.6 million in contract work over eight years, according to the report by the Interior Department's inspector general.

The investigation, first reported this week by U.S. News & World Report, found that employees in the trustee's office "felt pressured by these senior OST officials to continue to award work" to the firm and that they feared retaliation for speaking out.

The officials' relationship with the firm "created an appearance of preferential treatment," violating ethics standards and an internal memo directing employees to avoid close contact with contractors, Inspector General Earl Devaney wrote to department officials in the letter accompanying the report dated May 16.

The office was created in 1994 to improve account-

ability and management of Indian funds held in trust by the government.

Special Trustee Ross Swimmer said in a statement that he had directed his managers to take new ethics training as a result of the report's findings.

"Any appearance of an ethics violation at any level within OST is a great concern, and I believe that the additional ethics training will allow everyone to be fully informed of the rules," Swimmer said.

Accounting firm executives said in a statement that they believe their contracts were awarded under the appropriate guidelines. They pointed out that the report does not allege that they did anything wrong.

"We believe that OST management has acted appropriately and that the (Inspector General's) concern of 'an appearance of preferential treatment' for CD&L is subjective and unsubstantiated," the statement said.

Devaney's report outlines how the firm's executives and trustee managers exchanged gifts of meals and drinks, took out-of-town trips to a major golf event and played golf together almost weekly.

An eight-page chart details the dates of golf trips and meals, which often fell just days before contracts were awarded.

Canadian chief dies in canoe accident

SEQUIM, Wash. (AP)—An Indian canoe heading for an annual intertribal celebration overturned in windy weather, rough waves and chilly marine water, and a Canadian tribal chief from Vancouver Island died, authorities said.

All six people aboard the canoe were dumped into the Strait of Juan de Fuca on Wednesday off Dungeness Spit, Coast Guard Petty Officer Shawn Eggert said from Seattle. The strait runs between the island and the Olympic Peninsula of Washington state.

A man who died as the other five made their way ashore was identified by Makah Tribal Chairman Ben Johnson as Chief Jerry Jack, 55, of the

Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nations of Gold River, British Columbia.

The reason the canoe capsized and the cause of death were not immediately determined and an autopsy was pending.

Jack had been involved in the saga of Luna, a young killer whale who became separated from his pod and made his home at Gold River until he was killed by a boat propeller in March. Some Indians in the area said they believed Luna embodied the spirit of a dead chief.

A man and two women from the canoe were being evaluated at Olympic Memorial Hospital in Port Angeles and each "ap-

pears fine," nursing supervisor Ann Fischer said.

The other two people from the canoe apparently did not need hospital treatment or examination, Eggert said.

The Coast Guard received a report of the overturned canoe shortly before 6 p.m. and dispatched a helicopter and boat from Port Angeles, Eggert said.

The helicopter crew found five people on shore from the overturned canoe, the body of Jack, seven people from another canoe that was beached nearby and a Clallam County sheriff's deputy who responded to the initial call. The helicopter hoisted everyone to a nearby parking lot where emergency medical crews were waiting, Eggert said.

Eggert said none of those in the overturned canoe was wearing a life jacket.

He said conditions in the area included winds of about 35 mph, 5- to 7-foot seas and a water temperature of 54 degrees.

The death cast a pall over the annual summer's InterTribal Canoe Journey, which was started in 1989 as "Paddle to Seattle" and this year has the theme "Past and Present Pulling Together for Our Future."

The gathering runs from Monday, when the canoes are scheduled to arrive in Seattle, to the following Saturday and is being hosted by the Muckleshoot Tribe of Auburn, south of Seattle.

Ancient village on Miss. Coast discovered

BAY ST. LOUIS, Miss. (AP)—Archaeologists believe they have uncovered evidence of an ancient village, dating to the time of Christ, that once thrived along the shores of this bay town.

Some of the recently unearthed artifacts found in random spots near the beachfront suggest a prehistoric village occupied about a half-mile stretch between Bayview Court and the Bay-Waveland Yacht Club.

City leaders are working with state and federal transportation officials to cut a temporary beach road, while several agencies work to rebuild the 30-foot bluff and the bay bridge.

By law, the Mississippi Department of Transportation could rebuild the beach road over the artifacts, so long as the project doesn't disturb the historic relics in any way.

Buz Olsen, the city's chief of operations, said the roadwork includes replacing old water and sewer lines that for years ran underneath the road.

"We were disturbing the ground where these artifacts were," he said. "Our trenching for the new utilities may be as deep as five feet and some of the artifacts are just four feet below the ground."

Olsen said the only section of the project that could be

compromised is the laying of the utilities, because the digging required could disturb the area.

"With the utility corridor, (archaeologists) are going to want to sift through every piece of dirt," he said. "Things like this have been known to hold up projects for years. Hopefully, it won't hold up the temporary road and the beach project."

The scenario will change if human remains are found.

Sherry Hutt, a program manager at the U.S. Department of the Interior, said such a find could temporarily shut down the massive repair project on Beach Boulevard.

"If human remains are

found (on federal land) and there's federal money being spent, then you would have to stop activity immediately and instigate consultation with the possible descendent groups," she said.

Hutt, national program director of the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, which regulates the return of certain cultural items, said the stop-activity consultation period is at least 30 days.

David Seyfarth, a project engineer with MDOT, said neither the village nor the archaeological excavation is likely to slow work on the U.S. 90 bridge.