

## Clues to history found in planned highway's path

ASPEN HILL, Md. (AP)—Five thousand years ago, this sun-dappled stand of oaks was a place where Native Americans came to gather quartz and make tools. In the 1870s, an African American farmstead stood a few yards away.

Now, archaeologists are working feverishly to learn all they can about those earlier chapters before this patch of Montgomery County assumes its next role in human history, part of the roadbed of the pro-

posed intercounty connector.

Just off Georgia Avenue, north of Norbeck Road, field researchers hired by the Maryland Department of Transportation are in their final days of digging, sifting, photographing and cataloging the proposed route's only known archaeological site.

After 21 1/2 months, they've filled more than 175 boxes with artifacts, enough to fuel months', or even years', worth of laboratory analysis.

"We're very excited," said Julie Schablitsky, cultural resources manager for the State Highway Administration. "This gives us a chance to re-create the story of what happened here thousands of years ago."

Archaeologists found the site in 2003 as a part of a routine check of future highway lands. Historical land documents pointed them to the old homestead. And the presence of quartz boulders and a small wetland, conditions to which ancient

people were often drawn, led them to sink a series of test holes.

One of them turned up handfuls of the kind of quartz chips that archaeologists see as a kind of Stone Age sawdust. Someone had once made a lot of arrowheads, spear points and knife blades there.

Scientists have not found evidence that the area was ever an established settlement in prehistoric times. Rather, they think native folk visited periodically

during the late archaic period to take advantage of the abundant quartz. They might also have harvested cattails from the nearby marsh, a material that once served as moccasin padding and diaper filling, Schablitsky said.

"I think this was probably a marketplace that people came to for thousands and thousands of years," said Chris Polglase, an archaeological consultant running the dig.

## 3-chief Mohawk government recognized

ST. REGIS MOHAWK RESERVATION, N.Y. (AP)—The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs has determined that it will recognize the current, elected three-chief government of the St. Regis Mohawk tribe.

The ruling by Eastern Region Director Franklin Keel means that the United States will conduct its government-to-government business with the three-chief government, which has been in power since 1996.

Keel's decision Wednesday was the third time in the past 11 years that the bureau has decided on the Mohawk leadership dispute.

In 1996, the bureau decided it would recognize the so-called Constitutional Tribal Council as the valid government of St. Regis, which straddles the U.S.-Canadian border in northern New York.

The Constitutional government had been approved by a disputed referendum vote in June 1995.

However, the following year, St. Regis residents revoked the tribal constitution and voted to return to the three-chief system that had been in place prior to 1995.

In 2000, the BIA reversed itself and cast its recognition to the elected chiefs.

## Education conference in Hawaii proves very popular

FARMINGTON, N.M. (AP)—More than 360 people representing the Navajo Nation attended an education conference in Hawaii at an estimated cost of more than \$500,000, the Daily Times reported.

Tribal officials declined to release details about who beyond top administrators traveled and at what cost. The trip made by some public school district officials in the region cost at least \$1,400 a person, the newspaper reported.

The Navajo Nation is country's largest American Indian reservation, spanning 27,000 square miles into parts of New Mexico, Utah and Arizona. Tribal member-

ship stands at almost 300,000, second only to the Cherokee Nation.

Yet the Navajo Nation sent more than seven times the number of delegates as the Cherokees did to the conference. The Hawaii delegation had the most representatives with 545.

The National Indian Education Association hosted the four-day conference last month in Honolulu.

Some 362 representatives from the Navajo Nation preregistered for the conference and paid a \$400 fee, said Kim Narcisso, accounting consultant for association. Forty-five people representing the Cherokee Nation registered early.

Narcisso said he believes the location was the biggest draw.

"Because it was Hawaii, we got good attendance," Narcisso said. "But frankly, I was surprised to see so many people go."

A total of 3,200 people attended this year's conference, 1,000 of whom registered on site. A breakdown of onsite registration was not immediately available, but could boost the number of representatives from the Navajo Nation who attended.

About 1,900 people attended the association's past two conferences, which were held in Anchorage and Denver.

The Central Consolidated School District on the western side of the Navajo reservation sent eight school officials, six Indian Education Committee members and two others to this year's conference. While some school offi-

cials paid their own way to Hawaii, federal funds covered some of the trips.

The Navajo Nation Council sent 18 delegates to the conference, where such topics as early childhood education and issues facing American Indian education were discussed.

Council Speaker Lawrence Morgan said it's not unusual for tribal lawmakers to travel on behalf of the sovereign nation.

"The council delegates attended the convention to represent the Navajo Nation through their committee oversight function," said Morgan, who also made the trip. "As legislators of the nation, they needed to be involved and they did a wonderful job."

Morgan's office declined to say

what the trip cost for each delegate and would not release information on how many delegates had attended past conferences of the association.

Joshua Lavar Butler, a spokesman for the Office of the Speaker, said the delegates' travels were paid for through a fund for the council committees that is written into the fiscal year budget.

Former Education Committee Vice Chairman Wallace Charley said he believes the council sent more delegates than needed.

"That's way, way too many," he said. "Maybe they went to learn something. Well, we're ready to hear what they've learned."

## Badlands Park culls South Dakota bison herd

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK, S.D. (AP)—Badlands National Park has donated 152 buffalo to American Indian tribes as part of an ongoing effort to keep the park herd at a population the park's habitat can support.

Thirty-three bison went to the

Oglala Sioux Tribe, 25 to the Standing Rock Tribe of North Dakota, and 94 to the Spirit Lake Tribe of North Dakota, according to the park.

Park employees and volunteers recently rounded up 441 bison in the park. Blood samples were taken to test for disease

and pregnancy, and each animal's height and weight were recorded.

The largest animal processed this year was a 12-year-old bull that weighed almost 2,300 pounds. The oldest animal was a 27-year-old cow, according to Veterinarian Boyd Porch.

## Vote won't end tribes' interest in casino venture

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (AP)—The chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaws says the tribe's interest in locating a casino on the coast will not end if a nonbinding gambling vote fails in Jackson County.

Beasley Denson, who prefers to be called "Miko," the

Choctaw word for chief, has been making a series of speeches in Jackson County this week in support of the nonbinding referendum on the tribe's proposed casino in Jackson County.

Denson said in a speech to the Pascagoula Rotary Club that he is optimistic local residents will support the casino.

"If it fails we will talk to the governor and see what are the parameters we have in the future. Who's to say we might not build in Harrison or Hancock counties?" Denson said.

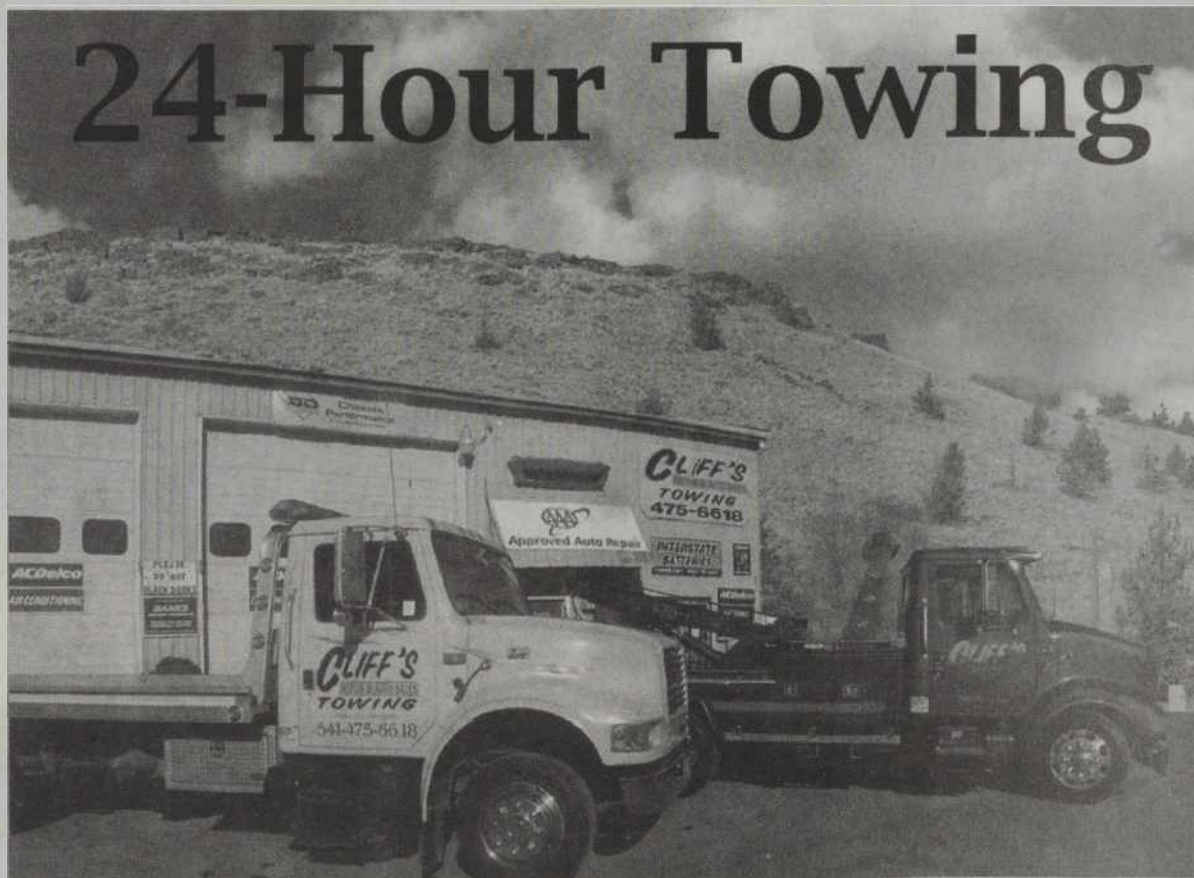
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