

Navajos mark 30th anniversary of uranium spill

CHURCH ROCK, N.M. (AP) - The leader of the Navajo Nation marked the 30th anniversary of a massive uranium tailings spill by reaffirming the tribe's ban on future uranium mining.

Speaking in Navajo and English, President Joe Shirley Jr. addressed about 100 people who made a seven-mile walk Thursday to the site of the July 16, 1979 spill and to the land of Navajo ranchers who live near another contaminated site.

What Shirley called "the largest peacetime accidental release of radioactive contaminated materials in the history of the United States" occurred when 94 million gallons of acidic water poured into the north fork of the Rio Puerco after an earthen uranium tailings dam failed.

Within days, contaminated tailings liquid was found 50 miles downstream in Arizona.

Shirley said the spill—the

same year as the Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania—barely registered on the consciousness of the United States but will not be forgotten by the by Navajo and non-Navajo residents "who still worry today about the potential impacts of this tragic accident."

It also helped mobilize the effort that resulted in the Navajo Nation's 2005 ban on uranium mining and processing until adverse economic, environmental and human health effects from past uranium activities are eliminated or substantially reduced to the satisfaction of the Navajo Nation Council, Shirley said.

"We will stand our ground until the terms of the Dine (Navajo) Natural Resources Protection Act are met," he said.

Substantial progress has been made in cleaning up one site, the Northeast Church Rock mine, Shirley said.

But, he said, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

wants to move the bulk of that contaminated material to a nearby Superfund site at a former United Nuclear Corp. mine. That, the Navajo president said, would not be considered a final solution by the Navajo tribe.

Shirley proclaimed July 16 as Uranium Legacy and Action Day, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Church Rock spill and 60 years of uranium mining impacts.

"The American people need to be educated and reminded about the disproportionate sacrifices made by Navajos so the United States of America could win the Cold War," he said.

Back at the Church Rock chapter house after the formal ceremonies, area Navajos talked about problems they blame on the spill. They talked about fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts and friends who died of kidney disease or cancer. They also talked about sick livestock and sheep found to have yellow intestines

when butchered.

The community's concerns have been heightened by renewed interest in the last couple of years in uranium mining.

New Mexico was a leading producer of uranium from the 1950s into the 1980s, when the price of uranium plummeted and mines and mills closed. The era's legacy remains in hundreds of abandoned uranium mines in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation.

Uranium mined from the 1940s into the 1970s went to the nation's defense, and many say that history obligates the fed-

eral government to help reclaim areas the mines damaged.

There have been no significant water quality studies of the Rio Puerco since the late 1980s or early 1990s, said Chris Shuey of the Southwest Research and Information Center, an Albuquerque-based environmental organization.

Studies have shown high radioactivity in runoff and flood waters, but "whether that can be traced to mining has not been determined," he said.

Impacts downstream are less certain, he said.

Man in artifacts case denied release

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - A Utah man accused of retaliating against an informant in an investigation of theft of American Indian artifacts has been ordered to remain in custody.

The Deseret News says 44-year-old Charles Denton Armstrong, of Blanding, was ordered to remain jailed because of his criminal history, mental-health issues and history of use and misuse of medication.

Native contracts focus of Senate committee hearing

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) - The preferences that some Alaskan Native-owned business corporations receive when competing for billions of dollars in government contracts

is under scrutiny. The Senate Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight held a hearing Thursday in which the rules that apply to the groups—called Alaska Native corporations—were

challenged. The subcommittee is chaired by Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Democrat, who says she wants to make sure the federal government is getting the best deal for taxpayers.

Community events

Upcoming summer youth activities

Youth and families are invited by 4-H and OSU Extension to come and help with the community garden at 5:30 p.m. every other Wednesday: July 22, and August 5, 12 and 26.

For details, call Edmund at 553-0118, or Fara at OSU Extension, 553-3238.

4-H is also planning some field trips this summer:

August 4: Fossil trip to Hancock Field Station near Fossil, grades 5-8.

August 11: Trip to windmill farm, grades 5-8.

Recreation field trips

The Recreation Department will also be hosting field trips this summer:

July 16: Timberline hiking, for ages 10 and over. Free. Bring hiking shoes, sack lunch, spending money.

July 23: Oaks Park, Milwaukee. Cost: \$8.75/bracelet. Bring sack lunch and spending money.

August 6: Bend Lava Caves/Drake Park: \$5/lantern. Bring sack lunch and spending money.

Living Traditions demonstrations

The Museum at Warm Springs will present the Living Traditions program through early September.

The Living Traditions live educational demonstrations are on Saturdays and Sundays, from 1 to 5 p.m. The schedule of demonstrations is as follows:

August 1-2: Cedar bark basketry, presented by Viola Kalama.

August 8-9: Tule mat weaving, presented by Adeline Miller.

August 15-16: Drum mak-

ing, presented by Emerson Squiempfen.

August 22-23: Beaded vests and buckskin gloves, presented by Brigitte Whipple.

August 29-30: Oral history and family tree, presented by Dallas Winishut Jr.

September 5-6: First foods and family heirlooms, presented by Darlene Foster.

If you would like more information, please call the Museum at Warm Springs at 553-3331.

Public notice

Notice is hereby given that the Early Intervention Early Childhood Special Education program of Warm Springs will destroy all special education student records that are no longer needed in regards to providing educational services. Records will be destroyed for children who received services any time prior to the 2008-09 school year.

Please note that this does not include the student's permanent record, which must be maintained indefinitely by local school districts. (OAR 581-22-717).

For purposes of claiming Social Security, or other benefits, parents may need special education records. If you wish to obtain the special education records mentioned above, please contact Samantha Gomez at the Warm Springs Early Childhood Education Center, 553-3241.

The next deadline to submit an item for publication is Friday, August 7. Thank you!

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