

## Fires draw big response



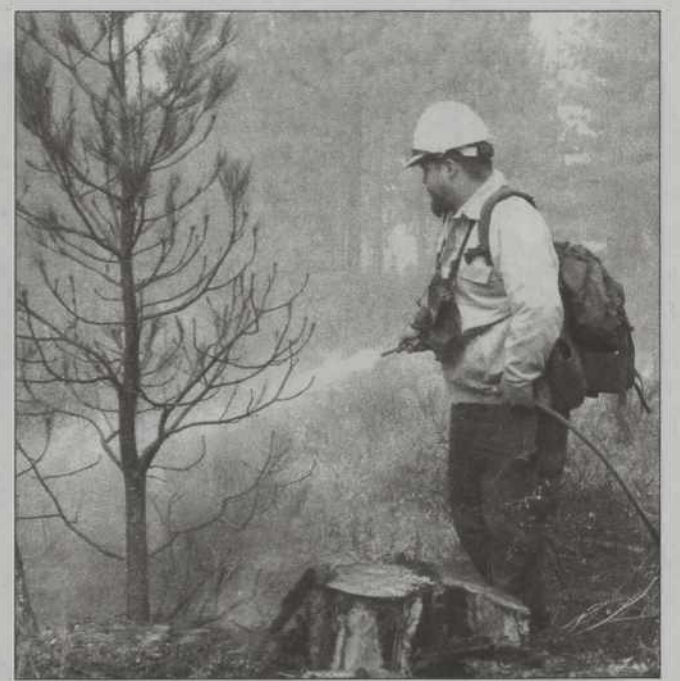
At the main incident base at the Warm Springs industrial park by Fire Management.

About 1,700 fire personnel were on the reservation in response to the fires. Some of them (right) used the new Sidwalter Fire Hall as a base station.

Spilyay staff photos.



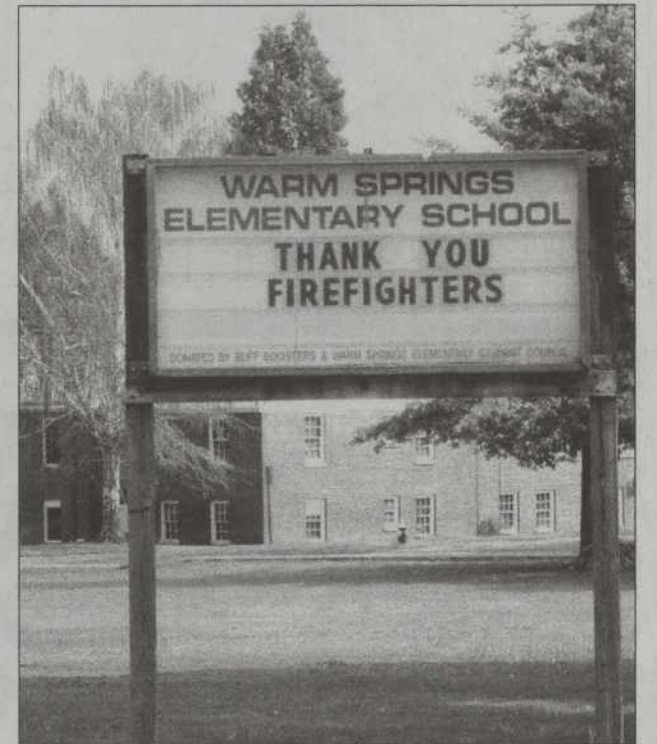
Even in high winds, the Chinook helicopter crew made water drops through the week.



Sidwalter Flat area saw extensive burning.



Limited visibility due to smoke caused the closure of Highway 26 during the middle of last week.



The school sign, at this time of year usually announcing the school start date, states community appreciation.

## News from Indian Country

### 2011 Indian Peace Treaty pageant may be last

MEDICINE LODGE, Kan. (AP) — A September tradition in southern Kansas that celebrates 300 years of the state's history might become history itself after this year's event because of a lack of money and volunteers, organizers said.

The Medicine Lodge Indian Peace Treaty Pageant has drawn thousands of people to the south central town where the pageant has been held every three to five years since it began in 1927.

But it requires help from nearly all the town's 2,300 residents and interest in participating has dropped in recent years.

The pageant, held in a natural amphitheater, typically draws between 10,000 and 15,000 visitors from Kansas and across the nation. This year's will be the 23rd pageant.

The focus is a re-enactment

of the signing of an 1867 treaty that was supposed to make traveling safer for those heading to frontier settlements in the West. It also one of the largest gatherings of Plains Indians — 15,000 Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, Apache and Cheyenne.

"It is with great sadness that possibly this will be our last one," said Robert Larson, one of the pageant's board members.

"It has become difficult to get community support and financial assistance to continue this wonderful event, as you probably know once you lose something like this it is almost impossible for a small community to get it back."

Sara Whelan, the president of the Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty Pageant, said board members voted to resign after this year's Sept. 23-25 pageant. A community meeting will be

held to determine the pageant's future. Whelan said if new people volunteer to organize the festival, it will continue.

"That's what we are all hoping for — but it has been difficult getting new people involved," Whelan said.

The pageant focuses on 300 years of Kansas and American history — including the Spanish conquistadors who came to the area in the 1500s, frontiersmen, the Lewis and Clark expedition and Indians on horseback.

It includes an 80-mile longhorn cattle drive between Bucklin to Medicine Lodge in the days before the festival starts, a ranch rodeo, a muzzleloaders encampment, a Western art show and an Indian encampment.

Dave Webb, assistant director at the Kansas Heritage Center in Dodge City, has been to

the pageant several times and plans to attend this year to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Kansas.

If the pageant ends, Webb said, "It would be the end of an era. It is a novel idea to take a lawn chair or blanket and sit out in the great outdoors and watch history happen where it happened."

The state has fewer major benefactors to support such events and younger people don't have the same interests as their parents or grandparents, said Jay Price, director of the public history program at Wichita State University.

"I think the whole idea of a pageant was a product of a particular time and era," Price said. "We saw a lot of them at the turn of the 20th century. Maintaining them has always been the challenge."

### Eagle feathers in caskets of officers were legal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — An American Indian group is upset that eagle feathers were buried with two Rapid City police officers who were killed in the line of duty. The U.S. attorney for South Dakota says no laws were broken.

Native American law officers honored slain Officers J. Ryan McCandless and Nick Armstrong by putting eagle feathers in their caskets. Representatives of the Black Hills

Sioux Nation Treaty Council say it's illegal for anyone who isn't an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe to possess an eagle feather.

A council delegate asked Rapid City Police Chief Steve Allender to return the eagle feathers. Allender turned to U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson.

Johnson said the Indian officers who provided the feathers had the legal right to do so.

### NM exhibition highlights Native American artists

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — More than two dozen new layered digital images, collages and black-and-white portraits are lining the walls at the New Mexico Museum of Art.

Native American artists from across the U.S. and Canada competed to win a spot in the exhibition "New Native Photography, 2011."

The show runs through Oct. 2. It's a collaboration between the museum and the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts

for its annual Indian Market.

Photographers have documented Native American life for more than a century, but this show features native artists who are using photography to convey their perspectives on everything from mixed ancestry and the environment to stereotypes and tribal sovereignty.

While not in the shape of traditional Indian art, some of the artists say their work is part of "the universal language of storytelling."

### Navajos focus on Little Colorado River settlement

CAMERON, Ariz. (AP) — The Navajo Nation, unwilling to settle its claims to the Colorado River without a pipeline to deliver much-needed water to its residents, now is focusing on rights to water from one of the river's tributaries.

Negotiators on a northern Arizona water rights settlement have removed from the deal a \$515 million pipeline that would have delivered water to the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Even with the lower cost, however, it remains uncertain when the revised settlement might be introduced in Congress.

Navajo lawmakers approved a version of the settlement last year. That version included the pipeline to send 11,000 acre-feet of Colorado River from Lake Powell to a handful of Navajo communities and about 4,000 acre-feet of water a year to the Hopi reservation.

But Republican Arizona Sen.

Jon Kyl, who has shepherded key American Indian water rights deals through Congress, later said it was too costly and asked the negotiators to revise it.

Kyl's office declined to comment on the revised settlement that negotiators sent him in June because it's not final. But in a letter to the Arizona Department of Water Resources, Kyl said the revised document marks only the next phase of conversation and that "it is possible that those costs will have to be further reduced."

"Because of the estimated cost associated with a main-stem settlement, the parties pulled back and focused simply on a Little Colorado River settlement," said Tom Whitmer, a water resource manager and tribal liaison for the state water department. "The federal government's budget is not in the most healthy state. When-

ever you start talking about settlements, it's also about the cost of the infrastructure to get the water to the area it's needed."

Under the revised settlement, the Navajo Nation still would get any unclaimed flows from the Little Colorado River and nearly unlimited access to two aquifers beneath the reservation. It also would settle claims from the Hopi Tribe, which did not follow the Navajos' footsteps in approving the settlement last year.

"I think we've gotten some things in there we feel good about," said Hopi Chairman Le Roy Shingoitewa. "Whether or not they remain is really something the parties all have to agree to."

Both the Navajo and Hopi are party to a case to adjudicate rights to the Little Colorado River, which has been on hold to allow for settlement discussions. Aside from Zuni Pueblo,

no other Arizona tribe has acquired rights to the river, Whitmer said.

The revised settlement was revealed in a separate federal court case earlier this month in which the Navajo Nation sued to assert its rights to the Colorado River. The negotiators said in a status report that they did not expect any settlement to be approved by Congress until late next year.

They also outlined further concerns by Kyl, including the future of the Navajo Generating Station that provides power to deliver water through a series of canals to 80 percent of the state's population and ensures that American Indian water rights settlements are met.

Kyl had asked negotiators for the tribes and 30 other entities to try to lower the \$800 million cost of the settlement so that he could introduce legislation well ahead of his planned retirement.

### Cheyenne River reservation celebrates new hospital

EAGLE BUTTE, S.D. (AP) — Residents of the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation celebrated the dedication of a new hospital in August.

More than \$80 million of stimulus money went into the project.

The building holds tribal and federal health services and is more than three times the size of the old one.

The Indian Health Service had tagged the old facility as

vastly undersized and understaffed.

State Tribal Relations Secretary LeRoy LaPlante Jr. says the opening is a promise that the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe's best days are ahead.

Indian Health Service director Yvette Roubideaux and Sen. Tim Johnson attended the ceremony.

Johnson says it's a proud day, but there's much more work to do.