

Telecom Dedication



The Wasco Dancers perform at the dedication ceremony of the Warm Springs Telecom.

Dave McMechan/Spilyay

Navajo teams up with lab on energy policy

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The Navajo Nation has entered into an agreement with a national laboratory to study carbon capture, clean coal technology and renewable energy on the vast reservation.

The tribe signed the three-year agreement with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory last week.

Navajo President Ben Shelly says the reservation is rich with natural resources that could be researched by leading scientists and engineers, and developed for

the benefit of the tribe.

Under the agreement, the tribe and the laboratory also could look into power plant design, combustion and geothermal technologies, and energy security, among other things.

The Navajo Nation is revising its energy policy. The reservation has large deposits of coal and uranium, along with potential for wind and solar energy but it historically hasn't been a major player in developing the resources.

Sen. wants council on Alaska Native languages

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — A bill from state Sen. Donny Olson of Nome would help preserve and revitalize the 20 Native languages of Alaska.

Olson recommends in SB130 that the state create the Alaska Native Language Preservation Council, which would advise the governor on programs and projects that will make the most of resources available to Native groups.

The bill was before the State Affairs Committee Tuesday. Representatives from Native

groups and linguists voiced their support and called for lawmakers to do what they can before time runs out.

Lawrence Kaplan, a Native language professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, says teaching students from an early age and working fast while elderly Native speakers are alive is paramount to avoiding extinction of languages.

The bill was held pending further dialogue with Native groups.

Objectors of Indian trust deal decry open letter

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Carol Good Bear says she worries for her safety after the attorneys who negotiated a \$3.4 billion settlement over misspent Native American land royalties published the phone numbers and addresses of the four people objecting to the deal.

Good Bear, of New Town, N.D., started receiving angry phone calls about a week ago, after the letter went out. She has since unplugged her home phone and started screening her cellphone calls.

"To put my name out there for the public, I think that's scary that these attorneys would use this tactic and intimidate me into dropping my appeal," she said. "I don't have protection. If somebody is upset about all this and comes at me with a gun, what am I supposed to do?"

The attorneys who published the Jan. 20 open letter represent up to 500,000 plaintiffs in the

class-action lawsuit named after Elouise Cobell, the Blackfeet woman from Montana who spent nearly 16 years trying to hold the U.S. government accountable for more than a century's worth of mismanaged Native American accounts.

The plaintiffs' attorneys are led by Dennis Gingold of Washington, D.C. Gingold said Monday that he was preparing for oral arguments and could not comment on the letter.

Cobell died in October, just months after a federal judge approved the largest government class-action settlement in U.S. history.

Under the settlement, \$1.4 billion would go to individual Native American account holders. Some \$2 billion would be used by the government to buy up fractionated tribal lands from individual owners willing to sell, and then turn those lands over to tribes. Another \$60 million

would be used for a scholarship fund for young Natives.

The settlement took a year to push through Congress, then months for final judicial approval. After the settlement was approved, Good Bear and three other people filed separate objections, each for different reasons.

Those appeals must be heard by a federal appeals court before any money from the settlement can be distributed, with the first scheduled to be heard Feb. 16.

The plaintiffs' attorneys wrote in their letter that the "hopes and wishes of 500,000 individual Indians" had been delayed by those four people. If it wasn't for them, the first pay-

ments would have been made before Thanksgiving, the letter said.

"There is little doubt that they do not share the desires or care about the needs of the class, over 99.9 percent of whom support a prompt conclusion to this long-running, acrimonious case," the attorneys wrote.

The letter went on to list the names, phone numbers and addresses of Good Bear; Kimberly Craven of Boulder, Co.; Charles Colombe of Mission, S.D.; and Mary Lee Johns of Lincoln, Neb. The attorneys invited people to "ask them directly about their motives" and cautioned them to "please be civil in your communications."

Tribal school district files complaint over alcohol inquiry

BOISE (AP) — A school district on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation says two of its best basketball players were wrongfully accused of consuming alcohol and asked to take a Breathalyzer test before a game in Clark County.

The Shoshone-Bannock School District has filed a complaint with the Idaho High School Activities Association over the Jan. 13 incident in Dubois.

Athletic director Lyndon

Smith says he intervened when Clark County Sheriff Bart May approached the two student athletes with a Breathalyzer test, saying an audience member had reported they smelled of alcohol.

Smith says he felt the interrogation of the players, who are Native American, may have been racially motivated and the district is considering a civil rights complaint. The sheriff denies the claim, saying he acted appropriately.

City of Sheboygan pursuing casino plan

SHEBOYGAN, Wis. (AP) — The city of Sheboygan is pursuing a casino development agreement with the owners of the Blue Harbor Resort and the Sokaogon Chippewa tribe.

Claremont New Frontier Resort, the Sokaogon Mole Lake and the city would develop a casino near Lake Michigan in

Sheboygan's South Pier District. An off-reservation casino would need federal approval, which could be a lengthy process.

A contract approved by the Redevelopment Authority last week requires the tribe, resort owners and the city to reach a development agreement in 180 days.

The city would sell land on the South Pier to Claremont for the casino. If the project does not get federal approval, the city would have the option of buying back the land.

The Sokaogon Chippewa Community is a 1,200-member tribe with a reservation near Crandon.

Tribes object to mining bill

HURLEY, Wis. (AP) — A federal agency says it's looking into whether Wisconsin violated treaty rights by not consulting with tribal governments that might be affected by a state mining bill.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs says it's conducting an inquiry after at least one tribal government asked it to get involved.

The contentious mining bill would streamline the state's complex mine-permitting process.

Officials from the Lac du Flambeau, Red Cliff, Bad River and Menominee tribes claim the lawmaking process ignored treaty rights.

Okla. Gov. asks tribes to drop water rights suit

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Gov. Mary Fallin wants two tribal leaders to dismiss their lawsuit against the state over tribal water rights in southeastern Oklahoma.

Fallin last week sent a letter to Chief Greg Pyle of the Choctaw Nation and Gov. Bill

Anoatubby of the Chickasaw Nation. Fallin asks them to dismiss their federal lawsuit and allow an ongoing mediation process to resolve disputes between the state and the tribes.

In exchange, Fallin says the state will not file a separate state court action to determine the

extent of tribal water rights in their historic territories.

The tribes said in statement they hope a resolution can be reached at the table.

The lawsuit asks a federal judge stop the state's plan to sell water storage rights to Sardis Lake to Oklahoma City.

Navajo Code Talker dies in Ariz.

WINDOW ROCK, Arizona (AP) — Another Navajo Code Talker has died. Thurmon Begay says his father, Sgt. Jimmie Begay, died Wednesday after a fall. He was 86.

Begay was one of about 420 Navajos trained to transmit messages in a code based on the then-unwritten Navajo language. The Code Talkers sent thousands of

messages without error on Japanese troop movements, battlefield tactics and other communications, helping to win World War II.

Jimmie Begay enlisted in 1942 at age 17 and served in the 1st Marine Division, 2nd Battalion. He eventually returned to the Navajo reservation and retired from the Navajo Forest Products Industries in 1985.

Neb. tribe's computer co. wins \$84M contract

WINNEBAGO, Neb. (AP) — The Winnebago Tribe's information technology company has won an \$84 million Air Force contract to provide support at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia.

Ho-Chunk Inc., which is the tribe's economic development unit, announced the new contract for All Native Systems last Wednesday.

Ho-Chunk CEO Lance Morgan says the company's proven performance on past government contracts helped it win this one.

All Native Systems is an information technology service provider that Ho-Chunk created in 2005.

Ho-Chunk says it has 26 subsidiaries and more than 1,400 employees in 10 states and five foreign countries.

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