

Family, Tulalip tribe feuding over land

SEATTLE (AP) — To the Campbell brothers, the 56 acres of prime land near the Tulalip Tribes' popular casino and outlet mall was a chance for the family to generate income for generations to come.

The parcel in the 22,000-acre Western Washington reservation had been left behind by their grandmother, a tribal member who went by the white name of Katrina Jim and had been an allottee in a land agreement signed by the federal government in 1904 — back when the reservation had about 450 people.

But the Campbells are now in a dispute over the land with their own tribe and the federal government, saying the tribal council and the U.S. Bureau of

Indian Affairs purposefully devalued the land and then offered a quick, below market cash value to the 50-plus shareholders — and got enough sellers to gain a majority ownership.

"I'm a veteran. I'm a senior," said 67-year-old Walt Campbell. "They're supposed to put us on a pedestal. I feel uncomfortable doing this. But something has to be done. We got railroaded on this land."

As for the tribe, what started with a bingo hall in 1983 developed into a casino, an entertainment center and a 12-story, 370-room hotel and resort along Interstate 5. The hotel alone cost \$130 million to build.

The tribe also leases land for a 110-store outlet mall, located about 45 minutes north of shop-

pers living in the Seattle area and just 15 minutes from Everett. The tribe also hosts a Home Depot, a Wal-Mart and a soon-to-open Cabela's.

In all, the Tulalips have built at a rapid pace one of the most economically successful tribes in the state. The revenue goes to benefit the 4,100 members — 2,600 who live within the reservation.

"The tribe is prosperous for its people," said Les Parks, a former tribal council member and an ally of the Campbell brothers. "We are baffled as to why the council would want to oppress an Indian family of 50-plus members from earning an income from the land their grandmother wanted them to own."

The 56 undeveloped acres sit a few hundred yards from the outlet mall, where people stream door to door to buy everything from clothes to electronics.

Tulalip Tribes chairman Mel Sheldon said the price paid to sellers was approved by the BIA.

"The Tribes paid the BIA approved price to those owners who wanted to sell," he said in a statement. Tribal officials declined to comment beyond that.

An inquiry to the Bureau of Indian Affairs this past week was not immediately returned.

But the Campbell brothers, and the 12 other family members who signed on to a lawsuit, say they don't trust the relationship between the bureau and the tribe.

Choctaws get \$2M for transportation projects

PHILADELPHIA, Miss. (AP) — The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has received two federal grants to fund construction of a new transit maintenance facility.

The tribe was awarded grant funds totaling \$2.1 million.

The tribe will use \$192,000 to build a new Regional Vehicle Maintenance Center. Construction is scheduled to be completed by September 2013.

The tribe also will use

\$120,000 for a new wrecker, \$169,000 for a new trolley, \$102,284 for two new 17-passenger ADA buses and \$185,000 for shop equipment.

The tribe also receives a \$200,000 U.S. Department of Transportation for the purchase of three public transit buses.

Chief Phyliss J. Anderson says the buses will be used on new routes to help tribe members get to nearby colleges.

Tribe suing beer companies for alcohol problems

LINCOLN, Nebraska (AP) — A Native American tribe is suing some of the world's largest beer makers, claiming they knowingly contributed to devastating alcohol-related problems on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in the state of South Dakota.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe of South Dakota said it is demanding \$500 million in damages for the cost of health care, social services and child rehabilitation caused by chronic alcoholism on the reservation, which encompasses some of the most impoverished counties in the United States.

One in four children born on the reservation suffer from fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and the average life expectancy is estimated between 45 and 52 years—the shortest in North America except for Haiti, according to the lawsuit. The average American life expectancy is 77.5 years.

The lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court of Nebraska also targets four beer stores in Whiteclay, a Nebraska town near the reservation's border that, despite having only about a dozen residents, sold nearly 5 million cans of beer in 2010.

Tribal leaders and activists blame the Nebraska businesses for chronic alcohol abuse and

bootlegging on the Pine Ridge reservation, where all alcohol is banned. They say most of the stores' customers come from the reservation, which spans southwest South Dakota and dips into Nebraska.

"You cannot sell 4.9 million 12-ounce cans of beer and wash your hands like Pontius Pilate, and say we've got nothing to do with it being smuggled," said Tom White, the tribe's Omaha-based attorney.

Owners of the four beer stores in Whiteclay were unavailable or declined comment Thursday when contacted by The Associated Press. A spokeswoman for Anheuser-Busch InBev Worldwide said she was not yet aware of the lawsuit, and the other four companies being sued—SAB Miller, Molson Coors Brewing Company, MillerCoors LLC and Pabst Brewing Company—did not immediately return messages.

The lawsuit alleges that the beer makers and stores sold to Pine Ridge residents knowing they would smuggle the alcohol into the reservation to drink or resell. The beer makers supplied the stores with "volumes of beer far in excess of an amount that could be sold in compliance with the laws of the state of Nebraska" and the tribe, tribal officials allege in the lawsuit.

The vast majority of

The lawsuit alleges that the beer makers and stores sold to Pine Ridge residents knowing they would smuggle the alcohol into the reservation to drink or resell.

Whiteclay's beer store customers have no legal place to consume alcohol since it's banned on Pine Ridge, which is just north, state law prohibits drinking outside the stores and the nearest town that allows alcohol is more than 20 miles (32 kilometers) south, said Mark Vasina, president of the group Nebraskans for Peace.

The Connecticut-sized reservation has struggled with alcoholism and poverty for generations, despite an alcohol ban in place since 1832. Pine Ridge legalized alcohol in 1970 but restored the ban two months later, and an attempt to allow it in 2004 died after a public outcry.

The reservation spans impoverished areas, including Shannon County, South Dakota, which U.S. census statistics place as the third-poorest in the U.S. It has a median household income of \$27,300 and nearly half of the population falls below federal poverty standards.

Tribal President John Yellow

Bird Steele said the tribe council authorized the lawsuit in an effort to protect the reservation's youth.

"Like American parents everywhere, we will do everything lawful we can to protect the health, welfare and future of our children," he said.

The tribe views the lawsuit as a last resort after numerous failed attempts to curb the abuse through protests and public pressure on lawmakers, White added. He said the tribal council voted unanimously about four months ago to hire his law firm.

"The illegal sale and trade in alcohol in Whiteclay is open, notorious and well documented by news reports, legislative hearings, movies, public protests and law enforcement activities," the lawsuit states. "All of the above have resulted in the publication of the facts of the illegal trade in alcohol and its devastating effects on the Lakota people, especially its children, both born and unborn."

Nebraska lawmakers have struggled for years to curb the problem, and are considering legislation this year that would allow the state to limit the types of alcohol sold in areas like Whiteclay. The measure would require local authorities to ask the state to designate the area an "alcohol impact zone."

Okla. AG asks Sup. Ct. to decide tribal water case

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt has asked the state Supreme Court to decide the rights of two Oklahoma-based American Indian tribes to water in two major streams in their historic territories in southeastern Oklahoma.

Pruitt filed an application on behalf of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board asking the state's highest court to assume jurisdiction over a comprehensive stream adjudication of the

water rights of the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations.

The tribes filed a federal lawsuit against the state in August. It seeks an injunction to stop the board from selling water storage rights to Sardis Lake in southeastern Oklahoma to the Oklahoma City Water Utility Trust.

In a statement, Gov. Mary Fallin says her goal is to work with lawmakers and the tribes to develop a statewide water policy.

January winnings drop for Louisiana casinos

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Last month's winnings for Louisiana's state-licensed casinos fell 3.5 percent from January 2011.

The tally for the 13 gambling riverboats, Harrah's land casino in New Orleans and the four race track casinos totaled \$185.6 million in January. Gamblers lost \$191.3 million the previous January.

The boats won \$126.4 million, Harrah's won just a shade under \$26.9 million and the track casinos took in \$32.3 million.

In December 2011, players left behind \$201.9 million.

The figures do not include Indian reservation casinos, which are not required to report their winnings to the public.

Ore. gold miner gets prison

(AP) — A southern Oregon gold miner has been sentenced to a year in federal prison for illegally mining on a salmon stream. Clifford Tracy of Gold Hill

was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Medford for failing to file a plan of operations and post a bond before mining on federal land that is critical habitat for salmon.

Shiprock counselor focuses on tradition

SHIPROCK, N.M. (AP) — The towering Shiprock pinnacle is perfectly framed by a window in Wilson De Vore's modular classroom tucked behind Northwest High School.

De Vore, the first traditional counselor on the payroll at Shiprock Associated Schools Inc., gazes at the famous landmark when he needs inspiration or tranquility.

"I'm here because I was a headache to teachers as I was growing up," he said during an interview. "I'm here to tell the kids that I've made mistakes. I share as much as I can with students to get them to talk, to help them find their identities."

Shiprock Associated Schools Inc., which comprises Northwest High School and Atsa Biyaazh Community School, began seeking a traditional counselor several years ago, Executive Director Leo Johnson said.

Adding the position was part of the schools' effort to change their image from an alternative

education setting to a more mainstream environment. Formerly Shiprock Alternative Schools, Inc., the school changed its name in 2007.

"Students here, it seemed like some of them had discipline issues," Johnson said. "They were highly mobile, moving from school to school, and they came here because we were alternative."

Although the school has changed, some students still need additional support or help working through challenges, Johnson said. Administrators worked closely with governing board member Charley Joe to develop a job description that captured the schools' need for contemporary counseling and traditional knowledge.

De Vore fit the role, Johnson said.

"We wanted to find someone with extensive background in tradition, someone who knows the significance of culture," he said. "Mr. De Vore was very knowledgeable and had a good background. He also is fluent in

English so he can connect with the students."

De Vore, who started at the school in September, quickly moved from a classroom inside the high school to a modular building outside, he said. His traditional singing was disturbing nearby classes.

De Vore doesn't mind. His new location allows students to leave the main campus and make a special visit to his office, a building he describes as "a place where you can be yourself."

Inside this building, students who are referred to De Vore by teachers, administrators or other staff members can talk openly about challenges.

De Vore also hosts classes for groups of students who he teaches the fundamentals of Diné culture, including the creation story and how youths can discover identity through tradition.

His sessions don't take the place of the academic Diné language and culture classes in the high school. Neither is his role

to convert students to native religion, he said.

"It's not conversion but identity," he said. "It's asking, 'Who is that brown guy looking back at me in the mirror? What does it mean to be Dine?'"

Navajo legend

De Vore, who spends most of his time with male students in grades 7 through 12, bases his lessons on the Hero Twins, deities in Navajo culture.


The twins, as legend has it, visited Spider Woman to learn the identity of their father. After learning their father was the sun, the boys traveled to him, seeking weapons that would allow them to defend their people against the monsters and create harmony.

One of the twins, Monsterslayer, confronts the negativity in life, De Vore said. His brother follows to generate resolution.

Students are encouraged to use the story to find resolution to modern struggles.

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