



# Judge may decide fate Okla. casino

TULSA, Okla. (AP) – A federal judge could decide whether a little-known Indian tribe of 350 members can legally build a casino in the Tulsa suburb of Broken Arrow, even as construction at the 20-acre site continues amid protest from thousands of area residents, lawmakers and pastors.

Oklahoma's attorney general has sued the tribe and is asking U.S. District Judge

Gregory K. Frizzell for an injunction to halt building at the site, saying the tribe doesn't have the authority under federal law to operate a gaming facility. A hearing is scheduled for this week in Tulsa federal court.

The Kialegee Tribal Town, headquartered in Wetumka in southeastern Oklahoma, broke ground on the Red Clay Casino site near the Creek Turnpike late last year

and has trucked in several pre-fabricated buildings in recent weeks to temporarily house slot machines. The tribe plans to open sometime this summer in the trailers and says a permanent facility will be built next year.

The tribe has yet to win approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Indian Gaming Commission to allow it to conduct gaming at the site. The town

king, Tiger Hobia, says his tribe is exempt from a federal review, and has said the casino would give the tribe its only chance to provide programs for its impoverished members. Hobia, who did not return calls seeking comment on the project, has said that 65 percent of tribal members are unemployed and of those who are employed, more than 90 percent only earn minimum wage.

# Seneca Nation firm wins \$18.5M NY Army project

SALAMANCA, N.Y. (AP) – A Seneca Indian Nation business has been awarded an \$18.5 million contract to design and build a U.S. Army Reserve Center in upstate New York.

The western New York tribe said that the contract was awarded to SCMC LLC, which opened in 2008.

Seneca President Robert Odawi Porter says it's evidence of the Senecas' efforts to diversify the tribe's

economy and its ability to compete for national contracts.

The new center will serve 12 Army Reserve units in the Albany area.

The Indian nation has been taking steps in recent years to broaden its economy beyond the discount cigarette shops and casinos for which it's best known as state and federal law changes have cut into the tobacco business.

# Items returned to Montana tribes

POPLAR, Mont. (AP) – Cultural items seized at a Montana and Canadian border crossing by U.S. officials who uncovered an illegal smuggling operation have been returned to the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes.

The 16 items include ceremonial clothing, war bonnets, a beaded knife sheath and other items dating from the late 19th century and early 20th century.

Terry Thibeault of the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Interior says the items were seized in December 1999. The case was never adjudicated because the man accused of smuggling the items died during the investigation.

Thibeault says the 16 items are a portion of some 78 items being returned to several other Montana tribes and one tribe in North Dakota.

# Seminole leader hopes to build modern tribe

WEWOKA, Okla. (AP) – Leonard Harjo sees his job as a builder. Actually, he considers himself a rebuild.

Harjo, who was elected principal chief of the Seminole Nation in 2009, says his goal as chief is to rebuild his tribe into a modern, economically diverse Native American nation. After watching the tribe struggle through the 1990s, he said, he wants to make the modern Seminole Nation an economically strong, diverse group.

Based in Wewoka and primarily in Seminole County,

the nation has a total tribal enrollment of about 18,800, records show. Of that figure, about 13,500 Seminoles make their home in Oklahoma. It also includes about 2,000 Seminole freedmen, descendants of black Americans brought into the tribe in the late 1800s. And though deeply engrained in state history—the nation is one of the state's five civilized tribes because of its written language—over the past decades it has not had the rapid economic growth of its neighbors, the Chickasaws and Choctaws.

# Coeur d'Alene Tribe may buy historic Idaho site

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho (AP) – The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is negotiating with a private landowner to buy land surrounding a historic mission site in northern Idaho.

Ed Short, the real estate agent who owns the land next to the Old Mission State Park, said he believes the Coeur d'Alene Tribe would be the best owner of the property. He's listed the property

for \$750,000. Ancestors of the tribe and Catholic priests built the Mission of the Sacred Heart in Cataldo in the 1850s. Last October, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe opened a \$3.2 million visitor center at the park. Short's land includes an old cemetery with the graves of Jesuit priests, trails to the Coeur d'Alene River and 1,300 feet of waterfront.

# Teens find old artifact

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) – A group of New Mexico seventh-graders have found what could be one of the most significant archaeological discoveries in a while.

Seventh-graders from Sandia Prep discovered a Native American pot, about 18 inches high and 14 to 16 inches wide and possibly 900 years old, while on a field trip last month in Cibola County.

"It was like a gray pot, with zig-zag stripes and dash patterns all the way going around it," seventh-grader Isabel Jerome said.

"Yeah, it was a really incredible find."

State officials aren't revealing the artifact until they consult nearby pueblos.



Drum group at the Agency Longhouse for Honor Seniors Day of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

# Calif. approves casino deal

ROHNERT PARK, Calif. (AP) – A Native American tribe's plans for a Las Vegas-style casino about 50 miles north of San Francisco appears to have cleared its last hurdle.

The state Assembly on Thursday ratified an agreement between Gov. Jerry

Brown and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria for the casino near Rohnert Park in Sonoma County. The vote was 64-3.

The state Senate had ratified it earlier in the week.

The deal now goes to the federal government for final approval, which is ex-

pected. The agreement between the tribe and governor allows for the operation of card games and 3,000 slot machines.

Up to 15 percent of the casino's net winnings would go toward gambling mitigation and regulation.

# Crowd gathers for languages workshop

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) – Two decades ago, Hishinlai' Kathy Sikorski could not speak her ancestral language, Gwich'in Athabascan. Now she teaches it at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

"When I was hired as a UAF language instructor in 2002, I was scared, very scared because I had no idea how to teach a language," Sikorski told a crowd gathered in Anchorage to talk about efforts to revitalize Alaska Native languages.

Sikorski, who began learning Gwich'in 17 years ago, developed her teaching skills by learning even more about the learning process, eventually creating her own lesson plans and making her own materials "from scratch," she said, reading from a prepared statement.

"Language learners need support, emotional or otherwise, from fluid speakers, politicians, educational settings, et cetera," she said.

She was among people

who spoke at the daylong event hosted by the Alaska Historical Commission. Participants attending in person include Alaska Native groups and government representatives. Alaska's three-member congressional delegation sent recorded messages.

State Sen. Donny Olson, D-Nome, participated by phone, reviewing a bill he sponsored and approved by lawmakers that would create a state-backed council aimed at revitalizing Alaska Native languages. Olson urged people to write to and call the office of Gov. Sean Parnell encouraging him to sign the legislation into law. Parnell spokeswoman Sharon Leighow said the bill has not yet been transmitted to the governor's office for review.

SB130 would establish the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, which would evaluate the state's 20 indigenous languages and make recommendations for preservation, restoration and revitalization.

# Ex officer convicted of abuse

(AP) – A retired Warm Springs police officer, Head Start teacher and child protective services worker faces up to 10 years in federal prison after his conviction on charges of abusing five young girls.

Prosecutors say 62-

year-old Harry Hintsala of Warm Springs was found guilty Wednesday in a trial before a federal judge in Portland.

The abuse took place between 2007 and 2011 on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation, according to reports.

# Failure to register as a sex offender

Lei Walker Calica, 31, primary address unknown, has failed to register as a convicted sex offender with the Warm Springs Sex Offender Registration office. Physical description: 5 feet, 9 inch. Weight 200 pounds. Contact the sex offender registry office with information, 541-553-2214.



# Oklahoma tribe's accounts to remain frozen

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) – Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes officials are disappointed with a federal judge's decision to keep the tribe's accounts at an Oklahoma bank frozen until an internal leadership dispute is resolved, a spokeswoman said.

The tribe had asked U.S. District Judge David Russell to lift the freeze on about \$6.4 million by Clinton-based First Bank and Trust Co., but Russell allowed the freeze to remain in place. He cited the ongoing dispute between the tribe's governor, Janice Prairie Chief-Boswell, and its one-time lieutenant governor, Leslie Wandrie-Harjo, over who is the tribe's leader.

A hearing on the leadership and banking issues is set

for June 8 in Custer County District Court, where the bank filed for the administrative freeze.

Tribe spokeswoman Lisa Liebl said that the workweek for about 500 tribal employees has been reduced to 32 hours because of the frozen funds, and checks written by the tribe to workers, contractors and vendors have been returned because of insufficient funds.

"Now, we'll just wait for our court date on June 8.... That's all we can do at this point," she said. "We're still locked out of those accounts, those frozen funds, so we have no idea what's happening with all of that."

The judge's order, issued last week, noted that depend-

ing on which side wins the governance dispute, "the bank faces potential liability for the payment of money at the request of an unauthorized signatory.... In light of the ongoing governance is-

sues, about which Plaintiffs have presented no evidence, the Court cannot conclude that Plaintiffs will ultimately prevail in their quest to have the administrative freeze lifted."

# Homelessness on reservations persists

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) – A new study finds that despite housing improvements on Minnesota's Indian reservations, homelessness still persists.

Researchers with the nonprofit health and human services organization Amherst H. Wilder Foundation visited eight of the

state's 11 reservations. They found nearly 2,100 people who are homeless or living in crowded conditions with friends or relatives. The study's author, Ellen Shelton, said the poor economy offset improvements in housing and social services since the last count of the homeless on reservations in 2006.