



# Indian Country

**TODAY** THIS WEEK FROM  
THE PREMIER E-NEWSLETTER SERVING THE NATIONS, CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE

## *A Letter from the Publisher*

*Shekóli.* While some Natives approach Thanksgiving with ambivalence, the holiday is one of the best moments of the year to educate a large number of people about the history and concerns of contemporary Indian Nations. Interest in our preeminent role in the history of Turtle Island is at its highest at this time of year. After all, the defining elements common to our Native cultures are the key Native issues of thankfulness and sharing.



To begin with, it is important to remember that there are as many words for the act of giving or the spirit of generosity as there are Native languages. (Amuyich, Potlatch and Yawa' are a few of the more familiar terms.) No matter whether we are living in times of plenty or times of need, Native peoples have always found a way to embrace ceremonies of thanksgiving and gratitude to the creator for all we have. We have held these celebrations of Mother Earth's gifts close to our hearts from the beginning of time. The recognition of her blessings has helped sustain our peoples despite the many hardships we have faced. History tells us of many civilizations that have vanished because of similar hardships, yet we have managed to survive and endure. Our very existence and the nurturing of our traditions is what draws people to us. On Turtle Island, they have looked to our ways of celebrating the bounty of Mother Earth. It goes beyond the romanticizing of the past, as how we live today and care for each other offers examples for others to follow.

At ICTMN, we regularly demonstrate how Native economic enterprises are typically geared to give back our communities. We debunk the myth of the casino-rich Indian to show how these financial engines provide money to larger endeavors. Throughout the year, Native corporate money is directed to areas of assistance such as education and educational advancement, food banks, clothes and food for the needy in addition

to funding healthcare, public safety and environmental causes. Generosity at the personal level is also celebrated, as Native traditions fly counter to many of the materialistic impulses present in today's consumer culture. Recently, columnist Mike Taylor (whose story is mentioned in this week's Letters to the Editor page), described the offerings made to him for his service as a funeral singer on western reservations: "Sometimes, depending on the tribe, declining gifts is offensive to a few families. In which case I accept the gifts but give them away to any other singer who may have traveled a great distance to sing, or to some poor elders. That is what we did traditionally; Indians almost immediately gave our gifts away to others who were more needy. I suspect this is why they originally called us 'Indian givers' but later the media, whether intentionally or unintentionally, completely misused the word."

Who among us does not recognize Taylor's spirit of generosity as one of the best qualities we possess?

The American holiday of Thanksgiving is a teaching tool. It is a reminder of when the first charitable acts of Natives on Turtle Island were witnessed and recorded by outsiders. Now we witness and record how the central beliefs of our communities have been honored and followed, from the time of our ancestors to today, just as our children will pass them down to the generations to come.

*Ná k'í wa,*

Ray Halbritter

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### The Mixed Blessings Of Thanksgiving

*Peter d'Errico, a consulting attorney on indigenous matters, considers the meaning of Thanksgiving amid Native American Heritage Month in regard to certain websites:*

Native American Heritage Month offers an annual fork in the road for American culture. One path celebrates the stereotypes of Indians and Pilgrims and ignores the history of the American Holocaust. The other path uncovers the history and explores its continuing effects in the world.

A federal Native American Heritage Month website sponsored by a coal-

tion of agencies, chief among them the Library of Congress, appears to aim for the middle ground between the two paths—safe for people who only want turkey and cranberry sauce, but pointing to deeper issues for those who want food for thought.

When we add what the Bureau of Indian Affairs website says about National Native American Heritage Month, we have all the evidence we need to prove that conventional Thanksgiving does not accurately symbolize American Indian—or American—heritage. According to the BIA website, “Americans both Indian and non-Indian have urged that there be permanently designated by the nation a special place on the calendar to

honor the contributions, achievements, sacrifices, and cultural and historical legacy of the original inhabitants of what is now the United States.”

Needless to say, this “special place on the calendar” does not substitute for the historical dispossession of Native peoples from their special places on Earth. The reference to “sacrifices” hardly touches the surface of the American Holocaust. The “contributions [and] achievements” barely hints at the heroic survival of Native peoples against nearly overwhelming violence, disease, displacement, racism, religious discrimination, and all the other historical events that have burdened and endangered Native peoples. <http://bit.ly/1AsnIZn> ☞

### Protecting Native Children Against Violence

*Former Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-North Dakota), the past chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs—and the current co-chairman of the Advisory Committee for the Attorney General’s Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence—makes the case for the recommendations in his committee’s recently released report:*

Supporting tribes, removing barriers and providing resources will help us turn the tide toward healing and sustaining American Indian and Alaska Native children.

Among the recommendations of the Advisory Committee are that Congress pass legislation requiring increased mandatory funding to bring tribal criminal and civil justice systems and tribal child protection systems into parity with the rest of the United States. Congress must also reestablish the authority of Indian tribes to assert criminal jurisdiction over all persons who commit crimes against their children on their land.

Native Americans should guide their own future. With trauma-informed, culturally appropriate programs and services funded by the United States government, tribes can continue their important efforts and the federal government can begin to do what it promised.

To that end, the Advisory Committee recommends additional tribal research funding. We need to improve how tribal child welfare and juvenile justice systems screen and treat traumatized children, with the ultimate goal of recovering and enhancing the wellbeing of every child’s well-being.

Violence is horrific enough; not having the tools and resources to protect these children, is inexcusable. We ask the Attorney General and the nation to carefully consider the recommendations in this report and together act decisively to end the violence afflicting American Indian and Alaska Native children. Let’s show Native American children that they are our top priority. <http://bit.ly/1xlr9F> ☞

### Remove Politicians From Immigration Reform

*John H. Horst argues for a return to first principles and a rethinking of the immigration debate as the federal bureaucracy has recently framed it:*

On the heels of an electoral drubbing, the president and Republican leaders of the new Congress remain at odds over the issue of immigration. The Republican meme of “securing the border” with Mexico is beginning to skip like a scratched record. We need a new song, a hit single to refresh the debate.

The truth about immigration in

America is that the requirements are whatever the bureaucrat in front of you says they are. But the good news is something that I learned as a paperboy who used to throw the old *San Diego Union* over white picket fences early in the morning, saying “Buenas dias” to the daily line of illegal immigrants who were being smuggled through our neighborhood: The vast majority of those who are here illegally are not criminals.

We have an immigration system built by and for political society—meaning government, its bureaucracies and their intramural budget battles. What we

need is an immigration system that is built by and for civil society—meaning organizations of commonly interested individuals and groups who are seeking to address a need.

Immigration reform simply has to start with a clear idea of exactly what the government should be doing. And it does not include administering the application process for immigrant work permits. That process should be managed by civil society. The proper role of the government is to create the charter for this and then to audit the process and enforce the law. <http://bit.ly/1xQAKMM> ☞

## Crime in Bakken Region Leads FBI to Open New North Dakota Office

After years of complaints by human rights and Native groups about escalating crime in the Bakken oil field region, the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced on November 14 that it will open a permanent office in Williston, North Dakota—its first new office since 2006.

Tribal advocates and others have long raised the alarm about the dangers posed by the influx of temporary workers at the Bakken oil field region of North Dakota. Combined with a lack of housing and law enforcement, the dramatic changes have brought crime such as human trafficking, drug activity and violence—especially against women—that are overwhelming local resources.

Of particular concern have been the so-called man camps, which are temporary housing developments that house workers. As the North Dakota oil region has gone from being a “sleepy and remote corner of America” to being an oil-boom-fueled hub of mostly unregulated human activity, “police have found themselves dealing with human and drug trafficking, organized crime and homicides,” the Associated Press reported.

While there are FBI satellite offices in Fargo, Grand Forks, Bismarck and Minot, they are far from the Bakken oil patch. “We aren’t expecting them to come and save us from anything,” Williams County Sheriff Scott Busching told AP. “We don’t need saving; we need help.”

Agents have recently been rotated into the Baaken area for a few weeks periodically, but officials say this is not enough. “You send somebody over here for two weeks and we just learn their name and then they’re gone,” Busching said. “We got to the point where we saw no point in filling in some of these new guys because we knew they were going to be gone.”

<http://bit.ly/1y8ocQi> 📱

## Oklahoma Tribes Celebrate a Decade of Gaming

The 33 gaming tribes of Oklahoma last week celebrated the 10th anniversary of the passage of State Question 712, a referendum allowing Class III tribal-state gaming compacts that have injected billions of dollars into the state economy and millions into schools.

The anniversary was highlighted by a luncheon on November 17 at Hard Rock Casino and Hotel in Tulsa. In fiscal year 2014 alone the complex had a financial impact of more than \$1.3 billion on Oklahoma and paid more than \$13.6 million in exclusivity fees to the state.

Over the past decade, Oklahoma’s more than 1110 tribal casinos have pumped \$895 million in additional funding into state coffers. Nearly 90 percent has gone toward education, including \$122 million last year, reported KTUL.com.

“That question [State Question 712] itself has created tens of thousands of new jobs, has increased economic activity in our state by billions of dollars, [and] has created destinations all across our state where people come from outside our state to stay, play and spend money,” said Brad Henry, who was governor when the referendum was approved in November 2004.

Thanks to the initiative, the economic footprint of the Cherokee Nation in particular has grown exponentially over the past decade. “In 2004, Cherokee Nation’s casinos generated just under \$12 million for services to the Cherokee people,” said Principal Chief Bill John Baker. “Last year, that number skyrocketed to more than \$47 million.” The Muscogee Creeks and Osage Nation are the next biggest gaming tribes in Oklahoma; they paid nearly \$9.1 million and \$5.8 million in exclusivity fees to the state in fiscal year 2014, respectively. <http://bit.ly/1xUGPZB> 📱

## Tribal Leaders Meet to Discuss New Tax Law

Tribal leaders from more than a dozen nations recently met in Florida to share their concerns about how the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Treasury Department have and will handle administrative processes related to the implementation of the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion (GWE) Act.

The GWE Act protects tribal citizens from income taxation by the IRS of necessary benefits from tribal government programs. It also suspends all audits of tribal governments pending proper training by agents and creates a Tribal Advisory Committee to advise

the Treasury Department on tribal tax issues. President Obama signed the act into law in September, following unanimous congressional approval.

But last month, Treasury officials indicated that the Tribal Advisory Committee was being developed without input from tribal leaders. Moreover, the officials did not clarify which federal regulations would apply to appointments to the committee. And they disclosed that appointees to the committee might not be tribal leaders. Tribal leaders plan to convene in Washington D.C. on December 3 during the annual White House Tribal Summit to continue discussions about the issue.

Despite their reservations, tribal leaders have generally welcomed the act. “We are grateful for the new GWE law,” said Lacey Horn, treasurer of the Cherokee Nation. “We hope tribal leaders will be involved in the law’s implementation, as it directly affects our ability to positively impact the lives of our citizens.”

“Congress enacted the GWE Act to protect Indian people from continued harassment by the IRS,” said Colley Billie, chairman of the Miccosukee Tribe. “For years we have had to deal with IRS auditing threats simply because we provide benefits to improve the quality of life of our people.” <http://bit.ly/1F7hwWx> 📱

## Hawaiian Language Makes a Comeback at Harvard

For the first time in 30 years, Hawaiian could be used to fulfill the foreign language requirement at Harvard University. Four undergraduates from Hawaii took a Hawaiian language placement test at the university in October and a group of Hawaiian-speaking students has been working to have their language recognized by the university.

The current effort began with LeShae Henderson, a junior who wanted to use Hawaiian to fulfill her foreign language requirement when she was a freshman. Administrators refused because there was not a qualified administrator to give a placement test. "I think it's really symptomatic of a larger problem at Harvard," Henderson told the student newspaper the *Harvard Crimson*. "Harvard isn't as accommodating as we think it is in terms of what you want to study."

An Hawaiian sophomore, Kaipo T. Matsumoto, also advocated for the placement test and said that it would benefit all Hawaiian-speaking students. "It's about legitimizing the language in general after all the historical oppression of the language," said Matsumoto, a member of the university's Native American Program, to the *Crimson*. "It's about all indigenous people at Harvard."

The first Harvard student to fulfill the university's foreign language requirement in Hawaiian was David M. Foreman, in 1984, but he did so without a placement test.

Maria Polinsky, a linguistics professor and chair of Harvard's Foreign Language Advisory Group, told administrators that the Hawaiian placement test should be offered. "There's always an important challenge to consider. Harvard cannot teach every possible language," she said. "One of the guidelines that we use in deciding which languages can be taught is whether or not it's associated with a literary tradition.... Hawaiian has a significant literary tradition." <http://bit.ly/1qSE0Cl> 📱

## Choctaw Corruption Case Continues

BY WILHELM MURG

Citizens of the Choctaw Nation are closely watching the trial of the former executive director of the tribe's construction administration, who is accused of theft, conspiracy, tax fraud and money laundering.

Jason Brett Merida faces federal charges in a case involving members of the tribal administration, the owners and managers of local companies that were contracted for the construction of the Choctaw casinos in Durant and Pocola, Oklahoma, and an estimated \$70 million dollars in gifts and cash. Indicted in March, he is currently on trial in U.S. District Court in Muskogee.

Merida was in charge of overseeing the construction of the casinos. He is accused of creating false invoices for materials that were never purchased and for accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of gifts and bribes from these contractors in exchange for bidding preference and allowing overcharges to the tribe millions for dollars.

In exchange, he allegedly received gifts and money from the companies. These include exotic hunting and golf trips, cosmetic surgery for his wife, chartered private planes, a collection of over 50 firearms, tuition and mortgage payments, and over \$1 million in gifts from Tiffany & Co., Saks Fifth Avenue and Louis Vuitton.

Six people involved in Merida's case have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit theft or bribery in exchange for reduced sentences. They are the Choctaw Nation's Project manager, Allen Mark Franklin; James Winfield Stewart of Scott Rice, an office furniture company, Mark Eshenroder and Cordell Alan Bugg of Flintco Construction; and Lauri Ann and Brent Alan Parsons, a married couple who own Builders Steel. Stewart and Brent Parsons also pleaded guilty to charges of money laundering. <http://bit.ly/1F8gppy> 📱

## Muscogee (Creek) Nation Creates Conservation District With USDA

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have established a conservation district, the two groups announced on November 19. The new Muscogee (Creek) Nation Natural Resource Conservation District is one of 45 such delineations around the country, the tribe and the USDA said in their joint announcement. Its creation allows the government agency to work in partnership with the Muscogee to bring USDA programs to tribal lands.

"We're excited the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has invested in a conservation

district to help tribal members achieve their conservation goals for clean water and air, soil health and wildlife habitat on tribal land," said USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Butch Blazer. "Conservation districts serve an important role, as they provide locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns. We look forward to this partnership."

Tribal officials were equally elated about the district, which was enabled in late 2013 by new tribal legislation and then signed into being this week with a memorandum of understanding, according to the joint statement.

"It is a historic day to sign a docu-

ment that memorializes the partnership of USDA and Muscogee (Creek) Nation," said Muscogee Principal Chief George Tiger. "Historically, we have been good stewards of our land with special emphasis on clean water and protecting the environment. This will allow us to grow in a positive direction in having more oversight of our natural resources."

The district gives the tribe latitude and guidance to "manage natural resources, secure assistance for conservation projects and encourage tribal members to own and operate agricultural land," the tribe and the USDA said in their joint announcement. <http://bit.ly/1t8Y8Rv> 📱



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## Pine Ridge Area Has Been Renamed

*Out with 'Shannon,' In  
with 'Oglala Lakota'*

Residents of Shannon County, South Dakota voted by a 4-1 margin on November 4 to rename the non-tribal jurisdiction that overlaps much of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation as Oglala Lakota County, after the tribal nation that lives there. Shannon's name will disappear from maps, websites, letterheads and other official references. The county's 19th century namesake, Peter C. Shannon, was a Pennsylvania-born judge, legislator and Union Army officer who served on the Edmunds Commission, which was tasked with compelling the Sioux bands to relinquish millions of acres of land. "Why should we name any-

thing in South Dakota after him?" asked state legislator Kevin Killer, Oglala Lakota. <http://bit.ly/1uw9RMS> 📱

## A Contract For Chugach Corporation

*Terms of more than  
\$50 million*

Chugach Federal Solutions, an Alaska Native company specializing in facilities engineering, operations, maintenance and management, has been awarded a \$51.9 million contract by Facilities Engineering Command Northwest, a.k.a. NAVFAC Northwest. Chugach Federal Solutions' contract includes Navy installations in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. The contract period is from October 2014 to September 2015, with an option for ex-

tension. Under the terms of the contract, Chugach Federal Solutions will administer environmental services, facilities management, fire and emergency services, integrated solid waste, pavement clearance, pest control, security, utilities management, and management of support equipment and vehicles. <http://bit.ly/1xaJs9K> 📱

## In Senate, Honor Song Brings Arrest

*Celebrating a defeat for  
Keystone XL pipeline*

Greg Grey Cloud, Crow Creek Sioux, was arrested in the U.S. Senate on November 18 after bursting into song when legislation enabling construction of the Keystone XL pipeline was defeated by one vote. He was released five hours later. "Once I heard the outcome

of the vote I was overcome with joy," stated Grey Cloud on the website of Bold Nebraska, a leading opponent of the proposed \$8 billion, 1,700-mile-long pipeline, which would carry 800,000 barrels per day of viscous bitumen from the Alberta oil sands to the Gulf Coast. "I didn't mean to disrupt [the] Senate, only to honor the conviction shown by the senators." <http://bit.ly/1tUN0J> 📱

## On-Air Mention of 'Redskins' Is Slashed

*References to NFL team  
have plummeted*

The use of "Redskins" in reference to the Washington, D.C. National Football League franchise has taken a sharp turn downward in recent weeks, reported Dead-

spin.com. The word has been spoken during televised NFL game broadcasts among CBS, ESPN, NBC and ESPN 605 times over 10 weeks this fall, which contrasts with 1,040 mentions during a comparable 10-week period in 2013—thereby constituting a 42 percent reduction, said Deadspin. Among the other news organizations that are now refusing to use the “Redskins” name are the *New York Daily News*, the *Seattle Times* and *The Washington Post*. <http://bit.ly/1tYhsjA> 📱

### Native Film Advocate Walks On

*Bob Hicks was a Hollywood pioneer*

Bob Hicks, Muscogee Creek, a longtime advocate for American Indians in the film industry, has died at the

age of 80. Hicks co-founded First Americans in the Arts and served as the organization's first president. He also served as the executive director of the American Indian Registry for the Performing Arts, established by Will Sampson, his fellow Muscogee Creek, who appeared in the 1975 film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. “He was the original trail blazer,” actress DeLanna Studi told Deadline Hollywood. “The work he did opened doors for so many of us. He was such a generous, kind soul.” <http://bit.ly/1t0grs1> 📱

### Watchman Is Honored For Navajo Acumen

*Recognized as a top chief executive officer*

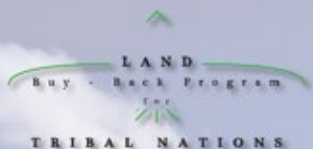
Derrick Watchman, chief

executive officer of The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, was honored as one of the Top CEOs in Arizona by *Arizona Business* magazine at its annual “Most Influential Leaders” banquet. Watchman launched Arizona's first Navajo resort casino, Twin Arrows, in May 2013; less than a year later, Twin Arrows expanded to include an additional 110 rooms and earned the prestigious AAA Four Diamond distinction. As the first Navajo CEO of Navajo Gaming, Watchman created more than 700 new jobs in Arizona and injected thousands of dollars into Northern Arizona's economy with the launch of Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort outside Flagstaff. <http://bit.ly/1t5aR7G> 📱

### Focus On Designer Of Code Talker Coin

*Sculptor is featured in area newspaper*

The sculptor Tom Rogers of Beatty, Oregon, whose design commemorating the Native American Code Talkers will adorn the reverse of the U.S. Mint's \$1 coin in 2016, was spotlighted in a November 13 feature story of the *Herald and News* of Klamath Falls, Oregon. Beatty's design, which was approved earlier this year, shows the two styles of helmets from the two world wars, with dates of 1917 and 1941, and two eagle feathers that form a “V.” “Since establishing a studio in Beatty, I have developed a greater understanding of Native American culture,” Rogers said. Rogers has had previous experience with Native portraiture, having designed the reverse side of the original Sacagawea golden dollar. <http://bit.ly/1x5uZrG> 📱



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations

## LAND CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS UNDERWAY

The Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, created to implement part of the **Cobell Settlement**, is offering fair market value to landowners for voluntarily restoring fractional land interests to tribes, which helps ensure that Indian lands **stay in trust**.

- Many landowners have already been paid.
- The Program has successfully concluded transactions worth more than \$100 million, restoring the equivalent of nearly 265,000 acres of land to tribal governments.
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# Winds Of Change in Juneau

High hopes in the wake of Alaska's gubernatorial election BY RICHARD WALKER



Byron Mallott and Bill Walker's "Alaska First Unity" fusion ticket offers new hope for the 49th state.

**Bottom Line:** Bill Walker is the first independent candidate to be elected governor of Alaska in state history. Byron Mallott, Tlingit, is the second Alaska Native to be elected lieutenant governor. Their successes are historic on several levels.

When Bill Walker and Byron Mallott take office as Alaska's governor and lieutenant governor next month, it will be the first time that both of the holders of their positions have been Alaska-born. Moreover, both are former mayors—Walker of Valdez, Mallott of Yakutat and Juneau.

Their respective elections were made possible on September 1 when they formed the "Alaska First Unity" ticket. Mallott, the Democratic nominee for governor in the August 19 primary, abandoned his nomination to join Walker as his running mate on September 1. Shortly before the ticket was formed, one poll had incumbent Sean Parnell leading 37 percent to Mallott's 22 percent and Walker's 20 percent. But after the formation of the ticket, it was estimated that Walker/Mallott led Parnell and his running mate, Anchorage Mayor Dan Sul-

livan, by 7 points. Walker/Mallott led in eight of 12 polls leading to Election Day on November 4.

On November 14, the Walker/Mallott ticket was declared the winner after late ballot returns showed a slim victory of 129,097 votes to Parnell/Sullivan's 124,463. The election of an independent governor and a Democratic lieutenant governor breaks Alaska's state government trifecta of one political party holding the governorship and a majority in the House and Senate.

"It is a history-making election in-

deed,” said Mike Williams Sr., chief of the Yup'it Nation, member of the Akiak Tribal Council and a longtime defender of Alaska Native rights. He predicted changes in the relationship between Alaska Native villages and the state government—“equally with relief and respect [for] our way of life,” he said.

“Hunting and fishing rights, transportation, energy and education issues must be addressed,” Williams said. “Mr. Mallott brings an added plus for all of us out here. My hope is that they will work closely with our 229 federally recognized Tribes in Alaska.”

Mallott brings diverse experience to a position that has minimal constitutional authority. The lieutenant governor is mainly responsible for overseeing the Division of Elections, the review and filing of administrative regulations, the commissioning of Alaska's notaries public, the use of the official state seal, and the publication and distribution of the state constitution.

However, Mallott has unmatched experience in business and government, said Laury Roberts Scandling, who served as communications director of his gubernatorial campaign.

“There is no one who knows Alaska better than Byron Mallott,” said Scandling. “He has decades of experience in for-profit and non-profit [organizations], and he has a true understanding of rural Alaska and its wonders and challenges. He's a good listener, he brings people together. He believes there's always a consensus and that you need to find it.”

In addition to serving as mayor of two cities, Mallott has served as commissioner of the Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs; co-chairman of the state Commission on Rural Governance and Empowerment; chairman of the Nature Conservancy of Alaska; CEO, chairman and director of Sealaska Corporation; president of the Alaska Federation of Natives; and director of several banks, including the Federal Reserve Bank.

Mallott has also served as executive director of the state's Permanent Fund Corporation, which was created by constitutional amendment to manage and protect the state's income from mineral

leases, royalties, and federal mineral revenue-sharing payments. Alaskans receive dividends from this fund.

Walker and Mallott “have different views on social issues,” said former state legislator Willie Iggiagruk Hensley, Inupiaq, “but on other issues of development, fisheries, education, they [are] in sync.”

Both Walker and Mallott wish to diversify Alaska's oil-dependent economy, partly by expanding agriculture and tourism and developing the infrastructure needed for economic development in rural areas. They support the development of alternative energy sources such as wind, geothermal, and small hydro projects.

Both want to develop fish and wildlife co-management agreements among the federal government, the state and Native landowners. They mutually support expanding Medicaid coverage, rather than participating in a federally managed health care exchange. And both oppose the development of the Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region, citing its “undeniable” environmental impacts.

“Job One,” said Mallott, is addressing projected revenue declines that threaten the state's reserves. Alaska has three main sources of revenue: oil, federal funding and investment earnings. The state does not have a personal income tax or a state sales tax. A decrease in oil production means a decrease in state revenue and higher energy costs.

According to the Alaska Resource Development Council, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System is currently two-thirds empty, and daily oil production dropped from 590,000 barrels in 2012 to 531,000 in 2013.

Senate Bill 21, approved in 2013, cut certain taxes and created new incentives for oil producers to encourage more investment and production. But oil production is expected to continue to decline to 312,000 barrels per day in 2023, according to state forecasts. And the state's Department of Revenue projects “years of deficit spending consuming the state's savings” since the passage of SB 21, reported the *Anchorage Daily News*.

A referendum to repeal SB 21 failed in the August 19 primary, and Walker and

Mallott pledged before the primary that if the initiative were retained, they would accept it as law.


“Although I do not presently intend to offer new tax legislation, I will monitor North Slope activity to ensure [oil producers'] promises are kept,” Walker said. “In this and other matters I will be a fierce defender of Alaska's interests. I also expect the industry to comply with the terms of their oil and gas leases and will act if they do not.” Earlier in his campaign, he said it is “unacceptable” for North Slope leaseholders “to warehouse Alaska's natural gas while they continue to develop competing projects around the globe.”

Walker supports developing oil and gas resources across the state and has promised to “aggressively pursue” infrastructure development—roads, rail, ports, communications—with that goal in mind.

“Alaska is facing a huge fiscal cliff, in part as the result of declining oil revenues,” the new governor and lieutenant governor state on their website. “Alaska needs dozens of new explorers on the North Slope. We need to remove barriers to the smaller companies to drill for oil. Alaska needs to streamline the permitting process at the Department of Natural Resources to reduce the cost and time required to move projects forward.”

Walker and Mallott's bipartisan transition team is led by Democrat Ana Hoffman, Yu'pik, president and CEO of Bethel Native Corporation and co-chair of the Alaska Federation of Natives; and Republican Rick Halford, former state senate president and majority leader, who is now a commercial pilot in Aleknagik and Chugiak.

“The big problem for any governor, including Walker/Mallott, is that we have a double whammy going on [with] falling oil production and, now, falling prices for oil—down 30 percent or so since June,” Willie Iggiagruk Hensley said. “With 90 percent of our annual revenue for state operations and capital spending coming from oil, we are digging into savings at a rapid rate.”

“So, hard decisions are ahead of them. The two leaders of the transition team are from rural Alaska—quite a change from the past.” <http://bit.ly/1uvNRlh> 



# Buy-Back Program Advances

A tribal land progress report from the Interior Department **BY TANYA H. LEE**



Connor: 'We're increasing the acceptance rate on the offers that we're making.'

**Bottom Line:** The Interior Department's Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations was established under the Cobell settlement. Designed to consolidate tribal lands divided among many individual owners as a result of the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, it has operated for two years. Here, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Mike Connor offers his thoughts on the \$1.9 billion effort:

**Could you give a quick overview on where the Land Buy-Back Program stands?**

The program's 2014 status report shows that so far, \$225 million has been made available to individuals to purchase their fractionated interests in land holdings and we have consolidated 375,000 acres of fractionated lands into tribal ownership. We have just announced an additional 21 reservations with which we will be working through the middle of 2017.

That brings the total number of reservations to 42, which represent 83 percent of all outstanding fractional interests and 15 of the 19 states with fractional interests. It's a good chunk of the people who are eligible to participate in the program.

**Are you on track to dispense all the \$1.9 billion available for the program within the 10-year time frame specified in the Cobell settlement?**

We are hopeful and we are optimistic. As we move through the program and improve our outreach efforts, we're increasing the acceptance rate on the offers that we're making. Given the growth in the program of late, we are confident that we can expend the money provided by the program and ensure that we don't return any money to the U.S. Treasury at the end of the program in 2022.

The \$1.9 billion in the buy-back program is basically in three buckets. The vast majority, \$1.6 billion, will go for purchases, payments made out to individuals. The individuals will get the value for their fractionated interest and then the land immediately goes into tribal ownership.

The second bucket is the 15 percent allowance for administrative costs, [some of which goes to tribal governments under cooperative agreements]. Our goal is to do that as efficiently as possible and if we can make any of those resources available for purchasing fractionated interests we will certainly do so.

And then the last amount of money is \$60 million that can be made available for the Cobell Scholarship Fund. We're at \$4.5 million in deposits [to the fund] that we've made so far.

**The Department of the Interior is reported to have said it expects a 30 percent acceptance rate for buy-back offers sent to individuals. Is that about what you are getting?**

Early on we were at about 30 percent. We're now up to 42 percent, based on the dollar value of the offers we've made. You know, this is a voluntary program. Our job is to make sure people are aware of the historic opportunity that's available now to get value for their fractionated interests.

But at the end of the day, that's their decision to make.

**While the buy-back program is voluntary, some concern has been raised that it will lead to forced sales of lands owned by individuals after a tribe obtains a 51 percent interest in that land. Could you comment?**

I think that would depend a lot on how the tribe moves forward with its members. That's not what the money associated with the buy-back program will do. The tribes in their own sovereignty will have to work in their communities to move forward with their programs and activities they want to

do with respect to the lands they've consolidated.

**Could you describe some of the benefits tribes have derived from the program in terms of economic development or housing?**

We've seen some very good projects like what's been done on Pine Ridge [where the Oglala Sioux Tribe is now embarking on a \$9 million housing program]. In addition to Pine Ridge, I know that Gila River is looking at some energy development projects and has a utility corridor that they have prioritized to ensure that they can move for-

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*So far, \$225 million has been made available for the purchase of fractionated interests.*

---

ward. That's where they've focused a lot of the buy-back program efforts, so the program is helping them move forward with economic development.

**Do you have any estimate of how many acres you will be able to buy back altogether with the \$1.9 billion?**

We have the overall metrics of approximately 245,000 owners, we've got 3 million fractional interests and we've got 150 reservations, 40 of which comprise about 90 percent of the fractional interest. We have not summed up what we think the overall acreage possibility is.

**Is it true, as some have said, that tribes east of the Mississippi River**

**and in California (with one exception) and Alaska have been excluded from the program?**

I don't think we've excluded anybody who's eligible where we've identified fractionated interests. That defines the eligibility for the program, whether there are those fractionated interests within the tribal lands. Alaska is excluded by statute. The program doesn't apply there.

As I mentioned, we've identified 42 reservations so far. Overall, we've identified 150 reservations eligible to operate the program. We will be continuing to expand the list of communities that we're working with. This is a 10-year program and we're now a little over two years in its development, so additional reservations will be added as we move forward.

**Could you detail the process that you and tribes are going through together to identify fractionated lands and decide which tracts you are going to make offers on?**

We've identified a number of factors that we weigh as we're determining what reservations we're moving forward with. Those factors were identified as a result of consultations with tribes and we've identified these factors in our implementation plan. Severity of fractionation is a primary factor. Forty of the 150 eligible reservations comprise about 90 percent of the fractionated interests, so we want to hit those reservations that are highly fractionated.

Also, for efficiency purposes, we're looking at groupings of reservations where there's a high degree of overlap within the reservations [i.e., where one owner has interests in land on more than one reservation]. That's one factor in why Pine Ridge and Rosebud were selected early on.

We wanted to have a diversity of geographical locations. We're just learning the process, so we thought it was important to have a diverse group of reservations as we initiated the program.

<http://bit.ly/1yZsDwO> 📄



## St. Labre Indian Catholic School-Ashland, MT

**-Chief Operating Officer**

**-Director of Major & Planned Gifts**

Housing Available,  
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and Moving Expenses Paid.

**Closing date: 12/12/2014**

Interested applicants contact:

Rhea Bearcomesout  
rbearcomesout@stlabre.org  
**(406)784-4518**  
or visit our website:  
<http://www.stlabre.org>



## Fremont County School District #14 Wyoming Indian Schools Ethete, Wyoming

Is accepting applications for the  
following position:

### SUPERINTENDENT

For application information please log  
onto the district website at  
[www.fremont14.k12.wy.us](http://www.fremont14.k12.wy.us)

Applications are due into the  
administration office no later than  
December 12, 2014 to be considered for  
an interview. Please do not contact  
individual board members.

If you need more information concerning  
this position, please contact:

Michelle Hoffman, Interim  
Superintendent  
638 Blue Sky Highway  
Ethete, Wyoming 82520  
michelle.hoffman@wyo4life.net  
307-332-3904

Starting on November 26, 2014  
**Beaveridge Housing Company**  
located at 1965 Allan Avenue  
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

a 167 unit building including 17 units designated for the disabled, will open its  
waiting list for rental to eligible households with limited income.

**Qualifications will be based on Section 8 Federal guidelines.**

**Interested persons may obtain an application in person between 11 am & 3  
pm or, by writing to:**

**JMI Management Company**  
277 Northern Blvd.  
Great Neck, NY 11021

**Please do not submit more that one (1) application per family**

**If more that one (1) application is received, it will be dropped to the bottom  
of the list.**

If you have a disability & need assistance with the application process, please  
contact **Carmela Siragusa at 516-487-0050.**

Completed applications must be sent by first class **mail only** to the address  
stated on the application and must be received **by December 26, 2014.**



## Yavapai-Apache Nation located in Camp Verde, Arizona is seeking an Associate Justice for the Court of Appeals

**Job Summary:** The Court System of the Yavapai-Apache Nation is a two-tiered court system  
consisting of trial and appellate courts. The government of the Nation is operated in  
accordance with a Constitution and Laws. The Associate Justice will be appointed to a  
two-year term of office and may be re-appointed upon re-application. Qualifications: Law  
school degree and/or prior judicial experience preferred but not required. Ability to analyze  
complex factual situations and apply applicable law. Ability to write appellate decisions.  
Must have a background in legal matters with experience as a Judge, Attorney, Court  
Advocate or the education and background that would qualify a person to hold a responsible  
position with the Yavapai-Apache Nation. Must never been convicted of a felony, and have  
not been convicted of any misdemeanor offense, except traffic offenses, for a period of five  
(5) years next preceding his appointment.

**Must have all the minimum qualifications and limitations of Judges of Tribal Courts in  
Section 111 of Title III in the Judicial Code.**

**Pay is \$500 per case.**

**Closing date is December 5, 2014**

**To apply:** Contact Yavapai-Apache Nation Human Resources at 928-567-1062 or email  
crivera@yan-tribe.org. Please submit a cover letter, resume and reference letters no later  
than 5:00 pm on the closing date listed above. Mailing address is: 2400 W. Datsi, Camp  
Verde, AZ 86322. Fax # is: 928-567-1064

**Preference will be given to qualified applicants who are members of federally  
recognized Indian tribes. To be considered for Indian Preference, you must submit  
your Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) with your application.**

**WILL BE REQUIRED TO PASS A PRE-EMPLOYMENT DRUG SCREEN AND COMPLETE A  
BACKGROUND CHECK WHICH WILL INCLUDE FINGERPRINTING**

**Please view and  
sign this important  
petition regarding:**

**Return Fort  
Reno to the Cheyenne  
& Arapaho Tribes  
of Oklahoma**

[https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/  
petition/return-fort-reno-cheyenne-  
arapaho-tribes-oklahoma/  
b5BwMJW1](https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/return-fort-reno-cheyenne-arapaho-tribes-oklahoma/b5BwMJW1)

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*Lyle Thompson, a champion of the Iroquois Nationals, has been named Person of the Year by Lacrosse magazine.*



*Oklahoma tribes last week celebrated the 10th anniversary of the passage of the referendum that allows Class III gaming in their state.*



*Change.org is circulating a petition to change the name of Squaw Island Park in Buffalo, New York.*



*Volunteers of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians Thanksgiving Outreach Program distributed 10,000 turkeys for the holidays.*

# Headlines from the Web

## TRIBES DROP PAYDAY-LOAN SUIT AGAINST NEW YORK STATE

<http://on.wsj.com/14NhCFZ>

## MARKETING OFFICIAL FOR DRY CREEK TRIBE OUSTS VETERAN CHAIRMAN IN ELECTION

<http://bit.ly/1ucg0dq>

## NAVAJO LAWMAKERS APPROVE JUNK FOOD TAX

<http://wapo.st/1xsVmvK>

## SENECA-CAYUGA OPENS INVESTIGATION: TWO SUSPENDED

<http://bit.ly/1HmBFtY>

## GRAY WOLF CASINO TO GET \$27M EXPANSION

<http://bit.ly/1xB6k3F>

## NATIVE AMERICANS URGED TO SIGN UP FOR PRIVATE INSURANCE

<http://n.pr/1AcD5Fp>

## Upcoming Events

### WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS CONFERENCE DECEMBER 2-3

The conference will build on the success of last year's meeting, at which President Obama discussed establishing the White House Council on Native American Affairs and announced his first presidential trip to Indian Country. The goal of this year's conference is to bolster the meaningful discussion between tribal leadership and the White House, and to further strengthen the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the U.S. and American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

**Location:** Capitol Hilton, Washington, D.C.

### UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO DECEMBER 2-4

"Because There Is Strength in Unity" is the theme of this year's gathering, hosted by the Oneida Indian Nation. Reports and panels will be offered by the board of directors as well as by the committees on

culture and heritage, economic development and entrepreneurship, education, health, housing, natural resources, social services, tribal administration, tribal emergency service, tribal justice and veterans affairs. Other events include a holiday craft sale and a USET golf tournament.

**Location:** Turning Stone Resort Casino, Verona, NY

### TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS HEALING DECEMBER 3

This webinar is part of the American Indian & Alaska Native Behavioral Health Webinar Series on research-based integrated health care topics. Evidence-based information by nationally recognized speakers who are experts in their field will be used to present current and timely subjects of interest to American Indian and Alaska Native behavioral healthcare issues. Rose Domnick, Yup'ik Alaska Native, will moderate the event.

**Contact:** <http://bit.ly/1vqEPd3>

### INTER-TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL SUMMIT DECEMBER 3-5

Some two dozen presenters and representatives of more than 75 tribes will be on

hand for the 18th annual summit. EPA regional updates and workshops will be offered; breakout sessions will be devoted to tribal profiles, the sustainable material management program, solid waste, pesticides, emergency response, educational outreach, solid waste, brownfields and climate change. **Location:** Wyndham Dallas Suites Hotel, Dallas, Texas

### INTERTRIBAL AGRICULTURE COUNCIL 28TH ANNUAL MEETING DECEMBER 8-11

This event attracts agriculture producers from across the country as well as representatives from the majority of agencies of the Department of Agriculture. "Youth and the Food Sovereignty Continuum" is the theme of this year's meeting; panels and presentations will include "Conservation Program Regulations," "Crossing Borders With Ag Products" and "Farming and Ranching Production Help." There will be featured appearances by master of ceremonies Verna Billedeaux of Blackfeet Extension and the Coeur d'Alene Dance Group. **Location:** Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re Mike Taylor's commentary "Everyday Adventures On and Off the Rez" (11/15):

People need to know what is really happening for Native folks on the reservations. I admire Mr. Taylor's tenacity, strength and resolve. It really puts things into perspective. Mr. Taylor is someone I aspire to emulate. I wish him the best in his endeavors, pray that

he has a home soon and hope that he is able to reach his goal of becoming a physician.

May the Creator watch over him and protect him and bless him with everything he needs.

—Kelley Folsom

I would like to thank everyone who assisted in my recently completed tenure

as vice chairman of the Karuk Tribe. The experience was fulfilling and was also a learning process. My term was exciting and my willingness to protect the interest of all tribes in California was my intention.

Thanks again to everyone who supported me.

—Mike Thom  
Happy Camp, California

Let us know what you think. To have your letter to the editor considered for publication, please email us at [editor@ictmn.com](mailto:editor@ictmn.com)





## TOP NEWS ALERTS

From [IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com](http://IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com)

### NEW VENUES FOR TURNING STONE

The Oneida Indian Nation, the publisher of Indian Country Today Media Network, is developing an expansive 250,000 square foot enclosed venue at its Turning Stone Resort Casino in upstate New York. The complex will feature a mix of 60 luxury brand retailers, 15,000 square feet of varied dining options, a six-screen movie theater and a deluxe bowling alley. The venture is being undertaken in partnership with Gordon Group Holdings. Oneida Nation Representative Ray Halbritter estimated that the new venue would create 1,100 new jobs.

### BURNING GAS IN NORTH DAKOTA

Mark Fox, the newly elected

chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, is stepping up negotiations that are connected with the burning of excessive natural gas conveyed through a pipeline that has been proposed through the tribes' oil-rich territory. "I will figure out a way to sit down with industry," Fox told the Associated Press. "We don't need to be flaring, and we can find an economic benefit to this natural gas."

### PALAS COMMENCE NEW JERSEY GAMING

The Pala Indians of California last week became the first tribe in New Jersey to offer Internet gaming. Partnering with Borgata of Atlantic City, the tribe expects to launch in full once it receives approval from the state's Division of Gaming En-

forcement. "Our launch in New Jersey is a huge step for the company, and we want to make sure we're rolling out one of the best, most user-friendly casino experience on the market," Jeremy Clemons, Pala Interactive's chief marketing officer, told the Associated Press.

### DOGS KILL EASTERN SHOSHONE WOMAN

A pack of dogs attacked and killed a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe on the Wind River Indian Reservation in central Wyoming on November 17. Tribal authorities were shocked by the death of the victim, 40-year-old Deanne Lynn Coando. "The tribes have ordinances and deal with dogs running around as any government does," said Kimberly Varilek, the

attorney general of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, to the Associated Press. "We've not had a series of dog attacks or anything like that against people."

### MUSCOGEEES BREAK GROUND ON CASINO

The Muscogee Creek Nation has begun construction on its \$365 million Margaritaville Casino in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The development, which will be highlighted by a 27-story hotel, convention and meeting space, is pegged to the activity of low-water dams along its banks the Arkansas River. "We are projecting we will have water in the river at some point," said Pat Crofts, CEO of the Muscogee Creek Nation Casino. "So we have approval of a dock that we will be able to add at that time onto the river."



# UPCOMING POW WOWS

**44TH ANNIVERSARY POARCH CREEK  
INDIANS THANKSGIVING POW**

11/27/14—11/28/14  
Poarch Creek Indians  
5811 Jack Springs Road  
Atmore, AL  
251-368-9136  
[PoarchCreekIndians.org](http://PoarchCreekIndians.org)

**36TH ANNUAL CHAMBERS FARM  
FALL FAMILY POWWOW**

11/28/14—11/30/14  
22400 NE Hwy 315  
Ft. McCoy, FL  
813-323-1340/407-327-1212  
[ChambersFarm.org](http://ChambersFarm.org)

**INDIO POW WOW**

11/28/14—11/30/14  
Cabazon Indian Reservation Special  
Event Center  
84-245 Indio Springs Parkway  
Indio, CA  
760-238-5770  
[jstapp@cabazonindians-nsn.gov](mailto:jstapp@cabazonindians-nsn.gov)  
[FantasySpringsResort.com](http://FantasySpringsResort.com)



Oct. 11, during the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians' Annual Pow Wow, in California State University San Bernardino

DIEGO JAMES ROBLES





AP IMAGES/KAREN SCHWARTZ

*A new article in the scientific journal  
Current Biology places Native  
Americans on Easter Island before  
Columbus arrived in the New World.*

**THE BIG PICTURE**