



# Indian Country

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

## *A Letter from the Publisher*

*Shekóli.* Last year, the National Center for American Indian Economic Development (NCAIED) expanded the roll-out of its regional business conferences, which were launched at the end of 2012 as counterparts to its well-known national RES Convention held each year in Las Vegas. President and CEO Gary Davis wrote in ICTMN last October about the enterprise development in Indian Country and credited “the energy and ideas of talented, visionary entrepreneurs and leaders.” The fact is that not only are regional conferences good for the business of NCAIED, but their proliferation in number and size indicates the steady strides being made in our nations. Indeed, the last twelve months have borne witness to new benchmarks for Native business.

In this week’s article “A Year for Business,” ICTMN reviews some recent highlights for the Native business community, from a thriving gathering place in Eagle Butte—the Cheyenne River Youth Projects Keya Café and Coffee Shop—to the renewable energy plant built by the Forest County Potawatomi. The coffee shop not only provides new jobs and internships where unemployment is high, it also offers programs and seminars on life skills and healthy living. The renewable energy plant takes waste and turns it into biogas.



Our innovators are also being heard. In this edition of This Week From Indian Country Today, you’ll read about what Mark Tilsen, one of the creators of Tanka Bars, had to say to the U.S. Senate’s subcommittee on Agriculture about rural jobs. He knows a thing or two about the rural economy, having started his business on one of the most remote territories. Now his company supplies buffalo meat snacks to 6000 retail outlets in all 50 states. Similarly, Henry Red Cloud of Pine Ridge was honored by the White House last April as one of its 10 “Champions of Change” for his efforts to promote and expand solar energy deployment.

Innovation is born of necessity. Indian Country’s need for jobs is high. That is why we applaud the efforts of the men and women who take the risk and bear the responsibilities to help their communities thrive.

*Na ki’ wa,*

Ray Halbritter

## Table of *Contents*



**2** COMMENTARY

**3** NEWS

**8** A HOLY INDIGENOUS EIGHT

**10** A YEAR FOR TRIBAL

BUSINESS

**13** CLASSIFIEDS

**14** WEEK IN PHOTOS

**15** WEB, EVENTS, LETTERS

**16** CARTOON, ALERTS

**17** BIG PICTURE

### A GOP Congress and Indian Country

*The incoming Congress, controlled by Republicans, can still be bipartisan, say Philip Baker-Shenk, former general counsel to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and W. Ron Allen, chairman and CEO of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe in western Washington:*

In the wake of the 2014 elections, Indian Country will once again be living with a Republican-controlled Senate and House. It's been 15 years since a Democratic president faced that reality.

Many Indian issues—tax reform, self-governance, energy development, trust reform, housing—are perfectly poised

to fit a bipartisan definition. Moreover, Indian Country knows full well that its interests are best furthered by bipartisan alliances. What goes around comes around, and sooner or later Democrats will take a turn again at leadership.

But if the Republican majority is to make an enduring contribution to Indian Country next year, it must marry its “less government is better government” mantra with tribal self-determination and self-governance in the fields of land management, economic development and tax reform. Just timidly tinkering around the edges of the failed status quo federal Indian policy will not be good enough. Indian Country has long asked for bigger, bolder solutions.

Republicans, now with a solid majority, should not be afraid to deliver.

With the GOP's property rights focus, it should be familiar ground for them to advance a territorial tribal sovereignty and jurisdiction approach that respects each tribal government's right to govern everything and everyone within its borders. Tribal laws—from taxation to labor to the environment to endangered species to violence against women—should be given preemptive effect by federal Indian law. After all, Republicans believe the best government is local government. And when it comes to Indian Country, you can't get more local than the tribe. <http://bit.ly/13PKSuN> 📌

### Why Keystone XL Is In Trouble

*Besides President Obama's opposition, the falling price of oil itself may well doom the Keystone XL pipeline, says ICTMN contributor Mark Trahant:*

When the State Department issued its report on the Keystone project, it included a chapter on market conditions. “Over the long term,” the report read in part, “lower-than-expected oil prices could affect the outlook for oil sands production, and in certain scenarios higher transportation costs resulting from pipeline constraints could

exacerbate the impacts of low prices.”

That was when even \$75 a barrel for oil seemed crazy. Last week the market price dropped below \$50 per barrel. The problem from the point of view of oil companies is that demand for oil is slowing at the same time that there is too much oil for sale. So there is a glut of oil, making a costly project like Keystone XL one that could be easily delayed for years.

Already Canadian oil producers are debating canceling major projects in the Tar Sands region because the companies no longer have enough capital to pay for them. The *National*

*Post* reports that Canadian producers are canceling some \$60 billion worth of projects and that the oil decline is seen along the lines of “the dark days of 1999.”

The price of oil is a game changer. Is it a sure thing? Of course not. But the first thing that large oil companies cut during oil price declines is capital projects. It's much easier to wait until the price climbs again and the math works in the company's favor. Republicans are hell-bent on constructing this pipeline. But there might not be customers wanting to buy expensive tar sands oil. <http://bit.ly/1AqnPCD> 📌

### The Decolonization of Medicine

*The taking of traditional cures not only makes medical sense, says the activist Camaray Davalos, Pechángawish; it makes cultural and political sense as well:*

Why leave traditional healing behind when it has been aiding us for centuries? We need to get back to knowing our plants, our other people. Yerba santa, for example, is a medicinal plant for sore throats used by indigenous people from California down to Mexico. When my great-aunt Betty was a child, she had a deadly kidney infection. Western

doctors told her she had no chance. Her father (my great-grandfather) knew of a swamp root on our rez and gathered some yerba santa for her to make a tea. With this alone, my great aunt was cured and is currently a healthy 80 years old.

Another herb to which I will testify is yarrow. I had an ingrown toenail, not the most comfortable feeling while walking. A fellow tribal member suggested the petals of yarrow and spoke highly of its regenerative properties. I found that yarrow promotes the rebuilding of white blood cells, which in turn heals inflamed skin on the body. After applying yarrow once a day for three

days, the irritated skin around my toe deflated. I had defeated my ingrown toe; more importantly, I had defeated colonialism by resorting to a traditional cure instead of a Western one.

Some have questioned the validity of traditional herbs. But would our ancestors pass down this healing knowledge since the beginning of time if it didn't work? Even if the traditions are not new, their validity and benefits still stand the test of time. Traditional healing is an act of decolonization that allows us to stand firmly on our land while withdrawing from the clutches of assimilation. <http://bit.ly/1AgmvSP> 📌

## Investigative Report Into Fort Berthold Leadership Published In *The New York Times*

*The New York Times* has published a lengthy investigative report on the change of leadership of the Three Affiliated Tribes—Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation—following scrutiny of former chair Tex Hall's business dealings on the oil-rich Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota.

The article, "In North Dakota, a Tale of Oil, Corruption and Death," ran on the newspaper's front page on December 28. It stated that the tribal council had hired a former United States Attorney, Stephen L. Hill, to look into Hall's oil dealings, as well as his personal and professional connections to James Henrikson, who is currently awaiting trial on a laundry list of felonies, including murder and conspiracy. Some of those charges, the article said, are linked to Henrikson's trucking company, called Blackstone, which operated out of Hall's garage.

The company did business for Hall's private oil field company, according to the *Times*, which further stated that Hill's investigation found that Hall had entered into a joint venture with Blackstone. "Now you have a murder, a hit man, and a five-time convicted felon operating as an oil contractor working directly with the chairman," tribal member Marilyn Hudson told the *Times*. "It's like our reservation got hijacked by the plot of a bad movie."

Hall, who has called himself an advocate for the reservation's "land, air and waters" and its oil development alike, told the *Times* that his professional conduct has been "by the book." The new tribal chairman, Marine veteran and tribal tax director Mark N. Fox, said that he would seek reforms and try to "resolve the conflicts amongst our own people," the *Times* reported. <http://bit.ly/1xuAQ00> 📱

## Lakota Federal Credit Union Earns Treasury Certification

The Lakota Federal Credit Union has earned federal certification from the Treasury Department as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). The certification, granted on December 18, verifies that the union has met several requirements. Among these are having a primary mission of promoting community development, predominantly serving and maintaining accountability to an eligible target market (the Pine Ridge Reservation), and being a financing entity.

"The application really goes beyond being able to show what products and services you are offering," said Tawney Brunsch, board chairperson of the union. "Being certified shows that you go further than that."

The union's new certification will allow it to apply for larger amounts of funding from the Treasury's CDFI Fund—up to \$1 million in financial assistance annually. Prior to certification, the maximum application amount was limited to \$150,000. Currently, the credit union has a pending application to the CDFI Fund for \$750,000. Should it be awarded, Brunsch said, "It will not only support the credit union's operating costs, but it will increase our ability to provide our members with greater access to loan capital. We will have a significantly greater pool of capital that we can loan from, and that's what it is really all about."

The notice of certification came shortly after the union celebrated its second anniversary in November. The credit union's membership base now stands at 1,856 and it has more than doubled its loan portfolio and assets from the previous year. As of December 31, the union had approved more than \$2 million in loans and had \$3.5 million in assets. <http://bit.ly/1BIRXbO> 📱

## A New National Park for Canada

The Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve, near the Yukon-Northwest Territories border in Canada, was named the country's 44th national park last month. The creation of the new park safeguards one of the world's greatest wilderness rivers, the South Nahanni River watershed.

"Through this action," said Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, "we ensure the preservation of this beautiful northern landscape for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations."

Those future generations will con-

tinue to thrive in a habitat that is conducive for a variety of fauna, including mountain woodland caribou, grizzly bears, Dall's sheep, mountain goats and Trumpeter swans. And visitors will have the opportunity to explore what has been preserved as a beautiful and ecologically significant area in the Northwest Territories.

The Nááts'ihch'oh National Park, spanning 4,895 square kilometres, is the 14th largest national park in Canada. It has been valued for hunting and its spiritual importance by the Shutagot'ine (Mountain Dene) in the Tulita District, who say that the mountain from which the park takes

its name is believed to have spiritual powers.

The park's size—when combined with its neighboring Nahanni National Park Reserve—is quite large, at least 35,000 square kilometers. But some parties, including Grand Chief of the Sahtu Dene Council and Chief of the Tulita Dene Band Council Frank Andrew, had hoped for additional area. In 2012, Canadian Geographic reported that Andrew and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, wanted more land set aside for conservation and to leave less land open to potential resource extraction.

<http://bit.ly/1AHmpoB> 📱



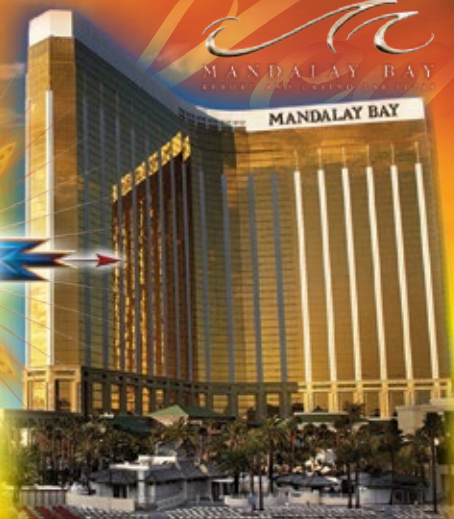
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## Nuclear Energy Tribal Working Group Will Strengthen Government-to-Government Relations

As part of President Obama's commitment to strengthen government-to-government relationship with tribal nations, Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz recently announced the formalization of the Nuclear Energy Tribal Working Group (NETWG). The NETWG will establish a forum where tribal leaders can engage with the Department of Energy on a variety of nuclear energy issues.

"Through the Nuclear Energy Tribal Working Group, the Department hopes to incorporate the unique and important perspectives from tribal leaders as we continue to develop and deploy safe, reliable, and efficient nuclear power," Moniz said. "These types of partnerships help the Department to work more closely with the tribal nations on building a sustainable energy future and advance the President's all-of-the-above energy strategy."

The working group is the final step resulting from the Nuclear Energy Tribal Leader Dialogue that was established in October 2013 by the Office of Nuclear Energy. Topics of the dialogue were management of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste; the inclusion of transportation and related emergency response planning activities; nuclear research and development; small modular reactors; and potential economic business opportunities.

"I have been very pleased with the progress made in the Dialogue, which explored a number of critical nuclear energy matters that effect both tribal leaders and the development of this low-carbon resource," said Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy Pete Lyons. "I look forward to the next steps from this working group and further strengthening this important relationship in the years to come." <http://bit.ly/1HXno4n> ☞

## EPA Ready to Develop Clean Water Standards for Washington State

BY TERRI HANSEN

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has told the state of Washington that it intends to develop a federal plan for the state's human health water quality criteria because the state did not finalize a plan by year's end, as mandated by the EPA in April.

The EPA's rulemaking process will overlap with the state's potential timeline. But it preserves the EPA's ability to propose a rule in case the state does not act in a timely manner.

Under the federal Clean Water Act, Washington must adopt standards that ensure rivers and major bodies of water are clean enough to support fish that are safe for humans to eat. Washington's current standard assumes that people eat only 6.5 grams of fish a day, or about one filet a month.

Tribal leaders with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, which represents 20 western Washington tribes, met with EPA Regional Administrator Dennis McLerran in September to set new water-quality rules for the state. The meeting took place after the leaders sent a letter to Washington Governor Jay Inslee that expressed dissatisfaction with a proposed draft rule change that he issued in July.

Inslee's draft rule would raise the fish consumption rate to 175 grams a day to protect people who eat one serving of fish per day. Tribal leaders accept that figure. But it has taken Washington two years to work out the new draft rule amid political tussles between business interests and health advocates.

The state's draft rule is expected this month. But because the EPA believes it can complete a proposed federal rule by August, the state is looking at a limited time period in which to finalize its rulemaking process.

If it does not do so, the EPA is prepared to move forward with rulemaking that McLerran believes will reflect the best science available. The rulemaking includes an assessment of downstream water protection, environmental justice, federal trust responsibility and tribal treaty rights. <http://bit.ly/1ECRjIT> ☞

## Justice Department Selects First Indian Country Legal Fellow

Charisse Arce has been selected by the Justice Department as its first Gaye L. Tenoso Indian Country Legal Fellow. Arce, of Bristol Bay, Alaska, will serve a three-year term in the United States Attorney's Office in the District of Arizona. She will be assigned to the district's Indian Country Crime Section and spend a portion of her term appointed to the Pascua Yaqui tribal prosecutor's office.

Arce is currently a fellow at Bris-

tol Bay Native Corporation, one of 13 Alaska Native Regional Corporations created under federal law. She received her law degree from Seattle University School of Law, where she served as a member of the editorial staff of the American Indian Law Journal. Her credentials include serving as an extern for the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington, for the Washington State Supreme Court, and for the Department of Interior's Office of the Solicitor. She has worked as a legal research assistant for a law professor

and a private law firm. Arce graduated with a B.A. cum laude in marketing from Seattle University prior to attending law school.

The Tenoso Fellowship is a part of the Attorney General's Honors Program; it is named for the late Justice Department attorney whose distinguished career spanned 30 years. Tenoso was an expert in federal Indian law who worked tirelessly for American Indian women's rights, culminating in the Violence Against Women Act of 2013. <http://bit.ly/1wwpilJ> ☞

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## Navajo Elections Slated For 2015

*Ballot schedule follows turmoil*

The Navajo Nation Council decided on December 30 that following a series of delays, a primary election would be held on June 2 and a general election on August 4. The tribal elections were postponed after Chris Deschene, a leading candidate for the presidency, was eliminated from the ballot because of issues arising from his fluency in the Navajo language; Navajo law requires that presidential candidates must be proficient in Navajo. The subsequent tumult brought about legislation from the Navajo Nation Council that sought to eliminate the language requirement. However, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly subsequently vetoed that legislation. <http://bit.ly/1xIEzE3>

## New Head of NB3 Foundation

*Huenemann brings extensive background*

Justin Kii Huenemann, Navajo, was selected on January 6 as the next executive director of the NB3 Foundation, established by legendary Native PGA golfer Notagh Begay III to improve the health and lives of Native children. In his 20 years in the nonprofit, government, and higher education sectors, Huenemann has focused mainly on improving economic opportunities for low-income families, Native American communities and communities of color. A former senior program officer for the Northwest Area Foundation, Huenemann

is also the founding president and CEO of the award-winning Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI), where he established the American Indian Cultural Corridor. <http://bit.ly/14k1M56>

## An Eroding Native Village Is Spotlit

*HuffingtonPost describes a crumbling community*

The erosion over the past several decades of Shishmaref, a Native Alaskan village of 536 people, 30 miles south of the Arctic Circle, was recently chronicled in an article on Huffington Post. The Inupiaq residents of Shishmaref have been steadily moving their homes, built on melting permafrost, back from the edge of the sea

and building barriers. But the sea has inexorably continued to encroach. "Based on a comparison of aerial photos, the Army Corps of Engineers estimates that the island is losing between 2.7 and 8.9 feet a year, on average," the article stated. "But measurements in years with big storms have documented land loss of up to 22.6 feet." <http://bit.ly/1HhW02p>

## Extended Comment Period On Secretarial Elections

*Possible revision to federal law*

The comment period for a proposed rule to update the regulations whereby the Bureau of Indian Affairs handles secretarial elections has been extended to January 16. The rule in question

would combine two Bureau of Indian Regulations governing petitioning and election procedures into one procedure under the Code of Federal regulations. The election process is a federal procedure conducted by the Secretary of the Interior under a federal statute or tribal governing document. Three consultation sessions concerning the matter were held within the last year among tribal leaders. <http://bit.ly/1CWJK80> 🌟

### Acclaimed Southwestern Artist Walks On

*Geronima Cruz Montoya was a Santa Fe icon*

The renowned artist, educator and cultural leader Geronima Cruz Montoya, a member of Oh'kay O'wingeh Pueblo, walked on at age

99 on January 2 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Educated at the Santa Fe Indian School, she headed the art program there from 1937 to 1961. Montoya also served as a board member of the Wheelwright Museum, the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA), the Indian Cultural Museum and the All Indian Pueblo Council Museum. She was honored by the SWAIA with its Lifetime Achievement Award and was the group's poster artist for the 2010 Santa Fe Indian Market. <http://bit.ly/14feJ06> 🌟

### Quinault Declare State Of Emergency

*Massive flooding leads to formal declaration*

Beset by two straight days of heavy rain that caused flooding, landslides, culvert fail-

ures and washouts, as well as a potentially compromised sewage treatment plant, the Quinault Indian Nation declared a state of emergency on January 5. With major roads closed and all the tribe's buildings and infrastructure being inspected for damage, Quinault President Fawn Sharp said the flooding was unprecedented. The "torrential storm" swept through parts of western Washington State Sunday and Monday, the *Seattle Times* reported, forcing evacuations in the city of Snoqualmie as well as along the coast. In all, a dozen rivers flooded in the region. <http://bit.ly/1tPtV0d> 🌟

### Supplemental Grant To Lummi Nation Workers

*Federal money follows fishing industry layoffs*

The Labor Department has announced a National Emergency Grant supplemental award of \$882,032 to provide continued employment-related services to approximately 630 workers affected by fishing industry layoffs in the Lummi Nation in Bellingham, Washington. The grant will continue to provide affected workers with access to dislocated worker services, including literacy education, basic skills training, career counseling, resume writing, on-the-job training, and training toward professional certifications. National Emergency Grants are part of the discretionary funding of the Secretary of Labor and are awarded based on a state's ability to meet specific guidelines. The initial grant of up to \$3,390,568 was approved on October 20, 2010. <http://bit.ly/1xBygCb> 🌟

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# A Holy Indigenous Eight

The U.S. offers many godly Native places to visit **BY STEVE RUSSELL**



*Pyramid Lake in Nevada is central to the life of the Paiute band.*

**Bottom Line:** *Given his misgivings with a list website's recent spotlighting of a clutch of sacred places around the globe, the author considers eight domestic Native alternatives.*

Last week I took issue with “Top Eight Religious Destinations in the World,” as selected by the website The Daily Eight. None of the choices were in the Western hemisphere. After my anger cooled, I got to thinking of eight religious destinations in my own country to which I believe are worth traveling in order to see.

The futility of naming just eight is obvious. But I hope to show that it

makes no sense to ignore half of the world in making the original list. So now, in no particular order, here are my nominations from the United States:

## **PAHÁ SÁPA**

Pahá Sápa, also known as The Black Hills, is located in South Dakota and Wyoming, but the Great Sioux Nation disputes the land title. Actually, the Great Sioux Nation won the dispute in court but was offered only money in exchange. Since the hills are sacred, they are not for sale. A visit will show you why. The Pahá Sápa contain, on the Wyoming side, a feature the Lakota call Mathó Thípila, the Arapaho call Wox Niinon, the Crow call

Daxpitcheeaasáao, and non-Natives call Devil's Tower. Native people still conduct ceremonies on the mountain and climbers are requested not to scale it in June, when most of the ceremonies are held.

## **CANYON DE CHELLY**

Canyon de Chelly, in the Navajo Nation but also in Arizona, contains several sacred sites. A particularly interesting rocky spire is reputed to be the place where Spider Woman brought the skill of weaving to the Navajo people. Tourists are not allowed in Canyon de Chelly without a Navajo guide—both because of the sacred sites and because people still live there who don't want tourists peering

in their windows. It's safer if you have a four-wheel drive vehicle or if you hire a guide who does. The paved road around the canyon rim is also worth a drive.

#### ENCHANTED ROCK

Enchanted Rock was, within my lifetime, designated a Texas State Natural Area. But traditional Comanche people still consider it sacred, a place to seek visions on the largest pink granite batholith in North America. Stone Mountain, in the Cherokee homelands now called Georgia, is a larger batholith of a different color and once a sacred site of the Ku Klux Klan. There is a historical marker on top of Enchanted Rock that has shortened a story that used to be more overtly cock-and-bull. It told of Texas Ranger Jack Hays escaping from a Comanche war party when he retreated to the summit. They used to claim the spirits of the Rock scared off the superstitious savages.

#### ZUNI SALT LAKE

The Zuni Salt Lake has been central to spiritual practices of pueblo peoples for some 1500 years. Salt is of course necessary to human health, and it is no surprise that a place where salt can be gathered would become a ceremonial center. It is an important religious destination not because this little salt lake in what is now New Mexico is more impressive than the Great Salt Lake taken over by the Mormons, but because of the radiating trails to Zuni, Laguna, and Acoma Pueblos. They call the lake Zuni because the Zuni people have taken the lead in protecting a fragile ecosystem from mining operations. For a tourist, the lake becomes a gateway to the cultural richness of the pueblos along the Rio Grande

#### PYRAMID LAKE

Pyramid Lake is a storied fishing spot in the Nevada desert where the Truckee River, originally fed by snow melt cascading out of the Sierras as overflow from Lake Tahoe, just disappears. It contains the rock formation that gives the lake its name and other formations as well, sacred to the Paiute band on whose reservation the lake is central. Tourists are not allowed in the ceremonial areas, but there is plenty to see otherwise.



*Enchanted Rock (left) is sacred to the Comanche; Spider Rock (right) offers Navajo sacred sites.*

#### FAJADA BUTTE


Fajada Butte is a historically sacred site that the National Park Service will not let you climb without a permit supported by very good reasons. The fragile area on the butte contains the Sun Dagger, petroglyphs and boulders arranged to mark the summer and winter solstices and—most amazingly—the lunar standstill that cycles between 18 and 19 years. But why visit a tall rock infested with rattlesnakes and closed to the public? Because it is smack dab in the middle of Chaco Canyon, which contains the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You can walk though Pueblo Bonito, 650 rooms and four stories high. Contrary to the colonial fantasy about pre-Columbian America, you have evidence here of a substantial civilization founded on agricultural surplus that traded with simi-

lar civilizations in California to the west (abalone shells), Mexico to the south (parrot feathers), and Cherokee country to the east (copper ornaments). There are roads built straight as a compass line from Chaco to outlying settlements with stairs cut into the canyon walls. The roads themselves were only discovered with aerial photography.

#### THE SAN FRANCISCO PEAKS

The San Francisco Peaks are snow-capped mountains sacred to the Hopi people, who believe they are the home of the katsinam, the benevolent cloud-beings who keep the water cycle alive in the high desert. One of the peaks is Doko'oosliid, the sacred mountain of the west, one of four mountains representing the cardinal directions and the borders of Dinétah, the place within which the Diné (Navajo) people were created to live. The peaks are beautiful but some Indians now call them—with bitter, ironic humor—"Peaks of the Yellow Snow." This refers to the failure of litigation and persuasion to stop resort operators from making artificial snow for the ski slopes with treated sewage.

#### BIGHORN MEDICINE WHEEL

Bighorn Medicine Wheel is sacred to the Arapaho and Crow and Cheyenne, among others, and is considered by the U.S. to be on National Forest land within the state of Wyoming. The several tribes that conduct ceremonies there would dispute that the sacred ground could be "owned" by this or that faction of human beings. But many of the sacred sites of North America are subject to similar title disputes. <http://bit.ly/13JFfhz> 

# A Year For Tribal Business

Innovation and diversity were hallmarks of the last 12 months



*The White House honored Henry Red Cloud, Oglala Sioux, as a “Champion of Change” for his green-minded energy efforts.*

**Bottom Line:** *Indian Country Today Media Network reflects on the advancements that tribes, Native entrepreneurs, and Indian-owned or -operated businesses, nonprofits and organizations made in 2014.*

In 2014, Indian businesses made great strides and paved the way for success. Among other notable accomplishments:

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) launched business summits across the country and debuted a business portal that makes various tools more accessible

to Native businesses. The \$28 billion Indian gaming industry continues to hold strong, while tribes focus on diversifying and many pursue impressive renewable energy ventures. Reservations are making business training more accessible to aspiring entrepreneurs. And Native business people are championing rural growth and taking initiative to push for federal capital for remote, Indian-owned businesses.

And now, a few of the big business stories of last year:

## **LAUNCH OF REGIONAL RES EVENTS AND THE NATIONAL CENTER EDGE**

In 2014, the National Center expanded its reservation economic summits regionally by uniting local tribal leaders, top CEOs, entrepreneurs and other big players. The nonprofit group's signature event, National RES (Reservation Economic Summit), held in Las Vegas each March for the past 30 years, continues to gather the country's biggest names and companies in Indian country.

But in 2014, the NCAIED significantly extended its reach by tapping into regional markets. So far, events have been held in Oklahoma, California, Arizona, Washington, D.C. and Wisconsin. The

forums offer a collaborative networking environment, a trade show and expo with business development tracks and, in Wisconsin, special listening sessions with staff members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

Also in 2014, the Mesa, Arizona-based nonprofit group launched the National Center Edge for Businesses. The website, [nationalcenteredge.com](http://nationalcenteredge.com), is still a work in progress, giving us something to look forward to in 2015. The portal consists of a collection of tools and resources for expanding Native American business. Membership in the National Center Edge for Business offers access to other American Indian business people, as well as to new articles, training and business development content on a weekly basis. Members have access through multiple devices and get updates on the latest Native business news and trends.

#### GAMING MILESTONE

Arguably the biggest achievement in Indian gaming in 2014 was the Bay Mills decision on May 27, in which the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in favor of tribal sovereign immunity. Writing for the majority, Associate Justice Elena Kagan determined that Michigan could not sue the tribe for its off-reservation casino, which has been non-operational almost since the day it opened in 2010.

The ruling was a victory for tribal sovereignty as a whole, and the win at the high court assuaged fears of many tribes concerning the negotiation of positive tribal-state gaming compacts under the terms of the Indian Gaming Regulatory

Act (IGRA).

"I feel like we dodged a bullet," Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn of the Interior Department told ICTMN. "The Supreme Court did the right thing and recognized the existence and importance of sovereign immunity, so that's a good thing." But he added, "It makes me nervous to keep



*Blue Stone Strategy Group Chairman Jamie Fullmer addressing the United Tribal Leaders Summit*

testing the limits of tribal sovereignty in this Supreme Court."

#### RURAL GROWTH

Last May, Mark Tilsen, president and CEO of Native American Natural Foods—the maker of Tanka Bars—presented the challenges of rural business growth to the U.S. Senate agriculture subcommittee on rural jobs. He testified about barriers to capital access and the lack of infrastructure to support business in Indian country. But he also stood before the committee as an example of success.

"[W]e created a national brand in the middle of a food desert, and from one of the most geographically and economically isolated places in America," Tilsen said. Native American Natural Foods'

Tanka Bars, which are buffalo-meat-and-cranberry snacks, are sold on 375 Indian reservations and are carried in over 6,000 retail locations in all 50 states.

In January 2014 in north-central Washington, the Colville Tribal Federal Corp. (CTFC) won a prestigious business award for demonstrating success in revenue growth, size and superior management, as well as

for commitment to the community. CTFC generated \$86 million in revenue in 2013, up from \$49 million in 2010. It did so by cutting costs, eliminating wasteful spending and, most significantly, restructuring the business (formerly Colville Tribal Enterprise Corp.) as a federally chartered corporation under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

"When we do business within the boundaries of the reservation on trust property, we

are exempt from federal and state taxes," said tribal member Joe Pakootas, the tribe's 25th CEO in 29 years. The tribal enterprise received the 2013 William D. Bradford Minority Business of the Year Award, the granddaddy of seven awards given annually by the University of Washington's Foster School of Business.

#### COFFEE WITH A SIDE OF BUSINESS TRAINING

In 2014, more than one reservation became home to a coffee shop that doubles as a location for teaching business skills. In May, the Cherokee Nation debuted its Kawi Café. In addition to serving its signature Cherokee blend coffee in downtown Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Kawi Café provides budding entrepreneurs with firsthand experience in running their

own business.

Also, up on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the Keya Café & Coffee Shop in Eagle Butte not only delivers a mean cup of coffee and mouth-watering pastries, it addresses such issues as the environment, job creation, diabetes and youth life skills. Opened in January 2014 by the Cheyenne River Youth Project—a nonprofit organization that has spent the last 25 years offering youth programs and family services that foster healthy choices and life practices—the Keya Café has created a handful of jobs in an area where unemployment is estimated to be as high as 80 percent. In addition, the café provided a unique internship experience to over 30 young people by the end of the summer.

“These kids become baristas and learn practical skills that can help them to get a job when they go off to college,” said Julie Garreau, executive director of the Cheyenne River Youth Project. “We’re raising the bar, and the kids are rising to the occasion. They have to perform and we’re not letting anyone off the hook.”

#### DIVERSIFICATION

This year, the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) and Blue Stone Strategy Group partnered in an effort to create a first-of-its-kind authoritative guide to 21st century tribal economic development. Like a previous report, issued in 1977, “Defining the Next Era in Tribal Economic Development: The Diversification Imperative for Tribal Economic Development” involves input from dozens of tribal leaders. But unlike the earlier report, the new guide focuses solely on economic development and blends theo-

ry, specific examples and vignettes from tribes and research from throughout Indian country.

“Defining the Next Era” clearly looks beyond the gaming industry but acknowledges Indian gaming as the foundation and driving force behind diversifying and growing tribal economies across Indian country. “Gaming is to be



*Biodigesters operated by the Forest County Potawatomi have benefited the tribe.*

intertwined all throughout [the guide],” the project outline states.

The guide sees the \$28 billion Indian gaming business as a mature industry that will continue to generate revenues but will not experience the huge growth spurts of its early years in the 1990s and first few years of the 2000s. Hence, tribes need to look beyond gaming for growth in the 21st century. And that is why NIGA and Blue Stone have developed this authoritative guide, which outlines next stage in the evolution of tribal economic development, Blue Stone Executive Director John Mooers told ICTMN.

“The guide is meant to be a practitioners’ guide and will focus on real examples throughout Indian country and ready-to-use solutions with tangible frameworks [that] leaders can utilize from day one as opposed to a comprehensive study, survey, or white paper for academia or policy makers,” Mooers said.

Among the many ways tribes are finding access to capital to help them diversify is through Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) loans.


#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

After squelching a mine, establishing air-quality monitoring, and building a solar plant, the Forest County Potawatomi Community has sought to set the bar even higher in the renewable energy field with its FCPC Renewable Generation Digester.

The digester essentially turns liquid organic waste known as feedstock into biogas, which is then burned in an engine that produces renewable electricity. Throughout 2014, the digester produced 2.0 megawatts of “clean, green and renewable electricity,”

the tribe said—enough energy to power about 1,500 homes. The Forest Potawatomi derive more than 55 million kilowatt-hours of power annually from renewables, supplying 105 percent of their energy needs.

On the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, home to roughly 28,000 Oglala Sioux, Henry Red Cloud is leading a green power revolution. He sees solar power as a way to reduce home heating costs and as a way to lead his people out of economic despair. “Last year, more than \$1 million was spent on propane and electricity to keep our members warm,” he told ICTMN. “We can take that money and turn it around, start some businesses.”

Last April, the White House honored Red Cloud as one of its 10 “Champions of Change” for his efforts to promote and expand solar deployment. <http://bit.ly/14xm386> 

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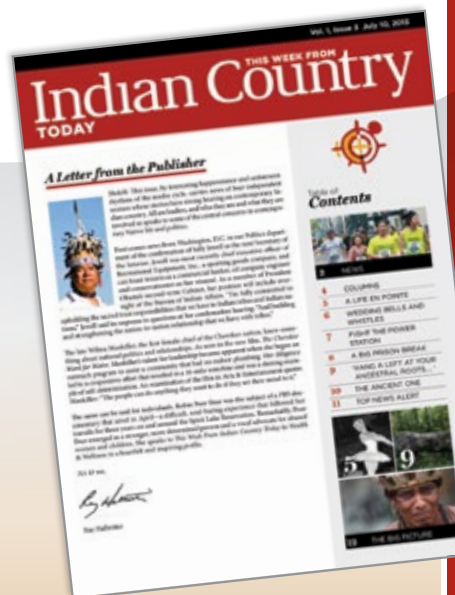
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*Justin Kii Huenemann, Navajo, is the new executive director of the NB3 Foundation, founded by legendary Native golfer Notah Begay III.*



*The Big Foot Ride, honoring victims of the Wounded Knee Massacre, concluded at the site of the slaughter on its anniversary of December 29.*



*Artist, educator and cultural leader Geronima Cruz Montoya, a member of Oh'kay O'wingeh Pueblo, walked on at age 99 on January 2.*



*Native jewelry designed by Lori Morsette (Suquamish, Chippewa) is now available at both locations of the National Museum of the American Indian.*

# Headlines from the Web

## YOUNG MEMBERS OF LOUISIANA'S HOUMA NATION TRY TO RECLAIM TRIBE'S LOST LANGUAGE

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

## TRIBES ISSUE REMINDER OF ILLEGAL GAMING ACTIVITIES ON FLATHEAD RESERVATION

<http://bit.ly/1xz3F9A>

## KICKAPOO TRIBE REMOVES MEMBER FROM TRIBAL COUNCIL

<http://bit.ly/1xPE0bO>

## LITTLE SHELL LEADER THANKFUL FOR DELEGATION'S HELP WITH FEDERAL RECOGNITION

<http://gfttrib.com/14s2VI4>

## MECHOOPDA INDIAN TRIBE TO BUILD CHICO CAMPUS, HEALTH CLINIC

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

## TRIBES ASK IDAHO TO OUTLAW INSTANT RACING MACHINES

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

## Upcoming Events

### NATIVE DIABETES PREVENTION

#### CONFERENCE JANUARY 25-28

"Protecting the Generations: A Lifetime Approach to Preventing Diabetes" brings together tribal members from American Indian, Alaska Native, and Canadian First Nations communities, individuals representing academia, tribal health systems, public health, diabetes educators, community health representatives, and more. General sessions, workshops, and wellness activities will focus on diabetes prevention using a blend of traditional and contemporary strategies. Areas of focus include diabetes prevention programs, diabetes prevention research, and wellness for diabetes prevention and self-management. Sponsored by the American Indian Institute of the University of Oklahoma.

**Location:** Hilton Phoenix/Mesa, Mesa, Arizona

### NATIVE AMERICAN HUMAN RESOURCES

#### CONFERENCE JANUARY 26-28

Through a series of panels, round-table discussions, and two tracks geared specifically to Insurance Options and Recruitment and Retention Strategies, attendees at this fifth annual conference will hear from top experts in the human resources field on topics such as labor and employment law, managing enterprises of all sizes, insurance and benefits, financial planning for employees, the benefits of technology and more. There will be networking with tribal leaders and human resource professionals who share the common goal of finding the most effective ways to manage their various tribes and enterprises.

**Location:** Flamingo Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada

### ABORIGINAL LAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FORUM

#### JANUARY 26-28

The 15th annual forum is dedicated to advancing aboriginal participation in the natural resource sector. Attendees will learn about enhancing the economic benefits of resource development for aboriginal communities; reviewing existing land codes and

legislation, as well as changes made after the Tsilhqot'in decision; effectively engaging with aboriginal communities with overlapping land claims; financing aboriginal communities and resource development projects; participating in the regulatory process of pipeline developments; and integrating aboriginal understandings into environmental sustainability projects.

**Location:** The Four Seasons, Vancouver, British Columbia

### INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 27-28

The Indian Health Service Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee (TS-GAC), a committee composed of tribal leaders from each IHS Area, provides advice to the IHS Director and assistance on issues and concerns pertaining to Tribal self-governance and the implementation of self-governance within the health service. This open meeting is geared toward IHS TSGAC members and members of the IHS staff.

**Location:** Embassy Suites DC Convention Center, Washington, D.C.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoy the articles you present in Indian Country Today Media Network. They offer a unique perspective that we do not hear enough of in the media. I find the serious pieces to be very enlightening and the lighthearted articles to be very entertaining. I often share the articles on Facebook, so that other people can be exposed to the wonderful variety of input

and perspectives from Native Americans, so that they, too, can be enlightened and entertained.

I appreciate you and your staff's work!  
—Glenn Krasner  
Bronx, NY

Re Ruth Hopkins' column about the Indian-themed products and advertisements of Ralph Lauren (12/19):

Lauren wants his products to be saleable. Since he is making monies on you, protests will not help. You should patent your regalia, symbols and trademarks, creating intellectual property related to what is tribal, ethnic and Native. Then you will be in position to control and benefit.

—Chris Kopczynski  
New York, NY



## TOP NEWS ALERTS

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

### NEW JICARILLA GAMING COMPACT

The Jicarilla Apache Nation and the office of the Governor of New Mexico have reached an agreement in principle on a new Class III gaming compact. The Nation spent much of the past year in intense negotiations with representatives of Gov. Susana Martinez to reach a negotiated agreement that complies with federal law. The new compact, which puts the Nation on par with other gaming tribes in New Mexico, now awaits approval by the state legislature and the Interior Department.

### USE OF 'REDSKINS' DECLINES

References to "Redskins," the official name of the Washington, D.C.-based National Football League franchise,

declined from the previous season by 27 percent during NFL broadcasts, according to the sports website Deadspin. According to Deadspin, NFL announcers mentioned the team name 472 fewer times than during the 2013-14 NFL season. In addition to many sports writers and broadcasters, those who have opposed the use of the name or suggested that it be changed include House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Sen. John McCain and outgoing Attorney General Eric Holder.

### PIONEERING ARIZONA LAWMAKER WALKS ON

Lloyd House (Navajo and Oneida), the first Native American to win election to the Arizona state senate, walked on January 2 at the age of 83. House was

35 when he won the seat, serving from 1967 to 1968. "I wondered why God let me win the primary," he joked to the Arizona State Archives Legislative Oral History Project. "It was something that never happened before." A teacher and Marine veteran, House was also director of the Phoenix Indian Center.

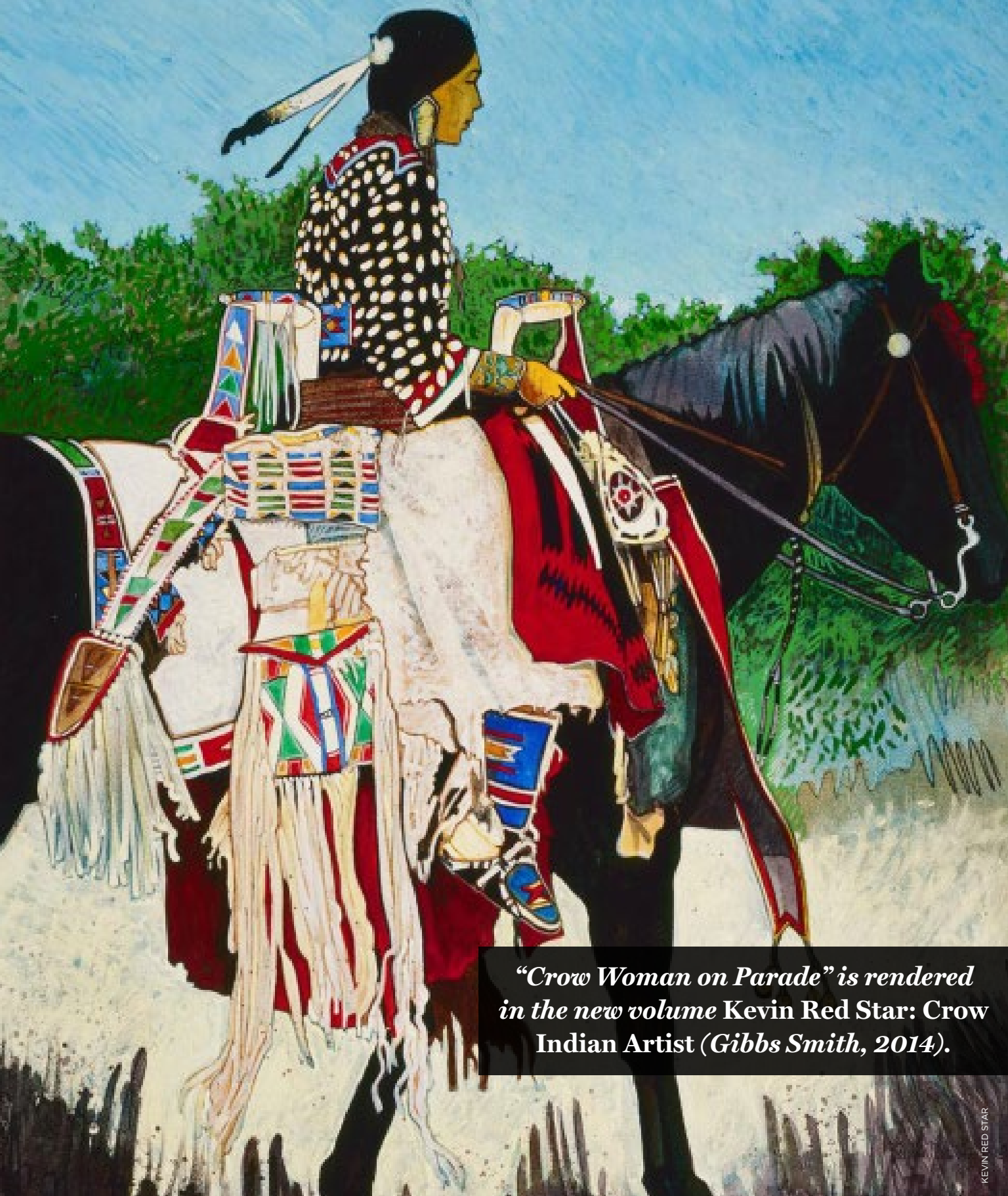
### MORALES RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTORATE

Bolivian President Evo Morales (Aymara) has received an honorary doctoral degree from the National University of Entre Rios (NUER). Morales was cited for his work on indigenous rights, land distribution and eradication of illiteracy. The citation praised his "work in defense of the human rights of the Bolivian people, his historic recogni-

tion of the different indigenous cultures of Bolivia integrated into the government, work in the eradication of illiteracy, distribution of land, nationalization of natural resources," and for being a "tireless fighter for Latin American unity."

### BEER NAME CHANGED AFTER COMPLAINT

A Chicago-based brewery re-named one of its beers after a Native American group in the Windy City called for it to be changed. Half Acre Beer Company retired the name of its award-winning "Heyoka" brew to "Senita" after the American Indian Movement informed the company that "Heyoka" is a sacred individual in Lakota culture. *The Chicagoist* reported. The new name of the beer, "Senita," derives from a cactus in southwest Arizona.



*“Crow Woman on Parade” is rendered in the new volume Kevin Red Star: Crow Indian Artist (Gibbs Smith, 2014).*

KEVIN RED STAR

**THE BIG PICTURE**