



# Indian Country THIS WEEK FROM

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

## *A Letter from the Publisher*

*Shekóli.* If all the flowery words and praise showered upon America's veterans on holidays and during political campaigns were supported by policy, the challenges faced by returning troops after serving in the armed forces would be greatly eased. However, the reality is that promises made on the stump are sometimes forgotten, and substantial veterans' support is often buried in red tape. Compound those problems with the added challenges faced by Native vets in rural communities in or around tribal nations, and the issues only get worse. Processes involving education, pensions, health care and home loans will sometimes involve layers of complexity.

Recognizing the long drives, long waits and cultural disconnects encountered by Indian warriors at Veterans Administration offices, the newly established VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR) embarked in 2012 on an effort to bring information and procedural support closer to Indian nations. Since then, the OTGR has held more than 20 of what it refers to as service training summits. This week's newsletter contains a report on a recent summit, held at the Chickasaw



Nation's Riverwind Casino and Conference Center. Native vets left the conference with updates on a full range of services, including an understanding of changes to the Veterans Choice Act.

"The VA recognizes that one of the best ways to really understand the needs and priorities of veterans living in Indian country is to recognize the unique relationship that tribes have with the United States," OTGR Director Stephanie Birdwell told ICTMN. Future plans include supporting various nations in building out their own departments for veterans' affairs. Tribal-led advocacy for Natives has always borne out; tribal leadership to support of veterans work through the VA maze is a can't-miss proposition.

*Ni ki wa,*

Ray Halbritter

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### Here Comes Another Cannibal Movie

*Tara Houska (Couchiching First Nation) is appalled at an upcoming film that traffics in cannibalistic depictions of an Amazon forest tribe:*

On September 25, Blumhouse Productions will release *The Green Inferno*. The film depicts a group of student activists who travel from New York City to the Amazon forest to “save” a tribe. Their plane crashes and the tribe takes the group hostage and engages in cannibalism, killing them one by one. Yes, you read that right.

Racist portrayals of indigenous peo-

ple are sadly all too common. Whether it is a sports mascot perpetuating the noble savage stereotype, or a grunting buckskin-clad brave brought to life by Hollywood, America refuses to let go of the ideology that Native Americans are a people of the past. *The Green Inferno* takes it up a notch. Why just feature tribal savages of long ago when you can set the story in modern times and show the tribe actually eating people?

The director, Eli Roth, has asserted that a fictional film causing harm to existing peoples is “absurd.” But presenting an at-risk population as cannibalistic beasts feeds into the mantra of saving, assimilating and educating uncivilized

tribes for their own good. Stereotypes and dehumanization have very real consequences.

Roth is attempting to soothe the many environmental and indigenous rights organizations that have denounced his pending film by joining a campaign to preserve the rainforest. He has also partnered with a charity to start a journalism fund highlighting the issues faced by indigenous peoples.

But if Roth has concerns about the plight of Amazonian tribes, maybe he could use his platform to expose the threats to their homelands and way of life, instead of portraying them as animalistic cannibals. <http://bit.ly/1NKQZC9> 📍

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### Gossip On The Rez Is Damaging

*Terese Marie Mailhot, a student at the Institute of American Indian Arts, decries reservation gossip and accentuates a positive alternative:*

Once on the rez I was walking my baby to a Christmas dinner when a matriarch in my community scolded me for not putting a blanket on my baby. The woman put her jacket on my baby, who was already wearing a little jacket and hat. This offering made me feel thankful to live on a reservation, where people cared enough to be generous.

Three days later I heard an ugly rumor that I was abusing my child. Lord, I didn't know what to say. I decided not to pay it any mind—until an administrator at the Health Department on our rez asked if everything was okay. I couldn't explain the situation; I felt beyond that.

We've all been in a conversation where someone looks excited to talk about a community member's personal struggles. Their pupils get large as they're talking about someone's inability to raise their kid, or stay sober, or stop eating, etc. On the rez, that talk is dangerous. It can get social assistance pulled, unemployment taken away, children re-

moved, jobs ruined or families broken up.

There's a difference between a concerned community member and a gossip. You might notice a kid on the rez who's never home, always walking or taking care of his or her little brothers. Maybe their clothes don't fit or are dirty. Ask yourself how you can help. Simply asking people what they need and if they're doing okay is enough sometimes.

Imagine how beautiful our community would be if we were stalwart supporters of each other. Try praising someone and watch how she lights up. <http://bit.ly/1fH1WsI> 📍

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### Helping Mom Walk On

*Harlan McKosato (Sac and Fox) found deep spiritual meaning with the passing of his mother:*

All my life I have left it up to my elders to take care of the bodies of those who pass and to take care of all the ceremonies and protocols that go along with our four-day Ioway ritual. But as the death of my mother started sinking in, I realized it would be up to my two sisters and me, along with my mom's sister, to make the decisions and take full responsibility for honoring her. We decided to

go the traditional way. We didn't know any other.

Our first task was to approach one of mom's best friends since childhood to oversee the funeral ceremony and service—to guide us and reassure us that things would be okay. We took a food basket, tobacco and a shawl to ask for her time and effort. She replied, “It will be my honor to help you children, your family, and your mother.”

Throughout the week, I wasn't thinking about the history of the Ioway people (officially known as the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma). I didn't dwell on the op-

pression and the historical trauma that is written, studied and talked about among our Native people on the national level. That's not what this time was about. All I could think about was trying to honor my mother's life. It dawned on me that this burial process was not just for mom, but also for us who were in sorrow.

After the ceremony and the burial had been completed my uncle, one of mom's first cousins and an elder statesman of the tribe, came up to me and said, “Your mama would have been proud of you kids.” <http://bit.ly/1KH12rx> 📍

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## First Nations Continue to Oppose B.C. Dam Plan

BY KONNIE LEMAY

Treaty 8 First Nations in British Columbia are maintaining their efforts to halt an \$8.8 billion dam project undertaken by the Canadian electric utility BC Hydro that is scheduled to begin this month. The Site C Clean Energy Project, which calls for a third dam on the Peace River system, would flood a 52-mile reservoir along the river, making it two to three times wider than its current width. However, there is concern that the flooding could wipe out evidence of First Nations dating back 12,000 years.

“The area that is going to be flooded is significant,” archaeologist Jonathan Driver told the *Globe and Mail* earlier this year. “The Peace River was a well-traveled route between the lowlands and the front ranges of the Rocky Mountains. You need to make a concerted effort to recover the knowledge of that history as much as possible. What is needed is a research strategy.”

On August 7, Treaty 8 First Nations members and non-Native supporters mounted a protest against the project in general, as well as a specific plan to remove trees containing 28 bald eagles’ nests. The nests are not currently inhabited, but eagles often return to nests every year. The company’s permit for removal requires that the nests be moved or relocated between September and March.

The West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations have called for a judicial review of the project; this spring, the British Columbia Supreme Court heard arguments in the case but has not yet ruled. Meanwhile, BC Hydro has moved ahead, clearing large forested areas for the project.

<http://bit.ly/1V36IAQ> 

## Mexico’s Constitution Is Translated Into Mayan

BY RICK KEARNS


A new translation of Mexico’s constitution into the Mayan language is expected to help the country’s large Mayan population better understand their rights. There are approximately 786,000 Mayan speakers in Mexico, making them the second largest group of indigenous language speakers, after the country’s more than 1.5 million Nahuatl language speakers.

Fidencio Briceno, a linguistic scholar of Mayan descent and the coordinator of the translation, addressed the Mexican Senate on August 4 after presenting the newly translated document to the legislators.

“I bring you an affectionate greeting from the Mayan people, because it’s important to remember that each time we make use of an indigenous language, we not only bring visibility to what we’re using, we also show the vitality of the culture along with opening new paths to the law,” Briceno said.

“It is necessary to note that our language is a living legacy, useful and important, like any other language of the world,” he continued, “and as it’s said that whoever does not know his history does not know his origin, we can also say that whoever does not know the laws does not know his rights and it’s for that reason that this work is so important.”

Mexico’s National Institute of Indigenous Languages (NIIL), was in charge of the translation. The effort involved the participation of several institutions, including the University of the East, the Indigenous University of San Luis Potosi, the Intercultural University of the State of Chiapas and the Veracruzian Academy of Indigenous Languages.

The NIIL has been advocating for more translations of the constitution into most of the country’s 68 indigenous languages, which include 364 linguistic variants. <http://bit.ly/1MVXgOz> 


## Tribal Tech Lands On *Inc.* Magazine Top 500 List

Last year the management and technical services consulting company Tribal Tech ranked 508th on *Inc.* Magazine’s list of the 500 fastest growing privately held companies. Now the Native American, SBA certified 8(a) and 8(m) business has jumped 188 places to No. 320, thus breaking into the ranks of the top 500. Entry into this exclusive and prestigious club is limited to companies that have grown at least tenfold over the past three years; Tribal Tech’s revenue growth in that period was 1,461 percent.

Additionally, Tribal Tech has moved up 20 places to No. 29 in the *Inc.* 50 Fastest Growing Women-Led Companies, holds the No. 18 slot in the Top Government Services Companies category, and is ranked No. 19 among the fastest growing companies in the state of Virginia. Its headquarters are in Alexandria.

Tribal Tech’s portfolio includes several contracts with the Department of Health and Human Services to provide grants administration, training and technical support to underserved communities. The work addresses complex issues such as historical trauma, bully-

ing, youth suicide and many other behavioral health concerns.

So far this year, Tribal Tech President & CEO Victoria Vasques, who is part Diegueno of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, has accrued several individual honors. She was recognized by the Small Business Administration as its Person of the Year in the Northern Virginia Region; by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development as the Native Woman Business Owner of the Year; and by *Enterprising Women* magazine as the Enterprising Woman of the Year. <http://bit.ly/1UcYOrC> 

# Murder And Redemption

*From childhood trauma, an adult vision emerges* BY SAMANTHA MESA MILES

**Bottom Line:** *Noel Altaha was just 13 when her mother was murdered. Her world was upended. And then this White Mountain Apache woman turned her life around.*

It was around 11:00 a.m. on February 27, 2003 and Noel Altaha sat in math class, joking with her classmates in Apache. She was living with her grandparents, apart from her mother at the time, and she loved going to school. “In those years I could just be a kid, like everyone else,” she said. She could never anticipate how her life was about to change.

The principal called her into the office. There, she saw her aunt sobbing as her uncle sat quietly. “What I’m about to tell you is serious and I need you to listen carefully,” her uncle explained to Altaha, who was then only 13 years old.

Her mother, Jade Velasquez, was found murdered near a camper in Phoenix, hours away from their Arizona home. This was not an isolated incident. The man who killed Jade had raped and murdered four other women.

The murder could have destroyed Altaha’s life. Instead, she made a new one.

Altaha, now 27, recently talked about the incident in a quiet corner of Butler Library at Columbia University in New York City, where she is now a student. Softly lit lamps glowed behind her as she sat in a leather chair mentally retracing that life-changing conversation in the principal’s office. It appeared to be as exhausting as living through it.

When Altaha first learned what had happened to her mother, she felt her hands become clammy and a hot sensation course through her head.

Usually, the survivors burn all of the deceased’s belongings by way of letting them go, sometimes even including pictures.

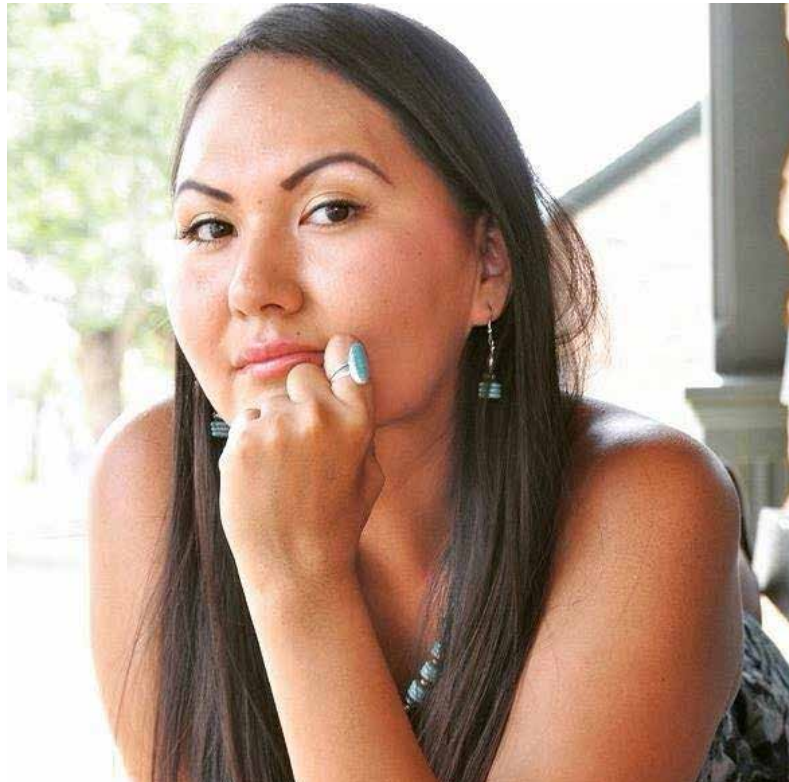
Instead, the clothes of Altaha’s mother were held for crime scene investigations. The family grieved her life in traditional Apache ceremonies; as part of the process, the girls cut their hair for one year. But they didn’t feel the mourning process was complete.

“That was very hard, going through the motions,” Altaha said, “partly because her clothes were withheld from us.”

She also had to confront media coverage of the murders by *The New York Times* and local Phoenix publications. One of the victims was reportedly mentally disabled; three were confirmed as prostitutes. Their murderer, Cory Morris, “declined to participate in IQ testing or psychological evaluation” prior to the trial, the court report noted.

Gossip spread throughout Altaha’s hometown. Some of her classmates said her mother was a crackhead. Jade Velasquez had served in the Army in the 1990s, winning medals for rifle and hand grenade expertise. She also frequently used drugs and alcohol. Abused by boyfriends, she would in turn become abusive towards Altaha—withdrawing from her, leaving her for long periods with strangers, and sometimes hitting her.

Grieving the loss of her mother was particularly hard because Altaha had to figure out how to face the effects of the



*“Childhood trauma can be devastatingly challenging to overcome,” said Noel Altaha. But by all appearances, she is succeeding.*

“It was almost an out of body experience,” she recalled. Her voice quiet and shaky, she continued, “The rest of the year is a blur. It’s as if my head blacked out.” She gently moved strands of her waist-length brown hair away from her face with hands decorated in silver and turquoise rings.

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In those days after her mother’s death, Altaha continued to attend school to try to maintain normalcy. But as the family held traditional Apache ceremonies, they left out a major process in their culture.

abuse. So she became emotionally detached through disassociation. “I coped by just checking out and [did] not let anything anyone would say get internalized,” she said.

Altaha recalled a moment that stirred tremendous guilt. She was at her aunt’s house about a month before the murder, and her aunt asked about her mother. “I remember saying, ‘I don’t have a mom anymore.’” That remark came back to haunt her when her mother was killed.

“So of course my little 13-year-old mind is going to think that I caused her death. I had to try to understand what it means to realize my mother’s death was not my fault, while still trying to get through high school.”

Different members of Altaha’s family reacted in different ways. Keyana Ayers, her younger sister, was six at the time of the murder. For a while, she quietly followed the investigation. But that has changed. “It brings back too many painful memories,” she said. “It’s just not good for my well-being anymore.”

Meanwhile, their aunt, Jan Tenijieth, has maintained a close interest in the case since the day she learned of her sister’s murder. Tenijieth continues to receive letters from the state attorney’s office regarding Morris’s appeals. She is still trying to collect Jade’s clothing from the state evidence room.

And when the children were left without a mother or consistent father, Altaha’s grandfather, Amyx Seymour, stepped into the father role for the girls. But the family would rarely discuss her death, or the domestic violence the girls experienced.

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Sent by her aunt to a boarding school in Portland, Oregon, Altaha continued as an adult to grapple with the aftermath of the murder. She enrolled in Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado at age 18. But her studies were interrupted when she

took over guardianship of her sister after her grandmother Genevieve passed away. It was during this time that in addition to her survivor guilt, she began experienc-



*Altaha, who plans to raise awareness of domestic violence, spoke in 2014 at an annual youth conference held by her tribe, the White Mountain Apache, on the Fort Apache Indian reservation.*

ing survivor anger.

So, years later, when she returned to college, Altaha decided to turn resentment into action. She took courses in social psychology, forensic psychology, abnormal psychology, all of which helped her to articulate what she had experienced growing up. She also started going to therapy. She began to understand how her mother’s murder had affected her. And she became involved with student groups that gave her a sense of belonging.

Those who have lost family members to violence might benefit from her example. But Altaha cautions that her way of healing may not work for everyone.

“I don’t want my story to come across as ‘She made it, anyone can make it,’” she said. “My story is one in which I processed the trauma in a way that was

appropriate for me instead of internalizing it. To not internalize the trauma that you’re faced with, however you do that, is what’s really personal to you.”

Altaha is now a graduate student at Columbia University’s School of Social Work. So far, her classes have included courses in social work policy, social work research and an offering called “Power, Oppression and Privilege.” She plans to pursue a Ph.D. program and be a researcher, professor and tribal consultant.

One of her goals is to raise awareness for missing and murdered indigenous women through blogging, academic research and poetry. Her overall aim, she said, is addressing self-compassion and healing from historical trauma, with an emphasis on advocacy and social justice activism.

“Having those uncomfortable conversations with my sisters about what they were going through when my mom died is most important to really recognizing that healing from this is a lifelong process,” she said. “How can we teach self-compassion to the Native youth, or adults suffering from addiction?”

She is focusing her work on breaking the cycle of domestic violence and substance abuse and wants to identify why indigenous women are disproportionately attacked and affected.

“My mom,” she said, “warned me of the dangers of addiction, and the reservation life mentality ‘bucket of crabs syndrome.’” (This popular theory holds that if one crab attempts escape from a bucket full of them, the others will try to stop him, to ensure he will share their mutual fate.) “You get used to the trauma. Childhood trauma can be devastatingly challenging to overcome.”

But Altaha has done so.

“He’s (Morris) on death row, and my mom is still in my DNA,” she said. “I still get to live my life. That’s my closure.”

<http://bit.ly/1L4RwkU> 

# The Man Who Rides Bulls

*'You have to stay humble to stay focused.'* BY RODNEY HARWOOD

**Bottom Line:** For this Cherokee bull rider, the heat is on—and he's loving it.

When Cherokee bull rider Ryan Dirteater climbs aboard 2,000 pounds of fury and starts working the grip as his opponent stomps and bangs against the chute, he is a warrior fixing to go into battle.

There is no time to think. No time to visualize. Once Dirteater nods his head and the chute door flies open, all he can do is act and react. That's the way it is in the organized train wreck called professional bull riding.

"It's as much preparation as it is the ride," Dirteater told ICTMN. "That adrenaline rush always gets ya. When you step off with 90 points and the crowd's screaming your name ... that's a pretty good feeling."

Dirteater, a 26-year-old Cherokee citizen, is currently ranked 29th in the Professional Bull Riders' Built Ford Tough Series world standings and is approaching \$1 million in career earnings. He has some work to do in the five remaining events left in the season. But he's still on track to qualify for the Built Ford Tough World Finals at Las Vegas for the sixth time in his career.

"I haven't had no luck the past couple of months," said Dirteater. "But I've finished 15th the past three seasons. I should be okay. I just want to show the world what I can do."

Part of the fun of riding bulls for a living and competing against the best cowboys and stock in the world is getting a chance to see some of it. He was in Australia in July.

"Bull riding has taken me a lot of places I never would have gone if it wasn't for

the sport," said Dirteater, who credits his father Randy with teaching him how to ride. "I rode in three events while I was down there. I did pretty good in one event, but the other two weren't so hot. But it was worth the trip."

also draws on traditional Native forms of praying as well.

"I think you learn from an early age you have to stay humble to stay focused," Dirteater explained. "You got to have your faith. I'm a Christian and I attend church as much as I can, but I did get a chance to sweat when I was coming through the Standing Rock reservation in June. It was my second sweat and it was awesome. We said some prayers, said what was on your heart. It was a special thing and it's good to get centered like that."

Dirteater tries to give back when he can. Every year he hosts "Ryan Dirteater's Ropin' for Wishes"; last month in Tulsa he involved some of his fellow PBR competitors in the charity event. "Every year we raise money for the Make a Wish of Oklahoma and the Rider Relief Fund. It's a pretty good event. There was family there, kids, and the bull riders were there signing autographs."

His heart is in Oklahoma. Dirteater has some financial investments and has bought some property, but what he really wants to do is make a personal commitment to Native children.

"I always want to see Native Americans be successful," he said. "Whether it's rodeo or bull riding or something they want to do. I put bull riding clinics on sometimes. We didn't have much growing up, but mom and dad knew I wanted to ride bulls and they helped me out through the tough years. I went after what I wanted and I'm still living my dream."

"I think that would be my message to Indian Country: 'Anything is possible to those who work while they dream.'"

<http://bit.ly/1KnTjz> 🌟



Ryan Dirteater is ranked 29th in the Professional Bull Riders' Built Ford Tough Series world standings.

Dirteater grew up on a 15-acre ranch in Hulbert, Oklahoma. From his family, he learned of his culture. "My dad still works for the tribe," he said. "My grandma and grandpa spoke fluent Cherokee, so I got to learn the language a little bit. It's something I still need to keep practicing. I don't dance, but enjoy the powwows and seeing the crafts. I got a few long bows I shoot around the house sometimes."

One of the things that keeps him grounded in the fast-paced world of professional bull riding is his spirituality. He grew up in a Christian household, but

# Tar Sands in Utah?

*'This stuff needs to stay in the ground.'* BY ANNE MINARD

**Bottom Line:** *"Oil sands extraction" could come to the Uinta Ouray reservation—but at what cost?*

While scientific researchers continue to press for a reduction in oil sands development across North America, tribes such as the Uinta Ouray Ute Tribe could face hard decisions as oil sands development comes knocking.

More than half of the known United States oil sands reserves occur in two areas of Utah: the Uinta Basin to the northeast and an area in the central southeast. Within these areas are more than 50 identified oil sands deposits. They contain a potential total of 20 to 32 billion barrels of oil, according to an estimate by U.S. Oil Sands, the Canada-based company preparing to mine the region. One of its prize project areas, PR Springs, straddles the border between state lands and the Uinta Ouray reservation.

Fracking has been occurring on the reservation since the technology was developed. But so far oil sands extraction, akin to that practiced in Alberta, is pretty much merely a controversial proposal.

Oil sands extraction involves the separation of tarry, oil-containing bitumen from sand and clay. It resembles oil shale development, whereby oil is separated as a liquid from heated sedimentary rock. Both types of extraction are occurring, albeit on a small scale, on areas just outside the Uinta Ouray reservation.

The tribally controlled part of the reservation, about 1.2 million acres, includes about 500,000 acres that were given back to the tribe by the federal government in the late 1980s. Called the Southern Extension, the acreage includes desert-to-mountain terrain in the Book Cliffs area between Price, Utah and Grand Junction, Colorado.

"The first thing the tribe did was declare a third of it forever wild," said tribal member Forrest Cuch. "I've always been proud of that. But now there's pressure to develop it. It's motivated by greed and

money. It's created some struggle here."

Cuch adamantly opposes development. "It's terribly dirty and polluting," he said. "I think our tribe needs to take a strong position and constantly hammer that position."

The tribe has not commented officially. Members of its governing body, the Ute Business Committee, did not return numerous phone calls and e-mails from Indian Country Today Media Network. But in June the Ute joined a lawsuit filed by four states against the Department of

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*'Why are we putting our water, air and climate at risk for fuels that don't have a lot of value?'*

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the Interior that called new fracking rules too restrictive, the Associated Press has reported.

Activists from groups like Peaceful Uprising and Utah Tar Sands Resistance have joined Cuch and other opponents. They have camped out near some of the operations and occasionally been arrested for disrupting the work.

"This stuff needs to stay in the ground," said John Weisheit, conservation director of the Moab-based group Living Rivers, which has also been fighting the development attempts. "It is too dirty to process. It's too energy intensive to process. It requires way too much water. Why are we putting our water, air and climate at risk for fuels that don't have a lot of value?"


Recent events up in Alberta lend credence to the dirtiness of it all. The biggest spill in Canada's history sent 1.3 million gallons of emulsion—a mixture of water, crude and sand—into the muskeg.

In a rare consensus, more than 100 scientists issued a petition on June 10 calling for a halt to new oil sands development in North America. One signatory is Ken Lertzman, a forestry professor at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. Canadian oil sands extraction is occurring largely in northern Alberta and to some extent east of the Rockies, in boreal and sub-boreal forests, he noted. And that has implications for many indigenous people.

"Once you get more than 100 miles or so north of the border, a lot of the communities are indigenous communities," he said, "especially in the more remote part, a lot of small, remote communities that are essentially trying to maintain a balance between traditional lifestyles and generating income and that kind of thing."

Development carries with it other consequences, he noted. "The landscape is crisscrossed with seismic lines," Lertzman said, referring to the noisy apparatus that is set up to measure oil deposits. "There's disturbance to caribou, threatened species, impacts ecologically as well as culturally. Once they start trying to extract, it's basically like strip mining."

As Indigenous Peoples worldwide grapple with climate change's effects, the debate over expanding oil sands development is intensifying.

"There is overwhelming evidence that subsistence communities around the world are already seeing many, many kinds of changes in weather, currents and ecological responses of plants and animals," said Lertzman. "I think a lot of people recognize that if we're going to make a difference on the global front in terms of reducing emissions, we can't be expanding these dirty, expensive sources of oil." <http://bit.ly/115aifG> 



# Informing Native Vets

*A new federal program begins to take hold* BY BRIAN DAFFRON

**Bottom Line:** *Rural Native veterans are often out of reach of the services with that only VA facilities can provide. Now the government is coming to their front door.*

For veterans living in rural areas, securing certain services and benefits can be a considerable hassle. The drive to a major city equipped with a Veterans Administration office can take hours. Once there, the wait can be just as long if not longer. Paperwork, applying for benefits online (which may not be an option in some tribal communities), language and cultural barriers, and other challenges can be downright maddening.

So wouldn't it be easier, figured the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR), if instead of making Native veterans endure such inconvenience, they were presented with critical information on their reservation or in their community?

To that end, the OTGR devised a system of hosting veterans' "service training summits" in closer proximity to Indian country. Since 2012, a year after the office was created, at least 20 of these summits have been held throughout the country. One of the most recent took place at the Chickasaw Nation's Riverwind Casino and Hotel Conference Center near Norman, Oklahoma on July 30-31. Among the topics broached were "Understanding Veterans Health Administrations Eligibility Priority Groups," "Veterans

Justice Outreach Program," and updated information on "Camp Lejeune & Contaminated Water."

"The VA recognizes that one of the best ways to really understand the needs and priorities of veterans living in Indian

the Veterans Choice Act and updates on education, home loans, pensions, monetary compensation and military cemetery grants. Information is also available on helping veterans with less than honorable discharges to apply for a service upgrade

to make them eligible for veteran benefits.

The summits, Birdwell said, bring elected tribal officials as well as tribal, state and federal employees "all in one place to really exchange information and provide training so that information can be disseminated. People can put faces with names and build relationships to really advance the efforts of serving the needs of our vets and their families."

She added, "The biggest impact has been more of

a consistent recognition, understanding and appreciation. Wherever you go—if you're going to Washington State, the Southwest, East Coast or Oklahoma—when it comes to tribal leaders reaching out to VA leadership, you are going to get a consistent response."

Some of the federal office's future plans include seeing more tribal nations create their own offices or departments for veterans' affairs. It is also intended to help implement the "MyVA" procedures that are already being put into place throughout the VA system.

The next OTGR regional summit will be held September 22-24 in Salem, Oregon. <http://bit.ly/1JjCWCw> 🍀



*Jody Calick spoke at the POW-MIA ceremony as part of the VA Service Training Summit that was recently held at Grand Ronde.*

country is to recognize the unique relationship that tribes have with the United States," said OTGR Director Stephanie Birdwell, an enrolled member of Cherokee Nation.

Her office's focus, she said, "is to build relationships with tribal leaders, establish a formal tribal consultation policy so the VA doesn't make decisions or policies about veterans living in tribal communities before we consult with tribes." The main issues in which tribal consultation are essential, she has found, are care, benefits and economic sustainability.

Some of the information that attendees can take back to their tribe's veterans' affairs offices includes changes to laws like

**Executive Director, EPICS**

EPICS seeks a full-time Executive Director (ED) to manage the EPICS organization. The ED serves as liaison between program staff and the public, monitors financial administration and directs overall program planning and activities for all projects.

Candidates must have excellent organizational, verbal, written and interpersonal skills; ability to work independently and as a team member; past success with a governing board; and experience with nonprofit accounting, budgeting and fundraising. MS/MA degree in related field with 3+ year's administrative experience. Native American preferred.

To apply, submit a Resume and Letter of interest as to why you would like to be considered for this position, and contact information (names, addresses phone, email) for three references to Veronia Sandoval at vsandoval@epicsnm.org. For more information visit: www.epicsnm.org.

Open until filled.

**Ute Indian Tribally Designated Housing Entity**

**Request for Proposals for Audit Services for FY 2015**

The Ute Indian Tribally Designated Housing Entity (UITDHE), hereafter referred to as the Housing Authority, located in Fort Duchesne, Utah is seeking proposals from interested accounting/auditing firms that provide auditing service specifically for Indian Housing Authorities or Tribally Designated Housing Entities as defined in the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996.

The Auditor must be responsible, qualified, and must be able to perform the audit in accordance with the requirements of the Single Audit Act.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being advertised as an open procurement with Indian Preference. Firms claiming Indian Preference must submit proof of enrollment with a federal or state recognized Indian tribe and proof of at least 51% Indian ownership of their firm. All sealed proposals are due no later than **5:00 PM, September 25, 2015** at the business office for Ute Indian Designated Tribally Housing Entity.

**Scope of Work for Audit Services – Length of Contract 1 year renewable based upon an annual review of services by the Housing Authority.**

For a complete copy of the RFP and rating schedule please call UITDHE at 435-722-4656 between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm MST.



**Omaha Tribe is hiring for the following:**

- CDL Driver-Tribal Utilities
- Certified Nurse's Assistant
- RN
- LPN
- Tribal Prosecutor

**Please send your resume, three references, and a complete application to:**

Omaha Tribe of Nebraska  
Attn: Human Resources  
P.O. Box 368  
Macy, NE 68039

**Telephone:** (402) 837-5391  
**Facsimile:** (402) 837-5239

**Email:** barry.walker@omahatribe.com

**The Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation**

(406) 395-4478 or 4210 – Finance Office 31 Agency Square  
(406) 395-4478 or 4210 – Business Committee Box Elder, Montana 59521

**REQUEST for PROPOSAL (RFP) for CHIPPEWA CREE TRIBE of the ROCKY BOY'S RESEVATION, MONTANA**

In accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards as adopted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and in accordance with "Governing Auditing Standards" issued by the Comptroller of the United States. All-inclusive fixed fee proposal to audit the following Chippewa Cree Tribal Reporting Entities as of and for the year ending September 30, 2015:

- Chippewa Cree Tribe Primary Government financial statements and supplementary schedule of expenditures of federal awards
- Rocky Boy Health Board component unit financial statements and supplementary schedule of expenditures of federal awards
- Chippewa Cree Housing Authority
- Unless otherwise revised

The audits must meet the requirements of "Circular A-133," issued by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Single Audit Act Revisions of 1996. The proposal must include an Annual Audit completed by firm.

First reading of proposals will be October 28, 2015. Please contact Janice Myers, Tribal Secretary/Treasurer for additional criteria requires or question of the auditing firm. Proposals may be mailed or emailed to Janice Myers.

janice@cct.rockyboy.org  
Janice Myers, Secretary Treasurer  
Chippewa Cree Tribe  
31 Agency Square  
Box Elder, Montana 59521  
(406) 395-5705 or 395-4478 Ext. 220

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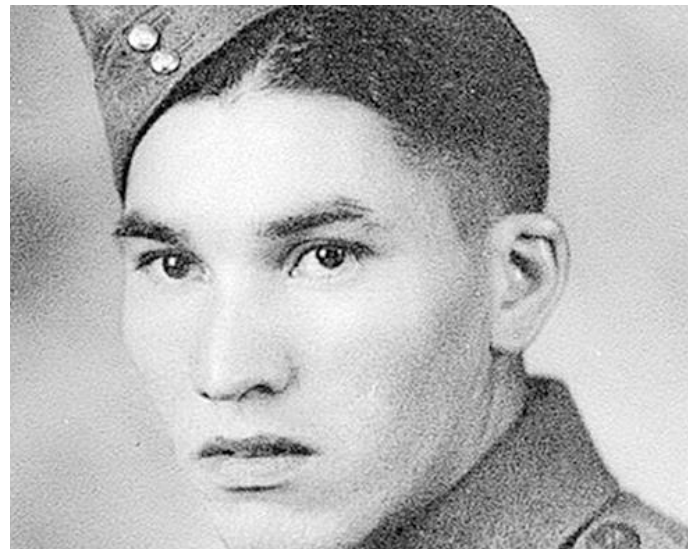
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*Google celebrated what would have been the 125th birthday of Duke Kahanamoku, the Native Hawaiian widely regarded as the father of modern surfing, on August 24 with an appropriate Google Doodle.*



*“Cultural Burdens,” a basket that is itself adorned inside and out with miniature baskets, by Carol Emarthle-Douglas (Northern Arapaho/ Seminole), won “Best of Show” at the 2015 Santa Fe Indian Market.*



*A new documentary will explore Canada's overlooked World War II Cree code talkers, including Charles “Checker” Tomkins.*

# Headlines from the Web

## GRAND TRAVERSE BAND NOW A TOWN CENTER INVESTOR

<http://bit.ly/1IOSN4T>

## INDIGENOUS PROTESTERS CHASE OFF POLICE IN ECUADOR TOWN

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

## BLUE LAKE RANCHERIA TRIBE UNVEILS NEW MICRO-GRID

<http://bit.ly/1hEJ2Vf>

## CHOCTAW CHIEF RIVALS BATTLE AGAIN

<http://on.thec-l.com/1hFStE4>

## TRIBE APPEALS RULING THAT LIMITS EAGLE KILLINGS

<http://bit.ly/1EkaWA3>

## FORMER TRIBAL LENDING EXECUTIVES CHARGED WITH EMBEZZLEMENT

<http://bit.ly/1MXefA0>

## Upcoming Events

### TRIBAL WELLNESS COURTS ENHANCEMENT TRAINING

SEPTEMBER 8-10

First-day training topics, geared toward tribes in the planning stage or in their first year of operating their Wellness Court, include screening and assessments, sanctions and incentives, and “Healing to Wellness Courts as Matters of Good Governance.” Second- and third-day training is more advanced and will cover team building and self-care, pharmacology and medically assisted treatment, confidentiality and related subjects. Hosted by the Tribal Law and Policy Institute, with approval by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance.

**Location:** Hotel Albuquerque, Albuquerque, New Mexico

### SELF-GOVERNANCE STRATEGY SESSION

SEPTEMBER 9-10

Conducted by the Indian Health Service, this self-governance forum is designed for tribal leaders, staff and other representatives. It will give them an opportunity to update and identify key self-governance strategic policy, budget and legislative issues; develop strategies

to protect and advance tribal self-governance; and design a proactive work plan that identifies action items, lead persons and timeframes.

**Location:** Hard Rock Hotel, Catoosa, Oklahoma

### NATIVE AMERICAN MARIJUANA AND HEMP CONFERENCE & EXPO

SEPTEMBER 9-10

Held against the backdrop of increased tribal interest in growing medical marijuana for revenue, the conference will offer experts who will discuss the most recent legal, economic, social and policy changes whereby Native Americans can enter the marijuana market. Conducted by Native Nation Events and the Indian Country Cannabis Association.

**Location:** Harrah’s Resort Southern California, Valley Center, California

### TRAINING FOR TRIBAL ASSET BUILDING: LEVERAGING

RESOURCES SEPTEMBER 9-11

The emphasis will be on developing tribal housing departments and associated entities that also embrace community and economic development. The training tracks are “Tribal Housing Is Self-Determination,” “Asset Building Requires

Tribal Capacity,” and “Native Businesses Strengthen Tribal Community.” Presented by the Native Learning Center of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

**Location:** Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, Flagstaff, Arizona

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF INDIGENOUS ARCHIVES, LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

SEPTEMBER 9-15

Approximately 100 workshops, lectures, discussions, evaluations, presentations, tours and related events are scheduled. Among them are “Identification and Care of Photographs,” “Developing an Ethnographic Lexicon,” “Unintended Consequences: The Potential Impact of Digital Footprints,” “Writing Our History: Native Newspapers as Historical Record” and “Google Mapping Tools For Preserving Indigenous Knowledge.” There will be three strategically significant pre-conference summits to address issues, concerns and initiatives specific to sustaining and advancing Indigenous cultures: “Digital Inclusion in Native Communities,” “Protocols for Indigenous Objects” and “Protocols for Native American Archival Materials.”

**Location:** Renaissance Washington, D.C. Downtown, Washington, D.C.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re your ongoing coverage of the land grab that would allow a foreign company to exploit the mineral wealth of the sacred land of the Apaches in Oak Flat, Arizona:

There should be a real outcry against this. I worry about how pollution would drift into the Apache land. Would the water be affected? Would the drilling be

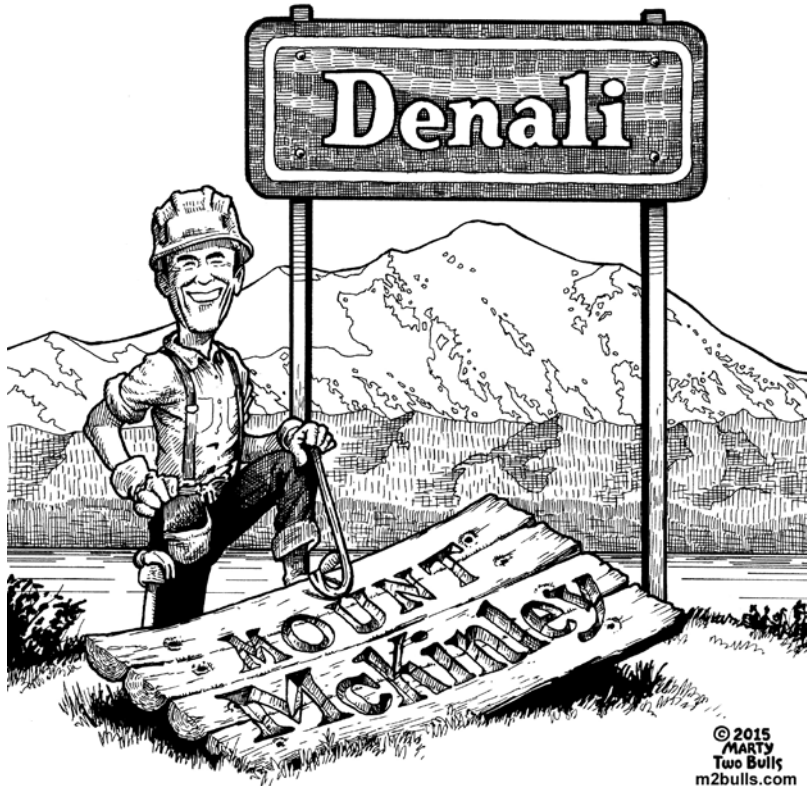
ear splitting?

I hope getting a wider audience to read about Indian Country’s problems and accomplishments will make a difference. I hope our newspapers and magazines will pick up on your stories. I also hope that you win the battle over Keystone XL pipeline.

I have long admired the Native Ameri-

can attitude toward our environment, in their spiritual practices. I am so glad you are making the effort to report what is going on in your lives, good and not good. I hope this will be an ongoing enterprise.

—Frances Elliott  
Calistoga, California



## TOP NEWS ALERTS

From IndianCountry Today Media Network.com

### TWO MORE TRIBES GET LAND LEASING

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has approved land leasing regulations from the Makah Indian Tribe and the Squaxin Island Tribe in Washington State. The action authorizes the two tribes to enter into land leases without having to obtain approval by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This brings to 22 the number of federally recognized tribes whose land leasing regulations have been approved by the Department of the Interior, in accordance with the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act.

### SENECAS INAUGURATE CREDIT UNION

The Seneca Nation of Indians Federal Credit Union officially

opened on August 20 in Albany, New York, having been chartered by the National Credit Union Administration on May 15. It is the state's first federally chartered credit union for Native Americans and their employees. The new group offers savings accounts, new and used car loans, personal loans checking, debit card and money market account services, certificates of deposit, club account, home checking, and mobile banking services.

### SENATE WILL HOLD EPA HEARING

The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will hold an oversight hearing on September 16 concerning the Gold King Mine incident last month. On August 5, an EPA-supervised crew at the Gold King Mine

in Colorado accidentally released three million gallons of wastewater into Cement Creek, which flows into the Animas River in Colorado and then to the San Juan River in New Mexico, affecting the Navajo Nation and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. "I hope this hearing will help bring about solutions," said Vice Chairman John Tester (D-Montana).

### GRAND TRAVERSE INVESTS IN 160 ACRES

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians has purchased a stake in a major retail, housing and commercial project in Acme, Michigan. The Band will invest in 160 of the project's 180 acres, with anchor retailer Meijer owning the other 20. The site of the project,

dubbed the Grand Traverse Town Center, is close to the tribe's 900-acre Grand Traverse Resort & Spa, a 900-acre property and the band's Turtle Creek Casino & Hotel.

### PECHANGA GOLF EVENT RAISES \$100,000

The Pechanga Charity Golf Classic, held at the Journey at Pechanga golf course in Temecula, California on August 19-20, raised more than \$100,000 to help the homeless, foster children and others in need. In its 17th year, the tournament has brought together tribal government, Indian gaming industry leaders, media partners and celebrities to raise more than \$1 million altogether. Three hundred sixty-eight golfers participated in this year's tournament.

# How Did I Miss That?

*The death of Route 29 Batman, the silly season in full swing, and nuking the Muslims* BY STEVE RUSSELL

Lenny Robinson, the 51-year-old “Route 29 Batman,” was killed when his Batmobile broke down. As he was checking the engine, his car was hit by traffic and knocked over him.

Robinson became famous when a police dash cam video showing the stop of his black Lamborghini Batmobile and Robinson emerging in full regalia went viral. His purpose was to visit children confined to hospitals, where he would cheer them up and gift them with Batman toys.

There are worse ways to be remembered.

\* \* \*

Establishment GOP analysts are now saying Donald Trump may win Iowa and it's not out of the question that he could win the nomination.

My Republican Cousin Ray Sixkiller mumbled something hard to understand with his head in his hands.

\* \* \*

Watchers of early polling have waited in vain for Trump's goofy remarks to tank his numbers. Now they are debating whether those impressive numbers are understated by polling people likely to vote in the Republican primary. Trump may be able to sweep open primaries by bringing in people who normally don't follow politics or vote.

\* \* \*

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller's campaign Facebook page posted a graphic calling for atomic weapons to be used on “the Muslim world.” That would be about a fourth of the world population.

\* \* \*

Proving that British political hijinks

match ours, Reuters reported that John Buttifant Sewel, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords, has resigned the position that “tasked him with ensuring fellow lords behaved properly.” The *Sun* released a video showing him half naked, sitting between two women, neither of them his wife, while snorting “white powder through a banknote.”

Lords are born in the United Kingdom, not elected—unlike in this country, where anybody who is named Bush or Clinton can run for president.

Cousin Ray disagreed. “Trump may have been born with money,” he said, “but he is not a Bush or a Clinton.”

\* \* \*

I reminded Cousin Ray that this election gives Hillary Clinton another shot at breaking the gender barrier.

“We could break the gender barrier with Carly Fiorina,” he retorted, “and a lot less drama.”

\* \* \*

Elsewhere on the gender front, Ellen Sturm Niz published a hilarious rant in *Parents* about the objections being voiced to Target's announcement that they are phasing out gender-biased signs.

“Do you really have such a hard time shopping for toys and bedding,” she asked, “that the lack of signs saying ‘For Boys’ and ‘For Girls’ will make it impossible to find what you need?”

\* \* \*

Two path-breaking GI Janes became the first women to graduate from Ranger School. At this time, even having earned Ranger Tabs, the women cannot serve as Rangers. But their admission to the school was part of a study to determine if they should be allowed in the elite combat units.

About 40 percent of men who start Ranger School earn Ranger Tabs. *The Washington Post* reported that only 37 of the 380 male students in this class went straight through all phases without needing to recycle. Nineteen women started and eight passed the physical tests. Three women passed the first phase after being recycled like most of the men. Two of the three will now graduate, while a third may graduate later because she is being recycled on a later phase.

It would be great if the new Rangers had no combat deployment opportunities. Fat chance.

\* \* \*


*Foreign Policy* reported that the U.S. troops remaining in Afghanistan are not allowed to call in air strikes on the Taliban unless they pose an immediate threat.

“You can't negotiate with dead people,” Cousin Ray reminded me.

\* \* \*

The Russian tabloid *Komsomolskaya Pravda* posted a recorded conversation on its website, allegedly between two CIA agents plotting to down Malaysia Airlines MH-17 and blame it on Russia. The tape has the individuals alternating British and American and Russian accents and using Russian colloquialisms.

The fake was too obvious for the story to have legs. Citizens of the former Soviet Union were brave with their biting humor. Of the old Soviet economy, for instance, they quipped, “We pretend to work and they pretend to pay us.” And of the old Soviet media, they giped, “In the *Pravda* there is no *Izvestia* and in the *Izvestia* there is no *Pravda*.”

After his LOL, Cousin Ray said with a smirk, “I know some tribal papers that resemble that remark.” <http://bit.ly/1JxYmzc> 

# UPCOMING POW WOWS

## **ASHLAND LABOR DAY POW WOW**

9/4/15—9/8/15  
Ashland Pow Wow Grounds  
Ashland, MT  
406-784-2883  
[CheyenneNation.com](http://CheyenneNation.com)

## **LEECH LAKE LABOR DAY POW WOW**

9/4/15—9/6/15  
Palace Casino Drive  
Cass Lake, MN  
Rod Northbird  
218-308-3120  
[LLOjibwe.org](http://LLOjibwe.org)

## **45TH ANNUAL BARONA POW WOW**

9/4/15—9/6/15  
Barona Stars Baseball Field  
1095 Barona Road  
Lakeside, CA  
619-443-6612 ext. 271  
[lwhitecloud@barona-nsn.gov](mailto:lwhitecloud@barona-nsn.gov)  
[Barona-NSN.gov](http://Barona-NSN.gov)

## **INDIAN PLAZA INTERTRIBAL LABOR DAY POW WOW**

9/4/15—9/7/15  
Indian Plaza Pow Wow Grounds  
Charlemont, MA  
413-339-4096

## **TOTAH FESTIVAL POW WOW**

9/5/15—9/6/15  
Farmington Civic Center  
200 West Arrington  
Farmington, NM  
800-448-1240  
[FarmingtonNM.org](http://FarmingtonNM.org)

## **OCEANA COUNTY INTERTRIBAL “HONORING OUR ELDERS” TRADITIONAL POW WOW**

9/5/15—9/6/15  
Oceana County Fairgrounds  
1025 South State Street  
Hart, MI  
231-894-8361  
[missbeatty@hotmail.com](mailto:missbeatty@hotmail.com)  
[hartpow-wow.Weebly.com](http://hartpow-wow.Weebly.com)

## **NORTH COUNTRY INTERTRIBAL POW WOW**

9/5/15—9/7/15  
934 Elm Street  
Newport, ME  
443-771-6207 or 207-368-4944  
[ncountrypowwow1@yahoo.com](mailto:ncountrypowwow1@yahoo.com)

## **EUFAULA INDIAN COMMUNITY POW WOW AND HOMECOMING**

9/5/15—9/6/15  
Eastside Ball Park  
Eufaula, OK  
918-584-9507 or 918-617-7985  
[jaydee.tiger@yahoo.com](mailto:jaydee.tiger@yahoo.com)

## **7TH ANNUAL KENTUCKY NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM HONORING OUR VETERANS POW WOW**

9/5/15—9/6/15  
Phillips Farm  
4116 Cumberland Falls Highway  
Corbin, KY  
[KNAHM.org](http://KNAHM.org)

## **55TH ANNUAL TECUMSEH LODGE POW WOW**

9/5/15—9/6/15  
Tipton County Fairgrounds  
Tipton, IN  
[powwow@tecumseh lodge.org](mailto:powwow@tecumseh lodge.org)  
[TecumsehLodge.org](http://TecumsehLodge.org)

## **34TH ANNUAL IROQUOIS FESTIVAL**

9/5/15—9/6/15  
Iroquois Indian Museum  
324 Caverns Road  
Howes Cave, NY  
518-296-8949  
[info@iroquoismuseum.org](mailto:info@iroquoismuseum.org)  
[IroquoisMuseum.org](http://IroquoisMuseum.org)

## **19TH ANNUAL SEACONKE WAMPANOAG TRIBE POW WOW**

9/5/15—9/6/15  
Red Way Plains Route 44  
Rehoboth, MA  
401-723-1573

## **NATIVE AMERICAN FESTIVAL**

9/5/15—9/7/15  
City Island  
Harrisburg, PA  
717-589-7744  
[sunrisesigns@nmax.net](mailto:sunrisesigns@nmax.net)

## **17TH ANNUAL TWO MOONS MEMORIAL POW WOW**

9/5/15—9/7/15  
The Schuylkill County Fairgrounds  
2270 Fair Road  
Summit Station, PA  
484-866-1242  
[twomoonsmemorialpowwow@gmail.com](mailto:twomoonsmemorialpowwow@gmail.com)



*The 2015 Santa Fe Indian Market  
Native American Clothing Contest  
included children's entries.*

**THE BIG PICTURE**