



Prayer & Sobriety walk into 2026

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Bobcats represent in All-League

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The Southern Ute Drum celebrates 56 years of excellence in tribal media coverage

The Southern Ute Drum presents 2025 Year in Review



Krista Richards/SU Drum archive

November marks Native American Heritage Month, in that spirit, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe proudly partnered with the Denver Nuggets for the Native American Heritage Game, Saturday, Nov. 22 at Ball Arena in Denver. Pictured are Riley Lang, Southern Ute Heritage Dancers and members of the Southern Ute Royalty.

See additional Year in Review on pages 12 and 13.



Summer Begay/SU Drum archive

Southern Ute Indian Tribe, joined by Chairman Manuel Heart of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, delivered a powerful address before a joint session of the Colorado General Assembly, Thursday, Jan. 16. Chairman Baker's address marked the third annual address to state legislators since the passage of Senate Bill 22-105, a significant step towards strengthening the relationship between the Colorado Ute tribes and the State of Colorado. Chairman Baker's address highlighted the rich history of the Nuuchiu, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and respecting the Tribes' sovereign rights as outlined in federal treaties.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe's focus on educational opportunities for tribal youth, in addition to cultural preservation and Ute language initiatives resounded in many of our leading news stories this past year. The 2025 news cycle has not been without its challenges, as the Tribe and KSUT have had to navigate significant budgetary cuts on the federal level, continue to uphold environmental standards on the Reservation and fight to keep the Tribe's water rights at the forefront of the conversation amid persistent drought and an uncertain future for the Colorado River Basin. Community coverage always remains at the core of our newsroom, visually highlighting everything from Tribal Fair & Rodeo to the numerous powwows that bring the Tribe together throughout the year!

LIFT THE LABEL

Southern Ute Tribe: Recovery stories Alfreda

"Recovery begins the moment we choose to plant new roots and give that hope a chance to grow. We all carry resilience within us already."

My name is Morning Starr (Alfreda), I am Southern Ute, Southern Cheyenne and Cad-do Nation. I am a mother of six children and have eight grandchildren. I've lived most of my life in Oklahoma, and it's where I started my journey of recovery and healing, thus being able to bring home my experience, strength and hope – so many others may heal. I recover out loud because my story can help someone else from struggling in silence and know they are not alone.

My 50-year journey was not easy as I grew up with childhood trauma, domestic violence, community trauma, intergenerational trauma, and not knowing my self-worth. I began drinking at age 11, experienced abusive relationships, and spent years caught between addiction, prison, self-destruction and toxic relationships. The breaking point came in 2016, when I lost my son and had to make the decision to take him off life support. I turned away from Father God and sank deeper into drugs and alcohol, losing four years of my life.

Then one night, I dreamt of my son while I was in county jail on my way to prison for the third time. That dream pushed me to finally and truly ask for help. My recovery wasn't immediate; I relapsed several times, but each time I got up again. Through DUI court, counseling, grief work, and eventually White Bison's Wellbriety movement, I began healing not just my body, but my spirit. I am the founder and director of Morning



courtesy Lift the Label

Morning Starr (Alfreda).

Starr Healing Inside and Out located in Oklahoma City and work for the Western Slope Native American Resource Center in Grand Junction, Colo. as the Wellbriety Advocate. I am a White Bison Firestarter and wherever I go I plant seeds of healing and hope.

Recovery for me means rediscovering my culture, wearing my regalia, dancing, attending sweat lodges, and honoring the traditions that make me rich in spirit. Healing is continuous. When I heal, I heal seven generations back and seven generations forward, forgiving the unforgivable.

I've faced stigma, as a Native woman and as a person who had a substance use disorder, but I've learned the

biggest roadblock was myself. Once I learned to love and forgive myself, and accept Father God in my life, everything changed. I now speak publicly so that others know they're not alone. Healing isn't about perfection; it's about persistence, love, compassion, and community.

To those still struggling or loving someone who is: show no judgment. Offer kindness. Recovery takes time, but there is always hope. I am living proof that no matter how far gone you feel, you can come back. Today, I am sober, grounded in myself again, and surrounded by my family and interconnected to many. I live each day tending to my Healing Forest; one story, one heart, one fire at a time.



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum archive

Leading motorcycle riders along Main Street in downtown Durango, Colo. for the annual Bike Week parade, former Colorado State Senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell rides alongside Southern Ute elder, Bennett Thompson, in September 2011.

STATE OF COLORADO

Former U.S. Sen. Nighthorse Campbell dies at 92

By Taylor Dolven
THE COLORADO SUN

Campbell was the first Native American to chair the Committee on Indian Affairs and the only Native American to serve in the Senate during his two terms.

Former U.S. Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a fixture of Western Colorado politics for decades, died Tuesday of natural causes surrounded by his family, his daughter Shanan Campbell confirmed.

Campbell represented Colorado in the Senate for two terms after serving in the House of Representatives and the state legislature.

He was 92.

Campbell is best known for his long political career, but held many other notable roles, including as a member of the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Olympic Team.

From 1983 to 1986, Campbell served in the Colorado state legislature, followed by three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. Then, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992, where he changed his party affiliation to Republican from Democrat in 1995.

He served as chair of the Committee on Indian Affairs until the end of his second term in January 2005.

Campbell was the first Native American to chair the committee and the only Native American to serve in the Senate during his two terms.

A member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe, Campbell stumbled into his political career almost by chance, said former Colorado GOP Chairman Dick Wadhams, who ran the organization from 2007 to 2011.

Wadhams said Campbell walked into a Democratic meeting in Durango and

walked out as a nominee for state representative.

Campbell recalled the meeting in July during an interview with The Colorado Sun at his dining room table with his wife, Linda, at their ranch near Ignacio.

"They asked, this guy said, 'I'm busy,' this one said, 'I'm sick,' that one said, 'I can't do it,' so I wasn't their best choice, I was the only one left," Campbell said.

Wadhams credits Campbell's interesting life story and likeability for his successful political career spanning both parties.

"When Ben Campbell entered a room, you knew he was there," Wadhams said. "He just had a huge presence. He just was the kind of guy that people found interesting and unique."

Campbell served as hon-

Nighthorse page 11



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum

Introducing the Southern Ute Tribal Council for 2025-26, pictured left to right: Marty Pinnecoose, Marge Barry, Vice Chairman Marvin Pinnecoose, Chairman Melvin J. Baker, Andrew Gallegos, Linda K. Baker, and Treasurer James “Mike” Olguin. The Southern Ute General Election was held Friday, Nov. 7, followed by a runoff election on Friday, Dec. 19 for the two open council seats. The Southern Ute Tribal Council warmly welcomed returning candidates, Barry and Pinnecoose during the inauguration ceremony held Monday, Dec. 22 in Tribal Council Chambers.

TRIBAL COUNCIL AFFAIRS

Tribe welcomes returning leaders Barry and Pinnecoose

Staff report
SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

Following the certification of the election results, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe welcomed Marjorie D. Barry and Marvin J. Pinnecoose back to leadership during a swearing-in ceremony held on Monday, Dec. 22.

The ceremony took place in the Tribal Council Chambers, where Chief Judge Scott Moore administered the oaths of office. The Council Chamber was filled with families, tribal members and staff, who joined together to celebrate the occasion. Dignitaries in attendance included

leaders from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Jicarilla Apache Nation, as well as officials from Archuleta County, the City of Durango, and the Town of Ignacio. Federal representation included staff from the offices of U.S. Representative Hurd, U.S. Senator Hickenlooper and U.S. Senator Bennet.

Council Member Barry returns for her third term, having first been elected to Tribal Council in 2019. Council Member Pinnecoose begins his second term following his initial election in 2022. During the ceremony, Chairman Melvin J. Baker announced his selection of

Marvin Pinnecoose to serve as Vice Chairman for the upcoming term.

“The Southern Ute Indian Tribe is fortunate to have the continued commitment of these two leaders,” Chairman Baker said. “Their experience is vital as we continue to protect our resources, provide for our elders and youth, and strengthen our position as a leader in Indian Country.”

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe congratulates Council Member Barry and Vice Chairman Pinnecoose on their inauguration and looks forward to their continued leadership.



courtesy George Gavrielides/SU Water Resources

Bureau of Reclamation Assistant Secretary, Andra Travnicek, Southern Ute Councilman, Andrew Gallegos; Water Resources Division Head, Pete Nylander; Legal Water Attorney, Lisa Yellow Eagle; Water Resources Technician, George Gavrielides; Natural Resources Director, Andrew Frost; BOR Deputy Commissioner of Operations David Pollumbo and Upper Colorado Basin Regional Director, Wayne Pullan attend a Southern Ute and Bureau of Reclamation meeting with regional leadership, Wednesday, Dec. 17.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water is Life

By Andrew Gallegos,
Councilman
SOUTHERN UTE TRIBAL COUNCIL

For years, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe has been trying to use its allocated federal waters rights. Throughout this journey the Southern Ute Indian Tribe has gained a working relationship with outside entities such as the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC).

Tuesday, Dec. 16 through Friday, Dec. 18, myself (Councilman Gallegos) along with Legal Water Attorney, Lisa Yellow Eagle; Natural Resources Director, Andrew Frost; Water Resources Division Head, Pete Nylander and Water Resources Technician, George Gavrielides attended the Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA) Conference held in Las Vegas, Nev.

Founded in 1945, CRWUA has served as an organiza-

tion where members from throughout the Colorado River Basin are able to meet and develop personal relationships to allow frank discussions of the many issues involving the Colorado River. This gave the Southern Ute tribal leadership and staff an opportunity to meet with federal, state and tribal representatives, the Upper Colorado River Commission, and other organizational staff to discuss concerns and priorities. This is also an opportunity for tribal leadership and staff to learn about additional Colorado River issues and help each other network with other tribal, state, and federal leaders and staff for a healthier Colorado River.

Southern Ute has been engaged with the Post-2026 guidelines. What is that you may ask? Well to not bore you, it is a federal document that helps maintain water usage and users that draw from the Colorado River, simply put ... it’s a policy or doc-

ument guiding water users within the Colorado River Basin on what they can and can’t do to help mitigate the ongoing years of drought, water usage from development of new communities and population growth, well I think you get the picture. Oh, I might add this thing called a savings pool for Lake Mead and Powell, I’ll touch on that in a minute. The Colorado River is defined into two sections: The Upper Basin being Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The Lower Basin is classified as Arizona, California and Nevada, spanning seven states in total. Hmm some might say that’s not so bad, seven states out of the whole United States, but wait ... what about the tribes? Shouldn’t they have a say, I mean Native American tribes were here first, right? This is where it gets tricky. Not only are there lo-



Many Moons Ago



Damon Toledo/SU Drum archive

10 years ago

The Ignacio Wildcats offer tickets for the powwow cakewalk, with all earnings going towards the 7th and 8th grade basketball teams.

This photo was first published in the Jan. 8, 2016, issue of The Southern Ute Drum.



Beth Santistevan/SU Drum archive

20 years ago

Ignacio Lady Cat Shirelle Gleason (32) and Monica Mestas (11) box out three Piedra Vista Panthers. The Lady Cats lost to the Panthers 48-58 this past Thursday. The Lady Cats take on Dove Creek tonight at 5 p.m.

This photo was first published in the Jan. 6, 2016, issue of The Southern Ute Drum.



Robert Baker/SU Drum archive

30 years ago

Council winner Pearl Casias serves cake to the staff.

This photo was published in the Jan. 5, 1996, issue of the Southern Ute Drum.



SU Drum archive

40 years ago

R, Tom Shippis, – Tribal attorney, Eddie Box Sr., Chairman Chris A. Baker, Lillian Seibal, Tim Wirth, U.S Congressman, Vida Peabody, Leonard Burch and State Representative Tom Glass were visitors to the Southern Ute Reservation to learn more about the Southern Ute.

This photo was published in the Jan. 10, 1986, issue of the Southern Ute Drum.



MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITY
Honor our Youth Pow Wow
Save the Date



Photo: Southern Ute Veterans Association Mentor Youth Honor Guard

Saturday January 17, 2026

Vendor Space available - \$40, Lobby Space \$25
Call 970-563-2640 to sign up



Multi-Purpose Facility 256 Ute Road, Ignacio CO
Call for more information 970-563-2641

Ringling in the New Year



Miss Southern Ute Alternate, Autumn Sage and Little Miss Southern Ute, Starlitt Greany, at the Towaoc Christmas Eve Powwow.



Theoden Greany after placing 1st in the Ponca New Moon Jr. Boys Fancy Dance special in Fallon, Nev. for the New Year's Eve Powwow.

Photos Dominika Joy
Courtesy to the Southern Ute Drum



Southern Ute Brave, Theoden Greany and Henry Whiteskunk II after fulfilling their roles as Head Boy and Head Man at the Towaoc Christmas Eve Powwow.



Starlitt Greany after placing 2nd in Jr. Girls Traditional dance competition.



Theoden Greany after placing 1st in the all-ages Hat and Boot Special.

SHELL DRESS
WORKSHOP



DATES:
JANUARY 14, 2026
JANUARY 21, 2026
JANUARY 28, 2026

MUST BE ABLE TO ATTEND ALL 3 SESSIONS



4:00PM - 7:00PM



SUCCM LARGE CLASSROOM

SUPPLY LIST:

-cloth (wool, broadcloth, velvet, or upholstery [dress liner should be cotton])

dress sizing:

14-16: 2 yds

16-18: 2.5 yds

18-20: 3 yds

20-22: 3.5 yds

-shells, coins, elk teeth (2 packs of 100)

-upholstery thread

-big eye needles

CLASS SIZE:

10

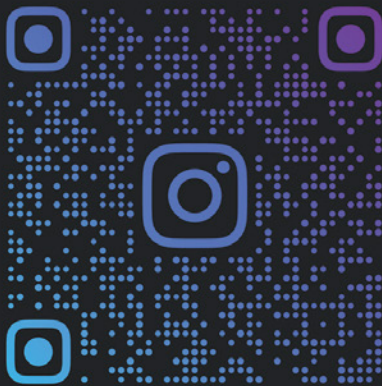
TO REGISTER, CALL:
970-563-2983

DINNER WILL BE PROVIDED



UTE
LANGUAGE
NEWS

The Cultural Preservation Department is excited to announce the new *Let's Learn Ute* Instagram account. We encourage folks to follow as we venture in this digital avenue of the Ute language being present on social media. Scan the QR code below, to be directed to the account. Toghoyaqh.



@LetsLearnUte



Let's Learn Ute



Nuvwa'wayaqh.

It is snowing.

Suti'yaqh.

It is cold (winter cold).

'uvwiaaro nuwavi kiyaqopaa.

Let's play in the snow.





BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BEE Heard: Healing Hooves

How animal-assisted therapy transforms trauma care

By Rebecca Gale
SOUTHERN UTE BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH

Many years ago, when I was a graduate student, my Clinical Supervisor mentioned to me that I should look into equine assisted psychotherapy (EAP). She knew that I had horses of my own and thought this might be an interesting modality for me to pursue. I had never heard of equine assisted psychotherapy before, but I looked into it, it sounded intriguing, and so, I set out for Phoenix, Ariz. for an intensive course on becoming certified as a mental health professional for EAGALA (Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association).

My first day of training included about 50 other mental health and equine professionals from across the country. The setting was a huge outdoor arena with folding chairs set up for us, and, a herd of five horses, free to wander amongst us, anywhere they chose to do so. I noticed that the people who were sitting in those folding chairs were becoming increasingly uncomfortable as some of those horses walked right up to them and started chewing on baseball caps and grabbing purses hanging off the backs of chairs, looking for treats. Basically, they were just wanting to hang out with the crowd of strangers who had invaded their environment. The problem? Their hooves were right at eye level!

Finally, a grizzled cowboy spoke up and said to the trainer, "This is UNSAFE! One of these horses is going to end up kicking somebody in the face!" At this, many others in the crowd agreed that they felt this way too. The trainer calmly answered in his Kentucky drawl, "You are free to do whatever you need to do to make yourself safe." This was a lightbulb moment for me. Someone was giving us permission to set a boundary and take care of ourselves. What a powerful statement and how powerful it would be for clients to be given permission to take care of themselves, and to be told that it's okay to do so!

Across clinics, schools, and community programs nationwide, animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is gaining recognition as a powerful, evidence-based approach to healing trauma. By integrating trained animals – most commonly dogs and horses – into therapeutic settings, practitioners are finding new ways to help individuals feel safe, regulated, and connected as they work through painful

experiences and tap back into their own personal power.

Animal-assisted therapy is more than simply spending time with animals. It is a structured, goal-oriented intervention delivered by trained professionals and guided by principles of trauma-informed care. This approach emphasizes safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment – values that align naturally with the presence of animals.

Science has shown that horses and dogs are particularly energy sensitive and will regulate their heartbeats to mirror the human who is within 20 feet of them. This is called heart coherence. So, if we are upset or dysregulated, our animal companion will know and will show us through their own behaviors how we are presenting.

Dogs: Comfort, connection, and emotional regulation

Therapy dogs are often the most familiar face of animal-assisted therapy. The presence of a well-trained dog can help to lower anxiety and reduce physiological stress responses. Research shows that interacting with dogs can decrease cortisol levels and increase oxytocin, a hormone associated with bonding and calm.

For individuals with trauma histories, dogs offer non-judgmental companionship and predictable responses. A client who struggles to make eye contact or trust adults may find it easier to connect with a dog first. This connection can serve as a bridge to the therapeutic relationship, helping clients feel grounded and emotionally regulated during difficult conversations. Their presence alone can create a sense of safety that many trauma survivors have rarely experienced.

Horses: Insight through movement and relationship

Equine-assisted therapy, which involves working with horses on the ground or through guided activities, offers a different but equally powerful pathway to healing. Horses are highly sensitive to human emotions, body language, and nervous system states. Because of this, they often mirror what a person is feeling, providing immediate, honest feedback.

In trauma-informed equine therapy, clients learn to observe their own reactions and practice emotional regulation. The interaction with a large, responsive animal can build confidence and the

ability to trust, not only in the animal but in one's response to the animal. For many, successfully guiding or connecting with a horse fosters a sense of empowerment and mastery – key components in recovering from trauma.

Horses help clients become aware of how they show up in the world. That awareness can translate into healthier boundaries, improved self-esteem, and stronger relationships.

Why animal-assisted therapy works

Animal-assisted therapy is effective because it engages both the body and the mind. Trauma is often stored in the nervous system, not just in memory. Animals help regulate that nervous system through rhythm, touch, movement, and connection. This bottom-up approach complements traditional talk therapy, particularly for individuals who find it difficult to verbalize their experiences.

Trauma-informed AAT also prioritizes client choice and control. Participants are never forced to interact with an animal and are encouraged to set their own pace. This restores a sense of agency that trauma can take away.

In a world where trauma can leave people feeling disconnected and unsafe, animal-assisted therapy reminds us of a simple but profound truth: healing often begins in a relationship, and sometimes, that relationship has four legs.

Here's to your good health!

It's okay not to feel okay

If you or someone you know has been struggling with their emotions, behaviors, or substance use please reach out to us. We can help you find appropriate tools and services that could help you overcome obstacles in your life. We are here for you. Please contact the Southern Ute Behavioral Health Division at 970-563-5700 for more information or to set up an appointment to see a counselor or therapist.

Reminder: If you need to talk to someone, please reach out.

And for those interested in opioid use education, harm reduction, and support, please contact us for quick Naloxone (Narcan) training and fentanyl test strips. We can schedule individual, family, or friends training times at our Southern Ute Behavioral Health Building, or we can come to you, and the training is around 30 minutes. Please call us at 970-563-5700 to set up a training appointment.

HEALTHY RECIPES

Quick, heartwarming 'Three Sisters' soup

Lisa Smith, RDN, CLC
SHINING MOUNTAIN HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Soup is winter's friend. Enjoy this simple recipe using frozen vegetables to make a quick weeknight dinner. Serve with whole grain rolls or cornbread.

Lisa B. Smith, RDN is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist with the Southern Ute Shining Mountain Health and Wellness.



Kate/AdobeStock

Three Sisters Soup

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon oil (olive, canola, avocado)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 quarts (8cups or 64oz) vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 12oz bag of frozen corn
- 1 15oz can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 16oz bag frozen winter squash like butternut (available at most grocery stores)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Garnish with sliced green onions

Directions

1. In a large pot, heat oil on medium. Sauté onions until fragrant and translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add garlic and sauté for an additional 1-2 minutes.
3. Add thyme and cumin, stir to combine.
4. Add broth, corn, beans and squash and simmer for 20-30 minutes, until squash is tender but does not fall apart.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a garnish of sliced green onions and enjoy!

(Adapted from an Indigikitchen.com recipe)

Shining Mountain Fresh

January 2026

Sign up for a **FREE**, healthy meal kit for you and your family with Shining Mountain Health and Wellness's monthly program

Heartwarming Three Sisters Soup

Meal Kit Includes:

- Primary ingredients
- Recipe / Prep Tips
- Kitchen Hacks

Contact:

Lisa B. Smith (970)-563-2344

If you need to schedule a different pickup time/date, please reach out to Lisa

Sign up for your meal kit now! Use the link below, or scan the QR code to quickly register in under 2 minutes!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SMFJan2026>

Sign-up Deadline: Monday, January 26

Pickup Date: Wednesday, January 28

Cervical Cancer Screening Lunch and Learn

JANUARY IS CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Join Shining Mountain Health and Wellness for a presentation about cervical cancer and how to get screened. Lunch will be provided and registration is required using QR code below.

DATE & TIME

THURSDAY JANUARY 15

12PM-1PM

LOCATION

LEONARD C. BURCH BUILDING

BUCKSKIN CHARLIE ROOM

356 OURAY DRIVE, IGNACIO

Registration Required: Link or QR code

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CervicalCancer2026>

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COLLABORATION WITH SHINING MOUNTAIN WELLNESS & SOUTHERN UTE TRIBE

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- STRESS REDUCTION ACTIVITIES
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KSUT PUBLIC RADIO

‘Truth Be Told’ screening comes to Durango

Doc spotlights the importance of local journalism

Staff report
LOCAL NEWS NETWORK

KSUT Public Radio, Local NEWS Network, and Fort Lewis College will co-host a special community screening of the documentary “Truth Be Told” on Wednesday, Jan. 14, in the Fort Lewis College Ballroom.

“Truth Be Told” explores the vital role of local journalism in sustaining informed, resilient communities and a healthy democracy. The film is part of a statewide Colorado tour, with Durango hosting the first of at least nine planned screenings across the state.

Filmmaker Brian Malone, along with a panel of local journalists, will lead a lively Q&A open community discussion, designed to spark meaningful dialogue among local residents, business owners, educators, journalists, and public officials about the importance of local news and how it supports community connection, accountability, and economic vitality.

The 49-minute documentary was produced by Fast Forward Films, through a grant from the Colorado Freedom of Information Coalition. The screening tour is made possible in collaboration with The Colorado News Collaborative (CoLab), a nonprofit newsroom committed to strengthening local journalism across Colorado.

“Local journalism is more than reporting the news – it’s about building trust, connection, and understanding within our communities,” said Tami Graham, Executive Director of KSUT Public Radio. “Truth Be Told highlights why local media matters, especially in rural regions like ours. As one of the five media outlets featured in this documentary, KSUT is proud to help bring this conversation to Durango and create space for meaningful dialogue about the future of local news.”

Light refreshments from Zia Taqueria will be available during the event.

This free, public event is intended to encourage thoughtful conversation about why local news matters – and how communities can support it.

Community members are encouraged to attend and be part of the conversation. You can pre-register for this event by visiting this URL onecau.se/_esw3v1 or using this QR Code.

For more information, please reach out to Laurie Sigillito, 970-946-7980, laurie@thelocalnews.us

Screening Details

Wednesday, Jan. 14, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Fort Lewis College Ballroom in Durango, Colo. A 45-minute documentary screening followed by discussion.

Joe Claunch farewell



photos Divine Windy Boy/SU Drum

Education staff and other tribal employees gathered for a luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 6, in celebration of Southern Ute Education Department Director, Dr. Joseph Claunch, and his achievements in that role. BGC Executive Officer, Bruce LeClaire honors Claunch with an eagle feather for his achievements and dedication to the Education Department over the past two years. Claunch will be leaving his position as he plans to go back to school, he has been working with the Tribe since the summer of 2024.



Southern Ute Education Department staff members gather for a photo with Southern Ute Education Department Director, Dr. Joseph Claunch on Tuesday, Jan. 6, ahead of his departure from the position. Claunch took time to give thanks to his colleagues for their continued support throughout his journey as a director.

During a luncheon, Education Director, Dr. Joseph Claunch opens gifts from fellow coworkers and local families. Claunch was honored for his achievements during his time with the Tribe.

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Tuesday - Thursday
January 13 - 15, 2025

10:00 AM - 3:30 PM

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BOBCAT BULLETIN

One semester down and so much to celebrate at Ignacio High School

By Alicia Gullion, Principal
IGNACIO HIGH SCHOOL

As we close the door on the first semester, there is a lot to be proud of at Ignacio High School. Our students have shown up day after day, put in the work, and continued to grow both academically and personally. From classrooms to performances to hands-on career experiences, this semester was full of moments that reminded us just how capable and motivated our students are.

Right before winter break, the high school hosted its annual science fair, and it was a wonderful showcase of student learning and curiosity. Projects covered a wide range of topics, from how water is used in the local agricultural industry to how different genres of music affect brainwaves, to the science of fingerprinting. It is always impressive to see students confidently present their learning, and it is especially exciting to see the diverse interests they bring to their work. A big thank you to Mrs. Redman and Mr. Gilster for guiding our students through the process and organizing such a successful event.

Several students will advance to compete at the regional level next.

Our students also had the opportunity to explore creativity and storytelling when the Language Arts Department, led by Mr. Groblebe, welcomed an accomplished author to campus. He shared his personal journey and path to becoming a writer, offering students a realistic and inspiring look at the profession. He and several other



Alicia Gullion
Principal
Ignacio High School

er authors then led writing sessions with students, providing hands-on guidance and encouragement. This experience was especially meaningful for our aspiring writers and showed students how passions can turn into careers.

As always, great things are happening in the world of Career and Technical Education (CTE). Under the leadership of Molly Turner and in collaboration with the Southwest Collaborative, our CTE program continues to connect students with industry professionals and career pathways. Before the break, representatives from Garrhs HVAC visited the welding shop and led students through a hands-on demonstration, giving them a real look at what work in that field entails. Our CTE program is incredibly beneficial for students, helping them explore career options and prepare for the trades if that is the path they choose.

We also wrapped up the semester with a fantastic performing arts showcase. Students from the drama department performed a play, and band and choir

students presented a concert under the guidance of Mr. Farrow, Dr. Sueker, and Ms. Walker. The growth in student skill and confidence was evident, and it is clear how much students enjoy and value these programs.

At Ignacio High School, our goal is to ensure that all students are able to pursue their interests and explore their potential. Even as a small, rural school, we strive to offer as many opportunities as possible – whether through concurrent enrollment courses with Western Colorado University, CTE and trade programs, online college courses, work-based learning, internships or a wide range of electives.

Just like the start of a new year, the beginning of the second semester is a great opportunity for a fresh start. It is a time for reflection, goal-setting, and recommitting to finishing the year strong. In January, our students will attend the Southwest Collaborative Career Fair at the La Plata County Fairgrounds. We attended this event last year with great success and are excited to return, giving students further exposure to career options and postsecondary pathways.

We are fortunate to work with exceptional students, and we remain committed to supporting them and providing the experiences they need to be successful beyond high school. Student success does not happen in isolation—it takes a team. That team includes families, staff, community members, and everyone who plays a role in a student’s growth.

Thank you for your continued support of our school. As always, my door is open.

CONSTELLATIONS OF PLACE

Guest Curated by Dr. Meranda Roberts
(Yerington Paiute, Chicana)

OPENING RECEPTION:
Thursday, January 15
4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Center of Southwest Studies
Fort Lewis College
1000 Rim Drive, Durango, CO 81301
swcenter.fortlewis.edu | (970) 247-7333

Free Admission

JANUARY 15 - DECEMBER 18, 2026

This exhibition is supported by the
Belonging Colorado initiative of The Denver Foundation



PINE RIVER COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

New groups offer services at the Community Resource Center

Staff report
PINE RIVER COMMUNITY
RESOURCE CENTER

The Pine River Community Resource Center (PRCRC) is pleased to welcome two new non-profit organizations providing services at the location, the Grief Center of Southwest Colorado and the Bayfield Farmers Market. Additionally, with the closure of Lizzy Q's coffee shop, the local AA and Al-Anon groups and others are now meeting at the CRC as well.

The Grief Center of Southwest Colorado provides support and resources for individuals and families experiencing grief and loss in locations throughout Southwest Colorado.

Serving people of all ages, including children, teens, and adults, the program offers counseling, support groups,

and educational programs to help clients navigate the grieving process. Director Judy Austin says of the opening of their Bayfield office, "The Grief Center of Southwest Colorado is honored to be part of a thriving nonprofit space. This allows us to provide grief counseling within an environment of shared values and where our bereaved families can receive comprehensive support".

The Bayfield Farmers Market (BFM) operates a local, farmer-managed Co-op providing pre-season and seasonal weekly Pop-up Markets for small local farmers, ranchers, cottage food, and artisan businesses. Suzanna Schroeder, founder of the BFM says "Having an office at the CRC provides the Bayfield Farmers Market a venue for collaboration with our partners at Pine River

Shares, to conduct meetings, plan upcoming events, and showcase vendor information and products. As a small cooperative operating with a highly constrained budget, we are grateful for our space at the Pine River Community Resource Center."

PRCRC's anchor tenants and management team, Pine River Shares, the Community Treehouse, and Pediatric Partners of the Southwest, welcome the new additions and the supportive services they bring within reach to residents of the Pine River Valley.

The PRCRC, located at 658 South East Street in Bayfield, provides affordable rental and event space for organizations providing essential services for residents of the Pine River Valley. For more information, or to inquire about available space for rent or use, call 970-444-0873 or 970-884-6040.

Drumming into the New Year



photos Zuriah Baker/SU Drum

Community members from the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe gathered at the Multi-Purpose Building to drum and sing on New Year's Eve. Drumming takes place until midnight; when a prayer closes the event, ushering in the New Year.



Southern Ute tribal member, Lorelei Cloud serves food to a community member at the Multi-Purpose Facility on Wednesday, Jan. 31. The meal served on New Year's Eve is a potluck style where attendees bring food.

Mountain Lion Safety

Mountain lions are common but elusive animals in our area. Lions generally avoid being seen by people, but it's not uncommon for them to live in and around urban and suburban areas. Lions can be attracted to neighborhoods that support deer and other wildlife that they consider food. Unfortunately, they can see our pets as possible prey as well. It's important to learn basic mountain lion safety in case you come face to face with one of these powerful creatures.



courtesy SU Wildlife Dept.

Reduce the chance of a mountain lion visiting your property

- Don't give a lion good hiding cover near your home: keep landscaping, especially around the kid's play area, open so that a lion can't easily hide and can easily be seen approaching.
- Plant deer resistant plants and shrubs to reduce the number of deer in and around your property.
- Keep pets from roaming.
- For hobby farms, keep livestock in a secure barn at night.
- Don't let kids play outdoors without supervision during low light hours.

Reduce the chance of running into a lion in the field

- Tribal members, employees and community members like to walk along the River Trail, the Bear Trail and around Scott's Pond. These are all areas where mountain lions have been seen in the past. Take basic precautions:
- Walk or run in pairs or groups.
 - Make noise or talk loudly.
 - Avoid walking in these areas early in the morning or late in the day.
 - Keep kids or pets within arm's reach.

Reading mountain lion body language

Mountain lions have nearly identical body language to your house cat. It's helpful to understand a cat's body language to give you an idea of their next move and yours.

Concerning behavior

- A mountain lion doesn't immediately flee when spotted.
- The lion has its ears up and is watching you closely.
- If after it is seen, the lion continually disappears and reappears in different places with eyes on you.

Alarming behavior

- Moves closer (less than 50yds) and into a hiding position.
- Ears are laid back and staring intently at you.
- Tail twitching.
- Hind feet pumping in anticipation of a pounce.

How should you respond?

- Stay calm.
- If you have a child, or a small pet, pick them up immediately to keep them from spooking and running.
- Make yourself look as big as possible; raise your arms, put your jacket up above your head.
- Back away slowly.
- Grab something you could use as a weapon if needed.
- Never take your eyes off the lion, you want to know where it is at all times.
- Be prepared to fight if needed!

When to call

- If you see a mountain lion in close proximity to people or near places people typically gather.
- If you suspect a lion has killed livestock or a pet.

Who to call

- The Southern Ute Wildlife Division 970-563-0130 during regular business hours.
- Tribal Dispatch/Tribal Rangers/SUPD 970-563-4401 during off hours/weekends.



courtesy SU Wildlife Dept.

Southern Ute Behavioral Health Division

About Us

The Behavioral Health Division of the Southern Ute Tribal Health Department provides a continuum of services to individuals with a wide variety of concerns, including:

- Family stress
- Life stress
- Mental health disorders
- Alcohol and Substance use disorders.

Services We Provide

- Assessment of mental health and substance use disorders
- Integrated visits with medical providers
- Individual, family and group therapy
- Medication-assisted treatment (MAT Services)
- Education and distribution of Narcan to prevent opioid-related deaths
- Peer Recovery Coaching
- Case Management
- Crisis interventions
- Psychiatric evaluations and medication management
- Educational presentations and outreach in the community
- Assistance with residential substance abuse or inpatient mental health treatment

988

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SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



WATER IS LIFE • FROM PAGE 2



courtesy George Gavrielides/SU Water Resources

Southern Ute Councilman, Andrew Gallegos; UCRC Utah Commissioner, Gene Shawcroft; P.E Wyoming State Water Engineer, Brandon Gebhart; UCRC Colorado Commissioner and Director of CWCB, Rebecca (Becky) Mitchell and UCRC New Mexico Commissioner, Estevan López at the Colorado River Water Users Association Conference in Las Vegas, Nev., Dec. 2025.

cal state and federal entities in each of the states, but there are also Tribes. How many you might ask? More than 30 Tribes, including Southern Ute, rely on the water that either gathers or passes through the connecting rivers, streams, lakes, and so forth.

Let’s focus on our Tribe. Why is it important to be involved in the conversations and have a seat at the table for the upcoming Post-2026 guidelines? For one, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe has federal water rights that go back to 1868. Also, we have water that is undeveloped that flows through all seven rivers that pass through our reservation downstream to New Mexico.

Think of it as a big snowball rolling downhill, the top of the hill being the Upper Basin as the snowball rolls into the Lower Basin that I mentioned earlier. Still, why is this important that the snowball that’s rolling downhill is our allotted water rights that we haven’t developed, and the Lower Basin is used to getting this extra snowball meaning our water that we haven’t used yet. So, it’s important we use all our water we have rights to because the second we do, the lower states may ask where the rest of the water is that’s been “left over.” Well, that “left over” that the Lower Basin has gotten accustomed to receiving, once it’s less, they may say things like “there’s a shortage of water!” No, actually that water is ours.

Examples of water being put to use may include projects such as treating the water to drink, using it for our natural resources such as our deer, elk and bison herds or our agriculture needs such as, rancher’s and farmer’s range units. One way or another a living being relies on this water, this is where the Post-2026 savings pool for Lake Mead and Lake Powell comes into play. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe is involved with a group called the Ten Tribes Partnership (TTP), where tribes from the Upper and Lower Basins meet monthly to discuss items that we all agree on to help the overall health of the Colorado River, while also respecting at all times the different wants and needs of each tribe and what’s in the best interest for each tribe. Some tribes aren’t as fortunate as we are and aren’t able to develop their water, maybe due to lack of funds, land status, technical expertise or maybe

their water rights aren’t as strong ... whatever the case may be.

With the new Post-2026 guidelines the TTP came up with this concept if a tribe isn’t using or unable to use its water, what options do they have? One thought is to lease their water. I mean that’s better than just letting it go downstream, and others will benefit from it, and this would leave the tribes out. This new savings pool concept would allow a tribe, if it’s the best interest for them to do so, lease their water for a portion of time, and get compensated for it.

Let’s be real, I can only talk for Southern Ute, but leasing our water while we get some of these projects off the ground buys us time, and we get paid for it. I want to be very clear, I’m not saying the Southern Ute Indian Tribe sells out, because this situation is very delicate and you simply can’t put a dollar amount on a life, and water plays a big part of the future and generations to come. This savings pool idea is better than letting the next-door neighbor access the water for free, we might as well get paid for it. All I’m saying is it’s another option if approved in the Post 2026 guidelines.

My number one priority before considering leasing or selling water is to use it for our own use and the community. Such as looking into another water treatment plant or energy projects, like this past spring, the Tribe used some of our Animas-La Plata (ALP) water that is designated for industrial use and municipal use or it goes back to this comprehensive ag project that Vice Chairman Pinnecoose and Treasurer Olguin have been working on to revitalize farming on the Southern Ute Reservation, making our land flourish.

You may ask why do we need federal and state agencies like the BOR or the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Well, let me explain, the BIA has a trust responsibility to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to maintain the Pine River Indian Irrigation Project (PRIIP). The PRIIP is one of the main irrigation lines that many of our tribal member assignments or allotments, as well as non-tribal members, rely on as a water source due to our checkerboard reservation. The integrity of the project is in poor condition considering the last major improvements were in the 1950s-60s. Our Water Resources Department, head-

ed by Pete Nylander and his crew, work tirelessly to keep the delivery of water limping along despite minimal federal assistance.

So why go to CRUWA? This is where the whole article ties together, I hope I haven’t lost you or have you too confused yet.

I learned long ago that if you want to make a change, get all the decision makers in the same room, so everyone hears it once from the source.

The Tribe regularly applies for grants from state and federal agencies to support essential projects. In 2023, we secured approval for several grants intended to fund major improvements to irrigation systems, including PRIIP and surrounding canals.

However, changes in federal policy have delayed the release of these funds. While the grants were approved, the implementation has been put on hold, leaving us in a position where promised resources have yet to be delivered.

This is why it’s important to have professional relationships to help lobby and advocate. Looking at natural resources, the fight will continue no matter who you have on your side, but it helps to have support at all levels.

On Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the conference, I attended and spoke during the UCRC Special Meeting about the importance of this grant funding and the unique land status of the Pine River. I strongly emphasized, “the Southern Ute Indian Tribe will always prioritize what is in the best interest of our membership. However, because of land status and the delivery system, these funds will also benefit surrounding non-tribal farmers. This reflects a principle we’ve long embraced from Chairman Leonard C. Burch: what is good for the community is good for the Tribe. Those words continue to guide us today.”

In conclusion, I hope this helps you, the tribal membership, understand why attending these water meetings is so important. These discussions are complex and technical, but having a strong presence ensures that our voices are heard, and our priorities remain front and center. Representation matters – and every time we show up, we make a difference for our Tribe and future generations. Thank you for your support, and if you have any questions, please reach out. I’m always happy to share more and keep the conversation going.

IGNACIO COMMUNITY LIBRARY

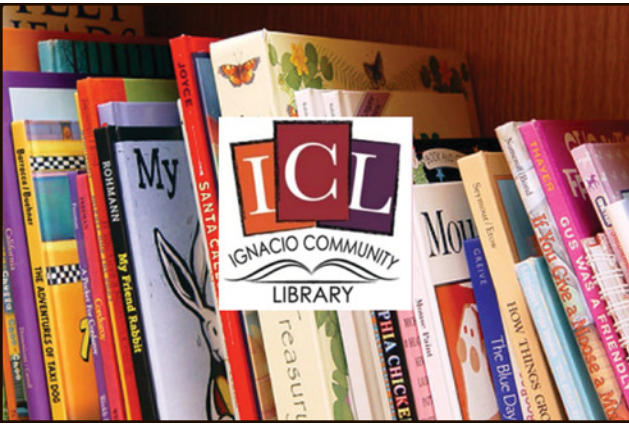
Stories for the New Year

By Ron Schermacher
IGNACIO COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Here at the library, we deal in stories. We check out books full of stories, we hold a weekly storytime, and there are numerous book clubs that discuss stories in detail. Stories surround and direct us, and recent scientific breakthroughs in neuroscience point to the importance of these stories in the fundamental evolution of the brain.

In his book “Sapiens,” Yuval Noah Harari puts forth the hypothesis that humans are the most successful animals on the planet not because of their individual talents but because we humans can cooperate flexibly in large numbers. This flexibility is due in part to our ability to create fictional stories that are adopted by large groups of people. The best example of one of these fictional stories is money. I can hand a complete stranger a piece of paper and they will give me real objective items. This is only possible because we have all adopted the story that the paper has value.

Stories are also at the heart of Angus Fletcher’s new book titled, “Primal Intelligence.” Fletcher’s theory is that intuition, common sense, and the rest of Pri-



mal Intelligence are driven by narrative cognition. “The human brain is real-life smart because it thinks in stories.” He suggests that simple organisms evolved to think soon after developing the sense of sight. Being able to see pushed multicellular organisms to develop plans to find food or keep from becoming something else’s food. After all, what is a plan but a story about a possible future. As animals advanced, they developed the ability to create multiple plans and then choose the one they believed might lead to a successful outcome. His theory does not require a brain to be conscious to create stories and allows that all animals have a shared ability to think.

The human brain has an ability to meet an unknown situation where there is no available data from which

to analyze and still create multiple plans for navigating this situation and then choose what it believes will be the most likely path to the best possible outcome. Fetcher argues that this is just one of the reasons computers will never work the same as a human brain. “Primal Intelligence” is just one of the many new and thought provoking books that have been added to the library’s collection.

As we start a new year, I challenge you to consider why, if we humans are writing the stories which control and shape our lives, we don’t write better ones? Pairing with this thought, the Ignacio Community Library staff have created a bookmark with the following: 2026, Happy New Year, “Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one.”

Multi-Purpose Facility

Traditional Sewing and Beading

Session One:
Tuesday - Thursday January 20 - 22, 2026

Session Two:
Tuesday - Thursday January 27 - 29, 2026

10:00 AM - 3:30 PM
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Call Elise to sign up & get supply list 970-563-2641

The class will focus on Moccasin making.
High tops or low moccasins.
Supply List:
buckskin hide for tops and leather for sole.

**256 Ute Rd. Ignacio CO 81137- 970-563-2640, multipurpose@southernute-nsn.gov**

PINE RIVER INDIAN IRRIGATION PROJECT – Water Users Meeting



Hosted by the BIA, Southern Ute Agency

Each year the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Irrigation is required to hold two meetings: one at the beginning of the irrigation season and another at the end. These meetings are to discuss with the water users the program’s budget, costs, savings, and projects.

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 6:00p.m. – 8:00pm

Location: Sky Ute Casino, Ignacio, Colorado

For more information please contact: Vickie Begay, PRIIP Manager at (970) 236-4161 or contact the Southern Ute Agency at (970) 200-8613, select option 1 for general inquires.



PINE RIVER SHARES

Future of Pine River Community Resource Center

Staff Report
PINE RIVER SHARES

Dear Friends,

As 2025 comes to an end, we are writing to let you know about some significant developments impacting Pine River Shares (PRS).

We were recently advised that the Bayfield School District intends to sell the property we currently lease from them and list it with a local real estate broker. While we have known for the past year that the school board was considering the sale, notice of the listing is sobering.

PRS has been blessed for nearly ten years to call Bayfield's "old primary school" our home. However, long before we became tenants, we were communicating to the school district superintendents our interest in potentially buying the property if it ever became available for sale. We said this not because we're "rolling in the dough," but because we have big dreams and there was no other place available for us to be located and remain in Bayfield. Sadly, this is still true today.

Earlier this year when we became aware of the potential sale of the property, we examined our options, which include finding another home in Bayfield, moving out of Bayfield, buying or building another site, shuttering the organization, or trying to buy the property and remaining where we are. While

housed in Bayfield, PRS serves the rural communities of the entire Pine River Valley. We initially searched the Bayfield area and then Ignacio for a potential new home to house our programs. We found no reasonable options.

The sale of the building and property doesn't just impact Pine River Shares. Pediatric Partners of the Southwest and the Community Treehouse are local service providers, co-housed with us on the property, facing similar challenges if the property sells. Each of us having to consider program closures in the worst-case scenario.

In an effort to forestall an immediate sale of the property, last spring the current tenants proposed to the Bayfield School Board that we collectively take over the management of the property, assuming all operating costs and leasing responsibilities, and move forward with existing plans to create the Pine River Community Resource Center (CRC). A three-year triple net lease, that includes a first right of refusal, was signed by all parties in July.

Simultaneously, two of the partners, PRS and the Community Treehouse, advised the school district that we were joining forces in an effort to buy the property and that both organizations were making exploratory moves in that direction. Those moves include developing plans for a capital campaign and fundraising effort, identifying grant funding

to support the purchase, obtaining a commercial property inspection, and retaining the services of an attorney to guide negotiations.

Our vision of creating a community resource center to provide critical services in our rural area was dramatically affirmed last fall when we received a \$200,000 donation toward the purchase of the property to house the CRC!! This funding was given to us on the strength of the vision and confidence in the leadership to make it happen.

So here we are today, fueled by our collective vision and fully dedicated to the people and communities of the Pine. As of the first of December, the CRC is home to the Bayfield office of the Grief Center of the Southwest, the Bayfield Farmers Market, and AA and Al-Anon.

New partners are on the way.

With the light of 2026 on the horizon, we are optimistic about the opportunity to create a forever home for PRS and other providers of services that our communities need to ensure that all residents thrive. And we are committed to making it happen. We will need your help if the school district accepts our offer. Stay tuned for updates.

The future is unwritten. Together, we write it and make it known.

Best wishes for a great and transformative new year from your friends at Pine River Shares.

Gilliam retires from Finance



Divine Windy Boy/SU Drum

Mollie Gilliam took time to thank her colleagues, while wrapped in a shawl gifted to her by Linda K. Baker, Wednesday, Dec. 24 during her retirement celebration.




Longtime employee Mollie Gilliam opens gifts during her retirement celebration on Wednesday, Dec. 24 in the Hall of Warriors. Gilliam worked for 20 years with the Southern Ute Finance Department and now will turn her focus on relaxation, crafting, and lots of family time.



Finance Department employees gather beside Mollie Gilliam during her Retirement Celebration. Guests enjoyed light refreshments and took time to commend Gilliam for her years of service to the Tribe.




Mollie Gilliam cuts the first slice of cake to be served during her retirement celebration on Wednesday, Dec. 24 in the Hall of Warriors.



Tribal Office Closure

Monday, January 19, 2026
In observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day



Southern Ute Elder Services

January Activities List

January 13, 2026
Movie Day (Durango)
Van will depart @ TBD

January 19, 2026
Office Closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 20, 2026
Cowboy Tuesday
Cowboy poetry, music and storytelling in an old west saloon. (Lunch provided)
Van will depart Elder Services @ 11:00 a.m.

Call Elder Services @ 970-563-2309 to have your name added to the activities list or if you have any questions. Activities are subject to change due to inclement weather.



Multi-Purpose Facility

January Indoor Yard Sale

Saturday January 24, 2026
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

No Admission Fee No Set-up Fee
Doors open 8:00 AM

Make and Take Crafting with Sandy
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



256 Ute Road, Ignacio CO
Call the MPF to reserve your table 563-2640
e-mail multipurpose@southernute-nsn.gov



Recovery from addiction starts with all of us.

Recovery from addiction is within reach.
Find support and resources at LTLSouthernUte.org
(970) 563-5700



LIFT THE LABEL 





New Year Prayer & Sobriety Walk continues into '26



Community members joined the traditional New Years Day Prayer and Sobriety Walk hosted by the family of Robert Buckskin “Saa-Swanis Hiswaqs” and Native Love.



Family members of the late Robert “Saa-Swanis Hiswaqs” Buckskin lead the walkers from the Veterans Memorial Park north on HWY 172 on a five-mile prayer and sobriety walk.

Photos by Robert L. Ortiz
The Southern Ute Drum



Native Love President, Daisy Bluestar shares a smile during the prayer and sobriety walk. Bluestar helps organize the walk along with the Buckskin family.



Sinuuv Larry holds the staff of his late grandfather, Robert Buckskin “Saa-Swanis Hiswaqs.” The Buckskin family has been holding the walk in his grandfather’s name.



Shielded by umbrellas, Miss Southern Ute, Zuriah Baker and cousin Lillian Valdez, trek along CR 516 towards Dry Creek, with other walkers.

The New Year Prayer and Sobriety Walk set out to usher in 2026 under rainy conditions, which may have deterred others from joining the walk that has now become an annual tradition. The walk began in the early 2000’s, first led by and organized by the late Robert Buckskin, “Saa-Swanis Hiswaqs,” bringing in the new year – celebrating sobriety through prayer.

WARM UP TO WINTER WINNINGS!



PLAY FOR YOUR PERFECT GETAWAY.

SATURDAYS | ALL DAY
GRAND PRIZE DRAWING: SATURDAY, JANUARY 31 | 10PM

Use your Ace’s Club card when you play to automatically earn entries. Starting January 3, Ace’s Club members will receive one entry ticket for every 100 points earned toward the **Grand Prize Drawing** — with no limit on entries! One winner will be drawn to receive a **Winter Getaway Package** valued up to \$10,000 or \$5,000 cash!



CURE YOUR POST-HOLIDAY BLUES.

MONDAYS | 3PM – 8PM

We’re waxing up the prize wheel and bringing it out for a spin. For every 25 points earned on your Ace’s Club card, you snag one entry ticket. We’ll draw one winner every hour and if your name is pulled, you’ll get to spin the prize wheel! You could win cold hard cash, Sky Ute Loot, snuggly swag, or entries into our massive **Winter Escape Giveaway!**



STOP SHIVERING & START WINNING!

WEDNESDAYS
4PM – 9PM

Come in out of the cold and grab a hot seat! Every Wednesday in January, warm up with some hot cash just by playing your favorite slots. Every hour, Ace’s Club staff will draw one lucky winner to come up and pick a polar bear, each hiding a cash prize of up to \$800!



GET BURIED IN JACKPOTS!

FRIDAYS | ALL DAY

Forget the chill. This January, we’re bringing a blizzard of cash. Every Friday, the snow falls and prizes pile up. Any slot machine in the house can trigger a snowslide of money. Lucky players can instantly pocket up to \$500! It doesn’t matter what you play, because at any moment, you could be the one caught in the drift!





BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL • FROM PAGE 1



Shannon Mullane/The Colorado Sun

Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who represented Colorado in both houses of Congress, poses for a portrait with his wife, Linda Campbell, on July 12, 2025, in their home on the Southern Ute Reservation in Southwest Colorado. Campbell worked for years to advance the Animas-La Plata Project and a key tribal water settlement during his time in Washington, D.C.

orary chair of the Sand Creek Massacre Foundation and is credited with helping get the Sand Creek Massacre site added as a unit of the National Park system. Campbell said his Northern Cheyenne ancestors were among more than 150 Native Americans, mostly women, children and elderly men, killed by U.S. soldiers while camped under a flag of truce on Nov. 29, 1864, known as the Sand Creek Massacre.

Campbell was born in Auburn, California, on April 13, 1933. His mother was a Portuguese immigrant, and his father was a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe.

Campbell quit high school to join the Air Force, where he got his GED and served from 1951 to 1953, stationed in Korea. He attained the rank of airman second class.

He attended San Jose State College in California, where he received a degree in physical education in 1957.

Campbell met his wife, Linda, in 1966 when they worked for the same California school district, where Campbell taught physical education. The school asked Campbell to teach a judo class so PE teachers would know what it was, and Linda enrolled.

They married after just a few months of dating and were married for 59 years. They had two children, Colin Campbell and Shanan Campbell, and four grandchildren.

On Tuesday, tribal elders came to Campbell's home, Shanan said in a statement, and Eddie Box Jr., the KSUT radio host and Southern Ute tribal elder, sang ancient, sacred songs. Shanan said Box had a vision of Campbell "on his horse, wearing his war bonnet and buckskins, riding into the other world, the warrior heading home."

Moments later, Campbell took his last breath, Shanan said.

"It has been said that we pick our parents," Shanan said in a statement. "And if that is true, I sure picked a good one. ... He taught me that perseverance beats luck, that reinvention is courage, and that you never give up. He was fierce and tender, an artist and a champion."

Sold it all for a chance at the Olympics

When Campbell found out in 1960 that judo was going to be included in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, he jumped at the chance to compete.

"I sold every damn thing I owned and I moved to Tokyo," Campbell said during the recent Colorado Sun interview.

He enrolled at Meiji University in Tokyo as a research student. In 1963, he won a gold medal in judo at the Pan-American Games in São Paulo, Brazil. At the 1964 Olympics, Campbell suffered an injury and did not place. Campbell went on to coach the U.S. National Judo Team.

As a child, Campbell started to make jewelry when he was just 9 years old by flattening coins on Southern Pacific Railway tracks between Reno and Sacramento and fishing trinkets out of the local dump to hang on necklaces. He honed the skills as an adult, becoming an award winning jewelry designer.

In a 2019 interview with Rocky Mountain PBS, Shanan described her dad's work as "his passion, his love and his outlet."

"I can show you his jewelry and explain to you what phase of his life he was in," she said. "It is almost like a journal. Nothing in his life is done haphazardly. Everything is done with clear intent."

Campbell and Linda bought a ranch on the Southern Ute reservation in 1978 where they raised horses and Campbell launched his political career.

In Congress, Campbell stood out for his bipartisanship and his looks. He often sported cowboy boots, a bolo tie and a ponytail.

Former U.S. Sen. Hank Brown, a Republican who served Colorado alongside Campbell, said Campbell "did a great job in capturing the spirit of Colorado and representing it."

"He was enormously straightforward and honest," Brown said.

Brown remembers in the early 1990s when he was Colorado's Republican senator and Campbell was the state's Democratic senator, Brown invited Campbell to attend a Fourth of July celebration in Greeley and stay at his home. Brown agreed to let Campbell bring his horse and keep it in the backyard.

When Brown woke up the next morning, he looked out the window and saw Ben and Linda already outside shoveling manure.

"We were just great friends," he said. "He had the kind of integrity that people would hope members of the Senate would have."

Brown called Campbell's change in political party an "act of conscience" as opposed to a political move.

During Campbell's time in the Senate, he became more estranged from the Democratic Party in part because he thought Republicans were doing more for

Native Americans. "I kept voting with those darn Republicans, so I changed parties," he told Rocky Mountain PBS in 2019.

Campbell saw one of his longest-championed endeavors come to fruition last spring, when the Southern Ute tribe was finally able to draw water from the controversial federal Animas-La Plata project.

First authorized in 1968, it took until 2011 to fill Lake Nighthorse, the main feature of a heavily scaled-down federal water project located just south of Durango named for Campbell. It then took 14 more years for a tribe to be able to use a small slice of its water, overcoming tough battles with environmentalists who opposed the project.

Campbell, during an interview with The Sun in July, implored water managers to focus on more ways to reuse water.

"We've got to find better ways of using what we have," he said. "Not producing more water that doesn't exist."

During his tenure in Washington, Campbell said he focused most on water, public lands, education, law enforcement and Native American issues.

The work he valued most included getting funding for bulletproof vests for police officers, he told the Rocky Mountain PBS crew. Pundits groused that the work was not "major."

"Well tell that to the mother of some cop whose life was saved by a bulletproof vest," he said. "That was a damn important bill."

After leaving Washington, he worked as a lobbyist, founding his own firm and lobbying on behalf of the Indian Gaming Association.

But above all other work, he said, he was proudest of getting the National Museum of the American Indian built on the National Mall.

"If I ever wanted to be remembered for one single thing above all others," he said, "it would be that museum — because I am a firm believer that you can't have a good future unless you learn from the past."

The Campbell family will hold a private funeral at their ranch, Shanan said in a statement. Information about a public service will be shared in the coming days. Rather than send flowers or gifts, the family is encouraging people to donate to the Northern Cheyenne Boys and Girls Club in Lame Deer, Montana.

Colorado Sun staff writer Shannon Mullane contributed to this story.



SU Drum archive

Indian dancers Tim Jefferson, Ben "Nighthorse" Campbell, and Rusty Box at the community center in June of 1978. The Southern Ute youth group presented an Indian Dance Program for visitors from Switzerland. This was part of a summer tour program where Europeans got a taste of Indian dances and rodeo performances from the American West.

SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

Statement on the passing of Senator Nighthorse Campbell

Staff report

SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe mourns the passing of Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a leader, trailblazer, and lifelong advocate for Native American communities.

Senator Campbell broke barriers as one of the first Native Americans to serve in the United States Congress, paving the way for future generations of Native leadership and inclusion at the national level. Throughout his distinguished career, he remained deeply committed to advancing tribal sovereignty and protecting tribal resources.

He was a steadfast champion for Ute water rights and played a critical role in supporting the Animas-La Plata Project, recognizing the importance of water as the foundation of our culture, ceremonies, and growth for future generations. His advocacy helped ensure long-overdue recognition of Ute water rights and strengthened the Tribe's ability to plan for the future.

In addition to his national service, Senator Campbell had a meaningful and personal connection to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe as a former employee. He remained actively engaged with the community throughout his life, frequently attending cultural events such as Bear Dance and powwows, where he celebrated and honored the living traditions of our people.

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell's legacy will live on through his leadership, steadfast dedication to Native people, and unwavering commitment to justice and respect for tribal nations. To honor his distinguished service and contributions, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum archive

Former Colorado State Senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell views the interpretive signs overlooking Lake Nighthorse, his namesake. Organizers of the Animas-La Plata Project dedicated a "tribute garden" above Lake Nighthorse, Friday, Oct. 21, 2011, to honor the many people involved in the effort, which spanned decades. The dedication ceremony included dignitaries from the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes, as both played major roles in the development of the project since its inception.



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum archive

Colorado Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia (right) and Ben Nighthorse Campbell (left) stand for a photo with Lynn Brittner, executive director of the Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum, during a visit on Thursday, Sept. 1, 2011.

will lower the tribal flag for family, friends, and all whose four days. We extend our lives were touched by his deepest condolences to his remarkable life and service.



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum archive

Kevin Gover, Director of the National Museum of the American Indian paid a visit to Ignacio, Thursday, Oct. 24, 2018. Gover set up meetings with the Southern Ute Veterans Association and Chairman Christine Sage to discuss the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) National Native American Veterans Memorial, and the museum's fundraising efforts. Former Colorado Senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell and members of the Southern Ute Veterans Assoc. gave their input on the importance of the National Native American Veterans Memorial and what that recognition means to those who served in the armed forces.



The Southern Ute Drum presents

TRIBE CONTINUES CLEANUP EFFORT



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum

During Colorado Senator Michael Bennet's visit to the spill site, Environmental Programs Director, Mark Hutson (right) details how the gasoline plume is affecting groundwater above the Animas River, Friday, Oct. 17. Hutson works closely with the Growth Fund Department of Energy (DOE) and outside consultants to review reports, respond to technical requests, and track ongoing cleanup Activities. While the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is the lead regulatory authority for the spill, EPD remains at the center of coordination and continues to push for transparent and timely remediation actions. Updated estimates underscore the seriousness of the incident, which is now estimated to be the largest refined gasoline pipeline spill in Colorado since CDPHE began tracking such releases in 2016.

WHY WE SERVE: FORT GARLAND MUSEUM



Krista Richards/SU Drum archive

The Fort Garland Museum & Cultural Center welcomed the color guard from Southern Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, Jicarilla Apache and Navajo Nations to bring in the flags during the opening ceremony for the new exhibit. The traveling exhibit "Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces" highlights 250 years of Native American military participation throughout history. From the American Revolution, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, Vietnam, Desert Storm through present day, the exhibit recognizes service men and women and individual accounts of their involvement in the armed forces.



Krista Richards/SU Drum archive

Raymond Baker (Navy Retired) stands next to his deep-sea diving helmet and boots that he wore during his service. Baker loaned these items to the Fort Garland Museum & Cultural Center exhibit.

NPR/COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO V. TRUMP



Tyrone Turner/NPR

From left to right, Tami Graham (KSUT), Stewart Vanderwilt, Steve Zansberg, Breeze Richardson, and Mike May (KSUT) walk into the E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Court House in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, Dec. 4. Graham, Vanderwilt, and Richardson lead three Colorado public radio stations suing the Trump administration alongside NPR over an executive order issued in May.

EPD DEDICATES RIVER TRAIL



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum

Southern Ute Executive Officer, Lindsay Box helps plant trees and shrubs as part of the Grand Re-Opening of the River Trail, which encouraged participation from tribal departments and the community.

Southern Ute tribal member, Nathan Strong Elk prepares a Native shrub for planting along the River Trail; Strong Elk also provided a traditional blessing ahead of the morning program.



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum

GROWTH FUND CELEBRATES 25 YEARS!



Divine Windy Boy/SU Drum archive

This year, the Southern Ute Growth Fund proudly marks its 25th anniversary – a milestone built on vision, resilience, and unwavering dedication to the Tribe's long-term prosperity. From its modest beginnings managing natural resources to becoming a cornerstone of economic strength, the Growth Fund has demonstrated disciplined planning and a commitment to stewardship that benefits generations.

BUCKSKIN CHARLIE HOUSING PROJECT



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum

GF Properties Group is moving quickly to complete the Buckskin Charlie housing project. The project consists of two apartment buildings with 60 units (30 units in each building). There will be a mix of one, two, and three-bedroom apartments with ADA units on the ground floor. The current design includes an amenity building that will serve the residents of the apartments and is proposed to potentially have a leasing office, fitness area, gathering space, and an adjacent outdoor plaza with grills and a fire pit. Phase 2 of the Buckskin Charlie housing project began in the spring of 2025 and will take roughly a year to complete with FCI Constructors, Inc.

2025: A Year in Review

SUCCM: UTE CULTURAL PRACTICES



Divine Windy Boy/SU Drum archive

The Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum (SUCCM) is dedicated to ensuring the upmost care and cultural sensitivity when handling objects and artifacts, with a team comprised of mostly Southern Ute tribal members and other members of tribal nations handling cultural items with care is second nature. Rhonda Price uses specialized tools to carefully clean a cradleboard that was on display during the “Ute Cradleboards & Baskets: Carriers of Life” exhibit, following the cleaning she assists in placing the cradleboard in a custom-made box, designed to help with the item’s longevity.

TRIBE TO USE ALP FOR FIRST TIME



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum archive

In 1986, the Tribe settled its water rights with the State of Colorado, which Congress then affirmed in the 1988 Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act and the 2000 Settlement Act Amendments. The Settlement Act and the 2000 Amendments authorized the construction of the Animas-La Plata (ALP) Project, which included the construction of Ridges Basin Dam, creating Lake Nighthorse. Growth Fund Department of Energy – Energy Manager, Andy Wetherell and Land Manager, Adrian Abeyta make a site visit to the Animas River, Monday, May 19, to view where water will be pulled for use on the Reservation, in a historic first use of the Tribe’s Animas-La Plata Project water rights. The Tribe plans to continue developing its water resources for the benefit of the Tribe and its members in the future.

CELEBRATING INK AT CASINO



Zuriah Baker/SU Drum archive

The Sky Ute Casino Resort hosted a Tattoo Convention, a first for the casino, hosting a number of tattoo artists from across the Four Corners and from the country Alyssa Atencio gets stenciled and prepared for a new tattoo, done by artist Mysti Morse. Morse is an artist at Headhunter Tattoo in Durango, Colo.

NATIVE STUDENTS GET CLOSE UP IN D.C.



Divine Windy Boy/SU Drum archive

Leandra Litz, Samantha Elk, Zuriah Baker, and Sonny Flores work together to design an introductory poster for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and its tribal government to share with other visiting students and faculty on the Close-Up Native Youth Summit trip in Washington, D.C.

UTE LANGUAGE SIGNAGE AT LCB



Summer Begay/SU Drum archive

A step toward cultural revitalization. Exciting changes came to Tribal Campus last year as Ute language signs were installed, bringing a renewed sense of culture, tradition, and belonging to the campus. This meaningful project was initiated by Dr. Stacey Oberly during her time on Tribal Council, reflecting her deep commitment to language preservation and cultural revitalization. “It’s a powerful act of linguistic sovereignty to post our beautiful Ute language in all our Tribal buildings. It honors all our past and current Ute speakers who so graciously shared their Ute knowledge with us to ensure it continues into perpetuity. Special thanks go to Council Member Marjorie Barry for following through on this important initiative,” said Dr. Stacey Oberly, Ute Language Program Manager.

The new signs serve as daily reminders of the Ute language, encouraging its visibility and use in every-day life.



Summer Begay/SU Drum archive

SPRING CREEK PASTURE RESTORATION



Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU Drum

The Wildlife Division has also been working with EPD on plans for a stream restoration project on the southern portion of Salabar Draw for the coming year. According to Aran Johnson, Southern Ute Wildlife Resource Division Head, the project will essentially mimic the work that beavers do with small brush dams along the stream that will back up water to raise the wet zone of the stream and promote riparian plants like willow as well as other grasses and forbs to grow and secure the stream banks. Other structures will divert the energy of the stream flows away from eroding banks. Water Quality Scientist, Dylan Ruckel (pictured above) has spearheaded numerous stream restoration projects for the Tribe’s Environmental Programs Department, including those along Spring Creek. Ruckle stands on the southern portion of Salabar Draw, where previous restoration efforts have already taken hold, exemplifying a healthy watershed and habitat for wildlife, including endangered species that rely on the stream.

HEART HONORED AT UMU SWEARING IN



Divine Windy Boy/SU Drum archive

At the toe of the Sleeping Ute Mountain lies Towaoc, Colo., home to the Ute Mountain Ute people, where Manuel Heart served on Tribal Council for 27 years both as a council member and as Chairman. On Friday, Nov. 7 at the Ute Mountain Casino, new members of council were sworn in and began their terms of service, during the ceremony former Chairman Heart handed over the keys to new elect Chairman Selwyn Whiteskunk marking the start of a new era for both leaders. During the ceremony, visiting tribal nations, sister tribes, government officials, and community guests all paid their respects to Heart with prepared gifts, songs, and speeches. November 7 will now remain, “Chairman Manuel Heart Day” as proclaimed by Governor of Colorado Jared Polis, as for Manuel Heart he will now turn his focus to rest and spend more time with his beloved family.



Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio quarterback Zane Pontine (1) airs out a pass during the Bobcats' non-conference game at Cedaredge. Pontine earned First Team All-South Central Conference for his work offensively and defensively, and garnered Honorable Mention All-1A.

BOBCATS FOOTBALL

Four fall in with football finest

Seniors lead IHS' All-Conference picks

By Joel Priest
SPECIAL TO THE DRUM

Gabe Archuleta's influence was felt on the field.

And fortunately for South Central foes, long before conference clashes commenced.

Due to an unfortunate injury suffered during Ignacio's third game of the 2025 season, in full view of the IHS Field faithful after he hauled in a long bomb deep in opposing Olathe's territory, the senior wide receiver's impact ended up being greatest as a co-captain, a sidelined vocal supporter and mentor to those hoping to fill his cleats next fall.

And when the All-SCC roster was released at season's end, Archuleta was still voted First Team for not only what was but what might have been as the 'Cats finished 2-3 in conference and 2-7 overall. Quarterback Zane Pontine's favorite deep threat, Archuleta's



Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Seen getting a needed breather during road action this fall at non-conference Cedaredge, Ignacio's Lincoln deKay (44) certainly took his lumps during the 2025 football season but also distributed plenty as an offensive and defensive standout. He earned First Team All-South Central Conference for his work, as well as Honorable Mention All-1A.

absence hurt in close contests; including a 20-16 loss to non-conference OHS, Ignacio won only one of four games decided by two or fewer touchdowns.

Often found scrambling out of the pocket in hopes of evading pursuers, senior quarterback Pontine took more

than his share of sacks but also willingly dished out punishment to would-be tacklers trying to bring him down on designed carries. Also vital on the defensive side of the ball, he was also voted First Team All-South Central.

Four page 20

BOBCATS BOYS WRESTLING

Wrestlers to resume work in Pagosa

IHS boys beginning '26 at Pirates' RMI

By Joel Priest
SPECIAL TO THE DRUM

Seeing very literally about all the opposition available in western Colorado, Ignacio's boys went into the now-concluded holiday break needing, well, a break after getting a good idea of where they stand in the state's wrestling hierarchy.

Or, at the very least, in the 2A San Juan Basin League.

Competing December 12-13 at the 2025 Western Slope Showdown in Montrose, Colo., Alamosa racked up a winning 213 points, and the event-hosting Red Hawks followed with 161.5. Colorado Springs Sand Creek came in third – out of 41 teams – with 158.5, Cedaredge was a close fourth with 156, and Aztec, N.M., rounded out the top five with 129. Tops amongst SJBL crews contending, IHS' varsity scored 77.5 points and placed 14th between Grand Junction (80.5) and Gypsum Eagle Valley (72).

Senior Lincoln deKay went 4-0 at 165 pounds and captured first place by defeating Montrose's Trevan Anstine 7-3. Anstine was the top-seeded deKay's only opponent to register even a single point; following a first-round bye, deKay pinned Mancos' Levi Gardner in just 60 seconds, beat Bennett's Kenneth Jordan by 8-0 major decision and then, after building up a 13-0 lead in his semifinal bout, pinned

Hayden's Ryder Weber 1:21 into the second period.

Senior Aven Bourriague began well at 120 with a comprehensive 16-1 technical-fall victory over Montezuma-Cortez's Teagun Samora, and then put away Bennett's Daniel Jordan 16-0. Bourriague then earned a tight 5-3 win over Monte Vista's Matthew Rodriguez, but then suffered a humbling 17-0 tech loss to Cedaredge's Cash Martinez (the weight's top seed).

Bourriague bounced back with a vengeance, defeating Rangely's Reid Zadra by 17-4 major decision, and locked up third place by beating Broomfield Holy Family's Kaden McCracken 9-6.

Senior Zane Pontine went 4-2 and ended up fourth at 157 pounds after losing 6-4 to Aztec's Cory Douglas. Pontine had won his first three bouts by, respectively, pin, tech and major before he lost to Montrose's top-seeded Trey Clarkson (Pontine was the No. 4; Bourriague had been his bracket's No. 5) by pin 1:02 into the third period of their semifinal clash.

At 144 pounds, senior Dillon Brann pinned Buena Vista's Dexter Whitmore, but then faced a long road back towards the podium after dropping a 14-13 decision to, coincidentally, Bayfield's Reese Appenzeller. Unfortunately, said road was closed for construction; Brann was eliminated by a 17-0 tech courtesy of Oak Creek Soro-

co's Cavit Gregory.

And at 132, senior Josh Kerrigan received a first-round bye, then beat Delta's Braylon Davis 6-3. A 15-3 major-decision loss to Gunnison's Julian Patrick complicated Kerrigan's tourney, but Kerrigan recovered to beat Soroco's Arthur Redmond 6-3 before, while still needing one more win to earn top six status, losing 1-0 to Nucla's Jackson McCabe.

Closing out '25 at the next weekend's Warrior Classic in Grand Junction, the Bobcats managed 43.5 points and finished 31st (between Montezuma-Cortez, 44, and Hayden, 41) out of a whopping 52 teams. Vernal, Utah-based Uintah – unquestionably eyeing a sixth straight UHSAA Class 4A crown – racked up 256.5 and took first over closest challengers Falcon (181) and Fort Collins Rocky Mountain (179.5), with Aztec (147) and Fort Lupton (131) filling out the top five.

Bourriague led the Bobcats with his fifth-place outcome at 120; he went 5-2 for the tournament, booking two techs and one pin, and defeated Central's Micah Bautista 7-5 to finish on a high note. After pinning his first two foes and then beating Falcon's Jackson McDaniel in the quarterfinals, deKay then lost 5-4 to Aztec junior Cory Douglas – who, as a

Wrestlers page 20

BOBCATS GIRLS WRESTLING

Ignacio girls carrying gains into '26

Lady 'Cats top-ten at two prestigious events

By Joel Priest
SPECIAL TO THE DRUM

Two Western Slope stops in as many weeks wrapped up the Ignacio girls' 2025.

And will more than bode well for the '26 half of their schedule – set to resume the weekend of Jan. 9-10.

Competing Dec. 12-13 in Montrose at the aptly-named Western Slope Challenge, the Lady Bobcats tallied 93 points and placed a solid seventh. Olathe won the meet with 152.5 points, and Farmington, N.M., settled for second with 133.5. Alamosa (112) came in third, with Meeker (105.5) and Aztec (101.5), N.M., filling out the 29-team standings' top five.

For IHS, senior Larissa Espinosa continued grinding towards another CHSAA State Championships appearance and captured first place at 235 pounds by first pinning Blanding, Utah, San Juan's Tyanna George in an elapsed 2:12 (after building up an 8-1 lead on the scoreboard), and then Strasburg senior Olivia LeFors in 1:08 (after going up 3-0). Coincidentally, Espinosa and LeFors had both qualified for last season's Championships at 190 (LeFors went 0-2; Espinosa went 4-2 and placed fifth).

Losing only to Durango's Aleia Fenberg (by 9-1 major decision) in the championship bout at 125 pounds, Laine Bradley went 3-1 for the tournament and pinned two foes (Meeker's Jenna Pelloni and Montezuma-Cortez's Madisyn Schuster) in under two minutes each.

140-pounder Krysten Neil placed also placed second after being pinned with 36 ticks left in the first period by Strasburg's Vivienne Gitke. But in finishing 3-1 herself, Neil notched three

pins – one coming in the semifinals at the expense of Steamboat Springs' Charley Konold, who found herself trailing 6-0 after one period and 9-1 before Neil made the stick 58 seconds into the second.

Madison Egger went 2-2 at 100 and finished fourth after losing 16-11 to OHS' Khloe Gonzales, an unfortunate result after Egger had pulled out a come-from-behind victory over Colorado Springs Sand Creek's Elice Torres-Cortez – who was leading 12-10 before Egger pinned her not quite 30 ticks into the third period – to remain vying for a top-three medal.

Pinned by Grand Junction Central's Mary Warren early in the second period after losing a 9-4 advantage gained during the first, 120-pounder Amira Montoya then won her first two consolation-round bouts before Broomfield Holy Family's Dalynn O'Blia eliminated her via second-period pin.

Kodi Mae Rima went 2-2 at 130, winning her opening bout against Hotchkiss North Fork's Cheyenne DeHerrera by pin and her first consolation-round against Central's Katherine Adams by forfeit, but did not place. Neither did Ireland Cates (0-2 at 140) nor Eliska Prokopova (2-2, two pins at 145).

At the next weekend's Warrior Classic in Grand Junction, Ignacio racked up 109 points and placed an outstanding fifth overall out of 32 scoring teams. Meet-hosting Grand Junction Central amassed a winning 266.5 and easily outclassed Garland, Utah, Bear River (193.5) – the Beehive State's reigning Class 4A team champ – and Cañon City (136). Aforementioned Farmington (122.5) came in fourth and Pagosa Springs (107) sixth.

Espinosa once again starred, going 2-1 and placing second after losing by second-period pin to Bloomfield, New Mexico's Caylee Miller. Which couldn't have been viewed as a letdown; now a sophomore, Miller went 39-1 overall last winter as a freshman and won the NMAA State Championships' title at 235 by pinning her four opponents.

Bradley returned with another runner-up result, going 3-1 but again losing to Fenberg (via pin, in 5:52 elapsed) in the weight's finale. Egger, however, improved upon her work in Montrose and ended up second at 100 in Grand Junction. After receiving a first-round bye, she pinned her first three opponents – each in less than 90 seconds – but then lost to Fort Lupton's Yaida Rodriguez by 19-3 technical fall.

Prokopova pinned her first two foes at 145, but then lost via pin in the semifinals to Central's Clara Denton-Baleztena. With third place still at stake, Florence's Alyce Johnson then pinned Prokopova 31 ticks into the second period. Neil went a strong 4-1 at 140, and copped fifth place by winning her last three consolation-phase bouts after initially losing via pin to Durango's Lillian Fenberg in the quarterfinals.

Montoya (0-2 at 120), Jada Davis (0-2 at 120) and Rima (0-2 at 130) did not place.

Looking ahead, IHS will resume competition on Friday, Jan. 9, at PSHS' Rocky Mountain Invitational, square off against both Bayfield and Durango for La Plata County supremacy on Thursday, Jan. 15, at BHS, and then travel to the Aztec-hosted 1/16-17 Clash at the Coliseum, held east of neighboring Farmington, N.M. at McGee Park.

Kanopy at Ignacio Community Library

Enjoy free streaming movies and documentaries with your library card using Kanopy. Watch critically acclaimed films, independent cinema, foreign films, documentaries, and family-friendly favorites – at no cost. Get started by visiting [kanopy.com](https://www.kanopy.com) or downloading the Kanopy app and signing in with your library card. Stream on your phone, tablet, computer, or TV at home or on the go.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

SUDEP has done it again. We have decided to bring technology and health monitoring together. SUDEP is offering all SUITMs a Garmin Fitness Tracker. We would like for you to be able to monitor your health with a watch. This device allows you to:

- track your steps, heart rate and energy levels
- walk, run, yoga - break a sweat with preloaded sports apps
- monitor your sleep cycles
- connect to your smartphone GPS and track daily activities

One per Tribal Member - Supplies are Limited

Youth/Adults		
SW	W	SW
Black	White	Green

Youth 13 & Under			
Black	White	Green	Blue

Youth 14-17		
Black	White	Green

Contact SUDEP at: 970-563-5555 or scan the QR Code to receive your watch.



COMMUNITY GREETINGS

Xmas submission to Mr. Jason Carmenerors
Smile, Jason. Merry Xmas, sonny!!

Love you, hang in there! Love, Mom

Poem Misc. – Toniette Rae Baca/Lopez,
Thinking of – My little sister, everyday & night, I miss you!! So much!!
Your laugh, your smile, kool style, I miss you!! Turn up the radio... The sound of the fresh water, and the sweet smell of the running water fall of the Rocky Mountains. I know it's you; I miss you! Little Sister. The whistles of Sundance at night, at night in the evening air, nice and cool, I know you're there.
I miss you little sister.
The smell off the fire and burning coffee, I know you're with us... The early morning sun, the warmth on my face, I know your love... When I water our garden every day. I know you, you're thinking of me too! I love

you, my little sister! You are missed very dearly!! Loved sooooo much!! I miss you little sister, can you hear me?
When the sun starts to go down and the evening air, I'm always thinking of you. I miss you little sister. Your singing at the hand games, your horses, your dancing, powwow princess, I'm proud to be your sister! Smiles! Always! Like "Brightness of the moon!" First snow fall, koolness of the 1st winter fall! My little sister!! 1st smell of the first rain fall. "Toniettie Rae Baca/Lopez" So pretty and beautiful.

Love your big sister.
Home Fire Burns, Always waiting for you!
Tonece Rae Baca

EXPRESS YOUR OPINIONS

Leonard C. Burch Walk Thanks

We, the family of the late Leonard C. Burch, would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone that made the 11th Annual Leonard C. Burch Memorial Walk a success!
We appreciate you all!

- We would like to recognize the following for their effort, time, and participation:
- LCB Walk sponsors: Southern Ute Indian Tribe, MBSS Attorneys, Sky Ute Casino, SunUte Community Center
 - Southern Ute Tribal Council & Tribal Royalty
 - Walk/Run participants, elders, youth, community members & family
 - Trae Seibel, Aran Johnson, Matthew Box, Edward Box III, Eddie Box Jr., Betty Box & Family
 - Ms. Linda Baker; Invocation
 - Robert Ortiz for designing the beautiful LCB Walk flyer
 - Abel Velasquez, Morgann Graham & SunUte staff
 - Jeremy Wade Shockley; Southern Ute Drum
 - Trennie Burch; former LCB Art & Litera-

- cy Coordinator
- KSUT Tribal Radio
- Southern Ute Police Department
- Dewey B. Waldron & American Diversity Business Solutions
- Shining Mountain Health and Wellness
- Sweet Peas Treats
- Monique Boudreau, Tracy Leppert & Edward Box III; Sky Ute Casino Marketing Promotions for the amazing LCB Exhibit at the Sky Ute Casino
- Sky Ute Casino Food & Beverage Dept.
- For all businesses that donated raffle items

In addition, gratitude to anyone we might have unintentionally not mentioned.
We want to commend Mr. Abel Velasquez for his special commitment to organizing this event and his continued dedication to our family, community, and the So. Ute Tribe.
We want to wish everyone a healthy, prosperous and successful New Year!
May the Creator look upon your path with love, courage, guidance and protection.

Respectfully,
The family of the late Leonard & Irene Burch

NEW EMPLOYEES



Kathleen D. Castellot
Job title: Property Manager, Economic Development Dept.
Description of duties: Oversee and manage on-Reservation rental properties for the Tribe – including the new Buckskin Charlie Apartments due to open in late spring 2026.
Hobbies: Water and downhill snow skiing, motorcycling, and Windsurfing
Family: Married 35 years. One son who resides in upstate NY. Has four grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren (so far).
Additional Comments: "I am honored to be an integral part of the future growth of the Economic Development Department and the Southern Ute Tribe."

EDITOR'S NOTE: ALL LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE SOUTHERN UTE DRUM ARE PUBLISHED AS SUBMITTED AND DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINION OF THE SOUTHERN UTE DRUM OR THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE IN ANY WAY.
The Southern Ute Drum encourages letters from readers on any topic. We ask that letters be 500 words or less. Letters deemed to be libelous will not be published. Letters should be submitted by email to Jeremy Shockley at jshockley@southernute-nsn.gov by the end of the day Monday preceeding publication.

2026 SOUTHERN UTE DRUM DEADLINES

DEADLINE	PUBLISH	FEDERAL & TRIBAL HOLIDAYS
Dec. 31*	Jan. 9	New Year's Day (Jan. 1)
Jan. 16	Jan. 23	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Jan. 19)
Jan. 30	Feb. 6	
Feb. 13	Feb. 20	President's Day (Feb. 16)
Feb. 27	Mar. 6	
Mar. 13	Mar. 20	
Mar. 27	Apr. 3	
Apr. 10	Apr. 17	
Apr. 24	May 1	
May 8	May 15	
May 22	May 29	Memorial Day (May 25)
June 5	June 12	
June 18*	June 26	Juneteenth (June 19)
July 2*	July 10	Independence Day (July 4)
July 17	July 24	
July 31	Aug. 7	
Aug. 14	Aug. 21	
Aug. 28	Sep. 4	Labor Day (Sep. 7)
Sep. 11	Sep. 18	Southern Ute Tribal Fair & Powwow (Sep. 11-12)
Sep. 25	Oct. 2	Southern Ute Tribal Fair Rodeo (Sep. 18-19)
Oct. 9	Oct. 16	Indigenous People's Day (Oct. 12)
Oct. 23	Oct. 30	
Nov. 6	Nov. 13	Veteran's Day (Nov. 11)
Nov. 19*	Nov. 25	Thanksgiving (Nov. 26)
Dec. 3*	Dec. 9	Leonard C. Burch Day (Dec. 10)
Dec. 17*	Dec. 24	Christmas (Dec. 25)

*Denotes Early Deadline
PLEASE NOTE -- DEADLINE IS NOW THE FRIDAY PRIOR TO THE PUBLISHING DATE. All content, including classifieds ads, display ads, RFP/RFB notices, job announcements, stories and articles, press releases, letters, birthday greetings and holiday wishes must be submitted by the posted deadline. Anything submitted AFTER DEADLINE will be considered for the next issue. Requests for design work must be submitted by 5 p.m. on the above posted deadline dates. The Drum reserves the right to edit all materials for spelling, grammar, clarity and libel.

THE SOUTHERN UTE DRUM
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Physical Address: 356 Ouray Drive, Ignacio, Colo. (Leonard C. Burch Building, 2nd floor)

THE SOUTHERN UTE DRUM ANNOUNCEMENT

As of January 1, 2026, The Southern Ute Drum DEADLINE for submissions will be the FRIDAY prior to publication.

(See deadline schedule above)

IOEA Rise and Lead: Youth Leadership Cohort

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Join the IOEA Rise & Lead Youth Leadership Cohort!

Rise & Lead empowers 2SLGBTQ+ youth and allies through leadership skills, mentorship, and community connection. Build confidence, explore identity, and learn advocacy and teamwork in a supportive, affirming space.

Register Here!



Date: January 14, 2026
Time: 6 PM – 7 PM
Location: ELHI – RM 19

Dinner Served

- Cohort Ages: 13–17
- Paid Opportunity for Youth!



For any questions please contact Trennie at Ignacioutandequal@gmail.com or 970-306-3555.

Drum Deadline

Next issue:
Jan. 23

Deadline:
Jan. 16

Articles, photos, advertisements, public notices, letters and greetings may be submitted in person, by mail, or by email to: jshockley@southernute-nsn.gov



THE SOUTHERN UTE DRUM
A biweekly newspaper owned and operated by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation in Ignacio, Colo.



SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$29 per year • \$49 two years
MAIN: 970-563-0100 • DIRECT: 970-563-0118
TOLL FREE: 1-800-772-1236 • ADVERTISING: 970-563-2251

MAILING ADDRESS

The Southern Ute Drum: PO Box 737 #96, Ignacio, CO 81137

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

356 Ouray Drive, Leonard C. Burch Building, Ignacio, CO 81137

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The Southern Ute Drum does not assume responsibility for unsolicited material and does not guarantee publication upon submission.

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Southern Ute Indian Tribe TRIBAL CREDIT COMMITTEE MEMBER VACANCY

The Southern Ute Tribal Credit Committee ("Committee") is looking for eligible tribal member applicants to serve on the Committee. The appointment is for a three (3) year term. This is a paid Committee: IRS Guidelines and a Criminal Background Check are necessary.

Individuals seeking to serve on the Committee must demonstrate a reputation of personal integrity, dependability, honesty, a strong work ethic, and the ability to perform in a non-biased, confidential, and fair manner. They must become familiar with the objectives of the Declaration of Policies and Plan of Operation – Tribal Credit Fund and must maintain good financial standing with the Tribe. Applicants must also pass a criminal background and reference check, per the Tribal Credit Committee By-laws.

The primary purpose of the Committee is to evaluate and render decisions regarding Secured Home Loan applications and monitor and evaluate the Tribal Credit loan programs, and make recommendations to Tribal Council. The Committee has scheduled weekly meetings.

Some of the duties of the Tribal Credit Committee are:

- Approve loans as required by the Declaration of Policies and Plan of Operation – Tribal Credit Fund ("Declaration")
- Monitor compliance with the Declaration
- Monitor all approved loans for performance
- Make recommendations to the Tribal Council on program revisions and updates regarding Committee operations
- Maintain confidentiality, objectivity, and fairness in conducting all Committee business
- Attend regular meetings and other special meetings, as needed
- Coordinate the Committee's annual budget with Tribal Credit Staff

Interested Tribal Members are asked to submit a letter of interest to the Tribal Credit Committee, PO Box 737 #60, Ignacio, CO 81137, or by email to zvogenthaler@southernute-nsn.gov.

The letter should include the full name and contact information of the applicant, along with a detailed explanation of their relevant experience that would aid in making credit decisions, as well as a description of why they would be a good fit for the position.

If you have any questions, please speak with Zeb Vogenthaler at 970-563-2458.



JOHNSON-O'MALLEY 2026 Meeting Dates

January 5th
February 2nd
March 2nd
April 6th
May 4th
June 1st
July 6th
August 10th
September 14th
October 5th
November 2nd
December 7th



Education Center- Public Education Office
330 Burns Avenue, Ignacio, CO 81137



12:00 PM - 1:00 PM



First Monday of the Month
(w/ the exception of August and September)

For more information contact:
Kaylyn LeClaire
Education Specialist
kleclaire@southernute-nsn.gov
(970)563-0235



JANUARY 2026



POSITIVE INDIAN PARENTING

HONORING OUR CHILDREN BY HONORING OUR TRADITIONS

ALL PARENTS & CAREGIVERS ARE WELCOME

Positive Indian Parenting (PIP) has been used for over 35 years and remains popular today because the teachings are timeless. Historically, we had rich teachings that helped children grow up safe with strong families. Colonization threatened those teachings—our Native families were being separated, and traditional practices were at risk of being lost. PIP was developed in the 1980s to fill this void and was designed to help parents and families remember our traditional teachings and apply them in the modern world. In part one of each session, we will discuss examples of traditional practices and teachings from several different tribes. Instructors also share teachings from local areas and communities. Part two of each session discusses how to apply those teachings and values today. Complete all 8 sessions to receive a certificate.

This class is VIRTUAL
Please call (970) 563-2337 to
sign up
Each participant needs the
following to attend:
➢ A working email
➢ A solid internet
connection
➢ A smart phone, tablet or
laptop with a mic
➢ Download the Microsoft
Teams App

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS 12:00 PM TO 2:00 PM

January 6, 2026

January 8, 2026

January 13, 2026

January 15, 2026

January 20, 2026

January 22, 2026

January 27, 2026

January 29, 2026



Call Southern Ute Social Services
(970) 563-2337
kyazzie@southernute-nsn.gov

SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE Boards, Committees and Commissions Vacancies

APPRENTICE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Open until filled - The Southern Ute Indian Tribe (Tribe) and Apprentice Program Committee has one (1) vacancy. The Committee shall include 5 members which shall be appointed by Tribal Council. The Committee shall include employees of the Permanent Fund who have a level of expertise and familiarity with the goal of Tribal member mentoring and employment in order to make a positive contribution to both the Committee and to the objectives of the Program. A majority of the Committee shall be Tribal members. The Permanent Fund Apprenticeship Committee (Committee) shall be appointed to administer the Apprenticeship Program (Program) which provides higher education, training, on-the job experience, and mentoring to eligible Tribal members employed in the Permanent Fund. All interested Southern Ute tribal members, currently employed with the Tribe, who would like to serve on this committee are urged to submit a letter of intent to the Human Resources Department at PO Box 737, Ignacio, CO 81137, or in person at the Leonard C. Burch Tribal Administration Building.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB BOARD

Open Until Filled – The Boys & Girls Club of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe is currently looking to fill four (4) volunteer Board Member positions. Responsible for knowing and effectively articulating the mission, vision, core values, goals, policies, and program areas of the Club. Members of the Board must attend meetings regularly and attend applicable committee meetings on a regular basis; also attend a minimum of one Priority event and one Club event annually. Members must maintain confidentiality of sensitive information and conduct oneself as a model for children in a manner that exemplifies high character. Interested parties must pick up an application on the www.bgcsu.org website or by request and returned to Bruce LeClaire at 970-563-2694 or bleclaire@southernute-nsn.gov.

ETHICS COMMISSION

Open Until Filled – The Ethics Office is accepting letter of interest from tribal members to fill One vacancy for "Alternate Member-At-Large" and One regular position on the Ethics Commission. Qualifications are: Be a member of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe at least 18 years of age or older; Have a reputation for fairness and impartiality; Have a familiarity with tribal government; and Satisfactory completion of a background investigation for criminal history showing no convictions or guilty pleas for felonies or any misdemeanor involving dishonesty. Submit letters of interest to the Department of Justice & Regulatory, PO Box 737-MS#10, Ignacio, CO, or in person at the Justice and Regulatory Administration Building, 71 Mike Frost Way. All letters will be presented to the Southern Ute Tribal Council for their consideration.

GAMING COMMISSION

The Southern Ute Gaming Commission is seeking One (1) Regular Full-time positions for specified term, must be Southern Ute Tribal Members. Applicants must possess the following attributes pursuant to the Regulation One of the Gaming Commission Rules and Regulations: Applicants must be at least twenty-one years of age. Applicants must possess a basic knowledge and understanding of gaming activities authorized on the Southern Ute Indian reservation. Applicants must have experience or expertise in regulatory matters or in administrative hearing procedures. Applicants must have the ability to observe restrictions concerning conflicts of interest and confidentiality. Applicants must submit an application form and a letter of interest explaining why the applicant wishes to be appointed to the Commission; and Applicants must undergo a background investigation. Applications may be obtained at the Division of Gaming Office - Licensing in the West Wing of the Justice Complex, 149 County Road 517, Ignacio, Colorado, 81137. Applications and letter of interest are required to be turned into the Division of Gaming Office. These positions are open until filled. If you think you might be interested, please contact the Division of Gaming at 970-563-0180.

POWWOW COMMITTEE

Open Until Filled – Two vacant positions. The Southern Ute Indian Powwow Committee is currently accepting letters of intent to serve as a

volunteer on the committee. The purpose of the Southern Ute Indian Powwow Committee shall be to nurture and promote the positive image of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe through their dances and other activities to preserve our culture. The vacancy is Open to Southern Ute tribal members or any interested Native Americans who would like to be actively involved in planning, promoting, and executing Powwows on Southern Ute land. Must be willing to work hands on, attend all scheduled meetings and powwow events with a professional/traditional attitude towards committee members, tribal departments, and visitors. Please submit letters to: Southern Ute Powwow Committee, PO Box 737 #16 Ignacio, CO 81137 OR soutepowwow@southernute-nsn.gov

SOCOCAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If you're passionate about making a difference in the community, SoCoCAA is currently seeking Board Members for their Board of Directors. This is a fantastic opportunity to engage with valuable programs that support our community. The Board meets every other month, making it a manageable commitment. For more information about our organization and the programs we offer, please visit our website at www.sococaa.org. If you're interested in applying, please reach out to Nita Emerson at 970-563-4517 or request an application by emailing nemerson@sococaa.org. Join us in making a positive impact in Southern Colorado!

SUIHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Southern Ute Indian Housing Authority (SUIHA) is currently seeking two individual to serve on the SUIHA Board of Directors. The Board adopts policies and enacts resolutions of the SUIHA. Individuals interested in serving as a Board Member should submit a letter of intent to SUIHA stating their qualifications and why they would like to serve on the Board. All letters of intent need to be submitted to SUIHA, P.O. Box 447, Ignacio, CO 81137, emailed to rtorres@suiha.org, or hand deliver to the SUIHA office located at 760 Shoshone Ave., Ignacio, CO. Proof of Southern Ute Tribal Member required. Letter of intent will be accepted until 2 p.m., Jan. 27.

TERO COMMISSION

Open Until Filled – The Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) is accepting letters of interest for two (2) Southern Ute Tribal member at-large Commissioners to serve on the Tribal Employment Rights Commission which are compensated positions. Southern Ute tribal member/ Applicants must have the following requirements: TRIBAL MEMBER AT-LARGE: Not currently employed by the Tribal Government or the Growth Fund; Does not own or operate a certified Indian Owned Business; Experience or expertise in administrative hearing procedures; Eighteen (18) years of age or older; Good character; and Ability to observe restrictions concerning conflict of interest and confidentiality. Submit your Letter of Interest to the TERO Division or send letter to TERO Division, P.O. Box 737, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ignacio, CO 81137. If you have any questions, please call TERO, at 970-563-0117 or 970-563-0100 ext. 2291. TERO is located in the J&R Administration Building, 71 Mike Frost Way, (north of the Tribal Court building).

WILDLIFE ADVISORY BOARD

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe is seeking enrolled Southern Ute Tribal Members to fill two seats on the Tribal Member Wildlife Advisory Board. The 8-member Board works closely with the Wildlife Division on planning and recommending actions related to tribal hunting and fishing programs. Board members not already employed by the Tribe are compensated \$20 per hour for meeting attendance. Meetings are held roughly on a quarterly basis throughout the year, and a commitment to attend and participate in all meetings is expected. Interested Tribal Members must submit a brief letter of interest that includes a description of the applicant's knowledge and experience with wildlife, hunting, or fishing, on and off of the Southern Ute Reservation. In addition, as a condition of appointment to the Board, applicants must submit a standard job application through the Tribe's Human Resources Department, as well as agree to a State of Colorado background check. Please submit letters to the Southern Ute Wildlife Division at P.O. Box 737, Ignacio CO 81137. For more information, please contact the Wildlife Division at 970-563-0130.

Committee of Elders Meetings Announcements

The Committee of Elders (COE) would like to announce our meeting dates and a Logo Contest we will be having. Meeting Dates: Our meeting dates are first Monday of each month, held at the Museum library at 9 a.m. We invite all elders to attend. Questions, call 970-946-4061, Byron Frost, Chairman of the Committee of Elders.



ON THE ELHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS!



3 EASY WAYS TO APPLY!

1. Scan the QR code to download an application
2. Send an email to admin@theelhignacio.org
3. Stop by the ELHI office Tuesday - Thursday between 10:00am-5:00pm



Multi - Purpose Facility January Events

Quilt & Sew Class— Tuesday– Thursday January 13-15, 10:00 AM—3:30 PM

**Traditional Sewing and Beading Session 1, Tuesday—Thursday
January 20-22, 9:30 AM—3:30 PM & 5:30 PM—8:00 PM**

**Session 2, Tuesday-Thursday January 27—29,
9:30 AM—3:30 PM & 5:30 PM—8:00 PM**

Yard Sale Saturday January 24, 9:00 AM—3:30 PM

Happy 2026 New Year

Special Events

**January Community Pow Wow—For the Youth Saturday January 17, 2026
1:00PM—10:30 PM**

Events are subject to change—Please watch for announcements.



**Multi-Purpose Facility 256 Ute Road, Ignacio CO
970-563-2640 - multipurpose@southernute-nsn.gov**



Southern Ute Economic Development Invites you to
Financial Literacy with
DreamCatcher Financial Solutions

Smart Finance, Bright Futures

JOIN US FOR AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP ON FINANCIAL LITERACY AND TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE!

Learn the techniques of budgeting, retirement, and securing your financial future. **DreamCatcher Financial Solutions** will guide you through the essentials in a fun and beginner-friendly environment.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE WORKSHOP:

- Understand the fundamentals of creating a budget tailored to your lifestyle.
- Learn about creating and understanding retirement planning
- Understand life protection & general wealth

For more information/register reach out to Allison - awall@southernute-nsn.gov

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH

11am to 1pm

Sky Ute Casino Ignacio, CO

(lunch provided)

Your paragraph text





Southern Ute Utilities Division

SOUTHERN UTE GROWTH FUND | 12/24/25



JANUARY UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRANSFER STATION 2026 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

DEC. 24TH CHRISTMAS EVE — OPEN
DEC. 25TH CHRISTMAS DAY — CLOSED
DEC. 26TH DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS — OPEN
DEC. 31ST NEW YEAR'S EVE — OPEN
JAN. 1ST NEW YEAR'S DAY — CLOSED
JAN. 2ND — OPEN
JAN. 19TH MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY — CLOSED
FEB. 16TH PRESIDENT'S DAY — CLOSED
MAY 25TH MEMORIAL DAY — CLOSED
JUNE 19TH JUNETEENTH — CLOSED
JULY 3RD INDEPENDENCE DAY — CLOSED
SEPT. 7TH LABOR DAY — CLOSED
OCT. 12TH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY — CLOSED
NOV. 11TH VETERAN'S DAY — CLOSED
NOV. 26TH & 27TH THANKSGIVING — CLOSED
DEC. 10—11 LEONARD C. BURCH DAY — CLOSED
DEC. 25TH CHRISTMAS — CLOSED

**TRANSFER STATION HOURS OF OPERATION
MON.—SAT. 8 AM TO 5 PM / CLOSED SUNDAY**

TRANSFER STATION FOR TRIBAL MEMBER / TRIBAL DEPT. USE ONLY

OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Friday 8 AM to 5 PM
Lobby closed 12p -1p on Fridays

Reach a staff member at (970) 563-5500

Utilities Division Manager, Julian Baker
AP/AR Manager, Wahleah Frost

Monthly Shut-Off Day is the first Wednesday of each month.
Jan. 7th / Feb. 4th / March 4th
Avoid Late Fees. Settle your payments before 10am on Shut-Off Day

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online at www.suitutil.com Choose "Pay My Bill" tab
- Utilities Drive-Up Window
- Utilities Drop Box at Office
- Wells Fargo—Ignacio Branch
- Automatic deductions at Tribal Distribution
- Mail payment made payable to "Southern Ute Utilities Division"
- Phone (970) 563-5500

JANUARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Shut-Off Day is Wednesday, JANUARY 7th! Payments must be received before 10am.**
- Upcoming Project: **Sewer Line Rehabilitation Project** begins on **January 5th** at **Sunset Meadows Housing area** followed by **Powwow Circle**. Door to door notification to residents will start December 22nd. Questions? Call Utilities Office (970) 563-5500
- Any billing questions? Call the office for assistance.
- **NEW 2026 Trash Permits are available!** Stop by the office or the ramp and obtain your new trash permit.

Happy New Year 2026!

UTILITY OFFICE CLOSURES

- Dec 25th & 26th for the Christmas Holiday
- January 1st & 2nd of 2026 for the New Year Holiday

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION, CALL UTILITIES OFFICE.
PO Box 1137 16360 Hwy. 172 Ignacio, CO 81137 (970) 563-5500 www.suitutil.com

In The Southern Ute Tribal Court

Of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe • On the Southern Ute Reservation
PO Box 737 #149, CR 517, Ignacio, CO • 970-563-0240

NOTICE OF PROBATE

**In the Estate Of,
Case No.: 2025-0078-CV-PR
Michael Jay Baker, Deceased**

Notice to: Heirs, devisees, legatees, creditors and all other persons claiming an interest in said estate: The Southern Ute Indian Tribe of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation, Ignacio, CO: Greetings: Take notice that a petition has been filed in this cause, alleging that the above decedent died leaving certain assets, and asking for the determination of heirs of said decedent, the administration of said estate including the allowing of creditors of said decedent and for distribution thereof. You are notified that said cause will be set for

hearing before the Tribal Court at the above address on **FEBRUARY 17, 2026 at 10:00 AM**. All persons having claims against the above estate are required to file them for allowance with the Tribal Court at the stated address on or before the time and date of said hearing, as above set forth or said claims shall be forever barred and all persons interested in said estate are hereby notified to appear and answer said Petition and offer evidence in support of their position. The Court will proceed to hear the matter at the date and time set above, or such later time to which the matter shall be continued and to make the determination therein necessary.

Dated this 19th of December, 2025.
Paula Trujillo, Deputy Court Clerk

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR AUDIT SERVICES

The Southern Ute Indian Housing Authority (SUIHA) is requesting proposals from qualified firms and individuals for providing audit services. Interested parties must submit written proposals to the SUIHA. Proposals will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on March 6, 2026. Proposals received after this time will be considered non-responsive and returned to the sender. Faxed proposals will not be accepted.

BACKGROUND: The Southern Ute Indian Housing Authority is the Tribally Designated Housing Entity (TDHE) for the Southern Ute Tribe. Our primary sources of income are rental income and Federal financial assistance received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Indian Housing Block Grant program. SUIHA currently uses Aliba and HDS software. SUIHA has 115 Low Rental Units. The SUIHA receives an annual Indian Housing Block Grant of approximately 2 million.


SCOPE OF SERVICES: The audit services to be provided will be for the twelve-month period ending September 2026. The audit shall be completed, finalized by November 25, 2026, and submitted to the Federal Audit Clearing House by December 28th, 2026. With onsite visit being done week of October 26, 2026. We expect an exit conference at the end of the audit fieldwork to discuss any findings, questionable costs, reportable conditions and adjusting journal entries. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements described in the Single Audit Act and the audit must be in compliance with the Uniform Administrative Guidance at 2 CFR Part 200.

The audit services to be provided will be for the twelve-month period ending September 2027. The audit shall be completed, finalized by November 26, 2027, and submitted to the Federal Audit Clearing House by December 27th, 2027. With onsite visit being done week of October 25, 2027. We expect an exit conference at the end of the audit fieldwork to discuss any findings, questionable costs, reportable conditions and adjusting journal entries. The audit shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements described in the Single Audit Act and the audit must be in compliance with the Uniform Administrative Guidance at 2 CFR Part 200.

CONTENT OF THE PROPOSALS: In selecting the firm or individual who will best serve the needs of SUIHA we will be reviewing the experience of the respondent(s) along with reviewing the expertise and qualifications of the individual(s) who will be providing the services. To meet these objectives, the proposal must contain a resume of all individuals who would be performing the services, with special attention to the experience related to Indian Housing Authorities or similar organizations. Six (6) copies of the proposal shall be submitted.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS: Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on a 100 point system with the proposal receiving the most points being determined the most responsive. The cost of conducting the audit will be the main criteria used in evaluating the proposals. The SUIHA Board of Directors will make the final selection, and the successful firm or individual will be notified shortly thereafter so that the audit process can begin as soon as possible. SUIHA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals if it is in the best interest of the SUIHA.


EVALUATION CRITERIA: The criteria for evaluating the proposals will include points given in the following areas: Qualifications of firm or individual to conduct Federal audits in accordance with 2 CFR 200 (0-10 points); Ability of firm to conduct the audit in a timely manner (0-30 points); Experience and knowledge of Indian Housing Authorities (0-15 points); Cost (0-45 points); Indian Preference (0 or 10 points if proposal includes proof showing that the firm is at least 51% Indian owned). Responses shall be addressed to Eric Spady, Executive Director, P.O. Box 447, Ignacio CO 81137. E-Mail: espady@suiha.org



SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

SOUTHERN UTE UTILITIES DIVISION

NOTICE TO RESIDENTS [December 2025]
Northridge Sewer Improvement Project




Northridge Sewer Improvement Project

Beginning January 5, 2026, we will start a sewer main rehabilitation project to improve the reliability and performance of your neighborhood's sewer system. This schedule is subject to change depending on weather conditions. You can view all affected areas on our Service Map. As work moves closer to your property, we will provide timely, address-specific updates so you know what to expect throughout the construction process.

The project is scheduled to begin in the area south of Sunset Meadows Drive. If weather conditions are unfavorable, work will likely start along Pow Wow Road. Alternatively, we can designate the entire area as the starting point.

Please review the attached maps. **Map #1 highlights the area in red, while the Map #2 includes comments and serves as the engineering drawing. Additional maps can be provided upon request. Please be aware that construction activities may result in increased noise and traffic in the area.**

Please feel free to call Peter Hayes, Southern Ute Utilities Division, Project Manager at (970)563-5502, with any questions.



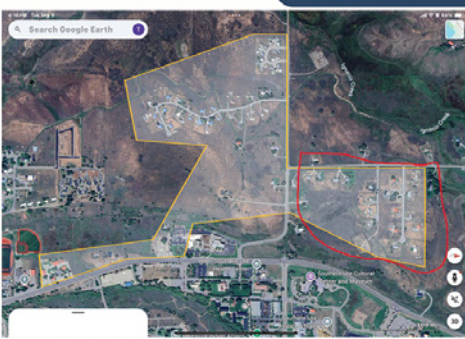
SOUTHERN UTE UTILITIES DIVISION

Main Line: 970-563-5500

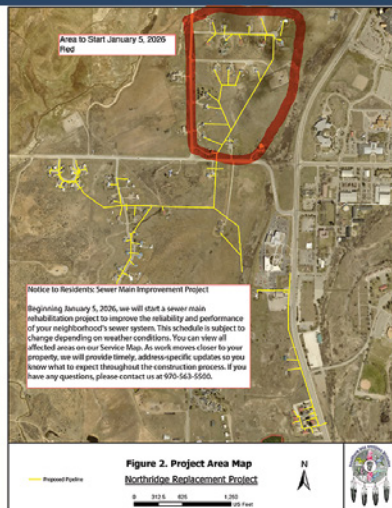
Page 1


Page 2

MAP #1



MAP #2





SOUTHERN UTE UTILITIES DIVISION

Main Line: 970-563-5500



Southern Ute Indian Tribe • Job announcements

Visit the the tribe's website at www.southernute-nsn.gov/jobs for complete job descriptions.
ALL EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED ONLINE.

If you need help filling out an online application, please come the Human Resources office and we are happy to assist you on our applicant computer stations.

Applicants and employees, be sure the HR Dept. has your current contact information on file.

Human Resources accepts applications for temporary employment on an ongoing basis.

Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Human Resources • P.O. Box 737 - Ignacio, CO 81137

Phone: 970-563-0100 ext. 2424 • Fax: 970-563-0302 • Hotline: 970-563-4777

Administrative Assistant II

Closes 1/9/26 – Under general supervision of the Construction Services Division Head, provides accounting and secretarial support to Southern Ute Tribe Construction Services Division, performing basic accounting and clerical duties. Pay grade N9; Pay is \$21.48/hour.

Detention Officer

Closes 1/9/26 – Under general supervision of the Detention Sergeant and Lieutenant, maintains the safety and welfare of inmates and visitors and monitors all activities within the detention center. Pay grade N12; Pay is \$27.56/hour.

Optometric Assistant Trainee (Southern Ute tribal members only)

Closes 1/9/26 – Under dentist supervision, Optometric Assistant is responsible for a wide range of tasks in the Southern Ute Optometry Clinic including, but not limited to, providing chair side optometry assistance, administrative and records, duties, Optos, Lensometry, FDT, Tonometry, OCT, and Dilation of patients. Pay grade N11; Pay is \$25.05/hour.

After School Program Attendant

Open Until Filled – A regular part-time position that provides education and physical activities for the after-school program to meet the needs of children ages 7 months through 12 years. Pay grade N6; Pay is \$17.05/hour.

After School Program Leader

Open Until Filled – A regular full-time position that provides education and physical activities for the After-School program to meet the needs of children ages 3 through 13 years. Pay grade N6; Pay is \$17.05/hour.

Bison Herd Manager

Open Until Filled – Under general supervision of the Wildlife Resource Division Head, is responsible for the overall management and conservation of the Tribal Bison Herd. Pay grade N13; Pay is \$30.32/hour.

Boys & Girls Club Aide (Part-time)

Open Until Filled – Assists in the implementation, planning, and supervision of activities provided within the Boys & Girls Club (BGC) program. Pay grade N5; Pay is \$15.79/hour.

Clinical Applications Coordinator

Open Until Filled – Under general direction of the Health Center Support Services Manager, serves as the Clinical Applications Coordinator (CAC) for the Southern Ute Tribal Health Department and the Southern Ute Health Center. Maintaining the Electronic Health Record (EHR) / Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) for the Health Department, coordinating up-grades, and providing training to all users. Pay grade E14; Pay is \$68,004/annually.

Clinical Supervisor

Open Until Filled – A senior level position that provides Clinical Supervision to staff Caseworkers providing a full range of intake and/or ongoing social casework services for a variety of program areas such as child abuse and neglect cases, youth-in-conflict cases, and adults unable to protect their own interests. Provides clinical supervision and oversees Family Preservation and the Foster Care Program Coordinator. Pay grade E17; Pay is \$92,160/annually.

Community Health Representative

Open Until Filled – Providing assistance and the coordination and development of activities for elderly and physically or mentally disabled Tribal members. Performs community health duties to include patient transport and monitoring, home visits, conducting classes, and providing community education on Tribal health issues. Home Care may include house cleaning, personal hygiene, preparing meals, and other health and wellness related activities. Pay grade N9; Pay is \$21.48/hour.

Construction Services Repairman

Open Until Filled – Assists in home repair to Tribal Home Rehab Programs, Elders Maintenance Program, Tribal Member and Elderly/ Handicapped Emergency Repair, and Tribal Rental Units. Pay grade N10; Pay is \$23.20/hour.

Detention Cook

Open Until Filled – Assisting the Food Service Coordinator to facilitate all kitchen food service preparation and cleaning duties. Pay grade N8; Pay starts at \$19.89/hour.

Detention Division Head

Open Until Filled – Under general supervision of the Director of Justice and Regulatory, plans, organizes, directs, and reviews the administrative and operational activities of the Southern Ute Detention Program and Facility; ensures compliance with all applicable laws, policies, and procedures; develops and implements Division policy and programmatic changes as required. Pay grade E17; pay range starts at \$92,160/year.

Detention Transport Officer

Open Until Filled – Under general supervision of the Detention Sergeant and Lieutenant, incumbent maintains the safety and welfare of inmates and visitors and monitors all inmate activities within and outside of the detention center. Responsible for transportation of inmates to and from other facilities, medical appointments, and court appearances. Pay grade N13; Pay starts at \$30.32/hour.

Dispatcher

Open Until Filled – Under general supervision of the Communications Manager, provides radio dispatch services for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Pay grade N10; Pay starts at \$23.20/hour and includes a potential 3-5k DOE sign-on bonus.

Early Childhood Teacher

Open Until Filled – A professional teaching position with the Southern Ute Indian Montessori Academy (SUIMA). Uses the Montessori philosophy to provide Southern Ute Indian Montessori Academy students with a developmentally appropriate learning environment meeting the physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and cultural needs of the child. Communicating effectively with parents/guardians about their child's progress in each domain area. Pay grade N9; Pay is \$21.48/hour.

Elementary Teacher

Open Until Filled – A professional teaching position with the Southern Ute Indian Montessori Academy (SUIMA). Uses the Montessori philosophy to provide Southern Ute Indian Montessori Academy students with a developmentally appropriate learning environment meeting the physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and cultural needs of the child. Communicate effectively with parents/guardians about their child's progress in each domain area. Pay grade E12; Pay is \$57,331/year.

Gaming Investigator I

Open Until Filled – An entry level position located under the Southern Ute Division of Gaming (DOG). Under general supervision of the Gaming Investigator III, works in coordination with other DOG Investigators to learn and perform Law Enforcement / Regulatory duties for the enforcement of Class II and Class III gaming on the Southern Ute Reservation. Pay grade N13; Pay is \$30.32/hour.

Gaming Investigator I Trainee (Southern Ute tribal members only)

Open Until Filled – A trainee position for uncertified individuals interested in a career in law enforcement with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Will be required to attend and successfully complete and approved basic police-training course. Upon successful completion of training curriculum requirements, will assume the Gaming Investigator I position. Pay grade N11; Pay is \$25.05/hour.

Gaming Investigator II

Open Until Filled – Under general supervision of the Gaming Investigator III, incumbent regulates and controls Class II and Class III gaming on the Southern Ute Reservation. Pay grade N14; Pay is \$32.69/hour.

Land Surveyor

Open Until Filled – Conducts all administrative surveys and surveys as a licensed Professional Land Surveyor, needed to meet the needs of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Pay grade E15; Salary is \$74,804/annually.

Lands Compliance Technician

Open Until Filled – Performs administrative, clerical, and technical support to the Lands Division. Manages the implementation, administration, and enforcement of codes, and land governing documents for the Lands Division. Pay grade N12; Pay is \$27.56/hour.

Lands Technician

Open Until Filled – Provides technical and clerical support to the Lands Division and provides general information to the Tribal Membership and general public regarding land status issues, Crossing Permits, and general land management related issues. Pay grade N10; Pay is \$23.20/hour.

Medical Assistant (Part-time)

Open Until Filled – Providing professional and clinical services. Grant funded; continued employment is contingent on grant funding. Pay grade N10; Pay is \$23.20/hour.

Patrol Officer I

Open Until Filled – Patrols the Southern Ute Indian Reservation and is responsible for preserving the life and property of all citizens within the Tribal Community. Pay grade N13; Pay starts at \$30.32/hour and includes a potential 3-5k DOE sign-on bonus.

Patrol Officer II

Open Until Filled – Patrols the Southern Ute Indian Reservation and is responsible for preserving the life and property of all citizens within the Tribal Community. Pay grade N14; Pay is \$32.69/hour.

Patrol Officer Trainee

Open Until Filled – Patrols the Southern Ute Indian Reservation and is responsible for preserving the life and property of all citizens within the Tribal Community. Pay grade N14; the Pay is \$32.69/hour.

Physician

Open Until Filled – Providing comprehensive medical services and primary care to the patients at the Southern Ute Health Center (SUHC). Pay grade E23; Pay starts at \$249,495/annually.

Public Defender

Open Until Filled – Represents eligible Native American or other defendants as authorized by applicable Tribal or federal law in criminal proceedings prosecuted in the Southern Ute Tribal Court. Representing respondents in involuntary commitment proceedings, representing juveniles in delinquency proceedings, truancy proceedings, and serving as guardian ad litem in dependency and neglect proceedings brought in the Southern Ute Tribal Court. Pay grade E19; Pay is \$121,866/annually.

AGRICULTURE DIVISION ---- HAY FOR SALE!



The Southern Ute Tribe's Agriculture Division has hay for sale to Tribal Members ONLY.

LARGE BALES:	\$160.00/BALE	1350#
21 BALE BUNDLER:	\$165.00/BUNDLE	1260#

Hay is available FIRST COME FIRST SERVE.

Contact the SUIT Agriculture Division at (970) 563-0220 for more information.



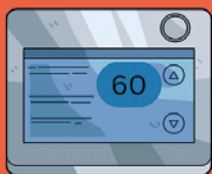
BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CONSTRUCTION SERVICES DIVISION

COLD WEATHER SAFETY TIPS

PROTECT PIPES !



- Apply heat tape to water lines to prevent freezing.
- Activate heaters at the pump house.
- Keep a slow drip on faucets during freezing temperatures if out of town or traveling.
- Open cabinet doors to allow warm air circulation near pipes if out of town or traveling.



HEATING SYSTEM !

- Set your home heaters to a minimum of 60 degrees.
- Inspect and seal windows/doors to prevent drafts and heat loss.
- DO NOT overload outlets and power strips with space heaters and do not leave unattended.
- Install fresh batteries in your thermostat.
- Clean your chimney to prevent carbon monoxide from being trapped in your home.



VEHICLE SAFETY !

- Keep a blanket, flashlight, shovel, ice melt, jumper cables and tire chains in your vehicle.
- Keep your vehicle maintained by checking fluid levels, battery health, tire thread & pressure.
- Fuel Management-keep your gas tank at least half to prevent fuel line freezing.

If you need assistance, please contact Construction Services at (970) 563-0260

Southern Ute Indian Tribe Job Announcements, cont.

Public Education Middle School Teacher Apprentice (Southern Ute tribal members only)

Open Until Filled – Under the mentorship of the Public School Middle School Teacher, the Apprenticeship Program is designed to provide training, education, and hands-on experience for a Southern Ute Tribal member in performing the work duties of the Public Education Middle School Teacher. Will develop the skills to teach/tutor Southern Ute or Johnson O'Malley Program students in the Middle School during and after school throughout the school year and develop the skills to design and implement summer enrichment programs, performing student instruction and supervision, managing the programs, and reviewing their success. Position is based on a regular work year (261 days). Will start 20% below the grade for the Middle School Teacher and will receive quarterly evaluation and pay increases. Pay rate for the Apprentice is \$26.15/hour. The duration of this program is designed to last 12 months and may be extended or reduced as appropriate. Upon successful completion of the apprentice curriculum requirements, will assume the position of Public Education Middle School Teacher.

Public Health Nurse

Open Until Filled – Providing public health nursing care and case management to individuals, families, and the community. Pay grade N15; Pay starts at \$35.96/hour.

Recording Secretary

Open Until Filled – Takes minutes and transcribes both regular and special council sessions, which also includes Council work session notes and provides support to the Executive Office Manager of the Tribal Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Tribal Council. Pay grade N9; Pay is \$21.48/hour.

Swimming Instructor (Part-time)

Open Until Filled – Under supervision of Aquatics Manager, instructs American Red Cross individual and group swimming lessons at the SunUte aquatics facility. Preparation of class, instruction of individuals, breakdown of equip-

ment, and all documentation associated with SunUte individual swimming lessons and the American Red Cross. Pay grade N7; Pay starts at \$18.42/hour.

Teacher Aide

Open Until Filled – Supporting the Southern Ute Indian Montessori Academy (SUIMA) through a variety of duties including providing classroom coverage and supervision of children in the After-School Program, being assigned to differing duties on an as-needed basis. Pay grade N4; Pay is \$15.55/hour.

TEAM Worker (Southern Ute tribal members only)

Open Until Filled – The TEAM program is an opportunity for enrolled Southern Ute Tribal Members to find temporary employment within the various departments of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Both part-time and full-time temporary positions.

TERO Worker

Open Until Filled – Under the supervision of the TERO office. It is an opportunity for enrolled Southern Ute Tribal Members and other Native Americans to find temporary employment within the various departments of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Both part-time and full-time temporary positions.

Tribal Apprenticeship Program (Southern Ute tribal members only)

Open Until Filled – The Southern Ute Tribe is accepting applications for SUIT Tribal Members interested in pursuing their career interests through the Apprenticeship Program. The purpose of the program is to build a career foundation for SUIT members to pursue further educational goals or career development. Apprentices may be placed within Permanent Fund departments or divisions dependent on career interests, educational level and/or length of prior relevant and appropriate work experience. The Apprentice Committee will review applications and assess what options may be available for applicants.



Southern Ute Growth Fund • Job announcements

Please visit our website at www.sugf.com/jobs.asp for full job details and to apply online.
Tribal Member employment preference • Must pass pre-employment drug test/background check.
Southern Ute Growth Fund, Human Resources • P.O. Box 367 • Ignacio, CO
Phone: 970-563-5064 • Job hotline: 970-563-4777.

Real Estate Investment Analyst – GF Properties Group (Durango, CO)
Closes 1/19/26 – Assists in the general management of all assets managed by GF Properties Group and works closely with the Portfolio Manager and Vice President to assist with the general oversight of the properties, leasing, contract administration, placement, and monitoring of loans, routine site, and property inspections, site analysis and due diligence, construction management, budgeting, financial analysis, acquisition and disposition support, market and industry research, and reporting functions.

Asset Manager – GF Properties Group (Durango, CO)
Closes 1/19/26 – Effectively performing a variety of real estate functions for a regional portfolio of mixed-use, multi-family, and development projects. Will support the asset management, property management, and construction management functions including financial analysis, project management, contract negotiations, budgeting, and forecasting. Will also assist with special projects and ad hoc analyses and will have the opportunity to support the national portfolio team on an as-needed basis.

Onshore Geoscience Manager – Red Willow Production Company (Ignacio, CO)
Closes 1/12/26 – Leading a team of geoscientists and technicians in ongoing exploration, development, and production-related assignments and will provide technical leadership for all onshore geoscience activities. Oversees geoscience contributions to both operated and non-operated onshore projects, as well as to new ventures opportunity evaluations. Provides technical expertise for individual projects as required. Collaborates with other onshore managers to ensure communications between land, engineering and geology disciplines to ensure sound business decisions and recommendations to executive management.

Drilling & Completion Engineer III – Red Willow Production (Ignacio, CO)
Closes 1/16/26 – Drilling, completions, and petroleum engineering support focused on horizontal unconventional resource development in the San Juan Basin. This role supports wellbore and completion design and execution, along with internal processes related to budgeting, post-appraisals, and performance optimization. Works collaboratively within a multi-disciplinary team to optimize field development and reservoir depletion strategies.

Vice President – Growth Fund Properties Group (Denver, CO)
Closes 1/16/26 – Leading acquisitions, dispositions and asset management activities for approximately half of the portfolio including negotiation of joint venture partnerships, management of key strategic relationships, debt financings, and reporting. Leads portfolio management and planning efforts on a national basis and is an integral part of a collaborative team that utilizes a combination of financial, qualitative, and quantitative analyses to support strategic portfolio decisions.

Financial Reporting Manager – Growth Fund (Ignacio, CO)
Closes 2/9/26 – Supports all aspects of routine and non-routine accounting, auditing, and reporting processes and projects; reviews and analyzes FASB accounting pronouncements and determines the impact on Growth Fund business entities; serves as an accounting expert in advising Growth Fund management, Controller and business entities on complex accounting issues. Assisting in the development of Growth Fund accounting policies.

Financial Planning & Analysis Manager – Growth Fund (Ignacio, CO)
Closes 2/9/26 – Heavily involved in the compilation and analysis of the annual budget and the five-year plan. Updating the Tribe's financial plan annually and every three years. The position manages the annual Growth Fund bonus and Long-Term Incentive plan (LTIP) processes for all Growth Fund entities and SUSS. Would track and analyze capital spending and prepare return analysis for Growth Fund investments.

Assistant Controller – Growth Fund (Ignacio, CO)
Closes 2/9/26 – Management of accounting functions, to include general ledger and all related subledgers, as well as supervision of assigned accounting staff, Growth Fund accounting principles, practices, and procedures, and assisting in the annual audit and budget process.

Human Resource Generalist – Growth Fund (Ignacio, CO)
Closes 1/23/26 – Maintaining the employment life cycle including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and separation for the Southern Ute Growth Fund companies and departments. Provides support with performance management, policy implementation, and maintaining HR records and provides general human resources support to Growth Fund and SUSS employees, Southern Ute Indian Tribal members and the public in an efficient, courteous and helpful manner.

HR Business Operations Specialist – Growth Fund (Ignacio, CO)
Closes 1/16/26 – Business operations of the Human Resources department focusing on HR process improvement, policies, technology and data management, and compliance by identifying redundancies and inefficiencies by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; will recommend implementation changes and streamlining workflow. Will assist with monitoring and reviewing department budget, invoice payments, and provide respective reports. Will assist with and provide back up to the Vice President of Human Resources.

Senior Control Analyst – Red Cedar (Durango, CO)
Closes 1/23/26 – Providing compliance with regulations for monetization eligibility; leads processing, tracking, reporting, and communicating volume and measurement accounting data; ensuring accurate timekeeping records, and other payroll-related tasks; accounting entries and reconciliations; and preparation of schedules and reports.

Measurement Accounting Specialist – Red Cedar (Durango, CO)
Closes 1/23/26 – Timely accumulation, processing, accuracy, and editing of Electronic Flow Meter (EFM) and chart data in accordance with contractual obligations and industry gas measurement standards. Providing support to the Measurement Accounting Supervisor and Accounting Department closing.

Sky Ute Casino Resort • Job announcements

Visit our website at www.skyutecasino.com to view job openings and apply online.
Human Resources • Phone: 970-563-1311 • PO Box 340, Ignacio, CO 81137
TERO-Native American Preference • All Applicants Welcome • Must pass pre-employment drug test, background check, qualify for and maintain a Division of Gaming License and be able to work all shifts, weekends or holidays. **21 years or older to apply.*

Beverage & Cocktail Server (On-call)
Must maintain the highest level of guest service while providing cocktail and beverage service to Casino guests. Will prepare beverages prior to serving and will be required to lift and move up to 60 pounds regularly and will be responsible for monetary transactions.

***Café Cashier (Full-time)**
Providing friendly and courteous service to all guests in a fast-paced work environment. Taking guests food orders, accurately totaling food and beverage purchases and collecting payments. Assists in preparing and serving all the food necessary for the Cafe kitchen. Prepares coffee and pizza from the hot food line in the front area of the Café. Will balance the register at the end of the shift with a proper report on discrepancies and complete paperwork.

***Deep Cleaning Staff (Full-time)**
Cleanliness of the entire Kitchen as instructed by the Facilities Manager and/or Supervisor. Will clean Food and Beverage facilities and equipment.

***Housekeeping Staff (Full-time)**
Consist of cleaning all public areas including Casino floor, public restrooms, restaurant, lobby, offices, and employee break rooms. All areas must be disinfected, swept, mopped, vacuumed, and dusted.

***Housekeeping Supervisor (Full-time)**
Will act in the leadership and training capacity. Will direct employees and help them to complete their tasks and goals defined by the Housekeeping Manager. Training employees, ensuring they abide by all policies and procedures. Will be responsible for office structure, budgetary administration and employee relations as assigned by the Housekeeping Manager.

Rolling Thunder Grill Cashier (Part-time)
Greet guests in a friendly manner, take and deliver orders, calculate checks, and receive payment for the Bowling Grill Window and Restaurant.

***Rolling Thunder Grill Server (Full-time)**
Provide an exceptional dining experience by delivering first class guest service of food and beverages to include: taking the order and delivering food and beverage items. Handle tasks in a friendly, courteous, helpful, timely and professional manner resulting in a high level of guest satisfaction. Shift covers Breakfast and Lunch only.

***Room Attendant (Full-time)**
Room Attendants are responsible for thoroughly cleaning hotel guest rooms and performing routine duties individually or as a pair, in a fast-paced work environment. Duties include cleaning hotel room by wiping, washing, scrubbing, vacuuming, sweeping, and mopping all areas of the guest rooms. Requires the ability to bend, lift, stand and walk throughout the shift. Duties of this job are physically demanding and may be stressful at times, particularly during peak season periods. Will be cleaning an average of 16 guest rooms, and during peak season, up to 20 guest rooms per shift, depending on whether you are working as an individual or a pair. Will be responsible for cross training on the Casino Floor to assist with Operational Housekeeping when needed and as assigned.

***Senior Facilities Staff (Full-time)**
Reports to the Facilities Supervisor on shift. Responsible for the operation of equipment, environmental condition and appearance of the facility and grounds. Responsible for the cleanliness, maintenance and repair of the facility, equipment, and building.

SoCoCAA Job Opportunities

To apply now, visit our website at www.sococaa.org or call 970-563-4517.

Central Administration
• Program Developer-Grant Writer (Full-time) \$32.97/hr.
• Executive Development Developer (Full-time) -\$75,275/yr., (Up to \$3,000 in relocation expenses available.)

Ignacio Youth Services
• Program Coordinator (Full-time) \$17.29/hr., DOE

Ignacio Early Learning Program
• Teacher Assistant (Full-time) \$15.79-\$20.76/hr.
• Substitute Teacher (Full-time) \$14.81/hr.

Road Runner Transit
• ICB Bus Driver (Full-time) \$22.76/hr.
• Transit Driver (Full-time) \$18.94/hr.
• Bus Cleaner/Building Maintenance (Full-time) \$18.94/hr.
• Operations Manager (Full-time) \$52,645-\$63,21



Scam Warning:
Report Suspicious Calls

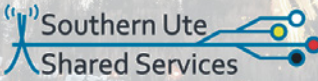
The Southern Ute Digital Equity Program (SUDEP) has received reports that individuals are getting phone calls from someone claiming to represent SUDEP.

Please be aware that these calls are not coming from SUDEP

SUDEP will never call a Tribal Member to request personal information. The only time you will hear from SUDEP is if:

- You have applied for one of our programs and we need to verify details, or
- An item needs to be picked up.

If you receive a suspicious call, do not share any personal information. Contact SUDEP immediately at 970-563-5555 and inform a staff member about the call. You may also contact SUPD Non-Emergency at 970-563-4401.



IMPORTANT ALERT FROM
Sky Ute
Fairgrounds

The indoor arena will be closed to the public until further notice as a precautionary measure due to recent outbreaks of Equine Herpesvirus Type 1 (EHV-1).

For any questions, please call the Sky Ute Fairgrounds & RV Park office, (970) 563-5540.

www.skyutefairgrounds.com

SOUTHERN UTE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT INVITES YOU TO
COFFEE &
CONNECTIONS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15TH
8:30-10:00 AM
Willows Cafe at Sky Ute Casino



Join Us for a Morning of Coffee, Connection & Small Business Conversation!
Start your day with great coffee and even better company. Whether you're a local entrepreneur, small business owner, or just passionate about supporting the community, this is a perfect opportunity to connect, share ideas, and build meaningful relationships!

FOR MORE INFORMATION REACH OUT TO ALLISON -
AWALL@SOUTHERNUTE-NSN.GOV/970.563.2281





FOUR FALL IN WITH FOOTBALL • FROM PAGE 14

With Archuleta out, senior receiver Aven Bourriague quickly became Pontine’s go-to and ultimately became a First Teamer. And if all else failed, senior running back Lincoln deKay – probably the most clear-cut First Team pick of the four honored ‘Cats – relished all his frequent chances to push the pile, move the chains and/or crash into the end zone.

Junior William Mendoza-Lechuga was called upon to fill multiple roles including receiver, defensive back, punter, kicker and backup quarterback, and in the process of doing so earned Second Team All-SCC status. His own importance on IHS’ interior lines magnified by the loss of sophomore Miguel Red to injury, junior offensive guard/defensive tackle Dillon Witt’s on-the-job development was also worth a Second Team All-SCC nod, and sophomore fullback/linebacker Jayden Scott was an Honorable Mention recipient.

Seven players from South Central champ Centauri were voted First Team All-Conference, including Offensive Player-of-the-Year Carson Shawcroft, a senior who typically played receiver on offense and doubled as a safety on defense. Also named First Team were senior Marcos Atencio, junior Leland Chacon, senior Cole Jackson, junior Dalyn King and senior Spencer Smith.

After clipping Monte Vista 20-18 in the SCC championship, played Halloween night, the Falcons began their Class 1A State Playoffs run the following weekend by eliminating Hotchkiss-based, 13th-seeded North Fork 35-21 and then blanking No. 12 Highland 26-0 up in Ault. Pit next against top-seeded Buena Vista in the semifinals, No. 4 Centauri’s season came to an end with a 27-12 loss leaving CHS – guided by SCC Coach-of-the-Year Kyle Forster – standing 10-2 overall.

Senior Sean Jarvies ended up a Second Team All-SCC pick along with junior Blake Johnson and junior Donovan Jarvies.

Runner-up in the South Central with a 4-1 mark (Centauri went 5-0), Monte Vista also qualified for postseason play and, as the Playoffs’



Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio’s Gabe Archuleta (21) absorbs IHS Field’s energy while stepping onto it prior to the Bobcats’ 2025 opener against Denver Manual. Lost to injury in the team’s third game this fall, Archuleta’s offensive and defensive impact was still enough to earn him First Team All-South Central Conference.

No. 10 seed, began work in the 16-team bracket by crushing 7-seed Colorado Springs Christian 21-0. Rewarded for the upset win with a home game in the quarterfinal phase, boss Manny Wasinger’s Pirates had the misfortune of welcoming Limon to Harvey Sullivan Field, and suffered a 50-14 loss to the second-seeded Badgers – who went on to best BVHS 14-10 in the State Championship, played Nov. 29 at CSU-Pueblo’s ThunderBowl.

Senior Azariah Hurtado was named First Team All-Conference and also SCC Defensive Player-of-the-Year. Senior Chayse Bouet, senior Zach Gallegos, senior Kelby Mondragon and sophomore Manny Jiron also represented MVHS (7-4 overall) on the First Team; senior Jon Enderle and sophomore Mason Mondragon were Second Team selections.

Victorious over Ignacio in the teams’ season finale, Del Norte (2-4 overall, 2-3 conference) had four All-SCC First Teamers in junior Morgan Howell plus freshmen Brendan Hemmerling, Asher Albright and Liam Kreu-

tzter, while seniors Wyatt Vanzalinge and Landan Velasquez were Second Team. Though defeated by IHS, Trinidad also ended up 2-3 in SCC play and 2-7 overall. Junior Conner Knezel, senior Matthew Garduno, junior Andrew East and sophomore C.J. Sandoval were all First Team All-Conference picks, while senior Xavier Garcia and junior Isaiah Moreno received Second Team recognition.

Representing Center (0-9, 0-5 SCC) on the First Team were senior DT/LB Ivan Guaderrama and sophomore QB/defensive end Devan Garcia; sophomore RB/LB Jaiden Martinez was Second Team.

Additional Honorable Mention All-Conference

Centauri – Drake Gallardo, sr.; Monte Vista – Domyon Naranjo, sr.; Trinidad – Curtis Bueno, jr.; Del Norte – Trenton Woolf, sr.; Center – Mario Mendoza, soph.

Extra Credit

When the Colorado High School Activities Association released its All-State Teams in mid-December, Ignacio’s deKay was named Honorable Mention All-1A for his efforts not only as a ball-carrier but also a ball-stopping linebacker. Pontine also received Honorable Mention All-1A.

Centauri’s Shawcroft was the only South Central player earning First Team All-1A. Monte Vista’s Gallegos and Kelby Mondragon were Second Team picks, along with Centauri’s Smith. Atencio, Chacon, Jackson and King were Honorable Mention choices, along with MVHS’ Hurtado, Bouet and Jiron, plus THS’ Garduno and Knezel.



Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio’s Aven Bourriague (11) greets his most devout four-legged fan prior to IHS’ home game versus South Central Conference foe Trinidad. Always poised to receive or repel passes in 2025 as a wide receiver and defensive back, Bourriague earned First Team All-SCC for his efforts.

WRESTLERS TO RESUME WORK • FROM PAGE 14

139-pounder, placed fifth at last season’s NMAA Class 4A State Championships – and ultimately forfeited his final two bouts due to injury.

Pontine also started well, defeating his first two opponents at 157 before then losing to Green River, Utah’s unbeaten senior Maddux Hintz (who went on to win the weight and improved to 17-0). Pontine managed to then down Hayden’s Jarrett Davis 9-6, but was then eliminated via an 11-1 major decision courtesy of Grand Junction’s Alan Delimont.

132-pounder Kerrigan also did not place at the Classic, despite posting a 2-2

tourney record. Stephen Romero earned a medical-forfeit win over Dolores’ Zaiden Suhr, but ended up 1-2 at 138 after being pinned by Bayfield’s Payson Blouin. Brann went 0-2 at 144 pounds, and freshmen Philip Velasquez (175), Zachariah Loudenburg (215) and Maximus Growler (285) fared likewise in their respective divisions.

The ‘Cats will resume competition on Saturday, Jan. 10, at Pagosa Springs’ Rocky Mountain Invitational, duel both Bayfield and Durango for La Plata County supremacy on Thursday, Jan. 15, at BHS, and then

hit the Aztec-hosted 1/16-17 Clash at the Coliseum, held at McGee Park in neighboring Farmington, N.M.

Additionally: Ignacio Boys’ Basketball was set to host 5A Durango on Saturday, Jan. 3, but head coach Trae Seibel said the afternoon of the 2nd that the non-league game has been relisted for Feb. 3. That made the 3A Bobcats’ first contest in 2026 their 1/8 trip to 2A Del Norte, but results (of both the boys’ and girls’ games) were unavailable at press time. IHS will then host 2A Dove Creek on Saturday, Jan. 10.

SOUTHERN UTE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

24TH ANNUAL CAREER FAIR

SAVE THE DATE

MARCH 4, 2026

9AM-1PM

SKY UTE CASINO EVENT CENTER

For more information please contact

Andrea Schultz

aschultz@southernute-nsn.gov

The Southern Ute Drum’s Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9
10				11				12		
13				14			15			
16					17					
18			19	20						
	21					22			23	
		24			25					26
27	28							29		
30						31		32		
33				34				35		
36				37				38		

Across

1 Nationwide shoe seller

4 Exploit

7 “Certainly, captain!”

10 Airport guesstimate, for short

11 Document sent over phone lines - years ago

12 Rocky pinnacle

13 Non-profit media organization

14 Arizona “Long Cut House” (Hopi)

16 Half a mint?

17 Worship

18 Shocks, sometimes

21 “Darling ---” (Julie Andrews movie)

22 Breaks a fast

24 Ticket writer

27 “Mountain lying down” in Arizona

29 Support on the links?

30 “Rutherford Falls” co-creator

32 Indication of limited liability

33 Music to Bo Peep’s ears?

34 “Deathtrap” author Levin

35 Wahoo

36 Allen wrench shape

37 Peacock network

38 Scranton’s “Noisy brook” gorge, --- Aug

Down

1 Fender flaws

2 One of the Twin Cities

3 Perpetrator of atrocities in times of conflict

4 Body of rural laborers

5 Man from Mecca

6 One who reveals

7 Administration of an oath of allegiance

8 John Lennon’s “Dear ---”

9 Ireland

15 First-stringers

19 Freshman

20 Drug to help you focus

23 Burnt crayon color

25 Louisiana descendants of Lipan Apache and Choctaw

26 Fake duck

27 Japanese port on Osaka Bay

28 Asian inland sea, once

31 Fox partner in Oklahoma

Answers will appear in the Jan. 23 issue of the Drum.

Answers for December 24, 2025 crossword puzzle.

Across: 1 Cree, 5 AMS, 8 Hans, 9 Saponi, 13 Aide, 14 Snap in, 15 STP, 16 Winners, 17 Martin, 19 Knot, 20 Ohs, 21 Del, 22 Cede, 24 Thresh, 27 Up until, 29 Tao, 30 No cost, 31 Attu, 32 Astral, 33 Teem, 34 MRE, 35 MRSA.

Down: 1 Chasm, 2 Raita, 3 End product, 4 ESE, 5 As sin, 6 Mann, 7 Spanker, 10 Open letter, 11 Niro, 12 Inst, 16 Wis, 18 The norm, 21 DHL, 22 Cuna, 23 Epos, 24 Title, 25 Sates, 26 Houma, 28 Tsar, 31 ATM.

LOCAL IGNACIO WEATHER

Friday, Jan. 9



Mostly sunny 37°F
20% chance of snow showers

Saturday, Jan. 10



Sunny 37°F
Calm evening winds

Sunday, Jan. 11



Sunny 44°F

Weather forecasts collected from www.weather.gov

