



INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY

Digital. Indigenous. News.

E-Weekly Newsletter - February 6, 2019



Pamunkey Casino rendering courtesy Jay T. Smith

How Pamunkey Tribe's proposed \$700 million casino could bring gaming to Virginia

Seven Virginia tribes are now officially recognized by the federal government. Here's why the Pamunkey Tribe sits apart

By Vincent Schilling

In 2016, the Pamunkey Tribe in Virginia received federal recognition in Virginia, becoming the first tribe in that state to be recognized. Now, in 2019, the Pamunkey are seeking to secure land in Norfolk, Virginia to begin building a proposed \$700 million casino.

With this \$700 million dollar casino, the Pamunkey—who received recognition in 2016 through the federal BIA process—are setting a precedent that has not been seen in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The state will have gaming for the first time.

The other six tribes—consisting of the Chickahominy, the Chickahominy, Eastern Division, the Monacan, the Nansemond, the Rappahannock, and the Upper Mattaponi—gained federal recognition in 2017 through Congressional legislation, known as the Thomisina Jordan Act, that signed into law by President Donald Trump on January 29, 2018.

[\(Continue reading by clicking here\)](#)

Inside this week's issue of Indian Country Today

#SOTU

Indian Country Today's Mark Trahan reacts to State of the Union address

#NativeExcellence
Native attorney makes partner at law firm

#NativeFilm
Film festival amplifies stories of Indigenous filmmakers

The State of the Union is a mix of pageantry, policy and politics

By Mark Trahant

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Screen capture

"Madam Speaker, the President of the United States." It's been a long time since those words were said. Nancy Pelosi was speaker from 2007 through 2011. In November she returned to the post after Democrats won enough seats to govern the House of Representatives.

The State of the Union -- a stage that comes with the office of President of the United States -- started two weeks late because of a government shutdown.

So President Donald J. Trump used that moment to talk about national unity. Sort of.

The prepared text said: "Together we can break decades of political stalemate. We can bridge old divisions, heal old wounds, build new coalitions, forge new solutions, and unlock the extraordinary promise of America's future. The decision is ours to make."

He said victory is not winning for our party. "The agenda I will lay out this evening is not a Republican Agenda or a Democrat Agenda. It is the agenda of the American People," he said.

[To read Trahant's entire live-blog of the State of the Union address, click here](#)

Achieving dreams, top Native attorney Elizabeth Saagulik Hensley, makes partner

By John Tepton

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(Elizabeth Saagulik Hensley)

Hensley: "We are capable beyond our wildest dreams. I love that saying "We are our ancestors wildest dreams."

This is a story about centuries-old Inupiat values, about determination, tenacity, and hard work. It's a story about a daughter whose parents and relatives encouraged her to make her dreams come true, all of them wrapped around ancestral traits passed down from one generation to another.

This is **Elizabeth Saagulik Hensley**, the youngest born to William and Abigale Hensley of Anchorage and first to become an attorney in the family.

Not only that, but Saagulik just became a partner in the law firm of Landye Bennett Blumstein LLP, a regional firm based in the Northwest and Alaska.

"Since 1955, our diverse experience and attentive service have helped public and private corporations, real estate developers, homeowner associations, municipalities, nonprofit groups, and individuals to achieve practical results. We partner with clients so they can succeed, whether it is a routine matter or a complex case. We do this by being efficient, effective, committed, and talented.

"We have built our practice around one unifying principle: hiring and retaining great lawyers. They might specialize in real estate, environmental, aircraft liability litigation, business, tax, plaintiff cases, general business litigation, or Native American law, but the one thing they have in common is that they are respected as leaders in their areas of expertise. They are part of our firm because they have chosen to practice law with colleagues who are equally talented and who have gained the respect of the legal community and the clients they serve," the firm's website said.

The firm's regional ranking places it at the top in corporate law, Native American law, environmental law, information technology law, and real estate law. It has an additional office and staff in Portland, Oregon.

[Finish reading the profile on Hensley here](#)



Indian Country Today video news report for Feb 4, 2019, with Vincent Schilling

*Team Wolves, History of the AIM song, Grand Canyon 100 year celebration and
Murkowski keeps a promise with Savanna's Act*

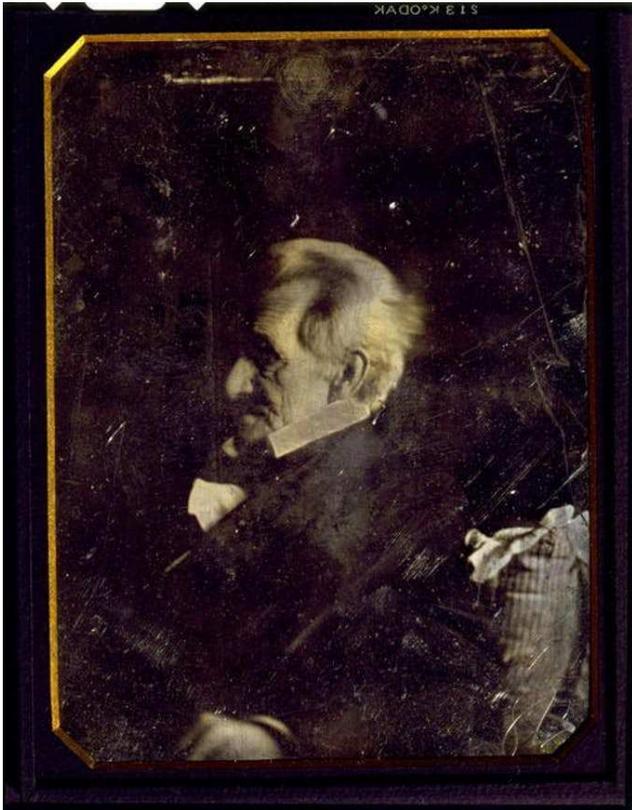
[Click here to watch!](#)

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State of the union was once the forum for Indian removal

By Jon Tepton

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Andrew Jackson (Photo: Library of Congress)

Andrew Jackson's tragic message to Congress in 1829; but Tuesday night begins a new chapter #ICTSOTU

The State of the Union was once a written message to Congress. At the end of 1829, President Andrew Jackson wrote his state of the Union with a message of support for the new states and he made it clear that he was taking Georgia's side over the Cherokee Nation.

"These States, claiming to be the only sovereigns within their territories, extended their laws over the Indians, which induced the latter to call upon the United States for protection," he wrote. "Georgia became a member of the Confederacy which eventuated in our Federal Union as a sovereign State, always asserting her claim to certain limits, which, having been originally defined in her colonial charter and subsequently recognized in the treaty of peace, she has ever since continued to enjoy, except as they have been circumscribed by her own voluntary transfer of a portion of her territory to the United States in the articles of cession of 1802."

And just to make certain that his message was clear. Jackson ticked off other states where he thought the tribal interest should be subservient.

The president wrote: "Would the people of Maine permit the Penobscot tribe to erect an independent government within their State? And unless they did would it not be the duty of the General Government to support them in resisting such a measure? Would the people of New York permit each remnant of the six Nations within her borders to declare itself an independent people under the protection of the United States? Could the Indians establish a separate republic on each of their reservations in Ohio? And if they were so disposed would it be the duty of this Government to protect them in the attempt? If the principle involved in the obvious answer to these questions be abandoned, it will follow that the objects of this Government are reversed, and that it has become a part of its duty to aid in destroying the States which it was established to protect."

He then told Congress that he "informed the Indians" that tribal self-government would not be permitted "and advised them to emigrate beyond the Mississippi."

[Continue reading Trahant's look back on the State of the Union address here](#)

Arizona State, Cronkite Journalism debuts two new Native education initiatives

By Debra Kol

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Journalism professorship explores Native American media coverage. New Online master's degree in Indigenous education

Arizona State University has announced two new programs in its Southwest Borderlands Initiative to include a program-specific professor, who will focus on Native journalism research and student recruitment, and an online master's degree program in Indigenous education, which will allow tribal citizens to obtain a graduate education degree and remain home.

Southwest Borderlands Initiative Professor

ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication is conducting a nationwide search for its newest Southwest Borderlands Initiative Professor, whose mission will focus on how the media covers and portrays Natives with an eye to improvement.

The successful candidate will join three other nationally-acclaimed news leaders who are the core of ASU's Southwest Borderlands Initiative, which serves peoples of the Southwest through research, education, and service.

"Newsrooms have struggled with diversity in general," says Cronkite School Dean Christopher Callahan. Native coverage is a particularly challenging issue for mainstream newsrooms ... Mainstream coverage [of Native issues] is infrequent and at times it lacks nuance and perspective."

Callahan says ASU's solution is to "Help prepare our students in how to cover Native American issues," and that the new professor will be a "thought leader," by shining a light on Native coverage issues. Callahan also says the professor will focus on recruiting more Native students to journalism careers and hands-on instruction, Callahan. The professor will also support Cronkite News, the school's student-run news outlet, which regularly reports on Indian Country issues.

Since the American Society of News Editors reports that just 0.36 percent of newsroom employees throughout the United States identify as Native, Callahan sees this new position as supporting the growth of Native journalists that could potentially grow into newsroom leaders. ([Finish reading about initiatives here](#))



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President names David Bernhardt new Interior secretary

By Mark Trahant

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David Bernhardt at his swearing in as deputy Interior secretary. (Creative Commons photo)

Senate must confirm the president's new choice for Interior secretary

President Donald J. Trump announced the appointment of David Bernhardt Jr. as the secretary of the Interior. He replaces Ryan Zinke who resigned in December. The announcement was made via Twitter.

Bernhardt is described by Think Progress as "a quintessential **revolving-door figure** in Washington." The liberal news site described a meeting with lobbyists in late 2017 with MGM Resorts International, who had opposed an effort by two tribes to build a casino in Connecticut.

However conservatives and energy developers are praising the appointment because Bernhardt will continue the pro-energy development policies of the Trump administration.

Bernhardt has a lot of experience working for the Department of the Interior or representing clients, including the oil and gambling industry, that had business with the agency.

According to Open Secrets, several tribes, including the Navajo Nation, hired Bernhardt's firm as a representative on specific issues.

He was the top lawyer for Interior in the George W. Bush administration in 2006.

Bernhardt told E&E News last year that he is far more familiar with the department's inner workings than was outgoing Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke at the outset, though their policy preferences are similar. "I can't think of an instance in the past year where I've done something where I would not be very confident that he and I were 100 percent on the same page," Bernhardt told E&E News.

Bernhardt would have to be confirmed by the Senate before taking office.

As the deputy secretary, Bernhardt told tribes that the budget will remain tight. "But at the end of the day for us it's going to be about how can we best provide the money we have in a way that's efficient and effective and gets the most bang for its buck."

The Department of Interior is an \$11 billion agency.

Indigenous films transcend boundaries at Sundance Film Festival

By Jourdan Bennett-Begaye

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The 2019 Sundance Film Festival continues to amplify stories of Indigenous filmmakers.

Sundance Institute's Native American and Indigenous Film Program renames its program to the Indigenous Program in light of its 25th anniversary.

The program's director Bird Runningwater announced the name change on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) during the 11-day independent film festival.

The festival started Jan. 24 and ends Feb. 3, and takes place in Park City, Utah

"The program name change is both appropriate and timely, especially in light of our increasingly global Indigenous reach, which transcends borders," said Runningwater.

The program focused on providing residency labs, fellowships, public programming and "a year-round continuum of creative, financial and tactical support" to Indigenous artists, according to the [press release](#). The program also helps to connect Indigenous artists with storytelling opportunities that will allow them to tell their own stories, which is a way to "inspire self-determination."

Author and University of Kansas professor Robert Warrior congratulated the organization and program for the name change on social media. He then posed a question to the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, "NAISA, is it time to become the Indigenous Studies Association?"

Shirley Sneve, executive director of Vision Maker Media, agreed with the institute's decision because "Native is a term that a lot of people want to claim like I'm a native Nebraskan, in addition to being a Native American."

"It seems natural to expand their reach and rename it. The word native is politically-loaded and Indigenous probably describes it a bit better," she said, especially if the reach is beyond the United States. "As Indigenous people from around the world a lot of us have similarities and colonized pasts and I've definitely learned a great deal from my Indigenous filmmakers friends about generational trauma and resiliency."

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Indian Country Today

E-weekly Newsletter

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