

The Southern Ute Drum

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Inside The Drum

Update	2
Culture	3
Health	4
Education	5
Sports	7
Youth	9
Voices	13
Notices	14
Classifieds	15
Back Page	16



Men at work

By Ace Stryker
The Southern Ute Drum

When Southern Ute Tribal Housing Director Mel Baker hires a trainee, he takes the job seriously.

Baker lately has undertaken a personal mission: to give young tribal members a set of skills they can use to be successful employees anywhere they go, whether with the tribe or private contractors. So when he assembled four new trainees in a warehouse near the site of the old Sky Ute Casino Pavilion for a week of hands-on training, he wasn't just going through the motions.

"To me, it's very important: giving these younger tribal members an opportunity that was never given to me," he said. "Really, I want to teach them what to expect when they go out in the real world. ... I'm just hoping they'll hit the ground running with the basics."

The first day of training on Tuesday, Feb. 21 began with tool familiarization, in which the young employees — construction repair labor trainees Jonathan Chavez, Anthony "Asa" Ortiz and Aaron Pena of the Tribal Housing Department, and construction repair tech trainee Julius Baker of the



photos Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

Anthony "Asa" Ortiz, a construction repair labor trainee with the Southern Ute Tribal Housing Department, gets ready to paint during a training session on Tuesday, Feb. 21.

Construction Services Division — learned the use of a variety of saws and other tools, then put them to work building a workbench.

They also began framing a small structure, one they would use later in the week to practice installing sheetrock, painting, insulation, and other parts of the job.

"It was really helpful," Ortiz said.

On Day 2, Baker sent the crew to a tribe-sponsored CPR training for certification — a skill not specifically Tribal Housing-related, but regarded as generally important. Day 3 saw the trainees working with a contract electrician on changing out electrical plugs, and on

the final day of training Baker sent them to a job site to continue learning from contractors.

"I want to get young tribal members in there to learn," he said. "We were trying to see how we could continue to keep these young tribal members working."

Training page 8

Tribal eyes on tribal skies

Southern Ute permitting program first in Indian Country

By Ace Stryker
The Southern Ute Drum

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe's Air Quality Program won approval on Friday, March 2 to begin issuing its own operating permits to major sources of air pollution on the reservation, becoming the first tribe in the nation to do so.

Issuing permits has traditionally been a duty of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, who before now had only granted it to individual states who made successful applications. But when EPA Region 8 Administrator James B. Martin signed the tribe's application at about 10 a.m. in Denver, the tribe effectively won the right to be treated as a state.

"We're really looking forward to taking over," said Brenda Jarrell, manager of the tribe's Air Quality Program. "The Southern

Tribal skies page 6

Sanford's rally shocks Ignacio

Boys fall in regional final

By Joel Priest
Special to the Drum

There's something to be said for the Ignacio High School boys' basketball program when a gym the size of Durango's DemonDome — stuffed mostly with Bobcat backers great and small — goes nearly silent.

A state tournament "Great Eight" trip is an expectation, not a distant goal.

But on Saturday, March 3, the goal seemed as distant as Pueblo, and its Events Center, is from Ignacio. And at the worst time possible: IHS managed two points in the fourth quarter of the 2A-Region III finale, while the Sanford Indians racked up 22 to swipe a stunning 61-53 verdict.

"Yeah, it was a tough, long game," said senior Shane Richmond in a quiet, shaky voice. "And we gave it our all, tried our best. ... Got a little tired there at the end. Just couldn't pull it off."

"We just played hard all three quarters," said sophomore Clayton Jefferson, who fouled out with 28 seconds left, and was just as hushed, "and that last quarter we ... lacked energy."

Which was, simply put, electric and free-flowing from the outset; SHS head coach Rhett Larsen, incensed, called timeout just 40 seconds in after a turnover and a Richmond jumper over a double-team. Any revised plans were proven futile: Richmond, who managed IHS's final basket about 90 seconds into the fourth, racked up 11 first-quarter points, and Jefferson sank a key three with 1:25 left.

Down 14-10 after the opening eight minutes, Sanford (20-5 before Thursday night's game against 23-0 Denver Christian) could have packed it all in if not for two triples by guard Calder Larsen. For Richmond, netting 10 points more in the second,



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio's Adison Jones (33) has a defensive rebound disrupted by Sanford's Mason Larsen (20), while Bobcat teammate Shane Richmond (10) attempts to clear some space in the congested lane during the Saturday, March 3 2A-Region III Tournament championship in Durango.

appeared two steps swifter in the paint with SHS posts Stetson Edgar and Colton Crowther also having to respect freshman Adison Jones' shooting ability.

"They got it in to their big man, just like we expected," lamented SHS guard Josh Jarvis.

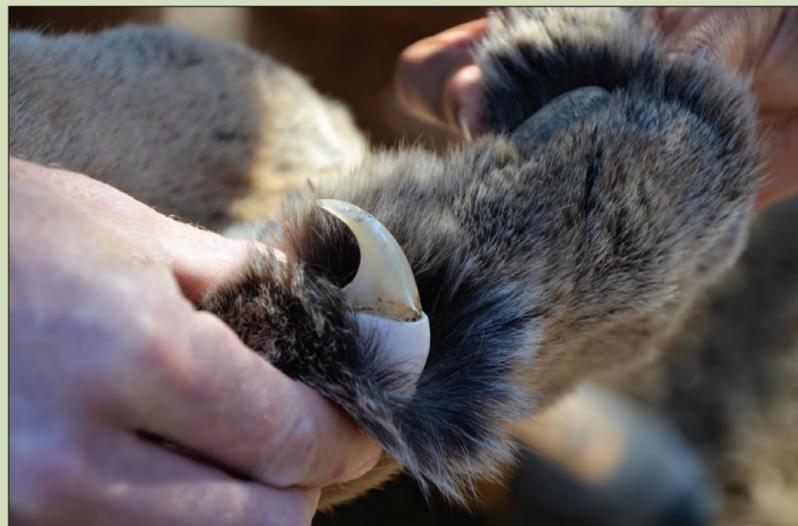
And Jefferson? Opened the frame with a three, then added an "and-one" free throw on his next score from distance, putting Ignacio up 21-12 with 6:52 left in the half. Richmond followed soon after with the first of three (two were completed) bucket-with-bonus efforts, taking one hack from Edgar and two from Larsen.

Jarvis' first trey and an Edgar hoop underneath, with just 0:01 left, gave Sanford, trailing 33-23, a flickering hope in the still-roaring venue, only to see Richmond threaten to extinguish it with a three-pointer after Jarvis began the third quarter with a miss.

Larsen (24 points) responded with a critical three-ball, but after Sanford closed to just eight points with 4:17 left, Ignacio fought through revamped full-court pressure to go up 46-32 on an Adam Herrera breakaway with 2:12 remaining.

Ignacio page 7

Mountain lion killed on 550



photos Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

An adult male mountain lion met an early end on Thursday, Feb. 23 in an encounter with traffic on U.S. Highway 550 near the Colorado-New Mexico state line. The Southern Ute Tribal Rangers acted quickly, recovering the animal and turning it over to the tribe's Wildlife Resource Management Division. For the full story, see the back page.