

The Southern Ute Drum

WINNER OF FOUR NATIVE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION AWARDS INCLUDING GENERAL EXCELLENCE IN 2011

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From the hawk's perspective



photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

Southern Ute Wildlife Biologist Aran Johnson and helicopter pilot Mark Shelton make a pass over the mountains toward Ignacio during the annual aerial game count, conducted each year to track long-term health trends in deer and elk populations on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. See more count photos on page 8.

By **Jeremy Wade Shockley**
The Southern Ute Drum

Flying birds-eye over the Southern Ute Indian Reservation, Southern Ute Wildlife Division biologist Aran Johnson manages the aerial game count annually by helicopter.

Spanning four days each January, the survey tracks the location and size of elk and mule deer populations across reservation lands. While smaller animals are also counted, the focus is on big game, Johnson said.

"The tribe has been flying big-game aerial classification surveys for nearly 30 years," he said.

The greatest benefit of an aerial survey is the ability to track population and herd health trends over the long term, Johnson said. While the State of Colorado manages its own wildlife records in the surrounding regions, it's important

for the tribe "to have its own look, a number to base its decisions on," he said.

"The vast majority of animals that winter on the reservation are migratory, and so communicating with surrounding jurisdictions is critical for management region-wide," he said.

Criss-crossing the mountains on Friday, Jan. 6, Johnson and Wildlife Technician Danielle Austin traversed the Vega, Escondido and Carracas units with pilot Mark Shelton, owner and operator of Native Range Capture Services Inc. Shelton and crew have worked for tribal, state and federal wildlife agencies across North America.

Touching down only to refuel, the fly-overs are run with a high level of experience and efficiency.

The Wildlife Division is proud to say it's been able to streamline its efforts in recent years, Johnson said.

Wildlife page 8



photo courtesy Aran Johnson/SU Wildlife

10 questions with Chairman Jimmy R. Newton Jr.

By **Ace Stryker**
The Southern Ute Drum

What factors led to your decision to resign from the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council and run for chairman?

The experience that I gained over the years of being elected three times to Tribal Council, being a vice chair, and being acting chairman twice. I wanted to challenge myself and see how I could contribute, to see what I could bring to the table.



Were there specific issues you hoped to address if elected?

At one time, we had developed a priority list of things we needed to get done. I wanted to go back to keeping a list, which is our working document. Are we tackling the membership's priorities? The next step is to make a checklist and provide it to the membership as information. I'd like the membership to know exactly what we're working on, and if we're completing those things. I plan on working on new focus groups this spring to determine what our priorities should be.

What was it about Steve R. Herrera Sr. and Amy Barry that you felt qualified them for executive officer positions?

Mr. Herrera was a former colleague of mine. Really, his work performance and dedication to the Southern Ute Tribe stood out. On council, he was here every day, was committed to tribal business, and made good, sound decisions in the chambers. I have a lot of respect for that. For Ms. Barry, the biggest thing that I wanted was having a younger tribal member

Newton page 3

IHS boys save 7th in Aztec

By **Joel Priest**
Special to the Drum

Among its own catalog of wide-ranging athletic achievements, the state of New Mexico still boasts a claim to the most consistently high-scoring high school hoop squad in American annals.

The Land of Enchantment had only just turned 58 before the end of the 1969-70 prep season, in which Hobbs went 26-1 en route to a state title, eviscerated enemies with an unprecedented 114 per-game average (amassing 3,094 points, third-most ever in U.S.; Ignacio totaled 1,609 in going 22-4 last year), and strung together a still-record 14 consecutive 100-

IHS Boys page 7

Youth basketball returns



photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

Youth basketball has returned to the SunUte Community Center in force. Nineteen teams of kids 5 - 12 will compete in four divisions over the next two months. For team photos and schedules, see pages 12 and 13.

Youth host New Year's powwow



photo Ace Stryker/SU DRUM

Southern Ute tribal members Head Woman Dancer Tricia Leroy and Head Man Dancer Greg Bison dances into the Ignacio High School gym during the grand entry at the Native American Youth Organization's New Year's Community Celebration on Saturday, Dec. 31, 2011. For more powwow photos, see page 9.