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**Sent:** Wednesday, November 27, 2024 10:55 AM  
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**Subject:** Native American Heritage Month Edition 2024



# STORYTELLER

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Native American Heritage Edition

2024

In this edition of the G&G Storyteller we celebrate Native American Heritage Month by highlighting major accomplishments in Indian Country. First we will highlight G&G's work this year, we will then look at the major wins for Indian Country within the Department of the Interior under the leadership of Deb Haaland. We then highlight the largest Dam Removal Project in U.S. History, and end with highlighting Native people elected to office.

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## FDAS NEXT LEGENDS CAMP

This year at G&G, we were busy at work with The Next Legends Campaign. Next Legends is an FDA-sponsored e-cigarette prevention campaign aimed at Native youths ages 12-17. The campaign educates Native youth on the mental and physical effects of vaping. This year we worked with numerous Indigenous Athletes across Indian Country to promote the campaign message of Anti-Vaping to Native American youth, as well as collaborated with various AIAN athletic events over the year, to help promote the campaign message.

The Alaska Native Youth Olympics and Native American Basketball Invitational, in Phoenix, A were a couple of the events our campaign had a presence at. We then had the great privilege of working with, Milwaukee Bucks small forward, Marjon Beauchamp (La

Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians), and PBR Bull-Rider Keyshawn Whitehorse (Navajo) for content creation at the Indian National Finals Rodeo. We helped develop tailored-campaign messaging from athletes and influencers such as: Oklahoma Sooners Quarterback Casey Thompson (Kiowa), Minnesota Lynx Forward Alissa Pili (Inupiaq/Samoan), Premier Lacrosse League Carolina Chaos midfielder Kyle Jackson (Ojibwe), and Bull Rider Najiah Knight (Klamath Tribes).

Native youth consume tobacco products at a higher rate than any other group, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2022, over 15 percent of Native youth reported using e-cigarettes or vapes. If you vape, you're not only affecting yourself, but you're also affecting your team and the team's outcome, which is why our campaign features lacrosse, basketball, rodeo, and canoeing. The campaign slogan, "There's No Vape in Team," and "No Days Off" was aimed at educating youth on the risks posed to their athletic ability. By making good choices, and being commercial tobacco-free.



In December 2020, President-elect Joe Biden announced Deb Haaland as his pick to lead the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Senate ultimately confirmed Haaland's appointment as interior secretary on March 15, 2021, by a 51–40 vote, making her the first Native American to hold a cabinet secretary position.

As interior secretary, Haaland was able to implement many programs. She established the Missing and Murdered Unit in the Bureau of Indian Affairs to investigate the epidemic of unsolved violence against Indigenous people and organizing listening sessions across Native communities to give voice to survivors and descendants of American Indian boarding schools.

She has additionally focused on issues related to climate change, including strengthening protections for public lands and endangered habitats as part of the Biden administration's "30 by 30" plan to conserve 30 percent of U.S. lands and water by 2030. On November 19, 2021, Haaland issued Secretarial Order 3404, a directive to remove derogatory language against Native American women from U.S. place names and In September 2022 the Interior Department announced that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names had updated names for 650 public sites across the United States.

And in 2022, the Interior Department announced that for the first time in the agency's history, it will require formal consultation with the Native Hawaiian community on matters of the rights and sovereignty of Native Hawaiians. In 2023, the Interior Department grew the number of public land co-stewardship agreements with Tribes across the country from 20 to 200, the largest-ever increase in history. In 2023 alone, the Department of the Interior protected more than 12.5 million acres of public lands.

Secretary Haaland has made historic investments in Indian Country, channeling more conservation investments to Tribal communities than any other interior secretary. Through her leadership, Secretary Haaland has not only broken barriers, but she has set the bar for future Interior Secretaries to uphold the government's treaty obligations to the 574 federally recognized Tribes and conserve lands for future generations.



The largest dam-removal project in history was completed in October, freeing 420 miles of the Klamath River and its tributaries in California and Oregon. The Klamath River, once the third-largest salmon-producing river on the West Coast, has faced drastic declines in fish populations since the construction of hydroelectric dams began in 1918. The river's blocked flow reduced water quality, increased temperatures, and made it nearly impossible for salmon and steelhead to complete their life cycles. This represents a major victory for the Klamath Basin Tribes, the States of California and Oregon, and numerous environmental and fishing groups.

The movement "Un-Dam the Klamath" is a social movement that has been ongoing for over 20 years to remove the dams on the Klamath River primarily because they prevent salmon, steelhead, and other species of fish from accessing the upper basin which provides hundreds of miles of spawning habitat. The dams have also significantly harmed the Tribal communities of Shasta, Hupa, Karuk, Klamath, and Yurok. The movement gained national attention following the 2002 Klamath River fish kill, when at least 33,000 salmon and steelhead died along the banks of the Klamath upon returning to the river and failing to reach their spawning grounds in the upper basin.

The recent removal of the dams, which had blocked the Klamath River's natural flow for over a century, restores nearly 400 miles of vital habitat for salmon and other species that are essential to the river's ecosystem and the Tribal communities that depend on them. Yurok Tribal Chairman Joseph L. James states "The tribally led effort to dismantle the dams is an expression of our sacred duty to maintain balance in the world. That is why we fought so hard for so long to tear down the dams and bring the salmon home."



Election Day 2024 saw 178 Native candidates on ballots in 24 states across the country. The 2024 election season started with 250 Indigenous candidates before those candidates were whittled down heading into the general election. Compared to the midterm elections in 2022, there has been a 44 percent increase in Native candidates in 2024, according to Advance Native Political Leadership. The 178 Native candidates up for election included 95 Democrats, 21 Republicans, 3 independents and 59 nonpartisans, as well as 104 women, 71 men, and three nonbinary or Two-Spirit people.

Below are the Native candidates who won political positions:

- Renee Tsosie, Diné, took 21.62 percent of the vote to be elected as the three board members for Page Unified School District 8.
- Desiree Fowler, Diné, took 24.45 percent of the vote to be elected as the three board members for Page Unified School District 8.

- Ronald B. Begay, Diné, was one of the three candidates for a four-year term for Tuba City Unified School District 15.
- Marie B. Acothley, Navajo, was one of the three candidates for a four-year term for Tuba City Unified School District 15.
- Linda Honahni, Hopi, was uncontested for a two-year term for Tuba City Unified School District 15.
- Jackie Fielder, MHA Nation, won against six candidates with 40 percent of the vote for San Francisco Board of Supervisors District 9.
- Todd Gloria, Tlingit, won with 56 percent of the vote against Larry Turner for mayor of San Diego. In 2020, Gloria became the city's first mayor of color and its first openly gay mayor.
- Mary Ann Carbone, Chumash, ran unopposed as mayor of Sand City. She made history in 2017 when she was unanimously appointed as mayor and became Sand City's first-ever female mayor and first-ever mayor with Indigenous heritage.
- Sharice Davids, Ho-Chunk, Democrat, took 53 percent of the vote to defeat Prasnath Reddy and Steve Roberts for the District 3 U.S. House of Representatives seat in Kansas.
- Angel Charley, Laguna Pueblo and Diné, won the New Mexico District 24 State Senate. Charley ran uncontested.
- Patricia Roybal Caballero, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian tribe and Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, won her race for the New Mexico House District 13. Roybal Caballero, Democrat, ran uncontested.
- Doreen Wonda Johnson, Diné, won her race for New Mexico House District 5. Johnson, Democrat, ran uncontested.
- Derrick Lente, Sandia Pueblo, won his race for New Mexico House District 65. Lente, Democrat, ran uncontested.
- Michelle Abeyta, Diné, won her race for New Mexico House District 69. Abeyta, Democrat, ran uncontested.
- Benny Shendo, Diné, won his race for New Mexico State Senate District 22. Shendo, Democrat, ran unopposed.
- Shannon Pinto, Diné, won her race for New Mexico State Senate District 3. Pinto, Democrat, ran uncontested.
- Jarrod Lowery, Lumbee, kept his seat in the North Carolina House of Representatives District 047. Lowery, Republican, was first elected in 2022. He beat Eshonda Hooper, Democrat, with 66 percentage points.
- John Earl Cummings Jr., Lumbee, won his race for Robeson County Board of Commissioners District 3. Cummings was unopposed.

- Judy Oxendine Sampson, Lumbee, won her race for Robeson County Board of Commissioners District 5. Oxendine Sampson, a Democrat, ran unopposed.
- Elaine Lowery Brayboy, Lumbee, won the race for Hoke County Register of Deeds. Brayboy, Democrat, won by 85.95 percentage points.
- Jayme Davis, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, won the race for North Dakota House District 9. Davis and Collette Brown, both Democrats, won by 32 and 24 percentage points, respectively, beating Robert Graywater and David Brien.
- Richard Marcellais, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, won his race for North Dakota State Senate District 9. Marcellais defeated Judy Etenson.
- Lisa Finley-DeVille, MHA Nation, won the race for North Dakota District 4A State Representative. Finley-DeVille, a Democrat, won with 63 percent of the vote, beating fellow MHA citizen Ronald Brugh.
- Collette Brown, Spirit Lake Nation, won the race for North Dakota House District 9 alongside Jayme Davis 24.43 and 32.17 percentage points respectively.
- Josh Brecheen, Choctaw, U.S. House of Representatives District 2, Republican, took nearly 74 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Brandon Wade and Independent Ronnie Hopkins.
- Tom Cole, Chickasaw, U.S. House of Representatives District 4, Republican, took nearly 65 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Mary Brannon and Independent James Stacy.
- Scott Fetgatter, Choctaw, Oklahoma House of Representatives District 16, Republican, took nearly 71 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Rosie Lynch.
- Ken Luttrell, Cherokee, Oklahoma House of Representatives District 37, Republican, took nearly 79 percent of the vote to defeat Independent Carter Rogers.
- John Pfeiffer, Cherokee, Oklahoma House of Representatives District 38, Republican, took nearly 85 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Doyle Lewis.
- Hurchel "Trey" Caldwell, Cherokee, Oklahoma House of Representatives District 63, Republican, took nearly 81 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Shykira Smith.
- Mark Vancuren, Cherokee, Oklahoma House of Representatives District 74, Republican, took nearly 76 percent of the vote to defeat Independent Aaron Brent.
- David Hardin, Cherokee, Oklahoma House of Representatives District 86, Republican, took nearly 77 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Anne Fite.
- Sarah Gray, Cherokee, Tulsa County Board of Commissioners District 2, Democrat, took just over 50 percent of the vote to defeat Republican Lonnie Sims.
- Fawn Pedalino, Natchez-Kusso Tribe, South Carolina House of Representatives District 64, Republican, took 56 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Quadri Bell.
- Bryan Terry, Choctaw, Tennessee House of Representatives District 48, Republican, took nearly 65 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Matt Ferry.

## Conclusion

As we wrap up Native American Heritage Month, we reflect on the successes and achievements in Indian Country. Our work at G&G with the Next Legends Campaign continues as we push the anti-vaping message to our Native youth. Deb Haaland will be greatly missed as she leaves office in the new year, but she leaves a lasting impact and sets the bar for future secretaries of the interior for working in Indian Country. The Klamath River is now a free flowing river, and salmon, steelhead, and other fish are now returning to the upper Klamath basin for the first time since the construction of dams in 1918. 35 Native Candidates won political positions nationally in this election, which is a huge win for the future of Indian Country!

We wish everyone Happy Holidays and safe travels as they gather with loved ones during gatherings and celebrations. Let us remember the reasons we gather as Native people, to be together socially in thanks and gratitude with loved ones, family, and community.

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