



INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY

Digital. Indigenous. News.



2018 Top Stories

Welcome to our newsletter issue celebrating the best of 2018

By Associate Editor Vincent Schilling

We've come a long way in 2018 thanks to the insights of our esteemed editor Mark Trahan who saw fit to create a new website, and embark on a venture to live broadcast election night with #NativeVote18.

We literally started with a skeleton crew with Mark Trahan and myself, then Indian Country Today hired our first staff reporter Jourdan Bennett-Begaye.

We now have contributor Lisa J. Ellwood posting to the press pool on a consistent basis, NCAI fellow Kolby KickingWoman assisting with the newsletter and an ever-growing team of freelancers and opinion-editorial contributors from all over Indian Country.

Our first year as the new Indian Country Today was extremely exciting and we have been doing our utmost to share the news in Indian Country, coordinate with tribal news organizations and give the best we can give.

We will be posting the stories in this newsletter as if they were live, to give a feel of being in the moment. 2018 was an exciting year for news.

Welcome to our year-end newsletter of Indian Country Today

#ICTTopStories
Check out which stories were most read in 2018

#ICTNewsletter2019
Welcome to 2019, see ya later alligator to 2018

#NativeNews
Make sure to keep coming back all year as ICT continues to grow!

Top Stories February - April 2018

Indian Country Today E-weekly Newsletter - January 2019 Page 2

It's Official: Indian Country Today Is Back In Business

February 28, 2018



Indian Country Today has new leadership and will be fully back in business soon. At the beginning of this month, the ownership of the digital platform was transferred from the Oneida Indian Nation in New York to the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C. Indian Country Today has been on a hiatus since September.

Heading up the Indian Country Today editorial team is Mark Trahant (Shoshone-Bannock) as Indian Country Today Editor and Vincent Schilling (Akwesasne Mohawk) as Associate Editor. The digital publication will continue on “publishing lightly” until this spring when there will be a build up of its operation, a shift to a new web platform, and an increased staff.

“ICT is also seeking an expanded presence within public media by producing a newscast for Native radio stations about Native issues on Capitol Hill.” “Under its new direction, ICT will focus on “service, rather than making a profit,” Trahant said. In addition to providing original reporting from its staff, it will rely more on freelancers and other tribal news publications and will re-publish press releases from Native organizations.” [Full story here](#)

Trump Administration Supports Changing Indian Health Programs

Trump administration maintains tribes are a race rather than sovereign governments and Indian Health should not be exempt from Medicaid’s ‘race-based’ work rules. The Trump administration is supporting a major policy shift on Indian health programs which could result in a loss of millions of dollars to the Indian Health Service while also sabotaging treaty rights. [Full story here -- By Mark Trahant | April 2018](#)

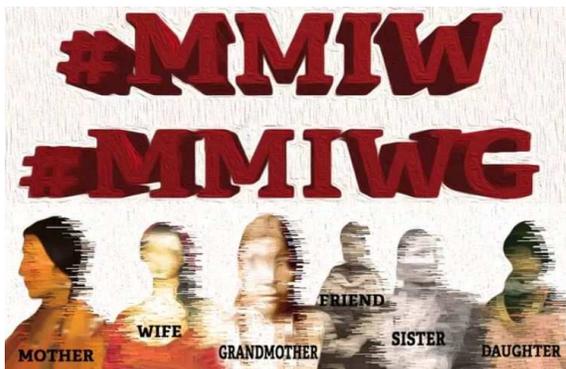
Four Efforts To Increase #MMIW Awareness Include A Film, Website, Law And Daily Tweet

The efforts to increase awareness regarding the terrible tragedies of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, #MMIW and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls #MMIWG, are getting an increased boost in exposure due to a new Washington state law, a continuous daily tweet that gets hundreds of shares and retweets daily, a new documentary film titled 1200+ and a new MMIW data website run by a doctoral student.

These four efforts include the following:

The Documentary Film 1200+ | MMIW Database Website

A New Washington State Law Orders A Study On How To Increase Reporting on MMIW | [A Daily Tweet by @DelSchilling -- Full story here](#)
[By Vincent Schilling | April 2018](#)



Top Stories April - May 2018

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May 5th voted National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls in the U.S.

Senator John Hoeven, R-North Dakota, chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and Senators Heidi Heitkamp, D-North Dakota and Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., among other Congressional leaders announced Thursday that the Senate had passed a resolution designating May 5th as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls, MMIW / MMIWG. [Full story here -- By Vincent Schilling | April 2018](#)

Canadian Government announces it will purchase Kinder Morgan Pipeline for \$3.45b

The Canadian Finance Minister Bill Morneau has just announced to reporters that they will purchase the Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline – a controversial pipeline that runs from the Alberta oil sands to the country's pacific coast – for \$3.45 billion (C\$4.5bn). The pipeline expansion will triple the capacity of pipelines in place to ship oil extracted from Alberta to the Canadian Rockies to nearly 890,000 barrels a day. The expansion would also create a seven-fold increase in the number of oil tankers in an area already subject to environmental concerns.

“The federal government has reached an agreement with Kinder Morgan to purchase the existing Trans Mountain pipeline, and infrastructure related to the Trans Mountain expansion project,” Finance Minister Bill Morneau told reporters at a press conference. “So our message today is simple: when we are faced with an exceptional situation that puts jobs at risk, that puts our international reputation on the line, our government is prepared to take action,” he said. The pipeline has already received tremendous opposition from protesters to include indigenous residents in Canada. Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs told The Guardian in December 2016. “The marches and rallies will intensify. It will become more litigious, it will become more political and the battle will continue.” [Full story here -- May 2018](#)

May is Foster Care Month: Native foster families are needed

The State of Utah is one example, there are an estimated 130 Native children in state custody, but less than 20 Native foster and kinship homes. In the State of Utah, there are an estimated 130 Native children in state custody. However, with less than 20 Native foster and kinship homes, many of the children are not able to be placed with Native families.

According to Stephanie L. Benally, Diné of the Red Streak People and born for Bitter Water, there is a great need for Native foster homes statewide and nationwide. Benally is also the Native American Specialist and Foster-Adoptive Consultant at Utah Foster Care. Utah Foster Care is a non-profit organization that covers the entire State of Utah. Utah Foster Care recruits, trains, and supports foster parents. They work with the Utah Division of Child and Family Services to find foster care homes for the children that come into state custody.

[Full story here -- By Vincent Schilling | May 2018](#)



Healthy Children, Healthy Nations

Build whole, healthy children this new year. Add healthy foods into your family's diet and sign them up for health coverage.

For more information, visit Medicaid.gov or Insurekidsnow.gov, or to enroll your child, please contact your local Indian health program, or call 1-800-318-2596 (TTY: 1-855-889-4325)



Top Stories June 2018

Indian Country remembers the horror of children stripped from their parents' arms

Many in Indian Country was quick to condemn the Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy

[Full story here](#)

In historic first, NE. farmer returns land to Ponca Tribe along "Trail of Tears"

June 10 ceremony included Ponca Chairman Larry Wright Jr., Nebraska landowner Art Tanderup, Ponca Nation of OK. members

[Full story here](#)

Some First Nations oppose the Canadian government's purchase of Kinder Morgan

Challenging Trudeau's veto claim, Indigenous Rights Bill passes in House of Commons.

[Full story here](#)

Census releases latest population numbers, Native Americans are at 2.09%

2017 National Census estimates are calling the U.S. "A More Diverse Nation." Oglala Lakota County, S.D. is 93.9% Native

[Full story here](#)

Tribal gaming is a \$32 billion business: NIGC releases annual revenue figures

The National Indian Gaming Commission cites an overall majority increase in Indian Gaming numbers across the nation

[Full story here](#)

Top Stories July 2018

Pruitt resigns, Wheeler steps in: Will change at EPA bring about change or not?

Scott Pruitt the controversial EPA administrator resigned last week after White House investigations, enter Wheeler

[Full story here](#)

Senator Heitkamp's Commission on Native Children Begins Its Work to Address Challenges

Commission Holds First Meeting to Address Challenges Native Children Face, such as Poverty, Abuse, Suicide, Education

[Full story here](#)

Interior denies Mashpee trust land: 'You do not meet definition of an Indian'

On Sept. 7, the Department of Interior told the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe they didn't meet the requirements to have their 321-acres of land placed into trust. The tribal nation wanted to use the land in the town of Mashpee for their government and the other land in the town of Taunton for the First Light Resort and Casino. The decision, as described by Tara Sweeney, assistant secretary of Indian Affairs, serves as the liaison between the tribes and federal government, was told to the tribe in a letter that they were not "under federal jurisdiction" when the Indian Reorganization Act was passed in 1934. They also do not meet the definition of "Indian" as stated in the policy. [Full story here -- By Jourdan Bennett-Begaye](#)

VAWA: Department of Justice to double funding for violence against Native women

Heitkamp: "Senate passes temporary extension of Violence Against Women Act, but long-term renewal needed." The U.S. Department of Justice told the Associated Press that it will double the funding it grants tribes for public safety programs and crime victims as it seeks to address the disproportionately high-rates of violence against Native American women. DOJ officials are seeking to provide an approximate \$113 million in public safety funding for 133 tribes and Alaska Native villages, according to Jesse Panuccio, the Justice Department's acting associate attorney general. An additional \$133 million will be awarded to serve efforts to help Native American crime victims. [Full story here -- By Vincent Schilling](#)

Shot, killed by police for lighter fluid? The family of Eric Hash speaks to Indian Country Today

Alaska State Trooper shot Hash for carrying "incapacitating, flammable liquid." then denied him medical assistance In the early morning hours of July 6, Alaska State Trooper Kamau Leigh exited his vehicle, drew his service weapon, and killed Eric Hash, a 38-year-old Ahtna Athabascan man living in the tiny Alaska Native village of Copper Center. A statement from the Alaska Department of Public Safety said Eric had "advanced toward" Trooper Leigh carrying a container of "incapacitating, flammable liquid." "It was lighter fluid," Eric's mother Evelyn told Indian Country Today. [Full story here -- By Frank Hopper](#)

Choctaw Nation Poteau Health Clinic Employee Snapchats Anti-Native Comments

A non-Native registered Nurse employed by the Choctaw Nation Health Clinic in Poteau, Oklahoma was under fire for anti-Native comments made on social media. Jill White Snapchatted the following on her way to work at the 2018 Choctaw Nation Labor Day Weekend Festival. It spread like wildfire amongst Native Americans on Facebook: White posted to Snapchat: "Excited to go make sure a bunch of fat natives don't stroke out playing softball." On Wednesday September 5, 2018, the Choctaw Nation confirmed the employee was terminated.

This was Indian Country Today's most read story in 2018.

[Full story here -- By Lisa J. Ellwood](#)



Top Stories October 2018

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'Our relatives are calling for help' Northwest Tribes stand up for dying Orcas

To researchers she is J-35. To the Native people of the Salish Sea she is Tahlequah, the young orca mother who pushed the lifeless body of her newborn calf in front of her for 17 days. The birth and death of the baby on July 24 coincided with this year's Tribal Canoe Journey, the Paddle to Puyallup, and many took Tahlequah's extended public grieving period as a sign to coastal Native people that their relatives from under the water were calling for help. On September 13, just a month and a half after the baby's death, another orca from the same pod was declared dead. J50, known as Scarlett, died of malnutrition. Another death earlier in the summer of a young male, Crewser, J-92, brings the number of Southern Resident Killer Whales in Puget Sound down to just 74. [Full story here -- By Frank Hopper](#)

Texas Judge rules Indian Child Welfare Act as unconstitutional

The Indian Child Welfare Act was dealt a substantial blow on Friday, when a U.S. Federal Judge in the Northern District of Texas ruled the landmark legislation unconstitutional. According to the law, when a Native child is up for adoption, family members, other tribal members, and then other Native homes are to be prioritized for placement. Ample research shows that all children, Native and non-Native alike, have better outcomes when they are raised with family, extended family or in their community over state child welfare systems and foster homes.

National child advocacy organizations have praised the act as a gold standard for child welfare. The act is often referred to by its acronym, ICWA. The republican appointee, Judge Reed O'Conner, ruled ICWA is a "race based statute" that violates the Equal Protection Clause of the constitution.

In the 47-page *Brackeen v. Zinke* decision, O'Conner also argued that ICWA violates the 10th amendment by "commandeering" state courts to enforce a federal law. [Full story here -- By Rebecca Nagle](#)

Jury acquits man of murder conspiracy in Savanna LaFontaine- Greywind death



Though William Hoehn had pleaded guilty to felony charges of conspiring to commit kidnapping and lying to police, a 12-person jury found Hoehn not guilty of a charge of conspiring to murder Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind in August 2017. Hoehn, 33, along with his ex-girlfriend Brooke Crews, 39, were charged with conspiring to murder the pregnant 22-year-old LaFontaine-Greywind and kidnap her baby. The case is a grisly one, in which Hoehn and Crews had abducted LaFontaine-Greywind, and claimed that she had fallen and hit her head on the bathroom sink. The pregnant woman then had the baby cut from her womb and had a rope placed around her neck to strangle her. The coroner has since ruled LaFontaine-Greywind's death was from blood loss or strangulation. Hoehn's girlfriend has previously pleaded guilty to her charges and is now serving a life sentence in prison. Hoehn will be sentenced on his charges at a later date. He remains in custody. The maximum sentence on conspiring to kidnap is 20 years, while the lying to police charge is 360 days. [Full story here -- By Vincent Schilling](#)



National Native American Hall of Fame names first 12 historic inductees

In an evening filled with emotion, laughter and occasionally tears, 12 Native people known for their distinction in athletics, activism, education, art and even reaching the stars were honored during the inaugural National Native American Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Oct. 13 at the Phoenix Indian School Memorial Hall.

By Debra Krol -- October 22 2018



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IndianCountryToday.com

Election night history: Reporting #NativeVote18 results from coast to coast



Three national media organizations made history broadcasting and streaming the first national news report

FNX | First Nations Experience will broadcast Native Election Night Live for five hours from its studios in San Bernardino, California, starting at 6 p.m. Pacific.

The election desk will be anchored by Mark Trahant, editor of Indian Country Today, known in Indian Country as the go-to expert on American Indians and Alaska Natives who are running for office. Trahant began collecting the names of Native candidates several years ago for his then independent blog, Trahant Reports. Trahant is a citizen of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

Antonia Gonzales is the anchor and producer of National Native News which airs on tribal and public radio stations across the United States and Canada. The program has won numerous awards for covering social, economic and cultural issues, which impact Indigenous people worldwide. Gonzales is a member of the Navajo Nation. [Full story here - 10/20/2018](#)

Strike Against Sovereignty? Sen. Warren asserts Native American ancestry via DNA

Senator Elizabeth Warren, who has long battled with politicians and the media and has been the subject of sarcastic and racially-based attacks by President Trump – he called her Pocahontas publicly on several occasions – has bowed to the pressure of the masses and sought to prove Native American ancestry with results of a DNA test she has posted to her website. Warren now claims to have documentation to back up her distant ‘Native heritage’ thanks to an analysis report by Carlos Bustamante, a professor of genetics at Stanford and adviser to the DNA companies, Ancestry and 23andMe.

[Full story here -- By Vincent Schilling](#)

In wake of new Voter ID law: Mad rush to repair Native voting woes in North Dakota

The Indian Child Welfare Act was dealt a substantial blow on Friday, when a U.S. Federal Judge in the Northern District of Texas ruled the landmark legislation unconstitutional. According to the law, when a Native child is up for adoption, family members, other tribal members, and then other Native homes are to be prioritized for placement. Ample research shows that all children, Native and non-Native alike, have better outcomes when they are raised with family, extended family or in their community over state child welfare systems and foster homes.

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Top Stories Through 2018

Nanticoke-Lenape of NJ Win Six-Year Battle to Restore State Recognition

By Lisa J. Ellwood

Urban Indian Health report identifies 506 urban Missing & Murdered Women, Girls

By Vincent Schilling

Halloween class goes awry; Dog food, taunts, and assaults on a student's hair

By Jourdan Bennett-Begaye

#NativeNerd: Native Hawaiian Jason Momoa's AWESOME Aquaman Premiere HAKA dance

By Vincent Schilling

Waiting for Congress? Trump tweets 'poor me' as pitch to end government shutdown - By Mark Trahant | Dec 2018



A sign on the National Christmas Tree read closed. The Interior Department's National Park Service does not have staff available during the government shutdown. (Photo by Mark Trahant)

President Donald J. Trump says the government shutdown will continue until Democrats give in and fund a border wall. Democrats say that won't happen and that the administration has not spent all of the money that has already appropriated for border security.

Over the holiday the president told reporters that he wanted the border wall constructed or renovated by election day. "I can't tell you when the government is going to be open. I can tell you it's not going to be open until we have a wall, a fence, whatever they would like to call it," he said.

Trump also tweeted:

"I am all alone (poor me) in the White House waiting for the Democrats to come back and make a deal on desperately needed Border Security. At some point the Democrats not wanting to make a deal will cost our Country more money than the Border Wall we are all talking about. Crazy!" Read [full story here](#)

Check out our YEAR END LIST of the top stories in Indian Country Today as picked by our readers.

Indian Country Today's Top Stories for 2018

Have questions about our weekly ICT newsletter?

Reach out to Associate Editor

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Check out our YEAR END VIDEO REPORT in Indian Country Today with host Vincent Schilling

Indian Country Today's year-end video report. Our top stories for 2018

Thanks For Reading!

Indian Country Today

E-weekly Newsletter

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