

American Indian Alaska Native

Please enjoy this issue of American Indian Alaska Native news.
Published to celebrate the contributions of American Indians

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Objectives of the American Indian/Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program include:

- Support the unique role of American Indians and Alaskan Natives within the Federal Government system.
- Recruit potential American Indian / Alaskan Native employees.
- Build coalitions with appropriate advocacy groups that support the NRCS mission.
- Encourage the participation of American Indian and Alaska Natives in all NRCS sponsored programs and activities.

“A Bison So Rare”

When Bison No. 7 on Peter Fay’s farm in Goshen, Connecticut gave birth to a white, 30-pound bull calf back in June, it made his farm the epicenter of the bison universe. White bison are so rare that each birth is viewed as akin to a historic event. And for those to whom the bison is an iconic part of the American experience, the birth is, at the least, a remarkable coincidence, coming at a time that wildlife, tribal and producer groups are lobbying Congress to have the bison officially designated as the national mammal and a national symbol alongside the bald eagle.



This farm is involved in both EQIP and GRP.

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History of Dream Catchers

Long ago an old Lakota spiritual leader had a vision. In his vision, Iktomi, the great trickster and searcher of wisdom, appeared in the form of a spider.

Iktomi spoke to him in a sacred language. As he spoke, Iktomi the spider picked up the elder's willow hoop which had feathers, horsehair, beads and offerings on it, and began to spin a web. He spoke to the elder about the cycles of life, how we begin our lives as infants, move on through childhood and on to adulthood. Finally we go to old age where we must be taken care of as infants, completing the cycle.

But, Iktomi said as he continued to spin his web, in each time of life there are many forces, some good and some bad. If you listen to the good forces, they will steer you in the right direction. But, if you listen to the bad forces, they'll steer you in the wrong direction and may hurt you. So these forces can help, or can interfere with the harmony of Nature. While the spider spoke, he continued to weave his web.

When Iktomi finished speaking, he gave the elder the web and said, The web is a perfect circle with a hole in the center. Use the web to help your people reach their goals, making good use of their ideas, dreams and visions.

If you believe in the great spirit, the web will filter your good ideas and the bad ones will be trapped and will not pass.

The elder passed on his vision onto the people and now many people have a dream catcher above their bed to sift their dreams and visions. The good will pass through the center hole to the sleeping person. The evil in their dreams are captured in the web, where they perish in the light of the morning sun.

Fancy Shawl Dance



Dance is one of the most beautiful parts of American Indian culture. Generations of American Indians have developed a variety of dances for many different kinds of occasions. Ladies Fancy Shawl is one of the newest forms of Women's Dance, and is quite athletic!

Fancy Shawl is often called Northern Shawl, as it does come from the Northern Tribes along the U.S. and Canadian Border. This is very similar in dancing and the bright colors to the Men's Fancy Dance. The ladies wear their shawls over their shoulders, and dance by jumping and spinning around, keeping time with the music. They mimic butterflies in flight, and the dance style is quite graceful and light. Emphasis is paid particularly to the shawls, with elaborate designs, appliqué, ribbon work, and painting. Long fringe hangs from the edges of the shawl, and flies round.

**Looking behind, I am filled with gratitude,
looking forward, I am filled with vision,
looking upwards I am filled with strength,
looking within, I discover peace
~ Quero Apache Prayer**