

CARES Act funds help Commodity Program construct drive through window



Cars line up to submit paperwork at the Commodities drive through window. (Construction Services photos)



Megan Pabawena (left) and Miranda Dixey stand next to the interior of the drive through window that features bullet proof glass.

By LORI ANN EDMO
Sho-Ban News

FORT HALL — Shoshone-Bannock Commodity program clients will no longer have to wait in the cold to process paperwork in winter months as a new drive through window has been completed.

Miranda Dixey, Commodity Program director, said the window opened December 5 and they had a few people come in. People can drive up and submit their paperwork, "It's an easy process,

don't have to get out of cars and put the distribution list in the window." They then drive around to the back to pick up food.

She said Megan Pabawena, eligibility examiner, may ask a few questions, the information is put into the computer, the boys get the listing and fill the food distribution. "It's better than waiting at the door. I think this is a good idea." She also said it's better for elders or those who may be disabled.

Dixey said they've been considering the concept since COVID because at times they might have had ten or more people standing in the foyer.

Construction Services did the work and they started in July. Kimberly Dixey, manager, said the cost was about \$43,000 and it's one of the last projects funded under CARES Act dollars. The final walk through was December 5. They had to cut a hole in the existing building to accommodate the window that has a

drawer similar to a bank drive through. The only challenge Dixey said was finding the type of window because there's not many places that manufacture it. Both windows are bullet proof.

Miranda said distribution days are December 4 to 22. The distribution happens during the hours of 8:30 to 10:50 a.m. then after lunch at 1 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.

Dugger performs as Michael Jackson at Indigenous Market



LaVonte Dugger performs the Michael Jackson song "Smooth Criminal." (Roselynn Yazzie photo)

By ROSELYNN YAZZIE
Sho-Ban News

FORT HALL — Wearing a black hat and sequin jacket, eight-year-old LaVonte Dugger, moon walked across the floor of the Chiefs Event Center over the weekend performing at the Indigenous Supplies Indigenous Market.

A crowd surrounded him to cheer him on as he did his best to imitate his hero, the "King of Pop" Michael Jackson. After his "Billy Jean" performance he was met with applause and cash tips, which he stuffed into his pockets.

LaVonte said Jackson is a legend and he really likes his dance moves. His favorite song is "Beat It."

LaVonte practices every night for a couple hours. Besides his signature move, he's also learned to shuffle and the spin and kick.

LaVonte enjoys all different genres of music and his other favorite artists include Prince and Elvis. Besides dancing he also

plays the guitar and the drums.

He often goes to concerts with his grandparents.

His grandpa said, "We encourage him to be his natural self, you know just whatever he likes, we just encourage him."

His grandma said he likes performing, but most importantly it gives him confidence.

One of his best memories happened in October, when he and his grandparents, Ronald Diaz and Pamela Stone, went to see the MJ Live - Michael Jackson Tribute show in Las Vegas. While there he had the opportunity to meet the performers who encouraged him to get his education and to pursue his entertainment goals after he gets a degree.

"It was a great experience," said Lavonte.

He'd like to perform more as he gets older, but for now he's a student at Chief Tahgee Elementary where he likes math, reading and of course, recess.

Tai Simpson selected NWIRC Board Chair

BOISE - Tai Simpson (Niimiipuu-Black), a descendant of Chief Red Heart and co-founder of the Indigenous Idaho Alliance, has been elected as the Board Chairwoman of the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC).

The election took place during NIWRC's board meeting December 1-3 in Tempe, Arizona.

In addition to their role with the Indigenous Idaho Alliance, Simpson currently serves as the co-stewarding director of the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence. Their extensive experience in advocating for survivors and addressing violence against Native women makes them an exceptional leader for this vital position.

Expressing their gratitude for this opportunity, Simpson said, "It truly represents a pinnacle moment in my work against violence. The NIWRC is widely recognized as THE go-to organization for law enforcement agencies, Tribes, and others dedicated to ending violence against Native women and children. I am honored that those who founded this organization have entrusted me with helping propel us forward and carry our vision forward."

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center is a Native-led nonprofit organization based on the homelands of the Cheyenne Nation in Montana. Committed to ending violence against Native women and children, NIWRC provides national leadership by amplifying grassroots advocates' voices while offering culturally grounded resources, technical assistance and training programs, as well as policy development initiatives aimed at strengthening tribal sovereignty.

Indigenous Idaho Alliance congratulates Simpson on the achievement and looks forward to witness-



Tai Simpson

ing their impactful contributions towards advancing justice for Native women within tribal communities.

StrongHearts Native Helpline advocates provide culturally appropriate support and advocacy for Native Americans impacted by domestic and sexual violence

StrongHearts advocates are trained to take a Native centered, empowerment based and trauma informed approach to every contact.



STRONGHEARTS
Native Helpline

Safe | Confidential
Anonymous | 24/7

Call or Text **1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)**
chat online at **strongheartshelpline.org**



APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BEFORE JANUARY 13TH!

USDA's Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) is a limited-time program providing financial assistance to ranchers, farmers, and forest landowners determined to have experienced discrimination in USDA lending programs prior to January 1, 2021.

DEADLINES

January 13, 2024: DFAP Application Submission Deadline

DFAP APPLICATION AVAILABLE AT <https://22007apply.gov/>



indianag.org