

**Journal #5894 from sdc 1.10.25**

*One Favorite Highway*

*Deb Haaland: The Impact of President Biden's Apology to Indian Country*

*Biden's gift to N.Cal: A new national monument in the remains of an ancient volcano*

*Return of 14,000 acres of ancestral Tule River Tribe lands to conserve huge swath of diverse habitat*

*Floating classroom program highlights chinook salmon lifecycle and Feather River research*

*Rep. Huffman secures \$3 million for Weaver Creek habitat restoration implementation*

*What's next after the failed effort to secure Colorado River Basin water rights for tribes in AZ?*

*New research reveals groundwater pathways across continent*

*Lithium project may hurt snail*

*NCAI Executive Council Winter Session/National Youth Leadership Summit*

*Story Behind the Disappearance of the Mayans/ Mexico's Hidden Arab Heritage*

*NUICF - Retro on 2024; Embracing Cultural Values in 2025*

*Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$121 Million to Help Tribes Build Climate Resilience*

*John Deere wants self-driving tractors to help with America's farmhand shortage*

*Take Part in the The University Center for Economic Development Surveyn*

*The makers of the new Baduwa't documentary want people to get mad about the river*

*Biden establishes 2 new national monuments in California, as part of final big environmental push*



**Know where?! (one of my favorite highways)**

## Deb Haaland: The Impact of President Biden's Apology to Indian Country

In a new blog on the [Interior Department's website](#) today, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland shares her perspective about the impact of the Department's Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative and President Biden's apology to Indian Country.

*The text of the blog is below:*

Of all of the work we have accomplished at the Department of the Interior under the Biden-Harris administration, one of the most significant has been the [Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative](#).

In October at the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona, I listened as President Joe Biden issued a [historic apology](#) for the U.S. government's role in creating and perpetuating the federal Indian boarding school system. As I listened, I remembered my grandma Helen recount the story of when she was taken away to St. Catherine's Indian Boarding School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She told me about the day a priest from the Pueblo of Laguna came to our village of Mesita, "gathered up the kids," put them on a train, and sent them away. She was 8 years old at the time. Her parents had no idea when she would return home.

My grandfather Tony, who was from Jemez Pueblo, was also sent to St. Catherine's. Helen and Tony spent five years at the same school – far away from their families, communities, and Pueblo cultures – and later chose to build a life from the bond they formed as children. Years later, their daughter Mary – my mother – would be sent to St. Catherine's, too. I am here because of their persistence.

This trauma is not new to Indigenous people, but it is new to many people across our nation.

Federal Indian boarding schools have impacted every Indigenous person I know, including staff across our Department. While many of us cannot recount all the ways in which the legacy of these schools has affected our lives, my grandmother and my mother carried scars from that era that they passed down to me. This reality persists with many Native peoples, whether we attended a boarding school ourselves, or are descended from those who did. In memory of Helen, Tony, Mary, and all those impacted by our country's horrific assimilation policies – I have sought to shed light on this legacy and leverage my platform to amplify the voices of those who deserve to be heard. Because Native American history is American history.

One of the reasons I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative was to ensure that this important story was told. That all of America knows of the intergenerational impacts of these policies, and that we – as a nation – take steps to heal from them.

Three years ago, our team embarked on a journey to bring to light this terrible era – one that is frequently excluded from history books. Interior staff – many of them Indigenous – worked through their own trauma to review over 103 million pages of federal records that informed the [investigative report](#) called for by the Initiative. That report outlined the number of schools, known attendees, and the extent to which teachers and priests denied children of their languages, cultures and lifeways. Based on available records, nearly 1,000 of those children died, though we believe the number to be much higher.

As part of the Initiative, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland and I planned "The Road to Healing" – a year-long, 12-stop journey across Indian Country where we listened to and wept with survivors and descendants of these boarding schools. The stories I heard from survivors about getting beat with ropes and razor straps, and the stories of girls being molested in the dark of night, were difficult to hear in person. While in Alaska, an elder man spoke of a group of young Alaska Native boys who arrived at the boarding school from the Interior and who

were dressed “magnificently in their caribou pants and shirts,” and carrying bags of dried fish and berries – nutritious food that would carry them through for a time - only to have their clothes and belongings torn from them and burned in a pyre.

Much of this horror took place at the then-named Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, which from 1879 to 1918 served as the blueprint for boarding schools that would eventually open across the nation. Many of the children who died there are still buried on the school’s ground. In December, President Biden established the [Carlisle Federal Indian Boarding School National Monument](#). Under the careful hands of the National Park Service – often called America’s storyteller – and in partnership with the U.S. Army who now manage the U.S. Army Carlisle Barracks, the history and horror of this place will never be lost or rewritten.

With the support of these partners and [new agreements between the Department, the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History](#), our country will continue to learn from the voices and stories of those the federal government attempted – and failed – to silence.

When I began the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, I had no idea that it would result in a presidential apology, or even a national monument dedicated to our people. I just knew it was necessary.

The boarding school era worked to systematically break up entire communities, erase cultures and traditions, and eradicate Native languages. On the heels of the boarding school era, the Dawes Act and other harmful federal policies worked to outright steal land and resources from under the feet of our communities. Although we have made much progress, this heavy legacy endures, and more federal action is needed to address the wrongs of the past and allow our country to heal from the assimilation era.

This work is not finished. The pain and hardship of the past will not be corrected in our lifetimes. But the President’s actions and the work of the incredible team at the Department begins a new chapter and breathes new life into our shared building of a better future. Our past can never be re-written, but together, we can heal.



**Biden’s parting gift to Northern California: A new national monument in the remains of an ancient volcano**

“The Medicine Lake Highlands in Northern California, near towering Mount Shasta, has a long and storied past. Its distinct lakes, lava beds and underground labyrinths rose from the blasts of what is the largest volcano, by volume, in the Cascade Range. The striking landscape has since drawn countless Native Americans seeking its professed healing powers. It has served as training grounds for NASA moon missions. It has sustained [aquifers](#) that help supply water to millions. On Tuesday, the site made new history with its designation by President Joe Biden as the 224,000-acre Sáttítla Highlands National Monument. The designation recognizes this remote, mostly wooded area in Siskiyou and Modoc counties, about 350 miles north of San Francisco, as federally significant and brings protections to ensure its safekeeping. The classification also means more Americans coming to visit. ...” [Read more from the San Francisco Chronicle](#). (See another story at end of Journal.)

**Return of 14,000 acres of ancestral Tule River Tribe lands to conserve huge swath of diverse habitat and preserve Deer Creek headwaters**

“A former cattle ranch in the southern Sierra Nevada foothills with proximity to the headwaters

of Deer Creek is one step closer to being conserved thanks to a \$2.4 million grant and collaborative efforts between the Tule River Indian Tribe, California Natural Resources Agency and the Wildlife Conservation Board. The Hershey Ranch, in southeastern Tulare County, is a stunning swath of more than 14,000 acres of blue oak woodlands that conservationists deemed a “must conserve” property years ago because of its varied qualities, key among them its Deer Creek watershed and the riparian habitat of rolling hills and savannahs. Deer Creek is one of the few remaining undammed waterways in the state, said Logan Robertson Huecker, executive director of Sequoia Riverlands Trust, a nonprofit based in Visalia that submitted a letter in support of the project. ... ” [Read more from SJV Water.](#)

### **Floating classroom program highlights chinook salmon lifecycle and Feather River research**

“During the autumn months, the Feather River in Oroville is home to adult Chinook salmon that have returned to their natural spawning grounds to complete their lifecycle and start the next generation. This infusion of thousands of salmon offers a prime opportunity for public education, with classes held on the river instead of within the four walls of a school. Through the Department of Water Resources’ (DWR) Feather River Floating Classroom Program, people of all ages are learning about the salmon lifecycle and critical ongoing conservation efforts and research in the Feather River. Developed by environmental scientists within DWR’s Division of Integrated Science and Engineering (DISE), the Feather River Floating Classroom Program has held various forms over the last decade. For many years public tours were offered solely during the City of Oroville’s Salmon Festival, celebrating the return of Chinook salmon. With the program’s growing popularity, DWR is now supporting dozens of free tours for local schools and public members during the fall spawning season. ... ” [Read more from DWR News.](#)

### **Rep. Huffman secures \$3 million for Weaver Creek habitat restoration implementation**

“Today, U.S. Representative Jared Huffman (CA-02) announced that he secured \$3 million in federal funding for the Yurok Tribe Fisheries Department for habitat restoration along Weaver Creek in California’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District. Funds for this grant were awarded through the Bureau of Reclamation’s WaterSMART program. The Yurok Tribe Fisheries Department will create instream habitat and develop new [floodplain](#) areas along the upper section of Weaver Creek, a [tributary](#) to the Trinity River. The project will control the spread of invasive plant species, establish habitat connectivity during summertime baseflow conditions, and support populations of threatened Coho Salmon. ... ” [Read more from Congressman Jared Huffman.](#)

### **What’s next after the failed effort to secure Colorado River Basin water rights for tribes in Arizona?**

“Advocates of a deal to secure reliable water for thousands of tribal members in Arizona raced to win Congressional approval until the final hours of the session in December. They didn’t make it. “We just ran out of time to address all the issues,” said Tom Buschatzke, director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources and principal negotiator for the state on Colorado River matters. The proposed Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act aimed to secure water rights for Navajo, Hopi and San Juan Southern Paiute tribal members in northeastern Arizona and to give the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe a reservation. The \$5 billion deal failed because officials from around the Colorado River Basin, [including Colorado, couldn’t resolve](#)

[key questions and concerns](#) in time to call a vote before Congress adjourned. The bill's outcome was disappointing, Buschatzke said. ... ” [Read more from the Colorado Sun.](#)

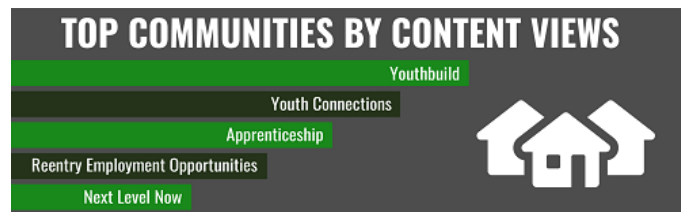
### **New research reveals groundwater pathways across continent**

“Researchers from Princeton University and the University of Arizona have created a simulation that maps underground water on a continental scale. The result of three years’ work studying groundwater from coast to coast, the findings plot the unseen path that each raindrop or melted snowflake takes before reemerging in freshwater streams, following water from land surface to depths far below and back up again, emerging up to 100 miles away, after spending from 10 to 100,000 years underground. The simulation, published Jan. 6 in the journal Nature Water, shows that rainfall and snowmelt flow much farther underground than previously understood and that more than half the water in streams and rivers originates from aquifers once thought to be so deep as to be walled off from streams. These unexpected findings have major implications for tracking pollution and predicting the effects of climate change on groundwater, which supplies half of all drinking water in the United States. ... ” [Read more from Princeton Engineering.](#)

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### **Lithium project may hurt snail**

[https://enewspaper.eastbaytimes.com/infinity/article\\_popover\\_share.aspx?guid=1ada6191-9906-4512-b8cf-e17d300b3f83&share=true](https://enewspaper.eastbaytimes.com/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=1ada6191-9906-4512-b8cf-e17d300b3f83&share=true)



### **View the accessible PDF version of the WorkforceGPS 2024 Year in Review.**

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### **Smithsonian Magazine**

<https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/mexico/articles/the-story-behind-the-disappearance-of-the-mayans>

### **The Story Behind the Disappearance of the Mayans - Culture Trip**

However, the Mayan culture was not totally lost. It is known that there are groups of Mayans in the Mexican cities of Yucatan, Campeche, Chiapas, Quintana Roo and Tabasco. They live a cultural, social and religious syncretism, worshipping both Mayan and Catholic gods. They keep some of their traditions and musical instruments to worship their ...

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- [Mexico's Hidden Arabic Heritage](#)  
Mexico's Arabic heritage can be traced back to the Moors, the North African Muslims who invaded Spain in 711 and ruled for almost 800 years.

## Register Now for the NCAI 2025 Executive Council Winter Session

Although the Mayan people **never** entirely disappeared—their descendants still live across Central America—dozens of core urban areas in the lowlands of the Yucatan peninsula, such as Tikal ...

The 2025 Executive Council Winter Session (ECWS) is scheduled to take place **February 10-13, 2025**, at the Washington Westin Hotel in Washington, D.C. ECWS has long been a cornerstone event in NCAI's efforts to strengthen government-to-government relationships between Tribal Nations and the federal government. This event provides an essential platform for tribal leaders, members of Congress, and high-ranking officials from the administration to come together, fostering constructive dialogue and collaborative policymaking.

Don't miss out on this pivotal event in tribal affairs— secure your spot today to engage in meaningful conversations, network with peers, and contribute to the collective advancement of Indian Country.

[\*\*Register Now\*\*](#)

[\*\*Learn More\*\*](#)

## 2025 Native Youth Leadership Summit

NCAI is also proud to present the 2025 Native Youth Leadership Summit, an integral component of the 2025 Executive Council Winter Session dedicated to empowering and inspiring young Native leaders from across Indian Country. Through this summit, we aim to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to advocate effectively for their communities and play a transformative role in shaping the future of Tribal Nations.

[\*\*Learn More\*\*](#)

[\*\*Register Now\*\*](#)

## NUIFC - 2024 in Retrospect, Embracing Core Cultural Values in 2025

**A Message from Our Executive Director Janeen Comenote and Welcoming a New Cohort Member**

Whew! What a year, right? 2024 was a whirlwind for the NUIFC and our member organizations. As an election year, we and our member organizations were in overdrive, highlighting

representation as a cornerstone of contemporary life in the United States. In 2024, we proudly funded and supported 35 members for initiatives focused on civic engagement, digital equity, and education.

Reflecting on the achievements of 2024, we are filled with pride for what our network has accomplished. Here's a snapshot of what the NUIFC and our members achieved this year:

- **Convenings and Gatherings:** Hosted a national convening to foster collaboration and share best practices among urban Indian organizations in Las Vegas. This gathering provided our cohort space to discuss and refine their strategies, organize coordinated days of action, and receive training from national civic engagement organizations.
- **Funding Support:** Distributed nearly \$2 million to over 30 urban Indian organizations in areas such as democracy, digital equity, education, and general support.
- **Democracy is Indigenous (DII) Initiative:** In 2024, the NUIFC funded 24 organizations across 18 states and D.C. to help mobilize the urban Native vote. Each organization created a unique integrated voter engagement strategy tailored to their community and helped connect with voters whom traditional efforts overlook.
- Expanded efforts to ensure urban Native communities had a strong and informed voice in the political process.
- Conducted voter education campaigns and supported voter registration drives in urban Native communities nationwide.
- Developed resources to empower Native leaders in advocating for their communities.
- **Digital Equity:** By funding 15 organizations across 13 states, the NUIFC's Weaving our Web fund helps urban Native families access technology and digital tools to bridge the digital divide. This coalition of Native non-profits helped educate families about internet affordability options, invested in their community's digital infrastructure, held trainings and workshops to improve digital literacy, and developed relationships with other non-profits and organizations.
- **Resurgence Practitioners Network:** Supported educational inquiry incorporating cultural values and history, empowering the next generation of Native educational leaders.
- **Welcoming New Members:** Welcomed Western Native Voices in Montana and the Native American Housing Alliance in Philadelphia, strengthening our network and reach.

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As we look forward to 2025, the NUIFC is gearing up to bring all of our member organizations together to explore ways of integrating deeper core cultural values into our civic engagement work for our relatives in need. We will co-create with our member organizations strategies to meet the new year and define what it means to integrate the core cultural values into our collective work. Americans for Indian Opportunity articulated these core cultural values as the "Four R's":

- **Relationship** (Kinship): In the most profound sense, we are all related. Humans are related both to each other and to all things.
- **Responsibility** (Community): We have a duty to care for our relatives. Each human is accountable for the well-being of their kin, which includes our family, our communities, and the Earth.
- **Reciprocity** (Interconnectedness) – Our relationships and responsibilities shape our roles in life and are reciprocal. We have a responsibility to reciprocate within our relationships.
- **Redistribution** (Generosity): Our reciprocal relationships and responsibilities guide us to share our resources and help us to maintain balance. The collective and communal traditions of our ancestors teach us that wealth must be shared for the greater good of the whole. In contemporary society that includes the sharing of information, knowledge, and resources.

Additionally, in 2025, we will expand our *Making the Invisible Visible* project. This initiative will conduct in-depth research into our ecosystem of nonprofits and the communities they serve. These insights will not only inform our work nationally but also empower our member organizations locally.

Here's to another year of care, growth, and collective progress. Together, we are making a difference!

Klecko Klecko (Thank you)

**Janeen Comenot (Quinault/Hesquiaht/Ogala), Executive Director**

As the NUIFC builds on its mission to build the strongest possible coalition of urban Native non-profits, we are thrilled to welcome the [Native American House Alliance](#) in Philadelphia into the NUIFC family!

Founded in 2019, NAHA was created to promote awareness about the overlooked urban Native population and the community's long history in the city of brotherly love. The organization quickly grew from its advocacy focus into one that provides services and helps people learn about social programs they may qualify for, including a grant program that helps first-time homeowners purchase homes.

**Cornelia Dimalanta (Lumbee), NAHA's Executive Director and Founder**



## **Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$121 Million to Help Tribes Build Climate Resilience**

**124 awards will support Tribes and Tribal organizations to strengthen preparedness, resilience**

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of the Interior today announced a \$121 million investment from President Biden’s Investing in America agenda to help Tribal communities prepare for the most severe climate-related environmental threats to their homelands. This is the largest amount of annual funding awarded to Tribes and Tribal organizations in the history of the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ Tribal Community Resilience Annual Awards Program, with 96 Tribes and 10 Tribal organizations receiving funding for 124 projects.

This investment from the Inflation Reduction Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and annual appropriations will help Tribes proactively plan for and adapt to climate-related threats and safely relocate critical community infrastructure, where Tribes determine that is necessary.

“Indigenous communities face unique and intensifying climate-related challenges that pose an existential threat to Tribal economies, infrastructure, lives and livelihoods,” said **Secretary Deb Haaland**. “Through President Biden’s Investing in America agenda, we have made transformational commitments to assist Tribes and Tribal organizations as they plan for and implement climate resilience measures, upholding our trust and treaty responsibilities and safeguarding these places for generations to come.”

“Today, we are not just investing in projects; we are investing in the future of our Tribal communities,” said **Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland**. “The Biden-Harris administration recognizes the vital role that Indigenous knowledge and leadership play. These awards are a downpayment on a more sustainable and resilient future for Native communities across the country.”

Today’s announcement includes \$17.1 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, \$79.8 million from the Inflation Reduction Act, and \$24.2 million from fiscal year 2024 annual appropriations. This historic funding also advances the Biden-Harris administration’s Justice40 Initiative, which sets the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. Federally Recognized Tribes, including Alaska Native Villages, are considered disadvantaged communities, whether or not they have land.

The Tribal Climate Resilience Annual Awards Program supports both planning and implementation projects, including for climate adaptation planning, community-led relocation, managed and partial relocation, protect-in-place efforts, ocean and coastal management, and habitat restoration and adaptation. A summary of awards can be found on the [Bureau of Indian Affairs website](#).

Today’s funding announcement is part of a more than \$560 million investment for Tribal climate resilience programs achieved during the Biden-Harris administration. In addition to significantly boosting the BIA’s Tribal Climate Resilience program, the Department launched a first-ever [Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation Program](#) with an initial \$135 million commitment to advance relocation and planning efforts for Tribal communities severely impacted by climate-related environmental threats. This funding is part of more than a collective \$50 billion invested through the President’s Investing in America agenda to advance climate adaptation and resilience across the nation, including in communities that are most vulnerable to climate impacts.

For more information about the awarded projects and how to apply for future funding opportunities, please visit <https://www.bia.gov/service/tcr-annual-awards-program> or email [resilience.funding@bia.gov](mailto:resilience.funding@bia.gov).

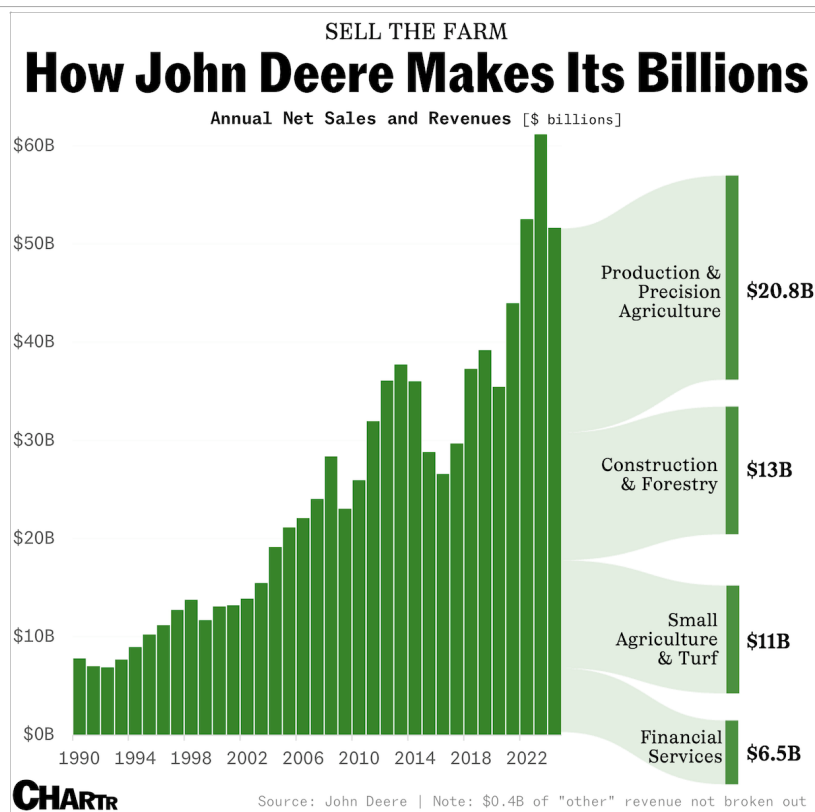
## John Deere wants self-driving tractors to help with America's farmhand shortage

The largest farming-equipment manufacturer in the world, **John Deere**, unveiled a new crop of autonomous tractors and trucks at CES 2025 earlier this week, as the heavy-machinery giant looks to capitalize on the buzz around all things self-driving.

If your immediate thought is that this sounds like a job killer... it is. John Deere has [talked up](#) its machines' capabilities for precisely that purpose: to help alleviate some of the labor-shortage issues that farming faces, with the company's chief technology officer, Jahmy Hindman, saying that "there is not enough available and skilled labor" to do the kind of agricultural and construction work that its customers do.

Though John Deere introduced its first fully autonomous tractor three years ago, the latest suite — which includes a couple of tractors, a lawnmower for commercial landscaping, and a driverless dump truck — comes plowing into a world where attitudes toward self-driving vehicles [have softened](#).

Whether John Deere's goal for fully autonomous farming by 2030 — outlined in a September [blog post](#) from Nvidia (we know: AI royalty **Nvidia** proudly touting its collaboration with a lowly multibillion-dollar minnow like JD rather than the other way around? Who'd have thought it?) — comes to fruition or not, the company will hope the new fleet reinvigorates sales after a slightly fallow year.



In 2023, John Deere’s total revenues rose to a record **\$61.3 billion**, but sales slumped some 16% in the last fiscal year as farmers tightened their purse strings and invested less into Deere-branded machinery and equipment, which accounts for as much as ~87% of the company’s revenue. Clearly, fewer farmers up and down the country fancied dropping thousands, or indeed millions, of dollars on new machines last year, with the company’s [most expensive tractor](#), the 9RX 830, listing for \$1.228 million.

Interestingly, the company aims to make 10% of its annual revenue from software subscriptions [by 2030](#) — quite the shift for a business that’s still almost exclusively known for making things that chop, plow, mow, move, and spray.

[Read this on the web instead](#)

### **Take Part in the The University Center for Economic Development Survey**

The University Center for Economic Development, part of The College of Business at the University of Nevada, Reno, has recently launched a statewide Resident Sentiment Survey for the Nevada Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs. This statewide survey is designed to gather a wide variety of perspectives and opinions from Nevada-based residents regarding tourism, the arts, and culture in their community. The survey is open until January 24 at 11:45 p.m. [Take the survey.](#)

### **The makers of the new Baduwa’t documentary want people to get mad about the river**

“It’s December 1849, and explorer and naturalist Josiah Gregg is alone. He is furious. He is hungry. His buddies absconded to get a meal at a nearby Wiyot village, leaving him stranded at a river they were resting at while he drew up a map of the area they explored. He crossed the river and found his crew. “His cup of wrath was now filled to the brim,” a later recount of the expedition would put it, “but he remained silent until the opposite shore was gained, when he opened upon us a perfect batter of the most withering and violent abuse.” After a minute everyone relaxed, but the incident remained fresh in Gregg’s mind. He christened the river he crossed in pursuit of bread and revenge the “Mad River” on his map. ... But there were people living near that river thousands of years before Gregg’s tantrum, and they called it a different name: Baduwa’t, “free-flowing river.” Almost two centuries after the river was given the Mad moniker, people are trying to change it back. ...” [Read more from the Lost Coast Outpost.](#)

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### **Biden establishes 2 new national monuments in California, as part of final big environmental push**

Protected areas south of Joshua Tree National Park and east of Mount Shasta cement conservation legacy in California

[https://www.mercurynews.com/2025/01/07/biden-establishes-two-new-national-monuments-in-california-as-part-of-final-big-environmental-push/?utm\\_email=85834408B47115A944CE9435C9&lctg=85834408B47115A944CE9435C9&active=no](https://www.mercurynews.com/2025/01/07/biden-establishes-two-new-national-monuments-in-california-as-part-of-final-big-environmental-push/?utm_email=85834408B47115A944CE9435C9&lctg=85834408B47115A944CE9435C9&active=no)

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January 10 Deadline - **Indian Health Service Summer 2025 Externship Program**. For more info, click [here](#).

January 10 Deadline - NAU's Indigenous Climate Change Program Spring 2025 Internship in Flagstaff. For more info contact [Kim Shaw](#).