

## Crane & Vacco makes \$20,000 deal

By James M. Odato and Casey Seiler  
Albany times-Union

ALBANY, N.Y. — The Commission on Public Integrity on Tuesday reached a settlement with the lobbying firm Crane & Vacco, which was accused of entering into an illegal "contingency" contract to assist in the development of a casino.

The Albany firm, led by former state Attorney General Dennis Vacco and lawyer/lobbyist James Crane, will pay the commission \$20,000 to settle the highly contentious case, which first surfaced in 2004. The charge involved a failure to timely file disclosures of its deal to represent Caywil, a Rochester development firm formed under the partnership of an Indian nation and the Wilmot development family.

As originally uncovered by the Times Union, a contingency agreement between Crane & Vacco and Caywil called for the lobbying firm to be paid millions of dollars if the Seneca Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma opened a casino in the state. The tribe was working with Thomas Wilmot, a developer from Rochester.

The firm's leaders said the agreement was not a contract and that the proposed services were legal work, not lobbying. Crane went so far as to charge that former Lobbying Commission Executive Director David Grandeau had launched a probe as part of a vendetta, and was abusing his power.

The now-defunct Temporary Commission on Lobbying became interested in the contingency agreement — such contracts are illegal in New York — and referred the matter to Albany County District Attorney David Soares. Soares conducted a six-month investigation and concluded there was no contract, no lobbying and no basis for criminal charges.

Soares' handling of the investigation came in for criticism from commission member Andrew Celli, who was appointed by former Gov. Eliot Spitzer.

"It strikes me personally that this (fine) is a much too low number considering what went on here," said Commissioner Richard Emery, Celli's law partner and another Spitzer appointee.

Soares and Commission Executive Director Herbert Teitelbaum have battled over the district attorney's investigation of the travel records scandal. Earlier this year, Soares went so far as to send letters to Commission Chair John D. Feerick suggesting that Teitelbaum had leaked confidential information about the matter.

Teitelbaum said Tuesday's settlement "does not resolve all matters" involving Crane & Vacco. Another investigation, also started by the lobbying commission, involves the firm's handling of thousands of dollars in political contributions for lobbying clients. That pending case relates to matters from the period when former Republican Party Chairman William Powers was a partner.

Crane & Vacco, which has 30 days to pay the settlement, has contended it did nothing wrong.

Firm spokesman Clemente Parente said the settlement was a business cost. "We're pleased the public integrity commission recognized what the district attorney recognized three years ago," he said.

The firm — now called Crane, Vacco & Sanders — faced as much as \$325,000 in fines after it didn't follow through on a proposed \$50,000 settlement in the Caywil case negotiated in 2005.

Parente revealed that deal was scuttled because the Lobbying Commission did not hold to a verbal promise to refrain from commenting on the case.

Grandau, the former lobbying official, said he would not criticize the settlement or Soares, but disapproved of the two commissioners for prejudging the case.

In October, Celli and Emery had suggested a bigger settlement.

# 'The Native American Curio Trade in New Mexico: An Encyclopedic History'

By Ernie Bulow  
For The Independent

GALLUP — Jonathan Batkin has been the director of the Wheelwright Museum in Santa Fe for nearly 20 years, and during that period the museum has produced some truly beautiful books on the subject of Indian art. His own book on pueblo pottery of New Mexico is still the most important work on the subject. His latest publication, "The Native American Curio Trade in New Mexico" is the fruit of more than 20 years of research.

Aimed primarily at dealers and sophisticated collectors, Batkin's 300 page study doesn't waste time trying to define what a "curio" is — or isn't. Like the word "myth" the term has contradictory definitions. Little more than 100 years ago, any Indian-made object would have been considered a curio with dubious value. Fifty years later, the term was used to refer to fake or shoddy goods, partially or wholly created and produced by Anglos. Today it has probably a dozen meanings to different people.

Batkin has taken an impossibly large subject and whittled it down to size. The first half of the book gives a short history of the Indian trade and concentrates on the dealers who not only peddled Native American items to the tourists, but who created demand, developed sources, and supplied other stores across America and Europe.

Several books have already appeared explaining the influence of the railroads on Native material. There is also a good-sized shelf of books on the Fred Harvey Company and its influence on the trade. Next to nothing is available on such early traders as Luis, Aaron and Jake Gold, grandfathers of the curio trade in New Mexico. Their squat adobe shop with the Mexican carreta (cart) on the roof is essentially still in operation on San Francisco Street more than 100 years later. They had a parrot that would insult patrons in Spanish.

Their successor J. S. (Jesus) Candelario was as



much a showman as a businessman and created his own legend. Candelario's shop was full of magic and wonders, each with some great story. One of my favorites was about a Mexican hair rope which had been used to hang a woman who smuggled booze into Pancho Villa's camp. The old trader sold 100 miles worth of that rope to gullible tourists.

One of the staples of the early curio business in Santa Fe was the Pueblo rain god. This was a crude seated figure with a small pot between his feet. What story went with it varied from place to place. According to Batkin tens of thousands of these little "pots" were shipped out to all parts of the world. They were packed 100 to a barrel and no big worry if a few broke on the trip.

Another mass-produced item of huge popularity was the "cheese box" tom-tom. Cheese was shipped in round wooden containers in those days. The wood circles, with a little rawhide and paint, made a perfect Indian drum. Thousands were produced. I just wonder who ate all the cheese.

Even more obscure are traders like Thomas Dozier, a government school teacher who married a Santa Clara woman and fathered 11 children, including the anthropologist Edward Dozier. Dozier was more literate than the average huckster and some of his writings survive. He was unabashedly honest about the potential to pillage the pueblos for antiquities of little value to their owners at the time.

Simon Bibo was an important early merchant but his two nephews are less well known. Siegfried and Julius Seligman took over the Bernalillo Mercantile Company in 1904. They quickly moved into Indian goods and by 1930 their had their own line of "native" jewelry. Julius moved his store to Albuquerque in 1946.

Julius Gans became a giant in the trade. He moved to Santa Fe in 1916 and located his Southwest Arts and Crafts on the south side of the plaza. He was adamant about buying direct from the makers and traveled regularly to Gallup. He developed Spanish-style weaving in communities other than Chimayo.

The uncontested king of the curio world, Harry H. Tammen, was one of more than 25 curio dealers in Denver in the early 20th century. Besides the many "Indian" items his shop produced for itself, he was a tremendous outlet for the Santa Fe boys.

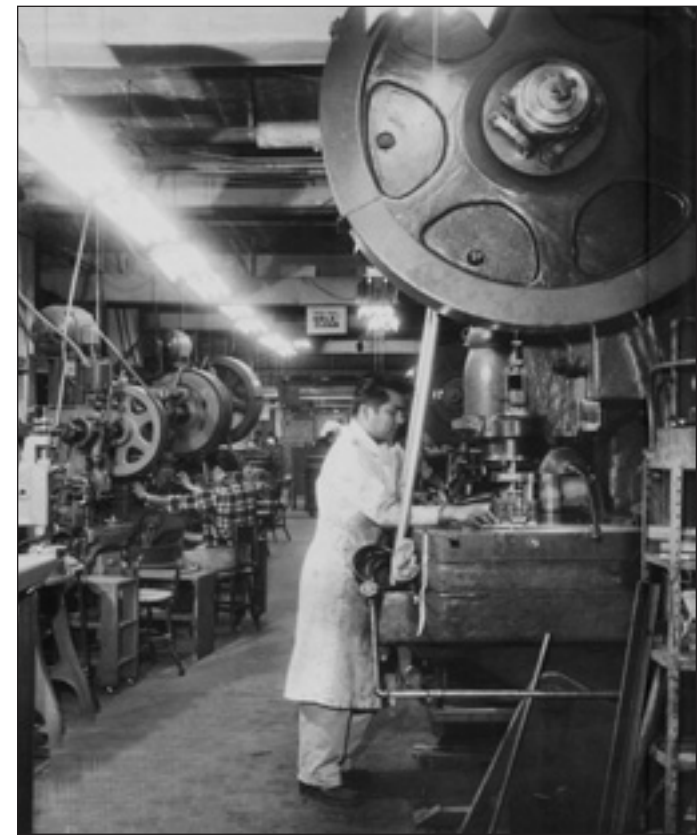
Tammen really was an American success story of the first rank. His German father died when he was a small boy. At age 7 his mother was forced to give him up but he refused the orphanage. Dressed in an oversized homespun suit he went out on his own. Her last words were: "My little son, may love and good cheer go always with you," a phrase he made his own through life. Harry, like many men and boys at the time, headed west. He soon saw the world was made up to two kinds of people, con men and rubes. He decided to be the best con man in the West.

Some of his schemes, acts, and exhibited wonders sound like they were stolen from that other great showman, P.T. Barnum, but he

had his own style. Once he bought himself a circus. By the end of the trail for the illustrious "Buffalo Bill," Tammen had title to what was left of his Wild West Show, and he owned Cody too, which is why the old scout is buried near Denver. Tammen was eventually the politically powerful co-owner of the Denver Post.

It was in Indian curios he made his first fortune, specializing in exotic items like Sitting Bull's own war bonnet or Geronimo's scalp — of which he sold hundreds, apparently. It was said that he had dozens of Victorian ladies beading away in their parlors as pieceworkers. Boys on summer break chipped arrowheads in the basement of Tammen's store. One of Tammen's most successful items was the Skookum doll, which sold by the thousands in many different styles.

Tammen's most outrageous line bragged, "Sometimes I am led to believe our workmanship surpasses that of the Indians themselves."



Courtesy Photo  
The back room at Maisel's in Albuquerque gave a new meaning to the term "Indian Hand Made."

## More tribal housing agencies sue over funding

DENVER (AP) — American Indian tribes have filed lawsuits challenging the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's plan to stop providing money to maintain lease-to-own houses on reservations after 25 years.

Housing agencies for 14 tribes filed lawsuits in federal court Wednesday alleging losses totaling about \$46 million. Three other tribes filed similar suits the day before.

Congress reauthorized the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act through 2013 with an amendment ending maintenance funding if homes aren't transferred to individual owners in 25 years. President George W. Bush signed it into law on Oct. 13.

Friday is the deadline for tribes to file lawsuits challenging the change, said Cate Stetson of Albuquerque, N.M., who filed a lawsuit on behalf of Ute Indian Tribal Housing.

Stetson said tribes get about \$1,500 per home each year for maintenance, which is far less than the need.

"We're tremendously behind in Indian country," Stetson said by phone. "There are people who go off to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, tribal members who come back and say, 'We had better conditions out there.'"

In some cases Stetson said there are cinderblock homes on reservations that have no insulation to weather sub-freezing winters and homes that have dirt floors.

HUD spokeswoman Jane

Goin said it was inappropriate to comment because the lawsuits were pending.

One tribe, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation based in Okmulgee, Okla., put its loss at \$16.7 million. Other hard-hit Oklahoma tribes include the Cherokee Nation Housing Authority (\$14.1 million), Comanche Nation Housing Authority (\$3 million), Housing Authority of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma (\$2.1 million), and the Housing Authority of the Osage Nation, formerly Osage Tribe of Indians, (\$4.9 million).

Stetson said the change is improper because the 1996 law does not specify a time limit on maintenance funding.

The lawsuits say they were filed in Colorado because HUD's Denver-based National Office of Native American Programs' Grants Management Office took many of the actions being challenged.

Plaintiffs in the suits filed Wednesday also include the Sicangu Wicoti Awanyakapi Corp. in South Dakota; Oglala Sioux (Lakota) Housing in South Dakota; Turtle Mountain Housing Authority in North Dakota; Winnebago Housing and Development Commission in Nebraska; Lower Brule Housing Authority in South Dakota; Metlakatla Housing Authority in Alaska; Spirit Lake Housing Corp. in North Dakota; and Trenton Indian Housing Authority in North Dakota.

## Billions of tax dollars at stake in gambling fight

By Mike Deeson  
Tampa Bays

TAMPA, Fla. — The stakes are high, and that's why the Seminole Indians are gambling despite a Florida Supreme Court ruling against the Tribe.

It started when voters approved expanded gambling in the form of Las Vegas Style slot machines in South Florida. Under the Department of Indian Affairs, the law states that the Seminole Indians can run any type of gambling game that is authorized by the state.

Clearly the Indians were going to be able to expand gambling with the new slot machines, but they made a deal with Governor Charlie Crist. The Tribe said if the Governor signed a compact that allowed them to run Las Vegas style card games, they would give the state a portion of the take.

Although Crist is anti gambling, he said he thought it was the right thing for Florida. The Governor concluded, the federal government was going to allow it anyway and Florida

taxpayers would have ended up with zero.

That's why Crist, a gambling opponent, signed a compact that allowed the Seminoles to expand gambling.

Seminole spokesman, Gary Bitner, says the Tribe didn't have to do it. The Federal law allows them to offer gambling, that is legal in the state, without having to share any of the take.

Due to the compact, the state will receive \$100 Million a year. This year a minimum of \$125 million, next year \$150 million and in 2010 it could receive as much as \$1 billion a year if the Indians are extremely successful. The more the tribe makes, the more the state makes.

Those opposed to the compact have two objections:

- First they don't like gambling in the state. This despite the state sanctioned gambling through the lottery.

- Second, opponents say the compact the Governor signed is illegal. The Florida Supreme Court said Crist exceeded his authority and if opponents are

successful in blocking expanded gambling the Indians will still be able to do it and the taxpayers will get zip.

Leonard Coolidge, tax payer, says it is crazy to turn down the money, especially in these economic times.

Norman Dunn, of the Family Action Committee, says it doesn't make sense to use gambling to balance the budget. Dunn says it is wrong and something the state shouldn't do.

But surveys show Floridians favor the compact, because they like what the Seminoles are doing and they like the money the state is getting.

State Senator Mike Bennett says it is a no brainer. Bennett says people could argue the constitutionality, the separation of powers and all that other crap, but if he had done nothing the taxpayers would have ended up with zero.

But if the opponents to the compact are successful, taxpayers will end up with nothing and the Seminoles will get to keep all the money from the expanded gambling.

## MSU adds online Native class

BOZEMAN, Mont. (AP) — Montana State University is offering an online class in Native American studies, beginning in January.

The class is titled, "Native America: Dispelling the Myths," and runs from Jan. 14 through May 8. Students do not have to be enrolled in an MSU degree program to take the class.

Students who take the course can earn either three graduate credits at MSU or 45 renewal units for teachers through the state Office of Public Instruction.

Instructor Kristin Ruppel says the course will be particularly helpful for Montana teachers who need training to fulfill Indian Education for All requirements.