

Judge rules Comanches remain out

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A court order recognizing a half-dozen Comanches as tribal officials was dismissed Friday during a hearing in Anadarko.

Judge Phil Lujan of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Court of Indian Offenses CFR Court ruled to dismiss his previous court order recognizing five — Ed Eschiti, Robert Tippeconnie, Ron Red Elk, Darrell Kosechequetah, and Yonavea Terry, as the Comanche Business Committee (CBC)— as well as for Robert Komahcheet as the tribal administrator. He cited a lack of jurisdic-



COFFEY

tion for the dismissal.

"With his ruling today, Judge Lujan has given the Comanche Nation the help we need to move forward in our fight for tribal sovereignty," said Chairman

Wallace Coffey. "It is a major victory for the Comanche Nation people and all Native American Tribes across the Nation.

"But we're not done — we have more work to do," he said.

Coffey and Tribal Administrator Johnny Wauqua worked with Crowe & Dunlevy, P.C. attorneys, Walter Echo Hawk,



WAUQUA

SEE **TRIBE**, 3A

TRIBE: Freeze on bank accounts still in effect

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Michael McBride, and Jimmy Goodman to argue their case that the court's jurisdiction was superceded by tribal sovereignty.

Tribal sovereignty refers to the inherent authority of indigenous tribes to govern themselves within the borders of the United States of America. The federal government recognizes tribal

is the best for the Comanche Nation."

It is expected the ruling will reaffirm the termination of Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker as legal council for the Comanche Nation. A 180-0 vote during the continuation of the annual general council meeting June 2 rescinded their hiring and authorized the council to

June 12 announcing her withdrawal from the election, according to the Comanche Nation Election Board. Her letter stating her withdrawal was received after the voting ballots were printed, and her name appears on the voting ballot, which was mailed to tribal members last week.

Also on the ballot will be

nations as "domestic dependent nations" and has es-



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along that the Comanche Nation's sovereignty in the United States refers to the

inherent authority of indigenous tribes to govern themselves," Wauqua said.

Lujan reversed his June 6 ruling over the issue. He cited an impending shutdown of tribe businesses, services and programs due to the freeze of Comanche bank accounts at International Bank of Commerce as the reason the CBC would be recognized. Lujan stated he issued the emergency interim order to alleviate unnecessary suffering and economic distress of the Comanche Nation.

established a number of laws attempting to clarify the relationship between the federal, state, and tribal governments.

"I have said all

hire an attorney to represent the tribe. The quorum gathered at the May 19 meeting approved their representation of the six former CBC members.

A freeze to the tribe's bank accounts with International Bank of Commerce remains in effect. The Texas-based bank filed a complaint June 1 in Western District U.S. Federal Court due to the leadership uncertainty. The bank claims it froze the tribe's seven individual accounts on May 29 due to competing claims of signatory authority. Records show the two fac-

tions are "making claims" to the \$6.5 million in the account. It is expected that, with the installation of a new quorum of business officers, no question will remain as to who has authority.

June 30 election

Ballots have been sent out for the June 30 Comanche Nation election for the Comanche Business Committee positions of Secretary/Treasurer, CBC No. 3, CBC No. 4, and the Comanche Nation Election Board At-Large Position.

the run-off for the positions of Comanche Nation Vice-Chairman and CBC posts No. 1 and No. 2.

The run-off candidates for the vice chairman position are Will Owens and Mack "Mike" Mahsetky Jr. The run-off candidates for the CBC No. 1 position are Charles Wells and Anita Daukei. The run-off candidates for the CBC No. 2 position are Sonya Nevaquaya and Vernon Tehauno Jr.

In-house voting will take place 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 29 at the Comanche Nation Complex, nine miles north of Lawton. The district

polling sites will be open for voters 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 30. Tribal members are urged to have their mail-in ballots postmarked and delivered to the Comanche Nation Election Board Post Office Box by noon June 30 to be counted. No hand-delivered ballots will be accepted.

There is a mandatory three-day protest period, and the results will become official 5 p.m. July 3, if no protests are filed.

Coffey has previously said he expects a quorum of officers will be installed

CBC recalled in April

The former business committee members were recalled from office during hearings on April 19 and 26. They continued to attempt to conduct business until a resolution to the situation was found. The dismissal should render all the actions resulting from a special tribal council meeting conducted by the six on May 19 as invalid.

"This wasn't really about us. This is about what's best for the Comanche Nation," Eschiti said. "And I hope that what comes out of this

n Secretary/Treasurer: Roderick Whitewolf; Tommy Parker; John David Wahnee; Gary Tahmahkera; and Delphine Nelson.

n CBC No. 3: Harry Mithlo and Marilyn Tiger

n CBC. No. 4: Deborah Hendrix; Sandra Gallegos; Tanisha Burgess; Eleanor McDaniel; Jonathan Poahway; and Jack Codopony Sr.

Susan Parker is the only candidate for the Election Board At-Large position.

Georgia Gibson, candidate for the Comanche Business Committee Seat No. 4, turned in a notarized letter

into office by July 5.

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