

south to the San Juan River and Santa Fe. The Mouache and Capote bands merged, becoming the Southern Ute Tribe. The Utes were one of the first native groups to use horses for subsistence and protection. By the late 1600s, the Utes were following buffalo herds on the plains and horse-packing their belongings.

Early relations between the Ute and the Mexican government were peaceful, resulting in the opening of the "Old Spanish Trail" as a regular trading route in the 1820s. In the 1830s, however, Mexican farmers tried to settle on Indian land and the Utes and the Navajo joined forces, raiding the farmers, settlements in northern New Mexico.

The Utes, first encounter with Anglo-Americans was in 1806 when Lt. Zebulon Pike entered the San Luis Valley. On December 30, 1849, a peace treaty was signed at Abiquiu, New Mexico with the United States government, in which the Utes recognized the sovereignty of the United States and established borders between the two nations. In 1863, a treaty was signed at Conejos that ended Ute claims to "all mineral rights, all mountain areas settled by whites and the San Luis Valley."

The gold rush to the San Juan Mountains began almost immediately after the 1863 treaty. In the face of encroachment by miners, the Colorado Ute bands were persuaded to sign a treaty, the Brunot Agreement, in which they ceded the San Juan Mountains. This territory represented one fourth of their reservation. The treaty resulted in the loss of their summer home and the majority of their deer harvest. The Hunter Act of 1895 allowed for the remainder of Ute territory, a strip of land 15 miles by 110 miles along the Colorado border, to be allotted. By April of 1896, 72,811 acres of this land was allotted to 371 Utes, the remainder being sold to non-Indians. The Weeminuche Ute band refused to comply with the allotment scheme and instead occupied the westernmost end of the reservation strip around Mesa Verde and Ute Mountain. The BIA was forced to leave the western reservation unallotted.

In 1896, Colorado's Southern Utes and Utah's Northern Utes organized the Confederated Bands of Ute Indians to seek financial compensation for the land taken from them. Reimbursement did not occur until 1910, when the U.S. Court of Claims awarded the Utes \$3,300,000. In 1937, 222,000 acres of reservation land, about half of their original reservation, were restored to the tribe. These restored lands turned out to be energy rich, providing the contemporary Southern Utes with a valuable source of income.

The tribe is growing rapidly, with over half of the population under the age of 25. Approximately 25 percent of the membership lives off the reservation, mostly in larger metropolitan areas such as Denver, Albuquerque, and Phoenix.

GOVERNMENT

The Tribal Council consists of seven elected members; officers include the chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer. The vice-chairman and treasurer are council members who are appointed by the chairman. Members serve for three-year staggered terms. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe approved its constitution and bylaws on June 6, 1940.

ECONOMY

AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

The tribe operates the Custom Farm Department. Services include plowing, disking, leveling, planning (906 acres), and growing hay on 639 acres for tribal members and non-members alike.

CONSTRUCTION

The tribe owns and operates Mouache-Capote Construction

Company which was established in May of 1990. A major goal of the company is to train and employ Southern Ute tribal members. The company employs four permanent and 20 seasonal employees. Projects consist of fencing; roads and heavy construction; oil field site and road development, and municipal water, sewer, and irrigation system installation and maintenance.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Business Opportunity Program offers tribal members training and long-term funding for small business development. Funding includes classroom instruction, seminars, internships, and scholarships. The Business Opportunity Program has a first year goal of placing three tribal members in business internships and establishing two tribal members in start-up businesses.

Feasibility and design work has begun on the Narrow Gauge Scenic Route between Arboles, CO and Dulce, NM. The proposed scenic route runs through the Southern Ute and Jicarilla Reservations and follows a portion of the Rio Grande Rail Road line that formerly ran from Chama, NM to Durango. An Overall Economic Development Plan is underway. The OEDP will provide a framework for assessing reservation-wide economic needs and targeting market niches for business development. The OEDP is being conducted in cooperation with the Fort Lewis College School of Business.

FISHERIES

Lake Capote, where trout is stocked annually, is a tribal enterprise. Seven rivers run through the reservation: San Juan, Piedra, Florida, La Plata, Navajo, Animas and Los Pinos. Two of the rivers, the Los Pinos and the Piedra, are regularly stocked with cutthroat and rainbow trout. Fishing permit sales generate \$2,500 annually.

FORESTRY

The reservation contains substantial stands of timber. The primary species are spruce, ponderosa pine, piñon pine, juniper, aspen, and oak. Total commercial timber acreage is 245,000; 76,066 acres of which are presently inaccessible. Two canyons, one with a volume of 5.0 million board feet (MBF) and net worth of approximately \$1.7 million, and another with a volume of 4.0 MFB and net worth of approximately \$1.36 million, are set for harvest to begin in 1994 and continue through 1997. Total woodland acreage is 92,607. Approximately 7,794 cords are produced per year. The BIA employs eight permanent and six seasonal workers and the tribe employs two permanent and two to four seasonal employees.

GAMING

The tribe opened the new Sky Ute Lodge & Casino Operation in September 1993. The Casino has Class II gaming with bingo, class III gaming with poker and 21 card games, and slot machines of \$1, \$5, 50¢, 25¢, and 5¢.

GOVERNMENT AS EMPLOYER

After the Purgatory Ski Corporation and the City of Durango, the tribe represents the most important source of employment for tribal members. The tribe employs approximately 200 people, not including employment in the lodge and casino area.

INDUSTRIAL PARKS

The tribe is in the process of completing a feasibility and site analysis study for a business park.

MINING

The Southern Ute Tribe receives over 90 percent of its income from natural gas production on the reservation. In the past few years, a dozen tribal members have gained employment with private gas companies. In February of 1992, the Southern Ute Energy Resources

Division started Red Willow Producing Company, a tribally owned oil and gas company. The company was formed to buy and operate gas wells and leases in order to increase the tribe's revenues from its energy resources. It is currently in the process of hiring tribal members to work on newly acquired properties. As of 1995, there are no mining operations on the reservation.

SERVICES

The tribe's business opportunity program, under the economic development division, assists tribal members in small business development. This includes entrepreneurial training, a micro enterprise loan program, technical assistance, business plan preparation, and development of business support services.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

The Southern Ute Indian Reservation is within the outdoor recreation-tourism region of southwestern Colorado, a well known major recreation area rich in scenery and history. The area's major tourist attractions are the San Juan Mountains, Mesa Verde National Park, and the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge railroad. Other attractions include Navajo Lake, the Four Corners, Aztec Ruins National Monument, the forthcoming Mancos Canyon Indian Park (a Ute Mountain tribal enterprise), and numerous fishing lakes and streams that are used by residents and visitors. The reservation's 33-acre Lake Capote offers some of the best trout fishing in southwestern Colorado. Camping, a modern bathhouse with hot showers and flush toilets, and RV sites with water and electricity are available at the lake.

The Southern Ute Cultural Center and Gallery represents the only Ute-funded and operated Indian museum in Colorado. The Cultural Center features a multimedia production shown daily, depicting the early history of the Utes. Displays include examples of the beautiful bead and leather work for which the Utes are famous. During 1992, the Sky Ute Cultural Center and Museum acquired artifacts and equipment to aid in the preservation of museum resources. The Sky Ute Gallery adjoins the Cultural Center and features the finest in traditional and modern American Indian arts and crafts. The Ute Heritage Dancers perform at the Cultural Center on Wednesday evenings; a western-style barbecue follows the performance.

The Sky Ute Lodge/Restaurant features 36 rooms; the restaurant serves a wide variety of authentic southwestern cuisine. The newly remodeled Southern Ute Tourist and Convention Center includes a gaming facility and accommodates up to 300 people. The Sky Ute Downs Equestrian facility is open year round for a variety of horse shows and activities. Several pow wows and the Ute Fair are held at Sky Ute Downs. A large number of deer and elk roam the Southern Ute Reservation. Hunting permits are issued on a limited basis. The Bear Dance, Ute Sun Dance, Ute Fair, pow wows, and the San Ignacio Fiesta provide visitors the opportunity to learn about Ute culture.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Highway 172 runs north and south through the Southern Ute Reservation. Highway 160 runs east-west 25 miles northwest of Ignacio. Highway 550 runs east of Ignacio from Highway 172. The nearest commercial service is in Durango, Colorado, 25 miles northwest of Ignacio. Several motor freight carriers serve the reservation, including UPS, Kangaroo delivery from Durango, and RAC Transport. La Plata County Airport is located approximately ten miles from Ignacio.

Ute Mountain Ute Reservation

Federal Reservation

Ute
Montezuma, La Plata counties, Colorado
San Juan County, New Mexico

San Juan County, Utah
Ute Mountain Indian Tribe
P. O. Box 52
Towaoc, Colorado 81344
(303) 565-3751
Fax: 565-7412

Total area	595,787 acres
Tribally owned	595,787 acres
Federally owned	40 acres
Fee	28,410 acres
High school graduate or higher	49.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	2.0%
Per capita income	\$4,839
Total labor force	515
Unemployment rate	19.0%
Total reservation population	1,366

LOCATION AND LAND STATUS

The Ute Mountain Ute Reservation covers 597,288 acres of allotted and deeded lands, primarily in Colorado, but extending into New Mexico and Utah. Mesa Verde National Park is surrounded on three sides by the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation. The reservation is located 15 miles south of Cortez, CO, on the Navajo Trail.

The topography of the reservation varies from approximately 4,600 feet near the Four Corners area to approximately 10,000 feet at the peak of the Sleeping Ute Mountain. The eastern half of the reservation is characterized by a high mesa cut by the canyon of the Mancos River and numerous side canyons. The western half of the reservation, with the exception of the Sleeping Ute Mountain, is semi-desert grassland.

Towaoc is the only town on the reservation. It is the site of the Ute Mountain Indian Agency and the residence of most of the people on the reservation. The nearest large town is Cortez, Colorado, about 16 miles northeast of Towaoc, and is the principle market center for the area. South of the reservation in New Mexico are the towns of Shiprock, 30 miles from Towaoc, and Farmington, 29 miles east of Shiprock.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Utes represent the oldest continuous residents of what is now Colorado. Traditional Ute territory encompassed most of Colorado and Utah and portions of New Mexico and Arizona. The language of the Utes is Shoshonean, which is a branch of the greater Uto-Aztecan linguistic family. Eleven bands of Utes roamed from the Wasatch Range above the Salt Lake Valley east to the Great Plains, and from the Uintah Mountains at the rim of the Wyoming Basin south to the San Juan River and Santa Fe. The Weeminuche band became the Ute Mountain Utes. The Ute shared many characteristics of the Plains Indians. In their early history they traveled by foot in small bands of 25 to 30 people. The availability of resources required them to be highly mobile and have efficient food-gathering techniques. The Utes were one of the first native groups to use horses for subsistence and protection. By the late 1600s, the Utes were following buffalo herds on the plains and horse-packing their belongings.

The Utes' first encounter with Anglo-Americans was in 1806 when Lt. Zebulon Pike entered the San Luis Valley. On December 30, 1849, a peace treaty was signed at Abiquiu, New Mexico with the United States government, in which the Utes recognized the sovereignty of the United States and established borders between the two nations. In 1863, the Utes signed a treaty at Conejos that ended their claims to "all mineral rights, all mountain areas settled by whites and the San Luis Valley."

The gold rush to the San Juan Mountains began almost immediately after the 1863 treaty. In the face of encroachment by miners, the Colorado Ute bands were persuaded to sign a treaty, the Brunot Agreement, in which they ceded the San Juan Mountains. This territory represented one-fourth of their reservation; the treaty resulted in the loss of their summer home and the majority of their deer harvest. The Hunter Act of 1895 allowed for the remainder of Ute territory, a strip of land 15 miles by 110 miles along the Colorado border, to be allotted. By April of 1896, 72,811 acres of this land was allotted to 371 Utes, the remainder being sold to non-Indians.

While the Capote and Mouache bands agreed to the allotment process, the Weeminuche Ute band refused to comply with the allotment scheme and instead occupied the westernmost end of the reservation strip, around Mesa Verde and Ute Mountain. The BIA was forced to leave the western reservation unallotted and established an agency for the Weeminuche at Navajo Springs in 1897 (it was moved to Towaoc in 1914). This separation caused a regrouping of the three bands of Utes into two tribes. The Mouache and Capote bands became known as the Southern Utes, and the Weeminuche band was referred to as the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, in reference to the Sleeping Ute mountain area of their settlement.

In 1896, Colorado's Southern Utes and Utah's Northern Utes organized the Confederated Bands of Ute Indians to seek financial compensation for the land taken from them. Reimbursement did not occur until 1910, when the U.S. Court of Claims awarded the Utes \$3,300,000. In 1911, the Weeminuche provided acreage for Mesa Verde National Park where the remains of Anasazi cliff dwellings exist. In exchange for the land provided for the park, the federal government granted the Utes other properties, including most of northern Ute Mountain.

Coal leases and oil and natural gas discoveries during the 1950s brought the tribe its first real income and provided for per capita payments to tribal members of up to \$1,500 every 60 days. In addition, many Ute people began to raise cattle, gradually regaining some of the non-Indian allotted lands. In 1957, the tribe bought the 20,000-acre Pinecrest Ranch between Gunnison and Lake City for additional summer range.

GOVERNMENT

The tribal government operates under a constitution which provides for a Tribal Council of seven members, including a chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer.

AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

The Ute Mountain Ute tribe's Farm and Ranch enterprise is an irrigated agricultural project which encompasses over 7,600 acres of the tribe's reservation. The enterprise relies heavily upon the Dolores Irrigation Project, which delivers nearly 23,000 acre-feet of water annually to the reservation for agricultural development. The 125-acre demonstration farm is currently used for research in irrigation systems and crop adaptation.

Since 1986, the Ute Mountain Ute White Mesa Community, located in southeastern Utah, has owned and managed a cattle operation.

Up to 650 head of cattle graze on over 200,000 acres, which include tribal lands and public lands for which the tribe pays grazing fees. Revenues from annual calf sales support community services in White Mesa.

CONSTRUCTION

The Weeminuche Construction Authority (WCA), a commercial construction enterprise, is owned and operated by the tribe. Since its founding in 1985, WCA has provided broad-based construction services, acquired through competitive bidding, to clients including federal, state and local municipalities; other tribes; oil and gas companies; and agricultural operations. WCA employs up to several hundred employees and owns over four hundred pieces of major construction equipment. WCA completed the REACH III project, which transported water from the Dolores Project across tribal lands for the Farm and Ranch project. Capabilities include waste and waste water treatment facilities, road construction, bridges, commercial buildings, and conventional and traditional houses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The tribe offers a series of classes designed to help tribal members and their spouses start businesses. Through structured course work, presentations by professionals, and classroom discussion, students gain practical knowledge in funding alternatives, business planning, personnel and accounting systems, marketing strategies and inventory control.

GAMING

The Ute Mountain Casino opened in 1992. It employs more than 350 people, over half of whom are tribal members. The casino is located on Highway 666.

INDUSTRIAL PARKS

There is one industrial park that includes the Weeminuche Construction Company, Farm and Ranch headquarters, and the casino.

MANUFACTURING

The Ute Mountain Pottery Plant is located in two sites and employs over 50 tribal members. Up to 3,500 pieces of pottery are produced monthly and sold locally and in outlets across the country. Small groups are welcome to tour at any time; large groups should call for an appointment.

MINING

There are 81 producing oil wells and 71 producing gas wells on the reservation. Sand and gravel deposits are also being developed, as well as coal, titanium, selenium, uranium, and bentonite. During the 1980s, the tribe negotiated a model mineral lease with the Wintershall Corporation. In addition to excellent financial terms, the company agreed to train Ute workers and to restrict activity in the Ute Mountain Tribal Park.

SERVICES

The tribe owns and operates Woody's Convenience Store, a gas station, and a laundromat.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

The tribe set aside the 125,000-acre Ute Mountain Tribal Park to preserve its ancient surface ruins, cliff dwellings, and petroglyphs. Once inhabited by the Anasazi Indians, the park is operated by the tribe primarily to protect its cultural and environmental treasures. Visitors on guided day hikes and longer excursions experience the extraordinary natural surroundings while exploring ruin sites, some in various stages of stabilization. Guided tours leave daily from the

Ute Mountain Pottery Plant in Towaoc. There is a small museum to provide tourists with information upon entering the park. Visitors may stay on the reservation's full-service Sleepy Ute RV Park, which has 84 sites. In addition, the tribe anticipates opening its Indian Village recreational site soon.

The Ute Mountain Bear Dance is held annually during the first week in June. A five-day celebration of spring, the event features dancing, singing and traditional ceremonies; a feast is included on the final day. The celebration is free, and attendance averages around 1,000.

INFRASTRUCTURE

U.S. Highways 160 and 666 and State Highways 41 and 789 run through the reservation. Two maintained gravel roads cross the reservation: one follows the Mancos River canyon to the eastern part of the reservation then southward toward Farmington; NM the

other goes westward from Towaoc to the Cache oilfield then on to Aneth, UT. Cortez, CO is 16 miles from the reservation and has regularly scheduled air and truck services. The nearest commercial train service is located in Gallup, NM. The nearest commercial bus service is in Durango, CO, about 60 miles east of the reservation.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The water and sewer system were installed by the BIA and USPHS. The Western Colorado Power Company and the Empire Electric Association supply electricity to the reservation. There is a United States Public Health Service clinic located in Towaoc; hospitals are located in Cortez and Shiprock, NM.

A recreation center is located on the reservation and features a swimming pool, a basketball court and a weight room.

