

COARSEGOLD, Calif., March 10, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- A California federal judge has thrown out a lawsuit seeking control of the Chukchansi Gold casino and its revenues, ruling that the rogue tribal faction headed by Reggie Lewis has not been recognized as the ruling Council of the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians.

In a fiction-filled press release dated February 12, 2014, Lewis had proclaimed himself the Tribe's Chairman, falsely claiming that he and a former Tribal Council elected in December 2010 had been permanently recognized as the Picayune Rancheria's duly-elected Council by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and had been granted the authority to run the Tribe's casino and day-to-day operations. Lewis falsely stated: "Everyone was waiting for the BIA to weigh in, and now it has. Finally, there is no more dispute as to who is the leader of the tribal government and the BIA-recognized Tribal Council looks forward to re-establishing our government-to-government relationships."

Federal Judge Anthony W. Ishii, in throwing out Lewis' complaint, plainly stated that "Plaintiffs (Lewis and his faction) do not represent the Tribe as the recognized government body."

The Chukchansi Tribe's government operations, including its casino and resort, have been run for the past year by a duly-elected Tribal Council headquartered on the rancheria in Coarsegold. That Council currently consists of Chairwoman Nancy Ayala (suspended); Vice Chair Tex McDonald, the acting Chairman; Treasurer Vernon King; Secretary Lynda Appling; and Members-at-Large Charles Sargosa,

Donna Featherstone  
and  
Amanda Ramirez  
.

McDonald said he had no doubt the Lewis lawsuit would be thrown out of Court. "It's a shame the Lewis group continues to waste our people's money with ridiculous lawsuits that get laughed out of court," the Chairman explained. "Lewis' false claims that he's in charge of the Tribe fly in the face of the facts. The on-rancheria Council does the work of our Tribe every day, from running the casino to paying the Tribe's bills and providing services to our members. The Lewis group only does one thing – waste the Chukchansi people's money on lawyers and fancy buildings."

Council Secretary Lynda Appling echoed McDonald. "Our Tribe has families who need per capita payments, elders who need grocery and housing assistance and children who need money for school. That's who won today in Court. The last thing our people needed would be for  
Reggie Lewis to get his hands on more of the Tribe's money."

Said Treasurer Vernon King: "Our Council will continue to come to work every day on the rancheria, to protect our people and conduct the Tribe's business. As Judge Ishii made very clear,  
Reggie Lewis doesn't run this Tribe from his fancy glass building in  
Fresno."

Contact: David Leibowitz 602.317.1414 [david@leibowitzsolo.com](mailto:david@leibowitzsolo.com)

SOURCE Chukchansi Tribal Council