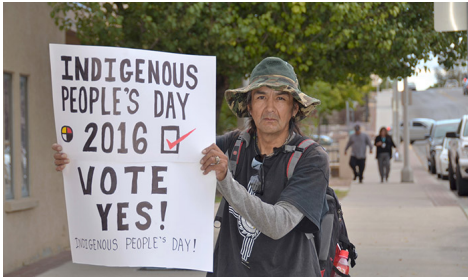


## Tilden holds protest at GCC

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 09 December 2016 06:01

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### Report: Dakota Access Pipeline construction halted

Mervyn Tilden, a Church Rock human rights activist, is the leading face of protest when it comes to area issues that impact Native Americans. Tilden has led the local effort for Gallup to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day and do away with Columbus Day.

The Gallup City Council proclaimed the former a couple of months ago.

Tilden, a freelance journalist, was back at it again Dec. 3 in front of the Gallup Cultural Center along East Historic Highway 66, demonstrating against business interests, and the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota.

"This is for the people who can't speak for themselves," Tilden said. "There are young people out there and there are elderly people out there who can't come here to demonstrate so I am doing my part for them. The Dakota Access Pipeline is environmental racism at its best."

The five-hour demonstration started at noon and dozens of marchers carried signs that read "No Pipeline." The weather was in the mid-30s and motorists that passed the demonstrators blew their horns in support of the cause. There was not one passersby who shouted bad words at Tilden or the demonstrators.

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“This is for a very good cause,” John Chapman, a psychotherapist from Gallup, said. “There are a lot of people who are not in agreement with what this big company wants to do.”

The 1,172-mile Dakota Access Pipeline would connect oil rich areas of North Dakota to Illinois, where the crude oil could then be transported to refineries on the Gulf Coast or East Coast. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers came out with an announcement Dec. 5 to not allow the proposed pipeline to cross the Missouri River because such a decision needs further analyses, including a deeper consideration of alternative routes, assistant secretary of the Army Jo-Ellen Darcy said this week in a letter.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe have argued that the pipeline would endanger the tribe’s water supply and that it stands to intrude upon tribal lands. Military veterans arrived in North Dakota this week to protect the protesters from police. Tilden said the pipeline issues is not solely a Native American issue, but, generally-speaking, an “American” issue.

“I’m glad things have come this far and I’m glad that the people of Gallup came out today,” Greg Rivers, a resident of Many Farms said. Rivers parked his car at the Cultural Center and briefly joined the demonstration. “I think it’s a good cause.”

***By Bernie Dotson***  
***Sun Correspondent***