



## **More meetings on Aamodt case, roads dispute in northern Santa Fe County**

**By T. S. Last / Journal Staff Writer**

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SANTA FE – Santa Fe County officials will be meeting behind closed doors today and Thursday to discuss a dispute over county roads that run through the “exterior” boundaries of four local pueblos that the county says must be resolved before it ponies up its share of funds to construct a \$261 million regional water system that’s the major piece in settling the long-running to Aamodt water rights case.

Meanwhile, two meetings related to the settlement that will be open to the public will be held today — one a town hall meeting co-hosted by state Rep. Carl Trujillo (D-Pojoaque) on the roads issue, and the other a public hearing on proposed rules for water administration in the Nambe-Pojoaque-Tesuque basin put on by the state Engineer’s Office.

A federal court last month issued a final decree in the Aamodt settlement, but that’s not the end of it. Rules governing the administration of water rights affect all people living within the basin and must be finalized before a Sept. 15 deadline. But concerns have been raised over the rules, particularly among non-Native people living on property within boundaries of pueblos that have since passed into private hands, including private well owners and acequia associations.

As part of that process, the Office of the State Engineer will take public comment on the issue from 2 to 4 p.m. today in the old Senate chambers of the Baaton Memorial Building, 400 Don Gaspar Ave. in Santa Fe.

Later today, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Pojoaque Middle School, 1797 NM 502, Trujillo and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will co-host a town hall meeting to provide information and answer questions regarding the road easement issue. The bureau’s deputy commissioner and chairman of the Indian water rights working group, Alan Mikkelsen, is also scheduled to attend the meeting.

Santa Fe County is justifying its closed meetings today and Thursday mornings at the state Capitol by citing the state’s Open Meetings Act, which allows public officials to meet in private to discuss threatened or pending litigation and the purchase, acquisition or disposal of property or water rights.