

Ex-officers: Air Force lied about range

■ **TWIN FALLS**— Three retired Air Force officers say the U.S. Air Force intentionally provided false information that led to a recommendation to close George Air Force Base in California and a proposed expansion of the Saylor Creek Bombing Range in Idaho.

"There's something going on here other than a fair and equitable evaluation of what should and shouldn't happen to the taxpayers' money," former fighter pilot Col. Maurice Long said.

Long, Lt. Col. Vernon R. Lee and Capt. William McDaniel, all retired fighter pilots, contend Air Force officials intentionally misled the Defense Secretary's Commission on Base Realignment and Closure during 1988 hearings.

The commission in December 1988 recommended closing George and moving 94 F-4 fighter jets to Mountain Home Air Force Base.

The Air Force since has said the move requires a large expansion of the base and the nearby Saylor Creek range.

When the three first learned that George was to be closed, they were certain it was a mistake, McDaniel said.

But as they investigated the commission's decision they slowly discovered it was intentional, McDaniel said.

"We slowly came to the conclusion that it was a carefully orchestrated plan by a few folks in DOD and the Air Force," he said.

Air Force headquarters at the Pentagon did not respond to allegations by the three officers.

Safety Task Force began work in February to make the county's 31 mainline crossings safer and people more aware of the danger.

The group, made up of railroad, local and state government agency and citizen representatives, is seeking education, engineering and enforcement methods to save lives and reduce the long-term trauma and questions train accidents leave behind.

"The families don't understand it. Engineers suffer a lifetime for something they are not at fault for," said Evelyn Bow, a task force member.

Sexual disease rate high in N. Idaho teens

■ **COEUR D'ALENE**— An epidemic more prevalent than the flu, measles or chicken pox is afflicting North Idaho teens, Panhandle Health District officials say.

"I assume that if you're between the ages of 16 and 22 and living in this community, you have chlamydia, unless otherwise tested negative, just because that's how rampant the disease is," said Jan Palmer, a nurse epidemiologist for the health district.

Palmer operates the health district's sexually transmitted diseases clinic, speaking to high school students and counseling patients about gonorrhea, vaginitis, genital warts, herpes and chlamydia — a sexually transmitted bacterial infection that is the most common here of the ailments and can result in sterility.

Over the past decade, the number if people seeking testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases at the health district has boomed — from 269 in 1980 to 1,067 in 1989.

Nez Perce want to start gaming this summer

Associated Press

LAPWAI — The Nez Perce Indian Tribe apparently is determined to start gaming operations to generate some revenue on their north-central Idaho reservation, possibly as early as this summer.

But Tribal Executive Committee Chairman Allen Pinkham said Friday that any operation will be low key and state authorities will be kept informed.

"I think we could probably do it this summer. We could test the market this summer," Pinkham said in an interview during the tribe's semiannual General Council meeting in Lapwai.

During the meeting Saturday, Pinkham, 52, lost three consecutive runoff races Saturday and immediately surrendered his post on the governing, nine-member Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee.

"I'd say I was surprised, but you never know," Pinkham said after losing for a third time, ending a nine-year stint on NPTEC.

Gov. Cecil Andrus and Attorney General Jim Jones have vowed to oppose gambling on Idaho Indian reservations. But the U.S. Department of Interior recently said it interprets the Idaho Constitution and state lottery laws as allowing Indian bingo.

Both Andrus and Jones dispute that interpretation, but acknowledge some changes might have to be made to clarify state law on the subject.

Besides the Nez Perce, the Sho-

The response generally was positive, with most preferring gaming to be at a site near the reservation's boundaries, Matthews said.

The top choices seemed to be bingo and horse racing, he said, although the survey did not specify whether a track would be developed by the tribe or horse

races would be simulcast from facilities elsewhere.

"I don't see this as a big, multi-million-dollar income producer, because we don't have the population to draw from," Pinkham said, but gambling could help provide a steady source of revenue for tribal programs cut back in recent years because of dwindling federal funding.

The Nez Perce leader said he wants to talk directly to Andrus about Indian gaming issues.

"I'm going to try to set up a meeting with him sometime before the summer is over," Pinkham said. "It's just a difference of opinion, that's all it is."

