

RICK RENZI INDICTED

From the AP:

A 26-page federal indictment unsealed in Arizona accuses Renzi and two former business partners of conspiring to promote the sale of land that buyers could swap for property owned by the federal government. The sale netted one of Renzi's former partners \$4.5 million.

Here's a post describing the deal from last year.

A big time mining venture, Resolution Copper Company, wants a parcel of land an hour east of Phoenix so it can mine the vein of copper that lies beneath it. Renzi offered to help them gain Congressional approval for a land swap that would give them that parcel of land, in exchange for some other pieces of land that would be preserved or used to decrease water consumption in the area. Only, Renzi wanted to throw in a little goodie for himself—he asked Resolution to buy an alfalfa field he owned to include it in the swap. The field was later purchased by another group (with ties to Bruce Babbitt) for \$4 million dollars, just two years after it was purchased for \$1 million.

Not a surprise, really. I'm just hoping the indictment finally reveals more about why Paul Charlton was fired to stave off precisely this indictment. From last year's post:

And, lurking behind the scam, is the firing of Paul Charlton as US Attorney. In the Senate hearing the other day, Alberto Gonzales offered no good answer for why Charlton was fired. He claimed only that Charlton resisted Gonzales' judgement on a death penalty case and

that he used poor judgment in his efforts to implement taped confessions for investigations in his district. News of the Renzi investigation first got leaked in October, just before the election. And this scam involves a significant Native American interest (one of the commonalities among several of the fired USAs)—the San Carlos Apache Tribe opposes the mining project because it endangers some of their cultural heritage areas.