Press Release
10 July 2003 (for immediate release)
Noteworthy presentation at INQUA Congress

Professor Gary Haynes (University of Nevada, Reno) has organized a symposium on Tuesday, July 29, 2003, to discuss the current state of knowledge about Western North America's very earliest human cultures, as part of the International Quaternary Association's World Congress in Reno, Nevada. He will also make a presentation in the symposium, following 10 other presentations by internationally known experts.

Title of presentation:"Patterns…Explained By Laws Not Yet Discovered?"

Presenter: Dr. Gary Haynes, Professor and Chair, Anthropology Department, University of Nevada, Reno
(author of Mammoths, Mastodonts, and Elephants (book), and The Early Settlement of North America: The Clovis Era (book), both published by Cambridge University Press)

Date/Time/Place: July 29, 2003; scheduled for 11:50 am, Reno Hilton (Tahoe room) in the Session entitled "Paleoindian Western North America: Climate and Life at the Last Glacial Termination"

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Main points: The first solid evidence of a human presence in virtually all of North America is the distinctive Clovis spearpoint, named after a town in New Mexico. Current archeological explanations for the sudden spread of people at the end of the last Ice Age are not satisfactory, based as much on unfounded myths as on imperfect interpretations of puzzling data. Most likely the people who made the point and the associated other flaked-stone items were unusually mobile hunters and gatherers who opportunistically targeted the continent's largest mammals, particularly mammoths and mastodonts. A cycle of changing climates had set up ecological conditions encouraging extreme human mobility and exploration. As a result, human groups spread thousands of miles in 2-4 centuries. While dispersing rapidly, they contributed to the extinction of about 2/3 of North America's largest species of land mammals. The process of rapid human spread was probably very similar in other continents where modern *Homo sapiens* moved into unoccupied landscapes.