

## MINUTES

### JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS

August 22, 2001

Prairie Band Potawatomi Reservation, Mayetta

#### Members Present

Senator Lana Oleen, Chair  
Representative Tony Powell, Vice Chair  
Representative Melany Barnes  
Representative Becky Hutchins  
Representative Doug Mays

#### Staff Present

Russell Mills, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Judy Swanson, Committee Secretary

The Joint Committee on State-Tribal Relations assembled at the State Capitol Building at 9:30 a.m., on August 22, 2001, for the purpose of a site visit to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Reservation. The Joint Committee traveled by state vans and private automobiles.

Upon arrival at the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Government Center, members were greeted and welcomed by Tribal Council Chair Badger Wahwasuck and other tribal officials. A brief reception was held for the Committee and other guests in attendance.

Jon Boursaw, Executive Director of the Tribal Council, introduced the other Tribal Council members. Mr. Boursaw discussed the proposed highway interchange project at the intersection of Highway 75 and the casino access road. It is a \$9.2 million project, and \$1.2 million is pledged by the Potawatomi Nation. He noted that a feasibility study on the need for additional housing for the elderly on the reservation is being conducted.

Rey Kitchkumme, Tribal Council Member, presented an overview of the reservation plat which showed land in trust, fee lands, and current purchased land. He stated that tribal members or the Nation owns about 50 percent of the reservation. In the past three years, 10,300 acres of land has been acquired by the tribe. He stated that the current reservation is 11 miles square and the original reservation was 30 miles square.

Mr. Boursaw reviewed the five-year road reconstruction project map. This is the first year of the plan. Discussion followed about the positive changes in the roads on the

reservation. All of the road projects are funded solely by tribal money, with the exception of the proposed interchange project. Mr. Boursaw said that 300 of the tribal members are working on the reservation now, as compared to about 25 in 1980. They are in the process of making a housing plan for reservation resident members. Most of the reservation's farmlands are leased to local farmers.

There are over 5,000 Prairie Band tribal members across the nation, but the majority do not live on the reservation, although some have returned to the reservation in recent times.

Committee members were conducted on a tour of the Government Center and the Police Center. Lunch was served at Harrah's Prairie Band Casino, followed by a short tour of the casino and the security systems in place.

Members then viewed the 142<sup>nd</sup> Road Housing Project, observed the buffalo herd, and viewed the Road, Bridge, and Commodities Departments of the tribal government.

Winona Wahweotten gave a tour of the new Senior Center facility. She is the director of the facility, which serves both tribal and nontribal members.

Cecily Wabaunsee, Director of Childcare and Headstart, gave a brief overview of their accreditation procedures and a tour of the facilities, which have both tribal and nontribal youth in their programs.

The Committee toured the new fire station which has over \$700,000 worth of new fire equipment. They have two ambulances, one of which is brand new, and trained emergency medical staff. Staff of the fire station noted that they have had 754 calls since January 1, 2001. Over 80 percent of the calls were medical.

Eric Sanderson, LMSW, Director of Social Services Program, met members at the We-Ta-Se Building and presented an overview of the counseling services that are offered to tribal members.

Committee members concluded their tour back at the Government Center. Chair Oleen stated that the Iowa Tribe has issued an invitation to the Committee to visit their reservation. This visit will probably be arranged for the October meeting.

The next Committee meeting will be announced by mail.

Prepared by Judy Swanson  
Edited by Russell Mills

Approved by Committee on:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ 10-30-01  
(Date)