



OFFICIAL DELAWARE TRIBE OF INDIANS PRESS RELEASE

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CHEROKEE NATION NEWS RELEASE

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Cherokee Nation and Delaware Tribe Reach Agreement on Separate Federal Recognition

BARTLESVILLE, OK — The Cherokee Nation Tribal Council has taken another step toward supporting the recognition of a separate Nation for the Delaware Tribe of Indians. The measure ratifying the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Cherokee Nation and the Delawares was passed unanimously during a Special Tribal Council Meeting on Thursday, October 23rd.

“We are pleased with the constructive method that the Delaware Administration has taken on an issue that has divided us for a number of years,” said Chad Smith, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. “This collaborative agreement protects our concerns about Cherokee Nation sovereignty and allows the Delaware’s their separate recognition.”

The MOA both recognizes the consultative, inter-governmental relationship between the two Nations and preserves and protects the Cherokee Nation’s territory and jurisdiction.

“Today is a very significant day for the Delaware Tribe,” said Jerry Douglas, Chief of the Delaware Tribe. “After years of hard work by Cherokees and Delawares alike, this agreement paved the way for the restoration of the Tribe’s separate federal recognition and resolves decades of uncertainty for both tribes. The Tribe looks forward to continuing to work with the Cherokee Nation cooperatively and as allies under the framework embodied in the MOA.” “The path to federal recognition for the Delaware Tribe of Indians is now closer to reality now that both governments (Cherokee and Delaware) have ratified the Memorandum of Agreement,” stated Chief Douglas. Chief Douglas expressed appreciation for Chief Smith’s leadership and cooperation throughout the process of negotiating and finalizing the MOA. Douglas also complimented the tireless effort and cooperation of the Cherokee and Delaware Tribal Councils work to complete the MOA process.

The Delaware, with assistance from the Cherokee Nation have already begun discussion with the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs and members of the Oklahoma Congressional delegation to restore federal recognition to the Delaware Tribe of Indians.

The Cherokee Council resolution, sponsored by Tribal Council member Brad Cobb, compliments H.R. 6786, a piece of Federal legislation, introduced by Congressman John Sullivan (R-Okla.) on August 1, 2008. While introducing the bill, Congressman Sullivan stated the legislative intent of this bill is to restore the Federal recognition of the Delaware Tribe of Indians. "But [it] also incorporates mechanisms for the Delaware Tribe of Indians and the Cherokee Nation to resolve issues between them in Eastern Oklahoma amicably," Congressman Sullivan stated in a floor statement on August 1, 2008. "I am pleased to see not only Delaware restoration but also accord and cooperation between the two tribes." Co-sponsors of the bill include Oklahoma Representative Dan Boren, Representative Tom Cole, Representative Mary Fallin and Representative Frank Lucas.

"This is a new day and the beginning of a new era in Delaware Tribal history," according to Delaware Assistant Chief Wayne Stull. Stull stated, "The disputes and differences have been resolved and he and Chief Douglas believe it is time to turn the page and be about the business of building a strong unit of Tribal government and Tribal economic infrastructure that creates opportunities and advantages for Delaware Tribal members."

Cherokee Nation representatives, including Secretary of State Melanie Knight, worked closely with Delaware officials to negotiate the proposed agreement defining the inter-governmental relationship between the two Nations. Highlights from the MOA include: agreements on jurisdictional boundaries, the administering of governmental programs and provisions for 8(a) contracting.

This legislative action follows Cherokee Council Resolution Number 86-06 that was enacted by the Council of the Cherokee Nation on August 21, 2006, to approve and support legislation for separate federal recognition of the Delaware tribe of Indians.