

## **Welcome Spring, By Chief Craig Harper**

We welcome the beauty of spring! Green grass, more sunshine, longer days and outdoor activities always bring fresh excitement and hope to us all, after the long winter months. I have always considered myself an outdoorsman and I greatly anticipate the fall hunting season every year. However, at the first sight of green grass this time of year, I am ready to get outside and work on our farm, golf or hike- anything to get outside and enjoy the beauty and fresh air!

I want to share with you all a brief recap of the last month since I took office, and update everyone on Tribal Elections, Elected Officials, current projects, and cast an overall vision of the direction I hope to lead our people in.

First and foremost, I want to thank each of our Election Committee members for their continued commitment to serve our Tribe during this time of transition. The work involved in preparing and overseeing each election does not go unnoticed, and is greatly appreciated. We have two Special Elections scheduled to fill vacant seats on our Business Committee and Grievance Committee.

Saturday, April 21, 2018      Second Councilman

Saturday, June 30, 2018      Second Chief / Third Councilman / Grievance Seat

I encourage each of you to make plans now to attend both of these important Peoria Tribal Elections. Each vacant seat plays a vital role in the operation of not only our Tribal Government, but in the overall success, prosperity, progress and future of our Tribe. Our Elected Officials represent you, work for and do business on behalf of the Tribe. For those of you that are able, I urge you to come and cast your vote!

Due to current vacancies on our Business Committee, we were unable to have a quorum to conduct business for the Regular Business Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 3, 2018. A Special Meeting has been called for Tuesday, April 24, following the Special Election to conduct regular business for the month of April. We appreciate your flexibility during this time of transition for our Tribal Government. We are committed to keeping you informed as changes happen, so please continue to check the Peoria Tribal website for updates.

With that said, we have already consulted with three IT companies in regards to updating our overall network infrastructure. We are researching new options that will help us increase the information outflow to our tribal members. Everything from website design/development, to social networking/outreach, our own 'Tribal App', weekly email blasts, and streaming/recording of our monthly Business Committee meetings. My goal is absolute transparency. We not only want to keep you informed on Tribal Government business, but build a stronger connection with ALL tribal members regardless of where you live.

Cultural revitalization and preservation is a top priority for this administration. Without culture, heritage and native traditions, we cease to be a "Tribe". With that thought in mind, we have already began pressing ahead in this direction. We have attended preliminary meetings with the

Miami Tribe, who have graciously offered to help us begin the process of implementing our own Peoria Language Program. Our Tribal Historian/NAGPRA Representative, Logan Pappenfort, is excited to take the lead on this project. Many tribal members have already begun this journey on their own, and are already speaking their native language!

Preliminary clean-up work has begun on the property formerly known as the Miami Golf and Country Club, purchased by the Tribe in 2012. Due to restrictions placed on the property at the time of purchase, my vision for the property to be used for cultural purposes may be delayed. Once our legal team has worked out all of the details, I will present our Business and Cultural Committees with what I hope to be one of our Tribes most exciting cultural projects yet...stay tuned!

I was honored to attend my first Inter-Tribal Council Meeting, and meet our local tribal leaders. This week I was at the Oklahoma State Capital Building to attend meetings at the Governor's Office. I was introduced to many of our elected officials at the state level, in regards to specific Native American issues that we want to keep at the forefront of our state government. It's important for the Peoria Tribe to be involved, network, and have a seat at the table.

The Buffalo Run Casino Pow-wow was held Saturday, March 31 at the Peoria Showplace. Hundreds of contestants were registered and many tribes were represented by their beautiful dancers. I was honored to attend the event and address the assembly on behalf of the Tribe. There will be a link on our website to view some of the images captured by Photographer, Gary Crow. The Pow-wow Head Staff and Casino employees did an excellent job overseeing this great dance event and we appreciate their hard work.

This is an exciting time to be Peoria! I encourage you be active, get involved and get to know your fellow Tribal members as we all move forward together in a spirit of excellence!

Thank you,

Chief Craig Harper

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