

Office of the Chief:

Unity, progress, cultural revitalization, and a new vision for tribal prosperity, will continue to be the focus of our tribal leadership as we look ahead to the coming summer months. A number of changes, updates and new opportunities are being presented to our Tribe, and I am excited about what our future holds! Although change can bring success, new opportunities and hope, it can sometimes be challenging to embrace. I pray that we all be strengthened as we embrace each other as family and fellow tribal members during this time of transition and progress.

We welcome Second Councilman Kara D. North, as the newest elected member of our Business Committee, at the April 21st, Special Election. Ms. North brings years of community tribal involvement and experience to the table, and we are glad to have her join our leaders. The second Special Election will be June 30th to fill the remaining positions on our Business Committee. 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. Make plans to come and vote- every position plays a vital role in our tribal government!

I want to share with you all a brief recap of what has transpired over the last few months since I took office, update everyone on current projects, and cast an overall vision of the direction I hope to lead our people in.

IT Upgrade:

We have met with multiple IT companies in regards to updating our overall network infrastructure, security system and audio/visual capabilities. We will soon be launching a new interactive website that will improve communication and outreach. We will be developing our own 'Tribal App', weekly email blasts, E-newsletters, and viewing options of our monthly Business Committee meetings. 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. BE WATCHING THE WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS! This will be the official vehicle to keep members informed and involved.

Cultural Revitalization:

We MUST pursue our Peoria culture—I have said it before, without culture, heritage and our Native traditions, we will cease to be a "Tribe". With that said, we are 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, will be taking lead on this project.

We will soon be launching a new initiative to retrieve and display Peoria artifacts currently held in out of state museums. We are in the process of purchasing custom display cases that will house the artifacts/ items that we retrieve. Our plan is to rotate different items for display for our tribal members to learn about, view and enjoy. Many of us have items that have been passed down to us from our ancestors that tell the story of our past. If your family has artifacts, culturally significant items, documents, regalia, pictures or a piece of our history you would like to display, we want to hear from you. Contact the Tribal office so we can schedule a time to visit with you about this initiative.

State & Local Government:

I have been honored to be involved with the Inter-Tribal Council. I have enjoyed getting to know our local tribal leaders and hope to build relationships and collaborate on projects together that will impact our Native community in a positive way. I traveled to 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, discussing specific issues relating to Oklahoma Tribes that we want to keep at the forefront of our state government. It's a critical time for us to be involved, assert our sovereignty, and ensure a seat at the table for the future of our Tribe.

Tribal Property:

Preliminary clean-up work has begun on the property formerly known as the Miami Golf and Country Club, purchased by the Tribe in 2012. We have had tremendous feedback from the community! 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. However, 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!

Tribal Businesses:

The Buffalo Run Casino Pow-wow was held Saturday, March 31st 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.

I am most excited to announce that both Buffalo Run Hotel and Casino revenues continue to climb. Tribal distribution for the month of March was double that of the previous month, and was the third highest distribution in the last year! New advertising strategies, social media campaigns, better gaming promotions, exciting entertainment events and tremendous staff are to be commended for this upward trend.

We will soon be collaborating with the University of Illinois on future education initiatives, research, and cultural projects. Positive meetings recently held with Dr. Robert Jones, Chancellor of the University of Illinois, promise to bring great opportunities for our people.

Get ready for the 21st Annual Peoria Tribal Pow-Wow June 22-24, 2018. Our Pow-Wow Committee is hard at work to make this our best gathering yet! I look forward to seeing many of you at this year's event!

This IS an exciting time to be Peoria! May we be stronger together, always remembering where we came from, but pressing forward together in a spirit of excellence!

Thank you,

Chief Craig Harper

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