

RESERVATION STATUS

The ruling issued in the 10th District Federal Court on Jan. 25, 2009 is that Osage County is not a reservation. The Osage Nation will have to appeal this ruling. The appeal will buy us some time—some think at least 18 months—to prepare for what may happen; the worse case is that the ruling is upheld, but before then the National Gaming Commission or the State of Oklahoma may take other actions against our casinos.

Statements have been issued by the Executive Branch that “The federal government has determined Osage County to be “Indian Country” for gaming purposes....” Actually, an opinion that the whole of Osage County was eligible for gaming was issued by the acting general counsel of the National Indian Gaming Commission, but she can only advise and has no authority. Our reservation status has never been brought before the federal decision makers with authority at the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Based on the information I have been able to gather, the Tulsa casino was started with the intention that it would be in trust before it opened. When that had not happened, that casino and Ponca City and Skiatook were completed based on a legal opinion given by Gary Pitchlynn with concurrence by attorneys Elizabeth Homer and Wilson Pipestem.

I and others in Congress, notably Doug Revard, have always advocated placing all the casino sites in trust. It just is the safe and sensible thing to do considering our situation; however, there are those who said it wasn't necessary, sometimes ridiculing the idea. Now that Judge Payne has knocked the funny out things we may have a majority in Congress who will support a trust application.

I will be introducing, in the next session, a resolution authorizing the Executive Branch to begin the process of getting the sites into trust. The process of getting land into trust is a long ordeal, sometimes taking years: It takes longer if the trust application is for gaming rather than for economic development, for instance. The Chickasaws have speeded up their process by applying for trust status for economic development and then, once granted, they converted to gaming. That option is not possible for us since we are already gaming on the sites.

The sooner we start.....

Clinical/Medical Service Program to give monetary aid to Osages

A new health benefits program has been implemented for the Osage Nation. This was a program funded in the October 1, 2008 budget for \$200,000.

I haven't seen the policy and procedures on this program and wasn't aware—until last week—that it had been launched. The following notice was posted on the tribal website on Jan. 23. I checked on this Monday and was told that 150 to 200 applications had been received and that they were already 4 to 6 weeks behind in processing.

Apparently, you ask, you get.

Some tribal members have already received checks for \$500, while many have not even heard about the program.

I hope the Health and Wellness Board is watching this develop as they consider the Health Benefits Act yet to be funded.

The following notice was posted Jan. 23, 2009. The links will provide you with all the information you should need:

By Tammy Bright, Public Health Nurse

Osage Nation Health Programs are excited to announce the addition of our new program, Clinical/Medical Service Program, under the direction of Marie Rumsey, R.N. The Clinical/Medical Service Program will provide all Osage tribal members, regardless of age or residence, with monetary assistance for medical-related needs (i.e. eyeglasses, dental, hearing aides, co-pays, medications, and other special medical equipment). All Osage tribal members will qualify for \$500 per year toward these types of needs. Applications for this program can be obtained by contacting Asa Cunningham via phone or email at (918)287-5525 or acunningham@osagetribe.org. You may also click here for printable [application form](#), [letter](#), and [W9](#) or may be found at www.osagetribe.com/diabeteshealth on the information page.

Our mission for the Clinical/Medical Service Program is to assist our Osage people with improving their quality of health and wellness.

NEWS ARTICLES FROM THE PAST

These articles are taken from Kansas newspapers from the late 1800's. The news was written from the white man's point of view and sometimes the Osage didn't get treated fairly. These excerpts are passed on for their historical value only.

Emporia News, December 30, 1870.

We learn from the *Arkansas Traveler* that Capt. Norton has just returned from a trip to the Little Osages camp, on Slate Creek, where he has been for some days trading with them. He informs us that about thirty of the hunters had just got in from a twenty days hunt, and brought with them over 400 robes. This was an unusually good hunt. The balance of the hunters, about 150 or 200, are expected to come in a few days. They state that they did not see any wild Indians on the plains, and think they are below the Cimarron. Big Hill Joe's band killed over 300 buffaloes on their first days hunt on the Salt Fork. The Osages will get about 5,000 robes on their first hunt, this winter. Their second hunt will come off early in January. It is calculated, from the way the hunting has been going on this winter, that 200,000 buffaloes will be killed by next spring.

The February 10, 1871, issue of the *Emporia News* had a clipping from the *Schoolmaster*, an educational periodical published at Chicago, concerning H. B. Norton, late Associate Principal of the Kansas State Normal School, and his brother, Gould Hyde Norton. It stated that there were nearly one hundred buildings, including mills, etc., in Arkansas City and that a large trade had been opened with the Osages and Texan drovers. Capt. Norton will handle \$30,000 in furs and robes this winter. As the Norton boys have a large share of the land, and as two railroads are sure to pass through their town, we, on the whole, are not disposed to blame the Osage for leaving the school room.