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CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION

Many of you may have contacted us about the recent issue of the State of Oklahoma perhaps taking a new policy stance on the legality of the vehicle tags issued by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation to its citizens.

We were not consulted about or given notice of any change in policy. We are still unsure what the details of the policy are and whether the State plans to change how it enforces State law. This lack of clarity is frustrating.

Still, our legal department and other Tribal departments involved in this issue are working on any necessary legal steps the Nation needs to take. Should you get a traffic ticket from a State official on the basis that you have a CPN vehicle tag, please contact the CPN Legal Department at 405.275.3121.

I have read a few points of confusion, and I would like to correct them.

The Nation has issued tags to its citizens for decades, and State officials have recognized the validity of these tags for decades. Like many of you, I've kept CPN tags on my vehicles for years without issue. There has been no new legislation or court decision. Our tags are as valid as they have always been.

We do not issue tags to make a profit. After the Tag Agency pays its bills, we take the rest of its proceeds and donate them to Oklahoma schools. To date, the Nation has donated a total of over \$3.9 million to school districts all over Oklahoma since 2005. Should anyone seek to frustrate the operation of our Tag Agency, it would mean a needless loss of revenue for Oklahoma public schools.

Almost all the time, we get along very well with our neighbors in the Oklahoma state government. Almost all these public servants realize that what is good for CPN is usually good for Oklahoma and vice versa. If we do have any neighborly disagreements, we usually can solve them with respectful discussion and cooperation.

Our public safety officials cooperate with Oklahoma state, county, and local police departments in CPN's jurisdiction. The Tribe participates in the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Telecommunications System "OLETS" database, sharing information about CPN motor vehicle registrations and vehicle tags. We have cross-deputization agreements with numerous State law enforcement departments in our jurisdiction.

Public safety is just as important to us as it is to Oklahoma, and so we work together.

We look forward to productive discussions with the myriad State, county, and local officials who prefer mutually beneficial partnerships with the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and who share our interest in the difficult and necessary work of maintaining public safety.

As we learn more about this issue, I will let you know.


John A. Barrett
Tribal Chairman