

Vice-Chairman – Linda Capps



Bozho
(Hello),

I wrote an article approximately 10 years ago about the 1990s and some of the important events of that time. I would like to expand on that concept since we have so many new Tribal members — approximately 7,000. There were lots of exciting events that happened during the 1900s. During that time, the celebrated “per capita payment” emerged due to the settlement of land claims between our Tribe and the United States government. The three payments came at three different times — 1960: \$23.89, 1967: \$205.87, 1983: \$748.21. The payments were distributed to Tribal members that were enrolled as of June 29, 1961. The rolls were closed at that time unless a person was

1/8 degree Citizen Potawatomi Indian blood. (Tribal rolls did not re-open for enrollment again until 1989.) Whenever the first per capita check was distributed in 1960, there were 7,799 Tribal members that were eligible to receive the funds. Those that were under the age of 18 did not receive their check until their 18th birthday, at which time they had to apply. You may have heard a parent or grandparent speak of the per capita payment. It was trumped up more than it turned out to be, but it was exciting to speculate that it could be a monetary treasure. Many of you will remember the anticipation and how your relatives talked about the next per cap.

During the 1970s, the first Indian Self-Determination Act passed. This would eventually be very important to tribes all over the United States. In 1984, our Tribe entered into an agreement for high-stakes bingo, which proved to be an unsuccessful endeavor. The short-lived enterprise ended in 1985 due to poor management. Nevertheless, it was a valuable lesson in economics for our Tribe. From that point forward, negotiations and contractual agreements were meticulously developed. Also in 1984, the Citizen Band of Potawatomi Tax Commission was established.

The commission was vital to nation-building. It was valuable then, and it certainly is today. The tax revenue at that time was small, but developing the process for the Tribe to collect taxes on enterprises was a giant leap for the future. Today, our tax revenue is central to Tribal operations. It helps finance scholarships and other valuable services.

The Tribal court system was established in 1986. Up until that time, our Tribe had to share court facilities and a judge with several other tribes. During the year 1989, the Tribe purchased First Oklahoma Bank, N.A., a failing \$14 million bank in Shawnee. Today, with a dynamic president, competent board of directors and stable environment, First National Bank & Trust of Shawnee, Oklahoma, is a thriving one half-billion-dollar bank. The local, home-grown bank is alive and well with many plans for a bright future.

The Tribe began gaming upon the passage of the National Indian Gaming Act in 1988. Bingo was the game of the day until this act was passed. Initially, there was only room for a few gaming machines to be added to the bingo hall. In 2003, the building was expanded, and revenue from

the new gaming operation became vital to the progress of the Nation. In 1996, the Tribe established the housing authority and began the process of managing the first apartments of what we know as Father Murphy Housing. Also in 1996, the Tribe would gain a new name by the vote of the people. There was reluctance in the beginning; however, the new name Citizen Potawatomi Nation was selected by our Tribal people. I, personally, was very pleased, believing that we truly could become a great Nation.

The newly named Citizen Potawatomi Nation executed the self-governance compact with the IHS in 1997. This was another steppingstone to a more efficient and effective system for our government. Self-governance allows for Tribal government to self-rule by taking control of decision-making authority over federal programs and resources. Today, our Office of Self-Governance has flourished with competent, intelligent staff members that help negotiate contracts, compacts and grants for the Tribe. In 1998, self-governance was executed for other government programs in addition to IHS, including realty, Tribal Rolls, Tribal Court and the Indian Reservation Roads program (1999).

The Supreme Court ruling in 1998 ordered that the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma could not place land in trust within our Tribe’s jurisdiction (original reservation). This is known as the Collier decision. In the same year, KGFF was purchased, and CPN moved to the newly renovated headquarters complex that still houses governmental offices. In 1999, the Nation purchased the Belshe property for our Grand Casino and purchased the Knight farm, which added 1,057 acres to the Tribe’s contiguous land.

The annual Family Reunion Festival replaced the long-time intertribal powwow in the summer of 1999. It is the same family reunion that we look forward to each year on the last full weekend of June. I appreciate serving as your vice-chairman and cherish the opportunity to correspond with you in this article.

My best to each of you,

Linda Capps
Segenakwe
(Black Bird Woman)
Vice-Chairman
405-275-3121 work
405-650-1238 cell
lcapps@potawatomi.org