John Red Eagle reflects on his term and envisions a nation for all Osages

Red Eagle clears up questions about his education

By Shannon Shaw Osage News

John Red Eagle has become very busy lately, but he’s enjoying every minute of it.

For four years he played second fiddle to Principal Chief Jim Gray and his administration, at first staying quiet and then becoming vocal about his treatment in the latter part of 2009 and again this year when he announced his bid for principal chief.

Whether Red Eagle was unfairly treated or he was the making of his own inferiority, he is the front runner to become the nation’s next chief and he sat down with the Osage News to share his vision for the

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Principal Chief candidate John Red Eagle stands next to a photo of his father Ed Red Eagle Sr. and his uncle Harry Red Eagle in his office in the Executive Branch building in Pawhuska. Red Eagle is the current assistant principal chief.

Tim Tall Chief ready to bring leadership experience to the Principal Chief’s office

Seasoned teacher and government leader to bring a ‘standard of excellence’ to the government operations, if elected

By Benny Polacca Osage News

When Tim Tall Chief started his seven-plus-year post with the Oklahoma State Department of Health as deputy commissioner of health and administration in 2002, the agency needed new team leaders after a multi-jurisdiction investi-
Principal Chief runoff election candidates debate on Osage issues

Red Eagle and Tall Chief answer questions about their prospective administrations, budgets and the reservation status case

By Benny Polacca
Osage News

Osage Nation Principal Chief candidates John Red Eagle and Tim Tall Chief returned to the lecterns to answer questions during the Osage News Political Debates held June 23 in Pawhuska.

Both men received the highest number of votes in the June 7 election and will compete in the Nation’s runoff election July 19. The Osage News hosted this second candidate debate for the Principal Chief and Assistant Principal Chief runoff election candidates and asked Red Eagle and Tall Chief eight questions.

Each candidate was allowed three minutes to answer each question and allowed one minute for rebuttal, or follow-ups after both candidates answered the question.

“Since you will have to hit the ground running when you take the oath of office in August, who have you considered for your administration?”

Both candidates did not name those who could be considered for appointed positions in their cabinets. Instead, Red Eagle and Tall Chief described how they would set up their administrations in the Executive Branch, if elected.

Moderator Jim Hill (left) wishes the Osage Nation Principal Chief candidates John Red Eagle and Tim Tall Chief the best of luck after the candidates answer eight questions at the Osage News Political Debates on June 23 in Pawhuska.

Red Eagle said his administration will also have a budget analyst “who will look at the budgets since we do over 100 budgets for the Nation.” He will also have a communications officer and a “government affairs person who will do most of my legwork with other governments, local governments, county governments, state government.”

Tall Chief said he believes “it’s essential that we have the finest, the most highly qualified individuals in all of the roles we have in our administration.” He said his administration would include the positions Red Eagle listed and also “legal counsel and Office of Governmental Affairs. All those things have to be a very important part of what we do. I also believe we need a chief financial officer” who will be helping manage the budgets.

“Right now, I would use my assistant chief as the second highest official in charge, whoever that might be, and I plan to have a senior adviser who will advise the chief and possibly the assistant chief,” Red Eagle said. “I will have a legislative analyst who will do a lot of reading and write legislation that the administration wants to do and possibly work with the legislature in their efforts to produce legislation and law.”

Tall Chief said he also plans to establish advisory groups for tribal youth and elders “to help me to help our assistant chief and to help our administration address the needs of our young and our old.”

After Tall Chief finished answering the question, Red Eagle used his follow-up minute to say he will appoint a treasurer for the Nation as allowed by the Constitution, but did not say who that person would be. “Right now that treasurer is the second highest paid individual in the Nation and we have to look seriously at that, consider their duties, what they have to do.”

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BigHorse and Proctor debate for the office of Assistant Chief

By Shannon Shaw
Osage News

Scott BigHorse and Amanda Proctor faced off at the Osage News Political Debates for the Office of the Assistant Principal Chief. Both candidates will be judged by the Osage people on Election Day July 19 for the runoff candidates in the principal chief and assistant chief races.

The candidates were asked eight questions and were given three minutes to answer with one minute for rebuttal. The questions were formed by a seven person question committee made up of Osage News staff and four Osage tribal members; Jason Bussey, Bruce Cass, Marie Rumsey and Jennifer Tiger.

The debate was held on June 23 at the WahZhaZhi Cultural Center in Pawhuska with more than 100 people in attendance. The event was filmed and broadcast live on osagetribe.com and the link to the video is also at the end of this story.

Who would you like to work with as your Principal Chief and why?

“Both have good qualities, both have expertise in the health field,” BigHorse said of principal chief candidates John Red Eagle and Tim Tall Chief. “As assistant chief I could bring in other avenues of expertise. I have experience in law enforcement, in children – abused or neglected.

“They’re both very, very qualified. I’ve been under the arbor with both gentlemen and the Native American Church with [John] Red Eagle,” BigHorse said.

Proctor had a very different answer. Since she is an attorney she pointed out that if the question were in a deposition or a legal proceeding she would have had the question struck from the record because the way a person votes is personal and not even a judge could force a person to disclose their vote. But she thought both men would serve admirably.

“I think for me to answer this question would be a tremendous disservice...we as Osages know that this kind of a rift, if created, could last a lifetime. But beyond it being a disservice to me personally it’s also a disservice to the nation and to you,” she said to the audience. “Because the chief and assistant chief have to work together, we have to function as a team and we have to function as a team right out of the gate.”

Administrative competence in tribal government can be a power asset. It must exist in order to deliver quality services and programs to its citizens, attract and retain good people. How will you help the Executive Branch develop the competence to effectively administer its programs and services?

“A good executive director or tribal operations officer... I think that person is the cornerstone of an effective tribal government and we have to have the best and the brightest that Indian Country can offer in that capacity,” Proctor said. Proctor is a former housing director for tribal programs and a former program clerk, where she said she got her “sea legs.”

“I’ve done everything as a housing director from writing grant applications, drafting environmental review records, drafting Indian housing plans,” she said. “I’ve rolled up my sleeves and done all of those things and I’m prepared to do all of those things [again] and get this ship sailing smoothly.”

BigHorse said that the cornerstone of the Executive Branch begins with the chief and assistant chief and that to attain administrative competence they need to lead by example. He also touched on that he would like to ensure that the employees receive quality training.

“I think that’s something we need to put in place so that our directors can enhance their abilities and have the additional tools that it takes to run their departments,” BigHorse said. “I would like to see some form of Bill of Rights for our employees, because of the ‘gag order’...the Executive Branch should have an open-door policy.”

Proctor disagreed with BigHorse and said that it will not be her job as assistant chief to micromanage the employees.

“The chief and assistant chief need to be accessible to the employees and citizens but I disagree... the chief and assistant chief have some big fires to put out and some real important tasks that need to be handled on a government to government basis and some of these other entities we have issues with such as the state, the [National Indian Gaming Association] and the Secretary of the Interior,” Proctor said. “It’s going to be my job to take that ball down the court; it’s not going to be my responsibility to worry about whether an employee

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Red Eagle also said “in the past, Congress has felt that producing boards has had a negative effect at times, we really have to lobby for the boards” because government officials need to consider costs and resources to support boards.

Tall Chief responded in his follow-up minute, stating: “One of the things that’s essential for us to create, ladies and gentlemen, is a team.” He then referred to the assistant principal chief’s position as “as an essential role and part” of the Executive Branch operations.

“What are your plans for the reservation status case?”

Last month, the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals denied to rehear the Nation’s case against the Oklahoma state Tax Commission, which left the Executive Branch 90 days to make a decision on whether to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The nine-year-old case was first filed in 2001 in federal court in Tulsa. The case then went to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals where it ruled in December 2007 that the Nation could proceed against individual members of the Oklahoma Tax Commission. U.S. District Judge James Payne ruled in February of 2009 that Osage Nation employees are not exempt from paying state income taxes and that Osage County is not the Osage Reservation’s boundaries. The Nation asked him to reconsider his “lousy decision,” as Principal Chief Jim Gray put it at the time, but Payne let the ruling stand. The Nation appealed to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals again where there agreed with Payne’s ruling. The Nation asked the 10th Circuit to reconsider their decision in January of this year.

Tall Chief said “at this point, we don’t have any options... we have to keep that case alive... at this point, the only way to do that is to forward it onto the (U.S.) Supreme Court. We need to develop a brief and send it to the Supreme Court. The reason for that is simple: as long as it is alive, the state of Oklahoma has said ‘we will not come in and close your casinos because you all are in the process of trying to make them appropriate.’”

“We’re going to have about 20 days after the inauguration of chief and assistant chief to get that (brief) to the Supreme Court... we’re going to have to act fast.” Tall Chief said it could take eight months for the Supreme Court to decide whether to hear the case, so the Nation should use that time to contact state and Bureau of Indian Affairs officials to get the three casino properties, which are at issue, into trust.

Red Eagle also believes appealing the case is essential to “buy some time,” but noted “It’s my understanding that the percentage of the Supreme Court hearing a case like this is 1 percent.” He believes the Nation needs to communicate with government officials, especially those on the federal level who handle trust land applications as well as the National Indian Gaming Commission to keep the Nation’s casinos operating and to avoid hurting the gaming revenues.

“We are in a situation where we need to make some definite moves, whoever the next chief is going to be, they’re going to have some quick decisions to make,” Red Eagle said.

“With up to nearly 50 percent of our gaming revenue at risk, what is your plan to secure the growth of our tribal resources?”

If the case involving the Nation and the Oklahoma Tax Commission is ultimately lost, the Nation stands to lose gaming revenues generated from the Tulsa, Ponca City and Skiatook casinos if they are forced to close, which prompts the question on what the candidates will do to secure the growth of tribal resources.

Red Eagle referred to the Osage Limited Liability Company which was set up in 2009 to generate non-gaming income for the Nation. “They were given $7.5 million last spring” through an appropriation bill passed by Congress and have made passive investments, he said. “We have to look at that to see if they have the ability to produce some revenue for this Nation.”

If elected, Red Eagle said he will “start an internal audit department to see and assess where we are... see how our money’s being spent, see what’s wasted, what is going out that shouldn’t be going out, what is spent that shouldn’t be spent. We need people that will show us what’s wrong, where it needs to be fixed and that’s what an assessment does.”

Tall Chief said “the answer is diversification, No. 1” in referring to business opportunities which are independent from gaming. He acknowledged the LLC as Red Eagle did in his answer, but noted the Nation will not see instant revenues from the LLC efforts, so the Nation should also “pursue grants very hard.”

“Again, we tend to depend on the money that’s available at hand and we don’t sometimes pursue the grants that are out there that could replace some of the money that we’re using from casinos,” Tall Chief said. In his answer, he also said the Nation should immediately address the trust land issue affecting the three casinos at stake.

“For example, the Ponca (City) casino, that one is on wheels, it’s a double-wide on wheels,” Tall Chief said of the casino’s building structure. “There’s trust land around, there’s trust land we can perhaps purchase, that we could lease. We could pull up that casino and move...”

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it to those trust lands and it would not be in jeopardy anymore. Tall Chief said if the worse-case scenario occurs and the Tulsa casino must close, he would like to consider starting a tribal college in that casino’s building which could be an additional source of Nation revenue.

In his one-minute follow-up, Red Eagle said he’s “all for college,” but noted colleges cost money to build and casino revenue has dropped in the past two years from “$50 million-plus to $34 million… If that revenue continues to drop then we’re going to have to do some serious cutbacks, then we have to look at making money in this economy today [and it’s] a little bit harder than it was 25 years ago, so we have to look at this very seriously.”

Tall Chief said in his one-minute follow-up he believes the Nation should buy a bank because “we are generating millions of dollars and those monies are going into someone else’s bank. Believe me, when it hits their bank it doesn’t just sit there, it’s moving, it’s making them money… it needs to be in our bank, it needs to be making the Osage people money.”

“If elected, will you be lifting the ‘gag order’? If so, will there be any type of communication protocol with your administration?”

This question refers to the communication protocol implemented last year by Chief Jim Gray which requires Executive Branch employees to get permission to release requested information about the branch’s operations to the Osage Nation Congress. Several tribal members have since started referring to the policy as a “gag order.”

“Yes, I will be lifting the gag order because I believe that the Nation’s revenue is the people’s revenue and an elected official has every right to see the financials,” Red Eagle said, adding he plans to develop a protocol which would be suitable for Osage citizens and tribal employees “because they are a vital part in our Nation, they need to know what’s going on.”

Tall Chief said the gag order never should have been put in place, it’s one of the most ridiculous things I’ve ever heard - to tell the employees they can’t talk to legislators, to Congressional people about their government program’s operations and finances. “The finest, most knowledgeable people in our program areas are the people who are doing it.”

“As far as a protocol, again, I think that any congressperson and any citizen has the right to speak to any employee within this Nation as long as it’s not impeding their work responsibilities,” Tall Chief said.

“What would be the advantages and disadvantages of taking over the management of the Pawhuska Clinic? Does the Nation have the administrative capacity to effectively manage the Pawhuska (Indian Health Service) Clinic? Why or why not?”

Tall Chief, who is currently the vice chairman of the Nation’s Health and Wellness Advisory Board, said he and other board members recommended the Nation take over the operations of the IHS-run clinic two years ago. A feasibility study on whether the tribe should take over the clinic was recently conducted and its results say the takeover effort would be very appropriate, he said.

“The finances are there, the people are there, the expertise is there and we can manage that,” Tall Chief said of the clinic feasibility study. He said the clinic should focus on its third-party billing practices to generate revenue and referred to an example from his Oklahoma State Department of Health post.

“When I was at State Health, we raised our Medicaid (our third-party billing money) from $2 million - in three years, it was to $18 million... We can bill Medicaid for the (clinic) services we are providing if our customers we are serving are eligible - we need to make sure that everybody applies.” Tall Chief believes increased clinic revenue should be used to increase clinic services and the number of staff including doctors and nurses who handle patient care.

Red Eagle said the clinic could serve more Osages by expanding the patient service area if the Nation takes over its operations because only patients living in Osage and Pawnee counties are eligible to receive care at the clinic. Compacting the clinic “would give us the revenue and right now, I believe that revenue is around $5 million to operate that clinic yearly. We would take that and we could manage that revenue in how we wanted to” run the clinic, he said.

“What is the scope of responsibilities of the chief of staff now that there is a tribal operations director?”

Red Eagle said the “current chief of staff advises the principal chief and that is primarily her job. She advises him on tribal matters, on those tribal matters dealing with other tribes... She advises him on legal counsel even though our present chief of staff is not an attorney... I believe that she writes legislation, she reads legislation, she advised the chief on whether to veto a bill or not to veto a bill, whether that bill is good or whether it’s not good, so primarily her job has been those duties over the past year since the new director of operations came on board.”

Red Eagle is referring to current Chief of Staff Hepsi Barnett who also “participates in the finances of the government” and he said he believes “she is given primarily more authority over the assistant chief at the present time.”

Tall Chief said the tribal operations director is a relatively new position, but “I’m not sure it needs to be there.” He said he is not proposing to add more positions, but he “would like to combine some roles into an existing position and add some additional responsibilities to the folks.”

“As far as the chief of staff,” said Tall Chief, “I believe the current

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filled the gas tank in the GSA vehicle.”

BigHorse said that maybe Proctor misunderstood him and that in his experience as a state representative good leadership started at the top.

“I think maybe my comments were taken out of context. I’m not talking about micromanaging. I’m talking about setting up a leadership program so that our directors and our employees have proper training in order to deliver services for our people and that does begin with the Executive Branch and it filters down,” BigHorse said. “Every organization I’ve been in starts at the top and it works its way down.”

How will you inspire executive branch employees to higher levels of performance if a merit system is not passed by Congress?

“There are many, many facets of that and one of those is team building and facilitating meetings, learning how to facilitate a meeting and some of that training is something our people need to lift their spirits,” BigHorse said. “If we’re not going to have a merit based system then we need to enhance our employees to the fullest of their ability and that’s what they’ll receive through training. We have Osage people who are in this field, we wouldn’t have to go outside and hire a firm to bring in.”

Proctor said that without a merit system the Nation would first need to make sure all the employee’s salaries were compliant with federal budget parameters; currently the Nation is on a 2003 government pay scale.

“There have been a number of surveys conducted regarding employee satisfaction and most of those surveys have reported that money is not the number one consideration to feeling job satisfaction where other issues such as feeling empowered and feeling appreciated for your work that matter more for the employees,” Proctor said. “When we talk about this merit system we talk about as though it’s discretionary and to some extent it’s not. Because there’s a little document put out by the Office of Management and Budgets, Circular A-87, and it applies to all federally funded tribal programs and that document states that salaries for those federally assisted programs must be necessary and reasonable and how we determine they are necessary and reasonable, the only way to do it really is to compare.

“And you compare not only internally, tribal program to tribal program within one tribe, but you compare those programs to other programs and you compare those tribal programs to other government agencies to make sure that we are paying those people within our federal budget parameters. So we really need to have a way to salary grid and we need to implement right away.”

If a citizen personally called you to complain about a program or service they didn’t receive, how would you handle the situation?

“As I stated earlier I’ve been a housing clerk and I’ve been a housing director for two tribes and one of those two tribes I am presently a lawyer for in their housing services area and as a housing director I’ve dealt with a lot of complaints,” Proctor said. “One of the things that has served me well is to have a grievance policy and I’ve always had a grievance policy and I had real thorough procedures for how a person attained redress from their unsatisfied service delivery.”

The policy would begin with an informal process and ends with a grievance hearing if the matters not resolved formally and there is always a follow-up to make sure it was resolved.

“We don’t have a grievance policy here at the Osage Nation and I know that because I’ve been aggrieved myself a time or two. I had an issue with the Housing program personally and an issue with the child care program personally and both times I was told that there was no grievance policy,” she said.

Proctor said that she wrote a letter by hand and sent it through the proper channels and the outcome was chaotic because there was no formal process. “So, certainly [a grievance process] is something I would implement and I would implement right away.”

BigHorse said he would speak directly to the directors of the programs that received the complaints and ask them to resolve the issue themselves.

“When I was a state legislator I received many calls like this and in my capacity as a state legislator the way that we handled it in both the house and senate side was to call that director in that was over that program and give him the information,” BigHorse said. “There are two sides to every street, just because someone has made a complaint doesn’t mean it’s a viable and legitimate complaint but you still want to hear that person out.

“So you call that director in and you talk to that director and you explain the situation as it has been explained to you and then you allow that director to go down the chain to the person that the person is grieving on and then you let them work that out, you follow up with that director, you call that director back in or you set a time for that director to come back in with a resolve,” he said.

Proctor disagreed.

“I would not defer accountability if it were a grievance that was
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brought to my attention as [assistant] principal chief. Referring that matter to the program director handle it or not in his or her discretion would not be satisfactory to me,” Proctor said. “I would want to personally follow up with that person and make sure the problem was resolved and if it wasn’t resolved let’s follow through.

“Sometimes we have to be creative and look outside of what the Osage Nation can offer, I’ve had housing clients come to me and they couldn’t be served through HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] programs but maybe they can be served through the USDA or some other agency...and we explore all of those options to do anything that we can to help that person,” Proctor said.

BigHorse maintained that his chain of command method would be the best way to handle complaints.

“A part of the process, the end process is following up with that constituent,” BigHorse said. “So, that is part of the process, when you talk to that director and that director takes it on down the line in whatever capacity and they work their way through that process and they bring it back to you and you respond to that constituent that gave you that call.”

Do you believe in per cap payments, and please explain why or why not?

“I believe in our future that we do have the ability for per cap but however at this time right now...we have many issues that may be costly issues that we’re going to have to deal with,” BigHorse said. “So before we look at any per cap we need to take care of our in-house business and make sure that it is all taken care of and if we have a surplus of monies and we have a rainy day fund and we’ve got back-up monies, then yes, I am for per cap.”

Proctor said it would be up to the Osage Nation Congress to make the call on whether or not the Nation would have a per cap payment because it would call for an amendment to the tribe’s revenue allocation plan. The amendment would be subject to the chief’s veto power but she said at this time it isn’t a good idea.

“I think we have a lot of budgetary issues...we’ve got to save jobs, we’ve got to save as much as we can for those three casinos that are not on trust restricted land that are in jeopardy and it’s not time to think of new pressures that we can put upon our revenues,” Proctor said. “It’s time to tighten our belt straps and really thinking about what’s important to this Nation.

She said once the casino debacle is taken care of, the Nation’s elders, children, all the housing issues addressed and the Nation’s income is up than she would be open to a per capita payment.

BigHorse disagreed with Proctor in that he said not all good ideas are born from the Congress and that good ideas do come from the Executive Branch.

“I disagree that all ideas must be born in Congress, the Executive Branch is there and they are going to be some of our brightest of the bright in order to sit in those seats and there are a lot of policies that come out of the Executive Branch that are passed down to congress,” BigHorse said.

Proctor said that the legislative branch controls the purse strings of the Nation’s government and it would be up to Congress to allocate the money for the per capita after they make an amendment to the tribe’s revenue allocation plan.

“I don’t disagree that the Executive Branch can generate good ideas and can bring those ideas to the attention of Congress, I’ve certainly got a lot of ideas myself, but an amendment to the tribe’s revenue allocation plan would fall within Congress’ purview,” Proctor said. “I’m certainly open to the possibility of per capita payments but that would depend on the revenue stream or liquidity and that is something that only those Congress members sitting in those chairs now knows.”

How do you plan to become an active figure in policy making as our new Assistant Chief?

“In my experience in the state legislature I plan on hitting the ground running, I do not have to go to any sort of school to learn how to develop policy, I’ve developed policy on the state level and I’ve also developed policy for Indian Country on the national level,” BigHorse said.

While in the state legislature he joined the National Conference of State Legislators, he was on the Native American Caucus that was made up of approximately 90 state legislators that addressed the needs of Indian Country throughout the United States.

“We would look at those problems and try to come up with a solution, and we would develop a policy, and then the attorneys from NCSL would take our policy request to Capitol Hill for consideration to be offered before Congress in a bill form,” he said.

Proctor said she already has policies in mind and as an attorney for a number of Indian tribes in Oklahoma she’s seen some of the best and worst practices. She said she crafts policy and makes policy recommendations on “pretty much a daily basis” and only wants to implement the best policy practices she’s seen.

“One of the policies that I think is absolutely critical and time sensitive is a land acquisition program because only persons of half Osage blood or more can hold land under restriction, those people, unfortunately, are becoming fewer and fewer and they’re not leaving what we call Qualified Indian Heirs,” she said. “Those are persons who would be qualified to hold land under restriction usually because of their degree of blood. So we’ve got to go out and find those lands, we’ve got to buy those lands, and we’ve got to lease those lands now before those lands pass out of restricted status.

“No one’s making any more land and certainly not making any more restricted land so that would be a number one policy goal that I would put into place as assistant chief,” she said.

Another policy she would to develop a detention facility that would serve prisoners from Indian tribal justice systems, those would be misdemeanor offenders, usually with alcohol driven offenses because tribal court jurisdiction is limited by federal law to one-year incarceration or a $1,000 fine, she said. There is not one facility of that kind in Indian Country or Oklahoma, not one that takes adult offenders.

“I think this could be not only be a great service to Indian people but it could be a source of economic development,” Proctor said. She also said she would expand housing to all areas of the reservation, not just Pawhuska.

BigHorse responded with a question to Proctor. He wanted to know where she planned to put a detention facility.

“This is the field I come out of, corrections, prisons, it’s a good idea. It is a money maker. Right now the state of Oklahoma has approximately 6,000 adult prisoners
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nation and to answer those pesky questions about his education.

A bachelor’s degree and certification from the University of Oklahoma?

One question Red Eagle cleared up was, does he have a bachelor’s degree or certification in nuclear medicine from the University of Oklahoma or not?

Two brochures were sent to Osage tribal members in the height of campaign season before the June 7 general election this year. The first brochure states he has a bachelor’s in science in nuclear medicine from OU’s school of nuclear medicine and also that he received his certification in nuclear medicine from OU. Both are untrue and after a Google search there is no school of nuclear medicine at OU, but there is a nuclear medicine technology program. The second brochure states Red Eagle completed his work in nuclear medicine from OU and also that he did this at the OU Health Sciences Center, both are untrue.

“I have two writers working for me and one of them made a mistake, [those were] misprints,” he said. “I didn’t finish at OU at all...I had to leave for financial reasons.”

The misprints were picked up by Tim Tall Chief supporters, his opposing candidate in the principal chief race, and broadcast on various Osage blogs that Red Eagle had committed degree fraud and had purposefully tried to bamboozle the nation’s citizens. He said that was not the case and that they were simple mistakes.

In fact he did take courses at OU but after leaving for financial reasons he became an X-ray technician and went to community college in Denver, Colo., he said. After community college he went to work as a nuclear medical technician in Tulsa, where he then completed his clinical hours at Hillcrest Medical Center. This later enabled him to become board certified by the Nuclear Medical Certification Board in Atlanta, Ga.

He then went to work for 25 years as a nuclear medicine technician contractor. He then took a brief retirement in the late 1990’s, because he was doing a lot of pastor work, but then went back to work in nuclear medicine cardiology at Cardiology of Tulsa before he was elected as the assistant principal chief in 2006.

“Uncle Johnny”

Growing up on the Osage reservation, one is hard pressed not to know who “Uncle Johnny” is. Most Osages on the reservation know that he is a spiritual adviser to many, in both Osage traditions as well as the Christian faith. He is an ordained minister and holds church services in Wakon Iron Chapel in Pawhuska every weekend.

Many of his supporters put stock in his spiritual qualities and knowledge so the t asked Red Eagle how he would bring those qualities to his term as principal chief if elected.

“I’ll use it the same way I use it in my life because I use prayer as a form of spiritual development and I’ll use that in the same way because I’m not going to sway from my faith in my culture or in the Christian faith, I begin my day with a prayer and end my day with a prayer,” Red Eagle said. “In both the culture and the Christian faith, even when I was in the work world, that was just a part of my life and that’s what I did when I found time to do it.

“Like Sunday, Sunday’s were set aside for the Lord’s day,” he said.

Red Eagle’s father was Ed Red Eagle Sr., a devoted Road Man in the Native American Church, and Red Eagle still participates in his family’s NAC on their original allotment near Barnsdall. That was Red Eagle’s first faith but as many Osages experience, sometimes your outside life of tribal traditions conflicts with your outside career but Red Eagle said he will always make time for his faith.

“I look at the [assistant chief] job the same way and sometimes

it interfered with my cultural activities and sometimes it interfered with my church activities and if it does that then that’s just the way it is because of the commitment I made,” Red Eagle said. “I believe that when you commit your life to something, you have to give it what you committed to.

“That’s fulfilling the duties of this office and that’s what I’m going to do,” he said.

Vision for the nation

Red Eagle said that his vision for the nation is to get the infrastructure stabilized first before it can move on to expand in the areas of business.

“When that infrastructure is stabilized, whether it’s done in this next administration or done over an eight year period, but it has to get stabilized within this new government,” Red Eagle said. “If we want to produce what we’d like to produce with business entities, with casinos, so my view is to stabilize the government. My vision is to stabilize the government and to get a good relationship or get a working government that will work together and I know that’s not always possible.”

In getting the infrastructure stabilized, he said, the nation can move forward with a better healthcare system. He has big hopes for the Health and Wellness Advisory Board, in which he is a founder, in that they have just completed two big studies that could lead the nation in very different directions in terms of healthcare, but the board is not currently ready to disclose which path they will take from those two feasibility studies, he said.

“If we’re going to build businesses that [are] going to produce revenue for this tribe we’re going to have to learn how to use our money

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Red Eagle Reflects

wisely whether that’s investments, whether that’s taking money, taking a certain percentage out of that from the revenues we got coming in now,” he said. “I think that’s a good idea, if we have $2 million coming in a month why don’t we take 15 percent of that and just put it back.”

Reflection

Red Eagle has been criticized by his non-supporters for not accomplishing anything during his term as assistant chief. His supporters say that was because the Gray administration wouldn’t let him do anything. In his opinion, he not only accomplished forming the health and wellness advisory board, but his education of the nation’s activities is something he cherishes.

“As the assistant chief you get to sit with Congress and you begin to learn the legislative process. I think I’ve learned more about the legislative process in this four years than I have actually learned about the executive,” he said. “I know about the executive and I know generally how it functions or how it should function and what you need and what kind of staff you need but I enjoyed the legislative process.

“That was a learning experience as well as a government experience, learning how to legislate, learning how to lobby, learning how to cross the aisle, learning how to get votes and I believe I was responsible for some things that are today [for instance] the health benefit card.

“I could have held that up or stopped it if I’d wanted to,” Red Eagle said. “So I think that’s what I’ve learned and that’s what I’ve accomplished.”

Red Eagle was a driving force in stopping the health benefit card from being used for abortions. Abortions are technically a tax free item on the list from the Internal Revenue Service that would have been eligible for Osage women when using their health benefit card. Red Eagle gave a speech during a congressional session against abortions and lobbied for it to be removed in which he was successful. Red Eagle is a conservative Republican and said he will not sway on his Christian beliefs when it comes to liberal views.

Lineage

Red Eagle’s parents were Ed Red Eagle Sr. of the Pawhuska Village and Virginia Logan of the Hominy Village. His grandfather is Paul Red Eagle, who was elected assistant chief during the 1920’s but became the principal chief after the sitting chief died. His great grandfather was Henry Red Eagle. John Red Eagle’s older brother, current six year Osage congressman Eddy Red Eagle, still lives on Henry Red Eagle’s original allotment near Barnsdall. This is where the family’s NAC is located.

Red Eagle’s father, Ed Red Eagle Sr., served on the Osage Tribal Council for 20-plus years and was the assistant chief for 15-plus years until his death in 1999. Red Eagle and his siblings always knew their father was involved in Osage politics but didn’t get involved themselves until the late 1980’s. He remembers going to the elections growing up and the long wait all night for the results, in which this year’s long wait brought back fond memories.

His father was an avid believer in the 1906 act and Red Eagle said he tends to lean toward those beliefs.

“He [Ed Red Eagle Sr.] was an avid 1906 person and I kind of lean towards that too because when I come into this new government, the 1906 act was the document and I kind of felt that too,” he said. “. . . even though I don’t have my parents, they left us their inheritance which I appreciate very much.”

Red Eagle, who is childless, dotes on his nieces and nephews and focuses on his faiths, cultural traditions and the Osage government, he said. He was married previously in which his wife lost two children in childbirth.

Red Eagle has two brothers and one older sister. The oldest brother is Eddy Red Eagle, Osage congressman, his younger brother Myron Red Eagle is a newly elected Osage Minerals Councilman. His much older half-sister, Carol, is still living.

Principal Chief Debates

“Who would you like to work with as your Assistant Principal Chief and why?”

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Tall Chief said with a smile after the moderator read the question out loud. “Let me say this ladies and gentlemen, both of the folks that are in the running for assistant principal chief have some wonderful credentials.

“You’re probably not going to answer this, but understand I’ve known Scott Big Horse, we’ve been in that arena for many, many years,” Tall Chief said. “I’ve danced to Scott’s songs for many, many years... he has some experience in state government. Amanda Proctor is Harvard-educated, she has a law degree, she’s an attorney, she’s done a lot of work with many, many tribes,” he said.

“I’ve spent some time with both of them, I’ve talked to them, we’ve talked about what-ifs, we’ve talked about how to move forward, how do we continue to work together,” Tall Chief said. “And I believe in my heart that I could work with either one of them and help this Nation move forward and be successful. That’s no answer, but it’s my answer,” he said with the audience reacting with laughs.

“The two individuals who made the runoff after the general election are two very qualified individuals as Tim said,” Red Eagle said. “Amanda is an attorney who would bring a lot of good things to the Nation. Scott would bring his legislative experience and I believe that because of the relationship that I’ve had with them – Scott (in the Indian culture) is actually my nephew, so I could have a little say-so over him, Amanda is probably my niece because she’s made a relationship with my father,” he said jokingly before ending with “I trust the Osage people to make the right decision.”

About 100 people came to the June 23 runoff candidates’ debate at the Wah Zha Zhi Cultural Center. The Osage News formed a question committee to brainstorm and develop the questions posed to the candidates who participated in the Political Debates. The debate was emceed by Susan Shannon, host of KGOU’s Indian Times and was moderated by Jim Hill, a volunteer from the League of Women Voters of Greater Tulsa.
Town Crier Caesar Williams prepares to ring the first bell to start the Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Otto Hamilton heads toward the arbor on June 17 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Straight dancers stand around and wait before heading into the arbor on June 17 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Sonny Eppinette walks in the arbor on June 17 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

People sit in the Hominy Community Building and wait for supper on June 17 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Caroline Keene takes a bowl full of chicken and dumplings and prepares to set it on the tables on June 17 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.
Our next Chief will oversee a $200 million gaming enterprise, a $15 million diversification effort, a $50 million budget and lead a Nation of over 13,000 citizens.

Elect Tim Tall Chief
Experience and proven leadership skills

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- Administrator of 300+ programs
  OKLAHOMA INDIAN EDUCATION
- Direct supervisor of 200 employees
  OKLAHOMA STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT
- Executive Director
  NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER
- Director
  INDIAN EDUCATION, OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- Deputy Commissioner
  HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
- Chairman
  OKLAHOMA INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION
- Vice Chairman
  OSAGE HEALTH & WELLNESS BOARD
- Chairman
  RETIRED VOLUNTEER PROGRAM, UNITED WAY
- Master’s Degree
  EDUCATION
  UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
- Bachelor’s Degree
  PSYCHOLOGY/BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
  EDUCATION
  CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY

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FOR YOUR NEXT PRINCIPAL CHIEF?

He’s the ONLY candidate for Principal Chief that has hands on experience within both the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. He knows what is working within our current government structure and has experienced what is not working. He is equipped with the knowledge to begin moving forward to becoming a stronger, more prosperous Osage Nation.

While serving as Assistant Chief the past 4 years, he was not only a leader within the Executive Branch, but also a leader within the Legislative Branch by voting to break ties on Congressional legislation. He is prepared to build upon this past experience. He knows what is needed and has the hands on experience needed to lead this Nation!

The time is now!

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for Osage Nation
Principal Chief

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DO YOU WANT A PRINCIPAL CHIEF... 
- with Osage tribal government experience?
- that is full blood Osage, speaks our language and practices our Osage traditions?
- that believes in economic diversity, growth & expansion?
- that understands the importance of budgeting wisely?
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- that believes in accountability to his people?
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- that BELIEVES in his Osage people?

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JOHN D. RED EAGLE
FOR PRINCIPAL CHIEF

AS CHIEF, JOHN D. RED EAGLE WILL:
• Demand transparency and accountability
• Emphasize economic growth and stability
• Promote Sovereignty of this great Osage Nation
• Uphold our Osage laws as intended by our Constitution
• Support the independence of the Osage Minerals Council
• See that the Osage Nation nepotism policy is strongly enforced
• Allow freedom of speech among our employees and our people
• Strengthen and expand Educational opportunities and financing
• Preserve the Language program & prioritize Osage cultural activities
• Support full disclosure of all Osage Nation revenues and expenditures
• Establish a strong unity among government officials and our Osage people
• Instill a strong sense of integrity, ethics and fairness within our programs

~ Paid for by the John D. Red Eagle Campaign for Principal Chief ~
Billy Proctor heads toward the arbor on June 17 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Men from the Grayhorse District line up before heading into the arbor on June 18 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Richard Luttrell carries the drum on June 18 during the Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Joey Allen waves to someone before heading in with the Grayhorse District on June 18.

Hominy

*In-Lon-Schka*

*Photos by Chalene Toehay / Osage News*
Men from the Hominy District head toward the arbor on June 18 of the Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Men from the Pawhuska District take part on June 18 of Hominy In-Lon-Schka.

Photos by Chalene Toehay
Osage News

Acey Kemble carries his blanket and step stool to the arbor during Hominy In-Lon-Schka on June 18.
Tall Chief Ready

Election uncovered mismanagement of the agency under previous leadership prompting the changes.

“I was the guy in charge of the turnaround,” Tall Chief said of the deputy commissioner position he held until Jan. 1 when he retired and has since focused on the campaign trail in his run for Principal Chief of the Osage Nation. He won the second highest number of votes in the June 7 election and faces a July 19 runoff election against John Red Eagle who is currently assistant principal chief.

“I believe everything I’ve done in my role has prepared me for this point.” Tall Chief was also the health department’s human resources director about 25 years before returning as a deputy commissioner.

Tall Chief was hired as deputy commissioner of health and administration in February 2002 by the agency’s then-Commissioner of Health Leslie Beitsch. His post’s responsibilities included overseeing the agency’s budget and funding, accounting services, human resources, information technology, and building management to name a few. The state health department has an annual budget of $370 million and employs 2,300 people.

Tall Chief’s hiring came less than a year after an Oklahoma Multi-County Grand Jury report was released detailing allegations of wrongdoing within the health department which serves Oklahoma’s 77 counties and involved investigators from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations and the FBI. Several developments involving the agency surfaced in 2000 during the grand jury’s 21-month investigation while Tall Chief was state director of Indian education for the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

According to its July 2001 report, the Grand Jury states its “examination of OSDH employment practices has revealed serious deficiencies, and at times blatant disregard for State statutes, regulations and polices and procedures,” which include allegations of department officials hiring unqualified employees, circumventing policies on nepotism, paying employees for non-working hours and misusing state property for personal use. The investigations prompted 302 subpoenas for witnesses and evidence and the grand jury “returned 12 indictments as a result of this investigation composed of 15 defendants and 159 separate counts,” the report stated.

“Some people went to prison, some people died while waiting for trial and some people got terminated,” Tall Chief said. “It took me two years to turn (the department) around and it’s because of the dedicated people committed to it – not just me,” he said adding the department developed a system to trace how its monies are spent during his stay.

While holding leadership positions in Oklahoma’s health and education departments, Tall Chief has also worked as an adjunct faculty member in the University of Oklahoma’s College of Liberal Studies where he has taught a conflict resolution course since 2000 among other past teaching posts which include teaching a health-related course focusing on Native Americans.

“All of those things prepare you for a moment in history: that’s where we are today,” Tall Chief said. He made the decision to run for principal chief a year-and-a-half ago after having a sit-down discussion with his family.

If elected, Tim Tall Chief, 62, will be the second Tall Chief elected as the Nation’s principal chief since the 1906 Act was signed.

His father, George Tall Chief, was elected principal chief in 1982 and was re-elected in 1986. Whoever is elected in the July 19 runoff election will be the second Principal Chief to serve the Nation since its government was reformed and new constitution was signed in 2006.

“I am not trying to retrace my father’s footsteps,” Tall Chief said of his decision to run for office. “It’s really about doing what I think is the right thing for the Nation: It’s the motivation.”

Tall Chief is married to Vicki Tall Chief, who is an OU professor in the College of Public Health. They live in Jones, but Tall Chief said he plans on relocating within Osage County if elected. He stays in the Grayhorse District, where he is a committeeman, when visiting the region for tribal and family functions.

He has two adult children: Russ, who is a former Grayhorse District Drumkeeper and is now Director of Arts and Exhibitions for the American Indian Cultural Center & Museum; and Amy, Director of Entertainment for the Osage Million Dollar Elm Casinos venture.

Tall Chief was born in Oklahoma City to George Tall Chief and the late Marion Harmon who both met while students at Central State University in Edmond (now called the University of Central Oklahoma) and is the same institution where Tim Tall Chief would earn his bachelor and master’s degrees.

Harmon had polio and was confined to a wheelchair but still attended classes with Tall Chief’s help everyday since he went to grade school nearby.

“Mom had classes on the fourth floor,” Tall Chief recalls. Everyday he would get called out of class to come help move Harmon’s wheelchair up the university building’s stairs. “She said that’s one of the
Tall Chief Ready

reasons you got big and strong so early.”

Tall Chief moved into the teaching arena like his parents did and earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1971 and a Master’s of Education degree in counseling psychology in 1978.

Tall Chief has taught health courses at OU’s Health Sciences Center with one course focusing on Native Americans and another on public health communication. His other leadership posts include other OUHSC positions including: interim director of the student services office; executive director of the Native American Center of Excellence Consortium; and associate director of the Native American Graduate Program for the College of Public Health.

Tall Chief has also sat on many boards, including the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission after he was appointed by former Gov. Frank Keating and served as its chairman for eight years. He currently serves as vice chairman on the Osage Nation Health and Wellness Advisory Board, which informs the tribal government of health-related advice. If Tall Chief is elected, he said he plans to resign his position on this board to focus on the Executive Branch operations.

New principal chief, new duties

The next principal chief elected July 19 must briskly learn the ins and outs of the Osage Nation’s government operations; finish working on the 2011 Fiscal Year budget; and start working with the Assistant Principal Chief who will also be elected July 19 as well as the Second Osage Nation Congress which takes the oath of office this month.

“I’m going to sit down with each program director and learn about what they do. And workers who are folks down in the trenches also have input,” Tall Chief said of his plans if elected.

Tall Chief says a typical day as Principal Chief would involve arriving at the office “before 8 a.m. and expects to stay after 5 p.m. I intend to be there and seeing folks on a regular basis.”

When it comes to the Nation’s employees, Tall Chief said “I will never ask anyone to work harder than I do,” but he expects “a standard of excellence for myself and employees. Our citizens deserve the best and we need to raise the bar.”

On traveling, Tall Chief acknowledges travel has been a prior issue in the Executive Branch of some government critics, but says he “does not believe in unnecessary travel.” But if he must travel while principal chief, Tall Chief said “if you got the right folks sitting in the right (work) spots, I think necessary travel should not be a problem,” which includes the assistant principal chief.

“The assistant principal chief needs to know everything that I know, if I am away there should not be a bump in the road,” Tall Chief said. “The assistant principal chief needs to have the knowledge and assistance to make decisions.”

With regards to keeping in touch with the Nation’s legislative and judicial branches and the Minerals Council, Tall Chief said he plans to keep “a collegial and productive relationship between all branches of the Nation. If issues begin to surface, I will get up and meet with the other officials – without breaking the (Nation’s) open meeting law.”

On tribal government spending practices, Tall Chief believes all tribal members “need to know how our government spends every dollar,” according to his campaign Web site. If elected, Tall Chief says he plans to ensure accountability by making audits, reviews and reports available to tribal members after the Nation’s revenue generated through its business enterprises has been evaluated.

Tall Chief has the support of Congressman-elect Geoffrey Standing Bear and Congressman Archie Mason who have both sent Tall Chief letters which have been posted to Tall Chief’s campaign Web site.

“You’re promise of transparency and accountability in our Osage government is taken seriously and I know you have the experience to implement your pledge,” Standing Bear wrote to Tall Chief. “We are both looking for creative and innovative ways to enhance our new government to better serve the health, education, and housing needs of our Osage people. With other Osages and Members in the Osage Congress we will have to work diligently to achieve our goals.”

Mason, who has worked with Tall Chief on previous projects, wrote: “You have the ethical standards and knowledge necessary to develop large budgetary components and expertise to meet projected and agreed upon timelines. This commitment is extremely crucial to our services rendered, employee perceptions, and all operations of our nation... Implementation and respect of our Osage law, your past experiences with state and federal entities, and knowledge of conflict resolution is vital.”
in private prisons in the state of Oklahoma and they’re paying $50 a day,” BigHorse said. “The state of Oklahoma houses the same inmate, a little bit tougher inmates, because the private prisons get to pick the cream of the crop.

“The state of Oklahoma houses inmates at $28 a day, my question is where are we going to place this, whose backyard is this going to be and are they going to be willing for us to put it in their backyard?” he said.

Proctor named off the small towns of Ralston, Fairfax, Hominy, Barnsdall, Shidler and Burbank as a few examples of places on the reservation where a detention facility could be built.

“My mother and uncle who are sitting here grew up in a little town called Elgin, Kans., about 20 miles north of here and it doesn’t really exist anymore and what I’d like to do is build this prison in a place where people need jobs and people need hope and people need opportunity because this kind of facility would provide jobs not only as correctional officers . . . but also in the therapeutic area because we would need to provide these people with services,” Proctor said. “Again, they’re misdemeanor inmates, alcohol driven offenses, they’re not felons, they’re not hard core, they’re Indian people who need help and I would like to put these facilities in places where our people need help in the form of jobs.”

If elected, what will your level of responsibility be in relation to the Minerals Council?

Mine would be as a backup and cooperative role. I know that these past four years that crucial issues have come up and the Minerals Council was needing some of their own travel money and that money was not approved for their travel and in my opinion they’re the ones that should be managing that mon-

ey...we are there to cooperate with the Minerals Council because they are a separate entity,” BigHorse said.

Proctor said she didn’t know of any direct responsibility she would have if any with the Minerals Council but she would like to have a working knowledge of the council’s activities.

“I’m the attorney of record in the case of Fletcher vs. United States... and I believe very strongly in the principles behind that case and I believe that non-Indians should not be sharing in those mineral royalties,” she said. “I will hope to monitor that case and will hope to convince the Minerals Council that they too should monitor that case in some way. At least one share was returned by a defendant in that case, a church, and there are more settlements in the pipeline and someone needs to create a fund to pull those shares as they come back in.”

The plaintiffs in Fletcher vs. United States, William Fletcher and Charles Pratt, are asking that all section four royalty payments to shareholders only be paid to Osage shareholders and that all non-Osage shareholders and non-Osage entities be required to give back their shares.

BigHorse said that he didn’t think the majority of Osage shareholders knew about the Fletcher case or what the case stood for. He also said that the attorneys in the case are asking for too much money.

“The only problems that I have with this case is right now the attorneys are asking for $2 million and I would like to hear where that $2 million is going to come from because personally as a shareholder I don’t think all shareholders are aware that this lawsuit is out there and I don’t think they’ve been asked if they want to be a part of that law suit,” BigHorse said. “That’s something that needs to be taken back to the Minerals Council and the Minerals Council should, I believe, do a possible survey if they have over 50 percent of the people that want to pursue that litigation then that’s fine and the money would come out of our shareholder’s money, but that’s the only place where I see that money could come from.”

Proctor disagreed.

“I’m not sure which lawsuit Mr. BigHorse is referring to, I know there are several lawsuits pending, the lawsuit I am the attorney of record on, the Fletcher vs. United States case, I am unaware of any demand for attorneys fees – in fact the attorneys have carried the freight on that case for the last eight years and the attorneys, with their own money, spent up to $50,000 to accomplish this service [when] almost 1,700 non-Indian individuals and entities are collecting those distributions,” she said. “I don’t disagree that the shareholders don’t know what’s going on and that’s because no one on the tribal side is monitoring that case.

“We have heard from the defendants in that case and they’ve tried to give their shares back and we’ve communicated with the various chiefs of this Nation about giving those shares back and they’ve either received no reply or told it was impossible. It’s not impossible and it needs to happen,” she said.

How will you handle disputes with the Congress?

“The key to avoiding disputes is communication,” Proctor said. “The assistant chief is in a very strategic position to build those relationships between the Congress and the Executive Branch so I would feel it was incumbent upon myself . . . to explain the disadvantages and the advantages of those laws, to convey the beliefs or the objections or reservations of the principal chief, if that be the case, so those amendments can be made during the legislative process instead of on the back end.”

She said her tribal clients prefer her to be at their council meetings because she brings her mediation practices with her and their meetings always go smoother.

BigHorse said his idea is to bring the chief and the Speaker of the Congress together.

“My idea is to bring the chief and Speaker of the [Congress] together and set up a mediation process so when there are disputes [those] two sides can come together with an unbiased person and sit down and talk through their issues,” BigHorse said. “[They can] come to a common ground without having to file lawsuits and pay attorneys outlandish wages to settle something that is probably simple enough that you can sit down at a table and come to an agreement to.”

Proctor did not disagree with BigHorse and agreed that the lawsuits between the Executive Branch and the legislative branch needs to stop.

“I believe it’s a tremendous waste of resources to fight inter-branch and that’s certainly something that hurts those branches and hurts the Nation,” she said. “I think we’ve got to find that middle ground however we can find it and I think the key to that harmony is communication.”

BigHorse maintained that his mediation policy will work.

“The mediation policy is the key, it is the answer and I also hope that the lawsuits are cut down to nothing but as you all know and we have attorneys who are sitting in this room right now, any one of you out here can file a lawsuit on me tomorrow for wearing this shirt I’m wearing tonight, and that’s just a fact of life folks,” BigHorse said. “To me the mediation process, putting it in place in conjunction with the Executive Branch and the Speaker of Congress and its members is of the utmost importance.”
Scott BigHorse discusses his legislative experience and bridging the gap

BigHorse says his experience as a state representative will be invaluable

By Shannon Shaw
Osage News

Scott BigHorse is ready to bridge the gap between the Executive Branch and Congress if elected as assistant principal chief.

His experience as a state legislator, in which he served a two-year term from roughly 2007 to 2009, will bring invaluable experience and contacts to the new administration, whether it's John Red Eagle or Tim Tall Chief, he said.

The runoff election is July 19.

Correctional facilities

Besides being a state legislator for two years, BigHorse has carved out a place for himself in Oklahoma correctional facilities. For 13 years he worked at the D. Conner Correctional Center (DCCC) located outside of Hominy and for nine years he contracted with the state by opening the only Co-Facilitated Juvenile Detention Center in the state.

He's been named Correctional Officer of the Year twice, once for DCCC and the second for Division I Institutions which covers approximately 12 institutions, he said. In 2003 he was promoted the Director of the Juvenile Detention Center to Assistant Director for the Youth Services of Osage County which has five programs within it.

He's active in the community in which he sits on the Pawhuska City Planning and Zoning Board; he's the current Chairman of the Friends of the Osage Language, Inc.; he's a member of the board of directors for the Edwin Fair mental health and he's a Peace Officer certified by the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training.

Osage community

BigHorse has always been active in the Osage In-Lon-Schka dances and other Osage traditions, he said.

“I have participated in our In-Lon-Schka dances since I was a baby and have grown up in that way of life to the point that it has affected the way I conduct myself when dealing with any situation,” BigHorse said. “[Just as in the In-Lon-Schka] we all have a job to do and we must focus on that job rather than trying to micromanage or worry about everyone else’s job.

“For instance, I want to be your assistant principal chief, I don’t want to be your principal chief during this administration nor do I want to be your director of operations, chief of staff or member of congress,” he said.

He also pointed out that when it comes to the In-Lon-Schka the Osage people put their personal or family differences aside because those differences have no place in the In-Lon-Schka.

“Our government should not be run around personality differences but for the best interest of our Osage people and our Osage government which is much bigger than the sum of individuals serving our government,” he said. “We must begin to put those personality differences aside when we are working for our people in the capacity of an elected official or Osage Nation employee.”

Legislative experience

As a former state legislator he said he is the only candidate that has real experience working within a three-branch government system.

“As a state legislator I joined the National Conference of State Legislators and then joined their Native American Caucus where we developed policy to be sent to Washington, D.C., for bill consideration,” he said. “While a member of the Native American Caucus I chaired the Environment and Natural Resources Committee and Co-Chaired the Transportation Committee.”

From that experience he said it will be his job as assistant chief to explain the intent of legislation to the executive branch through discussions with members of congress and to explain any problems the executive may have with items of legislation.

“I will not participate in the personality conflicts that have plagued our current congress but will work with the executive branch and the principal chief to do what is best for our people and our government,” he said. “This means that I will not take any side but that of our people when congress is divided.

“I will not take a side voting ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on a tie simply because of who may have sponsored the legislation on the table.

“I believe my experience in the Oklahoma State Legislature will help me to do an exemplary job as assistant principal chief when discussing and debating legislative items,” he said.

Policy

His policy ideas focus on making the Osage government more effective and more transparent, he said.

“As a tribal member I would like to see in some form every stream of revenue that comes into the nation (with exception to the minerals estate) and some form of where every stream of revenue leaves the nation and why,” he said. “I work in a business that is audited from four to six times a year on both financial condition and program records, needless to say I believe in being up front and above board with any and all audits.”

He said during his time as a state legislator he formed many valuable contacts within the state to help the principal chief in his decision-making processes.

He is the great grandson of Andrew and Laura BigHorse on his father's side and the great grandson of Tobe and Mary Trumbly Pearson on his mother's side. His Osage name is Ki-He-Kah Tah and he is from the Wa-Ka-Ko-Li’n district in Pawhuska. He has been dancing and singing for 40-plus years and he also attends the Native American Church and the Catholic Church.
Proctor credits her law background as an asset for Assistant Principal Chief’s office

By Benny Polacca
Osage News

Before Amanda Proctor started her law career with a focus on Native American issues, she worked as a program director for two tribes where she found herself taking on duties which lawyers tackle on a day-to-day basis.

“I started as a housing director and I felt as a housing director, I was doing a lot of legal work which included drafting policies, negotiating intergovernmental affairs and litigation” such as eviction matters which ended up in court, Proctor said. Those experiences would fuel her efforts to help several Native tribes and causes by representing them in court after graduating from law school.

Now she is running for Osage Nation Assistant Principal Chief to bring her knowledge to the Executive Branch.

Proctor, 35, won the second highest number of votes in the Nation’s June 7 election out of six candidates for the assistant principal chief’s office. Now she faces a July 19 runoff election against Scott BigHorse while incumbent John Red Eagle makes a run for the Principal Chief’s office against Tim Tall Chief.

If elected, Proctor will be the first Osage woman to hold the assistant principal chief’s office. Proctor said she’s heard concerns about a woman holding the second highest elected position in the Executive Branch, but she believes the Nation is ready for another change in progress.

“We’ve never had a female chief or assistant chief. Some people have told me they didn’t feel the tribe was ready for a female leader,” Proctor told the Osage News during an interview after dancing at this year’s Pawhuska In-Lon-Schka dances. “There’s been a lot of evolution: originally these dances were not open to the participation of women. It might be time for leadership to open up as well.”

What's next for the assistant principal chief?

As assistant principal chief, whoever is elected will have the task of performing duties which may be delegated by the Principal Chief and will serve as an ex-officio member of the Osage Nation Congress, according to the Nation’s Constitution. When meeting with Congress in committee of the whole, the assistant principal chief shall also have the right to join in debate and cast tie-breaking votes when the 12-member Congress is equally divided.

The assistant principal chief-elect also joins the tribal government which is at a crucial crossroads with the Second Osage Nation Congress taking oath of office this month with four new members and several litigations issues in the air, such as lawsuits filed in the Nation’s court system involving the executive and legislative branches and whether the tribe will make a move in response to the recent federal 10th Circuit Court of Appeals decision to not rehear the Nation’s case against the Oklahoma state Tax Commission.

On running for office, Proctor, says she’s “wanted to for quite sometime and really thought this through as the (candidacy filing) deadline approached because it involves sacrifices for me. Anytime you put yourself out there, there are risks and consequences.”

Proctor, who is co-founder of Tulsa-based Shield Law Group PLC which focuses on representing Native American tribes and organizations, said she “certainly will have to disengage from a number of my relationships” since the assistant chief position is full-time.

To date, Proctor has represented nine area tribes which, includes serving as general counsel for the Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation (Okla.) as well as the Absentee Shawnee Housing Authority. She is licensed to practice law in the tribal courts for the Iowa, Ponca, Muscogee (Creek) and Cherokee Nations.

Last year, Super Lawyers magazine selected Proctor as one of their Rising Star attorneys who are age 40 and under. According to the magazine’s Web site: “[The Super Lawyers selection process] is a comprehensive, good-faith and detailed attempt to produce a list of lawyers that have attained high peer recognition, meet ethical standards, and have demonstrated some degree of achievement in their field.”

“If elected, I think I will be practicing a lot more law than I am now,” Proctor said. “We are at a critical juncture in the history of this tribe and I think I am in the position to make decisions for the Nation – especially without the comfort of an attorney general (for the Nation).”

Proctor is referring to the Nation’s lack of an attorney general, a position she believes could be instrumental in providing legal advice or resolving conflicts or issues that may arise within the tribal government. “It will keep me sharp in my skills,” Proctor said of holding office, if she is elected. The Nation’s latest effort to establish an attorney general’s office failed earlier this year when the First ON Congress voted down a bill, sponsored by Congresswoman Shannon Edwards which would have created the AG position, during the Hun-Kah Session.

One issue affecting the Osage Nation that Proctor believes she can help with as assistant principal chief is closing the issues raised by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development last year after the agency issued a monitoring report to the Nation asking it to account for more than $666,000 in grant funding which had been awarded to the tribe but was unaccounted for.

A HUD spokeswoman told the Osage News in May the agency was still working with the Nation to close the findings in the monitoring report. A follow-up inquiry made last month has yet to be answered.

“Thanks to my background in housing authority, I really know

See Amanda Proctor
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Save the Date!

JULY

July 7
Judicial Branch Inauguration Ceremonies
The Judicial Branch will hold their inauguration on this day. Reception to follow.
Location: Judicial Branch Building
Starts at 10 a.m.
Contact Osage Election Board office at (918) 287-5289

July 7
Legislative Branch Inauguration Ceremonies
The Legislative Branch will hold their inauguration on this day with a reception to follow.
Location: Congressional Chambers
Starts at 12 p.m.
Contact Osage Election Board office at (918) 287-5289

July 7
Minerals Council Inauguration Ceremonies
The Minerals Council will hold their inauguration on this day with a reception to follow.
Minerals Council Chambers
Starts at 2 p.m.
Contact Osage Election Board office at (918) 287-5289

July 8
Osage Book Club
Join the Osage Nation Historic Preservation Office for a discussion of The Imperial Osage: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in Mississippi Valley by Gilbert C. Din and Abraham P. Nasatir
Nehemiah’s Wall Coffee Shop, 521 Kihekah, Pawhuska, OK
Starts at 6 p.m.
Contact Osage Nation Historical Preservation Office at (918) 287-5328

July 16-18
58th Tulsa Powwow
Spirit Bank Event Center, Tulsa, OK
Contact Robert Anquoe (918) 671-2417

July 19
Run Off Election for Osage Nation Principal Chief and Assistant Chief
Osage Nation Tribal Administration Building on the Osage campus.
Polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Contact Osage Election Board office (918) 287-5289

July 19
Absentee Ballots are due
Due at 10:00 a.m.
Contact Osage Election Board office at (918) 287-5289

July 20
WEWIN Sovereignty: The Strength of Native Women

6th Annual WEWIN Conference.
Reservations must be made no later than July 1.
Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, 770 West Cherokee Street, Catoosa, OK
Contact Susan Masten
(916) 202-2797 or email susanmasten@earthlink.net
or contact Madeline Mitchell
(571) 323-5640 or email mmitchell@namsinc.org

AUGUST

August 4
Inauguration for Osage Nation Principal Chief and Assistant Principal Chief
Details to follow.
Osage Nation Campus
Contact Osage Election Board at (918) 287-5289

SEPTEMBER

September 6
Labor Day
Observed Holiday; Offices Closed

September 17
Osage Nation Head Start Health and Safety Fair
Participants needed
Pawhuska Fair Grounds
Time 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Contact Carol Kliesen
(918) 629-9910 or Sandra Latty (918) 699-5561

September 20-24
Osage Nation WIC closed for training
All Osage Nation WIC offices will be closed for week long training. Normal office hours will resume Monday, September 27.
Contact Osage Nation WIC at (918) 287-5360

Election Day is July 19 on Osage campus

Chris Jake
Osage News

The runoff election will be held July 19 at the Congressional Chambers at the Tribal Administration Building on the Osage Campus in Pawhuska from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
The deadline to request an absentee ballot has passed. Absentee voters who voted in the General Election on June 7 can expect their ballot the week of July 5. New absentee ballot request forms have been processed and mailed out July 1.

An eligible voter who has requested an absentee ballot may vote in person on Election Day once they have turned in their absentee ballot that was issued to them. If the voter doesn’t have the absentee ballot that was previously issued to them they can sign an affidavit saying that the voter has not previously cast the absentee ballot and that they wish to vote in person.

All absentee ballots that are received after 10 a.m. on Election Day will be used as provisional ballots. The provisional ballots will be held at the Pawhuska Post Office for 48 hours and then retrieved by the election board supervisor and handed to the election board on July 21. All absentee ballots that arrive after 10 a.m. on July 19 will be counted in the event those ballots would make a difference in a race.

If an absentee voter chooses to vote in person, he or she will need to turn in the blank ballot before voting and will need to sign an affidavit.

You must have an Osage Nation Membership Card to vote. Please note that the membership card is not the CDIB card.

For more information contact Amber Harris by phone at (918) 287-5289 or e-mail her at aharris@osagetribe.org.

[Editor’s Note: Chris Jake is the Osage News’ summer intern through the ON Education Department. He will be returning to Haskell Indian Nation’s University for his sophomore year in the Fall.]
Amanda Proctor

—Continued from Page 20

the ins and outs of federal compliance and HUD audits,” she said.

Proctor also believes “we’ve got to put in some long hours” immediately if she’s elected because the Nation must decide on whether to respond to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals decision not to re-hear the Tax Commission case (also known as the “reservation/rez status case”).

“We need to figure out where we are and where we need to go,” she said because the Osage Nation’s reservation status is at issue which could affect three of the seven Osage Million Dollar Elm Casinos which are not on protected trust lands.

‘Humble’ start to helping Native Americans

Born in Dallas, Proctor (Osage/Cherokee) grew up in Wichita, Kans. and graduated from high school in nearby Goddard in 1993 before heading east to attend Ivy League-famed Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. “My background is humble with no expectation of (rural residents) going to Ivy League school,” Proctor said adding her parents (mother Karen Proctor is Osage) grew up in rural Kansas.

Amanda Proctor’s uncle and newly-elected Osage Minerals Councilman Galen Crum is one of her most ardent supporters who has championed and defended her on the Osage Shareholders Association blog which has been a lightning rod of discussion, criticisms and praise for all the candidates, newsmakers and rumors aired through the Internet since the election seasons started heating up last year. In a June 29 posting to the blog, Crum wrote:

“...When Amanda was barely in high school she announced that she was going to Harvard to study some major that would allow her to serve Native People. I smiled and encouraged her, (I’m her uncle) but I was certain her parents could never afford Harvard, even if she could qualify. But Amanda fooled me. She worked hard, got the grades, did the public service and extra curricular activities etc. that would land the necessary scholarships to pull it off. Harvard was very hard, not just the incredibly demanding curriculum, but also being a thousand miles from home, with little extra money. Scholarships pay for tuition, room, books etc., but not for plane trips home. I suspect a big, empty college campus is about the loneliest place on earth over Christmas and Thanksgiving breaks. But she stayed with her dream and got it done.”

Proctor completed her Harvard studies and graduated with an AB (bachelor’s) degree in anthropology in 1999. Proctor, who has participated in Native American cultural dances since childhood, founded the Harvard University Powwow in 1995 while attending the school.

After Harvard, Proctor started her work in Indian Country by working as housing directors for the Otoe-Missouria Tribe in Oklahoma and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in Dowagiac, Mich., before returning to school to pursue her law degree.

Proctor attended the University of Tulsa from 2003 to 2005 when she earned her Juris Doctor degree as well as the Native American Law Certificate. The following year, she was admitted to the Oklahoma Bar.

See Amanda Proctor
—Continued on Page 23
July 2010 Run-off Candidate Messages

In accordance with the Osage News Election policy, the Osage News allowed each candidate 200 words in this issue leading up to the July 19 run-off elections for Principal Chief and Assistant Principal Chief.

Tim Tall Chief
Run-off Candidate for Principal Chief

With July 19 just around the corner, it is important to consider what happens on July 20, and how we as a caring and loving people can move to a higher level of professionalism and teamwork for the common good of our Osage Nation. On July 20 we must come together as Osage’s to build a strong Nation that respects and celebrates our individual differences. The goal must be reconciliation, placing political differences aside and bringing our Nation together with a common vision for the future. Some progress has been made regarding the Strategic Plan; we must revisit that plan and continue to meet the established needs of our people. As leaders of this Nation it is our responsibility to establish priorities, develop plans and when necessary, modify those plans based on circumstances.

The support I’ve received is amazing and greatly appreciated. My commitment to you, the Osage people, is a 100 percent positive effort to building a Nation of which we can all be proud and re-establish “The Osage” to the prominence once enjoyed among Tribal Nations across this country. You deserve the best and now is the time to make that choice. Visit us on the Web at www.timtallchief.com.

—By Tim Tall Chief

Amanda Proctor
Run-off Candidate for Assistant Principal Chief

First, I wish to thank all those who continue to participate in the election process. There are many challenges facing those who are selected by you to lead the Osage Nation through the coming months and years. Many of those battles will take place in the halls of justice and will require the service of warriors who know the laws of our Nation and of the other governments with which we must co-exist. There are at least four active lawsuits moving through the federal courts, as well as several important disputes now pending in our tribal justice system. Any of the federal lawsuits have the capacity to change the landscape of federal Indian law -- not only for the Osage Nation, but also for other Indian tribes. I chose to run for office because I believe that my legal training and experience can help the Principal Chief and other decision-makers navigate this minefield and reach an outcome that serves the best interests of this Nation. As a former tribal administrator, I also pledge to leverage the Nation’s federal program dollars to improve healthcare, housing and infrastructure. I can makes these positive changes, but not without your continued support. Thank you.

—By Amanda Proctor

Corrections

In the front page story titled “Two incumbents and four new Osages elected to the Osage Nation Congress” it was incorrectly stated that re-elected Osage Congressman William Supernaw was going to have a celebration dinner. It’s an appreciation dinner. The Osage News regrets the error.

On page 28 Amos Satepauhoodle was misidentified as Amos Shadlow. The Osage News regrets the error.

Amanda Proctor
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Association and joined the staff of Sneed Lang Herrold PC, a Tulsa-based law firm where she focused on Native American law and has signed onto cases involving various tribal matters and causes including the Fletcher v. United States case which involves shareholders of the Osage Minerals Estate.

Today Proctor keeps home in Skiatook where she’s lived for the past five years. She is raising three sons as a single mother: Grayson, 8; Amory, 3; and Rhett, 11 months.

As attorney, Proctor is also general counsel for the Ponca Tribe and has provided legal work for the Otoe-Missouria on some projects. She left Sneed Lang Herrold last year to start Shield Law Group PLC with fellow TU law school graduate Katrina Jacuk who is a member of the Kenaitze tribe in Alaska and is of Aleut descent.

In the eight-year-old Fletcher case, in which Proctor is one of the attorneys on record, Osage plaintiffs William Sam Fletcher and Charles Pratt are seeking the return of headright shares which are being paid to non-Osage shareholders and entities with hundreds of defendants who have been served in the case.
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