



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWO NEBRASKA TRIBES ACHIEVE Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) STATUS

The National Park Service announced that the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska and the Santee Sioux Tribe have achieved certification of their Tribal historic preservation programs. The Ponca Tribe and Santee Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) are certified to assume duties under the National Historic Preservation Act, including nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places; the review of federal projects; survey of significant historic, archeological and cultural properties; and planning for the preservation and protection of important sites. The National Park Service administers THPO status, which also allows tribes to qualify for historic preservation grants.

“This is an important milestone in our efforts to preserve our culture,” said Gary Robinette, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Ponca Tribe. Thelma Thomas of the Santee Sioux Tribe will serve as Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. “The Santee Nation looks forward to working with the National Park Service, the Nebraska State Historical Society and other Tribes,” Thomas said. “We are pleased with this status, as this has been a longstanding goal realized.”

Beginning in January 2007, the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs co-sponsored a series of meetings with the four Tribes represented in the state to identify needs and issues in preserving their culture. One of the major findings was the desire to qualify Tribal governments as Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs). Both Ponca and Santee Sioux tribes requested technical assistance to seek the establishment of a Tribal Historic Preservation Office. Under a memorandum of understanding, the Nebraska State Historical Society contracted with a Native American consulting firm to facilitate the application process. This included an extensive training workshop for the THPO council and development of the application to the National Park Service. “It took much teamwork between the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Ponca Tribal staff to achieve successful certification,” said Robinette.

Contact the Nebraska State Historical Society’s State Historic Preservation Office for more information about historic preservation activities in the state, or visit www.nebraskahistory.org

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