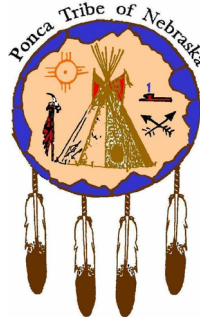


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PONCA TRIBE RESPONDS TO STATEMENTS OF ATTORNEY GENERAL JON BRUNING

Lincoln, Nebraska – The Ponca Tribe is disappointed that Attorney General Jon Bruning has chosen to allocate scarce taxpayer dollars on a lawsuit challenging the well-reasoned and legally sound decision of the National Indian Gaming Commission authorizing gaming on federal trust land in the State of Iowa. More disturbing, however, is that the lawsuit has been accompanied by angry rhetoric, false stereotypes, and outright untruths.

“The State of Nebraska has trampled on the sovereignty of not only the Ponca Tribe but also the State of Iowa and the City of Carter Lake by attempting to force its particular view of gaming into the government to government relationship between the Tribe and the State of Iowa.” Chairman Larry Wright Jr. said. “The Tribe has not sought gaming in Nebraska out of respect for Nebraska’s views. However, the Tribe also has federally designated services areas in Iowa, where tribal and commercial gaming bring needed economic development to the region. Consistent with these principles, the Tribe has reached out to the State of Iowa and has asked only that it be accorded equal treatment. We continue to have positive and mutually respectful discussions with Iowa and the City of Carter Lake to ensure that a Ponca gaming facility benefits the Tribe and its neighbors.”

Chairman Wright also said, “the Tribe takes issue with Attorney General Bruning’s claim that “the Tribe just flat out lied’ about its intentions. The Tribe exercised its sovereign right to change the use of its land when other economic development initiatives did not prove sustainable despite the Tribe’s best efforts. This is no different than the State of

Nebraska exercising its sovereign right to establish a State Lottery despite its previous constitutional prohibition against all forms of gambling.”

Attorney General Bruning’s claim that Indian gaming is “rife with corruption” is false and serves no purpose other than to prey on unfounded fears and stereotypes. According to the National Indian Gaming Association, “Unlike commercial and State operated gaming – Indian gaming is subject to extensive Federal oversight. To protect our operations – Tribes work with the FBI, the Financial Crime Enforcement Network, the IRS, and the BIA at the Federal level – in addition to the NIGC. As a result of this comprehensive web of regulation – the Department of Justice has consistently found that there has been no infiltration of organized crime on Indian gaming. It’s an underreported fact – but there are over 3,000 tribal gaming regulators working day and night on the front line to protect the integrity of our operations.” www.indiangaming.org

Finally, the Tribe cannot help but note a certain historical irony in the fact that over 100 years after prominent Omaha attorneys John L. Webster and Andrew J. Poppleton offered their services to the great Ponca Chief Standing Bear to defend his and the Tribe’s right to enjoy equal protection under the law, the State’s Attorney General has brought suit to deny the Ponca Tribe its right to pursue economic development and tribal self-sufficiency in the same manner as other Indian tribes across the country.

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