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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Pawnee, Okla. – Pawnee Nation Business Council President James Whiteshirt responds to Oklahoma Governor Stitt’s call for renegotiating Oklahoma tribal gaming compacts.

The Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma has read the notice to the tribes for renegotiating the gaming compact. The initial intent of the Indian gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (ICRA) WAS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBAL ECONOMIES. Since the passing of State Question 712 which authorized Class 3 gaming in Oklahoma, all the Tribes in Oklahoma combined has paid more than \$1.2 billion in exclusivity fees to the State of Oklahoma.

The Nation bore the financial risk and built all of the infrastructure and facilities to build casino gambling in Oklahoma while the state has been fortunate to reap the rewards without any investment or risk on its part. The Nation has expended significant capital contributions within the State of Oklahoma, most importantly in rural areas, that would otherwise be non-existent without gaming tribes in Oklahoma and uses every penny of its gaming net revenues to provide for our tribal members, to operate our tribal government to fund tribal programs and to assist our surrounding communities.

Although the Nation is certainly open to Governor Stitt’s request to negotiate new terms for a gaming compact, our view is we do not feel that taking from our tribal members’ services is the best option for the Nation. Any negotiations that involve raising the fees would be detrimental to the Nation and does not protect the interest of our Tribal government.

As we have always done and will continue to do, our Nation invests in our futures and stabilize the neediest of elders to maintain a decent quality of life. We invest in our children. Our investment far outweighs the investment that may or could be offered through the Governor’s plan.

The current compacts, as negotiated and approved by the Secretary of Interior and upon which the State, the Pawnee Nation and its Tribal business partners relied on, represent a continuing and mutually beneficial partnership between us, which create competition and diversity in the Oklahoma economy, creates jobs and contributes to the wealth, health and prosperity of Oklahomans, especial rural Oklahomans.

It is the position of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma that its Compact will automatically renew on January 1, 2020 and as the language of the compacts implies, if no new compact shall automatically renew for successive additional fifteen-year terms. The language of the law should prevail.

For more information, contact the Executive Office at 918.762.3621.