

Run-offs were contested in seven races

CPN Legislative roster completed by voters

Citizen Potawatomi Nation voters have filled out their new tribal legislature with election of seven more lawmakers in a run-off that ended on Saturday, March 29. The new lawmakers are: Roy V. Slavin of Kansas City, Missouri in District #1 (the northeastern U.S.); Eva Marie Carney of Arlington, Virginia in District #2 (the southeastern U.S.); Robert M. Whistler of Bedford, Texas in District #3 (the eastern three-fourths of Texas); Theresa Marie Adame of Topeka, Kansas in District #4 (the state of Kansas); Eunice Imogene 'Gene' Lambert of Phoenix, Arizona in District #5 (the states of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah); Jacqueline Taylor, a former Oregon state legislator, of Astoria, Oregon in District #8 (the Pacific Northwest and upper Rocky Mountain states); and David Joe Barrett, a business owner, of Shawnee in District #10 (one of the Oklahoma seats).

They join Reps. Thom Finks of Auburn, California (District #7), Ron Goyer of Vista, California (District #6), and Lisa Kraft of Stillwater, Oklahoma (District #11), all elected without opposition; Rep. Paul Wesselhoft of Moore, Oklahoma (District #9), elected without a run-off; and Reps. Paul Schmidlkofer of Tecumseh, Oklahoma (District #12) and Bobbie Bowden of Choctaw, Oklahoma (District #13), who both moved over from the former Business Committee.

If either of the losing candidates in the two especially close races desires a recount, this language from the CPN Election Ordinance will dictate events: "Since the Election Ordinance provides for automatic recount of ballots, any request for recount of ballots must list the reasons therefore in writing and be submitted to the Election Committee Chairman or his designated representative within two (2) working days after the election.

"Such request must be accompanied by a non-refundable cashier or official check of \$250.00 and made payable to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Said check shall be forwarded to the tribal Secretary-Treasurer to be credited against the cost of the recount. The Election Committee shall meet and decide within five (5) days of receipt of the notice whether or not such reasons listed in the request are sufficient to cause a recount of ballots. If no recount is made, the \$250.00 is refunded."

The newly elected legislators will gather at tribal headquarters in Shawnee, Oklahoma for a swearing-in ceremony, orientation session, and initial legislative meeting from April 24 through April 26.

In District #1, Slavin defeated William Pearce of Rochester, New York by a single vote, 61-60. The District #2 run-off saw Carney outpoll Ralph Henry (Bergeron) Bazhaw of Pleasant Garden, North Carolina, 63-36.

In Texas, the District #3 run-off went Bedford city council member Whistler's way by a 49-40 count over Brian K. Walker of Tatum, who has the Republican Party nomination for a legislative seat in east Texas. In Kansas, the new District #4 legislator, Adame, won by an 85-49 margin over Hubert L. 'Hurb' Adams of Rossville.

Lambert, a long-time regional representative for the CPN, won another nail-biter, 61-59, over Edwin M. 'Ed' Burns of Rocky Ford, Colorado in District #5. In District #8, Taylor notched a 14-vote win over William Edward Anderson of Whitefish, Montana, 53-39.

In District #10, the entire state of Oklahoma, Barrett moved into the legislature via a 197-160 win over Jason N. O'Neal of Stonewall, the chief of police for the Chickasaw Nation.

(A chart depicting vote totals accompanies this article.)

Meanwhile, four candidates, two in each race, have filed for two legislative seats that will be filled through an election to be decided on Saturday, June 28, 2008. In District #12, incumbent Paul Schmidlkofer, a drafting instructor at Gordon Cooper Technology Center and Tecumseh, Oklahoma resident, drew opposition from Chad Higbee of Oklahoma City, who is an executive for a hospice.

In District #9, incumbent Rep. Paul Wesselhoft of Moore, Oklahoma, a member of the Oklahoma legislature, will defend his seat against Norman Brasfield of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. The initial term in office for District #9 was just a few months long, part of the effort to stagger re-election dates for the legislators.

The June election ballot will also contain the annual budget for spending interest earnings from the Nation's set-aside funds. Thus, all eligible CPN voters have been mailed an Absentee Ballot Request, which must be postmarked no later than Sunday, June 8, 2008. Voted ballots must be in the CPN Election Committee's Tecumseh post office box no later than 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 28, 2008 to be counted.

Live balloting will occur at the CPN Tribal Courtroom, 1601 S. Gordon Cooper Dr., Shawnee, from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 28 – during the annual Family Reunion Festival.

Following the August 2007 approval of a constitutional revision, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is transitioning from a five-member Business Committee to the 16-member legislature. The transition is designed to devolve more government authority to the two-thirds of CPN members who live outside the state of Oklahoma. It also marks an extraordinary release of government/political power by the three members of the Executive Committee.

Under the previous government structure, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary-Treasurer controlled three of the five votes in the Nation's legislative body. In the legislative body, they have just three of 16 votes.

Chairman John 'Rocky' Barrett has frequently discussed plans for a second phase of the government makeover. When proposed as a constitutional amendment, it would involve moving the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary-Treasurer into a separate Administrative branch while setting up the final three legislative seats – numbers 14, 15, and 16. Holders of those seats will represent CPN members from all over Oklahoma.

Citizen Potawatomi Nation officials believe the Nation is the first tribal government that has divided the entire United States into legislative districts to allow members who live away from the tribe's governmental jurisdiction to have representation on its decision-making body. The CPN legislature will meet using state-of-the-art teleconferencing equipment. The Oklahoma legislators will gather in a new legislative chamber at the Nation's Shawnee headquarters. Those from outside the state will be connected to the meeting via a video/audio screen that will allow them to hear and see activities in Shawnee and at the sites where each of the other seven outside-Oklahoma lawmakers are.

Citizen Potawatomi Nation Legislative Election
Run-Off Vote Totals

District #1

William Pearce -	60
Roy Slavin -	61

District #2

Eva Marie Carney -	63
Ralph Bazhaw -	36

District #3

Brian Walker -	40
Robert Whistler	49

District #4

Theresa Adame	85
Hurb Adams	49

District #5

Gene Lambert	61
Ed Burns	59

District #8

Jacqueline Taylor -	53
William Anderson	39

District #10

David Joe Barrett	197
Jason O'Neal	160