

The Allied Arts and Humanities Council of Bartlesville has announced plans to present the Osage ballet, *Wahzhazhe*, in August 2012, in Pawhuska, Bartlesville and Tulsa.

The locally-created ballet will feature themes reflecting the rich culture of the Osage people who controlled a large part of what is now called the United States of America. “Osages have a great heritage of dance,” said Osage Principal Chief John D. Red Eagle. “We are proud of our own Osage ballerinas, Maria and Marjorie Tallchief, who reached international acclaim in the twentieth century.” Red Eagle added that this ballet, which details the history of the Osage people, “will provide an opportunity for Osage youth and adults to become involved in the creation of an artistic performance that honors their history and cultural traditions.” Dance is something that is important to Osages, “Osages danced: before a hunt, before a raid, to express joy or grief, to prayer songs, to the beat of a drum – what better way to tell the Osage story than through dance?” said project sponsor, Kathryn Red Corn.

The creators involved in the project include: Director, Randy Tinker Smith, Artistic Director, Roman Jasinski, Composer Lou Brock, Costume Designer, Ardina Moore, and Set Designer, Wendy Ponca.

Smith expressed her gratitude to the corporate sponsors of the project: Spyglass Energy Group, Michael L. Graves, and Nadel and Gussman, whose contributions total \$50,000. “We are looking for additional tax-deductible donations from oil producers, which these sponsors have agreed to match up to \$50,000,” Smith said. Another opportunity for increasing the benefit of your donation dollar is that an anonymous donor has offered to match dollar for dollar any Osage trust money donated to the ballet by Osage Shareholders. For information about donating to the project, contact Smith at 918-704-4668.

The Osage Nation is based in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. In 1870 the Osages sold their Kansas reservation and purchased their own reservation in Indian Territory -- now located in Oklahoma. In 1906, the Osage roll closed and the government divided the reservation into individual allotments called “headrights.” This unique agreement provided each Osage allottee with equal shares of a collective interest in the subsurface rights to the reservation. These rights to the mineral estate remain in place and continue to financially bless the Osage people.

The Osage Nation continues to evolve and in March 2006, following recognition by the United States as a sovereign nation, the Osage people voted to approve a new constitution, with three government branches – Executive, Legislative and Judicial. This form of government remains in place to this day under the supreme executive authority of the Osage Principal Chief, a position currently held by John D. Red Eagle.

