

NEWS RELEASE

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News Contact: Stan Whitley, (785) 296-3585

Prairie Band cooperative agreement project bestowed national award

A project that forged a cooperative agreement allowing the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation greater self-sufficiency in the management of reservation transportation projects has been recognized for a 2007 Exemplary Human Environment Initiatives Award.

The national honor was bestowed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the program category of process improvements. The innovative agreement between the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) allows the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation to maintain control over the work on the reservation under a self-determination process designed to foster self-sufficiency.

The agreement was developed after KDOT awarded a pedestrian/bicycle trail project for the Prairie Band reservation in Jackson County. The project involves construction of a 2.1-mile asphalt trail that will connect housing clusters and a work complex on the reservation.

The BIA will serve as administrator on the project and the tribe will be responsible for construction activities. The new pedestrian/bicycle trail is under construction.

“By working with the BIA to administer funds and the tribe acting as the general contractor, we have formed an agreement that benefits all parties and serves as a model on which other agreements can be written,” said KDOT Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller.

The national program is designed to support and measure FHWA’s environmental stewardship responsibilities. The program promotes environmental stewardship by giving recognition to transportation projects and activities that are particularly effective and innovative in how they adapt and enhance the human environment.

FHWA believes the program will provide an incentive for transportation sponsors to pursue new ways to adapt transportation projects to the human environment, thereby better meeting the needs of communities.

Funding for the pedestrian/bicycle trail was made available through KDOT’s Transportation Enhancement program. Total cost of the project is \$437,647 with KDOT paying 85 percent of the project and the tribe 15 percent.

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