

## **Osage Trust Team in settlement talks for remainder of trust case**

More information to come in a week, attorney says; Case seeks accounting of mismanaged funding owed to Osages

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Federal Judge Emily Hewitt. Courtesy Photo

The Osage Trust Team is participating in settlement talks regarding the Osage Nation's trust case against the United States.

A news release dated July 26 states: "The Osage Trust Team is participating in settlement discussions with the United States relating to the Osage trust case."

The release did not elaborate on details, noting that "by agreement of the Trust Team and the United States, these discussions are necessarily confidential. Osage headright holders should be reassured that the view of the Trust Team is funds from this case should be paid to the headright holders."

On Aug. 11, attorneys involved in the trust case met with members of the Second Osage Nation Congress and Osage Minerals Council in a nearly two-hour executive session during a Congressional Committee on Governmental Operations meeting with "Trust Team Information" as the sole meeting agenda item.

After the meeting, Wilson Pipestem (Osage), a Washington, D.C.-based attorney representing the Nation in the trust case, said he could not comment yet on details regarding the settlement talks. Pipestem told the Osage News more information would be forthcoming in about one week.

The Trust Team's announcement comes nearly six months after the Nation was awarded \$330.7 million in Tranche One of the case for the period of January 1981 to May 1994.

The Tranche One order issued Feb. 24 did not include possible damages for claims on the remaining claims in the case – Tranche Two and Tranche Three.

Federal Judge Emily Hewitt, who issued the Tranche One order, has asked for scheduling proposals from both sides for Tranche Two of the case and is expected in the near future to set a date for a trial to address those remaining claims, the Osage News previously reported. Payment on the damages will not be awarded until Tranche Three of the case is complete.

The Nation's 10-year-old trust case seeks an accounting of 140 years of mismanagement of the tribe's oil royalty payments and other alleged malfeasance.

The Osage Trust Team is made up of Principal Chief John Red Eagle, Speaker of the Congress Jerri Jean Branstetter, Osage Minerals Councilman Dudley Whitehorn, OMC Councilwoman Cynthia Boone and OMC Council Chairman Galen Crum.