

**Testimony of the Honorable Russell Earls**  
**Commissioner, Ottawa County District 3**  
**Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Field Hearing on Oklahoma Tribal Economic Development**

**February 20, 2008**

From the banks to the truck stops to casinos and dozens of other businesses owned by the tribes, they employ hundreds if not thousands of Ottawa County citizens reducing at one time one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. Some of the tribes have partnered with the County Government to build roads and bridges to their tribal grounds which we encourage. The Peoria Tribe, Chief Froman presented County government with a check for twenty five thousand dollars at our ground breaking ceremonies of the new Ottawa County courthouse. Currently there are talks between the tribes and County Government to cooperate on Emergency Operations Coordinator and County wide ambulance services. In recent conversations it has been said the tribes are the driving force in our economic boom here in Ottawa County I believe this to be true. There is no doubt the tribes have had a positive impact on Ottawa County.