



**INSTITUTE OF  
TECHNOLOGY**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **Caddo Nation and Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology Forge Historic Partnership to Transform Workforce Development**

**Landmark MOU establishes innovative training pathway for tribal citizens in high-demand energy and construction sectors**

**BINGER, OK – July 3, 2025** – The Caddo Nation Economic Development Authority (CNEDA) and Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSUIT) have signed a groundbreaking Memorandum of Understanding that will create unprecedented workforce development opportunities for Caddo citizens and strengthen the tribal economy through strategic education partnerships.

The historic agreement, signed by CNEDA Chairman Bobby Gonzalez and OSUIT Vice Provost Dr. Trey Hill, establishes a comprehensive framework for developing customized training programs that align with the Caddo Nation's expanding portfolio of tribally owned enterprises, including renewable energy initiatives, construction projects, and infrastructure development.

"This partnership represents a transformative moment for our Nation," said Bobby Gonzalez, Chairman of the Caddo Nation. "By joining forces with OSUIT, we're not just creating jobs – we're building the foundation for generational prosperity and economic sovereignty that will benefit our people for decades to come."

The collaboration directly supports implementation of the Caddo Nation's Section 477 Plan and long-term Resiliency Plan, providing scalable pathways for tribal citizens to participate in, lead, and grow the Nation's economic development initiatives.

### **Strategic Focus on High-Demand Sectors**

The partnership specifically targets workforce development in:

- **Renewable Energy Development** – Supporting the Nation's SAKU solar energy initiative and other green energy projects

- **Construction and Infrastructure** – Preparing workers for tribal construction projects and regional development
- **Environmental Remediation** – Training specialists for orphan well cleanup and environmental restoration
- **Utility Development** – Building expertise in energy infrastructure and grid modernization

"This agreement exemplifies OSUIT's commitment to serving Oklahoma's diverse communities," said Dr. Trey Hill, Vice Provost at OSUIT. "Our industry-aligned programs and state-of-the-art facilities provide the perfect foundation for preparing Caddo citizens for high-paying careers in these rapidly growing sectors."

## **Comprehensive Training Framework**

Under the MOU, OSUIT will provide:

- **Customized non-credit training programs** tailored specifically for Caddo Nation workforce development needs
- **Industry-relevant credentialing** in energy and construction sectors
- **Faculty expertise and curriculum development** for specialized tribal training initiatives
- **Access to cutting-edge facilities and equipment** at OSUIT's Okmulgee campus

CNEDA will provide facilities, coordinate student recruitment and enrollment, and ensure programs align with the Nation's enterprise development strategy and infrastructure investments.

## **Economic Impact and Vision**

The partnership builds on the Caddo Nation's remarkable economic growth and diversification efforts. Through Caddo Enterprises, the Nation operates successful ventures including retail operations (George's and McKee's stores), the innovative SAKU renewable energy division, and various infrastructure development projects.

"This MOU represents the kind of strategic thinking that positions tribal nations as leaders in the modern economy," said Zackeree Kelin, Vice-Chairman of CNEDA. "We're creating a direct pathway from education to economic opportunity – ensuring our citizens have the skills to build not just careers, but the future of our Nation."

The agreement also establishes protocols for co-marketing opportunities, quality assurance measures, and long-term sustainability of the partnership programs.

## **About the Caddo Nation**

The Caddo Nation is a federally recognized tribe headquartered in Binger, Oklahoma, with over 7,000 enrolled citizens. Through its Economic Development Authority and diverse enterprise portfolio, the Nation has emerged as a leader in tribal economic development, renewable energy initiatives, and community resilience planning. The Nation's recent partnerships with the

University of Oklahoma's RANGE project and hosting of the first Native Renewable Energy Symposium demonstrate its commitment to energy sovereignty and tribal collaboration.

## **About Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology**

OSUIT is a premier technological institute offering hands-on, career-focused education across 37 programs of study. Located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, OSUIT has provided 70+ years of applied education and is recognized as a leader in workforce development. The institute maintains strong industry partnerships and state-of-the-art facilities designed to create seamless classroom-to-career transitions, with most graduates completing their programs debt-free.

## **Implementation Timeline**

The partnership will begin implementation immediately, with the first customized training programs expected to launch in fall 2025. The agreement runs through June 30, 2026, with provisions for annual renewal and expansion based on program success and community needs.

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*This partnership reflects both organizations' commitment to innovative workforce development solutions that serve tribal communities while addressing critical skills gaps in high-demand industries across Oklahoma.*