



## Poarch Band of Creek Indians

**For Immediate Release**

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### **POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS DONATES \$25,000 TO ENTERPRISE ALABAMA TORNADO RELIEF FUND**

**POARCH CREEK INDIAN RESERVATION**, Alabama – April 23, 2007– The Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribe announced today that it is donating \$25,000 to the Enterprise Alabama Tornado Fund. Tribal Chairman Buford L. Rolin will present the check to Mayor Kenneth W. Boswell. The donation is in an effort to assist those affected by the tornado that hit the area on March 1 of this year. “The Tribe has always made it a priority to help those in need,” said Chairman Rolin. “We feel this is a way to do that, and continue the tradition within our Tribe of helping our neighbors.”

The storm devastated this community in southeast Alabama, leaving death and destruction in its path. Eight teenagers and 1 senior adult died when the tornado struck Enterprise High School and the surrounding area, and many people were left homeless. “The generosity and kindness from people all the over country and the state of Alabama that have contributed to the tornado victims is greatly appreciated” stated Mayor Boswell.

The Poarch Creeks have also suffered loss at the hand of Mother Nature. During the Hurricane season of 2004 the Tribe suffered tremendous damage to their reservation from Hurricane Ivan. “During this time the Tribe received a lot of assistance from individuals, tribes, and organizations, and we know how important it is to receive assistance,” said April Sells, Tribal EMA Director. “Even though we were not a part of the immediate response to the devastation, I was in constant contact with David Coggins, Region 1 Coordinator, State of Alabama EMA, to see how the recovery effort was going. I was able to pass this information along to our Tribal Council which led to them making this donation.”

The Enterprise Alabama Tornado Fund will be distributes through a series of three committees. The Recovery Organization of Coffee County will send trained caseworkers

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out into the devastated areas to evaluate circumstances of individuals in need. This organization will then make recommendations to the Citizens Committee, which consists of five members, as to the extent of need per individual. The Citizens Committee will then determine the amount of funding each individual needs and make a recommendation to the Chamber Area Foundation Board, who holds the account. The Chamber Board will then issue funds to those in need.

#### **About the Poarch Band of Creek Indians**

The Poarch Creek Indians are descendents of a segment of the original Creek Nation, which once covered almost all of Alabama and Georgia. Unlike many eastern Indian tribes, the Poarch Creeks were not removed from their tribal lands and have lived together for almost 200 years in and around the reservation in Poarch, Alabama. The reservation is located eight miles northwest of Atmore, Alabama in rural Escambia County, and 57 miles east of Mobile.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is the only federally recognized Indian Tribe in the state of Alabama, operating as a sovereign nation with its own system of government and bylaws. The Tribe operates a variety of economic enterprises, which employ hundreds of area residents. Poarch Creek Indian Gaming manages three gaming facilities in Alabama, including: the Creek Entertainment Center in Atmore; Riverside Entertainment Center in Wetumpka; and, Tallapoosa Entertainment Center in Montgomery.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is an active partner in the state of Alabama, contributing to economic, educational, social and cultural projects benefiting both tribal members and residents of these local communities and neighboring towns. The Tribe's Planned Giving Campaign includes significant donations to local schools, education scholarships, senior centers, youth athletics, and charitable organizations.

#### **About the City of Enterprise, AL**

The City of Enterprise has a strong history of growth and progress. Its diversity of people, occupations, lifestyles and interests come together to produce the community spirit that has been passed down for generations. The residents of Enterprise still enjoy the security of a concerned smaller city, even though it has become larger and more progressive. The people are warm and accepting of all who visit or choose to live in Enterprise. The Deep South friendliness combined with the new south progressive attitude make Enterprise a wonderful place to visit, to call home and to raise a family. Today's Enterprise is a far cry from the piney woods with two small wagon roads running through what is now a densely populated area.

The founder of Enterprise, John Henry Carmichael, moved to Coffee County and settled in the area in 1881. Carmichael built a small store on what is now North Main Street. In 1882 as others moved to the area, the post office was moved from Drake Eye, located about 5 miles north, to Carmichael's new community. Enterprise was incorporated in

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1896 with a population of 250. Two years later the Alabama Midland Railway Company located in Enterprise and with it came growth and progress. By 1906 the population grew to 3,750. Because early residents believed so much in their own town, they had a battle cry in the form of a banner stretched across the street saying, "Pull for Enterprise or Pull Out."

Property was threatened in 1915 as the Mexican Boll Weevil found its way into Alabama from Texas and wreaked havoc on the cotton crop. In Coffee County, almost 60 percent of the cotton production was destroyed. Farmers faced bankruptcy and the area economy was at stake. Farmers turned to peanuts and other crops to overcome the damage wrought by the boll weevil.

By 1917, Coffee County produced and harvested more peanuts than any other county in the nation. (In 1993, Coffee County ranked 4th in the state of Alabama with 128,000 acres planted in peanuts.) In gratitude for the lessons taught, residents erected the world's only monument to an agricultural pest, the boll Weevil Monument. The monument, dedicated on December 11, 1919, stands in the center of the downtown district at the intersection of Main Street and College Street. The Boll Weevil Monument is a symbol of man's willingness and ability to adjust to adversity. Citizens continue to remind visitors and newcomers to the city the lesson of the boll weevil.

Today, the broadened and diversified agricultural economy, local industry, and the presence of the Army Aviation Center at nearby Fort Rucker are largely responsible for Enterprise's relative immunity to economic catastrophe.