

MEDIA RELEASE

FIRST QUARTERLY MEETING HELD ON TRIBAL GROUNDS MARKS MAJOR GOVERNANCE MILESTONE

January 17, 2026 | Tribal Grounds

The Thlopthlocco Tribal Town held its first Quarterly Meeting on Saturday, January 17, 2026, on the Thlopthlocco Tribal grounds Community Building—marking a significant milestone in the restoration of lawful governance, operational stability, and protection of Tribal sovereignty following the October 18, 2025 election.

The meeting highlighted the successes achieved during the first quarter despite extraordinary resistance, interference, and efforts to obstruct Tribal operations and enterprises. Leaders emphasized that the period from October 23, 2025 through December 31, 2025 required decisive action to safeguard Tribal assets, ensure continuity of essential services, and maintain the lawful functions of government.

Executive Summary: A Quarter of Stabilization and Defense

The first-quarter report documents the lawful assumption of governance by Mekko Brent Smith and the duly elected Business Committee, alongside emergency stabilization actions undertaken to protect the Thlopthlocco Tribal interests. These actions were carried out under the Constitution and By-Laws of the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town and the Tribe's inherent sovereign authority.

Despite sustained external interference—including refusal by certain contractors and financial institutions to recognize the lawfully seated government—the administration acted under its fiduciary duty to protect assets, restore administrative control, and maintain services for Tribal citizens.

Key Governance and Administrative Achievements

- Lawful transition and assumption of governing authority following the October 18, 2025 election
- Restoration of administrative control over Tribal departments and enterprises by October 23, 2025
- Formal assertion and defense of Tribal sovereignty and jurisdiction
- Active engagement with federal regulatory and oversight agencies

Protecting Assets and Essential Services

The quarter required emergency actions to secure Tribal offices, records, and financial assets following documented interference and criminal acts associated with prior staff under the removed Business Committee. Asset recovery, documentation, and protection efforts were initiated immediately to prevent further harm to Tribal operations.

Enterprise and Casino Operations

Emergency oversight measures were implemented to stabilize and protect the Golden Pony Casino. This included temporary shutdown and structured reopening procedures adopted through formal resolutions, internal risk assessments, and immediate compliance reviews covering gaming operations, food and beverage services, surveillance, and security.

All emergency actions were conducted in coordination with the National Indian Gaming Commission, with continuous communication to preserve regulatory compliance and operational integrity.

Financial Stabilization and Banking Challenges

A central challenge this quarter involved access to Tribal funds. On December 12, 2025, tribal funds were successfully deposited into a secured banking service after the newly seated administration was denied access to existing accounts at BancFirst, despite proper certification and notice.

The administration secured alternative banking arrangements to prevent interruption of governmental and enterprise services. Although deliberate false representations by a **former administrative employee caused temporary service disruptions**, the funds were ultimately released and secured under the authority of the current Tribal government. Efforts to identify, recover, and protect all remaining Tribal assets continue.

Housing, Infrastructure, and Public Safety

The Willow Arbor Low-Income Housing Program maintained 13 occupied units during the quarter, generating rental revenue. Emergency repairs continued to severely neglected security vehicles were undertaken to restore minimum public-safety capacity, addressing years of deferred maintenance that posed serious operational and liability risks.

Critical information technology systems were also stabilized and rebuilt to restore communications, data security, and operational continuity.

A Message of Resilience and Accountability

Leaders underscored that the first quarter following the election was defined by resilience, lawful action, and unwavering commitment to the Tribe and its citizens. Despite unlawful interference and obstruction, the administration restored governance functions, protected Tribal assets, and maintained essential services under extremely challenging conditions.

The January 17 Quarterly Meeting reaffirmed the Tribe's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the continued defense of Tribal sovereignty. As the administration moves forward, it remains focused on stabilizing operations, recovering assets, and strengthening the foundations of self-governance for future generations.