



# USET

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For Immediate Release

## Tribal Nations Gather for Annual Meeting and Celebration of USET 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

(Sovereign Territory of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians)—Opening ceremonies included The Passing of the Fire at the Annual Meeting of United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) and United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF). The meeting will be from Monday, November 4 through Thursday, November 7, on the traditional land of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

The Passing of the Fire between USET member Tribal Nations who host our meetings has become a USET tradition. Unique to this year's fire ceremony, all USET member Tribal Nations contributed sage, tobacco, cedar and other items to the fire as a ceremonial expression of unity. The unity ashes were placed in 50th Anniversary commemorative jars for attendees as a keepsake from this special occasion.

The Board of Directors Meeting began with a Grand Entry led by our Board of Directors and included a presentation of Tribal Nation flags. The Board and other Tribal representatives were dressed in traditional regalia for this event. Videos, pictures and social media provides further opportunity for Tribal Nations to commemorate the history of USET and share who we are with the world.

On Monday night, all attendees will gather for a welcome reception hosted by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

During celebrations throughout the week, USET will honor several important influences. The four founding Tribal Nations, hosts Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, and Seminole Tribe of Florida will receive special recognition throughout the events. USET's highest honor, the Earl J. Barbry, Sr Lifetime Achievement Award, will be awarded to USET's first president Joe Dan Osceola (Seminole Tribe of Florida) and Robert Glenn Thrower, Jr. (Poarch Band of Creek Indians). On

**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF TRIBAL NATION UNITY 1969-2019**

behalf of the late Chris Thompson (Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe) Chris' family will accept the Chris Thompson Economic Professional Excellence Award.

In the spirit of acknowledging 50 years of advocacy and collaborations, USET will also celebrate many organizations throughout Indian country for their partnership and teamwork throughout the years. USET will also recognize their relationship with others for their commitment to justice for USET member Tribal Nations and all of Indian country. Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker will receive special recognition as they submitted USET's incorporation paperwork back in 1969.

Throughout the week, Tribal leaders from Tribal Nations across the south and eastern United States will discuss important topics such as protecting Tribal Nation homelands, building sustainable Tribal Nation economies, constitutionality threats and challenges, and protecting our communities through the restoration of Tribal jurisdiction. During the President's Panel, past USET Presidents will discuss their experiences and prospects for the next 50 years for the organization and for Indian country.

The USET/USET SPF Board will be meeting through Thursday, November 7, with various events and special experiences for the attendees and participants. Highlights will include the Tuesday evening 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala and the youth stickball exhibition on Wednesday afternoon. The day will also include a tour of the lands of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, their facilities, and communal offerings that have experienced tremendous growth as a result of their strong leadership.