



# THE MISSION OF USET

United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. is dedicated to enhancing the development of Indian Tribes, to improving the capabilities of Tribal governments, and assisting the member Tribes and their governments in dealing effectively with public policy issues and in serving the broad needs of Indian people.

## STATEMENT OF UNITY

We, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Seminole Tribe of Florida, Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Saint Regis Band of Mohawk Indians, Passamaquoddy Pleasant Point, Passamaquoddy Indian Township, Penobscot Indian Nation, Seneca Nation of Indians, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, Cayuga Nation, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Oneida Indian Nation of New York, Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians, Catawba Indian Nation of South Carolina, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians of Louisiana, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe of Massachusetts, Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut and Shinnecock Indian Nation, being numbered among the Nations People of the South and Eastern United States, desiring to establish an organization to represent our united interest and promote our common welfare and benefit, do of our own free will in Council assembly, affirm our membership in the organization to be known as United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc., and proclaim the following objectives and declare our purpose to be:

- ☞ To promote Indian leadership in order to move forward in the ultimate, desirable goal of complete Indian involvement and responsibility at all levels in Indian affairs;
- ☞ To lift the bitter yoke of poverty from our people through cooperative effort;
- ☞ To promote better understanding of the issues involving Indian Tribes and other people;
- ☞ To advocate for more effective use of existing local, state, federal and international resources;
- ☞ To provide a forum for exchange of ideas;
- ☞ To combine our voices so we can be heard clearly by local, state, federal and international governments;
- ☞ To dedicate ourselves to improvement of the quality of life for American Indians through increased health, education, social services and housing opportunities;
- ☞ To reaffirm the commitments of our Tribes to the treaties and agreements heretofore entered into with Federal Government in a government-to-government relationship and to promote the reciprocity of this relationship and those agreements and treaties; and
- ☞ To provide protection of Tribal natural resources.



## BACKGROUND OF USET

United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) was formed on October 4, 1968 by the leadership of four Tribes in the Southeast as the United Southeastern Tribes. The four original member Tribes, the Eastern Band of Cherokee, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw, the Miccosukee Tribe and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, felt that by uniting as an inter-tribal council on many issues and in dealing with the federal government there would be "Strength in Unity". When those tribal leaders met in Cherokee, North Carolina, little did they realize that those concepts of unity would last as an example to many other tribal governments in Indian Country. Nor did they realize that their membership would grow to its present size of twenty-six Tribes. These federally recognized Tribes occupy a range from Maine to southern Florida and to Eastern Texas, representing a population of over 60,000.

Beginning with its incorporation in 1969, USET operated out of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Shortly thereafter, the office moved to Sarasota, Florida, where it remained until 1975 when it moved to its present day location in Nashville, Tennessee, which was chosen for its central location to the Tribes. The organization's name was officially changed in 1978 to United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. in order to reflect the geographical spread of its growing membership. The current membership is composed of the following Tribes: Eastern Band of Cherokee (NC); Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana; Mississippi Band of Choctaw; Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana; Miccosukee Tribe of Florida; Saint Regis Band of Mohawk Indians (NY); Passamaquoddy Tribe Pleasant Point (ME); Passamaquoddy Tribe Indian Township (ME); Penobscot Nation (ME); Seminole Tribe of Florida; Seneca Nation of Indians (NY); Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (ME); Poarch Band of Creek Indians (AL); Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana; Narragansett Indian Tribe (RI); Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (CT); Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (MA); Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas; Oneida Indian Nation (NY); Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians (ME); Catawba Indian Nation (SC); Cayuga Nation (NY); Jena Band of Choctaw Indians (LA); The Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MA) and the Shinnecock Indian Nation (NY).

USET is a non-profit inter-tribal organization that collectively represents its member Tribes at the regional and national level through various workgroups and committees. Its main function is to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among the USET Tribes, various governmental agencies, and other American Indian organizations. USET provides a monitoring system that reviews current legislative actions and alerts the Tribes of any changes in regulations that would affect the programs and/or services they administer. In doing so, USET plays an intricate role in the self-determination efforts of its member Tribes.

USET is governed by a Board of Directors composed of the chief elected officials from each of the member Tribes (Chiefs, Chairmen, Presidents and Governors), and additional members appointed by the Government of the member Tribes. In addition, there are twelve USET Committees made up of delegates from each of the USET member Tribes. Each of the Committees deals primarily with one of the following areas of common interest among the member Tribes:

Culture and Heritage, Economic Development and Entrepreneurship, Education, Health, Housing, Natural Resources, Social Services, Transportation, Tribal Administration, Tribal Emergency Services, Tribal Justice and Veteran's Affairs. The Board of Directors meets regularly, at least three times a year, at the Annual Impact Week Meeting in February; Semi-Annual Board Meeting in the spring; the Annual Board Meeting and EXPO in the fall. During these meetings, the USET Board of Directors may adopt Resolutions or carry Motions from the floor on issues of public policy. The Resolutions may be generated by members of the Board or by one of the USET Committees. These Resolutions define the public policy stance of the organization. After their adoption, certified (signed) Resolutions are circulated to the members of the USET Board of Directors and Committees for their use in the efforts of the USET Tribes in public policy education. The Resolutions are the most important expression of USET's "Strength in Unity."