

Cherokee Nation Statement on Citizenship Status

Background / Note - March 23, 2007 -- The Cherokee Nation voted on March 9, 2007 to amend our Constitution to clarify eligibility for Cherokee citizenship. In amending our Constitution, we are pleased to have our people, also known as the Stam Hill, our Constitution has been amended accordingly.

The Cherokee Nation is a great Indian nation that embraces our mixed-race heritage. We are proud of our thousands of citizens who share African-American, Latin, Asian, white and other ancestry. Our sole purpose is to weave together a great Indian nation, made up of many ethnic groups which are held together through our common cultural thread -- a shared bond to an Indian ancestor on the Stam Hill.

The Cherokee people cherish our democratic freedoms and we paid dearly for them. These include the right to vote and to determine for ourselves the meaning of our identity. The revised formula for this constitutional vote passed that Cherokee identity is an issue that is close to the heart of the Cherokee people. The people have spoken: The Cherokee people passionately believe that you must be an Indian to be an Indian citizen. In our view, you need one Indian ancestor listed on the Stam Hill.

As a result of this constitutional amendment, citizenship status has changed for individuals who do not meet the requirement of one Indian ancestor on the Stam Hill, but who were granted tribal citizenship under a tribal court ruling approximately one year ago. Letters of notification are being sent to people whose citizenship status is affected. The requirement for Cherokee citizenship is at least one Indian ancestor listed on the Stam Hill.