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Fort Sill Apache Tribe Commemorates 100th Anniversary of Release from Prisoner of War Status

100 Years after Release, Fort Sill Apache Still Fighting to Return to Native Homelands

Akela, New Mexico (March 7, 2014) — Today marks the 100th anniversary of the release from prisoner of war status of the Chiricahua - Warm Springs Apache Tribe, now known as the Fort Sill Apache Tribe.

"We are commemorating and reflecting on the strength of our ancestors and on their desire to return to our homelands in southwest New Mexico and Arizona," said Fort Sill Apache Tribal Chairman Jeff Haozous. "Although the Tribe was released 100 years ago, we're still struggling to fulfill their dream to return to our rightful home."

In 2011, 97 years after its release, the Tribe was granted its only reservation in southern New Mexico by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Tribe is seeking to build a gaming facility to generate funds to bring its people home. Residents of the area support the Tribe's return and the jobs that the project will bring to the economically-depressed region.

"We're closer to our home than we have ever been," said Haozous. "Our ancestors didn't give up and neither will we. With patience and perseverance, we will return to our home."

To commemorate this milestone, the tribe is hosting events on March 7 and 8 at its hotel in Lawton, Oklahoma, at Fort Sill, and at its tribal headquarters in Apache, Oklahoma. Events include a sunrise blessing, a 5k race, traditional Apache dances, family and educational activities and more. For more information about the events visit FortSillApache-nsn.gov.

The Fort Sill Apache Tribe is the successor to the Chiricahua - Warm Springs Apache Tribe. In 1886, its people were taken as prisoners of war by the U.S. Army and removed from their homelands of southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona to Florida, Alabama and Oklahoma, where they were released. It was organized as the Fort Sill Apache Tribe after a Federal Court affirmed its claim for the loss of over 14.8 million acres of their homeland. The Tribe has always maintained both its independence as Chiricahua - Warm Springs Apaches and its desire to return to its rightful home. After receiving an invitation from the Governor of New Mexico in 1995 and again in 2000 to return to New Mexico, the Tribe purchased property at Akela, New Mexico in 1998 and was granted a Reservation in November 2011.

For more information and updates on the Tribe, please follow us on [Twitter](#) (@FortSillApache) and [Facebook](#) (Fort Sill Apache Tribe New Mexico)