

Sovereignty Speaks[©]

Reconnection through

Relocation

*Chief Billy Friend
Wyandotte Nation*



Elected in 2013, Chief Billy Friend began working for the Wyandotte Nation in 1998.

He served in roles including fitness center manager, human resource director, director of health services, casino manager, and Chief of Staff. In 2006, he was elected to the position of Second Chief. He served under Chief Leaford Bearskin, whom he considered his mentor and friend. In 2011, Chief Bearskin stepped down and Chief Friend began his first term.

In his first term, Chief Friend established goals of economic development and self-sufficiency for the Wyandotte Nation and its people. In addition to his role as Chief, Mr. Friend serves on the board of directors for the Ohio History Connection, serves as vice chairman of the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association and is a delegate for the National Indian Gaming Association.

Under Chief Friend's leadership, the Wyandotte Nation economically has grown to over 800 employees, with gross revenues of tribal enterprises producing over \$100 million dollars, which helps fund and subsidize all of the tribal social service programs.

Many new programs have emerged for the Wyandotte people during Chief Friend's tenure. Assisting up to 30 youth each summer, ages 16 – 22, the intern program is one that Chief Friend is most proud of. Chief Friend also established the first ever tribal town hall meetings as a way of reaching out to the over 4,000 Wyandotte tribal citizens who live outside the state of Oklahoma. This effort was made to help reconnect citizens to their tribal heritage.

