



NEWS RELEASE

Kaw Mission State Historic Site
500 North Mission • Council Grove KS 66846

REAL PEOPLE. REAL STORIES.

Contact: Mary Honeyman • 620-767-5410 • kawmission@kshs.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 8, 2008

Voices Of The Wind People Pageant Performed This Friday And Saturday

The *Voices of the Wind People*, the highly acclaimed historical pageant about the Kaw (or Kanza) Indians and the Santa Fe Trail, will be performed in the Old Riverbed Amphitheater in Council Grove, Kansas, this Friday and Saturday. Native American Flute Player, TerryLee Whetstone, will perform from 7:00 p.m. until the pageant begins at 8:00 p.m. *Voices* brings the past alive from the points of view of two cultural perspectives – Native American and Euro American.

Kaw chief Allegawaho and Council Grove trader Seth Hays alternately narrate the action in this historically accurate and dramatically compelling story. Luther Pepper, Kaw Nation executive council member and great-grandson of Allegawaho, speaks Allegawaho's words. Local resident Mark Brooks portrays Hays.

Allegawaho, the protagonist of *Voices of the Wind People*, narrates his peoples' history while living on the Council Grove reservation. "I feel honored to be able to portray my great-grandpa's part," said Pepper. "He had a big role in the tribe's history there in Kansas."

Ray Ball, Kaw tribal member, is cast as the visual Allegawaho, who leads a tribal council in accepting the terms of a treaty offered by the U.S. government in 1846. This treaty relocated the 1600-member Kaw tribe from a large reservation in the Kansas River valley to a 20-mile-square reservation in the Council Grove area. "It makes me feel good; it really does, to play one of my ancestors," said Ball. "I've always enjoyed doing it."

In 1873, the U.S. government ordered the Kaws to move out of the state bearing their name and resettle on a small reservation in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. In a meeting in Council Grove with the secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior, head chief Allegawaho spoke eloquently against the removal: "Great father, you whites treat us Kaws like a flock of turkeys. You chase us from one stream, then chase us to another stream. Soon you will chase us over the mountains and into the ocean."

The pain of the Kanza being separated from the land is a major theme of the drama. Betty Durkee, historic preservation director of the Kaw Nation, offered this perspective: "*Voices* is a living chapter...of the peoples who lived on the land, loved the land, and in the case of the Kaws, were forced to leave their homeland. That story is told beautifully and movingly in this pageant."



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Ron Parks wrote the *Voices* script in 1992 while he served as site administrator of the Kaw Mission State Historic Site in Council Grove. “Wind People” is the English meaning of the tribe’s name. The original script was subject to review by the Kaw Nation Executive Council. All subsequent changes have required the approval of the council as well.

Katy Haun directs the 2008 performances with Sharon Haun, pageant committee chair, and Cheryl Hayes as co-directors. A cast and crew of more than 100, including Kaw tribal members, are involved in the production. Major sponsors are the Friends of Kaw Heritage, Inc., the Kansas Historical Society/Kaw Mission State Historic Site, and the Kaw Nation. This pageant is fully supported with the help of dedicated volunteers and local organizations and foundations that provide additional funding.

Local weekend events scheduled prior to the Saturday *Voices* performance begin at 9 a.m. at the Kanza Agency site at Allegawaho Memorial Heritage Park when Ron Parks presents "More than Meets the Eye: A Close Look at the Kanza Agency". This event, sponsored by the Voices Committee, is free and open to the public. Directions to the park are available at the Kaw Mission State Historic Site; 500 N. Mission; Council Grove KS.

Other Saturday events, sponsored by the Morris County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and the Great Santa Fe Trail Horse Race Endurance Ride who chose Council Grove for the end of the 2008 Ride include: the Kaw Nation Trail Ride in Morris County; an all-equestrian parade and Prairie Art Walk in downtown Council Grove; and, a chuck wagon dinner and free concert beginning at 6 p.m. featuring Johnny Western and the Diamond W Wranglers at the Ride Village, Kanza View, Council Grove Federal Reservoir.

Refreshments will be sold during both performances by Bowers Community Center volunteers at their concession stand located at the Girl Scout Cabin near the amphitheater. Proceeds fund the Center. Seating for approximately 800 people will be provided in the amphitheater. Stadium seats recommended. Please do not bring lawn chairs. Fifty spaces will be reserved for the disabled; private vehicles carrying disabled persons will be allowed to drive to an unloading zone near the ticket gates.

Pageant tickets are \$12.00 for adults, \$10.00 for K-12 and may be purchased at the amphitheater gate. Only very inclement weather during the show will force its cancellation. For information about *Voices of the Wind People*, call 620-767-5410 or visit the website www.voicesofthewindpeople.com or www.kawmission.org.

COUNCIL GROVE, KS—Release

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