



Parish Council recognizes Adai Caddo Indian Nation

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Robeline – Earlier this week, the Natchitoches Parish Council unanimously adopted Resolution 22 urging and requesting the U.S. government to grant federal recognition to the Adai Caddo Indian Nation. Councilman Marty Cheatwood, representing the 4th District, put forth the resolution.

The Adai Caddo Indian Nation is a state-recognized tribe located in Robeline, Natchitoches Parish. Many of the tribe's 300 members still reside on its ancestral range: Central and Northwest Louisiana from the Red River to the Trinity River in East Texas. The Adai Caddo had villages located at or near the present-day communities of Robeline, Los Adaes, Spanish Lake, Evelyn, Isle Brevelle, Pendleton, Peason Ridge, Many, Zwolle, and San Augustine.

“Thank you Councilman Cheatwood and all of the parish council members for memorializing our tribe and our people,” said Dee Niette Thompson, Historian and Tribal Councilwoman of the Adai Caddo Indian Nation. “We are very appreciative of your efforts. We look forward to working with you to promote the history, heritage, and opportunities of Natchitoches Parish.”

In May of this year, the Caddo Parish Commission adopted a similar resolution recognizing the Adai Caddo Indian Nation and urging the U.S. Congress to grant federal recognition to the Indigenous tribe. Both parish governments are sending their official resolutions directly to the President, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and members of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation.

Natchitoches and Caddo Parish join others who have recognized the Adai Caddo Indian Nation, including LSU, the Louisiana Genealogical and Historical Society, the Louisiana Senate, the Office of the Governor, the U.S. Census Bureau, the Catholic Church, and the countries of Spain and France (the previous colonial governments of Louisiana and Texas).

Despite being one of the few remaining and well-documented Indigenous tribes in Louisiana, the Adai Caddo have been fighting for federal recognition for centuries. The Adai Caddo are the oldest and longest-serving ally of the Louisiana colony, and fought alongside their Creole and American brethren against the British in the Spanish Galvez Expedition of the American Revolution. The treaty of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 requires the U.S. to establish treaties with the Indian Nations that Spain recognized. Centuries later, the Adai Caddo are still waiting for the U.S. government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to honor the treaty and recognize the Indian Nation.

“The story of our people is one of resilience, honor, faith, and service,” said Robert Brevelle, Tribal Councilman of the Adai Caddo Indian Nation. “We have been on these lands since time immemorial. Archaeological surveys show we have been here for over 10,000 years. I grew up on these lands, as did my father, and our ancestors, as documented in the first written records of Louisiana and for thousands of years before. My father took me to our ancient Indian mounds and

taught me how to hunt, fish, and trap. As we gazed upon the hills and swamps of Natchitoches Parish, so many of the roads, islands, bayous, and communities bear the name of our tribe and our people. Our story is forever part of the history of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and America.”

The Adai Caddo were amongst the first tribes met and documented by European explorers in the present-day United States. Spanish Conquistador, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca met the Adai Caddo in 1530. The Adai Caddo were the host and eponym of the first capital of Texas (Los Adaes) and the first two Catholic missions in Louisiana (San Miguel de Linares de los Adaes and San Miguel de Cuellar de los Adaes). The first 15 governors of Texas would call Los Adaes home. The Adai Caddo were instrumental in the establishment of the first European settlements in Louisiana and Texas (Natchitoches and Nacogdoches). The tribe was not nomadic and remained on their ancestral lands throughout the period of European colonization to the present.

“Unlike many other tribes, we never sold, traded, or abandoned our lands,” said Robert. “Instead, we established military and trade alliances with the Spanish and French governments. We let them use our Indian trails, which connected our villages for centuries. Today, our ancient Indian trails are part of the National Trail System known as the El Camino Real. We helped transport and portage goods and people between the missions, villages, forts, and colonists in Louisiana and Texas.”

In May, Robert represented the Adai Caddo Indian Nation on Native America Calling, a live national radio program linking over 52 radio stations together on issues specific to Native communities. Native America Calling has been on the air for over 30 years. The Monday – Friday daily radio program is FM broadcast across the United States and Canada. In podcast format, it has over 500,000 online listeners.

“As colonization ramped up, we made ourselves valuable and relevant to survive,” said Robert. “We provided warriors, healers, guides, and trade goods. We protected the Presidio at Los Adaes, Fort St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches, and Nacogdoches. We kept our word in trade deals and always honored our military oath. We helped broker peace with other tribes and served the Spanish and French crowns, as well as, the Catholic Church. Our military, medical, and religious contributions are well documented by the Spanish and French, such as Cabeza de Vaca, La Harpe, and Athanase de Mezieres. In the centuries that followed and still to this day, we continue to honor the commitments of our ancestors. Over 25% of the men in the tribe have served in the military defending the country we helped create. We served in every U.S. conflict including the American Revolution so our families could live in peace on our ancestral lands alongside the graves of our ancestors. We served with honor and distinction to earn our place amongst the founding fathers of Louisiana and America.”

Besides hosting the first two Catholic missions in Louisiana in the 18th century, the Adai Caddo had a prominent role in the origins of the Tyler, Shreveport, Natchitoches, and Alexandria Dioceses.

In Natchitoches, the Adai Caddo were among the patron families and parishioners of the historic Saint Augustine Parish Church at Isle Brevelle, its mission church Saint Anne at Spanish Lake (originally named for the Adai Caddo as La Laguna de los Adaes), and several chapels in No Man’s Land in the 19th century. In the 20th century, Saint Anne Church became the official church of the Adai Caddo. In the 21st century, the Adai Caddo joined the Saint Kateri Circle of the Alexandria Diocese, erected a statue of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha in Robeline, and officially adopted Saint Anne as the tribe’s patron saint.

“We pray that our local congressman, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, will honor us by proposing legislation to federally recognize our tribe,” said Dee.

Each year in October, the Adai Caddo host a powwow at their cultural center. It is the largest annual event held in Robeline, attracting over 3,000 visitors from over a dozen states and Indian tribes. The event and parking are free. This year’s powwow will be held on October 18, 2025.