Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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David Makity, president, and Elliott Pamp, vice president, Battle Creek Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians, met with Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson in Washington, D.C. last week to discuss Federal recognition of their tribe.

“The group is interested in expanded service for school age and older members in the areas of health, education, and social service benefits,” Thompson indicated.

It has an enrollment of 268 and a State reservation of 120 acres. Approximately 40 of the 268 enrollees live on the 120 acres, the other members are scattered in nearby communities.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his discussion with the Indians, pointed out that the procedure for Federal recognition was lengthy and would involve the State of Michigan, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior and its Solicitor, and probably ultimately, the Congress.

Criteria for recognition includes (1) a statement from the Band, with a majority of its members backing the move; (2) an enumeration of possible BIA services that would apply to the enrollees; (3) number of the Band eligible for services, which would involve establishing a blood quantum for enrollment and other efforts.

BIA services to consider, Thompson told the group in Washington, D.C., are education, welfare assistance, on-the-job training, housing, road maintenance, etc. “It is not likely that a group as small as yours with a 120-acre land base could use all BIA assistance,” Thompson said.