

Government shutdown leads to local layoffs

(KAIR)--The effects of the partial government shutdown are being felt locally, with the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas laying off 22 employees because of it.

According to a news release issued by the Tribe Thursday, the shutdown has significantly impacted the Tribe's ability to provide basic services such as education and road maintenance to what the release calls "its vulnerable tribal members."

The release does not provide specifics about the affected employees or their roles, but does state that "the federal government funds or provides many services to Indian Country, including law enforcement, healthcare programs, and road maintenance, as a result of treaties signed generations ago."

Tribal Chairman Lester Randall in the release said, "because of the lack of access to federal funding at this time, [the Tribe is]providing very limited services to tribal members and the community," adding that the Tribe urges "the federal government to reach a deal that provides adequate funding" so the critical services can continue to be provided."

According to the release, representatives of the Bureau of Indian Affairs have been furloughed and the Tribe has been given little information on contingency plans while the funding has been interrupted.

Randall noted that "even when the government shutdown ends, the Tribe will not have immediate access to federal funding, as drawdowns from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other federal agencies, will still need to be processed, which could, he said "take weeks."

Randall said "very real threats" are posed when crucial services are abruptly halted, and Tribal leadership is being cautious with funding, trying its best to protect Tribal members in the event of a prolonged shutdown.

Randall closes the release by saying, "treaty obligations and trust responsibility should be exempt from budget cuts and the promises the federal government made to tribal nations throughout the country should be fulfilled."

[The Washington Post](#) reports that negotiations over the partial shutdown remained at a standstill Thursday after a Wednesday meeting between President Donald Trump and Congressional leaders led to no resolution.

The shutdown began December 22 when the United States House refused to provide the \$5 billion dollars for the Presidents goal of building a southern border wall.

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