

# Text to join NCJTC email list

- 1 Text NCJTC to 22828
- 2 You will receive an email
- 3 You can update preferences

Live transcript/captions available at <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=COPS>

[www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors/business](https://www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors/business)



National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College



# A Tribal-State Collaboration Model: Poarch Band of Creek Indians' Journey to Success

July 23, 2020

**Bruce Lee**

Public Safety Director

Poarch Band of Creek Indians



# COPS Tribal Community Policing Training and Technical Assistance Program

*This project was supported by cooperative agreement 2017-HE-WX-K001 awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues. The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s) nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.*

*Published 2020*



# Technical Overview

Expand/Collapse the control panel



Your audio will remain on MUTE during the entire webinar



Handouts (if available) found here



Raise hand function not available for this webinar



Question/Chat Box (Contact us with issues, ask a question, read messages)



Live transcript/captions available at <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=COPS>



# Certificate of Attendance

- Live Webinar = **YES**
- Recorded Webinar = **NO**
- What do I need to do?
  - Attend the entire live webinar
  - Complete the evaluation
- Certificate is emailed to you in two (2) weeks.
- Attending as a group?  
Email names to [info@ncjtc.org](mailto:info@ncjtc.org)







# Post Webinar Information

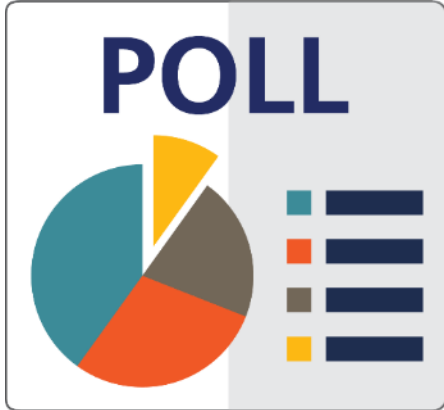
- At the end of the webinar, a short evaluation will appear in a separate web browser window.
- Pop-up blocker must be turned “off.”
- You will receive an email within 2 weeks with instructions on how to access our webinar library, the recording of this webinar, additional webinars and self-paced courses.



# Poll Questions

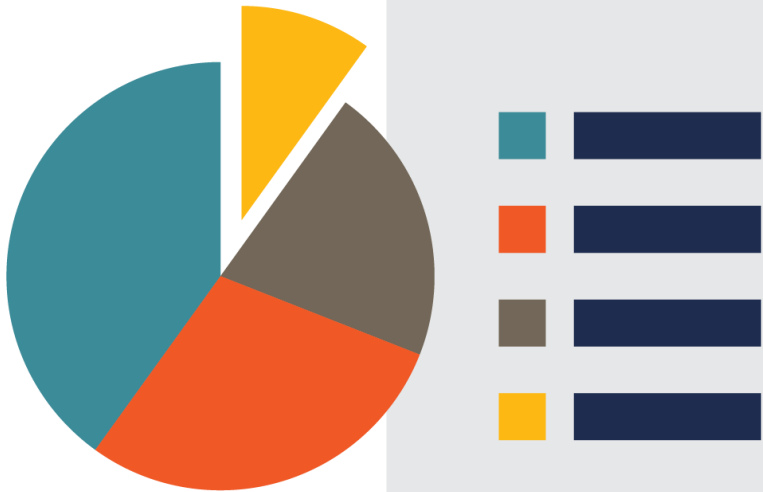
Poll questions may be asked during the webinar.

This is your time to weigh in with your thoughts.



Please respond promptly; polls are open for a short period of time.

# POLL



Which of the following best describes your role?

- Tribal Leadership or Stakeholder
- Judge or Attorney
- Law Enforcement
- CAC, Social Worker, Mental Health
- Other





**Bruce Lee**  
Public Safety Director  
Poarch Band of Creek Indians

# Learning Objectives

- 1 List steps Poarch Band of Creek Indians and their Public Safety Department took to overcome jurisdictional barriers and work towards the implementation of state legislation
- 2 Describe the specific barriers experienced by Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- 3 Apply some of the strategies used in your own tribal community and jurisdictions, as applicable
- 4 Identify the successful outcomes from the enhanced partnerships and state legislation implemented

# Alabama ACT # 2018-393

- The Poarch Band of Creek Indians – State Police Powers Act

**APPROVED** 3/28/18

**TIME** 9:36am

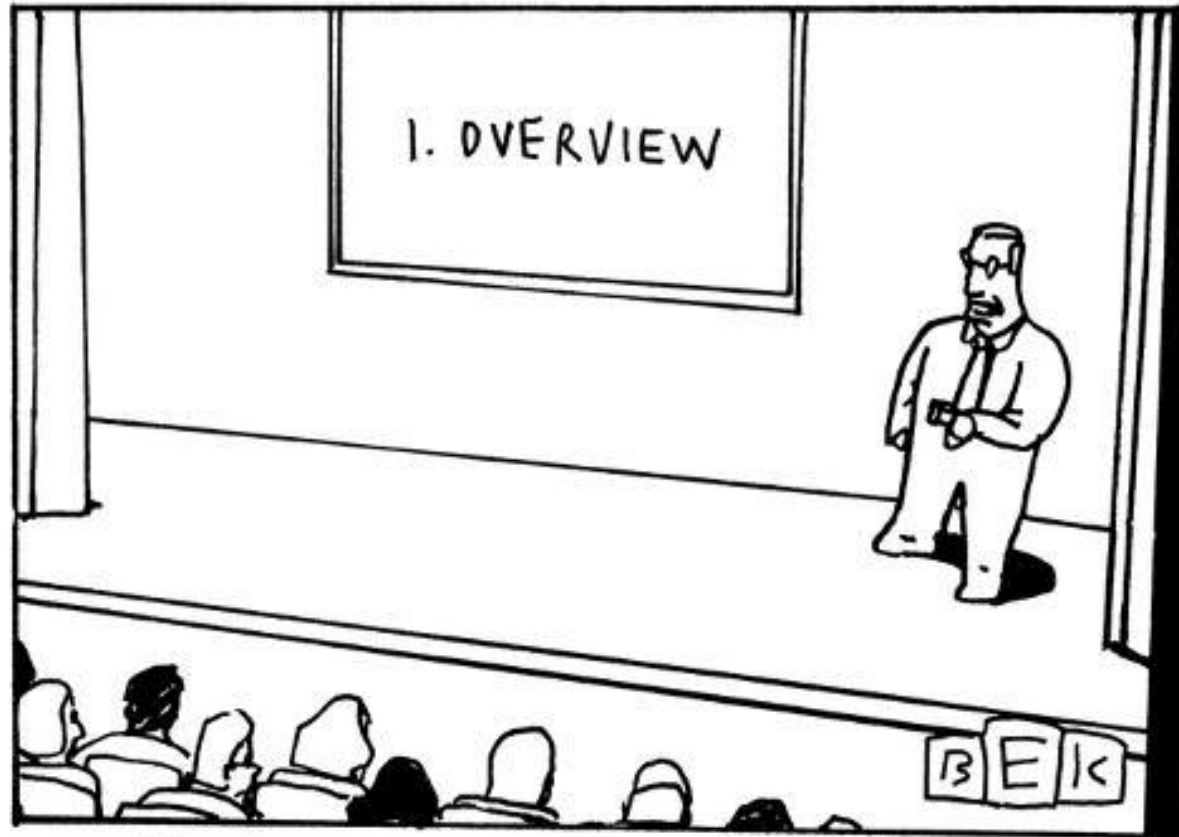
Kay Ivey  
**GOVERNOR**

Alabama Secretary Of State  
Act Num....: 2018-393  
Bill Num....: H-149

Page 5

Recv'd 03/28/18 02:03pm JKP

# How to Give a “TED” Talk



*“First, I want to give you an overview of what I will tell you over and over again during the entire presentation.”*

Kaplan, Bruce Eric. *The New Yorker*. April 9, 2012.



**Background:** On August 11, 1984, the Poarch Creek Indians became federally recognized as a “Indian Tribe.”





# Poarch Band of Creek Indians

- The Poarch Creek Indians are descendants of a segment of the original Creek Nation that once covered almost all of Alabama and Georgia.
- After the Treaty of Fort Jackson 1814 –
  - Unlike many eastern Indian tribes, the Poarch Creeks were not removed from their tribal lands and have lived together for almost 200 years in and around the reservation in Poarch, Alabama.
  - The main reservation is located eight miles northwest of Atmore, Alabama in rural Escambia County, about 57 miles east of Mobile.

# More about Poarch Band of Creek Indians

- Poarch Creek are the only federally recognized tribe in Alabama (1984)
- Alabama (state government) had forgotten/ignored the existence of Poarch Creek
- Alabama Act 2017-351 - Prior to this Escambia County Extradition law in 2017, no state laws were passed that included Poarch Creek in any way. (33 years)
- The Alabama constitution of 1901 is the longest operating constitution anywhere in the world (no local or home rule, everything goes thru the capital in Montgomery)





# Poarch Tribal Police Department

- The Tribal Police Department of the Poarch Creek Indians operates under contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal Officers are certified through Special Law Enforcement Commission (SLEC).
- The Department consists of 48 sworn officers in the Poarch, Wetumpka, and Montgomery jurisdictions, along with administrative office staff and 6 Communications Dispatchers.



# More about Poarch Tribal Police Department

- The Tribe has cross-deputation agreements with the Escambia County Alabama Sheriff's Department, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department and the Elmore County Sheriff's Department. These agreements allow Tribal Police officers to service our trust properties and the surrounding areas.
- The Tribal Police Department were active participates in the 21st Judicial Circuit Drug Task Force in Escambia County before it dissolved and continue to support local drug investigations off the reservation.



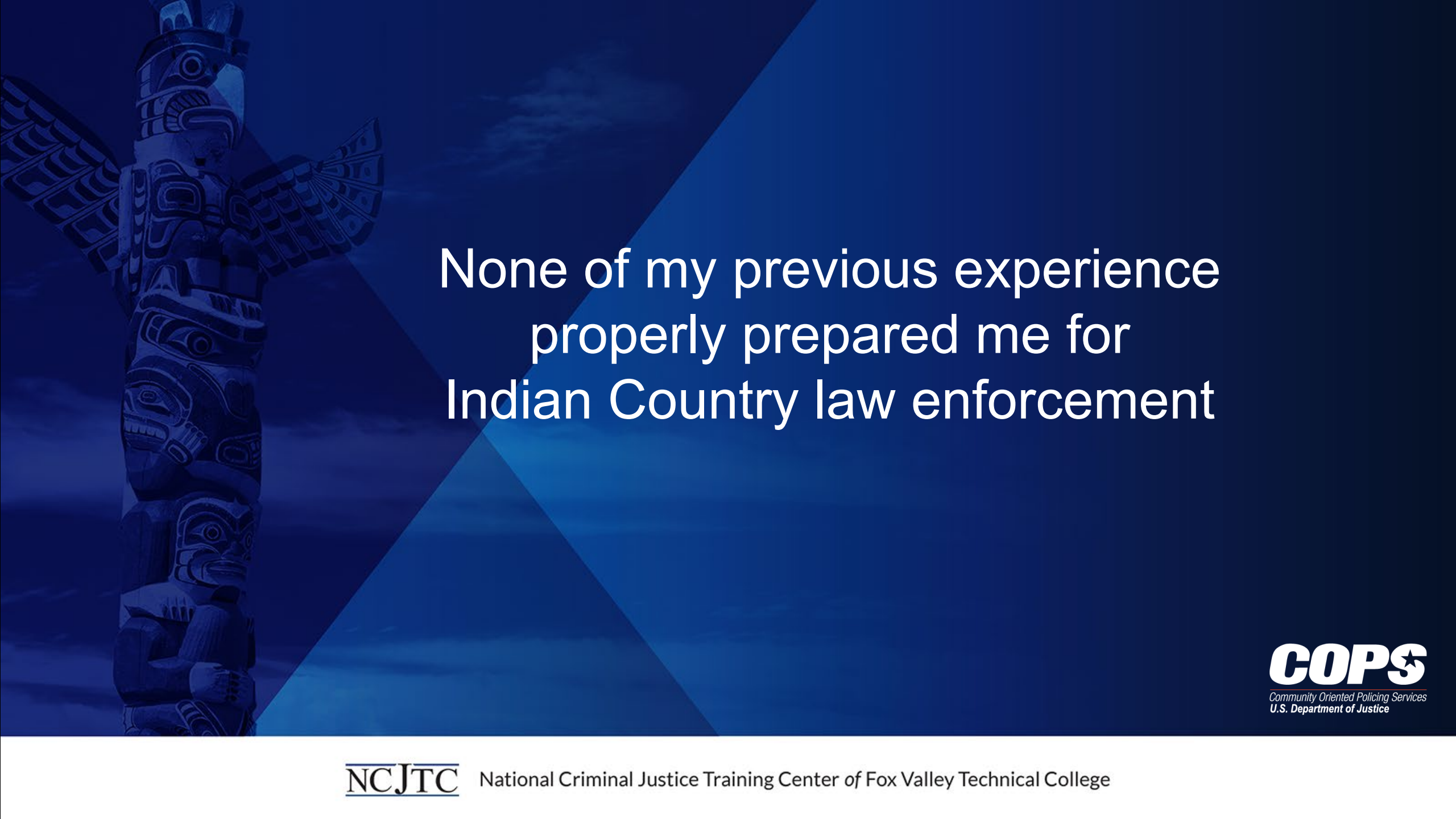




# A bit about me and how I came to Indian Country

- 29 years in law enforcement (at the time)
- 27 years at the Mobile Co. Sheriffs Office
- 12 years as Captain & 6 years as Lieutenant
- F.B.I. National Academy Graduate (179)
- M.A. degree in Criminal Justice Administration





None of my previous experience  
properly prepared me for  
Indian Country law enforcement

**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

NCJTC

National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College



# 2015

- What have I done?
- 29 years of law enforcement did not prepare me for the complexity of Indian Country LE
- Operational Picture when I was hired

**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

# Operational Picture 2015



- 3 reservations in Alabama
- 3 Casinos in Alabama
- 3 County Sheriff's Offices
- Deputized in all 3
- 3 District Attorney's
- 3 District Courts
- 3 Circuit Courts
- 2 Federal Court Districts (Southern-Middle)
- 2 U.S. Attorney Offices
- 1 F.B.I. Office
- 1 B.I.A. OJS District

<http://pci-nsn.gov>

**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice





# A Few of the Problems

- We have MOU's with 3 Sheriff's, but no one has a copy
- We have a small reservation, but no accurate maps
- No state of Alabama recognition
- But how do we have ACJIS (NCIC)?
- No ACJIS agreement

# More Problems

- We send our officers to the state Academy for training
- State code for the Academy does not allow for Tribal officers?
- State of Alabama does not honor Tribal Courts (warrants)?
- No extradition with state for Tribal charges







# 2016

## How do we make things better?

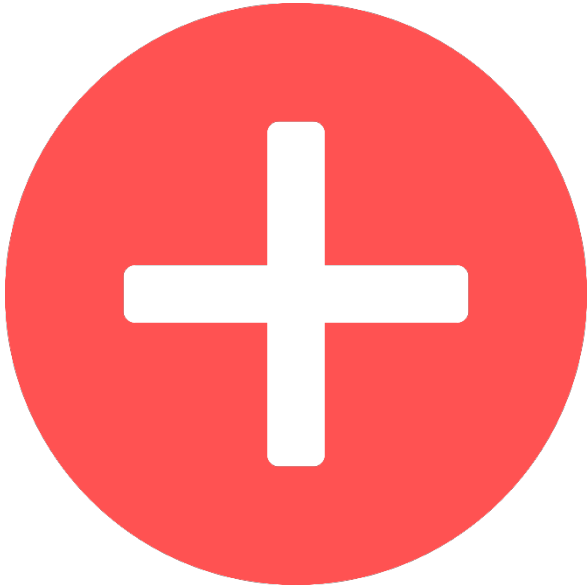
### Brainstorm with internal stakeholders

- State Police Powers
- Legislation
- MOUs
- Recognition
- Education

# 2016 Internal Roadblocks

- Unexpected internal challenges
  - You can't do that
  - Alabama hates us
  - You are wasting your time

# On the Plus Column



- I was too new to know better
- Poarch hired a new attorney to work in government relations
- Elected leadership was supportive
- The timing was right



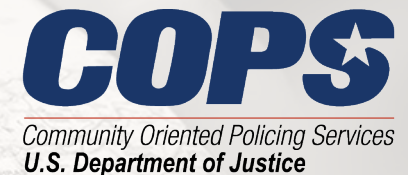
# This was a group effort!

**THERE  
IS NO  
“I”  
IN  
TEAM**

**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

# 2016 - 2017 – Start with a Plan

- We made a road map – floated ideas, brainstormed
- We made a plan, we revised the plan, we sought internal help
- In the beginning that started with me stating my case with Tribal Government Relations & Tribal AG





# 2016 - 2017 – Talk with Others

- We held meetings and refined the plan with our internal Tribal partners, ex. Family Services
- We sought approval from Tribal Chair and Council
- We then talked with friendly state legislators



# How do you go from ideas and plans to achieving your goal(s)?

- Collaboration
- Networking
- Lobbying is not a dirty word



# 2016 - 2017

**Out of our planning came 2 major problems that we wanted to tackle**

- Lack of state police authority for Tribal police officers
- Lack of criminal extradition within the state

# 2016 - 2017

## Which problem first (extradition or state police authority?)

- We chose to tackle both at same time
- Government relations was invaluable
  - Attorney with legislative experience
  - Who to sponsor the bills – strategic vision for legislation
- Worked on up to 4 draft bills simultaneously before settling on final versions





# Before filing the bills – some of the preparatory work

- Visited with each of our county sheriffs – asked for their help
- Visited with neighboring sheriffs
- Contacted other influential sheriffs in the state
- Visited with state APOST director and staff
- Visited with AL Chief's Association leadership
- Contacted past FBINAA presidents and leadership
- Spoke to other local law enforcement leaders

# 2017

- Extradition Bill – Local Act for Escambia County Only
- Police Powers Bill - Using an existing law
  - MOWA story
- Watching the sausage get made
- We Won? Well at least partially...(Extradition)

# 2017 – WE WON!

- At least partially
- Extradition Bill for Escambia County




# What's Next ?

- Regroup for 2018
- What went wrong
- More importantly what went right
- Who and what blocked our Police Authority bill from passing in 2017
- What is our strategy going forward?
  - Do we settle for what we got and quit?
  - Do we try again?



# 2018

- 
- Police Powers Bill – round two
  - Who supported us & who actively opposed us
  - Starting early, visiting all the supporters & a few of those who did not
  - The Legislature – more sausage being made (procedural)
  - We really won this time

# 2018

- 2017 paved the way
- Personal relationships matter
- Timing is everything

# The Poarch Bill

- To amend Sections 36-21-120 to 36-21-124, inclusive, of the Code of Alabama 1975, relating to police officers of the Mowa Band of Choctaw Indians; to give the same powers and authority to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

~~"(2)~~ (1) POLICE OFFICER. Any Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission certified police officer appointed by ~~the Mowa Band of Choctaw Indians Tribal Council~~ a tribe pursuant to Section 36-21-122.

~~"(3)~~ (2) RESERVATION. The Mowa Choctaw Indian Reservation or Poarch Creek Indian Reservation, including any and all tribal properties or property owned in trust for the tribe by the United States government.

~~"(1) MOWA BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS.~~ (3) TRIBE. The tribe of Indians known as the Mowa Band of Choctaw Indians

# Networking For the Future

- Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police AACOP
- Alabama Sheriff's Association
- Alabama Attorney General Training Sessions
- FBINAA
- Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC)
- Local County Chiefs groups





# Governor Kay Ivey's Inauguration

January 2019





# Our Tribal Chair With Some of Our Tribal Member Officers



# Building For the Future Hosting Support for Women in Law Enforcement Luncheons











**Bruce Lee**  
Public Safety Director  
Poarch Band of Creek Indians

[blee@pci-nsn.gov](mailto:blee@pci-nsn.gov)

**General Inquiries –**

[info@ncjtc.org](mailto:info@ncjtc.org) | [www.ncjtc.org](http://www.ncjtc.org) | (855) 866-2582

**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

**NCJTC**

National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College



# REMINDER

To receive a certificate you must:

- 1. Attend the entire live webinar**
- 2. Complete the evaluation**

A **Certificate of Attendance** will be emailed to you in two (2) weeks.

You must complete the evaluation to receive a certificate. Do not close your browser until you complete the evaluation.





This project was supported by cooperative agreement 2017-HE-WX-K001 awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice.

Neither the U.S. Department of Justice nor any of its components operate, control, are responsible for, or necessarily endorse this presentation (including, without limitation, its content, technical infrastructure, policies, and any services or tools provided).

Additionally, points of view or opinions expressed are those of the presenter(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College.