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RULES CHANGED FOR OSAGE TRIBAL ELECTIONS

The Department of the Interior today announced several major changes in the Federal regulations governing the conduct of elections of officers of the Osage Indian Tribe of Oklahoma.

Owners of "headright" interests in the Osage Tribe's mineral estate 21 years of age or over are eligible to vote in these elections. While most of the headright owners live in Oklahoma, a substantial number are residents of southern California.

One of the most important changes involves the method of computing the value of ballots cast which is tied to the number of headrights owned. Under the old rules, these values were frequently computed to many decimal places with the result that the counting of ballots became extremely complex and time-consuming. The revised regulations simplify this aspect of the elections by requiring full computation only for headright interests amounting to less than a hundredth of a share and computation merely to two decimal places in all other cases.

A second major change clears up an obscure point in the former regulations by providing explicitly that watchers and challengers are subject to the same rules as the election board with regard to leaving and returning to the polling place.

A third modification eliminates a section of the old rules providing for the presence of interpreters at the polling places. The deletion was made because practically all Osage tribal members now speak English and are well versed on election procedures.

Other significant amendments deal with compensation of election board members and the affidavits required for absentee ballots.

The amended sections of the regulations are being published in the Federal Register.

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