

WisDOT: Oneida Nation, WisDOT unveil dual-language highway signs

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The Oneida Nation and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) today unveiled new dual-language signs for placement on state highways. The new signs signify the Oneida Nation's tribal boundaries and other features in both the Oneida and English languages.

The sign unveiling took place earlier today on the westbound Duck Creek bridge (WIS 54) walking path in Oneida, Brown County. The dual-language signs for the Oneida Nation expands a statewide WisDOT initiative launched in 2021. Oneida Nation is the second tribe in Wisconsin to install dual-language signs.

The new tribal boundary signs feature the Oneida Tribal Seal next to the Tribe's name in its native language - *Onnyote?a:ká* - (O-na-yo-day-aah-GAaa) the traditional name for the reservation, which means "The People of the Upright Stone." The English language version of the highway sign is located beneath the Oneida Nation version.

"Oneida Language is the first language of our ancestors and we appreciate the state of Wisconsin for their recognition and respect of our sovereignty, language and traditions," Oneida Chairman Tehassi Hill said. "Native preservation and languages go to the heart of a Tribe's unique cultural identities, traditions, spiritual beliefs, and self-governance. We look forward to revitalizing the Oneida language through these signs."

One of the new signs is located near the Duck Creek bridge. It features the words *Talu?kowanhné* (Da-lew-go-wonh-NAY), which translates to "Place of Bountiful Ducks," and *Kawyhuhatati* (Gaw-who-ha-DA-di), which means "River Flowing Along."

“We are honored to join the Oneida Nation and offer dual-language highway signs on their tribal lands,” WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said. “Thanks to Governor Evers’ commitment to tribal sovereignty, we are proud to deepen the longstanding cooperation between state and tribal governments. Together we are fostering a stronger sense of place, and connecting travelers to history by sharing Native American heritage.”

WisDOT Bureau of Traffic Operations, WisDOT Tribal Affairs, Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and the Oneida Nation leadership developed the dual-language proposal that was approved by FHWA.

“The dual-language signs in Oneida language would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of WisDOT and the Oneida Nation,” FHWA Wisconsin Division Administrator Glenn Fulkerson said. “FHWA is pleased to be a part of this very important initiative, and we congratulate the Oneida Nation on the wonderful new greeting to motorists traveling into your beautiful reservation.”

All of Wisconsin’s federally recognized tribal communities are encouraged to apply for the dual-language sign program. For more information, visit <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/civil-rights/tribalaffairs/dual-language-signs.aspx>.