

LOGO CREDIT

This year's conference logo was developed by citizens of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Oklahoma and Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. The final design was created by Risaru (Chief) Gilbert Beard of Pawnee Nation. The logo features colors and imagery significant to both Tribal Nations. In the center is a green cedar tree. Cedar is a sacred medicine associated with purification and longevity; it is one of the oldest aspects of Pawnee culture, a physical manifestation of Mother Cedar, the mother of all Pawnee people, also known as Evening Star. This cedar tree motif comes from Otoe-Missouria Faw Faw Coats and the associated Faw Faw ceremony dating to the 1890s.

Flanking the cedar tree are two bear claws. Pawnee oral history describes a connection between grizzly bears and cedar trees: the bears informed the Pawnees how to use the medicine, and cedar is included in the Pawnee's bear claw necklaces. Members of the Pawnee Bear Society—who could be chiefs, doctors, or military leaders—wore these necklaces into battle as their only form of protection. Bears are also Otoe-Missouria traditional leaders, and Pawnee songs describe Father Bear and bears' affinity for cedar trees. Pictographs from the oldest dated Pawnee site (ca. AD 1125), located in southeast Colorado, depict men with atlatls hunting a bear directly alongside cedar trees.

Beneath the cedar is a bison hoof print, representing the animal as both a traditional leader and sacred relative, foundational as a pillar of ecology, sustenance, and the spiritual world. For the Otoe-Missouria, bears and bison lead at different times of the year, creating a full circle.

The full logo design with text surrounding the imagery mirrors that circle. The circle represents interconnectedness and wholeness within both the community and the larger universe.