

Studi stars in PSAs focused on reservations, need for giving Tweet

BY CHAD HUNTER
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Cherokee actor Wes Studi answers a question on Oct. 4 in Bentonville, Arkansas, regarding a new partnership for public service announcements to "raise awareness of realities on the reservations." CHAD HUNTER/CHEROKEE PHOENIX

BENTONVILLE, Ark. — Cherokee actor Wes Studi is partnering with a national nonprofit organization for video public service announcements to "raise awareness of realities on the reservations" and spur giving.

The goal, Studi said, is to "increase awareness and show that supporting Native-led causes is the only way we can create change."

"We are trying to get away from the misconceptions ... about Native Americans," Studi said. "What we really want to address is foundation funding and just general, overall giving, which has absolutely dropped."

The announcement was made Oct. 4 in Bentonville during the Museum of Native American History's signature Native American Cultural Celebration event. For the PSAs, Studi collaborated with the nonprofit Partnership With Native Americans. The series was developed to "give an accurate portrayal

of life on the reservations and dispel the widely held misconceptions that still impact Native people today," according to the partnership organization.

"He has filmed five public service announcements with Partnership With Native Americans," PWNA President and CEO Robbie Rice Dietrich said. "They're all focused on the misconceptions that so many people have about Native Americans. These misperceptions, unfortunately, have resulted in a lot of misunderstanding about tribal communities and about what is going on with the reservations."

The PSAs are "History, Treaties and Tribes," "Realities on the Reservations," "Economics of Indian Gaming," "Native Education, the Dream and the Disparity," and "Giving for Native Causes."

"The American public is extraordinarily generous," Dietrich said. "They have to understand that there's a need. They have to understand that what they choose to contribute is well spent and has a positive impact. This is where (Studi) comes in because he's got the stature, the reputation to help people understand. They'll listen to him."

An acclaimed actor and producer featured in films such as "Dances with Wolves" and "The Last of the Mohicans," Studi will receive an honorary Oscar on Oct. 27. According to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Studi, born and raised in Nofire Hollow, Oklahoma, is "known for portraying strong Native American characters with poignancy and authenticity."

"The portrayal he has on screen," Dietrich said, "has been helpful in dispelling some of the myths that we all have seen reflected in television and movies about Native Americans. But despite this unbelievable recognition and accolades he's received, he seems to never have forgotten where he came from, and he has a real heart, a passion for helping Native communities succeed."

To view the PSAs, go to http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pwna_psa&printer_friendly=1.

About the Author



CHAD HUNTER
chad-hunter@cherokee.org • 918-453-5269
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