



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

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Date: October 3, 2025
To: Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board members
From: Jessie Hughes, Office Administrative Specialist, Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
CC: Erik Cedarleaf Dahl, Executive Secretary, CAAPB
Peter Musty, Principal Planner & Zoning Administrator, CAAPB

RE: AGENDA ITEM #10 – Tribal Flag Plaza Flag-Raising Ceremony

Tribal Flag Plaza Flag-Raising Ceremony: September 5, 2025



Photo courtesy of the Office of Governor Walz & Lt. Governor Flanagan

The Tribal Flag Plaza Flag-Raising Ceremony on September 5, 2025, marked a historic moment at the Minnesota State Capitol: for the first time, the flags of the eleven sovereign Tribal Nations sharing land with Minnesota were permanently raised on the Capitol Grounds.

The Plaza includes each Tribal Nation’s flag, plantings selected by each Tribe at the base of each flagpole, and Minnesota-sourced granite pavers and benches. Together, these elements create a lasting place of recognition, respect, and acknowledgment of the government-to-government relationship between the State of Minnesota and the sovereign Tribal Nations.

The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB), chaired by the Lieutenant Governor, played a central role in the vision, design, and realization of the Plaza. The request for a Tribal Flag Plaza was initially raised during the 2021 Governor’s Tribal Summit, and this project was developed in close coordination with Tribal Nations, the Minnesota Legislature, and the Department of Administration to bring this collaborative vision to completion.

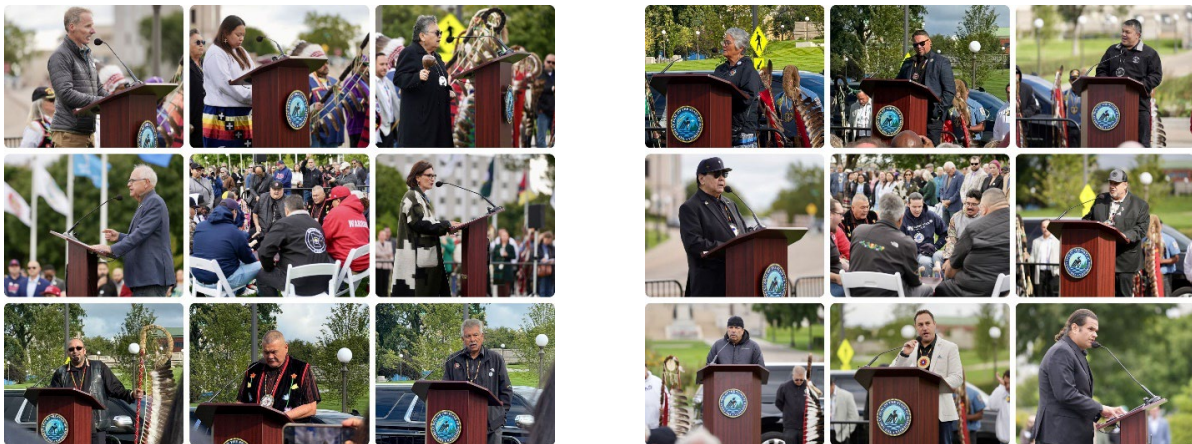
Event Program

The event started with opening remarks from CAAPB’s Executive Secretary, Erik Cedarleaf Dahl. This was followed by a Dakota Blessing from Vanessa Goodthunder (Cansayapi) and an Ojibwe Blessing from Sharon Day (Bois Forte Band of Chippewa). After the blessings, the Dakota Flag Song was played while Dakota Tribes flags were raised, and then the Ojibwe Flag Song was played while Ojibwe Tribes flags were raised.

Following the raising of the Tribal flags, Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan shared remarks. After their remarks, Tribal leaders from each of the 11 federally recognized Tribes of Minnesota spoke:

- Former President Robert Larsen of the Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Chairman Michael Fairbanks of the White Earth Nation
- Chairman Faron Jackson of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Vice Chair Agatha Armstrong of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Chairman Cole Miller of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Chief Executive Virgil Wind of the Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Chairman Darrell Seki, Sr. of the Red Lake Nation
- Chairman Bruce Savage of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Chairman Kevin Jensvold of the Upper Sioux Community
- President Grant Johnson of the Prairie Island Indian Community
- Chairman Carlos A. Hernandez of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa

The program ended with closing remarks from Governor Tim Walz and dismissal by CAAPB’s Executive Secretary, Erik Cedarleaf Dahl.



Photos courtesy of the Office of Governor Walz & Lt. Governor Flanagan

The Future of the Tribal Flag Plaza

Currently, plants that are sacred to each Tribe grow at the foot of their flagpole. There are also Minnesota-sourced granite benches for visitors to rest and reflect on the significance of this Plaza. The Plaza is flanked by white pines that will provide shelter from the sun and wind.

In the coming months, plaques will be installed under each Nation's flags that provide visitors with information about each Tribe and their seal. This will no doubt be a great teaching opportunity for all the students that visit the Capitol each year.

Lieutenant Governor Flanagan stated during the Flag-Raising Ceremony, "The Capitol should tell the full story of the history of Minnesota, one that honors all 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations, acknowledges complex histories and builds a future rooted in inclusion, beauty, and truth." It is CAAPB staff's hope that this Tribal Flag Plaza does just that and helps make the Capitol more welcoming to more Minnesotans.

Special Thanks

CAAPB staff would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all the agencies, organizations, and vendors that helped us make this event a success:

- Tribal-State Relations Executive Director Patina Park
- Native American Affairs Coordinator Adam Savariego
- Bipartisan members of the Legislature
- The City of Saint Paul
- Governor's Office: Simone Frierson, Julia Scovil, Amanda Frie, Katelyn Padden, and Sam Gullick
- Department of Administration: Commissioner Gronvall, Assistant Commissioner Waslaski, Laura Haag, Chris Mukina; Luke Jannett and Justin Patrick; Carrie Stiles and Laura Goiffon
- Facilities Management: Director Kari Suchy, Arborist Charlie Kreuger, and Grounds Supervisors Joe Dinnebier and Justin Lange
- Capitol Security: Captain Roeske and SSPD Commander Brown
- MnDOT: Joel Wenz
- Vendors: Twin Cities Tent and Event Rental, SixS Event Rental, Warning Lites, and Printastik
- Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board Members



Tribal Flag Plaza Flag-Raising Ceremony Materials

Resources:

- [Tribal Flag Plaza Flag-Raising Ceremony program](#)
- [Tribal Flag Plaza Flag-Raising Ceremony recording](#) (Minnesota Senate Media Services)
- [Tribal Flag Plaza Background document](#)
- [Tribal Flag Plaza Day Proclamation from the Office of Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan](#)

Media Coverage:

- Minnesota Senate Media Services - [On Sovereign Ground](#)
- Star Tribune - [Brooks: For the first time, Minnesota raises the flags of all 11 tribal nations at the Capitol](#)
- MPR News - [Tribal nations' flags raised in historic moment at Minnesota State Capitol](#)
- Pioneer Press - [New Tribal Flag Plaza at Capitol highlights Minnesota's past, present](#)
- CBS News - [Flags of 11 sovereign tribal nations flown for first time at Minnesota State Capitol](#)
- Sasaki - [Minnesota State Capitol Dedicates First-Ever Tribal Flag Plaza Honoring Sovereign Nations](#)

Attachment

Attachment A: Tribal Flag Plaza Day Proclamation from the Office of Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan