

## California Native American Day: Honoring Tradition, Building Community

By  
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### *For California Native American Day – Friday, September 26*

For the Lytton Rancheria of California, Native American Day on September 26<sup>th</sup> is both a celebration and a call to remembrance. It is a moment to honor the enduring presence of Native people on this land and to reflect on the resilience that has carried us through generations of challenges.

Our story, like so many others, is one of survival and renewal. From displacement and hardship to the restoration of our federal recognition in 1991, the Lytton people have endured. Today, we continue to carry forward our culture, traditions, and values, not just for ourselves, but for the communities we are part of.

California Native American Day is also a chance to remind all Californians that tribal nations are sovereign governments. Our relationships with state and local governments are not symbolic; they are government-to-government partnerships that build stronger communities. Here in Sonoma County, the Lytton Rancheria has invested in projects that go beyond our Tribe, creating jobs, supporting housing and education, and protecting the environment we all share.

We are especially proud of the efforts that uplift the next generation. Recently, we announced the Margie Mejia Preschool, which will provide Windsor families with new opportunities for early childhood education. Through our “Read on Sonoma” partnership, we are helping ensure every child in Sonoma County reads at grade level by third grade, a milestone that changes lives and futures. Quietly, we also make contributions and support programs that may not generate headlines, but which matter deeply to the families and communities they touch.

As a tribe, we strive to contribute in ways that reflect both our cultural traditions and our responsibilities as a government. From helping local nonprofits to supporting housing and educational opportunities, we see these efforts not as achievements to boast about, but as responsibilities we take seriously as neighbors and partners. These efforts are rooted in the same values our ancestors carried: community, respect, and stewardship.

But Native American Day must be more than a commemoration. True respect means protecting tribal sovereignty, ensuring Native voices are included in decision-making, and recognizing that California’s future is stronger when it fully includes its first people.

When we celebrate Native American Day, we celebrate the endurance of Native nations, the resilience of our cultures, and the hope that drives us forward. For the Lytton Rancheria, that hope is expressed not only in preserving our traditions but also in helping build a brighter future for Windsor, Sonoma County, and California as a whole.

