



Dennis Townsend and the Tuleriver Indian Tribe share a 27-year working relationship.

- Tule River Indian Housing Authority: Multiple projects totaling approximately 100 homes and the new Housing Authority office.
- Tule River Tribe: Tribal Administration building, Recreation Center, Mater Dolorosa Chapel addition and remodel and the Tule Aero Industries facility at the Porterville Airport.
- eagle Mountain Casino at Tule River: New Casino and Bingo facilities.



Canku Ota

(Many Paths)

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Reservation Scores a New Gym

by Terry Bergfalk [Special to the Fresno Bee-December 28, 2001](#)

Special thanks to Meadowlark Lemon for permission to reprint this photo of him and "Curly" Neal

PORTERVILLE -- "Without a vision, people perish," said former Harlem Globetrotters basketball great Meadowlark Lemon, as he stood on the court of the new \$1.4 million, state-of-the-art gymnasium at the Tule River Indian Reservation last week.



"Today you have fulfilled a dream that you saw and said it was going to happen and it did," Lemon told an audience of more than 350 adults and children at the gym's dedication.

Lemon and former Globetrotters teammate Fred "Curly" Neal were the stars in a ceremony that opened with a traditional American Indian blessing with burning sage by Phil Hunter.

Lemon, who played with the Globetrotters from 1956 to 1978 and was the team's "clown prince," now is an ordained minister in Scottsdale, Ariz.

In between shooting baskets on the court, he lectured to the children in the audience: "If you want to be better in any sport or almost anything you do, you must practice, practice, keep a positive attitude and respect your parents and teachers."

Lemon was joined at the ceremony by Neal, who played 22 years with the Globetrotters from 1963 to 1985, was known for his dribbling and shooting skills with a knack for hitting shots from beyond the half-court line.

The strains of the Globetrotters theme song, "Sweet Georgia Brown," played by The Fabulous Studio Band, heralded Lemon and Neal as they moved to the center of the court, where they commenced their antics, including ball-spinning, dribbling, bouncing the ball off people's heads and long-distance shots.

Later, the pair signed autographs, photos and basketballs and presented children with

basketball cards. They included many of the children as they demonstrated techniques for shooting and catching basketballs.

"This gym is for these young children who will use and grow with it," Lemon and Neal said. "We plan to return in the near future and hold basketball clinics here. It's an ideal place for it."

The dedication also was an opportunity for several presentations.

Master of ceremonies David Nenna presented a plaque to Leona Dabney, one of the leaders of the fund-raisers for the gym and park that bear her name. And tribal Chief Duane Garfield presented a check for \$5,000 to Jim Kusserow, director of the Fabulous Studio Band, for the band's trip for a Dec. 22 performance at the White House in Washington, D.C.

Bill Sharman, a standout athlete at Porterville High who went on to a Hall of Fame career with the NBA's Washington Capitals and Boston Celtics, was also on hand for the ceremony. Sharman was an eight-time NBA All-Star in the mid- and late 1950s with the Celtics and was the NBA Coach of the Year in 1972 during a five-year head-coaching stint with the Los Angeles Lakers. He is one of only 10 players to have won NBA championships as both a player and a coach.

Others attending the ceremony were former UCLA basketball star and Globetrotters representative Keith Erickson; Tulare County Supervisor Jim Maples, a former coach with the Porterville College basketball team; and Assembly Member Sarah Reyes, D-Fresno.

The gymnasium and adjacent park were the dream of Dabney and several other tribal members.

The gym is an 11,600-square-foot complex that includes a 9,600-square-foot gym with a wooden floor, electronic scoreboards, retractable bleachers, a stage for community events and entertainment, girls and boys locker rooms, showers, restrooms and a weight room. The second story houses 2,000 square feet of space with offices for youth activities and outreach groups.

Construction started in May for the new building located next to the tribal housing offices, but planning began in 1997 when the tribal council committed to building a gymnasium for the local youth. The building was designed by Dennis Townsend of the Townsend Architectural Group in Porterville.

Nenna, the tribal administrator, said the building was paid for by a \$228,000 Community Development Block Grant and savings from other construction projects on the reservation.

"Everyone from visitors to tribal members has classified the building as beautiful,"

Nenna said, "and [we're] looking forward to both children and adults using this ... facility."

Maples agreed that the gym would be an asset to the reservation and was impressed with the dedication ceremony.

"This was a wonderful and impressive event with the traditional Indian prayers and music," he said. "We had four worldwide-known athletes attending. This ... gym dedicated to the children here will be an ideal central spot for special and athletics events for the future."

Townsend Architectural Group

Local Architect

Townsend Architectural Group (TAG) was established in 2001 to provide general architectural services to the Central California region and throughout the state. From the inception, the firm has provided architectural services for a wide range of building projects. From its office in Porterville, California TAG

provides comprehensive planning and design services to individuals, businesses, developers, and municipalities. The scope of services offered by the firm includes a mixture of professional offices, agricultural facilities, commercial buildings, custom, production and Tribal housing, health care and industrial facilities, restaurants, churches and community buildings.

Local Porterville architectural firm.

Prior relationships with team and Tule River project

Dennis Townsend has worked for over 20 years with the Tule River Tribe and for 5 years during that period worked alongside Scott Griffith, now HMC, on Tribal and other Architectural projects of varying types and scopes.

27-year relationship with the Tule River Indian Tribe.

Native American Projects or communities with which we have worked

Since the inception of TAG and while managing an architectural and engineering firm for the preceding 27 years, Dennis Townsend has worked with tribes in California on housing projects ranging from a several homes to as many as 54- unit projects. The bulk of the work has been completed on the Tule River Indian Reservation for the Housing Authority.

40 homes for the Owens Valley Indian Housing Authority in Bishop, Big Pine and Fort Independence and 23 homes for the Quechan Tribal Housing Authority.

Architectural Group Project Team



Dennis Townsend, AIA / NCARB **Townsend Architectural Group**

Dennis Townsend is CEO/Principal Architect of Townsend Architectural Group, Inc. and responsible for design, production, business management and staff oversight in the preparation of construction documents and all architectural services for commercial, institutional, professional, ecclesiastical, educational, and industrial projects. His previous role as President/CFO/ Principal Architect / Partner included the position of Architectural Manager for a production homebuilding company that produced 300 to 600 homes annually. Dennis was an architect for Hobbs Architectural Group / R.L. Schafer and Associates from 1990-2001, where he worked on a wide range of projects. Duties included job development, contract negotiation and preparation, client relations, programming, design, cost estimating, construction document preparation and coordination, sub consultant coordination, project administration, and oversight, bid administration, on- site inspection, submittal review, review and approval of payment requests, project close-out services, and warranty inspections. Special services involved coordination of computer-aided drafting staff, conceptual design, two- and three-dimensional renderings, construction cost estimates, and light structural engineering.

/ Relevant Project Experience

Nupchi Xo'oy Housing Project Porterville, CA

Westwood Paradise Housing Porterville, CA

Design and plan maintenance for about 500 homes annually for Ennis Homes, San Joaquin Valley,

Hanford Subdivision, Hanford, CA

Summit Homes Southern Highlands, Visalia, CA

200 homes annually, Single and multi-family homes for Smee Homes, San Joaquin Valley

High Density residence, single family and apartments for Woodard Homes, Porterville, CA

Education /

BA, Architecture, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA

AA, Architecture, College of the Sequoias, Visalia, CA

Professional Registration /

Architect, C-24088, California

Affiliations /

Habitat For Humanity of Tulare County Porterville Build: Volunteer Coordinator Chair

City of Porterville Community Development Department: Zoning Ordinance Update Committee; Branding Committee/Downtown

Leadership Porterville: 2010 Sponsor; 2008 Mentor; 1993 Graduate

Fresno City College: Advisory Board Member

Porterville Unified School District: Trade Advisory Board Member

Springville Sierra Sunrise Rotary Club: Board Member, Past President; Past Secretary

Man Alive Men's Conference: Planning Committee; Speaker/Education Committee Co-Chair



Mike Taylor, Senior Project Manager

Townsend Architectural Group

Mike Taylor has been with Townsend Architectural group from the start in 2001 as well as working with Dennis for 30 years. He is responsible for construction document coordination, consultant review and specifications preparation as well as involvement in bid administration and construction phase services. Duties for other employers' include technical support, drafting and on-site supervision of a wide variety of architectural and design-build projects, assisted engineering department in the preparation of charts, graphs, and exhibits for water agency work, draftsmen work for commercial and custom residential projects, preparation of construction documents, plan development and shop drawings for modular housing units.

Education /

AA, Architecture, College of the Sequoias, Visalia, CA

Experience /

8/01-Present, Townsend Architectural Group, Porterville, CA

11/88-8/01, Hobbs Architectural Group, Visalia and Porterville, CA

6/26-11/88, Canby and Associates, Visalia, CA

9/81-2/84, G.W.M.R., Visalia, CA

9/81-2/84, EZ Livin Builders, Visalia, CA

6/77-9/81, Jerry Shaw Drafting, Visalia, CA

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Awards/ Featured Projects/ Media

Awards

2017 Porterville Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year

2007 California Construction Top Architecture Firms in California

2006 California Construction Top Architecture Firms in California

2006 ICF Builder 1st Runner up Light Commercial for Holy Cross Church

2006 ICFA Excellence Awards Small Commercial Award for Holy Cross Church

2006 NACDB Best Associate Member Testimonial for Holy Cross Church, Porterville, CA