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## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Smith, 520-907-1234

Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023

### **AUTHORITIES LOCATE MISSING TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION MEMBERS THOMAS LEWIS AND PHILLIP PANCHO**

***Both Men are Being Reunited With Family; They Had Been Missing Since Oct. 20***

SELLS, Ariz. – Missing Tohono O'odham Nation members Thomas J. Lewis and Phillip Pancho have been found and are safe. The two men had gone missing while visiting the Arizona State Fair on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023 as part of a program organizing day trips for tribal members with mental disabilities.

An extensive multi-agency search effort was undertaken over the following days, focusing on the area around the Arizona State Fairgrounds. When Mr. Pancho was found in the East Valley, the search was then expanded to that area where Mr. Lewis was located today.

Mr. Pancho was picked up by Tempe authorities and transported to the hospital, but it appears he did not have identification and was not able to communicate with hospital staff. However, on the evening of Oct. 24 hospital staff recognized Mr. Pancho from the missing persons flyer and contacted the Tohono O'odham Police Department.

With Mr. Pancho located in the Tempe area, extensive search efforts moved to the East Valley. This morning, Mr. Lewis was located through the support of the Mesa Police Department. He is believed to be in good health.

The Nation appreciates the incredible efforts of local, state, and federal agencies, volunteers, family members, the Tohono O'odham Police Department, the Nation's Office of Emergency Management, the Nation's Department of Health and Human Services, and many others who assisted in the search for Mr. Lewis and Mr. Pancho.

The Tohono O'odham Nation is looking forward reuniting both men with their families and reviewing its policies to ensure that this never happens again.

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*Together We Are Stronger*