



THE

MVSKOKE NEWS

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COVID-19 SHORT CHANGES HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

GRADUATING SENIORS ARE MISSING OUT ON SCHOOL MEMORIES LIKE PROM AND GRADUATION

Morgan Taylor  
REPORTER

SACRAMENTO, California-The last year in high school is an important part of life where students make final memories together and experience major changes as they plan for the next step. But for one Muscogee (Creek) citizen, those final high school memories were cut short.

Kyren Whitton is a high school senior at Grant Union High School in Sacramento, California. Whitton has been out of school and school activities for about a month and a half and is missing out on his final days of high school and the events that most seniors look forward too. He and Seniors just like him are a generation missing a milestone due to COVID-19.

Whitton kept busy in high school by playing on the football and wrestling teams and working as a member of the yearbook club and school news, all while taking college preparation courses and maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

"Right before school shut down, we were getting fitted for our tuxedos for prom," Whitton said. "I'm glad we hadn't ordered them yet because it would have been a waste of



Pictured above is Kyren Whitton, a Muscogee (Creek) Citizen and high school senior missing out on milestones due to COVID-19. (Submission)

money."

Whitton said during his time at home he is trying to focus on working on college preparation although he has little guidance and commu-

nication with the closure of academic institutions. He has applied to a few different colleges in his area and plans on applying to more.

SENIOR- 2



Legal services continue to operate on emergency basis with limited staff due to COVID-19. (MN File Photo)

MCN COURTS CONTINUE COVID-19 LIMITED ACCESS

MCN DISTRICT COURTS SOCIAL DISTANCING REMAINS IN PLACE UNTIL MAY 4, CLE CANCELLED

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma- The Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court has expanded previous orders issued limiting court operations due to COVID-19. Now the orders made back on March 17, will remain in effect until May 4. In May, the Court will re-examine whether or not to reopen all services based on the Nation's directives for public safety.

The order limits court functions to emergency protection orders, emergency temporary restraining orders, and initial appearances, arraignments, bond hearings, and other hearings necessary for due process.

"In any civil case, the statute of limitations shall be extended for

30 days from the date of this order,' documents said.

The latest administrative order was issued from the Court on April 20. It said that the Court would continue operating with a reduced staff and with special operating hours.

"The court is presently operating on reduced staff hours, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.," the order said. "There will only be one Clerk present to protect the Clerks safety so delays may be expected in answering and responding to calls."

At this time, the Mound building where court proceedings are held remains closed to the public. If emergency filings are needed, the party may contact the Court at 918-758-1400.

Those needing emergency assistance are encouraged to contact the

COURTS- 2



Whitney Mayhew takes a moment to have her picture taken with Principal Chief David Hill after paving the way for a new maternity leave policy. (Submission)

MAYHEW PAVES THE WAY FOR MOTHERS

MAYHEW WORKED DIRECTLY WITH PRINCIPAL CHIEF DAVID HILL TO MAKE NEW POLICY POSSIBLE

Morgan Taylor  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma- History has been made at Muscogee Creek Nation as the first ever Maternity Leave Policy has been established and pioneered by MCN Executive Legislative Assistant of the Principal Chief, Whitney Mayhew.

Mayhew worked directly with Principal Chief David Hill on the creation of this policy by using her own experiences as a mother. Mayhew worked for MCN during a pregnancy and birth of her child while there was no maternity leave in place.

Whitney said she had a bad experience and wanted to change that for others by being the pioneer for this policy.

"I was in a situation where I

needed to be with my newborn which was causing me additional stress about missing work," said Mayhew.

The Maternity Leave Policy's purpose is to help relieve the stress of the new parent by giving a full eight weeks of paid leave.

"I submitted the proposal to bring awareness and help other employees that may have to rely on leave to offset the burden and stress of financial worries during the most essential time of being with their child," Mayhew said. "I hope this is a step that can help not just mothers but entire families by helping them be there for the moments that matter most."

At the beginning of Chief Hill's administration, MCN HR, Chief and Mayhew collab-

orated on the particulars to set the policy in place. Mayhew researched to see what other tribes had in place for the same type of policy. In her research, Mayhew found that only one other tribe in the state offered this kind of leave, Cherokee Nation. Mayhew referenced their policy when crafting her own model.

"We couldn't be prouder of this new policy, especially since it came from one employee's personal experience as a mother," said Principal Chief David Hill. "This is an administration that listens to, and values its employees. We want an atmosphere where ideas and input can flow freely to this office."

According to Press Secretary Jason Salsman, this policy was put into place immediately.



MCN provides resources to help students stay sharp during the extended summer break. (MN File Photo)

MCN ROLLS OUT CULTURAL DISTANCE LEARNING PLATFORM

NEW DISTANCE LEARNING PLATFORM HELPS BRIDGE GAP DURING EXTENDED SUMMER BREAK FOR STUDENTS

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma- The Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Education Development and Administration program has rolled out a distance learning platform for students who may need extra resources to

help keep skills sharp during their prolonged absence from school. The Native EDGE-Distance Learning Platform went live on April 6.

According to the Federal Programs Administrator of the Department of Education and Training Sarah Price, the new platform can be used to help

NATIVE EDGE- 2

# BACONE COLLEGE AWARDED FUNDS

## NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AWARDS \$95K

Morgan Taylor  
REPORTER

MUSKOGEE, Oklahoma - Bacone College was awarded \$95,000 in support from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, an organization with a long history of supporting Bacone College, during the NSDAR's April executive board meeting recently.

National Chair of the DAR's American Indian Committee Suzanne Heske visited Bacone College during the fall of 2019. She subsequently made a presentation to the NSDAR's executive committee to request their financial support of Bacone College.

"The NSDAR has always supported Bacone. When Suzanne Heske visited campus in the fall, she loved what we were doing here and the mission we are pursuing," said Bacone College Vice President of Student Affairs Kaila Harjo. "She wanted to know how can the Daughters help. She toured the dorms that needed upgrades and the art pro-

gram that we have reinstated. She came to me with the idea of the funding available. She was our voice and nominated Bacone. This specific chair is this American Indian Education chair of the DAR and they are the ones who are supporting Bacone."

Bacone College School of Indian Art was recently awarded \$25,000 to offer five Bacone art students \$5,000 art scholarships for the 2020-2021 school year. "Much gratefulness is extended to the NSDAR and especially their chair of the American Indian Committee, Suzanne Heske, who championed our cause and helped these scholarships become reality," Art Director Gerald Cournoyer said. "I'm excited to be able to offer five School of Indian Art students these substantial scholarships to help them further their studies."

In addition, the board 'allocated \$70,000 from the Eleanor M. Stolle Fund for repair of the HVAC system in the men's dormitory and repair/painting/maintenance of the both the



Pictured left to right are Bacone Art Director Gerald Cournoyer, National Chair of the DAR's American Indian Committee Suzanne Heske and Bacone President Ferlin Clark during Heske's visit to the Bacone Campus last fall. (Submission)

men's and women's dormitories at Bacone College and granted the request of the Junior Membership Committee to 'provide support of Bacone College.'

"This is huge for our students. Upgrading the dorms allows the students to be more comfortable while away from home, both physically and emotionally, and it benefits our recruitment efforts. We are

so thankful to the NSDAR for their contributions and prayers they have offered to Bacone College." Said Harjo.

"We are extremely grateful for these donations, especially during these challenging times we are all enduring," said Bacone College President Dr. Ferlin Clark. "Five art students will be blessed by scholarships, and there are much-needed

repairs this will address which will hopefully allow our students to gain a greater sense of pride in their school. We cannot thank the NSDAR and Ms. Heske enough."

Future students who wish to attend the historic Bacone College School of Indian Art should contact Art Director Gerald Cournoyer at cournoy-[erg@bacone.edu](mailto:erg@bacone.edu)

### Native Edge

Continued from Page 1

keep students sharp and ready to transition back to the classroom when the time comes.

"One of the biggest barriers to students right now are necessities like food and finances for their families," Price said. "We are being sensitive to the fact that some families are focusing on trying to feed their students through this."

Price said there is evidence that shows students can lose mastery of many of the skills learned during a typical summer. That is why the extra enrichment resources were made a priority.

"There is a big concern right now that there could be a downfall in learning from now until the time the students go back to school," Price said. "Students

lose ground in the summertime."

Resources can be found for students in the form of age-appropriate lessons, activities and educational videos.

This evolving platform provides distance learning access and resources, indigenous learning videos, parent and teacher resources, and more.

For students, the materials are organized in elementary, middle school, and high school grade levels.

The shortened school year and closing of public resources such as libraries brought about the urgent need to give students access to learning resources.

"We have been working through a Native studies curriculum that we are creating for high school," Price said. "We are compiling some Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, and Five

Civilized tribes' curriculum with a consultant, but we had to halt that so that we could provide this supplemental distance learning resource."

She said that these developing resources could someday be used as a class on their own.

"We could have something that could be a curriculum in a high school class," Price said. "It builds in structure for learning activities for individuals and for small groups."

She said she hopes these lessons bring students an intrinsic motivation to participate and see themselves as tribal citizens.

"As we go through this, we are focused on building partnerships that help acculturate these students back to us."

Parents, students and teachers can access the learning materials on [www.mcncstep.com](http://www.mcncstep.com).

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor;

I recently sent an email to all the NC Representatives regarding Jeremy D. Pittman's nomination to serve as a District Trial Court Judge of the District Trial Court Civil Division of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that was sponsored by Patrick Freeman.

This correspondence is not directed to the NC Representatives who voted in favor of Pittman's nomination. This correspondence is directed to the 7 NC Representatives who voted no on the legislation to appoint Mr. Pittman. Those voting are: James Jennings, Adam Jones III, Anna Marshall, Darrell Proctor, Lucian Tiger III, Mary Crawford and Joyce Deere.

Below is what I sent via email to all NC Representatives.

Dear MCN Reps;

I received the April 15th edition of The Mvskoke News wherein the paper headlined that "Judicial Nomination Rejected by Council". The appointment of Jeremy T. Pittman to serve as a District Court Judge of the District Court Civil Division of the MCN was submitted by the Office of the Principal Chief and received a do pass in the March 23rd Business, Finance & Justice Committee. Pittman's appointment required a two-thirds approval from the full council.

The measure failed by a vote of 8 for and 7 against the appointment. Dear NC Representatives;

The appointment of a civil judge is paramount to move pressing cases forward in

tribal court. Especially, the Bruner matter. Mr. Bruner is entitled to a fair and speedy trial in accordance with the 6th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and MCNA Title 14, sec. 1-303 (F).

Failure by this Council to appointment a Civil Judge may jeopardize Bruner's case by virtue of a dismissal of all charges and may jeopardize any criminal or civil cases pending in tribal court.

In this citizens opinion (my opinion only) is that the majority of the council members objecting, or voting no, to Mr. Pittman's appointment may (I said may) be siding with individuals who do not want any criminal cases to go forward and hope their cases are to be dismissed on the "speedy trial" protections.

In repeating Travis Scott's statement "I made my vote based on the performance of Jeremy Pittman with respect to the position, not personal feelings or someone influencing my vote."

Mr. Pittman is well qualified to be appointed to serve as District Court Judge of the District Trial Court Civil Division of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

I invite those National Council members who voted no to not appoint Mr. Pittman as District Court Judge speak openly regarding their objections to the appointment or it can be surmised that an outside influence enhanced their vote. I await your response.

Sincerely,  
Rick Wide  
Tulsa

### Courts

Continued from Page 1

MCN Lighthorse police department, or the Family Violence Prevention Program or Children and Family Services.

Attorneys are still able to file non-emergency matters by digital or mail only with arrangements for payment of any filing fees upon consultation with the court clerk.

'However, any hearing or

orders regarding such filings will not be set until after the Court reopens post-pandemic emergency,' the order said. 'Except upon extraordinary grant of the Judge assigned, any responses to such filings are tolled till further notice of the Court.'

'Such a grant will not be lightly given.'

The order said agreed to orders of parties will be allowed and encouraged.

The 18th Annual Doing Business in Indian Country has been canceled. Those who had paid fees for the conference will be refunded.

The orders asked that those seeking a refund be understanding as the MCN Finance Department is also operating on reduced staff.

'The Court will look at the feasibility of a one-day fall CLE dependent on River Spirit Casino availability.

uation ceremony.

But no one is quite certain if it will happen or what may be going on when it comes time for graduation.

"If this graduation really happens or when this is all over, I'm going straight to college and getting started on my basics," said Whitton. "I'm ready to get some work done and move past all of this."

with no place to go that is safe.

"Not only do I have to worry about my health at this time but my physical safety as well," Kyren said. "I haven't really been out of my house since school shut down. This has been an overall bad experience as a senior."

Whitton said depending on the school district and the mayor, the school may be able to rent out a facility to hold a grad-

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The Mvskoke News is mailed from Stigler, Oklahoma to all enrolled Muscogee (Creek) citizens' households upon request. Inquiries should be directed to Mvskoke Media.

To submit a change of address or a letter to the editor, call: 918-732-7720 or email: [info@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:info@mvskokemedia.com).

# STUDENT PROJECT AIMS TO FIGHT HUNGER

CMN STUDENT HOPES PROJECT TO COMBAT HUNGER BECOMES SELF SUSTAINED IN COMMUNITY

**Lani Hansen**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—A little free pantry has been set up in Hawthorne Park by the primary school in Okmulgee.

Morgan Taylor, a student at the College of Muscogee Nation, and newest member of Mvskoke Media’s news team, has always had a passion for helping with community service projects.

Taylor had been volunteering with Linda Cope at the Cross Town Food Pantry and knew immediately what she wanted to do for her final school project.

“I had already known I wanted to do this little food pantry box,” Taylor said. “I feel like it’s a good way for people to donate and to reach out to people who need it, it is right in the middle of the community and always available.”

The little food pantry box is now open for anyone who willing to donate or for someone in need. Taylor’s box is funded by Okmulgee Service League, she presented her project to them where they approved to fund her \$100 annually.

The College of the Muscogee

Nation requires students completing degrees in certain areas to complete a Project Management Course. This course offers real world experience to students to work within their degree fields and their communities to offer assistance on things that they find important.

“I think Morgan has done a great job with her project management by creating something that is beneficial to her community,” said CMN Tribal Servies Instructor Mackie Moore. “It even came about during an amazing time when a lot fo people are in need during this pandemic.”

“The Tribal Leadership Circle at the college is going to be the ones to take over filling this box after I graduate. They will take the donation and buy groceries to take to the box as needed,” Taylor explained.

Taylor hopes that the little pantry food box will be self sustaining for many years.

“It should be able to self-sustain by people donating to it and by the little bit of funds that are allocated for it,” Taylor said.

The little food pantry box is located in a park so Taylor asked for those donating to only donate non-perishable food items. Milk,

eggs, hot or cold food are not allowed, only boxed or canned food items.

“I’ve cleaned out my pantry and took stuff that I haven’t even seen in a while and started the initial donation with those items,” Taylor said.

Due to COVID-19 she was unable to do a lot of advertising for her project, so she posted what she was doing on Social Media.

“I got a lot of feedback and many people shared my post,” Talor said. “Rusty Milroy with Mabrey Bank wants to fund a box for me, and try to help me get something going where we can do this in different communities.”

Taylor lives down the road from where she set up the little food pantry box, so she can check on it daily. She has noticed people have been taking goods from the pantry.

“It’s right in the middle of the park where kids go, and so I leave little snacks in there as well when I can,” Taylor said.

The little food pantry box is available to anyone in need, and for anyone who is willing to donate. It is located at Hawthorne Park, North Okmulgee Avenue and West Fairfax Street, Okmulgee, OK.



The little free pantry box is set up in Hawthorne Park for the public. It is open 24/7. (Morgan Taylor)

# CITIZEN ON TRACK TO BE FRONT COURT STAR IN TEXAS

MCN YOUTH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO MAKE IT BIG

**Morgan Taylor**  
REPORTER

DALLAS, Texas – Not too far from the Muscogee Creek Nation resides a young citizen and rising basketball star that has been recognized all over the Lone Star State by many different recruiters for his amazing talent on the front court. His name, Doryan Onwuchekwa.

Doryan stands six foot eight inches tall at just 13 years-old. He is in the eighth grade at J.L. Long Middle School, graduating class of 2024. In Dallas where he plays for the middle school basketball team Doryan also plays for other traveling basketball teams. He started playing for the middle school team in the seventh grade but it was his eighth grade season that showed lots of promise as he played on a traveling team that won a National title in Portland, Oregon.

Colby Jones, mother of Onwuchekwa, said he has played basketball his whole life but really started to get into the development of the sport in the sixth grade. At that time, he had played in a mini-league but even

then he led a winning team.

It was this last basketball season that he assisted the team in winning the first city championship title in 25 years.

“This season was really a turning point for. It was really exciting to watch him. The team just kept winning and winning,” said Jones. “He was one of the few eighth graders selected to participate in a local high school basketball camp. The camp is for recruiters and scouts to know who to watch for and keep tabs on the top youth basketball players in the area.”

Onwuchekwa had success at a camp called The Next Wave. According to Wings and Bigs Show Productivity and Promise at The Next Wave, made by sports reporter Kellen C. Buffington at [www.thetb5reports.com](http://www.thetb5reports.com), ‘Onwuchekwa was clearly the number one prospect of the camp...’

‘The six-foot eight forward was just on a different level. He scored over both shoulders, dunked in traffic, showed touch around the rim, made threes, and handled the ball like a true wing in the half court,’ said Buff-

ington. ‘For stretches I thought I was looking at a young Isaiah Austin. Onwuchekwa will contend for the number one spot in the national 2024 rankings when this is all said and done. I’ve heard from Texas, UCLA, Texas Tech, Baylor, and SMU since film was released from camp. This young prospect can be one of the best to ever come out of this city. He has all the tools and only time will tell. Top 30 All-Star Game Selection.’

TB5reports is designed to be a bridge for college coaches to identify prospects and build a platform for prospects to better further support academic and athletic achievement. The TB5Reports hosts camps and reports on local up and coming basketball players.

Owuchekwa left people with a lot to say about him after the camp. Director of Scouting/Recruiting at Spencer Pulliam Basketball Consulting and a host of The Next Wave basketball camp, Spencer Pulliam said, “The next potential front court star in the Lone Star state is six-foot eight Doryan Onwunche-kwa. Both athletic and skilled,



Doryan Onwuchekwa attended a scouting camp where he received many recognitions. (Submission)

he’s in the mold of a modern-day forward capable of playing in the paint as well as extending his game to the perimeter. He has elite defensive tools when considering his length, timing, and quickness of the floor. As he demonstrates a consistent motor and remains constantly engaged

in the action. The southwest prospect’s national status will continue to ascend.’

The Next Wave Recruiters and scouts have said that Onwunchekwa has what it takes to be the top player in the state and nation at merely 13 years of age.

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MCGIRT Case set for oral argument before the United States Supreme Court in May.

(Shutterstock)

# MCGIRT VS. OKLAHOMA SET FOR MAY

CMN STUDENT HOPES PROJECT TO COMBAT HUNGER BECOMES SELF SUSTAINED IN COMMUNITY

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

WASHINGTON—The Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s jurisdictional boundaries question raised in the United States Supreme Court (USSC) in the McGirt vs. Oklahoma case will have oral arguments in May according to a press release issued April 13.

The high court originally set the hearing for Apr. 21. However, alternative processes became necessary the United States dealt with the COVID-19 public health crisis.

‘In keeping with public health guidance in response to COVID-19, the Justices and counsel will all participate remotely,’ the release said. ‘The Court anticipates providing a live audio feed of these arguments to news media.’

‘Details will be shared as they become available.’

McGirt along with nine other cases will be set for oral arguments on May 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, and 13. It is not yet clear which of the calendar dates will be set aside for which cases.

The MCN was not the only Oklahoma tribe to submit a brief in the case. The MCN, Cherokee Nation, Choctaw Nation and

Chickasaw Nation were among several entities submitting briefs to the United States Supreme Court on Feb. 11. The briefs were all provided as impartial advisors on the McGirt appeal case.

The McGirt case is an appeal to the supreme court by Jimcy McGirt, who is currently serving two 500-year sentences and a life without parole sentence for first-degree rape by instrumentation, lewd molestation and forcible sodomy after former convictions of a felony.

According to MCN’s brief, ‘The Muscogee (Creek) Nation (“Nation” or “Creek Nation”) had no role in the genesis of this litigation, but now finds its Reservation under direct attack.’

‘Oklahoma has claimed that the Nation never enjoyed an Indian Territory Reservation and that, if it did, the allotment of lands to Nation citizens and the coming of statehood abolished it – despite clear treaty and statutory text to the contrary,’ MCN brief said. ‘The Nation files this brief to vindicate its core sovereign interests in its treaty-guaranteed Reservation.’

This is the second round of legal documents submitted by the tribe and supporters in cases cen-

tered on the tribe’s reservation status. In 2018, the tribe awaited the opinion in the Murphy case, a similar land reservation question.

The high court did not render an opinion. Instead, on Dec. 4, 2018, the court directed the parties, Solicitor General and Muscogee (Creek) Nation to submit supplemental briefs addressing two more questions for the court.

McGirt’s case presents the opportunity for all nine justices to hear and give an opinion on the matter. In the last session, Justice Neil Gorsuch did not participate in the Murphy case opinion leaving eight justices to hear the case.

McGirt’s appeal argues that the state did not have the authority to convict him, that federal courts should have handled the jurisdiction due to the fact the crime took place within tribal jurisdiction boundaries.

The question posed in the Murphy case asks the court, ‘Whether the 1866 territorial boundaries of the Creek Nation within the former Indian Territory of eastern Oklahoma constitute an ‘Indian reservation’ today under 18 USC. § 1151(a).’

Mvskeke Media will continue to follow this case and provide updates they become available.



A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting was held April 14 via Teleconference. (MN File Photo)

# TWIN HILLS WALKING TRAIL RESOLUTION PASSED COMMITTEE

WAGONER COUNTY ONGOING PROJECT WAS APPROVED

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma — A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting was held April 14.

All passed legislation will go before the full Council during the regular session April 25.

LNC addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 20-075** Execute a memorandum of agreement with the City of Holdenville for improvements to Adams Street and S. Echo Street. Sponsored by Thomasene Yahola Osborn. Passed 4-0.

The memorandum will allow the Nation to repair the two city streets Adams and S. Echo in part of the Maintenance Overlay Project.

**TR 20-076** Execute a memorandum of agreement with the Twin Hills School District for the Twin Hills walking trail. Sponsored by

Lucian Tiger III. Passed 4-0. The memorandum will allow the Nation to use interest funds that Twin Hills recieved to repair the Twin Hills Walking Trail.

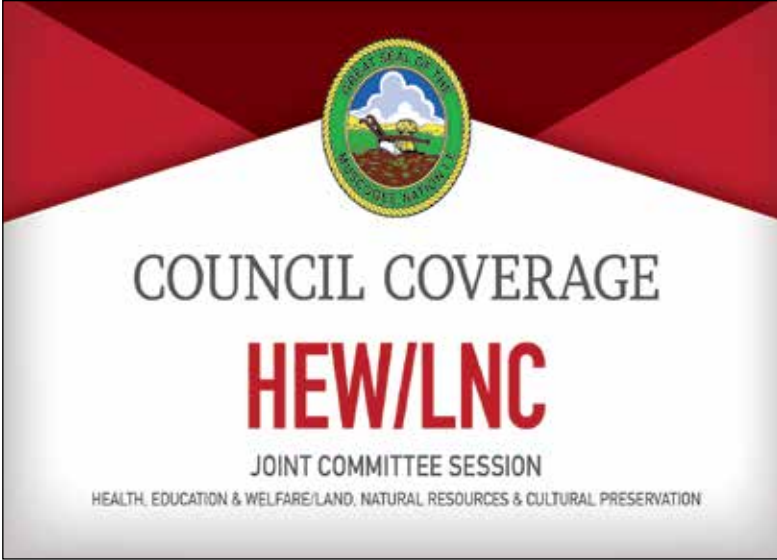
**TR 20-077** Execute a memorandum of agreement with Wagoner County for improvements to Oneta Road. Sponsored by Joseph Hicks, Co-Sponsor Charles McHenry. Passed 4-0.

The memorandum for an ongoing project in Wagoner County will allow the Nation to furnish and complete the rights-of-way for the project.

**TR 20-078** Execute a memorandum of agreement with the City of Okemah for improvements to the Okemah Community Center Road. Sponsored by Charles McHenry. Passed 4-0.

The memorandum will allow the Nation to repair the Okemah Community Center Road using funding from the Tribal Transportation Program Interest Funds.

For audio of committee meetings visit: [www.mcnncc.com](http://www.mcnncc.com)



A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare and Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting was held April 21 by teleconference. (MN File Photo)

# HEALTH DEPARTMENT SEEKS NEW LOCATION

JOINT COMMITTEE PASSED LEGISLATION FOR MCN HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma — A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare and Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting was held April 21.

All passed legislation will go before the full Council during the regular session April 25.

HEW/LNC addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 20-079** Execute a Real

Estate contract and Related Documents for the purchase of property in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, for the Nation’s Health Department. Sponsored by James Jennings. Passed 7-0. Absent Joyce Deere.

The Department of Health has identified some property located at 2502 E. 20th Street, Okmulgee, Oklahoma. The price for the two tracts of property is \$485,000.00, the Department of Health will pay the price and additional expenses out of its own funds.

For audio of committee meetings visit: [www.mcnncc.com](http://www.mcnncc.com)





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Volunteers and employees came together on short notice in order to make it possible for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to distribute a food donation. (MN File Photo)

# GOOD FOOD ON GOOD FRIDAY

## CMN PLANS TO CONTINUE WITH SUMMER COURSES

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—Muscogee (Creek) Nation was able to round up volunteers and take part in a food distribution partnership that ended up giving fresh produce to approximately 2,500 Muscogee (Creek) families on April 10.

The opportunity to participate was sudden, but Acting MCN Cabinet Secretary of Community and Human Services Shawn Partridge planned out the logistics of distribution in a social distancing friendly environment.

Food trucks from Walmart unloaded produce at River Spirit where volunteers sorted and distributed fresh fruits and vegetables to nine different locations through the Muscogee (Creek)

Nations boundaries.

MCN Press Secretary Jason Salsman said the event was an incredible turn around.

“We found out the delivery time on Wednesday afternoon and was able to effectively feed 2500 plus with less than two days prep,” Salsman said. “What an incredible reflection of the planning, volunteerism and leadership in place to put a plan of action forward like that.”

The University of Arkansas Indigenous group reached out to tribes for participation in the food drive supported in conjunction with Wal-Mart, John Christner Trucking who made deliveries, and more than 150 Muscogee (Creek) Volunteers.

“When we talk about #OneMvskoke, this is exactly what we mean,” Salsman said.



Pictured from left to right are CMN students, Daulton Cochran, Stilwell; Shelby Donathan, Okemah and Johnny Childress, Muskogee, enjoy the weather as they travel between classes of the CMN campus located in Okmulgee, OK. (submission)

# CMN EXTENDS ENROLLMENT

## CMN PLANS TO CONTINUE WITH SUMMER COURSES

Morgan Taylor  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Due to the COVID-19, the College of Muscogee Nation has had to make many schedule changes this year.

Things started changing when the college decided to move all classes online and send students back home on March 17. CMN had intended on opening back up April 3 but that was not the case. Courses remained online through the rest of the spring trimester ending on April 24.

CMN stayed in contact with all students on important updates via text, email, and phone call.

Dean of Academic Affairs, Monte Randall said students can start applying for the summer trimester now but the actual enrollment date has been extended to May 4 – June 3 and classes will start on June 1.

“We are hoping to open up for the summer trimester but we are making plans if that’s not the case. If we have to start the trimester online then we will but

the overall goal is to be back on Campus,” said Randall. “We have extended the deadline as far as we can with the hopes of being open.”

Randall said the staff and faculty will use the month of May to revive the curriculum before starting classes while CMN will work on making the necessary adjustments for the health and benefits of students.

CMN will be now be providing laptops for students for the summer trimester enrolled in nine or more hours. This is to help promote enrollment and success of the students.

“We want to focus on our student’s success and take care of our future graduates,” said Randall.

The CMN graduation ceremony was originally planned for April 24. Due to the pandemic, the ceremony has been postponed to August 7 after the summer trimester.

For more updates and information on enrollment please contact the College of Muscogee Nation’s front desk at (918) 549-2800.



A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare Committee meeting was held April 8 via teleconference. (MN File Photo)

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TO BE PLACED UNDER EXECUTIVE BRANCH

## NATION URGES CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE IN 2020 CENSUS THROUGH LEGISLATION PASSED IN COMMITTEE

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma — A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare Committee meeting was held April 8.

All passed legislation will go before the full Council during the regular session April 25.

HEW addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 20-073** Supporting the 2020 Census and urging Muscogee

(Creek) citizens to participate in the 2020 Census. Sponsored by Anna Marshall, Co-Sponsor Lucian Tiger III. Passed 3-0. Absent Mary Crawford.

A resolution for Muscogee (Creek) citizens and all Native Americans to participate in the count for the United States Census. Most Native Americans have been undercounted in the population group in the past. In order to receive funding for the Nation, citizens must be counted in the 2020 Census.

**NCA 20-022** Authorizing the expenditure of funds awarded

from the City of Tulsa, Tulsa Regional Complete Count Committee for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Community Research and Development Department for the benefit of the Census 2020 project. Sponsored by Anna Marshall. Passed 3-0. Absent Mary Crawford.

Funds awarded to Community Research and Development Department through Tulsa Regional Count Committee, will be used to do 2020 Census activities in various communities. Communities include Tulsa, Okmulgee, Sapulpa and Coweta. Activities scheduled for April were postponed.

**NCA 20-023** Amending MCNCA Title 22, Chapter 9, Entitled “Emergency Management Authority.” Sponsored by Anna Marshall. Passed 3-0. Absent Mary Crawford.

The Emergency Management Supervisor role has not been filled. Chief Hill proposed the Emergency Management be placed under Executive Branch.

The temporary employment for clean up purposes conducted by the Construction Services Department of the Housing Department should be coordinated with the Emergency Management Supervisor and the Principal Chief.

For audio of committee meetings visit: [www.mcnn.com](http://www.mcnn.com)



A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Business, Justice and Finance Committee meeting was held April 16 via teleconference. (MN File Photo)

# COUNCIL POSTPONES BUDGET SUPPLEMENT TO LIGHTHORSE BODY CAM SYSTEM PURCHASE BY LIGHTHORSE POSTPONED FOR ONE MONTH IN COMMITTEE

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma — A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Business, Justice and Finance Committee meeting was held April 16 by teleconference.

All passed legislation went before the full Council during the regular session April 25.

BFJ addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

**TR 20-080** A Tribal Resolution

of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a loan guarantee agreement between the Mvskoke Loan Fund and the United States Department of the Interior. Sponsored by Adam Jones. Do Pass.

A resolution for Muscogee (Creek) Nation allowing the Mvskoke Loan Fund to enter into a loan guarantee agreement with the United States Department of the Interior.

**TR 20-083** A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek)

Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a confidential settlement agreement and release of claims to settle a dispute with an individual landowner. Sponsored by Patrick Freeman. Do Pass.

A resolution stating that the Nation has agreed to a settlement terms with a certain landowner in order to resolve an underlying dispute with the individual landowner.

**NCA 20-026** A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police Department for Fiscal year 2020. Sponsored by Robert Huft and co sponsored by William Lowe. The legislation was postponed for one month.

The law is an answer to the request of the MCN Lighthorse Police Department requesting a supplemental appropriation for the fiscal year 2020 in the amount of \$155,135.00. The department received \$82,500.00 for the purpose of body cameras. The request for supplemental funds would be used to cover the balance of the costs associated with the purchase of the system.

For audio of committee meetings visit: [www.mcnn.com](http://www.mcnn.com)



# OLDHAM HOME CARE

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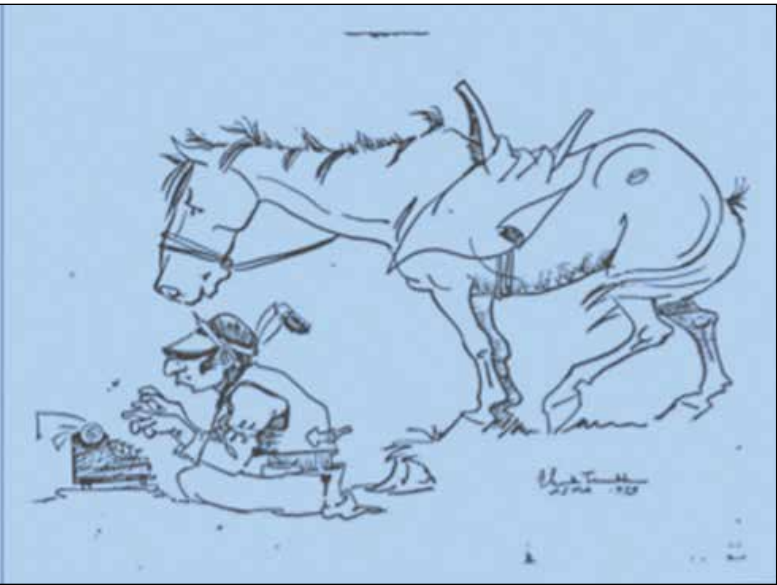
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## STILL VIRAL, MOVIE STUFF, THE MAYFLOWER

COVID 19 COLLATERAL DAMAGE, MOVIE HAPPENINGS, WRITE ABOUT THE MAYFLOWER

**Gary Fife**  
*RADIO SPECIALIST*

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – All the news is full of reports on the Covid-19 epidemic, so it might dominate this month’s column, too.

Masks on, hands washed?

News reports say that the Navajo Nation is hardest hit. Their numbers are scary. According to a Navajo press release, the tribe is prohibiting tourists and visitors from entering the reservation. Maybe they got something there?

The Mvskoke Nation is not immune. Our area is experiencing the effects of the epidemic and our tribe is taking steps to deal with it as best it can. A lot of questions about tests, supplies and equipment are flying around. Let’s hope we can get some answers soon. We’ll pass them on as soon as we get them.

So, cenke okkosvs-wash your hands, and practice social distancing. If you have one of the masks from the last flu epidemic, you might want to use it. I’m not sure if the medic folks say if they are or aren’t effective at this point, but if you don’t have anything else, it’s better than nothing. Make sure

you get over any embarrassment you might feel when out in public because it could help keep you from getting the virus.

Remember the old TV show “Lone Ranger”? You could be the Masked Man and the Faithful Indian Companion at the same time.

I saw on Facebook somebody has been selling some great looking masks with Pueblo designs on them.

Don’t know more about them, so you might ask questions. Maybe someone could produce some with Mvskoke textile designs? Hmmm.

Other impacts? As far as I know the Wild Onion dinner season has been a no-go. Maybe folks have been freezing them for the future? And...what about the stomp grounds or the pow-wow season? Imagine a Fancy Dancer or a Jingle Dress dancer wearing a mask? Maybe beaded ones? (Just kidding!)

Native News On-Line reports, Michigan students at a small Tribal college are using 3D printing technology to produce reusable facemasks for emergency workers in their area. The lightweight face shields will be sent

to hospitals, health agencies and other first responders.

Remember the movie about the Osage oil murders that was being produced right here in Oklahoma? Native News On-Line reports that flick, “Killers of the Flower Moon”, may go to Netflix or Apple for distribution. The film, starring Leonardo Di Caprio and Robert De Niro focuses on the rash of murders of Osage oil rights holders in the 1920s. Mohawk musician Robbie Robertson is writing the music for the movie. No date was given.

Speaking of Hollywood actors, Sean Penn is repeating his generosity with the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. Penn had delivered meals and other supplies to tribal members in the fall of 2018. His non-profit, CORE again appeared on the scene, bringing more assistance. Mvto, man.

Have you ever wanted to express your feelings about the landing of the Mayflower about 400 years ago? The American Indian College Fund is giving you the chance. The Fund will be publishing essays from Native peoples in a new publication called, “A Journal of Native Reflections on the Mayflower”.

They are accepting original submissions on how our Native peoples have met the challenge, how we have survived and how we deal with the fact in today’s world. The deadline is June 30. It should be published November 1, for Native American month. Accepted entries will give you a chance to get the idea off your chest. You could make \$200. If you’re interested: [www.college-fund.org/mayflower](http://www.college-fund.org/mayflower).

By the way, Cherokee humorist, Will Rogers has already used the joke: “My ancestors didn’t come over on the Mayflower, but they were there to meet the boat.”

O.K., that’s about all I can think of for now. Remember, ‘Cenke Okkosvs’—wash your hands. Have good prayers and thoughts about our peoples facing this viral crisis.

LEGALS

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
OKMULGEE DISTRICT

DISTRICT COURT  
FILED

Case No. AD-2019-10  
JUN 15 2020 P 1:06  
MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
DONNA BEAVER  
COURT CLERK

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF: )  
)  
MARLEY MARIE OWENS, )  
DOB 01/08/2009 )  
)  
MALI LEANNE OWENS, )  
DOB 11/25/2013 )  
)  
and )  
)  
TITAN JACK DANIEL OWENS, )  
DOB 11/14/2014 )  
)  
Minor Children. )

ALIAS NOTICE OF HEARING ON BEST INTEREST  
AND FINAL DECREE OF ADOPTION

THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

TO: DANIEL JAMES OWENS  
Biological Father

NOW on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020, the Petitioners, Jason Patrick McNulty and Crystal Marie McNulty, by and through their attorneys, Catherine Z. Welsh and Jim C. McGough, Welsh & McGough, PLLC, having filed their *Application for Setting of Best Interest Hearing and Final Decree of Adoption* herein, the Court FINDS that the Application should be granted and that the same should be set for hearing on best interest and entry of final decree.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Court that this matter be, and it is hereby set for hearing on the 11th day of June, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Courtroom, 2501 Lvnhvike, Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447, for determination of best interest and entry of a final decree of adoption, and that notice thereof be given to all interested parties.

EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION AT THE TIME AND PLACE SHOWN ABOVE WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AND HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. YOUR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT SAID HEARING SHALL CONSTITUTE A DENIAL OF YOUR INTEREST IN THE CHILDREN, WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS, IN THE ADOPTION OF THE CHILDREN WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION.

Signed and dated this 15<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2020.

*[Signature]*  
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Prepared by:  
Catherine Z. Welsh, MCN #358  
Jim C. McGough, MCN #914  
Welsh & McGough, PLLC  
Midway Building  
2727 E. 21st St., Ste. 600  
Tulsa, OK 74114  
(918) 585-8600 – telephone  
(918) 794-4411 – facsimile  
*Attorneys for Petitioners*

# HAS THE PRESCRIPTION OPIOID CRISIS AFFECTED YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW? YOU COULD BE COMPENSATED FROM THE PURDUE PHARMA L.P. BANKRUPTCY.

FILE YOUR CLAIM BY JUNE 30, 2020.

PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY. YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE AFFECTED.  
PARA INFORMACIÓN EN ESPAÑOL, VISITE EL SITIO WEB.

**WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?**  
If you think you’ve been hurt by Purdue Pharma L.P., a U.S. limited partnership, its general partner and its subsidiaries, including Imbrium Therapeutics L.P., Adlon Therapeutics L.P., Greenfield BioVentures L.P., Avrio Health L.P., Rhodes Technologies, and Rhodes Pharmaceuticals L.P. (“**Purdue**”), or Purdue prescription opioids, like OxyContin®, or other prescription opioids produced, marketed or sold by Purdue, you can file a claim for compensation in the Purdue bankruptcy proceeding. The deadline to file a claim is **June 30, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

**WHAT IS A CLAIM AND WHO CAN FILE?**  
A “claim” means a right to seek payment or other compensation. You must file a Proof of Claim Form so it is actually received by the deadline. It can be filed by you, by a legal guardian, by survivors, or by relatives of people who have died or are disabled. **All Personal Injury Claimant Proof of Claim Forms and any supporting documentation submitted with those forms will be kept highly confidential and will not be made available to the public.** You do not need an attorney to file a proof of claim for you.  
Additionally, partnerships, corporations, joint ventures, trusts, governmental units, and Native American Tribes may also file a proof of claim against Purdue.  
Go to **PurduePharmaClaims.com** to find a complete list of instructions on how to file a claim. You will also find a list of the opioids produced, marketed or sold by Purdue.  
You may file a Proof of Claim even if a settlement is contemplated in the Purdue bankruptcy so that your claim can be considered as part of any settlement.

**WHO DOES THIS AFFECT AND WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?**  
If you think you’ve suffered harm from Purdue or its prescription opioids, you have the right to file a claim even if you may also have received reimbursement from insurance. Examples of claims that may be filed in the Purdue bankruptcy include death, addiction or dependence, lost wages, loss of spousal relationship benefit for things like child-rearing, enjoyment of life, etc., or Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (sometimes referred to as “NAS”), among others.  
**The deadline to file a claim is June 30, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.** If you do not file a claim by the deadline, you will lose the right to file a claim against Purdue, and you will lose any right to seek payment or compensation you may have had. Proof of Claim Forms, a list of opioids produced, marketed or sold by “Purdue,” and instructions for how to file a claim are online at **PurduePharmaClaims.com**. You can also request a claim form by mail, email or phone:

**Purdue Pharma Claims Processing Center**  
**c/o Prime Clerk LLC**  
850 Third Avenue, Ste. 412, Brooklyn, NY 11232  
**Email:** [purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com](mailto:purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com) - **Phone:** 1.844.217.0912

**THIS IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION.**  
Is Purdue out of money? No. For more information concerning Purdue’s bankruptcy, Frequently Asked Questions, Proof of Claim Forms, examples of personal injury and other claims that can be filed, instructions on how to file a claim, and important documents including the Bar Date Notice, visit

**PurduePharmaClaims.com, or call 1.844.217.0912.**

Scan Now

OBITUARIES

BEVERLY ANN WATASHE

Beverly Ann Watashe, 71, of Sapulpa, Oklahoma went to be with Our Lord on March 12, 2020, at Sherwood Manor where she was a resident.

She was born December 10, 1948 at Claremore Indian Hospital, Claremore, Oklahoma. She graduated from Kellyville High School. She attended Northeastern A&M, completing an Associates in Business Administration, then furthered her education at Oklahoma State University. She entered the workforce with the Department of Human Services 1975 and retired after 25 years of Service.

Beverly loved playing Basketball, Volleyball, and Softball. She was a four-year Letterman in all 3 sports. She was also an All-Conference player in Basketball during her Senior Year of High School. Beverly was elected Basketball Queen, and was elected Prettiest Player at the All Indian Tournament in Oklahoma City.

She was preceded in death by parents Jesse and Annie Helen Barnett Watashe and one, sister Rita Darlene Watashe.

She is survived by one daughter Chris LaDawn Baker of Tulsa, Oklahoma; three Brothers Joe Wesley Watashe of Kiefer, Oklahoma Charles Edward Watashe of Sapulpa,



Oklahoma and Allen Ray Watashe of Sapulpa, Oklahoma; six sisters Brenda Watashe Mills of Okmulgee, Oklahoma Debra Watashe Rabbit of Sapulpa, Oklahoma Cynthia Watashe Fox of Glenpool, Oklahoma Jessie Watashe Sapulpa, Oklahoma Patricia Watashe Dunn of Mannford, Oklahoma, Sharon Watashe Lee of Tulsa, Oklahoma and numerous nieces and nephews.

Wake services were held on March 16 at Traditions Funeral Chapel in Kellyville. Services were held on March 17, 2020 also at Traditions Funeral Chapel with burial to follow at the Watashe Cemetery.

Private family services were arranged through Traditions Funeral and Cremation Services out of Kellyville, Oklahoma.

DAVID EDWARD FOX

David Edward Fox was born July 21, 1963 at Claremore Indian Hospital, Claremore, Oklahoma. David passed from this life on April 4, 2020.

David attended Sapulpa Public Schools all 12 years. He was in cross-country and track. He graduated in 1981. He attended Haskell Indian Jr. College. During his younger years he played basketball and fast pitch softball until an injury sidelined him. He was an avid St. Louis Cardinal and OU Sooner fan.

He enjoyed helping his mom cook. His family enjoyed his cooking, especially when he made sofkey and popcorn balls. He enjoyed his time with family and friends. He enjoyed being with his special friend Salena and her brother Mark and his wife Anita.

David was preceded in death by parents Herbert and Martha Fox; brother Roger Fox; nephews Dondi Fox and Zackary Pickering and brother-in-law Mike Columbus.

David is survived by brothers Steve Fox and Phillip Fox of Sapulpa, Adam Fox of Norman, Mark and Sheila Fox of Sapulpa, Micah and Janie Fox of Glenpool; sisters Stephanie Fox Leaf of Broken Arrow, Lu Fox Columbus of Kiefer, Lydia Pick-



ering and Melinda Fox of Sapulpa and numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Honorary bearers were Simon Harry, Joe Watashe, Mark Watashe, Sonny Hill, Bunky Hill, Robert David Leaf, Chris Leaf, Anthony Columbus, Lucas Columbus, Cub Columbus, Micah Roger Fox, Dylan Fox, Thomas Wolfe, Trenton Wolfe, Jordan Warrior, Tyies Warrior, Jeremiah Maddox, Isaiah Maddox, Kylar Bearpaw, Kale Bearpaw, Maverick Chisholm, Eric Williamson and Joe “Hawk” Watashe.

Private family services were arranged through Traditions Funeral and Cremation Services out of Kellyville, Oklahoma.

LUCILLE JOHN

Lucille John of Muskogee died Wednesday, April 1 at the age of 82. Lucille was born on May 15, 1937 in Bristow, Oklahoma. She was the daughter of Johnson and Munnie (Bear) Bluford. She attended Chilocco Indian School. On November 1, 1958, she and Willie Joe John were married in Bristow, Oklahoma. Mrs. John’s professional career consisted of federal government service with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Veteran Affairs before her retirement in 1994. Lucille was a member of the First Indian Baptist Church in Muskogee and a citizen of the Muskogee (Creek) Nation.

Lucille was a proud grandmother and devoted to her 4 grandchildren. She enjoyed watching her grandchildren’s soccer games, OU Sooner football, was an avid OKC Thunder fan, and fond of caring for her flowers and plants. She also enjoyed the companionship of her pet dachshund, Bama.

Survivors include her children Nancy John, of Muskogee; Charles John (Christy), of Muskogee; Sherri John (Ted Meyer) of St. Charles, MO; granddaughters Kaia and Sayre of Muskogee; grandsons Walker



and Sampson of Muskogee; a niece Monnie Underwood and extended family members Nancy Jones, Jake Wyly and special daily care provider Margaret Wilson. Mrs. John was preceded in death by her parents, husband and a sister, Lena.

The family also appreciates the care and loving support provided by all her home health and hospice care providers.

Serving as honorary pallbearers were Walter “Dub” Davis, Ted Meyer, Shaun West, Jason White, Jake Wyly, and Kenny Jones. The family entrusted Cornerstone Funeral Home with arrangements. A private family service and burial were held on Friday, April 3.

WILSON GENE KING

Wilson King, Sr. was born in Holdenville, Oklahoma on May 6, 1933 to Mary Pigeon Soweka. He passed at his home in Okmulgee, Oklahoma surrounded by family on Thursday, April 2 at the age of 86.

Wilson was second chief at Hickory Ground Ceremonial Ground. He was an active member and followed his traditional ways and attended stomp dances until his health failed.

He worked for Ryal School as custodian and bus driver for 32 years. Wilson also worked for many years as a deputy for the McIntosh County Sheriff’s office.

You could always find Wilson outdoors gardening and tinkering around the yard. He enjoyed watching wrestling, was an avid Chicago Cubs fan, liked playing dominoes and especially loved family gatherings with his children, grandchil-



dren and great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife Wanda (West) King, his mother, Mary (Pigeon) Soweka, an uncle, John Pigeon, grandson, Anthony Thomas, sister, Sally Wallace, and son-in-law Frank Bemore.

He is survived by nine children: Linda Bemore, Allen King, Bobby King of the home; Wilson King, Jr.

SUBMISSIONS

Higher Ed. Assistance

The Higher Education program provides supplemental financial assistance and opportunities to student-citizens of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in pursuing an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Deadlines for Undergraduate Grants for fall is June 1 and spring is Dec. 15. All applications can be accessed online at [www.mcnsn.gov/services/education-training/higher-education/](http://www.mcnsn.gov/services/education-training/higher-education/), for more

Sex Offender Registration and Check-in

To help stop the spread of Covid-19 the Lighthorse Police Department will be taking offender information and report-ins over the phone. Follow-ups will be conducted in person at a later date once the threat has subsided. When reporting you will need driver’s license number, citizenship number and current address avail-

and wife Karen of the Wilson Community; JoAnn Harjo and Steve Wind of Okmulgee;

Dewayne King of Morris; Lisa Sands and Clifford of Okemah; Jimmy King and Dana of Weleetka; Christine King and Charley Hicks of Henryetta; brother, Larry Joe Soweka;

Eighteen grandchildren, thirty-seven great grandchildren, & a host of other family & friends.

Pallbearers are Travis King, Corey King, Creighton Barnoski, Matthew King, Clifton Sands and Charlie Hicks.

Honorary pallbearers are, Scott King, Merle Kesssee, Rocky Pigeon, Rodney James, Phillip Crawford, Trenton Barnoski, Cliffod Sands and Steve Wind.

A private family wake, funeral service and burial was held at Hutchechuppa Church with interment in Hutchechuppa Church Cemetery under direction of Integrity Funeral Service.

able. Please contact Officer Dan Beaver or Officer Cody Townsend at Lighthorse Police Department (918) 732-7800.

Thank You

The family of Wilson King, Sr. would like to express our gratitude to Integrity Funeral Service, Hutchechuppa Church, Wallace Gambler and a special thank You to all that donated flowers, food and monetary gifts and especially for all the encouraging words and prayers during the loss of our Dad. Mvto.

TRIBAL DIAGNOSTICS TO START COVID-19 TESTING

NATIVE AMERICAN OWNED HIGH COMPLEXITY DIAGNOSTICS LAB TO BEGIN TAKING COVID-19 SAMPLES

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma —Tribal Diagnostics, a Native American-owned high complexity diagnostics laboratory based in Oklahoma City, is set to begin accepting COVID-19 samples from healthcare providers in Oklahoma and across the country. Testing is affordable and will occur in two phases.

“Tribal Diagnostics is proud to use our experience during these challenging and unprecedented times. We have now conducted over one million laboratory tests and feel uniquely positioned to join the fight to control the COVID-19 outbreak in Oklahoma and particularly within our often-vulnerable tribal and rural communities. Our mission is to help improve health outcomes in Oklahoma by doing what we do best – providing comprehensive lab analysis as quickly as possible,” said Tribal Diagnostics CEO Cory Littlepage, who is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation.

Tribal Diagnostics will start the first phase of Coronavirus testing, which will test for the COVID-19 antibody, on April 23. The serology blood antibody test is designed to identify if a person has previously had the Coronavirus. Tribal Diagnostics will run antibody tests on its Abbott ARCHITECT instrument which can test 100 patient specimens per hour.

The second phase, which is set to start in May, includes a nasal swab molecular polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test that detects the presence of the virus and identifies if a person currently has COVID-19. The test is currently in development but will be run on its ThermoFisher QuantStudio instrument which can test 200 patient specimens per day.

Oklahoma had its first confirmed case of COVID-19 in early March, and the effect on rural and Tribal communities is of concern for many health providers.

Looking to avoid delayed test results in these areas, Tribal Diagnostics is joining the team of healthcare facilities helping Oklahoma citizens learn more about the virus and recover as quickly as possible.

“For antibody tests, knowing if a person was previously infected helps provide context



Native American owned high complexity diagnostics lab based in Oklahoma City set to begin accepting COVID-19 samples. (Submission)

on who is developing protection against COVID-19. Knowing who has some level of immunity is an important factor in determining when a person can safely return to work or restart life,” Littlepage said. “Antibodies take time to develop so understanding the early detection of COVID-19 through a PCR molecular test is critical in controlling the virus and determining treatment options.

Littlepage added that finances should not prevent someone from being able to have access to Coronavirus testing, so the Oklahoma City-based lab will only charge the Medicare rate for these COVID-19 tests. Tribal Diagnostics currently has contracts with UnitedHealthcare, Cigna, Aetna, HealthChoice, Healthcare Highways, Medicare, and Oklahoma Health Care Authority which will help cover the cost of medically necessary tests. An agreement with Humana will begin June 2020.

While Tribal Diagnostics is available to serve all healthcare providers, they are working hard to ensure Tribally-operated facilities are receiving focused

care and analysis during the Coronavirus pandemic. Oklahoma is home to more than 39 Tribes and Tribal Organizations, each serving the potentially vulnerable population of American Indians.

“The option for Oklahoma and Tribal residents to use an Oklahoma-based lab is a great benefit,” said Littlepage. “We are acutely aware of the health status and needs of Oklahomans and American Indians and we take that status very seriously. We want the Tribes to know they can trust us, and their health and recovery is our top concern. Providing and caring for one’s community is ingrained in American Indian culture and therefore ingrained in the fiber of our company.”

Director of Tribal Relations, Bailey Walker, will lead members of the Tribal Diagnostics team in reaching out to Oklahoma state and Tribally-owned and operated health facilities on how to submit patient samples. Healthcare facilities interested in using Tribal Diagnostics for COVID-19 testing should contact their Territory Manager or the lab directly at 405-869-2978.

# WILLIAMS TEACHES CULTURE THROUGH HIS FILMMAKING

## FILMMAKER SHARES STORY OF CHOCTAW AND CREEK SISTERS WHO LOVE STICKBALL IN HIS LATEST PROJECT

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—Choctaw filmmaker, Mark Williams lives to teach others about his culture and other Native cultures through his documentary filmmaking.

According to an interview with Mvskoke Vision, Williams has always been creative and loved to write but once he got older he wrote his very first script in 2006. He wrote a short script and submitted it into a contest and at the same time he made a short film.

“I wasn’t too serious at the time of making the film, I got family and friends together to help out because it was a \$200 budget so it wasn’t big,” Williams said.

After making this film he only sent copies to family, but eventually someone from Red Fork Film Festival out of Tulsa gave him a call asking if

he might be interested in submitting his film. Williams had never been in a film festival before he took the offer.

Years passed and in 2012 he began to make documentaries, but continues to do narrative films but not as much. He hopes what inspires him might inspire other people, especially when he makes documentaries that connect to the culture.

“About two year ago I made a stickball film for Choctaw Nation,” Williams said. “I learned a lot about Choctaw stickball the history of it and what it means to us. Growing up I didn’t play stickball, because it wasn’t as popular as it is now.”

Williams noticed the sisters were always participating at the stickball games he was filming. He decided to feature them in his latest endeavor.

He said they got a late start learning how to play stickball but hopes thier story is inspires



A scene from the current documentary that Choctaw filmmaker Mark Williams is working on, featuring Aliyah Myers, one of the two Choctaw/Creek sisters who enjoys playing stickball. (Submission)

others to learn.

“For me it was to share their story and hopefully inspire others to follow their lead,” Williams explained about the documentary. “It’s an ongoing process, we’re still shooting it right now. It’s kinda developing as we’re shooting, its taking its own path right now.”

Choctaw’s do not have their own grounds anymore so it is more of a sport. Stickball is called “Little Brother of War,” with Choctaw’s instead of going into battles or wars with other tribes and communities they would play stickball.

The two sisters play for Choctaw Nation, they play with

a team called Tvshka Homma. They travel with their team playing in Texas and Mississippi for the Stickball World Series. Their team competes against Cherokee’s and Chickasaw’s teams.

To view Mark’s work visit, [www.markdwilliams.net](http://www.markdwilliams.net) or Facebook at Digital Feather Media.



MCN will continue to foot the bill for payroll, as the gaming facilities remain closed through the COVID-19 public health crisis. (MN File Photo)

# TRIBAL NATION CONTINUES TO INVEST IN EMPLOYEES

## EMPLOYEES WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE BASE PAY AND BENEFITS UNTIL MAY 15 AMID CLOSURE AS BOARD MEETS WEEKLY TO EVALUATE COVID-19

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

TULSA, Oklahoma— The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Casino shut down has been extended until at least May 15, according to MCN Press Secretary Jason Salsman. The Gaming Operations Authority Board and Casino Officials are continuing to monitor and evaluate the COVID-19 situation.

In a climate of economic uncertainty and rising unemployment due to corona virus, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has invested millions to keep employees and maintain services.

The tribal gaming facilities have been closed due to safety precautions in the wake of COVID-19 since March 16.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill and River Spirit Casino Resort Chief Executive Officer Pat Crofts made the announcements throughout the pandemic but did not issue a release on the latest extension.

While none of the tribal gaming facilities ever reported positive COVID-19 cases, officials have voluntarily shut down operations as a precaution.

After April 30 officials will review forecasts by federal health officials.

According to the earlier releases the tribe is focused on being a good leader in a crisis.

The 2,200 employee’s payroll totals about \$3.4 million every two weeks. Over the course of four pay periods the MCN will have invested \$13.6 million in employee play and benefits.

# HIGHER ED FUNDING HELPS CITIZEN SUCCEED

## MCN HIGHER EDUCATION SENDS CITIZEN TO LAW SCHOOL

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—Mvskoke Media is beginning a new series spotlighting Muscogee (Creek) Nation higher education students, with Hannah Stidman as the first student.

Stidman received a Tribal Funds Grant through Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s Higher Education program. The funding from this grant allowed her to complete her undergraduate degree from Oklahoma State University. Stidman is currently in her second year of law school at the University of Tulsa, where she is pursuing a degree in the areas of Native American Law and Environmental Law.

“Creek Nation has not only provided me with funds for school but it has provided me with opportunities to make me a more accomplished student,” Stidman stated.

“For example, I was given the opportunity to submit a proposal along with other students in the tribe pursuing their masters and doctoral degrees,” Stidman said. “I was chosen as an applicant to give a presentation at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Scholars Forum last summer, and was fortunate enough to be awarded the MCN Most Outstanding Scholar.”

The award just added on to her academic success and opens up many conversations with potential employers.

Law school has not always been Stidman’s calling, she actually wanted to be a veterinarian. She was accepted into veterinary school at OSU before graduating from high school.

“It was shortly before I started at OSU when law school became a calling,” Stidman said. “I realized I wanted to make real change in



Hannah Stidman is a recipient of the MCN Higher Education grant and is currently in her second year of law school. (Submission)

the world and knew a career in law would allow me to do that.”

She developed a plan early on in college to get herself there by finishing her undergraduate degree with 19 hours of law-related courses. She was accepted into The University of Tulsa College of Law in 2018. Her original calling for becoming a vet has influenced her studies.

Stidman will be saving her funds from Creek Nation for her bar exam preparation. Law school students take a bar course in their last semester of law school, but they begin taking online courses up until the exam which is at the end of July, according to Stidman.

“The bar prep classes are expensive and are vital for passing the bar,” Stidman stated.

After finishing law school, Stidman plans on looking for employment opportunities on the tribal level.

“Last summer I worked for a state agency, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and I am looking for experience at a federal agency this summer,” Stidman said. “My plan has been to work up the different levels of government so that I can be prepared to seek tribal employment.”

Her alternative plan is to seek employment at a state or federal agency, working in areas including environmental and tribal law. Stidman plans on giving back to the Naion, since they did help put her through school.

“I plan on giving back to the Nation by furthering my research to cover important areas of Native American law relating to its environment and resources,” Stidman said. “I want to do my part in protecting the tribe’s sacred land and cultural diversities and hope to do so through the law.”



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# GROUNDBREAKING SPIRO EXHIBITION AWARDED GRANT

EXHIBITION WILL INCLUDE THE REUNIFICATION OF A RANGE OF ITEMS LOOTED AND ARCHAEOLOGICALLY EXCAVATED IN THE 1940’S-30’S FROM SPIRO

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma–The National Endowment for the Humanities’ (NEH) has awarded a \$400,000 grant to support the exhibition “Spiro and the Art of the Mississippian World” at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. The first major presentation on the Spiro Mounds ever undertaken by a museum, the exhibition will share the art, history and culture of the Spiro people, representing the first, and possibly last, time these artifacts will be reunited from various collections across the country.

The exhibition will include approximately 200 objects and will debut at National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum February 12 - May 16, 2021, before traveling to the Birmingham Museum of Art and then to the Dallas Museum of Art.

The Spiro Mounds in Oklahoma are one of the United States’ most important ancient Native American sites, yet the Spiro people are nearly forgotten in the pages of history books, despite creating one of the most sophisticated ancient cultures. It is believed that the Spiroan people, along with other Mississippian groups across the eastern half of North America, created a world equal to that of the Aztec, Maya or Inca, consisting of trade networks and highly developed social, political and religious centers. During the 1930s, commercial and academic excavations revealed the Spiro site contained one of the greatest collections of prehistoric American Indian artifacts ever discovered in the United States.

This exhibition will include the reunification of a range of items looted and archaeologically excavated at Spiro that have not been

together since the early 1930s and 1940s. Embossed copper plates, wooden sculptures, thousands of pearls and beads, large human effigy pipes and engraved shell gorgets and cups are just some of the things that were housed at Spiro. In fact, nearly 90% of all known engraved shell created during the Mississippian period (900 – 1650 AD) was discovered at this one site.

“The quality and quantity of material found in Spiro is unprecedented,” said Eric Singleton, Ph.D., Museum Curator of Ethnology. “We are grateful to have the support of the Spiroan descendants, the Caddo Nation and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, as we work on this exhibition. Without them, this exhibition would not be possible.”

The grant was approved through NEH’s public humanities projects program, which supports projects that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life for general audiences through in-person programming. Projects must engage humanities scholarship to analyze significant themes in disciplines such as history, literature, ethics and art history.

“We are extremely grateful to be awarded a highly competitive and prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities’ grant in support of our Spiro and the Art of the Mississippian World exhibition and publication,” said Museum President & CEO Natalie Shirley. “The uniqueness and vast social importance of Spiro needs to be shared with the world, and the support and generosity of the National Endowment for the Humanities’ will help make that possible.”

For more information visit <http://nationalcowboymuseum.org/>

# LEADERSHIP FROM AMBASSADOR TO SUPERVISOR

FORMER PRINCESS COMPARES HOW THE ACTIVITIES HAS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma–Mvskoke Media continues the series of “Former MCN princesses: Where are they now?” with series nine featuring Sunny Roberts-Hammer. Hammer served as Muscogee (Creek) Nation Princess in 2000-2001.

“It was the summer after my senior year when I won the title,” Hammer said. “Back then I feel like it was honor to do it and go visit, and the main purpose was to be a good will ambassador in social events.”

Hammer said that she did not do as much as what the current princesses are doing now such as speaking at events. She was able to visit other tribes and hear different people speak, the traveling got her out of rural Oklahoma.

The Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation pageant was the first time Hammer ever ran for anything. She remembers being scared because she had never spoken in front of a large crowd before and when it came to the talent Hammer said she had no talent.

Hammer said her grandma, mom and grandparents were all members of Nuyaka Stomp-ground and that is where she grew up.

“I knew all of those traditions and dances,” Hammer said. “So I chose to show that. At the time it was probably controversial to show things that we do there in a ceremony to showing it out to the public.”

There was four girls who ran for Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and Hammer remembered thinking one girl will be going home without anything and thought it might be her.

“They started naming people second runner-up, first runner-up and Miss Photogenic,” Hammer



Sunny Hammer served as the Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation 2000-2001. (Submission)

said. “I got Miss Photogenic and I thought, ‘okay that’s what they are giving me because I’m probably not getting anything else’ then they named me as the winner, I thought oh my goodness I never thought I would win.”

During her reign, Hammer’s first big event was Inter-tribal and she did not realize there were so many tribes other than Creek Nation. Another event she was able to attend was the Gathering of Nations, where she saw so many other Native people.

While Hammer represented as Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation she had just finished high school and was going into college at Oklahoma State University to begin her studies in Engineering Graphics and Drafting. She received her associates degree in that program but was unable to find a job.


“I was married and was having

kids so I thought I have to do something,” Hammer said. “My son was about six weeks old when I started the X-ray program, and he was almost two when I finished. So I had two toddlers by the time I finished X-ray school, but we made it.”


Hammer is now working as a supervisor in the X-ray Department in Okemah, she has been there for five years in July. She currently has two kids and her husband is a coach at Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah.

“I wanted to come home and work for my people, that’s where my heart is and my parents still live there in Okemah,” Hammer said. “I enjoy working for Creek Nation.”

Stay tuned for the May 1 issue as we find out where the next former Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation is now.



## How Am I Seeing This?



Last week I was talking to a couple we often spend time with, but now are social distancing. They were sharing their struggles having the kids home, being stuck at home together, wondering how to start some type of educational curriculum, not being able to do their usual daily and weekly tasks and loss of conveniences. They were a little put out when my response was not “I understand, we are dealing with the same struggles”. Instead my response was “you’re missing it”, “you’re letting this window of opportunity slip through your fingers and you may never get it again.” I shared several examples of those who had experienced adversity and how they grew from it.

One particular event happened when I was a child in the 1970’s. My parents had friends living in Buffalo New York. That winter a snow storm hit Buffalo and dropped six feet of snow with drifts up to ten feet. My initial response was excitement and jealousy wishing we had that much snow. Not realizing exactly how much snow that really was my parents took the tape measure and showed me on the front door. My excitement and jealousy quickly shifted to “what are they going to do now?”

Later that year in the Summer those friends came to visit. They talked about their initial fears and anxiety over being stuck in their home, wondering what they were going to do and the first couple of days a drudgery. On the third day, the mom started looking at their situation in a different light. She realized she was given an opportunity with her kids to do things she had always not had time to do. She and her husband wrote down all the things they wanted to do, teach, instill, help, and even change direction for their kids and the family. Initially, when they shared it with the kids not all were on board, but as eventually they all agreed it was the best thing.

Occasionally I have contact with those, now adult kids, and they still will talk about their experience of being snowed-in and what they learned and have passed on to their kids.

Some of the things they learned or this event helped them to start working on are:

- How to truly value family more and not just exist is the hustle and bustle of life. They are more proactive to spend time together and turn off the business of the world.
  - Turned the TV off
  - Actually, had real conversations with each other and not just “how was your day” or “what did you learn at school?” questions
- How to enjoy spending time together as a family
  - Playing games
    - They had a closet full of games that had not been touched or had never been opened
  - Learning new things together – they had a ukulele and a piano they all started learning
  - Cooking together and teaching how to cook and plan meals
  - Helping each other more often – offering help when they see a need
- How to communicate better.
  - Sharing or stating their feelings more instead of just reacting
  - Speaking more positive about their siblings
  - Learning to listen and repeat what they heard instead of interrupting and stating personal opinions
  - Parents shared how they solve their disagreements
    - Often the kids did not see or know what they were doing to not blow up
- How to ask questions more and make sure what they know is correct
  - The kids learned to ask their parents questions and not just their peers.
    - Parents had to be proactive with these conversations but eventually the kids came to them more over the years and less and less with their peers.
- Sharing family history
  - Parents sat down with their stacks of picture albums and shared their family history
  - Parents shared their personal reasons for their values and beliefs
- Reframing the negative
  - How to see the opportunity instead of just the negative
    - Oddly enough they spent a lot of time outside making tunnels in the snow like a hamster maze. Great way to get energy out.
- How to not focus or dwell on the negative
  - Turned the news off and focus on just the day at hand.
  - Practiced calming and peaceful techniques

It can be hard not to dwell on all the negative from all the news, our current struggles, our situation, our fears or worries and not let it get overwhelming. One of the best ways is to work on changing your perspective. Start with asking these questions.

**“What opportunity am I given right now?”**  
– With my kids, spouse, in my relationships, to learn, to stop doing, to grow, to help, hobbies to do, books to read, projects to complete, etc.

**“What memories do I want to have about this event when I look back on it?”**  
– Some of our best memories are proactively developed. We plan vacations, weekend activities, celebrations and afterwards we are left with good memories.

**“What have I wanted to teach, share, instill in my kids but have been too busy to do?”**  
– You can look at what the family did or add to their list

**“What will I do today”**  
– Change starts with a specific time and date. Setting a day and time to start and following through will lead us closer to completion of the goal.  
– When will you get the board games out, play basketball, throw a Frisbee, teach your kids how to cook, clean, change a tire, change the oil, talk more with your kids, etc.?  
– When will you get back to that book, start or return to that hobby, practice an instrument, exercise more, paint the room, finish that project, practice calming techniques, etc.?

Answering these questions will help you be more proactive and less reactive to current events. That is what the family, I referenced, did and it made life-long memories and changes. The last question often is the hardest, because it separates good intentions and puts a time and date on it. It is important to set a specific time or day you will start doing one or more of the answers you listed in the three previous questions.

Be mindful of your expectations. The family I referenced did not make all these changes in the time they were snowed in. The snowed in was just the starting point and they purposely kept the momentum going.

If you or someone you know is experiencing anxiety, worry, fear, stress, or even depression and you feel like talking to someone about would help, contact Muscogee (Creek) Nation Behavioral Health at 918-758-1910. Text “Creek” to 741-741 if you or someone you know is in a crisis. Or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline Number at 1-800-273-8255.

Mvto!



In late spring and early summer, it is common to see turtles crossing roads as they search for mates and as females search for nesting sites. (Shutterstock)

# TURTLE SMUGGLER SENTENCED

## A NEW JERSEY MAN GIVEN TWO YEARS PROBATION AND FINED OVER \$350,000 FOR SMUGGLING TURTLES

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

TULSA, Oklahoma– A New Jersey man was sentenced in federal court to conspiring with others to purchase, transport and sell more than 1,000 box turtles unlawfully collected in Oklahoma, U.S. Attorney Trent Shores said.

A Mannford, Oklahoma hotel housekeeper entered a room, after being told for a week not to clean it, and discovered the turtles. She tipped off local law enforcement, and this eventually led to successfully dismantling an international wildlife smuggling operation.

Chief U.S. District Judge John E. Dowdell sentenced William T. Gangemi, 27, of Freehold, New Jersey, to two years of probation. The judge also ordered Gangemi to pay \$250,000 in restitution to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and a \$100,000 fine to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Box turtles can live beyond 100 years of age, and inhabit both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. This makes them valuable indicators of environmental health. They eat fruit and are essential for seed distribution. They also eat insects and carrion, curbing the spread of disease.

Additionally, they serve as

predators of fish, amphibians, snakes, mollusks and worms.

According to U.S. Attorney Trent Shores, by smuggling the turtles, Gangemi violated the Lacey Act, a federal law that makes it a felony to engage in the sale or purchase of protected wildlife that was taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of state laws or regulations.

In Oklahoma, the collection of both types of box turtles for commercial purposes is against the law. Box turtles reach sexual maturity at about ten years old and have a high nest and juvenile mortality rate. Due to these factors, turtle harvest can have highly detrimental impacts on populations.

Lueders said, “As a nation, we are very fortunate to have had the Lacey Act for the last 120 years, prohibiting trade in illegally taken wildlife, fish and plants.”

“Those who came before us knew the importance of protecting wildlife from unlawful trade, and this law remains relevant each time a poacher or wildlife smuggler is charged.”

“The success of this case is an excellent example of how crucial partnerships are to the critical work we do,” she said. “It exemplifies the mission of our agency, and our ability to achieve this mission depends on these partnerships.”

# GRANT RECIPIENT SERVING AS BACONE COLLEGE TRIBAL LIASON

## MCN HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT RECIPIENT RECEIVED DOCTORAL DEGREE FROM OSU

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma– Mvskoke Media continues the series of spotlighting Muscogee (Creek) Nation higher education students, with Dr. Nicole Been as our second student.

The Creek Nation Higher Education Doctoral Grant helped Dr. Been graduate in May 2019 with her Ph.D. in Health, Leisure and Human Performance from Oklahoma State University.

She also, received financial assistance from the tribe to pursue her undergraduate degree and masters degree. Dr. Been graduated with her Associates in Arts from Bacone College, Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training from OSU and Masters in Education and Sports Management from Baylor University.

“Getting my doctoral degree has always been a goal of mine since I was in undergrad,” Dr. Been stated. “The degree plan changed, my original plan in undergrad and masters was to go for sports management for my Ph.D. and so it definitely changed to health, leisure and human performance.”

Dr. Been studied more into the leisure aspect, looking at the role of physical activity on Native American women who are survivors of domestic violence. Dr. Been looked at their depression levels vs. their physical activity levels. The physical levels Dr. Been looked for was cultural and traditional activities like stompdance, powwow and gardening.

“My main focus for staying in school was creating a better future for myself, my local community and my people,” Dr. Been said. “I believe that education is a tool to get us



Dr. Nicole Been is a recipient of the MCN Higher Education grant and graduated with her Ph.D. in May 2019. (Submission)

into places that we normally wouldn’t get into. When I say “us” I mean Native Americans. Education is important and is a tool to create a better environment for ourselves, local community and our people.”

The funds Dr. Been received through the tribe had paid for all of her Ph.D. program.

“They helped me relieve that financial stress, to truly be able to focus on my studies and completing that coursework where I could come back and serve my community,” Dr. Been said. “Without them my Ph.D. wouldn’t have went smoothly, they definitely played that financial role allowing me to focus on my education.”

As far as giving back to the Nation, Dr. Been is currently working on her research that she is looking to publish. She wants to see what some of her findings can implement on

the tribal level. Dr. Been has a non-profit organization called the BEEN (Building, Educating, and Elevating Neighborhoods) Foundation, with this they host basketball clinics and do speaking engagements.

In addition, Dr. Been works as the Tribal Liason for Bacone College. This title allows her to go out and meet with the tribal partners to provide their citizens distance-learning program. She works with the Kiowa Tribe, Osage, United Keetoowah Band of the Cherokees, Cheyenne and Arapaho and Pawnee Nation College.

Dr. Been stated, “If you want to go to college don’t be fearful. We come from ancestors that were resilient and never gave up and continued to fight in what they believed in. That is the biggest thing for me, don’t be afraid to go and be great.”



# ATTENTION AT-LARGE CITIZENS

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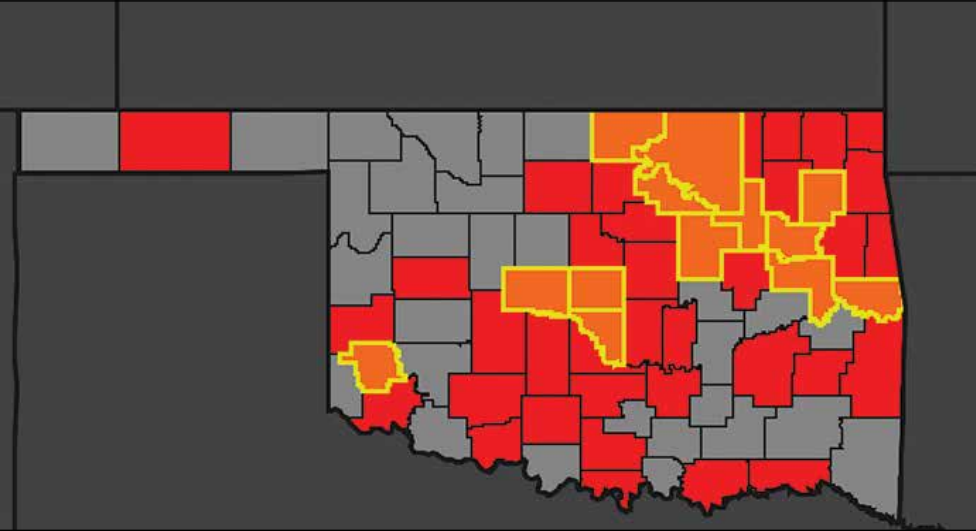
# STATE COVID-19 REPORTING FOR APRIL

MVSKOKE MEDIA RECORDS MCN SPECIFIC STATS REPORTED BY OSDH FOR APRIL

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

culated totals specific to the counties that make up the Muscogee (Creek) Nation boundaries. Totals are reported are not broken down by tribal citizenship. \*\*Note these reports are not generated by the Muscogee (Creek) Nations health facilities.

The following is a compilation of data reported by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. The following reports were use to cal-



APRIL 1

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma have jumped to 719 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 719 cases reported, 184 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has also reached 30 (12 females, 18 males), eight of which were residents in the tribal boundaries. Okmulgee County is now reporting four confirmed instances of the coronavirus and no COVID-19 related deaths.

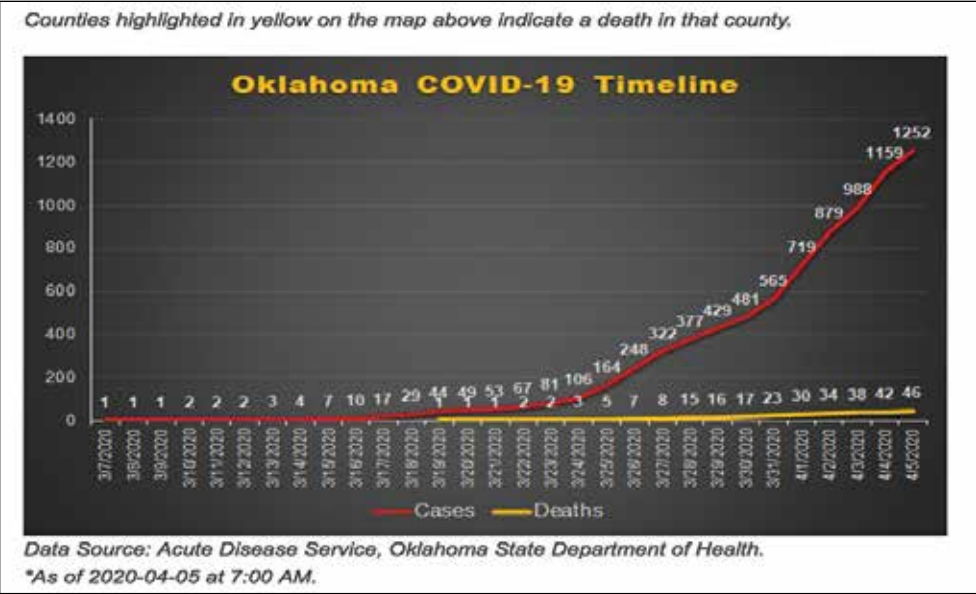
Oklahoma Gov. Kevin stated in a press conference that many testing restrictions are being lifted and that testing efforts will be ramped up.

The State is now calling for testing of anyone with symptoms of COVID-19.



APRIL 3

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma are 988 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 988 cases reported, 267 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 38 (16 females, 22 males), 12 of which were residents in the tribal boundaries. Okmulgee County is now reporting 7 confirmed instances of the coronavirus and no COVID-19 related deaths.



APRIL 5

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 1252 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 1252 cases reported, 387 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 46 (20 females, 26 males), 15 of which were residents in the tribal boundaries.

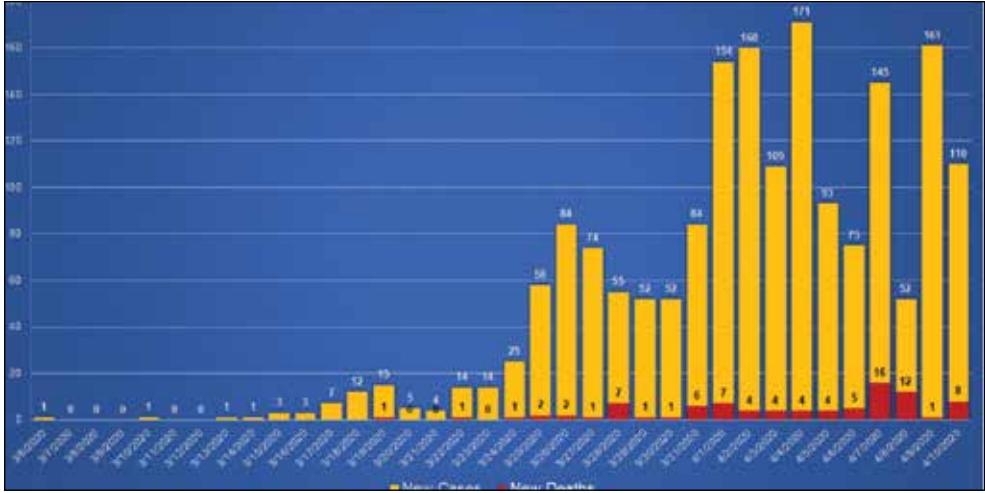
MCN Counties	Positive Cases	Deaths
Creek	47	2
Hughes	0	0
Mayes	12	2
McIntosh	1	0
Muskogee	21	2
Okfuskee	0	0
Okmulgee	11	0
Rogers	19	0
Seminole	4	1
Tulsa	293	16
Wagoner	57	4
Totals	465	33

APRIL 8

Nine people residing within the MCN boundaries have passed away since yesterday due to COVID-19 complication

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 1524 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 1524 cases reported, 465 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 79 (37 females, 42 males), 24 of which were residents in the tribal boundaries.

According to the data published by Oklahoma Department of Health the Median Age of fatal infections is 56.



APRIL 10

Over 500 people test positive for COVID-19 in the MCN boundaries, only Hughes Co. reports zero infections

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 1794 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 1794 cases reported, 510 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 88 (40 females, 48 males), 27 of which were residents in the tribal boundaries.

According to the data published by Oklahoma Department of Health the Median Age of fatal infections is 56. Of Oklahoma's 77 counties, 64 counties are reporting positive COVID-19 infections, 20 of those counties have reported COVID-19 related deaths.

COVID-19 Oklahoma Test Results	
Positive (In-State)	1,970
*Total Cumulative Negative Specimens	20,790
*Total Cumulative Number of Specimens to Date	22,511
Total Cumulative Hospitalizations	453
Deaths	96

\*The total includes laboratory information provided to OSDH at the time of the report. Total counts may not reflect unique individuals.

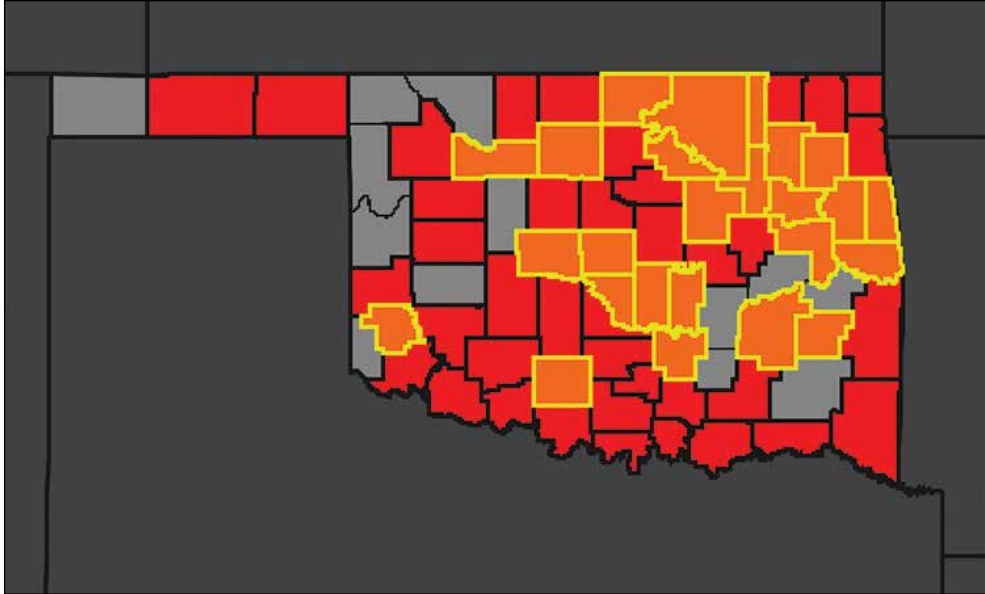
APRIL 12

Oklahoma reporting 22,511 COVID-19 Tests

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 1970 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 1970 cases reported, 537 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 9 (44 females, 52 males), 30 of which were residents in the tribal boundaries.

According to the data published by Oklahoma Department of Health the Median Age of fatal infections is 56.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation boundaries span 11 counties, some only a small portion of the county. The state has not reported any positive COVID-19 cases in Hughes Co.



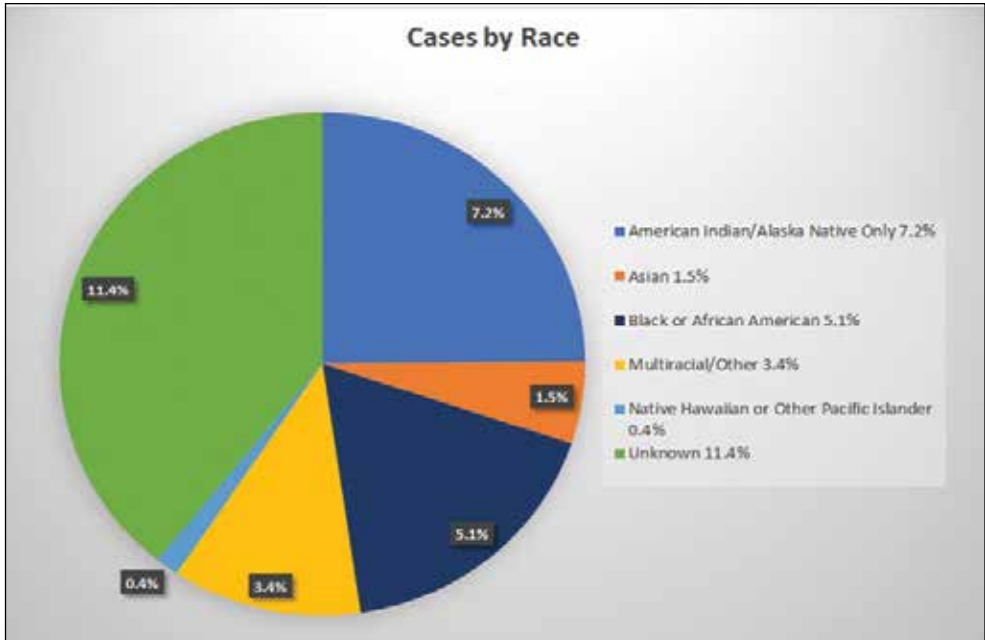
APRIL 14

Positive COVID-19 cases in MCN jurisdiction spikes over 600

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 2184 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 2184 cases reported, 605 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 108 (50 females, 58 males), 30 of which were residents in the tribal boundaries.

According to the data published by Oklahoma Department of Health the Median Age of fatal infections is 56.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation boundaries span 11 counties, some only a small portion of the county. The state has not reported any positive COVID-19 cases in Hughes Co.

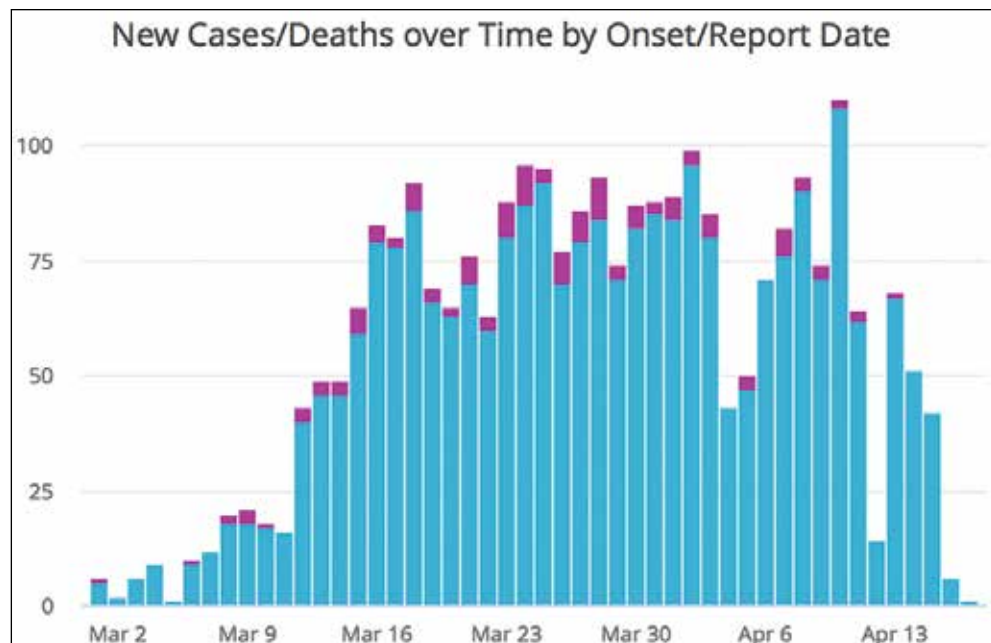


APRIL 16

State health department releases data on COVID-19 infection with ethnicity break down

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 2357 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 2357 cases reported, 637 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 131 (60 females, 71 males), of which were residents in the tribal boundaries.

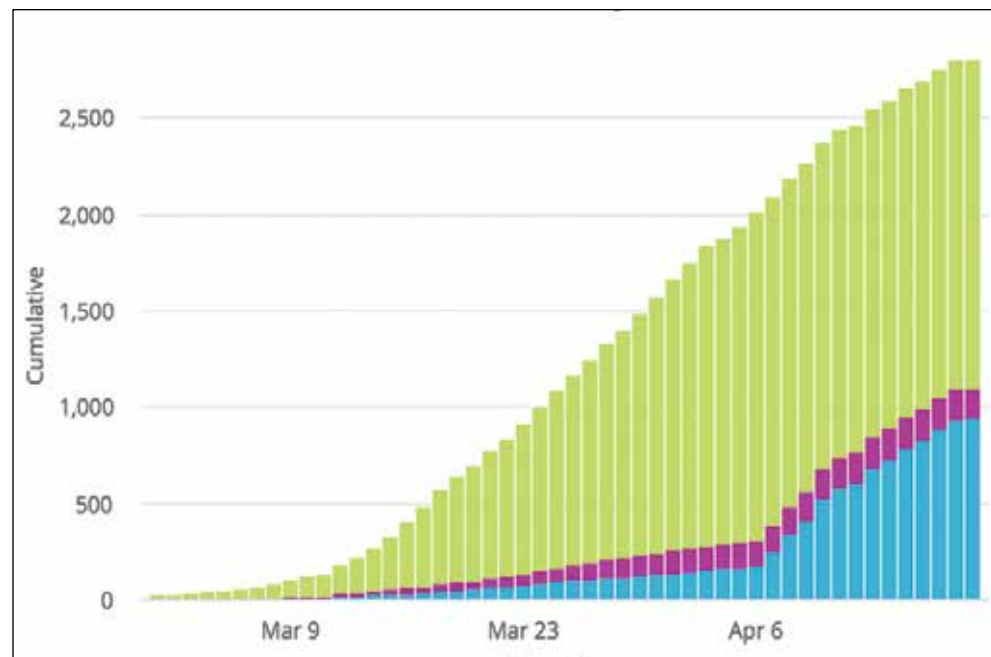
According to the data published by Oklahoma Department of Health the Median Age of fatal infections is 74. An expansion of data has been release by the state. That data reflects that 7.2% of the Oklahoma COVID-19 cases are American Indian/Alaska Natives. Native Americans represent the second largest affected population See the chart pictured below for more information.

**APRIL 18**

*Oklahoma Department of Health website publishing COVID-19 data is temporarily unavailable*  
The state did send out the statewide update but the breakdown by county and city is not viewable on the states website.

Total infected for Oklahoma is 2570 and 139 deaths. Reports indicated that so far 1,441 people have recovered. Mvskoke Media will check back throughout the day to share the county numbers as they become available.

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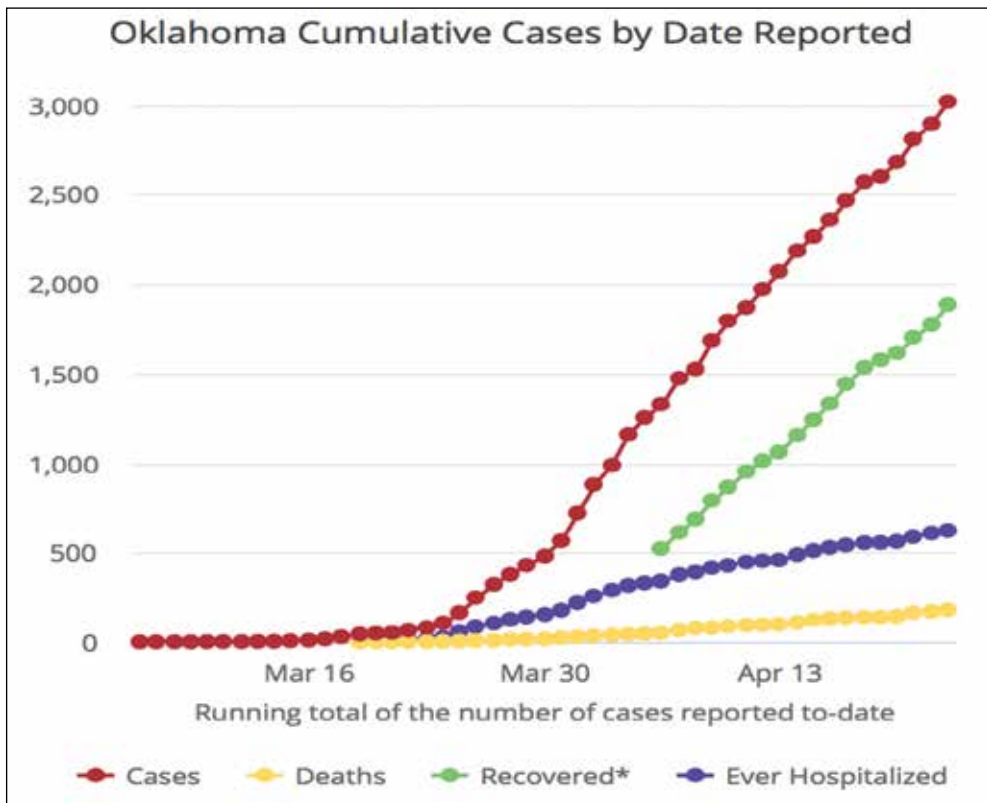
**APRIL 21**

### Oklahoma COVID-19 infection growth rate is 3%

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 2807 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 2807 cases reported, 725 of those cases exist within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 164. Of the 164, 50 were residents in the tribal nations boundaries.

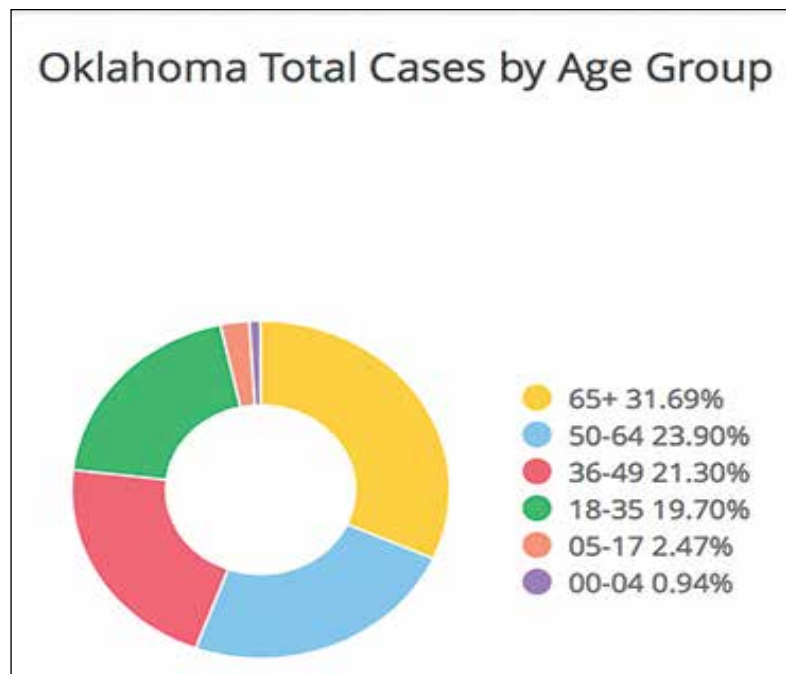
**APRIL 23**

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 3017 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 3017 cases reported, 753 were recorded within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 179. Of the 179, 53 were residents in the tribal nations boundaries.

**APRIL 24**

### Over 100 new cases and nine deaths reported in Oklahoma

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 3121 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 3121 cases reported, 753 were recorded within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 188. Fifty-four were residents in the tribal nations boundaries.



**APRIL 25**

### Thirty new cases and three deaths reported in the MCN boundaries

### Over 100 new cases and nine deaths reported in Oklahoma

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 3193 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 3393 cases reported, 786 were recorded within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 194. Fifty-four were residents in the tribal nations boundaries.

MCN Counties	Positive Cases	Deaths	Recovery
Tulsa	506	29	491
Wagoner	116	1	25
Creek	76	6	57
Rogers	50	3	34
Muskogee	26	4	20
Mayes	21	3	16
Okmulgee	16	0	14
Seminole	10	1	4
McIntosh	2	0	2
Okfuskee	1	0	1
Hughes	0	0	0
Totals	824	47	664

**APRIL 28**

## Over 130 new Covid-19 cases in 24-hours as state begins to reopen businesses

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma total 3410 according to data released by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Of the 3410 cases reported, 824 were recorded within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The number of deaths in the state has reached 207. Forty-seven were residents in the tribal nations boundaries.



**CALLING**  
— FOR **2020** —  
**GRADUATE**  
**PROFILES**

The 'Mvskoke News' will feature 2020 Muscogee (Creek) Nation high school, military, technical school and college graduates in the upcoming June 1 edition of the 'MN'.

Please provide us with the following information accompanied with a digital photo file via email to [info@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:info@mvskokemedia.com) no later than Friday, May 8 by 5 p.m. in order to be published in the 2020 'MN' graduation edition. If you do not receive an emailed confirmation of receipt, please call the office at 918-732-7720 to verify the profile has been received.

*Profiles will be edited for Associated Press style, structure, grammar, spelling, length and punctuation.*

## 2020 Graduate Profile Form

Name:

High School/College/Technical Institute/Military Program:

**Bio (150-word limit):**

**DEADLINE: MAY 8, 2020 AT 5PM**

**LATE PROFILES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

For more information, please call: 918-732-7720  
or email: [info@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:info@mvskokemedia.com)