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MVSKOKENEWS

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NEW COVID STRAIN SURFACES

HOSPITALIZATIONS HAVE REMAINED LOW IN NUMBERS IN MCN HEALTH SYSTEMS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – On the weekend after July 4, a surge in COVID cases struck the MCN and the state. During the Health, Education, and Welfare Committee Meeting, Secretary of Health Shawn Terry gave an update on the newest COVID variant spreading across the Nation on July 13.

In July, MCN Health systems administered over 350 tests, with about a quarter of them having positive results. The vast majority had symptoms of sore throat, headache, and mild to moderate fatigue.

Terry claims hospitalizations have remained low in numbers and an “almost non-existent” death rate.

“This thing, from what we’ve seen,” Terry said, “is not the killer that the previous variants were, but the cases are very, very high.”

Terry reported this variant is a little resistant to the vaccine. However, the intensity and symptoms of the virus could be reduced when fully vaccinated.

“Even if you are vaccinated, you could still catch this variant,” Terry said.

The monoclonal antibody treatment is still used to fight the virus as a second line.

According to Terry, a new treatment the health system uses is the prescription pill PAXLOVID as a first-line treatment. This treatment has caused patients to have a strong metallic taste which



BA.5 accounted for more than 75% of the country’s new COVID cases. (Shutterstock)

some claim to be unbearable to the point they would rather have the virus symptoms.

Terry claims that most are recovering with no problem with over-the-counter medication and cough drops.

“It is increasing, it is on the rise, and there’s a lot of it out there,”

Terry said. “We are trying to Assess what that’s going to do for our workforce.”

The general guidance is to stay home for five days after a positive test with no re-test necessary.

There are a lot of “what-ifs,” according to Terry.

“It is such a frustrating virus,”

Terry said. “We are now taking this off pandemic status and putting this into a chronic disease status inside of the department of health.”

The virus is mutating so fast that immunizations cannot be developed fast enough to fight each strain to the next. Terry claims the newest vaccine on the market will be developed more or less like the flu vaccine.

Terry believes the virus will be treated like the flu as it continues to stick around.

In June alone, MCNDH administered approximately 45,500 vaccines, along with 14 of those being Pfizer doses to ages 5-11.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, BA.5 accounted for more than 75% of the country’s new COVID cases. The numbers continue to grow; 122,639 new cases of COVID daily. The CDC also reports daily averages of 5,762 new hospital admissions and 336 new deaths from COVID as of July 7.

MUSCOGEE MODELS RETURN FROM TIMES SQUARE

DEERINWATER TWINS RECENTLY FEATURED IN A BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

NEW YORK CITY, New York– When most people go to Times Square in New York City, they are exposed to dozens of bright, colorful digital billboards advertising everything from entertainment and restaurants to everyday products. However, most people do not expect to see themselves illuminated by dozens of digital pixels on one of those massive billboards. This was not the case for twin sisters Autumn and Raini Deerinwater.

According to Raini Deerinwater, seeing her and her sister on one of those bright billboards was a milestone.

“It means a lot to me to be someone out of Oklahoma, be Muscogee and making a mark and saying ‘I can do this,’” Raini Deer-

inwater said. “I will always hold it close to my heart because it means more than just a picture. It’s two Native American Women from Oklahoma.”

The sisters had previously modeled merchandise for the Mvskoke Media Department. A year later, they have now been featured in one of the largest commercial junctions in the world.

“You see it on tv all the time, but seeing it in person is a whole other experience,” Autumn Deerinwater said. “I really want to go back again.”

The sisters modeled original designs by Anishinaabe Ojibwe artist Sheila Tucker. In the photo-shoot, they are seen sporting bright orange designs with beaded fedoras. The billboard campaign can be



From Left: Designer Sheila Tucker, Autumn Deerinwater, Raini Deerinwater, and photographer José Luis stand beneath a digital billboard in Times Square. (Submission)

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LIGHTHORSE MEET AND GREET

COFFEE WITH LIGHTHORSE AT DUSTIN INDIAN COMMUNITY CENTER INFORMS CITIZENS



Dustin Indian Community Members met with Lighthorse officers, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Attorney General, and a Council Representative on Aug. 5, at the Dustin Indian Community Center, Dustin, OK. (Mvskoke Media photo by Kaylea Berry/Reporter)

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

DUSTIN, Oklahoma - Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse officers, Attorney General, and Tukvptvce Representative Thomasene Yahola-Osborn met with members of the Dustin community on Aug. 5 at the Dustin Indian Community Center. They went to hear the community’s legal and law enforcement concerns and provide answers. The need for the meeting between Lighthorse and the Dustin community arose when questions were raised during the previous community meeting, and no one could answer them.

Lighthorse Chief of Police Richard Phillips updated the community members on what Lighthorse is currently doing and the department’s plans. He also explained the difficulties that they are facing due to staff shortages.

“Right now, we’re getting a special operations team together... our drone program off the ground,” Chief Phillips said. The department is looking at getting roughly six drones to aid in looking for missing people or fleeing suspects.

“We’re looking at rebuilding the K-9 department to get more out on the road and to have one on each shift,” Chief Phillips said. Lighthorse now has a swift water rescue team and a dive team with hopes of getting cold

water certified.

A new office location is being set up in Wetumka, and they are waiting for the internet and computers to start using it. This will be a new location where officers can go to fill out paperwork. The goal is to have officers in the area as the department grows.

The department’s most significant difficulty is building the force with new officers, radios for those officers, obtaining vehicles, keeping vehicles on the road, and competitive pay. These are issues across the country, and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is no different.

“We do our best ... we’re hiring, but we’ve got to vet those people,” Captain LJ Bear said. “They’ve got to be trustworthy and show a level of maturity to be able to do the job on their own.”

The department is getting people to fill the vacancies. However, some of them do not have any law enforcement experience.

Getting an officer certified and prepared to patrol alone can take a few months to over a year. New hires go to the Indian Police Academy in New Mexico for a 14-week training to get certified and then start field training with a seasoned officer. Field training is complete when the new officer has shown they are capable of patrolling on their own.

The area Lighthorse patrols

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

WILSON INDIAN COMMUNITY CENTER HOSTS BACK TO SCHOOL BASH FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

WILSON, Oklahoma - The Wilson Indian Community Center hosted it’s first Back to School Bash for community members Saturday, August 6, 2022. The event included lunch, a resource fair, school supplies, a bouncy house, and a water slide. Roughly 25 children received school supplies and enjoyed the waterslide and bounce house.

The resource fair allowed citizens to get information on different programs the tribe offers. The current programs include behavioral health, College of the Muscogee Nation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), children and family services, and contract health. Representatives for the programs brought brochures, bags, reusable bottles, notebooks, writing utensils, and more for parents and children.

School supplies were distributed to students enrolled in Kindergarten up to 12th grade. Supplies included backpacks,



Children living within the Wilson Indian Community boundaries play on the water slide at the Back to School Bash August 6, 2022 at Wilson Indian Community Center, Wilson, OK. (Mvskoke Media photo by Kaylea Berry/Reporter)

notebooks, pencils, baby wipes, Kleenex, glue, and more. Cindy Harjo, a Muscogee citizen and cosmetologist provided haircuts to students for the upcoming school year.

The community center used CMD (construction, maintenance, and development) funds to make this event happen. Raylene

B Harjo, Wilson Indian Community Center Secretary, said, “Our main purpose in this is to help the kids out, but also to try to get more community members in so we can do more.”

Wi-Fi, computers, an activity center, workout equipment, and

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described as a triple threat. It features Indigenous Designs, Artists, and Models.

“From the very start to now, Sheila has been amazing to work with.” Raini Deerinwater said. “She has an idea in her head and wants it a specific way.”

According to Autumn, Tucker’s inspiration for the designs in the billboard campaign came from a high-profile celebrity. “It was something that Rihanna had worn,” Autumn Deerinwater said. “I was like, ‘I can’t wait to wear something that was inspired by Rihanna, made by Sheila.’”

This was not Raini’s first time in New York City. However, it did mark Autumn’s first time visiting the Big Apple. The siblings got to take a carriage ride through Central Park and see the Brooklyn Bridge.

Autumn and Raini have always had a special connection with each other. “It’s literally like a best friend that’s your age,” Raini Deerinwater said.

“Being able to do things togeth-

er made things growing up that might have been a little harder easier. Or things that were fun together were made even more fun.”

Although the siblings have begun to follow their paths in life, they’re still close. The billboard campaign is a testament to that.

When asked how they complement one another, Autumn described herself as more outgoing while Raini is calmer. “She thinks a lot about things, and I’m just kind of like, let’s do it, why not?” Autumn Deerinwater said.

The sisters understand the mentality of what it means to be a role model. Even before being featured on the billboard, they always considered how their actions would be perceived by others looking up to them in school and sports.

“I’ve always known that I’ve had that role model aspect in my life, and now that I get to put it on a bigger platform and more people can reach it, yes, I do feel like a role model,” Raini Deerinwater said.

To view prior coverage of this story, visit: <https://www.mvskoke-media.com/muscogee-models-make-fashion-history-in-nyc/>

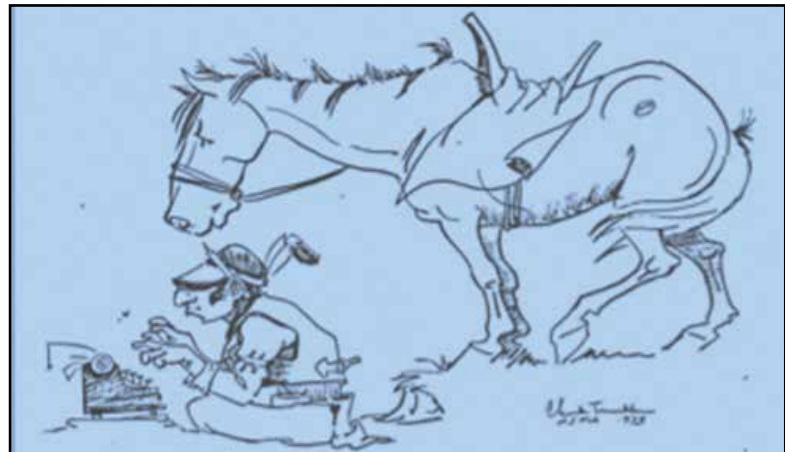
BACK 2 SCHOOL

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more are available to members by scheduling an appointment via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/wilsonnative>) or by calling the center (918) 652 - 3080. The board members include Adam Harjo - President; Mike Bear - Vice President; Raylene BHarjo - Secretary; and Linda Tsadi - Finances.

Wilson Indian Community Center distributes a ham or turkey to their community members annually during November. Information about upcoming events and meetings is spread primarily through phone calls, word of mouth, and Facebook.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month starting at 6 p.m. The Wilson Indian Community Center is located at 23275 Wilson Road, Henryetta, OK 74437. If you are unsure if you reside within the Wilson Indian Community, you can contact the MCN Community Resource and Development office at (918) 732-7963.



ENTERTAINMENT CHANGES AND OTHER CHANGES

LITTLEFEATHER VINDICATED, OTHER MOVIE STUFF, NAME CHANGES

by GARY FIFE
RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Okmulgee, Oklahoma—“Otvoskuce”—September.

Hesci! Everybody knows what that means. Most Mvskoke know this phrase? If not, here’s hoping you learn it and any other language phrases you may find useful. Our language department is doing a great job is sharing this cultural resource. Cokpe-rakko hokkolen (2,000) mvtos!

If you have paid some attention to the news, there’s a surge of interest and effort in teaching tribal languages in Oklahoma schools. Of course, the Cherokees have had their fine immersion school for some time now. But we’re hearing of other tribe’s languages now being shared. Among those are now the Kiowa and Comanche.

Here’s a huge ray of sunshine and happiness: the Hollywood Reporter announced, after 50 years, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will be apologizing to Sacheen Littlefeather, the Apache/Yaqui woman who turned down the Oscar for Marlon Brando in 1973. Brando refused the award and asked Littlefeather to stand in for him. He said it was for the way Hollywood had portrayed Native people.

It is also reported that night, actor John Wayne was so P.O’d that he had to be physically restrained from assaulting her on stage. Hey “Duke”, this attack on the Indians didn’t work out. You got beaten by an Indigenous woman!

The Academy is supposed to be presenting their apology on a program on September 17 with an interview with Ms. Littlefeather to follow. To watch it, look for the Academy’s website for details. “An Evening With Sacheen Littlefeather.” How diverse!

Still more news from the motion picture industry.

First, some tough news. Seminole/Cherokee actor, Sonny Landham has passed on. Best known for his part in the film, “Predator”, Landham died of heart problems, according to Indian Country Today. He played a small part in the New York gang film, “The War-

riors” as a cop who got his shin busted with a baseball bat. He was 76.

Still looking at the movie world, veteran Native American actor Wes Studi finally gets a role that doesn’t require feathers or buckskin. The Washington Post reported that Studi has been cast as a ‘love interest’ in his next film, “A Love Song.” Although this won’t be his acting portrayal that isn’t the usual character, Studi says, this will be the first time he gets to kiss a woman, Dale Dickey. It was supposed to be released in late July.

Remember the Mvskoke guy who threatened to kill the President and several members of Congress? He wrote that if he wasn’t paid restitution money for the Trail of Tears, federal officials would be killed. Mid-August, the U.S. Attorney’s Office announced that John Jacob Ahrens has been sentenced to 30 months in federal prison. Last December, Ahrens pleaded guilty to threatening the President of the United States and two counts of interstate communication with a threat to injure.

The National Indian Gaming Commission report that tribal gaming enterprises are more profitable than years past. The NIGC says \$39 billion is the new total, an increase of about 40 percent.

There are 510 gaming sites, owned by 243 federally recognized tribes, in 29 states.

There’s progress on the federal effort to change derogatory names on federal lands. The Interior Department has worked up a list of more than 660 candidates. Secretary Deb Haaland, (Laguna Pueblo) “created a 13-member Derogatory Geographic Names Task Force, composed of members from the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and several other government agencies, which she then tasked with surveying federal sites and generating new name alternatives.” No more “S” word!

Hvtvm cerecares—I will see you again.

Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

COMMUNITY

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are divided into two districts, North and South. The North District includes Creek, Tulsa, Wag- oner, Rogers and Mayes counties. The South District covers Hughes, McIntosh, Okfuskee, Tukvptce, Okmulgee and part of Seminole counties. The North and South districts share Muskogee County. Typically there are seven officers per shift, three shifts a day, and three to four officers for each district.

Chief Phillips said Lighthorse and other cross-deputized agencies work well together and help each other out. Checotah, Eufaula, Holdenville, McIntosh County, Wetumka, and Weleetka are some of the cross-deputized agencies. However, Dustin is located within Hughes County, which is no longer cross-deputized because Hughes County Sheriff Marcia Maxwell no longer honors the agreement.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Attorney General, Geri Wisner, brought attention to the struggles that the Muskogee Nation is currently fighting.

The most common questions from the attendees were related to who to call in an emergency. The biggest frustrations are that one agency says it is not their jurisdiction and the response times for an officer to show up.

Dustin residents and business owners have tried to get help with theft and drug issues from the Hughes County Sheriff’s Office and Lighthorse. Though they have not had much luck, response times are long, officers do not show up, or suspects are let go because officers did not see the crime take place.

One resident said he had had

roughly \$18,000 worth of property stolen or damaged. One suspect is on camera using a four-wheeler to remove his gun safe inside his home, destroying his flooring and door. He has caught two individuals trying to hotwire his four-wheeler, called Hughes County. They showed up and were told nothing could be done because they did not see the crime happening.

This individual has also taken it upon himself to follow a suspect to a location and call 911 requesting officers. The suspect was a Native American male with a Native American woman, both of which had warrants. The resident waited two hours for Hughes County to arrest the individual because of warrants, but the woman he was with was not arrested. He said Hughes County did not arrest her because “she wasn’t a big enough fish.” Hughes County Sheriff’s officers tell him that they are backed up.

Residents are frustrated that Hughes County Sheriff’s Office is not working with Lighthorse. They pointed out that the Sheriff is not running for re-election, officers are leaving, and there are only a couple officers left at the Hughes County Sheriff’s Office. They have lost hope in the Sheriff’s Office.

Residents in the area complained that gas tanks are being drilled to steal gas, and then the hole is plugged so the suspects can return to get more. Citizens have resorted to buying cameras to get some sense of security because of the high crime activity. One resident said, “you can go to bed at night and come the next morning you have stuff missing.”

Another resident spoke about her violated protective order and not getting anyone to enforce it.

She said she had to obtain an attorney because Hughes County would not take an informational report considering her children and husband are Native, even though she is not. She has tried to get Hughes County, Okmulgee County and Lighthorse to help. Lighthorse has been the only agency to show up and take an informational report.

Wisner told attendees about the Victim Compensation Fund to help alleviate some of the hardships brought forth by the criminal activity in the area. The Victim Compensation Fund is money for victims that are included in court and ticket costs. The VCF is through the Domestic Violence Program and more information is available by calling 918-732-7979.

“Article 4 Section 1 of the United States Constitution ... is the Full Faith and Credit. Under the Violence Against Women Act, any court order or protective order from ... wherever you get your protective order, it is enforceable in every 50 states, within every Tribal territory, and every other territorial area such as Guam and Puerto Rico,” Wisner said.

She said Law Enforcement Officers have a legal responsibility to enforce protective orders, and where the violation occurs, they have prosecutorial authority. If legal obligations are not carried out, then officers and departments can be and have been sued and held responsible for their negligence.

Citizens interested in attending the next Dustin Indian Community Center meeting, call Muscogee (Creek) Nation Community Research & Development at (918) 732-7963.

Anyone interested can apply for Lighthorse or other job opportunities online.



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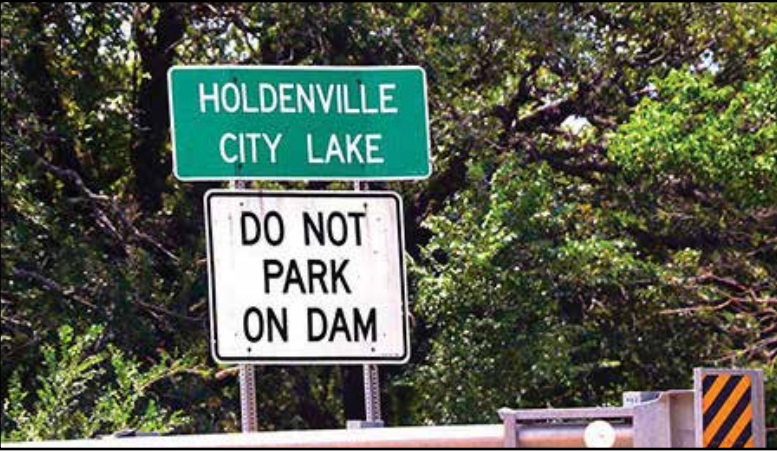
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Daniel Cully was last seen at the Holdenville Lake area on June 17. (Staff Photo: Morgan Taylor)

RED ALERT ISSUED FOR MISSING MAN

DANIEL CULLY WENT MISSING FROM THE HOLDENVILLE LAKE AREA ON JUNE 17.

by MORGAN TAYLOR
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

HOLDENVILLE, Oklahoma – A Red Alert has been issued for the case of missing person Daniel Cully. It has been over two months since anyone has seen or heard from him.

According to the family’s MMIW Lead Advocate Abbie Harjochee, a red alert is issued when someone is considered in danger. In her advocacy position, Harjochee works closely with the family and the law enforcement agencies involved in the case while organizing and conducting searches. Various MMIW/P chapters are involved in the case to assist in searching and outreach.

Harjochee and Cully’s mother, Mary Moppin, visited Mvskoke Radio on August 17, which was the two-month mark since Cully’s disappearance.

In the 60 days that Cully has been missing, Harjochee, MCN Lighthorse, MMIW volunteers, friends, and family have conducted several searches locally with no luck or trace of Cully at the Holdenville Lake and surrounding areas.

“We actually took four-wheelers out there where people couldn’t drive or walk,” Harjochee said. “We came up with nothing.”

Unfortunately, the coordination between local agencies has caused difficulties in the investigation leading to a delay in a report for Cully that was not completed until June 23.

“It took the family a few days to even get a report,” Harjochee said.

MCN Special Operations Captain Jerry Smith claimed that the search and rescue team conducted a search by foot around the area with no leads.

According to Captain Smith, a search in the lake waters was unnecessary due to the time gap between the disappearance date and the search date and environmental conditions.

“I am working with Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse, and that’s about the only agency right now,” Harjochee said. “I am actually working with the lead investigator of the case.”

Holdenville Police and Hughes Co. Sheriff are the local municipalities. In early February, the Hughes Co. Sheriff cut the working relationship between the local law enforcement and MCN Lighthorse. (<https://www.mvskokemedia.com/hughes-county-sheriff-drops-cross-deputization-agreements/>).

Almost a month later, MMIW received a report and became involved with the case on July 14.

“The minute I got it, I started

working non-stop,” Harjochee said.

Small bits of information have come up after searching that is relevant to the investigation but cannot be released at this time. Cully is believed to be alive and on the move.

“Somebody knows something. Somebody knows exactly where he’s at,” Harjochee said on Mvskoke Radio. “We just want those people to speak up.”

According to the report from Cully’s wife Tiffany and family members, his sister was the last to see him when she dropped him off at Holdenville Lake around 1:00 p.m. on June 17. His behavior leading up to this point seemed strange to his wife and family.

The day prior, Cully and his wife were having a typical day going to her dialysis appointment and eating afterward. During their meal, he had mentioned to his wife that he wanted to get a cell phone after not having one for three or four months. After errands, picking up a phone, and finally making it home in Seminole around 11:30 p.m., Tiffany told him that she was going to lay down on the couch and finish up some work, and he went to the bedroom to get his phone set up.

Tiffany could tell that he had logged on to his Facebook account because she started hearing several “dings” from notifications on the app coming from the bedroom.

It was sometime after midnight when Cully ran into the living room, telling his wife, “we got to go,” repeatedly. She packed up her laptop, hopped in the car with him, and they headed toward Holdenville.

As they were driving over New Lima Bridge, he stopped, got out of the car, and told Tiffany, “take the car back to Seminole and go home,” along with “I have to take care of something,” and started to walk the way they were driving.

She sat there watching for a moment in confusion at his actions, and he suddenly turned around toward the car and said, “I told you to go home.”

A few moments later, a car pulled up, who Tiffany believed was Cully’s stepdad. He hopped in the car and drove off with his stepdad, and Tiffany headed home. Cully struggled with

addiction and, from time to time, would go on a binge. It was not abnormal for him to sporadically take off.

“I thought he may be on the wagon, so I’ll give him a day or so,” she said.

Tiffany spent the night without a word from her husband, but she went to bed and woke up to start her Saturday. It was noon and she still had not heard from him so she started toward the Holdenville area to search for him.

Cully had made a sudden appearance at his mother’s house around 10:00 a.m. that Friday morning, where he took a shower and spoke with his mother before requesting a ride from his sister.

Moppin claims that her son said he was “tired of being a burden.” She replied, “You’re not a burden. You’re my son.”

He asked his sister for a ride in town. Once in the car, he said he needed to go to the lake, but the edge of town was fine. His sister agreed to get him to the lake, where he claimed he was “meeting someone for a job,” and they would be there around 7:00 p.m.

According to Tiffany, the sister questioned him about being dropped off so early, but he insisted, so she dropped him off anyways. She asked him, “you going to call Tiff?” and he said, “I’ll talk to all of you later.”

She said his sister gave him \$15 in cash, water, pop, and cigarettes before departing from the area and headed back to their mother’s home.

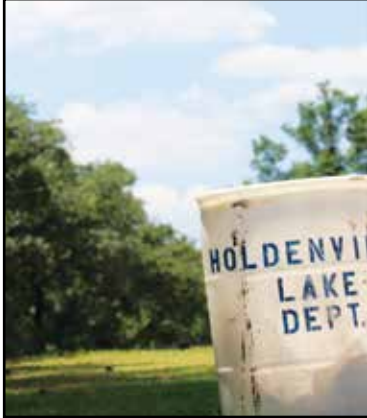
Many theories go through his wife’s head about his sudden disappearance from the area. She believes he may have been misleading everyone with his vague information and that he possibly was meeting someone at a sooner time for a different reason.

“He’s good at catching a ride,” Tiffany said. Cully would frequently walk to and from Seminole and Holdenville and would often hitchhike around the area catching rides here and there along the way.

At the time of his disappearance, Cully suffered a foot injury from stepping on a screw that Harjochee claims he could barely walk on.

“I do not believe he was on foot with his injury,” she said.

His mother claimed they had talk-



Daniel Cully’s last known location was Holdenbille Lake. (Staff Photo: Morgan Taylor)

ed about him relocating to Texas or Kansas before with hopes of finding a better-paying job, but nothing was taken into serious account.

If this were the case, his wife said she hopes he is well. “Even if he went to start a new life, I just want to know he’s okay.”

The couple has known each other since high school but reconnected as adults after his release from prison in 2019 and was shortly married in Jan. 2020.

She had a kidney transplant in 2018, but in May, the transplant started rejecting, causing her a trip to the emergency room during one of Cully’s benders.

She had to drive herself and was admitted. Upon Cully’s arrival the next day, he was shaken by her condition. She believes he may have felt a sense of guilt and trauma. She had sat Cully down to speak with him of the seriousness of her illness and that she would need him more present. She feels the sudden pressure may have been too much from him.

Any information about Daniel Cully would help to ease the mind of his wife and family.

Identifying factors: Male, 33, tattoos, 5’9, 180 pounds, black hair, and brown eyes.

Anyone with information about Daniel Cully is asked to contact the Muscogee Nation Lighthorse Police Department at 918-732-7800. Tips can remain anonymous.

Anyone inquiring about how to become an MMIW Volunteer can contact Abbie Harjochee at 405-450-2400.



Emerson encourages other local farmers and ranchers to take advantage of USDA programs. (Submission)

EMERSON NAMED CONSERVATION CHAMPION

MCN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT NAMES CITIZEN CONSERVATION CHAMPION

For Immediate Release

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Natural Resource Conservation District proudly named Josh Emerson of Checotah, Oklahoma, as a Conservation and Agriculture Reach Everyone or CARE Champion.

Over the next year, Emerson will serve as a program ambassador to the local community. He aims to increase minority and veteran participation in USDA Programs in Oklahoma and Texas.

Emerson is a rancher whose operation includes a cow and calf operation. Emerson was introduced to agriculture by his dad and has been involved in agriculture for 24 years. Farm Service Agency (FSA) allowed him to purchase his first property through the Beginning Farmers Program. Now, Josh Emerson wants to share his positive experience with other minority farmers and ranchers.

When asked what advice Josh Emerson would give to minority producers who were unsure of applying for USDA farm programs, Emerson stated, “It’s important to take advantage of USDA programs and don’t give up even if you feel like you are not being served.”

The CARE Project is a partnership effort of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Natural Resource Conservation District, the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Inc., Texas Agriforestry Small Farmers & Ranchers, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For more information about the CARE Project or to locate your conservation district, please visit www.okconservation.org/care. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Natural Resource Conservation District can be reached at (918) 549-2609 or www.conserva-tion@muscogeenation.com.



Office of Environmental Services

CURBSIDE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE / PESTICIDES COLLECTION EVENT

Thursday September 15, 2022 / 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

*** (1) Must either bring Creek citizenship card or (2) proof of being a resident of Okmulgee County such as bringing a current utility bill**

OES Household Hazardous Waste Collection event

WILL ACCEPT the following items:

- ✓ **Automotive products:** antifreeze, fluids, motor oil, oil filters, gasoline, polish and waxes (NO battery acid)
- ✓ **Paint products:** oil-based, latex and spray paints, caulk, wood preservative, wood stain, paint thinners and paint strippers
- ✓ **Other household chemicals:** toilet bowl cleaner, shower/tile cleaner, carpet cleaner, rust remover and more
- ✓ **Lawn care chemicals:** bug repellent, fertilizers, flea & tick repellent, fumigators, herbicides, insecticides, mosquito fogger, pesticides, rodenticides, stump remover

OES Household Hazardous Waste Collection event

WILL NOT ACCEPT the following items:

- ✗ **NO COMMERCIAL WASTE OR BIOHAZARDOUS MATERIALS**
- ✗ **Electronic waste:** answering machines, calculators, cameras, CD/DVD players, cell phones, pagers, holiday lights, modems, monitors, printers, radios, scanners, microwaves, etc.
- ✗ **Miscellaneous:** any type of batteries, ballasts, fluorescent bulbs, tires, cooking oil and grease, Freon cylinders or compressed gas cylinders, home fire extinguishers, mercury thermometers and thermostats, nail polish, aerosols, unused ammunition and unused fireworks



Muscogee (Creek) Nation RECYCLE CENTER

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Okmulgee, OK 74447
FOR MORE INFO CONTACT 918-549-2580



UTILITY SERVICES AGREEMENT ARRANGED FOR MCN KOWETA TAX OFFICE

MCN NATIONAL COUNCIL ADOPTS THE RULES OF PROCEDURES

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Emergency Session meeting was held in person and via teleconference on Aug 19 at the Mound Building.

The National Council addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

NCR 22-010
A resolution of the Muscogee

(Creek) National Council adopting the rules of procedures of the National Council. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the bill. It was co-sponsored by Representative Nelson Harjo Sr., Representative Joseph Hicks, Representative Randall Hicks, Representative Thomasine Yahoo-la Osborn, Representative Darrell Proctor, and Representative Mark Randolph. The bill was adopted unanimously, 13-0.

The Internal Affairs Committee and the National Council approved the Rules of Procedures. All previous resolutions



SNAP, EBT, or “food stamps” could be accepted at the Nation’s meat plant soon. (MM File)

of conflict are repealed.

TR 22-134
Authorizing the Principal

Chief to execute a utility service agreement with the city of Coweta for utility services for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Tax Commission. The bill was sponsored by Representative Charles McHenry and adopted unanimously, 13-0.

To obtain utility services from the City of Koweta, the Nation will need to execute a Utility Services Agreement, a Sewer Inspection Fee Agreement and Waiver, and a City of Coweta/Coweta Public Works Authority and Commercial Garbage Options document. The Nation will waive its sovereign immunity by abiding by regulations and policies governing said services and, in the event of default, pay all collection costs, including attorney’s fees.

The meeting, agenda, and full legislation can be viewed at www.mcnncc.com.

LANGUAGE PARTNERS WITH LOCAL SCHOOL

VAWA GRANT TO BRING AWARENESS APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare Committee meeting was held on August 10 at the Mound Building.

All passed legislation is subject to full council approval during the regular session.

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

TR 22-110
Authorizing the Election

Board to execute an Attorney Contract between the MCN Election Board and Seacat Law Firm. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the resolution, which was postponed indefinitely, 4-0.

The election board is seeking counsel to prepare for the next election. The board has used this law firm and is satisfied with the service.

TR 22-133
Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the MCN and the Okmulgee Public Schools for Mvksoke Language Services. Rep. Robert

Hufft sponsored the resolution, which passed 4-0.

The Mvksoke Language Program will provide language classes through the Okmulgee Public Schools to promote and preserve the language per grant requirements.

TR 22-091
Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women to benefit the Family Violence Prevention Program. Rep. Leonard Gouge sponsored the resolution, which passed 4-0.

The FVPP was awarded the Firearms Technical Assistance



Election Board seeks attorney. (MM File)

Project Pilot Sites Initiative Solicitation Grant of \$500,000. The grant will strengthen the tribal justice system to increase victim safety and offender ac-

countability and reduce access to firearms by domestic violence offenders.


To view legislation, visit www.mcnncc.com.




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WEST COAST CITIZENS REUNITE WITH MCN

CITIZENS BEYOND CONFERENCE RETURNS

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

FRESNO, California – When you are a citizen living far beyond your tribe’s reservation, it is natural to feel disconnected. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation headed to the West Coast to bridge that disconnect by hosting the 2022 Citizens Beyond the Reservation Conference Aug 6. This marked the first time the conference had been held in two years due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The conference featured booths from various departments providing services and information. Many booths provided freebies, pamphlets, and cultural crafts.

MCN Citizenship kept busy printing new citizenship cards. Dan Beaver’s booth featuring his hand-made war clubs was a hit at the event. Muscogee Royalty taught citizens how to make corn husk dolls at a booth that consistently saw a long line.

According to Principal Chief David Hill, California holds one of the largest populations of Muscogee Citizens outside of Oklahoma.

“Regardless where you’re from, north, south, east, west coast, you’re still Muscogee. That blood runs through your veins.” Principal Chief Hill said.

The conference was estimated to attract between 175-200 citizens from beyond the reservation. The actual number lay somewhere upwards of 300, according to the MCN Tribal Liaison Anne Townsend Edwards. Some citizens drove as far as five to six hours to attend.

The conference provided a way for Townsend Edwards and the tribe to gauge where they are at in terms of presence and outreach outside the reservation.

“It just has helped me to learn so much more about our citizens and what they long for as far as being a part and that disconnected feeling that they feel,” Townsend Edwards said.

For citizens residing far beyond the reservation in areas like California, it can feel isolating as a member of the tribe. Muscogee Community Engagements and Celebrations are not as easily accessible compared to those living on the reservation.

According to MCN Citizen Akua Maat, seeing her tribe’s leaders in person was a special occasion. For a citizen living on the West Coast, it’s not every day you get to see your tribal leaders and citizens.

“You’re in a whole other location, a whole other place,” Maat said. “It’s almost like a family reunion,”

If the citizens living beyond the reservation cannot come out to the tribe, bringing the tribe to the people is the philosophy for the outreach. The outreach acts as a way to bridge a gap, establish a presence in their backyard and connect them with tribal services.

“You always want to be connected to your native community, and while they have a little bit of that going on out here and they’re trying to connect, what they don’t have is that connection to their actual tribe, to the actual culture, to the actual activities that we do,” Townsend Edwards said.

She has made it her goal to build connective tissue with citizens beyond through newer media like Facebook live. This allows citizens like Danielle Mendoza Madrigal to stay informed on issues and events in the nation.

“It just has really created connections that I know I didn’t really feel prior to her, kind of reaching out to all of the citizens that live beyond the reservation, so it’s really important to us,” Mendoza Madrigal said.

She went on to say that although it’s important for leaders to make appearances beyond the reservation, it is also important for them to listen to the problems of citizens beyond the reservation experience.

Living outside of the state your tribe resides in can also provide a disconnect in the services citizens rely on, like healthcare. For MCN Citizens like Joy Sweger, who take pride in their tribal identity, living far away can be disconcerting.

“The State of California treats you as if you’re only native if you’re a native nation that is out here,” Sweger said.

Reuniting with her tribe helped Sweger dwindle those troublesome feelings.

“It means everything to my brother and me and my family. It makes us feel connected that we’re not just a lost tribe out here,” Sweger said. “If we didn’t have our nation reaching out, we wouldn’t have anything.”

Sweger is a historian and student of Native American Culture and History. She teaches Zoom classes on Native American topics, including education, citizenship, folklore, and depiction in media.

“I’m just trying to correct the history, to bring it alive so that people will be more interested in it. To eradicate what Hollywood and the history books said and



Various Muscogee (Creek) Nation departments set up booths at the conference to inform and connect citizens beyond the reservation with services provided by the nation. (Staff Photo: Braden Harper)

help people understand who we truly are. What is our culture? What do they mean? What did they get wrong?” Sweger said.

William Jones is an MCN Citizen born and raised in San Bernardino. He enjoys collecting autographed memorabilia. Like many others, he was excited to see his tribe after so long apart.

“We’re all Muscogee, and it’s nice to see that they don’t forget that there are other people outside the reservation that are just like them,” Jones said.

Raymond Harjo is an MCN Citizen and a 95-year-old military veteran. Orphaned at a young age, Harjo was raised by his aunts and would later serve in the army medical core. Although Harjo’s family regularly visits Oklahoma, for him, it was a nice change for the tribe to visit him.

“We’ve been going back to Oklahoma, but we’re still here,” Harjo said. “I’m glad many of them came out here to visit.”

MCN Citizen Butler Beker was thankful for meeting with the tribe in his state. The journey to the conference was much more sensible than traveling several states.

“It’s a great blessing. We’ve driven back to Oklahoma several times to get our initial cards and enrollment. It’s been a huge blessing for them to come out here where I have to travel 150 miles down here versus 2,000 miles,” Beker said.

According to Beker, seeing his people in an area with very few Muscogee People made him feel connected with his tribe and Oklahoma.

“It’s great to be among your people. In Northern California, where I live, there’s not many Muscogee that I know.” Beker said.

How did they get there?

Some MCN Citizens had previously lived in Oklahoma and moved to states like California and Oregon. Others were born off the reservation, descendants of citizens that moved west for different reasons.

“My family came out of Oklahoma and went into Arizona, probably if I remember correctly, right after World War II,” Maat said. “Been in California, born and raised all this time.”

“They moved back out here in the middle the to late 1940s. My grandfather was in the air force,” Jones said.

“I was born in California,” Mendoza Madrigal said. “My grandpa is where the Creek Citizenship came down through and he moved here from Oklahoma with my great-grandma and great-grandpa probably in the 50s.”

Initially raised in Okmulgee, Harjo traveled overseas to serve in the military.

“I wound up on a hospital ship. We had to bring back the wounded from the Philippines,” Harjo said. “That was in 1950 when I came out to California”

From there, Harjo connected with his brother in Fresno, found work, and eventually raised a family of his own.

Citizens like Sweger journeyed west in search of economic opportunity.

“In 1986, 87, when the recession hit, I was looking for a job. I was living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, my husband and I. I got a job in Los Angeles and ended up in Culver City,” Sweger said.

Beker’s grandparents migrated to California to connect with the family. According to him, his grandfather moved to Cali-

fornia after losing his land due to financial problems.

“We had relatives that had lived here in California. He decided to pack up and move out here. That was twelve kids. My grandfather, grandmother, and twelve children moved out here in one vehicle,” Beker said. “They moved out here to Fresno. From there, we kind of spread out over California.”

Citizens Beyond Outreach Onward

Although the event provided more access to services, it also offered the citizens something they had been lacking from their tribal community: fellowship. Whether it was sharing stories, catching up on life events, or joking, laughter and good conversation rang throughout the outreach event.

“That’s really what being Muscogee is all about. Sitting around the table and talking with each other.” Second Chief Del Beaver said.

The day wrapped with Members of the National Council and church groups singing traditional Mvskoke Hymns.

“What I want them to take away is that they may have felt that disconnection, but we do care about them, and they feel it today. They know that we care about them. I’ve told them, hugged them, let them know I’m here for them,” Townsend Edwards said.

The event was such a hit that MCN tribal leaders expressed interest in increasing the number of citizens beyond conferences to connect with more citizens in different areas of the country.

MVSKOKE LANGUAGE CLASSES NOW IN OKMULGEE SCHOOLS

LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT GRANT BRINGS MUSCOGEE (CREEK)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – The Mvskoke Language Program is partnering with Okmulgee Public Schools to implement classes in the curriculum to teach all attending students the Mvskoke Language as a part of the first grant awarded to the department. The grant total is \$128,118 for three years.

Manager Judy Montiel said the Preservation and Maintenance grant allowed the department to hire a grant project manager and two teachers who will teach at a school site, implementing the “Opunvkv Kerretv” Learning the Language Project.

Grant Project Manager Paskova Deere was hired in May with grant funding and has worked diligently to fulfill the needs of the grant and preserve the language. His passion is language, with the sole purpose of vamping up language outreach for the Mvskoke

people. Steven Powell and Carolyn McNac were hired as teachers with the grant funds and will teach language in the classrooms.

It has been estimated that the Mvskoke language will be extinct in 20 years unless the youth are taught to preserve and learn the language.

The narrative grant states that to fix this problem, the department will provide in-person Mvskoke language instruction to 180 K-5 students at six Johnson-O’Malley Schools and offer a virtual learning platform for 170 Native American K-12 students throughout all 45 Johnson O’Malley Program school districts. This project aims to increase the number of Mvskoke K-12 students who speak the Mvskoke language.

Classes will emerge into the students’ routine schedules starting in kindergarten. The Okmulgee Primary (k-5) will implement the courses in a rotation schedule so that each group will have the class once a week with an in-

structor Monday-Thursday. The Dunbar Middle School students will have the classes five days a week for nine weeks at a time for each grade, and the High school students will have them every Friday for nine weeks as part of the interchangeable pilot program for Native American studies.

During a HEW Committee meeting, the Language Department asked for the National Council’s approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the school and the MCN on Aug. 10. The committee approved the MOU.

According to Deere, it is mainly for the teachers’ best interest due to past experiences where teachers have been coerced into bus or detention duty even though they are not school employees.

Deere said the Principal Chief signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nation and the school on Aug. 16.

The Okmulgee Board of Education called an emergency meeting to review the Memorandum of Understanding on Aug. 19, which was agreed upon and signed by the superintendent.

Superintendent Renee Dove, a Cherokee citizen, said she couldn’t be more excited to implement the program within the Okmulgee Public Schools. As a tribal mem-



Mvskoke Language will be taught at Okmulgee Schools. (Staff Photo: Morgan Taylor)

ber, she did not grow up learning her language.

“I think this is critically important,” Dove said. “We live in the capital of the Muscogee Nation, right in the heart of it. If anywhere it should be spoken, it should be spoken right here, and every student in our district should be able to speak the language and be fluent by the time they graduate high school.”

Dove claims faculty will be participating in learning the Muscogee Language along with the students. Soon, she hopes to reinforce language usage by replacing signage around the school’s common areas with Mvskoke words.

Deere said students would be tested at the beginning of the course to see what level of knowledge the students are at, then will be tested again at the end of the course to determine the retention rate.

“I believe it’s 75% that have to reach a basic understanding of the language,” he said to the HEW Committee. “Now, that standard will be set by us.”

The teachers will assume their positions in the classroom at OPS on Aug. 22.

This is a developing story. For more information, call Mvskoke Language Program at 918-732-7725.

FIRST MCN ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAM FOOD SHOW SINCE COVID-19

NEW FOOD FOR A NEW MENU

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

GLENPOOL, Oklahoma - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elderly Nutrition Program hosted its Elderly Nutrition Food Show at the Glenpool Conference Center on Aug. 16. More than 180 elders attended the show and tried new foods from eight different vendors. Menu items included paninis, lasagna, fruit, desserts, and other meats and side dishes.

The Food Show is a collaboration between the MCN program and its food distributor, Sysco, bringing in different products for purchase. The event presented possible meals for the upcoming fall and winter menu starting in October 2022.

Ryan Parker, Sysco New Business Developer and Chef said, “We organize those [sites] with new products in the market. Then take those new innovative items that haven’t been on previous menu cycles, locate, target those items, bring them in, and cook them to let the elders try them so that we don’t rule out something new to 10 sites.”

The meal options are well-balanced and account for various nutritional needs. Determining what foods are more popular among the members ensures that foods are not wasted or over-ordered. Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter menus are on rotation for six months.

Elders who attend the event are given a survey booklet that includes an area for comments and a “Yes” or “No” voting option for the foods each vendor is serving. Based on the surveys, the foods with the most positive responses are added to the new menu, bringing variety to participants.

MCN Food Distribution Services Director Anna Sterner explained, “Sometimes it’s so overwhelming with all the food choices,

so we made it eight vendors this year. Hopefully, that will help them a little bit to keep track of their comments on the survey of which foods they like and don’t like.”

Muscogee citizen Matilda King, Holdenville Elders Chairman, is 83 years old and joined the program after retirement. When asked what her favorite aspect of the program is, she responded, “The food, but the fellowship with one another. We tell each other our problems, and we tell each other about our kids.” She enjoys being able to make new friends through the program.

Muscogee citizen Emma Lowe said, “You ask yourself what they put into this when you find something really good.” Lowe shared that she enjoys trying new foods; some of the items were delicious, and some were spicy. She also commented, “I enjoy coming up here. Especially seeing all the people from the other communities, some that you haven’t seen in a while, some that can talk your language, some that can understand.”

MCN Elderly Nutrition employees from all ten centers throughout the MCN jurisdiction helped serve the 184 attendees, which is only a fraction of the Nation’s program participants. The ten nutrition sites serve between 11,000 and 12,000 meals to citizens and other Federally-Recognized tribal members within the MCN communities. This was the first show in almost three years due to COVID-19.

Sterner said, “Food has been so hard to get since COVID, so we’ve had to think outside the box on some things.”

The MCN Elderly Nutrition Program is a Title VI program that is federally and tribally funded. Sterner explained, “The majority of our funding comes from the tribe for us to be able to keep ten sites open and feed them five days a week, but since we do accept federal funding,



Members of the Holdenville Indian Community pose for a photo during the MCN Elderly Nutrition Food Show at the Glenpool Conference Center on Aug. 16, 2022. (Mvskoke Media photo by Kaylea Berry/Reporter)



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Elderly Nutrition Program members are served multiple options during the Food Show at the Glenpool Conference Center on Aug. 16, 2022. (Mvskoke Media photo by Kaylea Berry/Reporter)

we have to abide by their rules and regulations, their policies.”

The MCN Elderly Nutrition Centers are located in Bristow, Coweta, Wetumka, Dewar, Muskogee, Sapulpa, Eufaula, Okemah, Holdenville, and Okmulgee, Okla. The program’s locations provide free meals Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1

p.m. for elders 55 years of age or older and have a Certified Degree of Indian Blood card from any Federally-Recognized tribe.

To participate in the program, elders must provide a copy of their CDIB card and complete an intake form. Once enrolled, members can eat at any of the ten facilities. Guests

are welcome but must pay a guest meal fee of \$8 (subject to change).

A detailed list of the program guidelines, the address and contact number for each nutrition center, and additional information can be found on the Elderly Nutrition Program website or by contacting the program’s main number at 918-549-2401.



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FIRST ANNUAL GATHERING OF MUSCOGEE NATION CHARTERED COMMUNITIES SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2022, 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M. AT THE CLAUDE COX OMNIPLEX IN OKMULGEE, OKLAHOMA

COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WANTS EVERYONE TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - The first annual Gathering of Muscogee Nation Chartered Communities takes place Saturday, September 10, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Claude Cox Omniplex in Okmulgee, Okla.

JR Wind, Community Research & Development Community Specialist, explained, “the purpose of the event is to show appreciation for all the communities for what they do for their citizens within their boundaries.” This is also an opportunity for everyone to fellowship, have fun, and share ideas for the communities.

There will be live music, Indian Elvis, games, the first Super Chief Wiffle Ball Classic, food vendors, and prizes.

Okemah Indian Community’s very own Chairman, Famous Marshall, and his band Bedrock will be performing. Indian Elvis will throw the first pitch for the Super Chief Wiffle Ball Classic between the MCN Chartered Community Board members vs. MCN National Council Representatives. There will be horseshoe, cornhole, and dominoes tournaments as well.

The food vendors are Jo Jo’s Q and Tacos Sonora. Each citizen will get a ticket to choose a meal from either of the vendors.

Citizens have the chance to participate in a meet and greet with first responders, including Lighthorse, Wilson and Twin Hills Volunteer Fire Departments, and EMSA. They will bring emergency vehicles for kids and adults to look at or walk through. Also, Tribal Construction will have some of its big trucks on display.

Kids can play on the bounce

house (courtesy of Dewar Indian Community), splash pad, or participate in other games available. There will be something for everyone to enjoy throughout the day.

“We’re also encouraging the communities to bring their vans out and to decorate them to showcase their community history,” said Wind.

The event is open to all Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizens and is free.

Wind explained, “We want people to come out and have fun and not worry about spending money.” He also said, “We’ll have door prizes to give away throughout the day.”

The ultimate goal is to get more community involvement, show what the community centers can do when citizens attend the meetings, and what activities can occur throughout the year.

Please get in touch with the CR&D Program to see which local chartered community you



The first annual Gathering of Muscogee Nation Chartered Communities takes place Saturday September 10, 2022, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Claude Cox Omniplex in Okmulgee, Okla. (Submission)

are eligible to join if you’re interested in joining one. Call 918-732-7963 or go online to access a local directory.

TAG LOCATIONS OPEN ACROSS THE RESERVATION

THE MCN TAX COMMISSION NOW HAS MULTIPLE LOCATIONS OPEN

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tax Commission has opened new locations in Coweta, Jenks, and Okemah to expand services to those living outside reservation boundaries. The Okmulgee office will serve as the central location, and the Southern Regional Office in Wetumka will operate the same, with services available only on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Now that the tax commission has extended license plate eligibility to citizens living within the state of OK, Tax Commissioner Mary Mushunkashay said there was a need to expand services to different areas where citizens did not have to come to the central office. (<https://www.mvskokemedia.com/mcn-expands-license-plate-eligibility/>)

She said the expansion of services would increase the revenue from the current \$3 mil-

lion to \$6 million during the fiscal year period, which will go back into the tribe.

For a while, citizens have highly requested tag services beyond the tribe’s Reservation. The department would receive multiple calls daily asking that the department consider it.

Mashunkashay and MCN Director of Motor Vehicle Lindsey Golightly spent countless hours researching means to make it possible. After drafting the first piece of legislation, the two women presented it to the

“We want to serve our citizens better and more efficiently,” Mashunkashay said.

NCA 22-061 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tax Commission for Fiscal Year 2022. The bill was postponed from the May 10 Emergency Session. It was sponsored by Rep. Osborn, which passed 11-4. Debate on the bill revolved around the supplemen-

tal appropriation amount. Two plans for the bill were on the table. One would have expended appropriations of \$445,956.00, and the other bill in the amount of \$137,576.00. The National Council approved the latter.

The supplemental appropriation will open new office locations in Jenks, Okemah, and Coweta and hire additional staff.

NCA 22-042 Amending MCNCA Title 36, Chapter 3, entitled “Motor Vehicle Tax and License Code,” was sponsored by Rep. Sandra Golden and passed 15-0.

The amendment codifies car tags, vehicle conditions, license plates, and vehicle classification. It also amends the code to include vehicle registration tax charges with defined fees for specific citizen tag classifications.

Principal Chief Hill nominated Mashunkashey. Her term will end concurrently with the term of the current Principal Chief.



The Coweta location has officially opened the doors as of Aug. 19. (Submission)

MCN CITIZEN RELEASING MUSIC ON VARIOUS PLATFORMS

LANCE GOUGE RELEASES HIS FIRST SINGLE ‘THIS TIME’ ON AUG.23

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

TVLSA, Oklahoma - MCN citizen Lance Gouge releases his first single, “This Time,” onto music platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora, and many others on August 23.

Gouge likes to play and sing Country or Country Rock genres. “I never thought I would write a love song,” Gouge said. “But ‘This Time’ is a country love song that he felt people could relate to and would like to hear.

Gouge is the son of Geebon and Jenna Gouge and brother to Hanna George and Madeline Hart. Growing up in a home full of musicians and singers, it’s no surprise he’s followed in his family’s footsteps.

He taught himself to play guitar at a young age, but his grandma, Karen Robertson, likes to take credit because she showed him his first chords. Gouge started playing guitar

on the praise and worship team around 13.

“The first time I sang in front of someone was at church when my dad made me, and I was out of my comfort zone and couldn’t do it,” Gouge said. “It didn’t sound too good the first time, so I didn’t think I could do it any other time.”

It was not until after high school that he began to sing and play more. He started recording himself on his dad’s computer while they lived together. After moving out, Gouge bought his equipment to continue recording.

“I didn’t think I would end up on all the platforms. I just did it for fun,” he said. “Then everybody was telling me I need to release it, so I said, ‘Okay, I will.’”

Gouge undertook the effort to produce the work himself.

“It’s been tough,” Gouge said. “I had to look it up myself because I’ve always wanted to put a song out.”



Courtesy photo from Lance Gouge. (Submission)

When asked who his most prominent supporter has been, he replied, “Probably my best friend Eddieson and my dad. My mom is one of my biggest supporters too.”

Gouge shared that one time when he was singing at a friend’s house, his friend told him he needed to start sing-

ing more. The encouragement increased Gouge’s confidence leading him to perform locally at TJ’s Bar and Grill in Beggs.

“I didn’t really think everyone was going to like it,” Gouge said. I thought it was going to be a few people the first time, but it happened to be a lot of people.”

His friends continue to push him to get himself out there. He has returned to TJ’s to play when requested by friends. They have been calling around to different places to get him more shows. In the meantime, he’s been working on more songs.

He’s currently working on four to five songs and hopes to release an album. However, these songs will have a country-rock style, with electric guitars and drums.

Gouge has written two of the songs he plans to release and has had help from his sister Hanna and her husband Tyler with others. He’s also had friends reach out with songs.

“I have a friend that writes music, and he wants to send them to me so I can play them,” said Gouge. “I’ve just got to find a chord progression and stuff like that for all the songs.”

He has a few other songs in mind that will be on the album. One piece is about him and his friends hanging out fishing and hunting. There is no time frame for his future songs or album but be on the lookout.

You will be able to hear ‘This Time’ on all music platforms starting Tuesday, August 23.

LEGALS

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF: }
JORDAN LYNN HEFLIN, }
d.b.a. June 1, 2021, }
A Minor Child. }

Case No. *AD 2021-18*

NOTICE OF HEARING

THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

TO: Shannon Deana Heflin and William Lee Estes
Natural Mother
Biological Father

On the 23rd day of June, 2022, an Application was filed in this Court
for an Order Determining Child Eligible for Adoption Without Consent of Natural
Mother, Shannon Deana Heflin, and Without Consent of Biological Father, William Lee
Estes, biological parents of Jordan Lynn Heflin, age 16 months, born June 1, 2021. Said
Application is set for hearing on the 29th day of June, 2022
at 9:00 a.m. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Courtroom, 2501
Lynchville, Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447.

1. Petitioners have alleged in the Application that said child is eligible for adoption in
that you, William Lee Estes, biological father of Jordan Lynn Heflin, born June 1, 2021
have failed to exercise parental rights or duties over said child, including:

a. Pursuant to Title 6 MCNA 1-901.2, the biological father has failed to
establish and/or maintain a significant relationship with the minor child through
visitation or communication for a period of six (6) consecutive months out of the last
fourteen (14) months immediately preceding the filing of this *Petition for Adoption*, and/or

b. Pursuant to Title 6 MCNA 1-901.4, the biological father has willfully
failed, refused, and neglected to contribute to the support of the minor child for a period
of six (6) consecutive months out of the last fourteen (14) months immediately
preceding the filing of this *Petition for Adoption* in substantial compliance with an
order entered by a Court which has jurisdiction and adjudicated the duty, amount, and
manner of support biological father had to pay; or according to such parent's financial
ability to contribute to such minor's support if no provision for support has been
entered.

2. Petitioners have alleged in the Application that said child is eligible for adoption in
that you, Shannon Deana Heflin, natural mother of Jordan Lynn Heflin, born June 1, 2021
have failed to exercise parental rights or duties over said child, including:

a. Pursuant to Title 6 MCNA 1-901.2, the natural mother has failed to establish
and/or maintain a significant relationship with the minor child through visitation or
communication for a period of six (6) consecutive months out of the last fourteen (14)
months immediately preceding the filing of this *Petition for Adoption*, and/or

b. Pursuant to Title 6 MCNA 1-901.4, the natural mother has willfully failed,
refused, and neglected to contribute to the support of the minor child for a period of six
(6) consecutive months out of the last fourteen (14) months immediately preceding the
filing of this *Petition for Adoption* in substantial compliance with an order entered by
a Court which has jurisdiction and adjudicated the duty, amount, and manner of support
natural mother had to pay; or according to such parent's financial ability to contribute
to such minor's support if no provision for support has been entered.

YOU ARE, THEREFORE, NOTIFIED THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR
EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AN 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 CHILD, WHICH
DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS
PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS, IN THE ADOPTION
OF THE CHILD WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT, ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA AND THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK)
NATION CODE.

Signed and dated this 23rd day of June, 2022.

[Signature]
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Prepared by:
Ricki M. Ryzio, MCN #921
2202 South Yale
International Tower, Suite 200
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74115
(918) 492-1441 - telephone
(918) 492-3774 - facsimile
rkr@mvskoke.com
Attorney for Petitioner

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify and state that on the date of receipt from the Court, a true and
correct file-stamped copy of the above and foregoing document was mailed, with proper
postage affixed thereon to:

Cherokee Nation
Child Welfare Division
P.O. Box 948
Tulalequah, Oklahoma 74465

Area Office of the Bureau of
Indian Affairs
P.O. Box 8002
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74402-8002

Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Child Welfare Division
P.O. Box 652
Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447

[Signature]
Rick M. Ryzio

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Haikey Chapel UMC
Haikey Chapel UMC will be having
an Indian Taco Sale on Sept. 17, 2022.
We will be selling tacos for \$ 10.00
from 11 am till 3 pm. Haikey Chapel
is located at 8815 E 101st st. Tulsa.
Looking forward to seeing you there.

Thlopthlocco (Creek) Tribal Town
General Elections Scheduled
Saturday, January 28th 2023
Time and Location: To Be Deter-
mined

After 17 years of internal litigation
within the MCN District and
Supreme Court and 15 years since the
last election, this litigation has been
settled and the Thlopthlocco Citizens
will once again exercise their constitu-
tional right to cast their votes to deter-
mine who the governing body shall
be. The Thlopthlocco General Elec-
tions include the following 5 elected
positions:
1. Tribal Town King
2. Tribal Town Warrior 1
3. Tribal Town Warrior 2
4. Tribal Town Treasurer

5. Tribal Town Secretary
The Thlopthlocco Tribal Town Con-
stitution outlines the election is to
be determined by enrolled Thlopth-
locco Citizens, by standing vote and
voters must be 21 and over. Thlopth-
locco is currently assembling an Elec-
tion Committee that will officiate the
upcoming election. There has not
been a determination of location or
time however, the election is dated for
Saturday, January 28th 2023.

Muscogee Veterans, please join
us at the Muscogee Nation Veterans
Affairs building on the tribal com-
plex in Okmulgee, OK every second
Thursday of each month from 8AM
to 12PM for coffee & donuts. We will
periodically have guests from various
state and federal agencies as well as
Muscogee Nation tribal departments
in attendance to inform and assist
Muscogee Veterans of the various ser-
vices and programs available to you
and answering any questions you may
have. We look forward to your atten-
dance and Mvto for your service.

SUBMISSION

POSITION AVAILABLE
TCIC has a position open for
a Part-Time Cook. The hours
will vary each week. To apply
for this position, fill out an
employment application. Ap-
plications are available at the
TCIC office. Resumes may
be emailed to tulic@mus-cogeenation.com or faxed to
918.298.2466. Applications/
resumes will be accepted until
the position is filled.

POSITION AVAILABLE
TCIC is currently looking
for a Part-Time Handyman.
If you are interested, submit
a resume and/or an employ-
ment application to the Tul-
sa Creek Indian Community.
Employment applications are
available at the Tulsa Creek
Indian Community. Resumes
may be emailed to tulic@mus-cogeenation.com or faxed to
918.298.2466. Applications/
resumes will be accepted until
the position is filled.

OBITUARY



Frenchie (Toodler) Tiger
Frenchie (Toodler) Tiger born Feb
13, 1929 in Coweeta, OK to Philip &
Alma Tiger. They Moved to CA at 2

yrs of age. Had 3 siblings, Jerial Tiger,
James (Tunney) Tiger, Edna (Louise)
Tiger and lived in N.Long Beach/Par-
amount CA.

He served in the merchant
marines mid 40's-late 40's (About 5
Years) and as he liked to always tell us
he sailed the seven seas.

He married Daphne Christine
Stith on Jan 21, 1952.

Frenchie went to work at Beth-
lehem Steel in Vernon CA and they
saved enough to purchase a new
home in Cerritos, CA in 1970. They
adopted Sheryl 11/15/1968 their only
daughter.

After Bethlehem Steel closed
down, Toodler purchased a box truck
and would do local pickups and deliv-
eries out of a warehouse in Wilming-
ton, CA.

In June of 2014 Chris (Daphne)

had a stroke while in OK at a family
reunion. By the grace of God she
survived and went on to live almost
another 8 years. Toodler had to bring
a 24 hour care giver into their home
to help care for Chris. He also now
had to change his roles in the home.
He would cook and make sure all the
bills got paid. He would continue to
do all the driving up until his passing.
We never had to take away his keys.
Frenchie (Toodler) & Daphne (Chris)
celebrated their 70th wedding anni-
versary on Jan-21-2022. He would
pass away on Jan 29th 2022. Daphne
also passed away 2 days later on Jan
31, 2022. Frenchie was the last of his
siblings to pass away. He is survived
by his daughter Sheryl, and son in law
Tony Lage. We will miss them greatly,
but God has blessed them with a long
life.

FREE Patches, Gum or Lozenges

Helpful Emails

Supportive Text Messages

Quit Guide

Web Coaching

Coaching Calls

Why pick only one when you
can get them all?

Using the Helpline's FREE services and resources to quit tobacco will make
you *three times* more likely to successfully quit.

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Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline

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