



MVSKOKE NEWS

PRODUCED BY MVSKOKE MEDIA



Lighthorse can be reached at 918-732-7800.

LPD GIVES AN UPDATE ON THE JUSTICE SYSTEM CHANGES SINCE MCGIRT

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE SETTling INTO THE NEW CHANGES AROUND THE RESERVATION AND WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Being responsible for the well-being and safety of Native Americans and non-natives across an 11-county

area is no easy feat. Two years after the SCOTUS confirmation of the reservation, law enforcement has shifted in many ways, affecting everyone living within these boundaries. Meeting the need is possible with the help of local agencies, including the state, county, and city.

On an episode of Mvskoke Radio, the Lighthorse Police updated the structure of the two-year post-McGirt justice system around the Mvskoke Reservation. The hour-long episode featured the Lighthorse Police Chief Richard Phillips.

Phillips has worked in law enforcement for about 25 years in many capacities. Now in the second year of his current position as Chief of Police for the Lighthorse. He oversees the department's operations while ensuring his force is equipped to deliver adequate public safety.

According to Phillips, there are 63 commissioned officers out in the field with the LPD, along with the assistance of the cross-deputization agreements and the officers working with those agencies.

"We could always use more people, but we make do with what we have," Phillips said.

The workload has increased over the last two years since proper jurisdiction is being observed. The LPD has increased the number of employees, equipment, and resources.

Deputy Chief Dennis Northcross and Captain Chad Morris are in charge of hiring for the department.

LIGHTHORSE - 2



(Shutterstock)

10TH ANNUAL ALL-INDIAN LIVESTOCK SHOW HELD JAN. 27 - 29

THE EVENT IS OPEN TO ALL TRIBALLY ENROLLED STUDENTS WITHIN THE MVSKOKE RESERVATION

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Youth Agriculture program's 10th annual All-Indian Live-

stock Show was held Jan. 27 - 29 at the Okfuskee County Fairgrounds in Okemah. The event is open to Native high school seniors and younger.

LIVESTOCK SHOW - 2



(Courtesy photo from Blake Hahn)

MVSKOKE CITIZEN TO RACE IN UPCOMING CHILI BOWL NATIONALS

BLAKE HAHN RACES SPRINT CARS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

SAPULPA, Oklahoma - The need for speed is vital in the Hahn family. Blake Hahn races sprint cars all over the United States. Hahn is a Mvskoke citizen through his maternal side, grew up in Sapulpa, and has a passion for going fast and turning left. Although his mother, Vickie, does not race, she is a big supporter of her son and very proud of his accomplishments.

Vickie is the one who reached out to Mvskoke Media to share his story.

"I'm just a proud mother and Muscogee citizen who would like to get Blake's story out there," she said.

Hahn can also share racing with his wife Sierra and daughter Lennix. Although Sierra did not grow up around racing, she loves it and supports her husband. Like her father, Lennix is growing up at the racetrack.

Only time will tell if she follows in her father's footsteps.

So, what exactly is a sprint car? A sprint car is an open-wheeled car with an engine block that sits directly in front of the driver's cockpit. Sprint car racing takes place on a quarter-mile or half-mile dirt track, and speeds can reach over 150 miles per hour.

The Hahn family's passion for sprint car racing started with Emmett Hahn, Blake's grandfather, in the 1960s. According to Hahn, his grandfather raced for about 20 to 25 years and was pretty successful. Throughout that time, Hahn's grandmother traveled with his grandfather to races. Having kids did not slow them down or keep them from racing. They just brought the kids along too.

Hahn said, "It was a family affair for them right from the beginning and just started running deeper and deeper for us."

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MUSCOGEE (CREEK) HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL PLAYER COMMITS TO OSU

AVERY ORTIZ SIGNS A NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT TO PLAY BASEBALL

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

TVLSE, Oklahoma - Avery Ortiz (Mvskoke) will soon hang up his red and white Redhaws baseball jersey at the end of the upcoming season and pick up an orange and black Cowboys one next year. On Dec. 21, Ortiz finally signed his national letter of intent to play baseball at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. He is currently a senior at Union High School in Tulsa.

happen to be his parents. According to Venissa Ortiz, her son had always been physically active regardless of his sport.

"He's always been athletic his whole life," Venissa Ortiz said. "He played baseball, soccer, and football and liked running. He's always been active and working out in the gym."

During middle school, Avery Ortiz found his passion for baseball, and that's when he decided to focus his time and energy on the sport.

"Baseball kept on accelerat-



Avery Ortiz signs his letter of intent to play baseball at Oklahoma State University alongside other Union High School athletes. Ortiz is currently one of the state's top high school baseball players. He will begin his collegiate sports career next year. Dec. 21, 2022. Tulsa, OK. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

Although Avery Ortiz had already committed to OSU, he waited to sign his national letter of intent with all his family present. Avery Ortiz said signing his letter of intent was a big moment in his career. It was a day he and his family had looked forward to for some time.

"It just made it official, just that next step," Avery Ortiz said. "I'm just ready to be there (OSU)."

Ortiz was accompanied at the signing by his biggest fans, Adam and Venissa (Mvskoke), who just so

ing, he kept progressing, and next thing you know, we're eliminating the other sports. It's been a long journey and a long process," Adam Ortiz said. "We're ready for a new beginning."

When it came time to decide the future, Avery Ortiz said it was easy to choose the next step of his baseball career. His family has always been OSU Cowboys fans.

"Just to walk on campus, meeting all the coaches and seeing the facilities they had, I just knew it was the right thing," Avery Ortiz said.

On top of playing for one of the Ortiz family's favorite teams, Avery's parents were happy he decided to play locally.

During the final year of high school, emotions can run high. Especially when students have dedicated a significant portion of their time and energy to an extracurricular like a sports team, theater group, or musical instrument. For Avery Ortiz, baseball is no different. He has been practicing non-stop to ensure he provides the best performance possible for his senior season.

"I'm preparing myself for the season. I've been working hard," Avery Ortiz said. "I'm just going to go out there to compete and be the best I can be."

Avery's talents on the baseball diamond allowed him to compete in the Area Code Games, an annual short-term league that featured the best of the best high school players from across the country.

"It was just crazy, just tons and tons of kids just filled with excitement for the game," Avery Ortiz said. "They're just really competitive, and the environment was insane with the number of coaches and talent."

This year's Area Code Games were held in San Diego. It was more than just an opportunity for Avery Ortiz to compete against players from out of state. It also allowed him to demonstrate his talents for Major League Baseball talent scouts interested in recruitment. He has also been invited to play at the Pro Baseball Report Super 60 Pro Showcase. According to Venissa Ortiz, it is an event that only features the top draft prospects in the country.

Avery Ortiz's favorite part about the sport is the competition. He said it's not always easy, but that is what makes it rewarding for him.

"Just stepping in that box, me versus the pitcher," Avery Ortiz said. "It's tough, but just winning that battle and that feeling of accomplishment is great."

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LIGHTHORSE
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ment and say they will consider Mvskoke applicants first.

“Citizens first, members of other tribes secondary,” Northcross said.

Before the McGirt decision, the department only kept 15-20 officers on staff. Their primary job was community policing which included doing business checks and policing the complex or other MCN sites.

A Special Operations division has been recently implemented by Captain Jerry Smith leads. This includes a SWAT, dive team, search and rescue, swift water, and drones.

According to Smith, the SWAT team is made of 20 members, with hopes to add more with another testing day set in Jan. The members are trained vigorously multiple times yearly, with the most recent training in November 2022.

Smith claims the department is in the process of grant applications for weaponry and armory, including an armored vehicle. Fortunately, other tribal nations like the Cherokee and Chickasaw nations and state agencies have reached out to offer a helping hand if needed.

“Usually, it’s the most violent crimes that your Tact (SWAT) team would be called out for,” Smith said. “Barricade situations or something that patrol may not have the resources or equipment to handle.”

Today’s technology gives Smith and his team the upper hand in a lot of situations, almost “taking the manpower out of it” however, the department stays ready in cases where the technology may fail or can’t do what is needed.

Applying drones to the task force helped create a safety net in law enforcement universally. Agencies may send a drone into a danger zone to do the initial sweep of an area, house, or building.

“I’d rather replace a drone than an officer,” Smith said.

A robot will be added to the department with grant funding that will be used to diffuse bomb situations, Smith said. Four officers will be sent to Arizona for intensive training for usage.

Despite the political rift, LPD and state agencies have a good relationship with the law enforcement sector of public service. Captain Morris is responsible for managing those cross-commissions, claiming there are little to no issues with those agencies.

“We work well with our emergency management and the state emergency management,” Smith

said. “We help each other out all the time on searches for missing kids, swifts water events, or dive events.”

One of the most recent examples was during a search for a toddler that went missing on the Muscogee Reservation that drew in multiple agencies on each level of tribal, state, and federal last fall.

“I can’t express how much state and other tribal agencies helped us,” Smith said.

All differences and opinions were put aside for a bigger picture that day.

“Even though it wasn’t the outcome we wanted...” Smith said. “It brought a lot of the agencies closer together.”

Another benefit to the collaborative emergency was allowing each side to see the resources of another and get a close look at what each agency could offer one another in situations as such.

As tragedy struck the reservation again in the home capital of the reservation when four men went missing, with one having tribal member status, the LPD offered assistance to the Okmulgee Co. Sheriff and PD in search and rescue.

“We do respect jurisdictional boundaries,” Phillips said. “We were asked at the tail end, and we offered whatever tools we had to achieve a common goal.”

According to Smith, there were other agencies involved with more efficient equipment.

Some agencies are less willing than others, but Philips said the LPD respects agencies and offers help regardless.

“The ones who are cross commissioned with us work well with us,” Philips said. “We are open to discussion with those who aren’t. Our door is always open.”

“To serve the citizen is our ultimate goal.”

Okmulgee law enforcement agencies have yet to engage in the agreements brought forth by the MCN, causing a few limitations. Still, Phillips said each agency works past those obstacles at a higher level if necessary.

Regardless of cross-commissions, officers can still step in and handle situations to a certain point of assertion and can detain a citizen until the appropriate agency is contacted and present.

“Our first and foremost concern is public safety,” Phillips said. “Non-native or native.”

Phillips has now answered that any police can pull over, stop, question, or detain any citizen based

on probable cause for public safety. That is an officer’s job and is supported by law and policy.

According to Captain Morris, it is their right to take action during a public safety incident.

“If they’re within the reservation, we have a right to take action and make a traffic stop,” Morris said.

If the commission is in place, LPD will act as the agent for the agency and transport to jail and file charges with the district’s attorney on whoever need be.

Northcross breaks it down, “If I were in the Tulsa City limits, and I conducted a traffic stop, and it was determined the person was non-native, I would act as an agent for the Tulsa Police Department. I would issue a summons or contact the department if needed. I would transport them to jail if necessary. I would issue charges and present the court with those charges.”

Without the agreement, the LPD will present the agency with the probable cause action that initiated the stop and hand over the case to them.

“We are all officers first and foremost, and it’s a matter of public safety,” Phillips said. “We all have families on the same road.”

The Nation does not currently have a jail for those jailed in Light-horse custody, but there are five contracts for Okfuskee County, Pawnee County, Creek County, Muskogee County, and David L. Moss in Tulsa.

Each county has a different contract depending on what they can manage. Smith claims that in the Tulsa area, MCN holds 120-130 inmates on average, but they are not limited to that number. Pawnee Co. designates 60 beds funded by the MCN.

North Division Commander Michael Fish oversees Tulsa Co, Creek Co. Rogers Co., Mays Co., Wagoner Co., and Muskogee Co. Commander Leeland Bear oversees the other counties.

The primary job of the two includes working with major agencies, including the FBI and DEA.

Fish said he works with law enforcement agencies for networking purposes and to inform all citizens within the jurisdiction.

According to Fish, for the whole operation to work, it takes an extensive collaborative effort.

“There’s not a book written on supervising the North Division. I’m the first,” Fish said. “We’re going to have some trial and error.”

For emergencies, call Dispatch at 918-732-7800.

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In 1987 Hahn’s grandfather founded the Chili Bowl Midget Nationals in Tvlse, Okla. The Chili Bowl is a midget class sprint car race, and the winner takes home the Golden Driller. A midget sprint car is what it sounds like, a smaller version of a standard sprint car. This year is the 35th annual race. Hahn has won eight Golden Drillers so far in his career.

After his racing career ended, Hahn’s grandfather became more involved as a promoter and started the American Sprint Car Series in 1992. According to theASCS racing website, he started it with a “simple idea of promoting and growing the sport of Sprint Car racing through honesty, fairness, and integrity.”

Hahn’s father, Tom Hahn, and his two siblings helped their father with all things racing. He also raced sprint cars for eight years and was able to compete with his father, Emmett, for a couple of years. He is now the pit team manager for his son.

Like his father, Hahn grew up around sprint racing.

“At a young age, I was around the racetrack, and my grandpa and family were deeply involved in racing,” Hahn said. “I would watch races on the weekend, and of course, being a kid watching the cars, that’s something I’d want to do.”

Hahn started racing at eight and has now won around 150 races.

“When I was eight years old, my dad got me my first race car, a micro,” Hahn said. “It was a little bit smaller than sprint cars.”

“It’s kind of a stepping stone for kids to learn and to get into those and to make their way up to the midget and then to the sprint cars eventually,” he con-

tinued.

After graduating high school, Hahn was approached by a guy in Houston, Texas, to race for national points. He began living his dream of traveling nationwide, racing with his dad and best friend.

Hahn competes with a 360 cubic block engine sprint car in the ASCS based out of Oklahoma. This car can reach around 160 mph and 775 horsepower because of the weight-to-speed ratio. Sprint cars can run with or without a wing on top of the vehicle. However, the wing produces a downward force allowing for higher speeds.

“Our goal is to go as fast as possible the whole time around the track,” Hahn said. “On the corners, sometimes we’re going 60 to 90 miles an hour.”

Racers can reach higher speeds on the straightaways of half-mile tracks than on a quarter-mile track.

He travels to multiple states across the country to compete throughout the year. Racers compete for a cash prize at each race, but each race also counts towards their overall performance record for an end-of-the-year accolade.

“We’re all competing basically to be as consistent as possible to see who’s the champion at the end of the year,” Hahn said.

According to a recent Facebook post by Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series, Hahn was “voted the 2022 National Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum, 360 Driver and Team of the Year.” This is only one of his many accomplishments during his career.

Check out Hahn’s website, www.blakehahn racing.com, or his Facebook pageBlake Hahn Racing for upcoming races and other information.

LIVESTOCK SHOW
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As long as a child can show their animal without anyone helping them, they can participate. Mvskoke youth living anywhere in the state and any youth enrolled in other tribes living within the Mvskoke Reservation are invited to partake in the event.

The reservation includes Okmulgee, Muskogee, McIntosh, Hughes, Okfuskee, Creek, Tulsa, Wagoner, Mayes, Rogers, and Seminole counties.

Years ago, the show started as a fun outlet for Native youth to show their animals and has continuously exceeded the program’s expectations. Last year exhibitors showed 570 livestock, which included 100 cattle, 306 hogs, 64 lambs, 69 doe goats, and 31 market goats. Participants and attendees have expressed their gratitude over the years.

“I have people all the time, especially kids, and their parents say, ‘Y’all’s livestock show is our favorite one to go to,’” said Muscogee (Creek) Nation Agriculture Youth Program Manager Billy Haltom.

This three-day event showcases sheep and goats on Friday, market hogs on Saturday, and heifers and steers on

Sunday. Breeds and/or weight groups will show each livestock category. This year a judge from Missouri will be one of the sheep and goat judges, and Ryan Rash, a well-known livestock judge from Texas, will be one of the hog judges.

Contestants will not be the only ones who could walk away with a prize. Those in attendance could win door prizes, including a handmade quilt and a Pendleton blanket signed by Chief David Hill. Contestants will also receive awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place and overall for each division. This show is considered a jackpot show because of all the awarded prizes. The entry fees are given back to the exhibitors as prize money.

“We’re not trying to make a profit,” Haltom said. “We’re there just for it to be an educational experience for these young people.”

The All-Indian Livestock Show is free and open to the public. A cash-only concession stand with various options will be available. Attending an event like this is a great way to show support for the future generations of our land. The Okfuskee County Fairgrounds is located at 999 E Columbia St., Okemah, Okla.



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ORTIZ
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In the whirlwind of changes and opportunities that Avery Ortiz faces, his parents could not be more proud of their son and excited for the future.

“I’m just trying to take everything in stride, stay present,” Adam Ortiz said. “It’s pretty surreal and incredible to be in that conversation of a possibility like that (MLB draft),”

“God has a plan for him. Whatever happens, happens,” Venissa Ortiz said.

The future is bright for Avery Ortiz. According to Venissa Ortiz, he has already begun talking with professional teams about draft prospects. If drafted into the MLB, he will join a narrow list of Muskogee (Creek) baseball players to play in the league’s history.

THE

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Temperatures across the Muscogee (Creek) Nation dipped into the single digits, helped along by frigid winds. Outdoor conditions were dangerous for prolonged periods. Some areas saw snow and ice accumulation, making road conditions hazardous. (Shutterstock)

MCN DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY

AFTER WINTER STORMS SWEEP ACROSS THE RESERVATION THE MCN PREPARES TO ASSESS DAMAGES

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION, Oklahoma – In the waning days of the holiday season, various areas of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation were hit by severe winter storms. Some areas saw snow and ice accumulation in neighborhoods and main roads. Temperatures dipped into the single digits as unrelenting arctic winds made it dangerous to go outdoors on Dec. 22.

The MCN Emergency Operations Center was activated the day before to monitor weather conditions. It allowed all agencies to assist those affected regarding ‘resource requests, damage assessments and recovery.’

While MCN tribal offices were initially expected to report for a half day, offices were closed or available remotely. MCN Director of Emergency Management Bobby Howard was out at 4 a.m. surveying road conditions. His team works with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, and the National Weather

Service to keep citizens safe. According to Howard, the storms were not initially expected to roll through until later.

“What you saw that morning at six wasn’t supposed to be there until after lunch,” Howard said. “We get out early to check and double-check so that we can alert our employees just as soon as we know that it’s too dangerous for them to be coming in.”

Howard said Council Oak, the Mvskoke Dome, and the Okemah Community Hospital sustained damage from the storm.

In response to the severe weather conditions that plagued the reservation, Principal Chief David Hill signed Executive Order 22-03. The order is a proclamation declaring a state of emergency for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

The executive order states as follows.

‘Severe freezing hazardous weather, straight-line winds, and icing beginning Dec. 21, 2022, caused a significant threat to life and public and private property in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation. The health and welfare of our citizens are vitally important, and the Nation wants to ensure our citizens

that we are taking necessary precautions to keep everyone safe.

The hazardous weather is expected to continue, and it may be necessary to provide mutual assistance among the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation, the State of Oklahoma, and political subdivisions impacted by the ongoing emergency event.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Administration and Emergency Management Officials are continually monitoring the situation with updates and information from the National Weather Service and community and roadway status briefings from Lighthorse Police patrolling the boundaries.’

The order will allow the MCN Office of Emergency Management to prepare documents for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) application. According to Howard, MCN Emergency Management does plan to apply for FEMA funds following the December storm.

After the application has been filed, a preliminary damage assessment team will survey the afflicted areas. The funds are divided into various sources, including individual assistance (IA), public assistance (PA), and Small Business Administration loans (SBA).

Just because a FEMA application has been filed, it does not necessarily mean that a tribe will be granted a disaster declaration.

“We have to meet certain criteria before we can get a disaster declaration,” Howard said. “Once they see that we meet all of our gates, we’ll do the official letter that goes to the White House for a disaster declaration.”

From there, the President of the United States will approve or disapprove of the declaration. Funding sources will be supported as well.

Looking ahead to the next severe winter storm, Howard said it’s essential to be prepared in case you get stuck on the road. This includes ensuring your car has plenty of fuel, having blankets on hand, and overall ensuring your car’s maintenance is up to date.



Mvskoke Royalty, Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tema Yargee and Jr. Miss MCN Chenoa Barnett, read to children at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Okmulgee Childcare Dec. 29 in Okmulgee, Okla. (Kaylea Berry/Reporter)

MVSKOKE ROYALTY READ TO CHILDREN AT MCN OKMULGEE CHILDCARE

MVSKOKE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS THROUGH STORIES

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tema Yargee and Jr. Miss MCN Chenoa Barnett read Christmas Moccasins by Ray Buckley to children at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Okmulgee Childcare Dec. 29. Christmas Moccasins is a true story about love and forgiveness.

In this story, Buckley shares a time when three young men treated him and his grandmother horribly. However, instead of treating the young men like they treated her, Buckley’s grandmother showed them love and forgiveness. She did so by gifting each of them a pair of beaded moccasins.

“The story we read today was very important about forgiveness because that’s something many Native people have to do these days,” Barnett said. “You just have to forgive and move on.”

Books can be happy, sad, full of excitement and adventure, and they can also hold life lessons. Children can enjoy an interesting story and learn about life at the same time. Children can learn about who they are through books written by Mvskoke authors or about Mvskoke culture.

“It’s important to read to the kids to promote Mvskoke culture and our language,” Yargee said. “It’s really important that we’re speaking our language because the kids are our future.”

“One day, they’ll be the ones that will have to take over and help with the language to keep it alive.”

The childcare staff tries to have a book reading every year, but they are going even further this year. Their goal this year is to have a guest reader monthly.

Dana Maxwell, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Okmulgee Childcare Supervisor, said, “We’re going to try to have Lighthorse and different people come and read a book to the kids and tell them what they do.”

This is an excellent opportunity for children to listen to great stories and learn about different departments and agencies throughout our Muscogee Nation. These children are the future of our Nation’s future Chiefs and Second Chiefs, Council Members, doctors, and nurses, or any other essential positions that keep our Nation running.

For information about the MCN Okmulgee Childcare or to volunteer to read the kids a story, contact Dana Maxwell at 918-732-7679.



The ceremony was held at the First Nations Museum on Nov. 9. Left to right- AARP OK State President Jim Randall, John Brown, former AARP Oklahoma Executive Council Member Tewanna Edwards, AARP Oklahoma Associate State Director Mashell Sourjohn, and Jr. Miss Indian Oklahoma City Aubrey Elaine Berry. (Courtesy photo: Jerry Hymer Photography)

TWO MUSCOGEE CITIZENS AWARDED ELDER HONORS

EDWARDS AND BROWN WERE HONORED AT A CEREMONY HELD AT THE FIRST AMERICANS MUSEUM

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma - Muscogee citizens John Brown and Anne Townsend-Edwards were awarded at the 14th Annual 2022 AARP Oklahoma Native American Elder Honors at The First Americans Museum Hall of the People on Nov. 9.

With 350 attendees, the event honored 39 Native American elders from 20 Oklahoma tribal nations for their achievements, community service, and impact.

Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church Bishop David Wilson presented a medallion to each recipient. The honorees were teachers, veterans, artists, tribal leaders, culture preservationists, and everyday heroes.

AARP Oklahoma State Director Sean Voskuhl said the Native American Elder Honors was

established to memorialize the work and contributions of elders who inspire future generations. “Whether they are well known or exhibit quiet devotion to family and community, all our honorees represent the love of family, dedication to culture, and respect for all,” Voskuhl said. “These honored elders embody AARP’s mission and, through example, motivate others to follow suit and selflessly serve their communities.”

“Individually, their accomplishments are remarkable. Their impact is breathtaking throughout Indian Country and our nation.”

Since Edwards came into the position as the MCN Tribal Liaison, a job requiring her to advocate for Muscogee Citizens living “Beyond the reservation.” Her focus on outreach has helped connect citizens to the Muscogee Reservation even though they are

physically miles away.

The Facebook page, “Muscogee Nation Citizens Beyond the Reservation,” was one of Edward’s first communication tools. It has helped bridge several gaps in communication. She said outreach is the most important yet challenging part of the job. Edwards keeps citizens up to speed with her Facebook Live broadcasts and daily postings on relevant information. One such posting was about the AARP public announcement. According to Edwards, she shared the information, thinking someone may want to nominate an elder.

On a random afternoon in the office, Townsend-Edwards receives a call from the AARP representative Michelle Sourjohn explaining that she was awarded. It stunned her because she was unaware she was nominated and could not even imagine who nominated her.

Sourjohn told Townsend-Edwards that it was her son who nominated her. When she made the post about the AARP award, her son was also monitoring the social media page. It’s where he got the initial idea to nominate her.

Her son realized she was eligible for the award.

“I had made the post not even realizing that my son was paying attention to things I was posting on Facebook,” she said.

Later, she received an email that contained a statement written by her son that tugged on her heartstrings and helped reassure her as a single mother.

“It made me feel good because I’ve been a single mother since my son was born. I always lived in fear if I’m making the right decision for him or doing the right thing,” she said. “Him being a boy, he’s not mushy.”

“I had hopes that I could inspire him and was setting a good example, but I had no idea I was impacting him in this way.”

In the letter, the young man

mentions how he watched his mother study to earn multiple degrees. He talked about her work with the at-large citizens and her efforts to create and teach a language program that reached people as far as London, England.

“He talked about why he was inspired by me being his mother, and he felt that I deserved an award like that,” she said. “Not just because I was his mom but because of all the things he had been watching me do.”

Giving back to the community and tribe is instilled in Edwards. She does her work from the heart, saying that this position is more than just a job.

Being raised by a strong Mvskoke woman inspires her to keep influencing the Mvskoke people.

Unfortunately, she could not attend the ceremony due to family circumstances, but she was still honored and given her medallion.

Many call the MCN Department of Cultural Preservation Project Coordinator by his nickname, “John-John.” Brown couldn’t help but think the award was a joke from one of his buddies or even suspected it might be a scam caller.

“Once I turned 50, I started getting a lot of calls from AARP and things like that,” he said. “I hung up on the lady the first time.”

The next day, he received an email explaining the reality of the award and that he needed to contact her. Brown called the woman back, apologized, and spoke with her about the award details. She told him he was nominated for the award. He eventually came around to believing her.

It is still a mystery to Brown who nominated him, but like Edwards, he was stunned that someone did.

He claims the person had to be someone he knew because they stated some personal comments he has made about being someone the Creator has blessed with

the talent to make different traditional pieces. The person also mentions Brown’s humility and his ability to teach others.

“The creator gave me these gifts so I could pass them on,” he said.

In his career with MCN, Brown has taught thousands of citizens how to make bows, blow darts, and many other traditional classes and events to help carry on Mvskoke traditions.

Over almost two decades of service, Brown has missed family events and grandchildren’s activities when dedicating his weekend and after-hours time to an event. He claims he has often been discouraged in his work, almost wanting to call it quits.

“Doing what I’ve done over the last 15-20 years, there comes a time where you start to feel like your efforts aren’t recognized,” he said. “There are times when I get a group of youth where not all are interested in our traditional ways and what we do.”

Brown claims that kids today are interested in phones, video games, and other technologies, which sometimes distract them from what he may be trying to teach them.

The award came at a perfect time for Brown, claiming that he was at a low in his career, and the award gave him the boost he needed to continue. Brown claims he has shed tears at times and cried out to the Creator for guidance during these times of hardship and discouragement. He is glad he never gave up.

“The people I was in there with, one had worked in health all of his life, picked by the president to run the nation’s health system, others had their doctorate degrees and done all these things across the world,” he said. “To stand on the same stage, I never considered myself that important. It was quite an honor.”

Brown and Townsend both continue to serve the Mvskoke People with pride.

MVSKOKE NEWS: A YEAR IN REVIEW

A QUICK RECAP OF SOME OF THE TOP PERFORMING STORIES OF 2022

by **ANGEL ELLIS**
DIRECTOR

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Looking back at 2022, there are some headlines that matter to the readers more than others. Some news marked accomplishments in our community. Some headlines connected the community in celebration, while other stories connected the community to its need for comfort and support. But no matter how the news shaped our feelings, the feedback from the community has and will continue to direct the headlines throughout the year. Here is a look at some of the top headlines you might have missed in 2022. These headlines were chosen for the highest number of likes and audience engagement.

Coming in at number one for 2022 was the in-person return of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Scholarship Pageant.

MUSCOGEE NATION PAGEANT IN PERSON

THE LOCATION CHANGED TO RIVERSPIRIT; PAGEANT SET TO TAKE PLACE AT 2:30

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – The 2022 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Scholarship Pageant is still scheduled to take place this Saturday, June 4, but has been moved to River Spirit Casino Resort inside the ballroom located on the second floor. The start time will now be at 2:30 pm. This year, the pageant will be open to the public with no restrictions, but masks will be available. Royalty Coordinator LuAnn Bear said that the pageant will now be hosted at a different high school throughout the reservation each year. The article had the most extensive reach of any other story published on Mvskoke Media's platforms, reaching 75K.

The number two article demonstrates food's importance to culture.

MEAT PIE LADY FINDS SPOT WITH MOTHER ROAD MARKET

SHANNON JAMES, OWNER OF "REZ SERVED," WAS ACCEPTED INTO A PROGRAM TO HELP FULFILL HER DREAM

by **LANI HANSEN**
SENIOR REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – In the kitchen of her very own home, you will find Shannon James, owner of "Rez Served," cooking up dishes with a Rez twist as she grows in her own business with the help of Mother Road Market – Kitchen 66 launch program. The audience engagement for this home-cooked story topped out at 42.2k.

Coming in as the number three best-liked story of 2022, two young Mvskoke ladies pursued a fashion dream and were noticed in a big way.

MUSCOGEE MODELS MAKE FASHION HISTORY IN NYC

DEERINWATER TWINS APPEARED IN TIMES SQUARE BILLBOARD

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

NEW YORK CITY, New York – Times Square is one of New York City's most popular destinations for tourists to visit from around the globe. Also known as "The Crossroads of the World," it stands as one of the most significant commercial intersections in the country. It's known for its fine dining, world-class theater, and an array of large digital billboards. On July 18, the Deerinwater Sisters were featured in an advertisement campaign that debuted on a billboard in that world-famous junction. "It just means more to both of us that we're able to actually be a part of this and represent Native Americans and our tribe," Autumn Deerinwater said. "To have both of us inspire other people that they can do this"

Taxes were a big topic on the Muscogee (Creek) reservation and the story continues to develop. The fourth most read and circulated story was one about taxes.

CITIZEN WINS TAX VICTORY

MCN EMPLOYEE ESTABLISHES A PRECEDENT

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – An Oklahoma Administrative Law Judge has ruled that Muscogee Creek citizens who live within the boundaries of the MCN Reservation and earn income from sources inside "Indian country" are exempt from state income tax. In a decision filed on April 12, the judge ruled that MCN citizen Alicia Stroble, who is an employee of the MCN National Council, was exempt from state income tax for the years 2017, 2018, and 2019 because she had proven that she worked for the tribal government and lived in Okmulgee County. Mvskoke Media will have further coverage of this developing story.

Always an important time of year, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Festival story was number five of the most-read stories of 2022.

FESTIVAL WILL EXPERIENCE MINOR CHANGES

THE FESTIVAL WILL BE THE LAST WEEKEND IN JUNE (23-25)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – According to Principal Chief David Hill, the Muscogee Nation Festival is projected to attract around 40,000 visitors during the last weekend of June after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the Tourism and Events Manager Ryan Logan, the last few months before the Festival are typically busy months for him. Logan was able to talk about the Festival on an April 5 Mvskoke Live Wire, then gave another update on an episode of Mvskoke Radio on April 27. Unfortunately, Logan could not give an update on entertainment, but they hope to announce that in mid-May. Logan and his department want to make this year's Festival the biggest yet. "When we get to June 23, it will be three years since we had our last festival," Logan said.

The sixth most widely read story of 2022 had a completely different tone. One young student talked about the harassment she experienced at Morris Public Schools. The story was widely read and had more comments than any other story of 2022.

"CAN I PULL YOUR HAIR?"

LACK OF POLICY AND REPORTING PROTECTION FOSTERS A PREDATORY ENVIRONMENT IN SCHOOL DISTRICT RIDDLED WITH ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

by **FRANCES DANGER**
CONTRACT REPORTER

"Can I pull your hair?" It's a question that a 60-year-old faculty member asked an 18-year-old student in the halls of Morris High School in Morris, Oklahoma. The Morris School District is located within the boundaries of the Mvskoke Nation Reservation. As of 2017, it boasted an enrollment of 1,026 students, 28.9% of which were Native American, spread across Morris Elementary (Pre-K-5), Morris Middle School (6-8), and Morris High School (9-12). It's a district in flux, having been rocked by the arrest of longtime Morris High School teacher Dallas Tyler Ewton in July 2021 and the resignation of the Morris High School Principal, who is also Dallas Ewton's father, Andrew "Buck" or "Bucky" Ewton.

Female bravery was an emerging theme in the news of 2022. The seventh most read and shared story focused on another kind of bravery.

CITIZEN'S DREAMS FLY ABOVE THE CLOUDS

MADDIE MCINTOSH GETS HER PRIVATE PILOT LICENSE AFTER HER FIRST TIME IN A PLANE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

NORMAN, Oklahoma – It was during a "discovery flight" from a coworker when 20-year-old Maddie McIntosh knew she would be a pilot. "I had actually never even been in a plane before, like I had never flown commercially," McIntosh said. "I've only ever been in a little plane and that's the only plane I had ever been in." The experience was mind-blowing for McIntosh. "We flew through these clouds and I just remember popping out of the end of this cloud; and seeing the ground and the city I grew up in that I've only ever known from the ground." She claimed the plane was traveling casually at 120 miles per hour and she could see for miles and miles. "I was like; there's no way this is real," she said. McIntosh is currently a sophomore at the University of Oklahoma studying aviation with a concentration in professional piloting.

It wasn't just the young women of the Muscogee Nation making headlines in 2022. Talented young men took the eighth and ninth most-read stories spots.

CITIZEN'S FISHING PRODUCT HITS WALMART SHELVES

FORMER MCN EMPLOYEE CREATED A PRODUCT AND BUSINESS TIGER JUGZ

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

AFTON, Oklahoma – In the fishing section at Walmart, Tiger Jugz will be available for purchase as a seasonal product. Muscogee citizen Tiger Wayne Carman is the inventor of the product. He claims his product was one of the few chosen out of 14,000 applicants for Walmart's Annual Open Call for Products Made, Grown, or Assembled in America. Carman and his team mass produced 8,000 Tiger Jugz in just four months to hit 200 Walmart Stores over 13 states, including Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, and South Carolina. The former MCN Petroleum Landman/Realty Specialist II worked on this product for nearly a decade before he hit his big moment with Walmart.

"I have been in deep waters since I started this," Carman said.

Innovation wasn't the only impressive talent on display and preserved in the archives.

MCN CITIZEN RELEASING MUSIC ON VARIOUS PLATFORMS

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

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

TVLSE, 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."

New programs and the ongoing freedman case were the ninth and tenth most-read topics of 2022.

BREAKING GENERATIONAL CURSES WITH TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

MCN RIP PROGRAM HAS GRADUATED 57 STUDENTS FROM THEIR FIBER OPTIC TECHNICIAN PROGRAM

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

HENRYETTA, Oklahoma – The partnership between the Muscogee Nation Reintegration Program and Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology continues to help break generational curses after graduating the fifth class of the Fiber Optic Technician program on June 23, with the sixth class starting just a couple of weeks later on July 11. Of the 16 participants in the most recently completed course, 15 enrolled are tribal citizens. The graduates included Robert Bailey, Micah Burgess, Payton Combs, William Fish, Dylan Froehlich, Frank Harley, Robert Harley, Brannon Murphy, Derrick Ross, Bryson Unah, Yahv Williams, Ty Whitlow, Tyler Pettit, Georgie Proctor, Asa Mitchell, and Taylor Snelson. The RIP staff mentioned Frank Harley and Georgie Proctor as outstanding participants in the group. Tim Caudle, the instructor from OSUTT, claims that the program has graduated 57 students in a year.

Rounding out the top ten most engaged and circulated stories of 2022 is the story of Rhonda Grayson and Jeffery Kennedy, who claim to have been wrongfully denied citizenship with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

SUPPORTERS ATTEND CREEK FREEDMAN CIVIL LAWSUIT HEARING

PLAINTIFFS APPEAR IN DISTRICT COURT IN HOPES OF SUMMARY JUDGMENT

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – A jury trial has been scheduled for April 4, 2023, in a civil lawsuit seeking Muscogee Creek Nation citizenship for two Creek Freedmen descendants.

The petition filed with the MCN District Court on Mar. 11 alleges that Rhonda K. Grayson and Jeffrey Kennedy applied for MCN citizenship and were denied.

The petition seeks a declaratory judgment from the court that all Creek Freedmen's descendants are Creek citizens under Article 2 of the 1866 treaty.

On Dec. 1, a hearing was held on a motion for summary judgment filed by the plaintiffs in the case, but MCN District Court Judge Denette Mouser has not issued an order granting summary judgment as of the publication of this update.

In the news for 2022, there were notable trends emerging. Some of the most sought stories were the themes of female empowerment, citizens' accomplishments, innovation, reconnecting in person, and pivotal policy. Mvskoke Media staff look forward to receiving tips and suggestions from the readers we serve. To reach us with your news tip, call 918-732-7637 or email info@mvsokemedia.com

THE

MVSKOKENEWS

2022 RECAP



The Oklahoma Blood Institute donation truck sits outside Okmulgee's MCN Head Start building. Those who came out and donated blood received a free t-shirt and a holiday ornament. This year's OBI/Head Start Blood Drive marked the first time it had been held in two years. Dec. 20, 2022. Okmulgee, OK. (Braden Harper/Reporter)

OBI BLOOD DRIVE RETURNS TO THE RESERVATION

FIRST TIME HOSTED SINCE COVID PANDEMIC BEGAN

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Generosity, and charity fill the air around the holidays. Many will give back by donating money to charities, supporting toy drives,

or giving food to shelters. Another way to give back to those in need is by donating blood.

Since the Covid-19 Pandemic began, donating at local blood drives has become more critical now than ever. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Pro-

gram and the Oklahoma Blood Institute combated the need by holding a blood drive at the tribal complex on Dec. 20.

It was the first time the Head Start blood drive had been hosted since before the Covid-19 pandemic began. According to the Head Start Program's Health & ERSA Specialist Dana Wells, blood drives held by the department used to be more commonplace.

"Before, I would have them about three times a year," Wells said. "Normally, we would have them in our conference room."

This year looked different with the OBI mobile donation truck. Donations being collected outside the Head Start center allowed fewer people to be in and out of the building.

Samira Winkler is a phlebotomist with OBI. Along with her colleagues, she collected donations in the mobile donations truck. Winkler said organizations like the OBI try to keep an ample blood supply. However, recent global health crises have made it challenging.

"We usually try to catch it before it gets too low," Winkler said. "Around COVID, it was really bad."

Among many other supply and demand issues, the pandemic had a crippling effect on the blood supply chain as well.

"It makes it harder for many people," Winkler said. "If they have any symptoms, we can't take them. It made it much harder for people to come out because everyone's scared of getting sick, and many facilities couldn't have us come in."

The advantages of the mobile donation truck are numerous. The truck allows OBI to go to more rural areas to collect donations. OBI has few locations outside of metropolitan areas like Tulsa or Oklahoma City.

Blood drives across the state dwindled, resulting in fewer but larger-scale events. According to Winkler, this was still problematic because people feared the risk of COVID would be higher at a blood drive with more people in attendance. Regardless, there is always a need for blood.

Wells and Winkler have both donated blood in the past.

"I donate all the time, every time that I can, I donate," Wells said.

For those donating blood for the first time, Winkler said it is essential to drink plenty of water, eat a big meal and bring a friend to help keep your mind at ease.

On the day of the blood drive, Wells wore one of the long-sleeve t-shirts given away to blood donors, a gray "Elf" themed shirt that read, "Don't be a cotton-headed ninny muggins, give blood." All donors received a long-sleeve t-shirt and a holiday ornament shaped like a blood drop. They also were entered in a drawing for a \$250 Visa gift card.

If you would like to donate blood to OBI, Winkler said walk-ins are welcome. However, appointments are preferred.

The next Head Start blood drive will be scheduled for later in 2023. Wells said tribal employees are welcome to visit the Head Start center or to come out and read to Head Start students.



Two back-to-back Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Emergency Sessions were held on Dec. 28 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee. (MM File)

OKMULGEE ER SET FOR \$11.8M UPDATE

TULSA LOW WATER DAM PROJECT CONTRIBUTION APPROVED BY A NARROW MARGIN

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – Two back-to-back Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council emergency session meetings were held in person and via teleconference on Dec. 28 at the Mound Building.

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

Emergency Session 1:
TR 22-182 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of understanding with the City of Tulsa, the City of Jenks, and the Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG) for the benefit of the low water dam project near Muscogee (Creek) Nation Property. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the bill, which was adopted 8-6.

The Low Water Dam Project will cost \$97,076,000.00 and is intended to increase the use of

the river frontage property, which includes property owned by MCN. The nation, as a partner, will contribute \$8,192,000.00 to the project.

Emergency Session 2:
NCA 22-154 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 22-026 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Recovery Funding for the benefit of the Department of Health) to add the authorization of the expenditure of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, ("Cares Act") Funds for the benefit of the Department of Health. Representative Joseph Hicks sponsored the bill, unanimously adopted 15-0.

The bill authorizes the use of \$11,840,087.00 of ARPA funds to be expended. This comes after the increased emergency room visits

during the pandemic, resulting in insufficient available capacity for patients. The nation will update the MCN Department of Health Medical Center Emergency Room with these federal funds.

NCA 22-155 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of funds awarded from the Department of Health and Human Services for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health-Special Diabetes Program for Indians Diabetes Prevention and Treatment Projects. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the bill, unanimously adopted 15-0.

The grant awarded the MCN Department of Health \$2,250,743.00 for diabetes treatment, prevention, and community services.

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

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2023 COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL BUDGET APPROVED

MOUSER AND MASTERS NOMINATED TO DISTRICT COURTS

by **BRADEN HARPER**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Emergency Session meeting was held in person and via teleconference on Dec. 21 at the Mound Building.

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

TR 22-180 Nominating Denette Mouser to serve as the District Trial Court Judge of the District Trial Court Civil Division of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted with 13 votes in favor, 0 against, and one abstain.

Mouser will serve as the District Trial Court Judge until Dec. 31, 2023.

TR 22-182 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of understanding with the City of Tulsa, the City of Jenks, and the Indian Nations Council of Governments (INCOG) for the benefit of the Low Water Dam Project near Muscogee (Creek) Nation Property. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the bill, which was unanimously voted to be postponed until the next emergency session.

The multi-million dollar project involves several partners pledging funds to reach a financial goal of

\$97,076,000.00. MCN has a significant interest in the project and intends to pledge \$8,192,000.00.

TR 22-183 Confirming the nomination of Alexandra Masters to serve as Special District Court Judge of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored the bill, which was adopted with 13 votes in favor, 0 against, and one abstain.

Masters has already served a one-year term as a Special District Court Judge of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and this will be her second one-year term. Her next term will begin on Jan. 14, 2023, and will end on Jan. 15, 2024. Masters' nomination required a ⅔ vote of the full council.

NCA 22-153 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the Comprehensive Annual Budget for the Fiscal Year 2023 and providing for appropriations. Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted 12-2.

The National Council has conducted budget hearings for the Fiscal Year 2023 Comprehensive Annual Budget and has approved all executive, judicial and legislative budgets. The budget will provide appropriations and authorized expenditures for FY 2023. The bill had previously appeared in the last regular session, however, it was postponed to be voted on at a later emergency session.

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

TAX COMMISSION OFFERS WEB SERVICES

THE DEPARTMENT HAS IMPLEMENTED SERVICES ONLINE TO HELP ASSIST CITIZENS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – For those who dread going to the tag office, the MCN Tax Commission has implemented online services for almost everything they offer.

According to Revenue Agent Meredith Lyda, the web services have made it easier on both ends.

“I think people like it a lot better,” Lyda said. “It helps alleviate wait times in the office and some of the workload for the agents.”

The website allows tag renewals, duplicate title requests, registration requests, decal replacements, lien holder titles, repo instructions, change of address, and handicap placard requests.

Lyda said that the only service that requires an office visit is a new registrant or for those who request the new tag design that came out earlier this year.

Once registered in the system, everything can be verified on the website by just entering the tag number of the registrant. Any further documentation requested can also be uploaded on the website.

The website differs from the Camphouse portal that renders other web-offered MCN services. Lyda claims that those who can navigate the portal should be able to manage the www.mcntags.com website easily.

Citizens may run into minor issues and are encouraged to call the tax commission at 918-549-2930 to be guided through the process.

Five locations across the reservation are now open and available for walk-ins and scheduled appointments. These locations, including Okmulgee, Jenks, Coweta, and Okemah, are open Monday- Friday, starting each day at 8 AM and closing at 4 PM. Wetumka is limited to Tuesdays from 9 AM-3 PM.



Tax Commission services can be processed online or in person at any location by walk-in or appointment. (Submission)

Below is a list of the locations and direct lines for further assistance.

Okmulgee
Monday–Friday
8:00 AM–4:00 PM
PO Box 579 (mailing)
3000 Warrior Rd (physical)
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Phone: (918) 549-2930
Fax: (918) 549-2941
Email: cntags@mcntax.com

Okemah
Monday–Friday
8:00 AM–4:00 PM
202 W Atlanta unit B
Okemah, Ok 74859
Phone (539)286-4602
Email: cntags@mcntax.com

Wetumka
Tuesday
9:00 AM–3:00 PM
Closed for lunch
11:00 AM–11:45 AM
333 S. Washita, Room 114
Wetumka, OK 74883
Phone: (405) 452-1153
Fax: (405) 452-1159
Email: cntags@mcntax.com

Jenks
Monday–Friday
8:00 AM–4:00 PM
1000 Riverwalk Terrace
Jenks, Ok 74037
(918) 304-3250
Email: cntags@mcntax.com

Coweta
Monday–Friday
8:00 AM–4:00 PM
13791 S. State Hwy 51
(next to Atwoods)
Coweta, OK 74429
(539) 244-2625

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LEGALS

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF OKMULGEE COUNTY
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

In re the Marriage of:
Brandon D. Harjo
Petitioner,
and
Mandy B. Harrison/Harjo
Respondent.

Case No. **FD-2022-14**
FILED
IN DISTRICT COURT
MAY 24 2022
OKMULGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
CHARLY CRINER, Court Clerk
Deputy

PETITION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

COMES NOW the Petitioner, Brandon Harjo
and, for cause of action against the Respondent, Mandy Harrison/Harjo states:

- At the time of the filing of this Petition (check one):
☒ The Petitioner had been a resident of Oklahoma for the past six months, and had been a resident of Okmulgee County for the past thirty days, or
☐ The Respondent had been a resident of Oklahoma for the past six months, and was a resident of Tulsa County at the time of the filing of the Petition.
- Petitioner and Respondent were married on the day of in Okmulgee County, State of Oklahoma and have been since that time and are at the present time husband and wife.
- There are 04 children, currently minors, born to the parties. The initials and dates of birth of these children are:
ADWH dob May 4, 2017
WSEKH dob June 8, 2018
- During the marriage, the parties acquired marital property. Petitioner requests that this Court equitably divide the marital property between the parties.
- During the marriage, the parties accumulated debt. Petitioner requests that this Court equitably divide the debt between the parties.
- (Use if applicable) Respondent should be ordered to pay Petitioner alimony for support.
- (Use if applicable) Petitioner requests that she be restored to her former name of Mandy Beth Harrison.

WHEREFORE, Petitioner requests that this Court grant the following relief:

- A dissolution of the marriage;
- (Check one) ☒ Sole ☐ Joint Custody of the minor child;
- Child support;
- Award the Petitioner all separate property acquired prior to the marriage;
- An equitable division of marital property, and debt;
- (Use if applicable) Alimony for support;
- All other relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,
Brandon Harjo
 Signature
Brandon Harjo
 Print Name
Henrietta, OK 74437
 City, State, Zip Code

 Telephone Number
 Petitioner, pro se

BRH:SR dob September 5, 2000
 BCT:H dob January 31, 2003
 dob
 dob

- Check one of the following:
☒ The Wife is not pregnant.
☐ The Wife is pregnant, and is expected to give birth at approximately the date of
- Petitioner requests (check one)
☒ Sole Custody of the minor child awarded to the Petitioner, with Respondent having the right of visitation
☐ That this Court award Joint Custody of the child to both parties.
- This Court should order the Respondent to pay child support to the Petitioner.
- Check one of the following:
☐ The Petitioner has not received assistance from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS). To the best of the Petitioner's knowledge, the Respondent has not received assistance from DHS.
☒ DHS has provided assistance to the ☒ Petitioner ☐ Respondent. DHS should be notified of this case.
- Between the spouses, there has arisen a state of complete and irreconcilable incompatibility. There is such a conflict of personalities as to destroy the legitimate ends of matrimony and the possibility of reconciliation.
- Prior to the marriage, Petitioner acquired separate property. Petitioner requests that this Court award the separate property to him/her.

VERIFICATION

STATE OF OKLAHOMA }
 COUNTY OF Okmulgee } SS:
 state: Brandon Harjo of lawful age, being first duly sworn upon oath,

That I am the Petitioner above named, that I have read the above and foregoing pleading and know the contents thereof, and that the statements, allegations and facts therein set forth are true and correct to the best of my information, knowledge and belief.

Brandon Harjo
 Signature
Brandon Harjo
 Print Name

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 1st of February 2022

Notary Public

My Commission Number:

My Commission Expires:

SEAL

NOTARY PUBLIC
 Notary Public, State of Oklahoma
 Commission # 18807538
 My Commission Expires 07-31-2022

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF)
KEELI ANN BOSHERS (DOB 08/08/19)) Case No. AD-2022-07
A minor child.) MU

NOTICE AND ORDER OF SERVICE BY PUBLICATION:
UNKNOWN, JOHN DOE

On this 27th day of December 2022, Petitioner's Application for Order and Notice Authorizing Service by Publication comes on for presentation before the undersigned Judge. The Court, following an inquiry pursuant to TITLE 6 MCNA §1-903, being satisfied that the whereabouts of the putative father, UNKNOWN, JOHN DOE, are unknown, cannot with due diligence, be determined nor ascertained and being satisfied that it is impracticable to make personal service of summons upon the putative father of the above-named child.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that notice of the hearing on Petitioner's Petition for Adoption and Application for Waiver of Interlocutory Decree and Waiting Period and Request for Best Interests Determination and Final Hearing, of the minor child who is the subject of this adoption action be given by publication to be published one (1) day a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the action to terminate parental rights is brought, and once in the *Muscogee Nation News* at least twenty (20) days prior to the hearing, since the putative father's whereabouts are unknown and cannot with due diligence be ascertained.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Application for Waiver of Interlocutory Decree and Waiting Period and Request for Best Interests Determination and Final Hearing is set for the 14th day of February 2023, AT 9:00 A.M. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court, 2501 Lymhvlke, Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447.

NOTICE TO, UNKNOWN, JOHN DOE, PUTATIVE FATHER TO KEELI ANN BOSHERS (DOB 08/08/19). 14th day of February 2023, AT 9:00 A.M. IS THE DATE OF THE HEARING IN WHICH THE PETITIONERS HAVE APPLIED FOR THE FINAL DECREE OF ADOPTION TO BE ENTERED. FAILURE TO APPEAR ON 14th day of February 2023, AT 9:00 A.M. AS SET FORTH ABOVE SHALL CONSTITUTE A DENIAL OF INTEREST IN THE MINOR WHICH WILL RESULT IN THE CHILD BEING ADOPTED. SHOULD YOU WISH TO CONTEST THIS ACTION YOU WILL NEED TO BE PRESENT IN COURT OR HAVE AN ATTORNEY APPEAR ON YOUR BEHALF. IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD AN ATTORNEY, YOU MAY QUALIFY TO HAVE AN ATTORNEY APPOINTED TO YOU. THE HEARING IS HELD IN THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION DISTRICT COURT, 2501 LYMHVLKE, OKMULGEE, OKLAHOMA 74447. IF YOU DO NOT APPEAR OR IF AN ATTORNEY DOES NOT APPEAR ON YOUR BEHALF, YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS COULD BE PERMANENTLY AFFECTED ACCORDING TO TITLE 6 MCNA §1-901.2 AND §1-901.4.

[Signature]
Judge of the District Court

Prepared by:
Becki A. Murphy, OBA #19895
David G. Francy, OBA #20056
2217 E. Skelly Dr.
Tulsa, OK 74105
918-895-8200
Attorneys for the Petitioner

Thlopthlocco Tribal Town Cancels Scheduled Election

The Thlopthlocco Tribal Town Business Committee has cancelled the upcoming January 28th 2023 Elections of their own offices. The reasoning just provided to Thlopthlocco Citizens is *"in order to review membership files for completeness & accuracy"*.

Thlopthlocco is a sovereign Nation of 1000 members with dual enrollment with the Muscogee Creek Nation. Subsequently, after 15 years of active litigation and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent in attorney and court fees, the MCN DC/SC recently dismissed all litigation which outlined enrollment infractions and leadership disputes with no resolve citing "Thlopthlocco is entitled sovereign immunity and orders case dismissed for lack of jurisdiction" in their latest order.

New Year,
New Chances to Win!

\$10K

Saturdays

That's a Total of
\$40,000 this Month!

Earn Entries Daily
January 1-28, 2023

Earn one entry for every 50 points played.

WIN YOUR SHARE
\$10,000

SATURDAYS IN JANUARY

DRAWINGS EVERY 15 MINUTES

\$2,500 | 10PM
\$750 | 9PM-9:45PM
\$500 | 7:30PM-8:45PM
\$250 | 6PM-7:15PM

Random \$25 Rewards Play Winners

Set Your Sights BIG!

See Players Club for details on all promotions.



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