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The Eufaula Dormitory is an operating boarding school located on the Mvskoke Reservation. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Education and Training Department oversees the operations at the Eufaula Dormitory. (Morgan Taylor/Multimedia Producer)

TRAGEDY, TRIUMPH & RESILIENCE: HOW EUFAULA DORMITORY IS MOLDING OUR FUTURE LEADERS

A DETAILED LOOK INTO THE SCHOOL'S CURRENT DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

EUFAULA, Oklahoma - The Mvskoke Reservation houses a boarding school supported by the tribe's education department,

the Eufaula Dormitory. It is one of 408 identified boarding schools confirmed in Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Bryan Newland's first volume of the Federal Boarding School Initiative report. Out of those

408 schools, 19 percent are still in operation from the boarding school era that lasted over a century.

The era was considered a part of the federal government's policy to assimilate Native Americans by targeting Native children. The report concluded that the lasting trauma from the boarding school era still impacts native communities today. The horrors are interrelated to the generational trauma resulting in the stigmas of addiction, abuse, violence, crimes, and family issues.

The U.S. Department of Interior released the report in May 2021, outlining the boarding school system and the goals of the department in efforts to attain reconciliation. Almost a year later, U.S. Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland kick started her Road to Healing Tour where she traveled across the country recording and writing the oral stories of survivors and the traumas they and their families deal with to this day.

The traumatic era ended in the 1960s when the Bureau of Indian Affairs took over operations of the remaining boarding schools during that time. Today, there are a few still out there with

a different approach than the missionaries, and has even evolved since the Bureau of Indian Education has taken control. Some tribes stepped in to take over the facilities within their jurisdiction. This included the Mvskoke Nation, and the acquisition of its own reservation school known as the Eufaula Dormitory.

The stigmatic view around boarding schools is grim due to the long-lasting trauma endured by tribes placed on them by the U.S. Government. The modern-day view is still changing to shed positive light on the operation.

Generally, boarding schools have a reputation for being a place for troubled students, especially Indian boarding schools. According to Administrator Melanie Taylor, it is her goal to produce success stories out of each Indigenous child that attends the dorm under her administration.

The Eufaula Dormitory Administration wants to change the scope of the dorm from one of trouble to one of success.

Dorm Life

On Sunday afternoons enrolled dorm students are to be

at their bus stop at their respective times. The dorm buses stop at central areas to pick up multiple students at a time. They will accommodate as needed for the convenience of the furthest student home address. Currently, the furthest bus stop is in Oklahoma City.

When students arrive, it's time for dinner at the dormitory. Residential staff wait to greet and check in the students from their weekend at home. For the rest of the evening, students enjoy recreational activities like hanging out in designated areas including tv rooms located on each wing of the two-story cement building. Activities involve playing in the gymnasium, the softball/baseball field, and at the outdoor basketball court.

Approaching bedtime, the younger kids take showers first, then head to their rooms. Each room has two or three beds and walls decorated by the resident supervisor for a cozier atmosphere. Next, the older elementary students take turns doing their nightly routine, followed by middle school then high school students.

EUFAULA DORMITORY-2



A booklet and examples of fatal amounts of opioids lay on a table at the Intertribal Opioid Crisis Summit in Glenpool, Okla. Feb. 13. (Kaylea Berry/Reporter)

MCNDH MAT | TOR TEAM HELD FIRST INTERTRIBAL OPIOID CRISIS SUMMIT

REPRESENTATIVES FROM TRIBES, TRIBAL AND STATE AGENCIES ATTENDED THE EVENT

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

GLENPOOL, Oklahoma - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health Medication Assisted Treatment and Tribal Opioid Response (MAT | TOR) team held the first Intertribal Opioid Crisis Summit at the Glenpool Conference Center Feb. 13. This event provided information about the opioid crisis to Muscogee Nation departments as well as other tribal and state agencies.

Megan Lowry, MCNDH MAT | TOR Director, said "The MCNDH MAT | TOR team put the Intertribal Opioid Crisis Summit together in response to seeing a need from our patients about educating our tribal departments, working with other tribes, and fostering partnerships between state and tribal agencies to address the opioid crisis in our communities and families."

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, "Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and many others."

The four main issues with the opioid crisis include fentanyl, the effect opioids

have on our brains, overdoses, and lack of knowledge. Fentanyl is so cheap, getting into almost every street drug, and pressed into fake pills. It is also easily accessible because it is so cheap. Opioids disrupt the natural levels of dopamine, making it highly addictive. Fentanyl hijacks dopamine response making it 50-100 times higher than normal.

Youth are experimenting with opioids and overdosing. They need to know the dangers associated with drugs, how to get help, and what to do if someone overdoses. Tribal agencies do not fully grasp how common opioid use disorder is, how to combat it and help citizens overcome it.

According to DEA testing in 2022, 60% of counterfeit pills on the street contain a lethal amount of fentanyl, increasing 20% from 2021. When pills are manufactured on the streets, there is no way to determine how much fentanyl is in each one. The MAT | TOR team used the analogy of baking chocolate chip cookies to explain this a little easier.

"You cannot control how many chocolate chips go into each cookie, just like the amount of fentanyl in most street drugs cannot be controlled," said Lowry.

A lethal dose of fentanyl is two mg, equivalent to five grains of salt. Because of the irregularities in counterfeit pills,

recreational and regular users are at a higher risk of overdose.

People who are getting sober, coming out of detox, or that relapse have the highest risk of overdosing because their bodies no longer have the same tolerance they did when using regularly.

The best way to avoid fentanyl laced pills is by only taking medications filled at a pharmacy. Fentanyl can also be found in meth, heroin, street weed, and vapes.

"It all starts with having knowledgeable conversations and addressing the opioid crisis on our reservations," Lowry said. "We wanted this summit to be educational and focus on getting out as much information as we could, the knowledge base from programs our tribe doesn't have yet, and hear from state agencies that collect data and deal with the tribes in our state."

Topics that were covered include paths to recovery, data and dissemination, Tribal Wellness Courts, substance use and the Indian Child Welfare Act, and addressing overdose and reducing harm.

Ways that attendees can implement what they learned include hiring peers (people who have been through recovery), having conversations about drugs especially opioids with youth, carrying Narcan and knowing how to administer it, and knowing who to get in touch with if someone is fighting the disease of addiction and is ready for help.

This was the first year for the summit and there were around 200 in attendance. The majority of the 39 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma were represented at the summit. The event was funded through grants and by the MCNDH.

The MAT | TOR team is now a year old consisting of five people, a Hospital Administrator, and the MCNDH Addiction Specialist, Dr. Reed. Although the program is new, the team stays busy working with patients, spreading awareness, and researching new ways to help those who are struggling. They are working to get Narcan into schools and out to cross deputized law-enforcement officers through Lighthorse Police.

There will be another event on May 8 with more details to come. If there are any questions or someone needs help, the MCN MAT | TOR intake number is (539) 286-3996.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH HICKS CHARGED WITH MISDEMEANOR DUI

QUESTIONS REMAIN ABOUT MISDEMEANOR CLASSIFICATION

by **JERRAD MOORE**
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - Mvskoke Media received an anonymous tip that Muscogee Creek Nation National Council Representative Joseph Hicks had been arrested for felony DUI in Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

Mvskoke Media obtained documentation from MCN Lighthorse Police as well as Sapulpa Police alleging that Rep. Hicks was arrested on Feb. 2 on charges of felony DUI.

According to the arrest affidavit, Sapulpa Police Dispatch received a call of a reckless driver in a dark pickup truck on East Taft Avenue.

The arresting officer located the vehicle and initiated a traffic stop.

Rep. Hicks was stopped driving southbound in the northbound lane of South Adams Street in Sapulpa.

The arresting officer observed an odor associated with alcoholic beverages on Hicks' breath and vehicle and attested that Hicks had slurred speech and red, watery eyes.

Hicks was asked if he was willing to take a field sobriety test, to which he agreed.

Upon the completion of the test the officer believed that Hicks was intoxicated and Hicks admitted to having two drinks while at a concert in Tulsa.

Rep. Hicks was then placed under arrest, at which time he refused a state chemical test for the presence of alcohol.

On Feb 3, A MCN Lighthorse officer transported Rep. Hicks to David L. Moss Criminal Justice Center for booking.

MCN District Court records show Rep. Hicks had his initial appearance in Tribal Court on Feb. 3, where a \$3,000 bond was set and posted, and an order was issued for



Rep. Hicks currently serves as a National Council Member for Creek District, Seat A. (Submission)

his release from custody.

MCN District Court records list Rep. Hicks as being charged with reckless driving on the same date, but made no mention of a DUI charge.

On Feb. 15, Mvskoke Media confirmed with the MCN Attorney General Geri Wisner that Rep. Hicks would be charged with a DUI in relation to this arrest and MCN District Court online documentation was updated to show an amended criminal complaint as being filed on Feb. 14.

Mvskoke Media obtained this amended criminal complaint, which lists the second DUI charge as a misdemeanor.

Mvskoke Media has contacted the MCN Attorney General for clarification on whether this charge is a misdemeanor or a felony. As of the deadline for publishing this story, Mvskoke Media has not received a statement from the AG's Office.

In September 2022, Muscogee Creek Nation National Council Representative Joseph Hicks plead no contest to his first offense DUI in Tribal Court, and is currently on probation for this offense until September of 2023.

According to MCN District Court records, a hearing is scheduled in this case for April 24.

EUFAULA DORMITORY

Continued from Page 1

By 11 p.m. all lights should be out in each dorm room, earlier for the younger children. Security staff of at least six are on the clock at all times. Overnight staff conduct headcounts of the children every hour on the hour until the 6:00 a.m. wake up time. Students have the option for an early wake up per request. Breakfast is available at the dorm's cafeteria beginning at 6:45 a.m. Students have about 20 minutes to finish getting ready and grab their bags before catching the bus. The bus takes the kids to Eufaula Public Schools where they attend a regular student schedule.

According to Taylor, the dorm is different from other boarding schools in this way. Many of the Indian boarding schools today house and school their students on site.

After school, students load the bus to head back to the dormitory. They are provided a snack upon arrival then it is straight to study time and tutoring to get homework done, with extra help as needed. After students finish their homework, they resume the evening routine of recreational time, dinner, showers, and bed.

The school week has a set schedule for the students to be bussed to and from the residence. However, the staff does adjust for extracurricular activities. Many of the students that stay at the dorms participate in sports and band.

On Fridays, the students are dropped off to the dorm from school to collect their snacks, grab their weekend bags then head home. They are bussed to the locations where they were picked up the previous Sunday and will be picked up again when the next Sunday comes to start the week all over.

Student Experience

In May 2022, Lyric Cummings earned her diploma at Eufaula High School making her a third-generation Eufaula Ironhead and Eufaula Dormitory attendee. Her hope is to attend the College of Muscogee Nation and eventually be a nurse.

Cummings' dad is also a Eufaula graduate. Her mother attended the school as well, but graduated elsewhere. Her parents met at the dorm as young kids and later became sweethearts. Plenty of her uncles and aunts attended the dorm as well, making it a family custom.

Long time staff member Mr. Higgins is someone Cummings mentioned that had a huge influence on her. He is admired among many alumni for his dedication and service to the dorm over the years.

"I loved the staff, they're really helpful and caring," Cummings said. "If you need any help, they'll help you."

"It's like living at home, but you're living with a bunch of your friends and stuff, it's really fun."

Higgins and other staff like him kept the kids in routine making sure they were fed, clean, and making good grades.

"They made sure we kept up

with our grades," she said. "They made us do tutoring."

Cummings claims they assisted her with attending Kiamichi Technology Center where she received her Certified Nursing Assistant license. She attributes her career choice to the dorm.

"I don't think I would be in nursing if it wasn't for them," Cummings said.

Cummings became a resident in the third grade. She believes the dorm provided her a safe place. She claims she may have found trouble to get into or possibly not even made it to graduation if she did not attend the dorms.

Being involved in cultural activities is a big part of Cummings' homelife, but that is not the same case for all students. She claims the dorm organized activities that help keep students involved.

"Usually there's people who come and they'll help you make skirts," said Cummings. "You learn how to make skirts and belts and learn how to speak the language."

When attending the public school during the day, Cummings claims there was definitely a separation between the dorm kids and others.

"We didn't really say much to the school kids," she said. "We call them 'outside kids.'"

National Council Speaker William Lowe also attended the dorms. He made a similar statement where he claimed the dorm residents were called "dormies".

Taylor herself experienced a rift attending Eufaula high school. She and Lowe attended the school around the same time; however, she was not a dorm resident.

"Usually they'll ask us 'What's the dorm like?', 'How do we live there?', 'What do we do there?'. We just tell them, and they're like 'oh that's cool, we didn't know about that'," Cummings said. "It's not like a prison, I mean we get to go do stuff."

"You can ask the staff if you need to go somewhere, and they'll take you. Like to the store or if you have athletic events, then they'll take you to your athletic events and stuff like that."

Even though there may be a distance with other kids, the dorm students are able to develop close bonds and lifelong friendships.

"Most of them still come over to my house, most of us still talk, most of us still have each other on social media," Cummings said.

Creating Success Stories

It is the dorm's mission to create future leaders. Whether they be leaders in their own tribal nations or even their own communities.

Students are already beginning their success stories. Before graduating high school, two male students have already had a placement in the Fiber Optic Training Program, and one female student signed to join the Navy. Former Jr. Miss Muscogee Nation Gabby Noriega attends the dormitory as well.

"I want Willy Lowe's (success

story)," Taylor said. "I want the support for this with firsthand knowledge of 'this is what it did for me', I want success stories."

Nicknamed Little Willy by the Eufaula Dormitory staff, Speaker Lowe attended the dormitory for most of grade school. A Eufaula native, he was a third grader attending Eufaula schools when he had his first introduction to the dormitory.

When it comes to the phrase "childhood home", his first thought is the cement building where he shares memories with friends he once considered family.

Being the oldest child of seven, Lowe spent a lot of time with his grandmother. Before his residence, he spent after school hours with her while she participated in the foster grandparents program the dorm offered at the time. It has now since been removed.

At a young age, he eventually made the decision to attend the dorm to help ease his single mother of her responsibility.

"It was poverty stricken times," he said. "With all the kids in the house we chose to go there."

Although he did take advantage of his grandmother being there sometimes.

"If I was crying enough, she would take me home with her," Lowe said.

The older Lowe got, the more he grew accustomed to dorm life. Not only did he enjoy being around his school buddies but staying at the dorm allowed him to attend and participate in activities.

"It was great because back then it was 24/7, seven days a week," Lowe said. "We would go to the movie theater and roller skate."

A favorite for him was the weekend sports competition between other Indian boarding schools like Jones Academy, Sequoyah, and others.

"Our claim to fame at Eufaula was we had a phenomenal basketball team," Lowe said.

Trophies were distributed at these boarding school tournaments. Decades later, he wonders whatever happened to the old trophies.

"I haven't ever asked about these old trophies we won and whatever happened to them," Lowe said.

Lowe more than enjoyed his time at the dorm. He lived there during the school year and even made his way there for summer through the Summer Youth Works Program.

Coming from a home without a father, he looked up to the male staff as uncles and even father figures.

"I would rely on my coaches, especially the guys who worked at the boarding school," he explained.

"It was good to have those examples."

Having these examples along with the dorm living experience led Lowe to join the United States Marine Corps. The structured living was nothing new to him, housing with others, being away from home, eating meals at certain times, among other things.

"It helped me," Lowe said about living at the dorm. "Everything else I was accustomed to."

Bacone students would volunteer at the dorm to provide tutoring services during the daily study hour. A student working toward her M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration) assisted Lowe with his homework.

"I was a young kid, didn't really know what degrees meant," he said. "But that acronym stuck with me."

After nine years in the infantry with the influence of the tutor that the dorm provided, he attended Bacone to receive his M.B.A.

"That helped me at least have some goals academically," Lowe said. "I really do credit the dorm and their tutors."

All his success, which would make a long list he credits to the dorm. He speaks of the dorm highly and is a huge supporter. He attends events held at the dorm in support and makes donations.

"Within our culture it is a good place for kids to go and have that structured lifestyle, if you will, and be able to have the comfort of a stable lifestyle," Lowe said.

Countless Eufaula Dormitory Alumni credit their success as adults to the place they called home during their formative years attending school.

The Dorm

Eufaula Dormitory is a co-educational facility that houses students as young as first grade to seniors in high school. Students stay at the dormitory Sunday through Friday and are bussed home on the weekends. A partnership with the local Eufaula Public School, provides the residents an education.

The dorm can house up to 120 students but the general enrollment numbers vary from 80-90 residents. There is a current enrollment of 58, as of Jan. 12.

During COVID, the dorm did not house students for a year and was limited to half capacity at 60 students upon return. The administration is hoping to return to full capacity during the fall.

Students come from many different socio-economic family situations including having married parents, single parents, living with grandparents, guardianships, adoptive parents, foster care, or who are homeless.

"We look to see if maybe we are not equipped to handle what the students' needs are," Taylor said.

Taylor wants to assure that the dormitory is equipped with the resources necessary for each prospective student.

"We want consistency and normalcy for the kids that are here," she said.

Taylor has worked in education for over two decades in various capacities across the education field. She has worked directly with students inside the classroom giving her the ability to understand that each student is different. In her experience, Taylor claims that the

learning style of a Native child is set apart from others because it is believed to be linked to generational trauma.

"I think they probably have a little bit of a different learning style," Taylor said. "They tend to be a little bit stand-offish; they are a quieter group overall and it takes a little bit longer for them to warm up and want to participate."

That is why she is determined to create a place where students are aimed toward success.

"We want it to be somebody we know that's going to excel here," Taylor said. "We aren't setting anyone up for failure."

To get more information on the Eufaula Dormitory, call 918-689-2522.

History

Originally, the school was established by the Episcopal Church as Asbury Mission Boarding School under contract with the Muscogee Nation National Council in 1842. The enrollment and housing of a hundred students for a term of ten months was reported in 1848. A list of enrollees (<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~tex-lance/genealogy/records/1949eufaula.htm>) for the term 1849-1850 suggests that children were coming from all over Indian Territory to attend.

Enrollment had declined to around 50 boys and 30 girls in 1858. During that year, boys were taught how to make fences, prepare land for crops, plant crops, cultivate, harvest, grind corn meal and chop wood in an added woodshop class. Superintendent Thomas Ruble reported that the boys were paid ten cents per bushel.

An agreement between the tribes' Council and the government provided that the Asbury Manual Labor School would be paid \$70 yearly for each child so long as the sum did not exceed \$5600 paid quarterly in 1870. The Creek Council Constitution of 1870 Section 6 was changed to only admit males at the Asbury Manual Labor School.

The school was moved from its original 1848 construction to the west side of the Eufaula on a hill. Eufaula High School was opened, serving grades first through 10th in 1892.

Standing three stories high, outfitted with a bell tower and wide porches around the first floor. It had been described as a prison or asylum which intimidated the children.

In 1907, the Bureau of Indian Affairs gained control of the facilities and separated the boys from the school, sending them to various boarding schools like Euchee, Nuyaka, and others. That's when the school changed the name from Eufaula High School to Eufaula Boarding School.

The BIA's objective was to civilize young Indian girls by teaching them to "follow a clean home run by an English-speaking woman who embraced traditional middle-class, white values.

The tribe had depleted education funds needing the government's full assistance in providing for the school in 1928.



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Muscogee (Creek) Nation leadership pose for a photo after the laying of the wreath ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Feb. 20, 2023. (Back row) Joe Hicks, Mary Crawford, Will Lowe, Del Beaver, Jeff Fife, (front row) Chief David Hill, Monica Hill, Joyce Deere and Grover Wind. (Submission)

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION LEADERSHIP PLACED A WREATH AT THE ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE MUSCOGEE NATION HAS HAD THE HONOR OF PLACING A WREATH

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

ARLINGTON, Virginia - For the first time, Muscogee (Creek) Nation leadership placed a wreath at the Arlington National Cemetery on Feb. 20. Principal Chief David Hill, Second Chief Del Beaver, members of the National Council and Veterans Affairs Director Grover Wind represented Muscogee Nation during this historical moment.

In November, Chief Hill and representatives were in Washington D.C. for the dedication of the Native American Veterans Memorial at the National Museum of the American Indian. While in the area, they toured Arlington National Cemetery and watched the Changing of the Guard. After experiencing the emotional

moment, Chief Hill began talking with officials at Arlington about how the Nation could get an opportunity for an official wreath laying.

Robin Jenkins (Mvskoke) was contacted by Jeff Fife and then Chief Hill about creating a wreath for the occasion. Jenkins has made many wreaths and sprays for different events and was honored with the opportunity. Chief Hill and Jenkins worked together to come up with an idea for the wreath.

Chief Hill was recently notified they were approved. The timing was perfect with it being President's Day and having the National Congress of American Indians in Washington D.C. this week.

"Everyone knows the exemplary record of Native American service in the military and how meaningful that is to our people," Chief said. "When we

have the opportunity for an honor such as this, that completely represents the selflessness and sacrifice that we value as people, then we can't pass it up."

"It's a tremendous and humbling honor for the Nation," Chief continued.

Jenkins shared the Muscogee Nation's live stream and her gratitude on her Facebook page.

"I was honored to get to make the wreath for the Muscogee Nation to be laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier," Jenkins said. "It filled my heart with joy to see our Muscogee leaders participating in this ceremony."

The ceremony was live streamed on The Muscogee Nation Facebook and the video is still available to watch. Around 125 individuals tuned in for the historical occasion.



Election dates are chosen based on the guidelines of the election code. (Shutterstock)

ELECTION BOARD RELEASES POLLING DATES

THIS YEAR'S ELECTION SEASON WILL INCLUDE THE POSITION OF PRINCIPAL CHIEF

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election Board has set the dates for this year's election that will include National Council District Representative Seat A along with the Office of Principal Chief and Second Chief.

Primary Elections will be held on Sept. 16 with polls open for early voting on Sept 13 and 14.

The General Elections are set for Nov. 4, polls will be open for early voters on Nov 1 and 2.

According to Election Board Manager Nelson Harjo Jr. dates are chosen based on what the code has outlined for election season. Depending on the election tier, it may say "the third Saturday in September" for reference.

Registered voters may have received an absentee ballot

request form in the mail from the Election Board. Harjo said these forms are due on August 23. Within the first week, around 100 were mailed back.

Absentee voter forms allow voters to cast their vote by mail for those who return the request form. Ballots are received in the mail with a pre-paid postage envelope to mail the ballot back. Voters remain anonymous.

In the most recent election, absentee votes were missed.

"That was a laundry list of issues that were beyond our control and beyond the Nation's control," Harjo said.

The United Postal Service had a nationwide problem with mail delivery due to COVID.

To get ahead of this potential situation, the MCN Election Board has invested in priority postage for absentee ballots that will be mailed the next day.

"It's a lot more expensive but we believe it's worth it," Harjo

said.

Typically, the voter turnout is higher during chief elections, Harjo claims. Voter turnout remains a problem, not only within the tribe but throughout the Nation.

"This has always been a problem our tribe has had," Harjo said. "It's an ongoing battle."

Only about 20 percent of Mvskoke citizens are registered to vote.

"If you don't exercise this right, eventually you may not have it," Harjo said.

Harjo encourages citizens to vote. He said it helps elected officials understand the need to listen to citizens.

The total number of registered voters for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is 18,003 as of 2/1/2023.

For more information, call the Election Board at 918-732-7631 or visit <https://www.muscogeenation.com/election-board/>.



MCN Lighthorse will launch a new week-long program called the Youth Police Academy. The program is designed for students ages 11-15 interested in law enforcement. (MM File)

LIGHTHORSE LAUNCHES POLICE YOUTH ACADEMY

STUDENTS LEARN WHAT IT TAKES TO SERVE ON THE FORCE

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - If you ask the average person if they remember what they wanted to be when they grew up, chances are they are happy to share those long-forgotten childhood dreams. Common answers involve healthcare, education, and law enforcement. To make those dreams possible for the next generation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police is set to launch its new Youth Police Academy March 13-17.

Through this new program, students ages 11-15 will learn about tribal law enforcement operations through a K-9 demo, patrol techniques, traffic stops, and firearm safety. This can range in positions like patrol, investigations, community outreach, or the dive team. While similar to the Summer Safety series, this has a different focus for those wanting to join the force.

The program also includes mentorship. It will provide classes on topics like bullying and internet safety.

Lighthorse Deputy Chief of Special Operations Daniel Wind III said the academy aims to bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community. If the community does not trust its public servants, it can create a negative image.

"We want them to see we are there to help them, to be someone they can trust," Wind said. "Through this academy, by letting them come in, they can see that we're not the boogeyman."

This program will teach what it takes to serve on the force and what it takes to serve as a law enforcement officer in a tribal community.

"How you show respect to our elders, how to show respect if you're at a ceremonial ground or

one of our traditional churches," Wind said.

Students will be taken across the reservation from the College of Muscogee Nation to the Broken Arrow Police Academy. They will also spend a night in Oklahoma City to meet federal partners and tour the Oklahoma City National Memorial.

Students in the program will receive a T-shirt, a polo shirt, a backpack, and a ball cap. Participants who complete the academy will participate in a graduation ceremony at the end of the program.

Due to funding from a grant, the program is free of charge for participants. It is open to anyone who lives within the MCN reservation, including non-citizens. Although the upcoming academy's 30 slots have already been filled, there is a waiting list.

These programs are vital in preparing the next generation for the workforce. Some of the students Wind has mentored through these programs in years past he now calls colleagues.

"I have enjoyed watching some of the kids I work with grow up and become very productive citizens," Wind said. "I am proud to say that I have seen many of our students become police officers in our department now."

According to a 2021 study, adult respondents ranked the position of a police officer as number ten on a list of the top twenty dream jobs they wanted to be when they grew up. Through the Youth Police Academy, students will learn about different opportunities in law enforcement and gauge whether it is the right career path for them.

Wind said that while the department has yet to set a date for the next Youth Police Academy, they are tentatively looking at scheduling the next one for summer. For more information, contact Malissa Beaver at mbeaver@muscogeenation.com.



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Author J.D. Colbert (Mvskoke/Chickasaw) discusses his new novel "Between Two Fires" on an episode of Live Wire. The book centers on a fictional Native American character as he lives through the allotment era and the inception of the "Oil Capital of the World." (MM File)

CITIZEN PUBLISHES NEW NOVEL SET DURING THE 1920S CREEK ALLOTMENT ERA

J.D. COLBERT’S “BETWEEN TWO FIRES,” TELLS A STORY OF CONSPIRACY AND ASSIMILATION

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma - The allotment era and Tulsa’s rise as the “Oil Capital of the World” is a sensitive topic among Muscogee (Creek) families whose ancestors lost their allotments to outsiders. It is also the setting for J.D. Colbert’s new novel, “Between Two Fires.”

Colbert describes the book as a historical fiction thriller. Readers are taken back in time to the early inception of Tulsa, or as Creeks called it, Tvhasse.

“I would say approximately 90% of what I write about, both in terms of the characters and the events that are portrayed in my book, actually happened,” Colbert said. “I took a little bit of editorial license to keep the story moving at a pace readers tend to enjoy.”

The book centers on Sam Davis, a fictional character living in the allotment era during the 1920s. Davis is a biracial descendent of white and Muscogee ancestry. He brokers real estate

between illiterate Muscogee people and outsiders looking to obtain their oil-rich real estate by any means necessary. Although Davis becomes successful at what he does, many Muscogee allotment owners are reported missing or murdered.

When Davis begins to see the error of his ways, he starts to uncover a massive conspiracy to steal Muscogee allotments. As the plot thickens, Davis must bring to light the nefarious schemes to obtain Muscogee-owned lands in Tulsa and confront his role.

Published in November of 2022, the book follows “Killers of the Flower Moon,” a nonfiction book about the Osage murders and the formation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In that story, citizens of the Osage tribe were also murdered for their land due to oil resources.

“Killers of the Flower Moon” is also being adapted into a Martin Scorsese film and is expected to be released in 2023. Colbert said it is possible that “Between Two Fires” could also be adapted into a film someday.

“I do have a connection of three

degrees of separation from movie producer Taylor Sheridan of Yellowstone fame,” Colbert said. “I am hoping it gets in the right hands.”

When it came to editorial license, Colbert made sure that he had as much control as he could over the story, given the sensitive subject matter. He wanted to ensure that the story of the stolen Muscogee allotments was authentically written and not embellished.

“I feel to a certain degree that I am the voice of those original allottees,” Colbert said. “I didn’t want that voice diminished.”

Colbert intends to write a sequel. He said the story’s focus would be on the Indian guardianship system that allowed Muscogee-owned lands to be taken by non-natives.

“Between Two Fires” currently holds an overall 4.7 out of 5 stars on Amazon.com. It is available in hardcover, paperback, and Amazon Kindle e-readers.

If you want to learn more about “Between Two Fires” or where to purchase it, you can visit Colbert’s website, jdcolbert.com.



Moses Brings Plenty (left) and Edwin Marshall (right) pose for a photo on the set of “1883: The Bass Reeves” Story Feb. 16. (Submission)

MVSKOKE CITIZEN LANGUAGE CONSULTANT FOR UPCOMING MINISERIES

EDWIN MARSHALL PROVIDES HIS MVSKOKE LANGUAGE EXPERTISE FOR THE “1883: THE BASS REEVES STORY”

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

WETUMKA, Oklahoma - Mvskoke citizen Edwin Marshall was chosen to be a language consultant for the upcoming miniseries “1883: The Bass Reeves Story”, which is set to premiere on Paramount+. Bass Reeves was the first African American Deputy U.S. Marshal west of the Mississippi River. During his 32-year career as a Deputy U.S. Marshal Reeves is believed to have over 3,000 arrests including that of his son’s for murder.

Reeves was born a slave to Arkansas state legislator William Steele Reeves and moved to Texas with William as a child where he stayed until the Civil War. William’s son, Colonel George Reeves joined the Confederate Army and took Bass with him. Sometime during the Civil War Bass escaped slavery and fled to Indian Territory where he lived among the tribes until the 13th Amendment passed. Around 1875, James Fagan

appointed Reeves as a Deputy U.S. Marshal because he could speak multiple Native languages and knew his way around Indian Territory.

Moses “Mo” Brings Plenty, an Oglala Lakota from South Dakota and famously known as Mo on Yellowstone, attended an Intertribal meeting at River Spirit and shared Taylor Sheridan’s vision of the miniseries on Bass Reeves. Brings Plenty met with Muscogee Nation Principal Chief David Hill to find a Mvskoke language consultant.

Chief Hill recommended Marshall to Brings Plenty to be the language consultant. Marshall is a first language speaker and has been involved with the Muscogee Nation in various roles over the years. Marshall worked as Seminole Nation’s Language Program Director, has a Facebook group “The Original Muscogee Word of the Day” with over 10,000 members, and has provided speeches in the Mvskoke language at many public events.

Marshall is of the Fuswvlke clan, a member of Tukvptce tribal

town and the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Baptist Church in Wetumka. He grew up in a multigenerational household of first language speakers.

Another advantage Marshall has for this opportunity is that Chiefs from the Five-Civilized Tribes appointed him to be the Intertribal Inaugural Representative to the U.S. Marshals Museum Board of Directors. During his time working with the museum, he expanded his knowledge of Reeves and played a part in proposing recognition of Tribal Lighthorse Officers’ part in working with the Marshals in Indian Territory. There is now a 13’ tall Lighthorse statue at the museum in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. He was on the museum’s board until 2017.

Marshall is working with the network by translating, phonetically spelling Mvskoke words, and ensuring words are pronounced correctly. He is able to work with the cast on pronunciation on set or over video calls or phone calls.

“I would like to think that our citizens would take pride in hearing their own language on the big screen, to hear someone speaking Mvskoke whether they’re Creek or Seminole,” Marshall said.

The team behind “1883: The Bass Reeves Story” seems to want to represent the different tribes in the series accurately. There are also language consultants for other tribes that play a role.

“That’s one of the highlights in this business now is that there’s a shift and now people want everything accurate when it comes to language, culture, and hopefully it’ll be inspiring for our young people to pick up and embrace their identity, their full identity,” Brings Plenty said. “It’s just a great honor to be able to have Edwin on board with us to share the language.”

Brings Plenty continued, “We’re building a good friendship and rebuilding and reconnecting Indian Country.”

The airdate for the miniseries has not yet been released.



Jayley Ray and her family pose for a photo at her letter of commitment to Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College signing at Tahlequah High School, Nov. 2, 2022. Back row left to right: Sherry Ray (grandmother), Willie Pigeon (grandfather), and Patsy Pigeon (grandmother). Front row left to right: Chris Ray (father), Jayley Ray, and Beverly Ray (mother). (Submission)

MVSKOKE SENIOR COMMITS TO PLAYING SOFTBALL AT NEO

JAYLEY RAY WILL JOIN THE LADY NORSE SOFTBALL TEAM AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

TAHLEQUAH, Oklahoma - Jayley Ray (Mvskoke) is a senior and softball player at Tahlequah High School. Ray is the daughter of Chris and Beverly Ray (both Mvskoke) and granddaughter of Patsy (Mvskoke) and Willie Pigeon and Sherry Ray (Mvskoke). On Nov. 2, 2022, Ray signed a commitment letter to play softball at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College (NEO).

Ray’s parents are proud of their daughter and eager for her to embark on the next part of her journey.

“I am happy and excited for her; it’s that kind of feeling that a mom gets when their child takes their first step or says momma for the first time – an unexplainable feeling,” Ray’s mom said. “I have enjoyed watching her develop as a player over the past 14 years.”

Ray has been playing softball since she was four years old. She primarily plays as a third baseman but has also played as a pitcher and in the outfield. She played travel ball with the Oklahoma Shock from 2016 until 2022 and is playing for the Oklahoma Patriots in 2023.

Her parents’ sacrifice and support are not overlooked, and she credits them for where she is today. Besides her mom and dad, Ray also gives credit to her grandpa, another big supporter. He played softball when he was younger and taught her a few things too.

Ray’s dad, Chris Ray, has been her coach for 14 years, starting at Weleetka and playing Coach Pitch. He is also the Head Softball Coach for Tahlequah High School. Coach Ray has watched his daughter mature from a unique position.

“I have been fortunate enough to watch Jayley grow as an individual, student, and athlete,” said Coach Ray. “Jayley decided several years ago that she wanted to play softball in college, and I am grateful to have been able to share that journey with her to this point in her career.”

Being the coach’s kid sounds like it would make things easier, but that is quite the opposite for Ray.

“He’s definitely a lot tougher on me, but it’s made me a better ball player,” Ray said. “Sometimes people question ‘Why does she get to play?’ ‘She’s the favorite,’ but I don’t get any favoritism at all.”

Some could say that being the coach’s kid can make it more challenging. Regardless, her hard work over the years has been noticed.

During her high school career alone, she has accomplished being the 2022 Large School (Class 5A & 6A) All-State selection, 2022 National Fast Pitch Coaches Association Region II 1st Team 3rd Baseman, Vype Magazine Top 100 Softball Players 2022, Class 5A Fast Pitch State Tournament Qualifier 2019, 2020, 2021, & 2022, Class 5A District 4 Defensive Player of the Year 2022, Class 5A District 4 Third Baseman of the Year 2020, 2021, Class 5A District 4 Champions 2021, 2022, and Class 6A Academic Slow Pitch

State Champions 2022.

Ray has also played slow-pitch and basketball at Tahlequah. She is a competitive player but still knows how to enjoy the game.

“My favorite memory of all the years I’ve played was my sophomore year,” Ray said. “We beat Pryor in extra innings to advance to the state tournament, and that was probably one of the most fun games I have ever played because it just went back and forth, and we eventually came out on top.”

Not only is Ray a competitive athlete, but she has paid attention to her academics. Ray is a member of the National Honor Society and Oklahoma Indian Student Honor Society and has a 4.032 GPA.

“At times, it’s difficult, but you know a student comes before an athlete, so you want to make sure that you do all of your work, get all your stuff turned in; that way, you can practice and play,” Ray said. “If you fall behind in your work, then you may not get to play an important game.”

“So, school is more important, I would say, than sports; that’s why it’s called a student-athlete,” she continued.

Ray will continue her education at NEO to become an athletic trainer. After she completes her freshman and sophomore years, Ray hopes to transfer to another college where she can continue playing the sport she loves.

Throughout her time playing softball, Ray has learned a few life lessons. Her response was simple when asked what she would share with younger athletes.

“Have fun and enjoy it because it goes by quickly,” Ray said. “I would also tell them not to be so hard on themselves because I found the more times I was hard on myself I played a lot worse.”

She continued, “So, if you just have fun, stay loose, and have confidence in yourself, then it makes playing a lot easier.”

Besides playing softball, Ray likes swimming, vacationing, making cards with her mom, and watching college softball. Ray is of the Hvlptvlke (Alligator Clan) and a member of Belvin Baptist Church.

Ray said, “Me being a Native American, I get to go out and represent my tribe and my family whenever I’m playing, and that’s a great honor to be able to do.”

Ray will continue to do so during college.

“She has worked extremely hard for the opportunity to play softball at the collegiate level and is eager to get to NEO in August and get her college career started,” Coach Ray said.

Bailey Burnett, NEO’s Head Softball Coach, and Ray have developed a good relationship. Burnett will hold an event for the incoming players to get to know one another and start building bonds.

Ray will play on the Large East All-State Team in the 2022 Oklahoma Fast-Pitch Coaches Association All-State game at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond June 10.



Chiefs from tribes across the state pose for a picture at the Oklahoma State Capitol. (Submission)

OKLAHOMA GOVERNOR GIVES THE STATE OF THE STATE WITHOUT MENTIONING TRIBAL AFFAIRS

STITT GIVES AN UPDATE ON THE STATE’S POSITION AND PLANS MOVING FORWARD

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma – “The State of the State is the stron- gest it’s ever been,” Oklahoma Gover- nor Kevin Stitt said during the deliv- ery of his address at the state capital on Feb. 6.

Principal Chief David Hill and Second Chief Del Beaver attended the event with other tribal leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes like Princi- pal Chief of Cherokee Nation, Chuck- Hoskins Jr. and Chief of the Choctaw Nation, Gary Batton.

At the beginning of Stitts’ address, he recognized their attendance by grouping them together and naming them “tribal leaders” along with a long list of other attendees.

However, as his address went on, Stitt did not mention the tribes at any other time. In last year’s address, he attacked the tribes by bringing up the Roth case that could have been sub- jected to the McGirt ruling. Chief Hill

said that Stitt’s statement was “patently false.” Later, it was the Castro-Huerta case decision that would decide the fate of Roth.

Tribal leaders have not had any negative feelings toward Stitt for the lack of recognition.

According to Chief Hill, it was nice to not hear negative comments about the tribes. He does believe tribes deserve credit for their economic impact, job creation, and public safety.

Stitt’s cabinet has made a positive turn for the state/tribal relationship with the confirmation of the new State Attorney General Gentner Drum- mond.

Drummonds’ priority is to improve relations with tribal nations. He finds the recent disputes over McGirt to be opportunities for collab- oration.

“Oklahoma’s relationship with our great tribal nations has been damaged by divisive rhetoric and combative leg- islation,” Drummond said.

“Oklahoma must forge com-

monsense agreements with our tribal brothers and sisters that respect their sovereignty and ensure public safety.”

What Drummond calls a simple task, has not been so simple for the state and tribes.

The Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium found that the tribes had an impact of \$15.6 billion on the state for the year 2019 alone, according to a report released in 2021.

The Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium found that the tribes had an impact of \$15.6 billion on the state for the year 2019 alone, according to a report released in 2021.

In Stitt’s first term he promised to deliver more transparency, eliminate budget deficits, replenish state sav- ings, boost the economy, and bring more jobs to the state. In addition, Stitt claimed that the state would support law enforcement, cut taxes, invest in infrastructure, and invest in education.

“We’ve done this by sticking to our conservative principles,” Stitt said. “Smaller government, lower taxes,

family, freedom, and faith.”

Stitt’s executive budget will propose \$130 million towards an Education Savings Account, \$50 million in per- formance-based pay raises for teach- ers, \$100 million toward the Innova- tion School Fund, and \$100 million for the expansive reading innovation. It will expand concurrent enrollment, and promote charter schools. One of his main goals is to create more educa- tion options for students.

Oklahoma has ranked at the bottom of the barrel in education over the last two years. Stitt claimed his ini- tiatives will put Oklahoma in the top ten from its current No. 49 rank in the United States.

“Every child deserves a quality education that fits their unique needs, regardless of economic status, or back- ground,” Stitt said.

Stitt claimed over 23,000 jobs have been created since he came into office. He said that Oklahoma now has the third fastest-growing economy in the nation.

“We must capitalize on the prog- ress we’ve made,” Stitt said.

The Stitt Administration has plans to focus on key areas: energy, infra- structure, workforce development, and tax policy.

These efforts could make Okla- homa the Nations’ hydrogen hub. It currently ranks fifth for natural gas production, sixth for oil production, and 10th for renewables.

“Oklahoma’s affordable and reli- able grid is the envy of the world and an undeniable competitive advantage,” Stitt said.

The Mvskoke Reservation houses Google’s second largest data center in Mayes County. Just last year, Google invested \$75 million to expand opera- tions. USA Rare Earth, American Air- lines, Dell, Amazon, and Boeing all house operations in the state.

House Speaker Charles McCall helped form the Oklahoma Broad- band Office. Their goal is to provide adequate broadband internet services to 95% of Oklahomans by 2028.

“When I came into office, Okla- homa was ranked in the bottom ten for broadband access,” Stitt said. “We’ve jumped 23 spots in the nation for fastest coverage.”

Stitt said that the workforce is a challenge to business flooding to Okla- homa. He hopes to see partnerships form between higher education insti- tutions, CareerTechs, and even high schools with the “workforce of tomor- row”. He urges the state to reimagine the approach by investing in students as individuals. Innovation is what Stitt believes will keep Oklahoma striving toward the future.

“Because in OK, we are not afraid of the future,” he said. “ We lean into it, and we embrace it.”

As of now the state has accumu- lated a \$4 billion savings account and \$1.8 billion surplus. Stitt’s budget will propose to eliminate the state grocery tax and reduce personal taxes to save families hundreds of dollars each year.

Families are still struggling to keep up with the post-pandemic inflation. Things like milk have gone from \$2.90 to today’s price of \$4.20. Eggs have almost reached six dollars.

“We can provide families with immediate relief at the store and with bigger paychecks,” Stitt said.

Stitt yearns to protect Oklahomans and promote freedoms. It is one of Stitt’s goals to make OK the best state in the nation for veterans.

About nine percent of Oklahoma’s population (340,000) is veterans. State legislature enacted multiple new bills to assist veterans statewide.

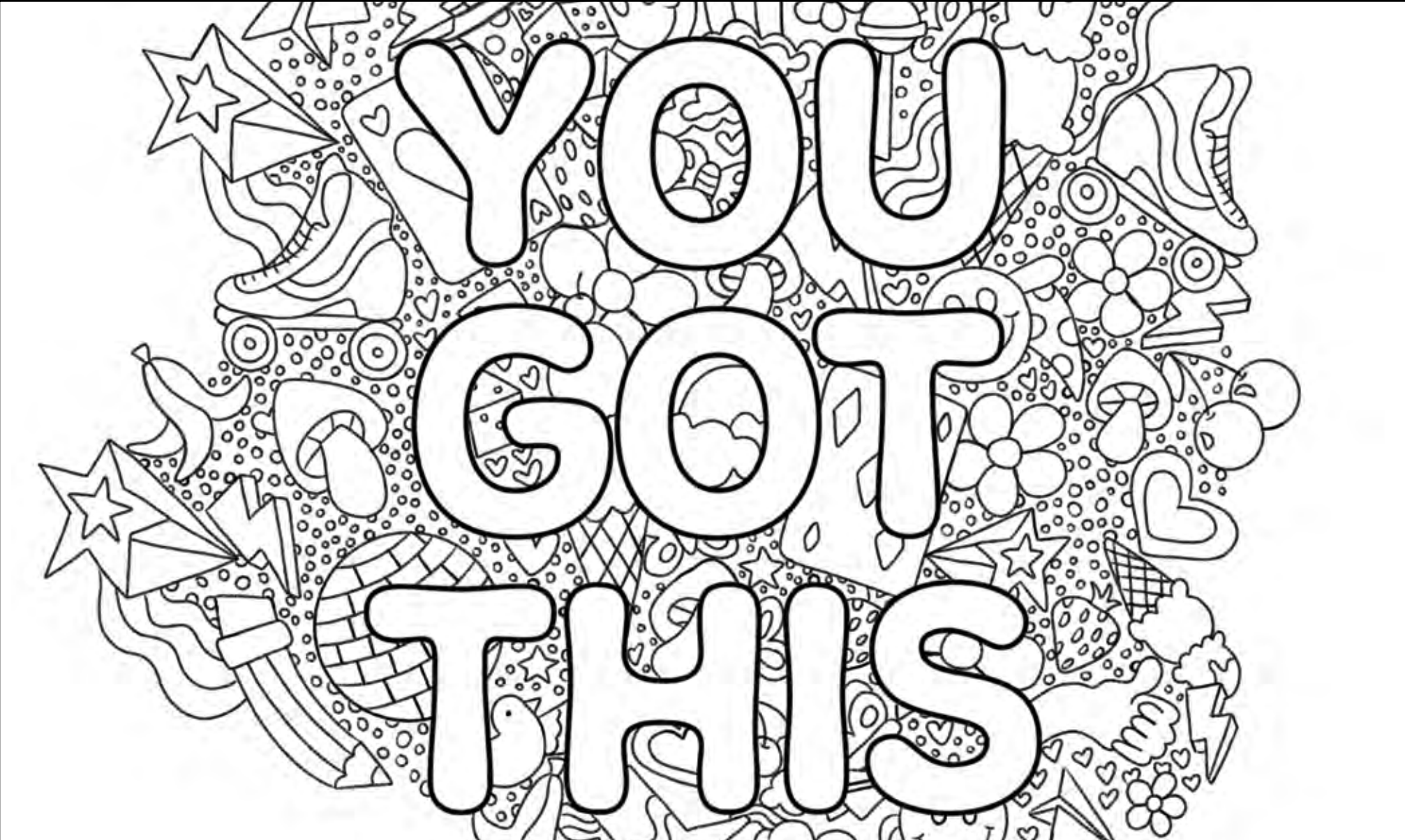
The conservative governor called on the state legislature to send him a bill to ban gender transition surgeries and care to minors.

“We shouldn’t allow a minor to get a permanent gender altering sur- gery in Oklahoma,” Stitt said. “After all minors can’t vote, can’t purchase alco- hol, can’t purchase cigarettes...”

Stitt claimed since the start of his tenure as governor, over a billion dol- lars have been invested in the health care system with another \$700 million on the way to improve rural hospitals and expand primary care.

Protecting citizens means pro- viding safe traveling roadways, he claimed.

“Oklahoma secured the largest transportation grant in state history,” Stitt said. “\$85 million for improv- ing I-44 and the US-75 interchange, a major win for Oklahoma.”



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A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Natural Resources & Culture Preservation Committee meeting was held at the Mound Building in Okmulgee. (MM File)

MCN DEPT. OF HOUSING AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

MCN ARBOR CARE SERVICES PROGRAM TO OFFER COMPETITIVE SALARIES

by **KAYLEA BERRY**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Land, Natural Resources & Culture Preservation Committee meeting was held on Feb. 14 at the Mound Building.

The following grant programs were approved through LNC:

- Muscogee (Creek) Nation Emergency Assistance Grant**

Negiel Bigpond represented Morning Star Evangelistic Center when he requested \$1,683.14. The money is to pay tribal construction for their work replacing water pipes that busted during the storm at the beginning of February.

Funding was granted, committee passed 4-0.
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation Camps and Camp House Grants**

Thewarle Indian Baptist Church was requesting \$4,227.28 but asked for a postponement of one month to add more items to the request.

Committee agreed to postpone 4-0.

Beverly Parker represented

- Thlopthlocco United Methodist Church when requesting \$8,178.08. The money will be used to repair their camphouse.

Funding was granted, committee passed 4-0.
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation Church and Ceremonial Ground Grants**

Joy Reynolds represented Pickett Chapel United Methodist Church when requesting \$38,500.00. The money will be used for additions, maintenance, and repairs of the church. The lowest bid for the work needed was a bid of \$38,500.00, and Tribal Construction said that a change order could be requested for any additional funds needed. The church is looking to get a total of \$50,000.00 for the work.

The committee voted on the \$38,500.00 and will vote on the remaining money at a later date.

Funding was granted, committee passed 4-0.
- LNC addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:

TR 23-022 A MCN resolution authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a MCN Department of housing

- contract with B-V-P, LLC. Representative Charles McHenry sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0.
- The MCN Dept. of Housing is requesting approval for a contract with B-V-P, LLC, to construct three homes for the Dept. of Housing. The cost for the work on the three homes is a total of \$791,000.00.
- NCA 23-012** A MCN Law authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Dept. of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation for the benefit of the Office of Environmental services. Rep. Galen Cloud sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0.
- The Office of Environmental Services was awarded the Indian Tribal Water Resources Development, Management and Protection Grant in the amount of \$200,000.00. The grant funds will be used to restore a five-acre pond located on the Dustin Cattle Farm in Hughes County. It will reintroduce native plant species, with an emphasis on pollinator plants to attract important species to the area.
- NCA 23-013** A MCN Law authorizing supplemental appropriation for the MCN Risk Management - Arbor Care Services Fiscal Year 2023. Rep. Cloud sponsored the legislation, which passed 4-0 but will go to the Business, Financial and Justice committee for funding.
- The MCN Arbor Care Services Program needs additional funds in order to add additional staff and provide competitive salaries in order to enable the program to utilize the equipment with four-man crews while working throughout the Nation's reservation.
- The supplemental appropriation will cover the salaries for new positions, additional increases throughout the budget to accomplish the workload requests. The MCN Arbor Care Services Program is requesting \$735,187.00 to be added to the 2023 fiscal year budget.
- All legislation will go before the full Council during the next session. The full legislation and meeting can be viewed at www.mcnn.com.



The Health, Education, and Welfare Committee held a meeting on Feb. 8. (MM File)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER TO RECEIVE \$1.5M

COUNCIL OAK ADDS HOTEL ROOMS FOR PATIENT FAMILIES

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

- OKMULGEE, Oklahoma — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held the monthly Health, Education, and Welfare Committee session at the Mound Building on Feb. 8.
- The committee addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:
- TR 23-021** Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a U.S. Department of Justice, Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) Purpose Area Four-Tribal Justice System Infrastructure Program (TJSIP) grant application for the benefit of the MCN Department of Health. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored the resolution, which passed, 4-0.
- The DOH submitted the request to apply for the grant for \$1,500,000. The funds will be used toward building a 30-day treatment facility and expanding substance abuse services.

- account will allow funds to be paid to and used by the center.
- NCA 23-011** Authorizing the expenditure of funds awarded from the Department of Health and Human Services for the Muscogee Nation Department of Health 988-Tribal Response Project. Rep. Gouge sponsored the act, which passed, 4-0.
- The award of \$825,000 will be used to improve response times to 988 calls, texts and chats ensuring that Natives have culturally, competent, trained support and connections to appropriate resources.
- Secretary of Health Shawn Terry reported that the CDC claims the COVID-19 Pandemic is reaching its end in May 2023.
- The highly contagious infection is moving into an endemic stage, where the health system is seeing less and less serious cases.
- Terry said he will still enforce mask wearing in Muscogee (Creek) Nation health facilities for the time being to prevent the spread of covid within the facilities.
- Chief Financial Officer Brenda Crawford claimed that the DOH collected \$17 million in December.
- Collections are typically lower in January, but Crawford claims that they are higher than last year.
- “The number continues to grow and that’s what we like to see,” Crawford said.
- Visit www.mcnn.com for more National Council committee coverage.



The Business, Finance and Justice Committee held a meeting on Feb. 16. (MM File)

LPD RECEIVES 100K FOR RURAL POLICING

COMMITTEE ADDS LEGISLATION FOR MUSCOGEE NATION BUSINESS, LLC STIPENDS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

- OKMULGEE, Oklahoma — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held the monthly Business, Finance, and Justice Committee session at the Mound Building on February 16.
- The committee addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills:
- TR 23-023** Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a grant notification letter and special conditions with the National Policing Institute and the Bureau of Justice Assistance for the Rural Violent Crime Reduction Initiative for the benefit of the MCN Light-horse Police Department. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the

- resolution, which passed 4-0.
- The grant funds of \$113,182 will be used to help rural agencies support their crime reduction efforts.
- NCA 23-014** Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the National Policing Institute for the benefit of the MCN Light-horse Police Department. Rep. Randolph sponsored the resolution, which passed 4-0.
- The Act will allow the LPD to expend grant funds from TR 23-023.
- Representative Sandra Golden made a successful motion to add NCA 23-015 to the agenda. However, Representative Randall Hicks and Rep. Randolph voted against the motion. Committee speaker Thomasine Yahola Osborn broke the tie with a swing vote of yes.

- NCA 23-015** Amending (Approving and authorizing the Principal Chief to execute and file the Articles of Organization with the Office of the Secretary of the Nation to form “Muscogee Nation Businesses, LLC” under the MCN Limited Liability Company Act and Approving the Operation Agreement for Muscogee Nation Businesses, LLC”). Representative Sandra Golden Sponsored the act, which was postponed until the next committee meeting, 3-1.
- The amendment was in need of word revisions in order to update the original legislation since it was last visited in 2015.
- The legislation would raise the amount of stipends to \$400. Representatives in the committee questioned the legislation, prompting Rep. Golden to postpone a vote on the amendment.
- Referred legislation**
- NCA 23-013** Authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the MCN Risk Management- Arbor Care Services Fiscal Year 2023. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the legislation, which will be given a founding source at the regular session..
- Other business**
- The Committee called an executive session for the Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprise, formerly known as the Gaming Operations Authority Board, and OneFire Holding Company, LLC.
- To view the agenda or meeting, visit www.mcnn.com.



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LEGALS

IN THE DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION
OKMULGEE DISTRICT

In the Matter of the Adoption of _____ Case No. AD-2023-01
G.M.L.,
a minor child

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA TO: _____ Unknown Father of G.M.L.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT Alisha Marie Goodman and Johnathan Erik Goodman have filed their Petition for Adoption in the District Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, State of Oklahoma, for the adoption of G.M.L., of which you are alleged to be the biological father, together with his application for an Order of this Court determining the child to be eligible for adoption without your consent. G.M.L. was born on May 28, 2021. The application alleges that your consent to this adoption is not required by law for the following reasons, to-wit: You have not contributed to the support of the minor child for a period of more than six (6) consecutive months out of the last (14) months.

Your failure to appear shall constitute a denial of interest in the minor child which denial may result, without further notice of this proceeding or any subsequent proceeding, in the termination of your parental rights and the transfer of the care, custody, guardianship or adoption of G.M.L., minor child. Your duty to support the minor child until a final decree of adoption is entered shall not terminate.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that this Court will hear the evidence in support of and in opposition to the granting of the application and the Petition for Adoption on the 12 day of February, 2023, at the hour of 9:00 o'clock, a.m. in Room 1 of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court in Okmulgee, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma.

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If you have any cause to show why the above mentioned application and Petition for Adoption should not be granted by the Court or why the child is not eligible for adoption without your consent, you should appear and present the same at the above stated time and place.

WITNESS my hand and seal of said Court this 14th day of February, 2023.


JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

HILTON LAW OFFICE
Alisha A. Dryden, OHA #21983, SACNHA #1198
512 West Rogers Blvd.
Skiatook, OK 74070
(918) 396-4400
ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONERS

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IN MEMORIAM



CHRISTOPHER JACOBS

Christopher (Chris) Jacobs was born on August 31, 1969 in Henryetta, OK, the son of Lewis Taylor Jr. and Janet Taylor (Jacobs). He grew up in the bottoms along with one sister and two brothers, Stephanie, Tom, and Mark. He met his wife, Thomasenia Johnson whom he shared 32 years with, and had four children: Shyla, Tyler, Nick, and David Jacobs. Chris worked at the bingo halls for ten plus years. He talked about all of the people he met along the way, and how he took care of his customers. He changed occupations to the tree trimming business and he became an expert tree trimmer. Chris loved to brag about how he was the best cook, and he took pride in his work. Saturdays were spent watching his favorite football team the OU Sooners and grilling out. Chris loved

the simple things in life like watching his grand babies and being their G-Pa, telling stories of the good old days and the fun times he had with his family. You could always find Chris just follow the smoke trail. Chris never met a stranger, and he would bend over backwards if anybody needed his help. He will be forever in our hearts and will be greatly missed!

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Lewis Jacobs, grandmother, Mariah Jacobs, and aunt, Emma Rose Jacobs.

Christopher is survived by his wife, Thomasenia Johnson of Norman, daughter, Shyla Martin and husband Cheth of Holbert, Oklahoma, son, Tyler Jacobs of Hulbert, son, Nicholas Jacobs of Henryetta, and son, David Jacobs of Hulbert, grandchildren, Katie Martin of Hulbert and Cheth Martin Jr., sister, Stephanie Taylor of Henryetta, brother Thomas Taylor & wife Elise of Broken Arrow, brother, Mark Taylor of Henryetta, as well as a host of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, other relatives and friends.

Wake Services were held February 20, 2023 at Integrity Chapel.

Funeral Services were held at Hickory Ground #1 Indian Baptist Church with Rev. Wallace Gambler, officiating. Interment followed at Jacobs Family Cemetery. Services were under the direction of Integrity Funeral Services.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MARCH 1-3, Butler Creek Baptist Church is hosting their Spring Revival at 7:00 p.m. for each night. For info call Rev. Norm Daniel, 918-441-8779.

MARCH 4, 11 AM to 2PM, Wild Onion Dinner, Holdenville Creek Indian Community Center, for info call 918-752-7959

MARCH 10, App. Deadline for Native Americans into Medicine undergrad opportunity. Contact: caimh@d.umn.edu

MARCH 10-12, INDIGI-POP, First Americans Museum, OKC, for tickets visit www.indigipopx.com

MARCH 11, Stompdance 7 PM MC: Chebon Kernell Meku-sukey Mission Gym 12566 NS 3540 Seminole OK Contact: Gina Lankford 405-471-3038

MARCH 13-17, Muscogee Nation Lighthorse Tribal Police Department is hosting a youth police academy during spring break, 2023 with an awards ceremony, March 18th. This is for youth ages 11-15, contact Melissa Beaver @ 918-732-7813

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CASH DRAWINGS TOTALING \$10,000 WEEKLY

Drawings every 15 minutes
\$500 | 6PM–8:15PM
\$750 | 8:30PM–9:15PM

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9:30PM–9:45PM
Random \$25 Rewards Play Winners

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