



MAY 15, 2023 | “KE HVSE” MULBERRY MONTH | VOL. 53, ISSUE 10

MVSKOKE NEWS

PRODUCED BY MVSKOKEMEDIA



Bacone College was founded as an Indian University in 1880. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

BACONE COLLEGE RECALLED FROM SHERIFF’S SALE

MHEC REQUESTED TO RECALL THE COLLEGE FROM THE AUCTION

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

MUSKOGEE, Okla. – Mvskoke Media reported to the Muskogee County Sheriff’s Sale for the auction of Bacone College to find it had been recalled from the sale within an hour before it was set to start at 10 a.m. on April 27.

MHEC LLC (Midgley-Huber Energy Concepts) recalled their prior request for auctioning the college sometime between 8:41 a.m. and 9:20 a.m. Thursday morning.

The sale is the result of an over one million dollar debt owed by the college to MHEC LLC for materials and installation of energy conservation services.

MHEC LLC filed a lawsuit against Bacone for a breach of contract. A district judge ruled in their favor on Nov. 13, 2022.

According to the contract, Bacone agreed to pay the costs of materials and labor in August 2020.

Bacone argues that the contract also states that MHEC was not to start any projects until paid in full and that the college did not have any money at the time.

It was Muskogee County District Court Judge Timothy King’s summary judgment ordering the campus be sold to pay off the debt. The school is currently valued at \$10 million, the Sheriff’s sale requires bidding to start at two-thirds of the appraisal value.

Bacone appealed the judges’ decision.

In the judges’ ruling, the college was given until April 27 to put forth a supersedeas bond, a type of surety bond in court that is purchased by the appellant who wants to delay payment in a civil lawsuit.

Bacone President Dr. Nicky Michael confirmed the college is under a large amount of debt due to previous administrations.

“We are working with the opposing attorneys,” she said. “We are working toward making sure this gets behind us in a positive way.”

Previously, Michael was a chair on American Indian Studies. She was asked to step into this position but claimed she did not seek it.

“It’s a very large task,” she said. “It’s been one day after another of unearthing and unlayering the depth of some of the past wrongdoings and misadministration.”

The Muskogee (Creek) Nation National Council published a press release on April 26 announcing that they will not pursue efforts in purchasing Bacone College based on the institution’s current outstanding debts with creditors. The MCN National Council’s statement reads as follows.

“As the legislative body representing the Muskogee people, the Muskogee (Creek) National Council has multiple responsibilities in addressing the needs of tribal citizens, as set forth in the 1979 Muskogee Constitution, specifically, in Article VI-Legislative Branch.

During each legislative session, the National Council receives legislation proposing land purchases, as submitted by the Principal Chief. Land purchases must meet the health, housing and other needs of Muskogee citizens, or long-range plan objectives for administrative, health, judicial and other tribal government facilities.

ity needs. Land purchases are subject to MCN Title 28-Lands and Minerals, Chapter 10-Acquisition of Property, and NCA 20-047.

Purchase opportunities can be initiated by a National Council Representative, or the Principal Chief. Properties for sale on the open market, or properties offered directly to the Nation for potential purchase, undergo a thorough property acquisition process, conducted by the tribal administration. This process produces answers to questions about: the property’s title status; any potential environmental issues; indebtedness and possible liens; and, general suitability for purchase by the Nation.

If the review is unfavorable for a given property, purchase-authorizing legislation is not submitted to the National Council; for purchases that appear to be feasible, legislation is submitted for consideration by Council committees and the full body.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) and numerous tribes have a vested interest in Bacone College; while the historic institution is situated within the Muskogee reservation, MCN has no ownership

BACONE RECALLED - 2



The Oklahoma Supreme Court issued a decision that children who are tribal citizens are not eligible for Indian Child Welfare Act protections if their permanent residence does not fall within the jurisdiction of the tribe they are a citizen of. (Shutterstock)

OKLAHOMA SUPREME COURT RULES ON MVSKOKE ICWA CASE

COURT RULES THAT THE CHILD MUST LIVE ON THEIR TRIBAL RESERVATION FOR ICWA TO APPLY

by **JERRAD MOORE**
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. - On April 25 the Oklahoma Supreme Court issued its decision in the case “IN THE MATTER OF S.J.W.”

This case concerns a Mvskoke child domiciled on the Chickasaw Nations reservation that was subject to a deprived adjudication in the Carter County District Court.

The parents of the child appealed the decision claiming that the court did not have subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The Oklahoma Supreme Court’s decision outlines that because the child in question was not domiciled on the Muskogee (Creek) Nation reservation, the Oklahoma courts have concurrent jurisdiction with the Chickasaw Nation.

The Muskogee (Creek) Nation issued a statement on the ruling on April 28. The

statement reads as follows:

“The Muskogee (Creek) Nation (the “Nation”) is disheartened and disappointed to learn of a ruling issued this week by the Oklahoma Supreme Court in the Matter of S.J.W. regarding the application of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to a case involving a Muskogee Creek child who lives on the Chickasaw Nation Reservation. Soon after the McGirt decision affirming the continued status of the Nation’s Reservation, the Nation found itself in a precarious situation needing to immediately exercise full child welfare authority over all Indian children in the Reservation as required by ICWA and the Nation’s own laws. To that end, the Nation and the State met, negotiated, and entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement providing for Indian child welfare cases in the Reservation involving the Nation or the State to remain at status quo while the Nation

built up its capacity to exercise full ICWA jurisdiction in the Reservation.

This intergovernmental partnership between the Nation and the State represented a good faith arrangement between two sovereigns to provide for a temporary fix and to avoid serious disruptions to Indian child welfare cases in the Reservation.

Now, the Oklahoma Supreme Court’s ruling disrupts that partnership and causes unnecessary confusion over what is specifically affirmed in ICWA—that Indian tribes have exclusive authority over child custody proceedings involving all Indian children residing within reservation boundaries. The Court’s central holding that the State retains concurrent jurisdiction with the Nation over the case since the child is a Creek Citizen residing in another Nation’s Reservation is a result in direct contradiction to the clear statutory text of ICWA.

Principal Chief David Hill said, ‘It is unfortunate the Oklahoma Supreme Court chose this path to reach a result inconsistent with what Congress intended and wrote when enacting ICWA. The workers and advocates at the Nation’s Children and Family Services work tirelessly every day in support of one of ICWA’s key purposes, that ‘there is no resource that is more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children...’ Despite this ruling, the Nation will persevere and remain strong in upholding and defending ICWA and our own laws to protect all Indian children residing within our Reservation.”

It is unclear from the statement whether the MCN plans to challenge the ruling at a higher court. Mvskoke Media will have continuing coverage in this developing story.



A beaded hat depicting the Mona Lisa in tribal regalia sits on display at the Mvskoke Art Market. April 23, 2023. Tvise, Okla. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

MVSKOKE ART MARKET RETURNS WITH MORE ARTISTS AND EXPANDED CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

EVENT FEATURED BANQUET, AWARDS, A COMEDY SHOW AND CULTURAL DEMONSTRATIONS

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

TVLSE, Okla. - Indigenous artists of different art mediums, and tribal nationalities gathered to display their works at the second annual Mvskoke Art Market at River Spirit Casino and Resort April 22-23. This year’s market followed last year’s successful inaugural opening. The market has become a staple within the past year, one that stands toe to toe with other well-known Mvskoke events like Festival.

The event exhibited paintings, pottery, sculptures, jewelry, silver work, bead work, quilt work, and textiles. These works not only depicted Mvskoke culture, but other tribal nations’ cultures as well.

Muskogee (Creek) Nation Cultural Center and Archives Department Program Manager ShaVon Agee is the organizer for the event. She and her team work around the clock to make sure all aspects of the event were operational. It is an event that requires months of planning in advance.

“Our hospitality is bar none, I think we have some of the best staff and committee members,” Agee said.

After last year’s market proved to be a big success among the Indigenous art community, Agee said many were eager to see what this year’s market had in store for the artists and patrons.

Sophomore Season

According to Agee, this year’s artists increased from 60 in 2022, to 83 this year. At least 20 came from outside the state. Overall, over 20 tribal nations were represented. Agee attributes this year’s growth to the hospitality presented by the Nation at last year’s market, and its warm public reception spread by word of mouth.

This year saw a lot of artists that were hesitant to participate in last year’s market.

“First year markets, you’re never sure how they are going to go,” Agee

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BACONE RECALLED

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or other legal interest in the College. Recent media reports have documented the financial, environmental and accreditation probation issues the institution has endured, and most recently, the pending sale of Bacone College for unpaid debts.

The National Council explored all viable possibilities, including continuing Bacone College as an institution, subject to its outstanding indebtedness, or an outright attempt to purchase the lands that comprise Bacone College and bring it back into the historic reservation lands of the MCN. Unfortunately, the pending state court-ordered sheriff's auction of Bacone College

involves only the claim of one of many creditors of the College. The MCN simply cannot buy all legal interests in the lands of College by paying that one creditor. A question of law involves whether any amount of money paid at the court ordered sheriff's sale could extinguish the legal interests of the known and likely unknown creditors of Bacone College, which would permit the MCN to own it outright."

The total amount of debt of the institution is not known at the present time. The institution may be subject to closure, bankruptcy or other long-term changes.

This is currently a developing story. Mvskoke Media will continue to provide updates on the college's status moving forward.



Students listen intently to speakers at the 2023 CMN graduation ceremony. April 25, 2023. Okmulgee, Okla. (Courtesy: College of the Muscogee Nation)

CMN WELCOMES THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2023

THIS YEAR'S CLASS SAW THE LARGEST CLASS IN THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - "Preserving the Past, Cultivating the Future!" is one of the slogans found on the homepage of the College of Muscogee Nation's website homepage. At this year's 14th annual CMN graduation ceremony on April 21, the college lived up to that high standard found in that slogan. The CMN class of 2023 made history this year as the largest graduating class the school had ever seen: 68 graduates.

The event was held at the Mvskoke Dome. CMN President Monte Randall presided over the ceremonies. The Mvskoke Honor Guard presented the colors, and CMN Faculty Member Gregory Palma sang the National Anthem in the Mvskoke language. The ceremony's invocation was given by CMN Graduate Naomi Wesley. CMN Board of Regents Member Sharon Mouss gave remarks on the momentous occasion.

"Students, community and Muscogee Creek people are the true foundation of every class taught, every degree offered, and every service provided at the college," Mouss said. "Together we maintain and build a tribal college that embraces excellence."

A special recognition was given to the faculty member of the year, Cynthia Sanders. American Indian Higher Education Consortium President and CEO Carrie Billy was bestowed the role as the ceremony's commencement speaker. This year's cere-

mony was held on the 50th anniversary of AIHEC.

This year's graduate respondent was CMN graduate Shayln Proctor, a Mvskoke Language Studies Certificate graduate. The CMN class of 2023 also saw nine graduates on the honor roll, and 15 on the president's honor roll. Honor roll recipients must maintain a grade point average between 3.5-3.74, the president's honor roll requires a 3.75 or higher. Additionally, 18 graduates were recognized as members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Associate degrees including Native American studies, natural resources, gaming, tribal services, criminal justice, general studies and certificates in the Mvskoke language studies were conferred to graduates.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation tribal leadership including Principal Chief David Hill, Second Chief Del Beaver, National Council Speaker William Lowe, and other National Council representatives were present to see the momentous milestone for students and the school.

"On behalf of the College of the Muscogee Nation's Board of Regents, faculty and staff, I want to thank our guests and family this morning for being here to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of our graduates," Randall said.

A statement from CMN goes on to thank faculty and staff for their continued service, and for carrying on the school's tradition of putting students first.

ART MARKET

Continued from Page 1

said. "At the end of our (first) market they were like 'oh man, I wish I would have been there' but this year we were able to get those who wished they had entered last year."

With this year's market marking its second year, Agee's team was more prepared going into it. This year brought new challenges with more artists and more traffic. People from around the MCN Reservation and the United States attended to see what this year's market had to offer.

While this market does not currently showcase over a hundred artists yet, Agee said it is a goal her department would like to strive toward someday. While there is always pressure to expand, Agee's team is already planning and discussing how to improve for next year's market.

One aspect new to this year's market included Mvskoke cultural demonstrations. These included history, artists, and craftsmanship. Mvskoke Living Legend John John Brown gave flintknapping demonstrations, a popular staple seen at cultural events hosted by the Nation. A display with photos from the Mvskoke Ancestral Homelands was on display as well.

According to Agee, the added demonstrations allowed market goers to participate in cultural lessons and activities in addition to shopping and admiring the artists' works.

The reception from the artists that have participated in the market has been positive. For Mvskoke artists in particular, it holds a special meaning.

"They're excited that the Nation has an art market for them," Agee said. You can tell that they have a sense of pride about 'this is our art market'"

Agee remarked that her favorite part of the event is how it brings people together in what she described as a "family reunion". The

market's relaxed and comfortable environment encouraged people to talk, laugh and enjoy one another's company.

The 2024 Mvskoke Art Market has been announced, however specific dates have yet to be determined. To stay up to date on next year's market, visit their social media page at: facebook.com/mvskokeartmarket.

2023 Mvskoke Art Market Award Winners

Best of Show – Starr Hardridge (Mvskoke), Under the Oaks
Judges' Choice – Jaylee Lowe (Mvskoke), Hvkylvielke
Mvskoke Heritage Award – Kenneth Johnson (Mvskoke/ Seminole), Journey

Painting
1. Timothy Tate Nevaquaya (Comanche), Sacred Ground
2. Bryan Waytula (Cherokee Nation), The Scout
3. Micah Wesley (Mvskoke/ Kiowa), Bloodlines

Diverse Art Forms
1. Dan Beaver (Mvskoke), Ceremonial Axe
2. Richard Honyouti (Hopi), Hopi Summer
3. Cystal Hanna (Cherokee Nation), Original WiFi Signals

Basketry
1. Ronda Talbert Moss (Cherokee Nation), Layers of Strength
2. Peggy Sheldon (Cherokee Nation), Arrows & Twining
3. Eva Cantrell (Cherokee Nation), Multilevel Marketing

Drawing/Graphic Art/ Photography
1. Benjamin West (Otoe-Missouria/Southern Cheyenne), Missing
2. Shannon Stevens (Laguna Pueblo/Hopi), Secrets
3. Bryan Waytula (Cherokee Nation), The Fast Track

Textiles (Wearable)
1. Phyllis Fife (Mvskoke), Tvkvpvtce Traveling Coat
2. Tom Barnett (Mvskoke), 4 Directions Ceremonial Shaker
3. Cynthia Yerby (Seminole), Royalty

Textiles (Nonwearable)
1. Janae Grass (Sac & Fox/ Mvskoke/Absentee Shawnee), Talking With Spirits
2. Cathy Abercrombie (Cherokee Nation), Lavender Wool Blanket
3. Breana Hill (Mvskoke), Keeping the Prayers

Beadwork/Quillwork
1. Patricia Belgarde-Cornelius (Turtle Mountain Chipewewa), The Mona Stolen Sisters
2. Robin Fife Jenkins (Mvskoke), Wotulke Bandalier Bag
3. Stephen and Robi White (Pawnee), Fancy Dance

Pottery
1. Chase Kahwinhut Earles (Caddo), Xinesis II: Spiritual Leader
2. Erna Wilson (Jemez), Butterfly
3. Crystal Hanna (Cherokee Nation), Porter Frog That Ate the Sun

Sculpture
1. Kenneth Johnson (Mvskoke/ Seminole), Genesis Paddle
2. Ron Honyouti (Hopi), Heheya Siblings
3. Scott Middleton (Cherokee Nation), Booger Dance

Jewelry
1. Sandy Fife Wilson (Mvskoke), Along the Coosa River
2. Mark Stevens (Laguna Pueblo), Contemporary Jewelry
3. Mark Stevens (Laguna Pueblo), Traditional Jewelry

Honorable Mentions
1. Micah Wesley (Mvskoke/ Kiowa), Perennial II
2. Dana Tiger (Mvskoke), From Where We Came
3. Jamie Bennet (Mvskoke), Ever Evolving Energy

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

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MUSCOGEE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS RESEARCH WITH GRANT FUNDS

THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE FY 2021 TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANT AWARDED \$200,000 FOR RESEARCH ON TURKEYS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Wildlife Program was awarded the Wild Turkey Restoration Effort grant. The \$200,000 grant will allow the department to participate in turkey research on the reservation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife FY 2021 Tribal Wildlife Grant programs over the next two years.

According to Wildlife Program Coordinator Jacob Rippy, multiple agencies from different regions are participating in the research study to determine what is causing the current population decline in turkeys in the southern region of the country.

“Oklahoma is one of the places where there’s quite a bit of knowledge being brought to the table and we want to be a part of that,” Rippy said.

The program is partnering

with Oklahoma State University Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management for the project. Faculty involved with the project include OSU Extension Wildlife Specialist Dr. Dewayne Elmore and Assistant Professor Dr. Colter Chitwood. OSU Wildlife Conservation Graduate Student Nicole De Fillipo also assisted Rippy’s small crew directly.

Although there are many theories regarding the turkey depletion, Rippy claims there are many factors.

“There is no silver bullet, so it’s not like just one thing that’s affecting them,” he said. “That’s what this (research study) is for.”

Awarded in June 2021, the program waited to receive funds from the grant until February 2022 to begin research. Rippy said the delay was due to the fact that the MCN is not an academic institution.

Taking nearly a year to receive



The MCN Wildlife Program caught turkeys to collect data for research purposes. (Courtesy: Jacob Rippy)

funding, the program assisted other participating agencies, gaining knowledge in their down time.

The grant funds were used to purchase equipment to capture the turkeys and purchase transmitters that track the birds. Equipment purchased included rocket holders, rockets, nets, traps, transmitters, feed, and bird calls.

A year after receiving funding in 2022, the program was able to initiate the first turkey capture on the reservation on March 10 and the last capture event on April 12.

Turkeys are captured on the Nations’ trust property in McIntosh County.

Rippy said the crew has captured anywhere from 12-20 turkeys at once with the net launching rocket.

Once the net has caught the turkey, Rippy said each turkey will be placed in a box and taken to the data collection area. Wing measurement, weight, breast feathers, fecal and mouth samples were taken during the process. The birds received a transmitter and band, then were released. The process took less than ten minutes.

“Usually it goes almost seamlessly,” Rippy said.

If the crew notices the bird is struggling, they will go ahead and release the bird without the transmitter to reduce the stress of the capture.

“We know it’s not an easy thing to be captured by these humans,” Rippy said. “The purpose of this project is for the birds.”

Transmitters are about the size of a hand-held radio and have a battery life of 270 days. The transmitters reveal each turkey’s location when Rippy pings it using a global positioning system (GPS).

Since turkeys are now nesting, Rippy and his crew are able to currently study their nesting habits.

Rippy will ping locations daily, then he goes out to find the turkey and observe it while taking notes, photos, and even video. Given the opportunity, he may try to view the nest to count the poults (eggs) and see what environmental factors are affecting the poults including predators, weather, and

mothering habits.

The transmitters include mortality signals, notifying them immediately. At that point, Rippy can find the turkey immediately to determine the cause of death for data.

The mortality rate data thus far has determined that interactions with coyotes and bobcats have affected the turkey populations.

One signal that sent the crew out was a hen that was still alive, but had not physically moved for a great amount of time. This instance gave the crew somewhat of a laugh.

Rippy claims that the turkeys usually don’t travel far outside of their home range.

“They pretty much stay within a ten-mile radius,” he said.

Rippy claims that flocks have depleted almost in half. Turkeys used to travel in flocks of 70-80, now they travel in flocks closer to 30-40.

“We are lucky to see a flock of 50 now,” he said.

Rippy himself has pulled long days of work that have included early mornings and late evenings in the office, however he enjoys the project.

This is a developing story. For more information on turkey research on the Mvskoke Reservation, call Rippy at 539-244-2220.



Volunteers in bright-yellow neon vests gather for a group photo outside of the MCN Executive Branch building during the Community Clean Up Event. April 14, 2023. Okmulgee, Okla. (Courtesy: Susumu Daniels)

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CELEBRATES EARTH WEEK 2023

VOLUNTEERS DONATE THEIR SERVICES TO CLEAN UP THE COMMUNITY

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation gleamed a little brighter during Earth Week 2023 as the MCN Office of Environmental Services organized events aimed at cleaning up the environment and responsibly disposing of recyclable materials.

The week started on April 14 with the annual Community Clean Up Event where volunteers gathered to pick up trash along the highway. For those driving in Okmulgee along Loop 56, they may have spotted one of those volunteers in a bright, neon-yellow vest.

According to MCN Office of Environmental Services Director James Williams, that event saw around 36 volunteers that picked up somewhere between 800-900 pounds of trash. Afterward, the group gathered for a cookout and fellowship.

“We always eat,” Williams said. “We’re like a bunch of Methodists, every time we meet, we eat.”

On Wednesday, April 19 the department brought out a group of local third and fourth graders to tour the recycle center. The students played recycling games, then were shown how to plant their own gardens with raised flower beds. Promoting recycling at a young age can help children develop responsible disposal habits as they grow up.

MCN Environmental Specialist Kristy Lawson appeared on Mvskoke Radio to discuss her department’s mission to educate the community during Earth Week.

“That’s the biggest part is just educating the community,” Lawson said. “We’re a throw-away society. Once we put it in the trash can we don’t worry about it. We need to think about where these resources are going.”

The week continued on with the Free Document Shredding service the department hosts every year. The annual event took in items like tires, small appliances, electronics and car batteries. This service provided an easy way for community members to responsibly dispose of larger items that do not end up in landfills that negatively impact the environment.

Community members who may not have the ability to shred their paper documents with sensitive information were able to use the shredding truck on a first come, first served basis.

In addition to taking in larger recyclables, the department also took in more commonly recycled materials like cardboard, paper, plastic and metal cans.

Community Coming Together

While the purpose of Earth Week is to clean up the environment and spread awareness on these environmental issues, it has

also sprouted another positive aspect: fellowship. According to Williams, the week has seen the same volunteers year after year. Just as well, the event has also seen repeat customers who donate their recyclables.

The fruits of Earth Week may seem small, but the ripple effects it can have across the community is invaluable. Williams said the event’s call to action is asking others to change their disposal habits, even for community members who have had the same disposal habits their entire lives. Anything the department is able to collect from the community will stay out of a landfill.

Williams said he and his team are extremely grateful for the community and their contributions to making Earth Week a success for the department. The forecast for the week’s festivities was cooperative as well, providing comfortable, sunny conditions with highs ranging from 70 degrees to 80 degrees.

“It’s been a good week, it’s always been good. This is one of our busier weeks for collections and recyclables,” Williams said. “It’s always a fun time for us. Everyone gets out of the office, it’s a pretty day, it’s just been good.”

If you would like to learn more about the annual Earth Week celebrations or services provided by the MCN Office of Environmental Services, you can follow them on social media at: facebook.com/MCNEnvironmentalServices.



The annual Pioneer Day celebration was held during the last weekend of April. (Morgan Taylor/ MM)

PIONEER DAY PROVIDES FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN

EVENT CELEBRATES THE HISTORIC CITY OF OKEMAH

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKEMAH, Okla. - The Annual Pioneer Day celebration on the Mvskoke reservation filled Okemah’s Business District on Main Street the last weekend of April.

Entering the south side of town Saturday afternoon, traffic flowed toward the downtown district where a ferris wheel could be spotted towering the various carnival rides.

On a stroll down Main Street, you could find rides that turn, twist and catapult high into the air along with classic favorites like the carousel and teacups.

Kids stood at each line checking their heights to make sure they could ride the attractions.

Passing through the rides, food was frying and lemonades were squeezed fresh. Vendors were running out of crowd favorites by the early afternoon. No more turkey legs or walking tacos were available, but funnel cakes and hotdogs were.

Moving through the abundant food choices, vendors in small tents sold items varying from handmade soaps, candy, wood-carved decor, Native American crafts and food vendors.

All of this was to celebrate what made the city of Okemah what it is today.

Friday celebrations started late in the day with the street dance that was moved indoors to the Corral on Main Street due to weather. Barbecue was served while attendees booted, scooted, and boogied to the country music.

The real fun began early Saturday morning with a 5K run, then on to the “Pioneer Day Games” that included turtle racing, balloon stomp, hula hooping, three

legged race, kids relay race and an adult tug of war.

Car show registrants parked hotrods for judging along Main Street. After the judges tallied their scores, the cars lined up for the parade along with floats from local businesses, and other other organizations who joined.

Families lined up along the street ready to gather candy being thrown by participants.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police led the parade with several different units throwing out candy with the Okfuskee County Sheriff following behind.

The Seminole Nation Honor Guard followed behind demonstrating their colors with veteran motorcyclists following behind.

The parade went on with firetrucks, police officers, the car show vehicles, bands, and Netflix themed floats. Awards were given to the American Exchange Bank for “Gillian’s Island”, Farm Bureau Women’s Group for “Green Acres” and the Okemah Marching Band.

The annual Pioneer Days Rodeo was a huge hit for the weekend-long event with several opportunities to win a little extra cash.

Carnival rides operated into the late evening and even began back up Sunday morning for a short time.

The Okemah Chamber of Commerce Facebook page kept guests updated on events throughout the weekend.

The next big event for the small town is the Woody Guthrie Festival, which is set for July 12-16.

According to Okemah Chamber of Commerce Director Shan-non Speir, the festival is their bigger attraction.

For more information call Speir at 918-600-2023.



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Houses experienced damage in the aftermath of the deadly tornadoes that swept through the area. April 20, 2023, Shawnee Okla. (Courtesy: Bobby Howard)

SHAWNEE AND COLE COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO RECOVER IN THE AFTERMATH OF DEADLY TORNADOES

MCN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AMONG AGENCIES INVOLVED WITH RELIEF EFFORTS

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

SHAWNEE, Okla. - Three people died as a result of the multiple tornadoes that tore through Oklahoma on April 19. The communities of Shawnee and Cole received extensive property damage involving thousands of structures in the area. The structures involved homes, businesses and schools. This left thousands of community members in the dark without power.

Notable locations in the area that received damage included Oklahoma Baptist University, the Shawnee Mall and the Lowe’s Home Improvement store. Muscogee (Creek) Nation Emergency Management was one of the many disaster relief and tribal agencies that provided assistance in the storm’s aftermath.

The department is part of the northeast and southeast areas which are among the five emergency management regions in Oklahoma. MCN Emergency Management Director Bobby Howard and his team were notified the day after the tornado hit that their services would be needed.

Initially they began assisting in search-and-rescue efforts. Once all residents were accounted for, they began the process of cleaning up the various debris littered across the area.

“There’s trash and power lines, and things off buildings, things off houses and shingles, and plywood,” Howard said. “There’s a lot of damage and it’s just going to take time to recover.”

For Howard, this tragic scene was nothing he had not seen before. He was one of the first people on site in Moore to assist in clean up efforts after a catastrophic EF5 tornado tore through the city almost 10 years ago in May 2013. That tornado killed 24 people, demolished 300 homes and caused an estimated \$2 billion in damages.

For Howard and his department, cleaning up debris after natural disasters is a routine job. While tornado clean up comes with its own challenges, it is similar to the natural disasters the emergency management depart-

ment deals with around Mvskoke Nation.

MCN Arbor Care was called out to Shawnee on Friday, April 21 to clear roads of fallen trees and limbs. The Red Cross set up resource centers in Cleveland, McClain, and Pottawatomie counties and offered free emergency supplies.

Tribal citizens affected by the tornadoes included those from Seminole Nation, Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Absentee Shawnee Nation as well as the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Howard said a simple thing that people can do to help in the clean-up efforts is to stay clear of the area if they can avoid it. When natural disasters devastate areas like Shawnee, or Moore it is common for sight seers to grab pictures and video of the aftermath.

“It’s hard enough when you’re trying to move around and there are power lines down and trees down and chunks of roof laying in the roads,” Howard said. “Then you throw a couple hundred people gawking at the damage that people have received. People are out there suffering, it’s pretty disheartening.”

On Monday April 24 the State of Oklahoma was approved by the White House for relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The funds will go toward helping those in need of housing repairs or temporary housing.

Initially it was reported on Thursday, April 20 that around 14,000 residents had lost power. According to Howard, that number has now been reduced to around 2,500 as of April 25.

Currently MCN Arbor Care Services and the Cemetery Clean-Up Crew programs are still in the process of assisting in cleaning up the areas affected by the tornadoes.

According to Howard, immediate clean up efforts are expected to last throughout the rest of the week. However, it will be weeks until all community operations are fully restored.

If you would like to make a donation to help the survivors of the Shawnee and Cole tornadoes you can visit [redcross.org/](https://www.redcross.org/) donate, or text REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

MVSKOKE FIGHTER MAKES DEBUT AT XFN: XTREME FIGHT NIGHT

SAMPSON TABBYTITE’S LAST MINUTE WEIGHT CLASS CHANGE STARTS HIS KICKBOXING CAREER

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

TVLSE, Okla. - Sampson Tabbytite (Mvskoke/Kiowa/Comanche) won his first professional kickboxing debut by unanimous decision at the Xtreme Fight Night: XFN. It was hosted by Dale Cook at the River Spirit Casino and Resort Paradise Cove on April 14.

Tabbytite visited Mvskoke Radio before the fight on March 29 and after on April 19 where he shared exciting changes that happened over the course of the three weeks, including his victory.

Tabbytite battled opponent Raul Garcia for three rounds, each round lasting three minutes. The fight took place in less than ten minutes and involved intense fighting.

“The fight everyone has been waiting for,” the announcer said. Calling out both fighters, the crowd reacted loudly when Tabbytites’ name was announced. Local area fans were ecstatic, many Native Americans were there in support of Tabbytite, including his family.

“Just being able to represent my tribe, being Native in general, I am Creek, Kiowa and Commanche. I hold honor in being able to represent my family,” Tabbytite said.

The Fight

The opponents were a bit hesitant at first, as they tried to get a feel for one other as kickboxers.

“The first round is like a feeler round,” Tabbytite said. “You never know how hard someone is going to hit. Every fight is different.”

Known for his striking abilities, Tabbytite took his jabs at Garcia, making good contact which gained him a few points here and there. Garcia, not much of an aggressor, fought back with hard, low kicks to Tabbytites’ knees and legs.

“He did land some good leg kicks,” Tabbytite said.

Admittedly sore from the kicks, Tabbytite had few injuries or alternative soreness, other than the top of his own foot that he was using to kick with.

As the bell rang indicating the end of the first round, Tabbytite felt the adrenaline from the successful round.

“I felt like I was in control the whole time,” he said.

The second round started intensely as the fighters went right up to each other.

Spectating fans called Garcia the “Mexican Battery” for his energetic bouncing as he continued to lose the fight without quitting.

“It was all pressure,” Tabbytite said. “I head kicked him and he shook it off and came right back at me.”

Tabbytite remained composed and technical in his delivery.

“I had to pick my shots and not get reckless,” he said.

Tabbytite took Garcia to the ground multiple times in the final round with kicks to the head and legs along with direct punches to the face.

After a roundhouse straight kick knocked Garcia down, he came back for more and more. Tabbytite served him punches, knees to the body, kicks and ultimately knocked him down with a side swipe to the chin.

It was not a knockout, but the bell rang and the final round ended.

“I thought I was going to be able to finish it in the first round,” Tabbytite said. “He was tough, he never gave up.”

Tabbytite threw his hands up in victory because he knew he had won.

The crowd roared as the announcer yelled over the microphone,

“Your winner is Sampson Tabbytite!”

On A Winning Streak

Merely a year into his professional fighting career, Tabbytite has been on a winning streak. He previously fought MMA grappling-style matches. His last match was in October 2022.

After months of practicing and preparing for a MMA grappling match in the 125 lbs weight class against a different opponent, Tabbytite received devastating news that his opponent Joe McCormick had backed out, less than a week from the match.

“My opponent pulled out for a nagging injury,” he said.

As a professional fighter, Tabbytite devotes each minute of his working schedule to fighting. Aside from doing security gigs at local bars, professional fighting pays the bills.

Tabbytite’s focus would shift with a family depending on him. Tabbytite told his managers he had to fight.

Honed in, he knew that there were obstacles set against him that he would have to overcome.

“We don’t get paid if we don’t fight,” he said.

Just four days out from “fight day,” Tabbytites’ managers proposed that his only option was to fight in a higher kickboxing weight class.

Taking the deal, Tabbytite made his professional kickboxing debut in the 135 lb weight class. He came out with a “W” as he calls it.

“We still got that ‘W’, just in a different rule set,” he said.

His winning speech gave shout-outs to his supporters and even said, “We did it mom!”

Family Over Everything

Tabbytites’ mother stood in the crowd with tears rolling down her face.

“It’s hard for her to watch me



Sampson Tabbytite showcased his kickboxing debut at the River Spirit Casino and Resort in Tulsa, Okla. on April 14. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

fight,” he said. “She’s really proud of me.”

Fighting is deeply rooted in Tabbytites’ family with both his grandparents being Native American veterans of World War II.

Tabbytite misses his younger brother Daniel, who is incarcerated. He wears a beaded necklace that Daniel sent to him as a gift. He took it off as he went into the cage and put it back on once the fight was done.

Growing up wasn’t easy for Tabbytite. He stayed in foster care and in the Murrow Indian Children’s Home while his parents were incarcerated.

“I know what it’s like growing up in Okmulgee with no role models and nothing to do,” Tabbytite said.

Lacking stability, Tabbytite claimed he was not able to participate in sports or athletics during the course of his childhood, but growing up with brothers made for a lot of fighting.

As he aged and became a stable adult, he felt like he could use his competitive nature to do something he loved. Not only was it a passion, it was a stress reliever, an anger reliever, and a healthy way to escape without using drugs or alcohol. It was a way to showcase his athletic talent.

“I was facing a lot of demons myself,” Tabbytite said. “But, I never really liked to party.”

Longtime girlfriend, and mother of his children Brooklyn Freeman (Mvskoke) not only enjoys watching her “fighter” but also joins him in the gym and will be making her debut at the Heart of Oklahoma Expo Center in Shawnee on May 27.

“She is my number one fan and biggest supporter,” Tabbytite said.

Fighting is a family affair, as the fighting couple has their two young boys ready to hit the gym as well.

The role Tabbytite plays in his children’s lives is important, and is what gives him strength to keep going. Tabbytite only wishes his UFC-loving father could see his success today.

According to Tabbytite, he’s not in this for fame or fortune.

“I grew up poor and I still struggle to this day,” he said. “But this is a dream I’m chasing.”

To watch Tabbytite’s career in the ring, follow him on social media as he chases his dream at Sampson Tabbytite FightPage on Facebook and sampsontabbytitemma on Instagram.

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A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Regular Session was held April 29 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee. (MM File)

ANCESTRAL REMAINS TO BE RETURNED TO MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

ALL LEGISLATION PASSED ON PROPERTY PURCHASES, JUSTICE APPOINTMENTS AND COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECTS

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Quarterly Session meeting was held in person and teleconference April 29 at the Mound Building.

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

TR 23-030 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Housing Contract with Hersh Properties, LLC. Representative Joseph Hicks sponsored the legislation. It was co-sponsored by Representative Patrick Freeman, and Representative Galen Cloud, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The contract will purchase eight new properties and will use \$3,100,000 from the Indian Housing Block Grant/American Rescue Plan Act (IHBG/ARPA) funds.

TR 23-031 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a purchase sale agreement for property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma. Representative Thomasine Yahola Osborne sponsored the legislation, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The address of the property purchase is 5005 North Wood Drive, located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

TR 23-034 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a repatriation agreement with the Alabama Department of Archives and History for the transfer of human remains and funerary objects at the Muscogee Ancestral Town Sites of Pintlala in Lowndes County, Al. and Hoithewalli in Montgomery County, Al. to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Rep. Cloud sponsored the bill and Rep. Joseph Hicks co-sponsored it. The bill was adopted unanimously 14-0.

On Nov. 29, 2022 the Muscogee (Creek) Nation formally claimed the human remains and associated and unassociated funerary objects described in the attached inventory from the Alabama Department of Archives and History at the Muscogee Ancestral town sites of Pintlala in Lowndes County, AL, and Hoithlewalli in Montgomery County AL.

The Notices of Inventory Completions and Notices of Intent to Repatriate were published in the Federal Register in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 U.S.C 3005 for the intent to repatriate cultural items under control of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

TR 23-035 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Amos McNac to serve as a Supreme Court Justice of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

McNac's new term will last six years with no holdover.

TR 32-036 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Montie Deer to serve as a Supreme Court Justice of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

Deer's term will last six years with no holdover.

TR 23-037 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the Department of Justice, Office of Community Policing Services (COPS), 2023 Cops Hiring Program (CHP) Grant Program for the Lighthorse Police Department. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The CHP grant will provide the MCN Lighthorse Police Department with sixteen additional officers. The grant will provide \$4,451,427.02, with the Nation committing a 25% match, or \$2,451,427.02 in the event that the grant is received.

TR 23-038 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a purchase sale agreement for property located in Creek County, Oklahoma. Rep. Joseph Hicks sponsored the bill and Rep. Freeman co-sponsored it. The bill was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The property and its facilities will be used for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health ("MCNDH") for the construction of a new health clinic. The purchase will cost \$1,800,000.

TR 23-039 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the construction of a new community center for the Bristow Indian Community. Rep. Freeman sponsored the legislation and it was co-sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks. The bill was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The building will be located at 24354 W. Highway 48 in Bristow, Oklahoma.

TR 23-040 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a real estate contract for the purchase of property located in Tulsa County, Oklahoma. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the bill and it was co-sponsored by Representative Leonard Gouge. The bill was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The property's address is 14023 S. Casper Street W and is located in Tulsa County. The property will be used for a new location for the Glenpool Indian Community.

NCA 23-015 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 15-015 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation 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 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Limited Liability Company Act and approving the operating agreement for "Muscogee Nation Businesses, LLC"). Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The legislation states that "It is in the best economic interest of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to organize a tribal business holding company to be formed as a limited liability company wholly-owned by the Nation, which shall be instrumentality of the Nation, created for the purpose of engaging in economic development ventures and other activities in furtherance of the governmental objectives of the Nation and for the advancement of its members."

NCA 23-023 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Program Fiscal Year 2023 budget. Rep. Gouge sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 14-0.

The supplemental appropriation will provide \$27,000 to the MCN Head Start Program to cover the cost of meals and food purchases for six centers and three collaboration sites for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year. The funding source was switched to gaming.

NCA 23-024 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to be used toward the purchase of property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma. Rep. Yahola Osborne sponsored the bill, which was near-unanimously adopted 13-1.

The property purchase will cost \$1,000,000, with an additional \$20,000 used for other associated costs including title opinions, surveys, environmental studies and applicable taxes.

NCA 23-025 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Interior Division of Economic Development, Office of Indian Economic Development for the benefit of the Office of Marketing and Tourism. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The grant will award the Office of Marketing and Tourism \$149,423 for project/market tourism opportunities including international tourism, bus tours, website development, unifying tourism with gaming initiatives, creating more cohesive gift shops, and participation in the Route 66: Road Ahead Initiative. Overall the grant will allow the department to make base operational decisions to assist MCN (including joint venture participants) in assessing whether the Nation should venture into this market.

NCA 23-026 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 14-029 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Festival.) Speaker William Lowe sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The appropriated funds will include \$780,000 for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Festival.

NCA 23-027 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation for renovations and expansion to the parking lot for the Dewar Creek Indian Community located in Dewar, Oklahoma. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The appropriated funds will include \$135,782 for the Nation's Federal Roads Department to complete the parking lot.

NCA 23-028 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds for the construction of a new community center for the Bristow Indian Community. Rep. Freeman sponsored the bill, and it was con-sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks. The bill was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The appropriated funds will include \$2,682,560 for the project.

NCA 23-029 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to be used toward the purchase of real estate property located in Tulsa County, Oklahoma. Rep. Hufft sponsored the bill, and it was co-sponsored by Rep. Gouge. The bill was unanimously adopted 14-0.

The negotiated price of the property is \$580,000. An additional \$20,000 will be used for the associated costs of the property including costs of title opinions, surveys and environmental studies.

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

MVSKOKE CITIZEN IS OFF TO THE RACES

WAYLON MELTON'S QUARTER HORSE TRAINING BUSINESS PROVES SUCCESS THIS SEASON

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. – For the first time in his horse training career, Waylon Melton (Mvskoke) is seeing his name in the winner's circle at Remington Park in OKC.

Melton had his big day during the races on March 25 where he had three horses place in the top ten out of 180 in the Oklahoma Futurity.

He won his second stakes race of the evening on Saturday at Remington Park, winning the biggest one of the night with PYC Legacy in Grade 2. He ended up winning \$533,270 at the Oklahoma Futurity.

Melton also won the Eastex Stakes earlier on the 12-race card with his horse Head Patron.

Melton improved his winning stats to an unbelievable 67

percent. He started 12 horses and won with eight of them, ran second with two others and a third once. His in-the-money percentage was an incredible 91 percent.

The horses Fabulous Rachel, RJ Havin' Fun, and PYC Legacy competed on April 22.

"It helps to have good horses," Melton said. "You have some horses that don't want to be a race horse."

The trainer has 22 horses currently in house training at Remington Park.

Born and raised in the Muscogee reservation capitol of Okmulgee, Melton was surrounded by horses and other farm animals throughout his lifetime.

Coaching various sports teams like baseball, basketball or football has helped him as a horse trainer.

"The horses are athletes," he



Waylon Melton stands next to one of his trained horses. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

said. "You have to make sure they are healthy."Not only does the trainer have to keep the horse in great running condition, he also has to build trust with each animal.

"A horse's natural instinct is to run away from you," he said.

The horses stay with Melton full time while training and competing. Some owners leave the animals in his care year long.

WM Training can be contacted on FB at Julio Jones.



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

REP. JOSEPH HICKS' DUI HEARING RESCHEDULED

PLEA NOT ENTERED, RIGHT TO SPEEDY TRIAL WAIVED

by **JERRAD MOORE**
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. – Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Representative for Creek District Seat A Joseph Hicks was scheduled for a disposition in MCN District Court on April 24.

According to the court clerk, the hearing date was rescheduled. Mr. Hicks entered a waiver of his right to a speedy trial and did not enter a plea. The next scheduled hearing in the matter of Mr. Hicks' DUI charge is July 12. Mvskoke Media will have ongoing coverage of this developing story.



A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Business, Finance and Justice Committee meeting was held April 20 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee. (MM File)

LIGHTHORSE GRANT APPROVED BY COMMITTEE TO ADD ADDITIONAL OFFICERS

REFERRED HEAD START BUDGET AND \$1.02M OKMULGEE PROPERTY PURCHASE FUNDING APPROVED

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Business, Finance and Justice Committee meeting was held in person and teleconference April 20 at the Mound Building. Passed legislation is subject to Full Council approval during the Regular Session held the last Saturday of each month.

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

TR 23-035 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Amos McNac to serve as a Supreme Court Justice of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which unanimously passed 4-0.

Upon confirmation, McNac’s new term will last six years. McNac’s pre interview was moved to the pre agenda meeting on Saturday, April 29 before the Regular Session.

TR 23-036 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Montie Deer to serve as a Supreme Court Justice of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which unanimously passed 4-0.

Upon confirmation, Deer’s new term will last six years. Deer’s pre interview was also moved to the pre agenda meeting on Saturday, April 29 before the Regular Session.

TR 23-037 A tribal resolution

of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the Department of Justice, Office of Community Policing Services (COPS), 2023 Cops Hiring Program (CHP) Grant Program for the Lighthorse Police Department. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which unanimously passed 4-0.

The Nation will provide a 25% match, or \$2,451,427.02 for a grand total of \$4,451,427.02. It will allow the MCN Lighthorse Police Department to hire 16 additional officers.

NCA 23-015 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 15-015 (A Law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation 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 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Limited Liability Company Act and approving the operating agreement for “Muscogee Nation Businesses, LLC”) Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the bill, which was unanimously passed, 4-0.

The bill states that the purpose of forming a limited-liability company wholly owned by the Nation will allow it to engage in economic development ventures and other activities in furtherance of its governmental objectives and advancement of its members. The bill was postponed from a previous meeting on March 16.

NCA 23-025 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Interior Division of Economic Development, Office

of Indian Economic Development for the benefit of the Office of Marketing and Tourism. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which unanimously passed, 4-0.

The legislation will expend \$149,423.00 in grant funds. It will be used to evaluate the project/market opportunities for tourism opportunities including international tourism, bus tours, and website development. It will also allow the department to create more cohesive gift shops, and develop a well-defined market profile within the MCN reservation.

NCA 23-026 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 14-029 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Festival) Speaker Will Lowe sponsored the legislation, which passed 3-1.

The bill will expend \$780,000 from the Economic Development Fund Account for the MCN Festival FY 2023 annual budget.

Referred Legislation

NCA 23-023 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Program Fiscal Year 2023 budget. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored the bill, which was initially introduced in the April 19 Health, Education and Welfare committee meeting.

The funding source for this bill was identified as the Interest on Permanent fund. The appropriation will meet Head Start’s need to cover the cost of food purchases for six centers and three collaboration sites for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.

NCA 23-024 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds to be used toward the purchase of property located in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma. Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill, which was initially introduced in the April 18 Land, Natural Resources & Cultural Preservation committee meeting.

The funding source for this bill was identified as the Economic Development and Land Acquisition Fund. The asking price from the owner is \$1,000,000 and will be used for the cost of title insurance, title opinions, surveys, environmental studies and applicable taxes.

All referred legislation was approved by the BFJ committee for funding.

Other business involved the MNGE (GOAB), Muscogee Nation Business Enterprise and Muscogee International, LLC.

To view the full sub-committee meeting, visit: www.mcnnn.com.



A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare and Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Joint Committee meeting was held April 25 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee, Okla. (MM File)

NEW INDIAN COMMUNITY CENTERS PROPOSED WHILE OTHERS RECEIVE RENOVATIONS

DEPT. OF HEALTH SET TO OBTAIN NEW BUILDINGS IN CREEK COUNTY

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. — A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Health, Education and Welfare and Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Joint Committee meeting was held April 25 at the Mound Building in Okmulgee, OK.

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

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

TR 23-038 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Purchase Sale Agreement for property located in Creek County, Okla. Representative Joseph Hick sponsored the legislation with Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. as co-sponsor, which passed as substitute 8-0.

The Department of Health will use the \$1.8 million property located on the corner of State Hwy 117 and South 49th W. Avenue in Sapulpa for a new health clinic.

TR 23-039 Authorizing the construction of a new Community Center for Bristow Indian Community. Rep. Freeman Jr. sponsored the legislation with Rep. Joseph Hicks as co-sponsor, which passed 8-0.

The new building will be constructed at 24354 W Hwy 48 in Bristow.

TR 23-040 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Real Estate Contract for the purchase of property located in

Tulsa County, Okla. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the legislation with Representative Leonard Gouge as co-sponsor, which passed 8-0.

The MCN intends to utilize the property at 14023 S. Casper St. W for a new location for the Glenpool Indian Community.

NCA 23-027 Appropriation for renovations and expansion to the parking lot for the Dewar Creek Indian Community located in Dewar, Okla. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation, which passed 8-0.

The Nation is requesting \$135,782 from the Federal Roads Department to complete the parking lot.

NCA 23-028 Appropriating funds for the construction of a new Community Center for the Bristow Indian Community. Rep. Freeman Jr. sponsored the legislation with Rep. Joseph Hicks as co-sponsor, which passed 8-0.

The project will appropriate \$2,682,560 for the construction of the new building for the Bristow Indian Community.

NCA 23-029 Appropriating Funds to be used toward the purchase of real property located in Tulsa County, Okla. Rep. Hufft sponsored the legislation with Rep. Gouge as co-sponsor, which passed 8-0.

A total of \$600,000 will be used for the purchase. The property itself will cost \$580,000, meanwhile an additional \$20,000 will be used for other costs associated with the purchase.

For video of committee meetings visit: www.mcnnn.com.



The MCN National Council held an emergency meeting via teleconference April 26. (MM File)

COUNCIL MOVES FORWARD WITH ROUTINE AUDIT FROM FY 2021

RSM US LLP CONTRACTED TO COMPLETE MVSKOKE LOAN FUND AUDIT

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. – A Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Emergency Session was held via teleconference April 26.

The Council addressed

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

TR 23-041 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to exe-

cute an arrangement letter with RSM US LLP. Speaker William Lowe sponsored the bill, which passed unanimously 14-0.

The letter will require the Nation to waive its sovereign immunity in order to reach an arrangement with RSM US LLP. The outside company will audit the Nation’s governmental activities, business-type activities, aggregate discretely presented component units, including each major fund and aggregate remaining fund information for the year ending Sept. 30, 2021.

TR 23-042 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an arrangement letter with RSM US LLP for the Mvskoke Loan Fund. Speaker Lowe sponsored the bill, which passed unanimously 14-0.

The letter will specifically audit the Mvskoke Loan Fund by RSM US LLP.

View the full meeting at www.mcnnn.com.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS NATIVE STORYTELLING WORKSHOP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, JUNE 11-15, 2023

Native American Journalists Association (NAJA)

The second annual Native Storytelling Workshop will take place June 11-15 at the University of Kansas (KU) campus in Lawrence, Kan. in partnership with the Native American Journalists Association and Haskell Indian Nations University.

The workshop will bring Native American high school students from across the country to the KU campus for four days to introduce them to the field of journalism and explore ways that storytelling skills offer opportunities to give back to Native communities. Students will have the opportunity to learn the

basics of online/digital news content creation, podcasting, and multimedia journalism using the studios and resources of the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Students will also have the opportunity to learn more about possible majors and the admissions process at KU and Haskell.

The workshop will be led by KU Journalism professors Dr. Melissa Greene-Blye (Miami Tribe of Oklahoma) and Professor Rebekka Schlichting (Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska).

The purpose of the workshop is to educate the next generation of Native storytellers by providing them with the tools and skills necessary to tell the stories that matter to them and their communities by giving Native people a voice in telling their own stories.

There is no cost for the workshop. Students are provided a room and all meals during the week. Scholarships will also be available to assist with travel to and from Lawrence, Kan.

SCOTUS HEARS TRIBAL BANKRUPTCY CASE

MCN SUPREME COURT JUSTICE WAS PRESENT AT THE COUNSEL TABLE

by JERRAD MOORE
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

Washington, D.C. - On April 24 the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments in Lac du Flambeau Band v. Coughlin case.

The question before the court was whether the bankruptcy code expresses unequivocally Congress’ intent to abrogate the sovereign immunity of federally-recognized Indian tribes.

This case concerns a lending operation owned by the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians and how bankruptcy code affects collection efforts made by the organization.

Brian Coughlin took out a loan with the Band’s operation, and later filed for bankruptcy.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Code puts an automatic stay on collection efforts once an entity files for bankruptcy.

The Band ignored this automatic stay and continued to attempt to collect the debt despite language in the bankruptcy code, designating that

the automatic stay applies to “other foreign or domestic governments.”

Arguments put forth by the Band’s lawyer Pratik Shah, focused on the fact that “tribes” are not specifically mentioned in the code.

One of the authors of the tribe’s Supreme Court briefs is Andrew Adams III. Adams is a Mvskoke citizen and a justice on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Supreme Court. In a comment, Adams clarified his role in the trial.

“Just to be clear, I didn’t argue the case before the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday. I’ve represented the Tribe since the beginning, argued the case before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, and was a named author on the Supreme Court briefs. For the hearing this past Monday, I was at the counsel table before the justices but didn’t argue the case,” Adams said.

SCOTUS has not yet reached a decision. Mvskoke Media will have ongoing coverage of this developing story.

TULSA CREEK INDIAN COMMUNITY - NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION

The Tulsa Creek Indian Community is holding a Special Election for the Secretary position. The deadline for Letter of Intent and Background check payment fee of \$15 is by 4:30 p.m. on May 12th, 2023. Candidates will provide their qualifications and brief bio at TCIC Community meeting on May 25th, 2023. The Special Election will be held May 30th, from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Please contact TCIC office if you have any questions.

TCIC OFFICE MANAGER POSITION

Tulsa Creek Indian Community is in need of a Full-Time Office Manager. If you are interested, submit a resume and/or an employment application to the Tulsa Creek Indian Community. Employment applications are available at the Tulsa Creek Indian Community. Resumes may be emailed to tulsacreek-communitiy@yahoo.com or faxed to 918.298-2466. Applications/resumes will be accepted until the position is filled.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

March 1-June 1: Muscogee Creek Nation Scholarship Foundation application window, 918-732-7754.

Month of May: Hutchcechappa Indian Baptist Church is requesting for donations/help for those who have loved ones buried in the church cemetery. Contact Mary Harjo, 918-652-0455.

May 18, 25: 2PM to 4PM, Women’s Empowerment/Support Group For Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Prescreening required, Call 918-732-7979 for details.

June 9: 7PM, Rez Games 2023 Youth Mini Bull Riding, Bob Arrington Arena, for info call 918-822-0722.

June 9, 10: Rez Games 2023 Fast Pitch Softball Tournament, Claude Cox Omniplex, to enter or info call 918-549-2999.

June 9,10: Rez Games 2023 Arts and Crafts/Food Vendors, Claude Cox Omniplex, limited spaces, for info call 918-549-2997.

June 10: Rez Games 2023 Gospel Singing, Mvskoke Dome, for info call 918-319-1551.

June 10: Rez Games 2023 Open Cornhole Tournament, Claude Cox Omniplex, to enter or info call 918-652-5289.

June 10: Rez Games 2023 Native All-State High School Basketball Game, Mvskoke Dome, for info call 918-549-2997.

June 10: 7:30 AM, MCN Scholarship Foundation Nene Letkv “Road Runner” 5K & Fun Run/Walk, Claude Cox Omniplex, for info call 918-732-7754.

Sept. 9: 10AM to 2PM, 2nd Annual Gathering of Muscogee Nation Chartered Communities, Claude Cox Omniplex, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

IN MEMORIAM



BETTY PRINCE

Betty Doris Prince of Sequim, Washington passed away from age-related causes on April 5, 2023 at her home. She was 90 years old. Betty, a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation was born on January 6, 1933 in Checotah, Oklahoma to Johnny and Edith (Walker) Jacobs. She attended Pierce Elementary and high school. She would later go on to graduate from the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School in Chilocco, Oklahoma.

In 1951 Betty graduated from business school before enlisting in the United States Marine Corps, where she was a charter member of the Women’s Military Service for America from January 31, 1952, to January 30, 1955. During the Korean War she was decorated with the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. Her most memorable experience during her service was in 1954, when she was one of the women Marines who unveiled the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. It famously shows six Marines raising the U.S. Flag atop Mount Suribachi at Iwo Jima.

Betty married Leslie O. Prince on June 16, 1955, in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The couple eventually relocated to Washington’s Olympic Peninsula where they worked on their boat, The Sea Prince as commercial fishers for a number of years. She was also an avid gardener and homemaker who enjoyed family and friends.

Betty is survived by her husband of 67 years, Les Prince of Sequim, Washington and their two sons Vincent (Kim) Prince of Sequim, Washington and Gregory Prince of Bothell, Washington as well as four grandchildren and five great grandchildren. She is also survived by her sister Faith (Tom) Castles of Walnut Creek, California, niece Susan Hope Combs, nephews, Dennis Prater, James (Monica) Pemberton, Brad Pemberton, and Damien Jacobs, and numerous cousins.

She was preceded in death by both parents, her sister Eula Jane Prater and brother Eddie Jacobs. She was also predeceased by her great grandfather, Wilson Jones, also known as Crazy Snake and Chitto Harjo, who was a big inspiration to her life, and who was nominated as Muscogee Creek Citizen of the 20th Century.

A graveside service with military honors took place on April 21, 2023 at Jamestown Cemetery in Sequim, Washington. Please visit sequimvalleychapel.com to leave treasured memories for the family.



DENISE SINCLAIR

Denise Lynn (Vail) Sinclair 60, of Canadian, Oklahoma, passed away Saturday, April 22, 2023 at the Hillcrest Hospital of Tulsa.

Denise was born on December 10, 1962 at McAlester General Hospital to William Colman and Delia Faye (Gray) Vail. In 1981, she graduated from Canadian High School.

Denise attended Connors State College in 1983, where she received an associate degree. She then attended East Central College in Ada, where she received her Bachelor’s degree in Nutrition. Denise worked in a sewing factory for several years. She attended Oklahoma State University Technical College in Okmulgee and received a degree in business administration. Denise worked at McAlester Regional Hospital in the business office for several years. She enjoyed fishing, reading, basketball, and Christmas. She loved cooking and published two cookbooks. Denise had a deep love for animals. She raised Dachshunds, and loved her dog Daisy and cockatiel, Babybird.

Denise is survived by her step-daughter Anna Prestige & husband Dan of Marathon, New York, her former husband, Gary Sinclair of Eufaula, her sisters, Phyllis Hailey & husband Robert of Canadian, JoAnn Cable of McAlester, Faye Taylor & husband Mike of Glenpool, two grandchildren Conner & Toshiko, niece Bobbie, and nephew’s Scotty, Jason, Casey, and Edward. She is also survived by her uncle Ronald Gray & wife Sue of Eufaula, and her aunt Imogene “Midge” Robertson of Del City.

Denise was preceded in death by her parents William Colman and Delia Vail; grandparents, Elmer and Vinny Gray and Joe and Minnie Vail; brother, Glen Vail and sister-in-law Cindy; and niece, Charyl Faye Schultz.

A funeral service was held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 28th, 2023, at the First Southern Baptist Church with Reverend Rodney Karch officiating. A burial followed at Bower Cemetery under the direction of Hunn, Black & Merritt Funeral Home & Crematory.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.hbm-funeralhome.com.



ALAN SNOW

Alan Wyatt Snow of Henryetta, Oklahoma passed away on Friday, April 21 2023 in Henryetta. He was 44 years old. Alan was born on May 10th, 1978 to Beverly Rae (Looney) and Carl Smith Snow in Mobile, Alabama.

The viewing and visitation for Alan Wyatt Snow took place on Tuesday, April 25th, 2023 at Integrity Funeral Service in Henryetta.

The funeral service took place on Wednesday, April 26th, 2023 at Integrity Funeral Home Chapel in Henryetta, Oklahoma.

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LEGAL NOTICE

IF YOU, A CHILD IN YOUR CARE, OR ANOTHER LOVED ONE WERE HARMED BY ENDO OR A RELATED COMPANY, INCLUDING PAR OR AMS, OR THEIR PRODUCTS INCLUDING OPIOIDS, RANITIDINE, OR TRANSVAGINAL MESH, YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE AFFECTED BY DEADLINES IN THE ENDO BANKRUPTCY.

The deadline to file a claim in the bankruptcy is July 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).
The deadline to object to Endo's sale is July 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

On August 16, 2022, Endo International plc and certain of its affiliates filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York. Certain Endo affiliates manufactured and/or sold, among other things, branded opioid medications (including but not limited to OPANA® (oxymorphone hydrochloride), OPANA® ER (oxymorphone hydrochloride extended release), and PERCOCET® (oxycodone and acetaminophen tablets)), generic opioid medications, generic ranitidine medications, and transvaginal mesh. **This notice is intended to inform you of your rights in this bankruptcy regarding the bar date and proof of claim process and Endo's proposed sale of substantially all of its assets.**

WHAT IS A CLAIM?

A "claim" means a right to seek payment or other compensation. If you, a child in your care, or another loved one were harmed by Endo or a related company, including Par or American Medical Systems (AMS), or their products, including opioids, ranitidine, or transvaginal mesh, you may have a claim against one or more of these entities. To make a claim, you will need to submit a proof of claim in the bankruptcy case. You may file a claim on behalf of yourself, a child in your care (including a child exposed to opioids in the womb), or a deceased or disabled relative. Examples of claims that may be filed in the Endo bankruptcy include but are not limited to:

- > **Opioid Claims:** Claims for death, addiction or dependence, lost wages, loss of consortium, or neonatal abstinence syndrome (sometimes referred to as "NAS"), among others.
- > **Ranitidine claims:** Claims for cancer, including bladder, esophageal, pancreatic, stomach, and liver cancer, among others.
- > **Transvaginal mesh claims:** Claims for pelvic pain, infection, bleeding, among others.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BAR DATE AND PROOF OF CLAIM PROCESS?

The deadline to submit your proof of claim is called a bar date. The bar date, or the deadline to submit your proof of claim, is July 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time). If you do not submit a proof of claim by the deadline, you will lose any rights you may have had to seek payment or compensation. You must file a proof of claim form so that it is actually received by the bar date. A proof of claim form can be filed by you, a legal guardian, survivors, or relatives of people who have died or are disabled. You do not need an attorney to file a proof of claim for you.

For a more complete list of relevant companies and products manufactured and/or sold by Endo and its related companies, including full prescribing information and BOXED WARNINGS for OPANA® (oxymorphone hydrochloride), OPANA® ER (oxymorphone hydrochloride extended release), and PERCOCET® (oxycodone and acetaminophen tablets), and for more complete details about the bar date and instructions on how to file a confidential personal injury claim, visit EndoClaims.com or call 877.542.1878 (Toll-Free) or 929.284.1688 (International).

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SALE?

Endo intends to sell substantially all of its assets in an auction and sale process in the bankruptcy case and subject to approval by the bankruptcy court. **Endo is seeking relief that the sale will be free and clear of all claims, liens, and encumbrances.**

If you disagree with the proposed sale, you must object to the sale in writing, so that your objection is received on or before **July 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**. **Any party in interest who fails to properly file and serve its objection by the objection deadline may lose its claim against Endo's assets if the sale is approved.** Objections not filed and served properly may not be considered by the bankruptcy court.

Complete details about the proposed sale, including any auction for Endo's assets, the date of the hearing to consider the sale, and instructions on how to file an objection, are available at EndoClaims.com or by calling 877.542.1878 (Toll-Free) or 929.284.1688 (International).

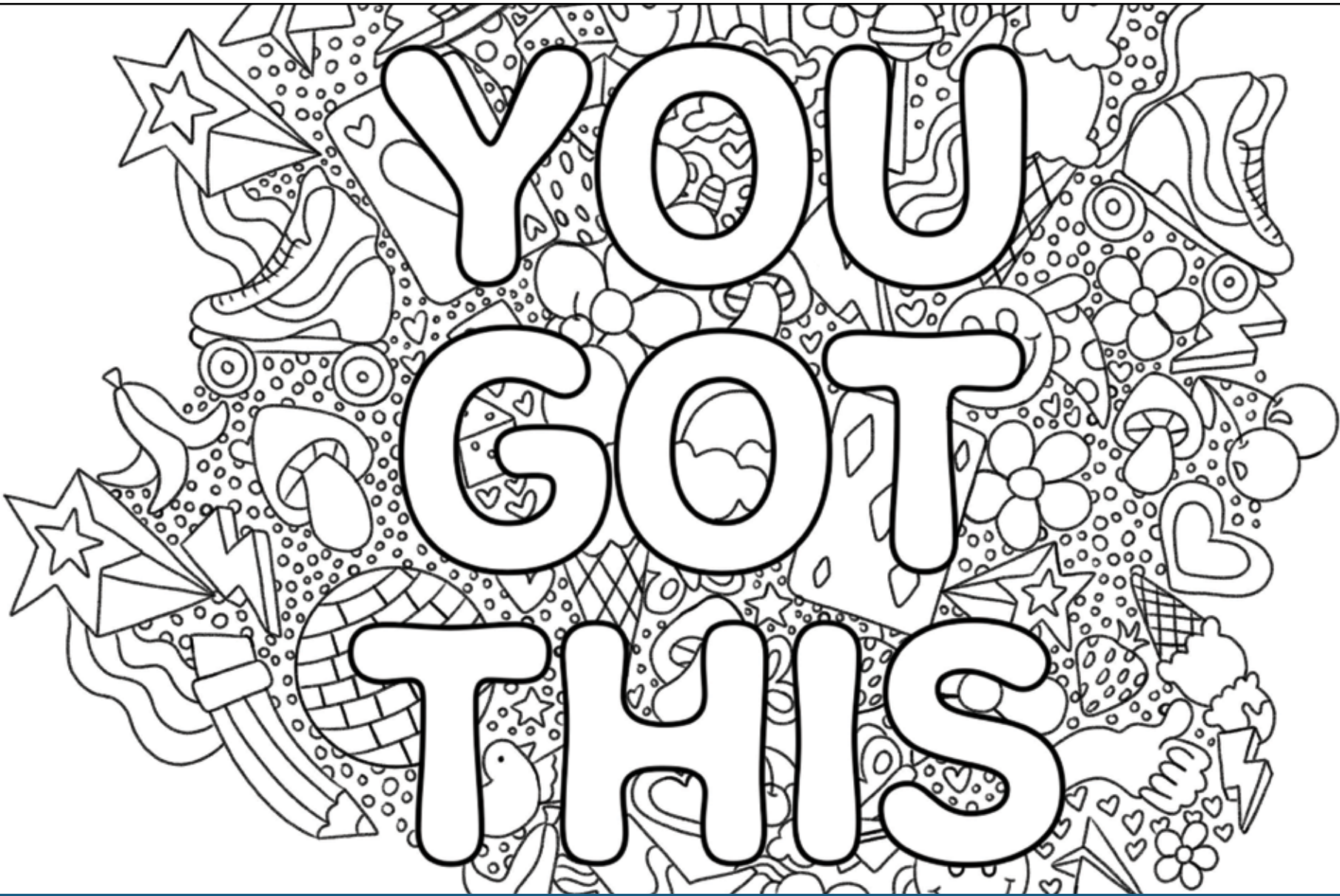
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

CALL: 877.542.1878 (Toll-Free)
929.284.1688 (International)


WRITE: Endo International plc Claims Processing Center
c/o Kroll Restructuring Administration LLC
Grand Central Station, PO Box 4850
New York, NY 10163-4850

VISIT: EndoClaims.com

EMAIL: EndoInquiries@ra.kroll.com



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