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# MVSKOKE NEWS

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## ANNUAL HOMELANDS FESTIVAL BRINGS MCN HOME

EACH YEAR A FESTIVAL IS HELD AT THE ANCESTRAL MOUNDS OF THE MUSCOGEE PEOPLE

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

MACON, Georgia - Departments from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and members of local Creek community centers traveled from the current home of the Muscogee people, to the ancestral lands for the Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration held on Sept. 16-17 in Macon, GA.

The two-day festival started each morning with the Mvskoke Honor Guard posting the colors. It featured storytelling from various tribal members, traditional cultural crafts, traditional ceremony demonstrations, cultural instrument playing, and other music and dances related to the Mississippian tribes.

Vendors selling handmade Native American arts and crafts lined the parking lot and grassy areas of the park, along with various MCN Department booths.

Community members traveled to the homelands after months of fundraising to sing traditional

Mvskoke Hymns. For some members, they have been attending the celebration it's first event.

Miss Muscogee Nation Chenoa Barnett took the stage to introduce herself to attendees in the Mvskoke language. She invited attendees to visit the Mvskoke Royalty Department booth, which handed out promotional items that included a bag, a water bottle, or a notebook.

A stomp dance demonstration from various members of a ceremonial ground was performed, Ty Hicks led the group and spoke to festival participants about the significance of the dance.

Hicks had his young daughter with him, and led as she shook cans behind him.

“Time only moves in one direction,” Hicks said. “My father was Red Hicks, he used to drive the bus on this trip and led the dance for all you to see.”

Although the dancing group was small, Hicks mentioned to the audience that the demonstration was merely a portion of what actually takes place during the ceremony.

emony.

“Do consider yourself lucky to see what’s going on here today,” Hicks said. “Our ceremonies we carried with us from here to where are now are not to be seen, we keep them sacred to us.”

### Passing along Tradition

Jarrett Wildcatt (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) played a traditional flute and told the creation stories of the Mississippian tribes.

He told stories of the animals and how they came to be, the stories before land when the earth was only water.

William Harjo (Mvskoke) played music and told stories passed down from his ancestors as well.

Raised in Texas, Harjo is full blood Mvskoke, and has kept his traditions alive.

After the storytellers finished telling their stories, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians demonstrated a NVNVHI Warrior's dance that each warrior danced in times of war.

Out of the group of five, one was an elder. As one of the young



The Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration was held at the Ocmulgee National Park in Macon, GA. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

men started a loud yell, the others repeated his cry.

The elder Cherokee man said, “We have danced this dance for many, many years. It is dedicated to all warriors and even honors Veterans like those here today. Just like we fought for our people and land, you fight to defend your country.”

Mystic Wind Choctaw social dancers held a demonstration, and gathered all willing attendees involved. The Choctaw Youth played stickball to give another ceremonial demonstration.

Pedro Zepeda (Seminole) told stories of the Florida Semi-

nole tribe, whose ancestors also dwelled in the Macon area.

The program held an afternoon portion that repeated the list of the events each day.

The second day, Wotko Long (Mvskoke) played his flute and shared more stories passed down to him.

Despite a little rain on Sunday, that did not deter the festival from proceeding with the same agenda.

According to the park rangers at the information booth, the first day alone attracted over 4,000 attendees. They claimed the

### HOMELANDS

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## HOMEOWNERS ASSISTANCE FUND HELPS MVSKOKE CITIZENS IMPACTED BY THE PANDEMIC

ARPA PROGRAM CAN CLEAR DELINQUENCY ON MORTGAGES AND MORE

### MUSCOGEE NATION HOMEOWNER ASSISTANCE FUND

HAF PROGRAM



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation HAF Program is designed to help Mvskoke homeowners with financial assistance. (Courtesy: HAF Program)

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Mvskoke citizens who have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic can apply for homeowners assistance through the Homeowners Assistance Fund (HAF). Funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the fund can get Mvskoke homeowners up to date on delinquent mortgage payments, utilities, homeowners insurance, property taxes, and homeowner association fees. On Wednesday, Sept. 13 Angel Alexander, Assistant Manager for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Homeowners Assistance Fund sat down with Mvskoke Radio and explained the details of the HAF, and how to apply.

“Our goal is to help our citizens who have been affected by the pandemic... We always want to help each citizen, if you’re a homeowner there’s

something we can assist with.” Alexander said.

The Muscogee (Creek) HAF program is set up to help homeowners experiencing housing-related financial hardship due to the pandemic. Delinquent house payments caused by financial instability, lapsed homeowner’s insurance payments, and even pesky past due homeowner’s association fees can be secured through the assistance.

### How to Qualify

To qualify for the assistance, the application must be filled out by a Mvskoke citizen. Alexander explained that even if the house or bills are in a partner’s name who is not a citizen, as long as a relationship can be established with the proper forms, citizens in need should apply.

“For example, if the mortgage and utilities are in the non-citizen’s name, we can

assist, but you will need to submit something like a marriage license.” Alexander said.

The citizen must already be in delinquency to apply. This means their mortgage has not been paid, or they have a past due amount on their bills. However, the HAF does not cover potential delinquencies.

“With the mortgage you do have to be at least 30 days delinquent and we don’t pay a prospective amount. We’ve paid cases that were six months behind, but you do have to be delinquent,” Alexander said. They can also help with past-due property taxes from 2021 and 2022.

Assistance is open to all citizen homeowners, regardless of residency. Citizens in need outside of the service area in eastern Oklahoma can apply as well. “Anyone can apply as long as documents are submitted. Any state, anywhere, out of jurisdiction. We’ve already helped many off-of reservation citizens,” Alexander said.

Citizens also need to supply their roll number, and may need to submit other identification.

### Application Process

The application process is streamlined through the MCN’s Camphouse Portal online. Applicants can find a list of all the necessary application documents and the application itself under “housing applications.” Applicants will have to submit necessary paperwork and forms establishing homeownership and the delinquency they have incurred; bills, notices, etc.

Once an application has

### ASSISTANCE FUND

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## MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION ENROLLS ITS 100,000TH CITIZEN

CITIZENSHIP OFFICE CELEBRATED WITH COME-AND-GO EVENT



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill shakes hands with the 100,000th enrolled Mvskoke citizen, Charlee. September 21, 2023, Okmulgee Oklahoma. (Braden Harper/MM)

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation now joins a small group of federally-recognized Native American tribes that currently has over 100,000 enrolled citizens as of Sept. 21. The 100,000th enrolled citizen was a young lady named Charlee. The MCN Citizenship office celebrated the six figure enrollment milestone with a come-and-go reception at its Okmulgee and Jenks locations.

MCN Director of Citizenship Nathan Wilson (Mvskoke) and his team have been hard at work processing enrollment for new Mvskoke citizens, especially within the past two years. Although the citizenship department did not know exactly when they would enroll their 100,000th citizen, they knew it was forthcoming.

“It says a lot. As a director I’m proud that I was a part of that” Wilson said. “I’ve got a staff that has worked hard these last two years. It’s big both on the personal and professional-type level.”

Over the past couple years, external factors like the U.S. Supreme Court McGirt decision and the rollout of individual American Rescue Plan Act checks have increased the volume of individuals seeking to enroll in the MCN. According to Wilson, his department has enrolled over 9,000 citizens within the past two years.

“Our usual enrollment is about a thousand or so a year,” Wilson said. “To do over 9,000 in less than two years is big for us.”

Although Wilson and his department view enrolling the 100,000th citizen as a triumph for the tribe, there is still a lot of work to be done moving forward. According to Wilson, his department still has a job to do. The department annually sees seasons that keep them busy throughout the year, particularly around new school years and the spring.

MCN Principal Chief David Hill was ecstatic about the tribe’s growth. It is not every day your tribe crosses the threshold of 100,000 citizens.

### 100K CITIZEN

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### HOMELANDS

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second day of the event is not typically as busy as the first.

Many of the attendees were non-Natives seeking a learning experience and a fun outing for the family. Others came with long-lost Native ties from those who stayed in the area, with no Dawes Rolls to trace their lineage back to.

Those inquiring about the Native people of the land were enriched in the culture for the day.

According to Visit Macon President and CEO Gary Wheat, the Mvskoke population only reaches about 411 individuals in the area, but the culture of the Mvskoke people is rich.

From the Ocmulgee River flowing through the city, to the Great Temple Mound view of Macon, the presence of the Indigenous people is felt.

Ocmulgee Mounds National Park Public Information Officer Carla Beasley said that out of her staff of 12, none have tribal affiliation.

The festival is one of the only times during operation that the park has Native American people on site.

“We work really closely with the Muscogee Nation to provide accurate information to daily visitors,” Beasley said.

The festival is one way the staff can also learn by asking questions to tribal members. Staff members often gather questions throughout the year from park attendees.

On a really busy day, the park may see close to 300 people.

What can attendees see while visiting?

The site houses a museum that is filled with artifacts and information covering the Indigenous inhabitants that were found during an archaeological dig in the 1840s.

During the century-old excavation, an underground room was discovered along with over 17,000 cultural, traditional, and ceremo-



The entrance to the Earth Mound is a narrow opening that requires visitors to squat, or crawl to see inside. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

nial pieces.

This room would be preserved and later reconstructed to what is called the Earth Mound. This mound can be entered, allowing visitors to see where many possible ceremonies, discussions, and community meetings were once held.

Taking a short walk, the Great Temple Mound can be seen. Walking further, visitors can walk on to the top of the mound and see for miles. The town of Macon can be viewed at its 55 feet height from the ground, along with the Ocmulgee River.

A theater located in the museum showcases a film that describes the life that once lived there.

Exhibitions of stickball, fishing, hunting, government operations, and basic living can be found in the museum.

With what can be viewed in the museum, and seen throughout the park, the Mvskoke culture can be felt, especially as one walks the trails to see where the Native Americans of the area once lived.

The park normally operates each day of the year, excluding major holidays, from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For more information about the Ocmulgee National Park, visit: <https://www.nps.gov/ocmu/index.html>.

### ASSISTANCE FUND

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been submitted, the office allows up to 30 days for the necessary paperwork to follow. From there the process is very thorough. For example, for a delinquent mortgage Alexander explained, “They reach out to the companies to make sure the payment amount issued matches the bill that is submitted. They do a follow up, call and confirm that payments go directly to vendors, payments are not sent to citizens.”

Once this is received, the process can take just a matter of days for citizens to find relief.

“We try to have a batch of payments that go out each week, so if we have the proper documentation we can move that along pretty quickly,” Alexander said. “We do allow 21-30 days for the documents to get sent in. But if you can submit everything and we get moving, usually within that week or two we can get that payment submitted. But that’s with everything submitted. Once we have all the documents, we can get you processed pretty quickly.”

#### Relief

Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and as Alexander explained there is a cap for the amount a citizen can receive.

“There is a cap, a max they can assist with. You can continue to apply and once you reach the cap, they will tell

you.” Alexander explained.

Because of the max allowed, there is room in the fund for citizens to apply more than once until that cap has been reached. Alexander encourages citizens to look into the program.

“We have a lot of caring agents willing to help...The great thing about now calling in is the call volume is not as great as it was when we had the direct assistance and the rental assistance, however we have agents who are willing to answer your call, there’s no long call times or wait times, once you’ve made the call and already submitted the application they get moving pretty quick.” Alexander said.

The HAF program has been instrumental in helping citizens keep their homes.

“We’ve already assisted in thousands of dollars and with people that were pretty much close to that max amount and we’ve been able to save their homes...We’ve had a few people we’ve assisted with bringing their homes out of foreclosure...We’ve saved homes by paying those property taxes.” Alexander said.

For more information about the HAF program and application process citizens can go online to <https://www.mcnhousing.com/haf.html> or call 918-549-2890.

Emails can be sent to [hafdoc@muscogeenation.com](mailto:hafdoc@muscogeenation.com).



Muscogee (Creek) Nation's 100,000th enrolled citizen, Charlee is pictured with her family at the 100,000K celebration event at the citizenship office. September 21, 2023, Okmulgee, Okla. (Braden Harper/MM)

“It’s great to see the rapid growth of our Nation, especially with the number of Muscogees now increasing to over 100,000 strong,” Chief Hill said. “I want to thank all the staff at Muscogee Citizenship, who do a fantastic job. As leaders it’s our responsibility to make sure this Nation continues to grow along with its people, and we intend to. Our future is bright and limitless.”

According to Wilson, new citizenship applications can take anywhere from two to three weeks to process. For those seeking the services of the MCN citizenship department, they can be reached at 918-732-7941.

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## ESTUCE FEST EMPOWERS YOUNG PARENTS WITH RESOURCES

EVENT SERVES PREGNANT MCN CITIZENS AND PARENTS OF INFANTS



Diaper bag starter kits were provided for parents at Estuce Fest. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Estuce Fest was held at the Okmulgee Community Center on Sep. 13. The event provided resources and gifts for first-time pregnant mothers and parents of an infant 12 months or younger. The event provided door prizes, diaper bag kits, and served dinner.

The Mvskoke Tribal Child and

Youth Coalition committee, various departments and volunteers assisted in hosting the event.

Each registrant was provided a diaper bag starter kit, which included items including diapers, baby wash, and wipes.

Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Specialist Shania Bender (Mvskoke) helped organize the event. Throughout the evening there was a presentation, guest

speakers, and games. Bender wanted the mothers to reach out for help if they were in need. One of the event’s main goals was to bring in resource booths that mothers may have been unfamiliar with that could help them in the future.

The resources included MCN Center for Victim Services, MCN Children and Family Services, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), as well as the MCN Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

“I hope that the first time mothers feel supported, that they feel they have resources to feel confident on whatever choices and decisions that they make,” Bender said. “I definitely want them to reach out just to feel supported.”

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Royal Coordinator LuAnn Bear (Mvskoke), who helped assist this event as well, said she is glad this event can help provide first-time mothers with support. “They’re not all just young mothers, it’s any age mother, it’s their first time and you don’t know what to do or don’t know what the tribe offers you,” Bear said.

Bender grew up beyond the

reservation. She had never been to an event like this, the community she grew up in did not provide this type of resource. She is grateful for MCN and the help they provide for young families.

Bender noticed first-time parents are not always aware of available tribal resources, especially if they reside in rural areas. Estuce Fest is designed to be as accessible as possible to young parents. “It’s just a good way to get everyone to come together for the evening, no matter where they live,” Bender said. “It is in the evening so no one has to miss work for the most part.”

MCN Prevention Specialist for Native Connection Grant Jasmyne Jack (Mvskoke) mentioned that

the Estuce Fest was an event initially organized by the Mvskoke Tribal Child and Youth Coalition (TCYC) committee, which is comprised of different departments and agencies. This includes the tribe, state and cities that all come together to support local communities in need.

The Estuce Fest is an event that has served families for nearly a decade. “I believe it was close to 10 years, we just wanted to do something to give back like TCYC did,” said Jack. “We did our assessment years ago and the help with child care or family’s expenses was one of the top things.”

According to Jack they have always met their max: 75 participants.



Mvskoke citizens listen to guest speakers at the Estuce Fest event. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

## THE MVSKOKENEWS

**Angel Ellis**, Director | [aellis@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:aellis@mvskokemedia.com)

**Braden Harper**, Managing Editor | [bharper@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:bharper@mvskokemedia.com)

**Jerrad Moore**, Assignment Editor | [jmoore@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:jmoore@mvskokemedia.com)

**Morgan Taylor**, Multimedia Producer | [mtaylor@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:mtaylor@mvskokemedia.com)

**Gary Fife**, Contributor | [gfife@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:gfife@mvskokemedia.com)

**Meredith Johnson**, Reporter | [mjohnson@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:mjohnson@mvskokemedia.com)

**Shayln Proctor**, Reporter | [sproctor@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:sproctor@mvskokemedia.com)

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STITT’S NOFIRE APPOINTMENT FANS FLAMES WITH OK TRIBES

ATTEMPTS MADE FOR WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM NAME CHANGE, WHILE OSAGE-BASED MOVIE PREMIERE LOOMS CLOSER

by GARY FIFE  
RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

OKMULGEE, Okla. —Well, we are still at it, although things seemed to be turned up a notch or two.

Governor Kevin Stitt is still whining about tribal sovereignty and fears tribes will be turning eastern Oklahoma into a reservation. He needs to remember a thing or two.

One, legally it already is a reservation, and two, he needs to examine why he “fears” it. He has only been causing trouble for himself.

Maybe he should fear the fact that he keeps losing the fights and in the process, creating some really bad feelings. The latest loss has been in the area of education. The Oklahoma Voice reports that the legislature has removed his control over appointments to the Oklahoma Advisory Council on Indian Education. This board has control over the curricula and support that goes to Indian students. This could come into direct conflict with Education Superintendent Ryan Walters. He wants to make major changes to state school curricula in a more conservative direction, perhaps an educational “Taliban.”

Tribal leadership is making their voices heard. In recent publications, Muscogee Principal Chief David Hill used the phrase, “Your remarks represent a new low, even for someone who has developed a pattern of baseless hostility towards tribes in Oklahoma and require correction for the public record.”

Cherokee Principal Chief Chuck Hoskins made a response to an address by the Governor to the Regional Chamber of Commerce. Chief Hoskins said “...the



Governor showed blatant hostility toward tribal sovereignty.”

And... to keep things rolling... both tribal leaders have expressed strong disappointment in Stitt’s recent appointment of Wes Nofire as his latest Oklahoma Tribal Liaison. Nofire has been a public opponent of tribal sovereignty. The Oklahoma Tribal Liaison position has never been effective. Of the three appointments Stitt made, two never produced anything, and the third resigned.

Now for something else, CBS Sports and other outlets report that the Native American Guardians’ Association is pushing an effort and petitioning to change the name of the Washington football team (once known as the R-Skins) from its current name, the Commanders, to the old name. That name had been called

offensive by many national Native groups and tribal members. The current owners of the sports franchise say the team will not be switching back to the R-Skins.

In a news article by the international news organization, CNN they studied a report by the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, which stated Native children have been sent to over 500 boarding schools in the United States. The Native group states that is more than the U.S. Department of the Interior reported in 2022. Their list includes both schools that are currently open and some that have been closed. According to CNN, the department report stated 19 schools had accounted for more than 500 Native children who died while in those institutions.

Fox News reported a Native

American gun shop owner said his sales of firearms to Native women is growing. Joe Talachy (Pojoaque Pueblo), owner of Indigenous Arms in New Mexico said a motto he credits for the increased sales is “No one is coming to save you.” He also teaches gun safety classes, and added that attendance has grown.

The big Hollywood movie about the Osage oil land murders has finally announced a local date for its showing. “Killers of the Flower Moon” will screen at Tulsa’s Circle Cinema starting Oct. 20 and will run for six days.

Primary election time is in the past. Now, we’ll find out who will be battling for control of Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Wondering what our Poet Laureate (emeritus) Joy Harjo has been up to since retiring from her national role? Not sure, but prob-

ably her usual role as a symbol of Mvskoke pride and accomplishment, but also sharing her talent and skills with our younger generations. Harjo was the featured speaker and reader at the recent “Joy of Reading” Indigenous Readers Event mid-September. It was aimed at students in Pre-k to the 12th grade. Nice to hear of such events.

Getting ready for the coming Fall (Rvfo Hakke) and Winter (Rvfo)? Maybe they will be unusual seasons and be colder or wetter? Maybe the Governor will back off and hell will freeze over?

Hvtvm.

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

SECOND ANNUAL GATHERING OF COMMUNITIES GATHERS TOGETHER FOR FUN AND FELLOWSHIP

EVENT OFFERED DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES, FOOD AND LIVE ENTERTAINMENT



A citizen has fun playing bungee basketball at the gathering of communities event. (Photo Courtesy: Shayln Proctor)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - This year’s Second Annual Gathering of Communities occurred on Sept. 9. Everyone from across the reservation was welcome to enjoy a day of fun. The event incorporated family-friendly games for all ages and live entertainment. There were different activities such as super chief wiffle ball classic, lumberjack attack, a mechanical bull, bungee basketball, and miniature golf. The event was held at the Muscogee Nation Omnplex.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Community Research and Development Specialist J.R. Wind (Mvskoke) spoke about how the gathering of communities resonates as a big family reunion. This started last year when MCN Second Chief Del Beaver mentioned how there needed to be an outreach event for the communi-

ties.

The different communities that attended were able to catch up with members from other communities. This involved sharing ideas with one another, and simply enjoying each other’s company.

Last year’s turnout saw around 500 citizens. According to Wind, they expected to exceed that number. Wind made this a free event because he wanted everyone to participate in the event’s activities.

“Somebody said ‘what if 50 people show up’, well then 50 people had fun. But we were very excited about it. About a little over 500 showed up last year, which I was happy about so I am hoping to get over 500 + this year,” Wind said.

Different departments set up their booths at the event, making it more of a “miniature resource fair” according to Wind. Wind’s

initial goal for the resource booths was for others to get exposure to tribal departments that may not be well-known to citizens.

There were new activities featured at this year’s gathering, such as the lumberjack attack, a mechanical bull, and ax throwing. Activities like ax throwing had age restrictions for attendees 16 or older. Live entertainment included local music groups Mvskoke Sunrise and Freeway Jam.

When selecting activities to provide at the event, Wind got feedback from his department and maintenance workers to gauge what worked from last year and what did not. Wind’s team explored new ideas to see what would serve citizens best.

The super chief wiffle ball classic was named after Allie Reynolds (Mvskoke). Reynolds’ was nicknamed “Super Chief” and played for the New York Yankees in the major leagues, even winning the world series at one point.

This year the community boards faced off against the MCN National Council in the super chief wiffle ball classic.

Chair volleyball and cornhole required registration in order to maintain team brackets. Unfortunately, the cornhole tournament reached its maximum capacity due to its popularity. According to Wind, last year saw over 50 teams compete, resulting in longer tournament times.

Wind brought in American food trucks for this year’s event. It was served on a first-come-first-serve basis. Last year’s vendors completely sold out. “We actually sold out of food and everyone had a great time. Going into it for the first time, you’re not sure of what to expect,” Wind said.

Wind did not grow up attending these types of gatherings. The closest thing he experienced growing up was family reunions.

Wind was grateful for the opportunity for his department to take part in the event.

Last year Wind reported seeing citizens speak in the Mvskoke language. According to Wind, they were laughing and enjoying the event by meeting their friends or making new friends.

Now that the gathering of communities has been hosted twice, Wind wants it to become an annual event. “We would like to make it an every-year event so hopefully every year we get bigger and bigger,” Wind said.

“We’re all grateful that this was something that was suggested, we just picked up the ball and went with it, so I’m thankful we are able to do it,” Wind said. “We have a great staff here, I really enjoy working with them and doing these kind of things.”

When planning the date for the gathering, Wind looks at other festivals that will occur around the same time. This includes Cherokee days or Seminole Nation days. “We didn’t want to make people choose to go to different festivals, so we are keeping it in the middle and it’s a free event so no one has

to worry about spending money,” Wind said.

Wind tries to provide other activities throughout the year for the communities, such as the Halloween decorating contest.

For those that have any questions or do not know which community they reside in, they can contact the MCN Community Research and Development department at 918-732-7963.

**Results:**

Creek War Cornhole Tournament:

1st Place: Dustin Rivas/Amber Riddle

2nd Place: Daylen James/Madison Proctor

3rd Place: Brian Proctor/Joe Jackson

House of Warriors Chair Volleyball Tournament

Overall Champion: Muscogee Indian Community team

2nd Overall: Wetumka Indian Community

3rd Overall: Glenpool Indian Community

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# CMN FALLS INTO THE SEASON WITH CAMPUS-WIDE FESTIVAL

EVENT PROVIDED ACTIVITIES, LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND DOOR PRIZES



Students face off against staff and faculty in a game of tug-of-war. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) held their annual Fall Fest event on campus Sept. 13. The event was hosted for the current students, staff and faculty. There were different activities, food and live entertainment.

Some of the activities included a war whoop and lulu, tug-of-war, free throw, a three-point contest, and a photo booth. The event also featured a blood drive. Student organizations set up resource booths across the festival as well. The music artist Wotko (Mvskoke) was seen performing live entertainment.

CMN Dean of Student Affairs Krystal Wind (Mvskoke) mentioned that the event acts as an annual back-to-school bash hosted in the fall. According to Wind, it started out as a regular cookout, then grew into a festival.

"The goal of fall fest is to bring

all of our campus together and give them the chance to mingle with faculty, staff and other students," Wind said. "It's just a chance to bring everyone together and have fun."

The event gave out free Fall Fest t-shirts. This year the Fall Fest planning committee chose to go with a stickball logo due to the sport's popularity. Former CMN student Tehillah Wind designed this year's logo.

The festival's activities were chosen by the committee as well. Every year the committee tries to switch up the event's activities to keep it new and exciting for festival attendees. New activities this year included the free-throw contest and three-point contest. Cornhole returned this year by popular demand from students.

The Renovations Salon and Barbershop in Okmulgee provided free haircuts for students and staff at the festival. The business has partnered with CMN to provide this service for the past

four years. According to Wind, their efforts are greatly appreciated.

This year's live entertainment was introduced by CMN's recruiter Thomas Berryhill. "Wotko seems to have an upbeat positive message and he spreads awareness about culture. He performs the language into his music and we felt like our students would like him," Wind said.

Prizes were handed out for winners from basketball and blanket competitions. Door prizes were also given away that included mini refrigerators, electronics, and dorm comfort items. According to Wind, this year's door prizes were comprised of items purchased by the college and items donated by local businesses.

"I would like to thank the planning committee and all of the local businesses that donate and the salon for coming out for the past few years," Wind said. "We hope that it brings everyone together and hope it kicks off the school year in a good way."

### Student's Experience

Jessica Burgess (Mvskoke) is from California and recently moved to Okmulgee this year. "It's been really nice that the event gives a lot of opportunities to what else the school has, I like the balance of the events and how there's kind of something for everyone," Burgess said. One of her favorite booths was CMN's Health and Wellness where she received a medicine bag.

Jayden Shawnee (Mvskoke/Shawnee), Evanna Flores (Mvskoke), Madison Bharjo (Mvskoke/Seminole) and Josh McNac (Mvskoke) all participated in the event. This year marked their first time attending the festival, they agreed the event was a blast.

McNac, Bharjo and Flores explored everything the festival had to offer. They visited the different resource booths, donated

blood, received free haircuts and took pictures at the photo booth.

McNac enjoyed visiting CMN's Health and Wellness Resource Booth. Bharjo enjoyed the free items the festival had to offer, as well as the food truck.

McNac and Bharjo also competed on a team together in the cornhole tournament. Everyone participated in the tug-of-war, "I think the tug-of-war was pretty fun," Shawnee said. Shawnee also competed in the free throw and three-point competitions.

"I think it's a great opportunity for students and the teachers to interact with each other. It brings

more opportunities for students as well to interact with people and get to know more students," Flores said.

Even though McNac is a new student, he is already finding community and fellowship with events like Fall Fest.

"I would like to say enroll and come join because this is so fun. I have had the best time and it's only been three weeks in," McNac said.

For more information, contact CMN at 918-549-2800. To keep up to date on other events, follow their Facebook page.

## MCN 2023 PRIMARY RESULTS



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation  
Election Board  
2023 Primary Election  
Saturday, September 16, 2023  
Official Results

		Total	
<b>Principal Chief</b>			
Timothy GoodVoice	1,021	25.36%	
David W. Hill	2,350	58.37%	
Joseph T. Rogers	88	2.19%	
Lahoma A. Schultz	567	14.08%	
<b>Second Chief</b>			
Del Beaver	2,678	67.02%	
Sandra Golden	1,318	32.98%	
<b>National Council Seat A - Creek District</b>			
		<b>Total</b>	
Dode Barnett	1,548	39.54%	
Joseph Hicks	1,526	38.98%	
Leney McNac	841	21.48%	
<b>National Council Seat A - McIntosh District</b>			
		<b>Total</b>	
Judith Pickering	1,624	41.27%	
Darrell Proctor	2,311	58.73%	
<b>National Council Seat A - Okmulgee District</b>			
		<b>Total</b>	
James Jennings	1,102	27.81%	
William Lowe	1,498	37.80%	
Robyn Whitecloud	1,363	34.39%	



The MCN Election Board released the official MCN 2023 Primary Election results on Sept. 22. (Courtesy: MCN Election Board)

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ARTWORK CREATED BY TIM NEVAQUAYA



### University of Tulsa Psychophysiology Lab

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918-631-3565

STUDY IRB APPROVED BY CHEROKEE NATION, INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE - OKLAHOMA CITY AREA OFFICE, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA. PI - JAMIE RHUDY, PHD



# MVSKOKE CITIZEN WINS BIG IN STATE HORSESHOE COMPETITION

SARAH HICKS IS NOW A FIVE-TIME STATE CHAMPION



Sarah Hicks wins her fifth state championship. (Courtesy Addie Hicks)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON  
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - Sarah Hicks knows horseshoes. As well she should, she’s a five-time horseshoe pitching state champion and won her most recent championship this year. The daughter of Wilson and Ina Hicks, Sarah was born and raised in Okemah and attributes her success to an early start. Back then it was a family affair. After supper, the family of six would go out and pitch horseshoes in the yard for fun.

## Beginnings

It was Hicks’ dad that taught her the tricks to pitches that would end up as ringers. Those are the throws when the shoe lands encircling the stake. Horseshoes can seem to be a deceptively simple game. As Hicks explained it, the details of a throw and the subtle differences in position can change how the shoe rotates. That is where the intricacies of the game come out. As Hicks spoke about those, she also spoke about the past and present. She spoke about the evenings throwing horseshoes when she was little with her parents and siblings, and about her own children pitching horseshoes with her and her husband, Sam Beaver.

“We got different flips... it’s the way you throw your shoes. You can have a single flip (demonstrates a vertical rotation) that’s what I, that’s what mine does. Just a single flip. And my older son’s, his flips real fast,” Hicks said. “And there is a quarter turn...My dad always used to teach me how to do that because he was my champion on that. But you know it was just backyard games. He said if you do a quarter turn he said you’ll never miss. I’ve seen that too and it’s true. So that’s not a flip. It’s a turn that way (demonstrates horizontal rotation) ...And he always tried to teach me that but I could never get it. But he was my champion. I guess dad has something to do with it (her interest)... You know, he was always trying to teach me this and that and he’d tell me how he’d throw against the wind and he was trying to teach me a lot of stuff. And so I guess he’s the one who actually got me, you know, playing.”

## Rules of Play

Horseshoe games are played in pitching courts where two metal rods called stakes are driven into the ground at distances of up to 40 feet. The area around the stake is called the pit. Pits can be made of broken up clay, dirt, or sand. The court has a pitching lane, the area between the two stakes. Lanes can be dirt, grass, sand or concrete. There is a foul line a pitching player can’t cross. Pitching courts are often seen in Oklahoma as part of municipal parks and fair grounds. The MCN Claude Cox

Omniplex has horseshoe courts and runs a tournament during the MCN festival. Backyard horseshoe courts can be as simple as a grass and dirt lane, or as complex as the concrete and grass courts seen in parks.

Scoring is based on how close one can get their horseshoe to the stake. More points for ringers, less for learners. Those are the pitches that land the horseshoe touching the stake, but not encircling it like the ringers. Players can cancel out each other’s lands, depending how close they are to the stake.

The playful backyard games turned competitive when Hicks’ husband and a friend introduced her to the world of sanctioned tournaments. She has been playing ever since.

“But when I got with my husband, him and his best friend, they got into this sanction tournament. And so I’d get out there and I’d practice with them. And they finally got me into it... So I went out there every weekend with them. We had a, I’m gonna say, a team. We’d have a get together and play against each other... But we still try to get together and then we can play together,” Hicks said.

In the world of competitive horseshoe pitching, sanctioned tournaments are those run by an organization like the Oklahoma Horseshoe Pitchers Association or the National Horseshoe Pitching Association. These organizations run games and tournaments, standardize rules, and support affiliated clubs. They offer prizes and competition in the run-up to bigger tournaments like the statewide championships and national.

The Oklahoma Horseshoe Pitchers Association (OHPA) sponsors tournaments all over the state. Hicks, who is the current vice-president of the association has been all over, as well playing at pits in Yukon, Edmond, and Choctaw. The OHPA offers a men’s section, women’s section, and a juniors section. The difference in section competition is the distance from the line of pitching and the stake. Men usually pitch from 40 feet, women from 30 feet, and juniors at 30 feet.

“...The men throw 40 feet at least and the women throw 30 feet. That’s why we pitched 30 feet. And like I said, you pitch at the sanctioned tournaments, the OHPA, we play against the men too. But at the state championship and the world championship, you know, we play against women, only women. And you come up to get some good ones,” Hicks said.

Hicks would like to get more people involved in tournaments, especially women and children.

“My team captain, he said, make sure you say that we need more women to play and we need a lot more women and juniors to play. I think we have no juniors in OHPA right now...Like I said, we need more women and a lot more women,” Hicks said.

Players bring their own horseshoes, the brand of which is also sanctioned by the organization running the tournament. According to the NHPA, pitching horseshoes must weigh around 2.5 lbs, with an opening no more than 3.5 inches across. There are slight variations in shape. Some come in bright red or blue, opposed to metallic silver. “Yeah, I throw Broncos. So I’ve always thrown Broncos, but there are different brands of shoes, like most things and just different ones. So me and my husband and two boys, we all throw different shoes. I’ve always thrown Broncos.”

As Hicks got involved in sanctioned tournaments, her family got involved as well. Competition runs deep. Hicks can rightfully boast of having a family full of state and world champions. In addition to her state championships, Hicks also won class A championships four years in a row before moving up to champion-

ship class.

“I’ve got five... And I’ve got two sons that play, but we did every weekend. We were just gonna play when they were little. Well my youngest one, he’s a four or five times state champion in juniors. My son, we go in different classes, so he’s got about two or three champions in his class,” Hicks said. “My husband.. I don’t know how many state doubles he got! I’m hoping to get my grandson and my two grandsons and two granddaughters into it. My grandson is eight now. But he’s playing football, the youngest grandson is three and my two granddaughters are six and four. And I got a pair for one of them already.”

The drive to compete in Hicks’ family extends beyond horseshoes. Hicks’ sons Brandon and Noah both compete in horseshoe pitching, while her son Comanche was a record-breaking competitive weightlifter.

## The Fun of Competition

Hicks’ family not only still plays together, they also more importantly practice together. Hicks shared her secret to winning: practice. This is a step in the process that involves family. Competition can also run deep in this stage as well.

“Well, practicing, just practice and practice,” Hicks said. “... when my husband and my boys like to practice, they said they like to practice against me ‘cause, you know, they try to beat me... once in a while they will,”

In spite of the competitive nature of Hicks’ family, the competition itself stays fun for them.

“No, we just see who wins. We just have fun out there,” Hicks said.

Although Hicks was bit by the competitive horseshoe pitching bug, her younger sister Addie Hicks was not. While Addie does not compete in tournaments, Hicks shared that her sister will play and join in for fun at church gatherings at Nuyaka Baptist.

When asked about sportsmanship and competition, Hicks said there are more important things in life than just winning.

“Everybody, everybody plays like they’re supposed to... they talk and they laugh out there and just go back and forth...Nobody’s down talking or making it uncomfortable for anyone. I have never heard that from anybody. If they have, you know, I’ve never heard of them,” Hicks said.

Hicks gave a good example of the sportsmanship and friendship that can develop from a lifetime of competition, her friend Tina Hawkins.

“I love you Tina! She’s my competition.”

Toward the end of Hicks’ interview when asked if she’d like to add anything, Hicks got close to the voice recorder and playfully said, “I love you Tina! She’s my competition.”

Hicks’ biggest competition, or her longest match ever? Hicks gave a friendly laugh and said, “That would be Tina Hawkins.” Smiling with her eyes, Hicks explained,

“She is good competition for me. Me and her have been going at it for I don’t know how many years. She used to beat me every year, every year. And let’s see, I think my last win in class A was 2007. So every year she beat me. And these past five years, I’ve got her!...She’s the best competition I ever had. Still is, still is,” Hicks said. “One year me and her were just going back and forth. And I barely beat her, okay. And, at a state tournament you go to 40 points. 40 shoes and we just kept going back forward. I think I don’t know how many shoes we threw just to hit 40. We kept killing each other’s shoes. She puts her shoe on there and then my shoe goes on there, nobody gets no point. Kind of like evens it out...we kept killing each other’s shoes.”

When the conversation ended, the grandmother of four explained what seems to be the draw of horseshoes, “We just have fun out there, I don’t know what else to say.”

# FARM BILL REAUTHORIZED TO INCLUDE TRIBAL INPUT

THE COLLEGE IS PARTNERING WITH EMORY UNIVERSITY THROUGH A GRANT



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has placed importance on food sovereignty by investing in cattle production. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

by MORGAN TAYLOR  
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

WASHINGTON D.C. - Tribes are pushing for further sovereignty, self-governance, and self-determination with the reauthorization of the Farm Bill 2023.

The last time the bill was reauthorized was in 2018. It has since made great advancements from the previous reauthorization, according to Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Chairman Brian Schatz.

Every five years, the bill reaches an expiration date, which is then updated within congress.

“The 2018 Farm Bill was the first to meaningfully expand USDA program support for Native producers and Native Communities,” Schatz said. “It was a big step forward but we can and should build on that progress.”

During a hearing on Native priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization in late June, Schatz outlined the priorities tribes have expressed as necessary additions to the reauthorization.

“Native stakeholders are calling for additional support, self-governance, and autonomy in food production, inspection and distribution, management of natural and cultural resources including forest resources,” Schatz said. “They are also seeking acknowledgment and incorporation of traditional, and ecological knowledge in USDA’s conservation practice standard so that Native land stewards can use traditional conservation methods while also modeling best practices for others to follow.”

Native communities are most notably requesting wrap-around navigator services targeted for on-the-ground help to apply for USDA grants, provide technical assistance with applications, and assist with compliance issues for life of the grants.

“These are priorities for agricultural policy,” Shatz said.

The hearing held a panel that included MCN Agriculture and Natural Resources Director Trent Kisse, President of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska Honorable Richard Peterson, Executive Director of Self-Governance Communication and Education Tribal Consortium Jay Spaan, Hawai’i Regional Director NDN Collective Davis Price, Director of Policy and Government Relations Agriculture Council, and President of the Intertribal Timber Council Cody Desautel.

Members of the panel described how these implementations would benefit the tribes in the agriculture industry and in reservation areas.

## Serving MCN Communities

Kisse has played a major role in the agribusiness for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation by leading the department and nation as it invested, constructed and opened a meat processing plant, along with acquiring a large ranch.

The meat plant is located in a USDA-designated food desert, filing a void of food access.

“Since opening in December 2021, Looped Square Meat Co. has served over 20,000 customers with fresh, wholesome and nutritious food,” Kisse said. “Some of which is grown and produced right there on the Muscogee Nation Reservation.”

The ranch included nearly 6,000 acres designated for cattle production to help keep the meat

plant stocked with fresh and accessible food choices.

“Feeding our people nutritious food and offering health choices in the community is of utmost importance to us,” Kisse said.

Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative Associate Director Carly Hotvedt was in Kisse’s position many years ago.

In her current capacity as associate director, Hotvedt has had a front-row seat during the Farm Bill’s policy development.

In a press release from the Native Farm Bill Coalition, Hotvedt said she feels positive about the farm bill, even with a divided congress.

“I think the perspective here is that this needs to get done, and it needs to be done in a bipartisan way,” Hotvedt said. “What we’re seeing is bipartisan support on these issues in Indian Country and the policymakers that support us are going to be influential in that process.”

## A Healthy Future

Allowing tribes self-governance and self-determination in the food processes will give better opportunities to make healthier decisions while allowing relevant, tribally-desired foods in the supply chain.

“You have products grown on a reservation, harvested on a reservation, processed, labeled and sold



MCN has invested in beef production through enterprises like the Looped Square Meat Plant in Beggs, OK. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

on a reservation,” Hotvedt said. “So this food hits either a feeding program or individual’s plate without ever having left the reservation or community.”

The IFAI is a research partner to the coalition. The coalition is also composed of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC), and the National Congress of American Indians, along with a long list of tribes and Native organizations.

With over 170 members, the Coalition represents the largest coordinated effort in Indian Country around food, agriculture and nutrition policy.

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## RAMP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PASSES LNC COMMITTEE

PROGRAM WILL HELP CITIZENS WITH ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council recently held a Land, Natural Resources, and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting. (MM File)

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**  
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION- On Sept. 12, the Land, Natural Resources, and Cultural Preservation Committee held a meeting. Legislation passed will go on to the regular session meeting unless otherwise noted.

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

Concharty Methodist Church received a Muscogee (Creek) Nation Ceremonial Ground Camp & Church Camp House Grant in the amount of \$9,875 with a vote of 4-0. The contractor is Paul Wilson. There were no questions or comments from the committee.

Broken Arrow Indian United Methodist Church received a Muscogee (Creek) Nation Emergency Assistance Grant in the amount of \$21,357.94 with a vote of 3-0. Representative Charles McHenry abstained from voting.

Christina McHenry stated that the money will go toward replacing the carpet and tile in the sanctuary. According to her, the tile has become cracked and is currently a hazard. There were no questions

or comments from the committee.

TR 23-094 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to apply for federal funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Tribal Transportation Bridge Program to fund 10 replacement bridges and 6 bridge constructions within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Representative Joseph Hicks. The resolution had no questions or comments from the committee.

This resolution authorizes the principal chief to apply for federal funds through the BIA bridge program for the replacement of 10 bridges and the construction of six bridges for the amount of \$10,261,863.

TR 23-095 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the adoption of the 2023 – 2024 Conservation Regulations of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud. The resolution had no questions or comments from the committee.

Jesse Allen from the MCN Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources commented that the

regulations made no changes from previous years.

NCA 23-075 a law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Construction Services in order to create the ramp assistance program passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Representative Charles McHenry and co-sponsored by Representative Robert Hufft. It will go on to the Business, Finance, and Justice Committee (BF&J) for funding. There were no questions or comments from the committee.

This legislation would benefit MCN citizens that need assistance installing residential wheelchair ramps. It was originally postponed from an Aug. 8 committee meeting. The legislation now provides for minor dwelling modifications to accommodate accessibility.

A representative from tribal construction made the following remarks, “...we spoke with Representative McHenry and he agreed, we made a change, we added in the language for as we understand there’s going to be instances... where their door frame might need to be widened and we added that language in there to under certain circumstances we can widen their door to accommodate a ramp.”

NCA 23-097 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation in the amount of \$16,308 to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Facilities Department for water services provided for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Industrial Park located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks. It will go on to the BFJ committee for funding.

The water meter at the MCN Industrial Park at 3510 N. Wood Drive was installed by the City of Okmulgee and the MCN in 2008. It was not properly recording water usage from a determined date spanning from 2014-2022. An amount of \$16,308 has

been requested by the MCN Facilities Department to settle the outstanding negotiated balance with the city.

NCA 23-098 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the United States Department of Agriculture for the benefit of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) in the amount of \$82,517 passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Cloud. There were no questions or comments from the committee.

The MCN DANR was awarded a Fiscal Year 2023 Tribal Nations Wild Cervid Grant in the amount of \$82,510. The grant funds will be used to increase the testing of wild harvested deer on the reservation for Chronic Wasting Disease research and provide baseline knowledge of the absence of presence of the disease.

Allen later clarified to Mvskoke Media that remarks made during discussion that funds would go towards youth archery equipment and programming were referencing different, upcoming legislation.

NCA 23-099 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA title 23, entitled “Wild-life Code ” passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Rep.

Cloud. There were no questions or comments from the committee.

Title 23 of the MCNCA deals with the regulation of hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering, and conservation on tribal lands. Allen stated during discussion that the update includes a definition of “legal bait” and “baiting” in the description of the code.

NCA 23-100 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation in the amount of \$70,000 to the Office of Environmental Services (OES) for the lagoon closure at Duck Creek and Okemah Casinos passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks. It will go on to the BF&J committee.

MCN Office of Environmental Services Director James Williams made remarks on the bill stating, “The lagoons have been out of compliance for awhile, there’s trees growing up in the berms... the one in Okemah, they haven’t used it since they hooked up to the city water and sewer, we need to go ahead and close it permanently. The one at Duck Creek... they want to close the lagoon in a way to use a drip system.” Williams stated that gaming has committed \$100,000 to the project and the rest will cost \$70,000.

To view the full meeting, visit: mcnnc.com.



## MILLIONS IN ARPA FUND EXPENDITURES PASSED BY BFJ

IF ADOPTED BY FULL COUNCIL, FUNDS WILL BENEFIT MNLH AND MUSCOGEE INTERNATIONAL



A Business, Finance and Justice Committee meeting was held at the Mound Building on Sept. 21 in Okmulgee, Okla. (MM File)

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held the monthly Business, Finance and Justice Committee session at the Mound Building on Sept. 21.

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

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

NCA 23-081 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation creating a new subsection § 2-135 entitled “Rules of Civil Procedure” in MCNCA Title 27, Chapter 2. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the legislation, which was unanimously postponed indefinitely 3-0. This legislation will not be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

This legislation was previously postponed on Aug. 17.

NCA 23-082 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation creating a new subsection § 2-136 entitled “Adoption of Restatement of Torts, Second and Third” in

MCNCA Title 27, Chapter 2. Rep. Golden sponsored the legislation, which was unanimously postponed indefinitely 3-0. This legislation will not be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

This legislation was previously postponed on Aug. 17.

NCA 23-108 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the 2023 Enbridge Fueling Futures Grant for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthouse Police Department. Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was unanimously passed 3-0. This legislation will be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

If adopted by the full council, the grant will provide \$14,526 in funds to the MCNLH.

NCA 23-109 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds received from the United States Department of the Treasury for the fiscal relief funding for Muscogee International, LLC. Rep. Golden sponsored the bill, which was unanimously passed 3-0. This

legislation will be presented before the Sept. 30 Regular Session.

If adopted by the full council, the bill will expend \$1,898,637.06 in funds for Muscogee International, LLC.

NCA 23-110 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds received from the United States Department of the Treasury for the fiscal relief funding for Muscogee Nation Business, LLC. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Golden, which was unanimously passed 3-0. This legislation will be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

If adopted by the full council, the bill will expend \$1,221,130.39 in funds for Muscogee International, LLC.

NCA 23-111 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds received from the United States Department of the Treasury for the fiscal relief funding for the Lighthouse Police Department. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was passed unanimously 3-0. This legislation will be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

If adopted by the full council, the bill will expend \$1,973,613 in funds for MCNLH.

NCA 23-112 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 36 § 1-104 entitled “Powers and duties of the Tax Commissioner”. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which unanimously passed 3-0. This legislation will be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

If adopted by the full council, the bill will revise the responsibilities of the tax commissioner position.

### Referred Legislation

NCA 23-075 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Construc-

tion Services in order to create the Ramp Assistance Program. The bill was sponsored by Representative Charles McHenry and cosponsored by Representative Robert Hufft. The funding source was approved and will be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

If adopted by the full council, the appropriation will provide \$50,000 in funds for MCN Tribal Construction Services.

NCA 23-097 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Facilities Department for water services provided for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Industrial Park located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Representative Joseph Hicks sponsored the legislation. The funding source was approved and will be presented

before the Sept. 30 regular session.

If adopted by the full council, the appropriation will provide \$16,308 in funds for the MCN Facilities Department.

NCA 23-100 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation to the Office of Environmental Services for the lagoon closure at Duck Creek and Okemah Casinos. Rep. Joseph Hicks sponsored the bill. The funding source was approved and will be presented before the Sept. 30 regular session.

If adopted by the full council, the appropriation will provide \$70,000 in funds for the MCN Office of Environmental Services.

Other business discussed by the subcommittee included Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises.

For more information visit [www.mcnnc.com](http://www.mcnnc.com).

## DISTRICT VOTING NARROWLY FAILS TO APPEAR ON NOV. 10 BALLOT

USDA WILL PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO TRIBAL FARMERS

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held an emergency session via teleconference on Sept 21.

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

TR 23-098 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a cooperative agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the United States Department of Agriculture Office of Tribal Relations. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

According to the bill, the tribe is seeking to provide technical assistance to tribal farmers and ranchers. The USDA will provide funding for a federal program specialist to meet this need.

NCA 23-113 A law of the Mus-



The National Council held an emergency session via teleconference. (MM File Photo)

cogee (Creek) Nation to amend Article IV and Article VI of the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to re-establish district voting. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which narrowly failed to become adopted 7-8.

Language in the bill claims district voting needs to be re-established to strengthen communication among national council representatives and their district’s constituents, establish accountability and provide more direct representation to citizens. The bill will not be presented as a constitutional amendment question on the Nov. 10 ballot.

To view the full meeting, visit: mcnnc.com.



# MONAA AND S.P.I.R.I.T. RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FOR THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE’S DAY EVENT

MCN VETERANS AFFAIRS SERVICE OFFICE WILL HOST THE STAND DOWN EVENT

by SHAYLN PROCTOR  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held an emergency session via teleconference on Sept. 13.

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

TR 23-096 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending TR 19-076 (A tribal resolution of the MCN to suspend all special appropriations and donations) as amended by TR 20-150, TR 21-080, TR 22-128, TR 22-143, TR 22-150, TR 22-155, TR 22-170, TR 23-045 and TR 23-066. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 8-4.

According to the bill, TR 19-076 needs to be amended for a donation to be made toward the S.P.I.R.I.T. and MONAA organizations for their respective Indigenous People’s Day events.

TR 23-097 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Principal Chief to enter into a Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) agreement with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. Representative Joseph Hicks sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the bill, the nation believes that the TTP agreement will ensure further protection and preservation for anyone interested in tribal citizenship. The nation will maintain the stability, accountability and capability to assist those duties that are correlated with a TTP agreement.

NCA 23-101 A law of the MCN authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the United States Department of Labor for the benefit of the Veterans Affairs Services Office. Speaker William Lowe sponsored the bill, which was adopted 12-0.



The National Council held an emergency session via teleconference. (MM File Photo)

The Veterans Affairs Service Office has been awarded \$6,557 from the FY 23 Stand Down Event grant. Their office will use this fund to host a Stand Down event for 75 veterans.

NCA 23-102 A law of the MCN authorizing a donation to the Society to Preserve Indigenous Rights and Indigenous Treaties (S.P.I.R.I.T.) organization to financially assist with the 2023 Okmulgee Indigenous People’s Day. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored this bill, which was adopted 7-4-1.

S.P.I.R.I.T. has requested financial assistance to help with food, drinks, paper products, city permits, performer stipends and event t-shirts for its Indigenous People’s Day event. They have received a

\$2,000 funding source identified as interest on the permanent fund.

NCA 23-105 A law of the MCN authorizing a donation to the Muskogee Oklahoma Native American Association (MONAA) to assist with the 2023 Muskogee Indigenous People’s Day. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored the bill, which was adopted 8-4.

MONAA has hosted an Indigenous People’s Day event for the past four years. They are requesting for \$2,000 in financial assistance. This is to help with their taco fundraiser and other Indigenous People’s Day events. The funding source was identified as interest on the permanent fund.

NCA 23-106 A law of the MCN authorizing the expen-

diture of the U.S. Department of Health and Human services, Administration for Children and Families Tribal Child Support Enforcement Program Grant and appropriating tribal funds for the tribal match for the benefit of the MCN Office of Child Support. Rep. Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 12-0.

The MCN Office of Child Support has been awarded \$2,167,612 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Tribal Child Support Enforcement Program Grant. The funding source for this bill was identified as gaming.

NCA 23-107 A law of the MCN approving the comprehensive annual budget for fiscal year 2024 and providing for appropriations. Speaker Lowe sponsored this bill, which was adopted 11-1.

The MCN National Council has reviewed the Fiscal year 2024 Comprehensive Annual Budget and has approved the executive, legislative and judicial branch budgets. This law is to approve the MCN Comprehensive Annual budget for the remainder of 2024 and to appropriate funds accordingly.

To view the full meeting, visit: mcnncc.com.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### SIMEON LEE

Simeon Lee (Zeke) is the son of Simeon Lee, Jr. and Theresa Wisner-Lee. He recently participated in the Heritage Cup Lacrosse Tournament held at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ over Memorial Day weekend. Zeke was selected to play on the inaugural Under 13 Haudenosaunee Nationals Lacrosse team (formerly known as the Iroquois Nationals) after an open tryout process. The

U13 Haudenosaunee Nationals is made up of Indigenous players from across the United States and Canada. Jeremy Thompson of the Onondaga Nation is an Iroquois professional lacrosse player and held the reins for this new, young team.

The Haudenosaunee Nationals won bouts with USA, Poland, and Israel. The U13 Haudenosaunee Nationals placed second after falling to Team Ireland in the finals. There were teams representing over 15 countries in the Heritage Cup.

Zeke was invited to play in the

Lacrosse World Series Championship in North Carolina over 4th of July weekend with the U13 Thunder Nationals Lacrosse Team. The Thunder Nationals also consists of Indigenous players from the U.S. and Canada.

Zeke plays for the Bixby Spartan Lacrosse and Impulse Lacrosse teams out of Tulsa. Zeke is one of three brothers who play lacrosse. Solomon, his oldest brother plays at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado and Sam, his younger brother plays with the Bixby and Impulse teams.



(Courtesy: Theresa Wisner-Lee)

## LEGALS

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

MLL; DOB: 11/22/2013

Alleged Deprived Child.

NOTICE OF HEARING TO:

PRESTON FRATES, as to MLL.

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE that a Motion to Terminate Parental Rights has been filed against you in the above-styled and numbered cause and will be heard in the District Courtroom of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Tribal Complex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma on November 30, 2023 at 9:00 o'clock A.M.

YOU ARE HEREBY INFORMED that it is sought by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that the child remain a ward of the Court and custody be continued in the Children and Family Services Administration for continued foster placement of possible pre-adoptive placement. YOU ARE FURTHER INFORMED that you have the right to be represented by legal counsel at this hearing.

FURTHERMORE, failure to appear at the hearing shall constitute a denial of interest in the child, which denial may result, without further notice of this proceeding or any subsequent proceeding, in the termination of your parental rights.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

Case Numbers:  
JV-2021-10 &  
JV-2021-11

G.L.H.; DOB: 06/07/2009  
A.R.H.; DOB: 03/19/2014  
D.L.H.; DOB: 07/03/2021

Alleged Deprived Children.

AMENDED  
(To change Case Number)

NOTICE OF HEARING TO:

CHRISTOPHER HUSMAN, as to G.L.H., A.R.H. AND D.L.H.

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE that a Motion to Terminate Parental Rights has been filed against you in the above-styled and numbered cause and will be heard in the District Courtroom of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Tribal Complex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma on November 30, 2023 at 9:00 o'clock A.M.

YOU ARE HEREBY INFORMED that it is sought by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that the children remain wards of the Court and custody be continued in the Children and Family Services Administration for continued foster placement of possible pre-adoptive placement. YOU ARE FURTHER INFORMED that you have the right to be represented by legal counsel at this hearing.

FURTHERMORE, failure to appear at the hearing shall constitute a denial of interest in the children, which denial may result, without further notice of this proceeding or any subsequent proceeding, in the termination of your parental rights.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

Case No.: JV-2022-10

I.C.; DOB: 01/29/2021

Alleged Deprived Child.

NOTICE OF HEARING TO:

KAYDENCE CUNNINGHAM, as to I.C.

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE that a Motion to Terminate Parental Rights has been filed against you in the above-styled and numbered cause and will be heard in the District Courtroom of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Tribal Complex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma on November 30, 2023 at 9:00 o'clock A.M.

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FURTHERMORE, failure to appear at the hearing shall constitute a denial of interest in the child, which denial may result, without further notice of this proceeding or any subsequent proceeding, in the termination of your parental rights.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

Case No.: JV-2022-06

MLL; DOB: 11/22/2013

Alleged Deprived Child.

NOTICE OF HEARING TO:

UNKNOWN FATHER, as to MLL.

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE that a Motion to Terminate Parental Rights has been filed against you in the above-styled and numbered cause and will be heard in the District Courtroom of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Tribal Complex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma on November 30, 2023 at 9:00 o'clock A.M.

YOU ARE HEREBY INFORMED that it is sought by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that the child remain a ward of the Court and custody be continued in the Children and Family Services Administration for continued foster placement of possible pre-adoptive placement. YOU ARE FURTHER INFORMED that you have the right to be represented by legal counsel at this hearing.

FURTHERMORE, failure to appear at the hearing shall constitute a denial of interest in the child, which denial may result, without further notice of this proceeding or any subsequent proceeding, in the termination of your parental rights.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

A photograph of the Council Oak building, a large, modern, multi-story structure with a prominent entrance and many windows. The building is surrounded by trees and landscaping.The logo for MCNHealth, featuring a stylized eagle and the text "MCNHealth".

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WORKING TO PRESERVE THE MVSKOKE LANGUAGE.

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