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MVSKOKE NEWS

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EVERY VOTE MATTERS IN THE 2023 MCN ELECTION

PRIMARY WILL TAKE PLACE SEPT. 16



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation is currently in the midst of the 2023 election season. (Shutterstock)

MVSKOKE RESERVATION -The Primary Election for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief, Second Chief and National Council Representatives Seat A will be held on Sept. 16.

The primary election will determine who will proceed to the general election later in November.

Community-hosted candidate forums held across the reservation have offered MCN citizens the chance to be involved vocally in the election process. At the forums, citizens have been able to ask candidates questions directly

as they each take turns answering. Over the course of the forums, citizens have grown comfortable with asking candidates harder questions.

The current chief's administration has undertaken a new role as the nation experienced one of the biggest changes in its history: the McGirt Decision.

While Native American issues continue to settle at the U.S. Supreme Court level, tribal citizen representation is growing, as well as the need for representation.

According to the Native Vote website, all elections have

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

an impact on Indian Country. Whether it is a tribal runoff or presidential race, Native votes have an influence in each outcome. According to the following statement from the website,

“Increasing Native representation in the election process is key to growing our political power. Each civic role plays a significant part in creating a better future for the next generation. And with the youngest Native voters now entering the political process, the Native vote will continue to create and inspire change.”

The chartered community forums started shortly after candidates signed up. Candidacies were declared at the end of July. Since then, campaigns have been running for contested positions.

MCN Community and Research Development Director J.R. Wind said that a young man from one of the communities had expressed gratitude for the forums. “The citizens are becoming more involved,” Wind said.

Questions of housing, elders, and economic development opportunities in the south-

ern regions have been frequently asked and discussed.

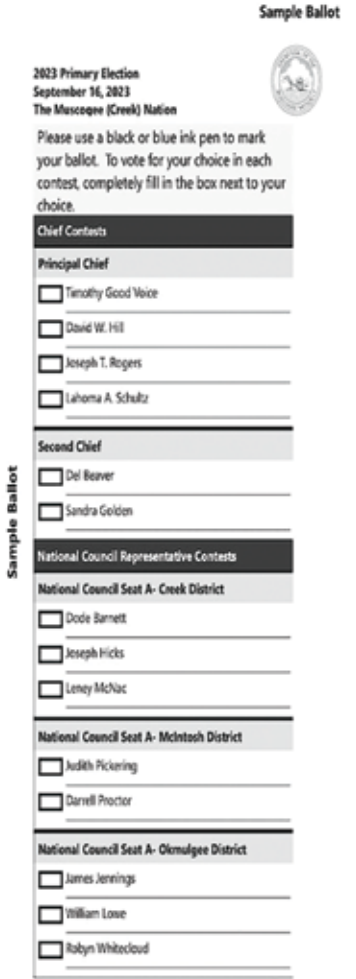
The Native Vote website claims self education is key to making voting decisions.

Individuals will benefit most by understanding candidates' platforms and considering the needs of the community and families within them.

According to the MCN Election Board Manager Nelson Harjo Jr., the nation has a voter registration of around 20 percent. The exact number of registered voters is 18,029 as of Aug. 1. However, participation is actually much lower according to Harjo.

The results of the last MCN Primary Election in 2021 had a participation level of less than 2,000 voters in one contest. Many contests were much lower than that. With total tribal membership over 100,000, the MCN Election Board would like that number to increase. However, data collected from past elections shows an upward trend in participation.

The Election Board Facebook page has been posting relevant and current information for page followers. For more information, visit <http://www.nativevote.org/> or <https://www.muscogeenation.com/election-board/>.



Sample Ballot
Voters will fill out a primary election sample ballot like this one at the polls. (Courtesy: MCN Election Board)

EIGHTH ANNUAL MVSKOKE SPELLING BEE IS ALL THE BUZZ

FIRST PLACE PRIZE MONEY SET AT \$300



The Mvskoke Spelling Bee will test contestant's knowledge on the language as they compete for cash prizes. (Courtesy: Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town)

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

EUFULA, Okla. - The Eighth Annual Mvskoke Spelling Bee Competition will take place on Sept 16 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Eufaula Community Center.

The contest is for children of all ages, but anyone who wants exposure to the Mvskoke language is welcome. Last year the event had close to 40 people in attendance and featured 6 to 8 contestants. Judith Pickering with the Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town said, “It's open to anyone to come, even if they just want to hear the language.”

The spelling bee is a partnership between the Mvskoke Language Preservation Program, and the Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town. The laid back, family friendly community event is “mostly for people to hear the language and have fun,” according to Mvhayv Becky Barrnet with the Mvskoke Language Pro-

gram.

Language preservation and instruction is a common activity for the Eufaula community where a monthly Mvskoke language class takes place at the West Eufaula Indian Baptist Church. The next meeting will take place Sept. 23 at 11 a.m.

The spelling bee is an activity designed for community fellowship and encouragement. Of its inception Pickering stated, “It was something that we felt would encourage people to learn the language and to read and to write the language. And that's one reason we started this eight years ago, preserving the language, and that's one way we felt like it would be beneficial to our younger people. Always encourage people to get involved”

But even with prize money topping out at \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place,

SPELLING BEE

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MVSKOKE CITIZEN RECEIVES HASKELL BRAVE DESIGNATION AND D.C. INTERNSHIP

JAYLON ROMINE SPOKE ABOUT HIS PAST EXPERIENCES AND HIS FUTURE PLANS

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

WASHINGTON D.C.- Jaylon Romine (Mvskoke) is currently a senior at Haskell Indian Nation University (HINU) and will be graduating in the spring of 2024. He is majoring in art in Indigenous and American Indian studies. He received his Associate of Arts in Social Work in 2022 from HINU. He interned at Washington D.C. this past summer and has received the Haskell Brave for 2023.

Romine is a 2023 Native American congressional intern with the Udall foundation. Last summer he worked as an assistant secretary for Indian Affairs with the U.S. Department of Interior after winning the Haskell Braves pageant.

Romine serves as a junior class representative for the student government association. He also serves as the secretary for the Phi Sigma Nu fraternity, and as a secretary for the society for advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). He is currently in a work study position at the warehouse on campus.

Other clubs Romine is involved in include the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) club and stickball club. He was also involved with track in the fall of 2022. Last spring he received an internship with the Kansas State House Department of Aging and Disability services in Topeka. Romine is also an honor student, and has recently received the president's honor roll this past semester.

Haskell Brave experience



Jaylon Romine with U.S Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. (Courtesy: Jaylon Romine)

During the process of winning the Haskell Brave pageant there were certain requirements that HINU needed to be met. “We had to do talent and traditional talent, I never grew up singing or dancing. I was raised more Creek Baptist and I was raised more in the churches, so I told a story for my traditional talent,” Romine said.

It was different for Romine to be on stage trying to win a pageant. “It was a really unique experience, but I'm glad I was able to have the opportunity and come out on top,” Romine said.

Romine did not grow up in traditional Mvskoke culture. His grandparents attended the Chilocco boarding school. His grandmother was Mvskoke and Chickasaw, his grandfather was Kiowa. Romine's grandparents met at the Chilocco boarding school, a place where they were discouraged from practicing their culture.

“I think that's kind of the reason why they stepped away from our Creek traditional values and they were just more focused on the Bible, living a Christian way of life,” Romine

said.

As a young child Romine attended a Creek Baptist church. Later on he attended a Pentecostal church in Eufaula with his mother. “I wouldn't say I'm reconnecting because I was raised up until six or seven in a traditional Creek Baptist church, but I still don't know the other side of the ceremonial grounds. I kind of lean towards those values instead of the Creek Baptist values and I'm still figuring that out,” Romine said.

Platform

Romine has been part of the substance abuse awareness and prevention program at HINU for four years. According to Romine, most of the school's freshmen came from rural areas like Eufaula, Morris or Okmulgee.

“They're just young and they are used to either the 'rez' way or a rural way. They come to Lawrence and it's a huge college party town and I've just

HASKELL BRAVE

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SPELLING BEE
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and \$100 for third place, there's much more to the event than just the competition. "It's pretty big prize money but when you're talking about the language, language is priceless," Barnett said.

For a word list study guide and a copy of the rules, those interested can contact 918-732-7725 or 918-689-6173. More information can be found at the Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town Facebook page.

HASKELL BRAVE
Continued from Page 1

seen so many young bright Indigenous students come to have a little bit too much fun with that party college life," Romine said. "I'm not condemning them but I just want to show you can still have fun but as long as you got your priorities straight and doing hard work in college but don't have too much fun."

Romine's platform is to help students that are dealing with these struggles. According to Romine, this is a problem that can be found in any school, it is not exclusive to Haskell. Likewise, issues like addiction are issues that students may have grown up around and develop themselves later in life.

Romine has had his fair share of struggles as well. He struggled with substance abuse in high school, however has since become clean while attending HINU. He wants fellow students to see his journey, and how he has been able to turn his life around from addiction.

"It's all about how you bounce back, you work hard enough you can pull yourself up out of trauma and addiction then maybe come to D.C. one day as an intern. I just want to show younger kids that you can," Romine said.

Romine wants to launch a program that addresses and assists those with mental health issues. He envisions it as a safe space for students to speak on personal issues, and not feel out of place or judged.

When Romine first started attending HINU he knew it was a place where he belonged. "It's just taken me to so many great places that it's probably the best decision I have ever made was coming to Haskell," Romine said.

Internship Experience

Romine's internship application took three months to complete. When he got the call back for an interview with the Udall Foundation, he knew they liked his application. He attributes his interview's success to former mentors and mock trials.

The Udall Foundation is a congressional internship that is funded by the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy.

According to the foundation's website, "The Udall Foundation was established by the U.S. Congress in 1992 as an independent executive branch agency to honor Morris K. Udall's lasting impact on this nation's environment, public lands, and natural resources, and his support of the rights and self-governance of American Indians and Alaska Natives,"

In total, the foundation hosts twelve Indigenous student interns. Each intern was split into different sections including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and the White House, according to Romine.

Although the internship can be overwhelming at times, Romine realized he could handle the pressure. "This past



Jaylon Romine stands in front of the U.S. House of Representatives podium. (Courtesy: Jaylon Romine)

summer it showed that I can compete with these kids from Harvard and these kids from Columbia," Romine said. "This is what a Mvskoke person is made of, this is what we can do."

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CATHOLIC DIOCESES SEEK BOARDING SCHOOL ATTENDEES' PERSONAL ACCOUNTS
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF OKC AND DIOCESE OF TULSA ARE CALLING FOR PARTICIPANTS IN BOARDING SCHOOL PROJECT



An investigation into Indian boarding schools operated by the Catholic Church in Oklahoma has been launched to better understand Native American boarding school students' experience in the state during the boarding school era. (Shutterstock)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKLAHOMA - The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and Diocese of Tulsa continue to seek participants for the Oklahoma Catholic Native Schools Project launched in November 2021.

The mission of the project is to better understand the his-

tory of Catholic Indian boarding schools in Oklahoma by gathering oral histories from former students and their descendants, studying documentation on Catholic Indian boarding schools from parishes, religious orders, tribes, the U.S. Department of the Interior and other reputable sources.

Fourteen Catholic Indian boarding schools existed in Oklahoma between 1880 and 1965.

The first one opened in Konawa in 1880 and closed in 1926. The last Catholic Indian boarding school, Saint Patrick's in Anadarko closed in 1965.

Two schools were located in Konawa, one called St. Mary's Academy and the other called Sacred Heart Institute, also known as St. Benedict's Industrial School.

Muskogee had three schools called Nazareth College, Nazareth Institute, and St. Joseph's College.

Other locations within the state include Sacred Heart Academy in Vinita, St. Agnes Academy for Girls in Antlers, St. Elizabeth School in Purcell, St. John's School in Hominy Creek, St. Joseph's Academy in Chickasha, St. Louis School for Osage Indian Girls (later renamed St. Louis Academy) in Pawhuska, St. Mary of the Quapaws in Quapaw, and St. Patrick Indian Mission in Anadarko.

The dioceses are collaborating with Marquette University Associate Professor of History Dr. Bryan Rindfleisch to develop a report of the information collected through documents and oral histories. The university houses archives of the

Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in Milwaukee, WI.

"It is important we learn and understand the experiences of American Indian children and their families at Catholic boarding schools in Oklahoma so we can make better and more informed decisions moving forward," Archbishop Paul Coakley said. "We will continue to build a culture of inclusion, healing and understanding related to Native American Catholics in our state."

The project is a joint effort by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, the Diocese of Tulsa and Saint Gregory's Abbey.

To learn more about the project, go online to archokc.org/oknativeschoolsproject. To contribute documents and/or photographs to the project or to share an experience from a Catholic Indian boarding school in Oklahoma, e-mail info@oknativeschoolsproject.org.

The Diocese is also currently seeking to employ interviewers as a part of the project. All information can be found on their website.

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KEEPING UP WITH KIRSTEN KUNKLE

MVSKOKE ARTIST TO PREMIERE NEW COMPOSITION

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Dr. Kirsten Kunkle is a gracious subject. With the steady focus needed for a doctorate in musical arts and the energy required to sustain a career of performing, teaching, and producing, it is no surprise the successful Mvskoke multi-hyphenate stays busy. Currently based in Ohio, but with continent-spanning jobs, Dr. Kunkle took time out to speak to Mvskoke Media about her upcoming projects, how she stays rooted in her heritage, and motherhood.

Dr. Kunkle earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance in 2007 from the University of Michigan. The kind of rigorous classical education that involves training to perform in a variety of languages. Very much like the Italian of Giacomo Puccini or the German of Richard Wagner. Dr. Kunkle’s repertoire includes scores of languages: English, Latin, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Czech, and Russian. As the leading Native American soprano, however, Dr. Kunkle’s repertoire also has grown to encompass Indigenous languages, a skill that makes this MCN citizen unique in her art. She has sung in both the Mvskoke and Cherokee languages in the past. She is currently working on singing in the Chickasaw language in “Shell Shaker”, a full Chickasaw opera written by Native composer Jerrod Tate (Chickasaw). That production is set to premiere in Oklahoma City in October of 2024.

But in her own new work, “Inspiration of the Muses” Dr. Kunkle transposes this skill into writing not for voice, but for flute and piano.

New Work

A composition for flute and piano, “Inspiration of the Muses” focuses on the nine Greek muses. It will premiere in Chicago at New Music Chicago this winter on Feb. 24, 2024. In ancient Greek mythology, the muses were nine daughters of Zeus and were responsible for the inspirations of art, literature, and science. The piece was commissioned for Dr. Kunkle to specifically get more works by Native American women composers written and highlighted.

Dr. Kunkle’s writing process for the composition started with her own poetry, a process not unfamiliar to her. Her 2022 song, “Reclaim the Land” premiered at the All Nations Teepee Village during Yellowstone National Park’s 150th anniversary. It was originally first written as a poem. However, this is the first work the singer has written that is not for voice.

“And it’s been very interesting to finally write a work that was not for voice. So I approached it as if I were writing a song, because I’m very textually driven. A lot of my work is poetry and libretti and things like that,” Dr. Kunkle said. “So I wrote a poem, and I said it as a poem that a flute would play if it could sing...And then I took the text out at the end so that it would give me motivation and drive to compose for the text I was hearing in my head. But I’m a singer and I am very driven by text. So that is how it worked for me. That was my specific process.”

As per the subject matter, Dr. Kunkle was given free reign in topic and style to compose. Her interest in mythologies and belief runs deep. “I have been interested in mythologies from a very early age. I am fascinated with mythologies. All mythologies to me resonate with most people in some form. That’s why people are fasci-

nated with religion is because they are all something people can relate to on some level.” Dr. Kunkle said. She is very aware and clear on how her subject matter relates to identity as a Native American working in a western artistic tradition. She shares that her heritage is always part of who she is, therefore it’s always part of what she does.

“One thing I always tell people and I hope it resonates at a tribal level as well is that sometimes what I do, whether it’s the French Revolution, or Lady Macbeth, or something like “Inspiration of the Muses”, people will say, ‘Well, is that really grounded in your heritage?’ Whatever I’m doing is grounded in my heritage because it’s coming from me. It’s my take on whatever the topic is. I’m multi-faceted, and I hope that that plays out in what I’m doing as well.” Dr. Kunkle said.

“These stories transcend time”

Featured on past coverage of Live Wire, Dr. Kunkle also spoke about co-writing “Girondines”, a story based during the Reign of Terror period of the French Revolution. Presented by Mission Opera, “Girondines” will have its West Coast premiere Oct. 28 and 29 in Santa Clarita. Directed by Dr. Kunkle, the English language opera is based on the lives of six women who did the ordinary and the extraordinary.

“These stories transcend time. And unfortunately the horrific things these women went through...that just brought down these specific women isn’t really any different than what women are dealing with today...I hope that there will come a day where that is not something people resonate with, but at this juncture, I



Dr. Kirsten Kunkle sports a dress by Dante Biss-Grayson (Osage) from the Sky-Eagle Collection (Courtesy: Rachel Mascari)

think it’s something that women and men can relate to because it’s something that they see every day on some level, which is not good...basically it comes down to the human element as opposed to an historic element. And that universal pull that we were talking about with great mythology and all mythologies. And that’s something that I just - it really is important to me.” Dr. Kunkle said.

In her co-writing of the opera, it was important to tell the story of women that was not a love story. She says, “Why are we only telling love stories? Or why are we only telling stories of nuns? You know, there’s more, there’s more. We are full people within ourselves. We’re doing a lot more things than that.”

And Dr. Kunkle is doing a lot more things. Ever busy, her November looks full. She will be playing the part of the witch in upcoming performances of “Hansel and Gretel”, produced by her company, the Wilmington Concert Opera in Wilmington, DE. She will be a guest vocalist in “Songs of Thanksgiving” for Firelands Symphony Orchestra in Sandusky, OH.

Rooted in Mvskoke

Dr. Kunkle wears many hats as a producer, writer, singer, wife, and mother. While the topic of work-life balance did not come up, she did speak to how the two are integrated and rooted in connection to her tribal heritage. She states,

“I grew up in Ohio, I did not grow up on tribal lands at all. But I’ve always had this drive to be more active with the tribe than what I physically can be. And nowadays that makes it so much easier because of things like Zoom language classes and my daughter...She’s three and a half and she recognizes more Muskogee words than I ever knew in my life. I repeat them to her and she hears them in my class and that’s so exciting to me because I can take what I’m doing and she sees me do this every day and she sees me go work at the piano and compose pieces and she sings the melodies back because she hears them all the time. And slowly but surely she’s seen what I’m doing and it’s starting to become part of her story too. So it has become multi-generational.”

When asked if she enjoys the work she does, Dr. Kunkle gave a simple, clear reply, “I absolutely love the work I do.”

MCN PARTNERS WITH PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL PLAYER TO HOST CAMP

DIVISION I ATHLETE LAKOTA BEATTY TAUGHT DRILLS AND SPREAD MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



Lakota Beatty talks to the youth and their parents before watching her documentary. (Photo Courtesy: Shayln Proctor)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla.- Muscogee (Creek) Nation partnered with Division I professional basketball player Lakota Beatty (Caddo Nation of Oklahoma). She taught youth basic basketball skills that she learned throughout her career and spread mental health awareness during the two-day camp. This camp was located at the Mvskoke Dome on Aug. 19 and 20.

MCN Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Youth Program Coordinator Tishia Sewell decided to partner with Beatty when she spoke at the Reservation Economic Summit in Las Vegas where she talked about mental health awareness. This was her first time partnering with MCN. This took four to five months to plan due to funding, as well as setting up dates that worked within her schedule, according to Beatty.

There were 60 students that attended the basketball camp. It was split by age groups. The second to fifth grade group participated in the morning session, the 6th-12th grade group participated

in the afternoon.

During the two-day camp students would begin by warming up before practicing. During the camp they watched a documentary on Beatty. She gave them information about mental health awareness, including techniques she learned through therapy.

Through these camps Beatty travels to different Native communities and encourages them to pursue athletic careers, as well as college.

Beatty has been practicing these basketball drills since a young age. Since her career involves a lot of traveling, she is only available for two to three day camps. The drills are designed for students to practice and improve their skills.

“My biggest thing is fundamentals so that’s just dribbling, shooting, passing and I don’t like to do fancy stuff especially for the little kids. But my biggest thing is I want to build a foundation, I want them to have fun but I want them to learn and get better,” Beatty said.

Promoting Values

During the drills Beatty

encourages her students to be helpful, and be good teammates. She encourages them to tell others how they feel, or at least ask others how they are doing from time to time. She understands that sometimes it can be hard to get help, but believes that by being a good teammate it can translate into being a good student.

When it comes to teamwork off the court, Beatty sees that play out in how individuals serve their community. “I think us being Native that’s where we are already community orientated,” Beatty said.

Beatty aims to teach youth healthy habits by encouraging them to stay hydrated, get adequate sleep, eat well and work on their drills. This is what has helped her throughout her life. She wants students to follow in her footsteps to lead healthier lives.

“I think ideally I could look back or fast forward ten years and they’d say ‘oh I went to your camp and you helped me with drills,’ mainly it’s to be a good athlete and to excel at basketball,” Beatty said.

Beatty gained her coaching style from her parents. She is also appreciative of her coaches that provided mentorship and made a difference in her career.

At the camp Beatty asked the students what they wanted to do when they grow up. Some of them wanted to be professional basketball players. “I hope they want to pursue that, also just being healthy, especially on the mental health part, you guys have the behavioral center health here and not a lot of tribes do so that’s really important to utilize those services,” Beatty said.

She wants students to realize they can become a professional athlete like her, however instill that basketball is just a game. Beatty admitted she struggles with seeing that as well. “I have to remember

that and working with them helps me like it’s just a game, it’s going to be over,” Beatty said.

When Beatty plays basketball games she understands she has to focus on her mental health, especially as an athlete. She strives to teach older youth the importance of not taking it too personally when they win or lose a game. “That’s not sustainable, especially for your mental health so I’m going to teach them the importance that it’s just a game and we are going to go hard. But to show them that I’m Indigenous and you can do it too,” Beatty said.

Before basketball games Beatty sometimes experiences anxiety. Beatty is still working on coping through mental pressure. She goes to therapy twice a week and performs breathing techniques.

“As I am teaching them and I’m learning from them as well, they’re having fun and not too stressed about it so I’m like ‘okay I need to take a lesson from when I go play pro” Beatty said.

Beatty’s current basketball position is point guard and shooting guard. Her motivation to continue playing is to travel to new countries.

A Role Model for Others

Beatty knows that others look up to her as a role model, a position she holds as a high honor. It’s a privilege she does not take lightly. While growing up, she did not see talented athletes finish college. Later on she would realize that was due to opportunity barriers and resources.

Beatty sits on the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) committee, which

actively recruits Native athletes. This gives her a connection with college basketball coaches to recruit students with athletic potential.

“I didn’t have that when I was growing up and I didn’t know about recruiting. My dad played division I and he’s the only Native that I knew that showed me the ropes so I just had the greatest time in college but it was tough,” Beatty said. “I flew to all of my games and played on TV, I want more Native kids to experience that, it’s life changing for sure.”

Once Beatty’s basketball career is over she wants to become a licensed counselor and open her own practice. She wants to practice within Indigenous communities. “I think now I would love to have a sports psychology curriculum that will help with the process of playing, especially if you are playing at a high level, but hopefully I can talk to Natives about the generations of trauma and stuff like that,” Beatty said.

The advice Beatty would like to give to others is if you want it, you can get it and that life is a process of getting there through trials, but good things will happen with enough hard work.

Beatty felt grateful to have the opportunity to be invited by MCN to appear at the camp. “where I learned most about the game is during basketball camps,” Beatty said.

Beatty will appear at more camps in the summer. She has done approximately 15 or 16 camps, but is looking forward to doing more during the off season. Beatty will be playing basketball in the Netherlands during the next fall and spring season.

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IT'S NOT HERMÈS, ITS HERUSE

LEA MCCORMICK'S DESIGNS HAVE BEEN FEATURED IN NEW YORK FASHION WEEK AND NATIVE MAX



Heruse Tos swimwear designs by Lea McCormick (Mvskoke) have been featured in Native Max Magazine. (Courtesy: Lea McCormick)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. - Heruse Tos Handmade Handbags and Clothing's first line of swim wear, designed by Lea McCormick (Mvskoke) was featured in the Native Max Magazine Fashion Issue 2023. It was released on Aug. 28.

Opening the annual fashion edition of the magazine to the ninth page marks the beginning of the seven-page spread that features a few of the swimsuit designs offered from McCormick's brand.

The brand's Mvskoke name translates to "You are beautiful".

McCormick uses inspiration from the symbols, shapes, and pictures from the old tales of the Muskogean, Mississippian and other southeastern tribes from the pre-colonization era.

Using historic tribal symbolism in her designs, McCormick uses modern and contemporary design techniques to keep the consumer base open. It does not just target Native Americans.

"I think they could appeal to anyone," McCormick said.

The swimsuit line first debuted

during the Muscogee Nation Festival Fashion Show this past summer.

According to McCormick, she created the line specifically for the models of the fashion show due to the heat for the outdoor entertainment.

The swimwear was highly noticeable. In fact, it is what caught the attention of the Native Max Magazine Editor Kelly Holmes.

"I got a call from Kelly just two weeks later," McCormick said.

After hearing the buzz of McCormicks' new line, Holmes wanted to showcase it in the fashion edition of the magazine.

McCormick and Holmes had initially met during New York Fashion Week, where McCormick was showcasing her Heruse Handmade Handbags.

McCormick got the opportunity to be showcased in fashion week after Canadian designer Stephanie Eagletail asked for collaboration that included four custom handbags.

After the collaboration on a special runway featuring minority designers, McCormick was contacted and asked to be a "feature designer" at the New York Fashion Week.

ion Week.

McCormick collaborated with other Mvskoke designers Dode Barnett and Amanda Rutland to curate outfits for 20 models at the fashion show.

In the fabrics McCormick created she featured artwork from other known Mvskoke artists like Johnnie Diacon, Dana Tiger, Dan Beaver and Buffalo Gouge.

McCormick has already been invited to next year's New York Fashion week. She claims she will focus primarily on designing handbags while allowing other Native designers to represent themselves under her brand name, modeling their own work along with her creations.

Each model will design their own clothing while McCormick pairs their handbag. Chris Thompson from Samari designs the shoes, and Amanda Rutland Indigo Designs ties it all together with the jewelry.

"The show will be called 'Community,'" McCormick said.

As a professional actress for most of her adult life, McCormick loves the friendly atmosphere of the Native fashion industry, but fashion is not her passion.

"If I was young and had a dream I would hope someone would help me too," McCormick said.

McCormick simply wishes to provide a platform for the young Native fashion designers with the passion and drive for the craft.

McCormick started her handbag-making business in 2021 after she handcrafted her own design using an elk tooth fabric for a work event. During the event, McCormick started looking for a way to showcase her Native identity.

The handbags are delicately handmade by McCormick with special tribal designs.

After pictures of the bag surfaced on social media, McCormick received several inquiries.

Requests for handbags came from actresses from "Killers of the Flower Moon" and "Dark Winds".

That is when McCormick started making custom handbags. Over the next two years it became another passion for her.

"I have made close to 550 since December 2021," McCormick said.

According to McCormick, she is interested in designing a line of dresses in the future.

Visit the Facebook page, Heruse tos Handmade Handbags to follow McCormick's upcoming news. Visit herusatos.shop to view her current handbag inventory.



Swimsuits are just one of the many fashion items Lea McCormick designs for her brand, Heruse Tos. (Courtesy: Lea McCormick)

MCN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ROCKS THE BLOCK

THE DEPARTMENT HELD A BLOCK PARTY EVENT FOR SERVICES AWARENESS

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKEMAH, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Vocational Rehab hosted Rock the Block, a block party event to bring program awareness to the community.

MCN Vocational Rehab Outreach and Inclusion Specialist Thomas Golden planned the event as a first of its kind for the department.

The event included door prizes from local businesses. Casinos donated small prizes for the drawings.

The event also provided games like cornhole, ladder toss, as well as refreshments for attendees.

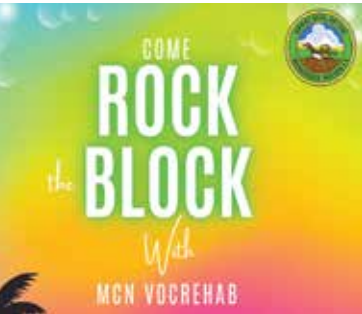
Golden claims it was not the outcome he expected, but it will not deter him from planning more outreach projects.

"It was a learning experience," Golden said.

Although the turnout was low, the event gained attention from many passersby.

"We are just trying to get out there," Golden said.

For future outreach, the program will be volunteering at local football games and attending career fairs with the next scheduled for Sept. 20 at the Mvskoke Dome.



(Courtesy: Thomas Golden)

According to Golden, the program has experienced a decrease in clientele since the Covid-19 Pandemic, but they are seeking to increase participation from citizens.

Eligibility criteria includes tribal citizenship and a disability diagnosis.

The program assists with seeking and maintaining employment for MCN citizens.

Golden claims that even if the program cannot directly assist a client due to the classification of their disability, a caseworker can immediately direct the inquiry to another agency with available resources.

Golden encourages those who may be curious about the program to call their office. For more information, call 918-623-1197.

CMN TAKES STEPS TO TRAIN MVSKOKE LANGUAGE TEACHERS

THE COLLEGE IS PARTNERING WITH EMORY UNIVERSITY THROUGH A GRANT



A group photo was taken with Mvskoke language speakers and language apprentices. (Photo Courtesy: Marissa Lewis)

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla.- The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) is the recipient of a three-year grant that will help revitalize the Mvskoke language. They have partnered with Emory University and the Mellon Foundation, which developed the "The Mellon Foundation Mvskoke Language Master Apprentice Cohort program". This curriculum is different compared to the Mvskoke language certificate.

CMN President Dr. Monte Randall (Mvskoke) chose three Mvskoke language speakers to help eight apprentices become instructors. The goal is to increase proficiency in the language.

"I'm confident in this master apprentice method, there's research behind it and there's evidence of success with the master apprentice program," Dr. Randall said. "We brought together some second language learners, Mvskoke language teachers, public school educators, they were all familiar with the language and culture. But my main focus was to bring educators to work on proficiency tests and performance assessments."

Throughout the selection process, Dr. Randall looked into each speaker's background. He wanted

to make sure they were highly proficient first language speakers. With the apprentices, he looked at their ability to dedicate themselves to learning the language and ability to commit to the long hours the program required.

Dr. Randall shared that he was ecstatic and anxious about what is to come within the year with this program, and the years preceding. There will be eight apprentices this year, the second year will include 12 apprentices. The year after that will feature 16 apprentices, by the end of the fourth year there will be a total of 36 new apprentices who have gone through the program.

"It's a good opportunity for these speakers, it's a good opportunity for the apprentices and the institutions. When you think about that term revitalization, it's providing this spark to those students to those speakers to this college to this nation. That's creating that momentum and stirring this movement up its building off of each other," Dr. Randall said.

Mvskoke Language Curriculum History

There were some Mvskoke language classes back in the early 1970s, which were constantly being refined. Now, Dr. Randall

LANGUAGE TEACHERS
Continued on Page 6

Re-Elect

DAVID HILL

For Principal Chief

It has been my great honor to serve this Nation as Principal Chief. Although we have faced challenges that we, as a people, could have never imagined or prepared for, we endured and came through as a stronger nation. We will continue to exercise and affirm our sovereignty by updating our justice system, tax codes, and laws, to meet our responsibility of having jurisdiction over our Reservation so that our future is prosperous. Through collaboration and partnerships with our sovereign tribal nations, we have been influential with fellow Oklahomans to provide the tribes a seat at the table. The recent Oklahoma Legislative veto overrides show we stand in agreement that working together benefits all of Oklahoma. Our sovereignty has been challenged unsuccessfully in many legal attacks. I will stand strong and unwavering, ready to fight for this Nation, with a clear message to those who threaten our sovereignty: We are still here, and we are here to stay!

EXPERIENCE MATTERS!

Paid for by Re-Elect Chief Hill for Principal Chief Campaign
25581 S. Hwy 48, Bristow, OK 74010

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918-688-7808

CONSTRUCTION AND FUNDING APPROVED FOR A NEW TAX COMMISSION OFFICE

GAMING ENTERPRISE TO BE INSTALLED AT THE
JENKS RIVERWALK



The National Council held a regular session on Aug. 26. (MM File)

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a regular session at the Mound Building on Aug. 26.

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

TR 23-074 Confirming the nomination of Michael Flud to serve on the College of the Muscogee Nation Board of Regents. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Flud will serve a term beginning immediately, and will end on Sept. 30, 2029.

TR 23-075 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Housing contract with BVP LLC Contractors. Representative Joseph Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The contract will construct one home, which will cost \$285,185.

TR 23-076 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Memorandum of Agreement between

the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas School of Law. Rep. Joseph Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The MOA will allow the Nation to explore opportunities for hemp operations.

TR 23-077 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a right-of-way agreement with the Oklahoma Natural Gas, A division of ONEGAS associated with the construction of housing units known as AKHVSE TUTCENEN (Three Ponds) Housing addition on behalf of the MCN. Rep. Joseph Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The Three Ponds housing addition is awaiting the finishing stages of construction.

TR 23-078 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a real estate contract for the purchase of property in Okmulgee, Okla. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 11-4.

The site will be utilized for the MCN Tax Commission office.

TR 23-079 Authorizing the

Principal Chief to execute a software services agreement with Grayshift, LLC for the MCN Lighthorse Police Department. Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The software will be used to extract data from certain devices for investigative purposes.

TR 23-080 Authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a deed for property located in Tulsa County, Okla. Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The property will be used to expand the land base.

TR 23-081 Authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a tribal broadband connectivity program grant application. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Funding will be utilized to support finalizing project designs, implementing the designs and launch broadband services.

TR 23-082 Authorizing the construction of three new child care facilities for the MCN Office of Child Care. Representative Darrell Proctor sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The new facilities will be located in Eufaula, Wetumka and Okemah. It will cost \$6,985,612 to construct.

TR 23-083 Authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the economic development administration for the benefit of the Office of Emergency Management. Rep. Randolph sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The funds will be used to increase the emergency management department and services.

TR 23-084 Designating the MCN Reservation as a Purple Heart Reservation. Rep. Randolph

sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The declaration honors military service members and sacrifices from Muscogee veterans.

TR 23-085 Authorizing the Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises, LLC (MNGE) to deposit additional funds in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Casinos Insurance Reserve Fund. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the bill, MGNE wishes to add \$7,500,000 to assist with the master mitigation plan and prepare for expenses to prevent possible natural disaster damages and/or insurance denial.

TR 23-086 Authorizing the Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises, LLC (MNGE) to open a new gaming facility. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the bill, MNGE desires to open a new gaming facility location at the Riverwalk in Jenks.

NCA 23-071 Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) University of the Oklahoma Health Services Center, the Family Medicine Obstetrical Training Expansion in Residency for Tribal, Rural and Medically Underserved Communities in Oklahoma Grant. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Funds of \$235,183 will be used to train 16 residents in the tribal rural area.

NCA 23-073 Amending MCNCA Title 35, 6-102 Entitled "Accountability". Speaker William Lowe sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The amendment will not penalize school clothing participants who are foster children, or newly adopted if their parents did

not return receipts from the previous year.

NCA 23-074 Authorizing the expenditure of the National Park Service Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) Grant for the Benefit of the Historic and Cultural Preservation Department. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The funds of \$101,449 will be used to ensure the protection and preservation of valued Mvskoke historic and cultural resources.

NCA 23-076 Authorizing a special appropriation for the cost of necessary measures related to the protection of the Muscogee Sacred Site of Hickory Ground near Wetumpka, Ala. Rep. Harjo sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The appropriation will provide the needed \$450,000 for legal defense and public relations services in regard to the ongoing court case.

NCA 23-077 Appropriating funds to be used toward the purchase of property located in Okmulgee County, Okla. Rep. Harjo sponsored the legislation, which passed 12-3.

The purchase will cost \$570,000.

NCA 23-079 Authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds received from the United States Department of the Treasury for the benefit of the Okmulgee County Fairgrounds. Rep. Joseph Hicks sponsored the legislation, which failed 5-10.

There are currently a number of MCN citizens utilizing the facilities for youth agriculture programs and shows. Opponents of the bill argued the cost did not benefit the usage.

REGULAR SESSION
Continued on Page 6

EMERGENCY COUNCIL SESSION SEES UTILIZATION OF ARPA FUNDS

OFFICES, COMPETITIVE SALARY INCREASES,
AND EMERGENCY HOUSING ON THE AGENDA

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla.- On Aug. 24, the MCN National Council held an emergency session at 11 a.m. by teleconference. All passed legislation will go into effect.

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

TR 23-087 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the construction of a new stage located at the omniplex in Okmulgee, Okla. passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Speaker William Lowe.

According to MCNCA Title 28, any new construction must be approved by the council through a tribal resolution. Speaking during comments, MCN Emergency Management Director Bobby Howard was asked about the hazards of the current stage.

"One the size, two we keep replacing boards. When we built the stage, standard drillings weren't in place, you know we've had people step and fall through the floor, to bring it up to international building code it would probably cost in excess of what we have now and the entertainers, they don't like the stage. If you look up underneath it...you'll see some of the support posts are actually landscape timbers, so you know the state is 20 years old and it really needs to go," Howard said.

TR 23-088 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center Long Room contract with the Cit-

izen Potawatomi Nation for the 2023 Cultural Activities Day in the Shawnee area for Muscogee (Creek) citizens passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Representative Randall Hicks.

MCN wants to host a Cultural Activities Day in Shawnee for Muscogee (Creek) citizens at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN) Cultural Heritage Center. According to Article VI of the MCN Constitution, the MCNC must approve any agreement with a state, federal, or local government. The resolution also grants a limited waiver of the MCN's sovereign immunity of suit in enforcement of the CPN contract. It also grants the principal chief authority to execute such agreements in the future with the CPN if they are substantially identical in nature.

TR 23-089 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to enter into a non-impairment agreement on behalf of the Nation with BOKF, NA dba Bank of Oklahoma, as administrative agent for various lenders, in relation to financing for the Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises, LLC (MNGE) passed with a vote of 13-2. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks.

This agreement pertains to non-impairment agreement in the refinancing of a BOK loan for MNGE in the amount of \$225,000,000, with an additional \$275,000,000. This gives MNGE access to competitive rates and a revolving line of credit used in the operations and development of the MCN's gaming facilities. The non-impairment clause is designed to protect MCN tribal assets.

TR 23-090 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to enter into a novation agreement to transfer an existing interest rate swap agreement to Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises, LLC passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Rep. Randall Hicks.

A novation agreement is the act of replacing a legitimate existing contract with a new contract, where the transfer is mutually agreed upon by both parties concerned. This resolution authorizes the principal chief to enter into an interest rate swap agreement between MNGE and BOK, transferring it from MCN to MNGE. It is a component of the refinancing agreement.

TR 23-091 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2023 Indian Community Development block grant program for Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages for construction of a public facility Veterans Affairs (VA) service extension building passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Representative Joseph Hicks.

This resolution authorizes the principal chief to apply for existing federal HUD funding, specifically a grant program for Indian community development. The grant will go toward the construction of a VA service extension building. The total grant amount requested will be \$1,452,205.33, with a leveraged match from the MCNC of \$217,830.80.

TR 23-092 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to submit a grant application to the Department of Transportation for the FY 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program for construction of a federal roads/geospatial building passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Representative



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held an emergency session Aug. 24 at the Mound Building. (MM File)

Joseph Hicks. The nation will match \$2,600,000 for a total of \$5,200,000 to be used for the project.

TR 23-093 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending TR 22-159 (a tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the extension of the Secretary of the Nation and Commerce to continue the operations of the Onefire Holding Company LLC) passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Representative Patrick Freeman Jr.

This resolution changes the name from secretary of the nation and commerce to secretary of commerce.

NCA 23-089 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation in the amount of \$230,092.81 for the construction of a new stage located at the Omniplex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma was postponed with a unanimous vote until the Aug. 26 regular session. The vote was postponed to re-write the legislation, taking possible ARPA funding into consideration. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe.

If passed, stage renovations would provide up-to-date production equipment for entertainers using the facilities throughout the year and during the annual Mvskoke Festival.

NCA 23-090 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of ARPA funds

received from the United States Department of the Treasury in the amount of \$13,860.71 for the fiscal relief funding for the Department of Housing for the benefit of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe.

The MCN Department of Housing ERAP will utilize the ARPA funds for staffing contractors to provide temporary contractual labor.

NCA 23-091 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of ARPA funding in the amount of \$496,176 to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Information Technology Department for assistance with Covid-19-related expenses was postponed indefinitely without opposition. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe.

During discussion Zechariah Harjo stated, "... the recommendation that I would propose to council is to postpone this legislation for the time being. I was informed that the IT department went ahead and covered these expenses to their budget, but because this was a directly eligible ARPA expense... it's possible we could send an amendment in so that they can recapture those funds, especially if they are tribal funds in nature, especially so that they could be reallocated elsewhere. That's a consideration I would

EMERGENCY SESSION
Continued on Page 6

LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Continued from Page 4

wants to refine Mvskoke language teaching to meet college-level standards.

“It was somebody who knew the language, they were probably approached or probably took it upon themselves and said ‘hey I’m going to teach a class’. We didn’t know how to teach the language and teaching a language is tough,” Dr. Randall said.

During that time it was difficult for language teachers to teach who did not have a standard curriculum to follow. A Mvskoke language curriculum separate from English was not prioritized by outside colonizers.

“The way we learned the Mvskoke language was through reading and writing through a curriculum. The boarding school and the missionaries were designed to teach us language. That wasn’t designed by us, now here we are in the 1990s, 2000s to 2020s and we are still using a curriculum designed to teach us English that wasn’t developed by us,” Dr. Randall said.

Accuracy and meeting needs is why this program is important to Randall. “That’s the part of the struggle that we are in right now so that’s part of this revitalization effort is to create language teachers, redesign our curriculum by us, that’s going to meet our needs,” Dr. Randall said.

Later in the future Dr. Randall wants to continue seeking partnerships with other tribal colleges through American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), and other academic institutions.

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

REGULAR SESSION
Continued from Page 5

NCA 23-080 Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Oklahoma Highway Safety office for the benefit of the MCN LPD. Rep. Ran-

dall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Funds of \$40,000 will be used to purchase five LIDARS, overtime pay for law enforcement officers to perform high visibility enforcement, and travel costs to attend the project director’s training and the annual Traffic Safety Summit.

NCA 23-083 Amending MCNCA title 35, 12-103 entitled “Donation Guidelines”. Rep. Randolph sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 14-1.

It was amended to add a subsection stating the committee may request any needed documentation from an organization requesting a donation exceeding the amount previously outlined in code.

NCA 23-084 Creating Title 6, Chapter 8, Entitled, “Muscogee (Creek) Nation Juvenile Delinquency Code”. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The act will provide procedures for all defined staff handling minors within the justice system to secure, care, protect and provide services to children while in custody of MCN Juvenile Delinquent residential care facilities.

NCA 23-085 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 MCN Tribal Utility Authority. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Funds of \$175,000 will be used for the expansion of high-speed internet (broadband) transmitted, variously, through DSL, cable modem, fiber, wireless, satellite and BPL.

NCA 23-086 Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds

awarded from the U.S. Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office for the benefit of the MCN Tribal Utility Authority. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Grant funds of \$271,137 will be used to ensure tribal facilities will not be impacted by critical weather, fire, floods, or outage events. According to the bill, it will implement new and improved controls, automation, communications, and infrastructure. It will train and increase the skills for the workforce. It will also address lacking, outdated, and failing energy infrastructure within the nation.

NCA 23-087 Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Commerce for the benefit of the MCN Tribal Utility Authority. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Grant funds of \$500,000 will be used to engage third-party consultants to perform a comprehensive broadband-needs assessment and pre-construction planning activities throughout the MCN reservation.

NCA 23-088 Anending NCA 21-156 (Articles of Organization with the Office of the Secretary of the Nation to form “Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises, LLC” under the MCN Limited Liability Company Act and Approving the operation agreement forth MNGE, LLC) as amended by NCA 22-017. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The First Amended Operating Agreement allows for the MCN to govern the affairs of the limited liability company and the conduct of its business. It can not be amended, except by duly enacted legislation.

NCA 23-089 Authorizing an appropriation for the construction

of a new stage located at the omni-plex in Okmulgee, Okla. Speaker Lowe sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

The new stage will be utilized for entertainment. The total cost will be \$230,092.81.

After the votes on legislation had concluded, Rep. Joseph Hicks made a statement regarding his past DUI charges in tribal court.

“Recently I had been struggling with some of my own per-

sonal struggles and demons linked to PTSD from my time at service, which lead me to seek comfort in alcohol. And as many more that have come before me, I’d like to express my deepest apologies to my family, who were affected the most, also to any others that were affected by my actions.” Rep. Joseph Hicks said.

For more information visit www.mcnn.com.



Office of Environmental Services

CURBSIDE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENT

Friday September 15, 2023 / 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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

OES Household Hazardous Waste Collection event

WILL ACCEPT the following items:

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



OES Household Hazardous Waste Collection event

WILL NOT ACCEPT the following items:

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



EMPOWERED THE SERVICES



RECYCLE CENTER



BASIN



Muscogee (Creek) Nation

RECYCLE CENTER

12675 Gun Club Road

Okmulgee, OK 74447

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT 918-548-2580

EMERGENCY SESSION
Continued from Page 5

propose to council but it appeared that because of the urgency to cover this they went ahead and did this under their regular budget...if those were tribal funds utilized we could reclass those expenses since we haven’t closed out the 2022-2023 audit in any way, and we’re not finished with those reports.”

NCA 23-092 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of ARPA funds in the amount of \$110,070 for the fiscal relief funding for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Children and Family Services Administration passed with a vote of 14-1. Representative Joyce Deere voted no on the legislation. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe.

The MCN Children and Family Services Administration will utilize the ARPA funds to offset the negative economic impacts by offering salaries to be at competitive market pay with the State of Oklahoma and other federally recognized tribes.

NCA 23-093 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of ARPA funds in the amount of \$296,650.72 for the fiscal relief funding for the Department of Commerce and the Secretary of the Nation to establish a Jenks office location passed with a vote of 14-1. Representative Sandra Golden voted no on the legislation. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe.

According to the bill, the establishment of a new government office in Jenks will “address the negative economic harm experiences, realize historic partnership opportunities, increase the Nation’s footprint, economic impact and business opportunities within the greater Tulsa metropolitan statistical area.”

NCA 23-094 A law of the Mus-

cogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of ARPA funding in the amount of \$33,000 to Muscogee (Creek) Nation GSA Fleet Department for assistance with Covid-19 mitigation and disinfection services passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe. The legislation will allow the purchase of maintenance plan services through the end of 2026.

NCA 23-095 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 13-200 (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 “Onefire Holding Company, LLC” under the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Limited Liability Company Act and approving the operating agreement for “Onefire Holding Company, LLC”) as amended by NCA 14-080 and NCA 14-178 and NCA 18-121, NCA 20- 007 and NCA 21-109 passed without opposition. It was sponsored by Rep. Freeman Jr.

NCA 23-096 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds in the amount of \$18,487 for the purchase and installation of five (5) new flag poles to be located at Treaty Park St. Augustine, Florida passed with a vote of 14-1. Representative Mary Crawford voted no on the legislation. It was sponsored by Speaker Lowe. The source of the funding was identified as interest on the permanent fund.

Treaty Park in St. Augustine, FL commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Moultrie Creek on September 18, 1823.

To view the meeting, visit mcnn.com.

JACOBSON HOUSE NATIVE ART CENTER TO SHOW NEW WORK
BEST OF SHOW PRIZE MONEY OFFERED UP TO \$1K

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

NORMAN, Okla. - The Jacobson House Native Art Center in Norman had a call for artwork. Entries will be exhibited in their “Twenty First Century” show planned for Sept. 9 - Nov. 11, with an opening reception on Sept 8.

According to the entry rules, the artist must be 21 years or older, a resident of Oklahoma or Indian Country, and a member of one of the 39 federal or state-recognized tribes. It is open to a broad range of mediums from painting to textile, sculpture and mixed media, photography and installation work. The artwork must have been completed on or after January 2001. Best-of-show prize money for first place is \$1,000. Prizes for second and third place are \$500 and \$250 respectively. To apply, applicants were required to complete an online application and upload a photo of their artwork. The deadline was Wednesday, Aug 30.

Borders and Boundaries

EJ Sweetly (Comanche), programming chair for the art center, said the idea for the exhibition has been both collaborative and thoughtful, even down to the call-out flier itself. “The show evokes themes of borders and boundaries because we are currently redefining who we are as Native people with the reestablishment of Indian Territory in the 21st century,” Sweetly said.

Indian Territory as a present, jurisdictional entity was an important acknowledgement for Sweetly as was the collaborative nature of planning the show.

“It’s definitely been a board endeavor for sure. It was really fun putting together this show

and thinking about what we could try to do to help cultivate Indian art here in our community...I’ve been leading the planning but I don’t want to say that I’ve done this all on my own. This show came together this year, all of this has just come from years of our talking about it.” Sweetly said.

Partnerships and Community

The call-out flier for the exhibition brought to mind the current shift in Indian Country jurisdiction since the 2020 McGirt decision that ruled portions of eastern Oklahoma are tribal reservation land. The art center has also gone through its own recent redefinition: a structural one.

The last public exhibition of new work held at the Jacobson House was “Azhwakwa: Contemporary Anishinaabe Art”. Curated by artist and publishing editor of First American Art Magazine America Meredith (Cherokee), the 2020 exhibition was an all-Woodlands artist show. It featured the work of artists from numerous tribes including the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Prairie Band Potawatomi, Gun Lake Potawatomi and Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

Held during the Covid-19 pandemic, the facility had numerous safety precautions in place for visitors and staff. The art center would then close temporarily for much-needed renovations. Partnering with the University of Oklahoma, the upgrades included structural repairs and display updates. The overhaul modernized the art center and was capped off with a reopening in May with an exhibition of its permanent collection of Kiowa Six works and other American Indian artists.

The Jacobson House is named after Swedish-born artist, scholar,

and curator Oscar Jacobson who headed the School of Art at the University of Oklahoma until the mid 1950s. Located at 609 Chau-tauqua Ave on the northwest side of the campus, it was built by Jacobson in 1917 as a family residence. The house has been part of the campus art community life in Norman ever since. Jacobson was a portrait and landscape painter, but is most known for his support and elevation of Native American Art, most notably the Kiowa Six.

The mentorship and partnership that he provided his students and collaborators extends to the current ethos the art center operates under. “The Norman Arts Council is supporting this show, which has been really awesome, because it does take partnerships to make all this work.” Sweetly said.

Sweetly, whose professional experience extends to past involvement in the Kimbell Art Museum and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, TX, hopes to see the exhibition become part of a tradition. “It’s kind of a learning curve for us in a way, because it is one of the bigger shows that we’re doing here at the house in a few years. If it is successful, I think it’d be really cool to turn this into a biennial.” Sweetly said. She is also hoping for opportunities to showcase the show winners in future exhibits.

For more information on submitting artwork, visit their website, jacobsonhouse.art.

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MCN PRINCIPAL CHIEF HILL RESPONDS TO GOVERNOR STITT’S NOFIRE APPOINTMENT

OTHER TRIBAL LEADERS DISAPPOINTED, HOWEVER “NOT SURPRISED”

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVA-
TION- On Tuesday, Sept. 5 Governor Kevin Stitt announced the appointment of former Cherokee Council member John “Wes” Nofire as the new Oklahoma Native American Liaison. In the announcement Governor Stitt said,

“Wes brings a deep familiarity with tribal governments and people across Oklahoma. His work for the Cherokee government makes him an ideal choice as we build bridges between my office and tribal governments,” said Governor Stitt. “Throughout his career, Wes has advocated for fairness for all Oklahomans and has fought against systems that seek to treat people differently based on race or heritage. I am thrilled to have him as a member of my team as we continue to work to make Oklahoma a top ten state.”

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill issued the following statement in response,

“We have always welcomed a constructive dialogue with the Governor, but I don’t think his staff has been the issue. The Governor sets the direction for his administration, and he has made it clear that his policy is hostile towards tribes and their authority. It’s hard to see one staff appointment changing that. Others have tried and ended up walking away when they found themselves as pawns in the Governor’s deceptive campaign.”

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. also issued the following statement



Wes Nofire will now serve as Oklahoma’s Native American Liaison. (Courtesy Ballotpedia)

regarding Nofire’s appointment,

“Governor Stitt’s selection of Wes Nofire as the state’s Native American liaison is disappointing, which is to say it comes as no surprise,” Chief Hoskin said. “We continue to hope for a day in which the depths of knowledge of Indian Country issues on Governor Stitt’s team deepens. It’s now shallower. Wes Nofire’s brief time in elected office was marked by a hostility toward Cherokee tribal sovereignty, a lack of understanding broadly of the issues facing Indian Country, and his peddling of conspiracy theories about Cherokee Nation, which can only be described as unhinged. Governor Stitt’s stances toward tribes, the most hostile in state history, will now be informed by someone who aligns closely with the Governor’s own views, sadly. Fortunately, there are a broad array of state leaders with whom we can and will continue to work.”

Nofire, a Tahlequah-based real estate agent, was a professional heavyweight boxer with a record of 20-2 before being elected to the Cherokee Nation

Tribal Council in 2019. As recently as this year, Nofire ran for Cherokee Nation Principal Chief against incumbent Chief Hoskin, Jr, losing with 10% of the vote. His campaign ads and social media posts often featured a campaign “Big Foot”. The sasquatch made parade and other campaign appearances.

In 2022, Nofire unsuccessfully ran for a seat in Oklahoma’s 2nd Congressional District, receiving less than 6.3% of the GOP primary vote. During a July, 2022 GOP primary debate Nofire erroneously claimed, “They (tribal leaders) are trying to put illegal abortion clinics right here on the reservation. We don’t want to see that.”

In a Ballotpedia Candidate Connection Survey for his house run he called himself the “foremost authority” on McGirt saying, “Oklahoma is faced with one of the most critical issues of safety due to the handling of the McGirt decision. Both state and tribes have faced severe difficulties in protecting all Oklahomans. Having first-hand experience in dealing with these struggles, I am the foremost authority on this issue, and I will lead Oklahoma on getting a swift solution to protect the safety of all Oklahomans.” At the time of the statement, Nofire had been in year three of his only term on the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council.

Coverage from the Cherokee Phoenix of Nofire’s tenure shows his critique of the 2020 McGirt decision and unsubstantiated accusations against Cherokee Federal and Chief Hoskins, Jr. of child trafficking.

The Oklahoma Native American Liaison is a secretary position under the governor that was passed into law in 2012. The liaison has jurisdictional areas of responsibility related to Native American issues and state and tribal relations. Additionally they are responsible for monitoring compacts between the state and tribes.

The position has been filled in the past by former

state representative and current Chickasaw tribal legislator Lisa Johnson Billy and the current secretary of state Brian Bingam. Billy resigned in 2019, stating in an open letter to Stitt that while she was proud of her work while in the office, “... it has become increasingly clear you [Stitt] are committed to an unnecessary conflict that poses a real risk of lasting damage to the state-tribal relationship and to our economy.”

OBITUARIES

ANGELA NANETTE JOHNSON



Angela Nanette Johnson was born to the late Richard “Bo” and Rose Johnson in Honolulu, Hawaii on Wednesday, June 9, 1971. Angel was called home to join her late husband Keith on Wednesday, August 30, 2023 in Okmulgee. She grew up in various parts of Oklahoma, but started her roots in McAlester where she graduated with the class of 1989. Angel settled in Okmulgee where she met the love of her life, Keith. They were together until he passed in November of 2022.

Angel enjoyed making many memories, from traveling to riding on her Harley Davidson, scrapbooking, and stamping late into the night just to mention a few. She was an accountant for many years until she retired in 2009. During her down time, she loved to watch her favorite show, “Grey’s Anatomy” and listen to her favorite artist, Kid Rock. Angel’s most prize possession were her grand-

MATTHEW JOHNSON TIGER



Matthew Johnson Tiger, known as Matt, and within his immediate family was affectionately called Butch, was a beacon of inspiration and a pillar of strength to all who knew him. Born on July 29, 1947, in Henryetta, Oklahoma, Matt was a vibrant soul who instilled hope, love, and wisdom in the hearts of many through his ministry. His journey of life concluded in Tulsa, Oklahoma on the morning of Sunday, September 3rd with his loving daughter by his side. His legacy of love, dedication, and service lives on.

Matt was the beloved son of Coody and Lela McNac Tiger, the devoted husband of his late wife Caroline, and a loving father to his late children, Kellie and Terry. He is preceded in death by his parents, and his brothers, Kenneth and Dean. He is survived by his daughter, Zoelynn Olea and husband, Teodoro, brother, George and wife, Frances, grandchild-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MCN History

As the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) restarted the tribal government, modern history developed.

In 1984 the MCN began class II gaming.

In 1991 the US Supreme Court authorized Oklahoma to invade tribal tobacco taxation revenues.

In 1993 the Oklahoma Highway Patrol seized a MCN tobacco truck, starting a federal lawsuit that settled in late 1995.

In 1996 MCN adopted a motor vehicle code and began selling car tags.

In 2001 MCN installed seven hundred class II electronic gaming machines on Riverside Drive.

River Spirit Casino opened in 2009 with 3,000 covered games, restaurants and bars, and modern amenities.

In 2016 the River Spirit Casino opened a hotel and Margaritaville-themed entertainment including a concert venue and a smoke-free gaming area.

MCN was aggressive and successful, leading the Tulsa gaming market.

Unfortunately, MCN has been unable to develop commercially in a centralized market consisting of over one million people. While gaming is a prominent revenue stream, there is ample commercial opportunity and profits to earn locally.

MCN owns seventy acres in south Tulsa, purchased in 2009 to build a toll bridge. Currently MCN is in discussion with municipalities with talk of taking the land out of trust. The bridge was a private venture never designed to include partners, financial or otherwise. Placing the land in trust gave MCN complete control.

The McGirt case proved tribal reservations in eastern Oklahoma have never been disestablished. Although the case evolved around the major crimes act, there

are tax ramifications and an overall shrinkage of state government if the impacted tribes can follow through.

Internally, MCN has an ambassador beginning with the James Floyd administration. The position developed rapidly with no indication of structure, transparency, or legislative input. The people are entitled to be informed about the position including qualifications, responsibilities, and duties.

MCN has gotten away from the practice of beginning each fiscal year with an approved budget document. Acquiring legislative consent used to take three months and each legislator knew the numbers well. In current contrast the budget for fiscal year 2023 was presented after Thanksgiving and adopted some three weeks later. If the budget was delivered to the legislature by June 15th annually, legitimate review prior to consent is possible.

During Covid and the River Spirit Casino flood damage in 2020 gaming revenues dedicated to savings (Permanent Fund) were temporarily redirected covering debt and operational expenses. Although this occurred three years ago, the savings mechanism has never been restored. The Permanent Fund will never grow as anticipated until the savings mechanism is restored.

Your elected leaders, former and present, have everything to do with the contents of this letter. As you prepare to vote, give some thought as to why other tribal nations are commercially successful and MCN is on the sidelines. Consider candidates that could do something about this financial impediment rather than conducting another popularity contest.

Respectfully,
Samuel S Alexander

Hooper v. Tulsa

I would like to personally congratulate the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on their diligence for the work they have and are continuing to accomplish on the Hooper Case. Through this work in the past and the tribe’s continued efforts, they are slowly removing the blindfold of justice, one of the most important aspects of justice, JUSTICE IS BLIND. I am so glad to know that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation proudly proclaims that when a Muscogee (Creek) citizen violates the traffic laws of Tulsa Oklahoma, they are immune from prosecution through Tulsa Municipal Court. I further congratulate the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for working so hard to absolve personal responsibility for the actions of the individual. As a Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen, I firmly stand behind the concept that Justice is blind. Justice requires equal application of the laws, no matter who you are. Should I ever violate a traffic law in the city of Tulsa OK, I fully expect to not only be given a citation, but also be held fully accountable for my individual action of violating Tulsa’s laws. Again, I stand for equal justice under the law and sincerely ask the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to abandon its decisive, wasteful, and expensive efforts to make justice partial and unequal.

Respectfully,
Brian Sulfridge

children. She loved them more than anything in this world.

Angel was always there for others when they needed her the most. She was very loyal and supportive of those who were close to her. The love and compassion she had for her family and friends is something that will never be forgotten and will always be cherished.

Angel was preceded in death by her husband, Keith Warkentin, parents Bo and Rose Johnson, and brothers, Jeff Johnson and John Johnson.

Angel leaves behind her beloved children, Zach Johnson and wife Destiny, Madison Love and husband Matt, Jacob Johnson and girlfriend Shanda Payne, and Lexi Johnson and husband Jalen Frank, grandchildren Faith Johnson, Holley Love, Caidence Johnson, McKenzie Johnson, Levi Johnson, Alanna Johnson, Jeremiah Johnson, and Macie Love, along with numerous relatives and friends.

A memorial service for Angel will be held at 11:00 A.M. Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at the McClendon-Winters Funeral Home Chapel.

Cremation Arrangements have been entrusted to the McClendon-Winters Funeral Home of Okmulgee. Memories, condolences, photos and videos may be shared with the family on Angel’s Tribute Page of our website at www.mcclendon-winters.com.

dren Chasity Tiger, Tyler Crenshaw, Damon Gunn, Justin Gunn, Jr; Darius Tiger, Brenay Tiger, Renae Tiger, Ayleah Powell, River Landsdale, Topley Powell, Jess Waterdown, Jr., great grandchildren, Maya Tiger, Alaina LaSarge, Sierra LaSarge, Tahlee Tiger, Hazel Landsdale, and Courtney Hall in addition to his nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. His family was the core of his existence, and he lived a life committed to their love and legacy, a testament to his profound resilience and strength.

A graduate of Chilocco Indian School in 1966, Matt’s thirst for knowledge led him to further his education at Oklahoma State University IT in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, where he earned an associate degree. His academic journey continued at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma, where he diligently pursued his studies.

Matt’s professional journey was as diverse and multifaceted as the man himself. As a comprehensive planner for Muscogee Nation, Matt was instrumental in shaping the future of his community. His satisfaction was knowing his work would impact and improve lives. He then utilized his knowledge and passion for his culture as a traditional language instructor for the same nation, tirelessly working to preserve and promote the language of his ancestors. Matt served as a pastor for numerous churches across the country, including the one his father had pastored, spreading love, hope, and faith wherever he went.

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