



THE MVSKOKE NEWS

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NATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET KICKS OFF HOLIDAY SEASON AT THE RIVERWALK IN JENKS

SHOPPERS ENJOYED TASTY TREATS AND HOLIDAY CHEER BEFORE THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY



The Native Christmas Market at the Riverwalk in Jenks was hosted by MNC and OneFire Holding Company on Nov 18. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

JENKS, Okla. - On Saturday, Nov 18 The Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Onefire Holding hosted a Native Christmas Market

at the Jenks Riverwalk. The market took place from 3-7 p.m. and featured a variety of outdoor vendors selling arts and crafts, jewelry, clothing, food, and seasonal holiday decorations.

The warm afternoon turned

cooler after sundown, allowing shoppers to enjoy the lights along the river while noshing on kettle corn from 5C Kettle Corn or delectables from Freeze Dried Candy by Kristina Vanerhoff. Coffee from Frost Bites and Java Delights made



Trees dressed in holiday lights were seen lit up at the Jenks Riverwalk during the Native Christmas Market (Meredith Johnson/MM)

the evening chill less chilly.

The Tulsa Carolers entertained shoppers by strolling and singing through the market festooned in Victorian holiday costumes. The a capella quartet sang classic Christmas songs and hymns, at times stopping and asking for special requests.

Musician Brice Reheard was on the mainstage playing Christmas songs as well as other music.

Shops at the Riverwalk were open as well. The Melting Pot beckoned market goers with chocolate fondue samples.

While this is the first year a holiday market has been hosted at the Riverwalk, the hope from organizers is that it will become an annual event on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

The past year has seen an

increase in Mvskoke presence at the Riverwalk with murals and artwork by Johnnie Diacon, Joe Hopkins and Starr Hardridge. The partnership between MCN and OneFire was a natural fit as event organizer ShaVon Agee explained, "We were ready to coordinate something, an event together, and the cards fell into place."

While the Native Market took place on the 18th, shoppers could still enjoy the holiday atmosphere at the Riverwalk. The Christmas on the Riverwalk community event on Dec 2 from 5-8 p.m. featured live music and a visit from Santa and Mrs Claus. The Christmas couple were available for a free photo with guests and performed "Twas the Night before Christmas" on the main stage at 6 p.m.

IF I EAT, THEN WE ALL EAT EVENT SPREADS BLESSINGS ACROSS OKMULGEE

EVENT PREPARES, DELIVERS AND SERVES FREE THANKSGIVING MEALS



Brittani Riley prepares cups with cranberry sauce with her mother, Pam Riley for the If I Eat, We All Eat event. Volunteers prepared meal boxes that were delivered to community members who requested a Thanksgiving meal. (Braden Harper/MM)

by BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Thanksgiving has become a contemporary holiday that celebrates family, food and fellowship. It is also a time where many reflect back on the year, and what they are thankful for. The Metcalf family is no different. For Terry Bemo-Metcalf, Thanksgiving is not only a time to count your blessings, but also a time to provide blessings for others through the If I Eat, Then We All Eat event.

"Everyone has that grandma that always says, 'don't eat in front of people'. My saying is 'When God blesses you, you try to spread it out to other people'. That's why me and my dad started this." Bemo-Metcalf said.

The event hands out free meals to the Okmulgee community during the week of Thanksgiving. Meals are handed out by request, and are served until they run out of food. This year marks the third year the Metcalfs have hosted the event. Although it has been hosted in person during years prior, this year's event exclusively delivered meals to the community.

Initially the event started out with just Bemo-Metcalf's family, including his father Terry Metcalf. The first year the event was hosted was 2020, a tumultuous year where large gatherings were discouraged due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This prompted the Metcalfs to offer meal deliveries.

Three years later, the event has grown. Now the Metcalfs

work with local churches like St. Anthony's Catholic Church and Restore Church. With their help, the event is able to serve the average 250-300 people that request a meal every year. Those who were hard at work preparing meal boxes included Bemo-Metcalf's aunt Pam Riley, cousin Brittani Riley, and volunteer Mindy Morgan.

Each meal contained turkey, a couple of varying sides and a dessert. Sides are served based on the food the event has available. This includes stuffing, mashed potatoes, and corn. According to Bemo-Metcalf, his favorite Thanksgiving dish is stuffing topped with gravy.

The event's service is open to everyone in the community, regardless of tribal or socio-economic status. Bemo-Metcalf has served many, from many different backgrounds.

"We see everybody honestly," Bemo-Metcalf said. "It's not just one race or one age group. I've delivered to a house with three kids. I've delivered to a house with three adults, it varies. Sometimes we will deliver to a house that has eight members that want eight meals. It doesn't matter who you are, we're just trying to feed you."

Bemo-Metcalf went on to discuss how the needs his team serves look different. Many people may not be able to see family due to a variety of reasons like sickness, or financial setbacks. For some, simply seeing and talking to a friendly face can make a huge difference. According to Bemo-Metcalf, one of the most rewarding aspects is seeing smiling faces as he makes his deliveries.

"I know it's not a lot, it's just a meal but to somebody else out in the world it may be something bigger than just a

MEAL DELIVERIES

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MVSKOKE CITIZEN INJURED IN BACKYARD EXPLOSION

EXPLOSION INJURED AND HOSPITALIZED MULTIPLE VICTIMS



Kanokie Coffeehouse made get-well boards for explosion victims. (Courtesy Photo: Summer Lamborn)

by MORGAN TAYLOR
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

BEGGS, Okla. - The community of Beggs was left in shock after five community members were severely injured in a backyard explosion involving a smudge pot. One of those victims included an enrolled Muscogee citizen.

A smudge pot is used to protect plants from frost by burning oil that creates smoke.

Four out of five of the individuals were transported to the Hillcrest Burn Center by helicopter.

A Beggs coffee shop called Kanokie Coffeehouse has stepped up to help families.

Inside the coffee shop, owner Summer Lamborn has poster boards hanging on her wall with the names of the explosion victims.

The boards give patrons and community members a chance to leave written words of encouragement to the victims.

"I thought you know, if we just stick those up there and people want to leave a message, we can get them to the families and be able to get them up to their individual rooms."

According to Lamborn, the boards have received so many words to the point where there is little blank space left.

"So many people have been asking about them, asking for updates," Lamborn said.

The shop has taken it step further by collecting donations on behalf of the victims' families during this time. They are asking Facebook friends and followers to donate bottled water and snacks.

Two of the victims involved a husband and wife that owned a neighboring business.

"I feel like that affects us daily not getting to see their faces," Lamborn said. "We just want to

BEGGS EXPLOSION

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LEGISLATION CREATES TRIBALLY-CONTROLLED REINTERMENT CEMETERY

LANDS IN ALABAMA WILL BE USED FOR REBURIAL OF MVSKOKE ANCESTORS



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation recently passed a tribal resolution creating a reinterment cemetery in the Alabama homelands for Mvskoke ancestors. (MM file)

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION- A recently-passed tribal resolution will allow the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to utilize 16 acres of federal lands in Alabama as a reinterment site for ancestral remains and objects. Tribal Resolution 23-115 passed unanimously during the recent regular session of the MCN National Council on Nov 7.

The resolution authorizes MCN Principal Chief Hill to execute a grant of permanent easement with the landowner to establish the reinterment cemetery. The easement contains limited waivers of sovereign immunity. The MCN Department of Historic and Cultural Preservation will exercise oversight of the reinterment cemetery.

During discussion of TR 23-115 at the Nov. 1 LNC subcommittee meeting, MCN Acting Secretary of Cultural and Historic Preservation Raelynn Butler commented that one of the major needs of doing this work is land. Butler stated,

“Trying to rebury, as everybody knows, we don't have lands

in the homeland and we want to rebury these ancestors close to where they were dug up. This federal agency has quite a large collection. This land, we would be able to bury more than 2,000 ancestors, which is very much needed. We have been waiting for this agency to help make these lands available. We hope we didn't have to have such a legal process or agreement like this. It's basically a 99 year easement on this land, but it makes us the primary care holder and responsible party of anything that happens on this land in the future.”

The MCN has been working with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) since its passing in 1990. The law established a means for returning American Indian cultural items and human remains in the collections of museums and federal agencies to lineal descendants and culturally-affiliated tribes.

Butler further commented during the LNC meeting that the MCN, specifically the Department of Cultural and Historic

Preservation, has worked with the landmark legislation, stating, “...we have helped repatriate more than 1,000 of our ancestors that were excavated in our homelands in the last 20 years that the nation has done NAGPRA work. Last week we helped rebury 189 of our ancestors. That's the most we've ever done and it was very challenging, emotional, but every part of our staff and team helped us carry that on.”

In a report published by Propublica, “The Repatriation Project” found that over 100,000 American Indian ancestors still remain in museums 33 years after the act's passing. The intent of NAGPRA was to offer a process for the reclamation of ancestors and items of cultural patrimony found in collections in museums, universities, and federal agencies. However, the system can be faulty, with work taking decades to fulfill its purpose.

Institutions can delay the process from the very start, citing issues like inventory problems or the inability to establish cultural lineage. The latter of which

is often used regarding pre-contact remains and items. Tribes can also struggle to find the appropriate land to rebury their ancestors, especially when the remains and items number in the 100s. Establishing a specific site for reinterment in the ancestral lands that is controlled by the MCN is a way to facilitate this process.

Because of the threat of looting, security of the site is a foremost concern. The legislation was crafted in such a way to reflect this. From her LNC subcommittee discussion, Butler explained, “Security will be very important and that's why we haven't stated where this is going to be in the legislation and it's held confidentially between us and that federal agency...there would be measures in place so that someone with a shovel would never be able to access those burials. Also, this is a fenced property, so there would be good security enforcement and cameras in the area... We're not going to have any kind of above ground monuments or anything to designate this as a cemetery that the public may think of as that

way.”

Speaking directly to Mvskoke Media, Butler commented, “Confidentiality is important for NAGPRA work, mainly because our ancestors and their belongings need to be protected. They were already disturbed and their lifecycle interrupted when they were excavated by archaeologists in the past and we do not want the public to know where or when we rebury them, they could be looted or exploited again, which is an unthinkable situation... The federal agency and MCN have agreed to not to make any statements to the press regarding the permanent easement. All I will say is that it is something that has been in the works for more than a decade and we are grateful the legislation passed.”

To learn more about NAGPRA, and the process of returning artifacts and remains to the tribes they originate from, visit <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/index.htm>. Information on law, and enforcement, as well as updates on NAGPRA efforts can be found there.

THE HISTORY OF THANKSGIVING AND ITS ORIGINS WITH NATIVE AMERICANS

HOW A DARK CHAPTER OF HISTORY EVOLVED INTO A CONTEMPORARY CELEBRATION

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - The American Thanksgiving is a holiday that has a long, and complicated history with Native Americans, particularly those of the Wampanoag Nation. Celebrated on the fourth Thursday in the United States, Thanksgiving is a holiday that does not have any specific religious observances like Christmas or Hanukkah. Rather, it is a holiday derived from a harvest feast celebrated by early European colonizers. Unfortunately, its significance also originates from a history of broken promises, violence and enslavement.

What is referred to as the “first Thanksgiving” in North America took place in 1621 when the Wampanoag people provided provisions for the Pilgrims after a harsh winter left them with little food to survive. American children are taught that the Wampanoag people broke bread with the Pilgrims, thus starting a new tradition. However, this account is contested as false by the Wampanoag people and historians alike.

In the following years the Wampanoag people would suffer greatly due to disease, a period known as “The Great Dying”. The Wampanoag people faced enslavement from European settlers and were pushed off of their homelands in what is now modern-day Massachusetts.

While to most Americans the holiday, Thanksgiving procures images of food, family and fellowship, to the Wampanoag Native Americans, it is a day of mourning. The first National Day of Mourning protest was founded by Wampanoag leader and Native American activist Wamsutta Frank James (Aquinnah Wampanoag) in 1970.

James is notable for penning

a written speech that detailed his tribe's account of what is regarded as the first Thanksgiving. The speech was supposed to be read at a banquet hosted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that commemorated the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the Pilgrims. However, James never got the opportunity to read the speech he wrote due to its content.

Although the origins of the holiday mark a dark chapter for the Wampanoag people, it is now recognized as a time of mourning and a day to bring awareness to contemporary Native American issues. Speakers at the National Day of Mourning protests have brought awareness to issues like the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women movement (MMIW), Indian Boarding School awareness, and the protection of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Thanksgiving Today

Within the past century, Thanksgiving has evolved into a holiday of food and fellowship celebrated among Indigenous, and non Indigenous families alike. Contemporary Thanksgivings are much more commercialized. According to WalletHub an estimated \$949 million will be spent on Thanksgiving turkeys every year, with an estimated 40 million turkeys consumed.

While Thanksgiving was first annually-proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, many former presidents also made Thanksgiving day declarations. The holiday was moved back a week to the fourth Thursday in November by President Franklin Roosevelt to give more space for Christmas, and Christmas shopping.

The turkey would come to find its way as the holiday's center piece

staple during the 19th century due to its availability as a resource. Although it is possible the fowl was present at the first Thanksgiving, it is contested among historians. Another detail lost to time.

Most businesses, organizations and tribes are closed for the holiday, encouraging employees to spend time with their families. This includes the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Thanksgiving has also found its way into popular culture and media. The television series “Friends” is most notable for its annual Thanksgiving episodes produced during its initial run on primetime television. The beloved “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving” television special aired in 1973 and aired annually during the holidays until its acquisition by Apple TV+ in 2020. Although the Peanuts specials are not officially broadcasted annually anymore, the company has given non subscribers a free window to watch them within the past couple years around the holidays.

Another pop culture staple that ballooned from the observance of the holiday was the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 1924. The event is well known for its massive, colorful balloons, elite marching bands, and celebrity appearances. The parade is broadcasted to millions of viewers every year.

Giving Back

In spite of commercialism and the annual television specials, Thanksgiving has also become a day of giving where individuals give back to those in the community who are less fortunate. This includes Mvskoke citizen Terry Bemo-Metcalf and his father, Terry Metcalf. On Nov. 22, the day before Thanksgiving, they made deliveries with free meals for those



Thanksgiving boasts a long history in the United States, albeit with dark origins for Native Americans. In spite of its complicated history, it now marks a day for celebration with family, food and fellowship. (Shutterstock)

in need. The free service was open to anyone who asked for a meal, regardless of their need.

“We just try to feed as many as we can with what we got,” Metcalf said.

Metcalf and his team of volunteers have served people from many backgrounds including Indigenous, and non Indigenous alike for the past three years. They typically serve veterans, elders, and families from various sizes and socio-economic backgrounds. For some, Metcalf's company means more than the food he delivers.

“Just being able to see people smile, I know that this world we live in now, you can look online at any point and time and get a little sad. We just want to provide something uplifting,” Metcalf said.

The historical events that are

commonly recognized as the origins of Thanksgiving are not the same as the folktale told to children. For some, it is a day of joy and togetherness. For others, it is a day of pain and mourning. However, the day has come to be celebrated by Native, and non Natives alike. Most importantly, it is a day where activists bring attention to issues affecting their communities, as well as a day for volunteers to give back and serve those in need.

For those seeking locations serving free Thanksgiving meals or food boxes, they can be found on Feeding America's website, feedingamerica.org. Donations can also be made on the site.

To learn more about the National Day of Mourning Protest and the issues it brings awareness to, visit culturalsurvival.org.



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 MVSKOKEMEDIA

HISTORIC BACONE COLLEGE BACK ON AUCTION BLOCK

SHERIFF’S SALE SCHEDULED FOR DEC. 14



The Bacone College campus is set to go on sale at a Dec. 14 Sheriff’s Sale in Muskogee, Okla. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

by **JERRAD MOORE**
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

MUSKOGEE, Oklahoma - Bacone College has been scheduled for a sheriff’s sale Dec. 14. As previously reported, Bacone College lost a civil case to MHEC LLC, a contractor the college had hired, but never paid. Bacone’s inability to pay the resulting million dollar judgment led to a sheriff’s sale, originally scheduled for April 27. This auction was canceled for unknown reasons, however on Nov. 15 a new notice of sheriff’s sale, scheduled for Dec. 14 was entered into the court record of the case.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council issued a press

release on April 26 addressing the previously scheduled sheriff’s sale. “The Muscogee (Creek) National Council, based on review of the status of Bacone College and pending sale, will not pursue any emergency or other efforts to purchase the institution. This decision is based on the Council’s responsibility to perform its “due diligence” in performing its responsibilities, a consensus of National Council Representatives, the advice of the National Council staff attorney, as well as findings resulting from a preliminary property acquisition process.”

Mvskoke Media will have ongoing coverage of Bacone College and the sheriff’s sale.

“THE SAVIOR” FILM TO BE DUBBED IN THE MVSKOKE LANGUAGE

THE MOVIE IS SET TO BE THE FIRST FULL-LENGTH FEATURE DUBBED IN THE MVSKOKE LANGUAGE



A scene from the film “The Savior” featuring actress Hanan Hilo as Mary, which is currently being dubbed and subtitled in the Mvskoke language. (Courtesy: The Savior Film)

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - A feature length movie based upon the life of Jesus Christ will be getting a Mvskoke cultural connection. Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen Jennifer Barnett and Oklahoma City-based director Aaron Hanzel (Choctaw/Chickasaw) have been collaborating to dub the movie “The Savior” into the Mvskoke language. When complete, it will not only be the first film to be entirely dubbed in the Mvskoke language, it will also be the first Native North American language used for the film as well.

Premiering in 2014, the movie retells the story of Jesus Christ, from his birth to his death and resurrection. Originally filmed in Arabic, the Bulgarian-Jordanian production has already been dubbed in over 40 languages.

The Mvskoke language project began when Barnett’s father, the late Rev. Bill Barnett, was told about the film in 2017. Bar-

nett explained to Mvskoke Media’s LiveWire, “He’d always wanted to have a film like that in our Muscogee language. And so from there he gathered my uncle Jackson Barnett and several other elders. And when they received the script, they began to translate it. And so Muscogee is the first North American language that will be used for this film. We’re really excited about it.”

Barnett and Hanzel have completed two proof-of-concept videos so far, the Nativity Story and the Easter Story. These smaller-scale, preliminary dubs of sections from the film helped secure funding for voice-over work for the full film.

Both can be found on their website, thesaviorinMvskoke.com, along with resource materials to support Mvskoke language learning. The resource materials include Christmas and Easter plays in Mvskoke and English, language pronunciation guides, and Mvskoke hymns.

Barnett wants to encourage people to use the proof-of-con-

cept videos, which also include subtitles in English and Mvskoke. Barnett said, “We do offer them with the Muskogee, with the subtitles in Muskogee or even subtitles in English as well. And so we want people, we want churches to use that. And at the same time, we want it to be a tool to help preserve our language and encourage the learning of it.”

Currently, the project is casting for 80 different speaking roles. They are looking for speakers who are proficient to fluent in the Mvskoke language. Barnett explained, “The biggest hurdle right now is casting, we’re trying to get as many people involved with the project as possible. The funding is there...for right now we just need folks to reach out and get involved.”

Additional scenes shot will give an even deeper Mvskoke context to the film.

In addition to the voice-over work for the film, Barnett and Hanzel have also added to the original production by recently shooting a few scenes of their own. Filmed at Camp Sooner, the scenes capture a storytelling night around a campfire telling the story in Mvskoke. As was important for Barnett and Hanzel, the additional scenes use Mvskoke people and Mvskoke actors.

Barnett explained, “And we had the idea of like, what if we wrote new scenes? Like what if we added someone telling the story in Mvskoke? And even if it’s as simple as a storytelling night. So we put together a short script and sent it to all the folks that had funded everything so far and they were like, ‘We love it.’”

For information on voice-over work or for those interested in reaching out to Barnett and Hanzel, go to their website thesaviorinmvskoke.com, or call 405-595-0053.

To view “The Savior- a Mvskoke Nativity” visit: thesaviorinmvskoke.com/christmas.

MURROW INDIAN CHILDREN’S HOME BRICK FUNDRAISER BUILDS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

FUNDRAISER WILL BENEFIT CURRENT CHILDREN WITHIN THE HOME



A statue of an eagle sculpture located at the Murrow Indian Children’s Home. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

MUSKOGEE, Okla.- The Murrow Indian Children’s Home is hosting a brick fundraiser for their non-profit organization. The organization serves as an inter-tribal children’s home. The fundraiser’s initial goal is to sell at least 1,000 bricks.

Executive Director of the Murrow Indian Children’s Home Betty Martin (Cherokee) started the brick fundraiser project. It began when she decided to place bricks around the eagle sculpture on the mound outside the home. The sculpture was made by Native artist Parker Boydiddle (Kiowa/Wichita/Delaware/Chickasaw).

When it came time to add on to the statue with a brick pathway, the home needed to turn to someone who could create a design that would complement it. Kenneth Johnson (Mvskoke/Seminole) is a well-known artist who came up with the layout and design with

these bricks. Johnson has designed many Indigenous sculptures, jewelry, as well as arts and crafts that have been used during many events.

According to Martin, Johnson will be at the Murrow Indian Children’s Home in April to start the project. She is hoping he will be able to attend the dedication ceremony. Purchasing a brick is not only a great way to support the home, it is also a way to become embedded in the it’s legacy.

“Not only is it a fundraiser but those people will become part of history because down the road people will come and look at those. There will be all these names of people who helped support Murrow Indian Children’s Home,” Martin said.

When choosing where to place the bricks, Martin thought it would be a great idea to put them around the eagle sculpture in order to enhance it.

Bricks will be available for purchase until the end of December.

Payments can be made online or by mail. For those that live locally near the home, donors are welcome to drop off donations in person.

Daily Life

“Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for American Indian children and provide a home placement. We provide them cultural experiences and spirituality,” Martin said.

The home takes in any Native child within the state of Oklahoma who are in tribal custody. Family placement is allowed if both parents are deceased. Placement within families depends on if a family member is available to take in the child, and if they can provide them with a safe home environment. According to Martin, the home currently houses 15 children, but they can serve a capacity of up to 30 children.

The home has two programs. One is for younger children who are in tribal custody, the other is called a transition program. This is for children who are about to age out of foster care.

Each child at the home attends a public school nearby. While the home is similar to a boarding school, Martin clarified its purpose is to provide a home for foster children.

The transition program is for children who are 18 years old, or who are about to turn 18 years old. The program helps direct them to lead an independent life. The home’s gift shop helps fund the transition program.

The transition program helps students find employment, become responsible in handling documents, budgeting, finding resources and making doctor appointments.

“To me budgeting is always a big deal because if you can’t budget, you can’t survive. Budgeting is critical to learning to live independently,” Martin said.

When the transition program first began it provided six bedrooms within each of its cottages.

“In my opinion I believe that when the kids are transitioning, they should have their own space, they all need their own bedroom,” Martin said.

Overall Martin wants to see each child succeed, have fun and be able to live life independently.

Activities

While children stay at the home they take part in different activities in order to stay spiritually and physically connected to their culture. Some have been to a ceremonial ground, some have been to a powwow. The home tries to incorporate as much culture as they can into the lives of their tenants.

Before the Covid-19 Pandemic the home provided cultural activities taught by members of the community. One of those activities included crafting stick-ball sticks. Now post Covid, the home does not see as many people coming in to teach these activities.

One of the classes still provided includes a ribbon skirt class taught by a women’s group called Red Spirit. They currently have three girls involved, however Martin hopes to see them come back so that every girl at the home can learn how to make their own ribbon skirt.

According to Martin each child has different talents, whether it is beading, art, basket weaving, sports or playing in a band. “I always tell them you’re Native, every Native person has talent somewhere,” Martin said.

Martin recognizes the unique

struggles within younger and older children. Regardless, she tries her best to make them comfortable and provide a place that feels like home.

“There are so many Native American children that are homeless, especially the ones that have been in custody and then they end up homeless. Well I just don’t want that to see that happen,” Martin said. “Also there’s a very high incarceration rate of Natives that has got to stop, we have to break that cycle.”

Making the Transition

After the children grow up and follow their own path, Martin tries to stay in touch. One former child from the home includes a young man who now works on a cruise ship, another, a young woman. They both call Martin to keep her up to date on their current whereabouts.

For children past and present, Martin wants them to feel that they are meant to be here, and are worthy to do anything they set their mind to.

“I know a lot of the kids, they just think well I could never be a nurse or I couldn’t be a doctor or things like that. But they can, they just got a slow start that’s all,” Martin said.

For more information about the Brick Fundraiser or about the organization, the Murrow Indian Children’s Home can be contacted at 918-682-2586. They also have a Facebook page, Murrow Indian Children’s Home (The Official Home Page).



Paintings made by the children at the Murrow Indian Children’s Home can be found at their gift shop. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

CITIZENSHIP BOARD SEEKS LEGAL SERVICES FOR UNSPECIFIED PENDING LITIGATION

EMERGENCY SESSION OF NATIONAL COUNCIL AUTHORIZES LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT FOR GABLEGOTWALS

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held an emergency session by teleconference on Wednesday, Nov 29. The MCN National Council addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is

attributed to language in the bill: TR 23-124 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an engagement letter for legal services between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship Board and the law firm of Gable-Gotwals passed unanimously with a vote of 15-0. It was sponsored by Speaker William Lowe.

The Citizenship Board is seeking legal services for the office and for pending litigation that was unspecified. According to their website, GablesGotwals is a full-service law firm that has a practice area in American Indian law at the state, federal, and appellate levels. To view the full agenda, visit: mcnn.com.



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council met for an emergency session Wednesday, Nov. 29. (MM File)

EPA GRANT AUTHORIZED FOR MCN OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

TINY HOMES PROGRAM AMENDED TO SERVE HOMELESS CITIZENS



The Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee held an in person meeting on Dec. 5. (MM File)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION- On Dec. 5, the Land, Natural Resources, and Cultural Preservation Committee held a subcommittee meeting. Legislation passed from the meeting will go on to the

regular session meeting, unless otherwise noted. The committee addressed the following legislation and appropriations, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills: Ryal Community Baptist Church received a Muscogee (Creek) Nation Emergency Assis-

tance Grant in the amount of \$8,850. The funds will be used to replace and repair the floor in the fellowship hall and the foundation. Grant funds will go toward repairs using Bell's Construction. Butler Creek Baptist Church received a Muscogee (Creek) Traditional Church and Ceremonial Ground Grant in the amount of \$46,374.03. The funds will go toward replacing the heat and air conditioning units, repairing and replacing the bathroom, and repairing the foundation. TR 23-123 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with nine Oklahoma cities for the maintenance of roadways and associated rights of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation program passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Representative Charles McHenry. Before the discussion and vote

could proceed, a motion was made to amend the agenda to accurately reflect the legislation. TR 21-123 was changed from "nine Oklahoma cities," to "the city of Clearview." The city of Clearview with the MCN will engage with the Box Culvert Repair Project, which assists in the repair and replacement of the existing box culvert on main street. Utilizing USDA grants, the MCN will only need to supply labor. NCA 23-152 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 22-070 (a law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fiscal recovery funding for the benefit of the Tiny Homes Program) passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Rep. McHenry. This amending legislation opens the MCN Tiny Homes Program to all Muscogee citizens. The previous legislation specified "support for elderly citizens who experience short-term homelessness" The amendment strikes the adjective, "elderly". NCA 23-153 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$654,090 awarded

from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the benefit of the Office of Environmental Services passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud. The Office of Environmental Services received a Partnership Performance Grant from EPA. It will allow the office to monitor air quality and radon around the Tulsa and Muscogee areas. NCA 23-157 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of ARPA funds in the amount of \$104,870 received from the United States Department of the Treasury for the benefit of the Okmulgee County Fairgrounds passed with a vote of 4-0. It was sponsored by Representative Joseph Hicks. This legislation was previously brought to council under NCA 23-079, sponsored by Rep. Joseph Hicks. It passed committee with a vote of 4-0, but failed in the regular session with a vote of 5-10. During discussion, Rep. Hicks emphasized that the improvements made to the stock pens will benefit Mvskoke agriculture students for decades. To view the full agenda, visit: mcnn.com.

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A photograph of five diverse children of various ethnicities standing in a row on a paved surface. Each child is holding a white stuffed animal that looks like a cloud or a soft creature. They are all looking directly at the camera with serious expressions.

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TSET

EIGHTH ANNUAL MVSKOKE MEN’S SUMMIT CELEBRATES RESILIENCE

SONS OF MVSKOKE HEALS TRAUMA THROUGH COMMUNITY AND FELLOWSHIP



Men at the summit gather around to listen to the stories told by others. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Sons of Mvskoke hosted their eighth annual Mvskoke Men’s Summit at the Okmulgee Indian Community Center on Dec. 1. The keynote speaker was Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill and a boarding school survivor who spoke about his experience growing up. This event provided breakfast, lunch and door prizes.

College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) President and Founder of the Sons of Mvskoke, Dr. Monte Randall (Mvskoke), along with the co-founder of the Sons of Mvskoke, Julian Watson spoke about the importance of the event.

This year’s summit was free to attend. It received help from Belvin Baptist Church who provided breakfast for the summit, and Jo Jo’s Q, who provided lunch. The afternoon featured a talking circle led by Watson.

In the past the group has received gifts like the big drum used for this year’s summit.

“I know that it’s not Mvskoke but we have a lot of people that

know different ways. We are not saying this way or that way, it’s however you feel led to talk to your Creator and talk to yourself. While we focus on Mvskoke and mostly Native American culture we understand we have a lot of brothers who join us from different cultures,” Randall said.

The purpose of this year’s men’s summit is “healing Indian Boarding School trauma through Mvskoke cultural and language revitalization”.

Dr. Randall brought in CMN instructor Eugene Herrod to share his personal experience from the boarding school he attended. According to Randall, Herrod had relocated to California, but now currently lives within the Muscogee Reservation.

Although Herrod did experience trauma from boarding school, he did have some good memories from his time there, specifically how he coped with it.

“He shared a few things with me and some funny stories. I can’t even pretend to give any examples from my life because I didn’t experience that but when you’re in a situation as Native people we like to laugh and so he shared a lot of sto-

ries of how they coped. He’ll talk about some of these funny experiences and how they kind of came together,” Randall said.

Watson’s father went to Chilocco Boarding School when he was younger. His father is currently 91 years old. Watson’s mother is from Weleetka area, she attended school up to sixth grade but did not get to finish her education.

Watson mentioned how he is trying to stay rooted in his culture as much as possible. “For a lot of us in my age and under were the result of that, we don’t speak our language, why? Because of the boarding schools and some of us don’t know how to be parents, why? Because our parents weren’t parents, why? Because of the boarding schools,” Watson said.

When the men’s summit had been hosted in the past, veterans had shared what they hoped to get out of time spent together. “I’ve heard from the veterans say, ‘hey we got to get our smile back, we got to learn to re-love ourselves, we got to learn to be community people again because those things were taken from our parents. Let’s have a good time giving it back and getting our land back,’” Watson said.

Ultimately, part of the goal of the summit is to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma in order to provide a brighter future.

“Vnokecv (love on another) for us to live, for our children and our

ones yet to come. That’s what the elders told us to do and the reason why to do them so the next generation could feel some kind of love, feel some kind of acceptance because they didn’t get it in the boarding schools,” Watson said.

Sons of Mvskoke Start Up

Sons of Mvskoke is a male youth mentor non-profit organization that operates within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) with five board members. The organization received appropriation funds from the MCN National Council in 2017. According to Dr. Randall, throughout the years they have received grants from other organizations.

The Sons of Mvskoke began when the Warriors Honor Woman group was sponsored by the Family Violence Prevention Program.

Watson and Randall were both on the group’s committee but wanted to transition out of the domestic violence prevention program in order to mentor others. During that time, they were in the works of spreading awareness on Indian Boarding School abuse that happened in schools around the Mvskoke reservation That is when the Men’s Summit began. Former MCN Principal Chief James Floyd and his administration officially organized it in 2016.

Principal Chief Floyd invited Watson and Randall to serve on

the planning committee for the first Men’s Summit in 2016. That is when the Sons of Mvskoke was formed. The event has been hosted by the group ever since.

“They wanted to really support the men, they wanted to provide this emotional support and the behavioral health support. They really wanted to strengthen the men as we go into the holiday season with all the stress and things that have taken place on families in general,” Randall said.

When the men were under the Warrior Honor Women group they held a sweat lodge. During that time Watson and Randall both participated in the activity. Watson took time to sit and pray. He saw men praying, and suffering with their ancestors in spirit. Watson remarked that people who view men as traditionally masculine were crying in prayer.

During Dr. Randall’s time as the President of the College of Muscogee Nation he has imbued some of these values in the Sons of Mvskoke male youth. One of those values includes being a responsible citizen of your community.

Watson believes education is important to men’s health issues that group members currently face today. “I root it back to that, education is the need and what was stolen. I get a little bit emotional because it’s all about education, it’s about teaching,” Watson said.

Randall agreed that education is important. Additionally, other factors like promoting self-esteem are also important.

Self esteem issues involve behavioral, problem solving or avoiding problems. Randall admits he is not a counselor, but is aware of these issues from his doctoral research on American Indian life skills curriculum development.

For more information on the Sons of Mvskoke group, contact them through their email at eppu-cetake@gmail.com. They also have a Facebook page, Sons of Mvskoke.



The Sons of Mvskoke logo. (Courtesy: Sons of Mvskoke)

ART EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS THE THREE RESERVATIONS THAT CALL TULSA HOME

“WEARE.” AT THE GATHERING PLACE CELEBRATED INDIGENOUS IDENTITY THROUGH VISUAL ART



Osage artist Jarica Wilcox weaves at the community loom. (Courtesy: Gathering Place)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

TVLSE, Okla. - A recent art exhibition at the Gathering Place celebrated the existence and persistence of the three Native American Nations that call the region home. The exhibition “WeAre.” featured artists from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Cherokee Nation, and the Osage Nation. It ran from Nov. 4 - 26 during National Native American Heritage Month at the ONEOK boat-house.



Curator Laura Clark (Mvskoke) at the WeAre. exhibit. (Courtesy: Gathering Place)

“WeAre.” featured a variety of forms including photography, sculpture, pottery, paintings, textiles, and woven paper. The exhibition showcased 13 artists and featured the art of Mvskoke artists Anita Fields, Yatika Fields, Jimmie C. Fife, Kenneth Johnson, Bobby C. Martin, and Melinda Schwakhöfer.

The exhibition not only highlighted Indigenous identity but also expanded on the idea of survival. Laura Clark (Mvskoke), Curator of Public Art at the Gathering Place, explained the inspiration for the exhibition, saying, “I

wanted to provide a message that goes deeper—not just still here, but who we are. I began to think about who we are as tribal people. We are proud of our culture, we are committed to one another, we are creative in how we think and what we make. We are artists and educators, leaders, followers, parents and aunties. I wanted the artists featured in the exhibition to express who they are in relation to each of the tribes, and who they are as people.”

A “Conversation with the Artists” panel discussion occurred on Nov. 12. The public event had flute music by Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Okmulgee Representative Nelson Harjo, Sr. and opening remarks by Acting Secretary of the Department of Historic and Cultural Preservation RaeLynn Butler.

Feedback on the exhibition has been positive. Clarked shared that visitors have remarked on how intriguing each work was in itself. She added, “Remarks ranged from how much they loved the exhibition to tribal people thanking us for a significant representation of Indigenous peoples and art.”

While the exhibition closed Nov. 26, it can be viewed at their website, <https://www.gathering-place.org/weare-native-american-art>.



MCNNC Representative Nelson Harjo, Sr. playing the flute at the artists panel discussion. (Courtesy: Gathering Place)

HOLIDAY COOKIES WITH INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

SHORTBREAD COOKIES ARE EASY TO MAKE AND ARE CHANGEABLE



Holiday cookies sit ready to be devoured. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION

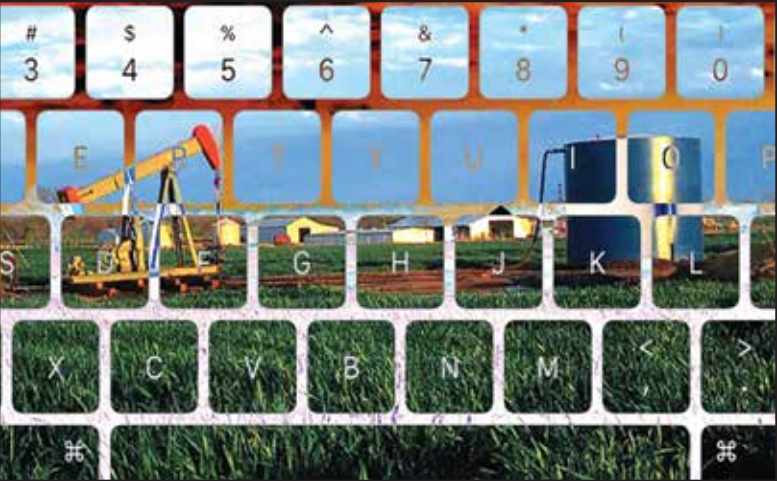
- These shortbread cookies are easy, infinitely changeable, and super impressive for holiday gifts. They are crisp with sugar, rich with butter, and will melt in your mouth. The basic recipe can be used to make a Christmas cookie box full of different cookies. The best thing about them during the holidays is how easy and child friendly they are to make. The basic recipe is made with three simple ingredients most have on hand: butter, sugar, and flour. They can also be changed with the simple addition of mix-ins and baked in any number of ways. They can be rolled into logs, cut and baked. They can be pressed into a whole sheet pan, then cut into squares after baking. The easiest way by far is simply to roll into balls, flatten and bake. But, the absolute best thing about them during the holidays - the dough freezes for up to two months so you can always have cookies ready to go.

- #### Ingredients
- 1 stick of unsalted room temperature butter
 - ¼ cup + 1 tbsp sugar
 - 1 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp vanilla or other flavoring

- #### STEP 1
- Preheat the oven to 325 F, you can use parchment to prevent the dough from sticking. In a large bowl use a stand or hand mixer and cream the butter until white. Add the sugar and beat for approx five minutes until very smooth and creamy. Add the pinch of salt. At this point you can add any liquid flavors like vanilla or lemon extract.
- #### STEP 2
- Once the butter and sugar are mixed, add the flour slowly, a ¼ cup at time. After the flour has been fully incorporated, you can add what you like: nuts, chopped up candies, chocolate, or citrus peel.
- #### STEP 3
- You can bake them now, but it’s best to let the dough rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. If you like the cut and bake style of cookie, you can roll them in parchment paper before letting them rest. Place small (walnut sized) pieces of dough on a cookie sheet three inches apart. You can bake them as they are, or you can flatten them, topping with sprinkles or sugar. Bake for 12-18 minutes until just barely golden in the middle. Cool on the sheet for 10 minutes and then move to a cooling rack.

NEW EDITED VOLUME OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY LOOKS FOR THE UNTOLD, UNIQUE, AND CHANGE MAKING

EDITORS CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR “WE BELONG TO THE LAND: DREAMERS, OUTSIDERS AND CHANGE-MAKERS IN OKLAHOMA”



A new volumne on Oklahoma history highlights untold Oklahoma stories. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - A new edited volume of essays about Oklahoma history seeks to shed light on alternative Oklahoma stories. “We Belong to the Land: Dreamers, Outsiders, and Change-Makers in Oklahoma” is a forthcoming collection of essays that focuses on the histories in Oklahoma that are often left out or untold.

The volume will be edited by the Director of the Center for Poets and Writers at OSU-Tulsa, Dr. Lindsey Claire Smith, and University of Alberta Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, Dr. Russell Cobb. The volume was inspired by the work of David D. Joyce’s “Alternative Oklahoma” that looked at the history of Oklahoma through its populist, and often radical political past.

Speaking with Mvskoke Media’s LiveWire, Dr. Cobb explained, “What we really want to do is feature just that

idea of alternative Oklahoma and people who are working in community, who are doing, taking action steps to make Oklahoma a better place to live... tell stories that people don’t know about and would benefit from knowing.”

Cobb and Smith want their work to go past the common images of Oklahoma history, the ones that pop up in scholarship and media that are heavy with stylized stereotypes. “We have such a rich place with so many other stories, peoples that have been either forgotten or deliberately erased from our state’s history. So anyone who can speak to those stories, you have a unique story to tell.”

The work will focus on changemakers in the state that have committed themselves to improving their communities and the futures of Oklahomans. While the editors are focusing on untold stories and histories, the objective is really about Oklahoma futures. As Cobb furthered, “And I think one of the goals we have is to really keep it focused on the future,

not just the past as well.” While the submission deadline for “We Belong to the Land: Dreamers, Outsiders, and Change-Makers in Oklahoma” was Nov 1, Smith and Cobb are still considering submissions. The essays and other contributions must be well researched and fact-checked. While the volume is academic in nature, they are clear that the work is open to anyone with a unique story to tell.

Cobb explained, “What we’re really after are storytellers. And people who really know how, who are rooted in community, are rooted in history and can speak to a particular kind of story. It doesn’t necessarily have to follow all the footnotes and whatever kind of style guide. But as long as you have that and you can speak to it and you’re passionate about it, I think it would make for a nice contribution.”

For information on the submission process and contribution overview, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/u5drnxzm>.

SAPULPA CHRISTMAS CHUTE FEATURES NATIVE CULTURE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

STUDENTS INVOLVED WITH SAPULPA INDIAN EDUCATION DISPLAYED THEIR TEEPEE FOR SIGHTSEERS

by BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

SAPULPA, Okla. - A new attraction that popped up on the Mvskoke Reservation last holiday season has now become a tradition for many Native and non Native families alike. The Route 66 Sapulpa Christmas Chute returned to Sapulpa’s downtown district, and along with it the Sapulpa Indian Education department’s

teepee display. This marks the sophomore year for both the chute and the teepee featured at it.

The teepee was displayed at the chute on Friday, Dec. 1. According to Sapulpa Indian Education Director Kayla Chupco (Choctaw), the date was picked in order to be as close as possible to Native American Heritage Month cel-

ebrated every November. The department acquired the teepee as a way to share Native American culture with others. The teepee is not specifically representing one tribe, rather it represents the Plains tribes.

“When I heard the Christmas Chute was coming, I thought it would be a good example to have some cultural representation for everyone,” Chupco said.

The teepee can be found exhibited at other events, not just during the holidays. It is also used at the department’s cultural camp for elementary students.

The teepee display takes a group effort from students and volunteers. Some volunteers

helped with setup, some took pictures of families, and others answered questions from visitors.

“We had a lot of kids that wanted to go inside and even older generations who also went inside. We had a student helping take pictures of families.” Chupco said.

Students from the Native American Student Association also made beaded ornaments which were sold to help with general fundraising efforts.

Although the display was only featured for one night, visitors can still explore the Route 66 Sapulpa Christmas Chute. For more information on operating hours and events, visit: route66christmaschute.com.



The Sapulpa Indian Education teepee stands illuminated at the Route 66 Sapulpa Christmas Chute. (Courtesy: Sapulpa Indian Education)

NOKOSE SKATEBOARDS DONATES SKATEBOARDS TO CHILDREN FOR CHRISTMAS

CORDELL BURRIS’ MISSION IS TO GIVE BACK TO THOSE IN NEED



This is an up close look at the process of making the two skateboards donated by Cordell Burris. (Photo courtesy: Cordell Burris)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla.- During the season of giving, Cordell Burris (Mvskoke) gifted one of his own Nokose skateboards to a young girl who requested one for Christmas. The request was made through a Christmas Wish from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Children & Family Services’ Angel Tree program.

During that time, Burris also sought out to donate a second skateboard to a child who requested it. The two boards were made from hardware and supplies from Quickie-Mart Tulsa.

This year marked Burris’ first time giving back to the MCN Angel Tree program. “This time, this is more of giving to a family in need,” Burris said.

Last year Burris was able to give away 50 skateboards at no cost.

“I pray one of these boards turns a kid professional, but more importantly I hope that it gives them an escape from their surroundings, just as skateboarding has for me,” Burris said in a Facebook post.

Burris’ journey of giving began at a young age when a local skater whom Burris looked up to, gave him a handed-down skateboard.

“I’ve always looked back at that gesture and remember what it was for me as a kid and I wanted a lot of the kids to have that same feeling, because a lot of kids can’t afford skateboards. Skateboards are expensive,” Burris said.

Every board Burris has given away came from his own money, he does it without profiting. Burris has heard others say that you have to become famous and rich to give back, but he says that is not true. He believes if anyone wants to give back, they just need to put in enough effort and hard work to do so.

Nokose Skateboards started two years ago. Burris currently goes through a manufacturer in Las Vegas to produce the skateboards. Someday Burris plans to manufacture his own boards within the next couple of years.

All of Burris’ artwork is designed by his friend Tehillah Wind (Mvskoke). The brand name “Nokose” translates to Burris’ clan, which is

Bear clan. “When you think of bears you think of protection and loving of their young, so that’s why I figured I should name the brand something that it can stand for looking out for our young,” Burris said.

Burris started skateboarding when he was 10 years old. He taught himself by watching videos, performing imitations, and simply watching others perform tricks. Throughout the years he has made great memories of making new friends and traveling to places by himself. He enjoys skateboarding anywhere, anytime.

What Burris sees within the next generation is Native children struggling with how to cope with their parents’ behavioral issues or addictions. Just as well, they sometimes struggle to figure out how to be a functioning adult once they reach their parent’s age.

“A lot of Native kids do not have a very comfortable home living situation so a lot



Cordell Burris poses with two skateboards he gave away during the holiday season. (Courtesy: Cordell Burris)

of times we need something to get us away from our home. So skateboarding is what did that for me and it kept me from getting in trouble as well,” Burris

said. Overall Burris is very grateful for the opportunity to give away skateboards to children for free.



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MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION UPGRADES WATER SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE IN MULTIPLE COUNTIES

PROJECTS AUTHORIZED FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN NEED OF USABLE WATER

by **MORGAN TAYLOR**
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

TVLSE, Okla. — Representatives from multiple agencies met to sign memorandums of understanding (MOU) in order to authorize ten water projects in several communities across the Nation on Nov. 28 at the River Spirit Casino and Resort.

The joint venture between the Indian Health Service and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, along with an additional contribution from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation will help fund the projects.

The infrastructure funds are tripled for a total of \$20,600,000.

The State of Oklahoma gave

the Muscogee (Creek) Nation \$6,750,000. The tribe will contribute matching funds. Indian Health Services will donate \$3,100,000, an additional \$4,000,000 will come from the Oklahoma Water Resource Association, Wagoner and Mayes Counties, and the city of Beggs. All funds will go to water infrastructure for 10 projects in nine communities.

In March the National Council passed TR 23-029, committing a match of \$6,750,000 to the American Rescue Plan Act Tribal Grant Cooperation Grant Program.

On Nov. 1 National Council Representative Joseph Hicks introduced National Council Act 23-141 (NCA 23-141) in correspondence with TR 23-029 during a MCN Land, Natural Resources,

and Cultural Preservation Committee meeting where the bill passed with four yes votes from the committee.

The bill was addressed in front of the full council at the regular session meeting where it was passed with full support.

Regulations of the program involve making necessary investments to improve access to sanitary drinking water, as well as building vital wastewater support, and stormwater infrastructure. This is a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and its negative impacts.

The projects include dam repairs, addressing water issues, and improved wastewater management. These projects were selected based on what was in the IHS System. Funding was already available to maximize it.

According to MCN Emergency Management Director Bobby Howard, it was after severe winter storms in February when many problems with water systems arose.

Howard claims many of these projects include restoring systems that were built in the 1970s, or around that time.

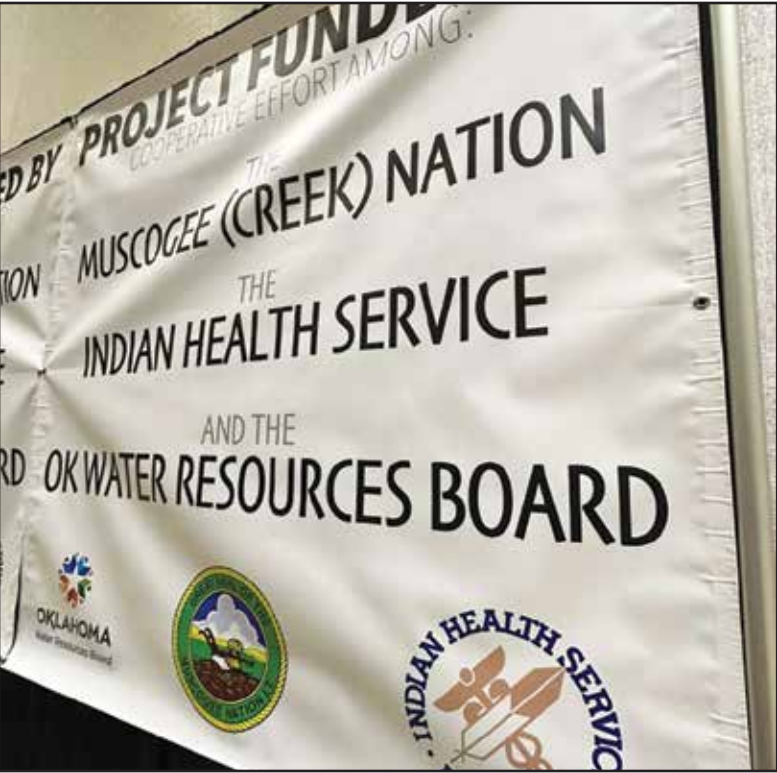
According to Howard, similar water projects cost millions of dollars. That is something many rural communities could not afford with the tri-collaboration and grant program.

The MCN Emergency Management department has carried water buffaloes across the reservation several times to provide potable water to communities during times of crisis.

“This will benefit everyone, not just Muscogee citizens,” Howard said.

Howard claims that during restoration and construction, communities’ water usage should not be affected.

For more information on how the water projects will affect a specific community or municipality, call MCN Emergency Management at 918-549-2700.



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

LEGALS

AD 2023-13

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION
FAMILY DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF:)
K.P.H.H.)
DOB 12/13/19) CASE NO. AD 2023-13
Tracey Lee Johnson, Petitioner)

**NOTICE OF HEARING TO TERMINATE PARENTAL RIGHTS
AND TO ADOPT WITHOUT CONSENT**

THE MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION TO: LARHESA HILL AND JUSTIN SYKES

You are notified that **TRACEY LEE JOHNSON** has filed Petitions before the above-named Court, praying that your parental rights be terminated and she be allowed to adopt the minor named in the caption hereof without your consent, and for adoption.

That said Petitions as to termination of your parental rights and if your consent to said adoption is necessary is set for hearing before the Court at 10:00 o'clock AM PM, on the 17th day of January, 2024, in the Courtroom of the Muscogee Creek Nation District Court located on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Complex, Okmulgee, Oklahoma in the Mound Building before Judge **Alexandra Masters**.

That the hearing of the Petition for Adoption is hereby set before the Court at 9:00 o'clock AM PM, on the 17th day of January, 2024, in the District Courtroom of said Court located on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Complex, Okmulgee, Oklahoma in the Mound Building before Judge **Alexandra Masters**.

Take notice that said Petitions are on file with the Clerk of this Court; that a copy of said Petition has been served upon you and that, among other things, it is alleged in said Petition that Pursuant to Muscogee (Creek) Nation Code, Title 6 § 1-1007:

the natural father and natural mother have abandoned the minor child;

both have failed to establish or maintain a significant relationship with the minor child through visitation or communication for a period of six (6) consecutive months out of the last fourteen (14) months immediately preceding to the filing of a Petition for Adoption; and

both have willfully failed to pay or to contribute to the support of the child as provided in the guardianship or, in the absence of such order, consistent with the parent's means and earning capacity.

and, therefore, your consent to the adoption is not necessary, and that **petitioner is a proper party** to adopt.

Page 1 of 2

WITNESS MY HAND this 17 day of November, 2023.

JUDGE **ALEXANDRA MASTERS**

Prepared by and approved as to form:
Brenda S. Golden
Brenda S. Golden, MCN #792
Golden Legal Services, PLLC
PO BOX 741
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Phone: 918-304-2066
Attorney for Petitioner

Page 2 of 2

LEGALS (CONT.)

AD 2021-0012

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF:)
HUNTER PHOENIX LOPEZ,)
DOB 03/03/2019,)
and)
EDEN DAWN LOPEZ,)
DOB 06/16/2020,)
Minor Children.)

Case No. AD-2021-0012 P 12 58
Judge Alexandra N. Masters
COURT CLERK

NOTICE OF HEARING ON BEST INTEREST AND FINAL DECREE OF ADOPTION

THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

TO: JOHN HUNTER LOPEZ
Biological Father

NOW on this 2 day of November, 2023, the Petitioners, Tracy Vernon Drain and Angelica Drain, by and through their attorneys, Catherine Z. Welsh and Jim C. McGough, Welsh & McGough, PLLC, having filed their *Application for Setting of Best Interest Hearing and Final Decree of Adoption* herein, the Court **FINDS** that the *Application* should be granted and that the same should be set for hearing on Best Interest and entry of a Final Decree.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Court that this matter be, and it is hereby, set for issuance of a Best Interest and Final Decree of Adoption on the 18 day of January, 2024, at 10:00 o'clock A.m. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Courtroom, 2501 Lvmhvike, Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447, and that notice thereof be given to all interested parties.

YOU ARE, THEREFORE, NOTIFIED THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION AT THE TIME AND PLACE SHOWN ABOVE WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AND HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. YOUR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT SAID HEARING SHALL CONSTITUTE A DENIAL OF YOUR INTEREST IN THE

1

CHILDREN, WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS, IN THE ADOPTION OF THE CHILDREN WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION.

Signed and dated this 2 day of November, 2023.

HONORABLE ALEXANDRA MASTERS
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Prepared by:
Catherine Z. Welsh, MCN #358
Jim C. McGough, MCN #914
Welsh & McGough, PLLC
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Attorneys for Petitioners

AD 2021-0012

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF:)
HUNTER PHOENIX LOPEZ,)
DOB 03/03/2019,)
and)
EDEN DAWN LOPEZ,)
DOB 06/16/2020,)
Minor Children.)

Case No. AD-2021-0012 P 12 58
Judge Alexandra N. Masters
COURT CLERK

NOTICE OF HEARING ON BEST INTEREST AND FINAL DECREE OF ADOPTION

THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

TO: CANDICE MARIE BAILEY
Biological Mother

NOW on this 2 day of November, 2023, the Petitioners, Tracy Vernon Drain and Angelica Drain, by and through their attorneys, Catherine Z. Welsh and Jim C. McGough, Welsh & McGough, PLLC, having filed their *Application for Setting of Best Interest Hearing and Final Decree of Adoption* herein, the Court **FINDS** that the *Application* should be granted and that the same should be set for hearing on Best Interest and entry of a Final Decree.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Court that this matter be, and it is hereby, set for issuance of a Best Interest and Final Decree of Adoption on the 18 day of January, 2024, at 10:00 o'clock A.m. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Courtroom, 2501 Lvmhvike, Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447, and that notice thereof be given to all interested parties.

YOU ARE, THEREFORE, NOTIFIED THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION AT THE TIME AND PLACE SHOWN ABOVE WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AND HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. YOUR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT SAID HEARING SHALL CONSTITUTE A DENIAL OF YOUR INTEREST IN THE

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CHILDREN, WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS, IN THE ADOPTION OF THE CHILDREN WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION.

Signed and dated this 2 day of November, 2023.

HONORABLE ALEXANDRA MASTERS
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Prepared by:
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AD 2023-17

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

In the Matter of the Adoption of)
G.W.C.,)
a minor child.)

Case No. AD-2023-17 P 1 A 9-16
COURT CLERK

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA TO: Curtis Earl Calhoun, Natural Father of G.W.C.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT Janet Lea Wickliffe and Kelsey Glenn Wickliffe have filed their Petition for Adoption in the District Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, State of Oklahoma, for the adoption of G.W.C., of which you are alleged to be the biological father. G.W.C. was born on January 2, 2013.

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

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that this Court will hear the evidence in support of and in opposition to the granting of the Petition for Adoption on the 9th day of January, 2024, at the hour of 9:00 o'clock, A.m. in Room 1 of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court in Okmulgee, Okmulgee County, Oklahoma.

If you have any cause to show why the above mentioned Petition for Adoption should not be granted by the Court, you should appear and present the same at the above stated time and place.

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WITNESS my hand and seal of said Court this 9th day of November, 2023.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

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