



MVSKOKE NEWS

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TRAVIS SCOTT FOUND NOT GUILTY

FORMER MCN COUNCIL REP. ACQUITTED OF FOUR MISDEMEANOR COUNTS

by **JERRAD MOORE**
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The jury in former Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Representative Travis Scott's criminal trial delivered a verdict of not guilty at the end of a two-day trial on Dec. 12. Scott had been charged with four misdemeanor counts of Conflict of Interest of a Tribal Official.

Arguments in the case revolved around whether purchases made by the MCN Okemah Casino at an ACE Hardware store owned by Scott constituted a conflict of interest. The business was owned by Scott and ShaRee Hill, Scott's then wife at the time, and daughter of MCN Principal Chief David Hill. The two have since divorced and sold their interest in the business.

Matthew Hall, a prosecutor in the case argued that the purchases were a conflict under title 14 of the MCN Code. Scott's lawyer, Robert Seacat argued that the charges should be filed under Title 31 of the MCN Code, which references "conflicts of business interest" and contains an exception that allows transactions that are "nominal in

nature and the government transacts business in the same nature as does the general public, freely and openly".

Ultimately the judge in the case, Judge Alexandra Masters ruled that the jury be given instructions to consider whether the amounts associated with the transactions in question were "nominal in nature and the government transacts business in the same nature as does the general public, freely and openly."

Testimony in the case detailed how various departments of the Nation that were based out of Okemah, had made purchases at the hardware store for decades, before Scott had taken ownership of it or became a MCN National Council Representative. Okemah Casino officials testified that the purchases were for promotional items, which fell below the \$5,000 threshold that would require a bidding process. Officials also stated that they sometimes received the items at a discount, and costs for the casino had gone up after it ceased doing business with the ACE Hardware store

due to these charges. Chairman of Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises Chris Ray testified that the gaming board had not received any complaints about the transactions.

Former MCN Principal Chief James Floyd and current MCN Principal Chief David Hill were subpoenaed in the case, but not called as witnesses in court.

Scott took the stand in his own defense, which required him to waive his constitutional fifth amendment privilege against self incrimination. He testified that he had worked at the hardware store since he was 18. According to Scott, when the previous owners of the store decided to retire they approached the Nation to purchase the business, but the Nation was not interested. Scott and Hill, who were married at the time, were able to form an LLC and purchase the business.

The testimony ended that Tuesday afternoon. After 45 minutes of deliberations the jury returned with a not guilty verdict on all counts.



Travis Scott's trial concluded in MCN District Court on Dec. 12. The jury trial acquitted Scott of all four misdemeanor counts that he was charged with. (MM File)

ANNUAL MCN CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL BRINGS HOLIDAY JOY TO ALL AGES

CARNIVAL BRINGS IN DIFFERENT HOLIDAY-THEMED ACTIVITIES AND VENDORS



Mvskoke Santa Claus takes a break with a citizen (Shayln Proctor/MM)

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla.- The annual Muscogee (Creek) Nation Christmas Carnival took place at the Claude Cox Omniplex on Dec. 8. The event featured many vendors, arts and crafts, carnival games, a cookie contest, concessions and raffle drawings throughout the event. Families and community members were seen enjoying their time with family and friends while exploring the different activities offered by the event.

According to MCN Director of Marketing and Tourism Ryan Logan (Mvskoke) the Christmas Carnival has been hosted by the Nation somewhere between 6-10 years. While planning this event, organizers try to involve as many reasonably-priced activities as possible. Many activities were free including face paint, photos with Santa, and

hot chocolate.

"It's mostly for our families and communities, it's just a way to bring them Christmas joy. This is a friendly family event," Logan said.

The event offered different activities including a cake walk, make-and-take ornaments and a selfie station, along with different vendors. This event even included two reindeer for visitors to see up close and learn more about. These activities were chosen based on the infrastructure capacity of the MCN dome.

According to Logan, the cookie contest is a carnival staple that has always been a success. It is a contest where anyone with baking supplies and an oven can try their hand at.

"It's a time for everyone to dust off their baking pans and try out to see if they have the

CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL
Continued on Page 2

GROUNDBREAKING FOR MCN CITIZEN SERVICES BUILDING BEGINS PHASE ONE OF TRIBAL MASTER PLAN

NEW BUILDING WILL HOUSE TRIBAL SERVICES AND EXECUTIVE OFFICES



MCN tribal leaders and the design and engineering team break ground on the future site of the Tribal Services Building. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - On Wednesday, Dec. 12 the Muscogee (Creek) Nation held a groundbreaking ceremony for the planned MCN Citizen Services Building. The ceremony marked the beginning of Phase One of the Tribal Master Plan that will reshape the tribal complex in coming years.

The 167,000 square foot, four-story facility will eventually house service-oriented departments and the executive branch in one centralized location. According to MCN Press Secretary Jason Salsman, the estimated time of completion is between 18-20 months.

New Fire Native Design Group and FSB-AE collaborated on the design and engineering of the project. The same team is responsible for other MCN projects, including the design of Loop Squared Meat Co. and the Safe Space Facility. The concept of a centralized services building is similar to

their work on the recent Choctaw Nation Headquarters building in Durant.

In remarks during the well-documented groundbreaking, Jason Holuby, New Fire President and MCN citizen, remarked on the functionality and design of the building in creating a specifically Mvskoke architecture-inspired space. Stating that the design uses, "mound geome-

try and southeastern motifs, with water as the defining element."

The existing master plan was conceived in 2017 and has been a project in stages of development since. While the recent roadway work on highway 75 was the first step forward in implementing the 10-year plan, the groundbreaking will officially start phase one construction.



A rendering of the MCN Citizen Services Building. (Courtesy: New Fire Native Design)

CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL

Continued from Page 1

best Christmas cookies, so it's a friendly competition," Logan said. The first place winner was able to take home \$200 and the second place winner received \$100.

The MCN Marking and Tourism Department has always seen a great turnout for this event. One of Logan's favorite aspects is seeing visitors laughing and having a fun time engaging with the holiday activities.

"It is literally the joy that we bring into the children's faces and I get to watch so many kids go around the corner and was just so excited to see Santa Claus and just going towards him. They were so excited that

they got to see the grinch and then see our Muscogee Santa as well. I just love seeing the joy we bring to peoples faces, that's what this is all about for our communities and for our people," Logan said.

Logan grew up going to different carnivals in his community, like the one held in his hometown of Wetumka. This gave him a good perspective of what others enjoy doing and seeing at carnivals. For Logan, bringing the joy of the holidays to others through the Nation's Christmas carnival is a gift unto itself.

Cookie Contest Results:

1st place: Jeroline Roberts
2nd place: Victoria Tiger



Carnival goers are seen mingling around booths and enjoying the 2023 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Christmas Carnival. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

FLYERS, BANNERS, PROGRAMS
BUSINESS CARDS, RACK CARDS
POSTERS, COPIES, ETC

MVSKOKECREATIVE

OKMULGEE INDIAN
COMMUNITY WAKES UP EARLY
TO HOST BREAKFAST SALE

THE COMMUNITY IS CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
SINCE ORIGINAL CHARTER



OIC members were hard at work in the kitchen of their community center preparing food for the breakfast sale. (Braden Harper/MM)

OKMULGEE, Okla. - In the dark, early hours of Dec. 8 volunteers from the Okmulgee Indian Community Activities Committee opened their community center doors and fired up the stoves to prepare food for their second breakfast sale. Dec. 8 was a spe-

cial date for members, it marked their 40th anniversary as a chartered community within Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Tara Allen is the OIC Activities Chairperson. According to Allen, the sale had no shortage of delectable foods including biscuits

TULSA CREEK INDIAN COMMUNITY
HOLDS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

ARTS AND CRAFTS MARKET CONTINUE A HOLIDAY TRADITION



Shoppers comb through the art and craft vendor booths at the annual Tulsa Indian Community Christmas Bazaar. The event provided an opportunity for shoppers to find unique items for the holiday season. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

TLVSE, Okla. - The Tulsa Creek Indian Community held their annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, Dec 9. The community center at 8611 S. Union Ave in Tulsa was decked with holiday decorations and lights while shoppers browsed and bought items from a variety of vendors. Artists and craftspeople sold everything from liquid soap cozies and beaded collars to homemade jams.

The holiday market has been a winter tradition for the community center for years. Carol Williams has been a member since 1986 and expressed how much the annual Christmas Bazaar means for people in the community. She said, "We've done it for years, and people enjoy it, 'cause they see people they haven't seen for a while. It's always good for us to see people that we've known for years."

This was a busy year of activities for the community. From holiday meals to movie nights and guest speakers, programming plays a big role in the life of the center. They recently participated

in the 2023 Tulsa Native American Day Parade and won second place with their float which featured community members and an arbor.

In addition to arts and crafts vendors, the event had a concession selling breakfast and lunch. Cakes and frybread were also available. Proceeds from the sales benefit the center and go toward

activities, programming, and other events. Williams said, "We have a lot of programs that benefit a lot of members... We do a lot of things for our youth, we take them to the movies and other things."

Interested in events and sales at the TCIC? Visit their Facebook page at Tulsa Creek Indian Community.



Everyone's favorite holiday shirt could be found at the bazaar thanks to Handmade by Jamie. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

by BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

and gravy, eggs, and potatoes. Ice coffee and holiday treats were available for sale as well.

The event saw steady foot traffic, with customers rolling in early to sit and enjoy breakfast with others, or grab a to-go box.

The sale's main chef was OIC Vice Chairman Makayla Harjo, who was hard at work whipping up the sale's main dish of biscuits and her signature gravy.

"She (Mikayla) makes good gravy," Allen said with a smile.

Funds from the sale will benefit the activity budget that allows the community to host events like movie nights, and field trips throughout the year. Field trip destinations the community enjoys include museums, the zoo and going out to see Christmas lights around the holidays.

Allen is an Okmulgee native and has lived in the area her entire life. The OIC has played an important role in Allen's life for over 40 years. She even recalled when the community sent her a card for her high school graduation. Within the past few years she has taken on more responsibilities within her community as the

activities chairperson. According to Allen, her current role is one she enjoys.

"My mom used to be on the board. I used to do activities back then. I'm just trying to prosper our community for our grand-kids so it will be here when they grow up and hopefully they will be involved as I am." Allen said.

Over the years the OIC has seen a lot of great change. Just two years ago this month, the community moved to a larger facility.

Now the community sees an average of 50-90 members per meeting.

On Monday Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. the OIC celebrated their 40th anniversary at their monthly meeting. Additionally they also hosted their annual Christmas party.

To stay up to date on the OIC's sales and events, visit their Facebook page, Okmulgee Indian Community Center.



Customers came out to enjoy breakfast at the Okmulgee Indian Community Center. (Braden Harper/MM)

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PRESIDENTIAL ORDERS, BACONE AUCTION STALLED, TULSA LOSES, INDIAN SHOW BIZ

PREZ HAS GOOD NEWS; BACONE FUTURE?; CHEROKEE BARBIE; TULSA TICKETS; NATIVE SHOW BUSINESS



by GARY FIFE
CONTRIBUTOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - O.K., let's start from the top down. The President of the United States has made his presence known in his latest actions regarding Native governments. During the recent national "Tribal Nations Summit" President Joe Biden signed an executive order to make it easier for tribal governments to access federal funds. According to several Native and national news sources, the order would establish a central 'clearinghouse' where tribes could search for the exact funding they need. Let us hope the White House increases the amount of bucks in the pot. There are supposed to be almost 200 additional agreements to make it easier for tribal governments to manage federal lands and other resources.

In good news for east coast tribal lacrosse players, the President has expressed his support for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to compete under their own flag in the 2028 Olympics, something they have been after for decades. Why not? They invented the sport. It would be way cool to see a tribal player carrying their flag during the opening ceremonies. The fate of Bacone College is still looking pretty grim, but it got a last-minute reprieve. The oldest college in Oklahoma was scheduled to go on the auction block mid-December, but as of early December that sale had not taken place. A contractor had been renovating the campus, but a mix-up in the payment plans kept that from happening. But on the day before the sale, the sheriff's sale was stopped, no reason given.

Did you get one of the Wilma Mankiller dolls? Word has it that the popular Mattel doll has sold out of the toy version of the former female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Some liked it, some did not. That is an old story, critics say it did not look like her, others said the Cherokee printing on the box says, "Chicken" instead of Cherokee. Price? One listing on eBay had the doll re-selling for \$598. Cha-Ching! In case you were not invited to Governor Kevin Stitt's "Native American Family Day", neither were any other Native leaders. (Neither was I) The Tulsa World reported that about 60 people with "tribal backgrounds" were in attendance. A Stitt spokesperson said "we invited people from the tribal communities who don't get the opportunity to do that all the time."

The guy whose court case got the sovereignty court battles rolling has pleaded guilty. The Tulsa World reported Jimcy McGirt entered a guilty plea six days before a re-trial of the case. McGirt's attorney said the man could be sentenced to time served. The City of Tulsa and some of the local tribal governments are butting heads. The last one to make any headlines was over a traffic ticket jurisdictional situation. The guy who got the ticket will have to pay up, but the fine is going to be split between Tulsa and the Mvskoke Nation. That's a situation that is going to require a lot of legalese wrangling and some sort of mutual agreement to be worked out. In November the tribe filed suit against the City of Tulsa. In the meantime, according to local news reports, a federal judge has ruled that the city can't enforce those laws. Only a tribal court can do that. By the way, the feds called us "Indian inhabitants". Still, it's probably not a good idea to get a ticket in Tulsa. Give YvNvSv a break. In the past decades, buffalo that wandered out of Yellowstone Park were eligible to be harvested, and over the last season, a high number of bison were taken for food. That number is too high according to a local Montana wildlife preservation group. They are calling for a pause in the hunt to allow the wild-roaming herds a chance to recover their numbers. That's not the only time buffalo have made the headlines. Several news reports cover incidents

of the animals tossing unwary (or just playing stupid) tourists into the air when they try to take selfie photos next to the animals. Maybe the yvnnsv are trying to even the score! The lead actress for "Killers of the Flower Moon" has been garnering tons of awards and recognition. The Piegan/Black-foot woman, Lily Gladstone has been nominated for a Golden Globe Entertainer of the Year award and been named as one the Associated Press' Breakthrough Entertainers of 2023. On top of that, Gladstone has been a cast member of "Reservation Dogs". She has a long list of productions in which she has appeared. Golden Globes winners will be announced January 7, 2024. Almost missed this one, on Sunday, Dec. 17 Cherokee Actor, Wes Studi turned 76. Congrats! And finally, Native News Online reports "Reservation Dogs" is one of two TV series named as Best Television Shows of 2023. Yea! O.K. the leadership of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been chosen and set to perform for the benefit of our Nation and citizens. We wish them the best and hope that 2024 will see our Nation continue to progress and stand up for our people. Mvto!

Hvtvm cerecares!

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

MAN KILLED AFTER BAPD OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING IN MUSCOGEE JURISDICTION

FBI INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION DUE TO "TRIBAL COMPONENT"



A suspect is dead after an officer-involved shooting in Broken Arrow. The FBI is currently involved in the investigation due to an unclear "tribal component". (Shutterstock)

by BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

BROKEN ARROW, Okla. - A suspect is dead after an officer-involved shooting in Broken Arrow. The suspect, 54-year-old Troy Anspaw from Broken Arrow was shot during a traffic stop near 131st and 145th on Sunday night, Dec. 3. The Broken Arrow Police Department initially responded to a call around 8 p.m. at the residential area near the 8000 Block of Willow Springs. Officers located the car in question and initiated a traffic stop. The driver, Anspaw did not respond to the officers' commands and exited his vehicle with a firearm. He was then shot by the officers. First aid was rendered to Anspaw by the officers on scene. Anspaw was transported by ambulance to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead. The three officers involved are currently on administrative leave. BAPD body camera footage was

released on Monday, Dec. 4. Footage shows Anspaw driving a white truck, although it is unclear if the truck's license plate was a tribal plate. The shooting took place within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. However, MCN Lighthorse Police was not involved with the investigation. The FBI is currently assisting with the ongoing investigation due to an unclear "tribal component" involved in the case. An official from the FBI confirmed that one of the people involved, either the victim or one of the officers, was a tribal citizen. They were unable to confirm which person was a tribal citizen, and which tribe they are a citizen of. Mvskoke Media will continue to monitor this case for future developments.

MVSKOKE FIGHTER PROVIDES AN UPDATE ON HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER

SAMPSON TABBYTITE SPOKE WITH MVSKOKE MEDIA AFTER FINAL SEASON VICTORY

by MORGAN TAYLOR
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Professional Fighter Sampson Tabbytite (Mvskoke/Kiowa/Comanche) visited with Mvskoke Media's Gary Fife on the new livestream YouTube podcast, Emvpanayv. Tabbytite last spoke with Mvskoke Media during a Mvskoke Radio broadcast in April. According to Tabbytite, he has had five winning fights since then, including his last one at the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center in New York in November. "It was my first time traveling that far and being flown out," Tabbytite said.

Tabbytite gained his victory by decision, gaining him the Freedom Fighter Promotions Professional USA 59kg Super Featherweight Muay Thai title. According to Tabbytite, the fight was a last-minute opportunity. "My coach wanted me to be done for the year," Tabbytite said. "He had hit me up on Tuesday asking me if wanted to fight in New York, and I was like, 'New York?!'" By that weekend, Tabbytite was flying to the Big Apple. After competing locally for years Tabbytite claimed the atmosphere was a bit different. However he felt calm and collected, even with his opponent being a "hometown boy." "I didn't have really big nerves or anything, I just felt comfortable," Tabbytite said. "I think I have been getting more and more comfortable every time I fight." Muay Thai is a style of fighting that utilizes eight points of contact. This involves punches, elbows, knees and kicks. The name translates to "Thai Boxing" and is the national sport of Thailand. The sport has gained inter-



Sampson Tabbytite gained a win during the 2023 season at the River Spirit Casino Resort in Tulsa, Okla. (Morgan Taylor/MM)

national popularity, and is practiced by fighters around the globe like Tabbytite. Even with the New York fight being his first full-rules Muay Thai, Tabbytite's comfortability led him to believe that he was ready to fight at a higher level. Tabbytite does more than just discipline himself in Muay Thai, he also trains in kickboxing, jiu jitsu, and grappling. Although he took the rest of 2023 year off, Tabbytite will con-

tinue to train daily at his gyms; Forza Combat Sports in Broken Arrow and Grappling Factory in Tulsa. Tabbytite plans to start his 2024 season in January. To stay up to date on where to see Tabbytite fight, check out his Facebook page, Sampson Tabbytite. The Emvpanayv episode Tabbytite appears on can be found on the Mvskoke Media's Youtube channel.



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OKLAHOMA SPORTS MUSEUM SILENT AUCTION HONORS MVSKOKE FATHER AND SON BASEBALL LEGENDS

MARK AND RUSTY RYAL SHARE THEIR
MLB EXPERIENCES, AND WHAT THE
SPORT MEANS TO THEM



Mark and Rusty Ryal pose for a group picture while they accept their Oklahoma Sports Museum Member certificates. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

GUTHRIE, Okla.- The Oklahoma Sports Museum recently held a silent auction featuring sports players signing autographs. Two of those players were former Major League Baseball (MLB) players Mark and Rusty Ryal. They are the first, and only Mvskoke father and son duo to play in the MLB.

Director of the Oklahoma Sports Museum Richard Hendricks has been serving the museum for 29 years. He helped host the sports collectible and memorabilia sidewalk sale in addition to the silent collection. The museum is a nonprofit. The purpose of the silent auction was to raise money to pay for general expenses.

The event featured a meet and greet, an autograph signing, as well as T-shirts, posters, sports

cards, books and other sports items for sale.

Part of the museum is dedicated toward honoring Native American athletes across different sports. These include athletes like Andy Payne (Cherokee), winner of the 1928 Transcontinental Footrace, Allie Reynolds (Mvskoke) who played in the MLB, Jim Thorpe (Sac and Fox), the first Native American to win a gold medal in the Olympics, and Cynthia Yerby (Seminole), who was a world champion arm wrestler.

Other sports represented in the museum included the National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), and pro rodeo.

“We are proud of our Native American heritage in Oklahoma and we try to acknowledge as many athletes as we can,” Hendricks said.

Parts of the museum’s col-

lections came from families and individuals like Mark Ryal, who donated his Philadelphia Phillies jersey. Hendricks was a former coach himself, as well as a teacher and principal. Throughout his coaching career he came to know Native American players in the MLB like Johnny Bench (Choctaw) and Allie Reynolds. Through Hendricks the museum received items from the families of these players.

The idea of dedicating a wing of the museum started when Hendricks attended an assembly at Guthrie Junior High. The assembly encouraged children to make drug-free choices and brought in two speakers, former MLB player Ferguson Jenkins and former NBA player Alonzo Gee.

“This museum is important to me and I’ve spent 29 years of my life doing it in honor of Oklahoma athletes and the user influence in a positive way for kids,” Hendricks said.

Mark and Rusty Ryal’s MLB experience

Mark Ryal signed on to play professional baseball while in high school in Dewar, Oklahoma. He played in the MLB for 16 years. He signed on as an outfielder, but also played infield as well. He retired in 1994. Mark Ryal came back to his home state to coach at Auburn High School and Oklahoma State University. Currently he spends a lot of his time giving private hitting and pitching lessons.

Rusty Ryal was drafted to play baseball in 2005 by Oklahoma State University. He went on to play for the Arizona Diamondbacks, then played for Japan for a year. After that he came back to the United States to play three more years. He was a super utility player, meaning that he was able to play multiple positions. Throughout the years he played infield, outfield, and backup catcher. Later on he eventually retired. Currently

he coaches amateur baseball.

According to Rusty Ryal, there is about to be another father and son duo from Oklahoma to both play in the major leagues. However, the Ryals are still the first, and only Mvskoke father and son duo to play in the league.

“It’s an honor, it goes to speak a lot about our work ethic and dedication as far as getting into the big league level and to get drafted, it’s definitely special. It’s good to see other father and son duos do it, as well being from Oklahoma to show that there is good baseball here,” Rusty Ryal said.

Mark Ryal explained that when he was playing in the MLB, it was every boy’s dream to play in it. Although he witnessed a lot of competition at a high level throughout his career, he still remembers his experience fondly. “It’s a grind coming up from the

minor leagues, but you get there and you stay there for a little while and it’s worth the reward,” Mark Ryal said.

Rusty Ryal still shares the same love for America’s National Pastime. Echoing his father, he knows there needs to be a lot of work and sacrifice put into playing the game. In order to be successful in the major leagues, Rusty Ryal committed to focus and discipline throughout his career. From his point of view, he stated it is important to be goal oriented, but have fun at the same time.

Rusty Ryal mentioned that playing on a team comes with the challenge of working individually as a player. This involves personal responsibility and accountability on the diamond.

BASEBALL LEGENDS Continued on Page 6



A baseball card from Mark Ryal’s days playing for the Los Angeles Angels. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

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SUBCOMMITTEE COVERAGE

FOOD DISTRIBUTION GRANT FOR \$337K PASSED FOR MVSKOKE FAMILIES

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) HEAD START PROGRAM

EQUIPMENT GRANT FOR \$16K PASSED

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a Health, Education and Welfare committee meeting Dec. 6.

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

NCA 23-154 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) authorizing the expenditure of the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for children and families Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds for the benefit of the MCN Social Services program. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored this legislation, which passed 4-0. This will be presented to the full council at the next regular session.

The MCN Social Services Program received \$306,687 from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds award. According to the bill, the award will go toward cooling and crisis

funds for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

NCA 23-155 A law of the MCN authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the United States Department of Agriculture and appropriating the tribal match for the benefit of the MCN Food Distribution Program. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored this legislation, which passed 4-0. This will be presented to the full council at the next regular session.

The MCN Food Distribution Program received \$1,349,398 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Grant. This bill will match that with \$337,350 in funds. It will go toward income-eligible Native American households that reside on the MCN reservation.

NCA 23-156 A law of the MCN authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of the Interior

HEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Continued on Page 6

APPROVED CHP GRANT WILL PROVIDE

LIGHTHOUSE \$2M FOR NEW PERSONNEL

LEGISLATION POSTPONED COVERING CODE LAW

COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS



A Business, Finance and Justice Committee meeting was held at the Mound Building on Dec. 7 in Okmulgee, Okla. (MM File)

by MORGAN TAYLOR
MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held the monthly Business, Finance and Justice Committee session at the Mound Building on Dec. 7.

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

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

TR 23-125 Confirming the nomination of Alexandra Masters to serve as the District Trial Court Judge for the family law division (including child support) of the District Trial Court of the MCN. Representative Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which passed 2-1-0.

Masters will go before the full council during the regular session before the council votes to adopt legislation.

TR 23-126 Approving the gaming licenses regulation submitted by the MCN Gaming Commission. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which passed 3-0.

The MCN Public Gaming Commission performs regulatory oversight and monitors compliance. The bill will go before the full council during the December regular session.

NCA 23-145 Amending MCNCA Title 50 § 1-107 entitled “Commission Composition”. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the legislation, which was postponed indefinitely 3-0.

An amendment to the bill would allow for members of other federally-recognized tribes to serve on the commission.

NCA 23-158 Authorizing the expenditure of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Policing Services (COPS), 2023 COPS Hiring Program (CHP) Grant program and appropriating tribal funds for the tribal match for the benefit of the MCN Lighthouse Department. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which passed 3-0.

The Council adopted TR 23-037, which committed a match from the tribe of 25%, amounting to \$1,898,544. The grant funds will be used to hire 14 LPD officers and two LPD School Resource Officers.

NCA 23-159 Amending NCA

23-107 (Approving the Comprehensive Annual Budget for fiscal year 2024 and providing for appropriations) as amended by NCA 23-148. Rep. Randall Hicks sponsored the legislation, which passed 3-0.

The budget increased the gaming funds from \$136,757,987 to \$137,334,295. Total tribal funds were increased from \$451,687,294, to \$452,263,602. An increase was made for the Interior Affairs Department from \$20,980,919 to \$21,557,227. The expenditure increased from \$451,687,294 to \$452,263,602.

Referred Legislation:

NCA 23-155 Authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and appropriating the tribal match for the benefit of the MCN Food Distribution Program. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored the legislation, which was forwarded from the Health, Education and Welfare Committee. The funding source for this bill was approved.

NCA 23-160 Authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the MCN Citizenship Office’s fiscal year 2024 budget. Representative Joyce Deere sponsored the legislation, which was forwarded from the Health, Education and Welfare Committee. The funding source for this bill was approved.

Other Business:

Rep. Hicks motioned for an executive session, which was passed.

Business involving Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises and Looped Square Meat Company was also discussed.

To view the full agenda, visit mcnnc.com.

BACONE COLLEGE

RECALLED AGAIN FROM

SHERIFF’S SALE

SALE SCHEDULED FOR DEC. 15 RECALLED THE DAY BEFORE



The historic Bacone College has once again been recalled from a sheriff’s sale that was initially set for Dec. 15. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

by JERRAD MOORE
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

MUSKOGEE, Oklahoma - The land and buildings that make up Bacone College’s physical campus were scheduled to be auctioned off at a Dec. 15 sheriff’s sale. This sale was recalled the day before by Midgley-Huber Energy Concepts (MHEC) LLC. 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. According to court documents, as of Dec 15 there has not been a new sheriff’s sale scheduled.

On Nov. 13 Bacone College’s accreditation body, the Higher Learning Commission, conducted a “focused visit” in relation to a previously reported complaint filed by a former Bacone employee. As of Dec. 15, the HLC has not published the results of this “focused visit” evaluation. Previously, on June 28 the HLC assigned a “Financial Distress” designation to Bacone as a result of the college being put on “Heightened Cash Monitoring” by the U.S. Department of Education.

Mvskoke Media will have ongoing coverage of this developing story.

BFJ/LNC JOINT COMMITTEE SESSION PASSES

IMPROVEMENTS TO CLAUDE COX OMNIPLEX

PLAYING FIELDS TO FULL COUNCIL

FUNDS WILL GO TOWARD ARTIFICIAL TURF AND NEW LIGHTING



A BFJ/LNC session was held Dec. 12 (MM file)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - On Dec 12, the Business, Finance, and Justice committee and the Land, Natural Resources, and Cultural Resources committee held a joint meeting in person. Passed legislation will go on to the council, unless otherwise noted.

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

TR 23-127 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation certifying broadband availability and affordability within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation passed with a vote of 7-0. It was sponsored by Representative Sandra Golden.

The resolution will help get broadband availability to rural areas within the Muscogee Reservation, particularly the three underserved counties of Hughes, McIntosh, and Okfuskee.

NCA 23-161 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fiscal relief funding in the amount of \$3,143,084.83 for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Recreation Department playing fields located at the Claude Cox Omniplex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma passed with a vote of 6-1 with Rep. Golden voting no. It was

sponsored by Representative Mark Randolph and co-sponsored by Representative Randall Hicks.

The MCN Recreation Department is seeking funds for the improvement of the playing fields at the sports complex. The funds would go toward installing artificial turf.

NCA 23-162 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fiscal relief funding in the amount of \$590,000 for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Recreation Department to replace and install new lighting for the playing fields located at the Claude Cox Omniplex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma passed with a vote of 6-1 with Rep. Golden voting no. It was sponsored by Rep. Randolph.

The bill describes the current state of the omnplex’s outdoor lighting as “deteriorated and blighted” and in need of an ongoing effort to expand, restore and improve existing infrastructure.

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BASEBALL LEGENDS

Continued from Page 4

“You can get lost in individualism and understand that each player has a role and its kind of quite more lead by example, than lead verbally. But as far as that team aspect for me, it is having respect for one another on each team, knowing their job is just as hard as other jobs and even though you may perform better than others, and others may perform better than you, you still have a role to play,” Rusty said.

Feeling Accomplished

The Ryals recognize that their career has seen obstacles that other players have not had to face.

“It’s an honor to be in my standpoint especially in our family to be Native American and hopefully throwing that out that some of the Native American kids to know that we both come from small schools and it’s possible. Just keep working at it and get your education. We recognize and represent the Native Americans society and my family, so it’s an honor,” Mark Ryal said. “I used to come home in the fall and play fast-pitch softball with a lot of the Native teams and played in some tournaments with some Native guys and got to meet a lot of people throughout that. It was a good experience for me.”

Mark Ryal expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to sign on to play professionally straight out of high school. He also expressed pride for the opportunity to represent his hometown. Traveling to countries around the world like Japan, Canada and Puerto Rico was a rewarding experience for him. Likewise, he even played in the same stadiums where Babe Ruth and Mickey Mantle made history.

“You’re playing with guys like Mike Schmidt, George Brett and Reggie Jackson. I can go on and on, just the information that they passed on down to you it’s replaceable and we’re both just passing it

to the younger generation here,” Mark Ryal said.

For Rusty Ryal, he enjoyed playing in Arizona at his home stadium. During his time there, he was treated well by the staff and loved building relationships with the people he met. The experience of traveling was surreal because he always dreamed of walking out on those professional league fields as a kid.

As the father of an MLB player, and a former MLB player himself, Mark Ryal’s pride for the sport could only be matched by pride for his son.

For further information about the Oklahoma Sports Museum in Guthrie, contact Richard Hendricks at 405-414-1342.

HEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Continued from Page 5

rrior Bureau of Indian Affairs for the benefit of the MCN Head Start Program. Rep. Hufft sponsored this legislation, which passed 4-0. This will be presented to the full council at the next regular session.

The MCN Head Start Program has received \$16,000 from the Indian Highway Safety Program Child Passenger Safety Grant. According to the bill these funds will go toward 107 car seats and any car clinic signs, traffic cones, sandwich boards, portable canopies, latch manuals, pool noodles, or brochures needed for training clinics.

NCA 23-160 A law of the MCN authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the MCN Citizenship Office’s fiscal year 2024 budget. Representative Joyce C. Deere sponsored this legislation, which passed 4-0. This will be presented to the full council at the next regular session.

The MCN Citizenship Office requested \$200,000 from their FY 2024 budget, this will help them continue with unspecified ongoing legal services.

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

CMN AND ORU SIGN HISTORIC MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

MOU WILL PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS



Dr. Randall takes a group photo with MCN Second Chief Del Beaver and officials from Oral Roberts University during the MOU signing. (Courtesy: Oral Roberts Media/PR)

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) and Oral Roberts University (ORU) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Dec. 6. This is CMN’s first time signing an institution-designated MOU agreement that will provide financial assistance for CMN graduates and staff. This will now provide students with new opportunities to transfer to ORU to pursue higher education degrees.

CMN President Dr. Monte Randall (Mvskoke) spoke about the historical moment for CMN regarding the MOU agreement terms. The MOU terms with ORU has been a work in progress for two to three months, however CMN had been in communication with ORU for several years before that. Dr. Randall himself is an ORU alumnus, he received his doctorate degree in 2018 and was an adjunct instructor for the college of education.

The partnership outlined

in the MOU agreement started early in the fall when representatives from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation had a meeting with ORU leadership. This involved MCN Principal Chief David Hill, MCN Second Chief Del Beaver, Dr. Randall, and ORU President Dr. William Wilson.

The meeting discussed agreements that would help both the Nation and CMN’s needs. One of those needs being a healthy pool of qualified professionals seeking positions within the tribe. Particularly, in the healthcare and finance fields.

The agreements include transitioning the Muscogee Language Revitalization Program into an Immersion school, which needs a certified secondary instructor.

The agreement will allow CMN to continue to work together with ORU to provide future scholarships that will benefit CMN graduates, staff and faculty. Randall eventually wants to extend this

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

opportunity to all MCN employees as well.

When he signed the agreement, it was a thrilling moment for Randall to create this opportunity for students. “That was a really great moment. Being an Oral Roberts University alumni, being a tribal college graduate, and citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation it was a great feeling to be able to create this partnership and to solidify this opportunity to provide more education degrees to our people,” Randall said.

This is not CMN’s first agreement with transfer services with another higher education institution. Other partnerships have included Northeastern State University, Haskell Indian Nations University, Bacone College and the University of Oklahoma.

All of the agreements detail CMN’s importance as a tribal college. Particularly, how CMN is accessible and affordable with the scholarships they offer students.

Randall has found ORU helpful in creating a pathway for CMN’s graduates. In the future he plans to bring CMN students for college tours at ORU to see firsthand the future opportunities the MOU will provide.

“This is a very historic moment for us and The College of the Muscogee Nation, an associate grant institution, that’s part of the work that we do to help our graduates, our students. For our graduates continuing on for other higher ed degrees, we’re constantly seeking out those partnerships with other institutions to help solidify that transition,” Randall said.

For more information about CMN and enrollment, contact them at 918-549-2800. They also keep up to date on collegiate news and events on their Facebook page, College of the Muscogee Nation.

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SUBMISSIONS

LEARNING FROM OUR ELDERS

BY: DAVID WARE

Editor's Note: The following is a family history submission from Mvskoke Citizen David Ware.

A young Muscogee girl was orphaned 176 years ago in Georgia when her family was killed by the descendants of colonists. She was only six months old, her brother a year and a half.

Julie and Henry were adopted by a white doctor and his Muscogee (Creek) wife. George and Annie Carter relocated some years after the infamous Trail of Tears to Indian Territory.

Little is known of Henry, except one high quality picture of him in a civil war uniform which still exists. His name does not appear on the Dawes Rolls and nothing more is known about him.

In fact only oral family history and some very old photographs enable either Julie or Henry to live on in the life of their descendant, who is now nearly 75. All previous generations have left us.

Julie and her family lived for a while in Tahlequah on the Cherokee Reservation. They then moved to the Wagoner area in Creek Territory. She attended school at the Tullahassee Mission before it was turned over to the Freedmen.

Julie grew up to marry James Skeen from Kentucky. They had three daughters. Their middle child, Lula would eventually marry Henderson Ware from Springfield.

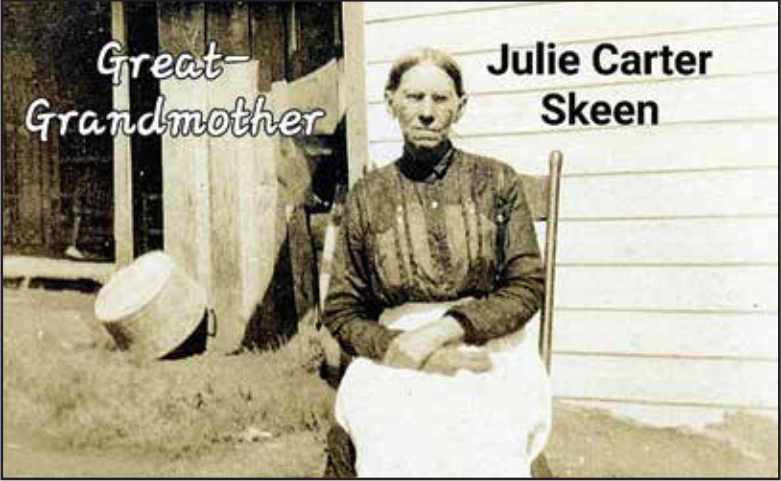
Julie and Lula were both original allottees on the Dawes Commission Rolls. So were Lula's first-three children, including the eldest son Oren Ware, along with daughters Iva and Ima.

The allotments are in Wagoner County, all except one. Julie's allotment, as seen by her great grandson two years ago, has somehow fallen into the hands of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is Flood Control Dike Number 10, which prevents rising waters of Fort Gibson Lake from inundating the town of Wagoner after heavy rains.

A careful review of the map reveals that the only identifiable outlet of Fort Gibson Lake, which crosses the boundary from Cherokee territory into Creek territory is the one that extends into Julie's allotment. There is only one other allotment between there and the Cherokee Reservation.

Research conducted with the help of Muscogee (Creek) Nation Cultural Preservation and Archives Department indicates that it was sold in 1943. It is unclear if Julie ever actually lived on that land because there was a dispute with one of the Freedmen over the ownership.

What is certain is that it is cur-



rently uninhabitable because it floods every year. Contact with the Wagoner County Clerk's Office has been recommended as the only way to research these old family and property records. That is still pending as of this writing.

Julie's daughter Lula had other children after the Dawes Rolls were closed. Wayland Ware was born in Bristow in 1916 and grew up on the allotment of his older sister Ima, who had passed away as a child. It is unclear why that allotment was in Creek County, whereas the others were in Wagoner County.

Everyone of those generations is now gone. Annie Carter had apparently passed away before the Dawes Rolls because her name is not found there. Julie Carter Skeen was the great grandmother of yours truly. She passed away in 1928, long before I was born.

My grandmother Lula Skeen Ware died when I was about five years old. I remember seeing her once or twice. My dad Wayland and his siblings all moved out to the West Coast, beginning during the Depression years.

David Ware

I was born in Tulsa and lived in Broken Arrow when it was still a tiny little town 15 miles away. At age six, I moved to Oregon where my dad worked in a plywood mill for five years. After a couple years back in Oklahoma and in Missouri where my older brother Gary was in the Air Force, we all moved out to California.

After serving in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam era in the Philippines and on Okinawa, I came to Hawaii in 1978 along with my beautiful Filipina wife, Herminia (Mini), with whom I just celebrated our 53rd anniversary.

In 1979, while living here in Hawaii, I received a letter from Muscogee (Creek) Nation about the new constitution. It was written in English, Muscogee and Euchee. It had to do with whether Freedman should be enrolled as citizens.

In 1984 I first visited the Muscogee Tribal Capital Complex

in Okmulgee. In 1988 I submitted birth records and received my enrollment number. Then between a brief visit in 2000 and my most recent one in 2021, it was the longest I was away from home.

I cannot tell you how many times I wish that my father's generation was still with us, especially my eldest Uncle Oren, born in 1898. He knew everything about our family history. I wish I had the opportunity to sit down and learn more.

It is very difficult at this time to reconstruct events from long ago. I have also learned that even U.S. Military and veteran records are not totally reliable and accurate from bygone years. I have been able to find little to nothing from records in either Oklahoma or the original homelands in Georgia about my family, apart from the Dawes Rolls, which were narrowly focused, politically motivated and not in the best interest of our people.

For whatever reason, my great grandmother Julie was registered as half-blood rather than full-blood ... apparently as the natural daughter, rather than the adopted daughter, of George and Annie Carter. It is obvious from both oral family tradition and the old pictures that she was indeed full blood. It's just that her birth parents have not been identified yet. I am still working on that.

So, it is not an issue that my citizenship card says that I am 1/16 rather than 1/8 blood quantum. I doubt that can ever be reconciled and it's not a problem with me because my Muscogee heritage is in my bloodline.

I have always known who I am even though I have lived far away from home. Because our culture is matrilineal, and the fact that my mom was non-Native, I understand that I may not have a clan or tribal town, since my ancestry was passed on through my father.

I am not aware of any members of my family who were subjected to the horrors of the Indian Boarding Schools, but somehow the Muscogee culture, history, traditions and language were not passed down, at least through my father's generation. He was very proud however, of his family heritage. He has been gone since 2001.

So, fast forward to 2023 and the great-grandson of Julie Carter Skeen, who had the honor of once visiting her allotment back in Wagoner, praying a silent prayer to the Almighty respecting her memory, is now living here in Hawaii for the last 45 years.

Despite having blonde hair and blue eyes inherited from my mom's European ancestors, none of whom can be traced back to their origins, I find my heart and mind constantly trying to get closure before my time on Earth expires. My only son Paul Mark passed away in 2007 at age 36. I have no one else to pass this knowledge of our family history on to.

I am at the age to be an elder, but I'm still very much in a learning stage to maintain the continuity between Julie, who lost her birth parents in Georgia in about 1847, and myself just three generations later.

A Thank You to the Tribe

In closing, I want to express my respect, admiration and gratitude to Principal Chief David Hill, Second Chief Del Beaver, along with National Council member

Mark Randolph from Wagoner District, and other current and future Council members.

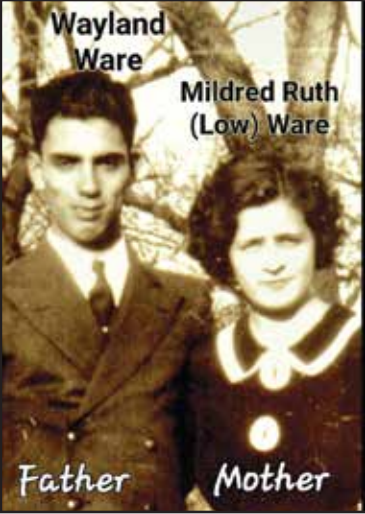
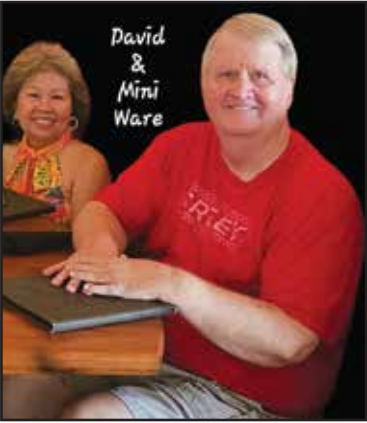
Everyone has been very gracious to me. That includes our wonderful Tribal Liaison Anne Edwards. Also, those in the Cultural Preservation Department who previously assisted my family research.

Jerrad Moore of Mvskoke Media was kind enough to offer me the opportunity to submit this letter to the editor. So why did I choose this topic? My dad would have been 108 years old next January. I do not expect there are any members of his generation still alive today.

But if anybody recognizes anybody or any place that I have mentioned here today, then that is a step forward. If my family history must indeed end with me, then I need to exercise my responsibility as an elder to document it for posterity and future generations of our tribe as much as possible.

If you have stuck with me this far, I say mvto from the depths of my heart. When I was young, I was very eager to learn from my parents and their generation about things that happened before I came along. I pray that our future generations will do the same while they still have time.

David Ware
Honolulu, Hawaii



THANK YOU

I would like to say Mvto/ Thank You to everyone that supported me, whether it was in service, donations, words of encouragement or prayers.

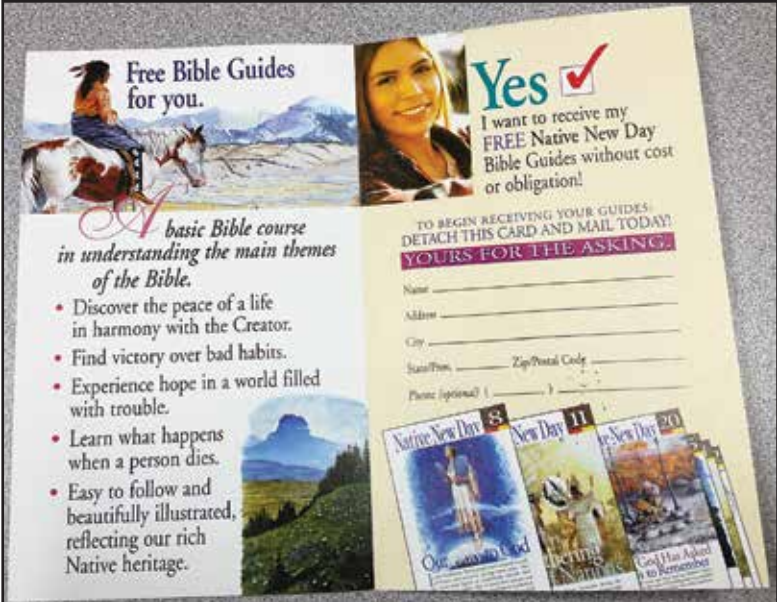
I look forward to working with the Leadership of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for the good of all citizens.

Have a blessed and prosperous New Year!

~ Muscogee National Council, Okmulgee District - Seat A Representative ~ Robyn Whitecloud

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