



MVSKOKE NEWS

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STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS STRESSES FOUNDATION OF SOVEREIGNTY AND COOPERATION

PLANNING STAGE SERVICES INCLUDING GROCERY STORES AND TRIBAL CO-OP ALSO MENTIONED

by **MEREDITH JOHNSON**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - On Saturday, Jan 27 Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill gave the 2024 State of the Nation address during the first quarterly session of the Muscogee (Creek) National Council.

After introducing guests, dignitaries, and Muscogee (Creek) citizens, Chief Hill followed with a list of his administration's achievements. Top among them is the ongoing fight for tribal sovereignty and jurisdictional rights in not only the responses to the 2020 McGirt decision, but also in recent legal rulings and challenges.

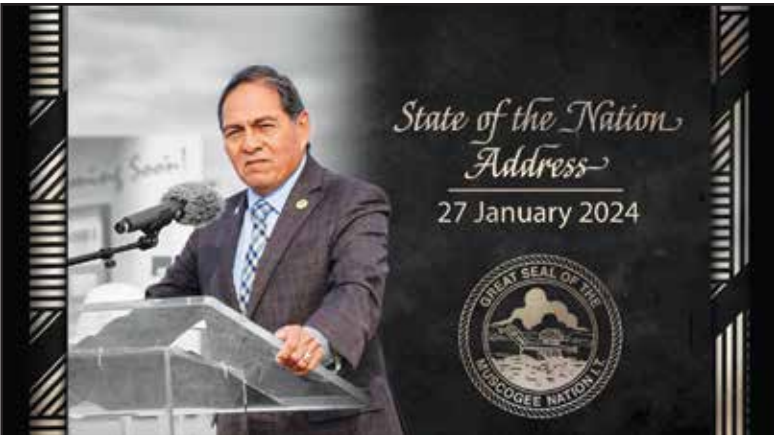
He stated, "Let me be clear, we will never cease in our efforts to fight and stand

against such challenges. The Supreme Court has spoken. This reservation is ours. Along the rise we fully embrace the responsibilities of sovereignty."

In the speech, Chief Hill also emphasized his administration's commitment to public safety and cooperation among governing entities. This echoes recent statements following recent jurisdictional issues and the tribe's refusal to participate in the One Oklahoma Task Force. He stated, "Public safety has always been our highest priority. In the days and months after the McGirt decision, the leaders across the state faced a choice to work for or against us. Sadly, some chose division and fear. Muscogee Nation chose collaboration and we are grateful for the many partners that have joined us."

With the new year marking the fourth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court handing down a decision in the landmark McGirt case, Chief Hill provided updates on the justice system. He noted his administration's important responsibility to usher in a new era of law and order and the expansion of law enforcement in areas across the reservation like Jenks, Holdenville, and Muscogee to ensure citizens are protected and safe. Chief Hill turned to the tribe's economic accomplishments over the past year, citing the years-long South Tulsa Dam Project. Chief Hill exemplified the project as the culmination of executive and legislative cooperation with municipalities leading to economic opportunity.

Chief Hill then jumped into



On Jan 27 Principal Chief David Hill gave the 2024 State of the Nation address during the first Quarterly Session of the MCNC. (Courtesy: MCN Communications)

current citizen service accomplishments from the past year and his administration's plans for the upcoming year. He gave mention of the recent strategic plan for rural broadband services completed by the Office of the MCN Secretary of the Nation. Additionally, Hill listed other services in the planning stage, including tribal grocery stores. He stated, "I'm excited about several other projects

that are deep into the planning process. These include grocery stores, a laundry service and aerospace manufacturing. We plan to expand our agribusiness to include a tribal co-op"

The full transcript of Chief Hill's State of the Nation address can be found on page three.

SPEECH TRANSCRIPT
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LILY GLADSTONE MAKES HISTORY AS FIRST INDIGENOUS GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER AND OSCAR NOMINEE

INDIAN COUNTRY REJOICES AS THEY WATCH HISTORY BEING MADE IN HOLLYWOOD

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OSAGE NATION, Okla.- "Killers of the Flower Moon" actress Lily Gladstone made history as the first Native American and Indigenous person to win the Golden Globe for best actress for her role in the film on Jan 7. Based on the book of the same name, "Killers of the Flower Moon" tells the true story of the Osage Reign of Terror where Osage people were murdered for their allotments and oil headrights in the 1920s. Gladstone continued to make history on Jan 23 by becoming the first Indigenous woman nominated for an Oscar for actress in a leading role.

Gladstone is Kainai, Amskapi Piikani and Nimiipuu First Nations from the Blackfeet Nation. She played Mollie Burkart in the film, a woman who watches close friends and family get murdered and missing over their family's allotments.

When Gladstone was announced as the winner of the best actress category, it was a historic moment for not only Osage citizens, but the broader global Indigenous community as well. When it was time to give her acceptance speech, Gladstone opened it by speaking the Blackfeet language. Gladstone credited her mother with keeping the Blackfeet language alive in their home and the classroom growing up. Although Gladstone's mother is not Blackfeet, she understood the cultural importance of passing down the language to her daughter.

"I'm so grateful that I can speak even a little bit of my language,



Lily Gladstone is now a Golden Globe winner, becoming the first Native American woman to do so. (Shutterstock)

which I'm not fluent in up here, because in this business, Native actors used to speak their lines in English and then the sound mixers would run them backwards to accomplish Native languages on camera," Gladstone said in her speech.

Gladstone also acknowledged her family's support for the achievement, as well as "Killers of the Flower Moon" director Martin Scorsese, costars Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert De Niro and Osage Nation Principal Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear. Gladstone's speech ended on an inspirational note.

"Thank you to all of you, and this is for every little rez kid, every little urban kid, every little Native kid out there who has a dream, who is seeing themselves represented and out stories told by ourselves in our words, with tremendous allies and tremendous trust with and from each other," Gladstone said.

Watch Party in Oklahoma
The moment Gladstone made

history as the first Native American women to win a Golden Globe was witnessed by many across Indian Country, including Oklahoma. One of the places to watch the Golden Globes awards included a watch party hosted by two Independent Indigenous news outlets; Osage News and Verified News Network (VNN). One of the hosts found at the watch party was VNN Director Brittany Harlow.

The Golden Globes watch party was one of the many events facilitated by VNN and Osage News. In late August 2023 VNN began contracting with Osage News to provide sustainability news developments for the tribe. This occurred around the same time momentum for the "Killers of the Flower Moon" movie started to build. According to Harlow, due to Osage Nation's involvement in the production, helping promote the importance of the film has been her focus over the past few months.

GOLDEN GLOBES
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MVSKOKE WOMAN FOUND MURDERED IN HER ABANDONED VEHICLE NEAR INOLA

CASSIDY RITCHIE'S BODY WAS FOUND IN THE TRUNK IN HER CAR

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

INOLA, Okla. - On Sunday, Jan 28 Mvskoke citizen Cassidy Ritchie was found dead in the trunk of her abandoned blue Chrysler Pacifica with a registered Muscogee (Creek) Nation plate near the I Don't Care Bar and Grill. Detectives discovered the body after serving a search warrant and later declared it a homicide. Ritchie had not been in communication with her family in several days. Tulsa Police declared her missing and possibly endangered on Thursday, Jan 25. Ritchie's husband, Chris Morland is currently the prime suspect in the case and was arrested for first degree murder on Monday, Jan 29. His bond was set at \$5 million.

According to the Nation, Lighthorse Police were involved in the investigation, thus the case will be charged as a federal crime. Law enforcement was unable to search Ritchie's damaged vehicle before a search warrant was issued. It was reported that Ritchie's body was found hidden under clothes.

Ritchie and Morland were newlyweds who had just been married on Jan. 7. Morland had a history of charges related to domestic violence in other states outside of Oklahoma. Ritchie was the mother of four.

In a statement released on Facebook, Ritchie's family expressed their gratitude for friends and community mem-



Cassidy Ritchie (Mvskoke) was found murdered in the trunk of her abandoned vehicle in Inola, Oklahoma. (Courtesy: Tulsa Police Department)

bers who helped in search efforts for Cassidy. The statement reads, "Our mother has been found. Unfortunately, she is no longer with us. We cannot say anything more as it is an ongoing investigation. Thank you to everyone who took the time out of their day yesterday to help search for her. Thank you to all the friends, family, and strangers who came out, and thank you to everyone who has kept us in your thoughts and prayers. Please give my family privacy as we deal with the grieving process."

Domestic violence intervention services are available for MCN citizens through the MCN Center for Victim Services. The department provides support for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

HOMICIDE
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2024 MCN WALKING PROGRAM SET TO BEGIN SIGN-UPS

PARTICIPANTS CAN RECEIVE INCENTIVES WHILE ACHIEVING THEIR HEALTH GOALS



The MCN Walking Program will begin signing up citizens and non-Natives interested in participating this year. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Get moving, the Mvskokvke Nene Hvkoke is starting up again! The walking program, sponsored by the Muscogee (Creek) Diabetes Program, is beginning its 2024 sign up season. Those interested can learn more either at area sign-up events or by making appointments at your local area health clinic via phone or email.

According to recent studies out of Harvard, researchers found walking briskly for an hour a day can decrease the effects of obesity-promoting genes by half. Not only does walking have a positive effect on weight control, it can also boost immunity, ease joint pain and inflammation, and help manage stress.

As an activity to engage with, walking is a relatively easy one to pick up. All it requires is comfortable footwear and appropriate clothing based on the season. The activity can virtually be done in any urban setting with sidewalks, or out in nature with trails or an easy-accessible path.

The incentive-based walking program encourages physical activity and overall wellness

with a reward program based on a points scale. The walking program is open to MCN citizens, tribal and health employees, non-Native spouses or parents of a program participant, and Natives within the MCN Reservation. After signing up, a MicroFit pre-health assessment will be taken to get an overall fitness score. When participants meet their goals they will take a post assessment. Incentive points will be added to this post-assessment fitness score.

Participants can earn points by joining community health events. Public 5ks, exercise walks or classes, the MCN Festival Senior Games, and the Diabetes Summit among others that can each add one point to the total. A five point bonus can be earned by losing seven percent of your body weight for those with a body mass index (BMI) over 25.

Examples of prizes in the past have included hoodies, T-shirts, duffel bags, tumblers and a massage gun. If participants increase their overall fitness score by 15 points they will receive a shoe fitting and a \$100 dollar voucher from Fleet Feet.

For more on the health benefits of walking, visit the Mayo Clinic's website, mayoclinic.org.

GOLDEN GLOBES

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“There is so much opportunity to maximize that momentum that film is getting and the book is getting, so that has been really out big part of strategic planning of how to incorporate this and help that film and the promotion of it in this best way for Osage News and really the Osage people,” Harlow said.

When the initial announcements were made for the 2024 Golden Globe nominations, Harlow conferred with Osage News Editor Shannon Shaw Duty about hosting a watch party for the Osage community. The idea was to give those that attended a taste of what a Hollywood award show felt like, even from home.

The party provided plenty of glitz and glamor, featuring a red carpet in the front entry with plenty of champagne and appetizers provided for guests. It saw over 100 people in attendance. It was also estimated that at least 20% of those who attended the party were involved with the film's production in some form. According to Harlow it was a night to remember.

“Just seeing the celebration of these people and how glamorous it was and how dressed up everyone was. It was really an upscale event of celebrating the history and the success of this film but also it was just really empowering to see something so good come out of a tragic series of events,” Harlow said.

This marked Harlow's first watch party for an award ceremony. According to her, it was quite successful in how it was able to bring people together.

When the announcement at the Golden Globes came for best female actor in a motion picture, the room filled with shouting and cheers. Everyone went wild with standing ovations and applause. Harlow filmed the moment for the Osage News YouTube channel and



The crowd at the watch party erupts in cheers after Lily Gladstone won the golden globe for best actress. (Courtesy: Brittany Harlow)

VNN's TikTok, which went viral garnishing over 17,000 views.

Harlow is not Indigenous herself, however she has worked with Indigenous communities in this part of the country for a decade. Through VNN Harlow has learned a lot about Indigenous communities, the issues they have faced, as well as the many historical wrongdoings made against them like the Osage Reign of Terror. Even from a non Indigenous perspective, she has found the new wave of Indigenous representation in mainstream media inspiring.

“It's been really a long time coming for representation for Indigenous people, film and media. That's something we really tried to push for at VNN, so to see that happen on such a large scale and know that it's the beginning,” Harlow said.

When Harlow listened to Gladstone's speech, she was hit with an unexpected wave of emotion. Especially during the part when Gladstone thanked her mother for teaching her the Blackfeet language.

“Talking about her non-Native mother was a huge part in her education of language and culture that really hit me in a way of like ‘wow that is such an important part of motherhood is helping passing on your child's culture even if it's not your own culture,’” Harlow said.

Harlow's husband, Kelly Tidwell is a Muscogee (Creek) citizen and is of Cherokee descent. In addition to their children they also foster through the MCN. Harlow's journey as the parent of Native American children has not always been an easy one in regard to

making sure they learn who they are culturally.

Understanding the importance of preserving cultures, Harlow has talked to other non-Native mothers about their place in parenting children who are Native American. “They voiced to me how they could do that and with being respectful and feeling like it's not their place but as a mother of that it really is their place to do everything that they can for their children,” Harlow said.

When Gladstone took the stage and thanked her own mother for the efforts she made to make sure her daughter embraced the Blackfeet culture, it was a validating moment for Harlow.

“Hearing her talk about the component on such a huge microphone it was really kind of empowering to me as an individual and I know that it also talked to other non-native women that are raising Native kids that even though that's not your culture, it's very important for your children to make that part of your life and your culture,” Harlow said.

Moving forward with the Oscars ceremony approaching in March, Harlow has been in talks with Duty to organize another watch party with the hopes of experiencing history be made again if Gladstone wins an Oscar. Osage News may even have the opportunity to attend this year's Oscars ceremonies as well.

For further information about VNN, visit their webpage, Verified News Network. The Oscars award ceremony is set to broadcast on March 10 on the ABC network and various streaming platforms.

HOMICIDE

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A GoFundMe page has been created to help Ritchie's family cover funeral arrangements. The page will not only help support family members, it will also promote awareness of domestic violence issues and the resources available for victims.

A Cross Ceremony was held for Ritchie on Friday, Feb. 2 at the area where she was found near the I Don't Care Bar and Grill. An open visitation was held the following day, Saturday, Feb. 3. At Ritchie's celebration of life, MCN Center for Victim Services was invited by the family to set up a booth to provide information and awareness for those who attended. It was reported by the department they saw hundreds of attendees. The department hosts many domestic violence programs year round.

If you or someone you know is in a domestic violence situation, call the MCN Family Violence main phone number at 918-732-7979. For after hours services call MCNLP at 918-732-7800. Ritchie's full obituary can be found on page eight.

HEAD START DADS ENCOURAGE HANDS-ON LEARNING

VOLCANO DEMONSTRATION PROMOTES SCIENCE AND PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT



Dads at MCN Okmulgee Head Start spent the morning with their kids learning about volcanoes. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

OKMULGEE, Okla. - On Friday, Jan 26 the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Okmulgee Head Start Program held a volcano science demonstration with the helping hand of some special volunteers: dads. A number of the learning center's dads built the model volcanoes and came in to demonstrate their handiwork.

Current early years education recommends firsthand, hands-on learning projects to get little ones excited about education and the

world around them. Nothing says hands-on learning better than a homemade volcano and pantry-staple chemical eruptions.

The volcanos were built at home by dads and their students. Teachers and staff covered the science behind volcanoes during the school week. MCN Family Service Worker Marcus Jeffrey explained, “The teachers talked about volcanoes all week. And today, they get to see it in action.”

The activity was the first of its

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

kind for the program, but there are hopes to continue the effort. Jeffery came up with the project as a way to get dads involved, explaining, “I want the community to see dads helping children learn.”

Encouragement and Support

The MCN Okmulgee Head Start Program has 57 children currently enrolled from ages three to five years old. The center works to keep families engaged in the program with monthly parent meetings and different training sessions. Ranging from information

on abuse, domestic violence, and family services, the program aims to not only educate families but also give them encouragement. Jeffery stated, “We try to encourage, in other words information is important.”

The center is also preparing for upcoming “Dad and Me” and “Mom and Me” days this spring. During the “Dad and Me” event, Jeffrey related that the dads will come out to cook for and eat with the kids. Stating the importance of engagement, Jeffrey said, “It's awesome to have our dads participate, especially when they have children in the program. And that's the whole thing: our dads teach, our dads comfort, our dads love.”



Kids got to explore the volcano models after the science demonstration. (Meredith Johnson/MM)

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MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION PRINCIPAL CHIEF DAVID HILL'S 2024 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS TRANSCRIPT



OKMULGEE, Okla. - “Thank you all attending today’s address and also attending the Council’s first session. I appreciate each and every one of you. You know, when the United States government removed our people from the homelands and forced us to come to this place, we were given one blanket per family and left to survive in the foreign land. Since then, our people have fought to preserve our culture, retain our government, and rebuild our nation. It hasn’t been easy. Many have sacrificed so much for our right to exist. It’s my great honor to stand before you today and once again affirm that not only are we still here, but the state of our Nation is strong and getting stronger every day.

This past year we’ve faced challenges, celebrated victories, marked historic occasions, and learned from our experiences. A common theme through it all is that we’ve done this together. I want to thank each and every one of you. People’s support and unifying spirit have been a constant source of strength in all our decisions. Thank you again for the belief and trust you placed in the Second Chief and I and the support you have shown to our families. For our National Council, it’s been a privilege to have this opportunity to join your first General Session of the new year to deliver this address. My commitment to providing this legislative body with everything it needs from the Executive Branch for a fully functional and thriving government remains the same. Your job as legislators couldn’t be any more important as we continue in this new era of tribal sovereignty and jurisdictional responsibility. We are blessed to lead in a time of tremendous opportunity to do great things together.

The Supreme Court has affirmed our reservation, our promise of a home that is truly ours. To fully honor this promise, we must continue building up our government, refining our laws and implementing new frameworks, enabling our nation to exercise our national sovereignty fully. I pledge to you a spirit of solidarity in our efforts. Though we would check and balance one another, I draw comfort in knowing that we all have a singular goal of

enriching the lives of the Muscogee citizens. I know together we can accomplish this goal. I’m proud of the work we’ve done together to grow and expand through the first four years of our administration, and we are just getting started.

In 2023, we worked to preserve the sacred, and defend our culture in Oklahoma and our ancestral homelands. We held a ceremony to raise a flag of the Muscogee Nation at the city hall in Macon. Now and forever, the Muscogee Seal flies proudly over Georgia. We visited Alabama to commemorate and remember the 209th Battle of Horseshoe Bend and began the process to erect a monument for over 800 Muscogee lives lost there. This memorial will forever honor the lives and sacrifices of all people at that somber place.

We renewed our legal battles to hold a certain so-called tribe accountable for the desecration of Hickory Ground. The atrocities committed in this sacred place cannot stand. I continue this fight for justice. We honor our ancestors from long ago, but also our elders of today. In May, we introduced a new program under the Social Services Department, the Tribal Grave House Assistance Program. This program began on October 1st, and we’ll provide up to \$500 for Muscogee families for the purchase of supplies to construct a grave house for their loved ones. We must continue pushing ideas and programs that are Muscogee, and preserve and advance in our ways. Thank you, Second Speaker Osborn for sponsoring and promoting this bill. Defending our culture also means educating and creating opportunities for the next generation of Muscogee citizens. Last September, we celebrated enrolling 100,000 Muscogee citizens. We are growing and getting stronger every day, despite attempt after attempt throughout history to wipe us out. I borrow a line I like to repeat: “They tried to bury us, they didn’t know we were seeds.”

Our children must have adequate facilities and they deserve nothing but the best. Last year we broke ground on a new child care center in Wetumpka. We also celebrated the largest graduating class in the history of the College of Muscogee Nation, an example of the vast growth of our college and our commitment to higher education. We are equally committed to trade school and have created partnerships with Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology and have graduated tribal citizens from lineman, fiber optic, and natural gas

pipeline technician programs.

Our next generation will be strong, but it’s up to this current generation to protect their inheritance by defending, exercising, and celebrating our sovereignty. We once again marked our national holiday of sovereignty day in July, with a special “On the Far End,” play presented at River Spirit by Mary Kathryn Nagle. The well-attended event was another meaningful opportunity for our people to celebrate and be proud of this day. It was once noted to me that July 9th was our 4th. But I want to thank all the veterans, even those that came before us. Those here and in our original Homeland. Thank you for your fight. In May, tribal leaders united calling for an override of anti-sovereignty vetoes from the Governor and we saw those vetoes defeated. We pledged to continue to use our strength to rise against similar threats in the future. We continue to be viewed as the leaders in Indian country on matters that deal with tribal sovereignty. We applaud the denials of the certification of the city of Tulsa versus Cooper case, which yet presented another challenge to the jurisdiction authority of the Muscogee Nation. Here the courts reaffirmed that the state and the city lacked jurisdiction over tribal citizens on the Muscogee (Creek) Reservation. Let me be clear, we will never cease in our efforts to fight and stand against such challenges. The Supreme Court has spoken, this reservation is ours. Along the rise we fully embrace the responsibilities of sovereignty. Public safety has always been our highest priority. In the days and months after the McGirt decision, the leaders across the state faced a choice to work for or against us. Sadly, some chose division and fear. Muscogee Nation chose collaboration and we are grateful for the many partners that have joined us.

Our justice system has added significant capacity even as we continue our commitment to aggressively seek ways to help our judges, our prosecutors, and our police. In the coming year we will increase access to our court system through expansion in our northern region at the Jenks Riverwalk, our southern region in Holdenville, and our eastern region in Muscogee. Our Attorney General’s office will continue to expand its capacity. This office will always provide vital educational and training opportunities for our partners. Next month, Attorney General Weisner will host the first “Justice on the Reservation” conference. This workshop will bring together law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, child advocates, medical and mental health providers, and child abuse allied partners. Nationally-recognized subject matter experts will share

discipline-specific best practice recommendations, investigative strategies, prosecution legal updates, and multi-disciplinary team practice to reduce secondary trauma. Events like this provide opportunities to improve collaboration among federal, state, and tribal agencies. We’ve already heard from several of our partners who are eager to attend and continue our successful collaborative approach to maintaining an increase in public safety on the reservation. In 2023, we welcomed a site visit to tribal headquarters from the United States Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women. OVW came to the reservation as we hosted the 18th annual Government to Government Tribal Consultation at the River Spirit Casino Resort. The OVW leadership group visited the Executive Branch and met with the Attorney General’s office in our Muscogee (Creek) Nation Center for Victim Services. Myself, Attorney General Wisner and Chief of Staff Fife gave critical testimony to the Department of Justice related to the court and public safety, giving direct information to the DOJ and how it can improve the relationship between the nation, the DOJ and the state. This collaboration with OVW is vital as this Nation continues to exercise the authority created by reauthorization of VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) to protect our citizens. I hope that Governor Stitt will take notice that none of these advances in public safety requires a task force, it is just what working together should look like.

Beyond public safety, our administration took significant steps in 2023 to create new economic opportunities for our Nation and our people. We started our year by signing an MOU with the City of Tulsa and the City of Jenks for the South Tulsa Dam Project, which has been in the works for years. Our National Council, in diligence in vetting this deal, enabled us to make it happen and open up all kinds of new economic opportunities throughout the expansion along the river. In June, we hosted representatives from the Oklahoma Municipal League and Oklahoma broadband office at the Executive Office to discuss ways to partner to increase access to broadband and high-speed connectivity across the reservation. We’re excited to share that since then, we have made advancements in the Secretary of the Nation’s Office with a strategic plan and coverage mapping on all of our rural areas. Increasing access in these areas will help in many ways, including more significant economic opportunities, increasing community engagement, and more efficient access to modern health care. The Nation was honored to host the National Tribal Self-Governance Conference at River Spirit Casino over the summer. The first time a tribal nation in Oklahoma has hosted.

We had an excellent opportunity to visit federal partners and agencies to discuss what we need here on our reservation and how to work with them to achieve our goals. We hosted IHS Director Roslyn Tso at our Kowetv facility to discuss our joint ventures in the ongoing success and needs of the Muscogee Nation Department of Health. Dr. Tso was blown away by the automated pharmacy refill and distribution center. Through such economic development and strategic partnership, we can make life better for our citizens. In November, we opened up our fourth remote tag office in Muscogee, continuing our promise to expand services to take it to the citizens. In the last two years, we opened up

tribal tags to all citizens in Oklahoma, generating over \$2 million in revenue and reaching over 180,000 transactions. I’m going to owe it to our Tax Commissioner Mary Mashunkashey and her team for another job well done. Thank you Mary. In March, the National Council unanimously passed a tribal resolution matching tribal funds with state, IHS, and local county resources, totaling over \$20 million to fund 16 projects in 10 communities across the reservation fully. Various projects include wastewater treatment plants and repairs, public pump station replacements, Beggs Lake Dam repair, and numerous primary water line replacement and repairs. This incredible commitment to infrastructure on the reservation demonstrates that we’re here for our communities and neighbors.

As part of the Inter-Tribal Energy Management Council 2023 Summit at River Spirit, we got the privilege to honor and host FEMA Administrator DeAnn Criswell. The first site visit of the administrator to our tribal nation. We’re still the only Nation to receive a Federal Disaster Declaration authorizing local communities to receive assistance through the tribe. We also have the number one Tribal Disaster Mitigation plan in the country. And we are the authors of the Tribal Joint Field Operation Playbook, which has been distributed nationwide to all 579 Tribal Nations. Our work in emergency management and with FEMA is paying off, especially during winter events and emergencies. This tribe is recouping monies that are there and far too long weren’t utilized. As we look ahead to the coming future, to the coming year, we will continue to face numerous threats from the state of Oklahoma. We have all taken an oath as elected officials of this nation. We will honor that oath. We didn’t swear to bend to public pressure or outside interests. We swore to uphold and defend the Constitution of Muscogee (Creek) Nation and that is what we’ll do. Part of the responsibility with the affirmed Reservation is to explore every avenue and opportunities to enrich the lives of our citizens through the powers of the sovereign. For instance, our Oil and Gas Department was revived last year. We are amending codes to be more efficient, effective, and protective of our natural resources. For too long, precious resources that have been stripped out of the stolen land underneath us have been used to enrich the lives and generation of others. It’s time to reclaim a promise for the benefit of those that it was promised to. We realize that natural resources also reach a personal level for many citizens and we will protect you as well.

I’m excited about several other projects that are deep into the planning process. These include grocery stores, laundry service and aerospace manufacturing. We plan to expand our agribusiness to include a tribal co-op. In other areas we have serious conversations with some of our most reputable creative minds to expand our interest in film and television production and capitalize on the current demand for authentic, Native storytellers. We are well on our way to increasing our creative economy here on the reservation. I welcome the National Council to work with my administration to meet both the challenges and opportunities before us. I know that if we are working together, there is nothing we can overcome. With many dark periods behind us, our future is bright. May God bless you and our great Muscogee Nation.”



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SESSION PASSES
LEGISLATION TO FULL
COUNCIL RENAMING
WAGONER DISTRICT TO
KOWETV DISTRICT
NAME CHANGE OF HISTORICAL AND
SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE



The MCNNC held a joint Business, Finance, and Justice/Land, Natural Resources, and Cultural Preservation committee meeting in-person. (MM file)

HEW/LNC JOINT SESSION PASSES TO FULL
COUNCIL LEGISLATION INCREASING EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES OVER
RESERVATION
ADDITIONAL TOWER EQUIPMENT WILL BENEFIT EMS,
LIGHTHORSE, AND TRANSIT OPERATIONS

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - On Jan 23, the Health, Education, and Wellness 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 24-003 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute FY 2022, 2023, and 2024 105(l) renewal lease agreements with the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship Office passed with a vote of 8-0. It was sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud.

According to the Indian Affairs Office of Tribal Leases, “The 105(l) program is provided under the Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act (OSDEAA). A 105(l) lease is not a traditional lease but an agreement between Indian Affairs and a Tribe or Tribal Organization to reimburse facility costs. Costs may be reimbursed when a facility (or part of a facility) is used to carry

ment of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship Office passed with a vote of 8-0. It was sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud.

According to the Indian Affairs Office of Tribal Leases, “The 105(l) program is provided under the Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act (OSDEAA). A 105(l) lease is not a traditional lease but an agreement between Indian Affairs and a Tribe or Tribal Organization to reimburse facility costs. Costs may be reimbursed when a facility (or part of a facility) is used to carry

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - On Jan 23, 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:

NCA 24-007 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation creating a new law in MCNCA Title 30, Chapter 2, entitled “Legislative Districts” to name the Wagoner/Roger/Mayes district boundary jurisdiction to Kowetv District passed 9-0. It was sponsored by Representative Mark Randolph.

The law will rename the Wagoner District to the Kowetv District. The Wagoner District is in the northeast section of the MCN reservation and contains in whole or portions of Wagoner, Mayes, and Rogers Counties.

Per the legislation,

“The Kowetv were the second great Mvskoke tribe among the Lower Creeks. They headed the war side as the Kvsettv headed the peace side. Kowetv was a Tribal Town and one of the four Mother Towns of the Mvskoke Confederacy in what is now the Southeast United States. Kowetv and its branches settled in the Northern part of the new country on the Arkansas River, where most of their descendants still live. Their Square Ground was first located about two miles west of the present town of Coweta... Wagoner/Rogers/Mays, the former is not significant to the Muscogee Nation, historically or otherwise... The name Kowetv is more significant historically, being the Mother Town of numerous Muscogee Tribal Towns, also being a model of the present Muscogee government. The tribal town and remains of the ceremonial ground of Kowetv is permanently located within the district area.

During the discussion, legislation sponsor and Wagoner District Seat B Rep. Randolph stated, “I did speak to our elders, I went on two different day trips with them and everyone was for it. Before our community meeting everyone responded very well to it and everyone was in favor of changing the name back. It’s good for us to reclaim what was taken.”

Wagoner District Seat A Representative Charles McHenry stated, “I truly believe there was a name given to us as Wagoner district, but our name shows and says it’s Kowetva and that is our identity.”

The legislation is based on NCA 95-06, which renamed the Hughes District to the Tukvpytce District. The former Hughes District was made up of portions of Hughes and Seminole Counties. It was passed by the full council on Feb 7, 1995. An official signing of the bill took place in the executive branch on Feb. 1.

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

by MEREDITH JOHNSON
REPORTER

out ISDEAA approved programs, functions, services, or activities.”

There were no questions for discussion.

NCA 24-005 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fiscal relief funding in the amount of \$1,392,900 for the installation and optimization of broadband and communications tower equipment located within Okmulgee County, Oklahoma passed with a vote of 7-1 with Representative Robyn Whitecloud voting no. It was sponsored by Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. and co-sponsored by Rep. Whitecloud.

NCA 22-152 had previously authorized the purchase of broadband communications equipment.

The tower, owned by the MCN, has been operating on leased land. This legislation, NCA 24-005, will begin what MCN Director of Emergency Management Bobby Howard described during discussion as Phase II of the communication project and includes buying property the tower sits on. Howard stated, “We have cell coverage, but this is the cornerstone piece for the Nation to build out because we’ll have put the tower in Eufaula and the tower in Holdenville and we’ll have 100% saturation for communication for Lighthouse, EMS, Transit, Chief vehicles across the nation. So the benefit is that it builds upon the equipment that the nation has already purchased which is state of the art.”

Rachel Langley, a representative from MCN Reality, stated that the Nation is still waiting for the correct appraisal and other supporting documents.

Included in the bill is monies for the Tribal Utility Authority. Micah White, a representative from the Tribal Utility Authority, stated that to comply with FCC agreements this equipment is necessary. He stated, “The other piece of this legislation is the radios and communications equipment that outfits it for broadband purposes. The nation received the 2.5 Ghz spectrum license from the FCC in 2020 and as such we are responsible for meeting construction buildout times to convert that from lease to ownership. This is the first step in meeting that construction building out time, we have to have 50% coverage by 2025. That’s why the equipment was requested as well.”

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

A Health Threat Causing Missed School Days

In Oklahoma, it’s still legal to smoke in cars where kids are present. When children live with secondhand smoke at home, they suffer more asthma attacks, ear infections and respiratory illnesses — and rack up absences as a result. The research is clear. Why isn’t the air?

Learn more about the impact of secondhand smoke at:

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BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS BILL ADOPTED BY NARROW MARGIN FOR \$1.39M

TAX COMMISSION LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORIZATION RETURNED TO COMMITTEE



The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a quarterly session in person on Jan 27.

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a quarterly session in person on Jan 27.

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

TR 24-001 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of understanding between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Green Country Technology Center on behalf of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reintegration Department. Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the legislation, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

The MOU will provide fiber lineman construction training courses to citizens that will enable them to become accredited and certified in their field.

TR 24-002 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 Tax Commission and Pipestem Law, P.C. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the bill, which returned to committee by unanimous vote 15-0.

According to Rep. Golden, the bill was sent back to committee in order to ask MCN Tax Commissioner Mary Mashunkashey to ask further questions. If adopted, the bill will provide the tax commission with legal services pertaining to litigation, tax codes, enforcement of applicable tax laws and advising tax strategy.

TR 24-003 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute FY 2022, 2023, and 2024 105(1) Renewal Lease Agreements with the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship Office. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 15-0.

According to the bill, the renewal lease will offset tribal expenses incurred in the delivery

of the aid to the tribal government, specifically “member services” for the aforementioned fiscal years.

TR 24-004 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a temporary operating permit with Red Tail Fireworks L.L.C. for the operation of one temporary fireworks sales facility on tribal trust land. Speaker Randall Hicks sponsored the bill, which was unanimously adopted 15-0.

According to the bill, Red Tail Fireworks L.L.C will pay the nation \$1,000 to have the first right of refusal to lease the property at a fair rate for the next three years (2024-2026).

TR 24-005 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending TR 19-0976 (A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to suspend all special appropriations and donations) as amended by TR 20-150, TR 21-080, TR 22-128, TR 22-143, TR 22-150, TR 22-155, TR 22-170, TR 23-045, TR 23-066 and TR 23-096. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-2.

TR 19-076 suspended all special appropriations and donations. This bill will amend TR 19-076 to allow for a one-time donation to Native American LINK, Inc.

TR 24-001 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of Family Voices MCHB unwinding project grant for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Community and Human Services. Representative Mary Crawford supported the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

According to the bill, the \$8,500 grant will allow the department to participate in a full needs assessment for support to help families navigate the end of the public health emergency and the process of Medicaid redeterminations. It will allow the department to distribute materials to the community, participate in webinars,

focus group sessions and outreach efforts.

NCA 24-002 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the benefit of the Geospatial Department. Representative Robyn Whitecloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

According to the bill, the \$300,000 grant will support the exchange network by enhancing technology that will facilitate electronic collection, reporting, exchange sharing and data integration.

NCA 24-003 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fiscal relief funding for improvements to a building on tribal property located in Holdenville, Oklahoma. Rep. Cloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted near unanimously 14-1.

The \$496,330 expenditure will go toward improving governmental services to citizens in the southern regional area who were disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

NCA 24-004 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition for the benefit of the office of the Secretary of the Nation. Rep. Golden sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

According to the quarterly session agenda the bill will expend \$10,000 in grant funds.

NCA 24-005 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fiscal relief funding for the installation and optimization of broadband and communications tower equipment located within Okmulgee County, Oklahoma. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the bill. Rep. Whitecloud co-spon-

sored the bill. The bill was adopted by a margin of 9-6.

Rep. Whitecloud and Representative Dode Barnett called for a motion to postpone the bill, which failed. Opposition to the bill revolved around the argument that the equipment could not be installed on land that was not owned or leased by the Nation.

The bill will expend \$1,392,000 in ARPA funds that will purchase and install radio and broadband equipment. According to the bill it will increase public access to wireless internet services within the surrounding region.

NCA 24-007 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation creating a new law in MCNCA Title 30 Chapter 2, entitled “Legislative Districts” to name the Wagoner/Roger/Mayes District Boundary Jurisdiction to Kowetv District. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted unanimously 15-0.

The name change will honor the second tribe of the lower Creeks. Kowetv was a Tribal Town and one of the four Mother Towns of the Mvskoke Confederacy. The council believes the district’s new name is necessary because it will reflect the name of a historically significant Tribal Town. Wagoner/Rogers/Mayes reflects the Oklahoma counties the district area resides in and does not hold historical significance to the MCN.

NCA 24-008 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a donation to Native American LINK, Inc. Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted by a margin of 13-2.

The bill will expend \$5,000 in funds to go toward the praise choir. According to the bill, the organization is celebrating its 25th anniversary and is composed of several Muscogee (Creek) citizens. Their mission is to help women grow spiritually, strengthen family life and contribute to cultural preservation.

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

LEGAL NOTICE AD-2022-0003

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF:)
BRODY DEAN SADLER,)
DOB 05/16/2013,)
A Minor Child.)

Case No. AD-2022-0003
Judge Alexandra Masters

NOTICE OF HEARING ON BEST INTEREST
AND FINAL DECREE OF ADOPTION

THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

TO: JASON DEAN SADLER
Biological Father

NOW on this 30th day of January, 2024, the Petitioner, Cheri Kay Patterson, by and through her attorneys of record, Catherine Z. Welsh and Jim C. McGough, Welsh & McGough, PLLC, having filed her 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 the entry of a Final Decree of Adoption.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Court that this matter be, and it is hereby set for issuance of a Best Interest and the entry of a Final Decree of Adoption on the 5th day of March, 2024, at 10:00 o'clock 4 .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 CHILD, WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS

1

NEWMAN TARYOLE



Newman Taryole was born on January 1, 1934 to Winey Mae (Lowe) Taryole and Thomas (Nick) Taryole at the Taryole home place in Okemah, Oklahoma. He left this life on January 18, 2024 with family by his side in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Newman and family celebrated his 90th birthday at home on New Years Day.

He will be reunited with his parents, Thomas (Nick) Taryole and Winey Mae (Lowe) Taryole; Grandparents, Prince Taryole, Marfy Mickey, Jackson Lowe, and Jemima Harjo; sisters Thomasena Taryole and Thelma (Taryole) Barnett; two brothers, son, Thomas James Taryole; daughter, Norma Sue (Shorty) Taryole; granddaugh-

ter, Carrie Annie Taryole; grandsons, Jason William Cook and Carl (CJ) West Jr. niece, Thomasena Barnett and son-in-law Carl West Sr. grandsons, Thomas Albert Fixico and Robert Fixico Jr.

Surviving family who will miss him dearly are wife, Lydia (Barnett) Taryole; daughters, Barbara (Taryole) West and Natalie (Taryole) Hogner and husband Joe; sons, Norman (Bungie) and Donna Taryole, Newman Taryole Jr. and Laura; daughter, Nadine Fixico; 19 Grandkids, 23 great grandkids, nephews, who were like his sons, Thomas and Tyron Barnett; other nieces and nephews, uncle, Benjamin Lowe; aunts, Louise Lowe Watson, Linda Lowe; many cousins and acquaintances.

Newman was blessed to be raised in a traditional and Christian family; being taught the Mvskoke language and speaking fluently. Newman and Lydia (Barnett) Taryole were married on November 8, 1955 in Okemah, Oklahoma. They moved to Selma, California and Tacoma, Washington where Newman served in the army for two years. They later

moved back to the Okemah area. In early years he played baseball and softball. He and his cousin, Winford Taryole, pitched baseball for the Taryole and Lowe team, playing with his dad and uncles. Later he coached softball and basketball teams, both men and women's. He built two ball fields and had many tournaments where teams from all over would come to play. His occupations included working for Warehouse Market as a produce manager, Statewide tree service as a foreman and at the Bristow Indian Community Smoke Shop where he retired due to his health conditions.

Pallbearers were grandsons, Brandon West, Michael West, Christian Hogner, Nicholas Hogner, Jarrett Hogner, Timmy Taryole, Christopher Taryole, Jason Taryole, Robert Topfi, Ryan Taryole, and Trevor Taryole. Officiating the services for Newman Taryole was Oscar Hicks.

Wake Services were held Sunday, Jan. 21 at Hutchins-Maples Matherly Chapel. Funeral Services were held Tuesday, Jan. 23 at Hutchins-Maples Matherly Chapel. Burial will be at the Taryole Family Cemetery west of the Nuyaka Ceremonial Grounds.

A large red icon of a telephone handset with three curved lines representing signal waves.

ANONYMOUS
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918-304-6204

The logo for Mvskoke Media, featuring a stylized 'M' made of geometric shapes in red, black, and teal, followed by the text "MVSKOKE MEDIA".

MVSKOKE CITIZEN WINS THE MAKER NATION CHALLENGE

BUSINESS OWNER AMANDA RUTLAND FACES DIFFERENT CHALLENGES ON LOCAL LIVE STREAMED PROGRAM



Amanda Rutland's different jewelry pieces sit together. The gorget shown on the far left is the winning piece from the Maker Nation Challenge program. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. - The Maker Nation Challenge is a live streamed program that hosts different competitive series throughout the country. Talented artists come from around the country including Florida, Missouri, South Carolina, Louisiana and Oklahoma. These artists create their own works involving costuming, tattoos, special effects makeup and glass blowing. Streamed every Tuesday, the show brings in new obstacles for contestants to overcome while they craft their work within a four hour time frame. The show is shot at Cheyenne Sky Studio, an art studio in the Oklahoma City area.

On Jan. 9's episode Indigenous artists paid tribute with gorgets, including Mvskoke citizen Amanda Rutland (Mvskoke/Seminole). The episode featured three Indigenous Artists competing against one another. Ashley Adams served as the show's host, guest judges included Taylor Martin and Jessica Harjo.

The artists that participated in this challenge were Rutland, Greg Stice and Josh Stice. They each created a traditional gorget that represented Oklahoma City and their ancestry. After undergoing the difficult tasks presented by the show's challenge, Rutland came out on top as the winner.

Rutland is an Indigenous artist and owner of Indigo Art & Textile. She spoke about how she became interested in the show, the challenges she faced during the episode she appeared in and how she made her gorget piece.

Rutland has been working with metal for about three years. She is self taught from Youtube videos and craft courses involving metalsmithing. Her journey to learning the craft involved a lot of trial and error.

Among her many interests Rutland has a passion for Mvskoke art, specifically from the Mississippian era. Rutland has been to the Southeastern United States several times. When she went on a trip back in 2019 she noticed that there were not many gorget makers. During that time it inspired her to start making gorget pieces of her own. Her inspiration for her designs came from looking at pictures of preexisting pieces.

"Looking back I was like 'woah that's rough' and it was real sharp but it was still an accomplishment. I was like 'I did it, I made one' and so from there I was like how can I make the symbols?," Rutland said.

While searching through the iconography of symbols Rutland found a passion for seeking the story, and history behind each symbol. "It tells us the stories of who we are," Rutland said. The serpent is a symbol found in many of Rutland's pieces because it is one that she identifies with.

When Rutland designs her gorgets she mainly looks up to other Mvskoke artists. She not only looks at their vision, but the story that each work of art tells.

The person who taught Rutland about her Native culture, language and stories was her late father. Through her art pieces she developed a newfound connection with him.

"I really missed that connection and so just looking back on the experiences and things I had as

a child was like this is a way I can bring that and make that connection for others too because I do a lot of pieces that are custom," Rutland said. "People come up to me and say 'I really identify with this symbol because of my grandma' or 'this is our clan and I'm a veteran.'"

Rutland has appeared at different art markets including the Southeastern Art Market and various Christmas markets. According to Rutland, her pieces have sold well in the markets she has appeared in. Because she is self employed, Rutland is able to focus on her art business she founded in 2020. She learned a lot about what it takes to own a business including marketing and documentation paperwork.

Maker Nation Competition

This marked Rutland's first appearance on Maker Nation. Although Rutland had experience with art show competitions, this was unlike anything she had faced before. When Maker Nation producers first saw Rutland's work they were impressed, and reached out to schedule her on the program.

The process for booking contestants involved preliminary interviews, followed by two day of filming. Contestants then waited three and half months to see the episode finally air. Per the show's contract, Rutland had to keep her victory a secret. According to Rutland, she was unable to post pictures, or tell anyone that she won the competition.

Later on when the episode finally aired, Rutland's family gathered around at a watch party event on Facebook where family members could watch it together. Rutland's children were hooked by the show, especially her younger son who asked his mom all about what it was like starring on a competition show.

"It's kind of different watching yourself on TV but it was fun and just remembering the things of being able to interject like 'oh we were doing this at that time' and just kind of sharing the challenges," Rutland said.

The competition presented a different working environment



Amanda Rutland poses with the art pieces that won the Maker Nation challenge. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

for Rutland, one where she did not have every tool at her disposal like she would have at home. The absence of these tools made the gorget-making process longer than it would normally take. Additionally, Rutland only had four hours to complete her piece with the tools available to her. While the challenge was stressful, Rutland still had fun during the process.

Rutland was familiar with her competitors, the Stices. That familiarity made her feel at ease and created a friendly environment for each competitor.

Going into the competition Rutland admitted she was a little nervous because she did not know what all a competition show entailed. However she felt comfortable when it came time to make her gorgets; a familiar process in an unfamiliar environment.

Rutland made a piece that represented herself as an artist. She included the breakup of the Mississippian worlds from beneath, middle and above the world. Rutland also included a serpent as a personal touch, one she had not included before in the past. The gorget also included a dome to separate the worlds with a whirlpool including a water creature along with raccoon hands, representing her clan.

"I found that women wore beneath-world symbols and men would wear above-world symbols, this was reading through archeological papers of when they were doing exhibition," Rutland said.

Amanda Rutland poses with the art piece that won the Maker Nation challenge. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

In the drafting stage each competitor had to draw what they were going to make. In the middle of this stage, it was announced that each competitor would need to incorporate a bird into the design. Rutland made the decision to include wings in the background of her piece.

When it came time to start gathering the materials for the gorgets, Rutland had to manage her time wisely. Initially she noticed she was spending too much time when she started working on her gorget.

Next came time for soldering the gorget. Soldering is a process in jewelry making where the metals are cut, fluxed and torched. Once the desired design is set in place by the tools, it is then quenched in cold water. When it comes to gorget making, soldering must be set at a specific temperature in order to get the desired result. For Rutland, she struggled with torching.

At this point in the competition Martin came by to help Rutland fix the issues she was experiencing, recommending she use a larger tip for a larger flow. This made a huge difference, allowing Rutland to gain more time and add other materials to the piece. Rutland then made her piece darker with an antique look to contrast the layers. Next came time to saw down the outline.

Finally when the time was up and it was time for the judges to make their decision, Rutland was declared the winner of the competition. According to Rutland, she was shocked. Especially due to the fact that her fellow competitors created such great designs. For Rutland, this was her first award for a jewelry piece. "As an artist it meant a lot to me," Rutland said. She described the feeling as being a business owner making their first sale.

A Fulfilling Experience

Overall Rutland stated she had a positive experience with her appearance on the show because it made her step out of her comfort zone and challenge herself. She was also able to make great professional connections, especially with Harjo, who is the business owner of Weomepe Designs and the owner of Indigichic in Tulsa. This would prompt Harjo to ask Rutland to sell her art pieces in Harjo's shop.

"It's really opened a whole new path after competing and new opportunities so it was definitely beneficial and it was wonderful. I can't say enough good things about all of those people," Rutland said.

From this experience, Rutland's advice is to not let anything stop anyone from chasing their dreams and to always try, even if they do not know what they are doing. She has learned that there will be a lot of lessons learned during the process, which requires a humble heart and a keen ear to listen.

Rutland's sons have inherited their mom's creative talents in their own ways. They each have their own artistic way of thinking. Her oldest son enjoys writing stories and programming, her young-

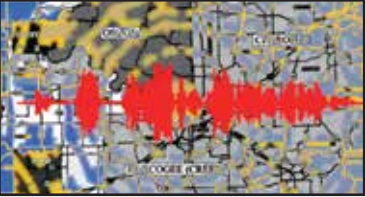
est likes to paint, draw and mold clay. One day Rutland hopes they will both help her with the family business.

Rutland's artwork has found its way across many different Oklahoma Native American communities including the Red Stick Gallery, Indigichic, Chickasaw Nation and Seminole Nation. Her work has even appeared east in the Mvskoke homelands. "My accomplishments that I'm proud of is that I have work for sale at the Ocmulgee Mounds gift shop in Macon, Georgia," Rutland said.

For further information about Rutland's business and artwork, visit the Indigo Art Textiles website. To watch the episode Rutland and the Stices were featured in, download the Maker Nation Challenge app.

MVSKOKE NATION ROCKED BY 5.1 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE

NO MAJOR DAMAGE REPORTED, BUT EFFECTS FELT ACROSS THE RESERVATION



An earthquake stemming from the city of Prague measured a 5.1 magnitude according to an Oklahoma geological survey. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

by BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION, Oklv. - On Friday, Feb. 2 at 11:28 p.m. (CT) many residents across Oklahoma, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and surrounding states felt the effects of an earthquake with a 5.1 magnitude originating near the city of Prague in Lincoln County. Although the city is not within the Nation's jurisdictional boundaries it is located just a few miles outside the west boundary. The depth of the earthquake was determined to be nearly two miles deep by an

Oklahoma geological survey. Friday night's earthquake took place along the Arbuckle formation, the same one that experienced a similar 5.0 magnitude earthquake in 2011. The Arbuckle formation is the state's deepest formation.

According to MCN Emergency Management Director Bobby Howard, there was no major damage sustained by the main tribal complex. Howard's team did not respond to any areas within the reservation for relief efforts.

On Saturday Feb. 3 the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's Oil and Natural Gas Conservation Division issued a directive for a change in operations to some oil and gas wastewater disposal wells near Prague in response to the seismic activity. All wells that dispose into the Arbuckle formation and that are located within a 10 mile radius were ordered to complete shutdown operations by Feb. 17.

SUBMISSIONS

FOSTER GARVEY ANNOUNCES OPENING OF TULSA OFFICE

Editor's Note: The following is a press release submission from Foster Garvey PC.

TVSLE, Okla. – Foster Garvey is pleased to announce the official opening of its Tulsa, Oklahoma office. Located in the Mid-Continent Tower at 401 South Boston Ave., this newest office is part of the firm's national expansion into the markets most critical to its clients' success. Led by R. Daniel Carter, who is a Principal in the Tribal Governments and Enterprises practice group, the Tulsa office further enhances the firm's services for Native American tribes and tribal entities.

"Foster Garvey takes great pride in our long history of service to Native American and Alaska Native tribes and their tribal communities," said firm Co-Chair Diana Shukis. "Our Tulsa office bolsters our ability to continue working closely with tribes to protect sovereignty and treaty rights, preserve histories and culture, and expand economic opportunities."

"We are thrilled to have Daniel leading our office in Tulsa," added firm Co-Chair Rafael Stone. "His dedication to public service and civic leadership, as demonstrated by his tenures in the federal government and as attorney general for tribes, as well as his work on various boards of directors such as the Tulsa Lawyers for Children and the Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission, further enhances our commitment to serving our clients and communities."

Daniel Carter, a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, joins Chloe Thompson Villagomez, based in the firm's Seattle office, in Foster Garvey's long-standing Tribal Governments and

Enterprises practice. The firm has decades of experience providing tribes and tribal entities with a full suite of legal services, including those relating to business and economic development, treaty rights, litigation, employment, gaming, real property, intergovernmental relations, historic preservation, financing, and government contracting. "Chloe is a brilliant attorney with extensive experience in treaty rights litigation, economic development, employment matters and more. With almost 20 years of experience, including a decade as in-house tribal counsel, she has a deep understanding of tribal governments and their legal needs. I am excited about bringing Chloe's valuable insights to our legal representation of tribes in the Oklahoma area," said Daniel.

In addition to representing tribal governments and enterprises, Foster Garvey's entrance into the Oklahoma legal market allows for a broader range of legal services to the wide assortment of businesses operating across the state. "The legal market in Oklahoma is steeped in history, but it has been generally slower to adapt to modern needs. Foster Garvey is on the cutting edge of emerging legal issues, for example, those arising out of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and renewable energy. With Foster Garvey's expanded footprint into Oklahoma, businesses and entities will have increased access to legal services that have been difficult to find within Oklahoma's borders—intellectual property & technology, hospitality and entertainment, and investment management, to name a few," Carter said. More information about Foster Garvey can be found at www.foster.com.

CHIEF JUDGE ROGER WILEY RECEIVES THE JUDICIAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

NAICJA RECOGNIZES JUDGE FOR EXCELLENCE AND DEDICATION IN THE COURTROOM



Muscogee (Creek) District Court Chief Judge Wiley holds his NAICJA award. (Courtesy: MCN Communications)

Press Release MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

OKMULGEE, Okla. - On October 24, 2023, Chief Judge Roger Wiley of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court was presented with the Judicial Excellence Award by the National American Indian Court Judges Association (“NAICJA”). The award banquet took place at the NAICJA 54th Annual National Tribal Judicial and Court Personnel Conference at the River Spirit Casino Resort in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The award recognizes excellence and dedi-

cation in the courtroom, which Chief Judge Wiley possesses with his background as a litigator, a prosecutor, and as a judge. Chief Judge Wiley has 38 years of experience practicing law and counseling tribal governments, local governments, election boards, and citizens.

Chief Judge Wiley is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma (1978) and the New Mexico School of Law (1985). He began his career at the Stipe Law Firm and went on to become a prosecutor for the Taos County District Attorney’s Office in New Mexico. He also served as the City of McAlester Prosecutor from 1995-2022 and a Judge for the City of Krebs (2016-2022).

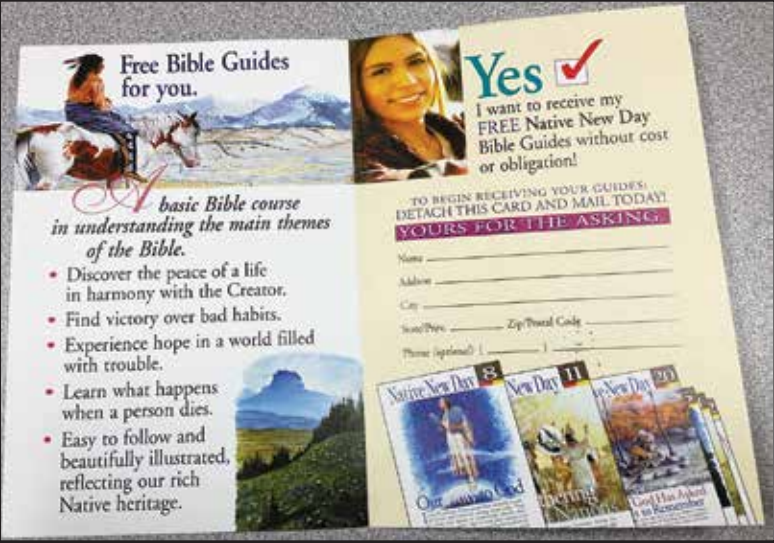
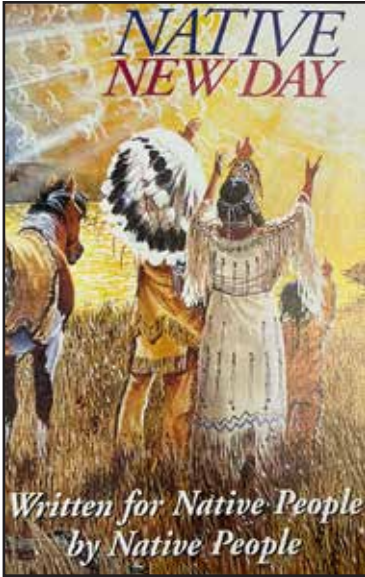
He was first appointed to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Supreme Court in 1995, where he served for 10 years and was also on the Board of Directors for the NAICJA. He served as the Attorney General for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for three separate Tribal Administrations, which makes him the longest serving Attorney General ever. He has also been extremely active in Indian Country, serving as a Judge at the Chickasaw Code of Federal Regulations Court, Tribal Court (1999-2002), District Court Judge

for the Chickasaw Nation (1999-2002), Supreme Court Justice at the Seminole Nation (2015-2022), and Supreme Court Justice for the Quapaw Nation (2018-Current). He has also served on a federally-sponsored Tribal Court Assessment Team that helps to determine the needs of Tribal Courts around the country. He has also been involved in many very prominent Indian Law cases such as *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, *Dollar General v. Mississippi Choctaw*, and *Muscogee (Creek) Nation v. Kialegee Tribal Town*. As the Chief Judge of the District Court, Justice Wiley has led the effort to expand the resources, the staff, and the dockets of the District Court to meet the growing demands of the Court that have resulted from the historic *McGirt* decision of the United States Supreme Court.

The District Court is extremely proud of Chief Judge Wiley and the recognition that he has received for his hard work and accomplishments over his distinguished career in law. He has served his local community and Indian Country very well and the District Court staff look forward to continuing to work with him on his vision of making the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court a model Tribal Court.

DISCOVERY NEW DAY BIBLE GUIDES

Discover Bible is offering Native New Day Bible Studies. This is a 30 lesson series that is done by correspondence. The guides are beautifully illustrated and are written for Native people, by Native people. If you are interested, contact us at Discover Bible School P.O Box 14208 Tulsa, OK. 74159-1208.



JONATHON ISOLA

I am a first generation college graduate in my family and just graduated with my Master’s of Business Administration from Texas A&M at Corpus Christi. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Muskogee (Creek) Nation’s Higher Education Department for their support during this journey as I wouldn’t have been able to do this without them. I would like to thank my wife Diane Michelle Nelson for

her support and wisdom during this process. Many times I thought about giving up, if it wasn’t for her guidance and support I would have. I am thankful for my faith and many prayers from church and my wonderful in-laws, Tom and Ruth who supported and prayed for my success along the way. I also would like to thank my sister, Julie Eldrige for her moral support.



OBITUARIES (CONT.)

LEGAL NOTICE (CONT.)

SHIRLEY CARVAJAL

Shirley Carvajal peacefully passed away on Wednesday, December 27, 2023 at her home in South Gate, California at the age of 68. She was surrounded by her loved ones as she entered eternal peace. Before leaving, she fought a tough battle against peritoneal cancer. Shirley was born on December 10, 1955 in Lomita, California to Cecil Johnson and Fannie Mae Johnson (Harjo); proud Muscogee Creek from the Alligator Clan.

Shirley accomplished a lot in her lifetime. After graduating from Dominguez High School in Compton California (Class of 1973), she landed employment at the American Indian Center in Compton California. Later, she pursued Job Corps in Astoria, Oregon and earned a business certificate. In due time, Shirley gained a position in Word Processing at Bank of America. With her expertise and knowledge, she went on to obtain a position as a legal secretary from which she happily entered retirement at the end of 2020.

Shirley enjoyed many things but nothing like sewing; a trait she learned in high school in home economics. Approximately in 2000 she joined a quilting class in Norwalk, California and continued attending other classes in Pico Rivera, California until the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020. Throughout her journey, she made many friendships. She was a no nonsense kind of woman, but she liked a good laugh! At home, Shirley loved her family dearly, especially her grandkids. A piece of her heart was always back in Oklahoma. She tried her very best to travel and visit family out there as often as she could. Although her time was cut short on earth, she will live on through us and our memories of her.

Shirley is preceded in death by her parents Cecil Johnson and Fannie Mae Johnson (Harjo); her brothers - Don and Yuna Johnson; and her sisters - Marri Sue and Angela Johnson.

Shirley leaves behind her husband, Karl Carvajal; sisters Esther, Cecilia, and Louise Johnson,



brother Benjamin Johnson; her daughters Roxanne Carvajal and her husband Manuel Marquez; Christina Carvajal and her husband Fred Hernandez; her grandsons-Christopher, Miles, Derek, and Manuel Marquez, Freddy Hernandez; her granddaughter-Nori Hernandez; and many nieces, nephews, and other family members.

Shirley will be cremated and later taken to Oklahoma to have her ashes spread with her family.

CASSIDY RITCHIE

Cassidy Danielle Ritchie, 39, of Tulsa, OK, passed from her earthly home to her heavenly home. She was born on Friday, June 15, 1984, in Claremore, OK to John Chris Ritchie and Cheryl Annette (Smith) Ritchie. Cassidy was employed in retail sales and was a great salesperson because everyone who met her loved her. She enjoyed watching television shows like “Grey’s Anatomy,” “Big Brother,” and “Shameless.” She also liked to shop, go out to eat, have fun at casinos, and socialize with her friends. Her greatest pleasure was spending time with all her children and visiting her son Joey at OU.

Cassidy is survived by her parents; sons, Joey, David and Troy Ritchie of Tulsa, OK; her daughters, Shelby Ritchie and Kennedy Ritchie of Tulsa, OK; brother, John “Kyle” Ritchie and wife, Danielle; two nephews, Jonathan “Kaleb” Ritchie and Konnor Ritchie of Sand Springs, OK. Preceded in passing by her grandparents John and Norma Ritchie, and Troy and Helen “Grandma Bingo” Smith. She also had numerous family members, coworkers, friends, and acquaintances who loved her and will miss her very much.

Even though Cassidy was taken from us way too soon, she will always be remembered for her



beautiful smile, kind heart, and loving nature.

A Cross Ceremony was held Feb. 2 in the area where she was recovered in Catoosa, Okla. A Celebration of Life service was held at the Rose Bowl Event Center in Tulsa, Okla.

JV-2023-22

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

IN THE MATTER OF:)
H.V.; DOB: 03/02/2018) JV-2023-22
Alleged Deprived Child(ren).)

JUVENILE SUMMONS

THE MUSCOGEE NATION to: HARVEY VICTOR

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a Petition has been filed in the Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation alleging that the above-named child is a deprived child and that, as the parent of said child, H.V., you have been named as the Respondent, all as more fully set out in the Petition.

YOU ARE THEREFORE ORDERED TO APPEAR at the Courtroom of the District Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on the 11th day of April, 2024 at the hour of 9:00 a.m. for an **Adjudication/Disposition Hearing** and to there remain subject to the call of the Court until discharged, so that you may be advised of the allegations and may answer that you admit or deny the allegations of the Deprived Petition.

You may seek the advice of any attorney on any matter relating to this action at your own expense. Or, if you are qualified as indigent, an attorney can be appointed for you.

IF YOU FAIL TO ATTEND THIS HEARING, YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS MAY BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED AND YOU MAY BE CITED FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT AND A BENCH WARRANT MAY BE ISSUED FOR YOUR ARREST.

Issued this 30 day of JANUARY, 2024.

[Signature]
Deputy Court Clerk
Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court

[Seal]

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

IN THE MATTER OF:)
H.V.; DOB: 03/02/2018) Case No. JV 2023-22
Alleged Deprived Child(ren).)

JUVENILE SUMMONS

THE MUSCOGEE NATION to: UNKNOWN FATHER

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a Petition has been filed in the Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation alleging that the above-named child(ren) is a deprived child and that, as the parent of said child, H.V., you have been named as the Respondent, all as more fully set out in the Petition.

YOU ARE THEREFORE ORDERED TO APPEAR at the Courtroom of the District Court of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on the 11th day of April, 2024 at the hour of 9:00 a.m. for an **Adjudication/Disposition Hearing** and to there remain subject to the call of the Court until discharged so that you may be advised of the allegations and may answer that you admit or deny the allegations of the Deprived Petition.

You may seek the advice of any attorney on any matter relating to this action at your own expense. Or, if you are qualified as indigent, an attorney can be appointed for you.

IF YOU FAIL TO ATTEND THIS HEARING, YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS MAY BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED AND YOU MAY BE CITED FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT AND A BENCH WARRANT MAY BE ISSUED FOR YOUR ARREST.

Issued this 30th day of January, 2024.

[Signature]
Deputy Court Clerk
Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court

[Seal]