



THE

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# MVSKOKE NEWS

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The new Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship building begins to take shape on the main tribal complex. (Jerrad Moore/MM)

## MCN CITIZEN SERVICES BUILDING CONSTRUCTION UPDATE COMPLETION DATE NOW 1ST QUARTER 2026

by **JERRAD MOORE**  
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee Creek Nation Citizen Services Building held its groundbreaking on Dec. 12, 2023. It is now a year into the project and Mvskoke Media has an update on its progress.

The information in this update was provided by Candor Build-

ing Solutions via Muscogee Creek Nation Press Secretary Jason Salsman. It is current up to Nov. 30, 2024.

The project has encountered a few challenges that have altered the completion date. Early design changes led to delays that moved the completion date back six

**CITIZENSHIP BUILDING**  
*Continued from Page 2*

## PELTIER GOING HOME AFTER 46 YEARS IN PRISON

AIM ACTIVIST'S LIFE SENTENCE IN PRISON COMMUTED BY FORMER PRESIDENT BIDEN

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

WASHINGTON D.C. - Indian Country and amnesty activists let out a resounding sigh of relief on former President Biden's last day in office when it was announced that Native American activist Leonard Peltier's life sentence in prison would be commuted. Peltier, who had been serving time for the killings of two FBI agents, will now transition to home confinement. This action means that Peltier will be allowed to serve the remainder of his sentence from home, it does not exonerate him from the crimes he was convicted of.

"It's finally over - I'm going home," Peltier said in a statement released by NDN Collective. "I want to show the world I'm a good person with a good heart. I want



Leonard Peltier is now a free man after serving 46 years of a life sentence for crimes that he maintained he did not commit. (MM File)

to help the people, just like my grandmother taught me."

Peltier is an 80 year old citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and was previously active in the American Indian

Movement (AIM), fighting for Native American Rights. In 1975 Peltier was involved in a shootout

**LEONARD PELTIER**  
*Continued on Page 7*

## OU HELPS DOCUMENT INDIGENOUS HISTORY

THE HISTORY OF THE MUSCOGEE AND OTHER INDIGENOUS TRIBES WERE BROUGHT TO LIFE IN A PROJECT BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

by **THOMAS JACKSON**  
REPORTER

NORMAN, Okla. - The history of the Muscogee people, and of Indigenous people in general, is one that is filled with stories of all types, whether they be reports about the cultures of various tribes, details of the various struggles that Indigenous people have had, or simply Indigenous people telling their life's story.

At the University of Oklahoma, an effort is being made to preserve some of these stories through written transcripts of interviews and reports that have been digitally archived in two digital collections that are accessible and open to the general public. These collections, which include stories spanning from 1861 to 1936, and were collected in 1937, are known as the Indian-Pioneer Papers.

The stories include a variety of interesting tales and anecdotes, such as the story of Mary Herrod. In her interview, which was documented in the article "Life and Experiences of a Creek Indian Woman, Mrs. Mary Lewis Herrod," a 1937 interview with Herrod, her husband Goliah Herrod, and the interviewer, Ella Robinson, the interviewer documented how Mary Herrod was Creek but grew up near the present-day location of Okay, Oklahoma, within the bounds of the Cherokee Nation's reservation. This was because of an agreement between the Creek Nation and the Cherokee Nation that allowed citizens of both nations to live and own property in either nation's territory.

Another interview, titled



A view of Bizzell Memorial Library at the University of Oklahoma, where some of its collections are kept. (Shutterstock)

"Interview with Hon. John A. Jacob," details the stories of John A. Jacob and his father, Frank Jacob. Frank Jacob lived near Fort Holmes, the marker for which is located about 5 miles south of Holdenville, OK, and learned how to speak English from the soldiers stationed there. Jacob would mention that just west of Fort Holmes, a battle was fought between Indigenous people from the Osage Nation and the Creek Nation on a hill that would be known as the Osage Hill. The interview, done by Nettie Cain in 1937, documented the following:

"About this time, a bunch of Osage Indians came down from Kansas and were planning to steal some of the Indians ponies, so the Creeks made charge on them, killing about twenty of them. The Hill where the battle was fought is about six or eight miles west of Ft. Holmes and is known as the Osage Hill. They would scalp the other Indians" (Paragraph 6).

Nettie Cain, the interviewer, would then go on to document John A. Jacob's story, including how, according to OKHistory.org, the city of Holdenville, OK was

surveyed on land belonging to Jacob and his father, permanently etching him and his family into the town's history.

These interviews also help to tell the history of the Muscogee Nation, such as an interview done by Billie Byrd, documented as "The Migration To The West of the Muskogees," which was done with Mary Hill, a Muscogee woman from Okfuskee Town (tulwa), Okemah, Oklahoma. Hill would tell the story of her grandmother, Sallie Farney, who was part of the Creek tribe that was forced from their lands and made to go on what would be known as the Trail of Tears. She would mention that the forced removal came as a shock to some, as documented by Byrd.

"Many years ago, my grandmother, Sallie Farney, who was among those that made the trip to the West from Alabama, often told of the trip as follows: ... "The command for a removal came unexpectedly upon most of us. There was the time that we

**PIONEER PAPERS**  
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Aryn Ward, Jaycie, and Chris Orloske perform in a trio on the c flute, euphonium and clarinet. (Courtesy: Aryn Ward)

## MVSKOKE FLAUTIST ARRANGES TRIO

ARYN WARD DISCUSSES PURSUING A MUSIC DEGREE, TEACHING MVSKOKE CULTURE AT LARGE, ALL WHILE RAISING FOUR KIDS

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

HOUSTON, TX. - Music is a melodic thread that weaves together Aryn Ward's life and family. Originally from Oklahoma, Ward is a Mvskoke citizen who always seems to have an instrument in her hand. She plays many, including c flute, cedar flute, piano, clarinet, bass clarinet, saxophone as well as bass drum and snare drum. Ward's husband is a band director, the two share four children who all play a musical instrument. Recently at a classroom performance at Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School (MPVA), Ward and her daughter Jaycie shared their musical talent and Mvskoke culture by performing in a trio. The trio performed a piece recorded over one hundred years ago.

Ward is a music major at Houston Christian University pursuing a bachelor's degree. When tasked with researching a topic for a research paper, Ward came across

the book, "Ceremonial songs of the Creek and Yuchi Indians" by Frank G. Speck in the Library of Congress. An arrangement that stuck out to her was Fütco, a Mvskoke ceremonial dance song originally recorded in 1911. According to Ward, the piece had never been recorded on instruments until 2025.

"I choose this piece to explore the effect of cultural genocide on the Muscogee Nation's music," Ward said. "I was surprised that it even existed. I wanted to compose something that would bring the song back to life over a century later. That was my intention, to have the songs heard in a way that freed the compositions from a dusty old book."

When it comes to composing pieces for wind instruments, Ward keeps culture in mind. She noted that she wants to bring Indigenous arrangements back to the table because it is music that most

**MVSKOKE FLAUTIST**  
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**CITIZENSHIP BUILDING**  
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weeks. Concrete received from Twin Cities Ready Mix did not meet the strength requirements for the project, which led to a seven-week delay and mix designs being changed. Approximately 250 feet

of grade beams had to be removed and replaced due to concrete breaks.

Concrete placement and earthwork was also slowed by weather impacts such as rain.

According to Candor Building Solutions, the building is on track and targeting a completion date of the first quarter of 2026.

**MVSKOKE FLAUTIST**  
*Continued from Page 1*

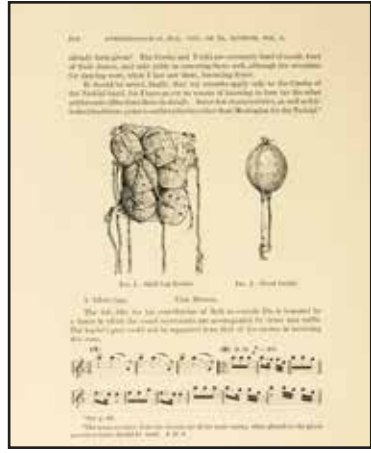
people have not heard before. When Ward and Jaycie performed their piece at MPVA, they also had the opportunity to share about the Mvskoke culture, and what it means to be a dual citizen of a sovereign nation. Ward and Jaycie also took the opportunity to wear their ribbon skirts as well as bone and dentalium shells. Feedback from students revealed an attentive response to learning about other cultures.

Another piece of culture Ward brought to share with students was a turtle shell rattle. According to Ward, the students were somewhat frightened by it. Hand-drawn illustrations of a turtle shell rattle are found in "Ceremonial songs of the Creek and Yuchi Indians". For Ward, she found it exciting to share an object in person that was found as an illustration in a book published over a century ago.

**Ward's Musical Career**

Originally from Sapulpa, Ward began playing percussion instruments in elementary school. She played in the marching band, performing on the drumline. She went on to earn a communications degree, and works as a photographer and videographer. Ward cites some of her music inspirations as Yakima bassoonist Dr. Jacqueline Wilson, Diné composer Raven Chacon and Diné pianist Connor Chee.

Most recently Ward was



(Library of Congress)

invited to perform an improv duet in the They, Who Sound Concert Series with White Mountain Apache musician Laura Ortman at the Lawndale Art Center in downtown Houston. Known for her compositions and collaborations, Ortman is a classical musician who plays the Apache violin. The concert series was hosted by Nameless Sound, an arts education organization whose mission is to explore new methods in sound and provide music to their community.

During this past year's Native American Heritage Month Ward performed the fish dance for Parker Elementary School. Ward's cedar flute was hand crafted by Mvskoke flute maker William Harjo.

"I called him and he went and cut down a cedar branch for me," Ward said. "That (the cedar flute) was fun to play."

Ceremonial songs of the Creek and Yuchi Indians is currently in the public domain and is free to read in the Library of Congress.

**PIONEER PAPERS**  
*Continued from Page 1*

noticed that several overloaded wagons were passing our home, yet we did not grasp the meaning. However, it was not long until we found out the reason. Wagons stopped at our homes and the men in charge commanded us to gather what few belongings could be crowded into the wagons. We were to be taken away and leave our homes never to return. This was just the beginning of much weeping and heartaches" (pgs 1-2).

Another type of interview would be done by the researchers for the purpose of documenting the cultures of the various tribes, such as another interview by Billie Byrd in 1937, titled "Customs Related to Muskogee-Creek Ceremonies," which was done

with an individual identified as "Simmer" in an area located 18 miles southwest of Okemah, Oklahoma known as Fish Pond Town (tulwa). In this interview, which documented everything from games, to dances, to discussions of language, and music, Byrd would describe a game that would, according to them, turn into a battle frequently, and would be frequently betted on by women of the tribe using garments, blankets, shawls, and other items.

"This game is played between two goals which are placed about two hundred yards apart. The game is similar to basketball as the ball has to be started in the center of the designated ground between the goals. When the game is to commence, the players are at center and instructed by a man to avoid a fight but play a fair game."

There is a man appointed to act as a score keeper. He has in his possession twenty short sticks, which he sticks (one at a time) into the ground when one side make a goal. It is the purpose of the opposing sides to hit the poles or throw the ball between the goals. When the sticks are stuck into the ground, the side having more sticks stuck into the ground for his side is the winner" (pgs 1-2).

These articles are just an example of the wide array of interviews and articles collected by the University of Oklahoma for their Indian-Pioneer Papers collections. They are an important method of collecting the history of the Muscogee Nation, and of Indigenous people in general. These types of collections must be maintained and protected.

**CHIEF HILL PINS NEW SWAT OFFICERS IN SPECIAL CEREMONY**

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Muscogee (Creek) Nation Lighthorse Police now has four new SWAT Officers and a new Deputy Chief of the Investigations and Special Operations unit. Jere Lee Smith was promoted to Deputy Chief of the Investigations and Special Operations unit after previously leading the SWAT and Tactical Units. The new SWAT officers include Maverick Williams, Timothy Deere, Kyle Johnson and Jacob Patton. According to a public statement by MCN Principal Chief David Hill, just a few hours later the SWAT team was called into action in Muskogee where they successfully disengaged a potentially dangerous situation and took into custody a barricaded suspect without incident. He described the situa-



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill is pictured with Lighthorse SWAT Officers at a special pinning ceremony. (Courtesy: MCN Communications)

tion as a timely example of "the growth in this area of our operations and how our commitment to public safety is strengthened by the work of these fine officers."

Chief Hill went on to express his pride for the department and the new SWAT officers.

"I was honored to take part in a special pinning ceremony with our Muscogee Nation Lighthorse Police Department," Chief Hill said. "Congratulations to all of them. I feel so fortunate to have shared this incredible day with their colleagues and families."

**CHEWIN' THE CUD**

by **CHRIS AZBELL**  
CMN EXTENSION OFFICE

Mvskoke Gardener Program: Empowering Communities Through Horticulture

Hesci readers and Happy New Year. The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) Extension Program is proud to announce the start of the Mvskoke Gardener Program, a comprehensive nine-week course designed to educate and empower participants with valuable horticultural skills, traditional ecological knowledge, and a deeper understanding of food sovereignty.

Program Details:  
Duration: 9 weeks, every Tuesday and Thursday, 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Start Date: February 18, 2025  
Location: College of the Muscogee Nation Campus - Classroom Building

Cost: Free of charge  
Native Preference: Priority will be given to Native applicants. Limited space available.  
Attendance Requirement:

Participants must attend at least 80% of classes

Completion Certificate: Awarded to qualifying candidates

Participants will explore a wide range of topics, including soil nutrition, greenhouse operations, composting, water sustainability, pest management, and the cultivation of Mvskoke medicinal plants. Each session will focus on practical knowledge and hands-on activities, ensuring attendees leave with both expertise and confidence.

Class Topics Include:  
Soil Nutrition  
Greenhouse Operations  
Composting Techniques  
Water Quality and Irrigation  
Pest and Disease Management

Mvskoke Medicinal Plants  
Orchards: Fruits and Nuts  
Hydroponics  
Seed Saving and Storing  
Pollinator Importance

The program concludes with a post-test, course certification ceremony, and a celebratory dinner.

Limited Space - Register Today! Space for the Mvskoke Gardener Program is limited, so early registration is encouraged. Interested participants can sign up by visiting [www.extension.cmn.edu](http://www.extension.cmn.edu), navigating to the Events Tab, and following the registration instructions. Applicants can also use the QR code below for quick registration.

For more information, contact Christopher Azbell at 918-549-2861 or via email at [cazbell@cmn.edu](mailto:cazbell@cmn.edu). Don't miss this opportunity to connect with tradition, sustainability, and community through the Mvskoke Gardener Program. Sign up today and grow your knowledge alongside your garden! Mvto.



(Courtesy: Chris Azbell)

**KENNETH BUNNER**

**Veteran Spotlight**  
MUSCOGEE NATION  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
SERVICES OFFICE

This week we are honoring tribal veteran Sergeant First Class Kenneth M. Bunner for his service to the U.S. Army, United States and the Muscogee Nation.

During his 28 years of service Sergeant First Class Bunner held several military positions including being a U.S. Army Special Forces Green Beret and was awarded the following:

Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (4th Award), Meritorious Unit Commendation, Army Good Conduct Medal (3rd Award), Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Vietnam Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Noncommissioned Officer's Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral 3, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas



(Courtesy: Muscogee Nation Veterans Affairs Services Office)

Service Ribbon (2nd Award), Republic of Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Medal Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Marksman Marksmanship Qualification Badge with Rifle Bar, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge, Special Forces Tab.

Mvto Sergeant First Class Bunner for your service.

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The Mvskoke News reserves the right to edit all submissions for space, style and grammar. Receipt of submissions does not obligate The Mvskoke News in any regard. The Mvskoke News is mailed from Stigler, Oklahoma to all enrolled Muscogee (Creek) citizens' households upon request. Inquiries should be directed to Mvskoke Media.

To submit a change of address or a letter to the editor, call: 918-732-7720 or email: [info@mvsokemedia.com](mailto:info@mvsokemedia.com).



# BIDEN ADMINISTRATION MAKES FINAL PUSH FOR WATER RIGHTS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

## BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW ALLOCATES \$700M TO DELIVER CLEAN DRINKING WATER AND DEVELOP SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE ON TRIBAL LANDS

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

WASHINGTON D.C. - In the waning weeks of President Joe Biden's presidency, his administration announced a \$700 million allocation for clean drinking water and sanitation infrastructure throughout Indian Country. According to Indian Health Services, the allocation comes from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The bill was originally passed in November 2021 and stands as one of the administration's most sizable legislative accomplishments to date. This allocation marks the earliest in the fiscal year BIL funding has been announced. It will support "accurate planning and purchasing for critical projects".

According to the Indian Health Service, an estimated 110,000 American Indian and Alaskan Native households will gain access to sanitation facility services through the allocation. The projects it prioritizes aligns with recommendations from tribal leaders. In particular, areas within the Lower Colorado Basin System will see improvements to water distribution structures, advanced metering infrastructure and farm efficiency improvements. This affects water use by the Colorado River Basin Tribes Partnership, also known as the Ten Tribes Partnership, who reserve water rights

in the basin and use 20 percent of its mainstream flow.

United States Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland remarked that those particularly in Western communities will see many benefits from the allocation.

"President Biden's Investing in America agenda has allowed us to begin work on long overdue water storage projects, providing clean, reliable drinking water to families, farmers and Tribes throughout the West," said Haaland. "The investments we're announcing today will continue to fund these important efforts, expediting essential water storage projects and providing increased water security to Western communities."

Indian Health Services Director Roselyn Tso said the allocation comes from a long list of other projects the Biden administration has overseen over the past four years. These projects are the result of partnerships between various federal departments and partners.

"The projects funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are making substantial improvements in clean water and sanitation systems in our tribal communities," Tso said. "In the first three years of BIL funding, the IHS supported over 765 construction projects across all IHS areas. With the FY 2025 funding, the IHS will allocate \$700 million to support an additional 67 construction projects. As we enter the fourth year of BIL funding, the



Much-needed improvements to water access in western communities throughout Indian Country has just received a multimillion dollar boost from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. (Courtesy: Indian Health Service)

IHS is delighted to continue collaborating with our tribal partners and federal partners, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Reclamation to ensure safe drinking water, reliable sewage systems, and solid waste disposal facilities are made available to tribal communities throughout Indian Country."

To learn more about the IHS Sanitation Facilities Construction Program, visit <https://www.ihs.gov/dsfc/>.



Members of the community sit in on a Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Environmental Services stakeholder meeting. (Courtesy: MCNOES)

## FINAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING & COMMUNITY PRESENTATION PUBLIC IS INVITED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT POLLUTANT EMISSION REDUCTIONS, NEW JOB CREATION AND FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE STATE

Editor's Note: The following is a press release from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Environmental Services.

OKMULGEE, OK - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Environmental Services (MCNOES) is announcing the completion and submission of the MCN Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) to reduce pollutant emissions in the region. The CCAP is the final component of a Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) awarded to MCNOES in 2023.

Join online or in-person for the final stakeholder meeting and community presentation on Friday, Feb. 7, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the MCN Housing Building, 2nd-floor conference room 257A, 2951 N. Wood Drive in Okmulgee, OK.

The agenda includes a welcome, discussions on the Priority & Comprehensive Climate Action Plans, MCN CPRG Grant Activity, and GHG Emissions Analy-

sis & Findings, covering both the State of Oklahoma and Muscogee (Creek) Nation emissions. We will also explore the carbon sequestration of land cover types in MCN, review the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and its components, and present the Final Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) measures, including the sectors and measures involved and the plan submission process. The meeting will conclude with outlining the next steps.

The MCN CPRG Plan aims to reduce pollutant emissions, create high-quality jobs, and spur economic growth in the state. The CPRG Plan will enable MCN tribal agencies and departments to compete for federal grant funding for energy infrastructure and investments in technology. The CPRG Plan development process is funded through a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

### MCNOES MEETING

Continued on Page 7



## Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election Board

### Primary Election Absentee Ballot & Registration Deadline

A mass mailing of

### ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST FORMS

will be mailed to all voters on February 14th, 2025

**Deadline to submit Absentee Ballot Request Forms**

**August 27th, 2025 @ 5 PM CST**

**Voter Registration Deadline**

**September 9th, 2025 @ 5 PM CST**

**All forms can be found on the website. Absentee Ballot Request forms will be available on the Election Board website February 14th 2025. Voters may request forms to be mailed, faxed or emailing the Election Board email.**

Contact us for any information

Email :Election@mcn-election.com

Office Phone : 918-732-7631

Fax : 918-938-0799

Mailing : P.O Box 878, Okmulgee, OK 74447

Scan QR Code for website Information





COMMITTEE COVERAGE

LIMITS ON CHIEF'S NOMINATIONS APPROVED BY BFJ COMMITTEE

THE NOMINATION FOR GERI WISNER TO BECOME ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS ALSO PULLED FROM THE BALLOT BY PRINCIPAL CHIEF HILL



(MM File).

by THOMAS JACKSON REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) National Council held the Business, Finance and Justice Committee session at the Mound Building on Jan. 16.

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 25-008 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Geraldine (Geri) Wisner to serve as the Attorney General of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation was passed by the committee. The resolution was sponsored by

Representative Dode Barnett of the Creek District. It was pulled from the agenda by Principal Chief Hill.

NCA 25-009 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of the Interior, to the amount of \$168,427.00, for the benefit of the Lighthorse Police Department, was passed by the committee. The law was sponsored by Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. of the Okmulgee District. It was passed with a vote of 4-0.

If adopted, this law will pay for fringe benefits, indirect costs, and pay for additional hours worked for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Lighthorse Police department.

NCA 25-010 A law of the

Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the U.S. Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions Fund Assistance Agreement Grant, to the amount of \$1,265,000.00, for the benefit of the Mvskoke Loan Fund, was passed by the committee. The law was sponsored by Rep. Harjo Sr. It was passed with a vote of 4-0.

If adopted, this law will allow the Mvskoke Loan Fund to access more money to be lended out to its clients.

NCA 25-011 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 26, Chapter 2, § 2-201.E, entitled "Compensation", was passed by the committee. The law was sponsored by Representative Randall Hicks of the Okfuskee District. It was passed with a vote of 4-0.

If adopted, this law will increase the amount of compensation given to District Trial Court judges for the increase in their workload.

NCA 25-018 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 16 § 1-108, entitled "Legitimate purposes for commissions to fill vacancies," and § 1-109, entitled "Commissions no substitution for joint approval of appointments," and creating new subsection, entitled "Nominations" in MCNCA Title 16, Chapter 1, entitled "Organization of the Executive Office of the Principal Chief" was passed by the committee. The law was sponsored by Rep. Barnett, and was co-sponsored by Rep. Harjo, Rep. Hicks, Representative Galen Cloud, Representative Mary Crawford, Representative Joyce C. Deere, Representative Patrick Freeman Jr., Representative Sandra Golden, Representa-

BFJ COMMITTEE

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(MM File)

HEW PASSES IHS ETHIC AWARD TO FULL COUNCIL

THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE ENDING HIV/HCV/SYPHILIS EPIDEMIC IN INDIAN COUNTY PROJECT GRANT HAD BEEN POSTPONED SINCE IT'S OCT. 2024 FEDERAL ALLOCATION

by MEREDITH JOHNSON REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - On Jan. 15, the Health, Education, and Welfare Committee held an in-person meeting. Passed legislation will go on to the next full council meeting, unless otherwise noted.

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

TR 25-001 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending TR 24-079 (a tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to apply for grant funds from the Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start and commit a tribal match) passed with a vote of 4-0. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored the legislation.

During discussion it was clarified that the original legislation,

TR 24-079, specified the tribal match at \$1,163,183. The amount is amended to \$742,321.

TR 25-002 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an agreement between the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health passed with a vote of 4-0. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored the legislation.

Spencer Torbett, an MCN attorney with the MCNDH, clarified during discussion this legislation will allow the MCNDH to recover costs from referred care from the DVA like ambulances and life flight.

NCA 25-001 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds

HEW COMMITTEE

Continued on Page 7



(MM File).

JOINT HEW/LNC PASSES LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING TEXANNA SMOKE SHOP RENOVATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL FAILS TO PASS \$654,995 APPROPRIATION NEEDED FOR THE RENOVATION

by MEREDITH JOHNSON REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - On Jan 21, 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 full council, unless otherwise noted.

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

TR 25-009 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the renovation/construction of a smoke shop for the Checotah Indian Community passed with a vote of 5-4. Representative Darrell Proctor sponsored and Representative Galen Cloud co-sponsored the legislation.

The Checotah Indian Community Texanna Smoke Shop at 419781 Texanna Road, Checotah, Oklahoma is in need of renovation/construction.

During discussion, Representative Mark Randopl asked if an \$85,000 loan to the community was paid off. Community representative Donna Williams responded that the payments are in good standing and the balance can be paid off if needed to secure the renovation funding. Rep. Proctor commented that the community has been working with tribal construction and has a current business plan.

NCA 25-019 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation in the amount of \$654,995 for the renovation of a smoke shop for the Checotah Indian Community failed with a vote of 3-6. Rep. Proctor sponsored and Rep. Cloud co-sponsored the legislation.

During discussion, Representative Dode Barnett commented that with a three-month compact set to expire it would be irresponsible to pass the legislation. Representative Mary Crawford mentioned the

HEW/LNC

Continued on Page 7

MCN UPDATES EMERGENCY REPAIR FOR LOW INCOME HOMEOWNERS

MCN FUNDS WILL PROCEED TO HELP PROTECT MUSCOGEE SACRED SITE OF HICKORY GROUND NEAR WETUMPKA, ALABAMA

by SHAYLN PROCTOR REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Okla. - The Muscogee (Creek) National Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee held a meeting in the Mound Building on Jan.14.

The committee addressed the following legislation, the interpretation of which is attributed to language in the bills. All legislation passed through committee will be presented at the next session for full council approval.

TR 25-003 A tribal resolution of the MCN authorizing the Bureau of Indian Affairs to execute a utility right-of-way agreement with Public Service Company of Oklahoma associated with the construction of a project in Wagoner County. Representative Mark Randolph and co-sponsor Representative Charles McHenry sponsored this legislation, which passed 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, a property requires a utility service installation for construction purposes. The Public Service Company agreed to maintain utilities to ensure the safety for the public, according to the bill.

TR 25-004 A tribal resolution of the MCN approving a revised eligibility, admissions and occupancy policy for the MCN Department of Housing. Rep. McHenry



(MM File)

sponsored this legislation, which was postponed until the next meeting 3-0.

TR 25-005 A tribal resolution of the NCB adopting an updated procurement policy for the Expenditure of Indian Housing Block Grant Funds. Rep. McHenry sponsored this legislation, which passed 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, there will be a procurement policy that will be updated to include the Procurement Standards of 2 CFR 200.

TR 25-006 A tribal resolution of the MCN adopting an updated emergency repair of privately owned homes policy of the MCN Department of Housing. Rep. Cloud sponsored this legislation which passed 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, the Department of Hous-

ing will be able to help low-income Native American homeowner families pay their deductibles amount on an insurance policy.

TR 25-007 A tribal resolution of the MCN adopting an updated payments and rents policy of the MCN Department of Housing. Rep. Cloud sponsored this legislation, which was postponed until the next meeting 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, the MCN Department of Housing will update the schedules of ceiling rents and payments for the homeownership, lease purchase and rental programs, according to the bill.

NCA 25-004 A law of the MCN authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the United States Department of

LNC COMMITTEE

Continued on Page 7



# INDIAN SWEETHEART MARKET ATTRACTS LARGE CROWD DESPITE COLD

DOZENS MADE THE TRIP TO THE GLENPOOL CONVENTION CENTER ON JAN. 18 DESPITE THE VERY COLD WEATHER

by **THOMAS JACKSON**  
REPORTER

GLENPOOL, Okla. - It was a chilly afternoon in Glenpool, but that didn't stop people from flocking to the Glenpool Convention Center to attend the Indian Sweetheart Market on Jan. 18. The convention center was packed full of people looking to have an afternoon of fun visiting the various booths and eating the delicious food provided by Autumn Star Catering. Music for the event was provided by a handful of musicians, including DJ Bravehorse, who handled music for most of the event, as well as a performance by musician Paul Anquoe and local band POAM, also known as Phate of a Marauder.

The booths at the event carried a wide array of items for sale, ranging from art such as paintings or caricatures, to jewelry and clothing of all kinds. There was also a variety of handmade goods, including beadwork and home decorations, and items such as soaps and cosmetics. The event was even attended by a caricature artist, John Whitfield of Caricatures by John, also known as the Caricature Extraordinaire, who drew a variety of pictures for attendees.

The primary caterer, Autumn Star Catering, also provided cheap and delicious food for any attendees who wanted it, with options includ-



John Whitfield, a visiting caricature artist, draws a piece for two kids during the Indian Sweetheart Market on Jan. 18. (Thomas Jackson/MM)

ing Indian tacos, rez burgers, frybread, chili dogs, and drinks like coffee and water. Desserts were also provided for sale by the event's featured artist, Tree Trunk Bakery, who sold cakes, macarons, cupcakes, and other baked goods.

Jon M. Tiger, an artist out of Eufaula, Oklahoma, described it as an enjoyable experience overall, and was happy to be able to meet new people and potential clients. He was also thankful to Tricia Alexander for working to show off local artists and creators. He is excited at the possibility of working to expand his audience, showcase his artwork, and to, in his words, "expose my tribal stories."

This happiness regarding the day's events were echoed by the event's organizer,

Tricia Alexander, the owner of Autumn Star Catering. She was very pleased with how the day went, and is excited at the possibility of future events like this one being set up.

"I'm very pleased with how the event went. We had steady attendance throughout the day, even before it was open to the public. We had a majority of returning artists, as well as several artists who set up with us for the first time. ... It's always nice seeing the variety of different styles and creativity. The DJ did a great job as well as the band that was last. We had frybread burgers, Indian tacos, and chili dogs once we ran out of frybread. I appreciate everyone's support, help, attendance, business, and encouragement."



Snowfall on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Main Tribal Complex rolled in mid morning on Jan. 9. (Courtesy: MCN Communications)

# REZ SEES FIRST SNOW OF 2025

TIPS ON HOW TO STAY SAFE AND WARM IN SPITE OF BURDENSOME ROAD CONDITIONS AND FRIGID TEMPERATURES

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - Snow found its way on the Mvskoke Reservation on Jan. 9, and stayed through the following weekend. Many districts across the reservation including Tulsa, Union and Broken Arrow closed due to cold weather and slick road conditions. Other districts such as Glenpool, Coweta and Sapulpa opted for distance learning. Many public transit services, including MetroLink Tulsa adjusted routes to accommodate dangerous road conditions. Muscogee (Creek) Nation, along with many other organizations closed in-person operations early to allow employees to avoid unsafe road conditions caused by snow and ice build up.

When sub-freezing temperatures hit it can make conditions hazardous for residents and motorists. MCN Emergency Management Department released tips on how to stay warm and safe during the winter season.

Power outages can raise big

safety concerns for residents, resulting in disrupted communications, utilities and transportation. In 2021, the neighboring state of Texas was hit by a winter storm that infamously resulted in a power grid crisis that killed 246 residents. Many died due to hypothermia because they did not have heat in their home.

If the power goes out it is advised that residents keep an emergency kit outfitted with winter gear and blankets to stay warm. Freezers and refrigerators must be closed. Generators should only be used outdoors away from windows. Do not use a gas stove or oven to heat a house or apartment. Have an alternative plan for medicine that needs to be refrigerated or medicine that uses power-dependent devices. Winter clothing, flashlights, extra batteries, blankets, first aid kits, as well as a three-day supply of water and food are always a good idea to have in place if severe winter weather is in the forecast.

## WINTER SAFETY TIPS

Continued on Page 7

# LEGAL UPDATES FOR JANUARY 2025

MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION IN SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH TULSA

by **JERRAD MOORE**  
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKMULGEE, Okla. - Oral arguments before the Muscogee Creek Nation Supreme Court in SC-2024-05 were scheduled to be held on Jan 10. SC-2024-05 seeks to determine the constitutionality of NCA 24-077. NCA 24-077 is a law that gives the MCN National Council and Principal Chief the ability to appoint temporary MCN Supreme Court justices when seated justices recuse themselves from cases. The oral arguments were scheduled to be held via Zoom, but were cancelled due to the snowstorm that hit Okmulgee. Oral arguments have not been rescheduled as of the publication of this story. Until a decision is made in this case, there is a stay in place in SC-2023-10, MCN Citizenship Board v. Rhonda K. Grayson.

A stay until March 18 has been issued in the MCN lawsuit against the City of Tulsa. The stay was issued so that both parties could negotiate a settlement. The lawsuit was a result of Tulsa's continued law enforcement actions against Native Americans in the wake of the Hooper decision in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. In the Hooper decision, the Tenth Circuit rejected Tulsa's assertion of jurisdiction over Native Americans under the Curtis Act. These negotiations follow the Dec 2, 2024 swearing in of the new Mayor of Tulsa, Monroe Nichols. During Nichols' mayoral campaign he asserted that he would acknowledge and stand with tribal sovereignty.

It is the one-year anniversary

of oral arguments held Jan 17, 2024, at the Oklahoma Supreme Court in Alicia Stroble v. Oklahoma Tax Commission. The Court has not issued a decision in the case. The Stroble case seeks to determine whether tribal citizens who work for their tribal government and live on the tribal reservation have to pay income tax to the state on those wages. Alicia Stroble, a Mvskoke citizen who lives on the MCN reservation, is employed by the MCN National Council. Currently, tribal governmental employees pay both federal and state income tax whether they are tribal citizens or not. Oklahoma has administrative code on the books that states if a tribal citizen lives in their tribe's "Indian country" and works for their tribal government, they do not have to pay state income tax. Following the McGirt decision that held that the Muscogee Creek Nation reservation was not disestablished, Stroble filed for the exemption for tribal income with the Oklahoma Tax Commission for the 2017, 2018, and 2019 tax years. The Tax Commission denied the claim. Stroble protested the denial which led to the issue being heard before the Tax Commission's Administrative Law Judge Ernest Short. After hearing testimony, Judge Short ruled that Stroble qualified for the exemption. The Tax Commission then overruled Judge Short and issued an order that Stroble did not qualify for the exemption. This action was then appealed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

# STUDENTS SHINE AT NATIVE AMERICAN ALL-STAR GAME

TWO MVSKOKE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES WERE SELECTED TO PLAY ALONG WITH 48 OTHERS FROM 35 TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

by **BRADEN HARPER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

FRISCO, TX. - Team Wa'Ya defeated Team Ta'Tanka in overtime 29-26 at the Native All-Star Game on Jan. 7. The match consisted of 50 players, who represented 35 tribal communities from the United States and Canada. Two Mvskoke citizens, Douglas Two Shields and Cameron Boone were selected to play. The game was a collaboration between the Native American Athletic Foundation (NAAF), the National Football League and Nike. This year athletes selected for the game got to play at the Dallas Cowboys headquarters, The Star. Previous all-star games were played at the Vikings Stadium in Minnesota.

Two Shields and Boone played for team Ta'Tanka. The full clinic involved four days of training, college preparation and like skills, all designed to equip these student athletes for the future. For Two Shields, the experience is one he enjoyed and will never forget. However, sometimes it takes time for Two Shields to talk to new people.

"It was a very fun experience, I made a lot of new friends," Two Shields said. "Going into the All-Star Game, I was a bit nervous. I was really quiet and shy for the first part. On Saturday I got over my fears and started talking to a bunch of the other kids. There was one kid who plays in Alaska, we talked a lot."

The Native All Star Game is not just a place to make new friends. It is also an opportunity for athletes to prove their mettle to eager recruiters seeking to



From Left: Dylan Harding, Conner Boone, Michael Stopp, Douglas Two Shields and Tom Osborn stand together for a photo. (Courtesy: Bennette Two Shields)

find the next Jim Thorpe or Sam Bradford.

Unfortunately for Two Shields, the game did not go the way he intended. During the third play, he was rolled up on, which tore his medial collateral ligament. This benched him for the rest of the game. In football, to roll up on a player describes incidental harm inflicted on the legs of a lineman. This can result in ligament tears or broken bones. Two Shields said he initially tried to walk off his injury, since this was not the first time he had injured his knee.

Although he was injured, Two Shields said he gave his all during those three plays and stayed through the whole game to support his team. By the end of the fourth quarter the score was tied at 26-26. Team Wa'Ya made a field goal, beating Team Ta'Tanka in overtime.

Growing up, Two Shields looked up to former Baltimore Ravens Lineman Ray Lewis as

an inspiration. Lewis is a player who leaves it all on the field.

"It was about his mentality on the field and how there is a switch in his mind," Two Shields said. "When he's off the field he's a nice person from what I hear, but as soon as he steps on that field there's a switch that flips in his mind, he just turns into a beast."

Two Shields' favorite collegiate team are local OU Sooners; professional, the Kansas City Chiefs. Quarterback Patrick Mahomes and tight end Travis Kelce may be crowd favorites, but for Two Shields he always looks up to offensive lineman Creed Humphrey.

According to NAAF Executive Director Michael Stopp, the Native American All-Star Game is designed to mold students into great leaders, not just great athletes.

## TWO SHIELDS

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# MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION HAF PROGRAM



THE MUSCOGEE NATION  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING  
PO Box 297 | Okmulgee, OK 74447



The HAF Program is providing funding assistance for the following homeowner expenses:

- \* **Mortgage Assistance (Must be delinquent)**
- \* **Homeowner Utility Assistance (Internet not included)**
- \* **Homeowner Fees (Homeowner Association, Cooperative Maintenance)**
- \* **Property Taxes**
- \* **Homeowner Insurance**
- \* **Flood Insurance**

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An "eligible household" is defined as a HAF household in which at least one or more individuals meets the following criteria:

- \* An enrolled member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- \* Financial hardship due to a reduction in income or material increase in living expenses associated with the Corona Virus Pan demic that has created or increased a risk of mortgage delinquency of 30 days or more, mortgage default, foreclosure, loss of utilities or home energy services, or displacement of a homeowner; and
- \* Household income is below 100 percent of the area median or household income between 101 percent to 150 percent of the area median income as defined by HUD in accordance with U.S.C. 1437 a(b)(2) for purposes of the HAF; MCN, in its sole decision, can adjust the order in which applicants are served to ensure that not less than 60% of the funding made available is used from homeowners having incomes equal to or less than 100% of the area median income or equal to or less than 100% of the median income for the United States, whichever is greater.
- \* Dwelling must be homeowner's primary place of residency.

- \* Eligible mortgages must be secured by an instrument of government or government sponsored entity or finance by a non-profit, bank, credit union or mortgage company that adheres to the widely accepted mortgage lending and mortgage servicing practices monitored by the Consumer Federal Protection Bureau. Seller financed transactions, rent-to-own transactions, and family-financed transactions are excluded.
- \* The homeowner must be ready, willing, and able to meet all obligations of participating in the program.
- \* Any applicant who is receiving or has already received other federal assistance may receive HAF program assistance so long as they are not duplicating or overlapping the same expenses.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS**  
**Call the HAF call center 918.549.2890**  
**Fax documents to 918.304.3256**  
**APPLY ONLINE ON THE CAMPHOUSE PORTAL**  
**You can find the portal at Muscogeenation.com**  
**Forgot your password?**  
**Call 918.549.2760 for IT assistance**



## THEY DIDN'T CHOOSE TO LIVE WITH SECONDHAND SMOKE.

When kids are exposed to secondhand smoke in a car, the health risks increase. Kids in other states are protected, but in Oklahoma, smoking in cars is still legal.

Where do you stand?

Join the fight to protect Oklahoma kids.

**TOBACCO STOPS WITH ME.com**





JUMPS

LEONARD PELTIER

Continued from Page 1

on the Pine Ridge Reservation at the Jumping Bull Compound. The shootout occurred after years of political violence between AIM Members and the federal government. The Jumping Bull Compound shootout resulted in three casualties, including Joseph Stutz, a citizen of the Coeur d'Alene Nation and FBI Special Agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams. Peltier fled to Canada, but was extradited and charged with Coler and Williams' murders.

In 1977 Peltier was tried and found guilty of two counts of first degree murder. In 1993 Peltier became eligible for parole, but was denied several times over the next 32 years. He served 46 years total in prison.

Outgoing U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Halaand said in a statement that she believes Peltier's commutation was a step toward justice and that it was a long-awaited moment for supporters.

"I am beyond words about the commutation of Leonard Peltier.

His release from prison signifies a measure of justice that has long evaded so many Native Americans for so many decades," Halaand said. "I am grateful that Leonard can now go home to his family. I applaud President Biden for this action and understanding what this means to Indian Country."

Not everyone within the Biden Administration agreed with Peltier's commutation. Former FBI Director Christopher Wray expressed his concern and opposition to Peltier's release in a letter released on June 7, 2024 regarding a parole hearing from last year. An excerpt from the letter reads,

"Peltier is a remorseless killer who brutally murdered two of our own before embarking on a violent flight from justice. His crimes also include a post-conviction escape from federal custody, during which he and his crew fired shots at prison employees. Throughout the years, Peltier has never accepted responsibility or shown remorse. He is wholly unfit for parole. To release Peltier now would significantly 'depreciate the seriousness of his offense' and 'promote disrespect for the law.'"

Gray goes on to state that Peltier's release would "represent an affront to the rule of law" and that his claims of innocence were "meritless" and backed by scores of federal judges. Lastly, Gray asserted that Peltier's release would be an injustice to the families of FBI Agents Coler and Williams. Peltier was subsequently denied parole.

An Activism Victory

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) also applauded Peltier's sentence commutation. However, the NCAI also recognized the commutation was due to the efforts of activists and allies. An excerpt from the statement reads,

"As we celebrate Leonard Peltier's commutation, it is important to recognize that Leonard Peltier's case has long symbolized the systemic injustices faced by Indigenous Peoples. This victory belongs to those who have fought for justice, especially those who refused to let the injustice against Leonard Peltier fade from public consciousness. This moment serves as a testament to the power of tireless

advocacy, grassroots organizing, and intergenerational collective action by Tribal Nations, human rights organizations, and global allies."

Amnesty International USA, one of the largest and oldest human rights organizations in the country, is one of the grassroots movements that advocated for Peltier's release. The global movement has millions of members and has provided support for Peltier by organizing an online petition and mobilizing others to write letters of solidarity during his sentence.

In a statement from Amnesty International USA Executive Director Paul O'Brien, the organization continues to stand firm on their position that Peltier should have been granted clemency a long time ago.

"President Biden was right to commute the life sentence of Indigenous elder and activist Leonard Peltier given the serious human rights concerns about the fairness of his trial," O'Brien said. "Amnesty International has advocated for the U.S. government to grant Leonard Peltier clemency for years, following the leadership

of Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples."

The President's commutation of Peltier is considered an act of justice for Natives who have been incarcerated but the family of Annie Mae Aquash (Mi'kmaw) are still left without closure.

Aquash was a fellow activist who was kidnapped and murdered in December of 1975. Her family has maintained that the murder of Aquash was related to events at Reservation at the Jumping Bull Compound. Aquash's daughter, Denise Pictou Maloney, told Aboriginal Peoples Television Network of Canada (APTN) that she believes Peltier was complicit in her mother's death. A documentary series called "Vow of Silence: The assassination of Annie Mae," debuted on Hulu in December 2024.

Peltier was never charged with the murder of Aquash.

Peltier's transfer from prison in Florida back home to the Turtle Mountain Reservation is scheduled for Feb. 18. The FBI still asserts that Peltier is responsible for the murders of Coler and Williams.

HEW COMMITTEE

Continued from Page 4

in the amount of \$2,025,24.00 awarded from the United States Department of Agriculture for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation 2025 Summer EBT Program passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Crawford sponsored the legislation.

This legislation will allow the MCN to extend the federal award from 2024 into 2025. It was awarded based on a 50% tribal match. The program will allow the MCN to serve 105,604 eligible children within the MCN Reservation.

NCA 25-002 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds

in the amount of \$1,100,000.00 awarded from the United States Department of Agriculture for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation 2025 Summer EBT Program passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Crawford sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, the grant funds will be used for technology implementation of the Summer EBT Program.

NCA 25-003 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$250,000 awarded from Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration Center for Mental Health Ser-

vices, Native Connections Project for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Crawford sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, the grant will build on previous work to promote the use of culturally appropriate prevention, intervention, and treatment methods.

NCA 25-008 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$742,320 awarded from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families for the benefit of the Head Start Program and appropriating Tribal

match passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Gouge sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, the grant funds will be used to administer the MCN Head Start Program.

NCA 25-012 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$186,507 awarded from the Indian Health Service, HIV/HCV/Syphilis Epidemic Project Grant passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Crawford sponsored the legislation.

The grant would enhance patient care coordination, patient navigation, treatment, retention care, and prevention services, and increase training and support

services available to patients. The legislation was postponed previously during the Nov. 5 and Dec. 3 HEW committee meetings.

To view the full agenda, visit mcnc.com.

MCNOES MEETING

Continued from Page 3

Your participation is important in this discussion about our community's climate action plans. Those who did not attend the open house can access event materials at mcnoes.org/priority-climate-action-plan/.

To RSVP and gain virtual login information, contact Emma McFarland at emcfarland@muscogeenation.com, (918) 549-2585.

BFJ COMMITTEE

Continued from Page 4

tive Robert Hufft, Representative Anna Marshall, Representative Charles McHenry, Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn, Representative Darrell Proctor, Representative Mark Randolph, and Representative Robyn Whitecloud. It was passed with a vote of 4-0.

If adopted, this law will limit the amount of times a person may be nominated by the Principal Chief within a single session of the National Council, and establish penalties for failed nominees who attempt to illegally serve despite the National Council's rejection.

Referred Legislation:

NCA 25-005 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a special appropriation for the cost of necessary measures related to the protection of the Muscogee sacred site of Hickory Ground near Wetumpka, Alabama, to the amount of \$450,000.00, was passed by the committee. The law was spon-

sored by Rep. Proctor and co-sponsored by Rep. Cloud. It was passed with a vote of 4-0.

NCA 25-006 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Cultural Center and Archives Department for museum collection, to the amount of \$437,336.81, was passed by the committee. The law was sponsored by Rep. Cloud. It was passed with a vote of 4-0.

NCA 25-008 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families, to the amount of \$742,320.00, for the benefit of the Head Start program and appropriating tribal match, was passed by the committee. The law was sponsored by Rep. Proctor and co-sponsored by Rep. Cloud. It was passed with a vote of 4-0.

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

LNC COMMITTEE

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Agriculture for the benefit of the MCN Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Rep. Cloud sponsored this legislation, which passed 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, the grant funds will go towards the baseline testing and detection of diseases, this will be specifically for the Mvskoke citizens hunting on portions of MCN's reservation.

NCA 25-005 A law of the MCN authorizing a special appropriation for the cost of necessary measures related to the protection of the Muscogee Sacred Site of Hickory Ground near Wetumpka, Alabama. Representative Darrell Proctor along with co-sponsor Rep. Cloud sponsored this legislation, which passed and moved forward to BFJ 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, these funds will go towards the legal defense and public relation services to help protect the sacred site, while also providing legal services to the current site of

their ceremonial ground.

NCA 25-006 A law of the MCN authorizing an appropriation to the MCN Cultural Center and Archives Department for museum collection. Rep. Cloud sponsored this legislation, which passed and moved to BFJ 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, there will be an agreement with ITsimiVee, LLC for long-term housing to move vulnerable culture items to the new MCN Visitor Center collection storage.

NCA 25-007 A law of the MCN amending MCNCA Title 24, § 2-102.D entitled "Housing Division." Rep. McHenry sponsored this legislation, which was postponed until the next meeting 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, the MCN Department of Housing will receive increased funds for a contract for day-to-day operations for goods and services, this is an updated Procurement Policy for IHBG funds for the MCN Department of Housing and the total development cost estimates.

NCA 25-013 A law of the MCN authorizing the expenditure of the National Park Service Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) Grant for the benefit of the Historic and Cultural Preservation Department. Rep. Cloud sponsored this legislation, which passed 3-0.

If this legislation is adopted into law, these grant funds will go toward the protection and preservation of Mvskoke historic and cultural resources, according to the bill.

For more information visit, www.mcnc.com.

HEW/LNC COMMITTEE

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amount in the resolution is different from the amount in the authorization legislation. General Counsel for the MCNNC, Kyle Haskins recommended tabling the legislation until it is amended to reflect the correct amount.

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

WINTER SAFETY TIPS

Continued from Page 4

For elders, it is recommended that all areas around the home have adequate lighting including walkways and stairways to avoid unforeseen objects or snags that may cause falls. Make sure all steps are sturdy and have a textured grip. If main entrances to the home become icy during winter months, use an alternative entrance. Walking aids like canes, walkers or wheelchairs should be dried off after being used outside in snowy conditions. A support network of friends or family members can be useful in helping clearing pathways to the home. Likewise, a support network can also check in on elders when conditions make it hard to leave the house.

When it comes to heating devices, plug space heaters directly into wall outlets. Never

plug a space heater into an extension cord or power strip. This can overload the circuit, which can cause overheating, electrical sparks or even a fire. Likewise, space heaters need at least three feet of space from other objects. A 2021 report from the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission reported that space heaters cause an estimated 1,700 fires per year, resulting in approximately 80 deaths and 160 injuries annually.

Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heat sources including fireplaces, stoves or portable heaters. Never use an oven or gas range to heat a home. Likewise, generators, grills, or anything that burns natural gas or charcoal should be used indoors. Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors must be tested annually to make sure they are operable.

Staying Safe on the Road

For those that need to embark on the road during winter weather they will first need to clear all windshields and windows of snow or ice from their vehicle. Once the vehicle is ready to hit the road, motorists need to use extreme caution. Do not make sudden changes in speed or direction. If the vehicle begins to slide, stop using the gas and do not slam on the brakes. Rather, turn gently into the slide and do not panic or try to overcorrect. Just like in a house, keep an emergency kit handy. A sturdy roadside emergency kit will include warm clothes, food and kitty litter or sand in the event a vehicle gets stuck. In the event a motorist gets stranded, run the vehicle's engine for 10 minutes per hour to run the heat and charge cell phones.

Open a window slightly to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and let in fresh air.

Being stranded on the side of the road can increase the risk of frostbite and hypothermia. Frostbite causes the loss of feeling in the face, fingers and toes. Signs of hypothermia include white or grayish skin that is firm or waxy. When someone is showing signs of frostbite they need to go to a warm room and soak in warm water. Do not use artificial heat sources and do not massage the afflicted areas, that can cause further damage. Hypothermia is when the body hits an unusually low body temperature below 95 degrees. Signs of hypothermia include shivering, exhaustion, confusion or drowsiness. Likewise when someone is showing signs of hypothermia they need to go to a warm room and replace any wet clothing with dry clothing.

TWO SHIELDS

Continued from Page 5

"We are excited and honored to work with the NFL to make an impact in the lives of Native athletes," Stopp said. "Our organization was established to use sports to develop the next generation of leaders in Indian Country. This partnership and this year's game take an important step forward in meeting our mission."

Regarding his knee injury, Two Shields said surgery might be necessary to fix it in the future. However, that is not stopping him from looking forward to graduating high school in the spring and moving on to college. He looks forward to "making his tribe proud from working hard"

To learn more about NAAF and their nonprofit work, more information can be found at nativeamericanathleticfoundation.org.



LEGALS

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Elder's Meeting  
Okmulgee Elder  
Nutrition Center  
Feb. 5  
9:30 a.m.

Muscogee Women Veterans Valentines Dinner  
MCN Veterans Affairs  
Services Office  
Feb. 10  
6:00 p.m.  
River Spirit Casino and Resort  
Limited to 25 + 1 attendees  
For questions, contact 918-732-7739

Coffee & Donuts  
MCN Veterans Affairs  
Services Office  
Feb. 13  
8 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
MCN VASO Building  
1006 Bear Ln.,  
Okmulgee, OK.  
For questions, contact 918-732-7739.

Mvskoke Gardener Program  
College of Muscogee  
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9 Week Course, Starts Feb. 18  
Every Tuesday and Thursday from 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
Focus on horticultural, ecological knowledge and food sovereignty.

SAND CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Sand Creek Baptist Church  
Wetumka, Oklahoma, 74883

- NOTICE -

Due to limited space Sand Creek Baptist Church, Wetumka, Oklahoma reserves the SCBC Cemetery, Church Building, and Fellowship Hall for active members only.

Respectfully,

*Harry Harjo* 11-24-2024  
Harry Harjo,  
Sand Creek Baptist Church Chairman

*Augusta Anderson*  
Augusta Anderson,  
Sand Creek Baptist Church Secretary

Pre registration is required.  
CMN - Classroom Building  
2170 Raven Cir., Okmulgee, OK 74447  
For questions, contact 918-549-2861.

Spring Celebration  
Mvskoke Tribal Child

& Youth Coalition  
March 19  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Event will include face painting, inflatables, games and haircuts.  
Pre Registration by Feb. 21 for meal ticket and t-shirt.  
Mvskoke Dome  
2950 Warrior Road,  
Okmulgee, OK 74447.

AD-2021-0011

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF: )  
ANYIAH ISABELLA SAMEJO, )  
DOB 05/15/2010, )  
YUSUF ANWAR SAMEJO, )  
DOB 10/22/2011, )  
and )  
ISHAQ REHAN SAMEJO, )  
DOB 09/17/2012, )  
Minor Children. )

DISTRICT COURT FILED  
Case No. AD-2021-0011  
JAN 15 2025  
Judge Alexandra N. Masters  
COURT CLERK

ALIAS NOTICE OF FINALIZATION HEARING

THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
TO: CORY JAMES HANCOCK  
Biological Father

NOW on the 8th day of October, 2024, an Application was filed in this Court to grant the Petition and finalize the adoption of Anyiah Isabella Samejo, born May 15, 2010, at St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Yusuf Anwar Samejo, born October 22, 2011, at St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Ishaq Rehan Samejo, born September 17, 2012, at St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Said Petition is set for hearing on the 13th day of March, 2025, at 9:00 o'clock a.m. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Courtroom, 2501 LvmhVike, Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447.

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 CHILDREN, WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS

PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS, IN THE ADOPTION OF THE CHILDREN WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION.

Signed and dated this 15th day of January, 2025.

HONORABLE ALEXANDRA MASTERS  
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

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

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