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MVSKOKE NEWS

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EXECUTIVE BRANCH ORDERS COMPLIANCE WITH MCN SUPREME COURT

CHIEF HILL OUTLINES FREEDMEN CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

BY JERRAD MORE
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

OKMULGEE – On Aug. 28, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill issued Executive Order 25-05, which outlines the Freedmen citizenship application process.

The order followed an Aug. 27 motion for contempt filed by Grayson and Kennedy in SC 2023-10. The motion asked the MCN Supreme Court to hold the MCN Citizenship Board in contempt for failing to issue citizenship to Grayson and Kennedy as ordered. The stated objective of the motion was to ensure that Grayson and Kennedy were given MCN citizenship in time to register to vote in the 2025 MCN election. The deadline to register to vote is Sept. 9.

The motion for contempt

was denied by the court Aug. 28. According to order:

Neither this Court's Order and Opinion, nor its subsequent Order Denying Petition for Rehearing directed the Appellant to process the Respondents' citizenship applications by a date certain, nor did it guarantee this task would be completed in time for Respondents (or other similarly situated applicants) to participate in the 2025 Muscogee (Creek) Nation election cycle. This Court understands the Respondents' excitement to participate in official Mvskoke exercises of citizenship, but it also understands that its decision represents a significant change in the Appellant's policies and procedures, and that it may take a

reasonable amount of time to establish appropriate changes to the Appellant's internal policies in order to fairly and lawfully process Respondents' (and other similarly situated applicant's) citizenship applications. Only one (1) week has passed since this Court issued its Order Denying Appellant's Petition for Rehearing. This Court is not inclined to consider contempt, or other Rule 20 penalties at this time.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Respondents' August 27, 2025, Motion for Contempt and for Court Enforcement of Order and Judgment is DENIED for the reasons explained above.

On the same day the MCNSC issued its denial order, Principal Chief Hill issued Executive

Order 25-05, with the stated purpose "to establish the framework for incorporating the qualification requirements in Article II of the Treaty of 1866 in Muscogee (Creek) Nation law for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship Office, pursuant to the Supreme Court order in case SC 2023-10." According to Executive Order 25-05:

The Office of the Principal Chief hereby declares and directs the Citizenship Office to continue accepting applications from Freedmen descendant applicants, but not issue citizenship cards or any form of membership identification cards to such persons until all law and policy have been fully reviewed and amended to meet the qualification requirements under Article II of the Treaty of 1866.

The Office of the Principal Chief further declares and directs the Citizenship Office to maintain the status quo by continuing to accept, process, and issue determinations for applications for new

Mvskoke citizens in accordance with current law and policy.

All departments are hereby directed to maintain the status quo in daily operations by continuing to follow the established policies and procedures for services they provide and, also, such department heads should begin reviewing such policies and procedures to propose necessary amendments to be consistent with the Order.

When the necessary reviews are complete, we will follow the normal processes established by the Executive Branch to review and approve prior to the setting forth the adoption of changes.

Where necessary changes require National Council approval, each department will submit those changes to the Office of Principal Chief, in accordance with established procedures, and the Principal Chief will submit the changes to the National Council for its review and approval.



The seats of the Mound Building's main room were filled with people from both UKB and Cherokee Nation during the Regular Session on Aug. 23. (Photo Courtesy: MCNNC Representative Mark Randolph)

MCNNC CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

A TRIBAL RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE UKB BROUGHT CONFUSION TO OKMULGEE AS REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICIALS FROM OTHER TRIBES ARGUED FOR AND AGAINST IT

BY THOMAS JACKSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – A recent conflict between the Cherokee Nation and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians came to the Mound Building on Aug. 23, as leadership from both groups spoke during the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council's Regular Session. At issue was MCN Tribal Resolution 25-079, which formally opposed a set of proposed U.S. Congressional language written by U.S. Senator Markwayne Mullin (Cherokee). After nearly 30 minutes of discussion, the resolution was eventually postponed indefinitely by a vote of 9-4.

The MCN resolution reads, "A Tribal Resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation opposing proposed Congressional language to limit the rights of

the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians." According to the bill's language, it would lead to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation officially calling upon the U.S. Congress to "refrain from interfering, either through appropriations or authorizing legislation, with the Administration's review of the Memorandum Opinion (M-37084) and the final agency action that follows."

It was initially passed with a vote of 3-0 in the Aug. 14 Business, Finance, and Justice committee meeting, and was sponsored by MCNNC Representative Dode Barnett with Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. as a co-sponsor.

Rep. Barnett made comments during the committee meeting in support of the United Keetoowah Band. "I felt like it was important for us to speak out for sovereignty in general, but specifically, to stand with this tribe.

I remember, years ago, when we were trying to find allies in our fight to protect Hickory Ground in Wetumka, Alabama, I was asked to go on some of those tours when we went to other tribes to ask for support," Rep. Barnett said.

"All we were asking for were friends to say 'this is wrong,' and I was very shocked and a little hurt that there were very few tribes that were willing to stand with us in that fight... I didn't want Keetoowah to be alone in this battle as well." Rep. Barnett said

According to the proposed language written by Mullin, only the Cherokee Nation would have jurisdiction over the land within the Cherokee Nation Reservation. It further clarifies that no funds could be used to take land

MCNNC CAUGHT
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JUSTICE FOR HICKORY GROUND GAINS SUPPORT AT SANTA FE INDIAN MARKET

MVSKOKE ARTISTS ALSO HAVE A STRONG SHOWING AT ANNUAL EVENT

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

SANTA FE, NM – The Southwestern Association for Indian Arts held the 103rd annual Santa Fe Indian Market from Aug. 16-17. SFIM is one of the largest markets for American Indian Art, and brought over 1,000 Indigenous Artists from different Tribal Nations across the U.S. and Canada to sell and showcase their work. This year the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, for the first time, was a title co-sponsor for SFIM.

According to the SWAIA, "Their sponsorship is a statement of solidarity. Together we affirm the importance of sovereignty, cultural authenticity and the essential

role Native artists play in carrying our traditions forward. With this partnership, we celebrate not only the beauty of Native art-but the enduring strength of Native Nations."

Many Mvskoke artists attended the market, including: Randy Kemp (Mvskoke), George Alexander (Mvskoke), Jesse Robbins (Mvskoke), Kenneth Johnson Studio (Mvskoke/Seminole), Faith Harjo Jones (Pawnee/Choctaw/Mvskoke/Cheyenne).

Mvskoke artist Carly Treece of Tvlse Studios curated the exhibit, "Keepers of the Land," a collaboration with Sovereign Santa Fe during the SFIM. The exhibit featured contemporary Native American artists from Oklahoma.

MCN Second Chief Del Beaver gave opening remarks and prayer on Aug. 16 and Mvskoke Artist Randy Kemp did an opening flute performance.

"We are so happy to be a sponsor of SWAIA, but it's such a good thing to see everybody here this morning because you're not only investing in art, you are investing in somebody's livelihood, you are investing in somebody's God-given talent," Beaver said during the opening remarks. "This is just a way to help perpetuate the arts and it's more than just what's on canvas, more than just a piece of pottery, it's somebody's livelihood, it's a God giving talent, it's what has been passed down from generation to generation."



The 2025 Best of Show art at the Santa Fe Indian Market on Aug. 15. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

Sacred Sites and Oce Vpofv

On Aug 15, SWAIA hosted a Sacred Sites panel featuring Justice for Hickory Ground at the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture. The event reached full capacity and had an overflow room for viewers to watch the discussion live. Oce Vpofv (Hickory Ground) member

Robin "Chub" Soweka gave a traditional Mvskoke welcoming.

The speakers on the panel included Ceremonial Ground Oce Vpofv (Hickory Ground) Mekko George Thompson (Mvskoke), MCN Secretary of Cultural and

JUSTICE FOR HICKORY
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THE ROYALTY JOURNEY OF THE 2025-2026 MISS AND JUNIOR MISS MCN

CATCHING UP WITH THE NEW MCN PRINCESS ON THE PAGEANT, WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS YEAR, AND NAVIGATING THEIR NEW ROLE

by SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – Newly crowned 2025-2026 Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Aholoce Deere and Junior Miss Mia Powell have begun their year-long Mvskoke ambassadorships. For Deere and Powell, this year marks a special competition that created community and friendships among the contestants. Mvskoke Media sat down with the new Royalty who spoke about why they entered the pageant, their contest journeys, and what they hope to bring to their new titles.

Q Was this your first time participating in this competition?

A Powell: My third year.
Deere: My second year.

Q How was your journey of getting yourself prepared for the contest?

A Powell: It was very fun, and it was sort of frustrating at the same time. Because I was trying to finish up my school and just trying to graduate. But I was also trying to focus on the pageant and making sure I was practicing my talent and making sure I was confident in my introduction. I think it was fun but also it was very difficult at the same time. I'm also glad the pageant was in the summer, that way I have more time to focus on it.
Deere: I'd say it was a very enjoy-

able experience, though confident in my ability to represent myself in the most authentic way possible. There were a few tweaks that I had to make to my introduction, giving it my grammatical structure and well abiding by the rules that are set forward by the Nation for our talent and our self presentation. I'm glad to say that I did win an award for self presentation on stage.

Q What did you enjoy most about it?

A Powell: One thing I really enjoyed most about it was being able to run and compete with one of my best friends. We were side by side throughout this whole journey. I actually kind of convinced her to be able to run with me so we'd be able to do this together, but also it was being crowned by our past Junior Miss MCN Olivia Beaver, who is one of my closest friends and one of my best friends. I think it was just the whole journey, just being able to go through this whole entire thing, to getting the crown, with my best friends and that is what I really enjoyed the most.

Deere: The thing I enjoyed most was our fellow contestants in the community that we created alongside each other for the past three months preparing for the pageant.

Q What made you decide to run for this role?

A Powell: It was really the support for my community, but also I really wanted to show that I was a good ambassador for the nation, but also for my own character to show that I could be able to do this. But just the community support, everybody was encouraging me to run just saying, "run again, run again, you got this" and I really think that's really what made because I was like "okay, they believe in me so I can do this" and I did do it, because I'm a princess.
Deere: What made me decide to run for this role was authentic representation of cultural and traditional aspects in my way of life for those who are also in the same way of life.

Q What was your favorite category?

A Powell: My favorite category that I did was my cultural presentation. I really enjoyed my cultural presentation because the entire thing was in the Mvskoke Creek language and I really think that so many people enjoyed it. But I myself enjoyed it because it gave me something new to learn and it gave me sort of a way to make sure that I was on track, making sure that I was practicing it and making sure I was ready to compete in front of everybody.

Deere: My favorite category to compete with was my introduction and dress presentation. I believe first impressions are a really



2025-2026 Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Aholoce Deere (MCN Communications)



2025-2026 Jr. Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation Mia Powell. (MCN Communications)

good aspect of being princesses because they will not see us again. So the first impression is always the best. I was very honored to display our language in the way that I did.

Q What are you most excited for this year?

A Powell: I'm most excited to be able to represent my Nation, but also myself. I'm really just excited to meet all the new faces, new royalty, just watching everybody, just meeting so many new people is really what I'm most excited for stepping into this position.

Deere: I'm really excited to be given this opportunity to talk to as many princesses as we do. To teach those who want to learn and learn from those who want to teach.

Q Since having this new royalty title, what do you hope this can bring to you?

A Powell: Well I hope this brings to me as a person is definitely building up my character. I think that stepping into this role is going to teach me to be more formal, teach me better ways to talk, but also how I handle myself in public and in situations. I really hope that it helps build up my character but I also want to use my platform, which is suicide awareness, to bring help to others, to give others the help that they need, and to give them the resources that they need.

Deere: Though alongside knowledge and gaining more awareness of those in my community, I hope to utilize it to spread awareness for my platform, which is cultural immersion. Cultural immersion is very important for those in our community to learn and grow as a people. Learning about our culture and traditions that will bring our culture through and past my reign as Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation.



(Courtesy: Shutterstock)

TRIBES GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN BLOOD DONATION CHALLENGE

OUR BLOOD INSTITUTE HOSTS YEAR FOUR OF THE FRIENDLY INTERTRIBAL CONTEST THAT SAVES LIVES

by BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – According to Our Blood Institute (OBI) Ardmore Senior Account Manager Michelle McGuire, it only takes 45 minutes to save a life. That is how long it takes for a blood donor to fill out paperwork, donate blood, and rest before they are on their way. One donation can save up to three lives. To meet the need of the critical blood supply in Oklahoma, OBI is hosting their fourth annual Tribal Challenge Blood Drive from Aug. 1 through January 31, 2026. The challenge involves the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Choctaw

Nation, the Chickasaw Nation, and the Cherokee Nation.

The Tribal Challenge began during the Covid-19 Pandemic. When lockdowns were in effect and public gatherings were prohibited OBI was unable to host blood drives in places like schools, public events, and tribal facilities. This resulted in a blood shortage. That is when Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton proposed the idea of a tribal challenge, a friendly competition among fellow Oklahoma tribes.

"He's (Chief Batton) the one that had that idea and brought it to fruition," McGuire said. "Now we're starting our fourth year. Our very first year that we had the challenge

we collected 2,292 units, which is amazing. We've grown exponentially every year. This past year we collected 4,496. Last year we collected 398 units from the Creek Nation."

Currently the Choctaw Nation holds the title of winner from last year's tribal challenge. Regardless of which tribe holds the title as winner, McGuire said the real winners are the patients who receive blood.

The OBI's O negative is currently low. O negative blood donors are also known as "universal blood donors" because they can transfer blood to anyone. According to McGuire, the OBI always has a need for O negative blood. Events like natural disasters, terrorist attacks or shootings can make the need greater.

"If something major happens that means we would need more blood," McGuire said. "We're using more than what we're collecting. Only seven percent of our population in Oklahoma is O negative, only two percent of those donors actually donate blood. That puts us in a very challenging spot. If anyone is O negative we are encouraging them to donate blood."

The OBI is also low on platelets, blood cells commonly needed for cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy treatment. Blood can be donated every 56 days, or about every two months. Platelets can be donated every seven days. Those who are eligible to donate blood must be sixteen years or older. Minors will need their parents to fill out a consent form, which can

be found on OBI's website or at any blood drive. The weight requirements for 16-18 year olds is 125 pounds, for those 18 and over, 110 pounds. Donors must present a photo ID on site. Those that meet the aforementioned requirements and feel healthy are encouraged to donate blood.

For those who were previously ineligible to donate due to low blood iron, McGuire said they can try again within 24 hours since hemoglobin levels can change

"The unknown is scary, anything that you've never done before is scary," McGuire said. "When you're giving blood you feel one little stick, that's all you feel. You're only on the bed for less than 15 minutes. By then you've filled up that bag of life-saving blood that's going to save three people in your community. Once you get over that fear you feel great because you feel like a hero, because you've done something that not everyone can do."

"EVERY TWO SECONDS SOMEONE NEEDS BLOOD. IN OKLAHOMA WE HAVE TO COLLECT 1,200 EVERY SINGLE DAY JUST TO MEET OUR DAILY NEEDS. OUR DAILY NEEDS WILL BE FOR OUR CANCER PATIENTS, THOSE IN ACCIDENTS, SURGERIES, ORGAN TRANSPLANTS, BABIES IN THE NICU (NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT) ON ECMO (EXTRACORPOREAL MEMBRANE OXYGENATION)." - OUR BLOOD INSTITUTE ARDMORE SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER MICHELLE MCGUIRE

within that time period. Foods that can help iron deficiencies include meat, fruits, vegetables and beans.

Donating blood for the first time can be a daunting task for someone who has never done it before. McGuire's advice is that although it may seem hard at first, the feeling afterward is rewarding.

For more information about upcoming blood drives and promotions, visit their website, obi.org. All units of blood donated at a MCN tribal complex site will help the tribe in the challenge. Starting in September, all blood donors will receive a "Wicked" movie-themed T-shirt.



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AUTHOR RUSSELL COBB TALKS TULSA AND INDIGENOUS HISTORY

THE SCHOLAR RECENTLY COMPLETED HIS FELLOWSHIP AT TU'S HELMERICH CENTER FOR AMERICAN RESEARCH

by **THOMAS JACKSON**
REPORTER

TULSA – Russell Cobb, author of the books “The Great Oklahoma Swindle: Race, Religion, and Lies in America’s Weirdest State” and “Ghosts of Crook County: An Oil Fortune, A Phantom Child, and the Fight for Indigenous Land” recently completed his time as a short-term fellow at the University of Tulsa’s Helmerich Center for American Research (HCAR). Cobb gave a talk on Aug. 28, wrapping up his tenure at the center.

Cobb, a native Oklahoman working as a writer and Associate Professor at the University of Alberta in Canada, gave an hour-long presentation on the history of one of Oklahoma’s biggest cities which has a unique history with the Muscogee

(Creek) Nation: the city of Tulsa.

Specifically, Cobb spoke about Tulsa’s evolution from a small Muscogee village in Indian Territory to the “Oil Capital of the World” despite, according to Cobb, having no oil whatsoever. In fact, the only substantial sources of oil were located in Glenpool, and to a lesser extent, Cobb explained, the town of Red Fork.

Cobb also elaborated on the process of legal theft that oilmen used on Indigenous people, like the Mvskoke people, who had been forced into Indian Territory less than a century before. In this process, oilmen, compelled by greed, swindled Indigenous people out of any potential riches from the oil-rich lands, and took the profits for themselves.

The author drew from what he

learned during his time as a fellow and his previous work to give the talk, which he hopes to give more of in the future.

In addition, Cobb found that Tulsa had essentially become a city of “magical thinking.” According to Cobb, there was a general view that if you believed in something enough, it would happen.

In Tulsa, strategies ranged from the underhanded to the absurd. This included finding oil and looking for ways to obtain the allotment land it was on after the fact. Some drillers even believed that oil was made from human bones, and drilled for oil near cemeteries.

Toward the end of his talk, Cobb elaborated on his goal when researching Tulsa and Oklahoma as a whole.

“What I’m after are the hidden



Author, professor, and native Oklahoman Russell Cobb gave a talk at the University of Tulsa’s Helmerich Center for American Research on Aug. 28 (Thomas Jackson/MM)

stories behind the City of Magical Thinking,” Cobb said in his talk, referring to Tulsa.

“What are the stories that got covered up? I think we really have to look at this wholesale swindle of the

Locv Pokv, and full-blooded allottees like the Locv Pokv... If we want to look into how this Mvskoke village became known as the Oil Capital of the World, we really need to reckon with that.”

MCNNC CAUGHT

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into trust without written consent from the Cherokee Nation:

Provided further, that no funds appropriated under this or any other Act shall be used to take land into trust within the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation Reservation in Oklahoma without the written consent of the Cherokee Nation: Provided further, That, except as provided in the next following proviso, no other Indian tribe than the Cherokee Nation shall possess tribal jurisdiction over such Reservation (or any portion thereof) under any provision of law, including the treaties with the Cherokee Nation that are referenced in section 602(3) of Public Law 107-331 (116 Stat. 2845)

According to the UKB, the language potentially impacts their sovereignty and is in contrast to a Jan. 17 memo from the Biden administration’s Department of Interior, known as M-37084, or the “M-Opinion.” The memo concludes, among others, that the UKB has an ownership interest in the Cherokee Reservation as a successor-in-interest to the Tribal signatory of the Treaty of 1846, and UKB has exclusive Tribal jurisdiction over its trust lands within the Cherokee Nation Reservation. It concludes, “Lands taken into trust for UKB for gaming purposes within the Cherokee Reservation qualify as “Indian lands” under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act and are therefore eligible for gaming.”

During the Regular Session discussion, Jeff Wacoche, Chief of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, addressed the full MCNNC council, “Today, you have an opportunity to stand against the termination of tribal rights. The proposed legislative language is intended to steal, in secret and without consultation

with the UKB, our rights as a sovereign. At its core, it is a blatant attack on our sovereignty.”

“It is also intended to ensure that we have zero economic development to fund critical services for our members, and that is not the end of it. The congressional language is intended to also deprive the UKB from having its day in court,” Chief Wacoche said.

“You all can appreciate, better than anyone, how important it is for the Supreme Court to address tribal issues of national significance. This body knows the importance of defending sovereignty as you have done in both the McGirt and Strobble cases.”

Chuck Hoskin Jr., Chief of the Cherokee Nation, defended the actions of the Cherokee Nation. His remarks also drew upon the friendship between the MCN and CN. “What is happening in the Cherokee Nation reservation is an assault on our history, on our treaties, on our reservation, on our very identity,” Chief Hoskin said.

“If this is approved, the Muscogee Nation National Council is entering into the debate in a way that will do irreparable damage to something that I hold as dear as Principal Chief, as treaties that I must uphold, the Constitution that I must uphold, and that is the relationship and the friendship between the Muscogee Nation and the Cherokee Nation.”

Rep. Barnett again expressed her opposition to the proposed language, particularly that it was done without the UKB’s knowledge or consent, and that the UKB had to request the document using the Freedom of Information Act.

“What spurred me to introduce this, to be honest, was thinking about the bigger picture and how these actions, if they come to fruition, could potentially impact Muscogee (Creek)

Nation and other nations in the future,” Rep. Barnett said. “So the language in the bill really opposes the avenue that’s being taken. I don’t believe that any of us, or any sovereign nation, should be okay with language being put in any appropriations bill or through a committee process without robust consultation with the nation that it’s going to affect.”

The bill, and its inclusion on the agenda, brought confusion and disagreements from other MCNNC representatives. Representative Sandra Golden voted to indefinitely postpone the resolution in the Regular Session, despite voting to pass it during the BFJ committee meeting. Rep. Golden expressed wanting a resolution that was, in her words, “inclusive, that unites us all rather than picking.” Representative Robert Hufft, who also voted to indefinitely postpone the resolution, remarked he felt that the resolution should never have been brought to the MCNNC in the first place, and that it was an argument for the CN and the UKB to settle themselves.

“First of all, I think this never should have been brought before the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council. I respect both the Keetoowahs and the Cherokees, but it’s something they need to deal with, because now we’re forced to make a decision. No matter how we make a decision, we’ll be seen as favoring one side or the other,” Rep. Hufft said.

The 9-4 decision to postpone the bill was opposed by Rep. Barnett and Rep. Freeman, as well as Representative Mark Randolph and Representative Robyn Whitecloud.

Mvskoke Media reached out to Senator Markwayne Mullin’s office for comment on the proposed language. As of presstime, his office has not responded to our request.

JUSTICE FOR HICKORY

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Humanities RaeLynn Butler (Mvskoke), “Rez Dogs” and “This May Be the Last Time” filmmaker Sterlin Harjo (Seminole), three-time U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo (Mvskoke), artist Kenneth Johnson (Mvskoke/Seminole), and counsel for MCN Mary Kathryn Nagle (Cherokee). The panel was moderated by Supervisory Special Agent/Division Chief BIA-OJS Cultural Resources Division in NM Franklin “Frank” Chavez II.

When choosing the speakers the MCN Department of Culture and Humanities worked with Hickory Ground and identified artists. “We definitely wanted to have Joy Harjo, because she’s from Hickory Ground, but I automatically thought about Sterlin and Kenneth because of their connection and support,” Butler said. “We decided the rest of the panelists to have Mary Katherin Nagle, the attorney. In case there were some kind of legal questions that came up but definitely wanted to have Mekko Thompson as the main voice for Hickory Ground.”

According to Butler, the panel has received great feedback from museum and collections colleagues in other parts of Southeast. Some have shared their takeaways, including how informative the panel was.

Journey for Justice also had a booth on Aug. 16 and 17. Informative materials on Hickory Ground and a special limited run of 200 t-shirts featuring a design by Johnson were available to promote the cause.

Over 1,100 signed postcards addressed to Auburn University were signed by visitors at the booth during the two days. The postcards ask the university to return ancestors currently held in the collections. Butler shared that she felt the event was successful and that it received an overall encouraging response and support from the community.

Throughout Hickory Ground events, including those in the

Homelands, Butler sees more outreach for non-native people who don’t have knowledge about the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) or sacred land issues. This was different in Santa Fe.

“I think what was really eye opening in Santa Fe was that people already knew about NAGPRA and there were so many Natives who came by the booth and who have a very similar history and story of sacred sites being developed where they had to fight for their ancestors to get them back too. So people were very sympathetic to our situation and cause and wanted to help in any way that they could,” Butler said.

The SFIM experience, from the panel to the booth, was heartening for Butler and the department. “It’s great to see Southeastern tribes represented. Overall, it was very encouraging and motivating to see the level of support and interest that we got from working in the booth that weekend,” Butler said.

“It was a very great experience and I am thankful that Hickory Ground and the Muscogee Creek Nation were able to attend and really help promote sacred lands protection.”

Keeping the Momentum

The Department and Hickory Ground have other ideas for booths for the Journey for Justice. Butler is looking to have a booth set up in Norman during the time Auburn University is playing football against the University of Oklahoma this fall.

“We’re exploring other options of how to keep this going, and to keep the support coming along and where else would a panel like that be successful and just thinking more about that,” Butler said.

For more information on Ocvpofv and the Journey for Justice, visit <https://www.muscogeenation.com/justice-for-hickory-ground>.

To watch the SWAIA SFIM Sacred Sites panel, visit the Justice for Hickory Ground Facebook page.

VETERANS EDITION

Mvskoke Media is now taking submissions for the 2025 Veterans Edition of the Newspaper set to publish on November 1st

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For submissions, please submit a biography including the name, branch, years served and any other relevant information. Please include a high resolution photo to accompany the bio as well.

Submissions will be accepted no later than Monday, October 20th at 5pm CST

Send submissions to info@mvskokemedia.com

“WE ALL RODEO”: A FAMILY LEGACY



Several of the Roberts patriarchs stand in the Bob Arrington arena. (Lauren Sicking/UNT)

by LAUREN SICKING
UNT

The following article is an original work, written and produced by student reporters from the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas. In March 2025, Mvskoke Media hosted nine students for a site specific, field reporting program with a focus on the history, culture, and people of the Mvskoke Nation. Their week-long efforts on the reservation culminated in written and visual projects, the full scope of which can be found at the project’s website Muscogeevoices.com.

OKMULGEE, OK — Before champion bull rider Ryan Roberts, 29, ever set foot in a rodeo arena, his fate, his destiny, his legacy were already written in the red dirt on which he competes. Even after broken ribs, a broken leg and skull, and most recently a broken arm that has him out for the year, he continues to compete. For Ryan, the love of rodeo and the legacy he is a part of fuels him to ride on.

“I’ll keep doing it until they say I can’t no more, and I guess I’ll keep going after that,” Ryan said, “because they told me a few times to stop, and I’ve just kept on going.”

Though Ryan has been bull riding for 13 years, his story starts with his great-grandfather, Caney Roberts. Caney, a cowboy who calf roped, sparked the legacy of rodeo with Ryan’s grandfather, Roy Roberts.

Because of his father, Roy, 79, was surrounded by horses and cattle and became a roper, both calf-roping and team-roping. Commissioned by the first elected chief of the Muscogee Nation, Claude Cox, Roy, a citizen of the Muscogee Nation, along with a team of welders he trained, built the tribe’s Bob Arrington Rodeo Arena in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, over a period of two years.

The Bob Arrington Arena has provided the background and spawning ground for the Roberts rodeo legacy for Roy himself, his sons, and grandsons, including Ryan. In 2022, at the Muscogee Nation Festival in the All-Indian Rodeo at the arena, he won the bull riding championship. Many years

prior, Roy won in team roping as a heeler (the person who ropes the hooves of a calf) and in breakaway calf roping. Rodeo is more than just a pastime for Roy.

“It means a lot to me because I looked up to my dad for being a cowboy like he was ... I just like seeing my kids keep doing it, he said. “[Rodeo] is a family deal.”

Roy no longer competes, though he “loves rodeoing” and wishes he could do it again. He now takes great pleasure in watching his children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren compete in rodeo.



Bodie Roberts stands in the Bob Arrington Arena. (Lauren Sicking/UNT)

“I like to watch them, even if they don’t win or they’re out there competing and doing what they want to do,” Roy said. “With Ryan, the bull rider, we’ve traveled all the way to Las Vegas to watch him, to Montana to watch him, Arizona, Wyoming ... We’re kind of proud of him. If the rest of them would do that, we’d go

to watch them, too.”

Bodie Roberts, 49, Ryan’s father, continued the legacy. Bodie was never a fan of bull riding like his son, but instead rode bucking horses and would break horses for his father, Roy. Roy bought and sold quarter horses and when it was time, Bodie



Roy Roberts stands in the arena that he built. (Lauren Sicking/UNT)

would break the horses, then his father would train them.

To Bodie, rodeo doesn’t mean only winning buckles or saddles; it also has a much deeper meaning.

“Rodeo to me means my life, my family. My family’s always been in it, [all the way back] to my grandpa,” Bodie said. “My daddy built this arena right here. Claude Cox got Bob Arrington and Bob Arrington found the best builder he could find. That was my daddy. We hired a group, and they built this arena out here. And that’s been our legacy ever since, we rodeo.”

Like a family recipe that is passed down from parent to child to that child’s child, the legacy of rodeo has seeped into every member of the Roberts’ family’s bones.

“My little brother Boog ... we always rope together. Ryan came along [and now] we got nieces and nephews, we got cousins. We all rodeo ... That’s all our grandpa ever wanted us to do, was rodeo. So that’s what we’ve been driving for this whole time.”

According to Bodie, Ryan had something in him that set him apart.

“I just kept on driving him. There’s times when he probably wanted to hit me with his helmet, putting him on what I did, but he always loved it,” Bodie said. “[Ryan] has something in him that nobody else really has, you know, you could see there ever so often. He could ride [and] he had real good balance.”

Now, however, Bodie wonders if he should’ve pushed Ryan so hard, because of what happened in January of this year to Ryan at a rodeo in Tulsa.

Ryan was at the Ford Expo Center in Tulsa riding bulls in the ACRA finals when he received a life-changing injury. As he was about to come out of the chute on his second bull, Dirty Worm, “whipped [him] down” and as he tried to catch himself, hooked him with his horn twice in the back of the bicep.

“I got up and went to go reach for the gate and my arm wasn’t working,” Ryan said. “I was like, ‘You know, something’s wrong here.’ And [I] got back there [then] they laid me down and started checking my arm and [it] turns out that it was broke.”



Kane Roberts stands in the Bob Arrington arena. (Lauren Sicking/UNT)

family and with brothers, there is the tapestry of support and loyalty.

“We go with each other. [Ryan’s] got bull riding and I’ll go over there and pull his rope,” Kane said. “Darryl will hold him in position when he’s on the bulls. If we [were] team roping, [Ryan] would come down there and watch us team rope ... let the steers out of the chute. We all sit there, taking care of each other.”

Whether Ryan ultimately decides to hang up his hat or keep going, his own legacy will not end with him. Ryan’s son, Taiten Roberts, will continue it.

Taiten has all the typical interests of an 8-year-old boy. He loves playing baseball, video games, playing with his dogs and spending time with his family. He loves his horse, Strawberry, whom he describes as “precious.”

Unlike a lot of 8-year-olds, Taiten has spent his life in the stands of rodeo arenas watching his father compete, which in turn sprouted a desire for rodeo in him.

“He’s definitely a little cowboy ... He’s always been to rodeos, ever since he was in diapers and bottle fed,” Ryan said.

Taiten’s favorite part of the rodeo is watching his father ride. “I want to see how good he is and learn it,” Taiten said. His favorite part of his dad being a cowboy is all of the cool things he wins, from a bull skull to the buckles.

Even at 8, Taiten is stewarding the Roberts legacy. He has done mutton busting (riding sheep until the rider falls off) and now has started to ride miniature bulls. It is too soon to say whether he will

The doctors told Ryan that he would be out for five months, but he plans to take off the rest of the year.

“They said I might not get all of my feeling back [in my arm] , so we’ll just kind of play it by ear ... and see,” Ryan said.

Despite this injury and all of the others before, Ryan says he’s not done yet and he plans to “keep going.” The passion for the rodeo and perhaps the stubbornness that all cowboys possess, keep Ryan in the arena.



Taiten Roberts stands in front of bucking bulls. (Lauren Sicking/UNT)

“You know, it’s my safe place, even though it is dangerous. It’s kind of as they say, ‘A rodeo arena is the place to go to forget your problems.’ It’s hard to imagine life without it,” Ryan said.

Ryan is not Roy’s only grandson who is carrying the Roberts legacy on. Kane Roberts, 25, Ryan’s brother, has been rodeoing since he was a child as well. Along with his brother Darryl Jones, he travels and team ropes.

“[Darryl’s] my header and I’m a heeler,” Kane said. For Kane and the rest of the Roberts, rodeo is a family affair. With the Roberts brothers, Ryan and Kane, though both cowboys, there is no brotherly rivalry between the two. And with any

follow in his father’s footsteps, but one thing is certain: the love, loyalty, and lasting bonds of the Roberts family will steward the legacy of rodeo for many years and generations to come.

Ryan doesn’t feel like he is done yet though. “I’ve kind of been on the fence about maybe now is the time to hang it up, but I’m too hard headed to go through with that, because the passion for it is just a little bit more stronger than that,” Ryan said.

“I’ve always wanted to be a world champion. The older I’ve got, [however] I’ve realized it’s more about the middle than the end. [It’s] the people I’ve met, places I’ve [gone], just the journey,” Ryan said.



Ryan Roberts stands with some of the prizes he has won. (Lauren Sicking/UNT)



Lauren Sicking (Lauren Sicking/UNT)

Lauren (Sicking) Pruett grew up in the North Texas area, surrounded by stories. She decided to pursue journalism because she wanted to give a voice to the voiceless to bring wholeness and dignity to who and what she writes about. She is set to graduate from the Mayborn School of Journalism with her bachelor’s degree in Fall 2026.

You can contact her directly by emailing her at laurenpruett2025@gmail.com.

REGISTRANTS FLY HIGH AT DRONE WORKSHOP

CMN EXTENSION LAUNCHES PUBLIC PILOT MICRO CREDENTIAL SERIES

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – The sound of spinning propellers whistling could be heard inside and outside of the College of Muscogee Nation Lecture Hall on Aug. 15. The sound came from drones, both big and small, at the CMN Extension Drone Fundamentals Workshop. The workshop was the pilot class for a new public micro credential series hosted by the college. It was open to all ages interested in obtaining their Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST) certification. There, registrants learned about how to safely fly drones through instruction and hands-on obstacle courses.

The purpose of TRUST is to provide educational safety materials to recreational flyers. It is legally required for anyone flying drones for recreational purposes in the United States. These purposes can include property surveys, photography or simply flying for fun. The

test goes over drone safety, limitations, air space, and weather patterns. A TRUST test typically takes a half hour or less to complete.

CMN Stem Instructor Angie Sexton teaches math fundamentals, college algebra, and classes on drones. According to Sexton, CMN wanted to provide an in-person opportunity for those seeking to learn more about piloting unmanned aerial vehicles.

“We turned it into a micro credential so that you would have each person experience it, versus just an online experience,” Sexton said. “We had all of our drones out so the participants could have access to them. It gives them more hands-on opportunities.”

The class initially had 20 open spots available. It reached maximum capacity in under 72 hours after registration had opened. Scholarships were available for those that needed it.

Once an individual has successfully completed their TRUST cer-

tification, they can present their TRUST certificate to the FAA or local law enforcement to prove they are licensed to fly drones for non-commercial uses.

Recreational drone licenses can also be used in agriculture. Larger pesticide drones can replace traditional crop dusting airplanes. According to Sexton, using airplanes as crop dusters on average typically carry a 20 percent profit loss, drones on the other hand only carry a two percent profit loss. Drones can even be programmed to dust crops by itself without a pilot. This can potentially support food sovereignty, or autonomy over food production, one of the core mission values of the CMN Extension Office.

The workshop featured guest lecturers from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Geospatial Department (GIS) and the Lighthorse UAV Special Operations Squad. GIS lectured on safety practices. Lighthorse set up their command center in the parking lot outside the lecture to show their drones in action.

Sexton said the college is planning to host the micro credential workshops quarterly. The next micro credential workshop she



The College of Muscogee Nation provided their first micro credential workshop that prepared registrants to take their Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST) certification. (Braden Harper/MM)

plans to teach is on the FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Exam, a certification taken by government employees and first responders for safety missions. That certification will require four five-hour classes that will total 20 hours of instruction to prepare for the exam. TRUST registrants have already expressed interest in signing up for the Part 107 class.

“It’s (Part 107) like taking your pilot’s license, it’s very detailed and takes hours upon hours to study,” Sexton said. “The only difference between a drone pilot’s license and flying an airplane is the airplane experience. It’s that detailed.”

Free TRUST materials, including the test itself, can be found online. For those interested in obtaining their TRUST certification, a free test can be taken through the Pilot Institute here. Resources on FAA drone registration can also be found on the website.

In addition to the micro credential workshop on Part 107, Sexton said the college will also offer workshops on 3D printing and laser printing. To stay up to date on announcements regarding future CMN micro credential workshops, follow their Facebook page, College of Muscogee Nation.



(Photo Courtesy: Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Facebook page)

ESTUCE FEST GIVE BABIES A HEALTHY START

ANNUAL EVENT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR FIRST-TIME PARENTS

by **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – On Sep. 19 first-time parents will be able to get support at the 2025 Estuce Fest’s “Time for Tea for Parents-To-Be,” set to take place at the First Baptist Church. Parents of newborns and infants up to 12 months can participate in learning sessions, father’s panel discussions, family resources booths,

and more. The event is scheduled for 6 p.m.- 8 p.m. and doors will open at 5:30 p.m.

Registration is due on Aug. 29 and each participant will be allowed to bring one guest.

“This annual gathering is organized by TCYC (Tribal Coalition), a collaboration of MCN tribal and health programs dedicated to providing essential baby supplies, resources, and support for expecting and new fam-

ilies who are Mvskoke citizens with infants up to twelve months old,” said Cassandra Thompson (Mvskoke) and Estuce Fest Chairperson.

“Designed like a community baby shower, this event aims to ensure that babies have a healthy start by offering items such as diapers and strollers. It also provides valuable information on parenting, health, financial management, and connects families with support networks and additional resources.”

The resource booths scheduled for the event involve support and service to new parents. MCN programs presented at this event will speak to health and wellness safety, early childhood development, hands on demonstrations, educational materials, and one on one guidance.

According to Thompson, they will have MCN public health nurses to speak about topics such as baby care, choking prevention, bathing, swaddling, and CPR. Other programs will show parents how to create schedules, manage finances, and improve home safety. Thompson said, “Tribal Fire Marshal will present on home

and fire safety, while the Center for Victim Services will discuss healthy relationships.”

In addition to panels and resource booths, the event will also have cultural presentations where the parents will be able to learn new phrases to share with their babies. The Mvskoke Language Preservation Program and NYCP will even be creating a baby book. The parents that attended will receive gifts including new car seats and a diaper bag filled with baby essentials. The Native Youth Community Project (NYCP) will be giving the parents a baby journal for the first five years.

“We are excited to introduce a Father Panel during our breakout sessions. Fathers from the community will share their experiences, discuss challenges, and offer insights on how to support mothers and babies. Our health professionals will address mental health, postpartum depression, the “purple cry,” and safe sleep practices.

Thompson is full of gratitude to the programs, employees, and health professionals who were able to help make this event happen, and for the opportunity

to collaborate with individuals who are dedicated and passionate for children and youth.

“Our goal is to ensure that new parents and their infants not only receive essential items but also gain knowledge to support their new family in various aspects of life. Our committee has thoughtfully considered the challenges that new parents may face and views this event as an opportunity to educate, assist, and provide resources as they embark on their parenting journey.”



First time parents participating in one of the activities last year's Estuce Fest. (Photo Courtesy: Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Facebook page)

ELDERS CATCH UP ON TRIBAL SERVICES AT SAPULPA COMMUNITY CENTER

SAPULPA INDIAN COMMUNITY CENTER RESOURCE FAIR PROVIDES INFORMATION ON DEPARTMENT SERVICES IN A SMALL SETTING

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

SAPULPA – Elders were greeted by Tribal employees from various Muscogee (Creek) Nation departments at the Sapulpa Indian Community Center Resource Fair on Aug. 27. The small fair provided community members, particularly elders, updates on available Tribal

Manager Kim Morrison. When asked about programming the Sapulpa Indian Community would like to see, Morrison was told they wanted a resource fair.

“Kim (Morrison) swung into action and got it organized,” Wind said. “She’s really involved with our campus community care and also the Creek Nation communities. She wanted to bring them together

MCN departments participating in the fair included Youth Services, Vocational Rehab, Elder Services, College of Muscogee Nation, and the Department of Education. Many offered freebies like pencils and letter openers, but more importantly they provided information on currently available resources.

The Sapulpa Indian Community serves lunch to members every weekday. The resource fair was held during the community’s Wednesday meal. Community member Virginia Rangel (Mvskoke) has lived in the Sapulpa area for over 74 years. It is rare to find a day when Rangel does not stop by for lunch. Her favorite dish is the baked chicken.

“The meals are excellent. As for the fellowship, I am able to get out of the house, I am able to speak to people. It makes a big difference because that socialization is needed,” Rangel said. “I’m able to get around but there are those that can’t. When they come in they get to visit, they get to say hi to people they basically see on a regular basis. It means a lot.”

Family members are even invited to bring in treats to share like cupcakes for special occasions. Rangel said that for some members the socialization aspect is more important than the meal itself. It is especially important for those with disabilities that make it hard to get out



Sapulpa Indian Community Member Virginia Rangel stops and chats with tribal employees at a small resource fair held at the community center. (Braden Harper/MM)



(Braden Harper/MM)

“THESE ARE REALLY GOOD FOR PEOPLE TO FIND OUT ABOUT PROGRAMS THAT THE TRIBE OFFERS. EVERY RESOURCE FAIR THAT THE PEOPLE COME TO, THEY LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICES, YOUTH SERVICES, DIFFERENT THINGS THEY DON’T KNOW ABOUT. YOU CAN FIND OUT ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS. EVERY DEPARTMENT OFFERS A LOT OF INFORMATION.” - SAPULPA INDIAN COMMUNITY MEMBER VIRGINIA RANGEL

services. The fair was sponsored by the College of the Muscogee Nation as an effort to bring information directly to communities.

CMN Dean of Student Affairs Krystal Wind (Mvskoke) said the idea to bring the fair to the Sapulpa Community came from CMN Case

to make them more accessible to these communities.”

The main goal is to bring resources to community members, rather than community members going out to a large fair. Smaller resource fairs have been hosted by the college for the past two years.

of the house.

Rangel’s family lives on her grandfather, Lewis Cumsey’s original allotment. They have regularly attended lunch at the community center for two years. The Sapulpa Indian Community Center is their gathering place.

“I see my family more here than I do at home and we all live on the same 20 acres,” Rangel said. “We still live on my grandfather’s allotment land just south of Sapulpa.”

Rangel utilizes the MCN Tribal

Energy Program for household cooling and heating bills. Housing has also performed emergency repairs on household water lines.

According to Wind, her department is also available to host Question Persuade Refer Suicide Prevention training. If there are other MCN Chartered Communities that are interested in hosting a resource fair or a QPR Training with the college they can reach out to Morrison by phone, 918-549-2864 or by email, kmorrison@cmn.edu.



UKB TRUST LAND RESOLUTION POSTPONED INDEFINITELY AFTER STAUNCH OPPOSITION FROM CHEROKEE NATION LEADERSHIP

STROBLE TAX CASE RECEIVES \$1.25M TO BRING BEFORE U.S. SUPREME COURT

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a regular session in person on Aug. 23 at the Mound Building.

The meeting was attended by Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. and members of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council. United Keetowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma (UKB) Chief Jeff Wacoche, as well as members of the UKB Tribal Council.

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

TR 25-068 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Shawn Terry to serve as the Secretary of Health of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation passed with a vote of 10-3. The legislation was sponsored by Representative Robert Hufft, and cosponsored by Representative Darrell Proctor. It was opposed by Representative Dode Barnett, Representative Mark Randolph, and Representative Robyn Whitecloud.

Terry’s term will begin upon confirmation and will end concurrent with the term of the current Principal Chief.

TR 25-069 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the comprehensive safety action plan passed with a vote of 13-0. The legislation was sponsored by Representative Galen Cloud.

The safety plan will include “eight federally-defined components necessary for future eligibility under the SS4A program. This includes leadership commitment and goal setting, planning structure, safety analysis, engagement and collaboration, equity considerations, policy and process changes, strategy and project selections as well as progress and transparency. As a result the MCN Department of Transportation will establish target crash reduction goals.

TR 25-070 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a real estate contract for the purchase of property in McIntosh County, Oklahoma passed with a vote of 13-0. The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Proctor and cosponsored by Rep. Cloud.

The property will be used by the Nation for “further land use expansion.”

TR 25-071 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a programmatic agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Cherokee National Forest; The Muscogee (Creek) Nation; and the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the review and implementation of undertakings in response to Hurricane Helene passed with a vote of 13-0. The legislation

was sponsored by Representative Charles McHenry.

According to the legislation, Hurricane Helene has affected areas of the Cherokee National Forest and is in need of assistance in clean up efforts. The agreement is not a binding financial agreement, however it is a “collaborative framework that preserves the Nation’s autonomy while offering critical support and information.”

TR 25-072 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing updates to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Wildlife Code Conservation Regulations Rep. McHenry sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, the update will include annually-revived season dates, updated bag limits, and best practices for wildlife management. The bill claims these updates are necessary to preserve game populations, protect natural ecosystems, and promote land stewardship.

TR 25-074 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation nominating Toni Smith to serve as the District Trial Court Judge of the District Trial Court Civil Division of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation passed with a vote of 12-0-1. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation, and Representative Patrick Freeman abstained from voting.

Smith’s term will begin upon confirmation and will end on December 31, 2029.

TR 25-075 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving and authorizing the Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises, LLC (“MNGE”) Board of Directors to execute the Platinum Gaming Ventures, LLC. Lease Agreement passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Hufft sponsored the legislation.

The lease agreement will last five years.

TR 25-076 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a proposal letter with the attached term sheet and fee letter from BOKF, NA d/b/a Bank of Oklahoma which outlines the terms and conditions for financing new clinics in Holdenville and Sapulpa, and for renovation projects related to Council Oak Comprehensive Healthcare passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation.

The proposed letter outlines the basic terms of a \$185,000 credit facility that will be offered to finance the construction projects.

TR 25-077 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a 2025 Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP) Grant Application passed with a vote of 13-0. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, the scope of this grant will develop a plan to increase revenue generation for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Utility Authority to enhance energy

sovereignty, improve grid reliability and support long-term climate resilience for critical infrastructure on the MCN Reservation. MCN Secretary of the Nation Zechariah Harjo will be the grant lead point of contact for coordination and communication throughout the project.

TR 25-078 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of understanding between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and several public schools passed with a vote of 13-0. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored the legislation.

The MOU will involve the following public school districts: Wilson, Mason, Okemah, Dewar, Beggs, Mounds, Sapulpa, Lone Star, Hanna, Broken Arrow and Berryhill. MCN Language Revitalization Director Eli Rowland-Chang was called to speak on the legislation’s content. According to Rowland-Chang, the Mvskoke languages will be offered as a world language credit at the aforementioned schools.

TR 25-079 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation opposing proposed congressional language to limit the rights of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma was postponed indefinitely with a vote of 9-4. Rep. Barnett sponsored and Rep. Freeman Jr. cosponsored the legislation. Rep. Barnett, Rep. Freeman Jr., Rep. Randolph and Rep. Whitecloud opposed the postponement.

The proposed congressional language that would limit the rights of the UKB include rights to trust land, which would limit gaming operations on trust property.

When the legislation was open for discussion, Chief Hoskin spoke on the Cherokee Nation’s staunch opposition to TR 25-079. He described the resolution as doing “irreparable damage” to Cherokee Nation’s sovereignty. Chief Hoskin called for the council to vote against the adoption of the resolution.

Chief Wacoche spoke on the UKB’s support of the resolution. He described the legislation that is being heard before the U.S. Congress as an “attack on sovereignty” for the UKB. Chief Wacoche called for MCN to oppose any legislation that stripped the UKB of trust land rights.

NCA 25-064 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 24-146 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from Casey Family Programs for the benefit of Mvskoke Nation Youth Services) passed with a vote of 13-0. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the legislation.

The \$2,000 grant will purchase 25 jackets for the Mvskoke Runners Group members to utilize during the fall and winter months when training or attending running events.

NCA 25-065 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Program. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored the legislation, it passed with a vote of 13-0.

According to the legislation, the \$10,000 grant will purchase a culturally-relevant book vending machine to enhance learning opportunities for the Nation’s youngest learners.

NCA 25-066 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Education for the benefit of the Eufaula Dormitory. Rep. Marshall sponsored the legislation, which passed with a vote of 13-0.

According to the legislation, the \$735,546 grant will be used for the dormitory to operate during the 2025-2026 school year.

NCA 25-067 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a budget modification in excess of ten percent (10%) for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Program Fiscal Year 2025 budget passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Crawford sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, the ten percent budget modification will reallocate salaries, fringe, and a reallocation of funding to purchase a Chevrolet Tahoe and a 14-passenger bus.

NCA 25-068 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 35, Chapter 5, entitled “Emergency Hardship Program” passed 13-0. Representative Thomasene Yahola Osborn sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, the update to the code is necessary to improve the Nation’s ability to “support citizens in times of urgent needs.” The updates the program’s funding source, which is now through the Comprehensive Annual Budget. It will be used for administration, professional staff, equipment and program operations. The program will also be placed under the management and direction of the Social Service Department for the Office of Community and Human Services.

NCA 25-069 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the purchase of property located in McIntosh County, Oklahoma passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Proctor sponsored and cosponsored by Rep. Cloud the legislation.

According to the legislation, the property’s price, \$525,000, will cover the cost of title insurance, title opinions, surveys, environmental studies, and applicable taxes.

NCA 25-070 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 14 Chapter 2, Subchapter 9, § 2-911, entitled “Child Endangerment”- passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation.

The amendment adds the language “(Person Under the Influence) or §3-2708 (Operation of a Motor Vehicle while Impaired)” to section four of the Child Endangerment clause.

NCA 25-071 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establishing a new MCNCA 14, § 2-345 entitled “Digital Operation Exposing Sexual Abuse of a Minor” passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Harjo sponsored the legislation.

According to the legislation, this new law will enable police digital operations in online crimes pertaining to sex crimes pertaining to minors. This includes online lewd and indecent proposals, or invitations to meet with unlawful/willful intent.

NCA 25-072 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 14, § 2-309 entitled “Stalking” passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Harjo sponsored the legislation.

Updated language regarding stalking in the code is updated to define stalking as “a person that willfully, maliciously and repeatedly follows a person with the intent of having that person feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed or molested, and actually causes the person to feel terrorized frightened, intimidated, threatened harassed, molested or a person willfully, maliciously and reportedly follows an immediate family member or intimate partner of the person in subsection A, and actually causes the immediate family member or intimate partner to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested.” It further goes on to state that a person convicted of violating the foregoing provisions will be guilty of a felony.

NCA 25-073 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 14

§ 1-401, entitled “Joinder of Offenses” passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Harjo sponsored the legislation.

The amendment pertains to domestic violence victims who are traumatized by making multiple appearances in court against their alleged perpetrator. The updated code adds a joinder offense, “they have the same alleged victim and would be judicially efficient.”

NCA 25-074 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 14 § 2-326 entitled “Sexual Abuse of a Minor or Ward”; MCNCA Title 14, § 2-327 entitled “Abusive Sexual Contact” and MCNCA Title 14, § 2-342 entitled “Transmitting Information about a Minor” passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation.

The amendment changes the age in the code from 16 years old to 18. It also changes language in § 2-327, section 5 to “shall be guilty of a felony.”

NCA 25-075 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 24-097 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Labor for the Calendar Year 2024 Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program (HVRPP) Project) passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Gouge sponsored the legislation.

Section one adds to the code the following; “any supplemental grant funds received by the U.S. Department of Labor each year beginning on July 1, 2024, and continuing through June 30, 2027, consistent with the approved grant budget.”

NCA 25-076 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the Oklahoma Juvenile Affairs Title II Formula Grant Program funds for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Juvenile Justice Program passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation.

The \$23,723 grant will be utilized to purchase Botvin life skills training, backpacks and school supplies for youth enrolling in the program.

NCA 25-077 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establishing the Mvskoke Technology and Innovation Park (“Mvskoke Tech Park”) postponed for two months with a vote of 11-2. was Rep. Freeman sponsored and Rep. Hufft cosponsored the legislation. Rep. Freeman and Rep. Hufft opposed the postponement.

If eventually adopted, the legislation will support developing data centers, digital infrastructure and A.I. development on the MCN Reservation. The legislation details the possibilities for opportunities for tech companies to incorporate workforce development in this tech park that would economically benefit Mvskoke citizens.

Former MCN Principal Chief James Floyd spoke on how this bill could potentially have negative effects for the environment, and historic sites. MCN Chief of Staff Jeff Fife spoke on the issue as well, citing the potential the bill would have for economic growth on the reservation.

NCA 25-078 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation to retain legal counsel to represent a Muscogee (Creek) Citizen in connection with seeking U.S. Supreme Court Review and litigating the merits, if review is granted, of the Oklahoma Supreme Court’s decision in Stroble v. Oklahoma Tax Commission, 2025 OK 48 passed with a vote of 13-0. Rep. Hufft and Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation.

The funding source was identified as Interest on Permanent Fund. The \$1,250,000 appropriation will allow Mvskoke Citizen Alicia Stroble to take her case on tax exemption to the U.S. Supreme Court.

To view the full agenda, visit www.mcnn.com.





CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILLS PASS BFJ COMMITTEE

THE THREE BILLS HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY POSTPONED ON AUG. 14

BY THOMAS JACKSON REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – On Aug. 19, the Business, Finance and Justice 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: NCA 25-071 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establishing a new MCNCA Title 14, Subsection 2-345 entitled “Digital Operation Exposing Sexual Abuse of a Minor” was passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation.

It was previously postponed on Aug. 14. If adopted, this law will properly define the scope of operations taken up by law enforcement to investigate and arrest those suspected of sexual abuse of a minor via digital sources. NCA 25-072 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 14, Subsection 2-309 entitled “Stalking” was passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation. It was previously postponed on Aug. 14. If adopted, this law will work to elaborate on the definition of Stalking, in order to protect victims of stalking and their loved ones. NCA 25-073 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 14, Subsection 1-401 entitled “Joinder of Offenses” was passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation. It was previously postponed on Aug. 14. If adopted, this law will be amended so that separate cases involving the same victims will be joined into one single case. To view the full agenda, visit: mcnn.com.



(Courtesy: BESH)

SOUR SOFKEE

BY FUS YVHIKV COLUMNIST

The Muscogee Dialect Writings

At the close of the 19th century and in the opening years of the 20th century a new genre of literature emerged in Indian Territory. This style of writing came to be known as the Muscogee Dialect Writings. The most well-known of these authors were primarily Muscogee-Creek. Most prominently these writers included Alexander Posey, Charles Gibson, and Acee Blue Eagle (born Alex McIntosh he was Muscogee/Creek, Pawnee, and Wichita). This style of literature is also called “speaking Creek in English”. The dialogue in these writings was based upon a Muscogee-Creek sentence structure but overlaid with English. The sentence structure of the Creek language is “subject-object-verb.” By contrast, the English language structure is “subject-verb-object.” Thus, in English a basic sentence such as “Bobby kicked the ball” would be rendered in Creek as “Bobby ball kicked”. The emphasis in Creek is on the action, not the subject of the sentence. Posey, of course, is the best known of the writers of the genre. His Fus Fixico Letters were published in the Eufaula Indian Journal (owned by Posey from 1902-1908). The Fus Fixico columns functioned as works of fiction and as a forum for political commentary. Posey was widely read not only in Indian Territory/Oklahoma but also across the nation. Posey’s persona of Fus Fixico had discussions with other fictional characters that brilliantly satirized politics and politicians at the turn of the twentieth century with a special focus on the government’s Indian policies. I highly recommend the book, “The Fus Fixico Letters: A Creek Humorist in Early Oklahoma” by Alexander Posey. The book is published

by the University of Nebraska Press and edited by Daniel Littlefield and Carol A. Petty Hunter. It is available on Amazon and other online book sellers. Thomas E. Moore was another prominent writer of the genre. He wrote under the pen name William Harjo in a weekly column for the Tulsa World called Sour Sofkee. Moore’s column ran in the Tulsa World from approximately 1937-1941 and again in 1964-1965. Given below are two of my favorite Moore/Harjo columns. I’m sure that you will enjoy reading his exquisite, insightful, and humorous work. Wooley on the death of Will Rogers. “Wooley Fixico he say: Will Roger he was died the other day. Killed in airplane fallin’ down, long way from home, ‘bout thousand miles from town. Now we miss it whole lot too, ‘cause aint got funny joke like use’ to do. Old man Will was made good joke, just give to you so much big laugh you choke. Happiest fell ever see, make everybody happy try to be. If you all time feel like mad, Will Roger’ make you laugh all over glad! He’s Indian fella, Cherokee, belongs to tribe all time like you an’ me. He was had allotment land, in Cherokee hills where whole lot rock an’ sand. Will Roger he was best kind, ‘nother man like him in whole world can’t find. Good man, he’s young fella died, Bad one like me can’t die if he tried. Maybe hundred years I live, before use up time some good man give. Maybe then last song I sing.” Wooley he was said these thing. Jackson Barnett The Richest Indian. “Jackson Barnett he was died the other day. That’s what city newspaper all time say. He leave big money – how much I don’t know, guess maybe two three million dollars maybeso. Jackson Barnett had oil wells whole lot. Was had so much he can’t spend all he’s got. His name “Richest Indian for Whole World” they say. He just thousan’ dollar spend it every day. Old man Jackson kin folks don’t had it none. Before he gittin’ rich an’ havin’ fun, just poor an’ livin’ by his self down there. ‘Cause kin folks he aint got it some nowhere. When old man livin’ seem like nobody care. But now, kin folks whole lot he want his share. No flowers send when he was died or even take off hat! An’ now, just claimin’ cousin, nephew an’ all like that. Indian fellas, White man, colored folks too, git Barnett money they all want to do. When court turn money loose maybe nex’ fall, I sody pop bet you lawyers git him all! Look like everybody in there try to be. If my name Barnett I in there too, me. I have dozen lawyers in that court all time, An’ maybe I git nickels...or a dime.” -Okis ci, Fus.

TWO MVSKOKE CITIZENS COMPETE IN NATIONAL BABE RUTH WORLD SERIES

SUBMISSION

It is with immense pride that we bring to your attention the outstanding achievements of two of our own young men, Michol “Xander” Jordan and Sir-Prince McVay, who made history as integral members of the first-ever all-Native team to compete at the national Babe Ruth World Series stage in August 2025. Selected for their exceptional skill at the inaugural Na’ive Na’ions National 16U Baseball Tournament in Scottsdale, Arizona, these Muscogee (Creek) youth athletes represented our Nation and all Indigenous peoples on a global platform. Their journey culminated at the Babe Ruth World Series in Branson, Missouri, from August 5th to 16th, 2025. During the opening ceremonies, Michol and Sir-Prince proudly carried the Muscogee (Creek) Nation flag onto the field alongside those of other sovereign nations, a moment of profound cultural significance.

As part of the Native Nations team, they not only held their own against powerhouse programs from across the globe but also contributed to victories in both pool and bracket play. Michol “Xander” Jordan, a right-handed pitcher and third baseman, drew inspiration from the legendary Jim Thorpe, demonstrating his presence on the field. He is

also noted as a Pitcher - Infield. Sir-Prince McVay, a switch-hitting outfielder and pitcher, embodied his motto to “always give 100% effort,” showcasing a dynamic blend of athleticism and intellect. These young men were more than just players; they were ambassadors who carried the weight of history and the hope of what is possible, inspiring future generations. Their dedication, talent, and commitment to representing their heritage brought great honor to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and exemplified the enduring spirit of our people.



(Courtesy, Amy Jordan)



(Courtesy: Willow Fiddler)

MVSKOKE CITIZEN WORKS ON MANITOBAH PROMOTIONAL FILM PRODUCTION

SUBMISSION

In May, filmmaker Halle Frieden traveled to Thunder Bay, Canada to produce a promotional film for renowned moccasin company, Manitobah. The project highlights the intricate beadwork and creative process of Indigenous artist Shannon Gustafson, whose work is deeply rooted in Anishinaabe tradition and storytelling. The finished film is now available

on Manitobah’s YouTube channel and social media platforms. Frieden is currently developing her next short film, Blayne Tree, and is seeking community support to bring the project to life. Donations can be made via Indiegogo at https://igg.me/at/blaynetreefilm. Follow the film’s journey on Instagram: @blaynetreefilm (https://www.instagram.com/blaynetreefilm/)

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

New Town UMC 176 Year Anniversary Celebration Sept. 17 12 p.m. - end A light lunch will be served at 12:00 p.m., a potluck dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m., followed by Creek Hymn Singing at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to celebrate and worship. 1107 S. Green Willow Rd., Okmulgee, Okla For questions, contact 918-428-5714	Farmer’s Market CMN Extension/Looped Square Meat Co. Sept. 27 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. 3300 U.S. 75 North, Beggs, Okla For questions, contact 918-549-2861.	Haskell Reunion & General Membership Meeting Oct 17-19 Grand Casino Resort/Hotel in Shawnee Registration begins at 3:00 PM Friday \$75 per person includes Friday reception and Saturday Board Meeting Brunch Saturday Dinner Registration \$50 and Membership dues: \$25 Special room rates: \$110/night Call 405-964-7777 to reserve rooms
Opioid Summit MCN Health Sept. 25 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. 425 Boston St., Muskogee, Okla For questions, contact 918-300-1320	Elder’s Meeting Okmulgee Elder Nutrition Center 2900 N. Osage Pl. Okmulgee, Okla Oct. 8 9:30 a.m.	Health Shelf Donation Drive College of Muscogee Nation Health & Wellness is seeking hygiene products, laundry detergent, and gently used blankets and pillows for students in need. Every five items donated will enter donors into a drawing. Donations can be dropped off at 2170 Raven Circle, Okmulgee, OK. For more information, contact 918-549-2800.
	Coffee and Donuts Veterans Affairs Services Office Oct. 9 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. 1006 Bear Ln, Okmulgee, Okla For questions, contact 918-732-7739.	

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VETERANS SPOTLIGHT



The Muscogee Nation Veterans Services Office is proud to honor tribal veteran David J. Ware for his dedicated service to the U.S. Air Force, the United States and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. David honorably served over five years from 1968 to 1974 and is a recipient of several honors: Air Force Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award. Myto Mr. Ware for your selfless service to your country and your community.



Representative Galen Cloud took part in one of the Wake Up! Shake Up sessions held during the Diabetes Awareness Summit on Aug. 28. (Thomas Jackson/MM)

19TH ANNUAL DIABETES AWARENESS SUMMIT HELD AT RIVER SPIRIT

THE EVENT FEATURED HEALTH SCREENINGS, PLUS FUN EVENTS LIKE DANCING AND YOGA

BY THOMAS JACKSON
REPORTER

TULSA - The 19th Annual Diabetes Awareness Summit was held on Thursday, Aug 28 at the River Spirit Casino in Tulsa. The summit continues the work of increasing the health and quality of life for MCN citizens, and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. Activities like yoga and

dancing were offered to participants as well as health screenings. The event also offered information booths from a number of MCN departments and programs including the Tribal Opioid Response Program, and the MCN Stroke Prevention Program. Other groups like the Euchee Butterfly Farm, Utica Park Clinic, Total Care Orthotics and Prosthetics, and Global-

Health also provided information to guests. MCN Secretary of Health Shawn Terry unveiled two new partnerships for the MCN Department of Health. A partnership between Nephrology Specialists of Oklahoma and Council Oak Comprehensive Healthcare will focus on providing medical services related to patients' kidneys, such as dialysis and renal transplants. The MCNDH and OU Health partnership will set up a Vascularization and Limb Salvage Clinic. The clinic will work to improve health to avoid amputations, which Indigenous people face at rates of up to 10 times any other race. In an Aug. 28 press release, MCNDH reported that their efforts to manage and eliminate diabetes has been a success. "As we look ahead to our 20th Annual Summit, we celebrate the historic progress made and commit to building on this work for the health of our people," Terry said. According to the release, MCNDH also reported "over 2,000 patients now use continuous glucose monitors, 4,000 are receiving GLP-1 therapy, and 80% of patients have an A1c under 8%. Obesity rates among patients have dropped from 70% a decade ago to 58% today." For more information on the work MCN Health does for Muscogee citizens, visit their website at <https://www.creekhealth.org/>.

LEGALS

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

IN RE THE NAME CHANGE OF)
MCKINNLEY GRACE WHEELER)
Petitioner,)

Case No. **CV-2025-126**

NOTICE OF FILING PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that MCKINNLEY GRACE WHEELER has filed I the above court a Petition to have her name changed as follows. to-wit: from MCKINNLEY GRACE WHEELER to MCKINNLEY GRACE EMERSON; and that the same will be heard by the District Court of The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Okmulgee District in the Court House located at 2501 Lvmhvlke (Eagle) Street, Okmulgee, OK 74447 on the 14th day of October, 2025 at 9:00 o'clock a.m.; and that any person may file a written protest in the case, prior to the date set for the hearing.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Approved For Entry:

Jesse Lee Allen, MCN #31815
SAVAGE, O'DONNELL, AFFELDT & WEINTRAUB
1836 SOUTH BALTIMORE
TULSA, OK 74119
Telephone (918) 599-8400
Fax (918) 599-8444
Attorney for Petitioner

MCNNRCD-3D (08/25)

NOTICE OF FILING PERIOD FOR ELECTION OF MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED:

Notice is hereby given that any person who is a Muscogee (Creek) registered voter and a resident of the Muscogee (Creek) boundaries of the MCN Conservation District and has entered into or will enter into a Cooperator Agreement with the said District, may have their name placed on the official ballot of the District Commission Election of said District for "Seat B" – restricted landowner and "Seat D" – fee landowner by filing a Notification and Declaration of Candidacy with said District located at the MCN Housing building Room 220 or call 918-549-2609 between the dates of November 3-19, 2025. Notification and Declaration of Candidacy forms may be obtained at the above location and must be returned to the same location before close of business on the last day of the filing period. The Election will be held in December 2025.

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MCNHealth



Our Phone
(918) 591-5733

Our Website
Creekhealth.org