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MVSKOKE NEWS

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STROBLE FILES PETITION FOR U.S. SUPREME COURT REVIEW IN TAX CASE

OK TAX COMMISSION ASKS FOR AN EXTENSION ON RESPONSE

By **THOMAS JACKSON**
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – On Sept. 29, Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen Alicia Stroble asked the United States Supreme Court to review the decision made by the Oklahoma Supreme Court, which decided she must pay state income tax despite previous lower court decisions.

Stroble, who works as the Secretary for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council, filed a

petition for a writ of certiorari, which would require the Oklahoma Supreme Court to send the case to the Supreme Court for review if accepted. She did so after the Oklahoma Supreme Court, in July 2025, declined to extend the McGirt decision to issues of taxation and other civil issues in a 6-3 ruling. The justices found that the 2020 McGirt ruling only applied to criminal acts and only extends to the Major Crimes Act, which gives federal courts jurisdiction over state courts when certain major or heinous crimes are

involved.

Attorneys representing the Oklahoma Tax Commission have filed for an extension on the deadline to respond to the writ of certiorari. If approved, the deadline for the Oklahoma Tax Commission to respond would be extended from Oct. 31 to Dec. 1.

Mvskoke Media reached out to Stroble's legal team for comment on the ongoing legal proceedings against the Oklahoma Tax Commission 1 and spoke to Elizabeth Prelogar of Cooley LLP.



(MM)

Prelogar said in a statement, "In an unbroken line of cases, the Supreme Court has held that States have no power to tax the income of tribal citizens who live and work within their tribes' Indian country. Under those precedents, Oklahoma

lacks authority to tax the income of Alicia Stroble, a Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen who lives and works within the Nation's Reservation. The Oklahoma Supreme Court's decision permitting that taxation is wrong and warrants Supreme Court review."



(Shutterstock)

By **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

WASHINGTON - On Wednesday, Oct 1, the federal government shutdown. As of Oct. 7 the Senate failed to pass five stopgap funding bills, temporary spending bills that would allow federal government operations to continue when final appropriations have not been approved by Congress and the President. The shutdown came after an extension for healthcare tax credit subsidies failed to pass in Congress. The tax credits, originally put in place in 2021 during the Covid-19 Pandemic, are now set to expire. This marks the first government shutdown for the current Trump administration, and the third under his leadership. When a government shutdown occurs, it affects the Tribal nations, particularly smaller Tribes, that rely on federal funding to provide services for their citizens.

According to Muscogee (Creek) Nation Press Secretary Jason Sals-

man, the government shutdown will have minimal effect on Tribal services offered by the Nation.

"We're confident in all of our Tribal systems. We've been through these instances before," Salsman said. "We feel that we're in a good position and are prepared to be able to handle any interruptions in service. And we believe that those in Washington D.C. will figure this out sooner than later. But in the meantime, we have a one hundred percent self sustainable health system and many of our programs will be able to get by at this time. So we're staying in close connection with our Washington D.C. lobbyists and our folks in Washington, but we're also staying with regular meetings with different areas of finance and federal programs to make sure that there's limited interruption."

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. released a public statement on the shutdown. Just like MCN, the Cherokee Nation health system will not be affected by the shut

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

TRIBAL LEADERS REACT AND PROVIDE INSIGHTS ON SHORTAGES IN FEDERAL FUNDING

down. He called for federal leaders to come together to find a solution. The statement reads:

The Cherokee Nation maintains sufficient financial stability to navigate the immediate impacts of a federal government shutdown, but we're hopeful that Congress' foresight to provide an advance appropriation for the Indian Health Service will prevent any severe disruptions as experienced during the 2013 and 2018 shutdowns. I urge both sides of the aisle to work on a path forward and reopen the government as soon as possible and call on the administration to honor the government's Treaty and Trust responsibilities, avoid needless cuts to Tribal programs and personnel, and use its authorities to minimize harm to tribes and tribal citizens.

According to the National Congress of American Indians, Indian Health Services will not be affected by the government shutdown. However, smaller tribes could see effects in their programs and services. According to Cedar Rock Alliance Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs Liz Carr (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians), a shutdown is in violation of treaties.

"Our intention is to remind those in power that Indian Country can't afford a shutdown," Carr said. "Shutting down is an abdication of the trust

and treaty responsibilities. If they do shut down they need to take prompt action to protect Indian Country."

The Associated Press reported that Medicare and Medicaid are expected to continue offering services, however delays may be expected for some services. According to comments made from National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett on CNN, federal employees now face furloughs and firings. Senator Mike Rounds (R- South Dakota) appeared on PBS News Hour to discuss how to avoid disruptions to services and possible furloughs moving forward. His answer is to simply open up the government again.

"There really is no other way to start than starting government and opening it up again," Rounds said. "And that's part of the message that we're trying to share is, there's lots of ways using regular order, the traditional way in which we do appropriations and everything, to accomplish a lot of really good things in the Senate."

Oklahoma Senator James Lankford appeared on KOKI Fox 23 to explain the holdup in Congress. According to Lankford, the core issue is over a proposed seven-week stopgap funding bill. The government is still determining which federal positions are essential and non essential, or which jobs can and can not be worked remotely. Those working positions that are deemed non essen-

tial may lose their jobs altogether. Lankford also said those seeking certain government services will find offices empty.

"Some people are trying to get a permit, do oil and gas development, reach out to a National Park area or other certain offices. They will suddenly find the person they were going to call is now on furlough, they're not there. They can't issue that permit during a government shutdown," Lankford said.

Coincidentally on Oct. 1 the Claremore Indian Hospital officially celebrated its transfer of ownership to the Cherokee Nation after a negotiation process that lasted over a year. According to Cherokee Nation, patients will not see a disruption of service due to the transfer or the shutdown. Likewise the Indian Health Care Resource Center in Tulsa announced the shutdown will have no effect on their services to tribal citizens.

Government shutdowns can vary in length. The Obama administration saw one government shutdown that lasted 16 days in 2013. The Trump administration saw two government shutdowns in 2018, the first lasting two days, the second lasting 34.

"Government shutdowns are kind of like a war. It's easy to start, it's hard to stop. Once you shut the government down you don't know how long it takes," Lankford said.

EUFAULA INDIAN COMMUNITY CENTER A HIVE OF ACTIVITY

10TH ANNUAL MVSKOKE SPELLING BEE BUZZES AGAIN WITH COMPETITORS ACROSS THE RESERVATION

By **SHAYLN PROCTOR**
REPORTER

EUFAULA – On Sep. 27 the Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town hosted their 10th Annual Mvskoke Spelling Bee Competition with the help of the Muscogee Creek Nation Language Department at the Eufaula Indian Community Center. The competition was open to all ages, and money prizes were given to 1st-3rd place winners. The center welcomed everyone to watch this year's competition, and lunch was provided to the participants and visitors.

It was the first time entering for this year's champion, Flo Wise (Seminole). Wise enjoyed the competition and had fun

testing out her language skills. "I think it's a good way for anybody to test their skills or just practice too, especially pronunciation and everything. I think it definitely helped me a little bit," Wise said.

There were 10 participants entered into this year's competition including Jon Tiger (Mvskoke) with the Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town. Tiger spoke to Mvskoke Media about this competition and what the goal is for continuation of the Mvskoke Spelling Bee.

The idea of the bee started several years ago. "As an organization we sit there and talk about the language, the different dialects that happen now. In different regions of the Creek Nation, there's some different dialects

now. We wanted to expand on that to include the spelling bee because many people can speak the language but they can't spell the words," Tiger shared.

"So we thought it might open doors to other insights of the language and we would like to include the youth one day. However it's mainly geared towards the spelling of the Mvskoke word."

Last year, according to Tiger, they had 10 contestants, like this year, and a really great turnout. He has noticed people are becoming more familiar with this competition and the need for it, but Tiger also sees the event as fun for participants.

The spelling bee used Mvskoke words from the green



The winners for the Mvskoke Spelling Bee 2025. From the left side is 1st place Flo Wise, 2nd place Mike Harjo and 3rd place Nancy Spain. (Photo Courtesy: Shayln Proctor/MM)

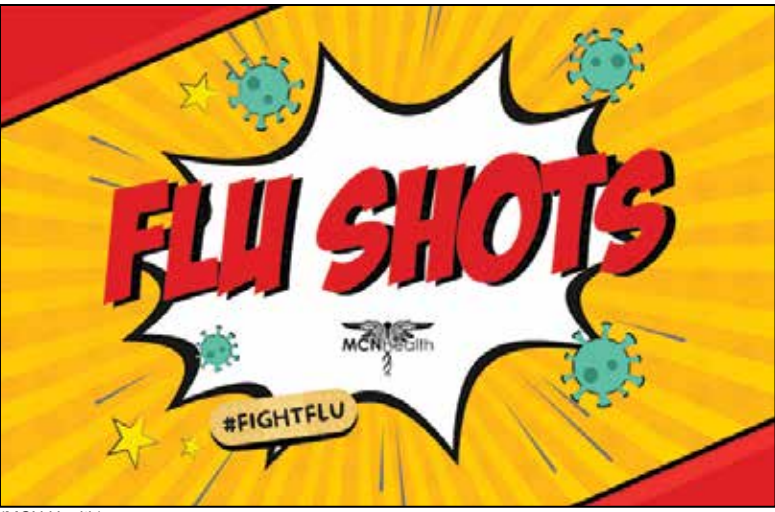
dictionary published by Jack B. Martin and Margaret McKane Mauldin. Before the competition, anyone participating could pick up a study guide provided by the MCN Mvskoke Language Department to help prepare for

the competition. The department was in charge of the competition and choosing Mvskoke words.

The Eufaula-Canadian Tribal

EUFAULA INDIAN COM
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3





(MCN Health)

HEALTH ROLLS OUT MOBILE CLINICS FOR FLU SEASON

ALL TRIBAL CITIZENS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO FREE IMMUNIZATIONS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS ACROSS THE MVSKOKE RESERVATION IN OCTOBER

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – Flu season is here, and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health’s Mobile Flu Vaccine Clinics are rolling out. The department released a schedule of the stops across the Mvskoke Reservation during September and October. The clinics are open to all citizens of federally-recognized tribes who are 12 years of age and older. The department encourages everyone to receive a flu shot, especially children and elders. Vaccinations help lower the spread of diseases like influenza. Most importantly, flu vaccinations lower the chance of severe illness, hospitalizations and long-term health issues.

Tribal citizens that attend a mobile flu shot clinic will need to provide their Tribal citizen-

ship card or Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card. The clinics are designed to be quick and efficient for people with busy schedules. According to MCN Health Communications Manager Ashtyn Sals-

“GETTING YOUR FLU SHOT IS A SAFE AND SIMPLE WAY TO KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY WHILE ALSO PROTECTING THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST — LIKE OUR ELDERS, CHILDREN, AND LOVED ONES WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS.”
- **ABBI LEE**

man, most patients are checked in, vaccinated and finished with their appointments within just a couple minutes.

MCN Health is already starting to see a rise in flu cases this year. According to MCN Health Chief

Medical Officer Dr. Jessicah Gilmore, this is why it is important for citizens to take early precautions by getting their flu shot as soon as possible during flu season.

“While we haven’t seen notable flu-related hospitalizations so far, our providers are already diagnosing flu cases in clinics and express care visits earlier than we typically expect,” Gilmore said. “That’s why we’re strongly encouraging people to take advantage of our mobile flu clinics and get vaccinated now.”

MCN Health Public Health Officer Abbi Lee assured that the vaccine is not only safe to take, it is important to take because it helps protect vulnerable populations.

“Getting your flu shot is a safe and simple way to keep yourself healthy while also protecting those who need it most — like our elders, children, and loved ones with health conditions,” Lee said. “It’s a step we can all take to look out for one another this season.”

For those who are apprehensive about getting poked, Gilmore said the benefits are worth it.

helps prevent serious illness for you, but it also protects those who may be more vulnerable. If you have concerns, we encourage you to talk with your healthcare provider.”

To learn more about the flu vaccine, visit the Center for Disease Control website, [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

MCN Mobile Flu Shot Schedule:

Okmulgee Elderly Nutrition
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Sept. 30
2975 Martha Berryhill Avenue, Okmulgee

One Fire Casino
1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Sept. 30
1901 N. Wood Drive, Okmulgee

Okemah Elderly Nutrition
11:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Oct. 1
1100 S. Woody Guthrie, Okemah

Okemah Casino
Oct. 1
1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
121 W. Lincoln, Bristow

Bristow Elderly Nutrition
Oct. 2
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
121 W. Lincoln, Bristow

Holdenville Elderly Nutrition
Oct. 6
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
224 E. Popular Street, Holdenville

Holdenville Casino
1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Oct. 6
221 E. Willow Street, Holdenville

Muscogee Casino
1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Oct. 7
3420 W. Peak Boulevard, Muskogee

Dewar Elderly Nutrition
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Oct. 8
903 E. 6th St., Dewar

Eufaula Elderly Nutrition Center
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Oct. 8
800 Birkes Road, Eufaula

Tulsa Indian Community
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Oct. 9
8611 S. Union Avenue, Tulsa

Checotah Casino
1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Oct. 9
830 N. Broadway Street, Checotah

Creek Nation Council House
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Oct. 13
100 W. 6th Street., Okmulgee

Sapulpa Elderly Nutrition
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Oct. 14
1020 N. Brown Street, Sapulpa

Duck Creek Casino
1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Oct. 14
100851 Ferguson Road, Beggs,

Wetumka Elderly Nutrition
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Oct. 15
608 N. Creek Street, Wetumka

OKC Resource Center
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Oct. 22
4111 N. Lincoln Boulevard, OKC

College of Muscogee Nation
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Oct. 24
STEM Building
2170 Raven Circle, Okmulgee

MCN/TULSA REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT MOVES TO CITY COUNCIL

THE CONTROVERSIAL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT RECENTLY BEGAN THE PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS ON SEPT. 10

BY **THOMAS JACKSON**
REPORTER

TULSA – The Southern Villa District Economic Development Project, a redevelopment project involving the City of Tulsa and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, recently went through a committee hearing and began the public comment process on Sept. 10.

The project, which would bring more than 210,000 square feet of high-end retail space, as well as 652 to 780 multi-family residential units, sits in between Riverside Parkway and Lewis Avenue in Tulsa, near 87th Street.

Some city councilors, such as Anthony Archie, whose district includes the site, approve of the project, saying it will bring additional jobs and housing to a community that needs it, as local areas such as the Plaza Shopping Center have been in decline.

“When I think about the Southern Villa T.I.F., I think about a partnership between the City of Tulsa and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation for more

housing, for more retail, and it just represents the potential for economic revitalization at 81st & Lewis.” Archie said during the Sept. 10 Tulsa City Council’s Urban & Economic Development Committee meeting.

Others, however, are more wary of the project. Jeff Sabin, an attorney with the Center for Economic Development Law, out of Oklahoma City, drew some concern when he explained that the residential units would be sold at “Market Rate,” and that at the time of the City Council meeting, no units of affordable housing would be planned.

Councilor Lori Dector Wright took issue with the vagueness of parts of the document, requesting that more details regarding the planned residential areas be released before the next public hearing.

During the first public comment period of the meeting, Mvskoke citizen Aaron Griffith took issue with the lack of affordable or workforce housing proposed by the project in its current state.

“My main concern with this project is the fact that we, from my understanding of this project, are subsidizing luxury

lofts for affluent and privileged people. ... I don’t see this being inclusive. I don’t see this being something that’s going to help with the number one problem and the number one priority of the politicians in the city of Tulsa, and that is the homelessness problem and housing instability in this city,” Griffith said.

“It completely undermines the confidence people have

in the process. It undermines everything you’re doing when you make these kinds of exceptions.”

The second public hearing regarding the Southern Villa District Economic Development Project took place on Oct. 8.

The public comment form for Tulsa City Council can be found on their website, <https://www.tulsacouncil.org/meetings>.



The planned redevelopment project’s layout (Photo Courtesy: City of Tulsa)

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To submit a change of address or a letter to the editor, call: 918-732-7720 or email: info@mvskokemedia.com.

EUFULA INDIAN COM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Town’s goal is to expand the knowledge of the Mvskoke language and spelling and for the people that are just watching. “We encourage them that they can take the study guides with them and to be more famil-

iar with it. We had several contestants that were scattered out throughout the Creek Nation and they are all from different regions, which was a good sign that the words are getting out and we’ve invited more people to come in this year too. If you don’t participate at least watch,” Tiger said.

What Tiger enjoys most about helping host this year’s competition is meeting new people and getting to know other Mvskoke citizens. He also likes speaking to the public about the Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town’s history and how they came about.Tiger also noted that they allow associate members to join them in dif-

ferent activities and events they have throughout the year. Wise would like more events like this. She was glad to see that the Eufaula Canadian-Tribal town hosting a spelling bee and hopes to see other tribal towns hosting one as well, “almost like a district then a big ole Championship at the dome or some-

thing,” Wise said. In the end she wanted to say, “South Canadians stand up.”

Results provided by MCN Mvskoke Language Department on Sep. 27:
1st place: Flo Wise
2nd place: Mike Harjo
3rd place: Nancy Spain



(Photo Courtesy: Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Facebook page)

SCHOLARS, TRIBAL LEADERS DISCUSS BLOOD QUANTUM

CITIZENS FROM MULTIPLE TRIBES GATHERED TO SHED LIGHT ON THE CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC, ITS ISSUES, AND POTENTIAL REPLACEMENTS

by **THOMAS JACKSON**
REPORTER

TULSA – People from across Tulsa attended a recent discussion at the University of Tulsa on one of the most controversial

topics in Indian Country: blood quantum. The Sept. 11 event at 101 Archer, titled “Beyond Blood Quantum: Sovereignty and Tribal Enrollment,” featured a talk with author Norbert Hill Jr. (Oneida); Jennifer Hill-Kelley (Oneida,

Kiowa, Comanche), former judge for the Oneida Nation’s Court of Appeals; and Jim Gray (Osage), former Chief of the Osage Nation. Wilson Pipestem moderated the free, public conversation.

Hill, the author of the edited volume “Beyond Blood Quantum: Refusal to Disappear,” spoke of how the issue of blood quantum is, in his opinion, the most important issue that Indigenous people will face in the 21st Century.

“I published two anthologies about blood quantum. It’s a complicated issue. I’ve been in education for a long time, so the books were about community education to try and get people to understand the complexity of this issue,” Hill said.

Hill also made a point of mentioning why holding discussions like this are important. “At the end of the day, we’re trying to figure out how to let people make informed decisions so we don’t terminate ourselves. Our mortality rates are higher than our birth rates, our populations are dimin-

ishing, and so we have to figure out how to reinvent ourselves,” Hill stated.

“There’s a sense of urgency there. I believe this is the most important issue Native people are going to face this century, but if we don’t figure this out and find a place for our young people, you know, we won’t survive.”

Another unique presentation was given by Hill-Kelley, who presented evidence via a slideshow of the potential damage blood quantum requirements can do by using the Oneida as an example. The Oneida have a blood quantum requirement of at least one-fourth. This was evidence provided to them by a demographer and analyst.

She pointed out that as time has passed, the number of full-bloods has decreased and the one-half and one-quarter members are increasing. However, due to the blood-quantum requirements, the number of tribal members has stagnated, with most of today’s tribal members being at most one-half or one-quarter.

The Oneida tribe, according to Hill-Kelley, is in danger of “evolving ourselves out” due to the strict blood quantum requirements, as no members below one-fourth can enroll.

Lance Kelley (Mvskoke), one of the organizers, took time to speak about the importance of events like this while also acknowledging that tribes in Oklahoma do have some differences from the Oneida Nation and other tribes in Wisconsin.

“I know it’s a little different perspective here in Oklahoma. In Wisconsin, there’s 11 tribes, while here, there’s 39. It brings another layer of discussion of issues that tribes here in Oklahoma are facing,” Kelley said.

“The Muscogee Nation is at roughly 100,000 members compared to 17,000 with the Oneida, and the Oneida are one of the largest tribes in their area. And with other issues such as the Freedmen, the number of citizens for the Muscogee Nation is likely to double, so this issue needs to be discussed among many others.”

MVSKOKE CORAKKOOHLIKV FINISH TRAIL OF TEARS MEMORIAL MOTORCYCLE RIDE STRONG

THE GROUP OF VETERANS TOOK THE ANNUAL 725-MILE RIDE TO HONOR THE MVSKOKE ANCESTORS THAT WERE FORCED TO TRAVEL FROM THE HOMELANDS TO OKLAHOMA

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – A convoy of motorcycles helmed by the Mvskoke Corakkoohlikv, the Mvskoke Riders, roared into the College of Muscogee Nation’s parking lot on Monday, Sept. 23. This marked the last stop for the riders for the Annual Trail of Tears Memorial Motorcycle Ride which pays respects for the Mvskoke ancestors that walked the trail after Forced Removal. The 725-mile ride starts in Chattanooga, Tennessee and ends in Okmulgee during the third weekend in September. Their slogan, which also serves as a motivating reminder for why they do what they do is “Ride to Remember.” The riders were greeted by Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal leadership, CMN employees and other supporters eager to cheer on the riders as they completed their commemorative journey.

The Mvskoke Riders can be found at veteran funerals, parades and volunteer events around the reservation. They are known for providing funeral escorts for veterans who have passed, a tradition they call “going the last mile.” Earlier this year the group organized a barbeque fundraiser that raised money

for lodging on this year’s ride.

Trail of Tears Memorial Motorcycle Ride Board Members John and Kathy Crockett are organizers of the ride and the owners of Crockett Powersports, a motorcycle dealership in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Neither John nor Kathy Crockett are Tribal citizens themselves. However, they ride to honor the victims and survivors of the Trail of Tears, as well as to give back to the community. John Crockett served as a road

“It’s a sense of honor, a sense of obligation, a sense of relief when we make that trail. As you ride that trail you begin to think and you begin to see images of our people walking, struggling. That crosses your mind. You think about how you’re tired and I want to rest, but then you remember they (the ancestors) didn’t have that option. We need to remember what they went through to get us where we’re at now. We need to remember how strong they

“BIKERS AND MOTORCYCLISTS ARE VERY GENEROUS AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE. IF THERE IS A CALL ANYWHERE AND YOU WANT HELP, A GROUP OF BIKERS IS THE BEST PLACE TO GO. IF YOU NEED SOMETHING DONE THEY’RE OUR GO-TO GUYS AND GALS.” - JOHN CROCKETT

captain, and Kathy drove the support vehicle that provided food and medical supplies for the riders.

Office of Veteran Affairs Secretary Grover Wind joined the Mvskoke Riders on this year’s ride. According to Wind, although the ride is a hard journey to make, the sense of pride it provides is worth the effort.

were and that’s our strength now. It’s an honor for me to ride this.” Wind said.

The Crocketts get Involved

The commemorative ride is not the only one that is hosted in honor of the ancestors that walked the Trail of Tears. According to John Crock-



(Braden Harper/MM)

ett, the Trail of Tears Memorial Motorcycle Ride is smaller and has a tight-knit community of riders.

John Crockett did not grow up learning about the Trail of Tears as a student in the public education system. It was not until he was an adult when he learned about the forced removal of the Five Tribes from their homelands.

“I grew up in a public school system back in Tennessee, in Nashville,” John Crockett said. “I never learned anything about the Trail of Tears. I was one of those guys that saw the signs everywhere I went throughout the Southeast, ‘Trail of Tears Historical Site.’ I always wondered what that was but I never took the time to explore it, to learn anything about it. As this opportunity presented itself I began to learn a little bit more and more about it.”

Kathy Crockett also serves as the treasury secretary for the ride. At the celebration hosted by the CMN, Kathy Crockett presented the college with a \$5,000 donation marked for Native American Studies scholarships. Kathy Crockett remarked that this year saw the largest donation made with funds raised from the memorial motorcycle ride.

“We’ve come a long way in how we’re able to raise funds to donate,” Kathy said. “We do that through tee shirt sales, we have a kick off gathering where John will grill hamburgers and hotdogs and we get donations. We do a raffle that raises a decent amount.”

The word bikers can sometimes carry a negative connotation associated with criminal activity. Crockett said their group that rides the Trail of Tears Commemorative Ride aims to be family friendly, focusing on giving back to the community. Crockett Powersports also supports other rides including the group Rolling Thunder’s Rolling to Remember, an annual run through Washington D.C. on Memorial Day. The run brings awareness for prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Wind remarked that the Crockett’s involvement in the ride and their contributions to the college are extremely meaningful to the Tribe.

“I think their contributions are great,” Wind said. “I think for them to give money to the college is their way of paying something to our history.”

VETERANS EDITION

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

★★★★

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

MUSCOGEE MUSICIANS PRESERVE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE THROUGH HYMNS



Pearl Thomas is a Muscogee hymn singer and elder at Honey Creek United Methodist Church. (Diego Hernandez/UNT)

by **DIEGO HERNANDEZ**
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](#).

TULSA , OK — Before Elisa Harkins ever stepped onto a stage, she was in a small classroom learning hymns in a language she did not grow up speaking.

It began with a simple challenge. Her Muscogee language teacher, Don Tiger, asked her to learn a hymn and return the following week to sing it in front of the class. She had not been raised in a household where the language was spoken fluently, but she found a recording online, taught herself the words and stood up the next week to sing.

That moment marked a shift. It was the first time Harkins, who is Cherokee and Muscogee Creek, saw how music could be a bridge not only to language but to a deeper connection with identity and community.

“I was not really familiar with the hymns until I started going to language class,” Harkins said. “But when I started singing them, I realized how much of the language

and worldview is embedded in the songs. That is what really pulled me in.”

Across the Muscogee Nation, hymn singing has long served as a



Elisa Harkins is a Cherokee and Muscogee Creek musician who preserves tribal languages through contemporary music and performance. (Diego Hernandez/UNT)

cultural cornerstone, a tool of language transmission and a spiritual practice.

For elders like Pearl Thomas, who has spent decades leading

hymns at Honey Creek United Methodist Church in Oklahoma, singing in Muscogee is not only a tradition. It is preservation.

“These are songs that came with our people on the Trail of Tears,” Thomas said. “They sang to keep going. The hymns helped them survive.”

Many of the hymns sung today were first translated from English or composed by Muscogee speakers in the 19th century. They exist primarily in oral form, passed from one voice to the next, often without any written lyrics or notation.

That method of transmission, imperfect but deeply communal, has helped keep the language alive even in families where it is no longer spoken fluently.

“When we were growing up, there was no sheet music,” Thomas said. “You learned by listening. You sang until you knew it.”

The connection between hymn singing and language preservation occurs because the melody, rhythm and repetition make it easier to learn vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

For language learners of all ages, hymns can serve as a kind of auditory textbook, an emotionally charged and culturally specific curriculum.

For Harkins, hymns became more than a learning tool. They became a foundation for experimentation.

While studying electronic music at the California Institute of the Arts, she began translating her own original songs into Cherokee, becoming the first person to perform contemporary music in that language.

As she continued learning Muscogee alongside Cherokee, she began incorporating both languages into her performances, which combine auto-tuned vocals, sampled rhythms and traditional melodies.

Her live show is part ritual, part concert and part challenge to expectations about what Indigenous music is supposed to sound like.

“People still think of Native Americans as being in the past,” Harkins said. “Like we are in museums or history books. But music brings us into the present and into the future.”

The idea that hymns belong solely to the past is one that both Harkins and Thomas push back against, although in different ways.

Thomas sings with a voice shaped by decades of church gatherings and community singings, a voice that carries the stories of her family and her congregation. Her father and uncles were strong singers, and many of the hymns she sings today were passed directly from their voices to hers.

“I was told by an elder once that if you do not know how to pray, you better learn how to sing,” she said. “So that is what I have been doing all my life.”

She has sung at basketball games, funerals, powwows and school assemblies. At a recent university event, her performance of a Muscogee hymn caused a

man who had no prior connection to the language or culture to approach her, “He came up and shook my hand and said, “That was beautiful,” Thomas said. “I did not even know ESPN was there filming it, but people listen. They feel it.”

Increasingly, young people are not only listening but participating. Across Oklahoma, schools in partnership with the Muscogee Nation have begun offering language programs that include hymn singing as part of the curriculum, according to Muscogee Nation.

In some classrooms, even Head Start students learn to greet elders, count and sing simple hymns in Muscogee.

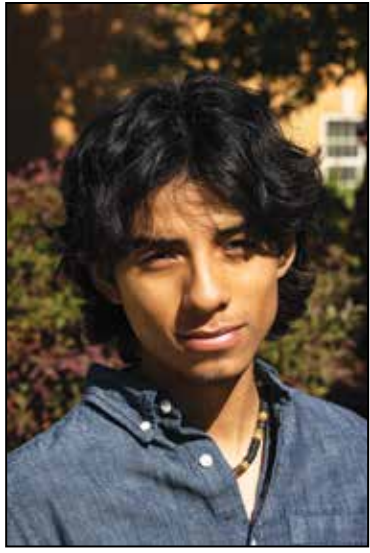
Thomas witnessed this firsthand when her great-granddaughter came home from school and surprised her with a formal Muscogee introduction.

“She could say it better than me,” Thomas said. “I asked where she learned that, and she said it was in her Creek class. I had no idea they were teaching it like that.”

While community programs and school initiatives offer formal pathways to revitalization, music remains the emotional anchor.

Hymns are sung at births, weddings, deaths and Sunday services. They are passed around at kitchen tables and sung while driving down back roads. They are what people turn to in grief and celebration.

“The language holds a different way of seeing the world,” Harkins said. “Even our calendar had 13 months once, to reflect the moon cycles. The way we describe the seasons, the way we name the months, it is all different. It is all encoded in the language.”



Diego Hernandez is a student journalist at the University of North Texas, where he studies in the Mayborn School of Journalism. He covers local music with a focus on Denton's alternative and DIY scenes and is the Digital Editor for the North Texas Daily and a freelance writer for the Dallas Observer. He hopes to pursue a career in music journalism and alternative music broadcasting, with plans to attend law school at the University of Texas at Austin in 2026. Diego can be reached at diegohernandez8j@gmail.com

NATION BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW WELCOME CENTER

ONCE COMPLETE, THE 11,000 SQ FOOT FACILITY WILL FEATURE CLASSROOMS FOR CULTURAL EDUCATION, RESEARCH ROOMS AND ARTIFACT COLLECTION DISPLAYS

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal leadership made the first step in the construction of the new Welcome Center on Wednesday, Sept. 24. The Welcome Center will be located at 3581 Industrial LN in Okmul-

“What a great place to showcase who exactly we are, what our history is, what we’re all about, where we came from and what we’re doing now,” Salsman said.

MCN Principal Chief David Hill believes the facility will provide the space needed to tell the story of the Tribe, its history, and its culture.

“Our stories here reach long before statehood. Through this

vacant for many years.

“We should be proud of who we are, we should be proud of what we’ve done. We should be proud of what we’ve accomplished and have yet to accomplish, we’re not done yet. This is just one step in a long line of projects we’re doing. One step in showcasing who we are. I am glad that we can share in the celebration and excitement of moving forward,” Chief Beaver said.

National Council Speaker Randall Hicks shared his excitement for the project and what he believes it will represent. According to Speaker Hicks, the Welcome Center will share the story of the Tribe and keep its traditions and culture alive.

“This Welcome Center will be a true gateway to our Nation. Visitors will be able to step inside and immediately feel the strength of our people, and the beauty of our traditions,” Speaker Hicks said. “They will hear our language, they will see our art and learn the story of our ancestors that walked this land long before us.”

A Gateway to the Nation

The Welcome Center will be the new home of the Council House collection. According to Secretary of Culture and Humanities RaeLynn Butler, the collection includes over 200 boxes and 55 critical care items. This includes hundreds of paintings, photographs, prints,

pottery, and baskets. Among these items is a basket and a cast iron pot brought over on the Trail of Tears. The collection also includes firearms and a canon ball from the Civil War.

“These items have been boxed up for several years but it’s time for them to have a home,” Butler said. “The curation space will allow the collection to be stored in a climate-controlled environment that is up to federal curation standards. This dedicated space will help make the collection accessible to our citizens for the first time. We will have a research area that will give artists an opportunity to see the items and learn from the designs. We hope this encourages a younger generation of museum professionals and traditional artisans.”

TriArch Owner Scott Vrooman (Potowatomi) is the architect who designed the Welcome Center. Vrooman’s resume includes Garth Brooks’ house in Claremore, the Hard Rock Casino Lobby Expansion and various churches and

community centers in the Tulsa area. When it came time to draft ideas for the Welcome Center Vrooman said his team worked very closely with Butler and Cultural Center & Archives Program Manager ShaVon Agee to make sure their vision for the center authentically represented the Tribe. Vrooman noted that the Welcome Center will incorporate four main motifs: mounds, Tribal towns, Removal, and the Modern Mvskoke.

“We are so happy to be working on this project,” Vrooman said. “We love to make architecture that tells stories. This is certainly telling the story of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. It’s a building that remembers the past through state-of-the-art archiving and research facilities. It celebrates the present through art and education. It embraces the future through educational programs. Triarch is honored to be telling the story of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation through this building.”



(Braden Harper/MM)

WE'VE SEEN THIS FILM BEFORE

BY TYLER SPEIR, J.D.
MVSKOKE CITIZEN

A black flag flutters loosely in a light breeze. It sits atop a flag-pole fixed to the side of a building on a main street in a small eastern Oklahoma town. The flag flies adjacent to the Stars and Stripes, both showing the wear and tear from too many nights of being forgotten outside. In the center of this black flag is a red hand-print, a symbol of movement not many know about, and unfortunately few bother to take the time to look up its meaning. This flag represents missing and murdered indigenous women, and the silent battle that is waging on their behalf. Women in indigenous communities are far more likely to face domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking than the average American, yet little has been done on the part of the federal and state governments to combat this crisis or to remove the barriers that these women face in getting help. It is the tragic reality that our tribal nations are the only organized forces that are both willing and equipped to take on this issue and fight for our women and girls.

Indigenous communities, particularly those in Oklahoma and

the southeastern US are anachronisms, a voting bloc that fails to conform to the norms that characterize other minorities in America. Native populations in these regions trend conservative, and again going against the grain, this has worked out for them, with a staunchly conservative Supreme Court strengthening sovereignty in tribal reservations. Yet it is becoming clear that the rapidly evolving American conservative movement, championed by the GOP, is abandoning shared goals with the country's tribal nations and is willing to forsake its political alliances in forging its new path.

The ideology of the new Republican Party is characterized more so by what it opposes rather than what it stands for. In many ways, the GOP under Trump's stewardship has shirked traditional ideology, and instead has adopted a Big Brother-esque deference to the proclamations of its figurehead. It is becoming increasingly clear that our old begrudging ally, once stalwart at least in the vocal support of some of our community's greatest challenges, is now lost to the whims and fancies of corporatists cronyism.

The years-long Jeffrey Epstein

debacle has transformed into a game of political football, with both parties waiting with bated breath to see if enough damning evidence is dug up to tank the opposition. The issue faced on both the left and the right is that this fiasco seems by all measures to implicate both the Republicans and the Democrats up to the very top of the food chain. Yet, the last few months of egregious mismanagement of the situation by Trump administration, with its constant backpedaling, contradictions, and outright lies regarding the existence, contents, and release of the ubiquitous Epstein Files has finally spun out of hand. From a campaign focusing on the release of all of the documents related to one of America's most prolific sex trafficking scandals, to the fight to keep the files hidden, to the denial of their existence, to the claims that they are a hoax perpetrated by the Obama administration, to the claims by the Speaker of the House that Trump himself was an FBI informant on the matter, and finally to the newly released birthday letter sent and signed by Mr. Trump himself to Epstein, it seems the ball has finally dropped.

WE'VE SEEN THIS FILM
CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

MCN REINTEGRATION
RECEIVED KFC GRANT

AWARD FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR FOOD STORAGE
AND PRODUCTION



MCN Secretary of Education and MCN Reintegration Program did a ribbon cutting on Sep. 17 for a storage building funded through a grant from KFC. (Photo Courtesy: MCN RiP/Employment and Training)

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

HENRYETTA – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reintegration Program (RiP) has recently received a Kentucky Fried Wishes (KFC) grant from the KFC foundation in the amount of \$10,000. The grant will be used for the food preservation and distribution pantry, and will also include purchasing and renovating a storage building. The building work will enable the storage of dried and preserved herbs, fruits and vegetables. On Sept. 17, MCN RiP

held a ribbon cutting to mark the beginning work this grant enables.

MCN RiP offers reentry services, housing, food, and transportation support as well as job training using a holistic approach for MCN citizens returning from incarceration.

The grant will enable MCN RiP to connect their clients to traditional food knowledge and sustainability. Tony Fish, Reintegration Manager, said in a statement, “We are deeply grateful to the KFC Foundation for this Kentucky Fried Wishes grant, which will help our organiza-

tion transform a storage building into a community pantry that reflects Mvskoke traditions of food preservation—such as drying, seed saving, and gathering—equip it with tools to support sustainable practices, and create a space where clients can reconnect with ancestral knowledge through hands-on learning.”

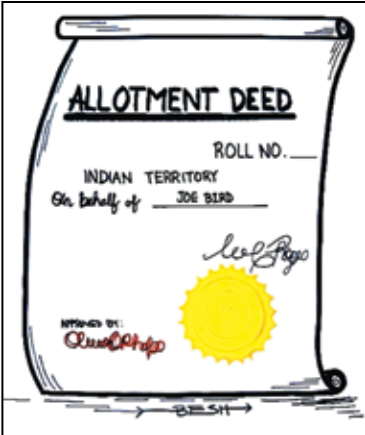
“We’re thrilled to support such incredible non-profits like MCN Reintegration through Kentucky Fried Wishes,” said Emma Horn, Executive Director, KFC Foundation. “These grants help make dream projects a reality, strengthening organizations and creating lasting benefits for the communities they serve.”

The grant will also strengthen food access and production on the reservation according to Greenhouse Facilitator Annetta Molet. “This grant empowers us to improve food access for our clients. Last year, we were able to provide plants to over 200 citizens, offering a unique pathway to food sovereignty and wellness,” said Molet.

“This initiative will allow us to expand our reach, deepen our impact.”

Together, gardening and cultural preservation is an important aspect in the programming at MCN RiP; the KFC Foundation award allows the program to strengthen that work and to encourage cultural connections

KFC GRANT
CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



(Courtesy: BESH)

SOUR
SOFKEE

BY FUS YVHIKV
COLUMNIST

The following column is a fictionalized satirical story written in the genre of ‘Creek Dialect Writings’. The events and characters depicted are fictitious.

“Fus, you’ve got it stop this,” Yahola says as I chomp on a tasty donut.

“Yeah, I know,” I reply. “But it’s so delicious!”

“Heyluh! I’m not talking about that. I’m talking about stopping this!” Yahola says pointing to a nearby TV.

I slurp on my coffee that is so strong it could put backbone into the most feckless politician. On the TV, there is a man at a podium addressing a throng of reporters. Above the man, there is a large banner that reads, “Two Stones Data Center Project.”

“You’ve got to stop this, Fus,” Yahola laments.

“Naget?” I say. “Turn it up.”

Yahola turns up the volume. A TV crawler identifies the man as the president of the local chamber of commerce.

“The Two Stones Project represents a major opportunity to attract investment, create quality jobs, and strengthen the economic foundation of our entire metro area,” he says. “The \$5 billion, Two Stones project is designed to position our region as a competitive hub for advanced technology innovation. It will transform all of Northeast Oklahoma!”

The adoring crowd erupts into thunderous applause. You’d think Two Stones is the best thing to hit Oklahoma since the grand theft called The Land Run.

A Tulsa County Commissioner also glowingly praises the project and notes that Tulsa County had to compete with several other locations to land the coveted project. The county granted a 100% property tax exemption over the next 25 years.

“It’s a small price to pay for this Crown Jewel of a project,” the commissioner declares.

“You see what I mean, Fus,” Yahola says. “You’ve got to stop this!”

“Why stop a \$5 billion project with all the jobs?”

“There’s no jobs,” Yahola replies. “Just stacks of computer servers and a bunch of Star Wars R2 D2 robots trolling around.”

“Ha! Maybe we could break into the data center disguised as Storm Troopers and blow up the robots with our blaster rifles!”

“Fus, I’m serious! There’s issues nobody’s talking ‘bout.”

“Like what?”

“Like the immense amount of water this thirsty project will use. It’s gonna drain our aquifer and our water bills will skyrocket.”

“Yeah, my water bill was so high last month I had to put my wallet into the witness protection program.”

“Not to mention electricity.”

“Electricity?”

“Yes, these data centers suck up huge amounts of electricity. There won’t be enough to go around. If we get another frigid winter like in 2021, we could all freeze to death.”

“I remember that. It was colder than my ex-wife’s divorce attorney!”

“And it’s corporate welfare. We’re giving away tax revenue for 25 years. And nobody knows who owns the data center. The identity of the owner is a secret more closely guarded than Col. Sanders’ recipe. You’ve gotta research this and see if there’s some way we can blow it up.”

“Blow it up? You’d make a good Storm Trooper, Yahola,” I reply. “Ok, I’ll see what I can do. I’m not an attorney but I did stay in a Holiday Inn last night.”

I arrive home and consult Hastains Creek allotment map. It shows the location of each of the original Creek allotments. I determine that Creek citizen Joe Bird was the original allottee of the land in question. Joe Bird received a deed to his 160 acres in 1901 when he was four years old.

At Tulsa Abstract Company I exam the abstract to the land. An abstract is a written chronology of all documents legally filed on a tract of land. In reviewing the documents I note there was an insider sale of the land between two of Tulsa’s esteemed founding fathers back in 1907. However, there is no evidence of court approval of the sale, which was a legal necessity then for a fullblood minor such as Joe Bird.

“We can kill Two Stones with one Bird,” I say reneketv (“speaking in an undertone”).

Ten days later a Mvskoke attorney representing the descendants of Joe Bird holds a press conference.

“We have today filed with the Office of the Tulsa County Clerk a Notice of Lis Pendens,” the attorney states. “A Lis Pendens is a formal written notice of a pending lawsuit. We have discovered a defect in the chain of title. Specifically that the allotment of Joe Bird was illegally and wrongfully taken from him in 1907. We are taking legal action to return the allotment to its rightful owners, the descendants of Joe Bird.”

Yahola calls me.

“You did it Fus! You killed Two Stones with one Bird! And the Bird family will finally get justice!”

I’m so overcome with gleeful emotion, I can’t speak. Tears of joy stream down my face.

-Okis ci, Fus

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BFJ PASSES LEGISLATION TO ENTER AN AGREEMENT WITH U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



THE AGREEMENT WILL CREATE A SPECIAL ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY ROLE TO ALLOW THE NATION TO PROSECUTE CRIMES IN U.S. DISTRICT COURT

BY THOMAS JACKSON
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – On Sept. 23 and Sept. 27, the Business, Finance and Justice Committee held in-person meetings. 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 25-090 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Oklahoma was passed with a vote of 4-0. Representative

Robert Hufft sponsored the legislation.

If adopted, this resolution will allow for the appointment of Tribal Prosecutor Kelly Sweeney to serve as a Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney (SAUSA), thus allowing Sweeney to prosecute crimes against the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in either Tribal or U.S. District Courts.

NCA 25-087 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the Comprehensive Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 and providing for appropriations passed with a vote of 2-1, with Representative Sandra Golden voting no. Rep. Hufft sponsored the legislation. The legislation was previously postponed on Sept. 23.

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



TWO CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS ADOPTED TO APPEAR ON THE BALLOT

QUESTIONS WILL INVOLVE TERM LIMITS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS AND CHANGING CONSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE FROM “MUSCOGEE” TO “MVSKOKE”

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a regular session in person on Sept. 27 at the Mound Building.

The minutes of the last Regular Session meeting were approved 12-0-1. Representative Joyce Deere abstained from voting.

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

TR 25-073 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Tim Wheeler to serve on the Mvskoke Loan Fund Board. Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

Wheeling’s term will last for a total of three years after his date of confirmation.

Stickball Park was obtained by the City of Tulsa in 1943 but has been utilized for years as a monument to Mvskoke culture. According to Butler, while there are no charges associated with the conveyance because it is not a purchase, the park will require lawn care, arbor care and restoration to the statues and monument.

TR 25-084 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to submit a grant application to the FHLBank of Topeka Affordable Housing Program Implementation Plan for the benefit of the Department of Housing. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

If the Nation receives the \$1,500,000 grant it will construct 60 rental units in Okemah. A total of \$9,194,534 will be used for the rental units. Of those funds, NAHASDA formulary funds will commit a total of \$5,000,000. A total of \$2,097,267 will be committed from the HUD Title VI Loan Guarantee Program and/or HUD Section 184. The units will be utilized by Tribal citizens who make low to moderate incomes.

TR 25-085 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation respectfully requests the consideration of Allie P. Reynolds, a Muscogee (Creek) citizen, as a National Baseball Hall of Fame candidate on the Classic Baseball Era Ballot. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the legislation. It was cosponsored by Rep. Cloud, Representative Mary Crawford, Representative Joyce C. Deere, Representative Leonard Gouge, Rep. Harjo Sr., Speaker Randall Hicks, Representative Robert Hufft, Representative Anna Marshall, and Representative Darrell Proctor. The legislation was adopted 13-0.

Reynolds played baseball for Oklahoma A&M College, now Oklahoma State University. He played for 12 seasons in the major leagues. He played for the New York Yankees and the Cleveland Indians. He was a six-time All-Star pitcher and received numerous accolades during his lifetime.

TR 25-086 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute an agreement with the Fort Sill Apache Tribe for the use of their venue and hotel rooms at the Apache Casino Hotel for the Citizens Beyond the Reservation Outreach in Lawton, Oklahoma. Rep. Marshall sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

The government-to-government contract will allow MCN employees to reserve rooms and use them during the Citizens Beyond conference.

TR 25-087 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Jessie Stomski Seim to serve as a supreme court justice of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Speaker Hicks sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

Seim will serve as a supreme court justice for a total of six years after the confirmation date.

TR 25-088 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a certain Intergovernmental Detention Agreement with the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Seminole to hold

criminal defendants at Seminole County Jail in Seminole County, City of Wewoka, Oklahoma. Representative Dode Barnett sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

Criminal defendants will be housed at the Seminole County Jail in Wewoka. The MCN will be required to pay for housing at the rate of \$50 per day per defendant, not including the cost of healthcare.

TR 25-089 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a certain Intergovernmental Detention Agreement with the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Wagoner to hold criminal defendants at the Wagoner County Jail in Wagoner County, Oklahoma. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

Criminal defendants will be housed at the Wagoner County Jail in Wagoner. The MCN will be required to pay for housing at the rate of \$66 per day per defendant, not including the cost of healthcare.

TR 25-090 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a certain Memorandum of Understanding between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Oklahoma. Rep. Hufft sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

This MOU concerns the appointment of a Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney (“SAUSA”) dedicated to the prosecution of crimes in Indian Country in the Northern District of Oklahoma. Attorney General Geri Wisner has recommended Kelly Sweeney, a Tribal prosecutor, serve as SAUSA.

NCA 25-079 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the Marathon Petroleum Community Investment Programs Grant for the benefit of the Emergency Management Department. Rep. Gouge sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, the \$60,000 grant will be used for the purchase of a CRD Compact Rapid Deployable/COW Cell-On-Wheels.

NCA 25-081 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Temporary Bridge Program Grant for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Transportation. Rep. Whitecloud sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, the \$394,000 grant will be used to purchase four temporary bridges to support Tribal community members.

NCA 25-082 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the University of Tulsa Subaward for the benefit of the Historic and Cultural Preservation Department. Rep. Whitecloud sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, the \$60,000 award will be used for a three-year restorative project in collaboration with the University of Tulsa to digitize and rematriate the Robertson-Worcester Collection.

NCA 25-083 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Housing for the Resident Opportunity and Supportive Services - Services Coordinators (ROSS-SC) Grant for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Housing. Rep. Randolph sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, the Nation will be awarded \$251,702 each year for a period of three years. The Department of Housing will provide a \$62,925.50 match each year for three years. The funds will be used to fulfill project objectives.

NCA 25-084 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Housing’s Program Income Funds. Rep. Randolph sponsored the legis-



MCN TRIBAL UTILITY AUTHORITY AWARDED \$2M ENERGY GRANT

FUNDS WILL BE USED TO INSTALL SOLAR PANELS AT OKEMAH HOSPITAL

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - On September 23, the Business, Finance and Justice/Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Joint Committee held an in-person meeting. All legislation passed through committee will be presented in the next session for full council approval unless otherwise noted.

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

NCA 25-097 A law of the MCN authorizing the expendi-

ture of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Indian Energy for the benefit of the MCN Tribal Utility Authority passed with a vote of 8-0. Representative Dode Barnett sponsored this legislation.

MCN Tribal Utility Authority was awarded a grant in the amount of \$2,241,892 to install ground-mounted solar photovoltaic panels at the Okemah Community Hospital. A match in the amount of \$560,473 from the Local and Tribal Consistency Fund will also fund the project.

For more information visit, www.mcnnc.com.

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REGULAR SESSION
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

lation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, a total of \$1,240,000 will be used for operations and maintenance.

NCA 25-086 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 11, Chapter 3 entitled "Annual Funds for Building Costs, Economic Development, and Development of Chartered Communities". Rep. Randolph sponsored the legislation. It was cosponsored by Representative Charles McHenry, Rep. Whitecloud, Rep. Barnett, Rep. Gouge, Rep. Osborn, and Rep. Harjo Sr. The legislation was adopted 13-0.

The legislation increases appropriations from \$1,500,000 to \$2,250,000 for the Chartered Communities. The communities will see the increase starting in Fiscal Year 2026. Increments of \$30,000 will be distributed on the fifteenth of every fourth month.

NCA 25-087 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation by replacing "Muscogee" with the traditional spelling of "Mvskoke" and deleting the word "Creek" throughout the Constitution. Rep. Randolph sponsored the legislation. It was cosponsored by Rep. Gouge, Rep. Osborn, Rep. Hufft, Rep. Harjo Sr., Rep. Barnett, Rep. Freeman Jr. and Representative Sandra Golden. The legislation was adopted 13-0.

The spelling change will appear as a proposal in the next election. The question will be worded as

"Shall the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation be amended to replace "Muscogee" with the traditional spelling of "Mvskoke" and delete the word "Creek" throughout the Constitution?" Voters will have the option to vote "YES" or "NO." In order for the change to be adopted it must receive a two thirds majority vote from voters.

NCA 25-088 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 22-142 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 15 Chapter 1 entitled Official Honor Guard to establish a Woman's Honor Guard and appropriating funds for the Este Cate Hoktvke Suletawv Honor Guard) as amended by NCA 23-053. Rep. Marshall sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, the \$60,000 appropriation will be used for the purchase of a van, trailer, and wrapping for the van and trailer.

NCA 25-089 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 37 § 2-123 entitled "Este Cate Veterans (Mvskoke Nation) Honor Guard." Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 13-0.

According to the legislation, the Este Cate Veterans Honor Guard will see an increase in annual appropriations from \$80,000 to \$116,000.

NCA 25-090 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending Article VI Section 2 of the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to establish term limits for National Council Representatives. Rep. Osborn sponsored the bill. It was cosponsored by Rep. Randolph

and Rep. Barnett. The legislation was adopted with a substitute 13-0.

Rep. Osborn remarked that the question had been brought up at a recent forum she attended. Term limits will appear as a proposal in the next election. The question will be worded as "Council representatives shall be limited to a total of three terms, whether served in consecutive terms of office or non-consecutive terms. A term shall not include a partial term created by election to fill a vacancy. This law shall become effective with the filling of seat B terms beginning in January 2026." Voters will have the option to vote "YES" or "NO." In order for the change to be adopted it must receive a two thirds majority vote from voters.

NCA 25-091 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Indian Energy for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Utility Authority. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 13-0.

NCA 25-092 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the Comprehensive Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 and providing for appropriations. which was adopted 11-1-1. Rep. Golden voted against the legislation, Rep. Deere abstained.

The adoption of the annual budget came after several budget hearings for all executive, legislative and judicial budgets within the government.

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

WE'VE SEEN THIS FILM
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Or at least it should have.

The response by the heads of the Republican Party, along with the unwavering fealty expressed by its base has shown that principle, if indeed any principle had ever existed or had just been a grand case of political posturing, has been outlawed. The political landscape of America in 2025 has become a grating retelling of the Emperor's New Clothes better fit for a satire read in a freshman literature course, rather than active political theater. Yet, if the ruling party has become content with ignoring the truth for the sake of pleasing the king and avoiding his retribution, then it is up to us to boldly expose the lewd nakedness that truly sits upon the throne.

Though not directly tied to the plight of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, the Jeffrey Epstein scandal represents the latest in the long line of broken promises, and the reverberating urgency to which we must stop heeding them. The administration has shown that it cares not for the justice of these women, and by extent all women facing violence and abuse at the hands of those more powerful than them. It has shown no interest in dismantling the mechanisms and institutions that protect the abusers. In fact, the Trump administration has shown a jarring level of recalcitrance on the matter and has withdrawn funds dedicated to combatting human trafficking in the US and abroad. And worst of all, it isn't clear whether these actions have lost the White House any support at all.

Our communities, our struggles have been abandoned, and it is hard to believe that we will ever be able to regain any support that is more than a political convenience. Once again, I call for us to turn inwards, to focus on building stronger levels of self-reliance and strengthening our self-determination. Our tribal nations are an island in a growing sea of hostility and shifting allegiances, and it is in this isolation that we must depend on each other and use our skills and resources to help our women and ourselves.

KFC GRANT
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

in their clients. Grant Coordinator Deana Votra (Mvskoke) stated, "Many of them don't know much about gardening, or being able to be self-sustaining, growing their own foods and it really links a lot to our ancestry of how our ancestors had lived. It's a way for us to pass that on to others and hopefully they pass it on to the next generation."

"I didn't grow up traditional and working for the tribe inspires me to learn more about my heritage and more about my culture," said Votra. "Visiting with clients, they have the same feelings, kind of like a separation from our heritage, a separation from our culture and just the way of life that the people before us have lived. So it's kind of a way to connect to our past."

Molet emphasized the health benefits the garden and greenhouse provide. "Our clients have been out of the habit of eating fresh vegetables or vegetables in general," she shared. "For them to come down to the garden and pick a tomato or something to say 'I haven't had it since my grandma used to have a garden,' so that's what we want to do is to get them back in the habit of eating some fresh vegetables, for better health."

Molet said that they not only have a food producing garden, but they also have plants. She's glad to hear when clients love bringing a plant to their place and comment "it makes it feel more home." Molet feels that is a big accomplishment- they are growing and eating fresh fruit and vegetables and taking a plant home to grow.

"Sometimes it's the small things, just seeing life develop that helps you develop your life," Votra said.

Molet has an open door policy for their greenhouse if people want to come to see what she is growing or what things she is doing- anyone can come to learn and visit.

For any information about RiP you can contact Mark Harjo at 918-549-2620 and his email is maharjo@muscogeenation.com



Lizzie Barnett presents original research at the Center for Disease Control showcase. (Courtesy: Lizzie Barnett)

TWO MVSKOKE CITIZENS PARTICIPATE IN PRESTIGIOUS THESIS INTERNSHIP

CDC-SPONSORED PROGRAM PREPARES STUDENTS FOR CAREERS IN THE NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH FIELD

by **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – Mvskoke citizens Lizzie Barnett and Mackenzie Cullinan recently completed the Center for Disease Control Tribal Health Experimental Student Internship Seminar (THESIS). According to Muscogee Creek National Council Representative Dode Barnett, Lizzie Barnett and Cullinan are believed to be the only citizens ever chosen to participate in the internship. The program is facilitated by the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board. College of Muscogee Nation Dr. Monte Randall served as an advisor for the program.

an issue that affects women on the Mvskoke Reservation as well.

"I found that within our reservation, American Indian women had an average Maternal Vulnerability Index (MVI) score of 80, double the rate for white mothers," Lizzie Barnett said. "A high MVI score is a serious disparity that we must address because it signals a community where mothers lack access to the resources and support needed for a safe pregnancy and birth. This problem hit home for me because in our matrilineal society, our children are our future, and mothers are their guides."

In addition to selecting a

research topic and identifying an issue affecting minority communities, THESIS interns were also tasked to find a solution to the issue they identified. Lizzie Barnett chose tribal sovereignty as a solution and learned about the services MCN offers for citizens through the Mother Baby Program. She believes the program is thorough and effective for mothers.

"This tribally-led initiative addresses a mother's well-being beyond just medical care, focusing on issues like domestic abuse and food insecurity," Lizzie Barnett said. "The program's success demonstrates how culturally appropriate, community-led health systems can help heal the historical trauma that has contributed to these disparities."

The Mother Baby Program is a partnership between the Tribe and Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health. It serves mothers who are Tribal citizens, as well as mothers who are raising infants who are Native American. Through the program recipients have access to prenatal care, infant care, breastfeeding resources, child development as well as parenting and life skills. The program even provides trained maternal health nurses to make monthly visits during the infant's first year of life. For more information on the program, call 918-758-5112.

Applications for the 2026 THESIS Virtual Internship Program are now open and are due on January 23, 2026. Next year's program will start on May 18, 2026 and will run through July 10, 2026. Preference is given to those with Indigenous culturally-relevant knowledge or skills. For more information on how to apply, visit the official THESIS website, thesis.spthb.org.

IN MEMORIAM



(Integrity Funeral Service)

ANDY RAY BUTLER

The sunrise of Andy Ray Butler, a resident of Okemah, was on August 25, 1961, in Wetumka, Oklahoma. His sunset came on Saturday, September 6, 2025, in Henryetta, Oklahoma, at the age of 64.

Andy Ray graduated from Jones Academy in 1981 and was an accomplished athlete. He was All Area Kicker, All Conference, Defensive Captain in football, played baseball, and he was a boxer. He was a lifelong active warrior at Pagan Tvlvhasse Etlwlv and he loved being at the ceremonial grounds. He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and was an avid fan of the Dallas Cowboys. He will be remembered for his sense of humor, big smile, and

good leads on Saturday night.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Andrew F. Butler and Ellen (Bullett) Butler; his son, Blakely Ray Butler; siblings Wesley Butler, Edna Belcher, Leta Marshall, and Roman "Cooksey" Butler; nephews Wesley Butler Jr., Roger Butler, Ronald Butler; nieces Ruth Ellen Mendoza and Ramona Butler; and his beloved companion of 37 years, Levine Harjo.

Left to honor his memory are his children: Stormy Harjo and wife Sho-tut of Del City, Brett Butler of Oklahoma City, Amanda Jo Butler of Henryetta, Matthew Butler of Henryetta, and Cecil Ray Butler of Ranger, Texas. He is also survived by numerous grandchildren; sisters Julie Butler and Christine Butler, both of Okmulgee; and close family friends Alexis and Ruth Bible along with many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends who will carry his memory in their hearts.

Pallbearers will be Polo Hernandez, Bronson Tre Harjo, Sajien Perry, Hybron Lewis, Brent Butler, Stephen Yahola Jr., Vincent Butler, and Andy Butler. Honorary pallbearers include Randall Butler, Gaylen Cloud, Archie Simpson, Oscar Harjo, Jeremiah Hicks, Bradley Hicks, Brock Hicks, John Burris, Elijah Lewis, Hopiye Mack, Brandon Butler, Samuel "Sammy" Nino, Mario "Piggy" Delgado, and the Peach Ground Warriors.

THANK YOU

by **THE BUTLER FAMILY**
SUBMISSION

We would like to take a moment to thank all of you from the bottom

of our hearts for your unwavering love and support, demonstrated through your willingness to stay up all night, help in the kitchen, clean up and attend the cemetery as we laid Andy to rest much love for all the prayers sent. Many many mvto from the Butler family.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Socktober

Mvskoke Nation Youth Services

Oct. 3 - Oct. 31

Department is accepting new socks and essential items for the homeless community. Donations can be dropped off at the Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Office 2710 N. Miami Ave. Okmulgee, OK

Revival

Haikey Chapel UMC

Oct 19-20

On Oct. 19 dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m., service starts at 7:00 p.m. On Oct. 20 service starts at 7:00 p.m. 8815 E. 101st St. Tulsa, OK

Night at the Council House

Oct. 24

3:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Vendors, Make and Takes, Storytelling.

100 W. 6th St., Okmulgee, OK

For more information, contact 918-759-6979.

Honkv Onvkuce (Ghost Storytelling Event)

Mvskoke Language Program

Oct. 25

5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

2950 Warrior Rd. Okmulgee, OK

Pink Party

MCN Health

Oct. 30

Pre-party activities start at 9 a.m., doors open at 9:30 a.m., program and brunch begins at 10:30 a.m.

8330 Riverside Pkwy, Tulsa, OK

Elder's Meeting

Okmulgee Elder Nutrition Center

Nov. 5

9:30 a.m.

2975 N. Miami Ave. Okmulgee, OK

Coffee and Donuts

Veterans Affairs Services Office

Nov. 13

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

1006 Bear Ln, Okmulgee, OK

For questions, contact 918-732-7739.

The Walk of Tears Play

Blue Eagle Solutions

Nov. 15

4:00 p.m.

Admission is free, donations are accepted

14248 Hectorville Road, Mounds OK

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.

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

The Muscogee Nation Veterans Services Office is proud to honor tribal veteran Kaylea M. Berry for her dedicated service to the U.S. Air Force, the United States and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Kaylea honorably served for four years from 2017 to 2021 and is a recipient of the Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award, Air Force Training Ribbon. Mvto Ms. Berry for your selfless service to your country and your community.

By LAHOMA SCHULTZ

SUBMISSION

I want to thank each and every one of you who supported me in my run for the MCN National Council. Your encouragement, prayers, and votes meant the world to me.

Although I did not win the seat

this time, please know that I will never stop supporting our people. I will always stand as an advocate for our Muscogee people and continue working to uplift our community.

This journey has only strengthened my commitment, and I am so grateful to walk alongside all of you as we keep moving forward together.

LEGALS

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

In the Matter of the Application of:
Barbara Jean Haynes-Espinosa,

To Change Their Name:

DISTRICT COURT
FILED

Case No. CV-2025-1473 P 2-23

ORDER FOR AND NOTICE OF HEARING ON
PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

To Whom It May Concern:

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that Barbara Jean Haynes-Espinosa, has filed a Petition for Change of Name in the above action in the District Court of Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED THAT this Petition will be heard on the 25th day of November, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. in the District Court of Muscogee (Creek) Nation, located at: 2501 Lynnhilke, Okmulgee, OK 74447.

You may appear and show cause as to why any or all of the requested orders should not be granted.

SIGNED this 25th day of Sept., 2025.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Barbara Jean Haynes-Espinosa, Petitioner
412 N Oklahoma Ave
Okmulgee, OK 74447

Pro-se document drafting assistance provided by:
Oklahoma Indian Legal Services, Inc.
Community Justice Worker Program
4300 Perimeter Center Drive, Ste. 222
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
(405) 943-6157

Oklahoma Indian Legal Services, Inc.
and its attorneys are not entering an appearance in this case.

PUBLISH ONCE.

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.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION

IN THE MATTER OF
THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:

BRAILEE J. BEAVER and BRYLYN
W. BEAVER ,

Minor Children.

2025 SEP 23 P 12:30

Case No. GD-2025-52

ORDER AND NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION
FOR APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL GUARDIAN

Notice is hereby given that CHUMONA DEERE has filed in the District Court of the Muscogee Creek Nation, a petition requesting the appointment of a guardian of the person and property of BRAILEE J. BEAVER, date of birth July 20, 2021, and BRYLYN W. BEAVER, date of birth October 13, 2022.

And that the 4th day of November, 2025 at the hour of 10:00 o'clock, a.m., in courtroom of the Muscogee Creek Nation District Court has been appointed as the time and place for hearing the petition, when and where any persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they have, why such appointment should not be made.

DATED this 23rd day of September, 2025.

JUDGE OF THE MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION

IN THE MATTER OF
THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:

AUBREE G. BRAY,

Minor Child.

2025 SEP 25 P 2:58

Case No. GD-2025-53

ORDER AND NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION
FOR APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL GUARDIAN

Notice is hereby given that LETICHA KINCADE AND JOE KINCADE have filed in the District Court of the Muscogee Creek Nation, a petition requesting the appointment of a guardian of the person and property of AUBREE G. BRAY, date of birth July 7, 2012.

And that the 4th day of November, 2025 at the hour of 10:00 o'clock, a.m., in courtroom of the Muscogee Creek Nation District Court has been appointed as the time and place for hearing the petition, when and where any persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they have, why such appointment should not be made.

DATED this 26th day of September, 2025.

JUDGE OF THE MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION

IN THE MATTER OF
THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:

T.B.,

Minor Child.

2025 SEP 25 P 2:57

Case No. GD-2025-54

ORDER AND NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION
FOR APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL GUARDIAN

Notice is hereby given that SERGIO SANCHEZ AND BERNADETTE SUE SANCHEZ have filed in the District Court of the Muscogee Creek Nation, a petition requesting the appointment of guardians of the person and property of T.B., date of birth July 3, 2017.

And that the 4th day of November, 2025 at the hour of 10:00 o'clock, a.m., in courtroom of the Muscogee Creek Nation District Court has been appointed as the time and place for hearing the petition, when and where any persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they have, why such appointment should not be made.

DATED this 25th day of September, 2025.

JUDGE OF THE MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION

MVSKOKE CREATIVE

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