



MVSKOKE NEWS

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MVSKOKE TECH PARK PLAN CRASHES

NCA 25-077, FAILED TO BECOME ADOPTED INTO LAW BY A 4-11 VOTE

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE - Legislation that would have established the Mvskoke Technology and Innovation Park failed to pass the Nov. 15 Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council Regular Session. NCA 25-077 failed by a 4-11 vote.

Mvskoke citizens and members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) Indian Territory Oklahoma protested outside of the Mound Building before the session, and were present during the vote. The bill would have developed a data center on Looped Square Ranch, an area that is used to sustain Tribal food sovereignty.

The legislation, sponsored by Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. and Representative Robert Hufft, originally passed out of committee by a vote of 8-1 in the Aug. 19 Business, Finance & Justice/Land, Natural Resource & Cultural Preservation joint meeting.

Representative Robyn Whitecloud was the only committee member to vote against the bill's passage at the time.

The bill was slated to be voted



Jordan Harmon and Mackenzie Roberts hold signs at the data center protest at the Mound Building. (Braden Harper/MM)

on during the Oct. 25 Quarterly Session, but was postponed until November by a unanimous vote of 14-0.

During the Nov. 15 Regular Session, representatives supporting the bill argued that the data center would create economic diversity for the Tribe. Critics argued the language in the bill was vague, and not

transparent enough to explain the full extent of the resources it would take to operate a data center on the Mvskoke Reservation.

During discussion on the bill supportive Reps. argued the data center would have brought jobs to the Mvskoke Reservation. Freeman argued that data centers would provide another strong economic con-

tributor in addition to gaming. In regard to the issue of land stewardship, Freeman said the Tribe knows best how to be a good steward of the Reservation, not outside entities.

"We'd like to say that gaming will be here 15 to 20 years in the future but we don't know that," Rep. Freeman said. "I'm worried about the other data centers that come in our

jurisdiction that do not have good stewardship of the land."

Rep. Hufft echoed Freeman's claims, stating that a tech park was in the best interest of the Nation's future in case gaming no longer remains a lucrative resource.

"This legislation will strictly designate some land for a tech park. It will allow us to explore opportunities we may need to generate revenue for the Nation," Rep. Hufft said.

Representative Sandra Golden said that she was not completely against developing a data center on the Reservation, however she believes that more laws need to be put in place to protect the land.

"I know that data centers are a lucrative business right now but in the back of my mind I am thinking 'all that glitters is not gold,'" Rep. Golden said. "What's the greater good of all people? I think we have to step back and look at this. We need to put some more laws in place to ensure that if we want to put a data center in place that our land is going to be here forever and be a resource for our people."

Representative Leonard Gouge and Representative Dode Barnett argued that they did not have all of their questions answered regard-

TECH PARK

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MICHAEL HOUSER GETS SENTENCED

FORMER MNGE MANAGER WILL SERVE JUST UNDER 6 YEARS IN PRISON FOR CASINO EMBESSEMENT CASE

BY **THOMAS JACKSON**
REPORTER



MCThe United States Dept. of Justice issued a press release announcing the sentencing.

MUSKOGEE - Former MNGE employee Michael Anthony Houser was taken into the custody of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on Nov. 10.

Houser, a former manager who worked for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Gaming Operations Authority Board, which later became known as Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises (MNGE), was sentenced for embezzlement and tax fraud, according to a press release sent out by the United States Attorney's Office's Eastern District of Oklahoma.

Houser, age 36, was sentenced to 36 months in prison for one count of Tax Fraud, and 70 months in prison for one count of Theft Concerning Programs Received Federal Funds. He will serve those sentences concurrently, meaning that he will serve just under 6 years in prison. In addition, he will be ordered to pay \$17,337,949.50 in restitution to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and \$8,205,834.00 to the I.R.S. for his crimes, totalling roughly \$25.5 million in total restitutions.

"The United States Attorney's Office is committed to pursuing and prosecuting those who defraud Tribal nations in the Eastern District of Oklahoma," said United States Attorney Christopher J. Wilson. "In this case, we were honored to join together

with our partners in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and federal law enforcement to promote the mutual protection of Tribal assets and resources."

Houser had previously pleaded guilty to the crimes he was accused of in Feb. of 2025, and he is reportedly not eligible for parole.

"Stealing from the community you are entrusted to serve is a serious betrayal," said Special Agent in Charge Christopher J. Altemus Jr. of the IRS Criminal Investigation Dallas Field Office. "Mr. Houser's crimes harmed the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and undermined trust in public and tribal institutions. By stealing from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and falsifying his tax return, Mr. Houser not only defrauded his employer but also the American public."

According to investigators, Houser had embezzled \$24.9 million of federal funds from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation during his time working as a Casino Accounts Payable Manager for what is now Muscogee Nation Gaming Enterprises from 2016 to 2024. In addition, fraudulent tax filings made by Houser reportedly cost the U.S. Department of Treasury around \$8.2 million, which were obtained via Houser's embezzlement scheme.

BIXBY, BROKEN ARROW TO FLY MCN FLAG AT OFFICIAL BUILDINGS

THE FIRST OF THE FLAGS TO BE USED BY THE CITIES WERE INITIALLY PRESENTED BY MCN OFFICIALS DURING CITY MEETINGS IN SEPTEMBER AND AUGUST

BY **THOMAS JACKSON**
REPORTER

BIXBY - The city of Bixby became the first city in Oklahoma to use the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's flag as a part of their official flags flown at government buildings during a ceremony on Nov. 10.

The flag raising was attended by MCN leadership and Bixby city officials, including: MCN Principal Chief David Hill, Second Chief Del Beaver, Secretary of Culture & Humanities Raelynn Butler, National Council Second Speaker Thomasene Yahola Osborn, Tvlse District Representative Robert Hufft, Bixby Mayor Brad Girard, Bixby Vice-Mayor Bobby Schultz, and many others.

Mayor Girard took a moment to speak on the historic relationship between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the city of Bixby during the ceremony. "Tonight's ceremony is a meaningful moment, one that recognizes the deep history, rich culture, and enduring presence of

the Muscogee (Creek) people on this land," Girard said.

"Bixby stands within the historic boundaries of the Muscogee Nation, and we are proud to celebrate the partnership and the friendship to grow between our communities."

The flag raising came after the Aug. 11 approval by the Bixby City Council to fly the MCN flag at the Bixby City Municipality Building. During the meeting MCNNC Speaker Randall Hicks presented the flag to the city. The idea was proposed by MCN citizen Lahoma Schultz.

Bixby is not the first to bring forward legislation to fly the flag of the Muscogee Nation as a part of their official flags.

The city of Broken Arrow previously passed legislation to use the Muscogee (Creek) Nation flag as a part of their flags to be officially flown at government buildings after a city council meeting at Broken Arrow's City Hall on Sept. 16, which included a ceremony in

which the city was presented with a flag from the Nation.

Attendees from the Nation in that ceremony included Chief Hill, National Council Speaker Randall Hicks, Secretary Butler, and National Council Representatives Hufft and Leonard Gouge, who represent the Tvlse District where Broken Arrow is located.

"Everything that we do here is for the next generation to come, and it's just showing a great partnership that we have with the city of Bixby," Chief Hill said.

This sentiment was echoed by Vice-Mayor Schultz, who spoke of how proud he was of the enduring partnership between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the City of Bixby.

"I'm proud that Bixby is the first municipality to enact an ordinance to fly the flag of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. As the flag is lifted, let us take a moment to reflect on the history, strength, and resilience of the Muscogee (Creek) people," Schultz said.



The flag of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation now hangs in front of Bixby's City Hall after a ceremony on Nov. 10 (Thomas Jackson/MM)

TECH PARK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing the bill. Representative Mark Randolph described the language in the bill as “vague.” He said that after meeting with constituents in the Koweta District he did not meet any citizens who supported the bill. Rep. Barnett stated that she is not against the development of a data center either, however she believed that NCA 25-077 posed ethical problems due to its lack of transparency.

“This particular legislation has brought out a lot of problems and challenges,” Rep. Barnett said. “It really is glaring why government and business do not mix. There is a reason that our economic arms are independent from the government. Government officials, elected officials, appointed officials should have no place in these business dealings. You can not say you are for the communities, you can not say you are for the people if you are signing NDAs (non-disclosure agreements) that prevent you from talking to your own people that elected you.”

Rep. Barnett’s comments received a round of applause from those in the audience. Rep. Barnett and Rep. Harjo agreed that there

were better areas on the reservation to look at for developing a data center other than Looped Square Ranch.

Rep. Freeman, Rep. Huft, along with Representative Anna Marshall and Representative Nelson Harjo Sr. voted for the passage of the bill.

Mvskoke Citizens Voice their Concerns

Data center protest organizers Jordan Harmon (Mvskoke) and Mackenzie Roberts (Mvskoke) made their position clear on the issue: data centers are not in the Tribe’s best interest. Both Harmon and Roberts organized town halls at the College of Muscogee Nation and the Tulsa Creek Indian Community Center. Harmon is frustrated by the missing details that have not been released to the public.

“There’s so many concerns with the lack of transparency during this process,” Harmon said. “We know there’s an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) somewhere, we don’t know who signed it or what it was about, that remains a mystery. They keep telling us they’ve switched firms to consult, but they won’t tell us who they’re working with. I’m finding this to be dishonest. It’s mis-



Charlena Wind Werito stands in solidarity with fellow American Indian Movement Indian Territory Oklahoma members during the protest at the Mound Building before the Nov. 15 MCN Regular Session. (Braden Harper/MM)

leading at best. They will try to hide how much water they want to use, they won’t let us know where the water is coming from until the very last possible second when they are applying for permits. We may have to file a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) Request. That’s what happened in Tulsa with Project Clydesdale and Project Anthem. A lot of people are worried about the strain on the water systems.”

Harmon said data center projects assume that Oklahoma is a water-abundant state that can accommodate facilities that use a lot of water and electricity. In addition to a strain on local resources, Roberts said the impacts could also put a strain on utility and electricity bills for Mvskoke citizens in Okmulgee County.

“For us as Mvskokvke, I don’t think that (data center) is something we should entertain,” Roberts said. “Even for a rural place (Looped Square Ranch), for the rural citizens around there it would mean a drastic impact on their way of life.”

AIM Indian Territory Oklahoma Director Charlena Wind Werito (Mvskoke) believes this issue is about more than just money, it’s about survival. Although she believes the data center can easily become a lucrative resource for the Tribe, she does not see a mutually beneficial outcome for its citizens.

“We’re talking about water resources, land resources. These things are not limitless. They can’t always be replaced. There’s pollution levels. Noise pollution, sight. How is this going to further our Tribe or any other Tribe? What

there was still a lot of speculation as to what would actually become of developing Looped Square Ranch.

“These are heavy, industrial businesses. They’re polluters for light and sound. It’s a threat to animals. There’s a lot of things we need

“In my work with the National Parks Conservation Association we have had to stop data centers, we oppose those throughout the United States, particularly in Virginia and Georgia. To see it in our own backyard, it’s scary.”
- James Floyd



Protesters held up signs outside the Mound Building. (Braden Harper/MM)

about our Ceremonial Grounds? How is this going to affect them? I don’t see the good in it.”

Former MCN Principal Chief Floyd was in attendance at the Regular Session. He said he was pleased with the Council’s vote. Floyd works with the National Park Conservation Association, an advocacy group that raises awareness for environmental issues. He found the legislation to be “premature” because

to understand about them before we just jump into a data center and technology park.”

Floyd remarked that if legislation for a data center ever makes its way back to the National Council for a vote, he would be happy to provide information on data centers, and their impact in other areas across the country.

TULSA D.A. CAN PROSECUTE NON-MVSKOKE TRIBAL CITIZENS, PER U.S. DISTRICT COURT

PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION DENIED

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

OKMULGEE – U.S. District Judge Gregory Frizzell denied a Motion for Preliminary Injunction for Muscogee (Creek) Nation on Friday, Nov. 7 in case 25-CV-75-GKF-JFJ, MCN v. Steve Kunzweiler. A hearing for the motion was initially held on Thursday, Oct. 9. In the suit, the Nation sought a preliminary injunction to prevent defendant Tulsa County District Attorney Steve Kunzweiler from asserting concurrent criminal jurisdiction over non-Mvskoke Tribal citizens who commit crimes not covered by the Major Crimes Act (MCA) on the MCN Reservation.

According to Judge Frizzell, four factors must be shown to obtain a preliminary injunction. The first factor is that the petitioner will “substantially succeed on the merits,” or can they win a full case. The second factor is that the peti-

tioner will suffer irreparable injury if the injunction is denied. The third factor is that the petitioner’s threatened injury outweighs the injury the opposing party will suffer under the injunction. The fourth factor is that the injunction must not be adverse to public interest. Judge Frizzell’s opinion stated that only one of these categories was favored.

According to the opinion, the Nation failed to make a strong showing with regard to the likelihood of success on the merits and balancing of harms. Furthermore, the opinion stated that MCN is not preempted by federal law from prosecuting non-Mvskoke Tribal citizens who commit crimes not covered by the MCA the Mvskoke Reservation. Citing Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta, the opinion stated that prosecuting non-Mvskoke Tribal citizens does not unlawfully infringe on Tribal self-governance.

The opinion also noted that Tulsa is a unique city, one lying within the boundaries of three

Tribal jurisdictions: Mvskoke, Cherokee and Osage. It stated that it is within both Tribal and state interests to prosecute non-Mvskoke Tribal citizens that commit crimes against Mvskoke citizens. If one of those sovereign entities prosecutes a non-Mvskoke Tribal citizen, it does not prevent the other from doing the same, the court reasoned. The opinion noted that although the MCN recently opened a traffic court in Jenks, it only hears traffic violation cases.

In regard to threatened injury to the petitioner, the opinion stated that injury to the MCN’s interest did not outweigh the harm the injunction would cause the defendant. It also stated that denying the injunction would not adversely affect public interest because Tulsa County has a proportionate number of staff members that enforces Oklahoma state laws for the city’s 670,000 citizens. Judge Frizzell concluded that the arguments presented for the preliminary injunction failed to prove

harm to MCN. It also concluded that the Nation would not win a full trial based on the merits of its argument.

Governor Kevin Stitt expressed his satisfaction regarding the decision. According to a public statement released on Nov. 7, Governor Stitt stated:

“Judge Frizzell’s ruling is common sense, and confirms what I’ve said all along. His decision to recognize the authority of district attorneys to pursue justice in every county preserves the rule of law and protects victims in our state. Our DA’s have worked diligently to keep our communities safe, even as some in our state questioned their authority to do so. Our nation was founded on the idea that laws should be applied equally regardless of race. This decision confirms that. How many more courts have to say the same thing before Oklahoma’s chief law

officer engages on the State’s side of these issues? These rulings are not close calls. They are consistent, unanimous affirmations that district attorneys have authority to prosecute crime in their own counties.”

In response to the dismissal of the preliminary injunction, the Nation said it will continue to fight to exclusively prosecute Tribal citizens who commit crimes on the Mvskoke Reservation, regardless if they are Mvskoke. The Nation’s statement reads:

“The Muscogee Nation is disappointed that the federal court did not agree with the preliminary injunction request against DA Kunzweiler, but the case is not over. The fight against unlawful state authority over Indians in the Muscogee Reservation will continue, and we are not going to allow today’s unfortunate ruling to discourage the Nation’s ongoing efforts to defend its sovereignty on its territory.”

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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.



An early conceptual design of the proposed Mvskoke Cultural Center in Macon, Georgia. The Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative worked with input and discussion with MCN. (Image Courtesy: ONPPI)

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION SEEKS A PLACE TO CALL HOME ON ANCESTRAL LAND

PRINCIPAL CHIEF DAVID HILL TOURS PROPOSED SITE OF NEW CULTURAL CENTER IN HISTORIC HOME OF EAST MACON'S 'FIRST CITIZEN'

By LIZ FABIAN

THE MACON NEWSROOM

The following article was originally published on Sept. 17, 2025 in The Macon Newsroom.

When Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill recently toured the 1865 home of an early settler of East Macon, he paid almost as much attention to the backyard — the land.

A little more than two centuries ago, his ancestors were forced off it, away from the banks of the Ocmulgee River to resettle out West in what is now Tulsa, Oklahoma. Now, they want to come back and establish offices in Macon on the outskirts of what still is expected to become Geor-

be integral in managing the cultural aspects of a national park, they also want to tell history from their own perspective.

“You don’t see that in the history books, but this just gives us an opportunity to tell the true history of it,” said Hill, who was in town for the Ocmulgee Mounds Indigenous Celebration. “That’s what we want to do, just educate people who we are, who Muscogee people are. So, I’m very excited.”

His former chief of staff, Tracie Revis, now the Director of Advocacy for the Macon-based Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative, (ONPPI), escorted the visiting delegation that included current Chief of

see us, right?” Revis explained. “Imagine our flag flying, our story, we get to control this, do what we want in this space.”

While the view from the vista that once overlooked the river is now blocked by the interstate, Marriott City Center hotel and Lewis B. Wilson Convention Center, Revis noted the park would be visible from the property.

Chief Hill was pondering the possibilities during his recent stay in the homeland.

“Just to see what we can do here, especially with the cultural center that we’re going to have — or that’s the thoughts of doing — just to bring more tourism here, just to help what we can do in



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Principal Chief David Hill examines an antique light fixture in the former home of DeWitt McCrary, a potential site for the tribe's cultural center in Macon. (Liz Fabian)



ABOVE: Leaders of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation tour the old DeWitt McCrary house, which could be home to the tribe's new cultural center. BELOW: Landscape architect Shannon Fickling shares thoughts about her concept drawing for a new Muscogee (Creek) National cultural center with Native American designers (Images Courtesy: Macon Newsleader)



gia’s first national park at the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park.

They are looking at building a cultural center in the former home of “East Macon’s first citizen,” DeWitt McCrary, who served 12 terms as an alderman of the Bibb County Commission.

While the Nation plans to

Staff Jeff Fife and the Nation’s Council Speaker, Randall Hicks.

Revis explained that the site at 320 Hydrolia St. is prime real estate for anyone coming to Ocmulgee Mounds off of Interstate 16 as the historic home is near the current back gate to the park, which is expected to become a main entrance in the expansion.

“When you turn in, you would

partnership with Macon,” he said.

The house, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, was threatened by the wrecking ball to make way for a convenience store, and later snatched from the county’s blight demolition list. Historic Macon Foundation fostered it on its Fading Five list of architectural treasures in danger of demolition by neglect.

The Urban Development Authority stepped in to purchase and save it and look for a buyer.

Although the building was partially burned and continually broken into by vagrants, UDA Executive Director Alex Morrison found it to be in “incredible shape” and worthy of rescuing.

“We have definitely redone worse properties,” Morrison told the authority before they agreed to purchase it for \$320,000 in 2021. Another cottage on the property had more extensive fire damage, was damaged by a fallen tree and was demolished in 2024.

Removal of that house opened up the back lot for a planned replica of the Native American dwellings that would have been

a common site in the area before the early 19th Century.

Architects Shannon and Laurie Fickling drew up the concept sketch that includes a two story addition to allow for handicapped access to the building and its exhibits and artifacts.

It was that design and a lot of local research that helped secure a federal grant to pursue the project with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

In March, Macon-Bibb County announced the long-awaited \$310,000 National Park Service grant to help secure the historic home and repair the roof, siding, masonry, doors, windows and improve wiring and HVAC.

“We couldn’t come up with a better or higher use than working with the tribe to find a place for them to be able to tell their own story and develop a site here, right here in Macon, Georgia, as the capital city of the of the Lower Muscogee Creek Confederacy,” said Macon-Bibb County Mayor Pro Tempore Seth Clark, who also is the executive director of ONPPI.

As Clark looked deeper into the history of the house, he discovered parallels with McCrary, who also served as Mayor Pro Tempore while working as a pharmacist and encouraging suburban neighborhoods on the east side of the river.

The Macon Georgia Then and Now page on Facebook, noted McCrary’s care and consideration for the community as it posted photos of McCrary shortly after the grant was announced.

“Please know he could have built his pharmacy on the other side of the river and lived like a king, but he made the choice to serve the Mill Village Community,” stated a post shared in the spring.

ONPPI Director of Strategic Planning Matt Chalfa helped lead the recent site visit that included Muscogee Creek citizens from Kimley-Horn, a development firm that does a lot of work with

the National Park Service and is currently working with ONPPI on the strategic plan for the park expansion, and New Fire Native, a design group specializing in working with the tribes.

Morrison thought it was a great fit to get them involved in finalizing the concept for the cultural center, which is across from the new Bicentennial Park that commemorates the rich history of this region and recent efforts at reconciliation among the peoples who lived here.

The new greenspace next to the Mill Hill Community Arts Center features a towering Native American sculpture and a regulation-size stickball field, the tribe’s signature sport.

Clark thinks the new cultural center could root the Muscogee Creeks into Macon-Bibb’s redevelopment goals to boost tourism, including the planned East Bank multi-purpose development down the street on the site of the old Bibb mill.

“This is their ancestral homelands, and so integrating this site here into the civic infrastructure of Fort Hawkins, but also just the tribe into the civic infrastructure that’s helped save and develop downtown, and manage this place that’ll be the gateway community for the next national park, is what we’re we’re doing here,” Clark said.

While he is grateful for the Congressional-directed spending in the initial grant that stabilized the DeWitt McCrary house, more money will be needed to make this cultural center a reality.

“It’ll be up to the civic community and really, ONPPI, the National Park and Preserve Initiative, to work to secure funds for the further development for it,” Clark said.

Civic Journalism Senior Fellow Liz Fabian covers Macon-Bibb County government entities for The Macon Newsroom, her work can be found here, and she can be reached at fabian_lj@mercer.edu.

FORGET THE STEREOTYPES

BY Ty Scott
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 MvskokeVoices.com.

OKMULGEE, OK — What makes someone Native American? You might imagine someone from Western movies, a person with long straight black hair, tan skin, riding a horse. The thing about stereotypes is that they are hardly ever true, especially about people.

Angel Ellis, a citizen of the Muscogee Nation in Oklahoma, looks nothing like what the movies have led us to envision Native people. She has blonde hair, blue eyes, and light peach skin. Ellis, head director of Mvskoke Media, has been a journalist for over a decade, uncovering scandals and covering political scandals in her community. With a cigarette in hand, she talked about how to truly understand Native Americans.

"Forget the Western stereotypes and tropes you were absorbed in growing up, and truly come to Indian country with open ears," she said. "Native America is a modern place, and it's alive and well today and to really see it for what it really is you're gonna have to abandon every notion you had about it."

The Muscogee Nation spans across 11 counties from Tulsa to Eufaula, having over 87,000 citizens nationwide. Since the adoption of their written constitution in 1867, people from around the country would pass through their reservation and some would stay, starting families and enrolling into the tribe.

In the Muscogee Nation many people are of mixed backgrounds, Latinos, white people, Black people. If you can imagine them in your hometown, they probably live in the Muscogee Nation. To enroll in the Muscogee nation all you need is proof of family heritage. For others it's blood quantum.

Many tribes in Oklahoma use the Dawes Rolls as a basis for citizenship enrollment.

The Dawes Act of 1893 required natives of the "Five Civilized Tribes": Cherokees, Muscogee (Creek), Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles to be enrolled in their tribe to receive land allotments from the government. The Dawes Rolls contain the names of over 100,000 natives from 1899-1906, including birth certificates, marriage certificates and court documents.

So in the Cherokee Nation for example the citizenship office would test your blood quantum, specifically to see if you have one-fourth Native American blood. They would also use the Dawes Rolls to look into your genealogy, to see if you have any native relatives.

However, some people are confused about their background, or worse, lie about it, taking the identity of native people and pretending it is their own. Nicknamed "Pretendians," people who pretend to be Indian are taking much more

than just native identity, Ellis said.

Ellis said she wrote a podcast called "Pretendians."

"I had someone come onto our show and explain this to me. I had a hard time imagining a world where people pretend to be native and scoop up a lot of resources and it's shit, right?" she said.

Academia is also affected with incidents of professors and students lying about their identity (intentionally or not) to gain some sort of benefit, such as abusing scholarships or building an identity upon a community they are actually not a part of.

"The more prevalent case that you see of 'pretendianism' is unfortunately in academia," said Elizabeth Camacho, a doctoral student of Indigenous political thought at the University of Illinois. "At least once a year an article will come out about oh so and so professor was claiming to be native, it turns out they actually weren't."

Pretendians cause problems systematically but also socially, blurring the lines between people with real native relatives, and those with a "Cherokee princess grandmother." That can also be considered a form of pretendianism, Camacho said.

"Because you're basing your identity on this sort of myth, it's almost like a family legend," Camacho said. "So that's what happened to [Senator] Elizabeth Warren, she claimed that she was of Cherokee ancestry. It turns that they (the Cherokee Nation Citizenship Office) checked they Dawes Rolls, and people found out that she had no family on the Dawes Rolls."

However, other Indigenous scholars don't believe the term has anything to do with looks, but points to a systemic issue.



Chickasaw citizen Robert Smith, professor of Indigenous History at the University of North Texas. (Image Courtesy: UNT/Muscogee Voices)

Robert Smith, is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and a professor of Indigenous history at the University of North Texas. He said he has encountered academics who lied about their heritage, possibly to get funding or prestige. At the same time, he is an Indigenous man who presents as white.

"You know, I don't think being a 'Pretendian' has much at all to do with looks," he said. He defined "Pretendian" as "people who are not enrolled [as tribal citizens] and who have no family lineage or tribal affiliation, but still insist on using tribal identity as a way to validate their work."

Smith is a tall man with light

sand-colored skin. His broad figure, short brown hair and soft but stern face has led people to confuse him for a police officer. However, he is part Chickasaw on his mother's side, and is an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation. He has never needed to lie about his lineage in order to validate his work, as some others have in the past.

"Those who assume a false identity are damaging to Indigenous people," Smith said.

"If you do not belong to our community, yet you claim to be a part of our community in order so you can build yourself up, stay away from my people," he said.



Ty Scott is a student in the Mayborn School of Journalism at UNT. He grew up in the DFW metroplex and being surrounded by so many different peoples and cultures, he wanted to tell their stories. He says he always ends up knowing more than when he came in.

ONE MVSKOKE, TWO KIALEGEE CITIZENS HONORED AT 2025 AARP NATIVE ELDERNS CELEBRATION

ELDERS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIAN COUNTRY

BY BRADEN HARPER
MANAGING EDITOR

OKLAHOMA CITY – The 17th annual American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Oklahoma recognized one Mvskoke citizen and two Kialegee Tribal Town citizens on Wednesday Nov. 5 at the Native American Elders Honors Celebration. Roy Roberts (Mvskoke), Caroyln Fultz (Kialegee Tribal Town), and Sylvanna Fish Caldwell (Kialegee Tribal Town) were among 49 elders who were honored for "achievements, community service and impact." The ceremony was held at the First Americans Museum.

According to an AARP press release, this year's list of honored elders included educators, veterans, artists, tribal leaders, and culture preservationists. An estimated 300 were in attendance at this year's ceremony. Regarding

this year's elders, AARP Oklahoma State Director Sean Voskuhl said it was an honor to memorialize their contributions to the community.

"Our honorees' selfless acts of service truly make a positive difference in the lives of so many, while helping others live their best lives," Voskuhl said.

Roberts was born in Sunrise, Oklahoma and is Deer and Alligator Clan. He earned an auto mechanics certificate from Haskell Vocational School in 1966 and spent his career as a pipe welder. Roberts is an Army veteran. Roberts oversaw the construction of the softball fields, the rodeo arena, and multipurpose facility for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation under Principal Chief Claude Cox. During his lifetime Roberts has participated in rodeos and is a supporter of the All-Indian Rodeo Association. In 2024 Roberts was selected as a MCN Chief's Choice Living



Mvskoke citizen Roy Roberts was honored by the AARP (Image Courtesy: AARP)

Legend.

Fish Caldwell was born on August 22, 1945 in Wetumka, Oklahoma. She passed away on Saturday, Nov. 1 at the age of 80. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Special and Elementary Education from East Central University. Fish Caldwell served on the MCN National Council as a representative from the Tvkvpvtce dis-

trict. During her career she served as the director of education for the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, the fiscal director for Kialegee Tribal Town and the director of human resources for Thlopthlocco Tribal Town.

Roberts Fultz is currently the dietary manager for the Okemah Community Hospital, working for the MCN Department of

Health for 32 years. Fultz served six years on the Kialegee Tribal Town Business Committee's advisory committee and four years on the enrollment committee. She is a member of the Association of Nutrition and Food Service Professionals, the National Association of Professional Women and the International Association of Professional Women.



MCN SUPREME COURT ORDERS FREEDMEN CASE STATUS REPORT

BY THOMAS JACKSON
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – The legal battle between the Freedmen descendants and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship Board continues to play out in the MCN Supreme Court. In an order filed on Nov. 13,

the MCN Supreme Court directed the Citizenship Board to submit monthly reports on the status of compliance with the court's order granting Grayson and Kennedy citizenship. This was in response to a renewed motion for contempt filed on Oct. 14.

As previously reported, on

July 23 the MCN Supreme Court ordered the Citizenship Board to grant Grayson and Kennedy's citizenship pursuant to the Treaty of 1866. This order was followed by a motion for contempt filed by Grayson and Kennedy on Aug. 27 after the Citizenship Board failed to grant their citizenship. The MCN Supreme Court ruled that the Citizenship Board had not been given a reasonable amount of time to institute the changes necessary to grant Grayson and Kennedy citizenship and denied the motion for contempt. MCN Principal Chief David Hill issued executive order 25-05 on August 28, which directed MCN departments to prepare for review any changes needed to comply with the court's order. The motion for contempt was then renewed by Grayson and Kennedy on Oct. 14.

The first status report is due on Dec. 5 and must contain any proposed amendments to MCN policies and procedures or MCN Code, as well as what actions have been taken to institute the amendments. The report is also required to contain any proposed changes to the Citizenship Board's policies and procedures and their estimated completion time.

The order requires that the report contain summary explanations of any proposed amendments, procedural changes, and/or "questions of national significance" that bar the issuance of citizenship documents. The report must also include an estimated time until these issues are resolved and justification for any timeframes listed. According to the order:

The Citizenship Board is also required to list any proposed administrative rules that have been published in the Muscogee Nation News, filed with the MCN National Council Secretary or the MCN District Court Clerk. The order requires that the report contain summary explanations of any proposed amendments, procedural changes, and/or "questions of national significance" that bar the issuance of citizenship documents. The report must also include an estimated time until these issues are resolved and justification for any timeframes listed. According to the order:

To be clear, the Court anti-

pates this initial status report to cover ALL areas in which the Appellant believes amendments to the Nation's code, internal policies and procedures, or any other area are required. Failure to provide complete information in this status report, or, in the future to claim that additional areas must be addressed, without good cause shown for the failure to include those items in this status report, will be taken into consideration, both with respect to future status report requirements, and with respect to this Court's consideration of the Respondents' Renewed Motion for Contempt.

The order outlines that the Court will issue a new due date and set of report requirements following the filing of the initial report.

SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS TRIBAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

CITIZENS ATTENDED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – An Oklahoma Power Up Symposium at Oklahoma State University- Institute of Technology in Okmulgee highlighted the tribal energy workforce. The Nov. 5 event was organized by 7Skyline, an energy development consulting firm. The symposium focused on tribal renewable energy development and workforce development for renewable energy within tribal enterprises. The event provided helpful information for tribal communities through resources, knowledge, and connection for tribal communities.

“We strongly believe that this event will serve as a catalyst for strengthening Tribal energy sovereignty and expanding opportunities for renewable energy across Oklahoma Tribal Nations,” said 7Skyline Tax and Project Manager Sheiyenne Seegmiller (Navajo).

The event featured MCN speakers and tribal leaders, and many tribal workforce energy teams: including MCN Second Chief Del Beaver, MCN Secretary of the Nation Zechariah Harjo, Caddo Nation Chairman Bobby Gonzalez, and Portland State Dean of Engineering Dr. Joseph Bull (Delaware Tribe of Indians).

OSU-IT Tribal Outreach and Workforce Program Specialist Brandon Dinsmore (Cherokee) worked with 7Skyline to organize the event at OSU-IT. “The people that are helping us with this are 7Skyline, they’re a renewable energy consultant. They’ve done some of these elsewhere in the country,” shared Dinsmore.

Dinsmore pointed out that all the participants have a passion



A representative from the Red Cloud Renewable Energy Center in Oglala South Dakota spoke at the Oklahoma Power Up symposium on November 5. (ShaylnProctor/MM)

about environmental stewardship, of taking care of the land, and climate change. That passion is what initially brought everyone together through natural conversations, which eventually led to the symposium.

“The idea is that we provide as much information as possible for tribes that might be considering renewable energy or that might have some questions and don’t know what to ask, but it’s also a great change for us to showcase what the tribes are doing, not just in Oklahoma but across the country.”

Representatives from the Red Cloud Renewable Energy Center in Oglala South Dakota attended the symposium and spoke about their program- that really excited Dinsmore. “I think that it serves as a really great example of workforce development done right. So I’m hopeful that we gathered enough people from all over to make it crystal clear that this is a big thing, this is really happening and the tribes at least in my opinion are leading the way,” Dinsmore said.

Red Cloud Renewable Energy is a nonprofit organization formed in 2017 that provides education in solar installation,

sustainable building practices, and weatherization techniques. However, the program started previously when the Chief Henry Red Cloud administration built solar air furnaces to help Lakota family communities to stay warm. Throughout the community, especially for the elders, expensive heating bills meant families had to choose either to stay warm or put food on the table.

“These solar furnaces were a way to honor our traditional responsibility: to look out for one another and protect the generations. Because this work isn’t just about energy. It’s about sovereignty. It’s about healing. And it’s about coming back to our original instructions: to take care of one another, to live in balance, and to make a good path for the generations to come,” stated Red Cloud Renewable Energy Center. “This impactful work directly benefits Native American communities by fostering self-sufficiency, reducing energy costs, and promoting sustainability, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life within these populations. We believe this path is a new way to honor the old ways and we hope you will join us on a journey of remembering our

past, while building a new and better future! Mitákuye Oyás’ín (“We Are All Related”).”

For Dinsmore, renewable energy is here to stay and necessary for everyone to consider. The symposium also allowed a space for listening to different perspectives.

“I think it truly shows people how big this thing is, we’re no longer just in that question phase of should we think about solar panels on the roof of my house,” Dinsmore said. “We’re truly talking about things that actually exist and are happening, and how we can rapidly expand that.”

Dinsmore sees one area that renewable energy needs to be considered: data center development. “The other thing that changed is this influx of data center development, and we live in a state that can’t even produce enough electricity for all of the proposed data centers that we want,” said Dinsmore.

“We need to consider these other options. So while the funding has been taken away, I believe

that everybody sees the relevance for renewable energy. It might not power the data centers, but maybe it can power our homes so that we can use that previous energy to power the data centers or what it may be, and I think that what I’ve seen in Oklahoma, that was very strong.”

According to Dinsmore, renewable energy development impacts more than what power sources communities are using. “That opens up a ton of opportunities for people when it comes to careers, education or access to certain things. All of this plays into a lot of the high tech stuff that’s happening all of the big tech development, and this represents an opportunity for the tribes to be able to provide career opportunities to tribal members, which will only improve things for everybody.”

For more information about the symposium or tribal energy contact Dinsmore through email, brandon.dinsmore@okstate.edu



OSU-IT Tribal Outreach and Workforce Program Specialist Brandon Dinsmore (Cherokee) and MCN Jr. Miss Mia Powell (Mvsokke) at the Oklahoma Power Up symposium. (ShaylnProctor/MM)

CENTER FOR VICTIM SERVICES ADVOCATES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

CVS HOSTED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES DURING OCTOBER TO RAISE AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ABOUT THEIR YEAR-ROUND SERVICES

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

MVSOKKE RESERVATION – Through the month of October the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Center for Victim Services advocated for the Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Programs and come-and-go events during the month offered an opportunity for community members to learn about the services the department provides throughout the year.

“This year our theme, Cycle Breakers, came from the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women. This theme celebrates the strength, resilience, and determination of our native communities to break the cycles of violence. It only takes one person to break the cycle and we hope to encourage this among the families in our community,” MCN CVS Outreach Coordinator MaCaylin Autaubo (Wichita) said.

Their program provides pre-

vention education and resources to communities year round, but during the October activities they spend time connecting with the citizens to provide meaningful information and promote their services.

“Our goal is to provide prevention on domestic violence and the alarmingly high rate of violence within our Native communities,” Autaubo said. “We wanted to host events that were come and go, so individuals who work or are busy with life in general, were able to participate and show their support.”

Autaubo shared the difficulties victims face when leaving abusive relationships and the many factors that make it hard to leave, such as fear, intimidation, shame, and lack of resources. Autaubo explained that shared children can also be a reason for not leaving an abusive relationship because of the guilt a survivor may feel that he/she is disrupting their own family unit.

There are also short and long

term effects of domestic violence on mental health and emotional development.

“Short term effects may include minor to severe injuries to the body. The short-term emotional effects can include confusion, shock, anxiety, sadness, and even changes in sleeping problems. Trauma from domestic violence can lead to more complicated long-term effects that affect the mental wellbeing of survivors. These complications can look like depression, PTSD, drug abuse, and in more severe cases suicide,” Autaubo said.

Children can also see what their parents went through in a toxic/abusive relationship and it could affect them when they grow up.

“Children who have secondary trauma from witnessing mom/dad being abused, can also show signs of short- and long-term effects. More often than not, children who see this abuse in their childhood go on to experience toxic/abusive relationships

in their own life because of the behavior they witnessed in their childhood,” Autaubo said.

CVS provides year-round resources to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. They can assist in locating emergency shelter, creating a safety plan, assisting with filing protective orders, and accompaniment to tribal/state/or federal court. CVS can also assist with Domestic Violence Nurse Exam (DVNE) and a Sexual Assault Nurse Exam (SANE). There are also additional resources/referrals available for the survivors, depending on their needs.

Autaubo said that the survivors have a right to a free exam, regardless of their decision to report to law enforcement.

DV statistics across Indian Country tell an alarming story. “In the U.S., violence against native women and men have reached devastating levels on tribal lands. Lifetime exposure of violence for native women is 84% and for men 81%. Oklahoma has

the highest rates of both domestic violence victimization and intimate partner homicide,” Autaubo shared.

“We encourage our communities to support survivors of domestic violence by being proactive during the month of October and every month after. Prevention doesn’t end in October; it should happen all year round. We also encourage community members to attend our events to show their support and learn more about the warning signs of domestic violence, whether for their own relationships or for a loved one,” Autaubo said.

She spoke about how it feels to be putting these events on for the Domestic Violence Awareness month in October and how her program leaves an impact for the survivors.

For information, resources, outreach, or in-service training, contact CVS at 918-732-7979 or email Autaubo at maautaubo@muscogenation.com



CVS did a giveaway for the participants that wore purple on Oct. 16 to show their support for survivors and domestic violence. This year’s winners were the MCN Department of Education and Training. (Photo Courtesy: MCN Department of Education and Training)



COUNCIL COVERAGE

REGULAR SESSION

COUNCIL KILLS MVSKOKE TECH PARK BILL 4-11

MCN CHILD SUPPORT OFFICE RECEIVES \$3.1M GRANT

BY **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR

MVSKOKE RESERVATION - The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a Regular Session in person on Nov. 15 at the Mound Building.

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

NCR 25-004 A resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) National Council selecting Owen Sapulpa to the Board of Directors of OneFire Holding Company, LLC. Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

Sapulpa's term will last until October 25, 2028.

TR 25-108 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a professional services agreement for legal services between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Citizenship Board and Rod W. Wiemer, P.C., Attorney at Law. Representative Thomasine Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-1. Representative Joyce Deere voted against the bill.

Wiemer P.C., Attorney at Law will provide legal services in case SC-23-10.

TR 25-109 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a professional services agreement for legal services between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Election Board and the law firm of Savage O'Donnell Affeldt Weintraub. Rep. Osborn sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, Savage O'Donnell Affeldt Weintraub will provide representation in election matters.

TR 25-110 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a memorandum of Understanding with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for the maintenance of roadways and associated rights-of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation Program. Representative Charles McHenry sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the Nation will make improvements to various public roadways designated as MCN Tribal Transportation Program Routes located in Oklahoma.

TR 25-111 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the update of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Long Range Transportation Plan with the addition of the routes listed as attachment "A" - MCN NTTFI 2026. Rep. McHenry sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

TR 25-112 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with Preston Schools for the maintenance of parking lots and asso-

ciated rights-of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation Program. Representative Robyn Whitecloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the Nation will make improvements to various parking lots designated as MCN Tribal Transportation Program Routes located at Preston Public Schools in Oklahoma.

TR 25-113 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation supporting the addition of new routes, as identified in Attachment "A" - MCN NTTFI 2026, to the Nation's existing National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory and requesting the Bureau of Indian Affairs add these new routes to the Nation's National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory. Representative Galen Cloud sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, these new routes have been identified within the Nation's Reservation and are eligible for inclusion in the Nation's National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory.

TR 25-114 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with seven Oklahoma Counties for the maintenance of roadways and associated rights-of-ways constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Construction Program. Representative Darryl Proctor sponsored the bill, Rep. Cloud cosponsored it.

The seven counties identified in the law are Tulsa, Creek, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, McIntosh, Muskogee and Hughes.

TR 25-115 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the principal chief to execute a separate memorandum of understanding with eight Oklahoma cities for the maintenance of roadways and associated rights-of-way constructed or improved by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Transportation Program. Representative Mark Randolph sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

The eight cities identified in the law are Coweta, Sapulpa, Winchester, Tulsa, Henryetta, Castle, Okmulgee and Eufaula.

TR 25-116 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of Bobby Howard to serve as the Department of Public Safety Commissioner for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the bill, which was adopted 11-4. Representative Anna Marshall, Rep. Randolph, Representative Dode Barnett, and Rep. Whitecloud voted against the bill. There was no discussion.

According to the law, Howard's term will end on January 31, 2031.

TR 25-117 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to effectuate and exe-

cute the settlement of a lawsuit between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Ross Group, et al. for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health. Rep. Barnett sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

TR 25-118 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending TR 18-089 (A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the sale of beer and liquor at Muscogee (Creek) Nation Gaming Facilities). Rep. Hufft sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, TR 18-089 needs to be amended to include the new gaming facility in Coweta and the new address of Creek Nation Casino - Eufaula at 1045 Birkes Road.

NCA 25-077 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation establishing the Mvskoke Technology and Innovation Park ("Mvskoke Tech Park"). Rep. Freeman and Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the bill, which failed to pass 4-11. Rep. McHenry, Rep. Osborn, Rep. Cloud, Rep. Whitecloud, Rep. Randolph, Rep. Golden, Representative Mary Crawford, Rep. Dode Barnett, Representative Leonard Gouge, Rep. Proctor, and Rep. Deere voted against the bill.

The bill was previously postponed from the Oct. 25 Quarterly Session. In the bill, it states that the purpose of the park was to create economic diversification, sustainable growth and resilience. According to the legislation, the park would have been developed at Looped Square Ranch and would have improved technology infrastructure for the Tribe. During discussion, representatives were critical of the legislation's lack of details.

NCA 25-110 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the U.S. Department of Justice Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation Purpose Area 6: Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities Grant Funds for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Children & Family Service Administration. Rep. Gouge sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the \$450,000 grant will allow MCN Children and Family Services to improve child abuse or neglect investigations. It will decrease caseloads, increase public community outreach and update policies and tribal code.

NCA 25-111 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the United States Department of Education for the benefit of the Department of Education and Training. Rep. Crawford sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the \$2,944,515 grant will be used to implement a "MCN Elevate: Innovation and Opportunity (MCN-EIO) project." It will provide opportunities for students to suc-

ceed in Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM) entrepreneurship. It will also provide career readiness and college preparation for Native Youth in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade.

NCA 25-112 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 Affairs for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Head Start Program. Rep. Marshall sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the \$16,000 grant will be used to purchase 125 car seats, car clinic signs, traffic cones, sandwich boards, portable canopies, latch manuals, pool noodles, and brochures.

NCA 25-114 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of funds for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Lighthorse Police Department for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services FY 2025 Cops Office Tribal Resources Grant Program - Equipment and Training. Rep. Barnett sponsored the bill, which was adopted into law 15-0.

According to the law, it will expend \$900,000 that will be used to pay for travel for department employees to attend required CTAS New Grantee Orientation Training and purchase twelve 2027 Chevrolet Tahoe pursuit vehicles.

NCA 25-115 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing

the expenditure of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Tribal Child Support Enforcement Program Grant for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Child Support. Rep. Golden sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, it will expend \$3,126,730.28 to operate the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of Child Support.

NCA 25-117 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 14-029 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation appropriating funds for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Festival) as amended by NCA 23-026. Rep. Hufft sponsored the bill, which failed to adopt into law 7-8. Rep. McHenry, Rep. Proctor, Rep. Randolph, Rep. Whitecloud, Rep. Barnett, Rep. Crawford, Rep. Golden and Rep. Gouge voted against the bill.

If adopted, the law would have provided an additional \$833,000 for next year's 50th anniversary Festival. Rep. Golden was openly critical of the bill, stating that the additional funds were unnecessary. Rep. Randolph said this bill asked for too much money during a time when citizens are struggling with food insecurity.

NCA 25-118 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation repealing MCNCA Title 30, Chapter 7, entitled "Parliamentarian to National Council". Rep. Freeman sponsored the bill, which was adopted 14-1. Rep. Whitecloud voted against the bill.

According to the law, there is a need to repeal MCNCA Title 30 because it is not fiscally prudent to hire a parliamentarian. The law further states that the position has been vacant for decades.

NCA 25-119 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the KFC Foundation Kentucky Fried Wishes Grant for the benefit of the Reintegration Program. Rep. Crawford sponsored the bill, which was adopted into law 15-0.

According to the law, it will expend \$10,000 for a food preservation and distribution pantry.

NCA 25-120 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Food and Nutrition Service for the benefit of the Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, it will expend \$40,471 for the continued administration of the program.

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

MCNNC COMMITTEE MEETINGS

HEW Nov .4

TR 25-108 passed with a vote of 3-0. Representative Thomasine Yahola Osborn sponsored the bill.

TR 25-109 passed with a vote of 3-0. Rep. Osborn sponsored the bill.

NCA 25-110 passed with a vote of 3-0. Representative Leonard Gouge sponsored the bill.

NCA 25-111 passed with a vote of 3-0. Representative Mary Crawford sponsored the bill.

NCA 25-112 passed with a vote of 3-0. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the bill.

NCA 25-113 was postponed indefinitely with a vote of 3-0. Rep. Osborn sponsored the legislation.

NCA 25-119 passed with a vote of 3-0. Rep. Crawford sponsored the bill.

NCA 25-120 passed with a vote of 3-0. Rep. Crawford sponsored the bill.

BFJ Nov.6

NCR 25-004 passed with a vote

of 4-0. Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. sponsored the bill. The legislation was previously postponed in October.

TR 25-116 passed with a vote of 4-0. Representative Sandra Golden sponsored the legislation.

NCA 25-114 passed with a vote of 4-0. Representative Dode Barnett sponsored the legislation.

NCA 25-115 passed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Golden sponsored the legislation.

NCA 25-116 was postponed with a vote of 4-0. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation. The legislation is postponed until December.

NCA 25-117 passed with a vote of 4-0. Representative Robert Hufft sponsored the legislation.

NCA 25-118 passed with a vote of 4-0. Representative Patrick Freeman Jr. sponsored the legislation.

BFJ/HEW Joint Nov 14
TR 25-117 passed with a vote of 6-0. Representative Dode Barnett sponsored the legislation.

VASO FOOD BANK SERVES VETERANS DURING TIME OF HIGH FOOD INSECURITY

MVSKOKE VETERANS SHARE WHAT IT MEANS TO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO SERVE OTHERS IN NEED

By **BRADEN HARPER**
MANAGING EDITOR



Muscogee Nation Veterans Affairs Service Office employees and veteran volunteers give out food and produce. (Braden Harper/MM)

OKMULGEE - Mvskoke veterans came out to volunteer and help their fellow veterans at the Muscogee Nation Veterans Affairs Services Office (VASO) Veterans Food Bank on Wednesday, Nov. 19 at the Mvskoke Dome. The quarterly drive-through event hands out boxes of food to veterans, as well as spouses and widows of veterans. Food boxes and produce were provided by the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. Each recipient received potatoes, carrots, onions, and a box of shelf-stable foods.

“We initially weren’t doing this for our veterans,” Riddle said. “Not only does this serve our people, it serves other veterans as well. We’re helping out the whole veteran community.”

VASO Secretary Grover Wind (Mvskoke) says two of the most pressing issues for Native veterans are housing and food insecurity. Each food package received from the food bank can potentially help an individual for a month, give or take. Events like these help the department get a grasp of the number of veterans within the Tribe. Wind said that

struggling to keep their shelves stocked.

“A lot of food banks have gone without food. A lot of programs they were relying on, due to the government shutdown, do not have the funding. A lot of our veterans are relying on events like this to feed their families,” Berryhill said.

Sometimes it can be hard for veterans to request help from their Tribe. According to Berryhill, she received a call from a veteran who felt guilty about approaching her office for help. She understands that VASO

“This is important to us because it makes us feel like we’re doing our part to serve the veterans. For so long, honoring our veterans has been something that has been overlooked. This is just another way to serve and tell our veterans how much we appreciate them.” - Grover Wind

This month’s food bank event came at a crucial time when Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funds for low-income individuals were frozen on Saturday, Nov. 1 due to this year’s federal government shutdown. After Congress passed a budget to reopen the federal government on Wednesday, Nov. 12, SNAP recipients only started receiving November’s benefits on Thursday, Nov. 13.

VASO Operations Manager Rachel Riddle (Mvskoke) said her favorite aspects of the food bank event are the smiles and visits with veterans who come through the car line. She remarked that both volunteers and recipients enjoy seeing one another. The event serves all veterans, not just Mvskoke veterans.

“I saw a need a long time ago,

some people get emotional when they receive their food box. He remarked that it is heartbreaking to learn that some people who come through the drive through may starve without help.

“It means more to us because we are helping take care of them,” Wind said. “Food is such a necessity. If food is something they’re not going to worry about, they can focus on other things like where to live, or getting a job.”

MCN Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) Manager Tacia Berryhill (Mvskoke) said her department sees firsthand the food insecurity needs that housing-insecure veterans struggle with every day. According to Berryhill, a lot of veterans have reached out to the Nation because food banks around the Mvskoke Reservation have been

events like the food bank are crucial for their veterans’ survival.

National Council Representative Leonard Gouge was present at the event’s front entrance waving in cars and checking off registered names on the sign in sheet. Rep. Gouge is an army veteran and said it gives him a good feeling to serve fellow veterans.

“Especially with the holidays coming around, it fills my heart to put a smile on someone’s face or put food on a plate for somebody,” Rep. Gouge said. “A veteran is always going to be a soldier willing to support and willing to work and step out and do what they need to do.”

The Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma provides volunteer opportunities year round. For those interested in volunteering, visit www.okfoodbank.org.

IN MEMORIAM

Frank L. Hester of Las Vegas departed this life to the embrace of God at 6:16 a.m. on Thursday, October 23, 2025, surrounded by family. He was born on Friday, April 27, 1945, to JoAnne and Ira Joe Hester in humble beginnings on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation in Oklahoma, the eldest of thirteen siblings. His first baby bed was a dresser drawer.



FRANK L. HESTER

At the age of five, the family moved to the small town of Clinton, Oklahoma, where Frank grew up fishing, hunting, excelling in football, basketball, and track. A natural athlete and fierce competitor, he became a hometown legend whose records in high school and college remain unbroken. He graduated a year before the construction of what is now known as the Tornado Dome. Stories of his All-State and All-Conference performances are still told today. He was inducted into the Clinton High School Athletic Hall of Fame in 2024.

Frank attended Colorado State University Pueblo (then known as the Indians) on an athletic scholarship, lettering all four years and earning his varsity sweater and a bachelor’s degree in education. Later, he would receive a master’s degree in science. His talent drew interest from several NFL teams, including the Oakland Raiders. During college, he met his best friend, Patricia J. Vanduvall, affectionately known as Patti Jo. They married on June 17, 1966, following her high school graduation. Their first child, Carri DeNein, was born on May 29, 1968. Drafted during the Vietnam War, Frank enlisted in the U.S. Army on June 18, 1968, taking his young family to Germany, which ended his future professional football career. After returning to the United States in 1970, Frank and Patti welcomed two more children, Adrienne Nichelle on July 8, 1970, and Frank Lee Jr. on May 25, 1973.

A proud U.S. Army veteran, Frank held his service close to his heart.

In 1971, the family settled in Henderson, Nevada, where Frank began his career in education. With his keen sense of humor and easy charm, he was the kind of teacher and coach people naturally gravitated toward. He taught at the Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center and served as Head Track Coach at Basic High School, while also working at Safeway. In 1972, he moved into full-time teaching and coaching at Basic, shaping the lives of countless student-athletes. Frank later served as Dean at Kenny C. Guinn Middle School and Basic High School, always leading with respect, positivity, and a gift for making others feel at ease. He eventually returned to his first love, teaching, where he found the greatest joy connecting with students every day.

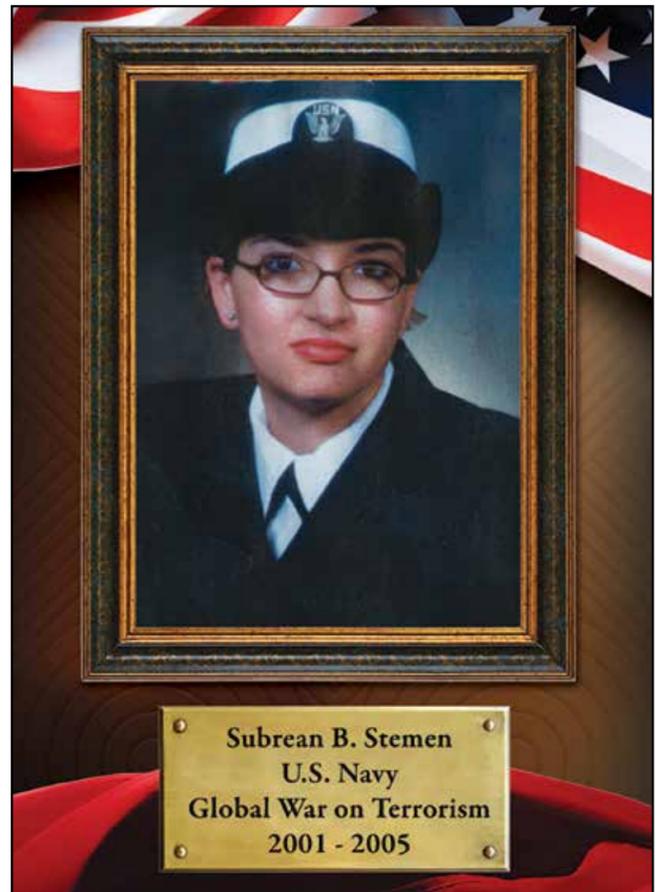
Frank also became an avid golfer after being asked to “inspect” Black Mountain Golf Course weekly to ensure it was ready for the school’s golf team. He took that responsibility with a smile, enjoying the game for over 40 years and winning just as many friends on the fairway as in the classroom.

Frank was preceded in death by Patti and his daughter, Carri. He is survived by his children, Adrienne Nichelle and Frank Lee Hester Jr.; five grandchildren—Mario, Alex, and Jaslyne Jones, Sierra, and Dorian Hester; six great-grandchildren, Brielle, Orion, Amaré, LaVea, Landon, and Nevaeh; siblings, Robert Hester, Lynda McCarty, Johnny Hester, Donnie Coward, Bobbie Ray Coward, Janell Lister, and Tyrone Lister, and a host of relatives and friends who will forever treasure his memory.

There was a Memorial Service held on Wednesday, November 5th, 2025, at 02:00 PM (PST)

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

SUBREAN B. STEMEN



We would like to honor tribal veteran Subrean B. Stemen for her service to the U.S. Navy, United States and the Muscogee Nation. During her 4 years of service ABH3 Stemen was awarded the Navy Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Medal. Mvto ABH3 Stemen for your service.

MVTO FOR YOUR SELFLESS SERVICE!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Elder’s Meeting
Okmulgee Elder Nutrition Center
Dec. 3
9:30 a.m.
2900 N. Osage Pl. Okmulgee, Okla

Improv Show
Route 66 Kicks
Free to the public on a first come first serve basis.
May contain adult humor, recommended 18+
Dec. 4
7:00 p.m. - 8:20 p.m.
CMN Lecture Hall
2170 Raven Circle, Okmulgee, Okla

Christmas Carnival
MCN Marketing and Tourism
Dec. 5
3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Mvskoke Dome
2950 Warrior Road, Okmulgee, Okla

Beekeeping 101
CMN Extension
Dec. 6
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Natural Resources Building
2107 Raven Circle, Okmulgee, Okla
To register, contact 918-549-2861

Youth Explosion
Snake Creek #2 Baptist Church
Dec. 6
2 p.m.
Live music, games and food.
Mekusukey Mission Gym
12566 NS 3540, Seminole, Okla

Elders’ Holiday Luncheon
MCN Elder Services
Dec. 8
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. or 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
River Spirit Casino Ballroom
8330 Riverside Parkway
Pre registration deadline is Nov. 24. Elders are asked to only attend one session. Must be enrolled Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen and be 55 years old. Elders may bring a guest who is a spouse or elder.
To pre register call 918-732-7765

Coffee and Donuts
Veterans Affairs Services Office
Dec. 11
8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
1006 Bear Ln, Okmulgee, Okla
For questions, contact 918-732-7739

Angel Tree
Children & Family Services Administration
Adopt an Angel beginning Nov. 3, drop off unwrapped gifts by Dec. 8.
5005 N. Wood Drive. Okmulgee, Okla.
For questions, call 918-304-3353

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.

TOURNAMENT FOR TOYS

MCN RiP WILL SPREAD CHEER FOR FAMILIES IN NEED THROUGH DODGEBALL FUN

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

HENRYETTA – The MCN Reintegration Program (RiP) will be hosting a dodgeball tournament Dec. 6 open to all for a fee, these funds will be going towards a toy drive for the children in need within their program. There are prizes for the 1st-3rd place winners. The deadline to enter is Dec. 3rd. This tournament will be located at the MCN RiP Fish-Out-Of-Water Activity Center in Henryetta.

The tournament is double elimination with a max of ten teams with 6-8 player roster and \$10 per player or bring a \$10 toy. Donations are also welcomed and concessions will be available.

Their goal for this dodgeball tournament is to bring the people together and have a friendly family atmosphere, especially trying to put on an activity for their own program. They want the community to see their campus, their new facility and want them to see what the RiP program is about.

“Most of the time when people hear the term or the name of ‘reintegration’, they automatically think jail or prison, assuming that the individuals that we help are the just the worst people in the world, and that’s not even the case, they’re normal people. They just got caught doing bad stuff or they were at a bad time in their life,” said MCN RiP Outreach Specialist Mark Harjo (Mvskoke).

These funds go towards gifts for the children’s clients within their program- case workers reach out to their clients to get the ages of the children and then purchase gifts. The RiP program will wrap the gifts and either have them ready for pick up or deliver them if needed.

According to Harjo, this is the third time RiP is hosting the event. In the past, RiP had held the tournament at Henryetta’s High School Gymnasium, now they will have it at their new facility- the Fish-Out-Of-Water Activ-



(Flyer: MCN RiP)

ity Center. Previous tournaments have had a good turnout with lots of citizens and tribal leadership, like MCN National Council Representatives, participating.

Harjo enjoys being able to give back to families that are in need as he can relate to children that don’t have a lot. Harjo shared that many on staff at RiP program staff can relate to that as well or they have the heart to give back too for that reason for the children in need.

“I can kind of relate to the children of the population that we serve, my family doesn’t come from money or wealth or anything like that. So every year I always look forward to Christmas, I might get one or two things or my family would reach out to like churches and stuff, they’ll do things like that, get gifts from churches or whoever. So I can kind of relate to how it is for children that have formerly incarcerated parents or just chil-

dren in need,” Harjo said.

Harjo knows that children always look forward to Christmas every year and he knows it’s not always about the gifts, however in the children’s eyes he knows that some see it that way. That’s why he, and his staff, is very glad to help their client families, Harjo even acknowledges the MCN Angel tree for helping the other children as well.

“They just light up, they’re so appreciative and thankful, once they do receive something,” Harjo said.

If anyone would like to donate to the MCN RiP toy drive, the deadline is Dec. 12, if anyone would like to join the dodgeball tournament that deadline is Dec. 3. Harjo hopes to see everyone have a good time, and wants everyone to come out to play.

For any information about the toy drive or tournament you can contact Harjo by his work cell at 918-633-7106.

Logan’s department also works within the local schools such as Okmulgee, Morris and Twin Hills to spread the word about the event. They put flyers into the children’s backpacks so that they could enjoy another fun activity for Christmas.

Making sure the carnival is open as soon as school ends was another way to accommodate families. According to Logan, the event starts at 3 pm so local children who attend school, especially for those families that live in the rural area, can make it to the event. Logan knows that sometimes once families are home and settled they tend not to want to come back into town.

What Logan enjoys the most is seeing the joy and happiness in the children’s faces.

“It’s just seeing the expressions in our kiddos, it just lets them really see the joy of Christmas. This is a time when money is always on the conscience of everyone but an event like this really is humbling to be a good community steward. So my favorite piece of this is just seeing the joy on our kiddos and parent’s faces,” Logan said.

Last year, the Christmas Carnival partnered with the Okmulgee Christmas Light Parade, and the event. Due to the cold weather, it hurt their attendance, but they did have a lot of fun. Even elders told Logan it reminded them of being kids again. “It was a wonderful time to partner with the city and our other partners down there. But we are looking forward to coming back into a heated and aired location to where everyone can feel comfortable,” Logan said.

Logan hopes to see everyone enjoy their time at this year’s Christmas Carnival.

LEGALS

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION
OKMULGEE DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT FILED
IN RE THE NAME CHANGE OF)
EMILY DACEY WHEELER) Case No. CV-2025-118
Petitioner,)
NOTICE OF FILING PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
Take notice that EMILY DACEY WHEELER has filed in the above court a Petition to have her name changed as follows: to-wit: from EMILY DACEY WHEELER to EMILY DACEY 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 Lymbyke (Eagle) Street, Okmulgee, OK 74447 on the 14th day of December, 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 #850
Savage, O'Donnell, Affeldt & Weintraub
1836 South Baltimore Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74119
Telephone (918) 599-8400
Fax (918) 599-8444
Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION
OKMULGEE DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT FILED
IN RE THE NAME CHANGE OF)
DANIEL WAYNE COLLINS) Case No. CV-2025-157
Petitioner,)
NOTICE OF FILING PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
Take notice that DANIEL WAYNE COLLINS has filed a Petition in the above court to have his name changed as follows: to-wit: from DANIEL WAYNE COLLINS to DANIEL TOMMY DORSEY, JR.; 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 Lymbyke (Eagle) Street, Okmulgee, OK 74447 on the 14th day of December, 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 #850
Savage, O'Donnell, Affeldt & Weintraub
1836 South Baltimore Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74119
Telephone (918) 599-8400
Fax (918) 599-8444
Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION
OKMULGEE DISTRICT
DISTRICT COURT FILED
IN THE MATTER OF THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:)
PRESTON MARSHALL, dob 03-13-65,) Case No. GD-2025-55
an Incapacitated Adult.) Judge Masters, GUARDIANSHIP COURT CLERK
NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN
MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION, TO: All Persons Interested In The Person and Estate Of Preston Marshall, an alleged incapacitated person.
Take Notice that, a Petition for Appointment of Guardian of the Person and Estate of Preston Marshall, incapacitated adult, was filed in this Court by the Paternal Sister, Norma Jean Marshall, seeking this Court to issue a General Decree of Guardianship with regards to her brother, Preston Marshall.
A hearing on said Petition is set for the 21st day of December, 2025, at the hour of 9:00 o'clock A.M. in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court, Okmulgee Oklahoma, before the Honorable Judge Masters.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE PETITION FOR GUARDIANSHIP AT THE TIME AND PLACE ABOVE SHOWN WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AND HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD AT SAID TIME AND PLACE INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO OBJECT TO THE REQUEST AND RELIEF SOUGHT; HOWEVER, YOUR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT SAID HEARING SHALL CONSTITUTE DENIAL OF YOUR INTEREST IN THE INCAPACITATED ADULT'S WELFARE, WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS

PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS, IN SAID PETITION BEING GRANTED AND ORDERED WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT AS WELL AS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE INCAPACITATED ADULT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION.
Signed and Ordered this 14th day of November, 2025.
JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT
Prepared by:
Jesse Lee Allen, OBA #14878/MCN#850
Attorney at Law
250 West 77 Street
Okmulgee, OK 74447
(918) 599-8400
jesslee@jessleeallen.com
Attorney for Norma Jean Marshall

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL AT THE DOME

FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAY SEASON



(Flyer: MCN Marketing and Tourism)

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR
REPORTER

OKMULGEE – The MCN Marketing and Tourism are hosting their annual Christmas Carnival at the Mvskoke Dome on December 5. The carnival is from 3-8 PM and includes carnival games, vendors, door prizes, free hot chocolate, concessions, free pictures with Santa, and make and take activities.

The department tries to keep costs down for families during the holidays. “Our prices there will be as bare minimum as possible just because the theme of this event is to make sure everyone is welcome. This is a time

to come together, it’s not about time to make money,” said MCN Director of Marketing and Tourism Ryan Logan (Mvskoke).

“Throughout the evening there will be carnival games that people can play, there is a fee of about \$1. We try to keep everything very affordable to make sure that folks can have an enjoyable Christmas,” Logan said.

The carnival offers guaranteed prizes for games. For the door prizes, they ask every vendor at the carnival to donate one item for a door prize, throughout the night door prize winners will be announced.