



JUNE 1, 2026 | KVCO HVSE•BLACKBERRY | VOL. 56, ISSUE 11

MVSKOKE NEWS

PRODUCED BY  MVSKOKEMEDIA

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FOREVER CHERISHED. NEVER FORGOTTEN. MMIP DAY ON THE RESERVATION HONORS THE MISSING AND DEMANDS JUSTICE



On May 5, citizens participated in the honor walk during the MMIP Day activities at the Claude Cox Pavilion. (Shayln Proctor/MM)

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR

OKMULGEE – May 5 was National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Day, and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Center for Victim Services held its annual MMIP Honor Walk at the Mvskoke Dome Pavilion. This event was held to raise awareness in the community, provide information, and share updates on MMIP cases on the Mvskoke Reservation. Many MCN representatives, tribal employees, and citizens came to support this cause. This year's theme was “Estofis Vnokeckv. Svnvcomv Ehosetcv,” which translates to “Forever Cherished. Never Forgotten.”

At this event, MCN CVS provided a memorial display for families who wanted to honor their loved ones. They encouraged everyone to wear red, handed out free MMIP t-shirts and buttons, and had their information booth open. MCN CVS provided

information to families seeking justice for their loved ones or wanting more details about reporting a missing person. MCN Lighthorse spoke about the reporting process. After the MCN Lighthorse discussion, MCN CVS also provided updates on missing-person cases on the reservation. They also spoke about the services that they provide for families of homicide victims.

“This year's turnout was great. We were very happy with the support that we received from the community, in which we're always excited to see that support, and for the cause of MMIP. We are making sure that we're getting those faces out there and family members are able to come and share their loved one's story,” said MCN CVS Outreach Coordinator MaCaylin Autaubo (Wichita).

One of the misconceptions about MMIP that Autaubo would like to dispel is the idea that “we're just another face in

the crowd.”

“I think that it's so important that we're able to utilize the resources that we have with our Lighthorse Police Department, our program, and everything that the Nation offers because we do want to assist these families, and also just break the stereotypes that surround MMIP. We want to be there to comfort families and just be there for them,” Autaubo said.

Last year, MCN CVS put up billboards featuring active missing person cases on the Mvskoke Reservation. Autaubo said family members were reaching out to them and that one of the cases had been resolved.

“We actually had a missing person who was on that billboard. He was located last year; I believe it was just a couple of months after the billboard campaign was placed. Somebody had seen the billboard, called into Lighthorse, and they were able to locate him and reunite him with his family. We were very excited about that outcome,” Autaubo said.

Autaubo said they had received great coverage in the news outlets, which they were proud of.

“Because oftentimes MMIP cases get overlooked within the news outlets. So those billboards were able to bring that awareness to the public at large and not just for tribal citizens,” Autaubo said.

The program wants people to know that MMIP Day isn't just in May or on May 5; it's



Memorial display at the Omniplex Pavilian brings honor to loved ones missing. (Shayln Proctor)

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GRAYSON/KENNEDY CASE CLOSED

MCN SUPREME COURT DENIES MOTIONS, CLOSES CASE

BY JERRAD MOORE

OKMULGEE – The Muscogee Creek Nation Supreme Court issued a final order in the Grayson/Kennedy case on Tuesday, May 12. The order denies the motions previously filed for contempt, a restraining order, and a preliminary injunction. The order closes the case.

The MCN SC finds that the status reports in the case show that both the legislative and executive branches are taking steps to comply with the court's order, noting that the court would prefer the order be implemented more quickly.

The order points out that the MCN National Council and Election Board are not parties to the Grayson/Kennedy case, and for that reason, the court will not grant the motions filed.

The order states that the question put before the court in the Grayson/Kennedy case concerned the MCN Constitution and the Treaty of 1866. Additionally, enforcement of the order is a separate legal question that must be addressed in a new enforcement case that includes all necessary parties.

The court order also addresses concerns put forth by the legislative branch and MCN citizens. In the remarks, the court discusses its history and the Mvskoke values that anchor it. From the order:

As dicta, the Court would also share the following to the parties, and the Nation as a whole. One of the unique features of our Nation's Judicial Branch is that our Constitution authorizes the appointment of non-attorney, traditional Mvskoke experts to seats on the Supreme Court. Currently, two of the seven seats on this Court are filled with traditional experts. It is no exaggeration to say that, in every case filed with the Supreme Court, these traditional experts provide insights that book-and-paper law simply would not afford. Our Nation is benefited tremendously by this unique approach to appellate law. In the above-styled case, our Court has attempted to honor both traditional legal concepts, analyzing our statutory and case law precedent, while also honoring Mvskoke history and tradition. At the forefront of our analysis in this case has been a deep consideration of the past. In the time leading up to the signing of the Treaty of 1866, it would be fair to say that many of our ancestors would have been dismayed at the retributive nature of the Treaty of 1866, and at the prospect of entering into such treaty terms. However, they did so. They did so with the fervent hope that such a course would secure a better future for their posterity. From our vantage point today, we see that their decisions, their efforts, and their sacrifice produced their intended results. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation stands as a sovereign entity, and is stronger today because of our ancestors' decisions, with our Nation's sovereignty resting in large part on that same Treaty of 1866. It would be both a disrespect for our Court to reject this history, and, perhaps more importantly, a danger to our Nation's sovereignty to expect that certain advantageous terms of the treaty should be enforced, while certain terms that some may feel are disadvantageous should be ignored. It is clear to this Court that, like our ancestors, many among our citizens today are also dismayed at the prospect of this Court's Order and Opinion, and would have preferred that the Court had ruled differently. Also like our ancestors, this Court's fervent hope in this case, and in every case that finds its way to our docket, is that our decision will secure a better future for our Nation, and make clear to all that the Judicial Branch of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation produces just results to all parties, honoring both our tradition and our legal precedent, even if some results may be hard.

Five values inherited from our ancestors and elders anchor Este Mvskokvke (Mvskoke People), and they anchor this Court as well. Vrakkuetv (respect) calls upon us to honor the rights and dignity of every person who comes before our bench, and to honor the promises our Nation has made, including those memorialized in the Treaty of 1866. Fvtcetv (integrity) and mecvlke (responsibility) call upon us to be fair, honest, and accountable in every decision we render, loyal to the Mvskoke Constitution and laws we have sworn

GRAYSON/KENNEDY
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MMIP WALK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

every day after. Autaubo discussed that MMIP cases often start with domestic violence and sexual assault, so their program also wants to provide that outreach and awareness for that.

“We’re trying to educate domestic violence and sexual assault because I mean that’s kind of what starts MMIP cases oftentimes. We just want to make sure that just because it’s in May doesn’t mean it stops on May 5,” Autaubo said.

“These disappearances and murders are often directly linked to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, sex trafficking, and longstanding harms impacting Indigenous communities,”

stated the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center. “56.1% have experienced sexual violence, 55.5% have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, and 48.8% have experienced stalking.”

Decreasing MMIP cases starts with conversations and education. For MCN CVS, that means helping citizens identify signs early, what signs look like, and when and how to seek help. Autaubo mentioned it’s important to recognize a healthy relationship from

a toxic one. MCN CVS also starts those conversations with the youth, like in their February “Real Love Respects” bowling event.

To report missing person cases, contact the MCN Lighthorse Police Department at 918-732-7800.



TOP: Pictured: MCN Center for Victim Services Director Shawn Partridge provides information on MMIP services. MIDDLE: Citizen holds their loved one’s photo during the honor walk. BOTTOM: Families participate together to bring awareness to MMIP. (All Photos by Shayln Proctor/MM)



GRAYSON/KENNEDY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to uphold, and diligent in the work of judging without regard to the prevailing political winds. Eyasketv (humility) and hoporenkv (wisdom) call upon us to remember that the Court is one branch among three co-equals, to be mindful of the well-being of the Nation we serve, and to draw from both scholarly learning and from the knowledge and experience of our elders, whose decisions (made under conditions far harder than ours) resulted in the treaty-defined permanent homeland we enjoy today, and that still shape every aspect of our Nation. These values guided the Court’s analysis in this case, and they will guide every case that comes before us. The Justices of this Court take their oaths seriously, and decide each matter before them without fear or favor, affection or ill-will.

In a government composed of three coequal branches, disagreement among the branches is not only permissible, it is to be expected. Each branch is charged by the Constitution with a distinct role, and the friction that arises when those roles intersect is itself part of the constitutional design. The Court’s responsibility is not to avoid that friction, but to discharge its own duty faithfully when called upon to do so. We lay this Order and Opinion at the doorstep of the political branches of government in the hope that they do the same.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Respondents’ (1) October 14, 2025, RenewedMotion for Contempt and for Court Enforcement of Order and Judgment and for Order to Show Cause, (2) March 9, 2026, Third Motion for Contempt, for Court Enforcement of Order and Judgment, and for Order to Show Cause, and (3) the March 9, 2026, Motion for Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction are hereby DENIED, and that the above-styled appeal is hereby CLOSED.

CITY OF HENRYETTA

ORDERED TO STOP

PROSECUTIONS OF

NATIVE AMERICANS

HENRYETTA ENJOINED FROM ASSERTING CRIMINAL JURISDICTION OVER NATIVE AMERICANS ON THE MVSKOKE RESERVATION

BY JERRAD MOORE

OKMULGEE – United States Magistrate Judge Jason A. Robertson issued his opinion and order granting a preliminary injunction in Muscogee (Creek) Nation v City of Henryetta on May 13. The case was filed by the MCN on July 8, 2025.

MCN vs City of Henryetta was filed as a result of the city’s continued prosecution of MCN citizens after the McGirt decision. According to the complaint, MCN Attorney General Geri Wisner contacted the Henryetta City Attorney regarding the ongoing prosecutions and was told the city’s position was that it had jurisdiction over Native Americans regardless of the McGirt decision.

The opinion and order grants the MCN’s request for a preliminary injunction. According to the order:

The Nation asked only that the Constitution be enforced. That is the only request this Court can grant.

This injunction draws no new line. It enforces the one Congress already drew.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that Plaintiff Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Docket No. 11) is GRANTED.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the City of Henryetta, Oklahoma, and all its officers, agents, and employees are ENJOINED from initiating, pursuing, or enforcing any municipal criminal prosecution or citation against any Indian, whether or not a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, for conduct occurring within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Reservation, until further Order of this Court. This injunction applies to prosecutions under both state and municipal ordinances, including traffic, misdemeanor, and code violations.

Nothing in this Order precludes Henryetta from entering or executing a lawful cross-deputization agreement with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation or from cooperating in investigations consistent with federal and tribal law. The Court retains jurisdiction to monitor compliance and to modify this injunction as justice requires.

THE

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

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

MUSCOGEE NATION FESTIVAL

SCHEDULE of EVENTS

SAT 06	10:00AM - 3:00PM CAR SHOW Safe Space Parking Lot	SAT 27	7:30AM 5K Okmulgee Regional Airport 8:00AM FAST PITCH SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT Claude Cox Omnplex 9:00AM HORSESHOES TOURNAMENT Claude Cox Omnplex PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT Hawthorn Park 10:00AM PARADE Main (6th) Street Downtown Okmulgee 11:00AM - 10:00PM FUN FAIR ARTS & CRAFTS FOOD VENDORS Claude Cox Omnplex 11:30AM - 2:30PM MEET & GREET MVSKOKE Dome Principal Chief Hill and Second Chief Beaver 12:00PM - 2:00PM INFO/RESOURCE FAIR Tent North of Amphitheater 12:00PM - 4:00PM MAKE & TAKE (Arts & Crafts) MVSKOKE Dome 4:00PM - 6:00PM LEGENDS SOFTBALL REUNION Safe Space 6:30PM LEGENDS SOFTBALL REUNION GAME Claude Cox Omnplex 7:30PM INFR RODEO Bob Arrington Arena FASHION SHOW (Mvskoke Designers) Amphitheater 8:00PM LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Amphitheater GENE SIMMONS BAND Following Fashion Show FIREWORKS
SUN 07	2:00PM SCHOLARSHIP PAGEANT River Spirit Casino Resort		
SAT 13	9:00AM JR TENNIS CLINIC Hawthorn Park 9:00AM CHAIR VOLLEYBALL MVSKOKE Dome		
FRI 19	8:00AM - 1:00PM ELDER GATHERING MVSKOKE Dome 6:00PM YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT MVSKOKE Dome Brock Memorial Gym 6:30PM SLOW PITCH TOURNAMENT Claude Cox Omnplex		
SAT 20	8:00AM YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT MVSKOKE Dome Brock Memorial Gym SLOW PITCH TOURNAMENT Claude Cox Omnplex TENNIS TOURNAMENT Hawthorn Park 9:00AM YOUTH FISHING DERBY (12 & under) Rocking Z Ranch 11:00AM - 3:00PM REZ CAR CONTEST Claude Cox Omnplex 2:00PM - 6:00PM TRADITIONAL GAMES Claude Cox Omnplex		
SUN 21	8:00AM TENNIS TOURNAMENT Hawthorn Park SLOW PITCH TOURNAMENT Claude Cox Omnplex 9:00AM CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT MVSKOKE Dome	+	
WED 24	2:00PM - 4:00PM MVSKOKE HYMN SINGING MVSKOKE Dome		
THU 25	11:00AM - 2:00PM LIVING LEGENDS River Spirit Casino Resort 4:00PM - 7:00PM HEALTH FAIR MVSKOKE Dome 6:00PM BULL BASH (Bull Riding) Bob Arrington Arena 5:00PM - 10:00PM FUN FAIR FOOD VENDORS Claude Cox Omnplex 7:00PM STOMP DANCE North of Amphitheater		
FRI 26	7:00AM JUNIOR OLYMPICS Beggs High School GOLF TOURNAMENT Page Belcher Golf Course 10:00AM ALLIE REYNOLDS STATUE DEDICATION Claude Cox Omnplex 10:00AM - 10:00PM FUN FAIR ARTS & CRAFTS FOOD VENDORS Claude Cox Omnplex 6:00PM INFR RODEO (Indian National Finals Rodeo) Bob Arrington Arena NOVICE PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT Hawthorn Park 6:30PM FAST PITCH TOURNAMENT Claude Cox Omnplex 8:00PM LIVE ENTERTAINMENT Amphitheater RYAN BINGHAM & THE TEXAS GENTLEMEN	SHUTTLE	SUN 28
			8:00AM FAST PITCH TOURNAMENT Claude Cox Omnplex 11:00AM (Doors Open at 10:00AM) WORSHIP on the RESERVATION MVSKOKE Dome Song and Worship Service FRI 6/26 5:00PM-12:00AM SAT 6/27 12:00PM-12:00AM PICK UP/DROP OFF Intersection at NE Corner of MVSKOKE Dome Parking (Omnplex) North Parking Lots of Complex Housing Administration Parking Lot College of the Muscogee Nation Bus Stop LOCATIONS • Bob Arrington Arena • MVSKOKE Dome • Amphitheater • Safe Space Claude Cox Omnplex Okmulgee • Hawthorn Park N. Okmulgee Ave & W. Fairfax St Okmulgee • River Spirit Casino Resort • Page Belcher Golf Course 8330 Riverside Pkwy Tulsa 6666 S Union Ave Tulsa • College of the Muscogee Nation • Okmulgee Regional Airport 2170 Raven Cir Okmulgee 100 Airport Rd Okmulgee • Brock Memorial Gym 415 W. 3 rd St Okmulgee • Rocking Z Ranch 2275 US-75 Beggs
			THE MUSCOGEE NATION MARKETING & TOURISM THE MUSCOGEE NATION RECREATION



JUNE

25TH-28TH

Claude Cox Omnplex

Okmulgee, Oklahoma

MuscogeeNationFestival.com

Call for more information call (918) 732-7993.



Water pours from a spout into aquaponic garden beds in Melissa Welch's greenhouse. (Braden Harper/MM)

AQUAPONICS ENRICHES THE FUTURE FOR CULTURAL CROPS AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

THE FARMING TECHNIQUE GROWS TRADITIONAL CULTURAL FOODS, SUPPORTS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, PRODUCES PESTICIDE-FREE CROPS, AND USES LESS WATER THAN CONVENTIONAL OUTDOOR FARMING

BY **BRADEN HARPER**

This story is part of a series by the Mvskoke News team focusing on climate solutions on the Mvskoke Reservation. This year, Mvskoke Media has been part of the Climate Beacon Newsroom Initiative, a collaboration between the Indigenous Journalists Association and the Solutions Journalism Network. Solutions journalism rigorously examines evidence-based individual, group, and community responses to social problems. The initiative supported our newsroom's skills development in story production, specifically stories focused on responses to climate and environmental challenges.

MORRIS - On Melissa Welch's (Mvskoke/Cherokee) property lies an inconspicuous greenhouse south of her house. Step inside, and you've entered Welch's non-profit, Native Bloom Aquaponics. Welch comes from a farming family. Growing up, her grandparents tended 30 acres of farmland on their allotment in the Ryal area. Welch's greenhouse can produce vegetables, as well as native plants and flowers. Her mother raised her own flowerbeds and pollinator gardens. "My green thumb was inherited from them," Welch said.

Aquaponics is a soilless method of growing crops that combines aquaculture and hydroponics. Through this method, farmers can grow crops in confined areas year-round regardless of the region's climate or season.

Aquaponics can present endless solutions to climate change, food sovereignty, and sustainability. It can yield crops up to four times faster while using less water than traditional farming. In addition to plants and produce, the system can also grow livestock feed and fertilizer. Safely stored in a climate-controlled enclosure, crops are protected from predators such as birds and insects, as well as drought. Once a greenhouse has accumulated the microbes and bacteria it needs, Welch said it can be just a matter of days before a newly-planted seed starts to germinate. The method also eliminates the need for weeding and digging.

Welch was familiar with aquaponics through her previous work at the Euchee Butterfly Farm, a Mvskoke-owned nonprofit that houses endangered pollinators. She now works as a nutrition manager at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food Distribution and manages the Muscogee Hands of Harvest garden in Okmulgee. The garden provides supplemental fresh produce to distribution clients and to the Elderly Nutrition Program. This spring, Welch harvested Romaine & Bunch lettuce, turnips, radishes, broccoli, cabbage, beets, and scallion onions. Welch was recently accepted into the Oklahoma Conservation Commission Soil Health Implementation Program (SHIP), a three-year program in which participants

develop a plan to elevate soil health management strategies.

In 2021, the MCN Conservation District received a grant from the Native American Agriculture Fund. The grant provided the Nation with \$197,060.73 to help citizens procure and operate their own aquaponic greenhouses. The MCN Conservation District built its aquaponics system at the Morris Indian Community Center.

Welch was one of four Mvskoke citizens who were selected to receive their own aquaponic greenhouse. Her previous experience at the butterfly farm was operating hydroponics towers. A hydroponic tower is a similar system to aquaponics without fish. The towers grow herbs, vegetables, and pollinator plants. In Welch's experiences, the system is affordable and adaptable- the tower system can be as small or large as needed.

Now, Welch operates her own nonprofit where she

a 1:1 ratio of fish tanks to crop beds. The system can grow common crops like spinach, herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, and peppers.

Aquaponics not only yields a harvest, but it also generates pride in the process. In addition to watching produce grow into a full crop, farmers also see fish grow. Once fully mature, both the crops and the fish can be harvested for food. Fresh watermelon or squash can be enjoyed out of season in January.

Self-sustainable farming can combat higher grocery and energy costs in 2026. The United States Joint Economic Committee reports that food price inflation increased 2.68 percent from March 2025 to March 2026. In that same time frame, energy price inflation increased 12.53 percent. Welch said a backyard aquaponic greenhouse can provide a farm-to-table solution right in your own backyard, and you know exactly where your food

“With aquaponics, we control the environment. We control the situation in there. Anything that goes wrong in there is because of our own mistake. We have created a natural environment in there, an ecological balance, just like Mother Nature inside.” - Bob Rider

grows traditional Mvskoke crops in her greenhouse, including tobacco, pumpkins, corn, pinto beans, honey-suckle, and minara.

"I think this is the way of the future, especially with land development growing rapidly," Welch said. "If we can have an aquaponic greenhouse to control those environments, the environmental issues with pests, sprays, and overdevelopment, and have adequate space. We could produce hundreds of pounds of produce a year," Welch said.

An inside look

An aquaponics system uses a tank to grow fish like tilapia, channel catfish, and bass. In the tanks, bacteria break down fish waste into fertilizer. Plants and crops are grown in raised beds filled with sediment rather than soil. The fertilizer-rich water from the fish is used to irrigate the plants in an indoor chamber. Aquaponic systems can be set up in small or large indoor areas as long as there is

comes from.

Dreams and realities

Welch's aquaponics greenhouse was built by Bob Rider, the founder and owner of Olive Branch Aquaponics. He has been involved with aquaponic farming for over 20 years. Rider's journey with aquaponics began with a vision as a young child. He still remembers the vision in great detail; he did not understand what it meant until he was an adult.

"I had a dream when I was eight years old. I was inside of a bubble, inside this bubble looked like the Garden of Eden. When I stood in the vegetation inside I looked outside the bubble, there were blue skies, with a little white cloud in the sky, it was beautiful, but I knew it was contaminated. I knew it was poisonous with pollution. Things were getting to where we couldn't maintain outside," Rider said.

"The Garden of Eden inside was our food production.

That stuck with me over the years.”

As Rider tells it, many years later, one day, he was sitting inside his greenhouse. Tired, he leaned back into his chair and looked outside. What he saw was a blue sky with one white cloud. Looking back inside, he remarked that the greenhouse looked like the Garden of Eden, just like in his vision. It was then that he said he knew the vision was a strong calling to aquaponic farming.

Ever since that day, sitting inside the greenhouse, Rider has made it his mission to build aquaponic greenhouses and educate others on how to take charge of their own food production. Through Olive Branch Aquaponics, Rider has built aquaponic greenhouses for clients in the community and around the world. Rider said that the greenhouses work in virtually any climate.

“We can reach the world through aquaponics. I’ve been to Africa because they have bigger problems over there than we do here. I put these in for farms, orphanages, daycares, and refugee camps,” Rider said.

“Aquaponics gives us the opportunity to control what we can’t control outside.”

According to Rider, aquaponic farming can be intimidating upon first glance. He admitted he was initially skeptical of the system’s capabilities. Cost is one limitation.

Starting up can be expensive due to the costs of erecting a greenhouse, installing a water filtration system, and acquiring the proper beds and sediments. Although crops are protected from insecticides and drought inside the greenhouse, the structure is still prone to storm damage. Welch’s greenhouse cost \$40,000, which she funded through the MCN CD grant. It required installing an electric mainline from her house, which increased her monthly utility bill.

Time is another investment. It can also take up to a year for the environment to be ripe with the microbes and bacteria required to germinate seeds. Likewise, not everyone who works a full-time job may have the time and energy it takes to dedicate to an aquaponic greenhouse.

Despite the limitations, Rider says that the investment is worth it. According to Rider, a 200-square-foot aquaponic greenhouse can produce as much as an acre of traditional farming.

College of the Muscogee Nation Extension Educator Courtney Natseway sees aquaponics and hydroponics as solutions for farming in extreme climates. The college has a hydroponic tower that fits inside a campus closet. Agreeing with Welch, Natseway said the system is a strong solution for extending farming seasons.

The college encourages adults to learn about aquaponics and hydroponics through some of their evening classes. Aquaponic and hydroponic systems can be viable gardening options for those living in homes without yards.

“It’s a good solution for people who don’t have a lot of outdoor space or if they have poor soil quality, or if they only have a balcony, they can,” Natseway said. “Just starting your own something, for some people, aquaponic or hydroponic is what’s best for them with their limited space and resources.”

Natseway echoed Rider’s view that those unfamil-



Melissa Welch is the owner of Native Bloom, a nonprofit whose mission is to empower citizens to grow their own crops. (Braden Harper/MM)

iar with the farming method may struggle at first. Transporting and selling the fish used in the aquaponic tanks requires a license in Oklahoma. According to Natseway, the method is more practical for the average person to grow their own food crops, rather than for commercial use.

Rider has dedicated his life to educating on aquaponics because he sees it as a sustainable way to feed the world. Rather than simply providing food, he wants to empower others to grow their own; for him, teaching people to feed themselves creates a far more lasting impact.

Natseway would like to increase the number of hydroponic towers in the extension program going forward. Welch, who has grown produce in her greenhouse for several years, now teaches classes on aquaponics through the CMN Extension Office’s master gardener program. She said that aquaponics is a farming method that is both youth and elder-friendly.

“I teach others, especially elders, that this is conve-

nient. It is in a controlled environment. They don’t have to lean over onto the ground. Raised beds that are waist-high, those are feasible for a lot of our elders. They can be in a condition that’s comfortable and have a stool or standing area. It’s all confined to one area,” Welch said.

For those interested in learning about aquaponics, Oklahoma State University Extension has published a printable factsheet with step-by-step instructions for getting started. It contains information about aquaponics equipment, garden beds, plumbing, and the types of plants that can be grown in an aquaponics greenhouse.

Native Bloom is open to community members. Its goal is to teach others how to become self-sustaining by growing their own food. Welch remarked that aquaponics and gardening are constructive activities for children and elders. Native Bloom is currently establishing a web and social media presence. For now, Welch says the best way to learn more about Native Bloom is to text her at 918-759-8513.



TOP AND BOTTOM: Morris Community Center’s aquaponics garden, installed by Bob Rider. can grow fruits and vegetables year long. (Braden Harper/MM)

RIGHT: Melissa Welch tends to her fish in her aquaponics greenhouse. (Braden Harper/MM)





MUSCOGEE NATION FESTIVAL PARADE

SATURDAY, JUNE 27 | 10:00 AM

Capital of the Muscookee (Creek) Nation
Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447 | Main Street (6th)

Visit MuscookeeNationFestival.com for Parade Entry Forms
or contact Whitney Tiger 918-732-7925 or Lori Howell 918 304 3325
MuscookeeNationFestivalParade@gmail.com. Deadline: **Friday, June 19th | 5:00 PM**
Theme of parade is **“50 years of sovereignty, strength and culture”**
All floats are welcome to participate.

Prizes:

1st: \$300	2nd: \$200	3rd: \$100
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We look forward to you being a part of the
50th Annual Muscookee Nation Festival.
June 25-28 | Claude Cox Omniplex | Okmulgee, OK
MuscookeeNationFestival.com



THE
MUSCOGEE
NATION



FAST PITCH

SOFTBALL & TOURNAMENT

SLOW PITCH

CLAUDE COX OMNIPLEX
2950 WARRIOR RD, Okmulgee, OK 74447

FAST PITCH
FRIDAY–SUNDAY | JUNE 26 – JUNE 28
6:30PM FRIDAY | 8:00AM SAT & SUN
DEADLINE: June 15, 2026

SLOW PITCH
FRIDAY–SUNDAY | JUNE 19 – JUNE 21
6:30PM FRIDAY | 8:00AM SAT & SUN
DEADLINE: June 8, 2026

\$200 entry fee. No steel cleats.

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Mike Sands 918.605.4048 or David Pascale 918.759.0880
ATTN: Recreation Department- P.O. Box 580 Okmulgee, OK 74447



IN MEMORIAM

Norman Tiger, 66, of Eufaula, Oklahoma passed from this life on Monday, April 27, 2026 at his home in Eufaula. Norman was born on April 11, 1960, in Talihina, Oklahoma, the son of Yahola Tiger Sr. and Harriette (Scott) Tiger. Norman worked in maintenance and security. Norman was a big OU Sooner fan.

Norman is survived by his son, Michael Norman Tiger and wife Crystal of Porum, OK; daughter Melanie Tiger of Tulsa, OK; brothers Ben Tiger



Norman Tiger

of Anadarko, OK, George S. Tiger of El Reno, OK, Jon and Mitch of Eufaula, OK

and Clifton Todd Kaulay of Checotah, OK; sisters Mariena Eslick, Judith Pickering and Benita Tiger all of Eufaula, OK, Serena Brown, Daneta Kaulay, Susan Kaulay and Jeraldean Tiger-Powell all of Checotah, OK. He is also survived by five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Norman is preceded in death by his parents Yahola Sr. and Harriette Tiger, sisters Susan Elaine Tiger, Anna Carson, Mary Kaulay, and brothers Yahola Tiger Jr. and Aaron Kaulay Sr.



James Rowland

James Mark Rowland, 65, of Eufaula, Oklahoma passed from

this life on Friday, May 1, 2026 at his home. James was born on November 20, 1960 in Tahlequah, Oklahoma to James A. Rowland and Lou Anna (Moore) Rowland. James attended school at North High School in Wichita, Kansas. James earned his CDL and was a truck driver for twenty years. James had a soft spot for cats & dogs, he loved to foster and care for them until they found forever homes. James loved his family and celebrating holidays and special events with them. He was a proud member of the Muscogee Creek Nation and one overenthusiastic Dem-

ocrat.

James is survived by his mother Lou Anna Rowland of Wichita, Kansas and his brother Chris Rowland and wife Terry of Florida, one niece Elizabeth Rowland Chang and husband Edward and son Theo of Okmulgee, Oklahoma and one nephew Tyler Rowland of Las Vegas, Nevada and many precious fur babies and the volunteers who helped provide for them.

James is preceded in death by his father James A. Rowland.

Eric Blaine May, 67, passed away in Oroville, California on April 13th after a long illness.

Eric (Mvskoke) was born in Fairfield, CA in 1958 to Merton and Mary Ann May and lived his life mostly in Fairfield and Sacramento, CA until moving to Oroville, CA in the Sierra foothills in 2011. Eric was predeceased by his mother, father and youngest brother David Joseph May. Eric was a nature lover and spent many hours in Rockville Hills Park and the surrounding hills. He had respect for all living things and was truly a gentle soul. He was a welder by trade until a workplace injury left him unable to continue.

Eric, his mother and his siblings were proud enrolled members of the Mvskoke Creek

Nation of Oklahoma. Eric's mother Mary Ann was the daughter of Eloita Stidham of Eufaula, OK, niece of Georgeanna Stidham and Chief George Washington Grayson and great granddaughter of George Washington Stidham. Sadly, Eloita passed away in Fort Smith, AR when Mary Ann was only a child so her grandchildren never knew her and her rich history firsthand. Mary Ann did everything she could to educate her children about their proud Mvskoke roots taking her children to powwows, presenting at their schools and forming the first Native American group in Solano County, CA in the 1970s.

Eric is survived by his sister Karen (May) Righthand of San Anselmo, CA, and broth-



Eric May

er-in-law Scott Righthand, his niece Jessica Righthand of Los Angeles, and nephew Grady Righthand of Austin, TX and his brother Alex May of Portola, CA. Eric will be laid to rest with his parents in Rockville Cemetery, CA.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mvskoke Matriarchy Exhibit
Mvskoke Waters Gallery
Curated by Carly Treece and Shelley Patrick
Exhibit runs from Tuesday, April 7 thru Saturday, Aug. 1
500 Riverwalk Terrace, Suite 115, Jenks

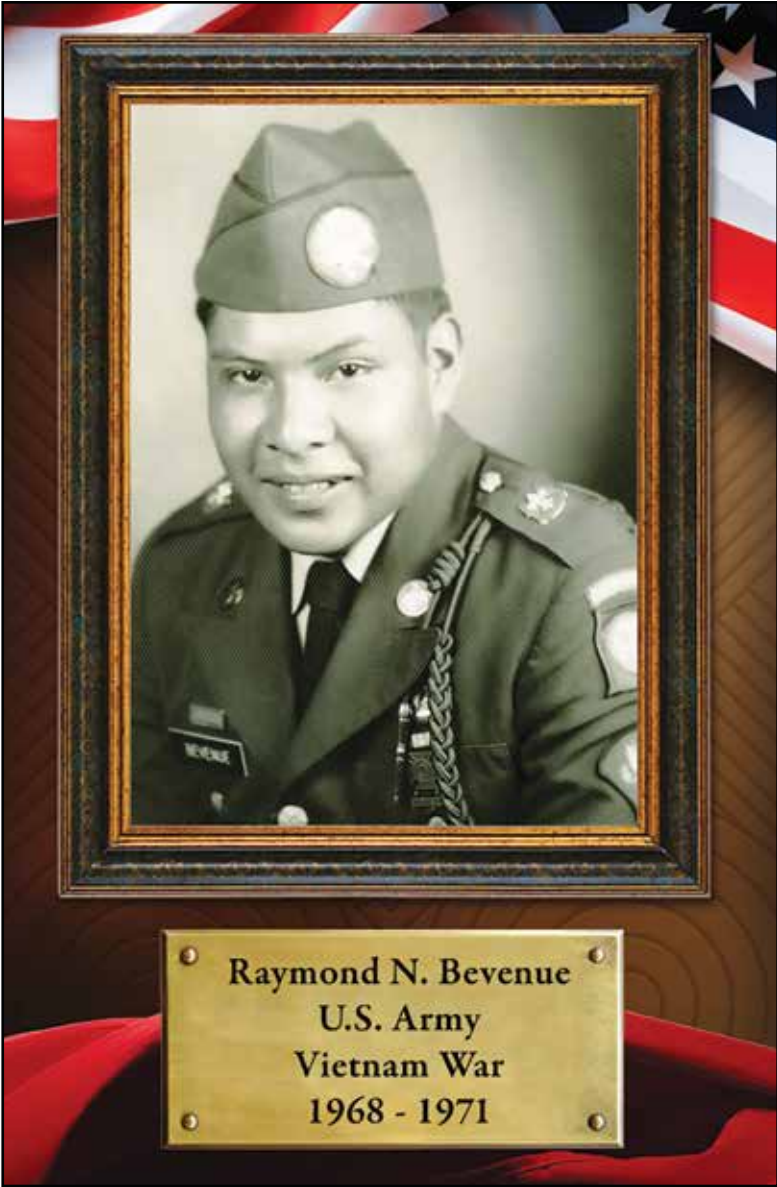
Elder's Meeting
Okmulgee Elder Nutrition Center
Wednesday, June 3, 9:30 a.m.
1021 N Seminole Ave, Okmulgee

Coffee and Donuts
Veteran Affairs Services Office
Thursday, June 11, 8

a.m. - 12 p.m.
1006 Bear Lane, Okmulgee

Take Out Tuesday
Fife Indian United Methodist Church
Tuesday, June 2, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Meals start at \$7, all are invited.
For questions, call 918-478-9227.

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT



The Muscogee Nation Veterans Affairs Services Office is proud to honor Raymond N. Bevenue for his dedicated service to the Muscogee Nation, the U.S. Army, and the United States. Raymond honorably served for three years and is a recipient of several honors: Parachute Badge, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, 2 Army Overseas Service Bars, Sharpshooter M-14 Badge, and an Expert M-16 Badge.

Mvto Mr. Bevenue for your selfless service to your country and your community.

The Veterans Spotlight is submitted by the MCN VASO.

MVTO FOR YOUR SELFLESS SERVICE!

MCNNC MAY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

HEW May 12
NCA 26-076 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Harjo-King

BFJ/LNC May 12
NCA 26-073 passed 7-1, sponsored by Rep. Lowe

LNC May 12
TR 26-030 passed 3-0, sponsored Rep. Whitecloud
NCA 26-075 passed 3-0, sponsored Rep. Proctor

HEW May 5
NCA 26-054 postponed indefinitely 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Harjo-King
NCA 26-055 postponed indefinitely 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Proctor
NCA 26-056 postponed indefinitely 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Proctor
NCA 26-057 postponed indefinitely 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Proctor
NCA 26-064 postponed indefinitely 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Proctor

BFJ May 7
TR 26-029 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Tiger III
NCA 26-068 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Lowe
NCA 26-071 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Golden
NCA 26-074 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Lowe
NCA 26-064 funding approved 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Proctor
NCA 26-072 funding approved 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Barnett

LNC May 7
TR 26-027 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Barnett
TR 26-028 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Lowe
NCA 26-065 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Barnett
NCA 26-066 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Marshall
NCA 26-067 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Marshall
NCA 26-069 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Phillips
NCA 26-070 passed 4-0, sponsored by Rep. Phillips
NCA 26-072 passed 4-0/sent to BFJ, sponsored by Rep. Barnett

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NATIONAL COUNCIL APPROVES RAISES IN 10–5 VOTE

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CEREMONIAL GROUNDS AND CHURCHES PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

BY **BRADEN HARPER**

MVSKOKE RESERVATION – The Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council held a Regular Session in person on Saturday, May 16, at the Mound Building.

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

TR 26-077 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation approving the designation of property located in Okmulgee County for future language, cultural preservation, and educational development. Representative Dode Barnett sponsored the legislation. It was co-sponsored by Representatives Galen Cloud and Cody Phillips, and Speaker Randall Hicks. It was adopted by a vote of 15-0.

According to the law, the Okmulgee Club and Golf Course will serve as a centralized cultural campus to support offices for the Department of Culture and Humanities, language revitalization programs, cultural education, and community-based learning. This will include a Mvskoke Language Immersion School, a Speaker Center for first-language speakers, and a cultural museum. There was no discussion.

TR 26-028 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Principal Chief to negotiate a real estate contract and related documents for the purchase of property in Tulsa County, Oklahoma. Representative William Lowe sponsored the legislation. It was co-sponsored by Representative Robert Hufft and Rep. Phillips. It was adopted into law by a vote of 15-0.

According to the law, the property is approximately 28.49 acres and is located at the corner of West 81st and U.S. Highway 75 in Tulsa County. There was no discussion.

TR 26-029 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation confirming the nomination of William R. Norman to serve on the public gaming commission. Representative Lucian Tiger sponsored the legislation, which was postponed until the June Regular Session by a vote of 15-0.

Rep. Tiger made the motion to postpone the vote on the legislation. There was no discussion on this legislation. If confirmed, Norman will serve on the Public Gaming Commission upon confirmation and will continue to serve until Thursday, May 16, 2030.

TR 26-030 A tribal resolution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the Prin-

cipal Chief to execute a location use agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Inclined Productions, Inc. for filming activities at the Looped Square Meat Company Property. Representative Robyn Whitecloud sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

Rep. Whitecloud made a motion to strike the language “Claude Cox Omniplex and Mvskoke Dome located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma” on line 14. The amendment was adopted 15-0. According to the resolution, Inclined Productions Inc. will have limited access to Looped Square Meat Company for filming the second season of “The Lowdown.” There was no discussion.

NCA 26-064 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a supplemental appropriation for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Energy Program for Energy Assistance related services for Fiscal Year 2026. Representative Darrell Proctor sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the MCN Tribal Energy Program needs an additional \$1.5 million to serve the expected 5,000 households in need of energy assistance this summer. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-065 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Housing. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the \$34,501,516 in grant funds will be provided to the MCN Department of Housing. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-066 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the Henry Luce Foundation Indigenous Knowledge Program Grant for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Culture and Humanities. Representative Anna Marshall sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, the grant will provide \$100,000 for a Sacred Lands and Cultural Preservation Symposium. It will be a presentation on the collective knowledge of sacred sites preservation. It will also provide general funding for Hickory Ground elders, cultural bearers, and Ceremonial Ground Leaders to travel to universities and communities to speak on the Justice for Hickory Ground Movement. Funds will also be

priation to the National Council’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

The bill was sponsored by Representative Sandra Golden and co-sponsored by Representatives Mary Crawford, James Factor, William Lowe, Anna Marshall, Cody Phillips, Darrell Proctor, and Lucian Tiger. Representatives Dode Barnett, Galen Cloud, Charles McHenry, Robyn Whitecloud, and Second Speaker Thomasene Osborn voted no on the bill.

According to the legislation, the council and the speaker’s salaries last increased in 2014, and



used to help produce a Justice for Hickory Ground documentary. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-067 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Fiscal Year 2026 Tribal Transportation (TTP) Safety Fund for the benefit of Federal Roads. Rep. Marshall sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, \$100,000 will be used to widen the shoulder on Mission Road in Okmulgee. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-068 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of funds for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigations Division for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, FY 2025 Local Law Enforcement Grants for Enforcement of Cybercrimes Program. Rep. Lowe sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, \$700,000 will be used to purchase supplies, equipment, and software to assist in the enforcement of cybercrime laws and to fund travel.

There was no discussion.

NCA 26-069 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 5 § 1-105 entitled “Ceremonial traditional religion” and MCNCA Title 5 § 2-105 entitled “Ceremonial Ground land acquisition assistance.” Rep. Phillips sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the legislation, a total of \$120,000 in assistance will be provided. Lease payments up to \$2,000 per Ground will be provided through the Ceremonial Ground Lease Payment Assistance. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-070 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 37 § 2-118 entitled “Financial Assistance for Ceremonial Grounds and Churches” and establishing the Ceremonial Grounds/Churches Assistance Revolving Fund in Title 37, Chapter 2, Subchapter 2, entitled “Funds and Accounts.” Rep. Phillips

analysis, which found the average median annual salary of a full-time Tribal legislative member ranges from \$106,314.24 to \$177,697.29, and the average median annual salary of a part-time Tribal legislative member ranges from \$67,692.34 to \$106,625.55. The average median annual salary of a full-time speaker ranges from \$158,341.19 to \$262,183.08; part-time salaries range from \$115,589.07 to \$191,393.65.

Rep. Golden argued during the discussion that this bill is necessary to attract and retain qualified citizens to elected council positions. “I’m sure each member has the same concern as citizens. They didn’t want this to be arbitrary, and it’s not. I believe all the general standards of contracts have been met. People want to trust that we have a process,” Rep. Golden said.

Second Speaker Osborn remarked during the session that she asked citizens for their thoughts on the bill; half were in

sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, \$1,709,000 will be provided annually from the Comprehensive Annual Budget for a revolving fund for Ceremonial Grounds/Churches Assistance. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-071 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNA Title 30, Chapter 4. Entitled “Compensation of National Council” and authorizing a supplemental appropriation to the National Council FY 26 Budget. The legislation was sponsored by Representative Sandra Golden. It was co-sponsored by Representatives Mary Crawford and James Factor, and Reps. Lowe, Marshall, Phillips, Proctor, and Tiger. It was adopted 10-5. Reps. Barnett, Cloud, and Whitecloud, and Representatives Charles McHenry and Thomasene Osborn opposed the legislation. *For in-depth coverage, see page x.*

NCA 26-072 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending MCNCA Title 5, § 2-115 entitled “Funding” and appropriating funds to the Ceremonial Ground and Church Grant, Ceremonial Ground Camp and Church Camp House Grant, and Emergency Assistance Programs for Ceremonial Grounds and Churches. Rep. Barnett sponsored the legislation. It was co-sponsored by Reps. Cloud, Marshall, and Phillips.

According to the law, available funds from the Passenger Van Assistance and Christmas Assistance Programs for this fiscal year will be needed to assist the churches and Ceremonial Grounds. This law will legally transfer the total sum of \$1.2 million to the aforementioned programs. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-073 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 26-050 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation for improvements located at the Omniplex). Rep. Lowe sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, a total of \$720,775 will be used from the Capital Improvements Fund account for omniplex improve-

ments. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-074 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency funding (LATCF) received from the United States Department of the Treasury for the Department of Commerce to begin the initial phase in pursuing an acquisition of a bank. Rep. Lowe sponsored the bill, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, a total of \$100,000 will be used for a bank acquisition. The Department of Commerce will engage with AIM Law, a bank acquisition and operations consultant. They will consult the Nation on laying the groundwork for a stable and successful banking enterprise. There was no discussion.

NCA 26-075 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing a special appropriation for the cost of necessary measures related to the protection of the Muscogee Sacred Site of Hickory Ground near Wetumpka, Alabama. Rep. Proctor sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the law, a total of \$650,000 will be appropriated from the Interest on Permanent Fund Account for the legal defense and public relations campaign for Ocevpopfv (Hickory Ground). There was no discussion.

NCA 26-076 A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 22-045 (A law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing the expenditure of grant funds awarded from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Education, Tribal Education Department Grant for the benefit of the Eufaula Dormitory). Representative Lora Harjo-King sponsored the legislation, which was adopted 15-0.

According to the legislation, a total of \$640,000 will be used for back-to-school dinners, staff training, computer software, playground equipment, stipends for language teachers, and Mvskoke language signage. For students, it will cover ACT test fees, college application fees, and graduation garments.

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

CITIZENS REACT TO COUNCIL RAISES

NCA 26-071 WILL RAISE COUNCIL SALARIES TO \$80K IF SIGNED BY CHIEF HILL

BY **BRADEN HARPER**

OKMULGEE – A bill passed by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council is now on Principal Chief David Hill’s desk, waiting to be vetoed or signed into law. The bill was adopted during the Regular Session on Saturday, May 16. Adopted by a vote of 10-5, the bill will raise each representative’s annual salary to \$80,000 and increase the speaker’s annual salary to \$99,000. If the bill is signed into law by Chief Hill, it will add a \$310,405 supplemental appro-

priation to the National Council’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

The bill was sponsored by Representative Sandra Golden and co-sponsored by Representatives Mary Crawford, James Factor, William Lowe, Anna Marshall, Cody Phillips, Darrell Proctor, and Lucian Tiger. Representatives Dode Barnett, Galen Cloud, Charles McHenry, Robyn Whitecloud, and Second Speaker Thomasene Osborn voted no on the bill.

According to the legislation, the council and the speaker’s salaries last increased in 2014, and

it points out that the tribe’s population has increased by over 30,000 citizens.

Per the legislation, a compensation analysis was conducted, comparing the council’s annual salaries to the median annual salaries of other legislative members from Oklahoma Tribes. During the discussion, Rep. Golden explained that the compensation analysis was conducted by an organization that had previously worked with other Tribes. The organization is unnamed in the legislation.

The legislation quotes the

analysis, which found the average median annual salary of a full-time Tribal legislative member ranges from \$106,314.24 to \$177,697.29, and the average median annual salary of a part-time Tribal legislative member ranges from \$67,692.34 to \$106,625.55. The average median annual salary of a full-time speaker ranges from \$158,341.19 to \$262,183.08; part-time salaries range from \$115,589.07 to \$191,393.65.

Rep. Golden argued during the discussion that this bill is necessary to attract and retain

qualified citizens to elected council positions.

“I’m sure each member has the same concern as citizens. They didn’t want this to be arbitrary, and it’s not. I believe all the general standards of contracts have been met. People want to trust that we have a process,” Rep. Golden said.

Second Speaker Osborn remarked during the session that she asked citizens for their thoughts on the bill; half were in

COUNCIL RAISES
CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

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COUNCIL RAISES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

favor, and half were against. She reported she has not received calls from citizens inquiring about the raise. She also had concerns about whether the FY 26 budget change would affect social programs reliant on American Rescue Plan Act funds.

“I believe the National Council needs a raise, but maybe not that much. Yes, I’m in favor of the raise. There are 16 of us who sit at this table, with one salary, excluding the speaker. I can only speak for myself. I know what I do, what I’ve done, and what I’ll continue to do, whatever the outcome is,” Second Speaker Osborn said.

Rep. Whitecloud argued that the council should meet with each chartered community to gather input on the bill before voting on it. Rep. Whitecloud made a motion to amend NCA 26-071, which would go into effect in January 2027. She said if

the raises were distributed mid-term, it would not comply with what was asked of Chief Hill and Second Chief Beaver. The vote to amend the bill failed 6-9.

The bill also updates the law to state that council members will not be reimbursed for mileage except for out-of-state travel when an MCN fleet car is not used. Council representatives will be authorized to receive reimbursement for overnight lodging expenses.

A similar bill, NCA 25-125, was adopted by the National Council at the December 20, 2025, Regular Session by a vote of 13-1. The legislation stipulated that raises would not go into effect until 2028. That bill was vetoed by Chief Hill on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Citizens React

Dr. Lahoma Schultz (Mvskoke) is an associate member of the Muscogee Indian Community and has been vocal about her thoughts on the coun-

cil raises. She even shared a Facebook post on Monday, May 20, with an email template to send to Chief Hill recommending that he veto NCA 26-071. She described feeling disappointed by the bill’s adoption because she believes there are bigger problems affecting elders and young families that need to be addressed. Specifically, those currently struggling with economic hardship.

“I was hoping they (The National Council) would consider our elders in need, our families, our young, single mothers who are raising children on salaries that are much less than what they (The National Council) are receiving in salary for their part-time jobs,” Schultz told Mvskoke News. “My heart really goes out to those young mothers. I know they’re struggling. My heart goes out to the elders because I know they’re struggling.”

Jeff Francis II (Mvskoke) is a member of the Checotah community. He described the bill’s passage as “quick but not sur-

prising.” Francis, who ran for an MCNNC seat in 2025, has also discussed the legislation on social media with MCN citizens. He believes that it shouldn’t be out of the question for council members to receive raises, but it shouldn’t be done in the middle of their fiscal year.

“I think the National Council deserves a raise. I think that \$80,000 is a little high, and it should not be done mid-term. They’re part-time, but they’re requesting full-time pay. Are we going to get full-time representation?” Francis said.

Lisa Deere (Mvskoke) lives in Broken Arrow. Deere has also been vocal on social media in her opposition to the bill.

Deere described to Mvskoke News her reaction to the bill’s quick passage through committee and full council as “appalling.” Deere said she attended the Business, Finance, and Justice committee meeting where the bill was introduced, but she did not hear an argument that persuaded her that the raises

were necessary. She believes that without community input on the raises, she feels suppressed.

“No one defended it or spoke up on why they needed this raise. There’s no communication with the citizens,” Deere said.

Although Schultz is opposed to NCA 26-071, she remarked that she is not opposed to smaller cost-if-living adjustments if “they are deserving of it.” However, she said that after speaking with representatives on the matter, she hasn’t heard “anything of substance.”

Schultz and Francis agreed that the new salaries are high for a part-time position.

Schultz and Deere both stated that they want Chief Hill to veto the bill.

Per code, Chief Hill has 10 days from the day the bill is received by his office to either sign it into law or veto it. Mvskoke News reached out to Chief Hill’s Office for comment. They did not provide a statement at the time this article was published, May 20.

MORE THAN A RIDE, REZ TAXI IS HERE!

NATIVE-OWNED TAXI SERVICE OFFERS FREE RIDES TO AA AND NA MEETINGS WITHIN THE OKMULGEE RESERVATION

BY SHAYLN PROCTOR

OKMULGEE – Rez Taxi is a Native-owned business in Okmulgee. It is \$5 one-way within the Okmulgee city limits, and \$1.75 per mile outside the city limits. The hours of operation vary from Monday to Sunday. Rez Taxi serves the area around Okmulgee and beyond the city limits.

Currently, their business offers round-trip rides to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings within the city of Okmulgee. “We understand that transportation can be a barrier, and no one should miss a meeting because they can’t get there. Our goal is simple: help you stay connected, supported, and on track,” stated Rez Taxi’s business.

The owner of Rez Taxi Austin Domebo (Iowa tribe) started this business to show his children how to set up a Limited Liability Company (LLC), and that is how the company got started.

Domebo explained that some of the larger transportation companies around close down during the day, leaving people without access to transportation. He saw the need and wanted to help.

“My intention was to operate within the reservations throughout the state of Oklahoma, try to get back to the community. I’ve been in some trouble in my past, I’ve went and got rehabilitated. Now I’m at the stage of my life where I’m trying to be a more productive member of the community and reservations across the state of Oklahoma and give back,” Domebo stated.

Domebo enjoys helping citizens and bringing this to the community.

“It’s an awesome feeling, being able to get back because KATS and Creek Nation, they shut down at a certain time. So a lot of people are just stuck without transportation. I mean if your car breaks down and you don’t have a way to get around and there’s nothing around here. There’s

Ubers but there’s hours to wait and charge. But it’s awesome just to be able to get back and operate like that,” Domebo said.

Throughout his life, he went through many changes, and the advice he offered people was to keep moving forward.

“Whenever it feels like it’s too much for you, just keep pushing. But the opportunity is there, I have faced and I’m facing obstacles right now. Obstacles are going to pop up and I would suggest everybody to keep pushing and don’t give up,” Domebo said.

He spoke of the meaning behind his business title, Domebo called it “Rez Taxi” because he is Native American and wanted to operate within the reservation in Oklahoma. He figured the name was something different that nobody else in Oklahoma had.

For any more information or transportation services, you can call or text 918-758-5517. You can also follow the company’s Facebook page at Rez Taxi.

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\$3 pickup fee

\$10 minimum fare

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(Image Courtesy: Austin Domebo)

Muscogee Nation Human Services

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BINGO SERIES PROVIDES FREE COME-AND-GO EVENTS THAT PROVIDE FUN ACTIVITIES AND BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS

BY **BRADEN HARPER**

DEWAR – HYPERTENSION, MEAL PREP, HEALTH SWAPS. These are a few stroke prevention terms to find at the Stroke Awareness Month Bingo event series. Mvskoke citizens enjoyed a game of bingo at the series stop at the Dewar Indian Community on Tuesday, May 12. The series, hosted by the Muscogee Nation Department of Health Stroke Prevention Program, provided tips for healthy living and stroke prevention while having fun.

Nurse Navigator Angela King routinely tends to patients who are at high risk for strokes and heart attacks. She teaches patients how to reduce their health risks by monitoring their blood pressure. At each bingo event, participants had the opportunity to have their blood pressure taken. If a test indicates high blood pressure, the individual can schedule an appointment through the stroke patient program. According to King, blood pressure is one of the most important factors to monitor for prevention.

“High blood pressure happens to be the number one controllable risk factor that we have for strokes,” King said. “It’s important to get it checked more often in order to prevent a stroke. Those are little things we can do because strokes are 80% preventable.”

According to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, a healthy blood pressure for most adults is 120/80 mm Hg. Those with a blood pressure reading of 130/80 mm Hg or higher have high blood pressure. Over 119 million Americans have high blood pressure. A 2025 Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study found that

23.1% of the American Indian/Alaskan Native population has high blood pressure.

Stroke prevention techniques are not hard to incorporate into a daily routine. MCN Health recommends avoiding nicotine, stretching for 10 minutes three times a week, and engaging in thirty minutes of daily physical activity. Dietary changes include eating five fruits and five vegetables a day and limiting added sugar intake to less than 25-36 grams per day. Getting a full night’s rest, seven to nine hours for most adults, can also reduce the probability of strokes.

Mvskoke citizen Pat Watson found the information helpful. She learned ways to lower cholesterol and ease back pain.

“I eat cheese all the time. That’s a high cholesterol product. Stretching your back or straightening your back. Leaning back and stretching your neck and back will make it feel better,” Watson said.

Strokes are one of the top five leading causes of death in the U.S. Every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a stroke. Every 3-14 minutes, someone dies of a stroke. Both King and Watson have had family members who have had strokes.

King stressed the importance of learning F.A.S.T: Face dropping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, and Time to call 911. These are the signs of a stroke. The acronym was found on koozies and cards handed out at the bingo event.

“When we think we’re having a stroke or someone else we know is having a stroke, we’re not thinking our clearest,” King said. “Reinforcing that information (on stroke prevention) can help us pop it back out there when we are actually in a time of need.”



Mvskoke citizen Pat Watson has her blood pressure taken by Angela King. (Braden Harper/MM)



Angela King draws cards to call out stroke prevention terms found on player bingo cards. (Braden Harper/MM)

Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

Rental Coordinator

The Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is seeking a motivated and detail-oriented **Rental Coordinator** to support the administration of our rental and low-rent housing programs. This position serves as a primary point of contact for tenants and applicants while coordinating program activities such as move-ins and move-outs, inspections, tenant communication, and rental assistance processing. The Rental Coordinator also helps ensure that housing programs are administered in compliance with **federal housing regulations, including NAHASDA and HUD program requirements**, as well as HASNOK policies and procedures.

Ideal candidates will have:

- A **high school diploma or equivalent** (some college preferred)
- At least **1 year of customer service experience**
- **Property management, housing program administration, or accounting experience preferred**
- Ability to understand and follow **federal program compliance requirements** related to housing assistance
- Strong organizational, communication, and problem-solving skills
- Proficiency in **Microsoft Office and database systems**
- Ability to maintain **confidential tenant and applicant information**
- A **valid Oklahoma driver's license**

This role is ideal for someone who enjoys helping community members navigate housing programs while ensuring services are delivered professionally, efficiently, and in accordance with federal housing regulations.

An application for employment can be found at www.hasnok.org. Submit your application, resume, and a copy of your valid driver's license. Applicant will be subject to a nationwide background check, motor vehicle report, and drug screen. You may contact administrativeofficer@hasnok.org (405) 257-6604, should you have questions. Position open until filled. The Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity employer with Indian Preference.

Housing Authority of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

Overnight Residential Support Specialist

The Overnight Residential Support Specialist ensures the safety, supervision, and well-being of residents during nighttime hours. This position provides trauma-informed, culturally competent care in alignment with MVCT's mission and maintains compliance with tribal, state, and federal guidelines. The role requires awake, alert supervision throughout the night shift, regular room checks, and documentation of resident activity and facility conditions.

An application for employment can be found at hasnok.org. Submit your application, resume and a copy of your valid driver's license. Applicant will be subject to a nationwide background check, motor vehicle report, and drug screen.

Please submit your information to:
HASNOK, Attn: Administrative Officer, P.O. Box 1493, or 120 West 4th Street, Wewoka, OK 74884, or email administrativeofficer@hasnok.org (405) 257-6604. Position open until filled.

LEGALS

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION
OF:
C.A.L.W.,
A MINOR CHILD.

2026 MAY 11 A 8 01
Case No. AD-2026-06
COURT CLERK

THIRD ORDER RE-SETTING & NOTICE OF HEARING ON APPLICATION FOR
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF NATURAL MOTHER

To: Tiffany Lynn Potter-Heyman

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that Brett and Samantha Gibson have filed a *Petition for Adoption* and an *Application for Termination of Parental Rights of Natural Mother* concerning C.A.L.W., (hereinafter "Minor Child") a female, Native American, minor child, born on September 15, 2009, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, whom is enrolled or eligible to enroll in the Cherokee Nation, of whom you are the Natural Mother.

A hearing on the *Application for Termination of Parental Rights of Natural Mother* is set for the 23rd day of June, 2026, at 9:00 o'clock a.m. before Judge Masters at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Courthouse, 2501 Lvmhvike, Okmulgee, OK 74447.

It is alleged that your consent to this adoption is not necessary pursuant to MCNC Title 6 §§ 1-1007(B), 1-901 and 1-902, for abandonment of the Minor Child, for failure to maintain a substantial and positive relationship with the Minor Child consecutively for six (6) out of the last fourteen (14) months immediately preceding the filing of the *Application* in this matter and for willfully failing to pay or to contribute any support to the Minor Child in the preceding year.

YOU ARE THEREFORE NOTIFIED THAT THE COURT WILL HEAR EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE GRANTING OF THE APPLICATION AT THE TIME AND PLACE

SHOWN ABOVE, WHERE YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRESENT AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO
BE HEARD AT SUCH TIME AND PLACE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO OBJECT TO THE ADOPTION OF
SAID CHILD. YOUR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT THE HEARING SHALL CONSTITUTE A DENIAL OF
INTEREST IN THE CHILD WHICH DENIAL MAY RESULT, WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OF THIS
PROCEEDING OR ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDING, IN THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL
RIGHTS AND THE TRANSFER OF THE CHILD'S CARE, CUSTODY, OR GUARDIANSHIP OR IN THE
CHILD'S ADOPTION. THE ADOPTION MAY BE ORDERED IF THE YOU, THE PARENT, DO NOT
APPEAR AT THE HEARING AND SHOW CAUSE WHY YOUR CONSENT IS NOT NECESSARY.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Submitted by:
M. Jordan Berghund, OBA #32596, MCN #1205
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Attorneys for Petitioners

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE GUARDIANSHIP OF
S.M.P., dob 12-31-2013,
MINOR CHILD.

DISTRICT COURT
FILED
2026 MAY 11 A 8 01
Case No. GD-2026-38
Judge Masters
COURT CLERK

NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION
FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN

MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION, TO: *Vernon Powell Sr. and All Persons Interested In The Person and Estate Of S.M.P., minor child.*

Take Notice that, a *Petition for Appointment of Guardian of the Person and Estate of S.M.P., minor child* was filed in this Court by, *Cyann Bessie Powell*, seeking this Court to issue a *General Decree of Guardianship with regards to the minor child, S.M.P., born 12-31-2013.*

A hearing on said Petition is set for the 25 day of June, 2026, 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 MINOR CHILDREN'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 MINOR
CHILDREN AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK)
NATION.

Signed and Ordered this 19 day of MAY, 2026.

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT

Prepared by:
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PREVENT
the SPREAD
of RESPIRATORY
VIRUSES

COVER YOUR COUGHS
& SNEEZES

WASH HANDS OFTEN
For at least 20 seconds

STAY HOME WHEN SICK
including having a runny nose,
sore throat, and/or cough

KEEP AIR CIRCULATING
& VENTILATED

STAY UP TO DATE
with your vaccinations, including
Flu, RSV & COVID-19

MCNHealth
EXPRESS CARE
CLINICS

COUNCIL OAK
10109 E. 79TH ST.
TULSA, OK 74133
918.233.9550

OKMULGEE
1400 S. WOOD DRIVE
OKMULGEE, OK 74447
918.591.5733

HOURS OF OPERATION:
MON-FRI (7AM-7PM)
SAT-SUN (9AM-5PM)

WALK-INS
WELCOME

+

NO APPOINTMENTS
NECESSARY

SERVING CITIZENS OF
FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES

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