

The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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Chairman Osceola, Gov. DeSantis sign gambling agreement

Tribe set to play major role in sports betting

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe and Gov. Ron DeSantis reached a long-awaited agreement April 23 for a new gaming compact which would bring sports betting to the state. The governor and Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola, Jr. signed the compact in Tallahassee.

In addition to offering craps and roulette at its casinos, the tribe will be able to conduct sports betting and license it to horse tracks, jai alai and dog tracks throughout the state. The tribe will receive a percentage of every sports bet placed.

If approved by Tribal Council, the Florida Legislature and the U.S. Department of the Interior, the state could receive at least \$2.5 billion from the tribe over the first five years, or \$500 million per year, and about \$6 billion by 2030. The Interior Department oversees Indian gaming through the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA).

"The Seminole Tribe of Florida is committed to a mutually-beneficial gaming compact with the State of Florida and looks forward to its approval by the Florida Legislature, the Seminole Tribal Council



Gov. Ron DeSantis, left, and Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. hold up the new gambling compact that they signed April 23.

and the U.S. Department of the Interior," Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. said in a statement. "The Tribe wants to express our sincere thanks to Governor DeSantis, Senate President (Wilton) Simpson, House Speaker (Chris) Sprowls and many others who have worked hard to negotiate a historic

agreement that cements our partnership with the state for decades to come."

The 30-year compact will be considered by the Legislature at a special session starting May 17.

The extensive 75-page compact allows sports betting in Florida to go through the

tribe, which will offer it to pari-mutuels. Sports betting includes any professional, Olympic or collegiate sport, motor sports event or individual performance statistics.

♦ See AGREEMENT on page 4A

HHS: Demand for vaccine slows

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — As the Seminole Tribe's Covid-19 vaccination program enters its fifth month officials say there aren't as many people asking for the shots.

Part of the reason is due to the success of the vaccine strategy's rollout and the hundreds who have already received the shot. The tribe's Health and Human Services (HHS) department and Public Safety staff have carried out the vaccine program through a phased eligibility process. The outreach and education to tribal members and the tribal community has been ongoing.

But Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley, the executive director of HHS, said many have still not been vaccinated.

"The number of vaccines being requested has significantly declined," she said. "The community needs to remember that the vaccine is in place to reduce mortality and hospitalization."

As of late April, about 813 tribal members and those who live in tribal communities had received both doses of the vaccine. About 956 had received one dose. Among tribal employees, about 626 had received both doses and 755 had received one dose.

The tribe has three vaccines available — Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.

♦ See VACCINE on page 9A

Gathering of Nations bids farewell to Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

After a historic two-year reign as Miss Indian World, Cheyenne Kippenberger stepped down during the virtual Gathering of Nations Powwow on April 24.

For the second year, Gathering of Nations was held online because of the pandemic. The event usually attracts about 3,000 dancers and 50,000 spectators to New Mexico, but this year everything, including the audience, was online.

About 15 emcees led the gathering and cued in participants from throughout Indian Country. First up were the Black Eagle singers from Montana, then the invocation by Bino Garcia and his young son Wasose, from the Pine Ridge Reservation.

"We had a very difficult year, send a helping hand grandfather," Garcia said. "Help us get back to our way of life, our ceremonies for celebration, prayer and happiness."

Other prayers and memorials followed. Arlie Neskahi, from the Coast Salish Tribe in Washington state, sang a song with his hand drum.

"This song sends a blessing to each and every one of you," Neskahi said. "This is about walking in beauty, it's a deep spiritual way we have that guides us to this day. As we walk on this earth, may be walk in beauty every day that we travel."

Shortly thereafter, the Miss Indian World farewell began. Kippenberger was the 36th Native woman to wear the crown and the first to serve for two years. During her first year as Miss Indian World, she traveled a lot. During the second year, not at all.

"For the first time since 1983, Miss Indian World will remain unfilled," said Kippenberger, a former Miss Florida Seminole and the first from the tribe to win MIW. "I had to find a new way to be Miss Indian World. I was through the roof ecstatic when they put the crown on my head and I am proud of being a Seminole woman. It was especially important to be authentic and real, I am also a regular Native woman."

The farewell was hosted by Canadian television producer Lisa Meeches, Ojibway from Long Plain First Nation. She explained that due to the pandemic, the Miss Indian World committee decided to wait until next year to hold another pageant.

"Cheyenne triumphed through the adversity of the pandemic," said Meeches,



Cheyenne Kippenberger poses with a cake made to commemorate her reign as Miss Indian World on April 24. The cake was made for her by chefs at Hard Rock and is topped with a replica of the intricately beaded crown. The cake was vanilla with raspberry filling and buttercream frosting underneath the lavender fondant icing.

as she introduced her and asked what she learned during her reign.

"It was easy to channel that resiliency because it's been in us since time immemorial," Kippenberger said. "I knew I had a responsibility to my tribe, my family and Indian Country. I knew what I had to do. The solution was to go back to the roots of who we are and to our teachings."

She said Miss Indian World was more than a competition; it was a bonding experience for all the contestants and she gave some advice to other girls who are thinking about competing for the crown next year.

♦ See MISS INDIAN WORLD on page 6A

Billie Swamp Safari strives to keep animals' lives normal in pandemic

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — For the animals of Billie Swamp Safari, life in the Covid-19 pandemic goes on without visitors.

Throughout the yearlong pandemic while the park has been closed to visitors, BSS staff has been making sure the animals' lives are as normal as possible. They are cared for and fed. Routines are important so the animals can have a smooth transition whenever the 2,200-acre safari park on the Big Cypress Reservation reopens to visitors.

"The animals are doing fine," said Melissa Sherman, operations manager. "A year without people has impacted them, so we want to maintain our normal routines with the animals."

The animals in the safari area know where the feeding troughs are. Before the shutdown, the park started a program for guests to feed the animals on the buggy trail. They could purchase a bucket of feed and pour it into the trough from inside the safety of a swamp buggy.

"They could get super close to the animals," Sherman said. "We are keeping that routine with the staff doing it. The animals are living their best life, roaming free and getting food. Their biggest worry is

panthers."

Panthers live in the area, but their impact on the animals is minimal. Sometimes an animal will disappear and a panther is the likely suspect. A young donkey was rescued from the buggy trail a couple years ago after an encounter with what was probably a panther. It was nursed back to health and put into the petting zoo.

Caretakers in the park have detected a few behavior changes in some animals. Phil Blackwell, shift supervisor, has noticed some changes when he goes into the safari park to feed the animals.

"They are more spooked by the buggies because they don't see them as much," he said. "They aren't seeing people or traffic."

In the walkable portion of the park, the macaws began chewing on wood in their aviary. They were given enrichment toys to play with instead.

Visitors used to purchase birdseed on popsicle sticks and hand feed the buggies. When the pandemic ends, they will have to be retrained how to be fed by hand.

"We can't hand feed 100 buggies; we rely on visitors for that," Sherman explained.

♦ See SAFARI on page 5A



Before park attendant Yusdday Martinez can clean the enclosure for the Critter Show animals April 22, Francesca the capybara enjoys a belly rub while Bambi the deer tries to get some attention.

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Visit the Tribune's website for news throughout the month at seminoletribune.org

Editorial

Let Native people decide regarding their traditional lands

•Peggy Berryhill

In light of the racial reckoning that is taking place in America and coming on the heels of the revelations about John Muir, I thought it was time to visit the role of land conservancy.

For the second time in five years, conservationists have helped two tribes in California regain some land. On the surface that sounds great – Native people getting their ancestral lands back. With all due respect, let's look at how this played out in Sonoma County when then tribal Chairman Reno Franklin joined with the County of Sonoma and The Trust for Public Land.

The 688-acre parcel was described as being "gifted" back to the Kashia Tribe, but in actuality, it was sold by the Richardson family, who accepted an offer of \$6 million dollars; \$500,000 came from the tribe.

This is a beautiful piece of the California coast with scenic Highway One meandering in front of it. Unlike most tribal land, there are no markers or signs that declare it Kashia land. Looking into the details of the land exchange document of June 2015 by the Coastal Conservancy entitled "Richardson Kashia Acquisition and California Coastal Trail Extension – Project No. 15-011-01", you will find that there are so many restrictions put on the land by the conservationists that the tribe can do little more than assign pathways.

The project summary clearly spells out that the land can't be used for economic development or for housing, something many Kashia residents would like, especially

because it looks out over the Pacific, and is part of their ancestral lands.

To the north and south, white people have large developments with private access to fields and common areas. There is no chance for the Kashia to do this. There can be no development, no lodging to help with economic development but there will be walking trails and local native plants will bear signage attributing them with Kashia names and uses. Some Kashia citizens say, "We just wave at it as we drive by."

A similar land return just occurred in Monterey. This time the Esselen Tribe is the recipient of land also imbued with many restrictions. The Los Angeles Times reported, "A \$4.5 million land deal, brokered by Portland-based environmental group Western Rivers Conservancy, will return a 1,199-acre parcel of wilderness along the Little Sur River to the tribe in the name of conservation and cultural resilience. The transfer will mark the first land returned to the Esselen since they were displaced centuries ago."

The Esselen Tribe is not a federally recognized tribe, however, their non-profit organization will hold the land in fee for the tribal members and they will have to follow a management program to keep the land. The tribe announced that they will build altars and a community house. They also expressed their hope to rebury their ancestors.

If these organizations can raise the number of funds they've demonstrated the need for so far, I think it's time to help Native communities invest in lands that will benefit future generations and not be small tokens of Indian islands with little hope for economic development.

It's time to let Native people decide

what they want to do with their traditional lands, especially in a state where genocide was the official policy of the United States government.

In theory, conservationists helping Indians get land back seems like a good idea. But to this Indian, it looks like another form of colonization. In fairness, the Kashia in Sonoma County will be granted access to a section of the coast for the tradition of gathering seaweed. That's mighty White of those folks.

The paternalistic attitudes imbued in these land agreements keep tribes' hands tied behind their backs without offering any equity by treating Tribes as Sovereign Nations.

While ceremonies and other cultural practices are vital to tribes and Native communities, so is the ability of a tribe to take care of their people. Health care, education, housing and jobs are all a part of being a sovereign nation. Partnerships and alliances are needed.

Why not begin a new era that includes the leadership of tribal members on these boards?

How about respecting and supporting the rights of sovereign nations to decide what is best for their future?

In the "land of the free and home of the brave," it's the least conservationists can do.

Peggy Berryhill, Mvskoke, is an award-winning journalist and the founder of the Native Media Resource Center. She lives in Mendocino County and is the owner and operator of community radio station KGUA in Gualala, California. This op-ed appears on IndianCountryToday.com.

Congressman Alcee Hastings' legacy includes support of Seminole Tribe, environment

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

U.S. Representative Alcee Hastings, a longtime supporter of and advocate for the Seminole Tribe, passed away at age 84 on April 6.

Elected in 1992, Hastings was the longest serving representative from Florida at the time of his passing. During his tenure in the House, Hastings was an ardent supporter of the tribe and sponsored or co-sponsored 31 bills to help Native Americans.

Hastings' latest bill, H.R. 164, would allow the tribe to purchase property without federal approval. The bill was carried over from the previous Congressional session and re-introduced Jan. 4.

While he was a U.S. District judge in 1979, Hastings ruled in favor of the tribe in its lawsuit against Sheriff Bob Butterworth, who fought against the tribe's high stakes bingo games. Hastings' and Judge Norman Rotteger's ruling was upheld in the U.S. Court of Appeals, leading the way to Indian gaming.

In 2011, Hastings participated with tribal leaders in the ribbon cutting and opening of the Eight Clans Bridge on Snake Road in Big Cypress.

Hastings was a friend of the environment and in 2012 praised President Barack Obama's investment in Everglades restoration efforts.

"With the Everglades making up a large portion of my Congressional district, I am acutely aware of the vital role restoration of this national treasure plays in the health and prosperity of South Florida," Hastings wrote in a statement. "While progress has been made on restoring the Everglades, we still have a long way to go to ensure that there is clean water for future generations of Floridians."

In one of his last actions in Congress on March 4, 2021, Hastings and Everglades Caucus co-chair Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart sent a bipartisan letter from the entire Florida Congressional delegation to President Joe Biden requesting that \$725 million for Everglades restoration be included in Biden's budget proposal for fiscal year 2022. The letter stated that South Florida Everglades restoration is crucial to Florida's health, economy, biodiversity and climate resiliency.

After his passing, Biden praised Hastings in a statement.

"I greatly admired him for his singular sense of humor and for always speaking the truth bluntly and without reservation," Biden said. "A trailblazing lawyer who grew up in the Jim Crow South, Alcee was outspoken because he was passionate about helping our nation live up to its full promise for all Americans. It was a passion he forged as a pioneering civil rights lawyer in the 1960s, fighting tirelessly to desegregate hotels,

restaurants, and public spaces in South Florida — a trailblazing spirit to advocate for what is right that guided him throughout his life."

Hastings began his career in 1964 as a civil rights lawyer in Fort Lauderdale. In 1977, Gov. Reuben Askew appointed him to the bench as a Broward Circuit Court judge. President Jimmy Carter nominated him in 1979 to the U.S. District Court, where he became the state's first Black federal judge.

Although Hastings was acquitted of charges in a bribery case in 1983, Congress impeached and removed him from the bench in 1989. Just three years later, he ran for Congress and won the seat in the House, making him Florida's first Black Congressman since the Civil War. He served 15 terms in office and was the dean of Florida's House delegation. He was always a strong advocate for minorities, women and immigrants.

The Democratic congressman of Florida's 20th Congressional District was remembered by his peers in the House at a ceremony held in Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol on April 21. Speakers included House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, among others.

"It is fitting we honor Alcee in Statuary Hall because Alcee was an historic force in our democracy," Pelosi said. "Alcee's life was the story of America; the son of domestic workers who became one of the most influential members of Congress. But he was not content just to live the American dream, he insisted that others had that opportunity, too, and share in that promise. He was a champion for the most vulnerable, his crusade for justice knew no bounds."

Wasserman Schultz fought back tears as she spoke about her "treasured friend and true mentor."

"Alcee loved the 20th District — from Belle Glade to Broward, and the Sawgrass to Sistrunk — he was Florida through and through," said Wasserman Schultz, co-chair of the Florida delegation. "He valued every part of the cultural and ethnic mosaic that enriches our great state. We've lost a brilliant, fearless, giant-hearted advocate for the place he so dearly loved. And here in Congress, one less wise, patient and compassionate statesman walks our halls."

Hastings was born in central Florida to parents who were both domestic workers. He earned a bachelor's degree from Fisk University in Nashville, attended law school at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and received his law degree from Florida A&M in 1963.

"He rose from young man in the orange groves of the segregated south to become the first African American federal jurist from Florida and part of the historic 1992 class of the U.S. Congress," Wasserman Schultz said.



Rep. Alcee Hastings participates with Seminole leaders in a ribbon cutting ceremony in 2011 for the opening of Eight Clans Bridge in Big Cypress.

Thanks to legislators, Kentucky made bold move to honor Indigenous people

•Angela Arnett Garner

There is a story here in this sacred land; in the vast sea of pristine meadows, in the splash of geese on sun-dappled lakes and winding rivers, in the quiet sanctity of forests, at the foothills of the Appalachians with its forgotten trails and fog-blanketed peaks. It speaks to us from across the ages of a time spanning 12,000 years or more, of this sacred home of Indigenous peoples. Kentucky is a saga of rich history. Yet it is the story of Native Americans who live here still, and the Indigenous history and culture so treasured and celebrated by a commonwealth. And as of March 12, there has been written another bold chapter in the history of Kentucky.

The Kentucky Legislature has adopted resolutions giving statewide recognition to Indigenous Peoples Day for the first time in our state's history. Kentucky is only the fifth state in the U.S. to do so. State Sen. Rick Girdler, R-Somerset and state Rep. David Meade, R-Stanford, agreed to draft these resolutions. I had approached them with proposals because they had always been supportive of Native American cultural events that I hosted in Stanford. Their leadership in passing these historic resolutions is remarkable.

Indigenous Peoples Day is a celebration that attempts to balance the discussion of both European exploration and colonization with recognition of Native American history and culture. It was first adopted by the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. However, the first proclamation in the U.S. was signed in Berkeley, California in 1992. Since then, more than 100 cities nationwide have followed. At least 16 states, including Kentucky have passed annual statewide proclamations. Five states, including Kentucky, have adopted resolutions in their state legislatures.

The movement in Kentucky began on a crisp evening in the late summer of 2017 in the charming town of Stanford. Its original Main Street was part of the old Wilderness Road, its Georgian facades reminiscent of Edward Hopper's "Sunday Morning." But further up the hill was an old train depot utilized for City Council proceedings. And now on that September evening, it was filled with townspeople, officials, and Indigenous people who had assembled to observe the solemn passage of the first Indigenous Peoples Day proclamation in Kentucky history.

The first celebration was hosted at the stately Beaux Arts styled historic courthouse in Stanford, a perfect symbol of justice and

equity in this consequential moment. The event which featured Indigenous performers and speakers, was attended by people from several states and was covered in the national news by such publications as U.S. News and World Report and the Washington Times.

By the end of 2019, 24 Indigenous Peoples Day proclamations had been passed in Kentucky, more than any other state since the movement began in 1992. In 2018 I was invited to speak before the Kentucky League of Cities to urge them to pass a proclamation. I spoke to dozens of mayors of this organization that represents 380 Kentucky cities. When the final vote was taken, it was unanimous, testament to how far the movement had come.

Indigenous Peoples Day is a new and unfolding chapter in our state's history. It is here on this soil, this sacred land of mountains and meadows, that we join with Indigenous peoples to tell the complete story of history. May that be a part of our enduring legacy.

Angela Arnett Garner is a social justice activist who organized the first Indigenous Peoples Day ceremony in Kentucky history. This op-ed is from the Lexington (Kentucky) Herald Leader and appears on Kentucky.com.

Indigenous-led conservation the key to sustainable development

•Jean Paul (J.P.) Gladu and Michael Crothers

Canada's economy is showing early signs of recovery. The labour market is expanding, government leaders are preparing to release the first federal budget in two years, and companies are identifying post-pandemic investment strategies. In this still-tentative time, some people will claim that a full recovery requires trade-offs. They will say we must prioritize jobs over the environment, industry over Indigenous Nations, and short-term growth over lasting climate solutions. But those are false choices.

We can generate durable prosperity for Canadians and enjoy clean air and water at the same time. We know it's possible because we see it unfolding across the country.

Innovative models are leaving old conflicts behind. They centre on protecting

lands and waters, and they make space for sustainable development and joint ownership with Indigenous communities. They are led by Indigenous Nations, and they draw support from a range of corporate sectors, from finance to energy to tourism.

Taken together, these models will create economic opportunity and make Canada an international leader on climate and conservation. That's why President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau singled out Indigenous-led conservation in their first official meeting last month. And an expanding group of corporate leaders has called for greater investment in these solutions.

Many Indigenous Nations are working to establish Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA). These IPCAs include some of the healthiest lands in the country. Many are within the boreal forest, which holds about 12 per cent of the world's land-based carbon reserves — the equivalent

of up to 36 years of global carbon emissions from fossil fuels.

Canada has a special responsibility to sustain this globally significant resource, and IPCAs help make it possible. Canada pledged to reduce carbon emissions, and IPCAs provide some of the most effective nature-based climate solutions. Canada also committed to protecting 30 per cent of lands by 2030, and IPCAs offer the biggest proposals for conserving lands.

These conservation values go hand-in-hand with economic benefits. IPCAs are managed by Indigenous Guardians — trained experts who draw on thousands of years of traditional local knowledge to care for lands and waters. Guardians programs create good-paying jobs and outsized benefits in small communities.

♦ See SUSTAINABILITY on page 8A

Tribal elections to be held May 10

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe of Florida will hold a regular tribal election May 10. Polling locations will be open, but voters can also vote by absentee ballot. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is May 6.

The polling locations will be open May 10 from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress, the Veteran's Building in Brighton and STOF headquarters in Hollywood. Mandatory screening and masks are required.

For more information contact the supervisor of elections at (954) 966-6300, ext. 11461 or email SupervisorofElections@semtribe.com.

Tribal Council candidates are:

Big Cypress Reservation

- Mariann Billie
- David Cypress
- Quenton Cypress
- Manuel Tiger
- Alfonso Tigertail

Brighton Reservation

- Jaryaca Baker
- Jeremy Bowers
- Lewis Gopher
- Larry L. Howard

Hollywood Reservation

- James Holt II
- Christopher Osceola
- Clifford Sanchez
- Douglas Smith

The Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. Board of Directors candidates are:

Big Cypress Reservation

- Nadine Bowers
- Joe Frank
- Wesley Garcia

Brighton Reservation

- Helene Buster
- Petties Osceola III

Hollywood Reservation

- Alicia Sanchez Cabal
- Kyla Billie Davis
- Sunny Frank
- Virginia Garcia-Sanchez
- Christine McCall
- Gary McInturff
- O'Hara Tommie
- Courtney Osceola
- Mitchell Osceola

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Community



CBH re-entry program graduate Joey Henry has plenty of reasons to be thankful

'I do have a good life now'

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

After 15 years of watching his back and trusting no one in prison, Joey Henry had to relearn how to live and succeed in modern society when he was released in April 2020. Being able to trust again served as the starting point for rebuilding Henry's life.

"I had serious trust issues with people," said Henry, 56. "You can't trust anyone in prison and I brought that out with me."

Fortunately, the re-entry program in the Seminole Tribe's Center for Behavioral Health is designed to help newly released tribal inmates like Henry and prepare them to rejoin the community. Bolstered by what he learned from the program, Henry is now sporting a positive outlook on life. He graduated from the program April 5.

"They helped me get over a lot of problems I had from being institutionalized," Henry said. "A lot of things I was doing were not appropriate for society."

The re-entry program taught Henry how to ask for help and face his issues instead of holding all of his emotions inside. Henry's counselor Calvin Graham guided him through the process, which began more than a year before his release date.

"Joey is a phenomenal client," said Graham, CBH clinical associate. "We had a lot of deep conversations over the years. He is a man of faith, which helped him make the transition back to society."

Henry credits his wife, Karen, for helping him while he was still incarcerated.

"She helped me become more budget minded," said Henry, who lives in Big Cypress. "She's smarter than me and sees things in a way I don't see them."

The world has changed significantly since Henry became an inmate in the Florida Department of Corrections. When he was released, he bought a flip phone like the one he had before. He quickly realized he had to catch up with current technology, so he



Beverly Bidney

From left, CBH aftercare/prevention administrator Bernard Colman, graduate Joey Henry and CBH clinical associate Calvin Graham celebrate Henry's accomplishment in Big Cypress.

bought a smartphone.

Other changes in Henry's life were not as easy to fix; trust being foremost. It took him a lot of work with Graham to regain trust, but he finally realized people don't always have ulterior motives. He also focused on solving his substance abuse problem and how to be a good father and husband.

"The more I learned, the better off I became as a person," he said.

Part of the learning process included making social changes.

"Now I want to hang out with people who are succeeding; the other life just didn't pay off for me."

Henry lost some family members while he was away and regrets that he couldn't be there for them nor attend their funerals.

"It was my fault [that] I put myself in this situation," Henry said. "Most of my life I always blamed things in my past as why I am what I am. The decisions I made were poor ones. Now I listen to these people who are teaching me that I can have a good life. I do have a good life now."

Ironically, the pandemic helped Henry ease back into society.

"I learned how to be comfortable sitting still and be content in my surroundings," he said. "I didn't have to watch out for people with weapons. It's relaxing to be where you aren't in danger all the time."

Henry now enjoys a mostly stress-free life and is accomplishing things. He is working on getting a home site in Big Cypress and has the freedom to enjoy the company of people. He is thankful for the CBH, Graham, and Bernard Colman, CBH's aftercare prevention administrator.

"They helped me get on the right path and gave me the tools and knowledge to keep on that path," Henry said.

Graham said it was a pleasure working with Henry. The two intend to stay in touch even though Henry has completed the program.

"Time is short," Henry said. "It is the most precious thing we have and you can't make it up. We're here a short time on earth, so we have to accomplish things, be good to people and to yourself. It took me a long time to learn that."



ERMD

A juvenile black bear near the Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church behind the Sweet Tooth Cafe on the Big Cypress Reservation investigates a garbage can March 21.

ERMD, FWC share bear essentials for tribal community

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The Florida black bear may not be the officially designated state animal, but sightings are becoming more common throughout the state, including on some Seminole reservations.

During the past few weeks, bears have been spotted almost daily on the Big Cypress Reservation. The Seminole Tribe's Office of Emergency Management sends out notifications to alert residents about sightings and provide safety guidelines. In January, EM issued a warning about a bear sighting on the Immokalee Reservation.

The tribe's Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) held a virtual bear training session April 6 to inform the tribal community how to stay safe when sighting a bear and how to keep them away from homes, including properly securing garbage. More than 70 people attended the session.

Bear management on the reservations is a collaborative effort between tribal departments – including Seminole Police, Animal Control, Public Works and ERMD – and the community.

"FWC doesn't have jurisdiction on

the reservations, so coordination comes from tribal leadership," said Karli Eckel, ERMD environmental science manager. "It's important for the community to work together by securing their garbage."

Knowledge of basic facts about bears can help keep people and their property safe.

"FWC policy's emphasis is on personal responsibility," said Chris Boyce, FWC south area bear biologist. "It is up to everyone who lives in bear country – and that is more and more of us – to be on deck for this."

Florida black bears are found in every area of the state. Males can weigh between 250 and 400 pounds, require a 62-square mile range and tend to be risk takers. Females weigh between 125 and 250 pounds, need a range of just 15 square miles and are more secretive than males.

The bear diet consists mostly of plants and insects; about 80% plants and 16% insects. Only 4% of their meals are meat. They mostly forage for nuts and berries.

When bears stand upright, it is to see and smell better; it's not a predatory posture. Their eyesight is similar to people, but their sense of smell is about 300 times greater than humans and about seven times better than bloodhounds.

♦ See BEARS on page 9A

PROBLEM?

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Hike, rally draw attention to oil exploration concerns in Big Cypress National Preserve

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

About 50 conservation-minded individuals rallied and hiked through the Big Cypress National Preserve on April 10 to protest the proposed construction of an oil pad for exploration of oil in the Mullet Slough area of the preserve.

The group, consisting of Native Americans and non-tribal folks, walked past an area it said was damaged in 2017 when Texas-based Burnett Oil commenced exploration. The five-hour, eight-mile hike went about two miles north of it to where the next oil pad is slated to be built.

"The area still hasn't recovered from the activity in 2015 to 2017," said environmentalist and activist Betty Osceola (Miccossukee), who led the hike. "You can see the damage in satellite photos on Google Earth. It looks like a big old square. It will be an industrial complex when they put in the pad and rig for the oil operation."

Houston Cypress, co-organizer of the event, said the hikers felt at home in the preserve and connected to it spiritually. Some said it was their first hike in the Everglades and they were impressed by the beauty of the natural landscape.

"People had a profound experience out there," Cypress said. "They went off trail and followed the tracks of Burnett's oil exploration. Burnett brought in trucks and in the process they damaged the terrain by leaving humongous tracks and cut down cypress trees."

Osceola was pleasantly surprised by the size of the group that signed up for the long hike in the hot, humid Florida weather. The potential for disaster is among the primary concerns of the group.

"Mullet Slough is a natural route for water to flow into the preserve," Osceola said. "Right in the middle of the slough, an oil company will be working. Think about if there is a spill and contamination. Right now the water is pristine; what happens if there is a spill?"

Seminole teenager Valholly Frank has been an environmentalist all her life. She spoke at the United Nations climate change conference in Madrid, Spain, last year and is one of eight young plaintiffs who sued the state. They claim the state violated their constitutional rights by perpetuating an energy system based on fossil fuels. The health of the Everglades has always been one of her main concerns.

Frank, daughter of Big Cypress Board Rep. Joe Frank and Rhonda Roff, spoke at the rally after the hikers returned to mile marker 63 off Interstate 75, just a few miles from her home reservation of Big Cypress. She lamented that it felt all too normal to once again be fighting for the land.

"I can't wrap my head around the fact that money is more important than us," she said. "Florida shouldn't enable these fossil fuel companies to come into our land, our home and destroy it. Nobody owns this air, this water, you can't put a price on life. You can't sell what people need to live."

Frank, 18, said humans are the problem, but must also be the solution. She encouraged



A group of protestors show off their signs near mile marker 63 off of Interstate 75 on April 10.

everyone to fight together against climate change, oil drilling and pipelines.

"When people said they felt at home when they were on the hike, it really struck a chord with me because this is my home. It was home to my ancestors and I feel a strong connection to this land," said Frank, a senior at Sagemont School in Weston. "The U.S. government has already tried to kill off my people. They came in and tried to commit genocide on our people. When we survived, they gave us the scraps they didn't want. Now they are coming in because they

drained their land and are trying to take what we have. We care more about people than profit. That's the message we have to relay, that people and animals are far more important than any money you can make from more oil."

When the preserve was established by Congress in 1974, Seminole and Miccosukee people were given permanent rights to occupy and use the land in traditional ways. They were also granted the first rights to develop income-producing businesses related to the resources of the preserve, such

as guided tours.

However, the preserve's original authorizing legislation also allows for exploration and extraction of oil, gas and minerals. The legislation states its minerals management office will ensure, consistent with the purposes for which the preserve was established, "timely consideration of and final action on applications for the exploration or development and production of non-Federal oil and gas rights located beneath the surface of the lands within the boundaries of the Big Cypress National Preserve."

The mineral rights under the preserve's land are privately held by the Collier Resources Co.

The deadline for the preserve's action on Burnett's application is May 12, after which there will be a 30-day public comment period. Then it will go to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

Burnett's applications for dredge and fill permits for two proposed drilling sites have not been approved yet. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gave final approval responsibility to the FDEP in December 2020, under the Clean Water Act's Section 404.

"The FDEP is woefully underprepared and underfunded," Osceola said. "We realize the public isn't aware of what is going on and the preserve hasn't been forthcoming with the (Miccossukee) tribe about what the applications look like."

The Center for Biological Diversity and



Courtesy photo

The group hikes through the Big Cypress National Preserve on April 10 to protest more oil exploration and drilling in the pristine area.

the National Resource Defense Council both oppose Burnett's applications. The NRDC submitted Freedom of Information Act requests to the National Park Service (NPS) during the Trump administration seeking information about the company's drilling plans in the preserve. Osceola said the NPS has not fulfilled those requests.

Speaking at the rally, Alison Kelly, NRDC senior attorney, discussed the impact of the drilling Burnett performed in 2017. She said the seismic lines caused by its 33-ton vehicles as they drove through the land are still visible and significant damage was done to the wetlands and panther habitats.

"The company now has apparently come back in to apply for state and federal permits to construct new oil wells and access roads," Kelly said. "One in the area we walked today, where there is no existing infrastructure. This is not a place to industrialize. This place provides at least 40 percent of the water to Everglades National Park and it provides refuge for all of us, including plants and animals. What they are proposing is to industrialize this area for a period of at least 30 years."

◆ See RALLY on page 6A



Courtesy photo

Protestors march to show their concern for the environment off I-75 in Collier County.

◆ AGREEMENT From page 1A

The governor's office estimates the sports betting industry could create over 2,200 jobs in the state.

"This historic compact expands economic opportunity, tourism, and recreation, and bolsters the fiscal success of our state in one fell swoop for the benefit of all Floridians and Seminoles alike," DeSantis said in a statement. "Our agreement establishes the framework to generate billions in new revenue and untold waves of positive economic impact."

The compact acknowledges the 2018

voter-approved constitutional amendment 3, which gives voters the exclusive right to decide whether to authorize casino gambling in the state. However, the amendment also states it will not limit the ability of the state or Native American tribes to negotiate compacts for casino gambling on tribal lands, pursuant to IGRA.

The tribe will be the facilitator for online sports betting throughout the state and will contract with pari-mutuel operators who want to offer it at their facilities. The deal gives the tribe 40% of the pari-mutuel's sports betting revenue.

The tribe must contract with three or more pari-mutuels within three months of the compact's effective date of July 31, 2021. If three or more do not sign on, the payments

to the state will increase by two percent until it has valid contracts with three pari-mutuel operators.

Designated player games will now be allowed by pari-mutuels. The tribe sued the state for violating the 2010 compact by allowing the games at pari-mutuels and won the case in 2016.

The compact also allows the tribe to add three additional facilities in Hollywood, which may be operated by a third party gaming company.

The compact, like many contracts, has a provision to protect the tribe from events beyond its control, such as an act of God, war, terrorism, fires, flood or accidents causing closure for more than three days. Under those scenarios, the obligation to make payments

will be reduced. The compact also includes "pandemic" in the list of events beyond the tribe's control.

The stated intent of the compact is to provide the tribe the right to operate class III gaming, which includes blackjack, craps and roulette, on an exclusive basis throughout the state. However, in the event the Florida constitution is amended without action by the Legislature to allow class III gaming to other entities, it will not be allowed within 100 miles of a tribal facility.

The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association applauded the compact announcement.

"This is a huge win for all Floridians and for the tourism industry, which has been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic," Carol

Dover, president and CEO of the association, said in a statement. "Not only will the agreement create jobs, but it will also bring more visitors to our great state. Florida's hotels and restaurants are ready to welcome the many visitors our state will have due to this new compact."

In December, Hard Rock Digital was launched by Hard Rock International to handle sports betting. It will be the exclusive vehicle for interactive gaming and sports betting. Hard Rock Digital is a joint venture with gaming industry veterans.

RICHARD CASTILLO
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A family legacy in law enforcement

Brady Osceola Latchford continues a tradition that dates back nearly 100 years

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter



Brady Osceola Latchford, far right, is set to join the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office as a deputy sheriff. He is following in the footsteps of, from far left, his great-grandfather George Latchford, grandfather Al Latchford, and father Will Latchford, all of whom have worked in law enforcement.

HOLLYWOOD — Brady Osceola Latchford said he's known for many years what he wanted to do after college. Newly graduated, he's doing it — entering the law enforcement tradition on his father's side of the family.

Latchford's father is William Latchford, the executive director of Public Safety for the Seminole Tribe and previously its police chief. He's been in law enforcement for 28 years.

But the family legacy extends 95 years in all to grandfather Al Latchford, who worked for the New York State Police and retired as a police chief for the city of Port Richey, Florida, to great-grandfather George Latchford who worked for the New York City Police Department.

"Brady has a huge heart and a humble passion for helping others to maximize their individual safety and ability," William Latchford said. "He strives to make everyone's life better in every aspect. Regardless of what community he is working in — he will surely make the community a better place to live, work and play."

Latchford graduated April 23 from Florida State University with a degree in criminology. (See story page 1B).

He recently completed an internship in the tribe's Public Safety departments and in August he'll enter a six-month long police academy in Pensacola. After that he'll start field training at the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office where he'll launch his career as a deputy sheriff.

"I had the idea of law enforcement in the back of my head for most of my life. The aspect of trying to help people, show guidance, and be a mentor out there for others," Latchford said. "Seeing my dad be a police officer and having the positions my

grandfather and great-grandfather did — it was kind of a no-brainer for me."

He said his parents never pressured him to choose law enforcement — something he appreciated.

"It was always whatever decision I make, they're supportive," he said.

With the help of his father, Latchford got into contact with Santa Rosa Sheriff Bob Johnson and went to the office in Milton to meet him and do a ride along to get a feel for the place and the people.

The panhandle county with Pensacola at its edge has about 180,000 people. Latchford is excited about living in the more rural area as he enjoys being outdoors in nature and fishing.

"Brady came out one day and we talked for about an hour," Johnson, who went to the FBI Academy with William Latchford, said. "He's a really great kid — focused and sharp; the kind of guy you'd like to have in a patrol car with you."

Latchford began the job application process after his visit.

"Usually a 21-year-old kid doesn't know what they want to do," Johnson said. "He knew exactly what he wanted."

Tribal support

Latchford grew up in Pembroke Pines and went to the NSU University School in Davie. He spent time in Hollywood, too — most of his mother's immediate family lives on the reservation. There are his grandparents Jimmy and Marie Osceola and uncles Jimmy Jr., Kevin and Matthew. There's also aunt Tammy.

"It's a great feeling to watch our son set goals and to watch how hard he works

to accomplish them," mother Amy Osceola Latchford said. "We are excited to follow his journey into law enforcement and see what the future brings. We are so proud of him."

Latchford is the oldest of four boys and two girls.

Although he hasn't lived on the reservation, Latchford said he attended tribal events and the annual Tribal Fair and Pow Wow over the years. One of his biggest tribal connections he had was the eight years he spent in the Police Explorers program — designed to excite youth about law enforcement careers.

"It helped me with the decision of going into law enforcement," Latchford said. "Having that opportunity and my schooling does so much."

Seminole Police Chief John Auer recalls Latchford's participation in the Police Explorers and seeing him grow up.

"I've seen him mature from a playful, young kid that was always inquisitive and wide-eyed about everything to the young man that he's become," Auer said. "It's heartening to see that he's chosen to go into a public service profession, specifically law enforcement, and I'd like to think that the Seminole Tribe and the police department had something to do with that as well as his father's heritage in law enforcement."

Auer said there have been some, but not many, tribal members who have gone into law enforcement careers. He wishes more would consider it.

"Whenever you see someone come from that kind of a family and they want to continue the tradition, that's always a heartwarming feeling," he said.

Florida Legislature passes \$100M climate change bill

BY JILL HORWITZ
Seminole Tribe Climate Resiliency Officer

Passing unanimously with bipartisan support, Senate Bill 1954 will direct \$100 million a year to fight flooding and other climate risks in both coastal and inland communities. While most efforts to date have focused on sea level rise and protecting coastal properties, this bill creates a comprehensive and coordinated statewide approach to assessing and preparing for climate impacts.

While some balk at the cost, the price of inaction is far greater. Already, warmer oceans are fueling stronger storms and heavier rainfall events. Just in the last 10 years, Floridians have suffered from 22 extreme weather events, at a cost of \$100 billion (which is a thousand times the annual budget of this program). Looking forward, rising seas and warmer temperatures will escalate these events, and have cascading impacts to groundwater levels and drainage capacity, not to mention saltwater intrusion into wetlands and drinking water supplies. With sea level rise accelerating at an exponential rate, the sooner we invest and prepare to adapt to the impacts, the less it will cost our communities in long run. As the old saying goes "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

The new legislation authorizes the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to create a "Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan." Local governments and water management districts can propose projects under the plan for funding. Projects can be for resilience planning or physical improvements to adapt critical assets and infrastructure.

Unfortunately, we do not yet have all of the data we need to make decisions on which areas are most at risk and what to do about it. So, to help guide the planning and project awarding process, the DEP will first have to develop a statewide data set, including statewide sea level rise projections, in order to determine the risks to inland and coastal communities. To support that research, the bill establishes an innovation hub at the University of South Florida.

Because all impacts are local, the bill gives room for local governments and other regional entities to partner in developing regional vulnerability assessments and providing technical input. Tribal governments are not explicitly mentioned in the bill, so advocating for tribal inclusion will be important as DEP decides on what criteria to use for project eligibility. Just as global climate models have to be down-scaled for regional application, state plans and assessments will need local and traditional ecological knowledge to ensure that proposed solutions will actually work.

Perhaps the biggest win for the Seminole Tribe is the shift to consider flood risk to inland communities. Historically, the Big Cypress and Brighton reservations have been left out of FEMA flood mapping; however, recent efforts by the tribe and the South Florida Water Management District seek to fill this data gap. A new bill, SB 1550, would help the matter even further. If passed, SB 1550 takes last year's legislation requiring a sea level impact projection study (SLIP) for state funded projects, and expands the requirement to all "areas at risk due to sea level rise."

While we may be running out of time to pass SB 1550 in this legislative session, we need to take this broader approach to future flood planning, and soon. Large-scale infrastructure investments (like updating water management systems) are not made every day, but rather every few decades. If we continue to fail to consider future climate impacts on these investments today, it will be very costly, in both lives and dollars, to repair the oversight tomorrow.

But today, we celebrate, and prepare to get to work. The state's \$100 million a year allocation won't be enough to fix all our problems, but it certainly is the kind of commitment we need to take a holistic and inclusive look at the challenges ahead. As always, the tribe's Heritage and Environmental Resources Office (HERO) works closely with regional and state agencies to ensure the tribe's interests are represented and met. As the plan and project list are created, the proof of that commitment will be in the pudding.

SAFARI

From page 1A

The animals in the Critter Show — Francesca the capybara, Bambi the deer, Peaches the possum and Cuddle the skunk — follow staff members as they clean their enclosure.

"They are very smart," Sherman said. "If you are raking, Francesca will move it so you will scratch her back. You need to keep them used to people. We don't know their emotions, but we want to keep that relationship with them."

Park attendants Yusdday Martinez and Keyovonni Purcell feed the animals and clean their cages regularly.

"The animals know the schedule for the shows and still go to the waiting area," Martinez said. "They like people."

Nuggie, the brown bear, and Little Girl, the black bear, love getting a treat of hard boiled eggs every day. Their large enclosure is inspected daily and the eggs are used to entice them into the closed off holding area.

"The bears like the extra playtime with the staff," Martinez said. "They aren't really affected by the lack of crowds."

The pandemic has allowed Sherman to tighten up procedures around the park. With a smaller staff compared to normal times, everyone pitches in and does whatever needs to be done.

"When you are outside in nature and with an animal, you forget what's happening in the world," Sherman said. "When you give love to the animals, it's a nice break to our mental fatigue. It helps the staff and the animals enjoy the belly rubs."

Treats are often given to the animals. For example, the lorikeets get plant clippings in their habitat. They can eat the nectar or use it to make nests.

Capybaras like eating hyacinths, an invasive aquatic plant abundant in South



Beverly Bidney

The park's Florida panther, Liberty, is ready for her close-up inside her large enclosure.

Florida. The staff harvests it from the waterways and gives it to the world's largest rodents.

"They need a lot of natural forage, it's better for them," Sherman said. "It takes a little bit of elbow grease and you have to make sure you don't pull up an alligator or snake with it. Small changes like that matter."

Capybaras eat about four to six pounds of food per day, including grasses, Spanish moss, kale and hay.

"They eat everything," Martinez said. "Their teeth are always growing. They need to eat a lot to keep them short."

The staff clips the overgrowth of weeds around the park and brings it to the animals in the petting zoo. Forage is healthy for digestion, but the animals also get kibble.

In the safari park, the animals get food in the troughs every two days. There are also molasses tubs with minerals in the park.

Together they encourage the animals to eat more forage.

Many animals are carnivores, so the park breeds mice and rabbits as a way to introduce the natural prey animals into their diets. The rabbits were a gift and have multiplied quickly. The breeding program is saving the park money while providing a sustainable source of food.

"It's good to give the animals more natural food," Sherman said. "Bone and fur is good for them, too."

The park wants to make sure its residents are in the best shape possible when guests return.

"We are patient with the animals," Sherman said. "We feed them, work with the veterinarian and make sure they are healthy. If they don't have a good diet, they will have bad health. We are protecting the tribe's investment in the park."

FCA to meet in Marco Island

STAFF REPORT

The Florida Cattlemen Association's annual convention and allied trade show is scheduled to be held June 14-17 at the

JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort in Marco Island. For more information visit floridacattlemen.org/.



Beverly Bidney (2)

At left, Florida cracker cattle, donkeys, a Nalgai antelope and an ostrich gather at a feeding trough. At right, park attendant Keyovonni Purcell seems amused that the lorikeet on her shoulder is more interested in her braids than the food she was offering.

Conference ends with eye on court ruling

Orlando to host NICWA in 2022

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) hosted its annual (and second-ever virtual) conference April 11 to April 14 – the largest national gathering that's focused on American Indian and Alaska Native child advocacy issues. The Seminole Tribe was once again the lead sponsor.

Organizers said there were 50 workshops and 1,209 attendees who represented 47 states and provinces and 272 tribes. Last year's virtual event had 1,557 attendees.

"In the midst of addressing challenging issues, the conference was not just informative, but also a very inspiring and uplifting experience," said one attendee on an evaluation shared by organizers.

Sarah Kastelic (Alutiq), NICWA's executive director, said one of the most poignant moments for her was the National Day of Prayer for Native Children on the second day.

"Sometimes we smudge and smoke the pipe – it's wonderful to do early in the morning," she said. "We weren't sure how it would work out on Zoom, but over 150 were there. Board members and staff took turns sharing a prayer or a teaching, some sang a song. It was a special event and we felt connected to one another."

Kastelic said another highlight was a unique panel that consisted of women who shared personal experiences with the child welfare system.

The panel featured a Navajo grandmother who was raising three children; a young woman who was a former foster care youth and now has guardianship of her siblings; and a woman who works with families and children who have experienced Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, or FASD.

"We've done some panels with people with lived experiences, but it's usually been with youth," Kastelic said. "This time it was adults with different experiences told through personal stories – and those listening were child welfare workers that can do something about it. If we're going to redesign it, we need to ask those who have been in the system."

NICWA's 40th conference in 2022 is set to take place through a hybrid in-person and virtual format in Orlando from April 3 to April 6.

ICWA concerns

The status of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is always a hot topic at the conference. The 1978 law was put in place to prevent the separation of Native children from their parents and extended families by state child welfare and private adoption agencies.

ICWA has seen challenges in court in recent years.

After very little movement for many months on one of the latest challenges – what's known as the Brackeen v. Bernhardt case – the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a more than 300-page ruling just days before the conference began.

Attorneys on both sides have been working on their interpretations of the ruling, however ICWA stakeholders did not see it as a clear success. NICWA leadership said it wouldn't issue any official statements until it receives an opinion from its legal counsel,



Gil Vigil, NICWA board president.

which had not yet been issued at press time. "Each side got something they wanted and something they didn't want," Kastelic said. "Something positive about the decision is that ICWA is still the law of the land, is still constitutional and is founded on Congress' ability to pass tribal laws."

Gil Vigil, NICWA's board president, concurred with Kastelic.

"The underlying constitutionality of ICWA and the power for Congress to enact legislation like ICWA remains intact," Vigil (Tesuque Pueblo) said. "Further, the vast majority of ICWA requirements are unaffected by this decision. Outside the states of the Fifth Circuit, we anticipate this decision having little to no effect on ICWA's application."

The states that make up the Fifth Circuit are Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

The reason why the ruling is of great importance to Indian Country, Kastelic said, is because there has been a pattern for at least a decade of groups that have worked to chip away at tribal sovereignty issues like adoption and others.

"We've seen groups like the Goldwater Institute and those with political agendas, including adoption groups and the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys and conservative think tanks that have undermined tribal rights and resources and anti-sovereignty groups that are opposed for different reasons," she said.

Kastelic said there is now a waiting period before oral arguments by both sides will be scheduled. The parties involved have until Sept. 3 to petition the Supreme Court to review the case.

Meanwhile, Kastelic is encouraging tribal leaders to work toward strengthening ICWA laws and ICWA courts in their respective states.

"At the state level you could have more protections," she said. "Federal protections are the floor, not the ceiling. At the state level you could pass even more supportive legislation."

Kastelic said about nine states currently have standalone ICWA laws and a couple dozen have provisions embedded into existing state child welfare laws.

For more information, go to nicwa.org.



Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger shows hand-carved items that she brought back from her trip to New Zealand for Tribal Council.

Tribal Council praises Cheyenne Kippenberger as her Miss Indian World reign ends

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — Cheyenne Kippenberger made the Seminole Tribe mighty proud when she won the Miss Indian World competition in April 2019.

For the past two years the tribe has had plenty of reasons to continue to be proud of the first Seminole to win MIW as she represented the tribe throughout Indian Country, the nation and beyond.

During a virtual special Tribal Council meeting April 21, Seminole leaders expressed their appreciation. After Kippenberger delivered a farewell address, they praised her for the work she did during her reign, which ended three days later with a special ceremony at the Gathering of Nations virtual pow wow.

"You represented the tribe well. We were always behind you here and I think everyone in the community was behind you. There was never any doubt that we were just as excited as you were, if not more, for this opportunity to be on the world stage," Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. said to Kippenberger.

"You have represented the Seminole Tribe throughout the world and you did a fantastic job," President Mitchell Cypress said.

Kippenberger, from the Hollywood Reservation, made the most of her tenure. She participated in more than 130 events as

MIW. She traveled to 10 states and outside the country. She spoke to a Congressional committee about Native youth and mental health, participated in powwows and parades, attended the Miss USA pageant, helped open the Guitar Hotel, spoke at symposiums and met government leaders. The city of El Reno, Oklahoma, thought so highly of her that they handed her the key to the city and proclaimed a day in her honor. Through it all, she kept her Seminole traits as the foundation to her reign.

"For the past two years, I have had the honor of representing my family, the Gathering of Nations organization, Native and Indigenous people globally, but especially the Seminole Tribe of Florida. I've consistently reminded myself to carry the spirit and teachings of who we are throughout my reign and show not only Indian Country, but the entire world who the unconquered Seminole Tribe of Florida is," she said to the council.

When the pandemic forced the cancellation of Gathering of Nations in 2020 and the naming of a new MIW, Kippenberger stepped up and accepted the opportunity to serve a second year.

"Us, as a tribe, couldn't pick a better person like you to represent us as a tribe around the world," Brighton Councilman Larry Howard said.

Kippenberger, who was named Miss Florida Seminole in 2018, is the daughter of Joe and Susan Kippenberger and the granddaughter of Lawanna Osceola-Niles

(1960 Miss Florida Seminole). Her family is of the Panther Clan.

"I couldn't have done it without my community and my family," she said.

"Not only have you represented the Seminole Tribe and all the Native Americans around the country, but you also represented your parents very well, and I'm sure they're very proud of you. We're all proud of you, also," Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress said.

During her farewell comments to the council, Kippenberger held up hand-carved items that she purchased for each council member during a trip to New Zealand with her father.

Before becoming MIW, Kippenberger had already earned an accounting degree from Keiser University. She plans to add to her education by returning to college for communications and public health with a career goal to help the tribe.

"I plan to continue to empower, uplift and support my community and Indian Country," she said.

She thanked the Tribal Council for its support. She said that even though she is the first Seminole MIW, she doesn't expect to be the last; the council agreed.

"You've really given these young ladies around here in Seminole country something to look up to," Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola said. "You've given them a role model."

CHEYENNE From page 1A

"Just do it, don't think about it," Kippenberger said. "Take that leap of faith in yourself. You are more than worthy and capable. It's about representing your tribe, community, clans and family. Go out there and show everyone the best version of yourself."

Meeches asked if she had a message for the families of other princesses out there.

"Being an ambassador is so much more than wearing a crown," Kippenberger explained. "It's the stuff that happens behind the scenes, like helping your elders and being with your people. Now the best way is to be there in spirit is on the phone and on Zoom. We have so much accessibility to each other now, we can do this even though we aren't together physically."

"Those were powerful words," Meeches said.

A video produced by Seminole Media Productions highlighted Kippenberger's reign.

"My first year, I dove right into it," Kippenberger said. "I went to every event I was invited to. With the pandemic, I continued my reign for a second year. I was able to connect and visit with more people than I ever was able to in my first year. It was important to show what it is to be a modern Native woman in the world today. Just be you, that's the best thing you can be."

She explained how she shared her experience with mental health issues and she believes it helped people.

"It has been one of the most gratifying things being Miss Indian World," Kippenberger said. "It's been an honor to be even just a little bit of light in someone's life."

Members of the MIW committee bade Kippenberger farewell with heartfelt messages on Zoom. One at a time, they celebrated her with personal tributes and thanks for all she has done:

"Thank you for leading us so fearlessly and using your voice so unapologetically."

"It was an honor to get to work with



Cheyenne Kippenberger with her family during the Miss Indian World virtual farewell. From left, her father Joe Kippenberger, grandmother Lawanna Osceola-Niles, her grandfather Juan Paz and her mother Susan Kippenberger.

you, may you have continued success in all that you do."

"Your smile is so infectious, you brought that onto all of us."

"You are such a great role model for all the women of the world."

"The journey you took, you took us with you on it."

"You embody everything Miss Indian World is all about."

After the emotional farewells, the powwow got underway starting with the golden age women.

A few days after the Miss Indian World farewell, Kippenberger reflected on her years in the role.

"I'm grateful for everything," she said. "You get exposed to so much and build friendships all over Indian Country. Miss

Indian World was a beautiful platform. I always thought of it as a public service position."

Kippenberger is continuing with projects of her own. She recently created a virtual space for current and former royalty in Indian Country to connect, exchange and collaborate on Facebook and Instagram. She also plans to continue her education and is applying to colleges out of state, where she will study communications.

"They say Miss Indian World changes you and makes you grow," Kippenberger said. "Now I understand who I am and what I want to do. I feel like we are always trying to figure out our place in the world and I feel like I found mine."

RALLY From page 4A

With climate change causing sea level rise, Kelly said this is not the time to exacerbate the crisis by industrializing the preserve. She believes Burnett's applications should be denied and outlined how everyone can get involved in the fight against it. She encouraged the rally attendees to send comments to FDEP secretary Noah Valenstein, Gov. Ron DeSantis, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services secretary Nikki Fried, the NPS, as well as local, state and federal elected officials including representatives and senators. She said they should also contact preserve superintendent Tom Forsyth and Everglades National Park superintendent Pedro Ramos. The crowd cheered when Kelly told them to contact Department of the Interior secretary Deb Haaland, who is the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary.

"Even though the minerals and oil are privately owned, the NPS oversees the preserve on behalf of the federal government," Kelly said. "So this land belongs to us, the Native Americans who were here before us and the animals and plants. They have to hear our voices. Let's all write letters and get this done."

Osceola agreed that people need to put a lot of pressure on Congress to do the right thing. She advises them to go on Twitter, since that is the platform on which politicians tend to communicate.

"As a Miccosukee, I am supposed to be able to go to my historic Indian camp, any tribal member is," Osceola said. "Building roads and pads takes that right away from the tribes. People on the hike and at the rally were appalled and upset that the areas would

be destroyed, but they weren't surprised by it. They wanted to know how to put a stop to it."

In the days after the rally, Osceola reflected on the work that remains to be done.

"It's always a long road to travel when you're trying to prevent desecration of your tribal land, educate the public, state and public officials on tribal sovereignty and trying to live in harmony with the environment," she said. "It's always a daily mission and sometimes a struggle. Every day tribal sovereignty is being attacked. I refuse to give up."



Betty Osceola, left, and Houston Cypress speak at the rally following the hike through the Big Cypress National Preserve to protest more oil exploration and drilling.

Seminole Hard Rock to host Miss Universe competition May 16

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — The next Miss Universe will be determined on the Hollywood Reservation.

The 69th Miss Universe competition, which draws a worldwide television audience, will be held May 16 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood at 8 p.m. The event will be broadcast in more than 160 countries. In the United States, the English-speaking broadcast details had yet to be announced as of press time. Telemundo has the Spanish-speaking rights. The event is expected to feature a limited audience. According to Ticketmaster, tickets are sold out.

The three-hour competition will feature categories that include personal statement, swimsuit, evening gown and interview. Reigning Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi, from South Africa, will crown her successor. The United States will be represented by Aysa Branch, who will be 23 at the time of the event, is from Booneville, Mississippi. She won the Miss USA competition last fall. She has her own cosmetic business named Branch Beauty.

“My love for makeup and people have gotten me to this point,” Branch said on the business’s website.

Branch has seven siblings. She attended Ole Miss and studied in the university’s School of Journalism and New Media with aspirations to work in a public relations and marketing field, preferably in sports.

In a promotional video for the Miss Mississippi competition, Branch said her life as a child suddenly changed when her father was arrested and incarcerated for 10 years.

“I had to watch my mother struggle raising four kids still left at home,” she said. Branch will compete against winners from more than 70 countries.

According to Miss Universe officials, Hard Rock’s “Safe + Sound” protocols, which include mask usage, social distancing, quarantining upon arrival and testing, will be used.

“We are thrilled to partner with The Miss Universe Organization in putting on an innovative event under unique circumstances that will lean heavily on our industry-leading Safe+Sound protocols to prioritize the well-being of all event participants,” Keith Sheldon, president of entertainment for Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, said in a statement. “While safety



Miss USA Asya Branch

will be at the forefront, we also look forward to showcasing the Hard Rock brand and all that our flagship Guitar Hotel property has to offer to audiences around the globe.”

Kim Boerema named to leadership position at Hard Rock Cafe

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Hard Rock Cafe, which turns 50 this year, has made a new addition to its leadership team.

Kim Boerema has been named president of Cafe Operations for Hard Rock Cafe. The announcement April 12 from parent Hard Rock International comes as Hard Rock Cafe hits the half-century mark. The first cafe opened in June 1971 in London and has grown to more than 200 around the world. The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.

Boerema will report directly to Jon Lucas, HRI chief operating officer.

“Kim joins Hard Rock with a remarkable track record and a wealth of experience in restaurant leadership, which we are confident will grow the Hard Rock Cafe brand,” Lucas said in a statement. “Kim’s vast experience and knowledge of the restaurant industry will bring a diverse set of skills to the team

and provide crucial insight to the overall strategic operations for the Hard Rock Cafe division.”

According to a release, Boerema “will provide leadership and strategic oversight to company-owned and franchise cafes, drive Hard Rock’s world-famous branded retail merchandise business and grow the Hard Rock Cafe portfolio.”

Boerema comes to Hard Rock with more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality and restaurant industries. Most recently, he was the CEO of Delaware-based Iron Hill Brewery and Restaurant, a scratch kitchen and brewery concept with more than 20 locations, mostly in the Philadelphia area. His background also includes being chief operating officer at California Pizza Kitchen and vice president at Texas Roadhouse.

Boerema earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Northern Colorado, where he was an All-American wide receiver on the football team.



Kim Boerema, president of Cafe Operations for Hard Rock Cafe.

National program honors Seminole Hard Rock for outstanding management

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Seminole Hard Rock has earned a national honor in a program sponsored by Deloitte Private and the Wall Street Journal.

The U.S. Best Managed Companies program unveiled its 2021 honorees April 13. Seminole Hard Rock was one of 49 private businesses recognized. It is the first time a privately-owned gaming organization has been awarded the U.S. Best distinction.

“On behalf of the 40,000+ team members at Seminole Hard Rock, we are humbled to be the first gaming company awarded the U.S. Best Managed Company designation and to be recognized alongside so many outstanding privately-held businesses,” Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in a statement. “Our team members all contribute to the success of our

organization and I want to thank them for their dedication and commitment to service excellence and financial results, which make this recognition possible.”

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the parent entity of Hard Rock International, which has 239 owned/licensed or managed hotels, casinos, cafes, Rock Shops and live performance venues in 68 countries.

The businesses honored by the program each generate at least \$250 million in annual revenue. The program recognizes businesses for demonstrating excellence in strategy, execution, culture and financials. A three-person panel of independent judges made the selections. Seminole Hard Rock is one of only two Florida businesses that made the 2021 list; the other is Miami-based Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits, the largest wine and spirits distributor in the U.S.

“After a challenging year for many businesses, it feels more important than ever to recognize the outstanding achievements



of our 2021 US Best Managed Companies honorees,” Jason Downing, vice chairman, Deloitte LLP, and U.S. Deloitte Private leader, said in a statement. “These businesses are led by visionary and innovative management teams throughout the country and across industries. Their resilience and sustained commitment to their purpose, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, is inspiring. We welcome them into the program and look forward to their continued success.”

Hard Rock to build 8 hotels in Brazil

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Hard Rock fans who have visited or live in Brazil know there are some Hard Rock Cafes to choose from, but no hotels to stay in. Officials say hang tight, because that’s about to change in a big way.

Hard Rock International released its plans April 26 for the development of eight hotels comprising about 3,000 rooms to be located across the South American country in the coming years.

Cities set to get a Hard Rock Hotel include Sao Paulo, Fortaleza, Ilha de Sol, Campos do Jordão, Foz de Iguaçu, Jericoacoara, Natal and Recife.

The hotels will be managed by Hard Rock and located in existing properties owned by Brazil-based real estate developer VCI S.A.

Officials said in a statement that the Brazilian hotels would showcase the

country’s “vibrant, energetic and artistic culture through locally inspired design and unmatched live music experiences.”

Unique Hard Rock memorabilia from celebrated Brazilian artists will be displayed throughout the properties as well, officials said.

Expect the hotels to be completed over a period of about eight years. Three are already underway.

Sao Paulo and Fortaleza are expected to open first, followed by Recife, Natal and Ilha de Sol. Foz de Iguaçu is scheduled to open in 2025, Campos do Jordão in 2027 and Jericoacoara in 2028.

As one might expect, the projects are expected to create hundreds of temporary and permanent jobs in each respective community as well as provide a boost to tourism.

“Brazil is poised to step up as a headlining performer on the world stage of travel destinations,” Todd Hricko, senior vice president of hotel development at Hard

Rock Hotels said in a statement. “This announcement exemplifies great strides for Hard Rock’s continued global growth and throughout Brazil, specifically, for years to come.”

Each property will have Hard Rock amenities like the Rock Shop and Rock Spa. At Ilha do Sol, located on a Brazilian island, the hotel will have 311-rooms with water views. It will feature three restaurants, three swimming pools, meeting space and a Body Rock fitness center, among other amenities.

“And there is no shortage of adrenaline-spiked water sports such as wakeboarding, water skiing, sailing and other beach activities,” officials said. “Get ready for the red carpet treatment. This is Hard Rock, island style.”

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International, which has 239 owned, licensed or managed hotels, casinos, cafes, Rock Shops and live performance venues in 68 countries.

online by the end of 2021.

“We are proud to continue our collaboration with the Choctaw Nation with this expansion of the Solar Energy Center in Durant,” said OGE Energy Chairman, President and CEO Sean Trauschke.

“The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma welcomes the opportunity to expand our commitment to renewable energy. We are excited to grow our partnership with OGE and give back to our Mother Earth by

utilizing a safe, reliable energy source that is environmentally friendly and will further reduce our carbon footprint in Southeast Oklahoma,” said Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

OGE is also currently building a 5 MW solar facility in Branch, Arkansas, which should be completed in the second half of 2021. This will be the company’s first universal solar offering to Arkansas customers.

‘A business like no other’

Q&A with the Classic Casino GM

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — Edward Aguilar Sr. started working for the Seminole Tribe at the ripe age of 14. It was summer jobs in recreation and youth centers then. He’s never stopped working, but the roles and titles have changed over the years.

Now the general manager of the Seminole Classic Casino in Hollywood, he credits much of his success in life and in his gaming career to his mother and to his participation in the tribe’s Tribal Career Development (TCD) program.

TCD started in 2003 and is designed to educate and train tribal members with the goal of placement in high-level positions within Seminole Gaming. Interns work their way through every department while they receive mentoring and on-the-job training.

Since Aguilar became a member of the program in 2013 he’s been an assistant GM of slot operations, assistant director of casino operations and assistant GM/VP for the Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee with about 1,000 employees.

But Aguilar began his foray into gaming even before entering TCD. He was a lead Seminole Gaming commission officer and assistant compliance officer — later at the Immokalee Board office.

The Tribune asked Aguilar to reflect on his life and what he’s learned from TCD and the world of gaming. It has been edited for length and clarity.

Tell us a little bit about your personal background.

I’m from the Immokalee community — my family moved on the reservation from LaBelle in 1989 when the first housing project was completed. My mother is Elaine Aguilar and my father is Pedro Aguilar Sr. I have three sisters and two brothers.

My father is non-tribal — he worked in the orange groves most of his life and my mother worked for the tribe for a long time in many roles. Her most notable role was as the council liaison for the community. In all she served the tribe for nearly 30 years in one form or another. Her work ethic and compassion she had for her people and her community was visible to me at an early age and she would share her hopes to her kids of the importance of supporting the tribe in any way we could by going out and getting an education, working for the tribe, respecting our elders, and to always find ways to give back to the tribe and to not be dependent on what the tribe does for us.

What stands out professionally?

I worked for the tribe since the age of 14 — summer jobs with recreation and the youth center and with Seminole Broadcasting (now Seminole Media Productions) under Danny Jumper and Sylvia Marrero. The late Allen Jumper and Delores Jumper offered me a position in 2000 to be a gaming inspector. I worked in gaming under that administration and under Ed Jenkins.

I’ve worked for the Seminole Tribe Inc. as the assistant to Delores Jumper and was Immokalee Board liaison for four years. From there I ended up going to culinary school at the Art Institute where I ultimately took an internship with TCD. I navigated the program and excelled in most departments, ultimately taking on new challenges and responsibilities that led me to the position I now have as property general manager of Seminole Classic.



Seminole Classic Casino/Facebook
Edward Aguilar Sr.

TCD was a big part of your career success.

I started the program in 2013 as a full time student and full time intern. I needed internship credits to graduate culinary school and this led me to apply for the program. I stayed within the food and beverage world for some time until I had to rotate into other areas of the casino world.

There’s just something about interaction with people and having a hand in creating the experiences that keep the guest coming back for entertainment and gaming. You have to have that in you to fully grasp all the happenings of the gaming business.

Let’s be honest, this line of work is not for everyone. It requires a huge commitment of your time, a willingness to learn and adapt, self-sacrifice, drive and most importantly patience. This business is like no other and the possibilities are endless, but you have to be willing to put in the work and to always challenge yourself.

Any specific TCD memories?

Going through the program and working in each department really puts into perspective the commitment and passion that our team members have working for the Seminole Tribe. My memories include seeing from the inside the growth of the company over the years — growing through the company merger of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming and going through the expansion phases at multiple properties.

What would you say to those who haven’t heard of TCD or are considering it?

There are so many different career paths in Seminole Gaming, chances are we have a career path that you’re looking for. We are more than just slots and tables. We are entertainment, culinary, hospitality, finance, security, surveillance, IT, social media, advertising, marketing and so much more. We are more than just Florida. It’s an exciting business to be a part of, but it takes a huge commitment from the individual to make it all the way through. I always like to say, it’s a ladder not an escalator, you have to put the effort to climb up. We provide 10 percent of what you need to be successful, the other 90 percent comes from you. But it’s worth the journey.

Native farmer in residence program launches in New Mexico

FROM PRESS RELEASE

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — New Mexico Community Capital (NMCC) is introducing a new way to connect Native American farmers to Native consumers and larger non-Native markets. The Native Farmer in Residence program is a peer-to-peer based Native farmer training and support program based on delivering the tools and knowledge a farmer needs to enhance success.

Based on its Native Entrepreneur in Residence (NEIR) program, NMCC’s goals for this program include:

- Increased food sovereignty for Native individuals and tribes
- Enhanced community health via improved food choices
- Improved economic growth via better farming business practices
- Finding secure and diversified markets for sales of Native grown produce

With funding from the Native American Agricultural Fund (NAAF), the program launches in the first quarter of 2021, with the selection of a cohort of 20 individuals engaged in farming practices, from the micro-farm of under 10 acres, and larger farms in the range of 40 to 60 acres. Training will take place over a one-year period at farms, in NMCC classrooms, and online as may be dictated by pandemic conditions. NMCC’s training techniques work to

preserve and protect Native traditions and values, while incorporating today’s digital learning techniques. Each participant receives a Chromebook loaded with a suite of Google business tools tailored to farming. Additionally, each participant is funded with a stipend for the purpose of investing in the needs of their farm. With experienced farmers on the NMCC staff, the program also brings Native farmers to training sessions to develop peer to peer training, and to begin to build a Native Farmer in Residence farmer network.

Curriculum includes: enterprise resource analysis; developing a whole farm plan; budgeting, record keeping, accounting/bookkeeping; finding new markets; and building a business plan.

In keeping with NAAF’s guidelines, the Native Farmer in Residence program is informed by multiple listening sessions to ensure a match with the farmers’ needs. Part of that work includes discussion of these points:

What is the desired future for your farm?
What are your values that are important to the growth of your farm?

What currently exists in the way of resources — land, people, equipment, etc?

The Native Farmer in Residence Program is the result of earlier work done in the Native agriculture market segment and funded by USDA and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, among others.

Choctaw expands renewable energy partnership

FROM PRESS RELEASE

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — Oklahoma Gas and Electric (OG&E) announced April 21 that it will expand its Choctaw Nation/OG&E Solar Energy Center in Durant, Oklahoma, by an additional 5-megawatts (MW), bringing the total solar capacity to 10 MW. OG&E will construct, own and operate the additional 5MW expansion, which is expected to come

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

AH-TAH-THI-KI

M U S E U M

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

New acquisitions come with early 20th century stories

BY TARA BACKHOUSE
Collections Manager, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

BIG CYPRESS — As we move further away from 2020, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is happy to experience this bright new year and the opportunities that it brings. Two recent donations of historic pieces provide one such opportunity, the chance to connect beautiful creations of Seminole

artisans to early 20th century Seminole history. For these particular donations, we are lucky to know the stories of the people who got the pieces in Florida during the early 1900s and then returned them to the tribe in the early 2000s. The first objects, two skirts and two dresses, tell the story of a family on vacation in 1969 in Florida. Dorothy Pegues, the donor, was very young when her parents visited a village on the Tamiami Trail. Dorothy's mother wrote

detailed descriptions of the family's travels, and her description of that day includes:

"On Christmas day...we headed eastward across the Tamiami Trail through the Everglades. Many Seminole Indians live here and we stopped to visit one village. Two little Indian girls, about 7 and 10 years of age, acted as guides and although they were very poor by our standards, they were very happy. We asked an Indian woman how long it took to make a skirt or dress, but



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Small dolls were typically attached to pieces of clothing with safety pins to provide decoration.

since she did not seem to understand, the little girls acted as interpreters. The answer was one week."

Dorothy's mother purchased the clothing from a gift shop on the way out of the village. From this family's experience, it's clear that the village they visited was used to visitors like them. The children were ready to act as tour guides and interpreters when needed, and there were souvenirs that could be purchased. This village was one of several on the newly built Tamiami Trail that was adjusting to a new way of life that depended on the interest and financial contributions of curious travelers driving between Naples and Miami. At other locations in Florida, artificial Seminole villages were opening, and these enterprises served solely to attract tourists by using aspects of Seminole culture, such as village life, artisanship, and alligator wrestling. Seminole families often travelled seasonally to such villages to make a living because their traditional way of life was rapidly disappearing. While some families eventually adjusted to this kind of lifestyle, many did not. It was not an easy time to thrive, and those that did are a testament to the ingenuity and resilience of the Seminole people.

The very small dolls recently donated tell a completely different story. They were donated by a great-granddaughter of Ethel Cutler Freeman. Freeman was an anthropologist from the American Institute of Anthropology at a time when very few women worked in that professional field.

She was best known for her work on the Big Cypress Reservation from 1940 to 1943. During that time she spent a lot of time getting to know the people of Big Cypress. In contrast to the camps on Tamiami Trail and the Seminole "villages" created for tourists, life on Big Cypress was not quite as involved in the tourist trade. Freeman encountered a community affected by the environmental changes of Everglades drainage projects as well as by increasing governmental regulations and assistance that interfered with traditional ways of life. These were problems that plagued all the Seminole reservations. The dolls are exquisite examples of the accomplished craftsmanship that could be found on Big Cypress and other Seminole reservations in the early 20th century. Like the clothing donation, palmetto fiber dolls were made in order to be sold to tourists. Therefore even though Big Cypress was not as central to the tourist trade, families there were involved in producing artistic goods and traveling to places on the coasts or on Tamiami Trail in order to sell them.

The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is here to share Seminole stories like these with the Seminole community and our audience around the world. Our collection of nearly 200,000 historic objects helps us to do this. If you would like to join us in this mission, let's talk about how you can be involved. While the museum is still closed to the public, we can be reached at museum@semtribe.com. Thank you!



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

These patchwork skirts and dresses were bought for four sisters between the ages 5 and 11 in December 1969.

Artist teams up with Miccosukee Tribe for Miami exhibit

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

MIAMI — The Pérez Art Museum Miami has announced a new exhibition that is heavily influenced by the Miccosukee Tribe.

"The Swaying Motion on the Bank of the River Falls," features the work of decorated Chilean artist Felipe Mujica — and marks his first major museum exhibition in the U.S. The work is meant to show the ecological and cultural diversity of South Florida, including the Miccosukee Tribe, which is located in the Everglades about 65 miles west of Miami.

The exhibition will showcase more than 20 new fabric panels, or curtains, that utilize the patchwork traditions of the Miccosukee Tribe.

The project is the result of a longtime collaboration between Mujica and Miccosukee artist Khadijah Cypress. Cypress created the patchwork designs for Mujica's fabric panels — traditional Miccosukee symbols and patterns of abstractions of the natural world of South Florida like animals, lightning, rain, rivers and wind.

Mujica and Cypress founded the Miccosukee Creativity Center, a community



Courtesy photo

Chilean artist Felipe Mujica

center that encourages the traditional craftwork in a space where members — both Miccosukee and Seminole — are welcome to learn patchwork, beadwork, basket making and other skills.

"We are very excited to be collaborating

with Khadijah Cypress, who was introduced to us when Mujica was in Miami for his research," PAMM associate curator Jennifer Inacio said in an email to the Seminole Tribune. "Her work in promoting the patchwork technique within her community in the Miccosukee Creativity Center is very admirable."

Inacio said visitors can expect a unique experience. As they move through the installation, the air will slowly shift the curtains and "activate" the space with each visitor who in a way will become collaborators themselves, she said. There is another interactive element in which visitors can physically move specific panels, creating an ever-changing experience.

"This group of curtains adds a new dimension to my work as well as serves as a platform for the study and promotion of Native American culture," Mujica said in a statement. "I am excited to see this combination, because even if it's done in a minimal and abstract way, the technique of Miccosukee patchwork is placed in a completely new context, in a different scale, in dialogue with architecture, space, the viewer, the elements, and also in dialogue with forms and colors while simultaneously maintaining its traditional character."

Inacio said that in addition to



Robin Hill

The Pérez Art Museum Miami hosts the exhibition starting May 20.

experiencing the works in the space and offering an experience for the audience to learn about Miccosukee culture, she also hopes it will serve as a platform to extend a dialogue about the Miccosukee Tribe.

The connection extends to the exhibition's title itself, which is meant to

directly reference the flow of water, a crucial factor in the Everglades ecosystem and ever present in Indigenous contexts.

The exhibition opens May 20 and runs through the spring of 2022. The museum is located at 1103 Biscayne Blvd. For more information, go to pamm.org.

NAMI set to reopen

STAFF REPORT

WASHINGTON — In May, the Smithsonian is scheduled to reopen the National Zoo and seven museums, including the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. NAMI is set to reopen May 21.

Visitors will need to reserve free timed-entry passes. Full re-opening information is at si.edu/visit.

Code talkers program to be held May 19

STAFF REPORT

WASHINGTON — The National Museum of the American Indian will host "Native American Code Talkers: A Lasting Legacy" at 2 p.m. on May 19.

During World War I and World War II, American Indians made a unique contribution to the U.S. Armed Forces by using their tribal languages in secret battle communications.

Join NMAI via Zoom as author and anthropologist/historian William C. Meadows of Missouri State University reveals how these Native American "code talkers" played a key role in important battles and campaigns and helped save many American and allied lives.

Following Meadows's talk, Alexandra Harris, museum's senior editor and co-author of "Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces," will host a Q&A with attendees.



National Archives

Diné [Navajo] code talkers Corporal Henry Bahe Jr. and Private First Class George H. Kirk. Bougainville, South Pacific, December 1943.

National Native American Hall of Fame to move to Oklahoma City

FROM PRESS RELEASE

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — The First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City announced Feb. 19 that it has agreed to collaborate on the development of a permanent home for the National Native American Hall of Fame. The current Hall of Fame is located in Great Falls, Montana.

"When FAM launches September 18, 2021, it will be a premier cultural center dedicated to increasing accurate and positive representations of First Americans and dispelling stereotypes and false narratives," said James Pepper Henry, member of the Kaw Nation and FAM director/CEO. "Expanding and building a space for the National Native American Hall of Fame in collaboration with FAM strengthens our capacity to reach more people."

Under the agreement, both entities will remain independent but collaborate on space, fundraising and programming when appropriate.

"Joining hands with the First Americans Museum is a natural marriage of our organizations given our shared commitment to advancing the contemporary and historic achievements of Native people," James Parker Shield, chief executive officer and founder of the National Native American Hall of Fame, said.

The NNAHOF focuses on identifying and honoring Native American pathmakers and heroes from the Civil War period up until present day. Inductees include actor Wes Studi, advocate Elouise Cobell, author Vine Deloria, Jr., and Wilma Mankiller, former principal chief of the Cherokee Nation. The 2021 induction ceremonies will take place on Nov. 6 at the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City.

◆ SUSTAINABILITY From page 2A

IPCAs and Guardians programs generate regional investment and new tourism businesses. The Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation led the creation of Thaidene Néné Indigenous Protected Area. Last year, they spent \$500,000 on equipment — mostly from Yellowknife suppliers — that Guardians need to co-manage the area. The Nation also bought a fishing lodge near Thaidene Néné to expand ownership in a tourism sector that brought \$200 million to the region in 2017-2018.

Indigenous-led conservation also provides certainty for industry. When Indigenous Nations determine the future of their lands and secure places for conservation, they may consider development outside those areas.

The Lutsel K'e Dene negotiated impact benefit agreements with mineral companies outside Thaidene Néné. In Labrador, the Voisey's Bay nickel mine — the largest in

the world — moved forward when the Innu Nation Guardians became independent, onsite monitors. And west of Yellowknife, Dehcho First Nations Guardians monitored a major Enbridge pipeline replacement. They also lead water testing initiatives, mentor youth, and co-manage an IPCA.

The way we approach development must and is changing with Indigenous ownership, entrepreneurship, and skilled job training. These activities augment community prosperity, and we need to unlock financial tools to support them. This could include, for instance, exploring effective ways to create and monetize carbon offsets that provide communities with innovative revenue options for sustaining lands.

The choice is no longer between conservation and growth. Indigenous Nations and their partners confirm that one leads to the other, and together they create shared, long-lasting prosperity.

That's why we — along with a growing movement of corporate leaders — believe Indigenous-led conservation and economic reconciliation should be reflected in the 2021 federal budget and central to Canada's plan

to protect 30 per cent of lands by 2030.

These efforts will help us move forward together to create resilient and healthy economies at the local, regional, and national levels, while also helping to position Canada as an international leader in biodiversity and climate solutions. That is the future we choose.

Jean Paul (J.P.) Gladu is the president of Alaska to Alberta Rail and is the former president and CEO of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. Michael Crothers is the president and country chair for Shell Canada. J.P. is chair of, and Shell Canada is a founding member of the Boreal Champions, a group of corporate leaders committed to working collectively with Indigenous peoples to promote Indigenous-led conservation and economic reconciliation in Canada's boreal.

This op-ed appeared in the Edmonton (Alberta) Journal.

Health

Missing, murdered unit sees big budget boost

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

One of the first initiatives Interior Secretary Deb Haaland established after her first day on the job – March 18th – was the creation of a unit within the Bureau of Indian Affairs to focus on missing and murdered Native Americans. She made the announcement April 1st.

The Department of Justice had established a similar unit in 2019 – Operation Lady Justice. However, Haaland's unit comes with the heft of a \$6 million budget – a significant increase from the \$1 million allotted to the DOJ.

Haaland also created a top staff position at the unit to coordinate policy.

In an April 20th House Budget Committee hearing on the Biden administration's budget request for fiscal year 2022, ranking member Dave Joyce, an Ohio Republican, asked Haaland to describe the unit's goals.

"There's been a lot of engagement across the government — we felt that it was important for this unit to provide the leadership that it needs so everyone is moving in the same direction," Haaland said. "The new unit will improve coordination within and outside of the [Bureau of Indian Affairs] to make sure that we're not missing anything."

Haaland said the goal at the Interior was to cast a wider net to make sure no stone is

left turned.

"This is an issue that's been going on for 500 years since Europeans came to this continent," she said. "It's going to take a lot more effort [and] we've started to scratch the surface."

Long before her rise to lead the Interior, Haaland – a 35th-generation New Mexican from Laguna Pueblo – had been instrumental in raising the profile of missing and murdered Native Americans.

"Violence against Indigenous peoples is a crisis that has been underfunded for decades. Far too often, murders and missing persons cases in Indian Country go unsolved and unaddressed, leaving families and communities devastated," Haaland previously said in a statement.

In part thanks to Haaland, it is now more well-documented and widely known that Indigenous women are 10 times more likely to be murdered than the national average.

When it comes to Native American and Alaska Native women and girls who are between the ages of 10 and 24, homicide is the third-leading cause of death.

Haaland made history March 16th when the Senate confirmed her by a vote of 51-40 to lead the Interior. She is the first Native American to lead the agency and the first to hold a cabinet position. In 2018 she also made history as one of the first two Native American women elected to the House.

More information on the missing and murdered unit is available at bia.gov.

April 5th to April 20th, for example, the tribe had seen 40 new cases.

"Strict Covid-19 precautions need to be maintained at all times. Additionally, if there's any contact with a Covid-19 positive person or someone exhibits any Covid-19-like symptoms, they should report to the doctor. If you're an employee, do not report to work," she said.

In short, Kiswani-Barley is encouraging those who are eligible to get the vaccine and for everyone to continue to follow virus guidelines like wearing a mask and social distancing.

The tribe is giving the vaccine to those 16 years and older, following U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines that were set April 19. It had previously been open to those 18 and up.

The tribal community and employees can call the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458 for vaccine and Covid-19 testing information.

you and them, back away slowly and talk quietly," he said. "If contact is inevitable, always fight back. Yell, wave your arms over your head. They only eat animals who play dead; you don't want them to think you are an easy meal."

If someone sees a bear in the woods while hiking or hunting, it is best to make some noise to alert it of your presence, such as jingling keys and talking.

"If you come face to face, make yourself big, don't turn your back and don't run away," Boyce said. "Retreat to wherever you can safely. They typically don't want anything to do with you in the woods."

He said running away could trigger the bear's predator/prey response.

"No one can outrun a black bear," Boyce said. "The fastest human, Usain Bolt, could run 27 miles per hour. Bears can run 35 miles per hour."

Like bears elsewhere, Florida black bears hibernate, but not because of frigid temperatures. Reproduction cannot occur without the hibernation cycle. Dens can be as simple as a pile of palm fronds on the floor of a forest.

Breeding season is in June and July.



A male adult bear checks out the surroundings on the Big Cypress Reservation on May 16, 2018.

Child advocate Martha Suta Ramirez focuses on tribal children

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

It has been said so often it could be a mantra: children are the future of the tribe.

With that in mind, the Health and Human Services' Advocacy and Guardianship Department operates with the health and well-being of children as its core principle. Child advocate Martha Suta Ramirez approaches her work with tenacity, dedication and passion for every child.

"Our goal is what is best for the child," said Suta Ramirez, who has been with the A&G department for six years and works in the Immokalee office. "We help families with training to hopefully have a positive outcome for the child."

The process begins when someone alerts the A&G department of abuse or neglect. They are given information on how to make a report, anonymous or otherwise, to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). An alert could come from anyone who is suspicious or knows of abuse or neglect. The A&G department facilitates all DCF investigations and works closely with it after a report is completed and an investigator is assigned.

"We are mandated reporters, so if we know something we report it to DCF," Suta Ramirez said. "We are present at every contact DCF has with a child and work side by side with them."

The A&G department makes sure DCF knows the child is subject to Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) protections, which extend to descendants as well.

Suta Ramirez works with the families to make sure they are aware of all the services offered by the A&G department, which include counselling, assessment, mental health services through CBH, evaluations and parenting classes.

"My role as an advocate is to make sure families are aware of all our services, assist them in the process and encourage tribal members to use services," Suta Ramirez said. "I let them know we are there to help them, not hurt them. DCF are the investigators; we are there to support tribal members through the process and provide the help they need."

A DCF investigation isn't necessary for a parent to take the parenting classes. The classes are available all the time and offered to all families. Classes are based on Native American and modern parenting practices and include culture, traditions and nurturing. The classes aim to link the two parenting methods.

"The classes are about positive Indian parenting with an ICWA curriculum," Suta Ramirez said. "The classes cover traditional parenting, lessons from the storytellers,

harmony in child rearing, traditional behavior management and cradle boards, mother nature and how to praise a child. It gives choices in parenting and focuses what Indian parents face today with their children, who are living in two worlds. It's interesting and the parents really like it."

Investigation process

A DCF investigation follows a specific timeline. If a case hasn't been resolved after 60 days, more may need to be done. DCF will determine if the family needs more intervention, such as case management without going to the state's dependency court. Or, it can take the family to court to remove the child from the home. The goal of dependency court is to achieve timely permanency for the child.

"As an advocate, I need to make sure the child is raised in the best place for the child," Suta Ramirez said. "We encourage tribal placement with family members in the tribe."

Every child advocate in the A&G department has experience in case management and knows the law and court procedures. Additionally, they help families navigate the process. Unification with parents is the ultimate goal, unless it isn't in the best interest of the child.

If the case goes to court, it can take about a year to be resolved. Suta Ramirez provides reports to the court and ensures the child remains up to date with medical and mental health services. As the case proceeds through the court, she meets with the child every week, then biweekly and finally every 21 days.

The court determines whether a child goes into foster care. The A&G department first looks for family members to foster a child. Background checks are done on all prospective foster families. Home studies are done to ensure the foster home is appropriate for the child.

"It's important to have the child with a family member, but they need to qualify for that role," Suta Ramirez said. "If there isn't a family member, we try to keep the child in the same clan. It's important to place the child with someone who is willing to work with the parent. Parents have a right to see their child in foster care and we encourage communication. Our foster parents are amazing."

The A&G department tries to help parents get their child back, but unfortunately it isn't always successful.

"Reunification can only happen when a case is open," Suta Ramirez said. "After it is closed, the parent will need to reopen the case with the court. We will assist parents if



Beverly Bidney

Child advocate Martha Suta Ramirez.

they want to get custody back from a foster family."

Whether a child remains in foster care for the long term or goes back to their natural family, the A&G department follows up at regular intervals until the child is 18 years old. Advocates follow up at three, six, nine and 12 months and then once a year until the child is 18.

As essential workers, advocates never stopped working during the pandemic and met with children virtually or by telephone. Suta Ramirez said there has been an increase of incidents during the pandemic.

"Sometimes we have a flat ocean with no waves, but sometimes we have back to back waves," she said. "It's demanding work and I'm sure everyone in my position is dedicated to it and has a passion for the children and the families. I always say you have to invest your time with the families; the more they see you, the more they get to know you and trust you. When they trust you, it's easier to do your job and help them."

The A&G department creates opportunities for families to connect, reconnect, strengthen relationships and provides them skills to become good parents.

"I love seeing families getting together again, seeing children able to grow and be happy," Ramirez said. "That's the reward."

VACCINE From page 1A

In March, the tribe opened vaccine eligibility to employees at all Seminole Gaming venues in Florida, which include Seminole Hard Rock properties in Hollywood and Tampa. The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.

At press time, Kiswani-Barley said she didn't have exact vaccine numbers for those employees, but said more than 1,000 had received at least one dose.

Meanwhile, Covid-19 testing is still in place across the tribe and positive cases have recently increased.

"Since we have entered the second phase of increased service delivery we have seen a spike in the number of positive cases within the tribe," Kiswani-Barley said.

After seeing declines, she said from

BEARS From page 3A

"They can smell things miles away," Boyce said. "It's unlike anything we can imagine."

Bears are most active at dawn and dusk when their coats blend into the environment better. They are more nocturnal in urban environments.

They don't want to interact with humans and will generally run away or climb trees to get away. Bears try to avoid fights and are excellent climbers.

Bears who feel threatened will typically display defensive behavior as a warning to the intruder; it's not an attack warning. The bear will huff, pin its ears back, charge, stomp the ground and create a popping noise with its jaws.

"If you see these behaviors, back away and let it have its space," Boyce advised. "Don't run."

Boyce said an encounter is very different from an attack.

"If there is plenty of room between

in the neighborhood has to be vigilant."

A question and answer period with viewers followed the presentation. Barbara Billie said bears don't really bother her, but asked if wind chimes would keep them away from her house.

"They aren't loud enough and bears will get used to them quickly," Boyce said. "You want an immediate and loud sound to deter them. You can set up a radio hooked up to a motion sensor and it will turn on when a bear comes by. That can work. It could be annoying at two or three in the morning, but those type of things can be effective."

Rollie Gilliam, a Center for Student Success and Services' advanced career development participant, said he would share the information with other tribal members and his coworkers.

"A lot of myths were debunked during the presentation," he said.

Boyce said paintball guns are effective in scaring away bears without inflicting significant harm.

"Human dominance can work," he said. "Yell at the bear, keep them afraid to be around you. But they will return. Everyone

said. "It's really dangerous. The bear might approach other people for a similar reward and that's when the real danger happens."

Sometimes electric fencing is the only solution to keep gardens, livestock and beehives secure from bears.

"Bears are dexterous and acrobatic," Boyce said. "They are amazing creatures."

Figures show the risk of being attacked is very low. Since 1970 only 14 people in Florida have been injured by bears. Some of the many effective ways to chase bears away are clanging pots and pans together, installing motion activated lights, alarms and sprinklers, using slingshots, air horns, car horns and car alarms.

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SEMINOLE SCENES



Osceola Brothers/Facebook

NASHVILLE NIGHTLIFE: The Osceola Brothers band announced its first shows of the year with two performances in Nashville that were scheduled to be held in April. The brothers from the Hollywood Reservation were scheduled to play at ReBar at the Dam and Donelson Pub. "It's gonna be great to see some familiar faces and meet new ones, as well as getting to play some new songs for you!" the band posted on Facebook.



Beverly Bidney

GETTING READY FOR ROOF: Construction continues on homes in the Mabel T. Frank neighborhood of Big Cypress. A pile of roof trusses are waiting to be put in place atop the concrete block walls of this home.



Kevin Johnson

SENIOR HONOR: Ahnie Jumper, of the Big Cypress Reservation, was one of seven seniors on the Florida Gulf Coast University softball team honored during a senior day pregame ceremony April 25 in Fort Myers. Each senior received an engraved brick with their name, years played, position and uniform number. The bricks will be placed in front of Alico Arena at the school. Jumper has been the starting catcher for two years.



Beverly Bidney

NON-SYNCHRONIZED FLYING: These ducks fly slightly out of sync in April over the Harney Pond Canal in Brighton.



Rock Shop

THE OTHER HOLLYWOOD: This special edition Hard Rock pin is a tribute to the world-famous Hollywood sign in the hills above Hollywood, California. The pin is listed as a new item and limited edition on Hard Rock Shop's website. Features include gold plating with a shimmering gold city skyline and palm trees across the base. Klieg lights beam up toward a Hard Rock sign in the spot of the legendary Hollywood sign and a Los Angeles Hard Rock Cafe logo along the neck.



Beverly Bidney

BEAR CARE: Billie Swamp Safari park attendant Yusdday Martinez feeds Nuggie the brown bear a hard-boiled egg to keep him in separate area while staff cleans the large enclosure April 22.



Hard Rock Atlantic City/Facebook

A DAY AT THE BEACH: As part of an Earth Day event April 22, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City employees participated in a beach clean-up effort.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Monument Mountain trail and peak renamed after discussion with Native tribe

GREAT BARRINGTON, Mass. — Hikers on Monument Mountain in Great Barrington will notice two names have been changed that were approved by the The Trustees of Reservations who worked with the Indigenous descendants of the people who once called the area home.

According to a news release sent to 22News from The Trustees, Indian Monument Trail has been renamed “Mohican Monument Trail” and Squaw Peak is now called “Peeskawso Peak,” (pronounced / Pē: skāw. sō /) which means virtuous woman in the Mohican language. The new signage will be installed by the end of April.

For more than a year, the changes were discussed with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans where the term “Indian” is considered offensive, and “squaw” is an ethnic and sexist slur.

“Being able to rename these areas in our homelands is a great honor but also an opportunity to take back our history and to right a wrong,” said Director of Cultural Affairs for the Stockbridge Munsee Community Heather Bruegl. “By removing offensive language, it gives us an opportunity to correct the historical narrative.”

The history will focus on the Indigenous people who called the property home, rather than filtering everything on the famed picnic between Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville on the mountain in 1850.

“We are immeasurably grateful to the Stockbridge Munsee Community for helping us set the record straight by reevaluating the language and historical perspective at Monument Mountain,” said Brian Cruely, Director of Southern Berkshires Properties. “Making our properties more inclusive and accessible so all of our visitors feel welcome is at the heart of our mission, and we realize that entails listening, learning, and making changes.”

The Mission House in Stockbridge, built in 1742 by Rev. John Sergeant, a minister who established a religious mission among the Mohicans was turned into a museum. The Trustees changed the original interpretation told the story through Sergeant’s eyes to a display written by tribal members detailing their history, shifting the narrative to Indigenous peoples instead of white colonists.

“The Trustees’ commitment to DBIE (Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, Equity) is deeply grounded in our mission to protect and share Massachusetts’ iconic places for everyone, forever. Together, we carry forth this belief by seeking to create inclusive spaces of belonging for Trustees staff, members, volunteers, and communities,” said Janelle Woods-McNish, Managing Director of Community Impact. “We acknowledge that creating inclusive spaces where everyone feels welcome will be a learning journey for the organization and for all of us as individuals.”

- WWLP-TV (Springfield, Mass.)

First Nations proposing new energy corridor in Western Canada

First Nations leaders in Western Canada are proposing a corridor for transporting commodities from the region and — possibly — to the West Coast.

The goal is to establish a route for pipelines or rail lines to ship oil and other materials.

Treaty 8 leaders, who represent 40 First Nations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories, are already having talks with provincial and federal government ministers about the proposal.

At this time, the route is still under discussion, but access to the West Coast is a priority so commodities can be exported. That would require working with coastal communities outside of Treaty 8.

“It would go west. That’s what we’re working on. It’s in the discussion phase, but it’s gaining momentum with the chiefs,” said Arthur Noskey, Grand Chief of Treaty 8 First Nations.

“At the end of the day, when this is approved, there will be pipeline access. There will be railroad access if need be. The First Nations will benefit from it, that I can say.”

For much of the past decade, attempts to build new pipelines from Alberta to the coast have either failed or faced delays.

For instance, Enbridge’s Northern Gateway project was shelved and Kinder Morgan sold the Trans Mountain expansion to the federal government, in part because of Indigenous opposition.

The Coastal GasLink project created national attention last summer after several Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs opposed the pipeline’s route through disputed land. Despite several disruptions, construction continues on the project.

The proposed passageway would avoid such conflict, say leaders.

“When this agreement is in place, there won’t be any First Nations protesting or blocking. That would be the social licence that the chiefs will have to work on and achieve,” said Noskey.

“The reason why investors basically are shy about investing in Canada is because of the Wet’suwet’en and the process that escalated into. So we’re trying to reassure the investors that, yes, you can still invest in Treaty 8 territory.”

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Leaders say they would require the highest environmental protection for their land, while also ensuring a benefit to all people belonging to Treaty 8.

“It’s definitely a work in progress, but we have unity. We have unity right now within the Treaty 8 governments,” said Chief Isaac Laboucan-Avirom of the Woodland Cree First Nation, in northern Alberta.

“There’s a need to get the economy stimulated again. People want to get back to work.”

The Treaty 8 leaders say their corridor could provide access for a number of different projects, such as electricity transmission lines and fibre optic cables.

Next steps include establishing a corporate structure and naming a CEO in order for the corridor to move from being an idea to an actual project.

- CBC News

Texas legislature mulls over casinos as Native American tribes expand casinos in Oklahoma

CACHE, Okla. — Comanche Nation is opening another casino, this one in Cache, Oklahoma.

For years, Texoma residents have had to go to Comanche Red River Casino and other casinos in Southwest Oklahoma to cash out. While Texas lawmakers are working to make casinos legal in their state, Native American tribes in Oklahoma are expanding their casino empire. Last month Texas legislators filed a bill to bring gambling casinos to the Lone Star State.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has gone on record saying it could be a long time before that happens. Texans like Gary and Darla Cloud often go to casinos like Comanche or other nearby states for casinos and say it would be nice to have some in-state.

“There’s actually a casino in Texas. It’s in Eagle Pass, it’s called Lucky Eagle,” Gary Cloud said. “People flock to that thing. It’s a huge casino. To me, that’s just evidence that people in Texas will support it.”

To further its roster of casinos, Comanche Nation Entertainment officials had its official groundbreaking of their new location in Cache.

“It is long anticipated. It’s been in the works for a really long time,” Comanche Nation Entertainment CEO Mia Tahdoahnippah said. “Cache has so much rich tradition with the Comanche Nation and the Comanche Tribe. Our people were here way before the state became a state.”

The location is a few miles away from the tribe’s last appointed chief Quanah Parker and there will be a courtyard in his honor in the new casino.

“He was a really important innovative leader that we want to recognize. His original homestead and this is where he lived, this is where he built his home,” Tahdoahnippah said.

Officials say they look to open the casino by New Year’s.

- KFDX/KJTL (Wichita Falls, Texas)

Denver returns 14 bison to tribal land in reparations, conservation effort

Fourteen American bison headed to their new homes on native land this month. Indigenous tribes received the bison from Denver Parks and Recreation as a form of reparations, the first gift in a 10-year ordinance to donate surplus bison that will also go toward tribal conservation efforts.

The bison came from the department’s two conservation herds that descended from a handful of historic Yellowstone bison. Denver typically auctions off its surplus bison to avoid overgrazing, but there was still an excess after this year’s auction in March.

“We just decided we couldn’t have another auction,” says Scott Gilmore, DPR’s deputy executive director. “We could have, but that wasn’t something we really wanted to do.”

Instead, the city decided to return bison to their native habitats — the culmination of what Gilmore says involved 10 years of talks and trust-building with tribal partners who have long advocated for bison restoration.

“It just really made a lot of sense to possibly look and see how we could work with other tribes to maybe donate bison to the establishment of these herds that are starting all over the place,” he says.

Thirteen bison went to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Oklahoma and one went to the Tall Bull Memorial Council in Colorado. All 14 were adult females.

“Probably half of the bison that we donated were pregnant,” Gilmore says. “So, not only did the Cheyenne Arapaho tribe in Oklahoma get 13 bison, they will have, six or seven calves, probably in the next three or

four weeks.”

City officials say the gift is a form of reparations for the mass slaughter of bison across Native American prairies and grasslands in the late 1800s.

“I don’t think it’s ever too late to acknowledge the challenges and the wrongs of the past,” says Denver Mayor Michael Hancock. “We got a chance to simply apologize, acknowledge the challenges of the past and to forge a relationship going forward that allows us to exercise our common objectives around the conservation of the tribal lands and of these animals.”

White explorers, professional hunters and frontiersmen like Kit Carson killed bison for sport and as a starvation tactic. A population of 30 million American bison was whittled down to about 1,000 by the turn of the 20th century.

“You can see pictures of bison skulls, just stacks and stacks of bison skulls, people sitting on them,” Gilmore says. “Bison were killed off to actually negatively impact the tribes on the Great Plains. You remove their food source, and then basically you’ve taken away a way that they sustain themselves.”

Since then, tribes have worked to regrow their own populations, as well as their bison herds.

“It just demonstrates the resiliency of both the American Indian and the bison animal itself,” says Nathan Hart, executive director of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ business department.

Hart oversees the tribes’ record-high number of 530 bison. He says this addition will help the tribes achieve food sovereignty, improve the herd’s genetic diversity and move toward a goal of sustaining a herd of 800 bison.

“Everybody’s really excited to grow the herd with this addition,” Hart says. “The bison was very significant to our well-being in the past — we have still have a lot of respect for the animal.”

Although this gift has fostered a relationship with Denver’s government, Hart says the focus should stay on the bison.

“We’re developing these relationships because of the bison,” he says. “That’s what brought us together ... it all came from the bison themselves.”

- NPR

Tribe passes measure to improve water quality

The Cherokee Nation Tribal Council passed the Wilma P. Mankiller and Charlie Soap Water Act during a regular meeting April 12, providing legislation for the tribe to conduct studies on barriers to Cherokee citizens within the reservation accessing adequate water systems.

According to the act, “despite a substantial annual expenditure of federal funds and general funds on improving water system, barriers to reliable water supply and wastewater disposal for some Cherokee citizens remain.” The council authorized an amount no less than \$2 million above general fund appropriations to improve water systems, beginning in fiscal year 2022, and every fiscal year thereafter.

“It’s huge for our districts, seven and eight, respectively,” said District 7 Tribal Councilor Canaan Duncan, referring to District 8 Tribal Councilor Shawn Crittenden. “And I know it’s huge throughout the rest of the 14 counties. Work’s already began in Adair County and I know it has in other places, so I’m just super thankful to be a part of that.”

- Tahlequah Daily Press (Tahlequah, Okla.)

Legislation would waive tuition for Native American students

Lawmakers have introduced legislation that would create a college tuition waiver for Native American students in Nevada.

The proposal — shepherded by Democratic Assemblywoman Natha Anderson, D-Washoe — had its first hearing Thursday in the Assembly Committee on Education. The bill would prohibit the Board of Regents from charging tuition for members of a federally recognized tribe or certified by a tribe as being of at least one-quarter Native American descent.

Several other states, including Massachusetts, Michigan, and Montana, have enacted policies to provide tuition waivers for Native Americans who reside in their states prior to enrolling in school, or are a member of a tribe from that state.

“One thing that has been very successful in Native American communities is when we are able to pay 100 percent for university tuition, whether that’s a community college or a four-year college. It shows that schools themselves as well as communities believe in the student and more importantly believe in the future,” said Anderson during the hearing.

It was not immediately clear how much money the measure would cost.

In 2019 there were 698 self-identified Native American students in the Nevada System of Higher Education, said Anderson, less than one percent of the entire student body.

Nationally, just 39 percent of native students graduate in six years. In 2017, less than one-fifth of Native American and Alaska Native students ages 18-24 were enrolled in college, the lowest of any subgroup.

Native students are more likely than white students to have graduated from low-performing high schools, have greater financial needs, live in communities with higher rates of unemployment, and are often the first in their families to attend college.

Several Native American leaders and students spoke in favor of the bill, including the chair of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony,

Arlan Melendez, who helped present the measure to the committee.

“Where the University of Nevada now stands, here in Reno, those were Paiute encampments all along the river,” Melendez said. “That’s where our homes were before we were placed on an Indian reservation of only 25 acres, where my tribe started out.”

Melendez said the bill would greatly enhance the ability of Native American students to attend college.

“The number one reason native students do not pursue college is the cost of attendance,” Melendez said. “Tribal governments and our Native American community greatly support this bill. It will not only benefit native students with the ability to have a better paying job in their individual goals but it will also strengthen our tribal communities with a skilled workforce.”

- Nevada Current

Miss. department announces new Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act website

JACKSON, Miss. — On April 12, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) announced it created a new website that prioritizes the repatriation of human remains and cultural items in the department’s archaeological collection.

The website features NAGPRA collections updates, policies and procedures, and links to more information about the department’s Tribal partners. An interactive map shows the status of ongoing repatriations in Mississippi counties across the state. MDAH completed its first repatriation earlier this year.

According to MDAH, the Choctaw Nation, Chickasaw Nation, and Muscogee (Creek) Nation provided images featured on the website, while the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana provided additional content.

“Our goal is to engage the public in NAGPRA and to provide information about our collections in a way that hasn’t been done before,” said Meg Cook, director of archaeology collections. “The most important part is remembering that these remains are people, and their families want to see that they are reburied.”

The website will feature internship opportunities, Tribal stories, collections updates, and repatriation progress.

- WJTV-TV (Jackson, Miss.)

Poarch Creek Indians tribal chair: Alabamians ‘deserve to have their voice heard’ on gaming, lottery

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians on April 14 praised the State Senate for passing legislation the day previous that would allow Alabamians to vote in a referendum on whether to legalize a lottery, casino gaming and sports betting in the Yellowhammer State.

The legislative package would also allow the State of Alabama to negotiate and enter into a compact with the Poarch Creek. This would allow the tribe to share with the State a portion of the revenue generated on their lands held in federal trust.

The Poarch Creek have made it clear they are eager to be able to contribute to their fellow Alabamians in this new way. With an annual economic impact of nearly \$1 billion in wages, capital, goods, services and taxes, the tribe already significantly supports the state’s economy; the tribe is also an active corporate citizen, leading on philanthropic and other civic fronts.

Stephanie A. Bryan, tribal chairwoman and CEO, released a statement following the Senate vote.

She said, “I want to thank Senate President Pro Tem Greg Reed, along with Senators Albritton, Marsh, and McClendon, and everyone who contributed to this effort in the Senate. This historic vote is the first step to empower Alabamians who deserve to have their voice heard on this issue.”

Under the legislation passed by the Senate and now up for consideration by the House, casino gaming would be authorized only at sites in Jefferson County, Mobile County, Macon County, Greene County, Houston County, and Jackson or DeKalb County. The licenses for these sites would go to the highest responsible bidder, with existing operators in those counties getting the right to make a final bid; for the Jackson/DeKalb site, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians would have the right to a final bid.

It is important to note that one entity could not own more than two of those six sites, ensuring a monopoly could not occur.

Proponents of the legislation point out that for the first time in state history, the package passed by the Senate Tuesday would fully control and cap gaming that already exists in the shadows in Alabama. Enforcement would be given teeth so illegal operators could be weeded out once and for all.

Based on work previously conducted by the Governor’s Study Group on Gambling, the package would generate between \$510-710 million annually.

The distribution of revenue in the package directs proceeds to education, postsecondary scholarships, high-speed broadband internet access, rural health care, mental health care, agricultural programs, roads and bridges, and more.

The legislation, among other provisions, would ban elected officials from accepting political contributions from gaming interests.

- Yellowhammer News

California bill supporting Native American regalia at graduations advances

A bill that protects Native American students’ rights to wear tribal regalia at high school graduations cleared an Assembly committee in April with a 7-0 bipartisan vote.

The measure, Assembly Bill 945 by James C. Ramos (D-Highland), is sponsored by the Yurok Tribe, the ACLU of California and Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

“High school graduations are times of great celebration, especially in tribal communities because tribal kids have the lowest graduation rates of all ethnic groups,” Ramos said in a prepared statement. “Our students have a 75.8% graduation rate compared to the 84.3% statewide rate. Eagle feathers and other symbols of Native American significance underscore not only the personal achievement but also the honor bestowed by the tribal community and the pride the community shares in the graduates’ achievement.”

There are 720,000 people in California who identify as Native American, the text of the bill states.

“Over 300,000 Native American or Alaska Native pupils attended California public schools during the 2019–20 school year,” the bill states.

If approved, the bill would create a task force, including tribal representatives, and a member appointed by the state superintendent of schools. The group would collect input, develop recommendations and submit a report to the Legislature by April 2023. The first meeting would be held prior to April 1, 2022.

Ramos said that while the state and U.S. Constitution guarantee the right to wear cultural and religious items, some students have been prevented from wearing certain items.

“Despite existing protections, local school officials have raised objections to students wearing eagle feathers, sashes with basket designs, basket caps and beaded medallions during graduation ceremonies,” Ramos said.

Jim McQuillen, the director of the Yurok Education Department, said there were problems in the 1990s related to Yurok students seeking to wear certain items for graduation.

“Back in the 1990s, we had some pushback on students wearing graduation sashes adorned with tribal basket designs,” he told the Times-Standard. “Thankfully, this is not the case today as tribal students in Humboldt and Del Norte counties are allowed to wear culturally relevant items to graduation events.”

Pointing to a case in Fresno County in which a student seeking to wear a feather at graduation took the fight to court, McQuillen said he wants to make sure that students across the state receive the same treatment.

“(The Yurok Tribe) sponsored this bill because we believe that all students in the state should have an opportunity to express their cultural identity on graduation day,” he said.

- Times Standard (Eureka, Calif.)

Catawba Indians declared victor in NC casino court fight, clearing way for construction

The Catawba Indian Nation said a federal court has ruled in its favor in a lawsuit that tried to stop its planned North Carolina casino.

In a Facebook post April 16, tribal leaders said they “were excited to announce” that they’d “just received word” of the court victory.

The lawsuit brought by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians was the final major hurdle to the Catawbans’ opening their \$273 million Two Kings Casino Resort off Interstate 85 in Kings Mountain, tribal leaders have said.

The casino is scheduled to open with a temporary facility this fall at the site, about 30 miles west of Charlotte.

The judge said he found no basis for the Cherokees’ claims in the lawsuit filed in March 2020 against the federal Department of Interior, The Associated Press reported.

The Cherokees sued after the department approved the tribe’s application to take the Kings Mountain land into trust.

On Facebook April 16, the Catawbans, based in Rock Hill, S.C., said they “intervened in the case to uphold our rights.”

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians owns the only other casinos permitted by the state, both in the N.C. mountains.

Harrah’s Cherokee Casino operates west of Asheville, near Maggie Valley about three hours west of Charlotte. Harrah’s Cherokee Valley River Casino is a four-hour drive from Charlotte near Georgia and Tennessee.

In January, Gov. Roy Cooper and the Catawba Indian Nation signed a revenue-sharing agreement that cleared the way for Vegas-style gaming to be offered at a planned resort in Kings Mountain.

The Cherokees in part argued that historically the land was theirs and the federal department violated U.S. law in granting the land trust for the Catawbans.

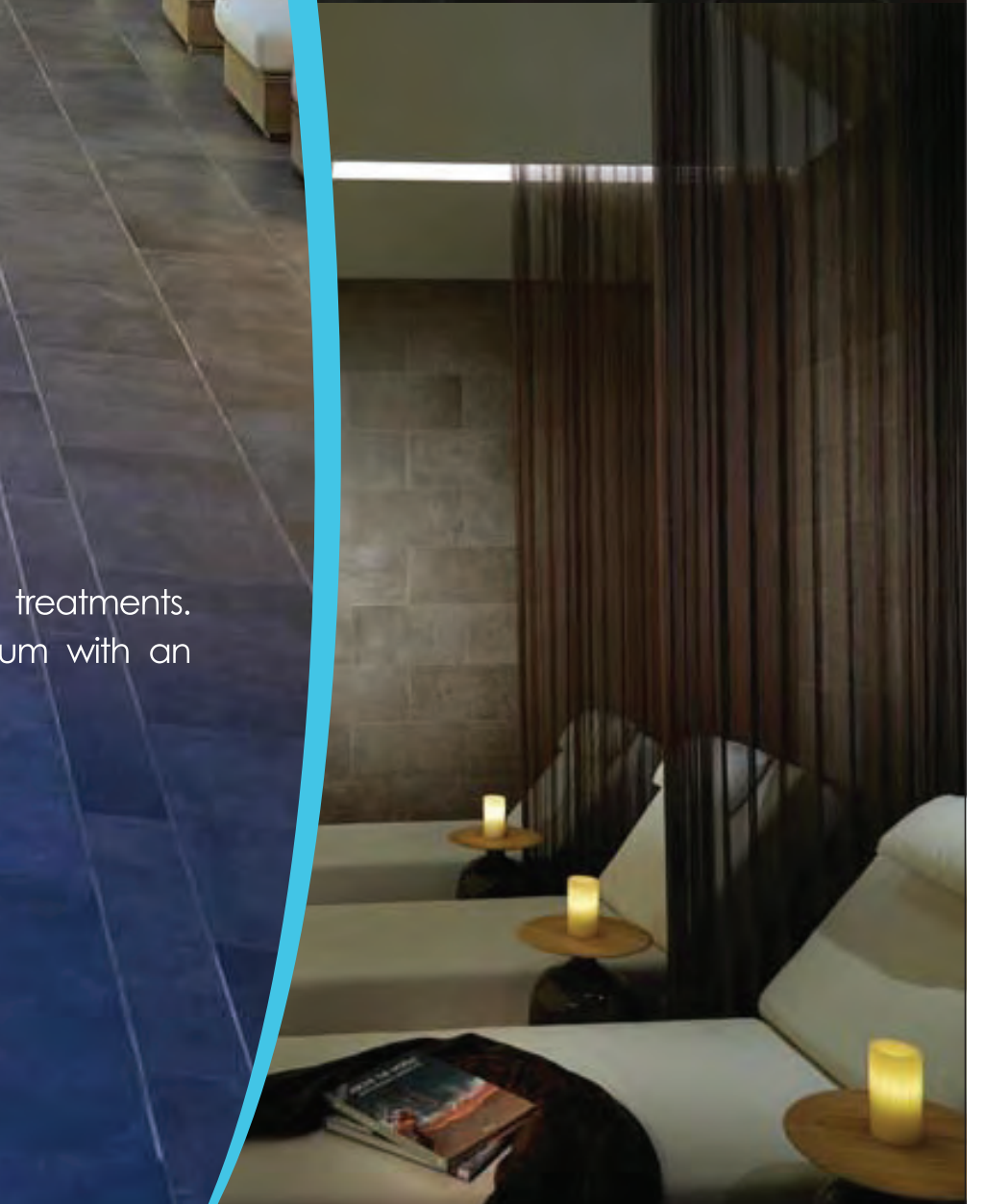
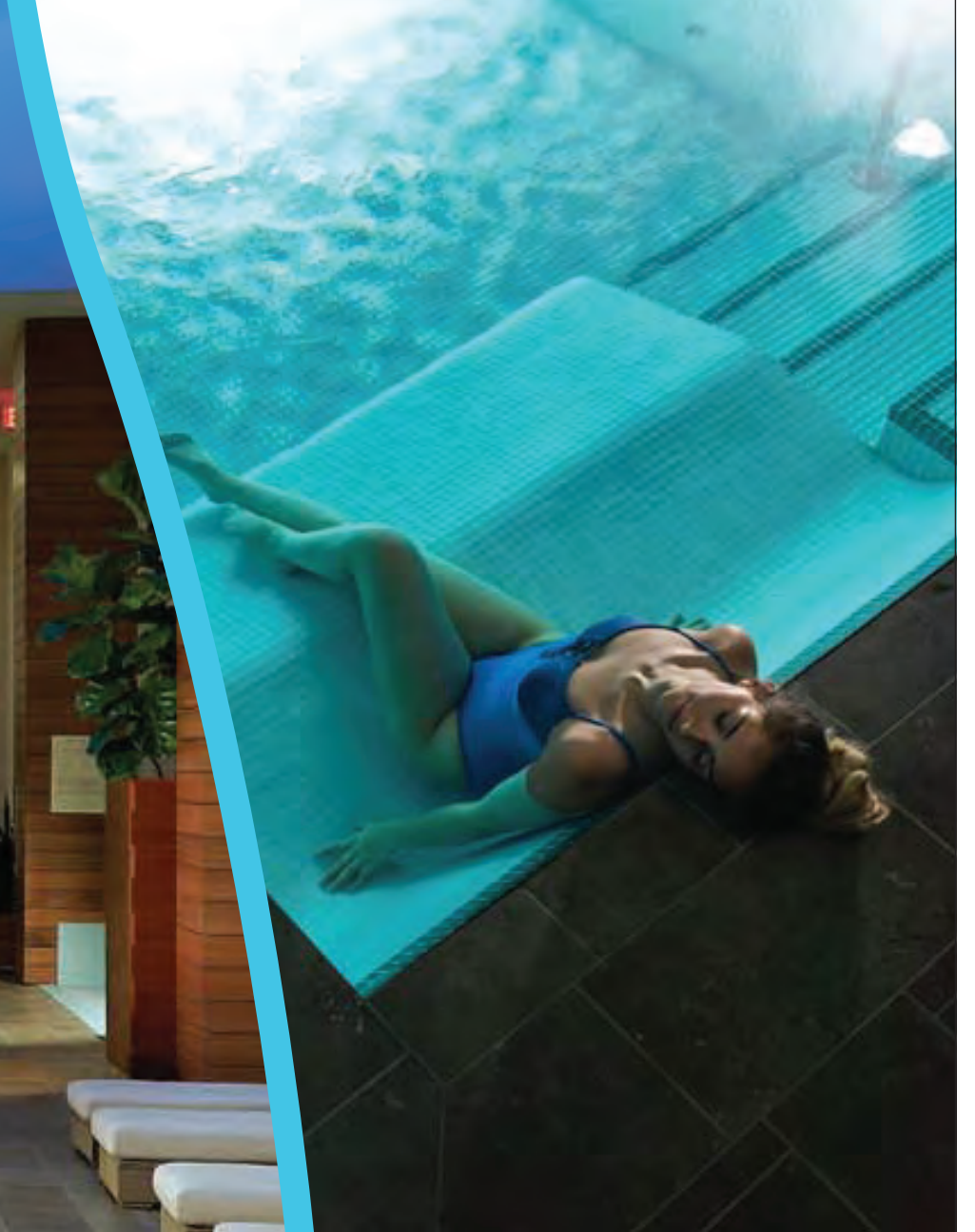
In [the April 16] ruling, U.S. District Judge James Boasberg disagreed.

“In the end, though, they come up with snake eyes, as on each claim they either lack standing or lose on the merits,” the judge wrote in his 55-page opinion, according to the AP. He is based in Washington, D.C.

The Catawbans have said they were proceeding with their plans for the temporary facility despite the lawsuit.

- Charlotte (N.C.) Observer

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Education

B

Florida's tribal youth to help restore coastal land

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The Interior Department announced April 28 that six tribes would be included in a new round of funding for the Tribal Youth Coastal Restoration Program.

The program secured \$927,000 in funds for a three-year project to help restore up to 1,000 acres of wildlife habitat on tribal lands along the Gulf Coast. The work is part of the Interior's task to carry out President Joe Biden's executive order to create jobs in clean energy and climate change mitigation.

Florida's Seminole and Miccosukee tribes are included in the group of six, along with the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Poarch Band of Creek Indians and the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.

The program is considered hands-on career training. Officials said each tribe has proposed its own unique teaching and experiential learning opportunities to prepare participants to "understand and respect their natural environment," through activities like native plant restoration, site cleanup and water and soil sampling.

The activities also promote skills needed to work on restoration throughout the Gulf and engage the Native Gulf community in a larger restoration effort that will continue for decades, officials said.

"Innovative strategies are urgently needed to help protect and enhance our fragile ecosystems," Interior Secretary Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) said in a statement. "Investing in programs that simultaneously provide economic opportunities for young people and protect our environment must be part of the solution to our climate crisis."

After the project, participants will be encouraged to pursue additional courses and degree programs to help them pursue careers in natural resources conservation.

◆ See COASTAL on page 2B

PECS students receive inside look at Stanley Cup champions

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

During the pandemic, Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School teacher Amy Carr has found innovative ways to motivate her sixth grade students during virtual school. The most recent was on March 26 when the students were treated to an inside look at ice hockey from a championship National Hockey League team.

Carr used the success of the Tampa Bay Lightning, which won the Stanley Cup in 2020, to inspire her students. The team overcame the restrictions and hardships imposed by Covid-19 to achieve the highest goal in professional hockey.

"We made the connection to the hardships virtual school has been posing on students, but if they continue to attend class regularly, give and get support from each other, staff and families, they too will be able to succeed, overcome obstacles and challenges," Carr wrote in an email to The Seminole Tribune.

Leading up to a virtual field trip to the Lightning's training facility, students tracked the team's progress and scored "goals" in weekly competitions. The sound of hockey goal buzzers were used to celebrate daily successes.

"I think it's important to celebrate all achievements, no matter how big or small," Carr stated.

Leading up to the Zoom presentation by the Lightning, PECS middle school math teacher and hockey fan Tom Finney showed the 2004 movie "Miracle" about the U.S. hockey team's victory over the heavily-favored Russians in the 1980 Olympics, a stunning triumph that is often ranked as the greatest moment in sports history. Two days later, the U.S. defeated Finland to win the gold medal. Finney showed clips from the movie as brain breaks between assignments during class.

Finney's appreciation for hockey spread to the next generation of Finneys.

The teacher's son, Tyler Finney, grew up in Okeechobee, graduated from Florida State University and has worked for the Lightning for four years. He was glad to slip into a new role as tour guide for the PECS students.

Finney took the students on the virtual tour of the team's training facility. He couldn't show the team's home ice in Amalie Arena because it was being used by the NBA's Toronto Raptors at the time. The Raptors are in Amalie because of pandemic restricted travel between the U.S. and Canada.

Finney began the tour by touting the Lightning's success as Stanley Cup winners in 2004 and 2020. The Cup was made in 1893 and is one of the oldest and most recognizable trophies in sports. It is made of silver and nickel alloy, is about 35 inches tall and weighs about 35 pounds. The name of every player and executive on a winning team is engraved on the Cup. Phil Pritchard, the official keeper of the Cup, escorts the trophy whenever it travels.

"A tradition for the players is they get to lift it over their heads," Finney said. "The Cup keeper, who has been the keeper for 30 years, has never lifted it over his own head since he never won it."

Each player gets to spend a day with the Cup doing whatever he wants. Goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy took it on a boat. Defenseman Victor Hedman took it to the beach.

Finney went into the practice arena and showed the students the Zamboni machine that smooths the ice between periods, the thick glass behind the goal where pucks hit at full speed, the bench area, sidelines and penalty box.

Finney moved onto the ice and showed the goal from the goalie's perspective. The net is heavy and its posts are dug into the ice to prevent it from easily moving. He went to center ice where face-offs start games.

He said a hockey roster, with about 23 players, is larger than a basketball team, smaller than a football team and about the size of a baseball team.

In the equipment room, Finney showed students the skates, pads and sticks used by players. Hockey sticks, made of graphite and other materials, are more flexible than the old wooden sticks. Sticks can break during a game, so players have a few they can use for back up. The sticks' blades are often taped to create friction and make it easier to connect with the puck.

The goalie stick is thicker on the end than other sticks. All players wear padding, but goalies wear 50 pounds of padding and have to be extremely flexible.

All NHL players wear helmets; most also wear plastic visors to protect their eyes. Decades ago when the game was far more vicious than it is today, many players didn't wear head protection.

"There aren't as many fights today as back in the day when it was about who can bloody someone the fastest," Finney said. "The game is more about speed than fights."

Tom Finney, the teacher, added his own take on the current state of the game. He noted that changes could be traced all the way back to the 1980 team and its coach, Herb Brooks.



The Tampa Bay Lightning, shown here celebrating after winning the Stanley Cup last year, were the focus of a virtual presentation for Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students. PECS teacher Tom Finney's son works for the team.

"He realized we wouldn't be able to compete with the Russians if we continued by playing from aggressiveness, fighting and intimidation. That's why it has gone to much faster, quicker, speed-oriented style of play," he said.

Hockey is an internationally played game and most NHL teams reflect that on their rosters. In addition to U.S.-born players, the Lightning's roster includes seven Canadians, three Russians and one Swede.

Finney, who works in season ticket sales, told the students about career opportunities with the team. Departments include marketing, ticket operations, an ice crew who maintains the ice whether there is a game or not, and analytics that help coaches and scouts.

"My advice, if you want to work in pro sports, try to get as much experience as you can with internships," Finney said. "I got one during my last semester at FSU and got a full-time job after that."

Playing during the pandemic was a lot harder than during a regular year, Finney

said. The playoffs for the Stanley Cup were played in a "bubble" in Canada, much like the NBA's playoff bubble in Orlando.

The team was there from July to September with no family. They were tested for Covid-19 every day and confined to the bubble.

"All they wanted to do was be home with their families," Finney said. "It was like 'Groundhog Day'; they would wake up, practice, play a game that night, eat the same meal every day, go to bed and do it all over again."

When the pandemic shut everything down, nobody on the team left Tampa, Finney said.

"This year had a lot of adversity, between Covid and learning from home all year," Finney said. "Just work hard, give it your best. Your parents, teachers and friends all believe in you. I know you will do great and persevere through it all."

Tribal members graduate from Florida State University

FROM FSU NEWS

TALLAHASSEE — Florida State University President John Thrasher urged new graduates to use the knowledge they have gained at FSU to make the world a better place in his commencement address delivered at six in-person ceremonies Friday, April 23, and Saturday, April 24, at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center.

FSU held a total of 11 commencement ceremonies this spring, including five ceremonies last weekend, to allow for safe social distancing.

Thrasher reminded graduates and their guests how special the occasion was in light of the pandemic.

"I'm absolutely thrilled that we are able to gather together today, in person, for your graduation," he said. "Nothing gives Jean and me more joy than seeing students we have come to know over the years cross the stage in their caps and gowns, having achieved their dreams of a Florida State University degree."

Thrasher, who has served as FSU's 15th president since 2014, is set to retire this year. He presided over each ceremony and served as commencement speaker.

"These ceremonies for the Class of 2021 will always be extra special to me for another reason — they will be the last that I will preside over as president of Florida State University," he said.

Thrasher praised the transformative power of universities and said FSU has been part of his evolution since his time here as a student and now as president.

"And just as the university changed us, we changed the university — we all have left our mark on FSU," he said. "Although this ceremony comes as I wind down my term as president — and it signifies the end of your journey toward earning a bachelor's, master's, specialist's or doctoral degree — I'm reminded of the true definition of commencement. It isn't the end — it's a beginning. The start of something new."

Thrasher also shared some important lessons he learned since earning his bachelor's degree in 1965 and his law degree in 1972. He encouraged graduates to have the courage to step into the unknown.

"Someone once said, 'There is no failure. Either you win or you learn,'" he said. "That certainly has been true for me. I'm reminded of the first time I ran for state representative, and I managed the campaign myself — I didn't win, but I sure did learn ... to hire a campaign manager!"



The Seminole Tribe's Kirsten Doney, left, and Brady Osceola Latchford, right, are congratulated by Florida State University President John Thrasher during FSU's graduation ceremony April 23.

Thrasher reminded graduates to balance the passion of their convictions with civility toward others.

"Stand up for what you believe in, but remember — if you want to be heard, you must also listen," he said. "Think of how much kinder this world would be — and how many problems could be solved — if only we would take the time to truly understand one another."

He also emphasized to graduates the importance of giving back and believing in something bigger than themselves.

"Wherever your journey takes you, I challenge you to take what you have learned here and make the world a better place," Thrasher said. "That's what Florida State has prepared you to do. We need you now more than ever."

Florida State awarded degrees to 7,251 graduates this semester. That includes: 5,531 bachelor's degrees, 1,166 master's and specialist degrees, 180 doctorates, 206 juris doctor degrees, 42 juris master's degrees, 7 LL.M.s and 119 M.D.s.

Notably, two of Friday's graduates are members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Graduating from FSU is especially meaningful, said Kirsten Doney, because of the university's close ties to her tribe. Doney earned a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary social science with a minor in communications.

"The connection between FSU and the Seminole Tribe of Florida is so strong," she said. "Because of the relationship of the tribe with Florida State, it's made my connection greater."

Doney said her experience at FSU has been nothing short of life changing.

"I'll forever be grateful for the opportunities I've been given, the life-long friendships I've made and the connections I've created in and outside of the classroom," she said.

Doney's brother, Kyle, graduated from FSU in 2007.

"We'd always come to football games when my brother was here," she said. "There was always an energy here. You could feel it going to the stadium and seeing the campus. Osceola, who was such a leader of our tribe, for him to be represented at every football game, is very powerful."



FSU Photography Services

Doney said while the past year has been a tough one for her and her family due to battles with Covid-19, FSU helped her set a solid foundation as she starts the next chapter of her life.

"I've become a more well-rounded person, gained the confidence that if I set my mind and put my heart into something I am able to achieve my goals," she said. "I've discovered more of my creative side, and I've learned skills that have prepared me for the future to come."

Brady Osceola Latchford, also a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, said he's proud to have earned his degree from FSU.

"It's been an honor to attend a school that promotes the name of the Seminoles and represents the tribe with such respect and tradition," he said. "I'm grateful for the opportunity the Seminole Tribe and FSU has given me and proud to say that I received my degree from such a prestigious school."

Latchford is from a long line of police officers that began with his great-grandfather and continued through his grandfather and father. He graduated with his degree

in criminology April 23 and is excited to continue that tradition later this year when he attends police academy before beginning work with the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Department.

While Latchford's degree in criminal justice may have seemed like a forgone conclusion, he was grateful for the vast opportunities FSU presented.

"There are so many pathways that I could have taken during my four years here," he said. "I'd had people tell me that my FSU experience would be one that I'd make for myself. It was all up for me to choose. I followed my interests, and I'm happy I did."

This article is by Amy Farnum-Patronis, Mark Blackwell Thomas and Anna Prentiss. It has been abbreviated for space. The entire article is at news.fsu.edu.

Rep. Davids' 'Big Voice' to make June debut

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Rep. Sharice Davids, the trailblazing Democrat from Kansas, is one of two Native American women who made history in 2018. She was elected to the House of Representatives that year with Deb Haaland, who is now Secretary of the Department of Interior. Like Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), Davids (Ho-Chunk Nation) been called an inspiration to many Native Americans across Indian Country young and old.

Davids has now marked her rise in politics and her Native American roots and heritage with a new children's book – "Sharice's Big Voice – A Native Kid Becomes a Congresswoman."

The book is an illustrated memoir that follows Davids, 40, from childhood through her election. It's been in development since 2019.

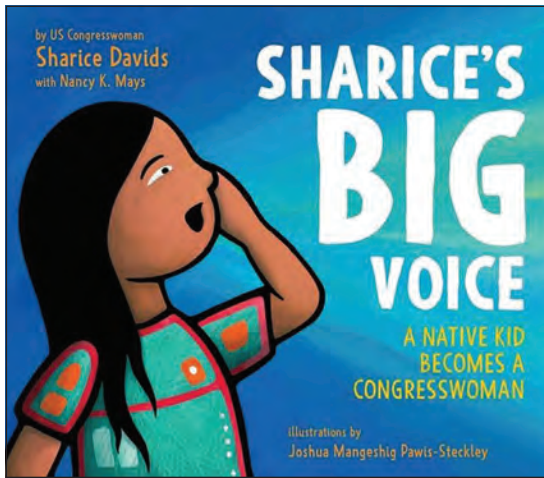
Davids, who has a background as a lawyer and mixed martial artist, has said that when she was young the idea of becoming a member of Congress wasn't a thought.

Even while running her campaign for the 2018 midterm election, she said she got blowback from naysayers who told her she couldn't win because of how she looked and her roots – including who she loved. (Davids is also the first openly gay Native American elected to Congress).

"Big Voice" is a story of her transcendence past the doubters. It also includes information about the Ho-Chunk, written by former Ho-Chunk President Jon Greendeer.

Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckly, an Ojibwe Woodland artist and member of Wasauksing First Nation in Canada, illustrates the book. Nancy K. Mays, a former campaign volunteer and donor for Davids, is a coauthor.

The book is to be released by HarperCollins in June.



'I hope they see themselves'

The main relationship in the story is of Davids and her mother, a single parent and Army drill sergeant stationed at Fort Leavenworth when Davids was a child.

Early on in the book a young Davids asks her mother, "What am I?"

Her mother tells her about her Native American heritage and that she's a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, a group that call themselves "The People of the Big Voice."

Davids told the Kansas City Star in March that the scene mirrors what happened in real life.

"I remember being young and saying to my mom, 'Mommy, what am I?' And it's because the kids at school were saying that to me: 'What are you?' – because I didn't look like any of the couple of groups in school. I was pretty little and remember asking her that question," she said.

Davids also told the Star that through her research she discovered that only 1% of children's books published in the U.S. feature Native American or Indigenous characters.

"I think that for any Native or Indigenous children or First Nations children who read the book, I just hope that they in some ways see themselves," Davids said. "I hope any kid who gets a chance to read the book will see that all of our paths are different."

Davids told the Star that her decision to write a children's book caught some friends by surprise at first. But she sees kids as the perfect audience for the book's themes of finding a path and celebrating differences.

"I think young people often feel like they're not given enough credit for what they understand, so that's on us as adults to making sure we're talking to young people like the humans that they are," Davids said.

The book can be ordered from several online booksellers like Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IndieBound, Target and Walmart.

Tunica-Biloxi Tribe, Louisiana university form multi-level partnership

FROM UNIV. OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE NEWS

LAFAYETTE, La. — A partnership between the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana will empower the state's green energy landscape.

The focus on strengthening Louisiana's renewable and traditional energy sectors is among a host of areas the new partnership will address. Other areas will include economic, workforce and community development, public health, and computing and information technology.

The partnership will advance the tribe and UL Lafayette's shared mission of improving Louisiana; it will also provide crucial resources for the tribe's 1,500 citizens and their families, both in Louisiana and around the country.

Dr. Joseph Savoie, UL Lafayette president, and Marshall Pierite, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe chairman, formalized the partnership during a signing ceremony on Tuesday. The event was held at the LITE Center in UL Lafayette's Research Park.

"Collaborations such as these are essential to our state. By aligning resources toward a common mission, this partnership between the university and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe will strengthen the state's economic landscape today and nurture future economic growth," Savoie said.

"This collaboration is good for the university and for the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe. Ultimately, it's the people of Louisiana who will benefit."

Pierite said that "this mutually-beneficial partnership will not only open doors for our tribe, but allow us to make an impact on the development of our state and region."

"From public health to energy and more, we are working together to address some of the most critical topics in our region. We are extremely grateful to UL Lafayette for their collaboration and look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together," Pierite added.

The memorandum of understanding signed April 20 "creates an environment of



Doug Dugas / University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Tunica-Biloxi Tribe and University of Louisiana at Lafayette leaders sign a partnership April 20 for collaboration in several areas, including renewable and traditional energy.

mutual support" that advances economic development for the tribe through the university's applied research and workforce development programs, said Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, UL Lafayette's vice president for Research, Innovation and Economic Development.

"We are a public university, and the work being done here is for the public good. This partnership is an opportunity to translate our research and intellectual capacity into tangible outcomes that will benefit society," he explained.

The partnership includes research collaborations, technical assistance, consultation, training and workforce development in a number of economic areas and industries, including traditional and sustainable energy resources.

"One of the focal areas of this partnership will capitalize on the university's longstanding role as a leader in energy research to assist the tribe as it explores both conventional and alternative energy sources," Kolluru said.

Additional collaborations will focus on economic and community development through entrepreneurship, business cultivation, financial literacy and hospitality management. The partnership will also foster collaboration in the fields of public, mental and behavioral health and other life sciences, and through information technology, including broadband applications such as telehealth and e-learning.

The agreement also seeks to enhance support for traditional students and continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities for adult learners of the Tribe.

The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana has more than 1,500 citizens and their families throughout the United States, primarily in Louisiana, Texas and Illinois. With deep ties to Central Louisiana, the tribe is dedicated to the prosperity and growth of the region. The tribe received federal recognition in 1981 and owns and operates Paragon Casino Resort in Marksville, the largest employer in Central Louisiana.

College enrollment decreases for Native students

BY DARREN THOMPSON
Native News Online

Overall Native student enrollment dropped in the fall of 2020 according to data collected by the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) and the National Student Clearinghouse. Overall student enrollment at tribal colleges and universities (TCU) enrollment is down by 1 percent with an 11 percent drop in freshman enrollment according to AIHEC; the National Student Clearinghouse data show a 23 percent decrease in freshman enrollment among Native students at all colleges and universities throughout the country.

"Our students, their families, and their community cannot afford to take a step backwards in education attainment," Cheryl Crazy Bull said to Native News Online. "TCUs offer Native students an opportunity for an affordable, culturally focused higher education alongside restorative traditional practices to help them and their families through the pandemic."

Although data show declining numbers among TCUs and Native student enrollment,

the decrease in student enrollment is much higher at community colleges with a 9.5 percent drop nationally according to Forbes Magazine. The decrease in enrollment at community colleges is attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with lower income and underrepresented students from marginalized communities.

Undergraduate enrollment at public colleges, the only type of institution that collects racial and ethnic data, declined for all student groupings. However, Native American student enrollment decreased the most with a loss of 12.5 percent according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center is the research arm of the National Student Clearinghouse. The Research Center collects data from nearly 3,600 postsecondary institutions, which represent 97 percent of the nation's postsecondary enrollments in degree-granting institutions, as of 2018.

"Education institutions, high schools and policymakers will need to work together to help bring back the learners

who are struggling during the pandemic and recession," Doug Shapiro, executive director, National Student Clearinghouse Research Center said to Forbes Magazine.

Native American students interested in attending college who are seeking a scholarship from the American Indian College Fund have an additional incentive to apply this year — the College Fund is offering \$20 gift cards for every student that completes an application by April 30 Crazy Bull said. "The incentive is being offered to increase Native student enrollment in at tribal colleges and universities and to encourage students to continue their education goals uninterrupted, despite the pandemic," she said.

Current Native tribal college students not receiving a College Fund scholarship, current American Indian College Fund scholarship recipients who are re-applying for scholarship funds and are attending tribal colleges, and Native high school students seeking to enroll at a tribal college are all eligible to apply. Eligible applicants must complete their applications online here to qualify for the \$20 gift card incentive.

UNITY names youth earth ambassadors

STAFF REPORT

MESA, Ariz. — United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY) announced April 21 the 2021-22 class of UNITY Earth Ambassadors. The environmental stewardship and leadership program, which began in the 1990s, provides Native American youth with training sessions and informational workshops to increase their knowledge of environmental issues affecting Indian country.

Through the program, ambassadors learn methods to raise awareness and youth engagement of the issues affecting the environmental quality on Native lands and promote the efforts to address environmental concerns within the nation's Native communities. Topics covered by previous cohorts have included recycling, conservation, regeneration, and restoration.

The Earth Ambassadors also have unique opportunities, coordinated through UNITY, to take their message to tribal and governmental agency representatives and lawmakers, and others committed to environmental stewardship.

The 2021-22 class of UNITY Earth Ambassadors are:

- LeAndria Gene, 17, Navajo
- Steve Harvey, 19, San Carlos Apache
- Binaahozhooonii Daisey Howard, 15, Navajo (Dine) / Zuni
- Tobi Candice Joe, 18, Navajo
- Maiya Martinez, 20, Spokane Tribe
- Gabriella Nakai, 15, Navajo/Choctaw
- Lauren Shelly Pina, 20, San Carlos Apache
- Tylee Tom, 20, Navajo
- Karlin Tsoitigh, 16, Kiowa
- Watson Whitford, 15, Chippewa Cree

"This impressive group of Native youth shares a strong commitment to preserving our Mother Earth and identifying and developing action plans that will protect, inform, and sustain their communities for generations to come," said Mary Kim Titla, UNITY's executive director.

The ambassadors were nominated by a community member, meeting criteria that included demonstrating leadership potential, showing an interest in protecting the environment, and experience and participation in community service projects. They will receive leadership training and recognition during the National UNITY Conference in Dallas, Texas, from July 2-6.

The announcement of UNITY's Earth Ambassadors was a part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indians Living Earth Festival – Youth in Action: Sustainable Future panel, featuring UNITY representative Marco Ovando (Shoshone-Paiute Tribe), a 2019-20 UNITY Earth Ambassador



Gabriella Nakai, 15, Navajo - Choctaw



Karlin Tsoitigh, 16, Kiowa



Maiya Martinez, 20, Spokane Tribe

Wampanoag Tribe member receives three-year scholarship to attend Harvard Law School

STAFF REPORT

Samantha Maltais, an enrolled member of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah located on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, has been awarded the American Indian Law Scholarship from the American Indian College Fund.

The scholarship covers all costs of attendance, including tuition, for the three-year course of study at Harvard Law School.

"A law degree from Harvard will mean more than just what I can achieve myself," she said in a statement. "It will mean helping design a future where Tribal youth can imagine themselves at the university's law school...a future where Native women and girls can see that they belong side by side with some

of the nation's brightest legal minds. It means a step towards healing for my community and inspiring generations to follow."

Maltais graduated in 2018 from Dartmouth College, where she was an American Indian College Fund Full Circle Scholar throughout her academic career.

According to the College Fund, the goal of the American Indian Law School Scholarship is to eliminate the financial hurdles to earning a Juris Doctor degree at Harvard Law School. The scholarship is open to American Indian or Alaska Natives who are an enrolled tribal member or lineal descendant of an enrolled parent or grandparent.

The scholarship is made possible thanks to an anonymous gift of \$1 million to the College Fund.



Samantha Maltais, Wampanoag Tribe

NSU plans for students to return to on-campus instruction this fall

STAFF REPORT

DAVIE – Nova Southeastern University is planning to welcome students back to campus this fall.

NSU announced in early April that it intends to resume full, in-person instruction on campus for the fall semester. The school

cited the availability of vaccines throughout the state, including at NSU, as a reason to resume on-campus learning.

Faculty, staff and students must be fully vaccinated by Aug. 1 in order to return to any NSU campus or site.

NSU will continue to follow CDC guidelines. Dining, recreation and sports are expected to return more of their pre-

pandemic services and activities.

"We have been through a lot together, and I personally look forward to welcoming everyone back to face-to-face classes and activities on our campuses again this fall," Dr. George Hanbury, NSU's president and CEO, said.

COASTAL From page 1B

The Restore Council initially approved the program in 2015. It trained 239 students in five tribes who restored 995 acres. Officials said the initiative proved so successful that

the 11 member council, which includes Gulf state and federal members, unanimously approved the new funds, which builds on the initial investment and adds the Coushatta Tribe.

The project originates from the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund, which was established in 2012 after the Deepwater

Horizon oil spill of 2010 – the largest marine oil spill in history.

More information is at restorethegulf.gov.



EVERY STUDENT HAS A STORY.

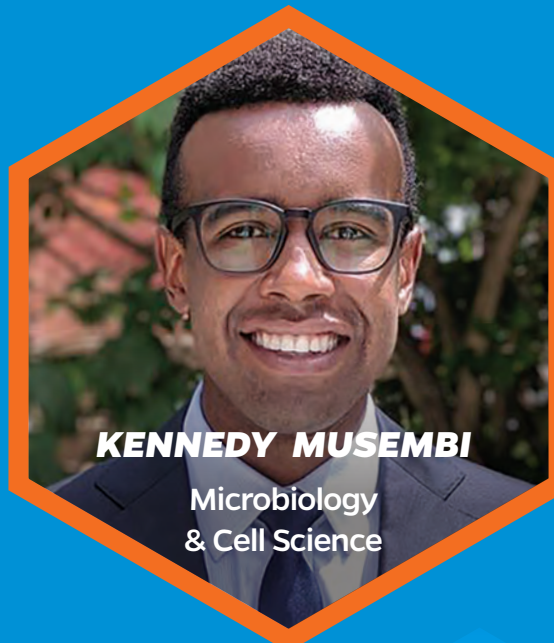
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2021 Seminole Tribal Fair Winners

ADULT/YOUTH FINE ARTS VIRTUAL CONTESTS RESULTS

AGES 60 & UP

- ACRYLIC
 - 1st Place | Jim Osceola
- CERAMICS
 - 1st Place | Donna Frank
- MIXED MEDIA
 - 1st Place | Virginia Osceola
- OIL
 - 1st Place | Jim Osceola
- PENCIL OR PEN & INK
 - 1st Place | Virginia Osceola

- PHOTOGRAPHY
 - 1st Place | Donna Frank

AGES 18-59

- ACRYLIC
 - 1st Place | William Cypress
- OIL
 - 1st Place | Dylanie Henry
- MIXED MEDIA
 - 1st Place | Tia E Blais-Billie
- PENCIL OR PEN & INK
 - 1st Place | Jo Jo Osceola
- PHOTOGRAPHY
 - 1st Place | Byron Billie
- WATERCOLOR
 - 1st Place | Clarissa Urbina

AGES 10-17

- MIXED MEDIA
 - 1st Place | Sarafina Billie
- PENCIL OR PEN & INK
 - 1st Place | Shylah Walker
- PHOTOGRAPHY
 - 1st Place | Derrion Faison
- WATERCOLOR
 - 1st Place | Sarafina Billie

ADULT/YOUTH ARTS & CRAFTS VIRTUAL CONTESTS RESULTS

AGES 60 & UP

- BASKETRY
 - 1st Place | Mahala Madrigal
- BEADWORK
 - 1st Place | Richard Doctor
- SEMINOLE CLOTHING W/
PATCHWORK
 - 1st Place | Virginia Osceola
- SEMINOLE DOLL
 - 1st Place | Lucille Jumper
- SEMINOLE PATCHWORK DESIGN
 - 1st Place | Mary Tommie

AGES 46-59

- BASKETRY
 - 1st Place | Salina Dorgan
- BEADWORK
 - 1st Place | Tina Osceola
- SEMINOLE CLOTHING W/
PATCHWORK
 - 1st Place | Jennifer Osceola
- SEMINOLE DOLL
 - 1st Place | Salina Dorgan
- SEMINOLE PATCHWORK DESIGN
 - 1st Place | Christalee Coppedge
- WOODCARVING
 - 1st Place | Vinson Osceola

AGES 33-45

- BASKETRY
 - 1st Place | Clarissa Urbina
- BEADWORK
 - 1st Place | Lazara Marrero
- SEMINOLE CLOTHING W/
PATCHWORK
 - 1st Place | Tasha Osceola
- SEMINOLE DOLL
 - 1st Place | Lorraine Posada
- SEMINOLE PATCHWORK DESIGN
 - 1st Place | Olivia Cypress
- WOODCARVING
 - 1st Place | Charlie Osceola

AGES 18-32

- BASKETRY
 - 1st Place | Taylor Fulton
- BEADWORK
 - 1st Place | Alanis Bowers
- SEMINOLE CLOTHING W/
PATCHWORK
 - 1st Place | Le' Andra Mora
- SEMINOLE DOLL
 - 1st Place | Alanis Bowers
- SEMINOLE PATCHWORK DESIGN
 - 1st Place | Le' Andra M Mora
- WOODCARVING
 - 1st Place | Morgan Frank

AGES 10-17

- BASKETRY
 - 1st Place | Miley Jimmie
- BEADWORK
 - 1st Place | Draycen Osceola
- SEMINOLE CLOTHING W/
PATCHWORK
 - 1st Place | Amalia Estrada
- SEMINOLE DOLL
 - 1st Place | Kashyra Urbina
- SEMINOLE PATCHWORK DESIGN
 - 1st Place | Kashyra Urbina
- WOODCARVING
 - 1st Place | Draven Osceola-Hahn

ADULT/YOUTH CLOTHING VIRTUAL CONTESTS RESULTS

AGES 60 & UP

- CONTEMPORARY LADIES
 - 1st Place | Mahala Madrigal
- CONTEMPORARY MEN
 - 1st Place | Norman Johns
- JACKETS
 - 1st Place | Thomas Billie
- MODERN LADIES
 - 1st Place | Virginia Osceola
- MODERN MEN
 - 1st Place | Sandy Billie Jr.

- OLDSTYLE LADIES
 - 1st Place | Virginia Osceola

- OLDSTYLE MEN
 - 1st Place | Norman Johns

- SKIRTS
 - 1st Place | Virginia Osceola

- TRADITIONAL LADIES
 - 1st Place | Lucille Jumper

- TRADITIONAL MEN
 - 1st Place | Sandy Billie Jr.

AGES 50-59

- CONTEMPORARY LADIES
 - 1st Place | Dionne Smedley
- CONTEMPORARY MEN
 - 1st Place | Joseph Kippenberger
- JACKETS
 - 1st Place | Joseph Kippenberger

- MODERN LADIES
 - 1st Place | Betty Billie

- MODERN MEN
 - 1st Place | Elrod Bowers

- OLDSTYLE LADIES
 - 1st Place | Betty Billie

- SKIRTS
 - 1st Place | Betty Billie

- TRADITIONAL LADIES
 - 1st Place | Dionne Smedley

AGES 41-49

- CONTEMPORARY LADIES
 - 1st Place | Laverne Thomas
- CONTEMPORARY MEN
 - 1st Place | Elrod Bowers

- OLDSTYLE LADIES
 - 1st Place | Jo Johns

- OLDSTYLE MEN
 - 1st Place | Elrod Bowers

- JACKETS
 - 1st Place | Marl Osceola

- MODERN LADIES
 - 1st Place | Laverne Thomas

- MODERN MEN
 - 1st Place | Elrod Bowers

- SKIRTS
 - 1st Place | Jo Johns

- TRADITIONAL LADIES
 - 1st Place | Laverne Thomas

AGES 33-40

- CONTEMPORARY LADIES
 - 1st Place | Jo Jo Osceola

- CONTEMPORARY MEN
 - 1st Place | Byron Billie

- JACKETS
 - 1st Place | Byron Billie

- MODERN LADIES
 - 1st Place | Jo Jo Osceola

- MODERN MEN
 - 1st Place | Byron Billie

- OLDSTYLE LADIES
 - 1st Place | Tasha Osceola

- OLDSTYLE MEN
 - 1st Place | Amos Billie, Jr.

- SKIRTS
 - 1st Place | Jo Jo Osceola

- TRADITIONAL LADIES
 - 1st Place | Jo Jo Osceola

- TRADITIONAL MEN
 - 1st Place | Byron Billie

- CONTEMPORARY LADIES
 - 1st Place | Ariaah Osceola

- CONTEMPORARY MEN
 - 1st Place | Justin Aldridge

- JACKETS
 - 1st Place | Justin Aldridge

- MODERN LADIES
 - 1st Place | Ariaah Osceola

- MODERN MEN
 - 1st Place | Justin Aldridge

- OLDSTYLE LADIES
 - 1st Place | Ariaah Osceola

- SKIRTS
 - 1st Place | Kurya Kippenberger

- TRADITIONAL LADIES
 - 1st Place | Kurya Kippenberger

AGES 18-25

- CONTEMPORARY LADIES
 - 1st Place | Kalgary Johns-Motlow

- CONTEMPORARY MEN
 - 1st Place | Malcolm Jones

- JACKETS
 - 1st Place | Grant Osceola

- MODERN LADIES
 - 1st Place | Katelyn Young

- MODERN MEN
 - 1st Place | Malcolm Jones

- OLDSTYLE LADIES
 - 1st Place | Kalgary Johns

- OLDSTYLE MEN
 - 1st Place | Hunter Osceola

- SKIRTS
 - 1st Place | Thomlynn Billie

- TRADITIONAL LADIES
 - 1st Place | Katelyn Young

AGES 13-17

- MODERN GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Xiya Osceola

- MODERN BOYS
 - 1st Place | Byron Billie, Jr.

- OLDSTYLE GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Kashyra Urbina

- OLDSTYLE BOYS
 - 1st Place | Xavier Osceola

- TRADITIONAL GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Xiya Osceola

- TRADITIONAL BOYS
 - 1st Place | Xavier Osceola

AGES 6-12

- MODERN GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Ma'at Osceola

- MODERN BOYS
 - 1st Place | Lennox Osceola

- OLDSTYLE GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Mary Sally Osceola

- OLDSTYLE BOYS
 - 1st Place | Lennox Osceola

- TRADITIONAL GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Mary Sally Osceola

- TRADITIONAL BOYS
 - 1st Place | Lennox Osceola

AGES 3-5

- MODERN GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Fiona Osceola

- MODERN BOYS
 - 1st Place | Deron Billie

- OLDSTYLE GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Jalylee Osceola

- OLDSTYLE BOYS
 - 1st Place | Ax1 Gentry

- TRADITIONAL GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Fiona Osceola

AGES 4MO-2yrs

- MODERN GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Evangelina Jo Billie

- OLDSTYLE GIRLS
 - 1st Place | Evangelina Jo Billie

- OLDSTYLE BOYS
 - 1st Place | Jalyn Osceola

- TRADITIONAL BOYS
 - 1st Place | Sam Santibanez-Gopher



Charlie Osceola - woodcarving

SMP



Donna Frank - photography

SMP



Draven Osceola-Hahn - woodcarving

SMP



Lucille Jumper - Seminole doll

SMP



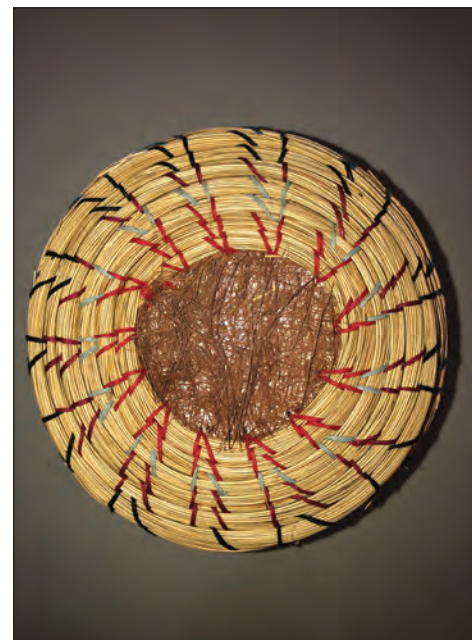
Tina Osceola - beadwork

SMP



Sandy Billie Jr. - traditional men

SMP



Miley Jimmie - basketry

SMP



Jimmie John Osceola - acrylic

SMP

Sports



High school softball game features two Seminole head coaches

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

OKEECHOBEE — The final score wasn't necessarily the most significant part of the high school varsity softball game when Moore Haven visited Okeechobee on April 23.

Instead, the importance of the evening was that two tribal members faced each other as head coaches, which is a rare occurrence for the Seminole Tribe. Very few Seminoles have coached high school sports at non-tribal schools — let alone be head coaches — so it was a big deal when Moore Haven's Jaryaca Baker faced Okeechobee's Mary Huff. Additionally, Baker's assistant coaches — her father Preston and Brianna Nunez — are tribal members. Seminoles were in both line-ups, too. Sisters Elle and Lexi Thomas started for Okeechobee at shortstop and center field, respectively. Moore Haven featured starters Preslynn Baker in the circle and Summer Gopher at third. Aaryn King, Tehya Nunez and Illa Trueblood also played for the Terriers.

Jaryaca Baker and Huff are former standouts at Okeechobee who went on to play in college.

"I think I was coaching the (Okeechobee) JV team in Jaryaca's senior year and then I think I coached Bri her senior year," said Huff, who has been at the helm of the Brahman program for nearly a decade. "It was cool to play against them (tonight).



Kevin Johnson

Seminole coaches and players gather after the Moore Haven versus Okeechobee softball game April 23 at Okeechobee High School. From left in front row, Moore Haven head coach Jaryaca Baker, Summer Gopher, Preslynn Baker, Lexi Thomas, Elle Thomas, Illa Trueblood, Aaryn King, Tehya Nunez, Moore Haven assistant coach Brianna Nunez and Okeechobee head coach Mary Huff. Moore Haven assistant coach Preston Baker is in the back row.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven's Summer Gopher sprints to first base against Okeechobee.



Kevin Johnson

Lexi Thomas delivers a base hit for Okeechobee.



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven pitcher Preslynn Baker fires a throw to first base for an out on a bunt.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee shortstop Elle Thomas prepares to tag out Moore Haven's Tehya Nunez at second base.



Kevin Johnson

From left, Moore Haven assistant coaches Preston Baker and Brianna Nunez, and head coach Jaryaca Baker, watch their team face Okeechobee.

Everybody is here. It's cool to keep it local and for everyone to root on kids they watched grow up."

Although perhaps not as vibrant an atmosphere as would be in non-pandemic times, spectators still mostly filled up the stands behind home plate and tailgated beyond the left field fence.

Baker said she, Huff and Nunez were all fortunate to have their parents coach them while growing up. But Baker said having tribal members as coaches only lasted for so long in their playing days.

"We never see other Native Americans coaching high school sports," she said.

That's why Baker believes it's so vital what she and Huff are doing as head coaches as well as her assistants.

"I feel like the main thing is for young tribal members — boys and girls — to see us doing more outside the rez. When they see us coaching and doing things, they know they can do those things, too," Baker said.

Of course, just because Seminoles are coaching Seminoles does not mean it's

going to be easy for the players.

"I'm really hard on my girls this year, and especially my sister (Preslynn), but I want them to know they can do more if someone pushes them to do more," Baker said. "For us to have as many tribal member kids in our program as we do makes me really happy. I want to see my people always be better."

As for the game, Okeechobee cruised to a 10-0 win against the far younger Terriers. In fact, Preslynn Baker is only an eighth-grader, but she has a varsity arm. She battled her older opponents and notched a handful of strikeouts, and also drilled a clean single up the middle, all of which bodes well for Moore Haven's future.

Elle and Lexi Thomas starred at the plate for Okeechobee. Both delivered RBI hits that paved the way to victory.

Elle is a junior; Lexi is a freshman. "They've been doing really well for me. I can't complain," Huff said.

Elle, a three-year starter, bats in the clean-up spot and is one of the team's top hitters.

"She is definitely the hardest-hitting, hardest-swinging person in the line-up," Huff said. "This (season) is the best I've ever seen her at the plate."

After the game, both teams shifted their focus to the district playoffs, which were scheduled to start the week of April 26.

FGCU catcher Ahnie Jumper earns praise for her leadership

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

FORT MYERS — From the coach to the players, the comments about Ahnie Jumper contained a common theme: leadership.

Whether it's been behind the plate as a catcher or away from the field, Jumper has earned admiration during her four years on the Florida Gulf Coast University softball team. She was one of eight seniors honored in a pregame senior day ceremony April 25 before the Eagles played their final regular season home game against Jacksonville.

"She's just been an amazing softball player," said FGCU coach Dave Deiros. "She's really, really knowledgeable about the game and brings a lot to the table as far as leadership, and as far as the ability to go ahead and make plays. Off the field, she's just an amazing individual who wants to give back to her tribe, wants to give back to her community, and wants to help those who are less advantaged."

Indeed, off the field, Jumper has been helping the less fortunate of Fort Myers. She works with those experiencing homelessness as part of her academic work toward completing her degree this spring in social work.

As the starting catcher and a leader on the team, Jumper helped FGCU clinch the Atlantic Sun Conference's South Division in April. She had started 24 games heading into the final weekend of the regular season.

"Knowing full well that she's the catcher and that she's the General, she's really enjoyed that leadership role and taking charge of the team when she's on the field and when she's off the field," Deiros said.

Off the field for Jumper includes competing in rodeos. She's been a fixture at Eastern Indian Rodeo Association events and the Indian National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas for several years, often competing in breakaway roping.

"I've asked her to come to practice and show us how she does her lasso techniques and everything else," Deiros said. "She's just an athlete. She can do anything that she sets her mind to, and that's why she's going to be successful with whatever she does."

Jumper had several family members from the Big Cypress Reservation in attendance at senior day, including her parents Andrea and Josh, some of her six siblings, grandparents Moses and Laquita and her uncle Naha.



Florida Gulf Coast University senior catcher Ahnie Jumper, of the Big Cypress Reservation, is the center of attention as the Eagles get fired up before facing No. 3 Florida on April 21 in Fort Myers.



Ahnies Jumper makes contact in her only at-bat in the Eagles' 3-0 loss to the Florida Gators on April 21.

Players were presented with bricks engraved with their name, position, uniform number and years played. The bricks will be installed in front of Alico Arena on campus.

The players' tributes to their class of 2021 teammates aired for everyone in the park to see as the giant scoreboard in left field played individual videos for each senior in between innings. A couple players said Jumper exudes confidence which, in turn, helps them. One player summed up Jumper by saying she's never afraid to let someone know when they aren't playing well because she doesn't want to see that person fail.

FGCU made sure it didn't fail on senior day. The Eagles shook off a shaky start in their final regular season home game and rallied for a 5-4 win.

Jumper went 0-for-1. She reached on a fielder's choice in the fourth inning and recorded her first stolen base of the season.

With the game knotted at 4-4 in the bottom of the sixth, Jumper's sacrifice bunt moved Maddy Johnson to second base. Johnson scored the go-ahead run on a single by McKenna Batterton.

FGCU's quest for a conference championship starts May 7 when the Eagles host Stetson University in a best-of-three quarterfinal series.

On April 21, FGCU's bats never got on track against Natalie Lugo and the University of Florida Gators in front of 278 spectators in Fort Myers.

Powerful Florida (33-6), which has



Ahnies Jumper, left, and fellow senior teammate Maddy Johnson watch a tribute on the video scoreboard during a pregame ceremony on senior day April 25.

played in the national championship game three times in the past six years, scored twice in the first inning on a two-run home run by Cheyenne Lindsey and tacked on another run in the seventh to blank the Eagles, 3-0. FGCU played the No. 3 ranked team in the country evenly except for those bookend innings.

"A lot of credit goes out to our pitching staff and defense," Deiros said. "We did a nice job of keeping them at bay after the first two hitters. We did a good job of keeping it close but we just had to do a better job offensively, not necessarily sitting back and being a victim but taking the game more to them."

Part of FGCU's strong defensive performance came from Jumper. She threw out Sarah Longley at second base on an attempted steal in the fifth inning.

Offensively, Jumper entered the game in the third inning as a pinch runner. Her lone at-bat came in the fourth. She flied out to right-center on a 3-2 pitch.



Ahnies Jumper sprints to third base in the third inning against the University of Florida.



Ahnies Jumper gets set for a play at the plate in the first inning of FGCU's senior day game against Jacksonville.

NABI plans for a full field in Phoenix

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

After being canceled a year ago due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Native American Basketball Invitational will return in 2021.

The NABI Foundation announced April 27 that a full field of 128 all-Native American and Indigenous teams, including from the Seminole Tribe, will compete in the Phoenix area July 11-17. The tournament will also include an educational youth summit that debuted in 2019.

NABI attracts more than 1,300 boys and girls ages 14-19. The Seminole Tribe has been a longtime sponsor of the tournament.

"This year's registration turnout is a testament to the significance of NABI among Indigenous youth who love playing

basketball and who benefit tremendously from exploring the higher educational opportunities NABI's educational summit opens them to," GinaMarie Scarpa, president and CEO of NABI Foundation, said in a statement.

Scarpa, who is half Indigenous on her mother's side, co-founded NABI with former Phoenix Suns player Mark West.

"In my garage, we were an odd trifecta of talent. Our friend, the late Scott Podleski, saw a need. I brought nonprofit experience as the former executive director of the A.C. Green Foundation and Mark, who is a huge advocate for higher education, well, played a lot of basketball and knew the game," Scarpa said.

Due to the pandemic, the tournament will mandate a mask policy and a scaled-

down version of its educational program. The tournament hopes that by this summer full attendance at games will be permitted.

"We're a nimble organization that pivots easily. We hope that by July full-capacity gyms will be allowed and fans, who are overwhelmingly families and community members of participating tribal teams, will be able to attend games and other events," said Lynette Lewis, director of program operations.

The tournament's future looks bright. NABI has a goal of doubling the number of participating teams to 256 beginning in 2022. Also in development is an annual All-Native American adult NABI tournament for ages 21 and up.



Anadarko High School senior basketball player Lexi Foreman.

1,000-point scorer Lexi Foreman named to Oklahoma Native All State Team

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

After producing strong all around numbers, Anadarko High School senior guard/forward Lexi Foreman earned a spot on the 2021 Oklahoma Native All State girls basketball team.

Foreman (Seminole Tribe of Florida/Kiowa/Sac and Fox) was one of 20 players selected to the team, which recognizes the top Native American players in the state. Her Anadarko teammate Kaylee Lane Borden (Comanche Nation/Kiowa) also made the team.

Foreman concluded her four-year varsity career in March. She averaged nine points, five rebounds, four assists and four steals per game in helping lead Anadarko to a 23-3 record and an Area championship. The team wasn't far from a perfect season; its losses were by a total of 11 points. The Lady Warriors saw their 20-game winning streak and season end with a loss to Tuttle in the 4A state semifinals.

Foreman excelled at both ends of the court this season. She scored in double digits 15 times. Her season highs included 18 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. She led the team in several categories, including rebounds (140), assists (107), steals (105) and blocks (17).

Foreman, who signed with the University of Central Oklahoma, reached the 1,000-point career milestone Feb. 23 in a win against Pauls Valley. She finished with 1,044 points.

The Oklahoma Native All State Association said it had record-high nominations this year with more than 160 boys and girls nominated by their coaches. The selection committee was comprised of 12 Native American coaches from across the state.

The Native All State games will be played June 12 in Okmulgee.

Foreman is the daughter of Matt and Alicia Foreman and granddaughter of the late Coleman Josh.

Formula 1 adds Hard Rock Stadium to racing circuit

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Since being named Hard Rock Stadium in the summer of 2016 – when Seminole Tribe leaders and the Miami Dolphins smashed guitars on the field to celebrate the 18-year naming partnership – the venue in Miami Gardens has hosted high profile sports and entertainment events, including the Super Bowl, NCAA football championship, Orange Bowl, Miami Open tennis tournament and concerts by Beyoncé, Taylor Swift and the Rolling Stones.

Add Formula 1 auto racing to the list.

Sunday the global racing circuit – which has worldwide appeal – announced it will hold the Miami Grand Prix at Hard Rock Stadium. The 10-year deal is scheduled to start in 2022; an exact date has not been announced.

"The U.S. is a key growth market for us, and we are greatly encouraged by our growing reach in the US which will be further supported by this exciting second race," Stefano Domenicali, president and CEO of Formula 1, said in a statement. "We will be working closely with the team from Hard Rock Stadium and the FIA to ensure the

circuit delivers sensational racing but also leaves a positive and lasting contribution for the people in the local community."

There should be plenty of international eyes on Hard Rock Stadium when F1 rolls into town. According to F1, its cumulative television audience in 2020 was 1.5 billion. The countries with the most TV viewers are Brazil, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

The track will cover 3.3-miles on the pavement outside the stadium. The course will hug the stadium on the northeast and southwest sides. Average speeds are expected to be about 138 mph with top speeds close to 200 mph.

"The Hard Rock Stadium entertainment campus in Miami Gardens exists to host the biggest global events to benefit the entire greater Miami region and Formula 1 racing is as big as it gets," said Tom Garfinkel, vice-chairman, president and CEO, of Hard Rock Stadium.

F1's 23-race schedule this season spans the globe with stops in Abu Dhabi, Australia, Brazil, Europe, Japan and other locations. The only race held in the U.S. this year will be in Austin, Texas.

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.



Formula 1 racing is coming to Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens starting in 2022.

FOR SALE						
LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/ HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE
A34484	1994	FORD DUMP TRUCK	L9000 (Diesel)	155,133	Poor	\$450.00
D91460	2006	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F250 XL SUPERCREW SD DIESEL (4WD)	97,305	Poor	\$4,940.00
206791	2012	FORD SEDAN	FUSION (FWD)	119,362	Fair	\$3,781.00
440779	2012	FORD SEDAN	FUSION (FWD)	139,114	Fair	\$3,840.00
440781	2012	FORD SEDAN	FUSION (FWD)	113,181	Fair	\$4,080.00
679371	2013	RAM PICKUP TRUCK	POLICE RAM 1500 SUPERCREW 4X4	160,393	Poor	\$5,535.00
A55401	2013	FORD SUV	EXPLORER XLT (FWD)	162,190	Fair	\$7,428.00
A55402	2013	FORD SUV	EXPLORER XLT (FWD)	131,852	Fair	\$8,478.00

Note - Previously advertised items are not reflected on this advertisement, only new listings. For more information contact Fixed Assets Dept. 954-967-3640, 954-966-6300 ext. 20034.

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