



The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

www.seminoletribune.org • Free

Volume XLVIII • Number 10

October 2024

5K run, fitness challenge to honor late STOF firefighter

STAFF REPORT

The first annual Humble Warrior Games – in honor of the late former Seminole Tribe of Florida firefighter and paramedic Jorge Pastore – will be held Nov. 10 at Reveille Peak Ranch in Burnet, Texas, about 50 miles northwest of Austin.



Jorge Pastore

The Games will include a 5K for every fitness level, a team obstacle course challenge, tactical events, and more.

On Nov. 11, 2023, Pastore, as an officer with the Austin Police Department (APD), was shot and killed in the line of duty during a domestic hostage situation in which another officer was shot and wounded, the gunman was killed and two other people in the home died.

Pastore, 38, had been a member of APD since 2019 and served in its Honor Guard, Counter Assault Strike Team, Special Response Team and SWAT Gold Team.

♦ See FIREFIGHTER on page 5A

New Immokalee clinic welcomes patients

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

IMMOKALEE — The recently completed Immokalee Medical Clinic and Behavioral Health Center is open and ready for patients.

The 17,160-square-foot facility opened Sept. 4. Its hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. A grand opening is scheduled for Oct. 21.

The facility provides ample space for adult and pediatric medical services. Some of its features include a drive-thru pharmacy, a teaching kitchen, physical therapy, dental, and the Center for Behavioral Health (CBH).

Located at 850 and 860 Seminole Crossing Trail on the Immokalee



Beverly Bidney

Mary Lou Alvarado, Immokalee Clinic supervisor



Beverly Bidney

The entrance of the Immokalee Medical Clinic.

Reservation, the building has separate entrances, one for the medical/dental clinic and the other for CBH and Advocacy and Guardianship Department.

In the clinic, adult and pediatrics each have its own sick and well waiting rooms, triage room and two exam rooms. The dentist is in the office five days a week and the dental hygienist is available twice each

week.

Between the adult and pediatric sides of the clinic is a state-of-the-art nurses station which resembles those commonly found in hospitals.

A serene glass-walled wide hallway with chairs connects the CBH wing of the building to the clinic. The space is intended for patients to take a peaceful break from

treatment if they desire.

Next door to the clinic is the Immokalee Pubic Service building, which recently became operational. The building houses fire, police, an emergency operations center/general purpose meeting center and the public safety dispatch point.

♦ See CLINIC on page 5A

Garden Club sprouts up in Hollywood

BY TATUM MITCHELL
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The 4-H Garden Club is starting to take root in Hollywood with the club's first meeting Sept. 17.

Donna Frank, among others, talked about sweetgrass and demonstrated how to plant it. Many kids got their hands dirty – literally – and participated in planting a bin-full of sweetgrass.

Attendees gathered under a chickee to hear speakers Frank, club leader Krystle Bowers, forester Grant Steelman and biologist Sean McHugh. Bowers and Frank spoke about the cultural significance of growing sweetgrass and gardening other plants in the community.

"A lot of ... tribal members from other tribes will tell you: You cannot have tribal sovereignty without food sovereignty," Bowers said. "And if you look at the history of our people, colonizers, they attacked the food ... first. That was their first way to gain control over our people."

After the speakers, people crowded around the above-ground gardening bin to plant their own sweetgrass. The children stretched over the top of the bin and squeezed in next to one another to dig their hands into the dirt, making a space to plant.

The grass can take up to three years to fully mature, and having sweetgrass readily available on the reservations can be challenging. Baskets made from sweetgrass have been made for more than 60 years within the Seminole Tribe. Finding it has become increasingly hard.

Environmental factors and construction contribute to this, according to Florida Seminole Tourism website. It also takes skill to spot and harvest sweetgrass. Frank said she sometimes drives for hours and treks through various areas to get to some.



Tatum Mitchell

From left to right, Sue Forbes-Osceola, Ella Forbes-Osceola, Tenia Tommie James, Sally Turtle-Alfonso, Alex Tommie James, Azallea Stewart, Daylen Stewart and Kaidence Alvarez gather around to plant sweetgrass at Garden Club's first meeting in Hollywood on Sept. 17.

"The wild sweetgrass used in these [baskets] is hand-picked from high, dry areas of the Everglades basin, washed, laid in the sun to dry and sewn together with colored threads," the STOF website said.

♦ See CLUB on page 5A

Tatum Mitchell

Grant Steelman shows attendees of Garden Club how to handle and plant sweetgrass.



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Visit the Tribune's website (seminoletribune.org) and Instagram (@seminoletribune) for news throughout the month

Editorial

A legacy of harm: The Navajo Nation demands justice for uranium mining victims

• Buu Nygren

The Navajo Nation, its workers and families, have carried the heavy burden of uranium mining’s toxic legacy for decades. They have suffered the devastating consequences of exposure to radiation. Our land has been scarred by the extraction of an element that was once considered critical to our national security.

The harm it left did not end with the closing of the mines. It has continued for generations. Many Navajo citizens developed serious illnesses such as cancer and respiratory diseases. The toll of uranium mining is a profound chapter of our people’s history. It demands immediate and comprehensive justice.

As President of the Navajo Nation, it’s my duty to protect the health and wellness of my people. I have said enough is enough. We now face a repeat of history with this country’s renewed interest in uranium mining, and with uranium ore being transported across my people’s sacred land.

The Navajo Nation stands united with the affected uranium miners, Downwinders and their families. Together, we will march to the U.S. Capitol later this month alongside other tribal leaders and impacted communities to demand Congress act with urgency.

In August, I worked with our Navajo Nation Council to strengthen laws regarding uranium transportation to prevent more disasters from occurring from this deadly element.

Despite our concerns, laws, testimony and declarations, Congress failed in June 2024 when it allowed the 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to expire. This failure in leadership left thousands of workers and their families in limbo. They were left without access to the critical health screenings or minimal compensation once provided by RECA. This is not a failure in policy. It is a failure in responsibility.

My message to Congress and the uranium mining industry is clear: do not start new mining and transport uranium across our lands when you haven’t even addressed the last crisis you caused.

The federal government and private companies knowingly exploited the Navajo people during the uranium boom. It concealed the dangers of radiation exposure from workers. It failed to provide my people with proper protective equipment.

Workers were not warned of the dangers as they drank water contaminated by mining operations and as families built homes from mining debris. They were unaware that these materials were poisoned. But others knew.

Governments have a duty to protect their people. In this case, the U.S. failed to do that.

Navajo uranium miners were men and women who were asked to serve their country by working in the uranium mines. They now

suffer from debilitating illnesses. They have waited too long for justice. Further delay is unconscionable.

Thankfully, Congress has a solution available. The Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act, S. 3853, has passed the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support with a vote of 69-30.

Critically, this bill extends RECA benefits to those affected by uranium mining operations beyond 1971. It addresses the broader impact on Downwinders and other communities.

Uranium mines on the Navajo Nation remained operational until 1990. Any viable RECA extension must include uranium workers through that time. Any earlier cut-off date would leave a significant number of Navajo uranium workers without the recognition or compensation they deserve.

For over 30 years, the Navajo Nation has tirelessly advocated for these workers. It is unacceptable to leave them behind.

RECA has been sitting at the House Clerk’s desk since March 2024 awaiting action from Speaker Mike Johnson and House leadership. The House could act to reinstate RECA today.

Sadly, Speaker Johnson has prioritized dollars and cents over justice for the communities poisoned by our government. He has rejected every compromise solution, shortening the duration of the program from 19 years to just six years with reduced compensation. The speaker has refused to meet with us to share his objections directly with those affected.

The U.S. has spent untold billions on foreign aid and wars. Yet when it comes to protecting the lives of American citizens – specifically the Navajo people, who contributed so much in the interest of national security – the federal government turns its back.

We call upon Speaker Johnson to bring the Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act to the House floor for a vote. The time for action is now.

Our march to the U.S. Capitol is not just about policy. It is about human live. It is about the countless Navajo families who have lost loved ones to cancer, who have watched their health deteriorate, and who continue to live in fear of what tomorrow may bring. It is about honoring the sacrifices made by uranium workers to ensure that their suffering is not forgotten.

We are not asking for favors. We are asking for justice. Congress has the opportunity to do what is right and rectify a historic wrong. The Navajo Nation will not rest until justice is secured for our people and for all those impacted by uranium mining. It is time for Congress to listen, to act, and to bring an end to this dark legacy.

Buu Nygren is the president of the Navajo Nation. This opinion was published by nativenewsonline.net.

boards supporting his tribal community and surrounding areas. During his nearly 12-year tenure with the EBCI, he also served as treasurer and Finance director.

“We couldn’t be more thrilled that Cory has decided to bring his talents to NAFOA, he has a unique understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our organization,” Chairman Rodney Butler (Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation), president of the NAFOA Board of Directors, said in the release. “His extensive background in tribal finance and governance, combined with his experience with nonprofits, positions him to effectively lead NAFOA. We are confident in his ability to steer the organization forward and amplify its impact on Indian Country.”

Blankenship holds a Bachelor of Arts in political science from North Carolina State University, a Master of Public Affairs from Western Carolina University, and a Master of Jurisprudence in Federal Indian Law from the University of Tulsa College of Law. In 2019, he received the 40 Under 40 award from the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development. He and his wife, Jade (Colville Confederated Tribes), reside in the Big Cove Community of the Qualla Boundary (Cherokee Indian Reservation) with their five sons.

Justice Department announces grants with Office on Violence Against Women for Native communities

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Justice Department announced Sept. 24 more than \$86.16 million in grants from the Tribal Affairs Division within the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) to support survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and sex trafficking from American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

The grants provided through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) will fund services for victims of these crimes while providing support for Tribal governments to enhance safety and support Tribal sovereignty.

Principal Deputy Director Allison Randall of OVW made the announcement at the annual Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program Institute.

“Tribal communities, and particularly American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, have experienced disproportionately high levels of violence for too long,” said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. “This \$86 million dollar investment represents the Justice Department’s commitment to working in partnership with Tribal nations to address and prevent gender-based violence and provide safety and justice for survivors.”

Included in these awards is more than \$7.58 million that OVW is awarding under its new Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program: Strengthening Tribal Advocacy Responses Track (START) Program.

The program is for Tribal governments

that have not previously or recently participated in OVW’s Grants to Indian Tribal Governments Program and focuses on capacity building early in the project period. Awardees will receive additional training, technical assistance, and support to implement their programs.

Additionally, OVW awarded \$45.17 million under the established Tribal Governments Program to support Tribal governments in responding to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and stalking in Tribal communities.

OVW is awarding grants totaling more than \$3.57 million to Tribes under its Special Tribal Criminal Grant (STCJ) Program and \$1.5 million under its Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction: Targeted Support for Alaska Native Tribes Special Initiative. The programs support Tribes that are preparing to exercise or are already exercising STCJ to ensure that victims find safety and justice and that non-Indians who commit covered crimes within their communities, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking, are held accountable.

OVW is also awarding grants totaling \$3.75 million under its Violence Against Women Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Initiative to support the collaboration between Tribes and U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in their investigation and prosecution of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, sex trafficking, and stalking cases in Indian country.

OVW is also awarding grants totaling

more than \$11.11 million under its Tribal Sexual Assault Services Program to support Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Tribal nonprofit organizations in operating sexual assault services programs in Indian country and Alaska Native villages. Additionally, OVW awarded funding totaling more than \$8.28 million under its Grants to Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions Program to support the development and operation of nonprofit, nongovernmental Tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions.

“We are committed to addressing the disproportionately high rates of violent crime faced by American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls and ensuring everyone can access both safety and justice,” said Principal Deputy Associate Attorney General Benjamin C. Mizer. “This funding supports Tribal governments and Tribal organizations’ efforts to provide legal services, housing assistance, medical care, and counseling to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of gender-based violence.”

OVW is also awarding grants totaling \$3.2 million for Tribal training and technical assistance (TA) programs. The TA programs support grantees through in-person and online educational opportunities, peer-to-peer networks, on-site technical assistance, and tailored support to help grantees further develop expertise and targeted strategies to implement their programs successfully.

More information is at www.justice.gov/ovw.

New director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs announced

STAFF REPORT

Bryan Mercier (Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon) is the new director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior, according to an announcement on Sept. 6.

“Bryan has demonstrated exceptional leadership ability, and I’m excited for what he brings to this role,” Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland said in a release. “We held a comprehensive recruitment and selection process to identify the best candidate, and Bryan stood out for his vision of the future of BIA and skills to achieve that vision.”

Effective Sept. 8, Mercier is the acting director and will be formally appointed when current director Darryl LaCounte retires later this year.

“I’ve had the privilege of serving in four federal agencies, Energy, Treasury, Agriculture and Interior, each with unique missions. None have a mission as important and fulfilling as BIA’s,” Mercier said in a release. “I’m truly honored to be selected as the bureau’s next director and look forward to building on Darryl LaCounte’s sound leadership to support Tribal sovereignty, strengthen Indian self-determination, and continue to improve our services by making the bureau an employer of choice for Native people.”



Courtesy photo

Bryan Mercier, new director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Hard Rock’s Pinktober kicks off in October

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock International’s Pinktober campaign – which raises awareness and money for breast cancer research – turns 25 this year.

The annual campaign held in October has raised more than \$12 million, including \$1.3 million in 2023.

This year Hard Rock – through its Hard Rock Heals Foundation – kicked off Pinktober by donating \$100,000 to the American Cancer Society.

According to a press release, this year’s fundraising will include auctions for items worn by soccer superstar Lionel Messi and the F1 powerhouse Oracle Red Bull Racing team. Other fundraising items include hotel, café, casino and merchandise offers.

“For the past 25 years, Hard Rock has proudly supported researchers at incredible organizations across the globe working toward a cure for breast cancer,” Stephanie Piimauna, senior vice president of people

& inclusion and chief diversity & inclusion officer at Seminole Hard Rock Support Services, said in a statement. “Through the Hard Rock Heals Foundation, we’re honored to do our part and are deeply grateful to our partners, loyal guests, and team members who help us make a meaningful impact in raising awareness and funds for this vital cause each year.”

The auction items are slated to include Messi-autographed pink cleats that he wore in an Inter Miami CF match and racing gear worn by Oracle Red Bull superstar drivers Max Verstappen and Sergio Perez. Additionally, Hard Rock branding on the team’s cars and uniforms will be changed to pink throughout October and the start of November.

Other areas of the Pinktober campaign include:

- Hard Rock Hotels will donate 25 all-inclusive hotel stays to breast cancer survivors, thrivers and caregivers. Hard Rock will offer a limited-edition “Stronger

Together” pink vinyl record, featuring inspirational and empowering tracks, that guests can check out or purchase as well as custom pink electric or acoustic guitars.

- Hard Rock Cafes will serve all burgers and sandwiches on specialty pink buns.
- A portion of proceeds from Hard Rock Casino games will be donated to the Hard Rock Heals Foundation for breast cancer awareness and research worldwide through the Change for Change program.
- Rock Shops will offer limited-edition Pinktober items.
- Unity by Hard Rock members will have chances to win Rock Shop merchandise through slot spins.
- Hard Rock Bet will incorporate the Pinktober theme in its app and make donations for every new player referred to the platform.

For more information go to hardrock.com/PINKTOBER.

Navy apologizes to Tlingit for historic attacks

FROM VOICE OF AMERICA

The U.S. Navy has formally apologized for its 1869 bombardment of the Alaska Native village of Kake, more than 140 years after the attack. During a ceremony held in Kake on Sunday, Rear Admiral Mark B. Sucato expressed the Navy’s regret, marking the first of two planned apologies for military actions against Alaska Native communities in the late 1800s.

The attacks on Kake and Angoon occurred shortly after the U.S. acquired Alaska from Russia in 1867, when the

U.S. Army and Navy were patrolling the region. Sailors aboard the USS Saginaw fired on Kake’s three villages and two forts, completely destroying the community. The Navy acknowledged that, following the bombardment, landing parties set the village ablaze, causing the death of “possibly one elderly Kake woman” and leaving many villagers to die of exposure during the harsh winter.

The attack on Kake was triggered by the killing of two Tlingit men by a sentry, which may have led to the killing of two settlers, prompting the USS Saginaw to be dispatched to “seize a few of their chiefs as

hostages” and “burn their villages.” While no one died during the bombardment itself, the destruction of food supplies and shelters led to many deaths from starvation.

Thirteen years later, the Navy bombarded the village of Angoon following a dispute over the death of a Tlingit traditional healer. When the tribe’s request for compensation was denied, Commander Edgar Merriman ordered the bombing.

A second ceremony is scheduled for October 26 to commemorate the anniversary of the Angoon bombardment.

The Seminole Tribune is a member of the Indigenous Journalists Association.

Letters/emails to the editor must be signed and may be edited for publication.

Subscription rate is \$35 per year by mail. Make checks payable to: The Seminole Tribune 6365 Taft Street Suite 3003 Hollywood, FL 33024

The following deadline applies to all submissions to The Seminole Tribune:

Issue: November 2024
Deadline: October 16, 2024

Issue: December 2024
Deadline: November 13, 2024

Advertising rates along with sizes and other information may be downloaded online at: <http://SeminoleTribune.org/Advertise>

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Community

Seminole first responders, employees complete FEMA training

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Office of Emergency Management has been holding Federal Emergency Management Agency courses on the importance of emergency management during incidents and events. An advanced course was given September 12 and 13 at the Big Cypress public safety building.

The course, Advanced Incident Command System (ICS) for Complex Incidents, was for participants who previously took more basic training classes. The course covered the details of implementing ICS and was geared toward those who are expected to perform in a management capacity during an event. It is the highest level training in complex incidents- the first response aspect of them.

ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. The purpose is to provide a common hierarchy and structure for managing incidents efficiently and effectively.

Twelve participants from the fire rescue department, police department and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum learned what it takes to manage incidents of various intensities by staying organized; all had previously taken lower-level courses on ICS.

“The course is about organizing and scalable training for any incidents from a one-car accident to a kids party to a 9/11

type disaster,” said Emergency Management Coordinator Jonathan Urtecho. “We will be thinking through what we need to control chaos. We can use ICS for any event.”

The class took a 30-minute pre-test to gauge their knowledge of the objective, structure, context and organization of ICS. Urtecho, who led the class, told them to do their realistic best.

They were given a final test at the end of the two-day course.

During the course, students were given scenarios and applied FEMA’s National Incident Management System (NIMS) doctrine concepts to determine the management of a complex incident or event. For each scenario they also developed a command organization and identified management issues that can result from lack of multiagency coordination.

During the course, the students learned different types of agencies and their policies, guidelines and agreements that influence incident management; issues that influence incident complexity and the tools available to analyze complexity; the process for transfer of command; and the primary guidelines and responsibilities of the command and general staff positions.

“Planning is the key to ICS. We want to know everything that will or can happen,” Urtecho said. “The more we use it and think that way, the more comfortable we will be with it and the easier it will be to use it when it is needed for complex incidents, even in multiple locations.”



Beverly Bidney

Tribal employees learn about using the Advanced Incident Command System for complex incidents in the Big Cypress public safety building Sept. 12 and work together in small groups to devise plans for various scenarios.

Jim Allen to receive lifetime achievement award

STAFF REPORT

Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International Chairman and CEO of Seminole Gaming, will receive a lifetime achievement award at the 28th annual East Coast Gaming Congress conference April 15-16, 2025, at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City.

“Jim Allen’s 44-year career trajectory, from a line cook to leading CEO, should inspire everyone who works in this industry. Along his path to success, he never forgot where he came from,” conference co-founder Michael Pollock said in a statement.

During Allen’s tenure, Hard Rock has established itself as a worldwide leader in gaming, hospitality, entertainment and restaurants while being honored with several “best employer, best managed and guest satisfaction” awards, and recognition for its programs about diversity and combatting human trafficking.

For more information, visit eastcoastgamingcongress.com or contact Donna Vecere at dvecere@cooperlevenson.com.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.



Jim Allen

File photo

Larry David to bring ‘conversation’ to Hollywood

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — “A Conversation with Larry David” is coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Dec. 5 at 7:30 p.m.

David, 77, co-created “Seinfeld” and stars in “Curb Your Enthusiasm.”

The event will include an informal discussion about his time on “Seinfeld,” “Curb,” and everything in between.

Must be 16 years or older to attend the show. For ticket information go to myHRL.com.

Temptations, Four Tops to perform in Immokalee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — The Temptations and The Four Tops will bring their 40th Anniversary Tour to Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee March 7, 2025.

Tickets are available online

from Ticketmaster or at www.moreinparadise.com. Attendees must be 21 years old.

“The Temptations, often referred to as “American Music Royalty,” are world-renowned superstars of entertainment, revered for their phenomenal catalog of

music and prolific career ... The Four Tops had their first Motown hit, “Baby I Need Your Loving” in 1964, making them stars,” a press release said.

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Boys & Girls Club celebrates 20th anniversary

BY CALVIN TIGER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The tribe's Boys and Girls Club celebrated its 20th anniversary in a ballroom at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Sept. 6.

The celebration included an arts and crafts station, airbrush, bracelet making, airbrush tattoos, face painting and a photo booth for the tribal youth who attend the tribe's Boys & Girls Club.

Robert North, director of the tribe's Boys & Girls Club, Vice Chairwoman/Board President Holly Tiger and Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie participated in the event.

During the celebration, the Ahfatchkee School band played a few cover songs outside of the ballroom where friends and families gathered. Other live performances during the evening included Paul Buster, Spencer Battiest and Doc Native, The Osceola Brothers and the Blues Traveler.

Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola spoke to the attendees about the positive impacts of the tribe's Boys and Girls Club.

Alumni and members of other Boys & Girls Clubs from around the country were also in attendance, including Toby Patrick, board member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and Bruce LeClaire, Rosebud Sioux, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of the Southern Ute Tribe in Colorado.

Carla Knapp, national vice president of Native Services of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, presented a special resolution acknowledging the 20 years of commitment of the Boys & Girls Club of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Knapp spoke highly about North and complimented him on his dedication and commitment to the tribe's Boys and Girls Club.

"When I think of Robert and what he has done, him and his wife over the last 20 years, I can stand up here and say they have



Seminole Tribe Boys & Girls Club director Robert North, left, is presented with a gift from Bruce LeClaire, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of the Southern Ute Tribe, at the 20th anniversary celebration Sept. 6.

provided a safe and nurturing environment where our youth build resilience." Knapp said to the audience.

President Tiger and Councilwoman Billie emphasized to the audience the positive impacts of the Boys & Girls Club.

"The progress is truly inspiring. I know

many Big Cypress community members have benefited from arts and the music program the Boys & Girls Club offers. The program allows them to express their artistic talents, and I am thrilled that we have a space for our young tribal members can receive assistance with their homework, tutoring,

educational activities and promoting academic success." Councilwoman Billie said.

"I just want to say keep doing the work that you are doing," President Tiger said. "The kids you can see the hard work in our children, I see a difference in the children



Calvin Tiger

Guitarist/vocalist Cameron Osceola from The Osceola Brothers band performs on stage during the Boys & Girls Club 20th anniversary party.

that are more well-rounded, and you guys bring that out in them and that's important." North thanked the parents, Boys & Girls Club alumni, and its board members.

"We are here to provide a safe and healthy atmosphere after school and throughout the summer." North said to the audience.

The event concluded with hit songs from Blues Traveler.



Calvin Tiger

From left to right, Dawna Bell, Valentina Arce, Scherina Marshall, Jon Thundercloud and Robert North are on the stage with Carla Knapp.



Calvin Tiger

Vice Chairwoman/Board President Holly Tiger speaks to the audience.



Calvin Tiger

Arts and crafts were part of the anniversary's activities.



Calvin Tiger

With Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola behind her, Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas speaks at the anniversary celebration.



Calvin Tiger

Ahfatchkee students play tunes outside during the Boys & Girls Club's 20th anniversary event.



Calvin Tiger

Paul Buster performs at the anniversary celebration.

◆ **CLINIC**
From page 1A

The public safety building is also built to resist storms, provide room for the growth of the Immokalee Reservation and for the modern technology necessary to provide



A pediatric examination room is cheerfully designed in the Immokalee Medical Clinic.



A mural decorates the wall of the physical therapy room.



Immokalee clinic Lorraine Posada health head cook, community health advocate, stands in the new teaching kitchen.



A mural of Billy Bowlegs and glimpses of Seminole life adorns the entrance to the Immokalee Medical Clinic.

top tier police, fire and rescue service to the reservation, according to acting executive director of public safety John Auer. Immokalee's current fire apparatus and rescue vehicles are assigned to the facility, which has more capacity to accommodate resources used for special events.

◆ **CLUB**
From page 1A

The first Garden Club meeting started with one bin of sweetgrass, but they are planning to plant Three Sisters and more to help teach kids about gardening and growing food. "With climate change, and ... even just with tribal sovereignty, growing your own food ... gives you more control over what you eat and what is grown in your community," Bowers said. The next meeting is at 4:30 p.m. Oct. 14 at the Hollywood 4-H grounds.

Tatum Mitchell

Jules Gentry gets ready to plant sweetgrass at Garden Club's first meeting Sept. 17.



Tatum Mitchell

Krystle Bowers hands out sweetgrass to participants at Garden Club for them to plant.



Tatum Mitchell

Donna Frank speaks about sweetgrass Sept. 17 at Garden Club's first meeting.



Tatum Mitchell

Attendees at the Garden Club meeting gather for a group photo.

◆ **FIREFIGHTER**
From page 1A

Pastore was survived by his wife, Kim; three stepchildren; and his parents. Prior to moving to Texas, Pastore served the tribe with Seminole Fire Rescue. He was one of six recruits sworn in on March 9, 2012, during Fire Rescue's graduation,

badge and promotional ceremony at tribal headquarters auditorium in Hollywood. Pastore was born in California and moved to Florida as a child. The Nov. 10 event will benefit the Jorge Pastore Foundation. In addition to the 5K and team event challenges at the ranch, a virtual 5K and fitness challenge is also offered. A biography about Pastore on the

foundation's website states: "Of everything he did in his career, Jorge was most proud of his service in the Honor Guard for both the Seminole Tribe of Florida and APD." For more information about the Humble Warrior Games and additional ways to support the Jorge Pastore Foundation, go to jpastorefoundation.org.



File photo

Jorge Pastore, center front, is sworn in during the Seminole Fire Rescue's graduation ceremony March 9, 2012, in Hollywood.

Homebuyer education class promotes financial literacy, resources

BY TATUM MITCHELL
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — The Real Estate Department hosted a homebuyer education class through Tribal Community Development on Sept. 12 at the Brighton Administrative Building.

The session was a part of a series of homebuyer classes this year with others in Hollywood, Big Cypress and Immokalee. Future classes are being planned for the Lakeland and Tampa area according to Wendy Larson, Real Estate loan manager.

Tribal Community Development’s goal is to “educate and empower tribal members to become homeowners, while providing outstanding customer service and the tools and necessary support needed to assist them in obtaining financial security,” according to the presentation.

The class covered information regarding tools to accomplish homeownership, the process and programs for loan approval,

and general tips for success. The group participated in a definition-to-term matching exercise, as well as a budgeting game. The matching exercise consisted of a list of relevant terms and definitions, and participants had to correctly indicate which ones paired together.

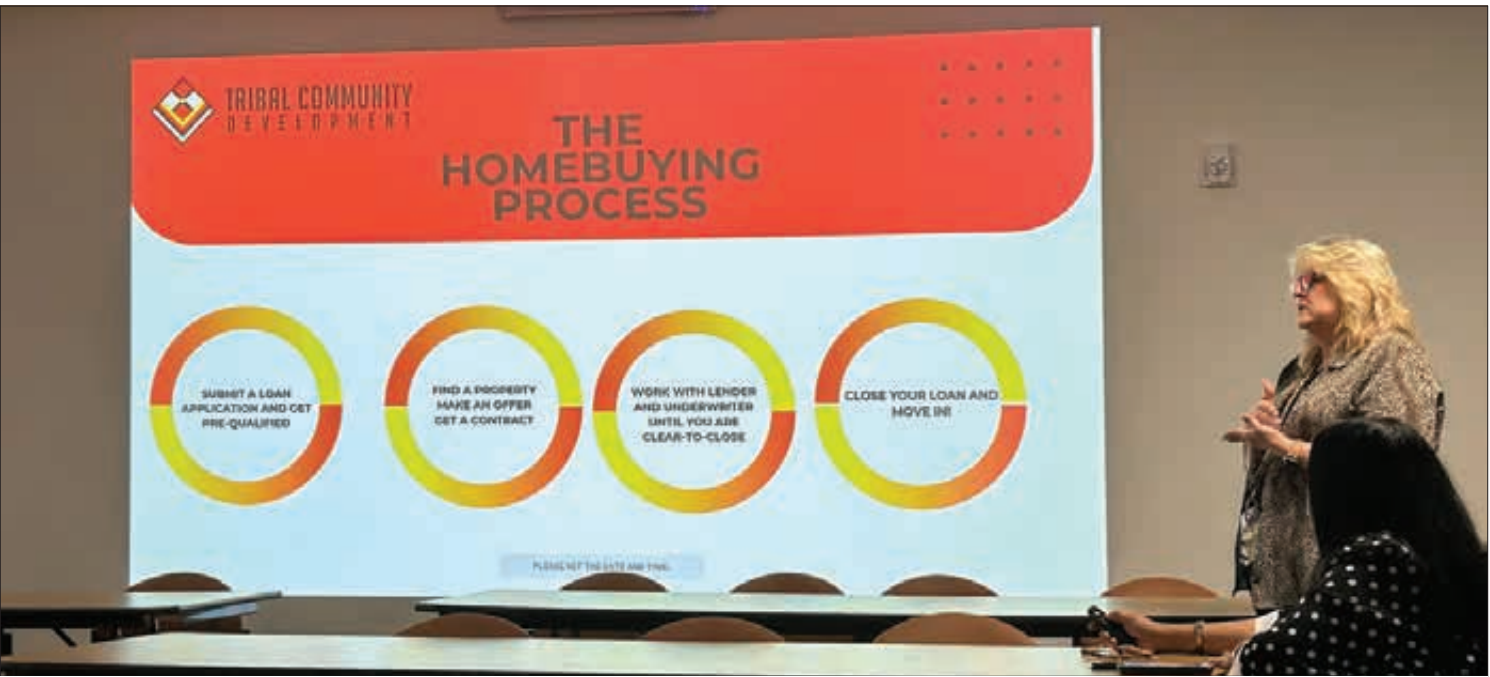
The budgeting game outlined recommendations to break down income into percentages of savings and spending. For example, the suggested monthly savings percentage is 10% of a total monthly income.

Larson and Charmaine Westberry, Real Estate credit counseling manager, discussed credit scores and how to maintain good standing. They said lenders are usually looking for a positive credit history, low amount of debt and savings.

They emphasized their role in the community to help people understand and organize their finances in a nonjudgemental way.

“We’re here to help,” Larson said.

For more information or questions, contact realestateservices@semtribe.com.



Tatum Mitchell

Wendy Larson presents at the homebuyer education class Sept. 12 in Brighton covering a range of financial topics.

Hollywood 4-H students tag their steers

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Hollywood 4-H members wrangled their steers for a cattle tag-in on Sept. 9.

Kitana Lamb, Justin Rodriguez and Tommie Osceola tagged their steers, which serves as identification for when they’ll go to

the show and sale March 3-7.

From the stall to the shoot, the 4-H students were hands-on getting their steers tagged. They guided their steers out of the stalls, then herded and shoed them to the cattle shoot, where they were tagged.

They picked out their steers over the summer, and they will take care of them until they are hopefully sold in the spring.



Tatum Mitchell

Tommie Osceola pets his steer Sept. 9 during the 4-H tag-in.



Tatum Mitchell

Kitana Lamb tags her steer during the tag-in for 4-H.



Tatum Mitchell

Justin Rodriguez pets his steer during the tag-in.

Princesses enjoy wonderful visit to Seminole Nation Days

BY WANDA F. BOWERS
Princess Program
Seminole Tribe of Florida

Recently, the newly crowned Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola traveled to Seminole Oklahoma to attend the Seminole Nation Days. I traveled with them along with Cecilia Thomas, Melody and Joseph Osceola.

The first event we attended was the Seminole Nation Princess Pageant which was held on Thursday night, September 19, 2024, and the Seminole Nation Princess Committee did a great job. Now they have three new princesses to work with for the upcoming year.

Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola along with the Seminole Tribe of Florida Princess Program would like to congratulate the newly crowned Miss Seminole Nation Adyson Beaver 2024-2025; Jr. Miss Seminole Nation Annalees Martinez and Little Miss Seminole Nation Emilia Wise. I know that they are excited and ready to step up and represent their Nation. The Seminole Tribe of Florida, Princess Program and Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas along with Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola wish them well and safe travels throughout their reign.

The Florida Seminole Princesses had lunch at the Seminole Nation Museum in Wewoka, OK with Seminole Nation Chief Johnson, Assistant Chief Palmer, STOFI President Holly Tiger, Brian Zepeda, Pedro Zepeda, me and parents of the Seminole Princesses Cecelia Tommie, Joseph Osceola, Melody Osceola and other guests. Afterwards, CeCe and Violet took a tour of the Seminole Nation Museum. The tour was very nice, and their gift shop is something that every visitor should visit.

The rest of the weekend was full of activities, from the parade Saturday morning to the stomp dance later that night. We also assisted the Seminole Nation Princesses in serving the community dinner that afternoon specifically the Elders of the Seminole Nation. The Florida Seminole Tribal Princesses enjoyed saying hello, answering questions with the Elders in between passing out the dinner and taking pictures with the Seminole Nation people.



Courtesy photo

During their visit to Oklahoma in September, Miss Florida Seminole CeCeThomas, second from left, and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola meet Seminole Nation of Oklahoma's Assistant Chief Brian Palmer, far left, and Chief Lewis Johnson, far right.

Even though it was a busy weekend for our princesses and parents, it was an experience that our girls will cherish. Trading history, visiting old friends, making new friends, joining in the festivities, sharing stories and shaking hands.

Finally, a special highlight of the trip was getting to watch Doc Native and Spencer Battist along with other entertainers later that evening. During Doc Native and Spencer’s set they presented Chief Johnson

a Seminole Jacket. Afterwards Doc and Spencer finished off their set. What a great evening, the princesses had a great time.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Chief Lewis Johnson, Assistant Chief Brian Palmer and of course the Seminole Nation Princess Committee for their great hospitality. The Seminole Tribal Princesses and parents had a wonderful visit during their Seminole Nation Days Festival.



Courtesy photos (2)

Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola attended the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma's Princess Pageant. In the top photo, Thomas, far left, and Osceola, far right, are with Seminole Nation's new royalty, from left to right, Miss Seminole Nation Adyson Beaver, Jr. Miss Seminole Nation Annalees Martinez, and Little Miss Seminole Nation Emilia Wise. At right, the princesses gather for a photo outdoors.



New renderings show Hard Rock venue at proposed NYC development



SHoP Architects, Field Operations

A rendering shows a proposed Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, at left, and the New York Mets stadium at right.

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

A Hard Rock hotel and casino are featured in new renderings of a potential entertainment and park development next to the stadium of the New York Mets.

In partnership with Mets owner Steve Cohen, Hard Rock International (HRI) would play a prominent role in the development of the 50-acre Metropolitan Park project in the borough of Queens.

“We are very proud to present New Yorkers with the visualization of what’s possible for a world-class city and its surrounding neighborhoods,” Jim Allen, Chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in a Sept. 25, 2024, press release. “We’d like to thank our partners for working with us to create something truly transformative. We take great pride and the utmost care in bringing forth something that will create much needed jobs and memories that will live on for generations to come.”

The Cohen-HRI partnership was first announced in November 2023.

The \$8 billion privately funded project needs approval from various government levels in New York. In a review session by the City Planning Commission on Sept. 23, details of the project included up to 2,300 hotel rooms and a music hall space with 5,655 seats.

Additionally, the casino would need to be awarded a gaming license by the state’s gaming commission.

According to the release, the project would create 23,000 permanent and construction jobs

The project, which would be built on space that is currently parking lots, features a live music venue, a food hall and a Hard Rock Hotel and Casino with bars, restaurants and a sportsbook.

There is also an open space aspect to the project, including the transformation of asphalt into 20 acres for a new public park area and five acres for community athletic fields and a playground.

The release emphasized how the project would improve livability in the area through transportation upgrades, community impact funding, waterfront access and outdoor activities, such as walking and biking.

“It’s time the world’s greatest city got the sports and entertainment park it deserves,” Cohen said in the release. “When I bought this team, fans and the community kept saying we needed to do better. Metropolitan Park delivers on the promise of a shared space that people will not only want to come to and enjoy, but can be truly proud of.”

The area is about 10 miles from Hard Rock Hotel New York, which opened in 2022 in Manhattan.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.

John Legend’s nonprofit organization receives \$100,000 donation from Hard Rock Heals Foundation

STAFF REPORT

LONDON — Multi-platinum artist John Legend performed at the original Hard Rock Café in London on Sept. 12, 2024, as part of a celebration for the Unity by Hard Rock global loyalty program launch.

Legend was presented with a check for \$100,000 from Hard Rock International’s Hard Rock Heals Foundation for his The Show Me Campaign nonprofit organization, whose mission is “to give every child access to a quality education” and to address criminal justice issues associated with the poor, minorities and disadvantaged.

“The night was special and made even more so with Hard Rock’s generous donation to The Show Me Campaign,” Legend said in a statement. “Growing up, music was my passion, but it was my teachers who truly unlocked my potential. They taught me to write with creativity, passion, and clarity, which paved my way to becoming a successful musician. I recognize that my journey was not just about talent, but also the fortune of having

teachers who believed in me. Thank you to Hard Rock for supporting The Show Me Campaign’s work to pay it forward and ensure opportunity and access to quality education for the next generation.”

Keith Sheldon, president of Entertainment & Brand Management at Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, made the check presentation.

“We are proud to support The Show Me Campaign and are thankful to John for sharing his talents and powerful music with our Unity members and special guests at another incredible performance curated by Hard Rock,” Sheldon said in a statement. “We’re thrilled with the continued growth of Unity by Hard Rock membership since its global launch and supporting the ‘Come Together’ campaign that began this spring. Members have been discovering how they can earn points for doing what they love across Hard Rock’s amazing venues including hotels, casinos, restaurants, shops and more.”

To learn more about Unity and sign up, visit unity.hardrock.com.



Hard Rock

John Legend performs at Hard Rock Cafe in London on Sept. 12.

Seminole Hard Rock Tampa marks Hispanic Heritage Month with \$100,000 in donations

STAFF REPORT

TAMPA — In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa launched ‘My Rhythm. My Flavor. Mi Gente’ on Sept. 15. The celebration continues through Oct. 15.

‘My Rhythm. My Flavor. Mi Gente’ is dedicated to recognizing the rich cultural diversity and invaluable contributions of Hispanic and Latin Americans to the U.S. To mark the special occasion, Seminole Hard Rock Tampa donated \$10,000 each to several local Hispanic organizations. They are:

- City of Tampa Mayor’s Hispanic Heritage Committee
- Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Hispanic Advisory Council
- Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Fund
- Hispanic Professional Women’s Association
- Hispanic Resource Family Cultural Center
- Hispanic Services Council
- Hope Community Center
- Latino Leadership
- Prospera
- Tampa Hispanic Heritage

As part of the ‘My Rhythm. My Flavor. Mi Gente’ Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, special evenings of rhythm, flavor and fun will take place for Latin Nights every Thursday from 8 p.m. to midnight at the L Bar, featuring specially curated cocktails while moving to the Latin beats with live entertainment.



Hard Rock

The Hispanic Professional Women's Association is one of 10 organizations Seminole Hard Rock Tampa donated to in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Additionally, the casino resort will unveil a commemorative mural by Puerto Rican-Colombian American artist Carlos Solano and a memorabilia display featuring iconic pieces from some of the biggest Latin superstars, including Juanes, Celia Cruz, Carlos Santana, Maluma, Gloria Estefan, Sergio Valin, Jose Guadalupe Esparza, Dave Navarro, Los Lobos, Julieta Venegas, and more. For details, visit www.descubreturritmo.com.

“As we observe Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrate the vibrant cultures and remarkable contributions of Hispanic and Latin Americans in our region,” said Estefania Diaz-Balart, Vice President of Latin Business Development at Seminole Gaming. “This initiative is a reflection of our dedication to supporting local Hispanic organizations and fostering stronger ties within the community during this important cultural celebration.”

Gary, Indiana, partners with Hard Rock for convention center proposal

STAFF REPORT

GARY, Ind., — The City of Gary, Indiana, and Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana are teaming up in a public-private partnership to land a convention center. The partnership received approval from the city’s Board of Works on Sept. 20.

“Hard Rock Northern Indiana is excited

to be the City of Gary’s private partner in creating a successful proposal for the Lake County Convention Center,” Matt Schuffert, president of Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana, said a news release.

Earlier this year, the county put out requests for proposals to build a new convention center. The bid submission deadline is Oct. 16. According to the city, Hard Rock and Gary Mayor Eddie Melton

are considering various locations for their proposal.

“We are happy to join forces with Hard Rock Northern Indiana in our pursuit to secure the bid for the Lake County Convention Center,” Melton said in the release. “This collaboration represents a significant step forward in our efforts to revitalize Gary and create new development opportunities to serve the entire region.”



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The hiring of an attorney is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisement. Castillo worked as a Public Defender in Broward County from 1990-1996 and has been in private practice since 1996. In 1995, he was voted the Trial Attorney of the year. He graduated from Capital University in 1989 and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1990, Federal Bar in 1992, and the Federal Trial Bar in 1994.

RICHARD CASTILLO
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY
WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM

Newly acquired historic vessels receive conservation treatment

BY MARIA DMITRIEVA
Conservator, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

BIG CYPRESS — In April 2024, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum received two ceramic vessels from History Fort Lauderdale believed to have been made by Elizabeth Buster.

These two small bowls resemble ritual vessels that were typically used to hold holy water. (Picture 1a, b.) One vessel has a hole in it, most likely meant to be hung on a wall.

It was broken in two pieces across the hole. The other has faint handwritten inscriptions on the outside of the bottom that are believed to be the name Elizabeth Buster. According to information provided to History Fort Lauderdale by the original donor, Buster reportedly made the bowls in the 1960s while she was attending boarding school in Cherokee, North Carolina, possibly as a teenager. However, further research suggests that this information may not be entirely accurate. The origin of the bowls and their creator is still in question.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Two small ceramic bowls (a, b) with the inscription on the bottom of the small one (d) resemble ritual vessels that were typically used to hold holy water. Fracture surface (c) means that the firing of the vessel was not completed properly.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

After all acquisition documentation was completed, both vessels were moved to the laboratory for examination and conservation treatment. Color and state of surface, as well as structure and consistency of vessel material, visible on the broken parts, indicate that a natural homogeneous clay was used with subsequent burnishing.

Burnishing is a pottery technique that involves polishing the surface of the clay with a hard, smooth object before the first firing to give it a smooth, soft sheen without using a glaze. This process modifies the clay's texture and light reflecting qualities.

The structure of the dark inner layer differs from the light outer layer, which means that the firing of the vessel was not

completed properly (Picture 1c). The nature of the inscription on the bottom of the second vessel indicates that the author's hand was not steady. (Picture 1d).

All these observations allow us to believe that the creator was not a professional sculptor. Most likely, they were a student.

The preservation treatment included cleaning, removing foreign deposits, and gluing two broken parts in accordance with the American Institute of Conservation recommendations.

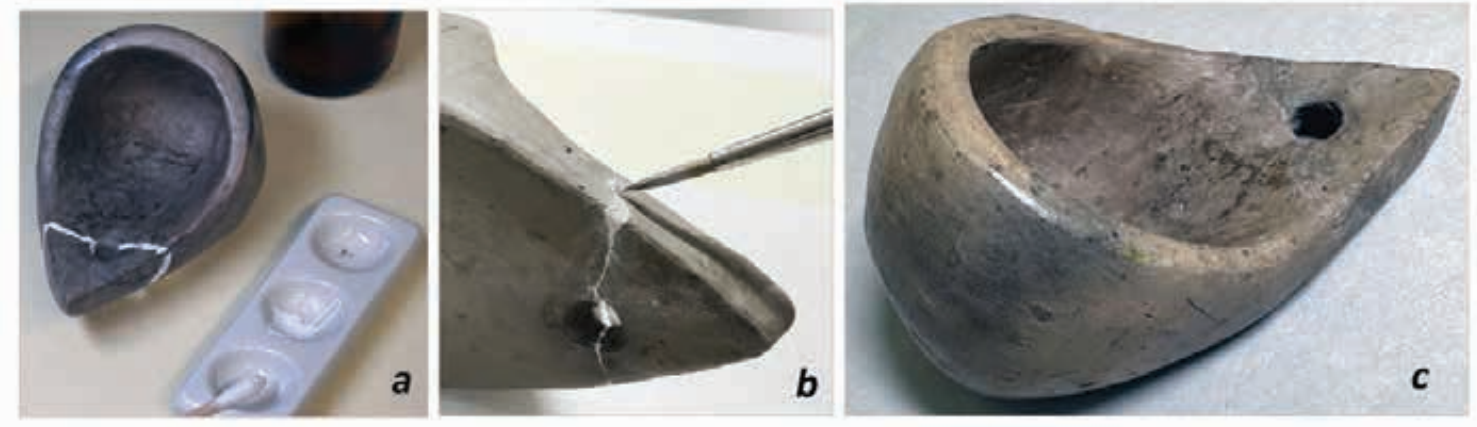
Surface cleaning was done with dry cotton swabs, sponges and non-abrasive and lint-free wipes. Old self-adhesive paper labels with previous inventory numbers were removed with acetone and stored separately

as a part of history of these objects.

Two broken parts of the vessel were glued with 6% B72 in acetone; B72 (Ethyl methacrylate-methyl acrylate copolymer) is an adhesive widely applied for ceramic conservation. The broken surfaces were preliminary wetted with 2% B72 to provide proper connection.

After the adhesive had set, small losses and gaps along the glue line were filled with BEVA Gesso, a tough primer. (Picture 2a, b, c). All procedures and materials used for this conservation treatment are reversible.

After conservation treatment, these two elegant vessels, connected to the Seminole history, have found a new life and a place in the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Two broken pieces were glued, and small losses and gaps along the glue line were filled (a, b) and this elegant vessel (c) have found a new place in the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

Deb Haaland stresses respect of public lands' heritage

BY TATUM MITCHELL
Staff Reporter

Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), U.S. Secretary of the Interior, joined the Mellon Foundation for about an hour-long virtual discussion about managing public lands, preserving culture and incorporating Native heritage while sharing accurate history.

"Public lands in our country are places where many of us go to experience the wonders and duties of the natural world, where many of us live," Mellon Foundation president Elizabeth Alexander said during the Sept. 5 discussion. "They are also sites of memory, history, culture and sites of learning. They are places where our American story is told and retold, where the history of our people and the landscapes that continue to shape them are shared with visitors from across the United States and around the world."

Haaland spoke on a range of

topics that included the department's boarding school initiative, representation, the importance of respectful land stewardship and language preservation.

"So many of our nation's national parks were ancestral homelands to Native American tribes. Many times, Native communities were pushed off of those lands so they could make room for a national park," Haaland said during the discussion. "So we always have to remember that there's a back story to so many things. While we can enjoy the beauty of America's national parks or wildlife refuges or [Bureau of Land Management] lands, we also should think about the deep story behind those things..."

The event was open to the public virtually through the Mellon Foundation. More than 1,000 people joined to watch and the speakers engaged with questions brought forth in the comment section.

Haaland and Alexander discussed some tools that are utilized in order to share accurate history on public lands.

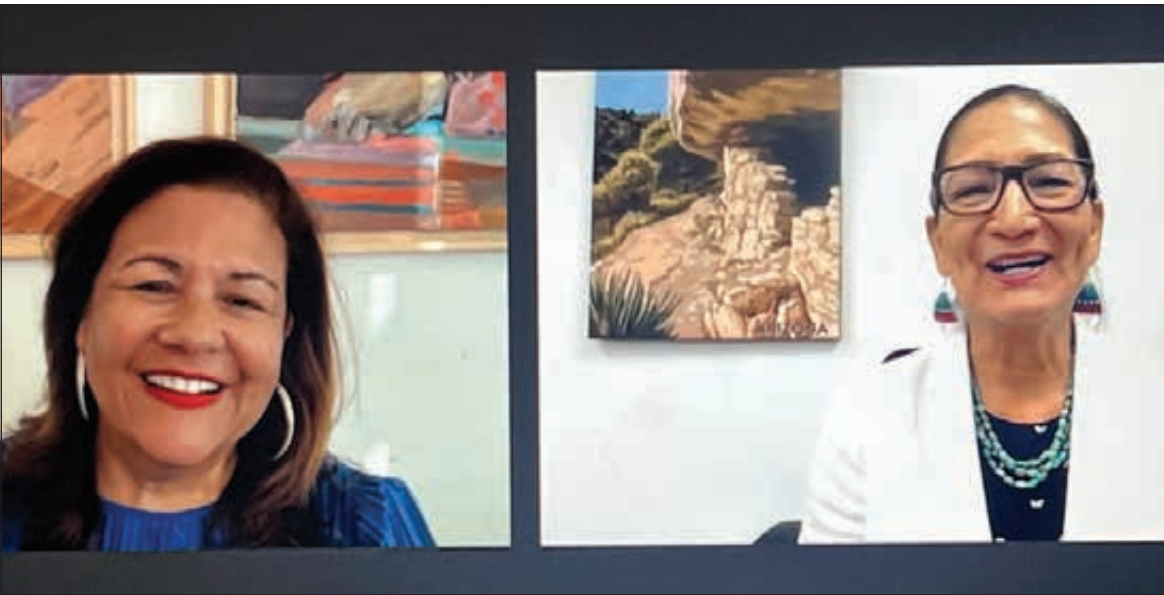
Haaland said technology and having interpreters present plays a large role in getting information to visitors on those lands.

"We want folks to get the most of their visit to any public land that they would go to... it's really just fulfilling our obligation to steward these lands in a respectful way."

"We're also reminding folks to visit with respect and to think about what era we're in," Haaland said. She also stressed the importance of preserving and protecting cultural heritage.

The Mellon Foundation's mission is to support the arts and humanities and build communities to create a space for ideas and imagination through grants, according to its website.

The discussion with Haaland can be viewed on YouTube.



Mellon Foundation virtual event screenshot

Mellon Foundation president Elizabeth Alexander, left, and Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, right, during the event.

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

October 2024

If we are lucky, the artifacts the THPO's Collections acquire have some form of defining features on them that can aid in identification. This bird beak is one of those fortunate cases. Through careful inspection, we can observe that the beak has some bone protrusions toward the back curving upwards, which is likely a portion of the skull. It also has two holes, which are the nares. Given these features, we can gather that this bone is the upper jaw of the bird. Knowing this, we can begin to narrow down what bird species it may have belonged to.



Using the general morphological information about the beak, we can narrow down likely bird species through comparative analysis. For example, we can examine the nares, shown in the figure above. The ones we find on this beak are rather large and oval in shape, which provides a distinct feature from which we can work. From this, we can determine the two types of birds fitting these constraints: blue jays and woodpeckers.



AllAbout Birds.org
Photo taken by Steven Martin

AllAbout Birds.org
Photo taken by Matthew Plante

Florida sees about nine different species of woodpecker throughout the year (Moran, 2023). Woodpeckers all possess a chisel-like beak that they use both for foraging as well as communication (Jung et al., 2016). Possessing a straight, chisel-like beak helps with both processes and makes them more efficient, as they can peck upwards of 20 times a second when performing either of these activities (Jung et al., 2016).



MacaulayLibrary.org
Photo taken by Sunil Thirkannad

Blue jays are more closely related to crows and ravens than Woodpeckers. While Woodpeckers use their beak to peck through wood for foraging, blue jays possess a similar beak due to their preferred diet. These birds are important seed-dispersers within the Eastern US and enjoy acorns as their preferred food (Dixon et al., 1997). Due to the extremely hard shells, the blue jay is thought to have developed adaptations to their beaks that allow them to chisel through them (Richardson et al., 2013). It is thought that the adaptations that allow woodpeckers to dig through wood could serve a similar function (Richardson et al., 2013).



MacaulayLibrary.org
Photo taken by Steven Mlodinow

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SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - OCTOBER 2024

THE FIRST FLORIDIANS

Before the arrival of colonizers from Europe, the peninsula that would become Florida was home to tens, or even hundreds of thousands, of Indigenous people. The first ancestors arrived during the Pleistocene, also known as the Ice Age, over 15,000 years ago. At that time glaciers covered much of North America, reaching as far south as modern day Chicago.

The Florida the first ancestors arrived in was very different than today. Lower water levels meant that the coast line extended about fifty miles further into the gulf than it does now. There was also less rainfall, so the land was drier and there were fewer rivers. The animals that roamed the landscape were also different. Megafauna, larger versions of animals that exist today, lived in Florida. The ancestors hunted these mammoths, mastodons, large tortoises, and other animals, and thrived.

As global temperatures warmed, the Ice Age ended. The megafauna began to die off, rainfall increased, and sea levels rose. The ancestors learned to overcome these challenges. New technologies, such as the atlatl (or spear thrower) greatly improved hunting. Canoes were created to navigate the landscape as more rivers, and eventually the Everglades, emerged.

By the time the first Spanish arrived, Indigenous Floridians flourished in large societies that had developed a wide variety of strategies for living across different landscapes. In northern Florida they fished, farmed, and hunted. In South Florida, where farming was less practical, they focused much more on fishing and collecting the abundant resources available in the Everglades and the Caribbean waters. Colonizers disrupted thousands of years of adaptation, ingenuity, and success. Yet, traditions passed down from the ancestors persist and continue today among the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the descendants of the first people of Florida.



Above: Artist's depiction of Vero Man, Florida Ancestors, hunting a mammoth. Finds from an archaeological site near Vero Beach, Florida showed that ancient Floridians were present during the Pleistocene.

Below: A map of Florida's coastline demonstrating the change between the Pleistocene and modern day.



Map data: Muhs, Daniel & Wehmiller, J.F. & Simmons, Kathleen & York, Lauren. (2003). Quaternary sea-level history of the United States. *Developments in Quaternary Science*. 1. 147-183. [10.1016/S1571-0866\(03\)01008-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1571-0866(03)01008-X).

To see more Seminole History Stories, please visit the THPO website at www.stofthpo.com

Visit the Tribal Historic Preservation Office website at stofthpo.com or use the QR code on the right for more Seminole history resources



Health

IHS, VA launch new health care map application for Native veterans

FROM PRESS RELEASE

To increase access to health care, the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a map application available online: ihs-gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/nearby/

The application is meant to increase community-based resources and other services for American Indian and Alaska Native veterans. The goal is to collaborate and build connections between VA, IHS and other organizations to share resources and promote accessibility for Native veterans. The map utilizes location data "from 41

urban Indian organizations with 82 locations and 1,500 VA health care facilities, creating an immersive one-stop platform for Native veterans to search and explore health care and other supportive services," according to the IHS website.

The map application is a part of the Native American Veteran Homelessness Initiative.

"American Indians and Alaska Natives have a long history of exceptional service in our nation's military. Through this new tool, VA and IHS are making health care more accessible for these heroes – which will lead to better health outcomes and better lives," according to the IHS website.

More suicide prevention needed in Indian Country, new report shows

FROM NATIVE NEWS ONLINE
BY KAILI BERG

A newly released CDC report has shed light on alarming suicide rates within the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations, sparking urgent discussions on suicide prevention strategies.

During a media briefing on the report on Tuesday, the CDC revealed that AI/AN communities continue to experience some of the highest suicide rates in the United States. This comes as part of a broader concern about mental health challenges in marginalized communities across the country. The report, presented by Dr. Debra Houry, CDC Deputy Director for Programming Science and Chief Medical Officer, was released on September 10, coinciding with World Suicide Prevention Day and Suicide Prevention Month.

"Often, suicide prevention focuses on helping people who are in crisis; while this is critically important, CDC's approach to suicide prevention is to increase factors that promote resilience and to reduce factors that increase suicide risk, to keep people from ever getting to a crisis," Dr. Houry stated in a media briefing.

The report, authored by Dr. Alison Cammack, a health scientist with the CDC's Suicide Prevention Team, examined how county-level factors such as health insurance coverage, broadband internet access, and household income correlate with suicide rates across the country.

"Suicide rates were lowest in counties with higher levels of health insurance coverage, broadband internet access, and household income," Dr. Cammack stated in a media briefing.

More significantly, the study found that AI/AN communities in counties with the highest access to these factors had suicide rates half as high as those in counties with the lowest access.

The findings highlight the stark disparities faced by AI/AN populations. For instance, suicide rates among AI/AN individuals were notably higher in counties with limited access to broadband internet

and healthcare, reflecting the challenges many tribal communities face in securing vital services.

Health insurance, broadband internet, and household income were identified as critical factors linked to lower suicide rates.

"Health insurance coverage can help people access mental health and primary care services and treatment," said Dr. Cammack. "High-speed internet access connects people to prevention resources, job opportunities, telehealth services, and friends and family. Household financial resources such as income and economic support can help families secure food, housing, healthcare, and other basic needs."

Despite these findings, barriers to accessing such resources remain for many AI/AN individuals, particularly in rural and tribal areas.

"Developing programs and policies that improve housing stability, economic security, connection to community, internet access, and healthcare access are community-level conditions with policies that can save lives," Dr. Houry said.

The CDC, alongside local organizations and tribal nations, continues to prioritize efforts to prevent suicide within AI/AN populations. CDC-funded programs specifically target health departments, tribes, and organizations to provide the resources and data necessary to inform suicide prevention strategies.

"By doing what works, we can have an impact," Dr. Houry said. "I hope that the take-home message is that we can all make a difference by implementing these community-level prevention programs and identifying the warning signs. We can all save a life."

The briefing concluded with a call to action for policymakers and communities alike to continue working toward providing accessible healthcare, economic support, and mental health services.

For those in crisis, help is available through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which provides free and confidential support 24/7.

Universities awarded grant to retain Native nursing students

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Northeastern State University, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College and Inter-Tribal Council, Inc. have been awarded a \$2 million grant to support Native

American nursing students in Oklahoma.

The grant is a part of an agreement with Indian Health Services. According to a release, the program will provide resources for mentorship, student support, application assistance and more.

Ernie Tsosie encourages family wellness, importance of culture

BY TATUM MITCHELL
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club had a full house for an evening of learning about family wellness strategies Sept. 3.

Ernie Tsosie (Navajo), speaker and comedian from Arizona, presented "Zealot for Family Wellness." His topics ranged from the importance of culture and identity to the dangers of vaping.

"I believe that they're all interconnected: mind, body, spirit. [It] makes up a family unit... I think when all those three elements

are in harmony, that's when we're happiest with our families and even as individuals," Tsosie said.

Tsosie spoke about the importance of parents monitoring their own actions because their children can pick up their qualities, he said. He shared things he learned raising his sons.

"I've been trying to teach these boys – best I can as a father – the basics, the respect, courtesy and kindness," Tsosie said. "These types of teaching, they cost nothing. We can do that every day with our children... I believe that kids are going to do what they see their parents do."

Culture setting people apart and giving

them a sense of identity is a large part of having a sense of belonging, Tsosie said. People of all ages benefit from having a sense of belonging in community, he said.

"Culture makes us stronger as a tribe, as a family and as individuals," Tsosie said.

The Boys & Girls Club said it tries to do events like this one a few times a year on top of its other community activities.

Some wellness strategies shared by the club after Tsosie's presentation included aromatherapy and tea-sampling. Attendees passed around jars of cotton balls which had different scents added to them and sampled various teas. The club also presented community awards at the end of the evening.



Tatum Mitchell

A table sampling teas at the speaker event in Big Cypress on Sept. 3.



Tatum Mitchell

Ernie Tsosie at the Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club on Sept. 3.

CMA apologizes for harms to First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples

FROM CBS NEWS
BY KARIN LARSEN

The Canadian Medical Association says it is "deeply ashamed" and "deeply sorry" for the past and present harms the medical profession has caused to First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

The apology was issued in a ceremony in Victoria held on the traditional territory of the ləkʷəŋiʔnəŋ-speaking people of Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations. It also featured singers, drummers, dancers, musicians and storytellers.

"The racism and discrimination that Indigenous patients and health-care providers face is deplorable," said CMA president Dr. Joss Reimer.

"We acknowledge there are ripple effects on future generations. We take ownership of the CMA's history, and we are committed to righting our wrongs and rebuilding our relationship on a foundation of trust, accountability and reciprocity."

Métis Elder Jim Durocher called the apology a good step forward.

"It's going to take a long time because there's a lot of damage and harm that was done to our people, and many of them, to this

day, will not even address that," Durocher said. "We need the truth first and I'm so happy that the Canadian Medical Association has taken the first steps."

The apology cited specific examples of harms, including:

- The Indian Hospital system which embedded systemic racism and discrimination in the Canadian health system.
- Forced and coerced sterilization.
- Forced medical experimentation on Indigenous children in residential schools, including forced malnourishment.
- Medical experimentation on Indigenous adults.
- Child apprehensions.
- Neglect and abuse.

The CMA's first Indigenous president said Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals need to "lift together so the CMA can move forward with authentic change."

"It's a chapter that we hope First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples can write with us together as we work toward a health system that provides Indigenous Peoples with the right care, at the right time, in the right place, in a good way," said Dr. Alikia Lafontaine.

"I feel solidarity and empathy. I feel hope that things can be different," he said.

Dr. Esther Tailfeathers, a family physician from the Kainai Nation in southern Alberta, similarly told CBC News that the event marked a new start but there's still a lot of work to do.

She also reflected on her experiences working in the health-care system as an Indigenous person, which she described as "being stuck between a rock and a hard place."

"You recognize the treatment of your people as patients in the medical system and it's overwhelming throughout the years. ... But you have to also recognize when you're working in the emergency room, the stress of attending to some very serious issues and not having time to address the bias itself and so it's a difficult place to be," Tailfeathers said.

"I'm very welcoming of this news because I know that it's going to alleviate a lot of the tension that Indigenous physicians and Indigenous front-line workers have in terms of working with colleagues who don't even recognize that they're biased and recognizing the harm that's done to patients."



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SEMINOLE SCENES



Kevin Johnson

FORT PIERCE FUN: Gabriel Griffin cruises down the slide in Chupco's Landing play area Sept. 26 on the Fort Pierce Reservation.



Calvin Tiger

BAND ON THE CARPET: Ahfachkee School band members, from left to right, Zechariah Stockton, Sautva Billie, Curmya Smith and Gene Jimmie strike a pose for cameras at the Boys & Girls Club's 20th anniversary celebration Sept. 6 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.



Beverly Bidney

FIRST INDIAN DAY: Caniah Billie holds her two-week old baby Aziyah Billie during the Immokalee Indian Day festivities Sept. 21.



Global Ties Miami/Facebook

GLOBAL REACH: The Seminole Tribe's Cheyenne Kippenberger, center, was a guest speaker at a Global Ties Miami program in early September. Kippenberger spoke to Global Ties' Women United for Equity's International Visitor Leadership Program. Global Ties Miami is a non-profit organization that brings together international visitors and South Florida communities to promote a "peaceful and prosperous world" through connections and cultural exchange. The organization posted on Facebook that Kippenberger "...shared her compelling journey and insights on female leadership within her community. Her work to challenge stereotypes and promote cultural preservation is truly inspiring. A special thank you to Cheyenne for her engaging discussion on the power of advocacy and her commitment to both her heritage and the environment. Her dedication to educating others and championing the Florida Everglades provided invaluable perspectives for our visiting leaders. We appreciate her partnership and contributions to fostering understanding and change." Kippenberger, a former Miss Florida Seminole and Miss Indian World, is an advocate, speaker and consultant who has been a guest speaker at several occasions in Indian Country and elsewhere.



Kevin Johnson

FALL FOLIAGE: The lobby at tribal headquarters in Hollywood is decked out with fall scenes, including pumpkins and colorful foliage.



Florida Historic Capitol Museum/Facebook (2)

SEMINOLES IN TALLY: Seminole artists Wilson Bowers, above, and Alyssa Osceola, right, were featured in the Florida Historic Capitol Museum's Indigenous Artists Series in September. They were joined by Randelle Osceola (Miccosukee Tribe) for the Sept. 19 program at the museum in downtown Tallahassee.



Mayli Tommie

GOOD SEATS: With the Guitar Hotel in the background, spectators get ready to watch the Hollywood Indian Day canoe race Sept. 25 at the pond on the east side of State Road 7.



NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

B.C. First Nations declare state of emergency due to toxic drug deaths

Following the tragic deaths of two Ahousaht First Nation members and many others in Nuu-chah-nulth communities, the council said the current mental health and opioid crisis continues to rage through First Nations communities at six times the rate of other B.C. residents.

Data released by the First Nations Health Authority in April 2023 showed that First Nations people died at 5.9 times the rate of other residents in 2022, with 373 toxic drug-poisoning deaths in total. That was a 6.3-per-cent increase from 2021.

“We haven’t gathered statistics yet, but we do know that at funerals that used to be once a month have now gone to two to three a week,” Judith Sayers, member of the Hupacasath First Nation and president of the council, told Global News on Sept. 19.

“And that’s from one of our people who conduct the services. So I don’t have any numbers yet. But, you know, it’s been impactful.”

The council is now calling on the provincial and federal governments and health authorities to resource strategies that take swift and meaningful action to combat the drug crisis.

“We’ve been asking for a detox and a cancellation centre for a couple of years,” Sayers added. “We’re not there. You know, we just really need to push the governments into responding and providing these services that we need.”

She said they believe solutions should be Nuu-chah-nulth-led and developed but they need those official agencies to support the work they are going to do.

“We’ve seen British Columbia declare a state of emergency eight years ago on this,” Sayers said.

“And what has changed? So maybe it’s time to change hands. We just want to lead it.”

B.C. Premier David Eby said on Sept. 19 that Indigenous communities have been hard hit by the toxic drug crisis in the province.

“First Nations are grieving right now and we will provide them with the support they need around counselling and additional avenues of delivering care in a community where people are struggling,” he said.

Eby added that the province is also supporting the First Nations Health Authority with additional treatment sites.

“But this is real and this is right now for Nuu-chah-nulth so we’ll make sure that we’re there for them with the support that they need,” he said.

Sayers said attending the funeral of a young person is devastating to so many communities and the loss and the grief is felt across those communities.

“Our communities are very connected to one another,” she said.

“And it’s not just Nuu-chah-nulth. We have a lot of intermarriages amongst the First Nations. So, you know, one death just affects so many people.

“And, you know, especially if people think, ‘Well, we should have done something’ or ‘Why wasn’t something done?’ You know, it makes it even harder to deal with that death.”

- Global News

Muscogee Nation argues in federal court Alabama tribe violated repatriation law

A years-long dispute between two federally recognized tribes – the Muscogee Nation from Oklahoma and Poarch Band of Creek Indians from Alabama – over the future of the remains of people from which both tribes claim descent was heard in the Federal 11th Circuit Court of Appeals Sept. 25.

“For over 20 years, people have been fighting,” said Raelynn Butler, Secretary of Culture and Humanities for the Muscogee Nation. “I just hope that the court system hears us and our ancestors, and our plea to help to hold those accountable for what happened.”

During the construction of their Wind Creek Casino and related properties, the Poarch Band allowed the disinterment by archaeologists of 57 people at a place called Hickory Ground, a historic Muscogee ceremonial ground now situated inside the city of Wetumpka, Ala.

The Muscogee Nation maintains the act violated the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, or NAGPRA, and that the remains should be returned to the living descendants of the dis-interred, Muscogee citizens who maintain the modern-day Hickory Ground in Oklahoma.

A district judge had tossed the suit brought by the Muscogee Nation against the much smaller Poarch Band of Creek Indians on the grounds that the Poarch Band, like any other federally recognized tribe, enjoys sovereign immunity.

Before the three judge panel of the 11th Circuit, attorney for the Muscogee Nation Mary Kathryn Nagle sought to revive the action, arguing the Muscogee Nation should instead be allowed to sue individual Poarch officials for what she said is an ongoing violation of NAGPRA, and therefore a violation of federal law.

“They dug up 57 Muskogee relatives, put them in trash bags and sent many of them off to Auburn University for scientific study. And that directly violates NAGPRA,” Nagle said.

Former United States Poet Laureate Joy Harjo is a Hickory Ground descendant and one of a handful of Muscogee citizens who have visited the Auburn University archaeology department collection.

“So I walked in the door, the entry there

was so intense, I almost turned around and ran,” Harjo said.

Both Harjo and Raelynn Butler said on their visits they saw people’s remains stored in large plastic bins.

“There’s no kindness or tenderness. Everybody’s been just thrown into boxes, a number put on him,” Harjo said.

Under NAGPRA, museums and universities like Auburn which still hold human remains or related burial items are bound to return them to the tribes who can demonstrate their connection to them. Both the Poarch Band and the Muscogee Nation have competing NAGPRA claims on what Auburn University still holds.

“Auburn could return them tomorrow. This would settle a lot of it,” said Raelynn Butler.

Officials from Auburn University did not respond to requests for interview and were not represented during the 11th Circuit arguments.

During the proceedings, the judges of the 11th Circuit spent little time on the NAGPRA allegations and instead focused on the logic of breaking apart into smaller pieces what they called the original “shotgun plea” that ran aground on the sovereign immunity issue.

After the hearing, attorney Mary Kathryn Nagle said she hoped the pieces the court identifies still amount to the whole.

“We’re hoping and praying the entire case goes back,” Nagle said. “But they are doing their due diligence and looking at it claim by claim, because it’s a different claim for each of the parties, each of the defendants.”

After arguments, Poarch Band Chairman and CEO Stephanie Bryan maintained her tribe was within its sovereign rights.

“We own the land. And we control what happens on the land,” Bryan said.

Bryan said while the Poarch Band has no control over the Auburn collection, they have returned a smaller number of remains to the Muscogee Nation.

“They have been repatriated based on the Muscogee Creek’s repatriation guidelines, the state, federal and the Poarch Creek guidelines,” Bryan said.

As the Mekko, or leader, of the present day Hickory Ground tribal town, it would have fallen to George Thompson to re-inter his ancestors in the Muscogee tradition and in a manner to let them rest again.

“We received notification, but it was like two days after,” Thompson said. “So it kind of more or less tells you, you know, that something went wrong.”

Muscogee Secretary of Culture and Humanities Raelynn Butler said what she’s really hoping for from the court now is a path to save other tribes from similar conflict in the future.

“That we work to prevent something like this, that there are no more loopholes in the law,” Butler said. “Nobody else should ever have to experience this.”

The decision by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals could arrive in weeks or even months.

- Georgia Public Broadcasting

Tribes file lawsuit to delay Southern Oregon floating offshore wind auction

Southern Oregon tribes have filed a lawsuit against the federal government, in an effort to delay an upcoming floating offshore wind lease auction off the Oregon Coast.

On Sept. 13, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians filed a lawsuit claiming the U.S. Department of Interior’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, or BOEM, failed to consider the environmental, cultural and economic impacts of the potential of floating offshore wind. The tribes’ intent is to delay an Oct. 15 lease sale and force the federal agency to conduct a thorough environmental impact statement that “honestly” looks at the impact wind energy would have on the Oregon coast.

“The decision to file this legal action was not taken lightly,” Tribal Council Chair Brad Kneaper said in a statement. “We would much rather work collaboratively with BOEM to determine where the best places are to develop wind energy, minimizing the impacts to the Coast and our people. Unfortunately, BOEM left us no other options.”

BOEM recently announced it will auction two areas off the coast of Coos Bay and Brookings. Those sites, which the agency finalized in February, total nearly 195,000 acres. In August, the federal agency found that issuing leases in mid-October will have “no significant impacts to people or the environment.”

But in their lawsuit, the tribes say BOEM violated the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, by failing to consider the impacts of future wind energy development, the cumulative impacts of the proposed projects along with other West Coast wind development, and failing to consider alternatives that exclude important habitat areas.

NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.

The suit also claims BOEM “issued its decision before complying with its legal obligations to protect cultural resources as required by the National Historic Preservation Act.”

“The Tribe has consistently urged that BOEM delay moving forward with wind energy development until a better understanding is made of the impacts to fish, wildlife, the marine environment, and cultural resources important to the Tribe,” Kneaper said in the statement. “No one, including BOEM has an understanding on how wind development will impact the fragile

marine environment. BOEM developed an environmental assessment document that narrowly focused on the impacts of the lease sale and completely turned a blind eye to the inevitable impacts that construction and operation of these private energy facilities will have on Coastal resources, the Tribe, and other residents.”

The push to generate more renewable energy by building out floating offshore wind has left many in Southern Oregon questioning how the technology would affect the region. For more than a year, residents and tribes in the area, as well as Gov. Tina Kotek, have called on the federal agency to provide more information regarding the environmental, cultural and economic impacts of floating offshore wind. Some, including the tribes, have also called for a delay until that information is available. Coos and Curry counties residents will vote on whether to formally oppose offshore wind outright, a symbolic move against the federal government.

The tribes’ position on floating offshore wind development has shifted over time. In 2020, the tribes had no firm position but wanted to learn more about what environmental and cultural impacts would be. According to Kneaper, the tribes have submitted a substantial number of comments to the agency, including a request to delay the sale until further information is shared.

Lacking answers, the tribes then passed a resolution limiting their support for offshore floating wind development.

In 2023, the tribes withdrew that limited support and passed a resolution expressing their opposition to wind energy development as “BOEM continually failed” to ensure what the environmental and cultural impacts would be.

But according to the tribes’ attorney Rick Eichstaedt, the tribes do not completely oppose the development of floating offshore wind. Their goal focuses on BOEM taking a full look at its environmental impacts, rather than turning “a blind eye to what all of us know is going to happen, construction and operation of offshore wind development.”

“It’s got to be the right project in the right place, understanding the impacts and with the right mitigation,” he said. “And that needs to occur early. We can’t do it once there are leases.”

Prior to filing the lawsuit, the tribes notified both BOEM and the governor’s office that the tribes are willing to withdraw the lawsuit if the October lease sale is delayed and BOEM commits to assessing the impacts of wind energy development on the Coast.

“Fundamentally, this comes down to BOEM not engaging in meaningful consultation with the tribe,” Eichstaedt said. “The tribe has pointed out throughout this process, it’s provided pages and pages of comments expressing its concern about this. Requested that BOEM meaningfully engage with the tribe to understand what its concerns are to on an upfront basis, try to mitigate those concerns. BOEM has not done this.”

In August, BOEM said issuing a lease to a developer does not allow construction of offshore wind energy. Once a developer is chosen, they will have up to five years to submit a project proposal, which will undergo an environmental review before final approval. That review, according to BOEM, could take at least four years to reach completion.

An official with BOEM said staff at the agency “do not discuss pending litigation through media” and did not answer whether the lawsuit will impact the upcoming Oct. 15 auction.

The governor’s office has not responded to a request for comment.

- Oregon Public Broadcasting

Navajo and other radiation, uranium mine survivors demand action on stalled RECA compensation program

People exposed to radiation from atomic bomb tests and uranium mines rallied Tuesday at the U.S. Capitol – along with tribal leaders – to demand action on a stalled compensation program.

“They gave the ultimate sacrifice when it was needed. We should reward the people who didn’t question what needs to be done,” said Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren.

Much of the frustration was aimed at House Speaker Mike Johnson, who has not said whether or when he will put the Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act to a vote.

Congress approved the original program in 1990 and has extended it several times. The last extension expired in June.

RECA, as it’s widely known, provided payments to people in 12 states who’d been affected by nuclear fallout or who worked at uranium mines and mills before 1971 – that is, during World War II and through much of the Cold War.

“Downwinders” from the Nevada nuclear test site were eligible for \$50,000. Uranium workers, many of them Navajo, were eligible for \$100,000.

“Please, Speaker Johnson have that compassion in your heart,” said Kathleen Tsosie from Cove, Arizona, who has been lobbying on the issue since 1998.

Phil Harrison, a Navajo member and former uranium worker, said no one ever disclosed the dangers. He developed kidney failure in 1999, at age 49.

“I’d like to ask Speaker Johnson to pass this RECA. As a leader, he has that responsibility,” Harrison said.

The Navajo Nation has a long history of exposure from nuclear fallout and the uranium mines.

There are roughly 500 abandoned uranium mines on Navajo lands. Many workers were not well versed in English, and the hazards were not properly communicated. Many brought their families to live with them near the mines; their cancer rates are also elevated.

Some House Republicans have expressed cost concerns. A GOP leadership aide said the version approved earlier this year by the Senate would massively increase federal spending.

The Senate bill, approved on a bipartisan 69-30 vote, not only reauthorizes RECA but expands it to cover more parts of the Western states and more illnesses. It also adds exposure to nuclear waste dump sites and expands eligibility to people who worked in the mines through 1990.

“We’ve heard from Mike Johnson’s office that they’re worried about the cost, and I think that is very disingenuous,” said Lilly Adams, a senior outreach coordinator of the global security program of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

When RECA was adopted, it was seen as a cheaper alternative to litigation involving tens of thousands of cancer victims who didn’t get sufficient warnings about radiation hazards.

The Speaker of the Navajo Nation, Crystalayne Curley, said many of her own relatives died from radiation-related illnesses, including a grandfather who worked in the uranium mines.

She said she understands cost concerns that Johnson and his caucus might be wrestling with. But she said, “You can’t put a price on a life, especially if they have been mistreated.”

The demonstration Tuesday marked the start of a three-day push to pressure the House into voting. Starting at the Navajo Nation Washington Office, a group of more than 60 people walked several blocks to the Capitol in the rain.

They chanted “Pass RECA now” and held signs with the symbol for radiation hazard. One sign read, “The govt poisoned me and my family. 79 years later, you can do the right thing.”

Nygren, the Navajo Nation president, held a sign that read, “Decades of cancer from nuclear testing. It’s time to pay the bills.”

After a news conference, the group moved outside to receive blessings from the DinéTah, a Navajo dancing group.

Since the end of 2023, RECA has received 7,890 claims from members of tribal nations, 86% of them Navajo.

Downwinder counties in Arizona include Apache, Coconino, Gila, Navajo and Yavapai. The Senate bill would add Mohave County.

At the news conference, lawmakers from both parties voiced support for RECA or vented at Johnson’s inaction.

Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, said RECA advocates represent both the suffering and heroism of Americans.

“Speaker Johnson is the only reason these people are suffering right now and he can fix it,” said Dawn Chapman, founder of Just Moms STL, which is fighting a nuclear waste site near St. Louis, Missouri. “He needs to move and he needs to move today.”

The three Arizona Democrats in the House, Reps. Raúl Grijalva of Tucson and Greg Stanton and Ruben Gallego of Phoenix, wrote to Johnson in June demanding a RECA vote.

“It’s unacceptable that, because of extremists in Congress refusing to act, hundreds of Arizonans are going without the care and compensation they deserve after sacrificing their health for our national security,” Gallego said in a statement.

Millie Chino of the Laguna Pueblo tribal nation in New Mexico held a framed photo of herself and her husband, James Chino, during the march to the Capitol. He died a year ago after being diagnosed with three different types of cancer starting in 2010, she said.

The RECA claim he later filed was denied because he did not work in the mines long enough.

Chino said she joined the protest to “budge anyone’s heart to do something right.”

At the news conference, Sen. Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, a Democrat, predicted that if Johnson did put RECA reauthorization on the House floor, it would certainly pass. Others agreed.

“I hope I run into him. Maybe I can talk some sense into him,” said Elvina Billiman Carl, from Buell Park, Arizona.

- Cronkite News (Phoenix, Ariz.)

How the Kaibab Paiute Tribe is helping California condor conservation efforts

The Bureau of Land Management and Peregrine Fund are set to release four captive-bred California condors into the wild from the Vermillion Cliffs National Monument on National Public Lands Day, which is this Saturday.

This partnership spans several state, federal and tribal collaborators, including the Grand Canyon and Zion national parks to the Kaibab and Dixie national forests.

Arizona Game and Fish Department and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources are also helping bring this endangered species back from the brink alongside the Navajo Nation and Kaibab Paiute Tribe.

Lead poisoning is the leading cause of death for California condors. They consume the toxic heavy metal that’s introduced into their environment by the ammo that hunters often use.

Mule deer is the most popular animal that Kaibab Paiutes hunt.

Kaibab Paiute Wildlife Director Bruce Benson explained that tribal members will

drive to St. George, Utah — a 40-mile trip each way.

“Before we start hunting, which is in October,” Benson said, “we’ll get some vouchers to get our non-lead bullets through Sportsman’s Warehouse.”

These vouchers discount non-lead ammo, often made of copper. Otherwise, Benson said the lead is “gonna drizzle down to the other animals that eat the guts.”

His remote reservation spans across some 120,000 acres along the Arizona Strip and between Coconino and Mohave counties. It’s located about 50 miles north of the Grand Canyon, which is where the California condors have called home since the Pleistocene Era that ended more than 10,000 years ago.

“We’ve been having some contact inside the reservation,” said Benson. “Back in February, a condor passed away up on the cliff. We actually hiked and retrieved the body, and I think it’s kinda sad to see. You wonder how they died.”

There were only 22 condors in 1982, but now there are more than 500 birds worldwide, with more than half flying free in Arizona, Utah, California and Mexico.

But last year marked the first time since 1996 when California condors weren’t released from the Vermillion Cliffs due to an avian flu outbreak. It killed 21 condors in the Utah-Arizona flock; only 85 condors are left.

A condor nestling called Milagra, a Spanish name for miracle, was rescued after her mother died from HP AI, or the highly pathogenic avian influenza. She hatched at the Phoenix nonprofit Liberty Wildlife before being transferred to the Peregrine Fund’s propagation facility at the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho.

Milagra is among the California condors that were scheduled to be released Sept. 28.

- KJZZ (Phoenix, Ariz.)

American Indian Affairs committee sends bison protections and law enforcement bills to lawmakers

Six Colorado lawmakers on the American Indian Affairs interim committee met for the final time Sept. 26 and voted to send three bills to the full legislature.

The committee was formed last April with the goal of having lawmakers listen to a wide swath of Indigenous people about pressing issues they face as both individuals and a community.

Before the committee met, a group of advocates put together a list of policy recommendations that they asked lawmakers to consider, including a hunting and fishing fee waiver for enrolled tribal members, tribal liaison positions at all state departments and requirements that school curriculums include Native American history

At the committee’s previous meeting, lawmakers asked staff members to draft six bills for them to consider Sept. 26. Of the six bills drafted, the committee could only pass three to the full legislature to consider when its new session begins in January.

The first bill the committee voted to send to the full legislature would extend the interim committee to 2029. Another would increase protections for wild bison. The third would require state agencies to enforce tribal court orders and arrest warrants.

Those bills must go through both chambers of the legislature like any other bill, and lawmakers may attach further amendments to them.

A bill that would’ve required Native American cultural competency training for health care workers narrowly failed after Democratic Sen. Dylan Roberts voted against it, arguing such a bill should mandate cultural competency training for all backgrounds. The bill’s failure elicited a vocal reaction from some in the audience, many of whom testified to the committee in support of the proposal.

“Competency in health care is just so lacking across our country,” Adrienne Maddux, executive director at Denver Indian Health and Family Services, told CPR News. “I think that we all see it in many ways. We are users of the health care system, too, and myself as a Native person have been targeted by this and it needs to change.”

Teddy McCullough, a member of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, said he and his family have grown wary of the medical system after being denied prescriptions.

“We don’t get prescribed the medication that we actually need to feel better and to heal because the medical professional feels like we are just drug-seeking, we don’t need the medication, we just want to get high essentially,” he said. “And that’s not the truth.”

Another bill that would have required the statehouse to clarify which Colorado laws apply to the Southern Ute tribe also failed to move forward, and one that would’ve added Native American history to the state curriculum was pulled from the docket before the final meeting.

Lawmakers said because only three bills could pass the interim committee, they would explore introducing the other measures during future legislative sessions.

“I am confident that my colleagues in the House and Senate will join me and commit to the community to see through some of the issues that did not move forward today,” Sen. Jessie Danielson said. “I saw some of that commitment today and I’m grateful for that, but there’s a lot of work to be done and we need to make sure that it gets done.”

- Colorado Public Radio

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AT THE GUITAR HOTEL POOL

Education



New Okeechobee High School taking shape

BY TATUM MITCHELL
Staff Reporter

Phase one of construction of Okeechobee High School concluded at the beginning of August. The completed high school is set to open at the start of the 2026-27 school year.

The construction started about a year and a half ago and is “pretty much changing everything in terms of [the school] itself,” assistant superintendent for administrative services Joseph Stanley said.

During phase one, they completed the Career and Technical Education building, which is about 19,000 square feet. Over the next two years, the construction will be in phase two which is the “major phase” of 230,000 square feet Stanley said.

“We will change the buildings, obviously, the format, the layout, ... the modernization of facilities. It’ll be a complete revamp and replacement of the high school itself,” Stanley said.

The final phase is demolition of the current original facilities, where they are currently operating out of. The construction is happening behind the current facility.

“Our students are very pleased with the new facility,” Stanley said. “Our teachers as well.”

The new facilities are being constructed behind the current building, so the CTE building is at the back of the property.

“We’re having to shuttle students to that between periods each day. That’s been the biggest area of concern,” Stanley said. “But in terms of ... the positive aspects, they expanded lab facilities that they have available there, now house our CTE programs. ... That comes with a huge number of benefits as well.”

Stanley said his personal hope for the construction project is to expand educational offerings and show students they value education.

“My other hope is that it helps to revitalize some of the community efforts by doing things like expanding to where we can use local partners and things along those lines,” Stanley said. “It truly is a community effort, and I look forward to seeing the community’s reaction to the finished product.”



A rendering of the new Okeechobee High School.

Courtesy rendering



Kevin Johnson

Construction for a new high school is evident throughout the property, including in this Aug. 29 photo of an area that used to be a parking lot near the softball field.

Swim Olympics returns to Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — For the first time in years, Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School held its swim Olympics Sept. 18, where elementary school students showed off their swimming abilities by racing across the Brighton community pool.

“We haven’t done this for five years,” said physical education teacher Pam Matthews. “This is a highlight; they have been looking forward to it.”

For three weeks leading up to the swim Olympics, students practiced and improved their skills daily. Swim lessons included blowing bubbles, floating, using kickboards and doing superman glides in addition to learning the freestyle stroke and backstroke.

Races included a freestyle long race—two laps on the short side of the pool, a one-lap freestyle race, one-lap backstroke races—one with and one without a kickboard, a freestyle kickboard race and a two-lap buddy relay race.

Families, PECS teachers and staff cheered for the swimmers, as did their classmates on the side of the pool awaiting their own races.

At the end of the races, a podium awaited the first, second and third place winners in each race, where they received their gold, silver and bronze medals. Some students won numerous medals.

After a fun 40 minutes, students boarded the bus back to school as another grade level headed for the pool.



Beverly Bidney

Third graders compete in the backstroke kickboard race during the PECS swim Olympics on Sept. 18.



Beverly Bidney

Blane Osceola, left, and Noe Bucio show off all three of their medals from the winners podium. The pair got second place for their performance in the boys buddy race.



Beverly Bidney

From the winners podium, Kali Jumper, left, and Rowen Van Houten show off their first place medals in the girls buddy race.



Beverly Bidney (2)

Above, third graders cheer for their classmates during the swim Olympics. At left, a trio of swimmers touch the wall.

Family fun: Ahfachkee School hosts grandparents day



The third grade table display for grandparents day.

Calvin Tiger



From left to right, Carol Cypress, Lorraine Jumper, Justice Jumper and Jonah Cypress at the Ahfachkee School's grandparents day Sept. 6.

Calvin Tiger



From left to right, Iretta Tiger, Austin Grasshopper, Harley Grasshopper, Dale Grasshopper, George Grasshopper and Narrah Grasshopper.

Calvin Tiger



From left to right, Addy Caldwell, Dakota Caldwell, Grayson Caldwell and Maria Laureano.

Calvin Tiger



During the grandparent event, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, left, visits with Lenora Roberts, the parent leader of the Ahfachkee PTA.

Calvin Tiger

Biden-Harris administration announce grants to support Native languages

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Biden-Harris administration announced \$11 million in grants Sept. 3 to support bilingual and multilingual educators as well as education for Native American students to strengthen Native languages. “Being multilingual is a superpower—a powerful asset that can connect students to their identity and culture, and gives those who speak more than one language cognitive, social, and economic benefits,”

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said in a release. “The investments we’re announcing today advance our goal of providing every student in America with a pathway to multilingualism by supporting the recruitment, preparation, and retention of amazing bilingual and multilingual educators—some of the best teachers in our nation, period. They also support the revitalization of Native American languages, a reflection of this Administration’s commitment to Tribal sovereignty and consultation in education.”

American Indian College Fund welcomes 2024-25 student ambassador cohort

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Nine Indigenous students were selected to be American Indian College Fund’s (College Fund) 2024-25 student ambassadors. “Student ambassadors gain valuable leadership and communications skills while working to create greater visibility of American Indians and Alaska Natives and an understanding of the importance of their cultures,” according to a press release from the College Fund’s website. The role of student ambassadors include representing the College Fund in media interviews, cultural events, in their communities and on campuses. “Student ambassadors attend a multi-

day program hosted by the College Fund to prepare for this role. Held in Denver, Colorado, the program includes in-person workshops on leadership development, public speaking, interviews, writing, and social media so ambassadors can confidently speak on issues impacting Native communities,” the press release said. The 2024-25 American Indian College Fund Student Ambassadors include: Annalise Guthrie (Cherokee Nation), Haskell Indian Nations University 2020, University of Kansas 2025. Bridget Hoshont’omba (The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), Nebraska Indian Community College 2025. Cherish GrassRope (Lower Brule Sioux Tribe of the Lower Brule Reservation),

Salish Kootenai College 2024, Gonzaga University 2026. Deanna Teller (Navajo Nation), Haskell Indian Nation University 2025. Elizabeth Crumm (Wichita and Affiliated Tribes [Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakonie]), Kansas State University 2025. Krista Goodluck (Navajo Nation), Navajo Technical University 2024. Lisa Aimsback (Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana), Blackfeet Community College 2025. Promise Lensing (Santee Sioux Nation), Sinte Gleska University 2025. Tashena Egan (Navajo Nation), Tohono O’odham Community College 2024, University of Nevada-Reno 2026.

California students to learn about history of Native American mistreatment

FROM PRESS RELEASE

California K-12 students will be required to learn about the impact on California Native Americans during the Spanish Colonization and Gold Rush Eras in California public schools after Governor Gavin Newsom signed a measure into law on Sept. 27. Assemblymember James C. Ramos (D-San Bernardino), who is the first and only California Native American elected to the legislature, authored the measure (AB 1821). It was one of seven tribal-related

measures Newsom approved on California Native American Day on Sept. 27. “I am pleased that Gov. Newsom approved AB 1821; it is another step forward in the path toward writing a new chapter in the state’s relationship to California tribes,” Ramos said in a press release on his website. “For far too long California’s First People and their history have been ignored or misrepresented. Classroom instruction about Spanish Colonization and Gold Rush periods fails to include the loss of life, enslavement, starvation, illness and violence inflicted upon California Native Americans.” A poll from the Institute of

Governmental Studies showed that 80% of people who responded supported a requirement in California schools to teach of Native American history and culture. “We thank Assemblymember Ramos for authoring AB 1821 to ensure that a more complete and accurate history of our state is taught. ... Those truths are often absent from instruction about California’s history and the nation’s westward expansion. Omitting this history erases the truth of Native Americans’ presence on this land and through silence perpetuates the injustices of those eras,” Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians Chairman Isaiah Vivanco said in the release.

Pumpkins get decorated for museum exhibit

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum held a family pumpkin decorating event at the Topeekeeke Yakne Community Center on Sept. 12. Members of the Big Cypress community attended the event, whose focus was on tribal youth being involved. The theme for the pumpkin decorating event was anime, which is a form of Japanese animation inspired art. The museum will host its annual Pumpkins of Devil’s Garden exhibit opening for decorated pumpkins. The exhibit in the Sculpture Garden will be displayed until Nov. 12. Students from the Ahfatchkee School will also have their decorated pumpkins on display at the event as well.

Calvin Tiger

From left to right, Dasani Cypress, Pilot Cypress, and Charles Billie enjoy decorating a pumpkin together during the Devil’s Garden Family Pumpkin Decorating Event.



Calvin Tiger (2)

Above, Koba Taylor, and below, Tyler Tigertail, show their pumpkin designs that they made during the decorating event Sept. 12.



Calvin Tiger

Staff from the the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum gather in front of a table full of yet-to-be-decorated pumpkins. From left to right are Rebecca Petrie, Tylor Tigertail, Jojo Osceola, Elizabeth Medina and Melissa Tommie.



Native educator earns national honor

FROM PRESS RELEASE

A Native American educator has been honored as national teacher of the year. Wunneanatsu Lamb-Cason (Schaghticoke/HoChunk) was named National History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History on Sept. 19. Lamb-Cason has taught history at Riverbend High School in Fredericksburg, Virginia, for the past decade. She currently serves as the assistant director of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative at Brown University. According to a news release from the institute, Lamb-Cason “earned

recognition for her innovative lesson plans and leadership in history education at the local, state, and national levels.” She is also an advocate, author and storyteller. “I am deeply honored and humbled to receive this award, which not only recognizes my years of work and dedication but also celebrates the



Courtesy photo
Wunneanatsu Lamb-Cason

administrators, and students who have supported and inspired me,” Lamb-Cason said in the release. “Being recognized at this level serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of including diverse perspectives in teaching American history, especially those of traditionally marginalized communities.” Lamb-Cason will be presented with a \$10,000 grand prize at a ceremony Oct. 15 at the Harvard Club of New York City.

TCU program names STEM awardees

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Tribal College and University (TCU) Building Bridges Grant Program announced Sept. 13 that it awarded over \$500,000 in its first cycle of selections. Through a cooperative agreement with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), NASA Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP) for American Indian Alaska Native STEM Engagement (MAIANSE) created the Building Bridges Grant Program to broaden TCU student participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs through projects that would enrich and support course and curriculum development, research activities, and increase student engagement. “AIHEC is proud to be in this partnership with NASA to increase STEM participation at our TCUs,” said

Ahniwake Rose, AIHEC President & CEO, “In addition to the educational opportunities these grants will provide, we also look to the potential future outcomes including better career opportunities for our students, job growth through economic development, and overall, strong sovereign nations.” In response to a request for proposals released in June 2024, AIHEC selected the following eight Tribal College & University projects centered around STEM enrichment: -Haskell Indian Nations University: Creating an Engagement with STEM This project provides students with the opportunity to participate in activities to gain knowledge of STEM field careers, such as the NASA internship program, First Nations Launch, and the NASA RockOn!™ workshop.

Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College: Enhancing Experiential Based Learning within Engineering at Tribal Community Colleges This project increases exposure to additive manufacturing courses in an applied setting, with a secondary goal of ensuring students investigate and pursue career pathways in STEM fields by having internship-based exposures. Northwest Indian College: Attracting STEM Students Through Extracurricular Science/Club Activities This program will engage students in activities that increase the likelihood they will enroll in STEM classes and pursue additional knowledge in rocketry and remote-control technologies.

♦ See STEM on page 6C

Folk music festival to be held in Everglades City

FROM PRESS RELEASE

EVERGLADES CITY — The ECity Musical festival – a gathering of Florida folk musicians – will be held Nov. 2 at the Rod & Gun Club in Everglades City as a benefit to save the old Bank of Everglades building. Among the scheduled headliners are Raiford Starke, Marie Nofsinger, Ken Crawford, and the Seminole Tribe’s Rita Youngman. The will be joined by local star Charlie Pace and longtime

resident Parker Oglesby. To start the day, the weekly Florida Folk Show on Radio St. Pete will be broadcast live at 10 a.m. with host Pete Gallagher, who helped organize this jamboree. Gallagher plans to interview some of the performers and local dignitaries as well as spinning songs. Stay tuned online at www.radiostpete.com for the latest updates. The festival itself begins around 12 p.m. with raffles and auctions of meals, tours, and artworks contributed to help

the fundraising while adding to the fun. Attendees can also enjoy a fresh seafood sandwich or other items off the menu on the porch of the Rod & Gun Club. The event is hosted by Everglades Society for Historic Preservation whose main project is the rehabilitation of the landmark Bank building for use as a visitor center and community focal point before its 100th birthday in 1926. For info and tickets, visit www.eshp.org or call 239-719-0020.

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Annual AIAC set for Nov. 1, 2 in BC

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum’s American Indigenous Arts Celebration (AIAC) will take place Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, at the museum’s festival grounds across the street from the Big Cypress museum from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The AIAC will feature Seminole and other Indigenous art, music, food and dance. On Friday, Ahfachkee School students will

present a fashion show and a concert by the school’s band. Attendees can participate in a meet and greet with Native American actor Dallas Goldtooth on Saturday.

Other highlights of the weekend include the White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers, Champion Native American Hoop Dancers, Aztec Dance performance by the Amayel Mexican Cultural Academy, a live wildlife show, music by Rez Jamz and plenty of Native arts, crafts and food for sale.

For more details and a daily schedule, visit www.ahтахthiki.com/AIAC/.

AIAC schedule

Friday, Nov. 1

- 9:50 a.m.
Main Stage - Welcoming Announcements
- 10 a.m.
Main Stage - Grand Entry Opening Ceremony
- 10:30 a.m.
Main Stage - White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers
Stage 360 - Wildlife show
- 11 a.m.
Main Stage - Fashion Show
Featuring Ahfachkee Students
Stage 360- Champion Native American Hoop Dancers
- 12 p.m.
Main Stage - Rez Jamz - Ahfachkee School Band
Stage 360 - Ameyal Mexican Cultural Academy
- 12:30 p.m.
Main Stage - Alligator Wrestling
Stage 360 - Native American Actor, Dallas Goldtooth, Meet & Greet
- 1 p.m.
Main Stage- Champion Native American Hoop Dancers
Stage 360 – White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers
- 2 p.m.
Stage 360 - Wildlife Show
- 2:30 p.m.
Main Stage - Rez Jamz, Cypress Billie
Stage 360 - Miss & Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Princesses, Meet & Greet
- 3 p.m.
Main Stage - Alligator Wrestling
- 3-3:45 p.m.
Stage 360 - Osceola’s Legacy Performance
- 3:45 p.m.
Main Stage - White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers
Stage 360 - Champion Native American Hoop Dancers
- 4:45 p.m.
Main Stage - Closing
- (schedule is subject to change)

Saturday, Nov. 2

- 9:50 a.m.
Main Stage - Welcoming Announcements
- 10 a.m.
Main Stage - Grand Entry Opening Ceremony
- 10:30 a.m.
Main Stage - White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers
Stage 360 - Wildlife Show
- 11 a.m.
Main Stage - Champion Native American Hoop Dancers
Stage 360 - Rez Jamz
- 11:30 a.m.
Stage 360 – Seminole Princesses Meet n Greet
- 12 p.m.
Main Stage - Alligator Wrestling
Stage 360 - Osceola’s Legacy
- 12:30 p.m.
Main Stage - White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers
Stage 360 - Dallas Goldtooth Meet & Greet
- 1 p.m.
Stage 360 - Wildlife Show
- 1:30 p.m.
Main Stage - Rez Jamz, Gabriella Diaz
Stage 360 - Champion Native American Hoop Dancers
- 2 p.m.
Main Stage - Lenora Roberts Fashion Show
- 2:30 p.m.
Stage 360 - Ameyal Mexican Cultural Academy
- 3 p.m.
Main Stage - Alligator Wrestling
- 3:30 p.m.
Stage 360 - White Mountain Apache Crown Dancers
- 3:45 p.m.
Main Stage – Champion Native American Hoop Dancers
- 4:45 p.m.
Main Stage – Closing
- (schedule is subject to change)



Hoop dancing, shown here at the AIAC in 2022, is scheduled to be part of this year’s events.

NAFOA honors lifetime achievement award recipients

STAFF REPORT

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — John Echohawk (Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma) and Chairwoman Glenda Nelson of the Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria received NAFOA Lifetime Achievement Awards.

They were recognized during the Fall Finance and Tribal Economies Conference from Sept. 23-24 by the NAFOA Board of Directors.

“The NAFOA Lifetime Achievement Awards honor Native American leaders who have dedicated their careers to strengthening their communities and advancing Indian Country,” according to a press release.

Nelson has led her people for over two decades, serving on the Tribal Council since 2003 and is the current Chairwoman. She helped get the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino at Fire Mountain open, which has brought in millions for nonprofits and other organizations despite years of opposition. With experience on multiple committees and in gaming, finance and more, she has contributed on a local and national community scale.

“She was one of the first Native American youth to graduate college in the 1970s with the assistance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Nelson holds a deep passion for children affected by the Indian Child Welfare Act and is dedicated to identifying and providing necessary services and programs,” according to a press release.



John Echohawk, center, receives a lifetime achievement award from NAFOA.

Since 1977, Echohawk has served as the executive director of the Native American Rights Fund (NARF). He was the first graduate of the University of New Mexico’s Indian law program and co-founded American Indian Law Students Association.

He received the 2023 Thurgood Marshall Award from the American Bar Association and was named one of America’s 100 most influential lawyers by The National Law Journal.

“At NARF, Echohawk helped secure the official recognition of over 300 tribes. His leadership has driven groundbreaking legal victories, championed numerous civil rights causes, and raised public awareness about tribal law and self-determination,” a press release said.

NAFOA was created in 1982 as the Native American Finance Officers Association.

Everett Osceola discusses interest in film industry, background of cinema festival

BY CALVIN TIGER
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Native Learning Center’s Hoporenkv Native American Podcast recently featured special guest Everett Osceola in a program titled “A Celebration of Native American Voices in Film.”

In the nearly 90-minute episode, Osceola, the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s film liaison and cultural ambassador, discussed how he developed his passion for films, acting and film making. In 2014, he started the Native Reel Cinema Festival, which is shown during the annual Seminole Tribal Fair and Powwow, to highlight the influence of Indigenous people in film.

During the podcast hosted by Brooke Warrington, Osceola talked about the support he received from various tribal members including Ollie Wareham, Doc Native, Spencer Battiest and Native actor and film maker Steven Paul Judd.

Osceola was initially hesitant to screen his first Native short film in 2016 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood. He didn’t think the short film idea would gain much attention, however, shortly thereafter, long lines formed to watch a second viewing, which helped him to keep the film festival alive.

Over the years, he has brought more Native short films to Tribal Fair and reached out to more Native actors and film makers to



Screenshot/YouTube

Everett Osceola discusses his interest and background in Native cinema on a Hoporenkv Native American Podcast with host Brooke Warrington.

be part of the Native Reel Cinema Festival.

Osceola’s interest in films started with Star Wars, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and martial art movies, including Bruce Lee and samurai movies. This opened Osceola’s view for different films which began with the Indigenous movie “Once Were Warriors,” which increased Osceola’s interest in Native films and acting.

“I got to see in other Indigenous tribes on the other side of the world going through the same things we were. Going through alcoholism, domestic violence, culture identify, coming back to your culture,” Osceola said during the podcast.

Osceola talked about his experience growing up in the 1980s and 1990s and seeing how Native Americans were portrayed and stereotyped in films. This led to a hiatus in Osceola’s acting career.

“We needed to be portrayed in a very modern light,” Osceola said.

One of the films that Osceola enjoyed included a new portrayal of a character by a Native actor. Wes Studi starred the movie “Heat” with actors Al Pacino and Robert DeNiro. After watching the movie and Studi’s performance, Osceola was inspired to get back into acting.

“He wasn’t wearing turquoise, he wasn’t named Tonto, you know he was just a regular guy right next to Al Pacino,” Osceola said.

“A Celebration of Native American Voices in Film” podcast is available on several plarforms, including Apple Podcast and YouTube. Go to nativelearningcenter.com for more information.

‘Rez Ball’ available to stream on Netflix

STAFF REPORT

A sports drama about a team of underdogs, Rez Ball, released on Sept. 27 on Netflix.

The film features basketball players from a Native American reservation aiming for a state championship in New Mexico.

“After the loss of their star player, the team must unite like never before to keep their dreams of a state championship alive,” according to a story by John Dilillo for Netflix. “This is more than just a game; it’s a journey of resilience and unity, a true underdog story deeply rooted in Native American culture and spirit.”

It was directed by Sydney Freeland (Drunktown’s Finest), who co-wrote the script with Sterlin Harjo (Reservation Dogs), and produced by LeBron James.

“You have these small arenas, but they’re just packed with people. Where we were, we don’t have professional teams. We don’t have college teams,” director Sydney Freeland said in the article for Netflix. “A lot of that falls on high school; where a lot of these Native teams have had the most success is the high school level. So you get this huge turnout and this rabid fan base. So for us, it was like, ‘Oh, this is West Texas

high school football. This is Friday Night Lights, but it is from an Indigenous perspective.”

According to a Netflix article, the movie was inspired by Canyon Dreams: A Basketball Season on the Navajo Reservation by Michael Powell and articles from The New York Times.

“The movie tends to race through actual game play — though the actors at least can handle the ball — and so the film’s strength lies more in the players’ easy rapport and the New Mexico location shooting,” a review by Nicolas Rapold from The New York Times said.



Netflix
A movie poster for ‘Rez Ball.’

Film festival to kick off with opening night at Hard Rock

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — An opening night film and party for the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival will be held Nov. 8 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

“Queen of the Ring,” a biographical drama, will be the featured film. Director Ash Avildsen and cast members are scheduled to be special guests.

The film covers the life of Mildred Burke, who was a star female professional

wrestler in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. She is described as the first ever million-dollar female athlete.

A description about the film on FLIFF’s website states: “Despite her success, Millie’s journey is marked by personal struggles, including raising her son on the road, the tragic death of her wrestling protege, and a tumultuous relationship with her manager and ex-husband, Billy Wolfe. Her story highlights her triumphs, such as headlining main events, bringing women of color into the sport, and participating in the first female “shoot match” for a title fight. ‘Queen of

the Ring’ captures the golden age of female pro wrestling and celebrates Millie’s role in changing the culture and achieving unprecedented success.”

A red carpet is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. The screening is set for 7 p.m. followed by a party. The evening will feature live music from the Jersey Girls.

Tickets are \$125 for non-FLIFF members and \$100 for members. For more information email info@fliff.com or visit fliff.com.

Steve Martin, Martin Short coming to Hard Rock Live Hollywood in January

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Steve Martin and Martin Short are coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood Jan. 11, 2025.

“Steve Martin and Martin Short’s ‘The Dukes of Funnytown!’ is a show that redefines the form in unexpected and

profound ways, from two of the funniest, most influential and acclaimed talents of the past century,” a press release said.

The pair first worked together in 1986 and were more recently in “Only Murders in the Building” together. The series was nominated for 22 Emmys in 2024.

Tickets are available at myHRL.com.



October schedule

BY NATIVE LEARNING CENTER

HOLLYWOOD — The NLC offers free Training, Technical Assistance, and Kerretv Online Webinars to Native Americans and those working within Indian Country. The NLC’s housing-related training opportunities and resources focus on areas that are critical to the growth and improvement of Tribal Communities. Stay informed about the latest trainings, webinars, and podcast episodes.

Webinar: Learning from Our Grant Rejections

Instructor: Diane Leonard, GPC, RST Grant Professionals Association
Approved Trainer
Owner, DH Leonard Consulting & Grant Writing Services, LLC
Date: Oct. 1
Time: 2–3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
There are lessons to be learned from each grant rejection, even when a grantmaker said, “There were just more good proposals than there were dollars available.” In this session, we cover the key lessons that you should take away from each grant rejection to strengthen your next application.

Training Objectives:
-Stressors Versus Mistakes
-Grant Rejections: Learnings & Ways to Avoid
-Grant Team Success & Continuous Improvement

Webinar: Law Enforcement: Mitigating Hazards, Preparing for and Responding to Emergencies, and Recovery Strategies (Part One)

Instructor: William Latchford, President, Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC.
Date: Oct. 8,
Time: 2– 3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
This webinar will focus on law enforcement strategies within the NAHASDA framework, covering topics such as identifying and assessing hazards, patrol techniques, effective use of force, and strategies for recovering from the effects of natural or human-caused disasters within Native American communities.

Training Objectives:
-These objectives aim to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively operate within the NAHASDA framework and address the unique challenges faced by Native American communities
-Gain a comprehensive understanding of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) and its implications for law enforcement within Native American communities
-Learn techniques for identifying and assessing potential hazards specific to Native American communities, including natural and human-caused threats
-Develop effective patrol strategies tailored to the unique needs and challenges of Native American communities
-Understand best practices for the appropriate and effective use of force in various situations, ensuring the safety and rights of community members are upheld
-Acquire strategies for recovering from the effects of natural or human-caused disasters, focusing on the resilience and restoration of Native American communities
-Learn methods to engage and collaborate with Native American communities to enhance mutual trust and cooperation in law enforcement efforts
-Explore the legal and ethical considerations specific to law enforcement in Native American communities, ensuring compliance with federal, state, and Tribal laws
-Increase cultural sensitivity and awareness to better serve and protect Native American communities, respecting their

traditions and customs

Podcast Release: Jacob’s Well: A Project Getting Clean Water out to Remote Areas of Indian Country

Guests: Drew Halter

President & Project Manager
Jacob’s Well Water Services, LLC.
Chris Halter
Executive Director
St. Bonaventure Indian Mission & School

Release Date: Oct. 9
Time: 12 p.m.

This week, we sat down with two brothers carrying out a very exciting project in Indian Country. Drew and Chris Halter came together to create a “mobile pipeline” that is getting clean water out to remote areas of the Navajo Reservation. Christened “Jacob’s Well,” the Halter brothers tell us all about the founding of the project, how Chris and the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School have long been working to battle the current water crisis, and how Drew’s career working with trains led to an ‘ah-hah’ moment and creative solution for facilitating access to clean water. Listen and learn how you can donate to help this amazing project or request their services for your own Reservation. Always remember: water is a human right.

Webinar: HUD’s Guidance on the Use of AI in Housing

Instructor: Vincent Franco, CEO, Next Venture Consulting
Date: Oct. 10
Time: 2– 3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
This single-session, 90-minute webinar attempts to provide the highlights and warning signs in accordance with President Biden’s Executive Order and HUD’s related announcement on the application of the Fair Housing Act to address the concerns that Artificial Intelligence poses to the tenant screening process and its application to housing opportunities through online platforms that use targeted advertising.

Training Objectives:
-Attendees will be exposed to HUD’s requirement to provide information and guidance for housing entities to understand the situation and to combat discrimination enabled by automated or algorithmic tools used to make decisions about access to housing and in other real estate-related transactions

Webinar: Fire Rescue: Mitigating Hazards, Preparing for and Responding to Emergencies, and Recovery Strategies (Part Two)

Instructor: William Latchford, President, Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC.
Date: Oct. 15
Time: 2-3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
This webinar will delve into fire safety, including firefighter safety, fireground preparation, and the necessary strategies for mitigating hazards, preparing for emergencies, and responding to fire and other emergencies within Native American housing developments.

Training Objectives:
-Learn key principles and best practices for ensuring firefighter safety during operations in Native American housing developments
-Develop comprehensive fireground preparation strategies to effectively manage and coordinate fire response efforts
-Identify and assess potential fire hazards within Native American housing developments and implement effective mitigation strategies
-Gain skills and knowledge to prepare for various types of emergencies, focusing on proactive measures to protect life and property
-Understand and practice the necessary

strategies for responding to fire and other emergencies, ensuring timely and efficient actions

-Learn methods to engage and collaborate with Native American communities to enhance fire safety and emergency response efforts
-Gain proficiency in the use of firefighting equipment and technology tailored to the unique needs of Native American housing developments
-Explore the legal and regulatory requirements related to fire safety and emergency response in Native American housing developments
-Develop strategies for post-emergency recovery, focusing on the restoration and resilience of affected communities
-Increase cultural sensitivity and awareness to better understand and respect the traditions and customs of Native American communities in fire safety and emergency response contexts

Webinar: History of Native American Housing

Instructor: Shelly Tucciarelli, Executive Director, Visionary Ventures NFP
Owner, Turtle Clan Development Services
Date: Oct. 17
Time: 2– 3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
The United States has a trust responsibility to Native American Tribes and specifically to the people. This trust responsibility is based on sacred treaties with Indian Tribes, federal statutes, court decisions, executive agreements, and through the course of other transactions and federal policy from the early 1800s. This trust responsibility extends to areas of health care, education, natural resources, public safety, and, of course, housing. In order to understand where we stand today in our Indian Housing, we need to understand the course of actions that took place to get us here.

Training Objectives:
-What the 1937 Housing Act is
-When Indian Housing Authorities became established
-When the Office of Native American Programs became established
-What the NAHASDA objectives are

Webinar: Emergency Management: Mitigating Hazards, Preparing for and Responding to Emergencies, and Recovery Strategies (Part Three)

Instructor: William Latchford, President, Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC.
Date: Oct. 22
Time: 2– 3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
This session will cover emergency management strategies specific to natural or human-caused disasters affecting Native American housing developments, emphasizing on hazard mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, and recovery planning within the NAHASDA framework.

Training Objectives:
-Gain a comprehensive understanding of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) and its relevance to emergency management in Native American housing developments
-Learn techniques for identifying, assessing, and mitigating natural and human-caused hazards specific to Native American housing developments
-Develop effective preparedness strategies to protect life and property in anticipation of potential disasters
- Acquire skills to implement efficient and effective emergency response actions during natural or human-caused disasters
-Understand and develop comprehensive recovery plans to restore and rebuild Native American housing developments post-disaster

-Learn methods to engage and collaborate with Native American communities to enhance emergency management efforts and ensure community resilience
-Gain proficiency in using tools and resources available for emergency management within the context of Native American housing developments
-Explore the legal and regulatory requirements for emergency management under the NAHASDA framework, ensuring compliance with federal, state, and Tribal laws
-Increase cultural sensitivity and awareness to effectively manage emergencies while respecting the traditions and customs of Native American communities

-Develop strategies for effective communication before, during, and after disasters to ensure that all community members are informed and prepared

Podcast Release: Hoporenkv on Halloween: A Holiday Public Safety Announcement (Special Halloween ReRelease)

Guests: William Latchford
President
Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC.

Release Date: Oct. 23
Time: 12 p.m.

A special Halloween ReRelease of a beloved Hoporenkv episode! In honor of Spooky Season, we sat down with William Latchford, President of the Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group and Co Director of the FSU College of Criminology and Criminal Justice Native American Crime and Justice Research & Policy Institute, to learn all about how you and your family can have a fun and, more importantly, SAFE Halloween this year.

William shares with our hosts Ouista Atkins and Brooke Warrington, the Training and Development Coordinator and Specialist respectively of the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Native Learning Center, tips for navigating the holiday from a public safety perspective. He covers everything from inspecting candy and wearing costumes with visibility all the way to avoiding stranger danger and pet safety, while some childhood Halloween memories are shared along the way. Listen in and spread the word to your friends and family in Indian Country, so we can all enjoy the holiday with vigilance for our loved ones. From all of us at the NLC: Happy Halloween, dear listeners!!

Webinar: Collaborative Grant Writing: Translate Theory into Practice

Instructor: Diane Leonard, GPC, RST Grant Professionals Association
Approved Trainer
Owner, DH Leonard Consulting & Grant Writing Services, LLC
Date: Oct. 24
Time: 2– 3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
This training focuses on how to turn the theoretical discussion into actionable steps for implementation within your organization and collaboratives. The session also provides an overview and recommended approach to tools that are available to help facilitate the implementation of best practices.

Training Objectives:
-How to facilitate application pre-planning with collaborative partners
-How to engage collaborative partners in program design
-How to create meaningful Letters of Commitment with collaborative partners
-How to ensure that the application reflects the strength of the collaborative relationships

Podcast: Halloween Safety

Instructor: William Latchford, President, Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC.
Release Date: Oct. 23

Webinar: Community Responsibility: Mitigating Hazards, Preparing for and Responding to Emergencies, and Recovery Strategies (Part Four)
Instructor: William Latchford, President, Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC.
Date: Oct. 29
Time: 2– 3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
The final webinar will center on community responsibility by addressing strategies for mitigating hazards, preparing for emergencies, and collaborating with public safety agencies to enhance community resilience in the face of natural or human-caused disasters within the NAHASDA framework.

These webinars will equip attendees with a detailed understanding of hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness, response strategies, and recovery planning, ensuring comprehensive readiness in dealing with public safety challenges within Native American housing communities.

Training Objectives:

-Gain a detailed understanding of community roles and responsibilities in identifying and mitigating hazards specific to Native American housing communities
-Learn strategies for creating and implementing effective emergency preparedness plans tailored to the needs of Native American housing communities
-Explore methods for fostering collaboration with public safety agencies, community members, and other stakeholders to enhance overall community resilience
-Acquire skills to develop and execute effective response strategies during natural or human-caused disasters, ensuring the safety and well-being of the community
-Understand the importance of recovery planning and develop strategies for post-disaster recovery to restore and rebuild Native American housing communities
-Learn how to leverage the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) framework to support hazard mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts
-Enhance cultural sensitivity and awareness to respect and incorporate Native American traditions and customs in emergency management practices
-Develop comprehensive strategies to build and strengthen community resilience against future disasters, ensuring long-term safety and stability
-Learn effective risk communication techniques to keep community members informed and prepared before, during, and after disasters
-Explore the legal and regulatory requirements for emergency management within the NAHASDA framework, ensuring compliance with federal, state, and Tribal laws

Webinar: Communication Plans

Instructor: Amy Wilson, Founder & Principal Consultant
SEE Renewal, LLC
Date: Oct. 31
Time: 2–3:30 p.m.

Training Description:
Communication Plans are critical for consistent messaging and outlining interactions with stakeholders. The first part of the webinar session will be used to describe the various types of communication plans and associated audiences and summarize key features of all communication plans. The rest of the session will be used to outline the steps for writing a communication plan. This webinar will give you the tools needed to create and disperse effective messaging and communicate with internal and external stakeholders. Featured materials for this webinar include a PowerPoint slide presentation and informational course resources to refer to when developing a communication plan.

Training Objectives:
-Understand what a communication plan is and its importance
-Recognize key features of all communication plans
-Identify how communication plans can be used in your organization’s current situation
-Apply session concepts and materials to develop an effective communication plan

Follow the Native Learning Center on social media or visit www.nativelearningcenter.com to keep up-to-date. For technical assistance, feedback, or more information, please contact us through our website or call 954-985-2331. The Native Learning Center values your input and welcomes your questions. Let us know what courses you and your community would like to see offered or if there are insights and lessons you and your community would like to share with others through the Native Learning Center.

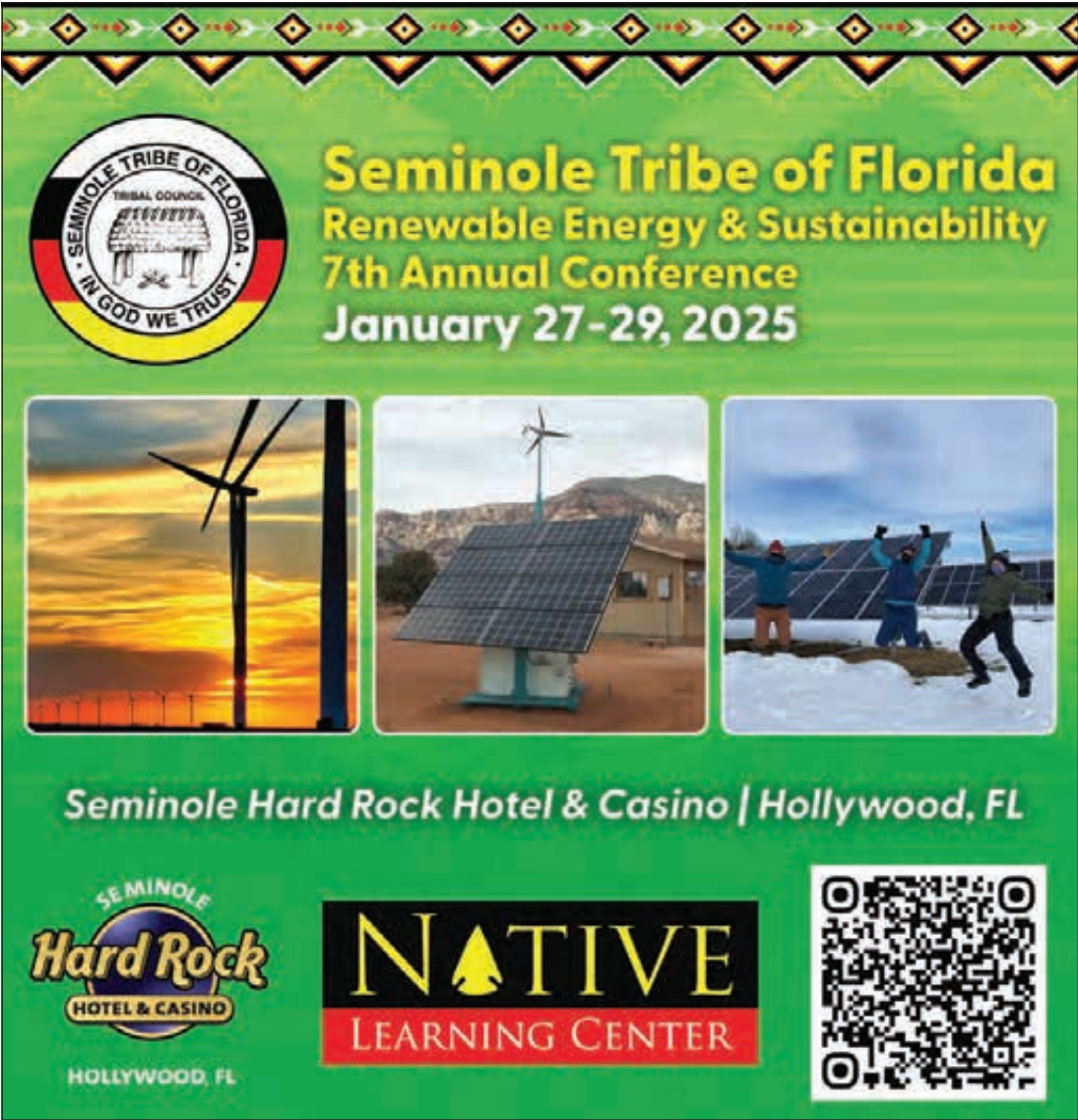
Clyde Butcher gallery to be part of environmental education fundraising day

FROM PRESS RELEASE

OCHOPEE — The Alliance of Florida’s National Parks will host a fundraising event for the “Swamp Water And Me Program” (SWAMP) Oct. 19 at the Clyde Butcher Big Cypress Gallery. SWAMP is a Big Cypress National Preserve program in conjunction with the Collier County School District. The fundraiser will help benefit an

educational field trip for 6th grade students from Collier County inside the preserve to get hands-on environmental education under the guidance of park rangers. The fundraiser, Swamp Celebration 2024, will include swamp walks, National Park Service demonstrations, environmental vendors and a food truck. There are three swamp walk options: two hours, 45 minutes and 30 minutes.

In addition, an open house at the gallery is being held in conjunction with the celebration. Photographers Clyde and Niki Butcher will be present for a meet and greet, and attendees can visit the gallery. The event is from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 52388 Tamiami Trail, in Ochopee. For more information and tickets go to the Swamp Celebration page on Eventbrite.com.



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Jake Keyser navigates a canoe, which he refurbished, on Naples Indian Day on Sept. 1.

Tatum Mitchell

Reservations’ Indian Day celebrations altered by hurricane

STAFF REPORTS

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Helene disrupted some, but not all Indian Day celebrations for the Seminole Tribe.

Powerful Helene churned in the Gulf of Mexico during Indian Day week and made landfall Sept. 26 in the Big Bend region as a category 4 hurricane.

Due to the storm, the tribe closed offices on some reservations Sept. 26. Offices tribalwide were closed Sept. 27 in observance of Indian Day.

The Lakeland/Tampa Reservation’s one day of activities – scheduled for Sept. 28 – was postponed.

Brighton managed to get in some events, but postponed two days of activities until Oct. 3 and Oct. 4.

The storm interrupted Hollywood’s weeklong schedule. The reservation held activities each day except for Sept. 26, which meant no field events, clothing contests or walk/run on that day; it was rescheduled for Oct. 3.

Fort Pierce and Trail held their events on their regularly scheduled days. The Naples community held its events at the start of the month.

Big Cypress also held its main activities on its regularly schedule day – Sept. 28 – however the Indian Day walk/run was moved from Sept. 26 to Oct. 2.

FORT PIERCE

Residents at the small reservation in Fort Pierce – known as Chupco’s Landing – were able to enjoy their Indian Day on Sept. 26. Due to Helene, activities and meals that are traditionally held at the youth ranch were moved indoors to the community center gymnasium.

Half of the gym was set up with eight dining tables, each with a bouquet of flowers. Balloon displays in Seminole colors and music added to the ambience.

The other half of the gym was where the cornhole tournament was held.

Breezy, but pleasant weather allowed the horseshoe tournament to be held on the lawn outside the center.

In the evening, the community wrapped up Indian Day with dinner and bingo.

NAPLES

The Naples community celebrated Indian Day over three days with a swamp buggy tour in the Big Cypress Preserve, dugout canoe poling, a garfish gigging competition and more traditional community activities.

Naples’ liaison Brian Zepeda said this year was the first time they’ve done three days of events. A lot of the activities were to get people out in nature.

Zepeda said the importance of cultural events around Indian Day is “to keep them alive. To keep the culture alive, to keep all of our history alive.”

There were also traditional dress family photos, with some taken in the canoes. Jake Keyser refurbished the canoes and made the oars himself.

“[Jake] refurbished them. So, this is kind of like their maiden voyage out. We were just trying to think of different things to do,” office manager Marlain Weeks said.

On Sept. 2, there were activities like hatchet throwing, fan nailing, and they cooked and ate the fish caught the day before.

“I liked ... actually just seeing everybody come out and really enjoy being outside because you can always go inside and show a movie ... But it’s not really the same as actually getting out in nature, getting your hands dirty and participating in [things] that aren’t necessarily taught now,” Weeks said.

TRAIL

The Trail community’s celebration Sept. 25 featured many members of the community. A clothing contest was among the major activities. It included groups for kids, men, women, and elders. Additional Indian Day activities consisted of a photo booth op, cotton candy making, skillet toss, hatchet toss, and pumpkin bread making.

Some scheduled activities were canceled due to heavy rain and wind. Nevertheless, the Trail community still managed to have a successful and joyful Indian Day.

IMMOKALEE

The Immokalee Reservation held its Indigenous Day celebration Sept 21. The day began with canoe races at the lake near the casino. The festivities continued at the Immokalee ranch pavilion near the rodeo grounds. The community came out eager to compete in fan tacking, log peeling, skillet toss, hatchet throw, archery and a turtle race.

HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood’s lineup featured activities every day during its Indian Day weeklong celebration Sept. 23-27.

The week kicked off with arts and crafts Monday. Tuesday featured bread contests at the Culture Camp, and sessions of early afternoon Elaponke bingo for seniors at the senior center and in the evening at the Estates.

Wednesday’s highlights included stickball on the ballfields behind the Howard Tiger Recreation Center and the always popular canoe races in the pond on the other side of State Road 7 from the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino and Guitar Hotel.

Thursday’s activities were postponed due to the hurricane. The week wrapped up Friday with a pair of off-reservation activities. Golfers teed it up in the morning at the Indian Day Golf Tournament at the Club at Emerald Hills. The afternoon’s offerings included a bowling tournament at SpareZ in Davie.

BIG CYPRESS

The Big Cypress Reservation’s Indigenous Day celebration, held Sept. 28 at the Junior Cypress Rodeo grounds, challenged tribal members in numerous traditional competitions including log peel, skillet toss, archery, hatchet throw, canoe races, a barefoot race and a fry bread and lapalle making contest. The day ended with a concert by Paul “Cowbone” Buster and dinner.

BRIGHTON

The Brighton Reservation began its Indian Day week with canoe and kayak races Sept. 24 before the rest of the week came to a halt due to the threat of Hurricane Helene.

Pairs of adult tribal members rowed canoes and individual youth manned the kayak on the lake at Tucker Ridge. Competitors were not racing each other, the race was against the clock to see who had the fastest time.



Beverly Bidney

Ralph Sanchez Jr. gives his son Ralph Sanchez III, 2, a ride on his shoulders Sept. 21 at the Immokalee Indian Day event.

Indian Day

Fort Pierce



From left to right, Mercy Griffin, Mya Sneed (holding panda) and Brooklyn Villages enjoy their time at Indian Day in the Fort Pierc Community Center.



Hope Sneed, left, and Sarah Sneed practice for the cornhole matches.



Valerie Snow, left, and Hope Sneed enjoy their friendly competition in horseshoes.



Irvin Parks, left, and Trenton Timothy get ready for a football play inside the gym.



Josh Sneed is interviewed by SMP.

Brighton



Mother and son team of Dionne Smedley and Justin Aldridge have their groove on as they paddle in sync at Tucker Ridge in Brighton on Sept. 24.



Reina Micco and Davey Snow put in the extra effort to get to the shore as fast as they can during Brighton's Indian Day canoe race.



The father daughter team of Dallas and Brianna Nunez hustled their canoe to shore after a brief encounter with Braylen Hunsinger in the kayak.



Frank Huff and Mary Huff hurry to the shore during their race.



Makai Newkirk, 11, gets close to the shoreline during his kayak race. He raced around the buoy in the background.

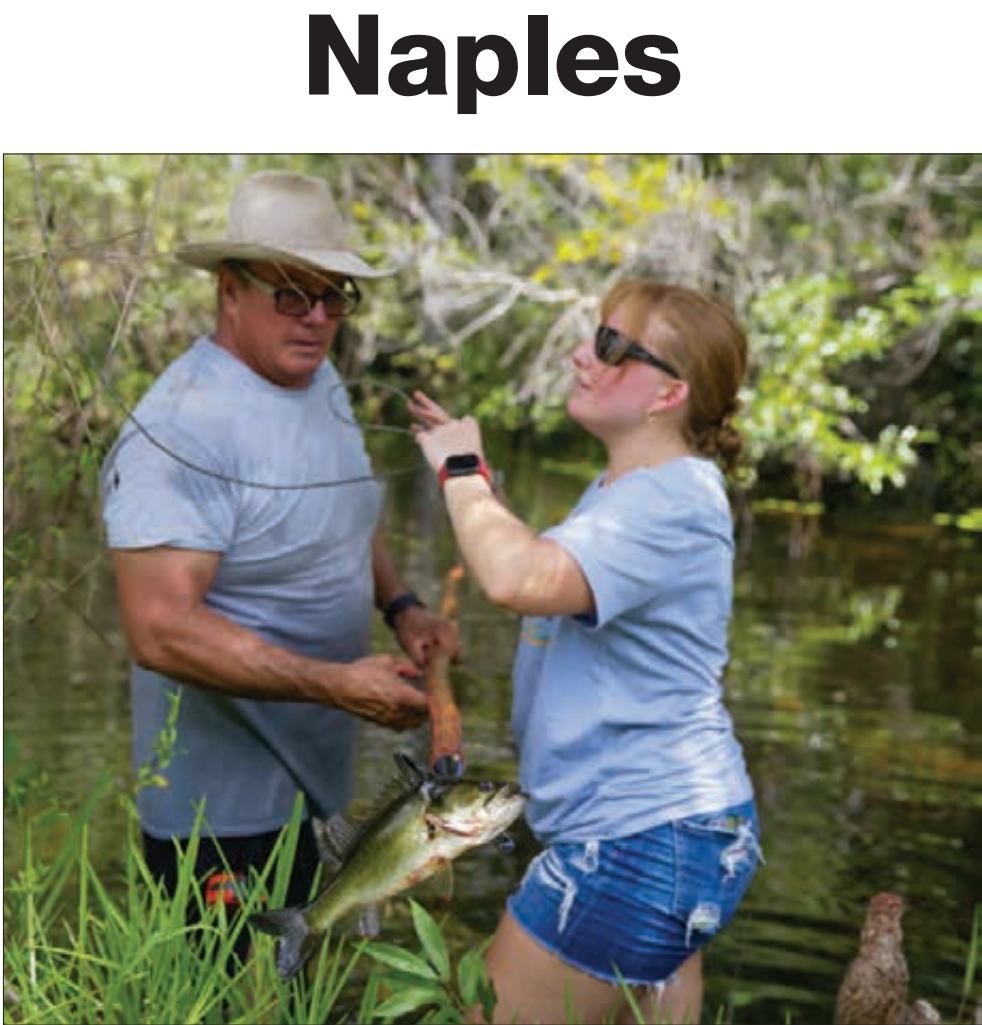


Jaytron Baker and Kalisa Baker manage their paddles as they move their canoe swiftly over the water.

Indian Day



Pedro Zepeda, right, and Colton DeLand-Zepeda, left, tie a rope on the end of a gig before taking part in gigging garfish Sept. 1 for the Naples community



Jake Keyser helps his daughter, Jace, spear a fish during the garfish gigging competition.



The Naples community participated in fan tacking and other activities to celebrate Indian Day.



Brian Zepeda was one of the first to gig a garfish during the competition.



John Kyle Osceola Jr., Marissa Osceola, Ryder and Jaden Osceola-Haltot take a canoe ride.



Archery, among other events, continued on the third day of events with the Naples community.



Brian Zepeda launches his gig and spears a garfish.



Tammy Billie spots a garfish and readies her gig.



Marissa Osceola preparing the fish caught during the competition.

Indian Day

Hollywood



Vincent Billie, back, and Charlie Tiger paddle quickly to get back to the finish line during the Hollywood Indian Day canoe race.



From left to right, J.D. Bowers and William Cypress race back to the finish line.



Leon Wilcox, left, and Lily Hall start prepping for the frybread contest that was held for Hollywood Indian Day.



As it usually does, the canoe race drew a big crowd, some of whom watched from bleachers set up for the occasson.



Melani Perez, left, and Resha Doctor paddle quickly to get back to the finish line.

Trail



From left to right, Jamieann Osceola, Sally Osceola and Caryn Billie all smile together during the Trail Indian Day clothing contest Sept. 25 on the Trail Reservation.



Amos Billie shares a laugh while presenting men's native clothing during the Trail Indian Day clothing contest.



Virginia Osceola was one of the contestants presenting women's Native clothing.



Wildcat Billie, left, and Justin Billie, right, are contestants during the clothing contest.



Teegan Osceola-Bartlett, left, and Magnum Osceola, right, display men's Native clothing.

Indian Day



Immokalee



Toni Martinez follows through on her toss of the skillet.

Beverly Bidney



Chris Briscall and Kenny Davis have some fun as they compete in the canoe race on Sept. 21 during the Indigenous Day celebrations.

Beverly Bidney



Raymond Garza peels the bark off a cypress log.

Beverly Bidney



America Martinez tacks nails to palmetto fans during the fan tacking competition.

Beverly Bidney



From left to right, Chris Briscall, Gary Frank, Alden McInturff, Mark Jock and Roggy Mariscal.

Beverly Bidney



Marissa Sanchez gives her turtle a nudge to get it to race.

Beverly Bidney



Daniel Yzaguirre aims for the center of the target during the archery competition.

Beverly Bidney



Spectators watch the skillet toss in the 90+ degree weather in the shade of the umbrellas they received as gifts from tribal leaders.

Beverly Bidney

Indian Day



Beverly Bidney

Michael Shaffer expertly strips the bark off the log as his family, with shaved ice treats in the background, observe his skill during Big Cypress Indigenous Day celebration Sept. 28.

Big Cypress



Beverly Bidney

The mother/daughter team of Ayze Henry and Ada Bruisedhead compete in the canoe race at the lake near the construction site of a new senior center.



Beverly Bidney

Alyssa Osceola doesn't let her traditional cape stop her as she strips the bark off the log.



Beverly Bidney

Nathan Billie, left, and Rob Cypress compete in the canoe race.



Beverly Bidney

Billy Walker, left, tosses a skillet with spectators watching the event.



Beverly Bidney

Clea Correa takes aim as she prepares to throw a skillet as far as possible.



Beverly Bidney

Louise Osceola concentrates as she aims for the target during the archery event.



Beverly Bidney

Josh Jumper shows plenty of determination in the skillet toss.



Beverly Bidney (2)

At left, spectators at the canoe race watch the action happening on the water.

At right, They made it to shore fine, but getting out of the canoe is a challenge to Lenny Jim, who doesn't seem upset to land in the cool water as teammate Hunter Howard tries to steady the canoe.



Sports



PECS volleyball proving again its tough to beat

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

MOORE HAVEN – There’s a lot to like about this year’s Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School volleyball program.

A turnout of 22 girls shows there’s strength and depth in numbers, which not only bodes well for this season but for upcoming years, too.

A perfect 7-0 record for the ‘A’ team, or varsity, after a win against Moore Haven Middle School on Sept. 12 shows there’s strength in the win column, too. In fact, ‘A’ coach Monica Koger can’t remember the last time the varsity lost a match.

“It’s been years,” she said.

Koger said Moore Haven was the toughest match of the season so far. The scores proved that to be correct, as PECS edged the Terriers with scores 26-24 and 25-21 in a close contest throughout.

Led by Kulipa Julian, Moore Haven showed early and often that it wasn’t going to be an easy match. Julian’s serving, including two aces, sparked the Terriers to a 4-0 lead in set 1. Julian later had a big kill that ended one

of the set’s longest points, and she proceeded to crank out four more service points.

But PECS’s eighth grade standout Azariah Washington came through with a kill and aces to rally the Lady Seminole to a narrow win.

PECS’ serving improved in the second set with aces from Jalene Smith, Jalaaya Hunsinger and Ciani Smith. A late kill by Jalene Smith helped seal the victory.

Earlier, PECS’ ‘B’ team won 2-0. The games weren’t as close as varsity.

Jamelynn Anderson and Jaiden Fludd were the stars in the serving department for PECS in game 1. Fludd continued to dominate with strong serves in the second game as Moore Haven struggled with its returns.

With nearly two dozen girls in the program, Koger likes what she sees now and the future.

“We tried to keep 11 and 11. It worked out. Next year we’ll lose some eighth graders we’ll need some of those girls to come through,” she said.

PECS’ final match of the season was scheduled for Oct. 1 at LaBelle.



Kevin Johnson

PECS’ A’ team exchanges hand taps with Moore Haven Middle School team at the start of their match Sept. 12.



Kevin Johnson

Azariah Washington controls the ball in the backcourt.



Kevin Johnson

Naylahnie Hardy shows strong form as she receives a serve in the ‘B’ game.



Kevin Johnson

Jalene Smith (15) and her teammates celebrate a point in the ‘A’ game.



Kevin Johnson

From left to right, Jamelynn Anderson, Macayden Sardina and Okalani Collins get ready at the net in the ‘B’ game.



Kevin Johnson

PECS’ B’ team gets ready for action.



Kevin Johnson

Ameliana Osceola delivers a serve in the ‘B’ game.

Football roundup: ‘Fresh’ Walters, Greg James, ‘Zae’ Thomas

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

ROGER ‘FRESH’ WALTERS

Roger “Fresh” Walters didn’t waste anytime making an impact at his new school. After seeing little playing time with Charlotte’s football program for the past two years, Walters, a 5-foot-10, 180-pound wide receiver, headed west and landed in Council Bluffs, Iowa, to play for Iowa Western Community College.

He’s playing a starring role. In the season opener Aug. 31, Walters didn’t disappoint family members in the crowd as he caught nine passes for 108 yards in Iowa Western’s 42-41 win against Georgia Military College in Milledgeville, Georgia. In the next games, Walters hasn’t shown any signs of slowing down. He’s had at least five catches in every game and twice has eclipsed the 100-yard reception mark, including 120 yards, six catches and one touchdown in a 41-34 win against Iowa Central Community College on Sept 21. His seven-yard touchdown catch late in the first half knotted the game at 27-27. As for the team, Iowa Western has emerged as one of the best in the National Junior College Athletic Association. With a 4-1 record – and its only loss coming to the No. 1 ranked team by one point – Iowa Western headed into October ranked No. 2 in the nation in NJCAA. Walters is a Seminole descendent. He is the son of tribal member Sheree Sneed and spent part of his youth on the Fort Pierce Reservation.

GREG JAMES

A busy October starts for the Moore Haven High School football team Oct. 4 when the Terriers host Westwood-Fort Pierce at 7 p.m. Moore Haven has five games in October, including on Halloween night. So far, the Terriers’ 2-2 season has seen wins in weeks 2 and 4 and losses in weeks 1 and 3. Moore Haven should be well rested for the Westwood game. The Terriers had a bye week after a 44-14 win against Evangelical Christian on Sept. 20. Moore Haven’s lineup includes tribal member Greg James and descendent Thaddeus Johns. James is a key part of the starting offensive and defensive line. Johns is a backup wide receiver.

GREG “ZAE” THOMAS

There might not be a high school team in the country with a tougher schedule than American Heritage-Plantation. And it’s not going to get any easier. The Patriots, who include Florida State-commit Greg “Zae” Thomas from the tribe, have already faced Milton, a defending state champion from Georgia; Southwest Florida powerhouse Naples; and recent state champions Chaminade-Madonna and Miami Central. Plantation was undefeated until Heritage got back on the winning track with a 35-0 win. Still to come are games against Miami-Norland and St. Thomas Aquinas. All three of Heritage’s losses have come in heavyweight bouts and each within single digit margins. The latest close loss came Sept. 20 in Miami, a 35-32 setback against Central. Heritage led in the first 21-6, but Central used a late first half and early second half surge to forge ahead. Thomas, a senior cornerback, was matched against Mississippi State-commit receiver Sekou Smith for the entire first half. On the first play of the second half, Smith and Thomas weren’t matched up and Smith promptly caught a long catch that led to a go-ahead score. Through six games, Thomas has 16 tackles, including a season-high six in a loss to Chaminade. Heritage is 3-3 heading into its next game, Oct. 12 against Norland.



Iowa Western

Roger “Fresh” Walters



Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven's Greg James (52) takes on two Westminster defenders during the Terriers' 22-14 win Sept. 5 in Moore Haven.



Kevin Johnson

American Heritage cornerback Greg “Zae” Thomas (2) lines up with the rest of the Patriots secondary during their game against Miami Central on Sept. 20 at Traz Powell Stadium.



Iowa Western

Roger “Fresh” Walters (1) finds some open space during his first game for Iowa Western Community College, which played Georgia Military College on Aug. 31 in Georgia.



Kevin Johnson
Jimmy Holdiness blasts a shot out of a sand trap on the 18th hole during the Indian Day Golf Tournament Sept. 27 at The Club at Emerald Hills in Hollywood. Holdiness's ball stopped a few inches from the cup for a gimme.



Kevin Johnson
Mondo Tiger lines up a birdie putt on the 18th hole.

Golfers tee it up at Indian Day tournament



Kevin Johnson
From left to right, Kevin Osceola, Mondo Tiger, Sam Nelson and Ted Nelson.



Kevin Johnson
Elliott Young chips onto the 18th green at the Indian Day Golf Tournament.



Kevin Johnson
From left to right, Elliott Young, Trey Boone and Jimmy Holdiness.

LaBelle riding high in volleyball

STAFF REPORT

This season has marked a huge turnaround for LaBelle High School volleyball, which includes Seminole sisters Beckah Tigertail and Anna Tigertail. A year ago, LaBelle finished with an 8-17 record. Fast forward to 2024 and it's been a completely different story as the Cowgirls headed into October with a 12-2 record.

Just how strong has LaBelle played? Only one of the Cowgirls matches has gone the five-set limit, which came in a win against Sebring on opening night.

The team has notched six shutouts. A nine-match winning streak was snapped with a loss to Bishop Verot on Sept. 24.

On its roster, Anna Tigertail is listed as a junior defensive specialist and Beckah is listed as a freshman outside hitter.

The team is scheduled to wrap up its regular season Oct. 10 at home against St. John Neumann.



Beverly Bidney (3)
Beckah Tigertail, left, and Anna Tigertail, right, compete in a match against Evangelical Christian School on Sept. 17 in Fort Myers. Below, Beckah is greeted by her teammates on the bench.



Oshaane tournament draws teams near and far

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — The 15th annual Oshaane Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament was played at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium in Big Cypress from Sept. 19 to Sept. 21.

Previously called the Tigertail Brothers Memorial Basketball Tournament, it was recently renamed the Oshaane Brothers tournament after the passing of Jody Bert, the third brother honored in the name. The others honored with the tournament are Malcolm Tigertail and Duane Tigertail, who were both basketball players.

“They were all Otter Clan,” said the brothers’ nephew DeForest Carter. “Oshaane means otter in Elaponke.”

The tournament drew players from around the country including Arizona, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, the Midwest and Florida.

On the women’s side, the Lady Ballers captured the adult division while Resilient took home the Legends championship trophy.

On the mens’s side, Plainzmen won the adult division and YHK won the Legends.



Beverly Bidney

Charlie Frye attempts a layup in a Legends game.



Beverly Bidney

A Legends player looks for an open teammate during action in the paint Sept. 19 in game between O-Town the Killer Whales in Big Cypress.



Beverly Bidney

Action from a Legends women’s game between the Lady Seminole and Resilient.



Beverly Bidney

The Lady Seminole team, in white, and the Resilient team in purple, congratulate each other after their game.



Courtesy photo

Legends Men’s Champions: YHK



Courtesy photo

Men’s Champions: Plainzmen



Courtesy photo

Legends Women’s Champions: Resilient



Courtesy photo

Women’s Champions: Lady Ballers

Moore Haven volleyball visits FGCU



Moore Haven High/Facebook

Two volleyball programs in the midst of outstanding seasons gather on the court together. The Moore Haven High School volleyball program, whose varsity squad entered October with an 11-2 record, watched a Florida Gulf Coast University volleyball match recently in Fort Myers. The Eagles sported an 11-3 record and were in first place in the Atlantic Sun Conference at the start of October.

FSU to face Miami at Hard Rock Stadium

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens will be the site for an Atlantic Coast Conference football clash Oct. 26 when the Florida State Seminoles face the Miami Hurricanes.

In the first month of the season, the teams were headed in different directions. FSU surprisingly struggled to a 1-4 record while Miami won its first four games by lopsided scores and improved to 5-0 with a close win against Virginia Tech on Sept. 27.

The Oct. 26 game will be Miami's homecoming. Kickoff time had yet to be announced as of press time.

FSU men to play twice in South Florida

STAFF REPORT

The Florida State University men's basketball team will make two trips to South Florida in the 2024-25 season.

The Seminoles will be in Sunrise on Dec. 14 for the Orange Bowl Classic at Amerant Bank Arena. They will face Tulane at 4:30 p.m.

FSU will return to South Florida on Jan. 8, 2025, to face Miami in Coral Gables at 7 p.m.

The Seminoles will also play two games on the Mohegan Tribe's reservation in Uncasville, Connecticut, as part of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Tip-Off. They will square off against Temple on Nov. 22 at 3 p.m. and wrap up against the University of Massachusetts on Nov. 24 at 5 p.m.

Hard Rock Stadium selected as site for Club World Cup

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens is one of 12 venues selected to host games in the FIFA Club World Cup 2025. FIFA, international soccer's governing body, announced Sept. 28 that the tournament will kick off June 15, 2025, and last 29 days.

The tournament features 32 of the top clubs in the world. The other venues are MetLife Stadium (East Rutherford, N.J.), Mercedes-Benz Stadium (Atlanta), Bank of America Stadium (Charlotte), TQL Stadium (Cincinnati), Rose Bowl Stadium (Los Angeles), GEODIS Park (Nashville), Camping World Stadium (Orlando), Inter&Co Stadium (Orlando), Lincoln Financial Field (Philadelphia), Lumen Field (Seattle), and Audi Field (Washington, D.C.).

The championship will be played July 13 at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

"This new FIFA competition is the only true example in worldwide club football of real solidarity and inclusivity, allowing the best clubs from Africa, Asia, Central and North America and Oceania to play the powerhouses of Europe and South America in an incredible new World Cup which will impact enormously the growth of club football and talent globally," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said in a statement.

The club tournament will held one year before the start of the 2026 World Cup, which will include games at Hard Rock Stadium.

Tour-approved rodeos include four in Florida

STAFF REPORT

The 2025 INFR Tour-approved rodeos include four on Seminole Tribe of Florida reservations. They are the Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo in Hollywood (Jan. 24-25), the Bill Osceola Memorial Rodeo in Hollywood (Jan. 31-Feb. 1), the Brighton Field Day Rodeo in Brighton (Feb. 10-11) and the Josiah Johns Memorial Rodeo in Brighton (July 11-12).

Hard Rock Bet teams up with Jags

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock Bet will be the official sportsbook of the Jacksonville Jaguars, according to Hard Rock Digital's announcement Sept. 6.

"We're proud to be the sportsbook for every kind of player and look forward to enhancing game days by bringing Jags fans closer to the action than ever before," Nick Menas, Hard Rock Digital's managing director, corporate strategy, said in a release.

The deal includes promotions and experiences on game days.

"Through our partnership with Hard Rock Bet, Jags fans will have access to a

best-in-class sportsbook app, free-to-play casino games, and chances to make 'money-can't-buy' memories," Scott Massey, Jaguars senior vice president of corporate partnerships, said in the release.

According to the release, there will be backstage pass events and VIP opportunities for Hard Rock Bet players. Hard Rock Games will include games on the Jaguars app.

Hard Rock Bet operates a sports-only experience in Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia; and an integrated online casino-sportsbook platform in New Jersey.

Tracing the Indigenous roots of lacrosse

BY STEPHANIE KULKE
Northwestern Now
(Northwestern University)

Lacrosse is one of the fastest-growing sports in the U.S. today, but few people realize its Indigenous origins.

“The city of Chicago was essentially a great lacrosse field where Indigenous tribes of the region played against each other in games that lasted for days and included hundreds of players on a team,” said emeritus professor of journalism Patty Loew.

Loew is a citizen of Mashkiziibii, the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, and inaugural director of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR) at Northwestern.

The roots of lacrosse were obscured when European settlers outlawed Native Americans from playing it. Paradoxically, the settlers had embraced the sport and formed their own lacrosse clubs.

An exhibit at Chicago’s Field Museum, “The Creator’s Game,” seeks to raise awareness of the history and meaning of lacrosse to Native Americans. The exhibit is co-curated by Loew, who co-produced the 2013 PBS documentary “Sacred Stick.” Additional curators include Scott Shoemaker, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and Josie Lee, Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin.

Also part of the exhibit team is CNAIR scholar, Eli Suzukovich III, descendant of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa/Cree and an assistant professor of instruction in the Program for Environmental Policy and Culture at Weinberg.

Loew and Suzukovich discuss CNAIR’s efforts to teach lacrosse to Chicago youth and share some little-known facts about lacrosse.

Suzukovich said there is an element of the sacred in lacrosse. For some tribes, such as the Menominee, the game was given to them by Thunder, or in the case of the Muskogee Nation, it was the Creator who gave them the game. The exhibit displays handcrafted wooden sticks once used to play lacrosse. They are often highly personalized with symbols carved into them to reflect family lineage.

Native communities follow their own cultural and spiritual protocols in preparation for a game. Each has an origin story for the game as well, that is shared among members and passed down to the next generation.

Some communities have variations on the game for women. For example, Ho-Chunk and Arikara women players use a double ball linked with rope that is associated with fertility and womanhood, and sometimes a shorter hooped stick, or longer straight stick are used. While different, double ball lacrosse is equally if not more challenging to play.

In some tribes, the name for lacrosse can be translated as “Little Brother of War.” The game could get violent and dangerous, and broken arms and legs were commonplace, yet tribes saw lacrosse as a useful way of solving disputes without all-out warfare.

Baaga’adowe, the Ojibwe version of lacrosse, was central to Pontiac’s Rebellion at Fort Michilimackinac. Loew said while Ojibwe women did not play baaga’adowe,

they played a crucial role in the battle.

When the French and Indian War was lost to the British, a string of forts from the Great Lakes area were to be turned over to the conquerors. Because Native Americans had forged strong trade relations with the French, they formed an alliance with them against the British.

As part of the overall rebellion on the 14 forts masterminded by Odawa leader Pontiac, Ojibwe and Sauk leaders planned a siege on Fort Michilimackinac that would utilize a game of baaga’adowe to distract British soldiers from the attack.

In the days leading up to the match, Sauk and Ojibwe women drew the attention of soldiers in Fort Michilimackinac by buying inexpensive trade items for betting on the game.

On the day of the siege, the women lined up near the fort for shade, with weapons hidden under their blankets. As the excitement around the game built, crowds of soldiers came out of the fort to watch and place bets. When the score was tied up at 3 to 3, some of the women moved inside the fort. When a ball was thrown into the fort to signal the attack, the players rushed into the fort where the women passed weapons to them. The siege ended in victory for the rebellion in just 12 minutes.

When Indigenous people were outlawed from playing lacrosse, many switched to baseball. “The Creator’s Game” exhibit features the Ho-Chunk baseball team of Wisconsin.

According to Suzukovich, in the mid-20th century, Ho-Chunk men in Wisconsin, who participated in baseball leagues, would help restore the game of lacrosse to their tribe and helped foster the resurgence of lacrosse among other Native peoples in Wisconsin.

An initiative led by CNAIR Director Megan Bang, who is of Ojibwe and Italian descent and a professor in SESP, is helping to bring the game back to Illinois as part of a long running program called Indigenous STEAM, an education models based in and with lands and waters. Educators offer Native American students a place-based lacrosse unit taught in the Cook County Forest Preserves.

“To see community members teaching our kids to carve sticks and play the game is gratifying,” Loew said. “They have a long-awaited opportunity to learn sportsmanship, history and Native values.”

“I think it is important Indigenous youth have an opportunity to learn the game,” said Wildcat women’s lacrosse star Selena Lasota ’19. A member of Katie First Nation in British Columbia, Canada. Lasota was exposed to the game at age 7, when she went to lacrosse practice with her brothers.

Lasota believes lacrosse represents personal growth, respect and accountability and offers Native youth an immediate connection to their culture regardless of any other connection they might have.

“The Creator’s Game” opened in Spring of 2024 for an open-ended run as part of the Field Museum’s permanent exhibition “Native Truths.”



Stickmaker Randall Blackdeer is on a mission to revitalize the traditional sport of lacrosse using his skills as a woodworker to create lacrosse sticks in the traditional Ho-Chunk manner.

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Rahontsá:waks, middle, pictured with family, served as a flag bearer at the International Team's opening ceremonies for the 2024 Presidents Cup in Montreal.

First Tee participants from Indigenous communities shine as flag bearers at Presidents Cup opening ceremony

BY HELEN ROSS
PGA Tour Communications

Rahontsá:waks Albany’s father had already planned to take his son to watch Thursday’s opening matches of the Presidents Cup at The Royal Montreal Golf Club.

Little did he know, the 12-year-old would end up being part of the day’s festivities, one of four First Tee participants selected to carry the flags of the United States, Canada, Quebec and the International Team at the event’s Opening Ceremonies.

“It was just like, what are the odds of having this opportunity?” Rahontsá:waks’ mother, Lacey Paul, says.

Rahontsá:waks, Nashtyn Mayo and Aronhiakèn:ra Martin were chosen from the Kahnawá:ke Mohawk Territory First Nations reserve and First Tee – Quebec’s partner, Club 24 Athletics. Club 24 seeks to build future leaders in the indigenous community through educational support and sports participation.

The fourth flag bearer, Jarred Pompey, is from nearby Montreal and a member of First Tee – Quebec, too. Earlier this year, he caddied at a charity shootout in conjunction with the Presidents Cup media day where First Tee – Canada received a \$250,000 donation from the biennial match-play competition.

The other charitable beneficiaries of the Presidents Cup are McGill University Health Centre Foundation, One Drop Foundation and Montreal Children’s Hospital.

On a recent Zoom call, it was hard to tell who was more excited – Rahontsá:waks, whose name in Kanien’kéha, which is the Mohawk language, means “He shakes the Earth” – or his mother.

Paul, who works for the Kahnawá:ke Tourism office, was about to go into a strategic planning meeting when she was notified that her son had been chosen. She remembers bursting with pride and telling anyone who would listen.

“To see our little guy represent Kahnawá:ke on the international stage, it truly is an honor, to have and see indigenous representation at the Presidents Cup,” Paul says.

Kahnawá:ke, which comes from the Mohawk word meaning “place of the rapids,” is located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, about an hour from Royal Montreal.

Paul is fiercely proud of her son and other indigenous athletes like Notah Begay III, a Native American and five-time winner on the PGA TOUR. Performers like Lily Gladstone, an actress raised on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana who was nominated for an Academy Award last year, have also raised awareness of the indigenous community.

“We have so many children who excel in sports that we’re going places,” Paul says. “The world is opening up, and seeing all the indigenous – the actors, the soccer players, the lacrosse players, the hockey players, even Brandon Montour who played for Florida Panthers. He’s from Six Nations.

“So, I think right there, it’s opening up a world like this international stage.”

Rahontsá:waks expects to be nervous on Sept. 26 at Royal Montreal. But he is hoping for a chance to see his favorite player, world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler, and pick up any pointers he can during his visit to the prestigious competition that began in 1994. He’s been a member of the Club 24 program since it started three years ago and recently started competing in nine-hole events.

Club 24 Athletics seeks to build future leaders in the indigenous community through educational support and sports participation. (Courtesy Lacey Paul)

“It’s really nerve-wracking,” says Rahontsá:waks, flashing an engaging smile. “I never really played competitive golf, but I liked it. I made new friendships with other kids, and I want to go back to playing them next year, too, or even the 18-hole tournaments.”

Rahontsá:waks, who also plays lacrosse and hockey, started going to the golf course with his older brother, Tehorahkwaneken, during the COVID-19 lockdown. Tehorahkwaneken, who was recently invited to play in an amateur tournament in Dubai, attended the Hernan Rey Golf Academy in Orlando for the last two years.

Paul has seen her younger son grow beyond simply mastering the rules and fundamentals of the game. At 12, he’s

become more self-confident and mature than he once was.

“But you’re still a kid,” she says. “(He’s learned) to play the game of golf and to have patience. ... And that also golf is a mental game. And just for the love of golf to keep pursuing the game.”

According to Martin Barnard, CEO of the Golf Canada Foundation, the return of the Presidents Cup to Royal Montreal was the catalyst for the launch of First Tee – Canada. In a partnership announced in 2020, the PGA TOUR committed \$250,000 to the effort, and the first chapters were created in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic a year later. There are now six chapters serving all 10 Canadian provinces.

“It is really a three-way partnership between Golf Canada, PGA TOUR and the Golf Canada Foundation, and that announcement really spurred all of this tremendous growth that’s happened since 2020,” Barnard said. “When we launched, we had to sort of set about saying, ‘Okay, we need the support of the philanthropic community. We needed the support of some of the corporate partners that we had as well.’ ...

“And last year we were thrilled to announce that we’ve reached more than 100,000 kids through the program in Canada and more than 19 million raised since that time.”

Barnard says First Tee, which uses the game of golf to develop character and life skills, works with its local chapters to make sure they bring kids from a variety of backgrounds into the program to “better represent the fabric of Canada.” The partnership with the Presidents Cup will only add to that legacy.

“It’ll be hundreds of thousands of kids, to be honest, that’s affected by this announcement and by this tournament coming to Canada,” he says. “As you know, International Team Captain Mike Weir is an advocate for this. He’s been amazing. He’s given a ton of his time and energy into promoting First Tee. And so really at the end of the day, because the TOUR and the Presidents Cup got behind us, we were able to raise a lot of money.”

And many more kids like Rahontsá:waks will benefit.

Custom-made gloves embrace Native American heritage

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Minnesota Twins, Treasure Island Resort & Casino and the Prairie Island Indian Community unveiled a first-of-its-kind Franklin baseball glove celebrating Native American Heritage.

The gloves, custom designed by the Treasure Island creative team in conjunction with the Prairie Island Indian Community, were given away to the first 5,000 fans in attendance for the annual Native American Heritage Night at Target Field on Aug. 31.

An additional 1,000 gloves will be distributed by the Minnesota Twins Community Fund to youth throughout the region via a to-be-determined program in collaboration with Treasure Island and the Prairie Island Indian Community.

“Our partnership with the Minnesota Twins creates a perfect opportunity to celebrate and share our Dakota heritage and culture with our neighbors,” sGrant Johnson, Prairie Island Indian Community Tribal Council president, said in a statement.



The Native American Heritage Night glove.

◆ STEM From page 3B

Red Lake Nation College: Natural Resources Research Internships at Red Lake Nation College

This program will collaborate with the Red Lake Department of Natural Resources to provide natural resources research internships for RLNC students. Students will work with Red Lake Department of Natural Resource staff on local projects in natural resource fields such as forestry, water resources, fisheries, and wildlife management.

Stone Child College: Indigenizing App Development

This program will teach students how to create culturally relevant, interactive experiences with real time 3D software and workflow that professionals use in industries such as gaming, architecture, engineering, automotive, and entertainment.

Turtle Mountain College: Analyzing Ecological Trends on Turtle Mountain

This program will empower students

to investigate climate change impacts on the Turtle Mountain Reservation using real-world data from USGS Earth Explorer and NASA Resources. Through the analyzation of satellite imagery and diverse datasets, students will gain hands-on experience with GIS software and remote sensing techniques to uncover trends in land use, vegetation health, and temperature variations.

United Tribes Technical College: Enhancing STEM Education through Structural and Electrochemical Material Characterization Research using XRD and Potentiostat

This project will enhance STEM education at United Tribes Technical College through student-led hands-on research with an integrated approach to material characterization using X-ray Diffraction (XRD) and a Potentiostat.

White Earth Tribal & Community College: Breaking Barriers to STEM Careers

This program will create an active learning summer bridge program for high school (junior and senior) or new admittance WETCC students to prepare them for college level coursework in STEM and enhance

student interest in pursuing further studies and careers in STEM by supporting a trip for a group of WETCC students to attend a NASA training experience at the Kennedy Space Center.

“This award will be transformative for UTTC’s STEM program, providing our students with hands-on experience in cutting-edge research,” said Dr. Ram Hona, Chemistry Instructor & Researcher with United Tribes Technical College, “It’s a significant step in our mission to empower Native scholars and prepare them for future careers in science and technology.”

“The TCU Building Bridges Grant Program is a great example of how collaborating on common interests and goals can contribute to providing more opportunities in STEM. AIHEC and NASA will work together to support and facilitate TCU faculty and students engaging in research that addresses Tribal and local priorities while encouraging students to pursue a career pathway in STEM,” stated Keya T. Briscoe, Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP) Manager with NASA.