





Seminole Tribune Voice of the Unconquered

April 2025 Volume XLIX • Number 4

showcases **Seminole** culture

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY **Staff Reporter**

MOORE HAVEN — Tribal members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida came out March 1 to celebrate Moore Haven's 77th annual Chalo Nitka festival.

The festival began in 1948 to celebrate the town's newly paved Main Street but is also a testament to its long-standing relationship with the tribe.

Chalo Nitka began with a parade through Moore Haven that included local elected officials, dignitaries including Brighton Councilman Larry Howard, Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas, Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola, Miss EIRA Rodeo Queen Brienna Brockman and Jr. Miss EIRA Rodeo Queen Karma Koenes, floats, Chalo Nitka Royalty, Moore Haven Middle High School marching band, floats, swamp buggies, first responders with sirens blaring and plenty of cowboys on horseback.

Emma Urbina attended Moore Haven Middle High School, Class of 1988, and has been going to Chalo Nitka for as long as she can remember. She watched the parade with four of her grandchildren.

"I've been coming here all my life," Urbina said. "I like the parade, the rodeo and seeing all my classmates."

See CHALO NITKA on page 7A

Chalo Nitka Jury awards more than \$800M in Seminole minors' trust case

Senior Editor

FORT LAUDERDALE — After hearing six weeks of testimony, a Broward County jury determined on March 25 that Wells Fargo Bank must pay \$832 million in total damages to the plaintiffs in a lawsuit over how the bank made unauthorized fees, did not properly disclose the fees, and mismanaged investments for a trust involving 2,300 minors from the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

The named plaintiffs in the case are tribal members Lewis Gopher Jr. and Quentin Tommie; Nancy Jimmie, a parent whose children are tribal members; and Providence First Trust.

Gopher, Tommie and Jimmie were in the 15th floor courtroom in downtown Fort Lauderdale nearly every day of the trial, sitting side-by-side at the plaintiffs' table in front of 17th Judicial Circuit Judge William

"I'm very happy with how things turned out," Tommie said after the trial. "It was a new experience for all of us, but we were definitely very dedicated the entire time to standing up for what we thought was right, in regards to the minors' trust. I'm very pleased with the experience that I had with the legal team that we worked with and all of their grave efforts they gave to winning

During closing arguments on the previous day, lawyers for the plaintiffs presented a slide showing the damage awards being divided among the 2,300 beneficiaries.

Conrad & Scherer founder and lead plaintiff attorney Bill Scherer opened and



Plaintiff Nancy Jimmie, right, receives a hug after a jury's verdicts were announced March 25 in Fort Lauderdale. The jury ruled in favor of Jimmie and the other plaintiffs in a case involving the Seminole minors' trust.

closed the case, setting the stage with a narrative that framed the issues for the jury and emphasized the serious breach of trust at the heart of the case. In the closing arguments, plaintiff lawyers Steven Osber and Irwin Gilbert, both from Conrad & Scherer, outlined the willful malfeasance and bad faith committed by Wells Fargo as trustee.

"The trustee knew the rules. The trustee

ignored the rules. The trustee broke the rules. The trustee breached its fiduciary duty to the minors. The trustee covered it up. The trustee caused significant damages to the minors' trust," Osber told the jury.

Throughout the trial, the plaintiffs' lawyers emphasized areas where the bank failed to act in the best interests of the beneficiaries, including not investing in stocks and not following the Prudent Investor

Rule or the Modern Portfolio Theory.

'The trustee acted willfully knowing that its conduct was contrary to their fiduciary duties to the minor beneficiaries and in bad faith," the lawyers presented to the jury in closing arguments.

See TRIAL on page 5A

DC trip provides students learning, connections

BY TATUM MITCHELL Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Twenty nine high school students from the Seminole Tribe of Florida spent a week in D.C. this month participating in Close Up 2025, a program that provides opportunities to learn about civics, government and history.

In total, 104 students attended the program from 14 tribal nations from March 9 to 13. It was the 25th year students from the Seminole Tribe of Florida attended Close

On March 10, students spent most of the day creating tribal action initiative projects to present at United South and Eastern Tribes "Impact Week" meeting. The poster projects revolved around problems and issues in their communities and steps to improve. Seminole students presented on public safety, tourism and youth engagement to tribal leadership, including Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie.

Senior Victoria Osceola Benard was one



Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola stands in front of the U.S. Capitol.



Victoria Osceola Benard speaks as Close Up students present their sovereignty statement to USET.

Tatum Mitchell

of the presenters for the project and read a part of the sovereignty statement students put together for USET leadership. She said something she will apply at home are the tribal action initiative projects.

"It was those boards we made [for the tribal action initiative project]. I'm going to take those back because of the safety of all the reservations — I really want to fix that," Osceola Benard said.

With Councilwoman Billie there, Osceola Benard said, she felt like her voice was heard.

"She understands us because she's from our same tribe, especially when we were coming up with ideas, she understood our concern [and] tried to give us more ideas or she would explain stuff for us. That's why I

felt comfortable. We're all natives, but we work differently. So to have someone who can represent us is really nice," Osceola Benard said.

Shawn Ralston (Seneca), curriculum design manager with the Close Up Foundation, attended the program as a student. He said he may not have realized it at the time, but the program helped forge his political identity and gave him the opportunity to connect with others.

That program helped me ... embrace my life more because I was away from my own community. I could do things differently here, talk differently, and people didn't have any sort of expectations. And my role is hoping to extend that experience to other students," Ralston said.

With the tribal action initiative projects, Ralston said it's a way for students to open up and learn more about the size and scope of government.

'But they walk around, they can both see that their communities may look similar, they may face similar problems. They can also see that those problems are very specific to the places that they live and the people that they live with. So yeah, it both allows them to create community through shared experience, but also what's in front of them, how different we all are," Ralston said.

During the week, Seminole students heard from Councilwoman Billie and multiple staff from the Environmental Protection Office. Krystle Bowers, Joseph Johns, Alfonso Tigertail, Mario Londono and Megan Mills presented on what their positions are all about and what their day-today looks like.

In addition to learning about different careers and working on projects, students took photos on Capitol Hill, toured memorials and monuments, and participated in various activities.

"My favorite was definitely the Abraham Lincoln [Memorial]. I didn't expect it to be that big – but it's huge, and I think it's a cool experience to see. As well as seeing where Martin Luther King Jr. [gave] his 'Dream' speech, and how it looked when he was talking. But that was cool," Jr. Miss Seminole Violet Osceola said.

See CLOSE UP on page 6A

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Sugar Festival features Seminole culture

STAFF REPORT

CLEWISTON — The Clewiston Sugar Festival was held March 14-15 at Civic Park in Clewiston. Tribal members from the Seminole Tribe of Florida had various

tables with baskets, dolls, beadwork and other items on display. Alligator wrestling demonstrations were part of the program. The tribe's Culture Department and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum had displays and demonstrations as well.



Billie Walker, left, and Jonah Walker give an alligator wrestling demonstration at Clewiston Sugar Festival on March 15.



From left to right, Clyve Billie, Cypress Billie and Sabal Billie at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum information



Tatum Mitchel

Hali Garcia works on basketry at the festival.



Tammy Billie works and sews at her machine

Indigenous Journalists Association.

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BY KELLY FARRELL Special to the Tribune

NAPLES —Tribal members persuaded the Collier County Commission to stop plans to construct a 360-foot communications tower in Big Cypress National Preserve.

As the Commission met on March 25, it was standing room only with members of the Seminole Tribe, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Independent Traditional Seminole Nation of Florida joining the Shealy family and others in opposition to plans to build the tower at the Ochopee Fire Station 66 on U.S. 41, near a tribal village.

The tower was planned to be within 400 feet of tribal members' homes, bringing opposition from near and far.

"I have relatives that live near the place they're talking about putting the tower. It's just right next door," said Ted Billie, who was the first public speaker at the hearing.

"I'm just worried the tower might have some side effects that's going to endanger their health and stuff like that, so I'm against it and I don't want that tower to be there,' Billie said.

"Of all the places in the vast area they could put it, why does it always have to be where Indian people are, like in Hawaii and North Dakota, South Dakota?" he asked the Commission.

The 360-foot communications tower at the Ochopee fire station was proposed by Collier County government staff to replace a communications tower existing on U.S. 41 and State Road 29 in Carnestown that is being demolished by the National Park Service to make way for a new welcome center to Big Cypress National Preserve. NPS staff did not respond to this reporter's requests for comments on the potential of retaining that current tower.

lives Rebecca Billie approximately 500 feet of the proposed

"We don't know how it will affect our health and we don't want to find out," she

She and Paula Billie are neighbors of several generations of the Shealy family. The Shealys own Trail Lakes Campground and the Skunkape Research Headquarters, also adjacent to the proposed tower.

"We're worried about our health and the animals that are out there," said Paula Billie to the Commissioners.

Ochopee fire station was donated to Collier County in 1977 by Ester Davison with a deed restriction stating it could only be used for fire suppression or ownership would revert back to their heirs.

Initially, Collier County Commissioner Bill McDaniel, who received a live phone call from his 85-year-old mother singing him a happy birthday during the discussion, motioned for the county attorney to move forward on suing to remove those deed restrictions and for county staff to identify alternative sites.

However, after hearing all public comment, Commissioner Burt Saunders said he believed the Ochopee fire station site, near the tribal homes, should no longer be considered. So, McDaniel withdrew his earlier motion and instead motioned for the site to no longer be considered and instead for county staff to discuss the potential with the federal government, legislators and the National Park Service to consider use of the existing tower in Carnestown. The motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

At the first public meeting on the topic in February at the Collier County Planning Commission, Jack Shealy of Ochopee was the only public speaker. By March, more than 2,100 people signed a petition on change.org

aboriginal nation, that we're all supposed this room I just want you to know I really up for what's right," Shealy said.

Everglades.

a break from town," Osceola said. "Coming to the Everglades is like a sanctuary," she

does Seminole War reenactments to educate.

could survive and be here today," he added.

tower there, right next to our relatives, to our family. I think you should keep it where it is," Tommie said.

grandchildren, for the four legged, for the ones that swim. Thank you for your time. Happy birthday," said Tommie.

Edward Ornstein sent a letter to the Collier County government reminding them of the 1974 enabling legislation that allowed the people indigenous to Big Cypress National

"Don't ask us to ignore something like a tower," said Tristan Tigertail of the

The County's planner, Mike Bosie, had said the tower would blend into the background over time.

more detrimental than I even knew before this happened," Tigertail said.

phone away every once in a while, Tigertail added.

Tigertail said.

Independent Traditional Seminole Nation

to oppose the tower and nearly 50 people attended the meeting in-person, including 33 registered speakers.

Tribal opposition helps block proposed

tower in Big Cypress National Preserve

"It's been passed down to me by the Iindigenous elders, the Seminole and to take care of each other. Everyone in appreciate you all being here today to speak

Among those speakers was Jaya Osceola, who said she didn't want to see the lack of trees in Orlando happen to the

Going to the Everglades is like taking

Daniel Tommie told the Commission he

"At the end of the Third Seminole War, my people came here right where you're talking about putting a cell tower," Tommie said. "My people sacrificed, suffered, so I

"Now, you're talking about putting a

"We're fighting for your family as well your grandchildren and great- great-

The Miccosukee Tribe's attorney Preserve to retain their cultural usage.

Miccosukee Tribe.

The effects I'm hearing could be a lot

He enjoys hunting and fishing in Big Cypress National Preserve and to put his cell

"I want to look at the sky, not a tower,"

Danny Billie, spokesperson for the



Daniel Tommie, of the Seminole Tribe, spoke in opposition to the proposed communications tower in Ochopee during a public hearing on March 25, requesting the Collier County Commission contact the Seminole Tribe in advance of such considerations going forward.



Ted Billie, of the Seminole Tribe, spoke to the Collier County Commission on March 25 in opposition to a proposed 360-foot tall communications tower within 300 to 400 feet of Indigenous families' homes and ceremonial

of Florida, said the Everglades need to be protected from overdevelopment, including too many communications towers. The development is coming into the Everglades from the East and the West, he said.

'So, before you know it, we're going to lose the Everglades," Billie warned.



Members of the American Indian Movement, including Obsidian Tiburón, Robert Rosa, Gary Wilcox and Ant Hatcher, show their solidarity with the Seminole, Miccosukee and Independents opposed to a 360-foot proposed communications tower in Ochopee located near tribal members' homes and sacred sites during a Collier County Commission meeting in Naples on March 25.



Public speakers, including Lewis Gopher Jr., second from left, and Daniel Tommie, right corner, stand up around the edges of the Collier County Commission meeting room on March 25 to voice opposition to the proposed communications tower in Ochopee.

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Community

Junior Cypress Cattle Drive keeps family tradition alive

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive is usually a leisurely ride for cowboys and cowgirls as they guide cattle through the Big Cypress Reservation, starting from Billie Swamp Safari and concluding six miles away at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.

However, the 27th edition, held on March 15, featured some drama at the start. The cattle sprinted into the woods as soon as they were released from the trailer. It took about 75 minutes for cowboys Andre Jumper, Blevyns Jumper and others, along with five cattle dogs, to get the rogue cattle on the road to the arena.

During the long wait for the cattle drive to resume, Pete and Terry Garcia, of Clewiston, found some shade for themselves and their horses. The couple has attended every one of the cattle drives and said cows going off course briefly has happened before, but not like this time. They waited about an hour and left, but they will participate again next year.

The herd of eight roping steer were followed by about 10 people on horseback, including a few children who showed skills on their horses. The procession down West Boundary Road to Josie Billie Highway also included some pickup trucks, the Billie Swamp Safari swamp buggy and members of Seminole Police Department and Fire Rescue



During the midpoint rest stop, cattle drive trail boss Janice Osceola talks to the participants about her father Joe Osceola Sr., the day's



With help from his cattle dogs, Big Cypress cattle foreman Andre Jumper gets these cows back to the herd on their way to the rodeo arena.

The cattle drive stopped midway to water the horses and cattle, feed snacks to the two-legged participants and learn about this year's honoree, the late Joe Osceola Sr., and hear from his daughter, Janice Osceola, who was trail boss for the day.

Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie welcomed everyone to the cattle drive.

"Let's give the cowboys a hand; they've been working hard today," Councilwoman Billie said. "This is the 27th year and I hope it continues. It's gotten smaller, but we appreciate you being here to show support for our cattle industry.'

When Janice Osceola was a child, her father put her on a horse and showed her how to work the cattle.

"I've been doing it my whole life," she said. "He made sure my brothers and I learned. My father was out there every day, even into his 90s. He died at 93, but he was still out there working the cows. Dad was the last survivor from the original cattle owners; I knew all of them.'

Osceola recalled spending the night at the Bowlegs camp in Brighton after working cattle there as a child.

"That's how I grew up," she said. "We need to show our children the ways to do things the way we did them in the old days, because some day you may need it again. You have to know how to survive without all

the modern stuff. Teach your children, keep them with you and take care of and love each

Today, Osceola gets help with her herd from her son, nephew, daughter and son-in-

Osceola isn't only cattle owner keeping the tradition family alive. Ahnie Jumper, Junior Cypress's great-granddaughter, is carrying on the Junior Cypress brand for her herd of 90 cattle. Junior Cypress passed the brand on to his son and Jumper's grandfather Jonah Cypress, who passed it on to her.

'Carrying brand means more than anything me," Jumper said. "He was one of the first Seminole cattle owners. It also meant a lot to my grandfather'



From left to right, Lorraine Jumper, Hayze Louis and Justice Jumper are comfortable on horseback as they ride in the Junior Cypress Cattle Drive on March 15.

arrived at the rodeo safely, with only two more short escapes by the herd into a home's front lawn and into some wild land. The herd was quickly brought back and moved along Josie Billie Highway. When they arrived,

the cattle were put into a rodeo pen and the participants enjoyed a hard-earned barbeque



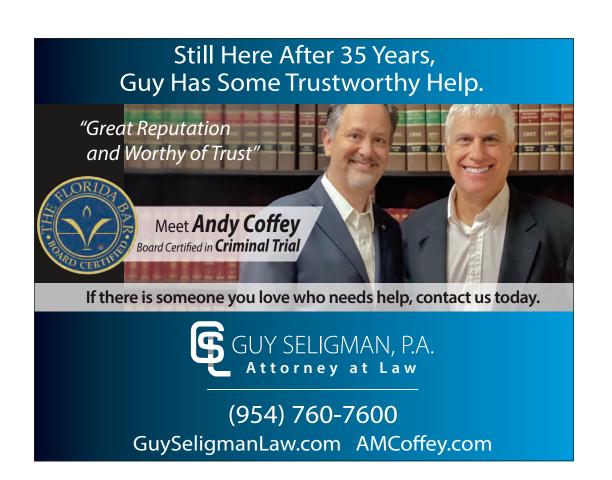
Beverly Bidney

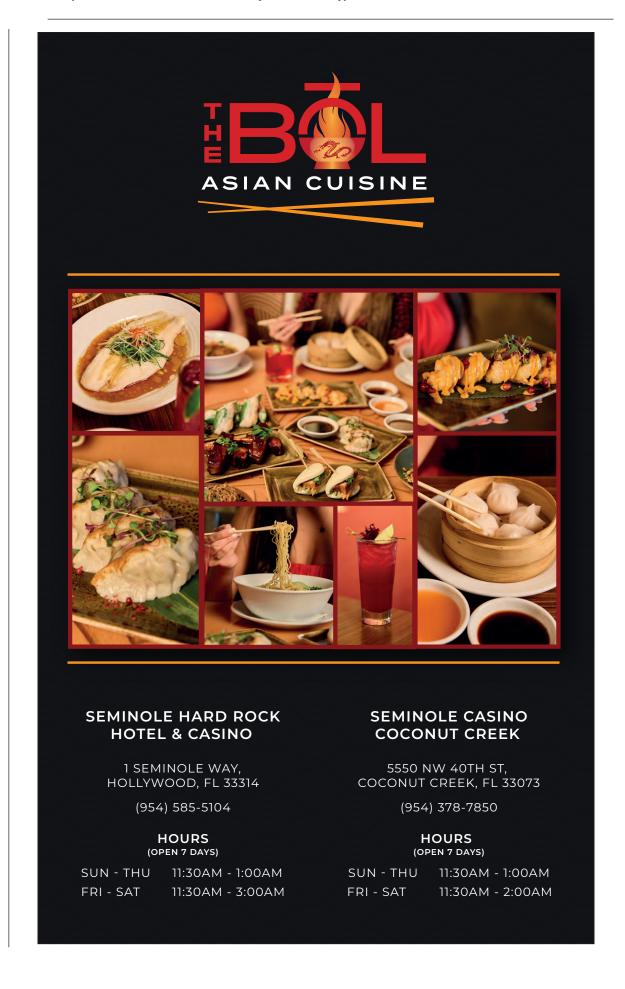
The entourage The cattle rush past the Ahfachkee School on their way to the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena.



Beverly Bidney

The horses in the cattle drive enjoy a water break halfway through the drive.





Board reports to shareholders at annual meeting

BY CALVIN TIGER Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The annual shareholders meeting of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. was held March 29 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. In a ballroom full of tribal members, STOFI's Board of Directors discussed a variety of topics, including current and future tribal business.

Board members are President Holly Tiger, Vice President Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., Brighton Rep. Bryan Arledge, Big Cypress Rep. Nadine Bowers and Hollywood Rep. Christine McCall.

"All the information presented represents the hard work and dedication our Board of Directors and enterprise managers have been putting into streamline operations while prioritizing growth in profits. We realized over 10% growth across all businesses' units in 2024; that is challenging nowadays in this economy. The board is dedicated to growing all brands owned by the shareholders, and today we had an opportunity to highlight our efforts," President Tiger said after the meeting.

The meeting began with a fiscal year

presentation by Erum Motiwala, the board's executive director of finance. She talked about STOFI's various accomplishments during fiscal year 2024 as compared to fiscal year 2023. STOFI businesses are Seminole Petroleum, Seminole Trading Post, Seminole Smoke Shop, Seminole Wholesale Distribution, Seminole Natural Resources, Seminole Brighton RV Resort and Campground, Seminole Commercial Cleaning, Seminole Credit and Finance, and The Bol Restaurant.

The board discussed the tribe's joint business venture with NRT Technology for fiscal year 2024 and its initiative for fiscal year 2025. NRT Technology oversees multiple services for the tribe's Hard Rock Hotel & Casino properties including new venues Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol in Virginia and Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Ottawa in Canada. Some of the services are for hardware at the properties including neo kiosks, jackpot kiosks, cash recyclers, ATM, cash advance and check cashing. New product initiatives were also discussed for fiscal year 2025.

After the presentation, the board conducted a Q&A with tribal members followed by closing remarks.

"It's truly a blessing and honor to be able to stand in front of you all and really have a meaningful discussion about your enterprises, because what it's all about is making sure that we're as transparent as possible," Rep. McCall said.

'I want us to give a big hand to the employees over here because with the vision that the board has, they've taken that and multiplied it for what the businesses are today and the growth you see in the dollars," Vice President Osceola said.

'Showing up here shows that you're interested, and you're really engaged in these enterprises and it's good to show everybody coming out. It makes us accountable to make sure we're representing you guys in the best way we can," Rep. Arledge said.

"Thank you to the shareholders for coming today and for their continued support," Rep. Bowers said. "I would also like to thank our dedicated staff for all their hard work and effort in making today's event possible. We appreciate everything you do. Thank you again, everyone."

President Tiger also gave closing remarks and thanked tribal members for attending.



Courtesy photo

The front entrance of the Alton District building in Washington D.C.

SEMREF adds LA, DC apartment buildings to portfolio

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

The Seminole Real Estate Fund (SEMREF) has been busy helping secure a bright future for the tribe by adding to its portfolio of a dozen properties around the country. Since last June, SEMREF has purchased apartment buildings in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

Founded in 2020, the objective of the fund is to enhance generational wealth of the tribe by diversifying through sound real estate investments in Class A rental apartment buildings. The goal is to generate sustainable income along with long-term asset appreciation.

SEMREF looks for properties by nationally known developers. With its experience in the market and the strength of the tribe behind it, the fund is able to offer ease and certainty of execution with no

"That makes us a very attractive buyer," said SEMREF executive director Jonathan Levy. "We aren't always the highest bidder, but we are certain. We aren't the headache, we are the Tylenol.'

All of the properties are located in in cities with job growth in professional industries such as medical, biotech, finance

"We like to say eds and meds put heads in beds," Levy said. "They attract the right clientele for us. Universities, hospitals and medical centers attract higher income folks."

In addition to Los Angeles and D.C., the the apartment buildings are located in Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas, Denver, Seattle, Kansas City, Las Vegas and Tampa

Washington, D.C.

In June 2024, SEMREF purchased Alton

District, a 125-unit, apartment building in the heart of Washington, D.C. Located in a prime location about a mile from the White House and close to many popular restaurants and shops, the apartment building also contains ground floor retail establishments including a bank, law office and high-end coffee shop.

Alton District offers studio, onebedroom and two-bedroom apartments and amenities including a fitness center, parking garage with electric vehicle charging stations and a rooftop terrace.

"We were attracted to D.C. because its population has increased by 14% in 10 years and by 19% near the District," Levy said.

Los Angeles

In January 2025, SEMREF purchased Vinz on Fairfax, a 144-unit apartment building in the Miracle Mile area of Los Angeles near The Grove shopping and entertainment area, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and about a mile from Beverly Hills.

Vinz on Fairfax offers studio, onebedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments. Amenities include a pool, hot tub, fitness center, covered parking with electric vehicle charging stations and a resident lounge with kitchen, fireplace, televisions and billiards.

"It has excellent bones and is in a great location," Levy said.

Overall, SEMREF's portfolio has grown significantly and is valued at more than twice its initial investment.

'We buy property for the long term," Levy said. "The tribe holds the properties for the foreseeable future for generational wealth building.



Courtesy photo

The exterior of Vinz on Fairfax in Los Angeles



The pool deck at the Vinz on Fairfax in Los Angeles.

President Holly Tiger speaks at the Board of Directors' annual shareholders meeting March 29 in Hollywood.







From left to right, Board Representatives Nadine Bowers, Christine McCall and Bryan Arledge speak at the meeting.

Large-scale project in Davie scheduled to complete phase one in 2025

BY TATUM MITCHELL **Staff Reporter**

DAVIE — A multi-million square foot project is beginning to take shape less than a mile north of the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. At the southwest

National Properties is building a massive residential apartment and commercial project called "The District in Davie" on the eastern edge of Davie.

According to the website of Cooper

corner of U.S. 441 and Griffin Road, El-Ad development "is intended to appeal to a hip professional demographic.

The project contains 1,256 residential units and 36,000 square feet of commercial space, like restaurants and retail. It is the largest multi-family project in Davie's Carry - the project's architect - the history. The site was previously occupied by a shopping plaza, which

has been demolished. The project approved in Noticeable construction of foundations has emerged in recent months. Phase one is expected to be completed in 2025. Preleasing for the apartments began earlier this year.

The project's five buildings will range from 20 to 24 stories, each offering studio up to threebedroom apartments. Unit sizes will vary from 589 to 1,460 square feet, according to a press



♦ TRIAL From page 1A

The defense side, most often represented by Texas-based lawyer Thomas Melsheimer, claimed the trustee invested in low-return bonds because it was following the tribe's desire to preserve principal in the trust.

The money in the trust came from the tribe via its gaming entities. The trust was irrevocable, meaning the money belonged to the minors when it was deposited into the trust and would become available to the beneficiaries when they became adults, provided they met criteria including financial literacy and education implemented by the tribe.

The jury, which was given 10 questions to answer on the verdict form, deliberated from about 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. before its verdicts were read in court and confirmed by the jury foreperson.

The largest chunk of the damages – \$818 million – is from the jury agreeing with the plaintiffs that Wells Fargo mismanaged the trust's investments. More than \$7.1 million of the total damages is from the claim that unauthorized fees were collected and the failure to disclose those fees.

During testimony, bank employees admitted mistakes were made internally and policies were not followed.

"You heard throughout the trial how the defendants, representing Wells Fargo, came across to the jury—with suspicion and criticism regarding how they performed their duties," Osber said after the trial. "Compare that to Lewis, Nancy, Quentin, and Jason [Fuller, from Providence First Trust], who were the faces of the Seminole minor children. They came across clearly likable, well-received, and most importantly, believable to the jury. I think that really shined through in how the jury evaluated the evidence and reached their verdict.'

"When you get a jury verdict that's the largest ever in Broward County history, you have to feel pretty good about the outcome. Considering it was on behalf of the trustee, three individual plaintiffs, and 2,300 beneficiaries—all children—you've got to feel very happy and gratified to achieve this kind of result for the tribe and its kids," Scherer said after the trial.

The jury also determined that Wells Fargo should give up \$7.6 million as a result of its unjust enrichment from the fees.

The case dates back to 2016. It covers the period from 2005 to 2016 when Wachovia Bank and then Wells Fargo Bank, which acquired Wachovia in 2008, handled the trust.

'We've been doing this for close to 10 years, and I've been a part of this since [2016]. ... But I just remember knowing, coming up to this, I almost felt contentment, because it's time, it's here," Jimmie said. "Like, yes, I was very nervous the first couple days, but working with the other plaintiffs, I enjoyed spending time with Quentin, Lewis and Jason, they're my family now. I feel like they're my brothers. The lawyers were so kind and just funny and fun to work with."

Tommie said being one of the plaintiffs was a sacrifice, but a learning experience as well. He said he's pleased the jury paid careful attention.

"Especially knowing that we've got justice for all of the minors that were in and that are currently in the minors' trust. It was a sacrifice that was well worth it," Tommie

Jimmie drove more than 5,000 miles over the course of the trial since she was going back and forth each day from her home on the Brighton Reservation. She said that over the years going through this process has made her felt like she's grown with it.

"I used to ask myself, 'Why me? Why me?' ... It was a lot to handle whenever I first started and people started finding out that I was going to represent. I had a tribal member ask me, 'Why you?' and I said 'You know, I don't know.' I said, 'But God has put me here, and I'm gonna finish it out, and I guess we'll figure it out. He knows, ultimately, I don't.' And I had to be content with that. It took me a lot of time," Jimmie said.

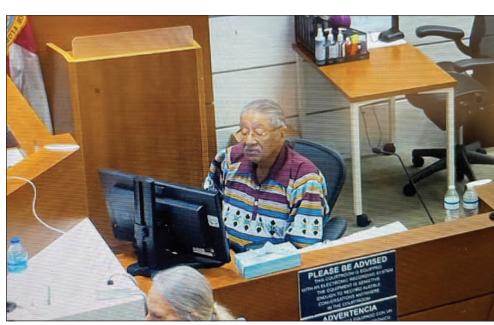
Tommie, reflecting on his testimony in the trial, said an impactful part for him was taking the past and the future generations into consideration.



Plaintiff Quentin Tommie looks to his right just before the jury's verdicts are announced.



Plaintiffs Quentin Tommie, Lewis Gopher Jr. and Nancy Jimmie enter courtroom 15150 in Fort Lauderale on Feb. 12, the first day of testimony in a trial that would last six weeks.



Former Chairman and President Mitchell Cypress testifies on March 18.



Plaintiff lawyers Steven Osber, center, and Bill Scherer, both from Conrad & Scherer, react after the verdicts were announced.



Several tribal members attended the trial throughout its duration, including Feb. 12, the first day of testimony.

"It was those who came before me that earned the ability to establish this trust for the future generations to come," Tommie

He appreciated the tribal members who showed support, Tommie said.

'We really dedicated ourselves to this, and we also really supported each other a lot. It made it a bit easier as well to have that support from one another throughout this thing. And I greatly appreciate all of the dedication and the sacrifice that they also had to give and put into this," Tommie

said. "They really were a really great support system, and I'm happy to have been alongside them during this process. As well, there were a lot of tribal members that showed up and supported. Such as Sally Tommie and [President] Holly Tiger, as well as Councilwoman Mariann Billie from BC, Councilman Larry Howard from Brighton and Michele Thomas for bringing the kids from PECS and Ahfachkee. It was a huge deal for me. You could see the faces of the minors that we were fighting for. And the jury was able to see those young faces

adorned in their traditional clothing, and they weren't just names on a piece of paper."

Gopher was not in the courtroom the day the jury made its verdict; however, he was at the plaintiffs' table from start to finish nearly every day of the trial. With a smile before court started or during breaks, he often greeted and thanked those who sat on the plaintiffs' side of the room. On the day of closing arguments, Gopher and Tommie stood for more than an hour at the table never sitting down – as lawyers from both sides and the judge ironed out issues without

the jury present. Gopher was not in the courtoom the day the jury made its verdict because he was in Naples protesting plans to build a communications tower in the Everglades.

Tribune staff reporter Tatum Mitchell contributed to this story.





RICHARD **CASTILLO** 954.522.3500

HELPING THE SEMINOLE COMMUNITY **FOR MANY YEARS**

24 HOURS A DAY

Since 1990 I have protected rights like yours. My office defends DUIs, drug offenses, suspended licenses, domestic violence, and all felonies and misdemeanors throughout Florida and the United States.

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.

♦ CLOSE UP From page 1A

It was Osceola's first year attending Close Up, and she said one of the most impactful parts was the group activities and workshops.

"I really like the questions they asked, and we were put into groups with other people. So I got the chance to talk to everyone in my group, and I really like that, seeing their perspective on things, and also their how much they know as well, because there are a lot of things that I didn't know that they brought up, and I hope to take that back," Ósceola said.

This year was junior Yani Smith's second time going on the Close Up trip. Coming into the trip, she knew about American government and how it works, but learned more about how tribal government and sovereignty tied into it. She said she recommends the trip because there's something that everybody can get out of it.

"Coming on this trip, it just gave me new knowledge and new perspectives and new experiences. Yes, I got to meet a lot of people from different tribes from our area, and, yes, I learned a whole bunch of things. But I feel like it's more than that. It's not just meeting people, it's not just learning things. The experience, as a whole, ... everybody can get something. Even if ... you don't want to go into politics in general. ... Even if you don't right now, who knows, in 10 years, you might change your mind, and then you can get new perspectives. No tribe is the same. ... Nobody's experience is the same. And it gives you a new perspective."

Meeting students from other tribal nations and learning about their various experiences is a highlight, Smith said. She, and other students on the trip, said buying into the program, participating and talking to others is vital to making the most out of it. Willo James, senior, also said one of the program highlights was making new friends and meeting people.

Something James hopes people takeaway is that they can make an impact.

"We can make a difference. It doesn't matter how old you are, where you come from, whatever. Just know that you can make a difference," James said.

Along with that key takeaway, Smith said she wants people to know that Native youth want to be a part of conversations about their communities, politics and other topics.

"I want people to know that we do want to be here – Native youth – we do want a space. We do want to be able to be in these conversations and talk about how we see things," Smith said. "Our tribal initiatives

presentations, that's ... one of the spaces that we get to have a voice in. So being able to talk to those tribal leaders and them listening to us is really good. I just want people to know, especially the adults and anybody, even young people that are reading this, [as] Native youth, we do want to be in these conversations. We do want to help, and we do want to make a difference, and we want to know more, and please include us in these conversations."

Martha Santibanez, 9-12 advisor for the Seminole Tribe, has been attending Close Up for three years. She said one of her favorite parts is seeing the students come out of their

"There's something that sparks in them. At first, they're really shy. Not all of them, some of them, but they are very quiet. And then I think when they start meeting other tribal members or their own family within their own tribe, they open up. They're not as shy, they're a little bit more outspoken," Santibanez said. "And even the students that you would think wouldn't be brave enough to stand up in front of a crowd or even speak, how they open up is great, and to see them use this later on, that makes it even better. It makes me feel like I'm doing a good enough job, because they're growing, they're learning, they're progressing, and somehow I was able to help with that. ... I love it. I love the kids.'

Something Ralston said students should have an understanding of leaving Close Up is how they can influence their communities through government.

"What tribal governments are, what they provide to their community, the underlying the unfulfilled treaty and trust obligations of the federal government to their tribal nations and their communities, that's all a good thing to know and a good thing to wrestle with," Ralston said. "But I would say that they should leave with an understanding That them as Native people, can be separate from the political structures and institutions that they're interacting with and impact their lives. I think there's not a ton of emphasis put on the fact that change can come with from within communities, and it doesn't have to be connected to whoever they elect. And so in like, in recent years, last two years, we've kind of focused on sort of a citizen action role to kind of counterbalance that. And so, yeah, I'd want them to leave with, like, I'm not saying that the tribal government in your community is going to solve all your problems. I'm saying that, you know, if you dedicate yourself if you learn what you need to learn and apply that to the world. You know you're not always going to get the best, the best result, but in our democracy and in your community, it's possible."



The Seminole group visits Hard Rock Café in Washington, D.C., where everyone had lunch.



Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, at left, standing, watches students work on their tribal action initiative projects.



At the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial are, from left to right, Adeline Garcia, Marnie McGhee (Poarch Creek), Tahnia Billie, Yani Smith, Erica Sanders, Merlelaysia Billie, Cordelia Snell, Ashkia Weaver (Poarch Creek).

Close Up students presenting their sovereignty statement to USET receive a standing ovation.



Tatum Mitchel

From left to right, Jonah Garcia, King Calisce and Greg James stand next to an Osceola portrait at the National Portrait Gallery.





From left to right, Sahara Robbins, Mia Herrera, Shyla Herrera and Ky-Mani Boyce with the Washington Monument in the background.



Hard Rock Hotel in Canada nears opening

STAFF REPORT

The Hard Rock Hotel London in Ontario, Canada, is close to completion and is now accepting reservations for guests. The new hotel will consist of 164 guest rooms and suites. Located within 100 Kellogg Lane - in a former Kellogg's cereal factory - the new venue is part of Canada's largest indoor entertainment complex and sits in the heart of London's Old East Village.

The hotel is expected to open in the spring. London is located in the southern part of the province, about a two-hour drive from both Detroit and Toronto.

"The debut of Hard Rock Hotel London, Ontario, marks an exciting milestone as we bring our iconic brand to this vibrant city," said John Rees, senior vice president of Hotel Operations at Hard Rock International, in a press release. "Guests can expect the signature Hard Rock vibe, where music, entertainment, and hospitality come together to create something truly special.'

Hard Rock Hotel London will have musical touches encompassing the property which includes Victrola record players in specific guest rooms and have guitars

delivered to guest rooms. At the property, guests can also utilize a fitness center along with an indoor/outdoor pool with an underwater sound system

Guests and locals will discover culinary and beverage concepts, including GMT-5 bar, Sessions Restaurant & Bar, and a speakeasy appropriately named after the year the Kellogg's factory opened - 1913. The mixologist driven bar will feature cereal infused beverages as an ode to the venue's

"Signing the agreement for the creation of Hard Rock Hotel London, Ontario marked the start of what has proven to be an extraordinary partnership between Dora Hotel Company, Hard Rock International, The Cribbage Group, and the city of London," said Tim Dora, president of Dora Hotel Company, in a release. "We are eager to bring to life the unparalleled energy of Hard Rock. There is no doubt this hotel will be a game changer for Canadians and those traveling from around the globe to Ontario for this unforgettable Hard Rock Hotel experience."

→ CHALO NITKA From page 1A

Chalo Nitka means "Big Bass" in Creek and the tribe's culture has always played an important part in the festival. At the festival, tribal members manned the cooking chickee and served samples of traditional Seminole foods including pumpkin fry bread, sofkee and thick cut bacon cooked over the open

The clothing contest showed off the colorful patchwork and style of the tribe as a panel of three judges determined the winners in each age group, from infants to seniors. During the contest, contestants waited patiently as judges examined details of their garments.

Beverly Bidney

Brighton Councilman Larry Howard waves to spectators along the parade route at the annual Chalo Nitka Festival parade March 1 in Moore





Beverly Bidney

Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas, right, and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola wave during the Chalo Nitka Festival parade.

Pitbull will play a big role in kicking



Willo James serves up some thick cut bacon for visitors to the Seminole cooking chickee.

Jr. Miss EIRA Rodeo Queen Karma Koenes, left, and Miss EIRA Rodeo

Queen Brienna Brockman participate in the Chalo Nitka parade.

Sandy Billie Jr., front, and Valek Martinez enjoy marching in the parade.



Nohea Collins and Elakaih Collins show off the candy they got during the

Hard Rock, Pitbull announce beverage deal

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Hard Rock International and Seminole Hard Rock announced March 5 a partnership with Grammy-winning superstar, entrepreneur, and motivational speaker Armando Christian Pérez, known worldwide as Pitbull, to serve his premium vodka brand, Voli 305. Guests at Hard Rock cafes, hotels, casinos, and live entertainment venues can have Voli 305 complement their favorite meals.

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood hosted '305 Day' on March 5 to kick off this newest addition to Hard Rock's beverage menu.

"It's an honor to create a partnership between Voli 305 vodka and Hard Rock International. I had the opportunity to sit with [HRI] Chairman Jim Allen during the inception of the Guitar Hotel. I was also one of the first artists to shoot a music video at the Seminole Hard Rock, so there's no better place to start Voli 305's first global partnership," said Pitbull in a press release.

"Pitbull's influence on the rap, hip hop and dance music scene embodies the vibrant, unstoppable energy that Hard Rock aims to bring our guests every day at our Guitar Hotel in South Florida and destinations around the world," said Keith Sheldon, president of



Entertainer Pitbull attends an event at Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood in March for his vodka partnership.

Entertainment and Brand Management at HRI and Seminole Gaming, in the release. "Introducing Voli 305 to our menus was a natural fit to enhance our guest experience."

off the Formula 1 Miami Grand Prix race weekend, starting with a concert at Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on May 1 at 8 p.m. He will also perform trackside at the Hard Rock Beach

SIXT car rental opens at **Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood**

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — A ribbon cutting ceremony was held March 26 to mark the debut of a new car rental branch at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Guests can now rent vehicles from SIXT USA, whose branch is located adjacent to the reception and bell desks at the hotel. SIXT offers standard and luxury models from BMW, General Motors, Mercedes-Benz and others.

As part of a partnership between SIXT, Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, exclusive discounts throughout the U.S. will be offered to members of Unity by Hard Rock's loyalty program.

"SIXT's commitment to premium service aligns perfectly with our brand, making them an ideal partner to enhance the travel experiences for our guests," Keith Sheldon, president of Entertainment & Brand at Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, said in a press release.



SIXT makes its debut at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood with a ribbon cutting ceremony on March 26.

Comedy play comes to Seminole Hard Rock

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Off-Broadway veteran actor and producer Anthony J. Wilkinson's "My Big Gay Italian Funeral" brings two nights of laughter to the Hard Rock Event Center at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on May 30 and May 31, with both shows at 8 p.m.

For ticket information go to casino.

hardrock.com/hollywood. "My Big Gay Italian Funeral" picks up where "My Big Gay Italian Wedding" leaves off, at the funeral of Anthony's father Joe. Anthony is reunited with his gay brother Peter Pinnunziato, who he hasn't spoken to in over a decade. Family drama and crazy characters unite when everything that can possibly happen at an Italian wake certainly

"My Big Gay Italian Wedding" is a play written by Wilkinson that premiered off-Broadway in 2003.





Scientific method proves age, creation method of photographs at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki

BY MARIA DMITRIEVA Paper and Photograph Conservator BY TARA BACKHOUSE

Curator

BIG CYPRESS — Thousands of photographs and documents have been donated to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum over the past few years. We don't always get a lot of information with these donations, such as the age they were created. You can tell a lot from looking at these pieces of history, but sometimes it takes more. Conservators at the museum engage in scientific investigations to learn more about the objects they care for.

In the conservation laboratory we use different tools, equipment, and technologies to engage in professional pre-treatment

scientific investigations. Some of the tests we do are light microscopy, chemical analysis, and pH testing. One of the most useful and widespread methods for gaining information is the Dino Lite microscope. This is a microscope with an integrated camera.

For one recent investigation we used the Dino Lite, and we were able to figure out how one particular photograph was made. This photograph (Figure 1, below) and other photos that were donated at the same time were previously thought to be black and white silver gelatin prints. Silver gelatin photography has existed since the late 19th century. It's still possible to produce photographs this way today. If you use a film camera, this is how prints are produced. But most of the photography these days is digital. If we want physical prints of the



The inset image (in circle) shows the colored ink dots in the rows that indicate that this photograph was printed on a modern computer printer

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

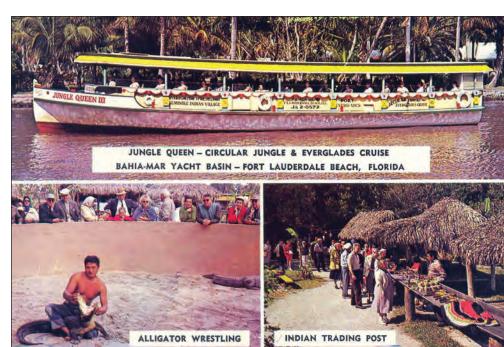
pictures, we use computer printers, and the image is printed on printer paper that looks similar to a silver gelatin print.

However when this particular photograph (and others from the same album) was put under the microscope, the Dino Lite showed us something surprising. The photograph is not, in fact, a silver gelatin print. Instead, it is the type of print produced by computer laser printers. Why was this surprising? One reason is that the caption of the photo reveals the date of the event pictured. This image dates from 1938, and it depicts the dock of the Jungle Queen on the New River in Fort Lauderdale. Two women dressed in patchwork skirts and capes are sitting on the dock and smiling. The Jungle Queen has been a sightseeing boat since 1935.

But in the early 20th century, Seminole people played a bigger part in this tourist enterprise. They welcomed and entertained tourists and were a big part of the Jungle Queen experience (Figure 2, at right).

Therefore, the story of this photograph is more complicated that you might think. There must have been a much older silver gelatin print that was produced in the early 20th century in order to record this scene. Nevertheless, the one that was examined at the museum is much newer and was most likely produced in the last 30 years by photographing the originals with a digital camera or by scanning original silver gelatin photographs.

Investigations like these allow us to tailor treatment methods for each object's unique requirements. In this case, we are



This postcard shows one way that Seminole participants at the Jungle Queen were advertised to Florida visitors. Alligator wrestling and craft sales were two of the ways that Seminole people participated in this tourist experience.

avoiding using organic solvents for surface cleaning, because this type of cleaner could damage the surface of the print. After all, the goal of every conservation treatment is to preserve historic and modern objects and prevent further damage from occurring.

Next month, check here to read about another scientific investigation at the Museum's conservation lab. If you'd like to see the action in person, call us and schedule a visit, at 863-902-1113.

Vendors participate in BC event

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — An event described as a St. Picklez Day celebration was held March 16 at the Topeekeeke Yakne building on the Big Cypress Reservation. Arts and jewelry vendors, entertainment and food vendors were part of the celebration.



April 2025

Lindsey Posada, left, and Lauren Posada display and sell tribal jewelry at Topeekeeke Yakne building on the Big Cypress Reservation on March 17 during the St. Picklez Day Celebration.



Sally Rockwell, left, and Diosa Sanders display and sell tribal jewelry at the event.



Peter Cast, left, and Cayla Willie display their MMIP Charity, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Movement material to gain awareness and accept donations to help further their cause.

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

would be a safe bet that you probably think of the Venus Flytrap, arguably the most well-known carnivorous plant in the world. However, it might surprise you to learn that there are dozens of many plants, and the THPO's Collections is fortunate to have a

This plant, commonly known as small butterwort, is native to the Southeastern United States. *Pinguicula pumila* only grows about 6-8 vers.org). Small butterwort is the smallest butterwort that can be found in the Southeastern United States, explaining its common name (pinguicula.org). Their petals can be found in Big Cypress Natural Preserve (re

. The carnivorous adaptations that it has developed trapped by (Figure 1). Enzymes are then used to help digest the bugs

Currently, there is no evidence that it was used by past Seminole ancestors. However, modern carnivorous plant enthusiasts appreciate



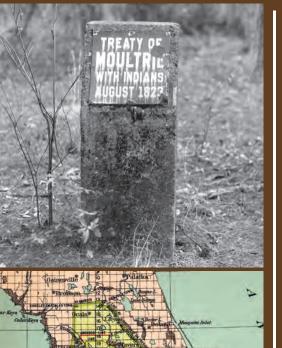
The Institute for Regional Conservation. (n.d.). Small butterwort. The Institute for Regional Conservation $\label{lem:https://regionalconservation.org/ircs/database/plants/PlantPage.asp?TXCODE=Pingpumi#:\sim:text=Pinguicula%20pumila%20bas%20been%20found%20in%20the,Status.%20Big%20Cypress%20National%20Preserve%2C%20Present%2C%20Native.$ Eric PARTRAT. (2025, February 25). Pinguicula pumila. A world of Pinguicula.

https://www.pinguicula.org/plants/pumila/ Small butterwort. Florida Wildflower Foundation. (n.d.). https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-pinguicula-pumila University of Florida. (n.d.). Carnivorous plants. Gardening Solutions.



SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - APRIL 2025

THE SEMINOLE WAR: MOULTRIE CREEK



In the late Summer of 1823, in a field along a creek south of Saint Augustine, delegates from the United States met with Indigenous leaders to discuss terms of peace. The Americans were represented by William Duvall, future governor of Florida, and James Gadsen. Neamathla, the eader of Fowltown, was recognized as the Seminole leader, though he was one of many who were present. This included the clan matriarchs, who while not part of the direct negotiations, could provide council from the

The Treaty of Moultrie Creek sought to end the hostilities by moving the Seminole to a designated reservation in Central Florida. There the towns in turn would receive payments in resources and labor, including teachers and blacksmiths, from the U.S. The borders were drawn to keep the Seminoles at least fifteen miles from any coastline, cutting them off from any allies outside Florida, and demanded the towns not give shelter to anyone escaping American enslavement.

The Treaty was never completely fulfilled. Most Tribal members would move to the reservation land over the next nine years, but bands who weren't represented at Moultrie Creek saw no reason to abide by a treaty they hadn't agreed to. Those who moved found the land far less sustainable than what they had left behind. Most also refused to comply with U.S. slave catchers. The agreed payments from the USA were normally far behind schedule, and often not fulfilled at all. Meanwhile American settlers were already starting to move into the reservation lands.

Seemingly outside these problems however, Neamathla and five other leaders had negotiated to keep their lands in North Florida even as the rest of the Seminole were forced to leave. This would backfire on them within the decade, as they were the first in Florida to be forced out under the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

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

Top picture: Historical marker for the signing of the Treaty of Moultrie Creek - St. Johns County, Below: The borders of the Moultrie Creek reservation (in green), included modern day Orlando

Okeechobee, and Ocala. (Map by Bureau of American Ethnology, 1896)



Health *

Arizona ranks 3rd for missing Indigenous people. New bill hopes to change that with emergency alert system

BY BRANDELYN CLARK Cronkite News (Phoenix, Ariz.)

PHOENIX — An Arizona bill to create a missing Indigenous or endangered person alert system passed the House with unanimous support and is now in the final stages of review by the Senate before heading to the governor.

HB2281 explicitly focuses on missing Native persons or non-Native endangered individuals and aims to address the growing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples in Arizona's 22 federally recognized tribal nations. It would facilitate an emergency advisory similar to Amber alerts and Silver alerts.

For Anthony Sanchez Jr., head councilman of the Pueblo of Zuni Tribal Council, the notification system represents an important step in combating the high rates of missing and murdered tribal persons that have plagued North America for hundreds of years. Pueblo of Zuni tribal lands sit on the border of Arizona and New Mexico.

"Now we're finally being recognized as equals," Sanchez said. "It shows power of the community coming back together. ... They're out there, not for themselves, but trying to get these individuals back home."

Native communities have long faced obstacles to finding and protecting their populations. The lack of adequate resources, timely responses and jurisdictional challenges have left many families without support in finding their loved ones and feeling safe.

Arizona ranks third in the country for the highest number of Indigenous missing person cases, according to 2022 data from the National Institute of Justice's National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).

The Arizona bill, co-sponsored by Rep. Brian Garcia, D-Tempe and a member of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, seeks to change that.

"(The bill) gets us that much closer to making sure that all of Arizona's communities are protected and safe. What we're asking with this bill is when someone goes missing, is endangered, we're able to send out that alert and hopefully save their life." Garcia said.

Garcia said.

Garcia pointed to the case of Emily Pike, a San Carlos Apache teen who went missing and whose mutilated remains were found near Globe last month. The state of Pike's remains have led police to suspect foul play.

An Amber alert was not sent out for her because there was no indication she had been abducted or was in danger, the primary requirements for activating an Amber alert. Pike's death has resurfaced conversations

Pike's death has resurfaced conversations about the missing and murdered Indigenous people crisis across the country, and Native community members have been protesting and raising awareness for the cause in her

"The response from community members and the awareness around it highlights it in a very real and upsetting way. Indigenous peoples are just tired of having our own gone missing, becoming endangered and being murdered," Garcia said.

Conditions would exist for notification qualification, similar to the Amber Alert and Silver Alert procedures. If triggered, authorities would be required to use all available local resources and determine that the person is in danger – either at risk to themselves or because they may be in the presence of a potentially dangerous person. Additionally, the individual must be over 18, and information that could assist in finding the person must be available. Tribal members under 18 are covered by the Amber Alert system.

The bill also represents non-Native people in potentially dangerous situations if the individual meets the qualification for the emergency alert.

The Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) would oversee the notifications through the Emergency Alert System to ensure timely public distribution. DPS would also coordinate with similar systems in other states to expand the reach.

Arizona's Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Task Force played a part in the formation of the notice system. Gov. Katie Hobbs formed the task force in March 2023.Sen. Theresa Hatathlie, D-Tuba City, who is Navajo and chair of the task force, has seen research of other states' advisory systems weaving into Arizona's approach.

"Every law, especially in this sense, would have some conditions. We just need to see how it'll be implemented," Hatathlie

As an Arizona tribal member, Hatathlie has watched her tribal nation evolve as their crisis grows.

"When we have a missing person, an Indigenous missing person, it's not elevated. Many times these entities brush it aside. They think it's because of alcoholism or it's because of some addiction," Hatathlie said. "No matter what the situation is, loved ones report people missing and that needs to be elevated, it needs to be investigated."

See HEALTH on page 6C

National Child Abuse Prevention Month: A child advocate's role

BY TATUM MITCHELL Staff Reporter

As a child advocate with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Vanessa Golaub is dedicated to making a difference in families' lives. With six years of experience in child welfare and two years with the tribe, Golaub currently works with the advocacy and guardianship department.

"The Advocacy Department within the Seminole Tribe of Florida ensures the safety and well-being of children and families in crisis," Golaub said. "As part of this department, our advocacy program focuses on immediate crisis intervention and stabilization for families with children at risk. As Child advocates we work closely with families both in-home and out-of-home, offering case management, parenting support, child development education, and counseling for issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health challenges."

April is national Child Abuse Prevention Month and child abuse prevention week, or Blue Ribbon Week, is April 7 – 11, during which preschool Superhero Day will be on April 9 and the child abuse awareness community walk is at 3 p.m. on April 10.

For the 10th annual child abuse awareness community walk and ice cream social on April 10, wear blue and meet at these locations: Hollywood (gym), Immokalee (gym), Big Cypress (gym), Lakeland (main gate), Brighton (tribal office).

"Child Abuse Prevention Month is incredibly impactful because it brings awareness to an issue that affects the well-being of children and the future of our communities. Within the Seminole Tribe, the importance of protecting and nurturing Seminole youths is deeply rooted in the culture and traditions. Our children represent the next generation, and it is our responsibility to ensure they grow up in a safe, supportive environment," Golaub said.

Along with promoting available resources and support, Golaub said recognizing Child Abuse Prevention Month opens an opportunity to educate people about those topics.

"It's a time to strengthen our commitment to the safety of our children and empower our community to take action. When we invest in the well-being of our youth, we are preserving our heritage, strengthening our families, and building a healthier future for everyone," Golaub said.

Golaub's role as a child advocate includes home visits, monitoring child welfare, providing support for court appearances and secures resources and services for families.

"Our goal is to provide guidance, support, and intervention to ensure every child has a safe and stable environment while respecting the Tribe's cultural values," Golaub said. "Our goal is to provide the necessary resources and support to help families overcome challenges, strengthen their ability to stay together, and ensure the safety of Seminole children while respecting

the Tribe's cultural values."

The most emotional part of her job, she said, is if a child is removed from a family's care. It impacts "your whole entire being. When it comes to emotional, physical, mental being."

impactful "The part is working with the families, working with the caregivers, the parents, whomever children are removed from their care, working with them throughout however long of a process it is, whether it's a year or longer. And it's taken ... different steps to get to where they need to be. When they actually reach that goal, it makes you feel good. Makes them feel even better, too," Golaub said. "To know that you actually help that family get to where they wanted to be or where they need to be, especially for younger kids, that's where it becomes the most impactful for me."

The department's main goal is child safety, she said, and family preservation. Golaub said the two go hand-in-hand. Something she hopes people remember is how important protecting children is.

"I believe, even if it's not your child, protecting our children is very vital in any situation. ... We were given the opportunity to work with a specific community, and I feel like given that opportunity is a big deal for us or should be a big deal. But that's what I would like for [readers] to take away. The children are our future, and our job is to protect them.'



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

10th Annual Child Abuse Awareness
Community Walk & Ice Cream Social

Please join us and wear your favorite shade of **BLUE**

THURSDAY, APRIL 10th







USPS to hold 'Powwow' stamp ceremony

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The U.S. Postal Service will hold a first-day-of-issue ceremony for the "Powwows: Celebrating Native American Culture" stamps at the annual Gathering of Nations Pow Wow in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

A ceremony is scheduled to be held at the Gathering on April 25 at 3:30 p.m.

EDT

The four powwow stamps showcase original paintings of Native American dancers by Cochiti Pueblo artist Mateo Romero. The artist took photographs of the dancers in their traditional clothing while performing and then painted on top of the images. The stamps include the Women's Traditional Dance, Crow Hop Dance, Men's Hoop Dance, and

Women's Fancy Shawl Dance.

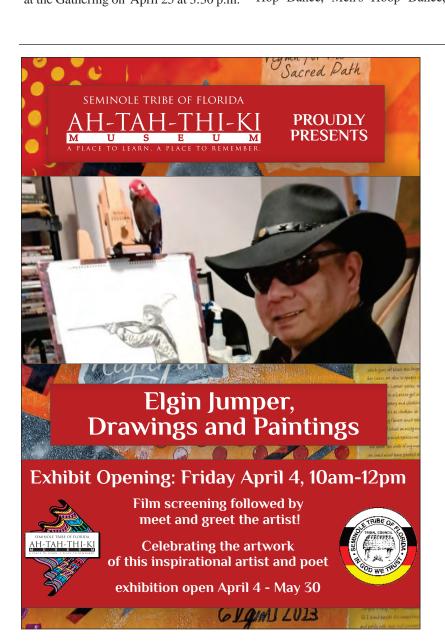
Attendees are encouraged to RSVP at usps.com/powwowsstamps. USPS will have a limited number of admission tickets and guests must register to receive one.

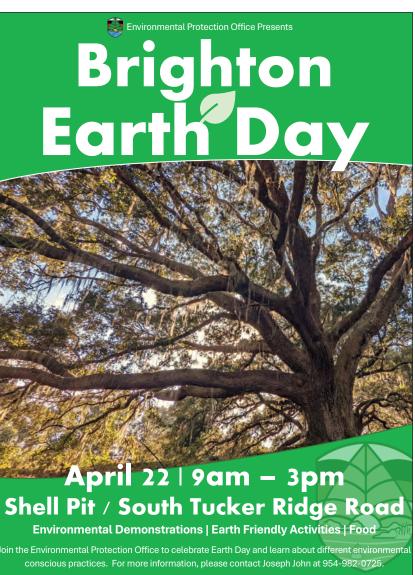














SEMINOLE SCENES *



ROYALTY, COUNCIL AND COWBOYS: Seminole princesses and members of Tribal Council participate in formal and not so formal events during their time in office, including getting down in the dirt at the 27th annual Junior Cypress Cattle Drive in Big Cypress on March 15. Posing with some of the cowboys guiding the cattle from Billie Swamp Safari to the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena are from left, Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Violet Osceola, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie and Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas.



BIG O'CYPRESS CELEBRATION: Above and below, the Big Cypress Recreation Department offered a variety of fun St. Patrick's Day-related activities, games and treats for youth on March 17.





SEAFOOD SCENE: Lillian Johnson, left, and Nick "The Crab Man" Garner, right, cook up some tasty seafood for those attending the Herman Osceola Memorial Basketball Tournament on March 23 in Big Cypress. The Dot's Pots Soul Seafood station was busy throughout the day outside the gymnasium.





GUITAR AND PIANO: Legendary pianist Balázs Havasi rehearses with the Guitar Hotel in Hollywood in the background. The Havasi Symphonic Concert Show was held March 29 at Hard Rock Live.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS: President Holly Tiger was a keynote speaker at the American Indigenous Business Leaders' National Business & Leadership Student Conference on March 10 during Reservation Economic Summit (RES 2025) in Las Vegas. AIBL is an American Indigenous non-profit organization dedicated to empowering business students in the United States.



Courtesy photo

AT THE RES: The tribe's Cheyenne Kippenberger, a former Miss Indian World who now runs her own company, CK Tribal Consulting, attended the **Reservation Economic** Summit (RES 2025) in Las Vegas. Organized by The National Center for **American Indian Enterprise** Development, the summit was held March 9-13 in and featured more than 4,000 attendees, including Native business leaders; tribal, local, state and federal representatives; and celebrities.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Judge rules Minnesota can prosecute marijuana crimes on reservations even after legalization

A Minnesota district court judge ruled that the state may prosecute Native Americans on most reservations for possessing large amounts of marijuana, allowing a felony case against a White Earth man to proceed.

The ruling is the first — though likely not the last — to address state law enforcement's jurisdiction over marijuana in Indian Country since Minnesota legalized its recreational use in 2023.

Todd Thompson, a White Earth citizen, faces a felony possession charge with a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine for selling marijuana without a license from his tobacco store in Mahnomen on the White Earth reservation.

Mahnomen County sheriff's deputies and White Earth tribal police raided his store on Aug. 2, 2023, a day after recreational cannabis became legal in Minnesota, and seized about 7.5 lbs of cannabis, 433 grams of marijuana wax and \$2,748 in cash along with Thompson's cell phone and surveillance system

Thompson asked Mahnomen County District Judge Seamus Duffy to dismiss the charge, arguing that the state doesn't have the legal jurisdiction to prosecute him.

Under what's called Public Law 280, Minnesota has the power to prosecute tribal members on certain reservations including White Earth's for criminal acts but not civil or regulatory violations of state law. Thompson and his attorney, Claire Glenn, argued that after cannabis was legalized in Minnesota, possessing and selling the drug became a regulatory matter, not a criminal one.

The judge, in a ruling issued [in March], disagreed. He wrote that the possession of "non-personal, non-recreational amounts of marijuana in public is generally prohibited," and that just because the state may issue licenses to businesses to sell marijuana, doesn't mean it's only a regulatory matter. He pointed to a case in which a White Earth man was convicted of possessing a pistol without a permit on tribal land.

Thompson also argued that prosecuting him for possession of cannabis violated his rights under the United States' 1855 Treaty with the Ojibwe, which guarantees the Ojibwe usufructuary rights to hunt, fish and gather on ceded lands.

Again, the judge disagreed, pointing out that even Thompson acknowledged marijuana was not used in a ceremonial way in the 1800s, and that treaties guarantee rights to tribes, not individuals. Minnesota's law does not limit the White Earth Nation's right to regulate marijuana on their land, the judge wrote.

Thompson, through his attorney, said the ruling was "disappointing, but not surprising."

"Exercising my rights should not be controversial or complicated. But once again, the state has failed to respect our sovereignty, our constitution, our own rule of law that has existed since long before the state of Minnesota even existed," Thompson

Thompson's attorney said they are considering their avenues for appeal. Complicating matters is the fact that criminal cases can typically only be appealed after a conviction, which means Thompson could be forced to go to prison before being able to appeal the judge's ruling.

The potential conviction of a Native American man for selling marijuana without a license would seem to cut against one of the central arguments Minnesota Democrats made in favor of legalization, which was to undo racial disparities in marijuana charges. State Democrats even mandated that a certain number of licenses be set aside for so-called social equity applicants who have been disproportionately affected by the War on Drugs.

Even so, in the interest of public safety, state lawmakers maintained criminal penalties for possessing large amounts of cannabis or selling it without a license.

Thompson flouted those requirements in a direct challenge to state and tribal regulations. Like many Native people, he says he doesn't believe Public Law 280 is legitimate. He also says the White Earth tribal council — which voted just days before the state cannabis law took effect to legalize adult-use cannabis and sell it from a tribal-run dispensary — overstepped its authority in establishing rules on cannabis

This isn't the first time Thompson has publicly taunted law enforcement in order to assert tribal sovereignty. In 2015, he was cited for illegally gillnetting on Gull Lake without a permit. Thompson fought the charges, which were ultimately dropped years later after a district court judge ruled that Thompson retained fishing rights on Gull Lake as a citizen of the White Earth Nation.

Thompson also successfully fought a citation by the state Department of Natural Resources for illegally harvesting wild rice on Height of Land Lake in 2023.

Prosecutors initially dropped that case in 2024 but refiled it last August, right before ricing season. Thompson argued the timing and delay was malicious, and on Wednesday, Becker County District Judge Michelle Lawson agreed.

She dismissed the ricing case, ruling that prosecutors unnecessarily delayed bringing the case, which caused Thompson to miss two seasons of harvesting wild rice out of fear of further incidents with law enforcement.

- Minnesota Reformer (minnesotareformer.com)

Potawatomi to reclaim tribal land in Illinois

More than 175 years after their reservation in Illinois was illegally sold at auction, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation is now in line to get their land back.

Gov. JB Pritzker signed legislation March 21 authorizing the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to hand over to the tribe the ownership title to Shabbona Lake State Park, a 1,500-acre tract in southern DeKalb County that largely overlaps the tribe's original reservation.

"This moment reflects the power of collaboration and the shared desire to build a future rooted in justice and respect," Prairie Band Potawatomi Chairman Joseph 'Zeke' Rupnick said in a statement. "Illinois has shown true courage and vision by leading the way in the Land Back movement, demonstrating that healing and reconciliation are possible."

Although ownership of the land will revert back to the tribe, visitors to the park should not notice any difference, at least not for now.

Senate Bill 867, sponsored by Sen. Mark Walker, D-Arlington Heights, also requires the tribe and DNR to enter into a land management agreement that will keep the land open for public recreation.

Prairie Band Potawatomi officials have said publicly they have no plans to develop the property for a casino or any other commercial use. They also point to a 2005 Illinois statute that requires the governor to seek legislative approval before entering into a compact authorizing a tribe to conduct gambling in Illinois.

"This legislation puts Illinois on the right side of history — fostering a partnership with indigenous communities and returning what was wrongfully acquired," Walker said in a statement. "I have worked with the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation on this bill since 2018, and today we celebrate this achievement together."

In a 2024 podcast interview with Capitol News Illinois, Rupnick described the tribe's history in the area. He noted that before European settlement, the Potawatomi people occupied much of the Great Lakes region. But as settlement occurred, they were gradually pushed into smaller enclaves.

In the 1829 Treaty of Prairie Du Chien, Prairie Band Chief Shab-eh-nay was granted two square miles of land, or 1,280 acres, in what is now DeKalb County that was intended to stay in his family's possession in perpetuity. But the following year, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the president to grant land west of the Mississippi River to tribes that agreed to give up their lands in the east.

That led to the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, in which the Potawatomi, Chippewa and Ottawa tribes ceded 5 million acres in present-day Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin in exchange for land west of the Mississippi. Many of the Potawatomi eventually resettled in what is now northeast Kansas.

That treaty, however, did not include the 1,280 acres that had been granted to Chief Shab-eh-nay, Rupnick said, and Shab-eh-nay continued to live on that land for several years

Around 1849, Shab-eh-nay went to visit the rest of the tribe at their new reservation in Kansas, a trip that would take several weeks on horseback. Upon his return, Rupnick said, Shab-eh-nay learned that his land had been declared "abandoned" by the Illinois General Land Office and sold at public auction.

"That's when he discovered that people were living in his house," Rupnick said. "They actually picked up his house and moved it to another location and people were living in it. He tried to fight that through the court systems. They told him that he had abandoned his land, that the General Land Office had sold all of his land because he abandoned it, and they allowed the settlers and whoever else to live there."

The Prairie Band Potawatomi have argued since that time that the land is still legally theirs because Congress never authorized the sale, and as recently as 2001, attorneys for the U.S. Department of the Interior acknowledged the tribe had a legitimate claim to the land.

"The federal government has acknowledged wrongdoing in the sale of the land," Walker said in his statement. "With the support of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and members of the Prairie Band, this transfer is not only a common-sense solution, it's the right thing to do."

Until last year, Illinois was one of only a handful of states with no federally recognized tribal reservations. That changed in April 2024 when the Interior Department placed into trust 130 acres from the original reservation that the tribe had repurchased, making that property an official reservation.

After the Shabbona Lake State Park transfer is executed, that land is expected to be added to the reservation.

- Capitol News Ilinois

Patwin tribes sue to halt Vallejo casino project

VALLEJO, Calif. — Two Patwin tribes filed a federal lawsuit March 24 seeking to block a major casino development in Vallejo, California, by the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians.

The Patwin tribes, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation and the Kletsel Dehe Nation of the Cortina Rancheria, argue that the Bureau of Indian Affairs improperly approved the transfer of land to the Scotts Valley tribe. They say that the proposed casino will be built near the sites of multiple Patwin villages in the heart of their ancestral homeland.

in the heart of their ancestral homeland.

The project is slated to be built on a

160-acre site at the northeast quadrant of the Highway 80 and Route 37 interchange and includes an eight-story casino to be open 24 hours a day, restaurants, bars, a ballroom for events, tribal housing and an administration building.

The Patwin tribes' lawsuit alleges inaccuracies in the Pomo tribe's historical account of their lineage traced through an individual named Shuk Augustine.

The suit also claims that the Bureau of Indian Affairs violated the law by failing to allow the Patwin tribes to rebut the historical claims of the Pomo tribe and did not consult the recognized local tribes at various stages of the approval process and in drafting the environment assessment of the project.

"It is heartbreaking that the Biden Administration chose to spend its final days approving a mega-project on our sacred Patwin homelands without ever consulting our Tribe," Yocha Dehe Chairman Anthony Roberts said. "This has left us no choice but to pursue legal action to protect our people, our homelands, and our rights."

In a statement released Tuesday, Chairman Shawn Davis of the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians said, "These anti-competitive lawsuits were completely expected, and it doesn't change our approach and commitment to the project. We are moving forward in collaboration with the local community just as we have been."

The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation operates the Cache Creek Casino in Brooks California, approximately 60 road miles north of Scotts Valley Pomo's project site. The tribe is active in Vallejo and throughout Solano County, such as by partnering with the county in creating the First 5 Center in Vallejo which offers information and resources for parents of young children.

More recently the tribe withdrew plans to build a restaurant and cultural center on Vallejo's waterfront next to the Ferry building due to additional costs associated with sea level rise.

The Patwin tribes' lawsuit follows a lengthy legal battle that stretches back to 2016 when the Scotts Valley tribe submitted an application with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to transfer the property for the casino project to a tribal land trust.

The bureau originally denied the request with the reasoning that the Scotts Valley tribe's historic reservation land was 75 miles away and the tribe had not provided adequate evidence of a "significant historical connection" to areas in the vicinity of the Vallejo land parcel.

In 2019, the Scotts Valley tribe filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of the Interior claiming that the bureau's decision to reject their application was arbitrary and capricious.

The Scotts Valley tribe's evidence of their historical connection to the site included an unratified 1851 treaty in which Pomo ancestors ceded the land to the U.S. government. It also traces the life of the Pomo Chief Augustine, connecting him to baptismal records at Mission San Francisco Solano in Sonoma, 17 miles from the site and later through census records that showed Augustine residing in locations in Napa and Clear Lake

The Patwin tribes' lawsuit disputes much of this historical account, claiming the connection of Augustine to baptismal records in Sonoma is unverified and that the movements of an individual do not represent a tribal connection to the area.

The Pomo tribe's account also notes that Salvador Vallejo, the brother of the city's namesake General Mariano Vallejo, captured Pomo Indians and forced them to work on their ranches, including Rancho Suscol which encompassed the Vallejo project site, according to the application documents.

In her ruling on the 2019 lawsuit, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson found that the agency's decision to reject the Scotts Valley tribe's application involved areas of ambiguity and the bureau should have resolved the ambiguities in favor of the tribe, according to a legal doctrine known as the Indian canon.

The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation claimed via an amicus brief that the Indian canon does not apply when the decision would benefit one tribe over another. But Berman Jackson found that the potential damage to the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation from the construction of a casino was too many steps removed from the decision before her.

Now that the casino project's environmental assessment is completed and the land fully transferred into trust for the Scotts Valley tribe, the Yocha Dehe will retest this argument, along with several claims that the bureau violated the laws in the process of reaching their final decision.

In a statement, Charlie Wright, Chairman of the Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, said "this is about more than a casino, it's about protecting the integrity of the land-into-trust process and ensuring decisions are made fairly, lawfully, and based on true historical

"Our Tribe has always stood firm in defense of our lands and heritage, and this case is no different," Wright said. "Scotts Valley has no documented cultural connection to Vallejo, and allowing this approval to stand sets an ominous precedent that undermines Tribal sovereignty and weakens the foundation of federal-tribal land policy."

 $\hbox{-} \textit{Vallejo} \textit{(Calif.)} \textit{Sun} \textit{(vallejosun.com)} \\$

Puyallup Tribe donates more than \$690,000 to 54 local organizations

The Puyallup Tribe Charity Trust Board and Puyallup Tribal Council have awarded 54 local organizations a combined \$693,043.

Representatives of the nonprofit and charitable organizations were greeted and

thanked by members of the Puyallup Tribal Council as they arrived for the March 24 celebration at the Emerald Queen Casino Events Center in Tacoma, Washington. Tribal Council delivered remarks recognizing recipients and invited them up to take a photo.

The donations are funded from 2024 Emerald Queen Casino revenue as part of an agreement with the state of Washington that includes additional contributions for smoking cessation and problem gambling programs, and for impact costs paid to local governments for such things as fire and police services.

- Puyallup Tribe press release

Despite opposition from the governor, Oklahoma moves forward sports betting bills with tribal input

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — Legislation legalizing sports betting, which gives tribal governments the exclusive right to operate it, has made its way through the House despite the governor's opposition.

House Bills 1047 and 1101, authored by Rep. Ken Luttrell, R-Ponca City, would allow tribal gaming compacts to be amended to include sports betting. In exchange for exclusivity, the state would receive 10% of the revenue.

But House Bill 1101 would send the decision of whether or not to legalize sports betting to the ballot box, bypassing Gov. Kevin Stitt who said he will veto any legislation giving tribes exclusivity.

Rather than negotiating new gaming compacts, these bills add sports betting to the existing agreements. Rep. Steve Bashore, R-Miami, said March 26 that negotiating new compacts could open the door to violating the exclusivity provision. The voter-approved compacts between the state and tribal governments give tribes the exclusive right to operate gaming in exchange for paying the state a portion of the revenues generated.

Luttrell said the language of these bills has gone through negotiations with Oklahoma's tribes, the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association and leaders of the Legislature. The tribes could choose to offer mobile betting and the Legislature would leave regulation up to the consensus of the tribes as it does with other forms of gaming, he said.

"For the last three years, I've been in negotiations with the tribes and trying to get OIGA to take a stance and take a position and let us know what they really wanted," he said. "They finally reached out to me last Friday with language that they wanted to see in the bill, things they thought were important. I've met with our leadership, we've come up with the cleanest, simplest possible sports betting bill that we can send to the Senate."

He said millions of dollars leave Oklahoma every day with people taking their sports betting out of state.

Fiscal analyses of both bills estimate the revenue is about \$140 million per year if sports betting is limited to "on-location betting", but could reach \$420 million annually if "mobile betting" is allowed. The state could receive between \$14 million to \$42 million annually. Luttrell said he thinks these are low estimates.

Stitt has taken a strong stance against legislation that would give tribes exclusivity over sports betting. He said he wants a "free market solution" and will veto any legislation giving tribal exclusivity that comes to his desk.

"Matter of fact, they've (lawmakers) excluded the governor of the state of Oklahoma from these discussions," Stitt said March 26. "So when they say that all stakeholders have come to the table and agree on something ... the governor has not weighed in on those things."

House Bill 1101, which bypasses Stitt's desk by sending the matter to the ballot, would only go into effect if House Bill 1047 is not signed into law. The governor would be able to set the date for when the question would go before voters.

"If you have a moral obligation against gaming, if your Sunday school class doesn't like gaming, if your constituency in your district doesn't like gaming, by voting for this bill, this gives you cover," Luttrell said. "You're not going to have to vote to override a governor's veto on gaming, you're not gonna have to answer to your constituents why you voted for gaming because you're gonna vote to give it to a vote of the people and let your constituents make the decision."

At a meeting of the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma March 20, tribal leaders said Oklahoma is different from other states trying to legalize sports betting because there are 38 tribes who must come to an agreement. The head of OIGA said tribes shouldn't rush into a "bad deal" with the state.

House Bill 1101 passed with a vote of 66-29, and 1047 passed 62-31. Both can be considered by the Senate.

The Senate has advanced its own sports betting bill that would give the Oklahoma City Thunder, the state's NBA team, a stake in sports betting. This bill is now eligible to be heard in the House.

- Oklahoma Voice (oklahomavoice. com)

New Mexico set to create 'Turquoise Alert' system for missing Indigenous people

New Mexico is set to become the fourth state to create an alert system meant to help find Native Americans who have gone missing. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham plans to sign Senate Bill 41 into law, establishing a Turquoise Alert system, according to her office, after the bill passed both chambers of the Legislature unanimously.

Operating much like the state's Amber Alert system for abducted children, Turquoise Alerts would be issued for people who are enrolled in or eligible for enrollment in a federally or state-recognized tribe and are missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances or are at heightened risk due to health concerns or disabilities.

Colorado, California and Washington have established similar alerts. Since Washington's system was created in 2022, 114 alerts had gone out as of August last year, and 111 of those people were located, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

Lawmakers in New Mexico have passed a couple other bills in recent years responding to a national crisis of Indigenous people disproportionately going missing and being killed. There are 186 Indigenous people missing from the state, according to the state Department of Justice, and the average number of days missing is 1,662, or about four and a half years.

The alert is especially needed on reservations, where jurisdictional confusion and understaffed law enforcement agencies are major obstacles to public safety, said Rep. Michelle Paulene Abeyta (Diné), a Democrat from To'hajiilee and one of the bill's sponsors.

"When someone goes missing, we're combining our own resources outside of law enforcement and any actual government-run entity to try to locate our missing loved ones," Abeyta said Monday in an interview. "We know how important this is and how the lack of resources just isn't fair for us and the jurisdictional issues that get in the way. It's not right."

In the '90s, when she was a child, Abeyta's mother went missing. She was taken to a remote area and "beaten and left to die," Abeyta said, before being found a few days later by a person who happened to be in the area. She was brought to a hospital and survived, but her recovery was difficult.

Abeyta and her co-sponsor Sen. Angel Charley (Laguna/Zuni/Diné), D-Acoma, are "excited to see how this is going to help improve the lives of so many families that for a long time needed some type of solution, some type of resource to go to," Abeyta said.

While helping solve logistical barriers, the alert system would also raise awareness about the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people, Charley said in an interview Friday.

Charley, who used to be the executive director of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, referenced Ashlynne Mike, an 11-year-old Diné girl who was kidnapped and murdered in northwestern New Mexico, on the Navajo Nation, in 2016. Law enforcement didn't issue an Amber Alert until the day after she went missing due to "misunderstandings and jurisdictional hurdles," according to the Justice Department.

"You never know if coordination would have happened in a way that was quick and efficient" if there had been greater awareness at the time, Charley said. After lawmakers passed the bill last week, Ashlynne's father contacted Charley, telling her he was going to write to Lujan Grisham and urge her to

Indigenous advocates, tribal leaders and police, and lobbyists representing several pueblos also spoke in support of the bill during the session.

The bill requires the Department of Public Safety to develop a plan for getting alerts out as quickly as possible and keeping records on each alert, with information including the municipality where the missing person report was made, the date the alert was issued and the date the missing person is recovered.

- New Mexico In Depth (nmindepth.

Indigenous creators among 2025 Canadian Screen Award nominees

Several Indigenous nominees are among those announced March 26 for the 2025 Canadian Screen Awards in film, television, and digital media.

Show creator Amber-Sekowan Daniels, who is Anisininew, and director Zoe Hopkins, who is Heiltsuk and Kanien'kehá:ka, received four nominations for Crave Original comedy series "Don't Even", for Best Comedy Series, Best Direction, Best Photography and Best Picture Editing.

Kaniehtiio Horn, who is Kanien'kehá:ka, is nominated for Original Screenplay, Performance in a Leading Role, Comedy and the John Dunning Best First Feature Film Award for "Seeds", which she also directed.

"Seeds" actor Graham Greene (Oneida)

"Seeds" actor Graham Greene (Oneida) is nominated for Performance in a Supporting Role, Comedy.

Oshim Ottawa (Atikamekw) is nominated for Performance in a Leading Role, Drama for "Atikamekw Suns". Lise Yolande Awashish (Atikamekw) is nominated for Performance in a Supporting Role, Drama for "Atikamekw Suns".

Métis director Marie Clements' "Bones of Crows", a multi-generational epic about a residential school survivor, is nominated for Best Drama Series, Best Direction and Best Writing Drama Series. Grace Dove (Secwepemc) is nominated for Best Lead Performer, Drama Series for the show.

Paul Spence (Métis) is nominated for Performance in a Leading Role, Comedy for "Deaner '89".

Angie Pepper O'Bomsawin's (Abenaki/ Kanien'kehá:ka) "Little Big Community" is nominated for Best Factual Series.

- CBC News

SOUTH FLORIDA'S ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION



APR 3, 4, 5 & 6
SEBASTIAN
MANISCALCO



APR 10 CHRIS TUCKER



APR 12 CHICAGO



APR 17 CRIME JUNKIE



APR 18
WARREN
ZEIDERS



APR 19 LOS TIGRES DEL NORTE



APR 24 & 26 PEARL JAM



APR 27 TOM JONES









Education



Museum presents Seminole war history at national education conference

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY **Staff Reporter**

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum educators brought Seminole history to life for hundreds of history teachers at the annual conference of the National Council for History Education in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 21.

Museum education coordinator Abena Robinson moderated the panel "From the Seminole Eyes: Uncovering Local History Through Tribal Voices", which featured museum educator Cypress Billie and outreach specialist Van Samuels. Kim Cunningham, Broward County social studies teacher, Native American education specialist and friend of Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki, invited the museum to participate in the

The panel discussed key figures, events and their impact on Seminole history. Teachers in the audience participated by asking plenty of questions to the panelists.

They included how did the Seminole war change the traditional tribal lands, did it influence the relationships between Seminoles and other Indigenous tribes, are there ceremonies or traditions to remember the war and what can teachers do to share the true story of the Seminole war.

"Everyone was engaged and wanted to learn about the Seminole War," Robinson said in an email. "The main idea was the Native American perspective vs the American perspective. Natives view it as one long war [while] the American perspective is three wars."

The museum also hosted a booth at the three-day conference where teachers learned more about the Seminole education programs and upcoming events and activities at the museum. Robinson said the museum has been invited to present at next year's conference in Montgomery, Alabama.



Courtesy photo

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum education coordinator Abena Robinson works at the information booth at the conference.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

educator Cypress Billie, center, speaks about Seminole history during the panel at the National **Council for History Education Conference** on March 21. With him on the panel are, from left, Broward County teacher Kim Cunningham, museum outreach specialist Van Samuels and museum education coordinator Abena Robinson



Libraries stock reading bins at tribal clinic and dental waiting rooms

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY

As part of an effort to encourage literacy, the Education Department's Library Program has been providing reading bins filled with books in all tribal clinic, dental and Center for Behavioral Health waiting rooms. The program began in Nov. 2024 and has been popular with patients.

National Library Week is April 6-12 and the book bins are another way to promote reading.

"It started when I realized there were TVs in all the waiting rooms," said library program supervisor Padmini Dukharan. "I used to see books and magazines in waiting rooms and wanted to find a way to reach out to the community. So we took the initiative with books in all the waiting rooms."

Dukharan said HHS executive director Dr. Vandhana Kiswani loved the idea, which cleared the way for finding books. The libraries had an accumulation of donated books, so that began the process. They purchased other books to fill out the bins, which contain about 20 to 30 books each.

See BOOKS on page 3B



From left to right, Big Cypress education work experience trainee Janessa Jones, CBH administrative assistant Maria Rivera, CBH child clinical associate Gabriella Velasco and library assistant Claudia Doctor with the book bin.





From left to right, Immokalee library education work experience trainee Gwyn Bastida Garcia, Immokalee clinic supervisor Mary Lou Alvarado and Immokalee library assistant Dolores Lopez with the book bin in the Immokalee Clinic's pediatric waiting room.



From left to right, Immokalee dental assistant Claudia Carrillo, dentist Dr. Oscar Reyes and dental assistants Raul Garcia and Elizabeth Pineda with the book bin in the dental waiting room.

PECS 6th graders visit St. Augustine

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

A group of 22 Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School sixth graders explored St. Augustine, with teachers and chaperones, on March 25 and 26,.

Founded in 1565 by the Spanish, St. Augustine is oldest city in the U.S. According to teacher Ryan Tedders, the students thought that was an important fact. They took several guided tours of the city including a trolley tour where saw statues of Juan Ponce de Leon, who was credited with discovering Florida in 1513, and Henry Flagler, who brought the railroad to the east coast of Florida in 1886 and built hotels creating perhaps the first tourist destination in the state.

Students also toured the Castillo de San Marcos fort, where Seminole leader Osceola was imprisoned in 1837 during the Seminole war and held there until he was sent to Fort



A blacksmith at the Fountain of Youth explains

how blacksmithing worked in years gone by.

Moultrie in South Carolina.

The tour guide asked the students if they knew anything about Osceola. They said they knew he refused to sign a treaty and something about a mold made of his head. The guide explained how he was tricked into being captured.

Another highlight of the trip, according to Tedders, was the pirate museum.

"They loved the pirate stuff," Tedders "It was eye-opening for them, they learned about the myths of the pirates vs the reality of what it was like. They got a lot out of that. They also liked the ghost tour; they love ghost stories.'

The tour of the Fountain of Youth included the archeological history of artifacts of Native Americans and Spaniards found in the area, proving the Natives interacted with the Spanish hundreds of years ago. They also drank from the Fountain of Youth, but likely won't know if it works for a few decades or



At the Pirate Museum, Bentley Osceola stands Caribbean" movie.



The group of PECS students, teachers and chaperones gather in front of the old fort, Castillo de San Marcos, in St. Augustine on March 25.



behind a sword used in the "Pirates of the Students listen as a tour guide tells them the history of Castillo de San Marcos, the fort where Osceola was held for a time during the Seminole War.

Ahfachkee School hosts career day

BY TATUM MITCHELL **Staff Reporter**

BIG CYPRESS professionals went from classroom to classroom at the Ahfachkee School on March 19 for career day. From 4-H to firefighters to the human resources department, students heard about roughly 20 different careers.

Timika Reid and Josh Lohn from the Human Resources Department started their day with presenting to third graders. They discussed their jobs and took questions from the class. Reid explained that working in HR means that they're in charge of hiring employees to work with the tribe.

One student asked Reid and Lohn what their advice would be for someone pursuing a career in HR. Lohn's first piece of advice was to go to school for a bachelor's degree or a master's degree.

"One of the unique things we do in our job is we kind of have to know a little bit about everything," Lohn said. "Here at the tribe, we have about 75 different

departments. And you'll meet a lot of those different departments today. ... So, where we may not be experts in accounting, we have to know a little bit about accounting and what accounting does ... so we know what we're looking for, especially when we're trying to hire people for those positions."

Rosa Martinez, cataloging assistant, and Jessica Rusch, objects conservator, from the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, talked about their work in the collections department of the museum.

They discussed their day-to-day and different aspects of their jobs. Martinez said that she documents and catalogs, uploads information to a database, for example, information about people and places from photographs.

Martinez talked about her path through college and how she discovered what she wanted to pursue through a lecture.





Timika Reid, left, and Josh Lohn from Human Resources present to a third grade class on Ahfachkee career day, March 19.



Tatum Mitchell



Ila Trueblood hits the right notes in Oxbridge **Academy concert**

BY KEVIN JOHNSON **Senior Editor**

WEST PALM BEACH — If Mark Damon was a high school music teacher, there's no doubt he would have given the Seminole Tribe's Ila Trueblood an "A" for her singing performance at Oxbridge Academy's Rock Band concert on March 14.

Damon is not a teacher, but he knows music – in fact, he's a guitarist for The Pretty Reckless, the opening band for legendary ACDC. They are on tour in the U.S. this spring playing in front of huge audiences in some of the country's biggest venues, including The Rose Bowl, AT&T Stadium, Soldier Field, and, on May 16, Tampa's Raymond James Stadium.

But on a Friday night in West Palm Beach, Damon was more than happy to be a special guest of the school and play in a



Kevin Johnson

lla Trueblood and Mark Damon, a guitarist for The Pretty Reckless, performed on stage with other music students from Oxbridge Academy. The Pretty Reckless is the opening band for ACDC's U.S. and Europe tours, including playing at Tampa's Raymond James Stadium on May 16.

small venue and in front of about 100 people as he joined Oxbridge's Rock Band students for a concert in the school's theatre.

Damon played guitar as Trueblood, a sophomore in the band, sang her only song of the night, Fleetwood Mac's classic "Dreams." Damon liked what he heard from Trueblood, who made her concert singing

"She killed it. She did a great job. She really captured the essence of [Fleetwood Mac singer] Stevie Nicks," Damon said.

The gentle, swaying, laid-back song that was released in 1977 – and whose most recognizable lyric is perhaps 'thunder only happens when it's rainin' - resonates as a favorite of Trueblood, who first selected it and then practiced it at least twice every week leading up to the concert.

"It was great, but I was super nervous," Trueblood said after the concert, adding that it was a different kind of nerve than she might encounter in a game as a multi-sport

student-athlete at the school. Trueblood, from the Brighton Reservation, is a big fan of Nicks as well as other artists who also etched their niche decades ago, such as

Queen and Billy Joel. Trueblood said she enjoys performing, especially with the rock

"It's so much fun. I love playing with all my friends," she said.

She also plays guitar in the band and performed with her Fender six-stringer on a few songs sung by classmates.

Among those watching in the audience were her friends and members of her family, including her mom Carla Gopher and a few other tribal members.

Another concert is planned for May. In the meantime, Trueblood will continue her extracurricular activities in music and sports. She's the starting catcher on the softball team and is among the team's top

'She's a talented kid," Damon



Oxbridge Academy sophomore lla Trueblood sings Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams" during a concert at the school on March 14.



Kevin Johnson

Ila Trueblood, second from left, plays the guitar during the concert.

CAREERS From page 2B

Rusch shared her role as a conservator and said she uses a mix of art, science and hands-on skills to preserve 3D objects, like paintings, textiles, beadwork and more. Rusch showed different types of adhesives that she uses, among other items that students passed around.

Another career day presenter was the Water Department. Resources Chris Self showed students maps of Florida and the Big Cypress Reservation and explained his role. department talked The to students about how it manages water and the various aspects of it. Self said there are two ways to manage water - pump stations and gravity.

'My main job is to take care of all the water in the reservation, from the main canals to smaller canals. ... All the water that's in the reservation, I'm responsible for. So, my main job is to keep the water levels down and then send it outside of the reservation, and we send it into our basins – which are basically big giant filters that clean the water," Self said.

In addition to inclassroom talks, students went outside to talk with fire and police departments. Students got to hold and use equipment from the fire departments, like a hose and "jaws of life." They pointed the hose at tennis balls sitting on top of cones and attempted to knock the balls off the cone.

Overall, students had the opportunity to learn about multiple career paths, ask questions and learn about some jobs hands-on. A student asked the HR department, what is something they know now that they wished they knew during their time in school?

"When I started college, I ... was a criminal justice major, that works with law enforcement. And then I took a law and politics class and changed my mind," Reid said. "And then I majored in communications because I wanted to be a publicist, and I'm not even working as a publicist, I'm working in HR. So, I would say that you should pursue something that you really really love to do and you'll be happy doing it."



Tatum Mitchel

Vivi Osceola, left, and Jordan Callender, police officer, at career day.



Rosa Martinez, left, and Jessica Rusch from the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum participate in career day.

♦ B00KS From page B1

None of the books are linked to the library system, so patients are free to read and take the books home. Most are children's books, but some young adult and adult books are also included.

In the Immokalee Health Center, the books are in the pediatric, dental and CBH waiting rooms.

The kids look at the books and want to take them home," said Mary Lou Alvarado. "They love the books."

They can take the books," responded Dolores Lopez. "We have plenty. If you ever run out, let me know and I'll bring more." In the dental office, the books are also a

big hit. "The kids sit and read the books," said

dental assistant Raul Garcia. "The parents read them, too. When they come in, they all grab a book."



Brighton dentist Dr. Emily Pham, Library assistant Joss Youngblood and dental assistant Kim Crews with the book bins.

Poem: The Delight Song of Elgin J

BY ELGIN JUMPER

Author's note: This nature poem was inspired by N Scott Momaday, the late Kiowa poet, author, and painter (who was also a winner of the Pulitzer Prize (1969) as well as, a recipient of the National Medal of the Arts (2007), and his ever-exuberant poem, "The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee." The poem employs extended metaphors and repetition to achieve its magic, and celebrates the speaker's interconnectedness with the natural world, and their sense of belonging, and good relations with all things. Indeed poetry instructors have long utilized the poem in their lessons, encouraging and inspiring young poets to imitate and emulate these unforgettable words. And so, I now borrow a bit of change from Momaday's pocket, and repay it with the poem that follows.

I am the far-reaching sawgrass, as far as the eye can see.

I am an ancient battle taking place in the clouds. I am the gar-fish, hovering, just under the surface.

I am the wind stirring up dust in a field.

I am the arrow focused on the horizon.

I am the osprey plunging for fish in a river. I am the thread in a maze of patchwork designs.

I am a beaded sash in sunset colors.

I am a highway of rivers in a bygone land. I am the long rains following a drought.

I am the last light of day, playing in a treeline.

I am the sound of rain outside a chickee. I am the pine needles trampled under foot.

I am a playful otter greeting folks at a boardwalk. I am the silver gorgets atop a red calico shirt.

I am the battle-cry that echoes across history. I am a land and a language well-worth preserving.

I am the poem which encapsulates it all

Broward women's leadership honorees include Hard Rock's **Susan Renneisen**

STAFF REPORT

In honor of Women's History Month, History Fort Lauderdale and Galleria Fort Lauderdale celebrated six women leaders at the "Women Trailblazers: Champion of Change Broward County" event on March 5 at the Galleria Fort Lauderdale.

Susan Renneisen, vice president of community affairs and special events at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, was one of the women honored.

"My secret to success is relationships. I love people. I want to make people happy. I want to give them what they want, and not that I am a people pleaser, but to make people happy brings me joy and I do it in a different way," Renneisen said in a pre-event

"We applaud Susan's commitment to the community, supporting an array of vital not for profit organizations." History Fort Lauderdale posted on Facebook.

The other five women honored consisted of Rita Case, president, CEO and owner of Rick Case Automotive Group; Frances M. Esposito, chief strategy officer of Broward Partnership; Ina Lee, owner of Travelhost Magazine of Greater Fort Lauderdale; Juliet Roulhac, director of external affairs for Broward and Southwest Florida for Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) and corporate philanthropy for NextEra Energy, FPL's parent company; and Elaine Vasquez, owner of Broward's first bilingual newspaper, El Heraldo de Broward.



Susan Renneisen speaks at the "Women Trailblazers" event March 5 at Galleria Fort Lauderdale.

Gathering of Nations set for April 24-26

STAFF REPORT

The annual Gathering of Nations Powwow – described as the largest Native American event in the country – will be held April 24-26 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
The event draws hundreds of tribes from

the U.S. and Canada. It features a four-day competition for Miss Indian World. The reigning Miss Indian World is Kassie John, Diné Nation (Navajo), from Rock Point, Arizona.

Entertainment on Stage 49 includes Indigenous traditional and contemporary artists in rock, blues, reggae, hip hop, country, jam bands, and dance.

Other events include the grand entry, which features more than 2,000 dancers; dance and drum contests; and a traders market featuring Native arts, crafts, jewelry, clothing, quilters and more, as well as health and wellness educators. The vendor booths are sold out.

Another highlight of the event is the horse and rider parade. According to the event's website, riders, dressed in traditional regalia, represent their tribes and showcase the beauty and heritage of the Horse Nation. Each rider's attire tells the story of their tribe's history and traditions.

For more information go gatheringofnations.com.

Former Miccosukee Chairman **Billy Cypress dies at 74**

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

Billy Cypress, the longest serving Chairman of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, has died. Talbert Cypress, the current chairman of the tribe made the announcement on Instagram on Feb. 28.

Billy Cypress served as chairman for more than 26 years, during which time he oversaw the tribe's gaming operations and administrative departments while being a leading advocate for the tribe's sovereignty and the protection of the Everglades.

"He always recognized the honor it was to serve as chairman for our people, and he carried himself with immense pride," Chairman Talbert Cypress wrote. "There are few who understand the responsibility of this seat, but only he served for almost 30 years. Chairman Billy Cypress: thank you for your humor, your dedication and your service."

According to the tribe, Chairman Billy Cypress didn't back away from a fight in Congress or the U.S. Supreme Court. His efforts against the sugar industry established stringent pollution controls in the Everglades. Over the years, he advocated to restore historic water flows in the Everglades and fought to protect the tribe's right to educate their children in the traditional manner. He brought thousands of acres of Everglades National Park back under tribal control and jurisdiction.

In testimony to Congress in 1997, Chairman Cypress said "We're not asking for much. Just leave us alone and we'll leave you alone. We'll protect the environment, protect water quality, assist in Everglades restoration... Miccosukees hope to see just one law- yours and mine- and that we're all equal under it together."

Fort Lewis College set to have its first Indigenous president

FROM COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO

The Fort Lewis College (Durango, Colorado) Board of Trustees has voted unanimously to confirm Heather Shotton as the sole finalist to be the college's new president.

If selected for the job, Shotton, a citizen of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes and a Kiowa and Cheyenne descendant, will become the first Indigenous person to lead the Durango institution. She is currently the vice president of diversity affairs and acting dean of students. The board has two weeks to finalize her nomination to be president.

"All of her personal and professional experiences created a presidential presence that stood out from an exceptional field of over 75 applicants," said Janet Lopez, chair of the board. "Her lived experiences align with those of many FLC students, and

her leadership, vision, and dedication to reconciliation and student success make her an outstanding choice to guide the college into its next chapter."

Shotton is considered a nationally recognized leader and higher education scholar who has dedicated her career to fostering access and student achievement, particularly for Indigenous and firstgeneration students.

Shotton's selection comes at a critical time as the college continues to reconcile with its past as a former federal Indian boarding school and advance its commitment to student success, equity, and community engagement.

The board must wait at least two weeks after naming a finalist before finalizing an agreement. A final decision is expected at the board's next regular meeting on April 11.



The PeeWees of 4-H recite the pledges.

107 sold at the Youth Livestock **Show and Sale**

BY TATUM MITCHELL Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Youth Livestock Show and Sale featured a collection of age groups across swine and cattle divisions that showcased their work and animals the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena on the Big Cypress reservation.

The children practiced showing their animals, leading them around, brushing and taking care of them. The swine show was on March 5, and the cattle show was on March 6 and featured heifers, calves and steers. The sale was on March 7.

Jonathan Spurlock, 4-H program coordinator, said from the approximately 137 entries for the show and sale, 107 sold.

"The best part was seeing the smile on the kids' faces," Spurlock said.

Spurlock took over as program

coordinator in October 2024, and this was his first time running the show and sale. You can see the smiles. Seeing the

happiness [from] the moms and dads that, alright, this is done. We're finally done. It's the happiness of things coming together for all of us," Spurlock said. He said with the help of Sara Whitehead

and Sheri Trent, they were able to "step up together" and pull off the show and sale as

"I won't tell anybody that I've done it by myself. If it wasn't for the two here in this office, it wouldn't have gotten done. So I have to put the thank you out there to Sheri and Sara as well," Spurlock said. Everything he does with 4-H is for the

kids, Spurlock said.

"We told [the kids], thank you, because if it wasn't for them writing the letters and making the phone calls, we wouldn't have the people there to buy the animals. ... It's



Kitana Lamb and her steer, Jerry, at the show and sale March 6. She was first in her class in the steer showmanship division.

their show and sale. It's not ours, it's theirs. ... And we appreciate the work that they put in as well," Spurlock said.

The children, much smaller than their cows, led their animals around the arena at the show and sale at the direction of the

Kitana Lamb raised a steer named Jerry, weighing in at 1,165 lbs. Lamb received first place in the class 3 market steer division and the senior showmanship with Jerry and finished as reserve champion overall for the market steers. It's her first year with 4-H and first year showing.

"It takes responsibility, leadership, staying calm," Lamb said.

Ella Forbes-Osceola has been doing 4-H for four years. This year, she had a pig named Franklin, weighing 290 pounds. "I like showing him, feeding him, just

spending time with him," Forbes-Osceola The most interesting thing about raising

Franklin, Forbes-Osceola said, was learning how to walk a pig. The hardest part was getting Franklin to turn, but most of the hard things about prepping for the shows can be overcome with practice, she said. "It's just like getting over the fear

of, 'Oh, am I going to win? Am I going to lose?' or anything like that. So, learning about losing doesn't really matter, because the overall thing is letting your animal go. ... If you built a real strong bond with your animal, then it's hard for everybody,' Forbes-Osceola said.

4-H results

March 5

Swine Showmanship results (Judge: Danny Drawdy)

Class 1 - Junior Showmanship (8-Champion: Jolietta Osceola

Class 2-Intermediate Showmanship Champion: Amariah Lavatta

Class 3 - Senior Showmanship (14-Champion: Jaylissa Brunette

Breeding Cattle Class (Judge: Allen Newsome)

Class 1 – Commercial Heifer **Aponi Cochran**

Amariah Lavatta

1. Kylo Cochran

Vanessa Osceola Class 2 - Commercial Heifer

Timothy Urbina Class 3 - Commercial Bred Heifer Jayleigh Braswell

Jayleigh Braswell

2. Avani Smith

Harmany Urbina Class 4 - Commercial Cow/Calf **Arrow Johns**

Class 5 – Registered Heifer Harmany Urbina Khoal Cochran

Class 6 – Registered Bred Heifer 1. Arrow Johns Champion (Registered Bred Heifer):

Class 7 – Registered Cow/Calf 1. **Khoal Cochran**

Heifer Showmanship (Judge: Allen Newsome) Class 1 - Junior showmanship (8-

1. Avani Smith **Arrow Johns**

Aponi Cochran

Class 2 - Intermediate showmanship Kylo Cochran

Class 3 - Senior showmanship (14-**Jayleigh Braswell Harmany Urbina**

Timothy Urbina Khoal Cochran Steer Showmanship (Judge: Allen

Newsome) Class 1 - Junior showmanship (8-**Aponi Cochran**

Cherie Bearden Class 2 - Intermediate showmanship

Ada Bruised Head Kylo Cochran

Champion: Ada Bruised Head Reserve champion: Kylo Cochran Class 3 - Senior showmanship (14-

Kitana Lamb



Tatum Mitchell



Ella Forbes-Osceola and her pig, Franklin.

James Osceola and his calf, Lazy.

Big Cypress holds healthfocused Comic Con

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — The Big Cypress Health Comic Con event took place at the Herman L. Osceola Gym on March 24. The event was a collaboration between Big Cypress Council Office, Integrative Health, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, Recreation and other departments to help bolster the tribal community engagement with the tribe's Health Department while also having a comic con event. The event was hosted by

Van Samuels.

The departments had multiple booths focused on healthy eating, nutrition, and general health information for the tribal community while combining hands on games for the tribal youth that attended.

The comic con part of the event consisted of multiple vendors that had comic books for sale, toys, facepainting, cosplay contest, native reels, raffles and various artwork pieces that the tribal community could purchase.



Cecilia Kostadinov hands Zion Garcia a Acai bowl at the Big Cypress Health Comic Con event that took



From left to right, Van Samuels, Alexi Cypress, Norrah Grasshopper and Gordon Wareham gather for a photo after handing out raffle prizes at the Big Cypress Health Comic Con event.

Talen Jumper Market Hog Class 3 – Market Hog

Kalani Billie

4-H results continued

Sarah Randolph

March 6

Kailin Coleman

Daylen Stewart Nancy Shaffer Delilah Hall

Class 4 - Market Hog Tenia Tommie James

Jenna Grimaldo Federico Rodriguez

Augustice Jumper Joshua Dimas

Franky J Concepcion

Class 5 - Market Hog

Caden Jumper Sebastian Garcia

Wade Martinez Kree Billie

Gage Osceola

Iverson Huggins Class 6 – Market Hog

Jayden Garza 2. Zoey Garcia

Kali Jumper Aubree Rodriguez

Urijah Bowers

Class 7 – Market Hog 1. **Steel Gopher Jr.**

Lane Gopher

Dylan Garza

Cody Tommie Gia Garcia

Lillie Coleman

Nohea Collins

Rowen Vanhouten Class 8 – Market Hog

Katelyn Mariscal Avaní Smith

Chanel Cypress Nayeli Mariscal

Angel Stewart Jolietta Osceola

Jaylissa Brunette

Class 9 – Market Hog **Kanae Jumper**

Saede Johns **Kreed Snow**

Avery Hernandez

Drayton Vanhouten Xander Gopher

Valentin Garcia Class 10 - Market Hog

At right, Eric Stiles makes a ballon figure for Gia

Leylani Garcia

Destin Stewart

Amariah Lavatta

Marcelo Garza **Terrance Osceola**

Kenneth Tommie Jr.

Okalani Collins Class 11 - Market Hog

Ellis Gopher

Damon Cypress Ashton Garza

Ella Forbes-Osceola **Cassie Pearce**

Elakaih Collins Class 12 – Market Hog Esteban Santibanez, Jr.

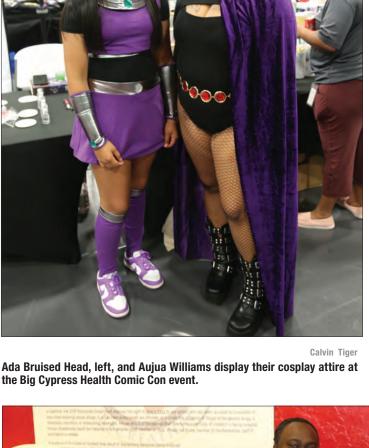
Evaray Stewart Koty Gopher-Turtle

Kiani Runkles **Timothy Urbina**

Champion (Market Hog): Leylani

Reserve Champion (Market Hog):

Ellis Gopher





Calvin Tiger

Harriet Billie receives beads from Mercedes Osceola at the event.

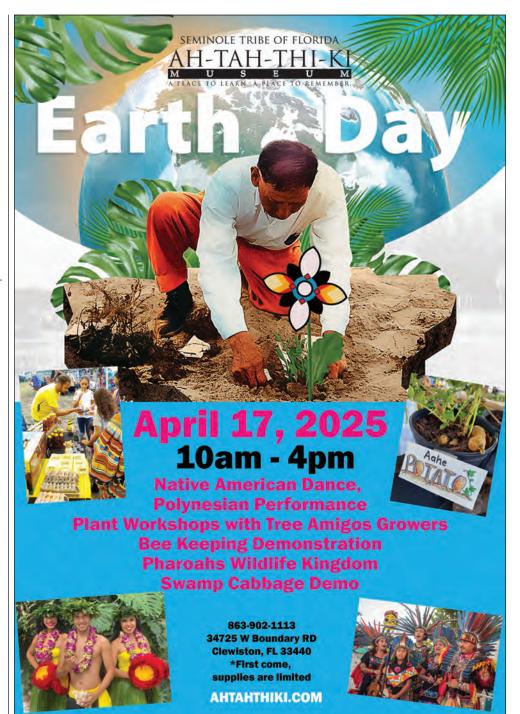


Calvin Tiger

Garcia at the event.

Darnel Brutus and Jessica Lara from the tribe's Health Department offer health information at the their booth.





New book highlights historical, landmark court case for Indigenous people

STAFF REPORT

"The Ravaged Forest: A Native Woman's Journey to Justice" by Sandra Crowell tells the story of a legal battle between the U.S. government and Indigenous people and the woman behind it – Helen Mitchell.

Mitchell is a Native American woman who fought systemic injustice, according to a press release, and paved the way to a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision. According to the release, the legal precedent set by this case in 1983 holds "government accountable for its fiduciary responsibilities to Native communities." The Ravaged Forest highlights historical and present day challenges Indigenous communities face with reclaiming their lands.

"Helen Mitchell's case is a cornerstone in legal and Native American history," Sandra Crowell said in the release. "Her legacy is a testament to the power of resilience and the importance of holding institutions accountable for their obligations.

Mitchell, née Sanders, from the Chehalis

Reservation in Washington State, started out personally, with her speaking up for the Quinault Reservation's forest lands – an area that was being mismanaged by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, according to the release. Going up against the Bureau of Indian Affairs resulted in winning a legal battle and reiterated government's trust responsibilities and set a precedent, according to the release.

"The Ravaged Forest" intertwines Mitchell's personal narrative with the broader struggle for Native sovereignty and environmental protection. Crowell transports readers to the lush landscapes of the Pacific Northwest, bringing to life Mitchell's fight for Native American heritage. From her early years rooted in survival to her rise as a national advocate, the book captures the essence of a woman who dared to challenge institutional neglect," a release said.
"The Ravaged Forest: A Native

Woman's Journey to Justice" is available on major online bookstores and in local outlets. It's available on Amazon for \$19.99 in paperback.



Courtesy photo "The Ravaged Forest"





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Sports*





Equoni Cypress

Justice Jumper

BC ballplayers ready for new season

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Billie Johns Ballfield was filled with athletes, ages 4 to 9, March 20 for the first time this season for a baseball card-style photo session. The

session featured the enthusiastic young players in their brand new, sparkling clean uniforms.

After all the photos were taken, the teams held practice and a scrimmage game.

There are three Recreation Department teams including the T-ball team – Little

Giants – coached by Recreation Department staffers Carlton Banks, Maria Galvan and Aldivar Gary.

The girls machine pitch team – Diamond Divas – is coached by staffers O'Bryan White and Diane Bryant along with community member Albert Graham, whose daughter is

too old to play for these teams.

The boys machine pitch team – Dirt Kings – is coached by staff members James Toombs, Gabriel Hyland and Marcus Thompson.

The seasons for all three teams runs March 31 to May 1. Games are played

in Clewiston on the field located at 100 Sugarland Park Drive.

During the season, the Little Giants will play eight games and the Diamond Divas and Dirt Kings will each play nine games.



Lashawn Pascal



Marhz Edwards



Cher Osceola

Photos by Beverly Bidney



Merle Koenes



ShayIn Koenes



DanaSue Bear



Austin Billie



Roger Jumper



Chance Thomas

Charisma Micco provides pitching, offensive boost for Moore Haven

BY KEVIN JOHNSON Senior Editor

BELLE GLADE — Charisma Micco made a memorable debut in her first-ever high school pitching start on March 11 in Belle Glade.

Micco, one of five Seminoles on the Moore Haven High School varsity softball team, fired a complete game 1-hit shutout as the Terriers topped previously undefeated Glades Day, 10-0, in six innings.

"Lights out. She did awesome," said Terriers head coach and tribal member Preston Baker, whose squad also includes his daughter Preslynn, Tahnia Billie, Teena-Marie Covarrubias and Truley Osceola, all from the tribe, as well as Neska Blissett (United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians), from Oklahoma.

Micco, a sophomore, struck out 12 in an overpowering performance and allowed just one walk. Glades Day's only hit came from its leadoff batter in the first inning.

Micco helped her own cause by drilling a 2-run single to center field in the second inning. She received plenty of support, too, including RBIs from Preslynn Baker and Osceola.

The victory was Moore Haven's fourth in a row after a season-opener loss against Vero Beach.

Baker, the team's only senior, is also a key part of a pitching staff that includes Micco and Brooklyn Sergent. The catchers are JoEllyn Erskin and seventh grader Khloe Desroche. Osceola (shortstop) and Covarrubias (third base) handled infield duties on the left side.

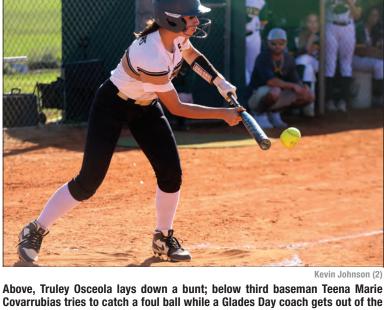
"This is a pretty good team. I think we're going to go far this year. I push them extra hard," coach Baker said. "The girls play good. They're learning. They're absorbing what we're trying to teach them. We have a few extra coaches this year and that helps a lot, too.'

Two nights later the Terriers cruised past Clewiston, 18-3, as Micco continued her hot hitting with three hits, four RBIs and four runs scored. Osceola (three hits, three RBIs) and Covarrubias (two hits, three RBIs) also had huge games at the plate. Erskin, Desroche and Camryn Prowant each had two RBIs and Sergent tossed a one-hitter.

The Terriers headed into April with a 7-3 record. Micco (.478) and Baker (.387) are among the team's top three in batting



Moore Haven pitcher Charisma Micco delivers a pitch during her complete game 1-hitter against Glades Day on March 11.







Kevin Johnson

Kevin Johnson Moore Haven's Neska Blissett gets ready to make contact



Moore Haven's Charisma Micco, left, Teena Marie Covarrubias, center, and JoEllyn Erskin have plenty of reasons to smile after a 10-0 win at Glades Day.

Sports Round Up: Chanon Frye, Kashlynn Cooper finish strong treshman seasons

Moore Haven senior Preslynn Baker swings at a pitch in the middle of the strike zone.

BY KEVIN JOHNSON **Senior Editor**

Here's an update on how studentathletes from the Seminole Tribe are doing in college and high school athletics.

Chanon Frye (Murray State College men's basketball)

Chanon Frye, a 6-foot-6 freshman forward from the Big Cypress Reservation, wrapped up his freshman season on the Murray State College men's basketball team in March.

Frye was among the team's top players in several categories, including leading the team in blocks with 24.

Frye averaged 5.9 points per game, which placed him sixth on the team.

He grabbed 145 rebounds (average of five per game), which was fourth highest on the team. He also was fourth in assists with

He played in 29 games and started one. In the team's final regular season game, Frye poured in 13 points in an 86-67 win against Western Oklahoma State College on March 6. It was the third time he scored 13 points in a game, his season high.

The same teams met six days later in the Region 2 quarterfinals with Western prevailing 67-64, in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Murray State finished with a 20-10 record, a vast improvement from the previous season (16-16).

Ava Nunez

(Thomas University softball) It's already been a good year for Ava Nunez and the Thomas University softball team.

A 2-1 win against the University of Mobile (Alabama) on March 29 marked the team's 20th win with 32 games still remaining on its schedule. Last season, the team won only 19 games all season.

Nunez, a third baseman Immokalee, entered April with a .286 batting average, which included 18 hits, two doubles and five RBIs. She leads the team with 16 walks.

She had two hits and a walk in a 7-6 win against Freed-Hardeman (Tennessee) on March 8. She went 2-for-2 and scored one run in a 5-2 win against William Carey on March 28.



Murray State

Murray State College freshman Chanon Frye eyes the basket in a game during the 2024-25 season.



Kashlynn Cooper (Heritage Hall girls basketball)

The Heritage Hall (Oklahoma City) girls basketball team, which includes freshman forward Kashlynn Cooper, upset Community Christian, 53-50, in a Class 3A regional tournament game Feb. 27. With Heritage Hall ahead by two points, Cooper made a steal with two minutes left in the

game that helped preserve the lead. In a 54-53 regional championship loss to Casady, Cooper hit an NBA-range 3-pointer at the buzzer in overtime.

Among Cooper's accolades during the regular season included being named a "Super Prep Player of the Game" for scoring 31 points and grabbing nine rebounds against Harding Charter.

OB Osceola III

(St. John Neumann baseball) OB Osceola III, a Florida State commit,

made a remarkable diving catch in center field with runners in scoring position against Canterbury on Feb. 27. The last inning catch led to a double play and helped preserve Neumann's 3-1 win.

Neumann entered April coming off a 4-1 spring break road trip with a few games against Mississippi teams.

Ila Trueblood (Oxbridge Academy softball)

Sophomore Ila Trueblood has been one of Oxbridge's most consistent batters this season. Trueblood has hit safely in nine of the 12 games she's played while compiling a .393 batting average with 11 hits, 14 runs scored and nine RBIs.

She had one hit, one RBI and scored one run in a 5-4 win against Wellington on





II Indoor Track and Field Championships in Indianapolis, Indiana.

University of Sioux Falls track and field standout Tyler Hiatt competes in shot put at the NCAA Division Tyler Hiatt, far left, and the other top finishers in the NCAA Division II indoor shot put championship raise their trophies.

Tyler Hiatt takes 4th, earns **All-American honors at NCAA Championships**

BY KEVIN JOHNSON Senior Editor

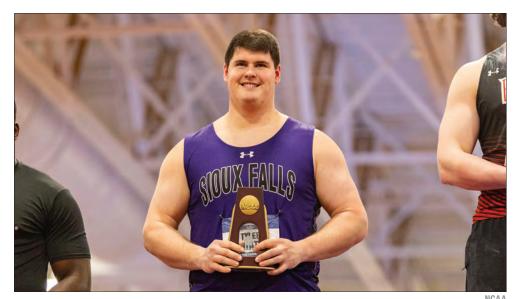
Seminole Tribe of Florida descendent Tyler Hiatt racked up several accolades in indoor track and field this winter.

Among the accomplishments for the University of Sioux Falls (South Dakota) senior:

- NCAA Division II First Team All-American • Northern Sun Intercollegiate
- Conference Men's Indoor Athlete of the Year NSIC All Conference NSIC champion in shot put and
- weight throw NSIC Field Athlete of the Week

three times during the indoor season Hiatt wrapped up his indoor season in mid-March with a fourth place finish in shot put at the NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field Championships in Indianapolis, Indiana. His shot put of 60 feet, 5 inches broke a USF record that he already held. He also competed in weight throw, finishing

At the conference championship Feb. 28-March 11 in Minnesota, Hiatt won the

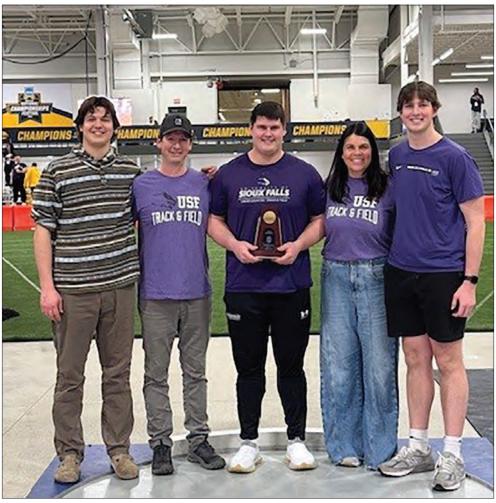


Tyler Hiatt holds his trophy for finishing fourth at the NCAA Championships.

weight throw title (64 feet, 1.25 inches) and the shot put (58 feet, 5.75 inches). He earned all-conference honors in both events.

Hiatt is the record holder at USF in weight throw and shot put. He is the son of

tribal member Stephanie Bowers Hiatt, who is a 2017 inductee of the USF Hall of Fame in volleyball.



The Hiatt family shows its support for Tyler Hiatt, center, at the NCAA Championships. At the far left and far right are Tyler's brothers, Caleb and Lucas, respectively, and next to Tyler are his parents, Jon **Hiatt and Stephanie Bowers Hiatt.**

BC hosts Junior **Cypress Memorial All Indian kids** rodeo

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — When the Junior Cypress Memorial Cattle Drive finished, it was time for the kids rodeo to begin at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena in Big Cypress. Here are the results:

Junior Cypress Memorial All Indian Kids Rodeo

March 15 at Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena, Big Cypress **Dummy Roping**

> 2nd- JP Jumper 3rd- Thomas Koenes **Mutton Bustin** 1st- Thomas Koenes

1st – Hayze Louis

2nd - Roger Jumper 3rd – Nalanie Bear **Youth Pony Riding** 1st - Asaiah Fludd **Pony Riding** 1st – Kylo Cochran 2nd - Karma Koenes Jr. Bareback Riding 1st - Talen Jumper

Calf Riding
1st – Dana SueBear 2nd – Hayze Louis **Steer Riding** 1st – Koty Gopher-Turtle

2nd – Kree Billie 3rd – Kylo Cochran Jr. Bull Riding 1st – Greyson Johns 2nd – Khoal Cochran 3rd - Blaze Cypress

Chute Doggin 1st – Khoal Cochran 2nd – Anthony Gopher Osceola 3rd – Vanessa Osceola Age 4-8 Barrels

1st – Aponi Cochran 2nd – Lolo Jumper 3rd – Hayze Louis Age 9-12 Barrels

1st – Kailin Coleman 2nd – Lillie Coleman 3rd – Kalani Billie Age 13-17 Barrels 1st – Addy Hall 2nd - Sue Osceola



Chanel Cypress competes in steer wrestling at the Junior Cypress Memorial Kids Rodeo.



Tatum Mitchel



Tatum Mitchell Talin Jumper competes in junior bareback.



Tatum Mitchell

Mason Bear shows good form coming out of the chute.

Miccosukee Tribe hosts inaugural Glades **Runner Marathon**

BY KELLY FARRELL Special to the Tribune

More than 160 participants ran through the Everglades on March 15 as part of the inaugural Miccosukee Glades Runner Ultramarathon. The event was a draw for new and experienced runners alike, ranging in ages from 6 to 16 and 60 years old.

Many participants noted that the draws to the event, which began and ended at the Miccosukee Village along U.S. 41 in Miami, included its unique location in nature and the

welcoming tribal hosts.

The Village provided an opportunity for people to gather before and after the race with vendors for food, jewelry, alligator demonstrations, wood carving and other opportunities for cultural learning.

"Now, when we talk about the Everglades and Big Cypress and the need to protect them both, with the Tribe involved every step of the way, people have something to wrap their heads around because they've seen for themselves what's actually at stake," said William "Popeye" Osceola, Miccosukee tribal secretary.



William "Popeye" Osceola, left, and a staff member of the inaugural Miccosukee Glades Runner Ultramarathon hold up jackets ahead of the race on March 15 in the Miccosukee Village, Miami. Jackets were provided by Khadijah Cypress and Adriana Huggins with patchwork by Myra Frank and Betty Clay.



The inaugural Miccosukee Glades Runner Ultramarathon on March 15 drew approximately 160 runners and their supporters for four races spanning 5k to 50 miles through from the Miccosukee Village through the Everglades.



Miccosukee Glades Runner Race co-director Bob Becker of Ultra Sports with the winner of the 50mile mens' race, Blain Reeves, 60, of Pembroke Pines, with co-director Kevin Donaldson of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida.



Bob Becker of Ultra Sports running events, coorganizer of the Miccosukee Glades Runner ultramarathon, with first place female runner, Jamie DePaola, of Naples, as she completes the 50-mile marathon through the Everglades, including running Loop Road in 12 hours and 22 minutes on March 15. DePaola won a handmade tribal jacket provided by Adriana Huggins with patchwork by Betty Clay.



Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida Councilman Pete Osceola offers opening prayers at the inaugural Miccosukee Glades Runner Ultramarathon on March 15 in the Miccosukee Village, Miami.



ECS's Paizley Billie makes contact during an at-bat against Charlotte.

Evangelical Christian School's Angela Yzaguirre sprints around the basepaths during the team's 4-3 win against Charlotte on March 13 in Fort Myers.

Defending state champs ECS off to strong start

STAFF REPORT

FORT MYERS — The Evangelical Christian School softball team looks like it's ready to make another run at a state championship.

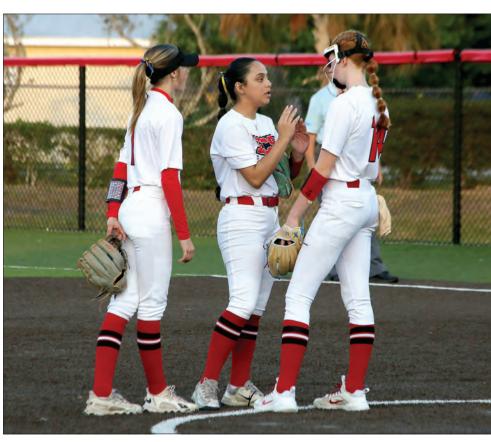
After winning the 2A state title last season, ECS hasn't missed a beat this year, compiling a sizzling 12-2 record entering April which included five consecutive shutouts to start the season.

Similar to last season as well, there are Seminole connections on the team with Billies and Yzaguirres on the roster.

Freshman Paiton Billie has been winning the battles against opposing pitchers to the tune of a .476 batting average. She leads the team in RBIs with 20 and also has 20 hits, including one home run.

She had two hits and three RBIs in a big 7-6 win against Lake Wales on March 15.

In the circle, Haydn Billie leads the team with a 1.76 ERA and a whopping 86 strikeouts, which included 14Ks in a win against Bonita Springs on March 25.



Beverly Bidney



Beverly Bidney

Angela Yzaguirre chats with her ECS teammates in the outfield.

RES 2025 features Native athletes

STAFF REPORT

Four Native American professional athletes and a former NBA star were the center of attention for programs at the Reservation Economic Summit (RES 2025) that was held March 10-13 in Las Vegas.

Bull rider Dakota Louis, golfer Gabby Barker, softball player SilentRain Espinoza and track and field athlete Janee Kassanavoid were panelists for a program called "Athlete Principles for Business Success."

Louis is married to Ahnie Jumper from the Big Cypress Reservation. Barker competed in an LPGA event in late March.

In a separate program NBA Hall of

In a separate program, NBA Hall of Famer Julius "Dr. J" Erving was the featured speaker.



Pro bull rider Dakota Louis, center, and pro golfer Gabby Barker, right, participate in a RES 2025 program.



RES 20

NBA Hall of Famer Julius "Dr. J" Erving speaks at a RES 2025 program.

Fists of Fury Series returns to Hard Rock

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Boxing's Fists of Fury Series returns to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on April 11 at 7 p.m.

Tickets start at \$81. All seats are reserved. Tickets are available at myHRL. com. Doors open half hour before showtime.

One of the featured boxers is unbeaten world-ranked knockout artist Armando Martinez Rabi (14-0, 13 KOs) of Miami by way of Cuba. Rabi dominated fellow Cuban and more experienced Yoadris Salinas(23-3-2, 16 KOs) this past Feb. 22 stopping him in eight bouts and retaining his WBA & WBC regional titles.

World-ranked unbeaten twins Andrey (3-0, 2 KOs) and Ari (3-0,2 KOs) Bonilla will square off in separate 10-round bouts for WBA and WBC regional titles. The brothers made history last year, debuting in 10-round regional title bouts.

Rounding out the card will be JD Martinez, Alex Ochoa, Lazaro Medina, Lorenzo Medina, Victor Abrue, Alex Hernandez, Miguel Parades, Gustavo Trujillo, and Anthony Martinez in separate bouts.

F1 race weekend at Hard Rock Stadium to feature local cusine

FROM PRESS RELEASE

MIAMI GARDENS — The Formula 1 Crypto.com Miami Grand Prix will feature 15 local community restaurants. Racing weekend takes place May 2 to May 4 at the Miami International Autodrome, located on the campus of Hard Rock Stadium.

Hailing from the Greater Miami region, including Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, the community restaurants will bring their unique flavors to race attendees from around the world.

Among the returning vendors, La Vela Coffee Roasters will once again provide racegoers with its crafted coffee.

Known for its Jamaican vegan cuisine, Reggae Beets, also returns. Reggae Beets serves up a mix of plant-based and traditional jerk chicken dishes, complemented by natural smoothies and tropical lemonades. Another fan favorite, Soulfly Chicken, brings its Southern comfort food back to the track. Chef Troy Tingling, a first-generation Jamaican-American, founded the business after years of working as a private chef.

after years of working as a private chef.
Food Junkies on Wheels is another returning vendor, blending Bahamian flavors with classic comfort food. Drinks on Me 305, run by Chazemon Fenderson, will make its third appearance at the race.

New additions for 2025 include GNS Seafood and Wrap City Global Eats, both located on the West Campus. Bonanzas (aka Elegant Eatz) brings hibachi flavors to the mix.

At the Beach, racegoers can enjoy award-winning barbecue from Troy's BBQ and Lickie Stickie BBQ, savor Haitian cuisine from Fin's Kitchen or indulge in Cajun food from House of Flava.

The race weekend will also feature Miami Slush, Italian Vice, and Garden of Soulfood.

For more information and tickets, visit www.flmiamigp.com.

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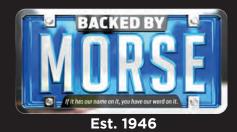
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April special events at Immokalee casino

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Seminole Casino Hotel will host the following special events in April:

Free Southland Bluegrass Music **Festival**

Sunday, April 6

Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will host the fourth annual Southland Bluegrass Music Festival Sunday, April 6 starting at noon. The free festival will feature outdoor concerts with concerts in the Zig Zag Lounge both before and after the festival, as well as a variety of food trucks.

The outdoor entertainment lineup includes free performances from headliners Rhonda Vincent & The Rage, Del McCoury, The Infamous Stringdusters, The Travelin' McCourys, and Alligator Alley. All concerts are free with the main Festival performances held outdoors. Attendees are welcome to bring chairs and all ages are welcome. A large selection of food trucks will be at the event. Coolers, backpacks and pets will not be permitted. For more information, visit Moreinparadise.com.

> Micky Dolenz of The Monkees live in concert

Saturday, April 12

Micky Dolenz, of the iconic 1960s band The Monkees, will perform live in concert at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee Saturday, April 12 at 8 p.m., with doors opening at 7 p.m. Tickets are available for \$95 from Ticketmaster or at www.moreinparadise. com. Attendees must be 21. Parking is free.

Dolenz is an actor, singer, director, producer, writer, radio DJ, inventor, and allaround performer extraordinaire, and stands tall as a paragon of taste and accomplishment in the rough-and-tumble world of show business and entertainment. Dolenz is best known as a vocalist and drummer of the 1960s pop legends The Monkees.

Los Palominos to perform

Saturday, April 19

Lozano's Mexican restaurant presents Los Palominos with special guest Costumbre and opening with local band Desprezio live in concert at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee Saturday, April 19 with gates opening at 6 p.m. and the show beginning at 7 p.m. Tickets start at \$59 for this outdoor concert and are available from Ticketmaster or at www.moreinparadise.com. Parking is

The Tejano music of the Texas and Mexico borderlands has been transformed into an exciting dance music by the charting, Grammy- and Latin Grammy-winning Los Palominos.

PBS Appalachia television studio at Hard Rock Bristol opens to public

STAFF REPORT

The PBS Appalachia television studio opened March 24 at Hard Rock Bristol in Bristol, Virginia,, making it the first TV network affiliate located in a casino.

"This is truly a milestone moment for Southwest Virginia — proving that bold, forward-thinking ideas can take root even in traditionally under-resourced areas. This studio brings new opportunities for regional storytelling, education and economic growth," Julie Newman, chief operating officer and general manager of PBS Appalachia, said in a release.

The 4,000-square foot facility is on the

lower level of Hard Rock Bristol's all-ages promenade. Visitors will be abled to watch video production and listen through a viewing window.

"By opening in Hard Rock Bristol, we believe PBS Appalachia will be one of the most visible stations in the PBS system," Will Anderson, president and

> PBS Appalachia Virginia The new PBS studio at Hard Rock Bristol.

CEO of Blue Ridge Public Television, Inc., said in a release. "This is a perfect partnership because both organizations are focused on helping the region move forward."

The secondary studio includes features like an interview set and podcast studio, according to a release.

"PBS Appalachia's mission is to preserve the history and culture of Southwest Virginia. The new studio showcases works by local artisans, including Black Copper Woodworking, Benjamin Walls Fine Art Gallery and artists from the Southwest Virginia Cultural Center and Marketplace,' according to a release.



HRI, Shakira partner for women empowerment initiative

STAFF REPORT

celebration of Hard Rock International's annual International Women's Month and International Women's Day on March 8, Hard Rock and superstar Shakira announced a year-long partnership that aims to empower women around the world to tell their stories, be their authentic selves and unite through the power of music.

Hard Rock was scheduled to host 1,000 women-led performances and raising funds through Hard Rock Heals Foundation throughout International Women's Month. A portion of proceeds will benefit Pies Descalzos Foundation, Shakira's non-profit enhancing the education and social development of girls in Colombia's vulnerable communities and local women's organizations. The Hard Rock Heals Foundation donated \$250,000 to Pies Descalzos Foundation.

"I'm excited to partner with Hard Rock, an organization with an incredible history of uplifting women through the power of music, to empower my sisters this International Women's Day and beyond," said Shakira in

a press release.

→ MISSING From page 9A

According to 2023 FBI data, 10,650 missing American Indian and Alaskan Native people were reported in the United

The Native alert system concept was first introduced in Washington in 2022, paving the way for other states, including California, Colorado and soon New Mexico, to implement similar measures.

With 29 federally recognized tribal nations, Washington is one of the leading

contributors to missing Native person cases nationwide, per NamUs data.

Chris Loftis, director of communications for the Washington State Patrol, said the state's system has sent 148 notifications since its launch, and only 22 people remain

Notifications have led to locating people who had been kidnapped, run away or killed. Native people, who make up 6% of Washington's population, are three times more likely to go missing.

"Even if the alert doesn't directly lead to resolution, it helps us get the broader

uniquely vulnerable to crimes against a person. They're uniquely vulnerable to being victims of violent crimes and being victims of sexual crimes or sexual trafficking," Loftis said.

He said these notifications serve as a tool for recovery and a deterrent.

We have one case where the person who had taken someone heard the alert on the radio and had let their victim go because he knew that he was being looked for. It only has to happen once before it makes it all worthwhile," Loftis said.

The main differences between Arizona's story out that Indigenous communities are proposed system and Washington's are the

qualifying conditions and broadcasting method.

In Washington, any missing Indigenous person automatically triggers a notification, while Arizona's system would have specific criteria. Because Washington's system has no restrictions, it isn't sent as a loud emergency notification to cellphones, like Amber or Silver alerts. Arizona's would use the cellphone broadcasting system.

Washington's advisories are shared through email subscriptions and social media, which lowers the visibility but doesn't potentially desensitize the public with mass alerts, said Carrie Gordon, program manager and missing person alert coordinator at the Washington State Patrol.

Emergency broadcasts are only used if a recovery is imminent. Arizona's system also has an age requirement, making support more limited.

Gordon explained how these differences affect the notification's impact.

"All we're doing is posting a poster to social media and sending it out to people who've subscribed to receive it. That is a very limited audience compared to an Amber Alert. ... But we're not able to use the other tools that we would like to be able to use, because there is no other criteria."

consistently and successfully include evaluation in your smaller grant applications.

qualitative and quantitative evaluation

questions to use when crafting the evaluation

include the cost of evaluation in future grant

5-Day Webinar Series

Date: April 21-25 Time: 2-3 p.m.

Training will enable participants to create

a more effective and efficient Housing

IHA management and operations. It will

lead to an improved delivery of Housing

opportunities for the beneficiaries of your

NAHASDA programs. We will discuss

reporting requirements and required policies

and governing documents. Participants

will receive a comprehensive overview of

NAHASDA and implementing regulations

staff responsibilities and functions

administrative requirements for NAHASDA

Instructor: Chantay Moore, MBA

Date: April 29 Time: 2-3:30 p.m.

(Navajo / African American)

Certified Financial Educator

Course Description:

-To provide a basic summary of the

-Answer questions regarding recipient

-Identify management options and

Webinar: Planning for My Retirement

Native American Financial Literacy

Most individuals assume retirement

is an age and fail to consider if they have

adequate resources to retire comfortably

without having to worry about running out of

money. As you get closer to thinking about

retiring, this is a critical point in time where

you have to get strategic and wise about

how your retirement savings are managed.

NAHASDA rules and regulations.

Course Objectives:

implementation

organization by increasing knowledge

Course Description:

Instructor: Cheryl A. Causley,

-Increased confidence in sharing existing

-Increased understanding of the framing

-Increased understanding of ways to

Webinar: NAHASDA Intermediate

(Bay Mills Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

Principal, Cheryl A. Causley and

This Virtual NAHASDA Intermediate

Course Objectives:

application budgets

Associates

methods in new grant applications

ATIVE LEARNING CENTER

April schedule

FROM NATIVE LEARNING CENTER

HOLLYWOOD — The NLC offers free Training, Technical Assistance, and Kerrety Unline 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: How Money Works Essentials

Instructor: Chantay Moore, MBA (Navajo / African American) Certified Financial Educator Native American Financial Literacy

Date: April 1, Time: 2-3:30 p.m.

Course Description:

In this webinar presentation, you will discover why financial education matters and how it impacts every area of your life. You will learn three basic financial principles every person should know and practical proven action steps to take in the short-term and long-term to improve your financial position.

Course Objectives:

-Understand the importance of financial education and its impact on various aspects

three essential financial -Learn principles that everyone should know -Gain confidence in applying financial

knowledge to make informed decisions -Explore ways to build a strong financial foundation for future stability and growth

Onsite Training: Strategic Planning for Tribal Professionals 3-Day Workshop Instructor: Amy Wilson Founder & Principal Consultant SEE Renewal, LLC Date: April 2-4 Time: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Training Description:

The training session is designed to benefit Tribal Professionals and will focus on building effective strategic planning skills to enhance organizational success and community development initiatives. During the three-day workshop the facilitator will review foundational concepts related to strategic planning, provide a thorough explanation of planning elements, and lead participants in applying strategic planning concepts and elements through a practical application of strategic planning and planmaking processes. Practical application is a primary aim of the three-day workshop, and it will include break-out exercises where participants in each group will work together to lead and carry out the strategic planning process by applying research, analysis, strategy, decision-making, stakeholder management, and plan-writing concepts and

Training Objectives:

-Critical thinking and analysis -Problem solving and decision making -Communication and collaboration

-Adaptability and flexibility -Stakeholder management

Webinar: Forecasting for Federal Grants Instructor: Diane Leonard, GPC, RST Grant Professionals Association Approved Trainer

President DH Leonard Consulting & Grant Writing Services, LLC

Time: 2–3:30 p.m.

Course Description:

This session will teach you how to navigate the forecasting of competitive federal grant applications. This skill is important because the availability of federal grant programs is subject to the administration and its priorities. Even longstanding grant programs are subject not to be funded in the future, for new competitions, or for continuing awards.

Course Objectives:

-Identify the type of application to conduct pre-planning activities for

-Navigate the free government tools available for forecasting federal grants -Identify and form a team for preplanning activities

-Facilitate pre-planning activities

Webinar: The 0% Tax Bracket Instructor: Chantay Moore, MBA (Navajo / African American)

Native American Financial Literacy

Date: April 8 Time: 2-3:30 p.m. Course Description:

For most Americans, paying taxes is inevitable. Sales tax doesn't sneak up on you- it's right there on the receipt. Income tax, on the other hand, can rear its ugly head decades later. Whether your future ends with a tax strategy- or tax tragedy- can depend on the financial vehicle and the tax structure you choose today. When you know how taxes work, you're better equipped to build wealth by using strategies that are the most advantageous for you and where you can pay 0% in taxes. In this course, participants will learn about the impact of taxes they pay to federal and state governments on their income and how earnings from various savings and investment vehicles are taxed.

Course Objectives:

- Understand how the United States's progressive income tax system works

-Learn the differences between tax now, tax later, and tax never savings and investment accounts

-How to build wealth using taxadvantaged strategies based on your individual financial goals

> Webinar: Housing Advocacy and **Influencing Change**

Instructor: Shelly Tucciarelli (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin) Executive Director, Visionary Ventures NFP & Owner, Turtle Clan Development Services Date: April 10 Time: 2-3:30 p.m.

Course Description:

Native Americans in Tribal areas and in urban areas have some of the worst housing needs in the United States. They face high poverty rates and low incomes, overcrowding, lack of plumbing and heat, and unique development issues. Despite the growing need for safe, decent homes, federal investments in affordable housing on Tribal lands and Tribal Members living in urban and suburban areas have been chronically underfunded for decades, particularly in more rural and remote areas. Recent changes to federal Native Housing Programs have led to an even greater reduction in resources for communities most in need.

Course Objectives:

-What is the housing advocacy and what organizations are involved

-What is the Native Sustainable Housing Initiative

-Advocacy to re-authorize Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA)

-How to influence change

Webinar: Money Management for **Tribal Members**

Instructor: Chantay Moore, MBA (Navajo / African American) Certified Financial Educator Native American Financial Literacy Services

Date: April 15 Time: 2-3:30 p.m.

Course Description:

As Tribes and Native Communities continue to make significant economic gains, it is extremely important to invest in building financial skills and knowledge to benefit future generations. On one hand, the reality is we don't learn how to manage money in school and many Tribal Members continue to suffer the financial consequences of past generations' historical trauma and stolen resources. Native families deserve to be financially educated and empowered. In this course, participants will learn how financial education can eradicate financial illiteracy and give families the hope that they can improve and do better with their finances, no matter how limited their financial resources

Course Objectives:

-Learn why financial literacy is the biggest economic crisis in the world

-Learn three basic financial concepts and principles that will help Tribal Members make confident and informed financial

-Learn the 7 Money Milestones, roadmap to financial security and independence

-How to support Tribal Members with professional tools and resources

> **Hoporenky Native American Podcast** Services Release: "Reel Reflections"

Special Guest: Everett Osceola (Seminole Tribe of Florida) Film Liaison Cultural Ambassador Florida Seminole Tourism

Release Date: April 16 Time: 12 p.m.

Episode Description:

Seminole Tribe of Florida

Tune in as Everett Osceola, Seminole Tribe of Florida Member who is Film Liaison and Cultural Ambassador for the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Tourism Department, joins us once again to share his reflections on the success from the 10th anniversary of the Native Reel Cinema Fest, hosted at Seminole Tribal Fair and Powwow earlier this year. He regales us with tales of the triumphant event, identifies the lessons learned for future Native Reels, and shares valuable advice for fellow Native cinephiles who hope to make their own mark on the world of Indigenous film and media.

Webinar: How to Include Evaluation in Grants When the Funder isn't Paying for It

Instructor: Diane Leonard, GPC, RST Professionals Grant Association Approved Trainer

President DH Leonard Consulting & Grant Writing Services, LLC

This session will teach you how to

Date: April 17 Time: 2-3:30 p.m.

Course Description:

Planning for retirement is a process, and there are several factors you have to consider before leaving the workforce. In this webinar, you will learn about different retirement accounts, how they work, and how to maximize them so you have enough money saved to retire.

Course Objectives:

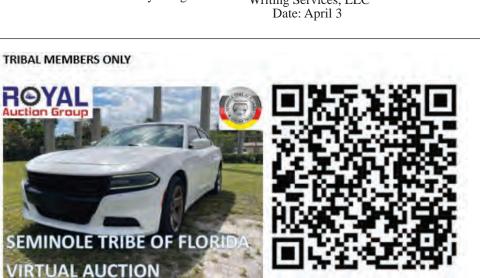
-Recognize the importance of strategic retirement planning beyond simply reaching a certain age

-Identify critical factors to consider when preparing for retirement, including financial resource adequacy

-Understand the different types of retirement accounts and how they function -Learn strategies to maximize retirement

savings and ensure long-term financial -Develop actionable steps to effectively

manage retirement savings as you approach



Contact Fleet Services: 954-967-3480 or fleetservices@semtribe.com