





Seminole Tribune Voice of the Unconquered

August 2025 Volume XLIX • Number 8

Hard Rock development planned for **UAE** coast

BY KEVIN JOHNSON **Senior Editor**

Hard Rock International announced July 23 that it is working with two companies on a mixed-use hotel and residence development project in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

According to a press release, Hard Rock Hotel & Residences Ras Al Khaimah is scheduled to open in 2028 and will create about 500 permanent jobs.

Hard Rock's joint venture with Maltabased db Group and RAK Hospitality Holding (RAKHH) will feature 300 hotel rooms and 395 residences. The hotel will include restaurants featuring diverse cuisines and waterfront dining, a rooftop bar, conference space, event venue, beach club, swimming pools, spa and fitness center.

"This development will open new doors for the Hard Rock global traveler in a destination with rich history and nature to explore," Todd Hricko, senior vice president and head of Global Hotel Development at Hard Rock International, said in the release.

UAE is located in Asia on the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf, also known as the Persian Gulf. UAE's borders include Saudia Arabia and Oman. The property's location is Ras Al Khaimah's Beach District, adjacent to Al Marjan Island.

See UAE on page 7A

New princesses crowned as Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford, Chaka Yani Smith win titles

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe of Florida has two new princesses.

Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford won the Miss Florida Seminole title and Chaka Yani Smith won Jr. Miss Florida Seminole on July 26, 2025, at the 68th annual Miss Florida Seminole Princess Pageant in Hollywood.

Latchford, 20, attends Florida State University in Tallahassee. She won't have far to travel Nov. 1 when the princesses crown FSU's princesses at the homecoming football game. She is in a dual degree program, studying social work and criminal justice with a minor in psychology. She is a 2023 graduate of NSU University School in

Smith, 17, is a senior at Okeechobee High School where she is a multi-sport student-athlete, a 4.0 AP student and is in the school's dual enrollment program.

Other contestants for Miss Florida Seminole were Sarafina Billie, Leilani Burton, Winnie Gopher and Serena Zepeda. Kulipa Julian was the only other contestant for Jr. Miss.

2024-25 Miss Florida Seminole CeCe Thomas and Jr. Miss Violet Osceola gave farewell speeches and were honored at the pageant.

Behind the scenes

The contestants spent three days together preparing for the pageant. Throughout the week, members of the princess committee were there to support the girls and direct the practices. The vibe was relaxed; the contestants were comfortable and cheerful backstage and elsewhere. They formed a



Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Chaka Yani Smith, left, and Miss Florida Seminole Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford have their hands full of gifts and honors at the Miss Florida Seminole Princess Pageant on July 26 at tribal headquarters auditorium in Hollywood.

quick bond as they rehearsed.

Backstage, they helped each other study the impromptu interview questions; each contestant would have to answer one of them. They talked at length about possible answers and supported each other's input. They also talked about who made their

jewelry and clothing, shared makeup tips and talked about their talent presentations.

There were seven girls in the pageant, too many for one table so during lunch they pushed two tables together so they could dine as one group.

Dinner the first night was hosted

by Thomas and Osceola at the Estates clubhouse. In addition to a healthy meal, the girls played some fun party games that had them all laughing.

See PRINCESS on page 4A

New senior center opens in Big Cypress

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The new senior center on the Big Cypress Reservation opened July 7 with a celebration fitting for the Seminole Tribe of Florida's esteemed Elders.

The community from Big Cypress and other reservations gathered in the shade of the building's entrance to listen to tribal leadership and Big Cypress seniors. Located on land that used to be the

home of the Big Cypress bingo hall, the 21,000-square-foot senior center on Josie Billie Highway includes a large dining area/flex space, a commercial kitchen, multipurpose room for games, pottery, puzzles and painting, a fitness room, showers, a clinic with an exam room, a conference room and office space. The building is also available as a hurricane shelter.

The tribe is always looking to progress and have more and better facilities," said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie. "This one is large enough to host community events. They did a good job planning for the future.'

"This is what we do to honor our warriors of the past; we preserve our heritage and culture," said Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. "Without their sacrifices none of this is possible."



See SR. CENTER on page 6A Above, a ribbon cutting ceremony is held for the opening of the new senior center on the Big Cypress Reservation on July 7. Below, the new senior center, which was built on the site of the old bingo hall.



Editorial

When a station goes dark, we lose

Loris Taylor

Then a tribal radio or television station goes dark, a community loses far more than a broadcast signal — it loses its voice, its lifeline in an emergency, its trusted news source, and its cultural compass. With the proposed Rescission package threatening to eliminate funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Native Public Media urges you to consider the irreversible impact this will have on American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages who rely on tribal media every day.

Tribal stations are uniquely vulnerable. These stations often serve some of the most rural, economically distressed, and underserved communities in the United States. Places where broadband is scarce, newspapers are nonexistent, and commercial stations fail to reach or represent the people. If Congress defunds Corporation for Public Broadcasting or cuts public broadcasting support, tribal stations will be the first to go

And when they do, we all lose. There is a cost of silence.

Across Indian Country, 59 tribal radio stations and one tribal television station serve tribal nations. These stations reach more than 1.5 million people across vast geographies where they may be the only source of locally relevant news, emergency alerts, public safety announcements, language preservation, health information, and election coverage.

According to the Government Accountability Office, Native communities already face systemic barriers to participation in emergency communications and broadband access. Tribal stations close these gaps. They are local. They are trusted. And they are vital. Eliminating their funding undercuts decades of policy progress and public safety in Indian Country.

Programming and services at risk

Defunding tribal stations will immediately result in the:

Loss of emergency alerting capabilities, including access to the Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alerts, especially in remote areas with limited cell

Elimination of vital tribal radio and television communications about missing and endangered persons, reducing the reach and coordination of the new Missing Endangered Persons Alert across Indian

Termination of programming in Native languages that support language revitalization, cultural preservation, and elder engagement.

Collapse of civic engagement coverage, including debates, local government meetings, and voter education in places considered "news deserts."

Disruption of educational programming for Native youth, especially in areas where school resources are limited or internet access is weak.

Silencing the next generation

Perhaps most tragically, cutting funding silences Native youth who are just beginning to explore and express their First Amendment rights. Tribal media stations often serve as the first training grounds for young Native journalists, storytellers, broadcasters, and content creators. These platforms offer handson experience, mentorship, and exposure to journalism ethics, media literacy, and civic engagement.

In these spaces, young people learn not only how to use their voices but how to protect their communities through truthful storytelling, public service reporting, and cultural programming. Without these opportunities, it cuts off an entire generation and risks the loss of a democratic and

informed society.

When we defund tribal stations, we don't just turn off a signal, we turn off a pathway to participation, representation, and leadership for Native youth.

A network nearly 50 years in the making

Tribes and their citizens did not create a tribal broadcasting system overnight. It took decades of advocacy, technical buildout, and bipartisan support dating back to the Public Telecommunications Financing Act and Section 396 of the Communications Act, which explicitly acknowledges the importance of universal service, including service to Indian tribes and rural communities.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 reaffirmed this commitment by directing the Federal Communications Commission to ensure "access to advanced telecommunications and information services... to all regions of the Nation, including... Tribal lands.'

Congress has long understood the importance of universal service and the need for strong, community-based media infrastructure. Pulling support now would unravel this commitment and push tribal communities further to the margins of our national information landscape.

Civic health is public health

Research consistently shows that communities with access to trusted, local news enjoy stronger civic health, higher voter turnout rates, and better public health outcomes. Without tribal media, Native citizens risk being left in an informational vacuum, disconnected from essential services, public discourse, and democracy

See STATION on page 3A

Letter of Appreciation to Jacob Osceola Sr.

Editor's note: Extreme Rage Paintball Park, which included paintball and other vendors, has operated for decades at 6401 Sheridan Street in Hollywood. The complex closed at the end of July. This letter is from one employee and represents appreciation shared by all the staff at Extreme Rage Paintball Park to owner Jacob Osceola Sr.

Letter of Appreciation to Mr. Jake

6401 Sheridan Street was more than just a property to me. It was an escape for many

6401 Sheridan Street made a lot of difference in people's lives, including myself. As a young man coming from a poverty environment, many of us were traumatized of the stigma of being Black in America. At 16, God blessed me with an opportunity at the Paintball Park which made me who I am

The care and joy of being able to take care of others mentally, emotionally and

physically...it made me feel amazing and had a purpose. However, the most important thing that was implemented was discipline. Ensuring the paintball field was clean every Monday morning was a mission that I enjoyed. During that time, I appreciated every second. I taught myself the value of appreciation and taking care of what we

As much as the property may have not been that big, I knew it was many people's escape, even if it was to leave home for a couple minutes get a snow cone or one of those famous hot dogs.

Mr. Jake, I just want to say thank you. I understand how life is, but just know 6401 Sheridan Street has had a positive impact in our lives and we thank you for everything, especially an opportunity.

L. Baptiste

Seminole, Miccosukee representatives attend justice system training on substance use

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD —All Rise, formerly known as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, has partnered with the National Judicial College to provide judiciary training on substance use. They provide judicial education at no cost through an Office of National Drug Control Policy grant. They identified judicial faculty, from the National Judicial College, who have experience working with tribal courts.

An in-person training session was held July 10 at the Native Learning Center in Hollywood. Attendees included representatives from the Seminole Court, the Miccosukee Court, Seminole Police Department, Guardianship Department and Center for Behavioral Health.

The courts and departments are trying to advance justice through effective judicial training and continuing education. Moses B. Osceola, the new Director of the Administrative Office of the Seminole Court

and a former Chief Judge of the Trial Court, would like to emphasize that the Seminole Court is ensuring that the tribal judges and court staff possess the necessary knowledge and ethical standards to administer justice

Topics covered at the training included: Substance Use as a Chronic Medical Disease

Compulsive Behaviors Despite Harmful Consequences • Substance Use Screening and

Assessment • The Substance Use Treatment

Continuum of Care The Importance of Building Recovery Capital

The Role of the Tribal Court Judge Presenters were Judge J. Matthew Martin (Ret.); Nisha Wilson, Division Director, All Rise's Center for Advancing Justice; and Wendy Schiller, Project Director, All Rise's Center for Advancing Justice.



A justice system training session about substance use was held July 10 at the Native Learning Center.





Happy birthday to headquarters

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe of Florida's headquarters building, home to many departments and an auditorium that hosts council and board meetings and other events, turns 30 years old Aug. 1.

The tribe had outgrown its previous headquarters, which was described in a Tribune article at the time as being in poor

On Aug. 1, 1995, the new four-story building was dedicated.

The architect was

Sam Engel. Construction

started in May 1994

and was completed in July 1995. Thousands of

trees, palms and shrubs were planted outside the

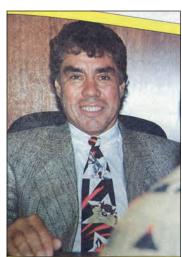
building, which included a helicopter landing pad on top and a reflecting

The building at 6300 Stirling Road has the Florida Turnpike as its backyard neighbor. The property was described in a 1995 Tribune story

as being on the old "Hog

pool in front.

Farm" site.



Chairman James E. Billie sits at his desk at headquarters in 1995.



A plaque on the first floor of headquarters shows the names of the Tribal Council at the time of the building's dedication on Aug. 1, 1995.



The Seminole Tribe of Florida headquarters on May 12.

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Community

Tous Young's debut novel is a literary act of deliverance

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Tous Young did not discover his voice in the classroom, courtroom, or pulpit—but in the crucible of redemption.

As the founder of Warriors For Christ Ministries Inc., the Kingsman Consulting Group LLC., and author of "The Trial of Adam T. Son" and and his second work "Cruciform and Covenant: A Theological Exposition of Romans", Young now emerges as a redemptive author whose first novel is as much a theological statement as it is a cultural reckoning. His debut work, "The Trial of Adam T. Son: A Courtroom Allegory of Redemption", is not merely inspirational, it is apostolic. Written with the cadence of a prophet and the clarity of a courtroom witness, the novel delivers an unrelenting message: mercy still speaks.

Set for release through Trilogy Christian Publishing, a division of TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network), "The Trial of Adam T. Son" will be distributed globally through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and all major retail outlets. A global promotional campaignincluding broadcast commercials on TBN's global platform reaching over 2 billion homes—will accompany the launch, signaling both the literary and spiritual magnitude of this work.

The Courtroom as a Mirror of Grace

Spanning only 36,000 words and 13 chapters, "The Trial of Adam T. Son" is a compact, literary thunderclap—rich in Scripture, wrapped in legal tension, and saturated with eternal hope. Set in a cosmic courtroom, the story brings Adam to trial not just for his actions, but for the inherited weight of fallen humanity. The proceedings, though fictional, become a lens for covenant



Tous Young

theology, divine justice, and sovereign

"This isn't a confessional—it's a hand reaching back," Young insists. "It's for those drowning in addiction, suffocating under condemnation, or forgotten by systems of

Drawing from his personal history and informed by academic exposure to Harvard's and Yale's divinity archives, Young weaves biblical fidelity with Indigenous narrative depth. As a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida (Panther Clan), he speaks not only as an author, but as a cultural priest bearing generational wounds. His work reflects a rare synthesis of tribal history, theological scholarship, and prophetic urgency.

> A Scholar's Mind, A Shepherd's Heart

Once a student who dreaded essays, Young's transformation occurred through immersion in the sacred texts of divinity libraries at two of the world's most elite institutions. "I didn't just study business—I studied God's business." says. What began academic hunger matured into a scriptural

theological

His

"The Trial of Adam T. outpouring

ADAM T. SON

formation and Romans covenantal frameworks now informs every paragraph of "Adam T. Son," making it equally effective as a devotional tool and

theological primer. The novel's courtroom setting draws literary comparisons to "The Pilgrim's Progress" in form and to "Biblical Doctrine" in depth (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017). Adam becomes a representative archetype of all humanity—standing condemned under the law, yet offered pardon by covenant

A Voice for the Voiceless: Cultural and Evangelistic Reach

Indigenous populations—particularly Native American men—face the highest incarceration and addiction rates in the United States (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022). The "Trial of Adam T. Son" addresses

these wounds with theological balm, presenting a model of regeneration rather than rehabilitation.

Young's literary mission aims to bring visibility to the historically silenced and spiritually wounded. The book targets not only general audiences, but specifically those in recovery centers, prison ministries, and underserved tribal communities. Its vision echoes initiatives like Prison Fellowship's literacy programs, combined with the theological depth found in Bonhoeffer's Life

A Ministry Ecosystem in Motion

Warriors For Christ Ministries Inc. is more than a Christian ministry—it is an apostolic infrastructure. Under Young's leadership, the ministry includes:

Seminary and church-based curriculum

Evangelism, outreach, and prison discipleship

Recovery resources for addiction and trauma

Shelters for women and children

A regeneration center for trafficking survivors and the homeless

This literary release is not a detour from ministry—it is the extension of the pulpit. "This book is me turning around and lifting someone else out of the muck and mire," Young declares.

The Kingsman Consulting Group LLC, Young's adjacent consulting business, provides the operational backbone for scaling this ministry model. Using AI integration tools like Rev, Gamma, and Atlas, the rollout of Adam T. Son is designed to equip ministries across the country with digital evangelism tools, AI-enhanced discipleship platforms, and sustainable outreach systems.

Covenant, Not Condition

One of the novel's most resonant lines occurs when Adam takes the Judge's hand:

"Adam took the Judge's hand—not as a condemned man clinging to mercy, but as a son returning to the embrace of the Father who had always known him, always wanted him, and now welcomed him not with condition, but with covenant... He was no longer afraid."

This single moment embodies Young's entire ministry: a return, a reconciliation, and a recommissioning. For him, redemption is not just personal—it is procedural, communal, and strategic. It is grace with structure.

A Call to Action

With global distribution through TBN and Trilogy Christian Publishing, "The Trial of Adam T. Son" is poised to impact millions. But its true metric of success, according to Young, is not found in sales figures—but in souls touched:

"If it pulls one man off a ledge, opens one woman's heart to grace, brings one soul into the light—then it's already done what it was sent to do.'

To order the book, support the mission, or become part of the national outreach network, visit:

- www.AdamTSonBook.com
- www.wfcmi.org
- www.kingsmangroupllc.com

Tous Young is the founder of Warriors For Christ Ministries Inc. and The Kingsman Consulting Group LLC. He is a preacher, teacher, author, tribal member, and apostolic builder committed to reaching the lost, the addicted, and the overlooked with a gospel of power, truth, and covenantal grace.

FWC completes revegetation projects on Lake O

STAFF REPORT

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee (FWC) has completed a revegetation project on Lake Okeechobee. According to a July 15 press release from FWC, the revegetation effort will help the habitat for Fisheating Bay, Moore Haven Marsh and Fisheating Bay

Starting in 2022, the Lake Okeechobee Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Plan assisted with FWC to help more aquatic

species meet their management goals. Aquatic plants in Lake Okeechobee have struggled in the past due to prolonged high water levels, impacts resulting from both natural and human disturbances, according

to the release. To help with this struggle, FWC sawgrass plants across 6 acres in the Moore

partnered with the South Florida Water Management District to plant 40,000 individual eelgrass (tapegrass), paspaladium (Kissimmee grass), and bulrush plants resulting in 8.25 acres of improved habitat.

Additional planting of 27,558 individual

Haven Marsh was also conducted to help with the revegetation effort.

FWC also planted 100 each of pond apple, pop ash and bald cypress, and 80 cocoplums spread over the Fisheating Bay

DOI launches training series to combat violent crime in Indian Country

STAFF REPORT

A new training series aimed toward decreasing violent crime in tribal communities launched May

Department of the Interior's Victim Assistance Program partnered with the U.S. Department of Justice's National Indian Country Training Initiative, U.S. Indian Police Academy, FBI, DEA and ATF to facilitate this training series. The training is designed to improve law enforcement response to violent

crime and victim support in tribal communities.

'This series shows what we can accomplish when agencies work together," Glen Melville, Deputy Bureau Director of Office of Tribal Justice, said in a press release. "By combining our expertise, we're making sure those on the front lines have the tools and knowledge they need to protect victims and hold offenders accountable.'

The series began in May with a live webinar with about 900 attendees, which included tribal, federal and state law enforcement

officers, medical professionals and victim advocates. The webinar covered responding to domestic violence and strangulation incidents.

The series will continue throughout the year, offering nocost, virtual training to those working in tribal justice, public safety and victim services.

To register for remaining courses and receive more information, contact the National Indian Country Training Initiative at usipatraining@bia.gov.

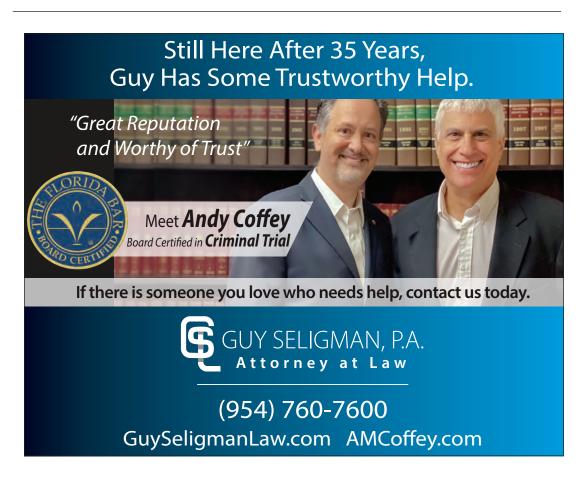
STATION From page 2A

The cost of silence is too high. When a station goes dark, the entire community loses not just the signal but also the service, safety,

connection, and the voice that tribal on. media uniquely provides.

We urge Congress to protect the investment that has powered tribal public media since 1974. Preserve funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Stand with tribal nations and keep the signal

Loris Taylor is president and CEO of Native Public Media. This opinion was published on ictnews.





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Beverly Bidney

Ra

Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford, second from right, reacts to winning Miss Florida Seminole.

Beverly Bidney

◆ PAGEANT From page 1A

Princess Banquet

During the traditional Princess Banquet the contestants had dinner with the judges, who rotated between the tables of two or three girls. By the end of the evening, each contestant and judge had the opportunity to speak to each other.

Chaka Yani Smith waves to the audience.

Emcee for the evening was Naomi Wilson, Miss Florida Seminole 1985. She addressed the contestants, families and indees

"I wanted this to be a learning experience that fulfilled them," Wilson said. "Whether

Cozad, Miss Indian World Dania Wahwasuck and Clarissa Antone.

they win or not, they learn something. Being a princess is a stepping stone. You learn problem solving skills, decision making skills and something about yourself. We have many successful professional Seminole women who were princesses and work for the tribe now."

One of those professionals present was executive director of operations and THPO officer Tina Osceola, Miss Florida Seminole 1984.

"These three days are going to be that time of your life that you look back at," Osceola said. "The most important thing is the journey and the opportunity to live life with purpose. I'm excited for you; the sisterhood we built has laid the foundation for you. When I look around here, I see future leaders of our tribe and of Indian Country."

Parents

Parents played a big part in their daughters' decision to compete for the

"Chaka is outgoing and has a great personality, which is a good trait for princesses," said Suraiya Smith, Jr. Miss Florida Seminole 1996 and Miss Florida Seminole 1999. "I'm ready for Saturday night to find out what the next year holds. She plays five sports, is a 4.0 AP student, is dual enrollment at Okeechobee High School, is third in her senior class and is in drama. She's pretty busy, but what's one more thing? This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and are memories you hold on to forever. All former princesses have fond memories of

our year representing the tribe."

EMINOLE

"Bailey thought about it long and hard since she is a student at FSU and needed to be able to fit it into her schedule," said Amy Osceola-Latchford. "She knew she had our support."

Assistant director of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum JoJo Osceola, Jr. Miss Florida Seminole 2000 and Miss Florida Seminole 2004, is Sarafina Billie's mother.

"It makes me proud that younger Seminole girls are participating and want to represent our tribe," Osceola said. "Sarafina was encouraged by the museum exhibit and she made the decision to do it. We are here to support her and are very proud of her."

Amanda Julian, said Kulipa was inspired after she watched the pageant last year.

fter she watched the pageant last year.
"This is a good experience for her in this

stage of her life, it could let her know herself better," Julian said. "I think this could give her confidence and help her in every part of her life."

This was Leilani Burton's second time in the pageant.

"I'm proud that she is trying again and didn't want to give up," said Micki Burton, Miss Florida Seminole 1995. "Last year she stepped out of her comfort zone and gained a lot of confidence."

Brian Zepeda, Serena's father, said she decided to run because her grandmother Wanda Osceola told her to "just do it."





Chaka Yani Smith and Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford with pageant judges, from left to right, Dustin



.~/

Kulipa Julian leads the Princess contestants to the stage July 26 as the audience and judges stand to



Beverly Bidney

Winnie Gopher waves to the audience before making her way onstage for the pageant



Beverly Bidney

Chaka Yani Smith and Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford are joined by, left to right, Board Rep. Nadine Bowers, Councilwoman Mariann Billie, President Holly Tiger, Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., Board Rep. O'Hara Tommie and Board Rep. Bryan Arledge.







Beverly Bidney



Beverly Bidney

Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford is crowned 2025-26 Miss Florida Seminole.



The contestants pose at the Hard Rock pool area before the Princess Banquet. From left to right are Kulipa Julian, Chaka Yani Smith, Leilani Burton, Serena Zepeda, Sarafina Billie, Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford and Winnie Gopher.

→ PRINCESS From page 4A

Pageant day

The ambiance backstage was quieter as the reality of the day sunk in. The girls were focused on the final dress rehearsal, the committee members made sure everyone was in the right place and knew where their talent props were. The rehearsal was efficient and smooth; it ran like clockwork.

The girls talked about the week. Kulipa said it was an eventful and fun week and Winnie wanted to thank her community for

"My community is small and there aren't a lot of young women my age," Serena said. "I feel like I have made connections I wouldn't have if I wasn't here. The butterflies in my stomach aren't nerves, just excitement.'

'I'm feeling pretty good, it's what I thought it would be and more," Sarafina said. "I'm grateful to the committee, they treated us like family and made us feel welcome. Everyone feels like family now. I'm happy no matter what happens tonight."

Chaka and Leilani both competed in last year's pageant.

"I was nervous last year and I'm more prepared this year," Chaka said. "I know how to lose now.'

"If it's not my year, I know how to handle it," added Leilani. "I'm proud of everyone for stepping out of their comfort zone to take this opportunity to represent the tribe."

During the pageant, outgoing Jr. Miss Florida Seminole 2024 Violet Osceola and Miss Florida Seminole 2024 CeCe Thomas made farewell speeches after videos documenting their year of service were shown. Tears were shed by both princesses as they spoke. The crowd applauded and gave each a standing ovation.

"I wanted to do something for the tribe and this was the first step for doing that,"

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Osceola said. "I got to build a sister bond that will live on, a stronger connection with my community and my cultural ways. To the young Seminole girls; don't be afraid to take the initiative. It was a long, memorable journey.'

"Last year I came to the pageant unaware of the opportunities I would have," Thomas said. "I'm grateful I had the experience to let people know who we are as a tribe. Without this, I wouldn't have had this experience and have grown as a person. I made memories that will last for a lifetime."

The day after

After the big night, contestants, committee members and their families met for breakfast and reflection of the last few

"I'm really happy and I just keep smiling," Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Chaka Yani Smith said. "I would like to work with kids and adults doing community events to get people out of their homes and mingling more. It's so important to come together as different reservations and become more connected and unified as a tribe. I also want to focus on culture and language and learning from elders. All the elders have things to share that need to be carried on."

"It's a great honor and I'm proud to have had a lot of my family there and see it," Miss Florida Seminole Bailey Marie Latchford said. "The last few days have been a learning and growing experience. I'm looking forward to being exposed to new cultures and people, I welcome it with open arms. I want to advocate for Seminole people, we are still here and aren't going anywhere. I didn't expect to win. We all deserved the crown and had a good shot at it. I love my culture and our resilience as a people. I love how we have been able to thrive even when the world was against us. The future is bright

Doc Native creates short action film, joins cast of two feature films

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY **Staff Reporter**

In addition to his music career, Doc Native has been busy living the "Hollywood" life. He wrote and starred in a short action film and recently joined the cast of two feature length films that will start filming in Miami and Minnesota in the next few months.

"Ghost" was directed by Adam Conte (Oneida and Mohawk) and written by Native, Conte and Raquel McCloud (Ojibwe from Red Lake Nation). Native played the lead character Sam Huff, who he named after his great grandfather.

"It's a John Wick type action movie with fight choreography and stunts," Native said. "We had an all Native cast and crew including a number of Seminoles. The Osceola Brothers scored some music, my sisters Petra and Coral [Battiest] did the makeup for the film and Everett Osceola helped with locations and production."

The eight-minute independent film was filmed in locations in Broward County in 2024. The story is about a father who was an assassin for the underworld and wanted to get out of the business to live a normal life with his daughter.

"It was so difficult to choreograph the fight scenes since we aren't professionals,' Native said. "It's like a dance but you have to trust that you and your partner won't hurt each other.'

It took only two days to film, but months of preparation. Native's wife, McCloud, has a military background and taught the cast how to hold guns properly and clear a room of criminals. After filming, it took another six months to edit. In all, it took the film over

a year to go from script to final product.

Native has submitted "Ghost" to various film festivals and it was screened in February at the Native Reel Cinema Festival in Hollywood, where it received positive feedback from the community and tribal

"We would love to turn it into a feature film," Native said. "We want people in the industry to see Natives are capable of many genres of movies."

In addition to his own film, Native will be featured in two feature length films. The first, "Day 1", starts filming in Miami in August. It is a thriller directed by Dave Clark in which Native plays the role of TJ, an influencer who is best friends with the lead character.

Another film will be filmed in Minnesota in October. "Ghost Lake" might be a supernatural thriller, but Native hasn't seen the script yet. It will be directed by Ginew Benton (Ojibwe).

"We're proud to welcome Doc Native to the cast of "Ghost Lake" as the Native Smuggler, a role that calls for both edge and depth, and Doc brings both in full,' Benton wrote on an Instagram post July 9. "As a performer and advocate, Doc Native continues to amplify Native visibility across media and music, and we're honored to have him join this Indigenous-led vision."

Native has a long list of acting roles under his belt including "Marvel's Echo" (Ancestor #9), "Don't Let It In" (Lead -Chris), "Borders" (Lead - Shadow Wolf Agent John), "Ghost" (Lead - Sam Huff), 'Mixtape" (Manager Gabriel), "People of the West" (Lead - Chief Augustine), "Mary Margaret Road Grater" (Big Wheel Guy) and commercial for the Seminole Tribal Fair & Indigenous Arts Festival.



Doc Native, dressed as the character he plays, appears in a promotional piece for the short film

As for his music career, Native has some new music coming out in the fall. You can find his music on YouTube and other social media sites. You can watch "Ghost" on YouTube at this link- https://youtu.be/ vUXUBolgF_o.



Courtesy photo

Doc Native, in center, with the cast and crew of "Ghost" on location in Broward County.

Fire ravages Miccosukee's Tiger Camp

STAFF REPORT

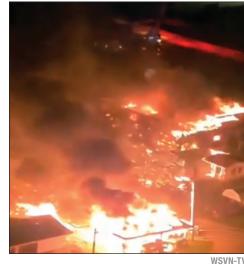
A massive fire engulfed multiple homes at the Tiger Camp on the Miccosukee Reservation in the evening of July 27. More than twenty-five units from Miami Dade Fire Rescue arrived on scene near the 37700 block and Southwest 8th Street area around 8:30 p.m. to combat the fire. MDFR arrived on scene to find three structures fully engulfed.

Early reports indicated there were no injuries and the cause of the fire is under investigation. Residents in nearby homes were evacuated as a precaution.

Miccosukee Tribe Chairman Talbert Cypress made this statement on Instagram:

Tonight there was a 3-Alarm fire at our historic Tiger Camp in the Miccosukee Reserved Area. We are still determining the extent of the damage and any injuries but so

much has been lost including family homes, Miccosukee tribal art, and historic artifacts. We are thankful for our partners at MDFR and MDSO for their comprehensive response. I have no doubt that MDFR's massive response prevented further devastation to our community. Our members are already coming together and stepping up for one another in response to this disaster. The emotional and economic impact will be felt for some time but the cultural significance that the Tiger Camp has on the history of our community cannot be understated. We as a community have celebrated so many milestones and holidays at the Tiger Camp and have all grown up with fond memories of the original Miccosukee Indian Village. My office will be handling any inquiries and I ask the Tiger family be afforded privacy during this time of hardship."



An aerial view of the fire from WSVN-TV in Miami.



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RICHARD CASTILLO FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTOURNEY WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM

RICHARD CASTILLO 954.522.3500

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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.

◆ SENIOR CENTER From page 1A

Former Councilmen and Board Representatives were acknowledged and thanked by the speakers and a few of them

and other seniors spoke as well.

"I didn't think I would live this long, but I'm still here," said Paul Bowers. "We can all meet here and talk about old times."

Tribal Community Development executive director Derek Koger thanked Tribal Council for challenging his

department and investing in the community.

"This is a truly collaborative project and it shows what we can do when we work

together," Koger said.

After the ribbon was cut, the crowd toured the facility and enjoyed lunch in the new dining hall.

Acouple of days after the opening, Linda Beletso used the fitness options available to seniors, including a walking trail around the lake; three times around equals one mile.

"I've been walking around the lake in the mornings and then I go to the weight room," she said. "We have to break it in; I

want to see some buffed up seniors."

"Walking around the lake is beautiful, being in nature is the key to being healthy," said Daniel Tommie. "I love the new senior center. It has more amorities to keep use center. It has more amenities to keep us active all under one roof."



These are some of the dozens of photos of Big Cypress residents that are on a wall in the reservation's new senior center.



Beverly Bidney

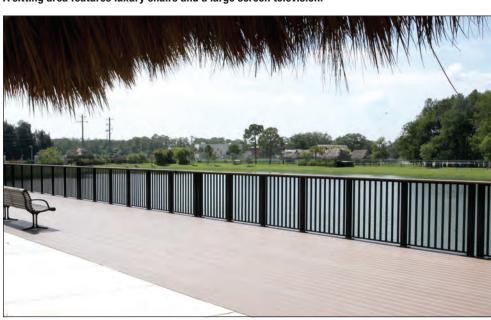
Standing in front of a wall-length mural of Seminole scenes are, from left to right, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, David Cypress, Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers and Mitchell Cypress.



Ahfachkee School students participate in the opening ceremony.



A sitting area features luxury chairs and a large screen television.



Beverly Bidney



The dining area at the new senior center.

The fitness center is getting a workout on its second day open. Daniel Tommie lifts weights while Linda Beletso pedals her legs vigorously on a seated



Beverly Bidney

Trio reappointed to Gaming Commission

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribal Council unanimously reappointed three commissioners to the Seminole Tribal Gaming Commission at the council's regular meeting July 24 in Lakeland.







Mitchell B. Osceola



Reappointed to two-year terms were

Mitchell B. Osceola is the commission's

Alan Huff, from the Brighton Reservation; Jacob Osceola Jr., from the Big Cypress

Reservation; and Mitchell B. Osceola, from

chairman, Jacob Osceola Jr. is vice chairman

and Kyle Doney is secretary. Jarrid Smith is

the Hollywood Reservation.

Allen Huff

Hard Rock Bet goes live in Colorado

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock Bet Sportsbook's reach is continuing to grow. Owned by the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the sportsbook expanded into its ninth state by going live in Colorado, Hard Rock announced July 21.

"Hard Rock Bet Sportsbook is bringing an exciting new experience to Colorado players with deep betting markets on all major sporting events plus local favorites like table tennis and MMA. With our toprated platform, weekly Legendary Reward Drops, and integration into Unity by Hard

Rock, we're confident that Coloradans are going to love the Hard Rock Bet Sportsbook experience," Matt Primeaux, Hard Rock Bet's executive managing director president & chief revenue officer, said in a press release.

Users can wager on professional and college sports and participate in Hard Rock's Legendary Reward Drops and Unity by Hard Rock rewards.

Hard Rock Bet Sportsbook is also in Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia.

Hard Rock Heals Foundation gives grants to 50 community charities

STAFF REPORT

The Hard Rock Heals Foundation, the charitable arm of Hard Rock International, announced July 8 a distribution of \$250,000 in grants to 50 local nonprofit organizations around the world. The distribution consists of \$5,000 grants that are part of the foundation's annual commitment to help strengthen communities in which the Hard Rock operates through impactful initiatives.

The 2025 Hard Rock Heals Foundation Grant Programs supports three focus areas which consist of mental health awareness and research, prevention of human trafficking and promotion of human rights, and children's wellness and education.

"Since 2016, the Hard Rock Heals Foundation has supported hundreds of local programs focused on healing and hope,' Tracy Bradford, President of the Hard Rock Heals Foundation and Seminole Hard Rock Support Services, said in a press release. "This year's grant recipients, whether serving children, combating homelessness, or standing up for human rights, embody the spirit of our mottos: 'Love All - Serve All' and 'Take Time to Be Kind.'

The locally based organizations selected this year span fifteen countries and over forty cities that reflect the brands global reach and community outreach.

The program encourages each Hard Rock property to nominate one charity annually. Examples of 2025 grant recipients

include: The Bowery Mission (nominated by Hard Rock Cafe New York) - Serving

New Yorkers experiencing homelessness

• Make-A-Wish Foundation of Georgia (nominated by REVERB by Hard Rock Atlanta) - Granting life-changing wishes to critically ill children

 Maldives Autism Association (nominated by Hard Rock Hotel Maldives) - Providing resources for children and families with autism

 Julie Weintraub's Hands Across the Bay (nominated by Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa) – Supporting survivors of human trafficking

Cruz Roja Española (nominated by Hard Rock Hotel Marbella) - Offering essential care and education to underserved children

Career Wardrobe (nominated by Hard Rock Cafe Philadelphia) – Empowering women through professional development

more information, hardrockheals.com.

Seinfeld coming to Hard Rock Hollywood

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD - Comedian and actor Jerry Seinfeld will perform at Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Jan. 23, 2026, at 8 p.m. and Jan. 24, 2024, at 8 p.m.

For tickets, myHRL.com. Seinfeld starred in the comedy classic "Seinfeld" for nine years on NBC.

His latest Emmy-nominated Netflix projects include "Jerry Before Seinfeld" and "23 Hours to Kill," along with the web series, "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee."

Immokalee to host Thunder from Down Under

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE Australia's Thunder from Down Under, a male review group from Australia, will perform at the Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on Dec. 6 at 8 p.m. For tickets, go to Ticketmaster or moreinparadise.com. Attendees must be 21 or older. The tour features heart pounding dance numbers, sensational costumes, and interactive audience engagement. This show is for adult audiences and contains no fullfrontal nudity.



"This partnership demonstrates exactly what we mean when we talk about strategic collaboration that elevates the entire emirate," said Alison Grinnell, CEO of RAKHH. "We're bringing together three distinct strengths—our deep understanding of Ras Al Khaimah's market dynamics, db Group's proven development expertise, and Hard Rock's globally recognized brand appeal—to one of the most exciting lifestyle destinations in the region that will become a dynamic hub for tourism, leisure, and entertainment. This isn't just another

hotel development; it's a catalyst for the sustained, high-quality growth that positions Ras Al Khaimah as a serious contender in the luxury and lifestyle hospitality space while supporting our broader economic diversification goals."

RAKHH operates luxury, upper-upscale, and upscale hotels, leisure and entertainment venues, a variety of dining establishments in the UAE. In the entertainment area, it owns

and operates the world's longest zipline. dB Group is also involved in the development of the 5-star Hard Rock Hotel Malta on scenic St. George's Bay in Malta. The project is also a mixed-use development that will include hotel, residences, retail and dining. It broke ground in 2024.



In the center, Hard Rock International COO Jon Lucas and President Holly Tiger participate in a guitar smash July 3 at the grand opening of the Hard Rock

Hard Rock opens in Canada's capital

BY KEVIN JOHNSON Senior Editor

Hard Rock's traditional guitar smash ushered in the grand opening of the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Ottawa on July 3.

The venue in Canada's capital is Hard Rock's first fully integrated resort in the country. It features 150 guest rooms, including 22 luxury suites; several dining options, including a Council Oak Steakhouse & Seafood and Hard Rock Café; a 2,200-seat Hard Rock Live; and an expanded casino floor with up to 1,500 slot machines, 40 liveaction table games, and high-limit gaming.

The Seminole Tribe was represented by President Holly Tiger, who joined Hard Rock International COO Jon Lucas, Hard Rock Ottawa President Christine Crump and other guests for the traditional guitar smash on stage to mark the opening.

When we sit down with our executive team, they comb through lots of cities and they pick which cities they feel like it can make the most impact; that is why they chose

this city because they feel like we can make the most impact to the communities, we can make the most impact to the economy and help each other out," President Tiger said.

As part of the opening ceremony, Hard Rock presented a \$100,000 donation to Ottawa Food Bank.

The property employs more than 1,000 team members. The opening was met with welcomed arms by local officials, who praised Hard Rock. This is a \$370 million investment from

a global company that saw huge potential in our city. Congratulations Christine Crump and the entire team at Hard Rock for this enormous win for Ottawa," Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe said on Instagram. "Our government is thrilled that

fully integrated hotel and casino venue in Canada," Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, said in a statement. "A major boost for our economy and a great addition to our city," Laura Dudas,

on Instagram.



President Holly Tiger speaks at the grand opening who serves on the Ottawa city council, said of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Ottawa.



Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Ottawa

Hard Rock Ottawa

ottawa Food Bank

E Ottawa Food Bank

Lundred Thousand DOLLARS \$ 100,000. PROUD COMMUNITY PARTNER

Hard Rock Live earns best concert venue award

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Hard Rock Ottawa

A donation in

the amount of \$100,000 is made to Ottawa Food Bank at the

ceremony.

HOLLYWOOD — Hard Rock Live at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood has been named best concert venue (Gold) in Fort Lauderdale Magazine's 2025 Best of Fort Lauderdale Awards.

The annual awards, which were announced in July, celebrate the best of the Fort Lauderdale lifestyle, with locals casting votes across more than 200 categories.

Winners are featured in the magazine's August special Best of Fort Lauderdale issue.

"Being recognized consistently by our local community as the best concert venue is a tremendous honor," Andrew Saunders, vice president of Entertainment for Seminole Gaming, said in a press release. "Hard Rock Live is committed to delivering world-class entertainment experiences, and this award affirms the dedication of our team and the dynamic energy our venue brings to South

Florida's vibrant music scene."

Hard Rock Live has hosted some of the biggest names in the industry, including Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, Eagles with Steely Dan, Ed Sheeran. Sebastian Maniscalco, Metallica, Paramore, Wu-Tang Clan & Nas, Janet Jackson, John Mayer, MANÁ, Dave Chappelle, Matt Rife, and Billy Joel, among others.

Congratulations, graduates!

BY MISTY SNYDER Museum Assistant, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

BIG CYPRESS — With graduation season upon us, it is time to celebrate the achievements of hard-working students from Pre-K through college. Like many facets of Seminole history, education contains aspects

of struggle and success. Formal schooling is a European concept that was imposed on indigenous people in the Americas by the colonial governments that invaded and settled on this continent. In the early 20th century, it was a lingering effort to accomplish Indian Removal, a U.S. government policy used to forcibly evict indigenous people from their homelands. Therefore, it is no surprise that



Graduates gather on stage during a preschool graduation event at the Hollywood headquarters auditorium



Black and white photographic print of Oscar Johns, Daniel Gopher, Julie Johns and Linda Smith in graduation caps and gowns, graduating from kindergarten on the Brighton Reservation.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

many tribal citizens refused to participate in the colonial education process.

Seminoles would remain justifiably suspicious of federal and state education for many years, but eventually some tribal members, such as Betty Mae Tiger Jumper, saw how they could use education to benefit the tribe. Betty Mae graduated from high school at the Cherokee Indian Boarding School in North Carolina and then went on to nursing school in Oklahoma where she was the first Florida Seminole to complete higher education and earn her degree in nursing. She then returned to Florida where she worked as a traveling nurse providing healthcare to the tribal community. In 1967, she became the first Chairwoman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Along with her many other accomplishments, she continued to practice nursing and advocate for healthcare and education within the tribe. The Betty Mae Jumper Medical Clinic stands today as part of her legacy of better health and wellness.

Today, Seminole students have opportunities to attend school on their own terms. Tribal students and parents can choose from public, private, homeschool or the on-Reservation schools of Ahfachkee and Pemayetv Emahakv. Scholarships are available for those interested in attending college or vocational schools, and many students today choose, as Betty Mae did, to use their skills, education, and passion to serve their community by working or volunteering in tribal government or other tribal industries.

So, congratulations to all the graduates of today. We can't wait to see the amazing things you will do in the future.

As we celebrate the Seminole graduates of today, it can be fun to look back at some of the graduates of the past. The museum preserves many images of graduates celebrating their achievements. Check them out online or come and see us at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. We're always on Big Cypress, but we'll see you at different events, too. Come check out our photo tables and contact us to schedule a private viewing at 863-902-1113.



Graduates, dressed in white caps and gowns, on a stage during a Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School graduation event in 1997.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Graduates posing for a group photo during an Ahfachkee graduation event.

Navajo woman named IAIA president

STAFF REPORT

Dr. Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo) has been named president of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, effective Aug. 1. Lowe succeeds longtime President Dr. Robert Martin (Cherokee

Nation), who was scheduled to retire July 31. Lowe most recently served as chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), managing a federal agency with a \$207 million annual budget and spearheading initiatives to advance Indigenous education and representation at the national level.

Lowe's resume also includes being executive director Harvard the University Native American Program, serving in administrative and teaching positions at Yale University and University Arizona, where she earned her PhD in Educational Policy Studies and Practice.



Dr. Shelly C. Lowe

Philadelphia museum honors Wes Studi

STAFF REPORT

The Museum of the American Revolution honored veteran actor Wes Studi on June 12 at an awards gala.

Studi, one of the most acclaimed actors from Indian Country and receipeint of an honorary Oscar, was given the Philadelphia's museum Lenfest Award. In a social media post, the museum praised Studi as "an internationally acclaimed actor, producer, and musician who has moved audiences with unforgettable performances in "Dances with Wolves," "The Last of the Mohican," and more."



SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - AUGUST 2025

When everyone was at ease, the US soldiers surrounded

The prisoners were taken to Fort Marion in St.

Augustine but were only held there briefly. Coacoochee

orchestrated an escape at night that freed most of the

captives. Unfortunately Osceola, weakened by malaria,

was unable to take part. After the escape, he was taken

to Fort Moultrie in South Carolina and died in captivity

weeks later. Emathla, likewise, had been ordered taken to Oklahoma, but died during the forced march.

The violation of the flag of truce further divided the

United States on the already unpopular war. Jesup

was called in front of Congress to defend himself. He

believed the capture of Osceola was worth the price

paid as most Americans wrongly believed Osceola

to be the leader of the Seminole, and that resistance

would crumble without him. Instead, the betrayal only

intensified Seminole resolve.

and captured the Seminole delegation.

Wes Studi receives an award from the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia.

THE SEMINOLE WAR:

UNDER A FLAG OF TRUCE

The arrest of Osceola under a flag of truce quickly

became one of the most infamous actions in American

history. The breaking of the military code of honor

damaged the United States' reputation, hampered

diplomacy, and marked its top wartime general,

William Jesup, as a villain. Osceola's death in captivity

would only solidify the stain on the honor of the young

In early September of 1837, acting on information from a prisoner, the US Army surrounded and took

the camp of Emathla (King Phillip) by surprise. Emathla

was not only a prominent war leader in his own right,

but the father of Coacoochee (Wildcat), who the Army

considered one of the most dangerous Seminole

strategists. Jesup saw the opportunity to draw Coacoochee and Osceola into an ambush, demanding

they meet to discuss Emathla's fate. Jesup declared

the meeting would be a negotiation under the flag

of truce. When the leaders arrived, there were formal

greetings and handshakes.

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

Have you ever been out in nature and seen a rock that didn't deceiving. Sometimes, a simple stone could be turned into a tool with little effort. Like this abrader.

People have used abraders like these for grinding, shaping, polishing, smoothing, and sharpening a variety of materials. Abraders can be divided into two broad categories: surface grooves can clearly be seen in Figure 2. Imagine smoothing out a stick for an arrow in this groove, and you will have a pretty good idea of what this kind of abrader was used for. old(peachstatearchaeologicalsociety.org).

Along with being found across the United States, this technology can also be found in the Eastern hemisphere common material is sandstone, like the example in Figure 3. The one in our THPO's Collections is made of limestone, which makes sense considering Florida is rich with it. Limestone is perfect for abrading due to its coarse nature. So next time you see a chunk of limestone, or any other coarse



Figure 2

n/assets/stone-tools-of-minnesota-part2_tcm36-247479.pdf Hamon, C. (n.d.). View of technology and function of grooved abraders in he early neolithic of Northwestern Europe: Journal of Lithic Studiest.

https://journals.ed.ac.uk/lithicstudies/article/view/1649/2304#:~:text=The%20use%20of%20grooved%20abraders,a%20wide%20range%20of%20grooved%20abraders,a%20wide%20range%20of%20grooved%20abraders.according to the control of the contro

Peach State Archaeological Society. (n.d.). Abrader. Peach State Archaeological Society. rchaeologicalsociety.org/artifact-identification/ground-stone-tools/abrader







or use the QR code on the right for more Seminole history resources



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





Tribes unite in opposition to Everglades detention center

BY KELLY FARRELL Special to the Tribune

Tribes are uniting to close the immigration detention center that continues expanding in middle of the Everglades. As the opposition plays out in federal courts this August, Indigenous people continue holding prayer vigils, gatherings and protests as Seminole Tribal leaders express support for their efforts to protect Big Cypress National Preserve from the onslaught of increased traffic, construction and activity.

The Miccosukee Tribe of Florida filed to join a lawsuit against what Florida legislators dubbed Alligator Alcatraz this July.

"We have a duty to protect the Everglades just as it protected us years ago," Miccosukee Chairman Talbert Cypress said in an interview with this reporter. "It's not just a piece of property; it's part of our way

For the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida in particular, protecting the environment is a core aspect of their Constitution. But, the Miccosukee Tribe isn't just protecting their tribe, but other indigenous people and all Floridians, as well as people affected by the Everglades nationwide.

"To get all the people on the same page, to get people together to create this Preserve was a monumental effort," Talbert said.

Now, that monumental effort of creating Big Cypress in the 1960s is taking shape again to protect the surrounding Indigenous families living in traditional camps there as well as the broader environment. These actions from Florida's

tribes as well as Indigenous supporters, including the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, joined allies locally throughout the world, are to protect the sacred ceremonial grounds,

as well as to protect environment and drinking water source for Floridians living hundreds of miles away.

defend It's to sacred, tribal residents say.

Among the residents who have been leading prayers and protests are Panther Clan members

Betty Osceola and Mae'Anna Osceola-Hart. Both of them live near the detention center at what was to be the world's largest airport that their ancestors successfully worked together to close before its completion in the 1960s. leadership demonstrates the multigenerational support for

protecting Big Cypress and Florida.
Friends of the Everglades
nonprofit and Big Cypress National Preserve were formed as part of the Jet Port's closure, which was then renamed the Dade Collier Training and Transition Airport (TNT) before being dubbed Alligator Alcatraz, with signs that have become a place for social media selfies. TNT is



Jessica L. Osceola shows her opposition to the center.

located mostly in Collier County and owned by Miami Dade County.

It's near ceremonial grounds and 15 traditional Seminole, Miccosukee and Independent camps along Tamiami Trail in Ochopee. The tribes lay their people to rest nearby, Chairman Cypress said.

'Our people have been here since the 1800s, since the wars that tried to remove us," said Laura Billie, a member of the Seminole Tribe who attended an event hosted by Osceola with the intent to remain prayerful.

"The people supporting this have probably never been in the Everglades," said Billie, who was raised in Big Cypress and lives in Hollywood now.

'My heart is here because my maternal roots are here and my paternal rights here. This is where my family comes from. It really

hurts me to see all this going on," Billie added, as law enforcement guarded the property and truckloads continued to enter.

"This is a sacred place, but they're treating it like it's not," Billie

Many people have expressed that their opposition to the project is not opposition to immigration policy, though some are opposed to that as well— rather the people of the Everglades are opposed to the particular location of the development regardless of who was



Durante Blais-Billie, of the Seminole Tribe's

Hollywood Reservation, speaks in protection of

sacred water, wildlife, tribal sovereignty and all

relations during the June 28 gathering outside the

immigration detention center in the Everglades,

Osceola said in a statement.

Everglades, as well as the Seminole

culture and our way of life. The

Seminole Tribe of Florida stands with

its members in opposition to further

development of the site," Chairman

people were detained at the facility,

all appeared to be Latino males

according to people interviewed at

the site. Meanwhile, Osceola and

others documented in live videos

on social media that hundreds of

trucks with materials for adding

pavement, trailers, generators, water

infrastructure and other construction

materials entered the site. By

4,000

there,

from

officials.

temporary

impact

Attorney General James Uthmeier

was possible, telling this reporter

not to even report on it at the time,

adding that it was nothing more than

a political stunt. However, within 10

days, the gates that had been open

to the Indigenous and Gladesmen

culture for decades were locked,

manned by armed guards and

conditions within the detention

center led to a lawsuit filed by the

American Civil Liberties Union,

adding to the environmental concerns

noted in the previous lawsuit filed by

Friends of the Everglades, Center for

Biological Diversity, Earth Justice

and a request for the Miccosukee

Tribe to be added to that lawsuit for

she hosted, the environment is not

separate from humanity for the

indigenous people living within their

through the court system, she

advised supporters to continue

contacting leaders within tribes as

well as officials in local, state and

federal governments. She and others

continue to host events at and near

As Osceola noted in each event

"We are the environment. We

As lawsuits make their way

cultural preservation reasons.

cultural way of life.

know that," Osceola said.

The lack of oversight and

construction began.

of

are to be housed

end

August,

detainees

according

statements

described

Governor

immigration

Though

Ron DeSantis as

causing

environmental

been no timeframe

for its closure and

performed. Alligator

Alcatraz was first

environmental

harm, there

facility has

As of July, approximately 900

which officials named Alligator Alcatraz.

Betty Osceola uses a bullhorn during a prayer gathering June 28.

"Illegal immigrants need to announced in late June by Florida be removed. It's not that we're against that," said Billie, echoing in a video ad he posted to his social the sentiments of many residents. media page on \hat{X} . Many local and "It's what they're doing to our state officials said there was no way Everglades, to our water. That's the development in the Everglades really what we're fighting for here is life, life of all Floridians," Billie

"If they develop this place, they'll sink the state of Florida," she

Some are also opposed to immigration enforcement methods overall but many people are opposed most of all to the particular location.

Billie said she hoped to see even more Seminole support of restoring the site and removing the detention center and development that has occurred there thus far.

July 2 Seminole statement, of Florida Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., said the tribe stands with its members who are protesting the facility.

"Hundreds of members Seminole Tribe of Florida have reached out to express their deep concerns about further development of the Everglades Jetport site, which they view as sacred land and critical to the Florida Everglades ecosystem. Their opposition is based on the need to protect and preserve the

violence and strangulation incidents. The series will continue throughout the year, offering no-cost, virtual training to those working in tribal justice, public safety and

and receive more information, contact the National Indian Country Training Initiative at usipatraining@



BC, Immokalee 4-H kids learn to cook from scratch, sprinkled with some life lessons

BY TATUM MITCHELL AND **BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporters**

IMMOKALEE — 4-H students filled the Cattle and Range kitchen and learned hands-on cooking in Big Cypress on July 15. A class was also held July 23 with the Integrated Health Department in Immokalee.

In Big Cypress, Tracy Sommeralls led about 20 children in multiple recipes from scratch with help from the 4-H Department's Sara Whitehead, Cheyenne McInturff and Jonathan Spurlock.

That day, Sommeralls had been up since 3:30 a.m. cooking breakfast and lunch for the people involved with calf shipping alongside Mary Jean Koenes. Sommeralls said she loves cooking for others and making them happy through food.

They taught students to make a snack of chocolate covered Cheez-Its, homemade chicken nuggets, and pigs in a blanket. After making the food, everyone got a chance to share the meal they worked on

McInturff, the newest employee in the department, said a lot goes into planning an event like this and it takes effort from a number of other departments. Getting the community together and talking about new project ideas has been a highlight, she said.

"Being involved in the community gets everybody on the same page of what they're going to accomplish, not just like this cooking class, just gathering things ... that's how it starts. From starting one project, ends up being another project, and that's kind of what we're about right there - getting all types of programs and what the community wants to be involved in to better the community, and get back to a little bit of where we came from," McInturff said.

She said she is excited for what's to come with 4-H and looks forward to more community events.

"We're trying to give them opportunities to do things for themselves. ... That's what I feel like a lot of what we do is a part of," McInturff said.

> 'We grow best when we grow together'

In Immokalee, 13 enthusiastic 4-H kids learned the art of cooking at a class in the Integrative Health kitchen July 23. On the menu was Three Sisters Chili, but before cooking began the budding chefs learned the significance of the three

Integrative Health operations supervisor and health educator Andrea Kuzbyt asked the kids if they heard about the three sisters. A lot of hands went up and Kuzbyt explained that when beans, corn and squash are planted together in a garden, all three plants thrive.

"In the garden, as in life, we grow best when we grow together," The kids teamed up three at a

worktable, which was laden with all the ingredients and tools they would need to make the chili, including a hot plate on which to cook the chili. They used Health Clinic



From left to right, Tracy Sommeralls provides instructions to Shalyn Koenes, Merl Koenes and Thomas John Koenes during a cooking session July 15 in Big Cypress.



From left to right, Justice Jumper, Akira Jumper and Loraine Jumper work together in the Big Cypress cooking session.

nutrition coordinator Karen Two Shoes' recipe, which is published in a cookbook with other tribal members' and employees' healthy

"We did one of these in Brighton and Big Cypress last year and the kids loved it," said youth agriculture extension agent Sheri

"We are trying to bring more programs to the Immokalee reservation," McInturff said.

Chief clinical dietician Muskan Peerani taught the 4H-ers how to properly use knives before they started slicing and dicing onions, peppers and garlic for the chili. As the tear-duct unfriendly onions were sliced, everyone in the room teared up, chefs, teachers and staff included.

The vegetables were sautéed and other ingredients added to the pot, including a pound of ground

bison. Since the meat is so lean, it isn't browned before adding to the rest of the ingredients. That ensures it remains tender instead of rubbery. Adults supervised and helped the kids when needed. The result was a tasty lunch with plenty left



Shalyn Koenes uses extra effort in the Big Cypress class.



Immokalee health nutritionist Alejandra Francis watches as Diane Yzaguirre slices a red pepper for the Three Sisters Chili.

DOI launches training series to combat violent crime in Indian Country

STAFF REPORT

A new training series aimed toward decreasing violent crime in tribal communities launched May

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Victim Assistance Program partnered with the U.S. Department of Justice's National Indian Country Training Initiative, U.S. Indian Police Academy, FBI, DEA and ATF to facilitate this training series. The training is designed to improve law enforcement response to violent crime and victim support in tribal

communities.

"This series shows what we can accomplish when agencies work together," Glen Melville, Deputy Bureau Director of Office of Tribal Justice, said in a press release. "By combining our expertise, we're making sure those on the front lines have the tools and knowledge they need to protect victims and hold

offenders accountable." The series began in May with a live webinar with about 900 attendees, which included tribal, federal and state law enforcement officers, medical professionals and

victim advocates. The webinar covered responding to domestic

victim services.

To register for remaining courses

Business expo, health fair to be held Aug. 21

FROM PRESS RELEASE

From left to right, Paisley Arteaga and Hayleigh Rodriguez watch as

Scarlett Sanchez stirs the pot for the Three Sister Chili they are making.

FORT LAUDERDALE - The South Florida Business Conference & Expo and the Medical Services Show, Health Fair & Longevity

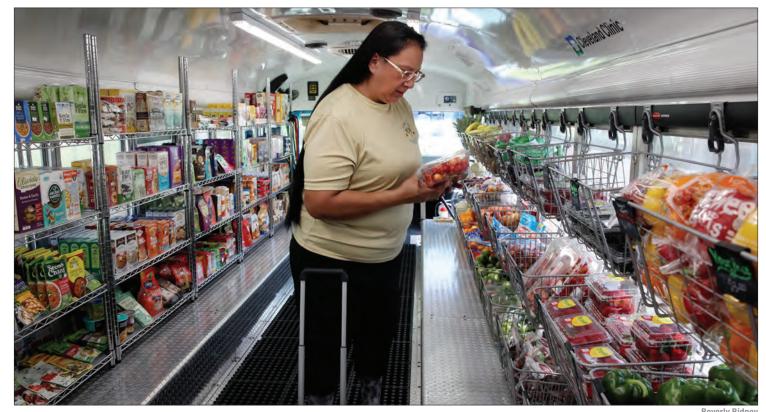
Expo will be held Aug. 21 at the Fort Lauderdale Marriott North Resort and Conference Center from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The events are open to the public.

The health expo offers a platform for health professionals and local businesses to connect,

share insights, and collaborate on health initiatives.

For more information, call the Broward Chamber of Commerce at 954-565-5750 or visit browardbiz.

SEMINOLE SCENES *



SAVVY SHOPPER: Geraldine Osceola shops at the Mobile Market bus, which came to Big Cypress on July 9. The Broward County-based bus, which offers fresh fruit, vegetables and other food, will be in Big Cypress on the second Wednesday of every month in front of the TPPY building.



ART AND ABOUT: Seminole artist and author Elgin Jumper was among the featured presenters at the Seminole Artist Experience Art Sale on July 19 at the Seminole Hotel & Casino Immokalee. Jumper sold some of his art and said it was a wonderful, successful day.





OLLIE IN MIAMI: Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Director Gordon "Ollie" Wareham brought Seminole culture and history to the Patricia & Philip Frost Art Museum on July 2 as part of the museum's "Frost After Dark" program. The museum is located on the campus of Florida International University in Miami. "With a lifelong commitment to preserving Seminole culture and history, Wareham shared captivating origin stories and ancestral histories, some passed down for thousands of years, offering a rare glimpse into the rich oral traditions of the Seminole people," the museum posted on Facebook.

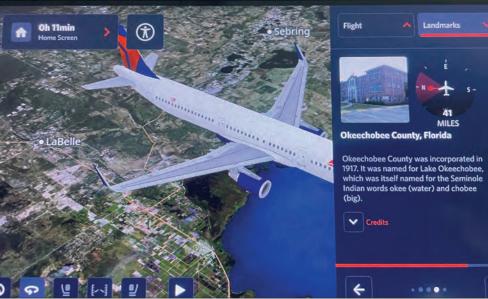




HOLD ON: Ivrin Parks gets a ride from Trenton Timothy during the Fort Pierce community's July 4 celebration on July 1 at Chupco's Landing. The event featured activities, bounce slides, games, music



ROCK, FIRE, IRON: In July, the Fire & Iron Motorcycle Club held a regional meeting at Hard Rock Casino Rockford in Rockford, Illinois. The organization is comprised mostly of firefighters and others who are associated with the fire service who love to ride. It supports veterans and families of fallen firefighters.



HIGH ALTITUDE HISTORY: Flight tracker information on board Delta flights with TV screens include historical information about locations where the planes are flying above, including Okeechobee County. The note on a flight on July 20 read: "Okeechobee County was incorporated in 1917. It was named for Lake Okeechobee, which was itself named for the Seminole Indian words okee (water) and chobee (big)."

REMEMBERING HULK: Hulk Hogan, whose energetic and flamboyant personality helped professional wrestling's popularity and finances soar, died July 24 in Clearwater at age 71. Hogan was involved with the Seminole Tribe and Hard Rock at various times in his career, including (above) when he helped open new gaming options, including craps, roulette and sports betting, at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Tampa on Dec. 8, 2023. In June 2024, Hogan returned to the property to launch his Real American Beer brand and even helped bartend. In 2006, Hogan and his family attended a Kid Rock concert at Seminole Hard Rock in Hollywood.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Arizona's Turquoise Alert for missing Indigenous people goes live

An alert system established to issue statewide alerts for missing Indigenous or endangered persons is now officially online, offering a vital tool to assist law enforcement agencies in addressing an ongoing crisis within Arizona.

"The Turquoise Alert is a critical communication tool that will save lives," Gov. Katie Hobbs said in a press release. "With this alert, we are making sure our law enforcement officers and the public can respond quickly when it matters most.'

The Turquoise Alert System bill was signed into law by Hobbs in May, creating a new statewide alert system using the federally authorized Emergency Alert System.

The alert is for anyone under 65 who doesn't qualify for an Amber or Silver Alert. An Amber Alert is issued when a minor is abducted, while a Silver Alert is for individuals over 65 or with a cognitive or developmental disability who go missing.

Before the Turquoise Alert, if a person 18 or older went missing in Arizona, a public alert of their disappearance was neither available nor required, a challenge many Indigenous families are familiar with.

This tool is a meaningful step to improve the safety and well-being of communities across Arizona, and in particular Tribal communities, which for too long have suffered from a crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people," Hobbs

The Arizona Department of Public Safety will manage the new alert system, and it will operate in parallel with the Missing and Endangered Person alert code, a national alert code adopted by the Federal Communications Commission in the fall of

2024.
"The Turquoise Alert represents a vital step forward in protecting vulnerable individuals in our communities," DPS Director Col. Jeffrey Glover said in a written statement. "By empowering the public with timely, actionable information, we can make a critical difference in locating those who are missing and bringing them home safely."

To support the launch of the new alert system, a training curriculum was developed by multiple agencies to educate officers about the alert.

"The training will consist of an eightcourse module that introduces methods and techniques for responding to and investigating cases of missing persons and implementing the new alert," according to the Governor's Office.

The alerts will be distributed regionally through various methods, including the Emergency Alert System, Wireless Emergency Alert and Arizona Department of Transportation vehicle message boards.

Alerts will also be sent through the requesting agency's social media platforms and the DPS Alerts website. Law enforcement agencies across the state will also receive an All-Points Bulletin broadcast.

A Turquoise Alert will be activated when a person goes missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances and is believed to be endangered.

The alert will be issued when there is a report of a missing endangered person, including tribal members, under the age of 65, and specific criteria are met, such as: the law enforcement agency investigating the report has exhausted all available local resources; the person has gone missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances; the missing person is in danger or with a potentially dangerous person; and there is sufficient descriptive information to assist in their recovery.

"Seconds count any time an Arizonan goes missing, a fact that our Native communities know all too well," Ak-Chin Indian Community Chairman Gabriel Lopez said in a press release. "The Turquoise Alert will help more quickly notify law enforcement during these emergencies, improving the odds of a person's safe return."

Indigenous leaders across the state praised the launch of the state's Turquoise Alert system, many noting how it has been a long time coming and will support Indigenous communities in various ways.

"Over the years, Tribal communities have faced the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons without advanced emergency systems in place, and we see the Turquoise Alert as a proactive step in the right direction," Inter Tribal Council of Arizona President Paul Russell said in a press release.

Russell, who also serves as the vice president of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, said the Inter Tribal Council respects the efforts of Hobbs to provide critically needed public safety assistance for Arizona's 22 tribal nations.

'The new Turquoise Alert, also known as 'Emily's Law,' will advance safety in Arizona not only within Tribal communities, but throughout the State of Arizona," he

added. For Gila River Indian Community Governor Stephen Roe Lewis, establishing the Turquoise Alert System through Emily's Law is deeply meaningful to him and all tribal communities in Arizona.

"We have long lived with the painful reality that our Indigenous brothers and sisters go missing at alarming rates and too often slip through the cracks of systems not built to protect them," Lewis said in a

statement. Lewis said the new alert system gives Indigenous communities a fighting chance to bring their people home, which means no family has to wait in silence, wondering whether anyone is looking for their loved

"This law is a promise that Indigenous lives matter, that our people deserve to be found, and that no one should feel invisible,"

More than 10,600 Indigenous people were reported missing in the U.S. in 2023, roughly 3,300 of whom were 18 or older, according to the FBI.

The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System reported that more than 23,700 missing persons cases were in the database at the end of 2023, and 255 of those were for Indigenous people.

In 2021, Arizona was ranked as having the third-largest number of unresolved cases of missing Indigenous people in the country, according to NamUs. Currently, there are 93 cases of missing Indigenous people in the NamUs database for Arizona.

- Arizona Mirror

Mescalero tribe to seek state's help cracking down on companies allowing online sports gambling

The vice president of a local tribe is asking the New Mexico Attorney General and the state Legislature to intervene against online gambling apps that he says are using a backdoor to allow illegal sports gambling here and, in doing so, threatening tribal gaming rights.

Mescalero Apache Reservation Vice President Duane Duffy told a panel of state lawmakers this week that platforms like Kalshi allow customers to do online sports betting under the guise of commodity futures trading. The companies are "wiggling" their way into New Mexico, a state where online sports betting is illegal, he said.

'That is a threat to the gaming market here in the state, and a clear violation of the state tribal gaming compacts," Duffy told members of the interim Economic & Rural Development & Policy Committee on Monday at the tribe's Inn of the Mountain Gods, which houses its casino. "And so that is something that we are going to have to work together on [to] address.

He said he and other tribes intend to approach lawmakers ahead of the 30-day legislative session in January to see whether there's a legislative way to crack down on the companies. He also intends to seek help from the New Mexico Attorney General, he

Duffy did not respond to a request for comment [July 8]. Neither did Kalshi.

Lauren Rodriguez, chief of staff for the New Mexico Attorney General, told Source New Mexico in an email that the office had received a letter from gaming tribes regarding the matter. The office has been in communication with one of the tribes, Sandia Pueblo, regarding Kalshi and the office is 'continuing to monitor developments in related lawsuits brought by other states," she

Duffy's comments come as other states seek help from a federal agency to crack down on the companies, which they say are undermining hard-fought legislation regulating gambling at the state level.

In early June, Arizona's director of gaming wrote a letter to the federal Commodity Futures Trading Commission, naming Kalshi as well as Robinhood and Crypto.com as companies that bypass the state's gambling regulations by pretending they are allowing users to buy "contracts" or engage in "trading" financial products when in effect they are just trying to predict which team will win a sporting match.

'The [companies] claim that their operations enable 'trading' of financial derivatives, which is conduct regulated by the [commission]," Johnson wrote. "In truth, there is no meaningful difference between buying one of the contracts offered by the [companies] and placing a bet with any other sportsbook.

Arizona is among seven states that sent cease-and-desist letters to Kalshi, according to online sports gambling news site SBCAmericas. Several other states have launched investigations, according to the

The tribal gaming compacts between 14 tribes and pueblos in New Mexico result from negotiations between the tribes, the governor's office and the New Mexico Legislature. The 2015 gaming compact, which is in effect until 2037, requires the parties to reopen "good-faith negotiations" if any "internet gaming" is authorized in New

Mescalero and other tribes cited that provision recently when seeking an official opinion from Torrez about the activities of Jackpocket, an app that allowed users to buy lottery tickets online.

In February, Torrez concluded that Jackpocket's activities amounted to "internet gaming," which meant, per the compacts, the state needed to reopen negotiations with the tribes to evaluate its impact. Torrez also determined that Jackpocket was operating without a necessary authorization from the New Mexico Lottery Association.

Duffy told the committee Monday that as a result of the AG's intervention, Jackpocket has "since ceased that operation when it comes to the online lottery sales.'

Rodriguez, Torrez's spokesperson. told Source that while it is monitoring the situation that the office would not be issuing a formal opinion about Kalshi like it did about Jackpocket, because the request for its opinion on the matter did not come from state elected officials like legislators or district attorneys.

New Mexico Sen. Bill Sharer (R-Farmington) asked Duffy to elaborate on what he's asking the Legislature to do, suggesting he would like to avoid reopening compact negotiations.

"What's the solution to this? Because I don't think we can stop the internet," Sharer

Options Duffy listed include lawsuits and seeking help from the governor's office, the Legislature or the AG. He told Fund. lawmakers he was just putting the issue "in your ear" because the problem would not be going away.

'There's no mechanism that exists right now that allows the tribes or racinos to engage in internet gaming, and to have these outside entities from outside the state doing that...it's taken out of our pockets, sending it out of state," he said. "And we don't have that ability then to revenue share to our full potential.

According to the latest figures, tribal casinos across the state generated more than \$219 million in "adjusted net win" in the first quarter of 2025, which includes the amount of money made on gaming machines minus the amount paid out in non-cash prizes. The state received more than \$20 million in revenues deposited into the general fund this quarter, as a result.

Duffy said the Inn of the Mountain Gods and its casino, which generated more than \$15 million in the first quarter of 2025, constitute the tribe's sole source of revenue, excluding federal and state grants. The casino accounts for a huge part of that, especially as the tribe's ski resort increasingly loses customers due to reductions in snowpack, he

- Source New Mexico

Tribal nations seek to join lawsuit against restricted voter registration

A bill restricting when Montanans can register to vote — including eliminating most of Election Day — would disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples living in rural parts of the state, according to new court documents filed on June 24.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Blackfeet Nation, the Fort Belknap Indian Community, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, as well as tribal advocacy nonprofit Western Native Voice, filed to join the lawsuit brought last month by the Montana Federation of Public Employees before Lewis and Clark County District Court, which challenged the constitutionality of Senate Bill 490 and another bill that strengthened voter ID laws.

The new law, sponsored by state Sen. Mike Cuffe, R-Eureka, tightened the deadline for voters to register to vote to noon on Election Day and eliminates registration on the Monday before an election, but opens it on the prior Saturday, which previously was not a day voters could register.

In the motion to intervene, the Native American coalition said the suit marks the third time in six years that Western Native Voice and some of Montana's sovereign tribal nations have gone to the courts to challenge the "Legislature's continued insistence on making it more difficult for Native Americans in Montana to vote."

"Each time we've stood up in court for our right to vote, we do so not for ourselves, but for the generations who came before us and those who will come after," Fort Belknap President Jeffrey Stiffarm said in a statement. "Our ancestors fought for recognition, sovereignty, and dignity. It's racism to try and enact the same laws over again. We will not let the state drag us backwards or silence our people. Not now. Not ever.'

Under previous Montana law, anyone in line at the ballot box by 8 p.m. on Election Day could register to vote, which has occasionally led to long lines at voting

Last November, some voters waited in line at the Gallatin County Courthouse until the early hours of the morning in order to register and cast their ballot.

Cuffe, in an opinion piece published by Lee Newspapers, cited that example when votes were cast as late as 4 a.m. — as a reason for passing his bill.

'The intent is to smooth out the process and avoid votes being cast many hours beyond the intended closing of the polls at 8 p.m.," Cuffe wrote.

But a 2024 decision from the Montana Supreme Court struck down a 2021 law that had sought to eliminate Election Day voter registration, which the initial legal complaint from MFPE cited and the motion to intervene focused on as well.

"Past efforts to limit Election Day voter registration impermissibly interfered with the right to vote," according to court documents filed by the tribal advocates. "On notice from its own legal analysis that the planned legislation likely did not conform with the Montana Constitution, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 490, which does away with eight critical hours of voter registration on Election Day.'

The Native American groups joined the lawsuit because restricting Election Day voter registration disproportionately affects Native American Voters. Citing the Supreme Court opinion, their filing states that Native voters "rely on Election Day registration because of numerous issues they face in voting, including lack of access to mail, transportation, and the long distances to county seats where they can register.'

Indigenous people in rural tribal communities "rely heavily on Election Day registration, but also overwhelmingly register to vote after noon— precisely the window SB 490 cuts out," according to the press release.

"We are not asking for special treatment—we're demanding treatment," Northern Cheyenne President Gene Small said. "When you live miles and miles from the nearest polling place, and the roads are snowed in all morning, taking away eight hours of Election Day registration creates real-life problems for everyday voters. It's anti-democratic."

The tribal nations and Western Native Voice are represented by the ACLU of Montana, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Native American Rights

- Daily Montanan (Montana)

Wisconsin's Brothertown **Indian Nation is fighting for federal** acknowledgement

There are nearly 1,000 Native American tribes. But according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there are 574. What happened to the other 400?

The answer is right there on the Bureau's website with a prefix and a caveat that may not even register if you're not Indigenous the term "federally recognized."

Federal recognition is a legal status that grants sovereignty to tribes, allowing them to have a government-to-government relationship with the United States. Recognized tribes have rights that

unrecognized tribes do not. Non-recognized tribes missed out on Covid relief funds. They don't have access to funding for language preservation. They are not covered by the Indian Child Welfare Act, the Indian Arts and Crafts Act or any other laws designed to protect tribes. Unrecognized tribes are sometimes not even recognized by other

"There was a time when a lot of other tribes did not recognize us," Phyllis Tousey, chair of Wisconsin's only unrecognized tribe, the Brothertown Indian Nation, explained to WPR's "Wisconsin Today."

"I can remember when I was a lot younger, if you said you were a Brothertown Indian, somebody might say, 'What, who?' That can be quite detrimental to your selfconcept and your identity," she said.

For the Brothertown, lack of federal recognition has even threatened the tribe's ability to preserve its own heritage. Tousey told a story about how a non-Native man came in possession of a trove of tribal documents that he tried to sell to the tribe for \$1 million. "We had no ability to reacquire that," she said.

The Oneida Nation, a recognized tribe that often acts as an ally to the Brothertown and has some shared history, stepped in to protect and preserve the Brothertown's collection.

The story highlights the vulnerability of unrecognized tribes; they are at risk of losing control of their own history.

In a "Los Angeles Times" article, Indigenous scholar and author Olivia Chilcote wrote, "In pursuing federal recognition, tribes confront the United States' enduring power to define Indigenous identities on its own terms.'

Chilcote is an assistant professor of American Indian Studies at San Diego State University and the author of "Unrecognized in California: Federal Acknowledgment and the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians." She is also a member of that tribe.

Many tribes — more than 100 — that lack recognition lost that status in the 1950s and '60s, when Congress passed a series of laws ending the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the U.S. This so-called "termination era" of federal policy was cast as a way to grant tribes greater freedom from the government. The era actually resulted in loss of crucial rights - and millions of acres of land.

However, the majority of tribes that lack recognition today never had that status in the first place, Chilcote explained.

'Some had the status at one time, but for various reasons the governmentto-government relationship ceased and wasn't actually terminated through legal mechanisms," Chilcote wrote in an email.

This is the case for the Brothertown. In the 19th century, the government terminated the Brothertown's sovereign status without the tribe's knowledge.

The Brothertown people were forced to move many times over the course of their history, eventually making their way from the East Coast to Wisconsin. When the government tried to force the tribe to move again in the 1830s, this time to Kansas, the tribe refused via legal maneuvering. They requested allotment of their land and for U.S. citizenship.

'There was a belief that owning our land individually — which tribal people were not used to — and being citizens would protect us and would prevent us from being

removed to Kansas," Tousey said.
"I believe that our ancestors, our leadership, looked around and realized, of course, that no one was asking the non-Indians to move so their land could go to someone else," Tousey said.

The strategy worked. The Brothertown were able to stay in Wisconsin. But unbeknownst to the tribe, the government had terminated the Brothertown's sovereign status when they became citizens.

The tribe has spent the last 45 years trying to get the government to fix this problem. For three decades, the Brothertown worked to gather the necessary documentation to apply for federal recognition. But the government rejected the tribe's petition in 2012, informing the tribe they should have been petitioning for restoration, not recognition.

The onus is on tribes to correct the government's wrongdoings in this arena, and it's not easy. In California alone, which has the most unrecognized tribes of any state, 81 tribes have petitioned for recognition, while only one succeeded.

"I make sense of [the history and current federal recognition process] in understanding that in a lot of ways, it's by design," Chilcote said. "Because ... the United States is a settler colonial nation. It's a kind of colonization that happens here in the United States, in Canada, Australia, New Zealand ... all with that same goal of taking Native people's land. And the lack of access to land, in many cases, then creates

this condition in which tribes lack federal recognition.

The Brothertown are still fighting for restoration of that government-togovernment relationship today.

"We are still here. We are still operating as an Indian tribe, but we are doing that on our own power," Tousey said. "This is a hard road, but we've been through a lot."

- Wisconsin Public Radio

Coastal First Nations in B.C. issue open letter to Carney opposing suggested northern pipeline

Coastal First Nations in British Columbia, Canada, have issued an open letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney, asking him to reject any new proposal for a crude oil pipeline to the northwest coast.

The move comes as Alberta Premier Danielle Smith pushes for a new privatesector pipeline that would send crude oil to the northern B.C. coast for export to Asia.

Marilyn Slett, president of the Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative, says in a statement that there is no pipeline or oil tanker project that would be acceptable to their group, and any proposal to send crude oil through their coastal waters is a "non-

The group is asking Carney to uphold the 2019 Oil Tanker Moratorium Act, which prohibits oil tankers carrying more than 12,500 metric tons of crude from stopping, loading or unloading at ports or marine installations along the North Coast.

It says the act is Canada's recognition of more than 50 years of effort to protect the North Pacific coast, which includes the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii, from the risks of an oil spill.

The nations say they have not changed their stance since oil tankers were banned from their territorial waters in 2010 based on ancestral laws, rights and responsibilities.

The group says the North Pacific coast has one of the richest and most productive cold-water marine ecosystems on Earth, and it remains a source of sustenance, culture, and livelihood for coastal communities and all B.C. residents.

The group has instead suggested the prime minister meet with them to "better understand the credible ecological treasure that is the North Pacific coast.'

The letter comes less than a week after Carney met hundreds of First Nations chiefs, where he faced resistance to the Building Canada Act, which allows the government to fast-track major projects that it deems to be in the national interest, including by sidestepping existing laws.

A news release from the Prime Minister's Office after he met with premiers in Ontario, says Carney will "continue meeting with key stakeholders over the coming weeks to ensure big projects are built in full partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, and to build one Canadian economy."

- CBC News

New Mexico, Colorado senators introduce bill to increase tribal access to clean water

According to federal data, compared with white households, Native American households are 19 times more likely to lack indoor plumbing. That figure jumps significantly for Navajo residents, who are 67 times more likely than other Americans to live without access to running water.

Citing this data, U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) on July 22 announced he and colleagues from Colorado, Democratic U.S. Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, had introduced the Tribal Access to Clean Water Act.

The bill's components include authorizing the United States Department of Agriculture to make grants and loans for technical and financial assistance, as well as for construction, and lays specific amounts over the next five years, including:

increased funding authorizations for USDA's Rural Development Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program by \$100 million per year for five years;

Increasing funding authorizations for existing programs of the Indian Health Service for water and sanitation facilities construction; • and authorizing \$90 million over

five years for the Bureau of Reclamation's

existing Native American Affairs Technical Assistance Program. Heinrich previously introduced the bill in 2021 with Bennet. Heinrich, Bennet and Hickenlooper also backed billions for tribal

water projects in that year's infrastructure

package. In a statement of support for the legislation, Anne Castle, co-founder of the initiative on Universal Access to Clean Water for Tribal Communities noted that "some of the starkest examples of the public health impacts from not having clean, running water in the home are right in our backyards," such as "higher incidence of respiratory disease, gastrointestinal infections, diabetes, and

"Water is a sacred resource given to us to protect," Santa Ana Pueblo Gob. Myron Armijo said in a statement. "It is of the utmost importance that Tribes have access to clean water not only for personal consumption and economic development but also for cultural purposes. Many tribes in the Southwest rely on access to clean water to carry on our culture and traditions.'

- Source New Mexico

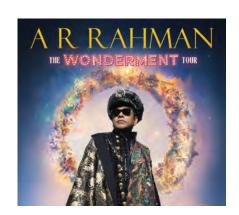
SOUTH FLORIDA'S ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION



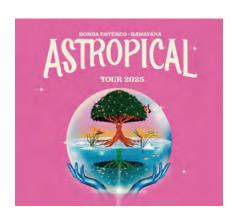
AUGUST 1 & 2SHANIA TWAIN



AUGUST 22 UB40



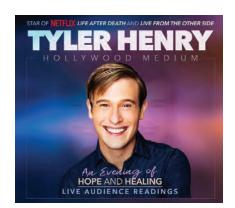
AUGUST 7
A.R. RAHMAN:
THE WONDERMENT
TOUR



AUGUST 23
BOMBA ESTÉREO
& RAWAYANA:
ASTROPICAL TOUR



AUGUST 8RAMON AYALA



AUGUST 24TYLER HENRY



AUGUST 10 REBELUTION



AUGUST 26 THE O'JAYS



AUGUST 14
THE JOE PERRY
PROJECT



AUGUST 28 BLINK-182



AUGUST 15 & 16 GABRIEL "FLUFFY" IGLESIAS



AUGUST 29
DEF LEPPARD



AUGUST 21 PROFESSIONAL FIGHTERS LEAGUE



SEPTEMBER 3 STEVIE NICKS









Education



Ahfachkee students to attend high school, college simultaneously this fall

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY **Staff Reporter**

BIG CYPRESS — Four Ahfachkee students will attend the Ahfachkee School and Florida SouthWestern State College in the fall. When they graduate from high school, they will have earned a high school diploma and an associate's degree.

The students are juniors Aiyana Crespo, Curmya Smith and Shakur Williams and senior Curtis Smith.

The requirements to qualify for the dual enrollment program are a 3.0 GPA or higher and to have five high school credits in core courses including English, math, science and social studies. Students also took the Accuplacer state college test to assess their readiness for college level coursework.

"All four of them achieved the college level test score," said guidance counselor Chip Osborn.

This is the first time Ahfachkee has participated in the dual enrollment program, which means the students will attend Ahfachkee in person and FSW remotely. On May 26, guidance counselors Osborn and Adriana Murgueytio made a presentation to students and parents interested in the program.

'There are still a few students waiting in the wings until they complete the core classes," Murgueytio said. "They will get them in tenth grade.'

"Since the school year ended, the students have been coming in on their own time to work with us [to get enrolled]," said

Crespo joined the program to give her more discipline.

"It will be nice to be more prepared for it," said Crespo, 17. "It will give me more structure before I head off to college.'

She isn't sure what she plans to study yet but is interested in film and political Curmya Smith, 16, joined the program

because she wants to get a head start on college, where she plans to study law to help people and speak up for them.

"I want to have an easier time in college and graduating high school with an AA will



Ahfachkee's dual enrollees take a break from registering for college at Florida SouthWestern State College in the Big Cypress library June 24. From left to right are Curtis Smith, Curmya Smith, Aiyana Crespo and Shakur Williams.

help," she said. "I don't think the workload will be too bad. I'm a good student and my GPA is usually higher than a 3.5.'

Curtis Smith, 16, wants to start working on college as soon as possible. He is good at science and math and may want to study finance or become a dietician. When he completes college, he plans to come back and work for the tribe.

"I want to either work in the health department or help people with their financial issues," he said. "It's a lot to set up, but it should be a smooth road. I like a

Williams joined the program to make college a little easier for him. A generally self-motivated person, he is thinking of studying either technology or science when he graduates with his AA degree.

With help from Osborn and Murgueytio, the students completed an online FSW orientation and registered for classes.

The only thing left for them is to enjoy the rest of the summer before tackling high school and college in the fall.

Cypress Billie completes Harvard program

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum educator Cypress Billie recently completed the Project Zero program at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, where he learned more teaching methods he can integrate into the tours he gives at the museum.

"It was an honor to be sent to Cambridge by the Ah-Tah-Th-Ki Museum," Billie said. "Project Zero allowed me to gain awareness of multiple teaching strategies better suited

to teachers and students.' Founded in 1967, Project Zero's mission is to understand and nurture human potential in learning, thinking, ethics, intelligence and Harvard and other universities.

pedagogy, the relationship between teacher and student and how to break through the wall dividing the two.

"You're only good as a teacher if you are good at communicating and can leave an impression on people," he said.

During the week-long course, Billie also shared his Seminole perspective with educators, administrators and museum representatives from around the world. Completing the program gave Billie confidence in his ability to learn and gave

him an appreciation for higher education at said. "They are always advocating for the

"We have a lot of smart people in the At the program, Billie learned about tribe and nothing is out of reach these days, Cypress said. "I would love for younger generations to aspire to the Ivy League and those old colleges in the Northeast.'

About a year and a half ago, the opportunity to attend Project Zero was presented and Billie volunteered to be the first to attend. Museum director Gordon Wareham and educational coordinator Abena Robinson are supportive of more

training and education for the staff. "They are always looking for a way to better our personal development," Billie

younger generation to carry the mantle of responsibility at the museum and within the

As an educator, Billie believes a challenge allows a person to demand more of themselves.

"Being Seminole is about having the ability to adapt to new ways while having a tight grip on the past," he said.

> Courtesy photo Cypress Billie with his certificate.



Claudia Doctor honored for years of service at **Big Cypress library**

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY **Staff Reporter**

BIG CYPRESS — The Education Department honored Big Cypress library assistant Claudia Doctor for her 45 years working with the tribe.

The entire department met for a training session at the Veterans Building in Brighton



Claudia Doctor with the plaque honoring her 45 years of service to the tribe.

July 10 and presented Doctor with a plaque commemorating her service.

During her years working for the tribe, Doctor has had many bosses and a lot of different jobs, but her favorite place to work is at the Willie Frank Memorial Library in Big Cypress.

"Libraries keep kids out of trouble," Doctor said. "I've seen many generations come through here."

Doctor loves working with the kids every day. Some of them love to read, but she tries to get them all to pick up a book and read.

The little ones like doing crafts and being on the computers," Doctor said. "But they have to finish their homework first."

One of the big differences she has noticed over the generations is that children today waste a lot of food. Doctor reminisced about being so grateful for anything to eat that she wouldn't dare waste a morsel.

Doctor said teenagers can sometimes be a challenge, but she knows they just want a room of their own to talk and giggle. She loves that older kids and young adults remember her and come to see her at the library. Some even bring their babies.

"It makes me feel so good that they remember me," she said. "Some of them call me grandma and give me hugs.

About 45 years ago Doctor started working for the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program (CETA), which was led by Jacob Osceola. She was there for a few years and was in charge of paper timesheets and payroll at



Library supervisor Padmini Dukharan presents Claudia Doctor with a plaque and flowers during an education staff meeting at the Veterans Building in Brighton on July 10.

Cattle and Range. She noted that one of the big changes she has seen over the years is the advent of computerized time clocks instead

After CETA, Doctor worked with the

elders for a few years doing a host of jobs including cleaning, washing dishes, cutting grass and cooking. She came to work at the library in 1992, when Debbie Johns was in

Doctor has thought about retirement but doesn't know what she would do all day.

"This is my home," she said. "Even if I leave the job, I would come back to watch the kids. I enjoy being here with the kids."

Reservations hear from college representatives

Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — The Seminole Tribe's Higher Education Department conducted multiple information sessions this month on reservations. Topics included the Billy L. Cypress Scholarship, academic programs and student resources to the Work Experience Program (WEP).

Along with the information sessions, representatives from colleges and universities attended the sessions and spoke about the different academic programs each school offers to high school graduates.

At a session July 25 in Brighton, attendees heard from Florida Gulf Coast University, Indian River State College, Stanford University, Montana State University and the U.S. Army.

The representatives discussed degrees, career services, campus life and student services. Montana State and Stanford talked about the Native programs offered by their

Montana State offers the Caring for Our Own Program (CO-OP) support program for Native American students who pursue nursing degrees. A goal of the program is to increase Native enrollment. The school also has the American Indian Hall, which is a dedicated space to Native students on campus. The American Indian Hall includes Indigenous gardens, Native artwork and a drum room.

Stanford, in Northern California, has a Native American Cultural Center which conducts programs, lectures, performances and conversations around Native issues. The center is a place for Native students to learn, grow, make friends, and find support. Stanford also conducts its own powwows, according to its website, which states there are more than 450 undergraduate and graduate students representing more than 50 tribes and island communities studying at Stanford.

Toward the end of the information session, tribal member Ace Youngblood, a college graduate and former WEP participant, shared her thoughts about her collegiate experiences and the benefits and services offered to the tribal community by the Education Department.

"I think what we've seen here today is how colleges are supportive of Native American education and supportive of the development of Native youth." Youngblood

"Tribal students walked away with a better understanding of scholarships, college readiness, and the importance of staying grounded in their heritage while pursuing higher education. The significance of this event reaches beyond academics; it's about shaping the future leaders of the Seminole Tribe." said Jeri Joiner, Higher Education and WEP manager.

For more information about Higher Education, contact the Education Department at 954-989-6840.



Jarvis Barnes-Jones, Florida Gulf Coast University director of Community Engagement and Outreach, speaks with Brighton residents July 25. Barnes-Jones discussed FGCU's academic programs and provided an overview of the campus for students who are potentially interested in applying to the school.



Ace Youngblood talks about her experience in higher education and the services offered by the tribe's Education Department.



Juan de la Rosa Diaz, senior assistant director of Regional Outreach for Stanford University, talks about the Native American Cultural Center on the Stanford campus.



Jason Montalvo, U.S. Army education services specialist, speaks about enlistment and educational programs offered to new recruits.

Caddo, Oklahoma college launch workforce development program

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Caddo Nation Economic Development Authority (CNEDA) and Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create workforce development opportunities for Caddo citizens and strengthen the tribal economy through strategic education partnerships.

The Caddo Nation is a federally recognized tribe headquartered in Binger, Oklahoma, with over 7,000 enrolled citizens.

The historic agreement, signed by CNEDA Chairman Bobby Gonzalez and OSUIT Vice Provost Trey Hill, establishes a comprehensive framework for developing customized training programs that align with the Caddo Nation's expanding portfolio of tribally owned enterprises, including renewable energy initiatives, construction projects, and infrastructure development.

"This partnership represents a transformative moment for our Nation," said Bobby Gonzalez, chairman of the Caddo Nation, in a press release. "By joining forces with OSUIT, we're not just creating jobs — we're building the foundation for generational prosperity and economic sovereignty that will benefit our people for decades to come.'

The collaboration directly supports implementation of the Caddo Nation's Section 477 Plan and long-term Resiliency Plan, providing scalable pathways for tribal citizens to participate in, lead, and grow the nation's economic development initiatives.

The partnership specifically targets

workforce development in:

Renewable Energy Development Supporting the nation's SAKU solar energy initiative and other green energy

Construction and Infrastructure — Preparing workers for tribal construction projects and regional development.

• Environmental Remediation Training specialists for orphan well cleanup and environmental restoration.

• Utility Development — Building expertise in energy infrastructure and grid modernization.

"This agreement exemplifies OSUIT's commitment to serving Oklahoma's diverse communities," Hill said in the release. "Our industry-aligned programs and state-of-theart facilities provide the perfect foundation for preparing Caddo citizens for high-paying careers in these rapidly growing sectors."

Comprehensive Training Framework

Under the MOU, OSUIT will provide: • Customized non-credit training programs tailored specifically for Caddo

Nation workforce development needs. Industry-relevant credentialing in

energy and construction sectors. Faculty expertise and curriculum

development for specialized tribal training initiatives. Access to cutting-edge facilities and

equipment at OSUIT's Okmulgee campus. CNEDA will provide facilities, coordinate student recruitment and enrollment, and ensure programs align with the Nation's enterprise development strategy

and infrastructure investments.

Story-telling key to relating Native American culture, elders and educators say

BY MARY STEURER **North Dakota Monitor**

How do you get students to remember what they learn? According to Gladys Hawk, a citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, you tell them a story.

Hawk is one of dozens of tribal elders featured on the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's Teachings of Our Elders website, which now boasts more than 350 videos.

In an interview played for educators at the Department of Public Instruction's annual Indian Education Summit in Bismarck on July 18, Hawk spoke of the bedtime stories her grandmother would tell her in Lakota growing up.

Hawk said at the end of each tale, her grandmother would tie in an important life lesson.

"She would say, 'And that's why I want you to be good — don't be like this one in the story," said Hawk. "We have to listen to what our elders have to say, because usually they're teaching us something important."

Sharla Steever and Scott Simpson, who worked on the videos for North Dakota's Native American Essential Understandings project, shared Hawk's interview as one example of how attendees can integrate Native culture and history into the classroom.

'You can pull those stories in any time you want, if you want to focus in on a

concept or a theme or something historical that the elder is speaking about," Steever

said of the Teaching of Our Elders videos. Steever said in her experience, storytelling helps to create a sense of community in the classroom. Kids tend to retain information if they have a personal anecdote to connect it to, she said.

Under a law adopted by the state Legislature in 2021, K-12 schools in North Dakota are required to teach Native history. The website is one of a number of resources the Department of Public Instruction's Office of Indian and Multicultural Education has developed that can support schools in this area, Steever said.

She said the Department of Public Instruction is still doing interviews with elders from time to time. However, it can be difficult to arrange.

While the agency likes to give elders who participate a stipend, there's not a ton of funding available, Steever said.

'There's never really been a budget for that," she said. The department also has to squeeze in time for the interviews around its other work, she added.

Steever said she's working on an additional set of video interviews with Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate elders.

Haiden Person, a recent graduate from Bismarck High School and the conference's youth speaker, said July 18 that teaching more Native American culture and history in schools is key to combatting anti-

'They don't know it's wrong, you've just got to teach them," said Person, a citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

Person recently graduated from Bismarck High School and plans to attend United Tribes Technical College in the fall. Person said mental health is an issue close to his heart, and that he plans to become a psychiatrist.

The summit also welcomed Daniel Kish, an expert in human echolocation — using sound to locate objects — and president of World Access for the Blind, for a keynote address.

Kish has been blind since he was a year old. He said he gained the ability to echolocate because his parents wanted him to be self-sufficient despite his disability. He now helps teach the skill to other blind

"It's an ability that provides you with awareness of the environment that's way out beyond the length of your cane," he said.

He said a broader goal of his is studying how people develop a sense of personal identity and agency. Kish said he appreciated hearing Person talk about mental health and the importance of leaning on others in your community.

"Haiden had it right, don't be afraid to ask for help," Kish said.

UNITY wraps up national conference with more than 3,000 attendees

FROM PRESS RELEASE

SAN DIEGO — UNITY's National Conference was held June 27 to July 1 in San Diego. More than 3,000 attendees from around the country came together to celebrate their culture and explore strategies for using their voices and leadership with a goal to create positive change in their communities. Youth attendees and trainers held discussions and explored actions to promote positive mental health and substance abuse prevention efforts.

"It's always so inspiring to see our youth come together and demonstrate so much passion for their communities," Mary Kim Titla, UNITY executive director, said in a press release. "Our goal is always to empower Native youth to become cultural stewards and future leaders. Youth, chaperones, trainers, and staff felt a renewed sense of pride and purpose during the conference that will fuel them when they return home."

Pre-conference activities included campus tours at San Diego State University and a Native Youth Empowerment Night. Daily themes focused on spiritual, mental, physical, and social development, with dress days highlighting the initiatives Every

Child Matters and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and showcasing traditional dress.

UNITY youth elected Watson Whitford (Chippewa Cree/Navajo of Montana) and Mazie Countryman (Northern Arapaho, Eastern Shoshone, Shoshone Bannock, Navajo of Idaho) as co-presidents of the National UNITY Council Executive Committee. During their one-year term, Countryman and Whitford will work with the following area representatives who were elected by youth councils during the

Great Plains Area - Weston Bird

(Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara), North Dakota

Midwest Area - Gabriel Loonsfoot (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians), Michigan

Northeast Area - Liliana Mars (Narragansett/Navajo), Rhode Island Northwest Area - Tia Butler (Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians),

Pacific Area - Alina Sanchez (Wilton Miwok), California

• Rocky Mountain Area - Rhiannon Eaglespeaker (Blackfoot/Kiowa), Montana

Southeast Area - Ethan Hedgepeth (Cherokee/Tuscarora), North Carolina

Southern Plains Area - Victor Organista (Prairie Band of Potawatomi),

Southwest Area - Jamie Crowe (Tesuque Pueblo), New Mexico

Western Area - Amaya Escalante (Pascua Yaqui Tribe), Arizona.

SWEP DOC participants search Big Cypress land, water for invasive species

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — A group of Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) participants have been working with the Department of Conservation (DOC) to find and identify species in Big Cypress to determine whether they are invasive or native to the area. On July 16, they found a lot of invasive fish and small rodents.

Led by Joe Andreoli, DOC invasive wildlife biologist, and Kenneth Descheene, DOC biological technician, the group consisted of three high school students and one young adult. All had chosen the department because of its work outdoors.

Carlise Bermudez, 21, attended Florida SouthWestern College but was eager to start working in a job that was meaningful to her. She grew up watching the Discovery Channel on TV and saw people doing things she wanted to do.

"I wanted a hands-on, outdoor job," she said. "This is something I can stick with, I really like the department of conservation, its everything I'm passionate about. I get to do something I always wanted to do.'

SWEP began in mid-June and Andreoli noted that they wanted to provide the participants with a true experience of what the department does. They drew on the department's deep bench of experts in various fields to achieve that.

The forestry department is working on the upcoming palmetto berry harvest and, along with the SWEP participants, are collecting data, making graphs and mapping the data. They use a new iPad app for geolocation that streamlines data management.

"The kids pick up the technology fast and we all noticed that they are really enthusiastic," Andreoli said. "They are also learning PowerPoint, Excel and the Arc GIS system to map and analyze their data. They are learning stuff I didn't learn until college and are picking it up fast. DOC does a lot of different work and we wanted to include them in the whole process."

Ahfachkee tenth grader Randy Rueda, 15, has always liked being outside and watching animals.



Biological technician Kenny Descheene, invasive wildlife biologist Joe Andreoli and SWEP participants Carlise Bermudez and Randy Rueda check rodent traps to get a count of any animals within them.



'They are always interesting; how they do things and the way they are organized is very structured," he said. "I've learning how and why they do the things they do. The most interesting thing we found was an albino walking catfish in the net trap in aquatics. It's an invasive species; there are a lot of invasive fish here, even more than the native fish. We are trying to save the native fish and take the invasives out of the ecosystem so the natives can thrive."

Amid the heat, humidity and mosquitos, the group went out to check rodent traps in Billie Swamp Safari. Beverly Bidnev

They check the traps From left to right, daily to see what lives Randy Rueda, Joe there and whether Andreoli and Kenny Descheene work to move a cotton mouse from a trap into a bag to be weighed, logged and tagged in

a Billie Swamp Safari

hammock.

they are native or invasive. They checked a few sites in different habitats; open prairie and hammock.

There were about 20 traps in each site, set about 10 meters apart. The traps were baited with nuts and seeds and a cotton ball was put in the trap for the animal's comfort.

On this day, they found the native species Gossypinus, of the genus Peromyscus, also known as the cotton mouse in the traps. They found eight of the little rodents, who weighed in between 18 and 35 grams. After being weighed, a number was written on its belly with a sharpie to identify it if it should be trapped again. During the outing, one "repeat offender" was captured two days in a row; a male who lost one gram of weight

When the group completed its survey of the traps, they went to the Kissimmee Billie Slough in the Big Cypress native area to check two sites with fyke nets set up to capture fish. Between July 8-22 and 15-17 the SWEP DOC team caught 223 Brown Hoplo, 106 Sailfin Catfish, six Walking Catfish and five Florida Gar. The Gar was the only native fish species caught, the rest are all invasive species.

The SWEP program is nearing its end for the summer and the participants will make their final presentation to the community at a meeting in the Swamp Water Café Aug. 1.





Above, Invasive wildlife biologist Joe Andreoli holds a cotton mouse as SWEP participant Carlise Bermudez tags it by writing a number on its belly with indelible ink. At left, a tagged cotton mouse moments before being released back into the wild of Billie Swamp Safari land.



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Reservations celebrate Fourth of July



BRIGHTON: Kaine Torres, Ella Snow and Jayda Torres enjoy snow cones on the 4th of July.



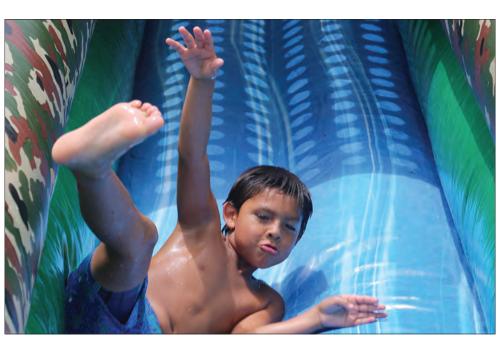
BRIGHTON: Dressed in patriotic clothing and patchwork Dana Osceola, left, and Theresa Frost play in the corn hole tournament.



BRIGTHTON: Brighton Councilman Larry Howard shows off his BBQ skills as he prepares dinner for attendees at the Brighton 4th of July celebration.



BRIGTHTON: Eric Puente, left, and Donovan Osceola make the watermelon race look easy in the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena in Brighton.



TRAIL: At right, Michael Osceola Jr. has a blast coming down the water slide. Below, Trail enjoys the celebration.



TRAIL: Malakai Osceola slides down a giant bounce slide.

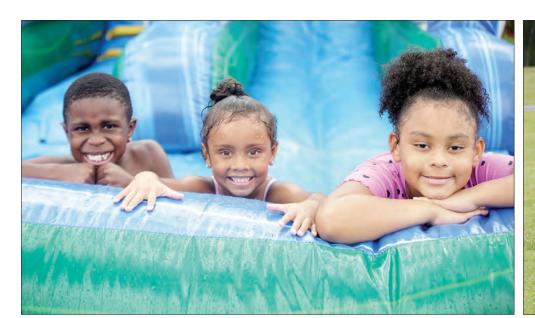
TRAIL: Trail Council Liaison Caryn Billie speaks to attendees at Trail's 4th of July celebration July 2



at the Huggins Camp.



FORT PIERCE: Makai Timothy shows his quarterback skills at the 4th of July celebration.

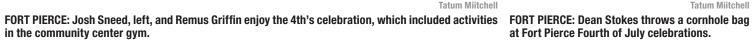


FORT PIERCE: Brooklyn Villegas, Mya Sneed and Ivrin Parks on a waterslide at the 4th of July celerbration at Chupco's Landing on July 1.



Tatum Miitchell





Calf shipping sends cattle to feedlots from BC, Brighton

BY TATUM MITCHELL Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — From July 7 to July 17, across Brighton and Big Cypress reservations, things were busy with calf shipping after the past year cattle owners spent caring for the calves.

After the various owners and their teams wrangled the calves from the field and separated them, the calves were then sorted

into different paddocks based on weight to stand by for shipping.

Moses Jumper Jr. and his family have been raising cattle for three generations. He has been involved with cattle for most of his

We have these sales every year, once a year. It brings everybody in the community, everyone together. We have a pretty good time out here," Jumper said.

When the calves reach about 1,350

pounds after the next few months of eating, they will be sent to market.

Jumper had "a good crop" this year. About 35 of his calves shipped out on July 15. He said the calf shipping is busy, but he enjoys everybody in the community coming together for it.

"It's pretty nice. It brings everybody out together," Jumper said.



Moses Jumper Jr., left, and his son, Josh, keep their eyes on the calf shipping in Big Cypress.



BC cattle foreman Andre Jumper helps guide calves through tall growth on shipping day.





The Jumper's team shoos a group of calves toward a trailer to go get weighed for shipping July 15 in Big Cypress.



'Behind the scenes' on shipping day in Big Cypress.



Tatum Mitchell (3)

Clint Raulerson closes a gate behind him as a group of cattle watch at the Big Cypress calf shipping

Hard Rock Tampa receives cultural impact award

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TAMPA — Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa has been recognized by Casinos.com as one of seven tribal gaming operations across North America making a significant cultural and community impact, based on votes from residents across four states and three Canadian provinces.

The award honors gaming establishments with the greatest community impact through charitable giving, local investment,

and entertainment leadership in regions with strong tribal gaming presence.

Seminole Hard Rock Tampa was honored as Florida's top voted casino resort for its deep rooted commitment to charitable giving, disaster relief, and local economic development. The recognition was part of Casinos.com's Tribal Casinos Month, celebrating the achievements of Indigenous owned and operated gaming institutions during National History Month. Indigenous

"This recognition is a reflection of our team's ongoing commitment to community, especially during times of crisis, Joseph Wagner, vice president and assistant general manager at Seminole Hard Rock Tampa, said in a press release. "We are proud to stand with our neighbors, offer real support, and help uplift the Tampa Bay area through both action and compassion."









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Sports*

Brighton Bombers go unconquered, win NAYO title

BY KEVIN JOHNSON Senior Editor

CHOCTAW. Miss. — Nine teams from the Seminole Tribe of Florida competed in the annual NAYO baseball and softball tournament July 17-19 in Choctaw, Mississippi; one came home as champions.

The Brighton Bombers wore camouflage uniforms and ruled the 8U boys coach-pitch division from start to finish. Organized by the Brighton Recreation Department, the Bombers won all three of their games, including the clincher, 7-0. They were proof that practice pays off.

"We had practice for a couple weeks. They worked really hard, and they got better," said Bombers head coach Mary Huff, who was assisted by coaches Brandtley Osceola, Bruce Snell and Lillian Henry. Also, Preston Baker and Mitchell Runkles helped out in

"It was definitely a good group effort with a bunch of help," Huff said.

Hosted by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the tournament featured 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U and 17U divisions in baseball and softball. Twenty teams competed on the baseball side while softball drew 25 teams. In addition to the nine Seminole teams, six came from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the remainder from MBCI.

Three Seminole teams finished as runners-up. The B-Town Bad Boyz (17U baseball), Seminole Impact (17U softball) and Florida Girls (10U softball) reached the championships with one loss. All three

Brighton Bombers 2025 NAYO 8U Boys Coach-Pitch Champions

Head coach: Mary Huff Asst. coach: Lillian Henry Asst. coach: Brandtley Osceola Asst. coach: Bruce Snell

- 11 Jeremiah Ash 44 - Jherricko Baker
- 12 Axton Baxley
- 7 Maverick Gabbard 6 - McCoy Gabbard
- 5 Eastyn Gopher 4 Ethan Gopher 2– Bill Osceola
- 10 Evin Osceola

9 – James Osceola needed to win twice in the championships,

but none were able to force the "if necessary" games. Still, they went home with finalist plaques and rings. The Florida Girls lost their first one, but

clawed back to win their second game to make it into the championship.

"They did awesome. It's their first time playing together as a team. We had girls from different reservations come together," said coach Kalgary Johns.

The Florida Made 10U boys also won a plaque for finishing third.

'We came back, we fought back. A lot of it is kids never played before," said coach Mitchell Runkles.

Florida Made's top hitters included



Kevin Johnson

The Brighton Bombers celebrate after winning the NAYO 8U boys coach-pitch championsip July 19 in Choctaw, Mississippi.

Zach Yzaguirre, Ellis Gopher and Kihyon Hodge and Franky J.

Seminole players produced some defensive gems in Saturday's games. Bombers shortstop Jherricko Baker made a Major League stop when he backhanded a Jazmine Garcia and center fielder Tehya sharply hit groundball and, from his knees,

fired the ball to first base for an out. The Impact's outfield made a significant impact thanks to plays by left fielder

Nunez. Garcia dove to make a tough catch in shallow left in the championship against the MBCI Sparks.

See NAYO on page 3C



Brighton Bombers shortstop Jherricko Baker receives a toss from second baseman McCoy Gabbard



Kevin Johnson

The Brighton Bombers are eager to get their hands on the championship plaque that they won in the coach-pitch 8U boys division.

Big Cypress kids visit Fort Myers lagoon park

Big Cypress Recreation campers had a great time at the Brightwater Lagoon water park in Fort Myers on July 18. The 33

campers frolicked in the 6-acre, 10-million gallon, lagoon-shaped pool which features a floating obstacle course, paddle boards, kayaks, a water slide and sandy beaches.





From left to right, Zhane Carter, Mason Bear, Braylen Carter and Chance Frank paddle two person kayaks as camp counselor Gabriel Hyland, in the water, gets splashed at the Brightwater Lagoon water park July 18.

From left, Chance Frank. **Zhane Carter, Braylen Carter** and Mason Bear enjoy the water after paddling kayaks in the lagoon.



From left to right, campers Lashawn Pascal, Audrean Cypress, Kion Tommie and Cole Tommie stand in front of the lagoon's floating obstacle course.



Beverly Bidney

Campers listen and speak to WNBA player Alissa Pili, an Alaska Native, on July 11,



NFL player and former FSU star Dalvin Cook meets kids at the Celebrity Sports Academy's summer camp July 7 on the Big Cypress Reservation.

Sports, music, Miami all part of busy week at BC camp

BY TATUM MITCHELL **Staff Reporter**

BIG CYPRESS — Big Cypress Recreation Department summer campers received a glimpse of life in the NBA thanks to a visit to the Kaseya Center, home of the Miami Heat. The behind the scenes tour July 10 included meeting Heat player Haywood Highsmith and attending an informational panel of team employees, who discussed various career opportunities in basketball.

The trip was part of the Celebrity Sports Academy's summer camp, which ran July 7-11 on the Big Cypress Reservation and drew more than 100 kids.

The visit to Miami started with lunch in the arena before the campers split up into age groups for the tour and met the panel.

The panel consisted of six employees with jobs ranging from merchandise manager to creative operations manager. The panelists discussed their career journeys, balancing personal life with work, financial advice, the importance of cultural identity and more.

"Being here at the Heat, I still kind of see that [diversity] represented as well within our community here and the culture here," Laura Sarmiento, senior creative operations manager, said. "Everyone's very inclusive. We get along greatly. We value each other's opinions, no matter where we come from. And actually kind of helps elevate what we do, having to share our experiences, no matter how different

they are, if we pull the best from all our

The tour took the campers through the Heat's weightroom, locker room, practice court, medical / physical therapy room and office area. They shot hoops on the practice court, and took photos with championship trophies.

The day ended with a Q&A with Highsmith. Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie presented him with a traditional Seminole doll and he gave her a signed jersey. Highsmith signed mementos and took photos with the campers.

The questions he received ranged from "How tall are you?" (6-foot-6inches) to "What advice do you have for your younger self?"

"I'm gonna tell my younger self to use this time wisely and don't take anything for granted. Time is the most valuable thing in the world we have. We don't get time back," Haysmith said. "Looking back at my younger self, I didn't work as hard as I did, as I should have when I was younger. But now that I'm in the NBA I see how much hard work it is. Well, I did so much hard work to get here. I could have worked even harder when I was younger to make it kind of easier for me. So, just telling myself to use your time wisely, trying to get better each and every day, try to just keep working.'

One camper asked for a Jibbitz (decorative shoe charm) off of his croc, and Haysmith agreed. More questions included "What's your shoe size?" (13 or 14, depending on the shoe), "Who's your



The trip to Miami included photos in front of a statue of former Heat star Dwayne Wade.

weren't a professional basketball player, what would you be doing?" (owning a business or coaching).

The field trip came on day four of the five-day camp, which offered campers a variety of opportunities in a busy, funfilled week packed with basketball, soccer, music production, pro athletes, and favorite music artist?" (Drake), and "If you sessions about the sports industry.

Celebrity Sports Academy award winners for Big Cypress summer camp

Basketball Awards

MVP Camper of the Year: Curtis Smith Jr Scoring Champion of the Year: Little Tigertail Most Improved Basketball Camper: Madelynn Garza Best Sportsmanship: Nakoa Smiley

Soccer Awards

MVP Camper of the Year: Kathy Billie Soccer Scoring Champion of the Year: Braylon Carter Most Improved Soccer Camper: Jezabel Yzaguirre Best Sportsmanship: Goldie Hanks

Cheer Awards

MVC Cheer Camper of the Year: Kiara Jackson Most Improved Cheer Camper: Kayli Jackson Best Spirit: India Richardson Best Sportsmanship: Caleigh Fuller

Other Awards

Strength & Conditioning Camper of the Year: Wildcat Billie Sportology Camper of the Year: Micah Jimmie Music Creator of the Year: Tyson Cypress

The themes emphasized during camp focused on being respectful and listening. Campers, who ranged from ages 5 to 17, even wrote, recorded and produced their own song, which was performed by a group of campers on the final day.

Dalvin Cook (NFL) visited the campers on the first day and live video chats were held with Indigenous pro-

soccer, cheer and music.

athletes Alissa Pili (WNBA) and MarJon Beauchamp (NBA). The camp wrapped up with award presentations for basketball,

Senior Editor Kevin Johnson contributed to this story.



Miami Heat forward Haywood Highsmith presents an autographed Heat jersey to Councilwoman Mariann Billie, right, and Big Cypress Recreation Manager Cathy Cypress on July 10 in Miami.



Campers get a chance to visit the Miami Heat's locker room and ask questions.



Kevin Johnson



A frenzied scene as kids try to score and hurry back to chairs during a musical chairs game on the final day of camp.

After practicing all week, cheer participants perform what they learned.

♦ NAYO From page 1C

In an earlier game against MBCI's Hotshots, Nunez caught a flyball and fired a bullet to third base to nab a runner for a crucial inning-ending double play.

Also, in the Impact-Hotshots game, two

of the best pitchers in the Seminole Tribe -

Hadyn Billie and Preslynn Baker – faced off in an impressive duel. Billie and the Impact

emerged with a 3-1 win.

In Friday's action, on the baseball side, after losing their opening game Thursday, B-Town Bad Boyz 17U stayed alive Friday afternoon thanks to a dramatic victory. Bad Boyz trailed 5-0 early, but fought back to tie the game at 6-6 with Tim Urbina scoring the

Sylas Billie, who earlier in the game belted a two-run double, came through in the clutch in the last inning. Billie drilled a leadoff double deep into the leftfield corner and scored the winning run on a steal and wild pitch on the same play.

Jokoah Spencer and Leland Billie handled pitching duties for the winners.

With only three teams in 14U, the Rez Rascals, with players mostly from Brighton

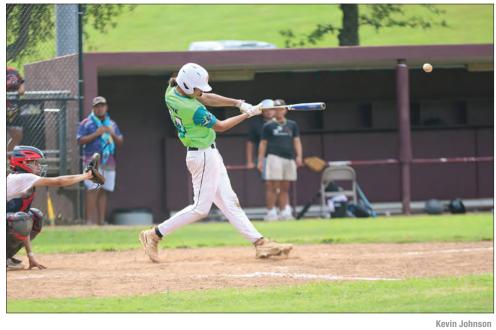
and Immokalee, didn't play Thursday. On Friday, early in their game they received an RBI single from Milo Osceola, and Khoal Cochran had a single and scored a run, but the Rez Rascals lost to a Choctaw team.

In Friday's softball games, the Seminole Impact 17U and the Lady Seminoles 12U each won their Thursday night and Friday morning games, but both lost close games Friday afternoon to fall into the losers bracket

in the double-elimination tournament.

In Friday morning's win, Melaine
Bonilla sparked the Impact's four-run first
inning with a leadoff walk and run scored.
Aniyah Martinez blasted a two-run double and Daliyah Nunez drove in a run.

The Choctaw's Hotshots 17U includes Seminoles' Preslynn Baker, Truley Osceola and Teena Maree Covarrubias. Osceola drilled a two-run double in a game Friday.



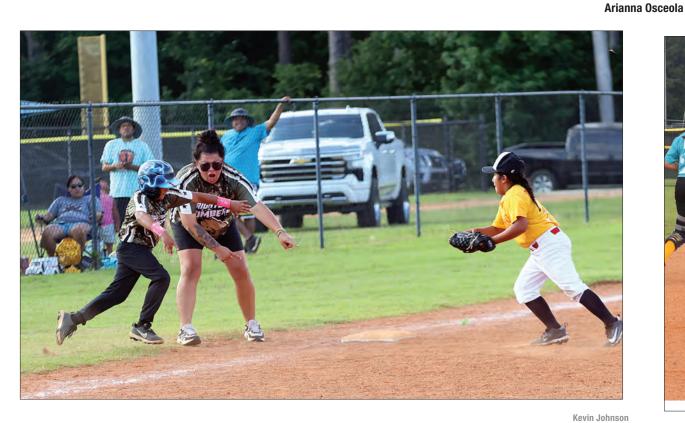
Sylas Billie





Zach Yzaguirre

Kevin Johnson



Coach Mary Huff and Evin Osceola



JoJo Nunez, left, and Jaylynn Rodriguez



12U Lady Seminoles



Kevin Johnson **Amariah Lavatta**



Kevin Johnson



Truley Osceola



Kevin Johnson

Kevin Johnson





Kevin Johnson



Kevin Johnson

Tim Urbina

Teo Estrada

Making an impact in Montana

Photos by Byron Osceola

STAFF REPORT

Seminole Tribe basketball standout Duelle Gore brought his Rez Famous Mvmnt nonprofit to the Fort Peck Reservation in Poplar, Montana, for a youth camp July 8-10. The camp averaged about 90 kids per day.

Gore and his former Haskell Indian Nations University

teammate Bo Schneider led the music portion. basketball side of the camp, focusing on fundamentals, skill development and team competition.

The camp offered more than basketball. Art and music were a big part of the experience. The Seminole Tribe's Wilson Bowers provided art instruction while Keysel Pelaez handled the

Rez Famous's website mentions the organization is "focused on empowering Native American youth through a combination of sports, health, and cultural programs. We believe that by nurturing physical health, fostering cultural pride, and building community connections, we can

inspire the next generation of leaders."

Byron Osceola, a college student from the Hollywood Reservation who is majoring in photography, captured the essence of the camp and the reservation through the lens of



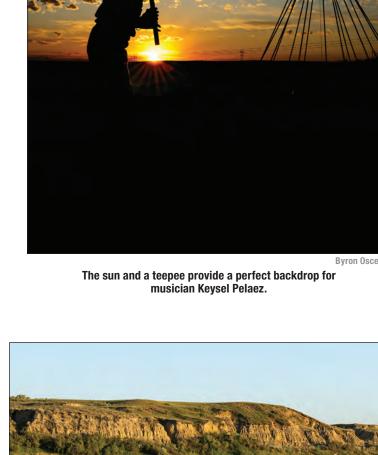
A classroom of creativity as Wilson Bowers provides art instruction to the campers.



Duelle Gore at the center of a court filled with young basketball players.



A lone buffalo on the horizon in a black and white image.



Byron Osceola



 $\begin{array}{c} \textbf{Duelle Gore oversees a drill during his Rez Famous camp for youth} \\ \textbf{on the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana.} \end{array}$

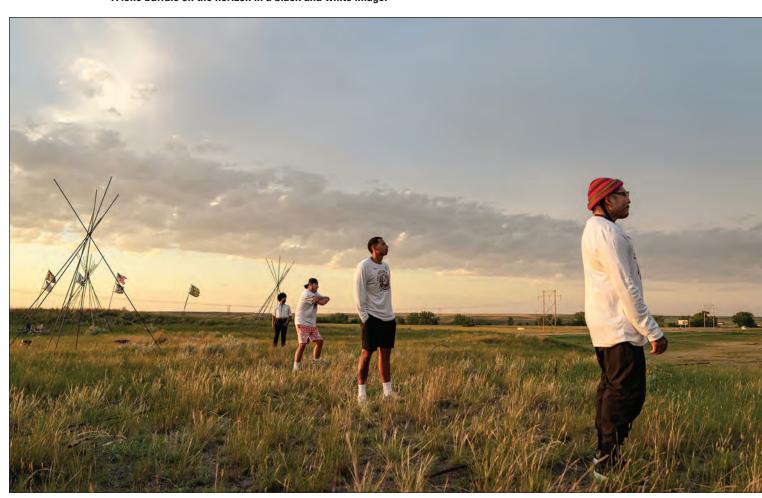


Byron Osceola A young camper focuses on an art activity.



Skipping stones in unison.





Having a ball.



Byron Osceola

FSU homecoming, Seminole Heritage game to be held Nov. 1

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE — Florida State football will celebrate homecoming and Seminole heritage on Nov. 1 against Wake Forest. FSU is 62-12-1 all-time in its homecoming games and has won 11 consecutive homecoming games.

The game will also serve as the team's third annual Seminole Heritage game. Florida State celebrates its long-standing relationship with the Seminole Tribe of Florida by featuring turquoise – the color that represents harmony, friendship and fellowship throughout Native American communities – in many different ways during the game.

FSU is 2-0 in Seminole Heritage games, beating No. 16 Duke 38-20 in 2023 and Charleston Southern last season.

FSU starts its season Aug. 30 with a home game against Alabama at 3:30 p.m.

The Seminole Tribe's Zae Thomas is a freshman defensive back on FSU.

FSU basketball to face UMass in Sunrise on Dec. 13

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE — Florida State will face the University of Massachusetts on Dec. 13 in the 31st annual AutoNation Orange Bowl Classic at the Amerant Bank Arena in Sunrise.

Florida will play George Washington as part of a doubleheader. Times have not been announced.

Florida State will play in the AutoNation Orange Bowl Classic for the 11th consecutive season as it faces UMass of the Mid-American Conference. Florida State has won three of its last five and 10 of its last 13 games played in the Orange Bowl Classic. The Seminoles first played in the Orange Bowl Classic against UMass in 1999 and have played in the Orange Bowl Classic each time it has been played since an 82-63 win over Tulsa in the 2012 Orange Bowl.

"The game allows us to showcase our program to the south Florida area where we have a very strong fan base. Playing in the Orange Bowl Classic against UMass is a tremendous growth opportunity for our program," first-year Florida State head coach Luke Loucks said in a press release.

FSU recently signed guard Xavier Osceola from the Seminole Tribe. Osceola, from the Hollywood Reservation, graduated from NSU University School this spring.

FHSAA student advisory committee seeks members

FROM PRESS RELEASE

GAINESVILLE — The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) is seeking nominations from member schools for students who would like to serve on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee will be to provide a voice for student-athletes within the FHSAA governance structure, in the following areas:

- Current issues facing studentathletes
- Input regarding rules and regulations
 Input on FHSAA special initiatives
 (e.g., sportsmanship campaign)

• Promotion of a positive image of the student-athlete.

The 16-member statewide committee will meet once or twice annually at the Robert W. Hughes FHSAA Building in Gainesville and once over Zoom. Projected meeting dates are Oct. 6, 2025 (Gainesville), Jan. 26, 2026 (Zoom), March 2, 2026 (Gainesville). Participation in these meetings is a mandatory requirement of the committee. A student's participation would involve a trip to the meeting, accompanied by a chaperone. Expenses (e.g., mileage, lodging, per diem) will be paid by the FHSAA.

The FHSAA is interested in applicants who possess the following qualities:

 must be an active student-athlete participating in at least one FHSAAsanctioned or recognized sport;

 must be a sophomore (rising junior) or junior (rising senior) in good academic and disciplinary standing;

- must show a commitment toward representing the interests of all studentathletes;
- must display strong character and commitment to sportsmanship and integrity;
 and
- must demonstrate leadership in school.
 As of July, the committee had slots for 8 more students for the 2025-2026 school year.

Nomination deadline is Aug. 21. For more information, email jrohrer@fhsaa.org or call 352-372-9551, ext. 440.

First Nations hockey star to play for Penn State

BY KEVIN JOHNSON Senior Editor

Highly touted teenage hockey star Gavin McKenna - regarded as the likely No. 1 overall pick in the 2026 NHL Draft committed to Penn State University in July.

McKenna, 17, is from Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory of northwest Canada. He is a member of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

In 2024, he won the APTN Bryan Trottier Most Valuable Player Award, which is awarded to an Indigenous hockey player who demonstrates on-ice excellence and contributes to the Indigenous community.

"It's a super cool feeling, you know, being Indigenous and getting that recognition," McKenna said at the time of

the announcement. "I'm super proud of who I am and my background."

McKenna has starred in the Western Hockey League the past two years, including racking up 129 points in 56 games last season. He could have returned to the WHL for the upcoming season, but instead chose to play for Penn State. He is regarded as the likely No. 1 overall draft pick in the 2026 NHL Draft.

"His arrival to Hockey Valley is extremely significant not only to our hockey program, but to Penn State athletics and to college hockey as a whole," Penn State coach Guy Gadowsky said in a statement. "We are absolutely thrilled and excited to witness his contributions on the ice, to our locker room, and to the Penn State community. This is a great day to be a Nittany Lion."



Penn Sta

Gavin McKenna

Brighton to host NASA softball tournament

STAFF REPORT

BRIGHTON — The annual NASA softball tournament, featuring men, women and coed teams, will be held Aug. 7-9 on the Brighton Reservation and in Okeechobee.

The tournament will feature three divisions: age 18 and up, 40 and up, and coed. Games are scheduled to be played at the ballfields on the Brighton Reservation and at Okeechobee County's OK Softball Fields, 950 Northwest 23rd Lane, in Okeechobee, next door to Yearling Middle School.

NASA is comprised of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Seneca Nation of



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Strong tournament for Florida teams at junior nationals

STAFF REPORT

The sixth annual Native American Junior Nationals - one of the largest Native tournaments in the country was held June 27-29 in Mesa, Arizona. Games were played at the Arizona Athletic Grounds, which has 24 courts under the same roof.

Divisions ranges from 3rd grade and under all the way to 11th and 12th grade. Florida teams didn't win any championships, but many of them had strong tournaments.

GIRLSOn the girls side, Native Soldiers, coached by Skyla Osceola, dominated their first six opponents with lopsided wins in the girls 11th and 12th grade division. On the final day, Native Soldiers lost to Legendary Elite, 44-41, and wound up fourth with a 6-2 record.

The Florida Rebels 7th-8th grade girls played great in the first two days, outscoring their opponents 113-33. Led offensively and defensively by Milli Dear (Choctaw descendant), who was averaging 20 points per game. Koraline Jumper, who is only a 6th grader and played up on the 8th grade team, commanded the floor at the point guard

Great three-point shooting by Shiloh

Archambault Tiger (Miccosukee Tribe) ignited the offense. They had to play without a center, so Jalene Smith stepped up and played great defense in the paint without fouling and rebounded very well. Eri'Mya McQueen brought great energy and was a force in the backcourt with Dear. They made their way to the Diamond bracket on the final day and made it to the Sweet 16. They finished in the Top 15 out of 56 teams.

The Florida Rebels' 5th-6th grade girls found themselves in a tough pool play bracket. They lost by 5, 7 and 4 points in pool play to teams that all went to the Final Four in their brackets.

The Rebels were led by guards Koraline Jumper, Kaliyah Hodge, and Dalyse Baker. The trio shined at both ends of the floor. Sharp-shooter Kanae Jumper kept teams spread out and tough to guard in the paint. Forward Elieah Pemberton (Red Lake Band of Chippewa and White Mountain Apache Tribe) was a force in the paint blocking shots and rebounds. First-year players Ameliana Osceola and Amariah Lavatta brought great energy off the bench and set up important runs when the team needed it

The Miccosukee's Renegadez boys had an outstanding tournament in the the 9th-10th grade division, finishing with a 7-1 record which included two one-point wins on the second day. The Renegadez finished in third place. Jamere Osceola received an all star award.

Hollywood Elite Blue went 3-3 in the 9-10th grade boys division.

Hollywood Elite Black went 2-2 in the 11-12th grade boys division.

The Florida Rebels boys started out 2-0 in the 5th-6th grade division, outscoring their opponents by 42 points. The Rebels were led by center Jayceon Billie who scored on almost every shot he touched in the paint and blocked shot after shot that was put up in the paint. Guards Dominick Osceola, Makai Newkirk and Taylor Battiest not only attacked the rim but knocked down numerous perimeter shots that made it very hard for teams to guard. Forward Jeremy Smith played lock down defense and provided a huge spark when it was needed most. They made it to the Diamond bracket and lost to a top 5 team in the first round of bracket play.



The Florida Warriors won their first four games in the 3rd grade coed division before losing on the final day. The Warriors finished fourth at 4-1.



Kash Cooper

Darin Sicurello



Jaiden Fludd



From left to right, Eri'Mya McQueen, Sophia Young Bird, Zoie Snow





Darin Sicurello



Zaiden Frank



Coach Skyla Osceola

Darin Sicurello



Homer Huggins



Coach Eric Osceola



Darin Sicurello Jayceon Billie



Kingston Billie

Darin Sicurello



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