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Hard Rock Tejon moves closer to breaking ground

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

A partnership between Hard Rock International and the Tejon Tribe to develop a hotel and casino recently took a significant step forward.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) signed off on the proposed project Jan. 8 – one of the last hurdles to clear before the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tejon could eventually move toward a construction timeline.

The \$600 million project is to be built on a site in Mettler, California – 14 miles south of Bakersfield and 90 miles north of Los Angeles. California Gov. Gavin Newsom must now approve the BIA decision. If he does, the Department of Interior can take the land into trust.

“From the start of our relationship with the United States government in 1851 our Tribe has fought for a homeland for our people,” Octavio Escobedo III, chairman of the Tejon Indian Tribe, said in a statement after the BIA approval. “Today we are ... closer to that dream.”

Escobedo said the project would enable the tribe to “move closer to the promise of self-determination through economic development.” The BIA has agreed, saying it would allow the tribe to be self-sufficient and maintain a stable source of revenue to provide for governmental programs.

♦ See GAMING on page 6A

Tribe’s vaccine distribution in full swing

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe started its Covid-19 vaccine program in late December and has since administered the shot to hundreds of tribal members and key personnel.

Some of the first to receive the vaccine were tribal leaders and public safety and health care workers. Seminole Fire Rescue staff, which has been administering the shots, then began to vaccinate health clinic patients, disabled elders and those with diabetes.

Vaccine availability has since been opened up to any tribal member 18 years and older. After tribal members who wish to receive the vaccine have been given an opportunity, including non-tribal spouses that live with tribal members, tribal employees will be in line for the shot.

Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley, the interim executive director of Health and Human Services for the tribe, has been overseeing vaccine distribution with the head of public safety, William Latchford.

In late January, she reported that the tribe continued to receive doses of the vaccine through the Indian Health Service, and was set to begin booster shots for some. The tribe is using the Moderna vaccine – a two shot series. The second, or booster shot, is given 28 days after the first. When both shots are given its effectiveness is 94.5%.

Virus threat

The tribe has been moving with urgency, as the virus worldwide continues to be a perilous one. Native Americans have



Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress shows his approval as he receives a Covid-19 vaccine shot from Stephen Zitnick of Seminole Fire Rescue at tribal headquarters in Hollywood on Dec. 28.

been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, with generally higher infection and death rates per capita than the rest of the population.

Elected tribal leaders said they wanted

to get the vaccine to motivate others in the community.

“I wanted to set an example for other tribal members who aren’t sure what the shot is going to do,” Brighton Councilman Larry

Howard said. “I wanted to pave the road for them as a leader.”

♦ See VACCINE on page 9A

Tribe gains control of BC wetlands, saving millions

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Starting in the 1990s, the U.S. government aimed to restore the water system on the Big Cypress Reservation with a project that was supposed to rehydrate wetlands, improve water quality and enhance water storage capacity. Instead, the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation Water Conservation Project never worked as intended and became a costly albatross for the Seminole Tribe.

“The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorized the water system in 1996 [and] built it in the 2000s in a phased approach,” said Paul Backhouse, the Seminole Tribe’s Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO) senior director and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. “It’s rubbish, it doesn’t work. We finally got them to deauthorize it which means the tribe can use the land to do with what they want.”

The water conservation plan, also known as the Critical Project, was officially deauthorized Dec. 27, 2020, when former

President Donald Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, after it passed Congress.

“The design of the project proved to be fatally flawed and the tribe never realized any of the intended benefits while contributing millions of dollars for its construction and maintenance,” said Kevin Cunniff, Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD) director.

The tribe and Corps split the cost of the project, which stretched into the tens of millions. It was supposed to include four large basins to hold water and provide better quality of water treatment before sending it out of the reservation through BC’s canal system. Only three of the basins, also known as yellow gate facilities, were built on several thousands of acres of land on the reservation.

“The greater time you have water on land, the better it is,” Cunniff said. “Holding water within natural lands was to be an effective way to prevent excess nutrients from going downstream.”

HERO senior scientist and liaison Stacy D. Myers was involved at the inception of

the project 20 years ago when he worked for the South Florida Water Management District as a liaison between the district and the tribe. The Corps was responsible for the engineering of the project.

“My job was to look at the viability of the project,” Myers said. “It was poorly designed and not well thought out.”

Despite Myers’ reservations, the project was approved and went forward. It was supposed to hold water, but it never did. The pumps were located near the outflow canal, so water in the basins went directly into the canal without any treatment.

ERMD regularly analyzes water samples to measure concentration of pollutants in the water, including phosphorus and other nutrients.

“Our system is about knowing what comes in and how it leaves the reservation,” Cunniff said. “Water coming in is already high in phosphorus and nitrogen. We tried to keep them in the natural areas identified as being the project footprint.”

The first two basins were constructed in 2008 and 2013. After the third yellow gate facility was completed in 2017, it was

clear the project wasn’t working and the tribe began seeking deauthorization. The community perceived the project as the tribe shouldering the responsibility to clean up water from other users.

“They are right,” Cunniff said. “The water coming in is problematic and the tribe has spent a lot of money to clean it. This has been a source of contention for the last 20 years. It’s why the tribe continued to pursue deauthorization.”

With deauthorization, the money being spent annually has been stopped in its tracks.

“The real success story is we got rid of the wasteful project and stopped the bleeding,” Myers said. “It was hemorrhaging.”

“The tribe will save about half a million dollars a year on maintenance costs and is no longer answerable to the [Corps] about water going through BC,” Backhouse added. “The project was an abject failure, it never held water. The work of getting it deauthorized is very important. It will save significant money.”

♦ See DEAUTHORIZATION on page 2A

Haaland has vital role in Biden’s climate change efforts

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Rep. Deb Haaland, the New Mexico Democrat from Laguna Pueblo, is expected to play a high profile role in the new administration’s battle against climate change.

Soon after then-President elect Joe Biden named Haaland as his pick to run the Department of Interior, he also placed the 60-year-old on a newly formed climate change team.

The team includes Gina McCarthy, former President Obama’s Environmental Protection Agency administrator, and Jennifer Granholm, the former governor of Michigan, among others. The team is thought to represent the largest group of climate change experts ever brought together in the White House.

President Biden said the team would make clean energy jobs and environmental protections a priority in his administration. His environmental reform efforts are expected to move forward quickly. Indeed, one of his first actions after taking office Jan. 20 was to bring the U.S. back into the Paris climate accord – an international agreement designed to abate the catastrophic effects of global warming.

Biden’s climate change plan is also touted as economic stimulus. It calls for 500,000 new electric vehicle charging stations, the construction of 1.5 million new energy-efficient homes and public housing units, and the creation of a “civilian climate corps” to carry out climate and conservation projects.

Meanwhile, Haaland has a history of work on environmental issues. In her acceptance speech after being nominated to lead the Interior, she said she’d “move climate change priorities, tribal consultation and a green economic recovery forward.” Haaland was a co-sponsor of the Green New Deal legislation.

♦ See HAALAND on page 3A



An overview of the Army Corps’ basins on the Big Cypress Reservation. Basins 1, 4 and 2 were completed in 2008, 2013 and 2017; basin 3 was never built.

Courtesy image

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Editorial

The two sides of our citizenship: tribal and American

• Levi Rickert

In the late 1990s, I testified before a joint legislative committee of the Michigan Legislature about the benefits of tribal gaming casinos on tribal citizens. Before I began, I introduced myself and noted I was a citizen of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

As I was leaving the witness table, I was called back by a state senator who asked me sternly if I considered myself an American citizen. Not wanting to engage in an argument, I answered “yes” and added, “The Internal Revenue Service does.” That answer garnered chuckles from a few American Indians sitting in the audience. The state senator’s face turned red as I took my seat in the audience.

Through the years, I have been asked following speaking engagements how American Indians could serve in the United States military at such higher rates than other demographics, after everything that has happened to American Indians throughout history.

It is a valid question. History has not been kind to our ancestors. American Indians were often greeted by settlers on a genocidal path across the continent. They carried the Holy Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. It is believed among American Indians that if they could not “save us,” they would kill us. American Indians have been the subject of many atrocities.

It is true American Indians have served in the U.S. military at higher rates than any other demographic in the country. A high percentage of American Indians volunteered in World War I before they became U.S. citizens in 1924. During the Vietnam War, 90 percent of American Indians who served volunteered. They were not drafted.

I generally answer the question saying

American Indians have always been warriors and since the United States was the land of our ancestors, it is only natural they fight to protect land and freedom.

American Indians who are citizens of federally-recognized tribal nations enjoy duality as U.S. citizens. One fine example is Rep. Deb Haaland, a dual citizen of the United States and the Pueblo of Laguna. She has been nominated to be the next secretary of the Interior. When confirmed by the Senate, she will be the first American Indian to become part of a president’s cabinet in the history of the country. On Wednesday, Haaland arrived at the inauguration dressed in her cultural attire.

American Indians often fall somewhere between being traditionalists who fight colonization to being assimilated with little regard to their tribal identity. The citizenship identity may also shift with time.

Within my own progression as a Potawatomi man, the issue of duality as a tribal citizen and a U.S. citizen has caused me trepidation when examining who I am.

A few years ago when NFL football quarterback Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the national anthem to bring attention to police brutality against Black people, I understood. He was asking the nation to pay attention to the disproportionate brutality that Black people endure at the hands of law enforcement. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Indians and Alaska Natives have high rates of death by police.

It was Kaepernick’s right. It did not make him less of a patriot because he took a knee to protest injustice. I recalled times I chose not to stand for the national anthem because I was angry about the federal government’s treatment of American Indians. I felt standing would make me complicit and at that moment, I did not feel like standing. Other times, I stood because as a dual citizen I chose to stand. The back-

and-forth speaks to conflicting feelings we have as humans, and as we progress along our personal journeys.

The deliberation of where I fit on the duality spectrum became more pronounced during the first three weeks of January as we witnessed an insurrection, an impeachment and an inauguration.

The U.S. citizen in me was angry at the insurrection. Seeing so-called patriots beat police officers with wooden U.S. flag poles sickened me. I thought this should never happen in the United States.

The inauguration seemed to restore order in United States governance. And 22-year-old Amanda Gorman’s poem “The Hill We Climb,” brought a wounded nation hope.

Her words “Somehow, we’ve weathered and witnessed a nation that isn’t broken but simply unfinished” were refreshing and perhaps more charitable than what I would have come up with. However, she gave us hope that we can work towards a more perfect union.

Later in the week, I read the words of one of my favorite Indigenous leaders, the great Onondaga Chief Oren Lyons. They summed up my thoughts on my own citizenship duality in its current state:

“Even though you and I are in different boats, you in your boat and we in our canoe, we share the same river of life. What befalls me befalls you. And downstream, downstream in this river of life, our children will pay for our selfishness, for our greed, and for our lack of vision.”

Levi Rickert (Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation) is the founder, publisher and editor of Native News Online. He can be reached at levi@nativenewsonline.net. This article was posted Jan. 24 on nativenewsonline.net.

Seminole Tribe’s concerns noted in Everglades report

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently sent a required report to Congress on what it calls “Everglades restoration momentum.”

The most significant part of the 144-page report, now available to the public, is the status of the multibillion-dollar Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, or CERP, which has been ongoing since 2000.

The Corps and the South Florida Water Management District are the leads on CERP implementation.

Everglades restoration is a complex bureaucratic web that involves multiple agencies and stakeholders – including the Seminole Tribe and the Miccosukee Tribe. It consists of dozens of projects and initiatives across a large swath of the state.

Recovery has been impacted by sea grass die-off in Florida Bay, harmful algal blooms in the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries, effects from hurricanes and invasive species, and sea level rise, among others.

The new report, which covers 2015 to 2020, cites what the Corps and others see as signs of progress, including better water quality and distribution.

Much of CERP’s goals are to provide a clean water flow to the central Everglades and Florida Bay. In short, the idea is to reduce water releases from Lake Okeechobee by capturing, storing, cleaning and redirecting it. The Corps describes the ongoing efforts as “getting the water right.”

However, the Corps’ path to successful restoration doesn’t always align with the Seminole Tribe.

While the report states often that the Seminole Tribe has been consulted on proposed plans and projects, communication has been spotty and the tribe says it has ongoing concerns.

One concern includes plans for a variety of water-related construction projects along Lake Okeechobee, including water storage

near the Brighton Reservation.

The tribe believes the storage projects have the potential to cause life threatening flooding, property damage, negative environmental impacts to water supply and agriculture – and that it encroaches on tribal lands.

Stacy D. Myers, senior scientist and liaison for the tribe’s Heritage and Environment Resources Office, submitted some of the tribe’s views, based on previous letters and position statements made by the tribe, for inclusion in the report.

He said while the tribe generally supports additional water storage for drainage and flood control, “initiatives to build large, above ground water storage facilities north of Lake Okeechobee are unnatural and inconsistent with restoration.” The tribe has objected to those projects.

Myers also noted inconsistent communication from the Corps: “Particularly [in] situations that may impact the tribe and its natural resources.”

He wrote that when the tribe’s interests align with the Corps’ goals, there is more communication and coordination. But when restoration planning potentially impacts tribal resources negatively, or “presents a difficult issue ... where the tribe may oppose aspects of the planning effort,” communication slows or stops.

In the meantime, the tribe has called for an ethnographic study – observations in a natural environment versus a lab – to aid the Corps in its consideration of traditional cultural properties, places and sites that are of significance “when determining effects of CERP projects.”

The full report can be accessed at saj.usace.army.mil/CERP-Report-to-Congress/.

Editor’s note: One non-CERP project in the report is the Big Cypress Reservation water conservation plan. It was intended to rehydrate wetlands, improve water quality and provide water storage. However, tribal officials had long said the project did not work as intended and was expensive. The project was recently de-authorized and the tribe now has exclusive control over future activity. (See story page 1A)

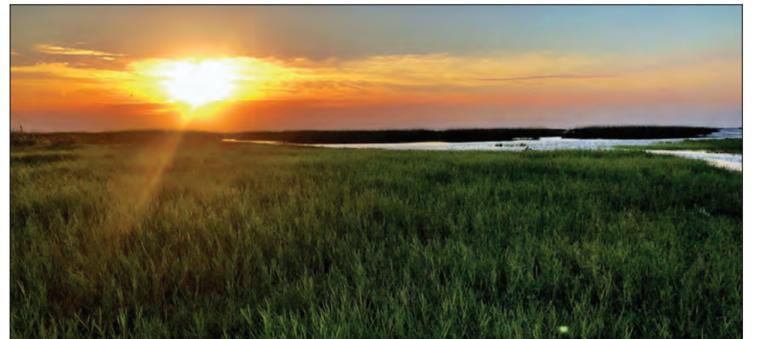


Image via Army Corps Facebook

Everglades restoration projects have been ongoing for decades with many stakeholders across Florida.

Why does Canada commit billions of dollars to oil pipelines but not fresh water pipelines to First Nations?

• Brandi Morin

I recently came across a meme online that floored me. It was a hypothetical question posed to Amazon’s virtual assistant Alexa, asking, “If we can build oil pipelines through Indigenous land, why can’t we build water pipelines to Indigenous land?”

I’m almost certain Alexa wouldn’t be able to give an answer. But the statement was so poignant, yet so simple and it got my mind churning. I shared the meme on Twitter, which immediately received thousands of likes and hundreds of retweets in agreement. Not surprisingly, others connected with its frankness too.

I wish the answer was easy. It makes sense Canada should fix the water crisis, right?

There is a human rights crisis of access to clean drinking water to hundreds of First Nations communities in Canada, which has been going on for decades. Safe drinking water and sanitation are “basic human rights” according to a 2019 United Nations Water Development report. But, Canada, being one of the wealthiest countries in the world and home to 20 per cent of the planet’s freshwater resources, is failing thousands of Indigenous Peoples the right to clean water.

The federal government committed to end the water crisis by 2021 but has since stated it won’t reach its initial goal to end water advisories for the current 59 First Nations. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cited barriers to travelling to First Nation communities due to COVID-19 as being one of the reasons.

In November, Canada watched in dismay as the entire nation of Neskantaga in Northern Ontario was evacuated to Thunder Bay due to unsafe water. Hundreds of people are still displaced, including men, women,

children and elders in hotels in Thunder Bay. The Neskantaga nation has been under a water boil advisory for more than 25 years — an entire generation has grown up not being able to drink water from their taps!

Other remote First Nations are struggling to conduct day-to-day life activities without access to safe water, even in a pandemic when sanitation is crucial to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

There are families whose children react to contaminated water and break out in bloody sores and get sick with autoimmune diseases. Human Rights Watch reported in 2016 contaminants in some reserves included coliform, E. coli, cancer-causing Trihalomethanes, and uranium. Exposure to these types of contaminants can cause health problems ranging from serious gastrointestinal disorders to increased risk of cancer.

The federal government is funding a \$19.5 million methylmercury poisoning treatment centre in Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations in Northern Ontario. This follows after years of advocacy from the communities after industrial pollution poisoned their main water system, the English-Wabigoon River in the 1960s and 1970s. People in these communities have, and are, dying almost 50 years later, so much so that a permanent treatment centre is needed.

The Human Rights report states that in many cases, the lakes, rivers and streams that contribute to the source water for First Nations communities have deteriorated because of pollutants from industries, and growing municipalities.

On the other hand, the Trudeau government has invested an estimated \$12.6 billion to build the state-owned Trans Mountain pipeline. Some of the pipeline is being constructed through Indigenous lands and Indigenous land defenders opposing it are doing so to protect their last remaining,

sacred water sources.

During the pandemic, governments have allowed industrial projects to continue at full-speed and do whatever it takes to get the job done, in the “national interest.”

The cost of fixing the on-reserve water crisis is estimated to be about \$3.2 billion. The commitment, time and priority of remedying this crisis is on the shoulders of the federal government under the Constitution Act, 1867, which grants it jurisdiction over “Indians and lands reserved for the Indians.”

If unsafe drinking water conditions existed in 41 non-Indigenous communities, I’m certain they would be fixed immediately. If this complacency isn’t racism and oppression, then I don’t know what is.

Even though Trudeau has said time and again his No. 1 priority is reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, his actions speak far louder. Yes, his government has lifted 97 long-term water drinking advisories in First Nations so far, but there are still thousands of people waiting. This water crisis and other human rights violations against Indigenous peoples are tainting Canada’s reputation on a global scale.

The government needs to move as fast as they are to build the pipeline and live up to its obligations to the first peoples of the land, whose lands were stolen, rampaged and continue to be contaminated.

Certainly the health of human beings should take precedence over economic gain in a prosperous, vast and democratic country like Canada?

Brandi Morin is an award-winning French/Cree/Iroquois journalist from Treaty 6 in Alberta. This article appeared in the Toronto Star.

DEAUTHORIZATION From page 1A

In addition to the financial benefit, the deauthorization also removes the Corps’ presence and direct influence on tribal lands in the project’s footprint. The tribe now has the authority to take full responsibility for its water control projects.

“It goes to self-government, self-determination and sovereignty,” Cunniff said. “The tribe can determine how they want to use that land in the future. The land has intrinsic cultural and traditional value. It will be used for the betterment and protection of the tribal community.”

The Critical Project was approved four years before the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan was authorized in 2000. It was the first trial run on how to execute Everglades planning on a grand scale.

“Unfortunately, the tribe was the guinea

pig,” Cunniff said. “There were a lot of lessons learned on how to do this properly and plan restoration on a scale like this. That legacy ends with deauthorization.”

Deauthorization of Corps’ projects is a rare occurrence. This is the first completely deauthorized project in Florida, Myers said.

An additional benefit of the deauthorization is the tribe is not responsible for any claims a construction company may have for costs, which could have added up to millions. The tribe’s liability ended with deauthorization.

Messages left for the Corps seeking comment were not returned as of press time.

The future of the infrastructure remains to be determined. Whatever decision is made will be the tribe’s to make thanks to the deauthorization.

“This was a great way to start 2021,” Myers said.



Courtesy photo

An inspection of the basins takes place in February 2020.

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Community



Toni Sanchez advocates for Native philanthropy amid pandemic

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to Indigenous communities has been an outsized one compared to other populations. It magnified Indian Country's longtime deficiencies in infrastructure, health care, food security, housing, technology and more.

A new report shows that the Native American philanthropic sector stepped up to fill in gaps in the federal government's response. It demonstrated the extent to which tribal communities mobilized and leveraged resources to try and lessen the impact.

Seminole tribal member Toni Sanchez is at the forefront of the organization behind the report – Native Americans in Philanthropy.

Sanchez said that between March 2020 and October 2020 – representing the crucial early and middle parts of the pandemic – \$32.2 million in philanthropic funds were distributed to Native communities. The donations were led or initiated by Indigenous People – a relatively large number for a short amount of time, she said.

In all, 15 nonprofits raised \$23.5 million and 56 GoFundMe platforms raised \$8.7 million.

Sanchez and the organization have also issued a call to action for the philanthropic sector at large to invest in Indigenous-led organizations and initiatives – including those supporting Covid-19 response efforts.

Native Americans in Philanthropy operate offices in Washington, D.C., and

Los Angeles. Sanchez was named the group's engagement and communications coordinator about seven months ago.

Originally from the Immokalee Reservation, she's lived in Burbank, California, for about four years, where she's been involved in a number of projects, including entertainment journalism.

But like it did to many, the pandemic hit and work slowed. Sanchez put her feelers out for potential new work and came across a posting from Native Americans in Philanthropy.

Her job is to advocate for more equitable funding for Native American organizations and causes. For example, from 2006 to 2016, she said, such groups received less than .5% percent of donations, but make up 2% of the population.

"The philanthropic sector is largely non-Native as well," Sanchez said. "It's indicative of the overall issue of being underrepresented."

The nonprofit works to correct the gap with outreach and serves as a bridge between Indigenous communities and the non-Native philanthropic sector.

Funds are earmarked for a variety of projects, including infrastructure.

"As with all things in Indian Country, everything is so interconnected. A pull on one thread is to pull on all of them," she said. "[The Seminole Tribe has] roads, cell towers, Wi-Fi, and don't really have to worry about it or think about it – water, electricity and internet – a lot of tribes don't have it."



Toni Sanchez

Sanchez said being a part of Native Americans in Philanthropy has reinforced to her how far the Seminole Tribe has come over the years.

"We are a very blessed tribe. We don't have a lot of financial woes and are so self contained and self-sufficient," she said.

Sanchez is encouraged by the new administration in Washington, D.C., and

with Rep. Deb Haaland's expected ascension to lead the Department of Interior.

"It's not really enough for philanthropy to try and slap a Band-Aid on failures of federal government," she said. "There's so much history and bureaucracy – then you go ahead and pile on centuries and generations worth of fraught relationships."

Home sweet home

Her mother and grandmother are in Immokalee and her father – Tony Sanchez Jr. – and stepmother are on the Hollywood Reservation. Sanchez' father is a former president of the tribe's board of directors.

Sanchez went to school in Immokalee and later graduated from Florida State University with a degree in English and creative writing. In the late 2000s Sanchez moved to Orlando and ended up working as a marketing intern at Hard Rock's former headquarters for three years.

"I had the best intern gig you could possibly have," Sanchez said. "I got to bounce around from franchise marketing, to [audio/visual] and customer care. It was amazing. I learned a lot in a relatively short amount of time."

Sanchez worked as a marketing coordinator for Hard Rock from 2012 to 2015.

She left Orlando for Tallahassee where she began to dabble in content creation – producing "silly little geeky videos" about science fiction movies. She bought a

webcam and started to video blog about Star Wars and Marvel movies.

Those interests called her to California. She did entertainment journalism and covered science fiction conventions and press conferences. One of the last events she covered was the New York Comic Con in 2019.

"It was the first time they ever had an all-Indigenous panel in science fiction and fantasy," Sanchez recalls. "I finally felt like it was happening – to actually have the beginning of true representation."

Sanchez said her goal for 2021 is to see her family in Florida and to be able to meet others in person again once its safe.

"To have an opportunity to actually meet and shake hands, have a meal – that's the modest goal," she said.

Sanchez said she hadn't been back home to Florida since last year's Tribal Fair and Pow Wow in February.

"I miss my family, my grandmother. We just had a birthday and I wasn't there for Christmas. I miss flatland, miss being able to get sweet tea in places other than Popeyes. I miss my friends and being in a place that's familiar. Florida is definitely my home and one day someday I'll be back," she said.

For more information and to read the Native Americans in Philanthropy report, go to nativephilanthropy.org.

Inauguration star Amanda Gorman once told Osceola story

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

One of the most talked about moments of the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris had to do with the reading of a poem.

Amanda Gorman, a 22-year-old from Los Angeles and the first national youth poet laureate, recited her original work "The Hill We Climb" at the event. She is the youngest poet to write and recite a piece for a presidential inauguration. Gorman was chosen to be a part of the festivities by first lady Jill Biden who is a fan of her work.

It turns out one of the pivotal moments in Gorman's early years involves Seminole chief Osceola.

The San Diego Union-Tribune and other news outlets have reported that while Gorman's relationship with poetry started as far back as the third grade, it was in the second grade that

she had her first foray into public speaking. That was when she gave a monologue to her class in the voice of Seminole chief Osceola.

"I'm sure anyone who saw it was kind of aghast at this 15-pound Black girl who was pretending to die on stage as a Native American chief," Gorman said to the Union-Tribune. "But I think it was important in my development because I really wanted to do justice to the story and bring it to life. It was the first time that I really leaned into the performance of text."

Osceola, born Billy Powell, is known for leading a small group of warriors in the Seminole resistance to U.S. removal policies during the Second Seminole War. He was captured and imprisoned in 1837 under a deception offered as a flag of truce.

Osceola died at Fort Moultrie in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1838 – reportedly of an internal infection or malaria.

Meanwhile, interest in Gorman has skyrocketed since the inauguration. She gained 2 million followers on Instagram in one day. She will also recite a new poem at the Super Bowl in Tampa to recognize an educator, nurse, and veteran for helping their communities during the pandemic.

The Tribune reached out to Gordon, but had not received a response as of press time.

People are not only interested in her backstory, but continue to praise her for her poem – which she said is about a country in transition.

"Somehow we weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished/We, the successors of a country and a time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president/Only to find herself reciting for one," reads an excerpt.



Image via Library of Congress Facebook

Amanda Gorman recites her poem at the presidential inauguration Jan. 20.

HAALAND From page 1A

"I'll be fierce for all of us, for our planet, and all of our protected land," Haaland said.

The raised visibility of Haaland and her role in the federal government's environmental efforts are of particular interest to Native Americans. Indigenous communities are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change impacts. In Florida, those impacts include sea level rise, ever more frequent and powerful storms and habitat loss to name a few.

As head of the Interior, Haaland would oversee one-fifth of all the land in the U.S., including 1.7 billion acres of coastline. The department also manages national parks, wildlife refuges and natural resources. Experts say a shift in direction at the department could have swift implications for the environment – the U.S. Geological Survey estimates 25% of all carbon emissions come from fossil fuels that are extracted on

public lands. Haaland has previously opposed several Trump administration policies related to federal lands, including his efforts to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil and



Image via Facebook

Deb Haaland is expected to be confirmed as head of the Department of Interior. She is also a key member of President Biden's climate change team.

gas drilling. In early 2020, Haaland sponsored legislation in Congress that would set a national goal of protecting 30% of U.S. lands and oceans by 2030. The plan has been adopted by the Biden administration as part of its environmental agenda.

Haaland's confirmation hearing had not been scheduled as of press time. If confirmed, she would be the first Native American cabinet secretary in history, and would serve as the head of an agency that is responsible for managing the federal government's relationship with 574 tribes.

Her path to Senate confirmation is not expected to be met with much Republican resistance, however there have been some groups that oppose action on climate change that have described Haaland as "radical" on energy issues.

In addition, her confirmation should follow a smoother path as Democrats now control the Senate, although by the narrowest of margins.

Tribal Fair contests to be held virtually

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The 2021 Seminole Tribal Fair and Pow Wow, scheduled for Feb. 12-14, has been postponed until further notice but the contests will go on, virtually and contactless.

The contests will be entirely electronic. All

contestants must take photos of their submissions and upload them to SemTribFair.com/VirtualContests. Entries for all contests must be submitted by Feb. 12 at 5 p.m. (ET). No late entries will be accepted. Should any senior contestants have questions, please contact Elder Services on your reservation.

◆ See FAIR on page 4A

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4-H kids, animals prepare for virtual show

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Despite no meetings or social gatherings, the 99 kids in the Seminole Indian 4-H program have been resilient throughout this challenging time and have cared for their animals valiantly.

They should be well-prepared for the virtual show, which will be videotaped March 22-26 from locations in Hollywood, Big Cypress, Immokalee and Brighton. The 4-H'ers will show their animals one at a time to ensure social distancing. Judges from the University of Florida will review the video and choose the winners.

"We want to bring back the excitement of the show," said Kimberly Clement, 4-H special projects coordinator. "Positive youth development is more essential than anything right now. Our meetings have always been fun, but we haven't been able to have those get-togethers. We are looking forward to the day we can meet together again."

The pandemic hasn't prevented the 4-H'ers from going into the barn, pasture or backyard to get to know and care for their animals. Virtual schooling has allowed the kids more time to spend with those animals.

Sisters Armani and Makayla Torres have been taking care of their steers together in Big Cypress. The Ahfachkee School students – Armani is in ninth grade, Makayla is in 11th – have taken classes online since the pandemic began.

Last year, Armani had a pig as her 4-H project. She was a little afraid of it, but is much more comfortable with her steer.

"Miss Kim (Clement) showed me how not to be scared anymore," said Armani, 15. "She taught me how to hold him, steer him around and walk him right. I spend a lot more time with him than I did last year. It's given me more confidence because the more time I spend with him, the more he gets used to me. Now he doesn't buck and run into me. I'm looking forward to the show; I'm trying to teach him how to stop."

This is Makayla's first year in 4-H. She spends about two hours with the steer twice a day.

"It's an experience. You have to get used to it and the animal has to get used to you," said Makayla, 17. "I let him play a little, clean his pen, get his feed ready and walk him. He has to get used to walking for the show; he has to practice. Then he eats and we do it again later. When he sees the same person every day, you get used to each other. But he has his moments, like anyone else if he isn't having a good day. It takes time. You have to spend time with him."

Typically, they go to the barn first thing in the morning before virtual school starts and again late in the afternoon. Both girls received their animals from their grandfather Carl Baxley's herd.

"It makes [him] happy because I'm following in his footsteps," Makayla said. "I think I would have a harder time doing this if I went to school in person. I'd probably spend less time with the steer. Now I always make time for him before anything else."

The 4-H staff of Clement, Dionne Smedley and Sheli Tigertail have worked with the 4-H'ers on the phone, through email or socially distanced in person.

"Anytime they have questions or concerns about showmanship and grooming we are able to answer and help them," Clement said. "We've always been available to them and want them to reach out to us with their questions. We also contact those who haven't asked any questions."

Clement believes this year has been less stressful, when it comes to 4-H, since the kids don't have to worry about making it to meetings. Despite the lack of meetings, the kids and their animals are doing very well.

"I feel like the kids are getting the point of what they are doing by raising the animals," she said. "If you don't take care of them properly, they won't grow to their full potential. I think we have some really good animals this year."

Makayla praised Clement's impact on her 4-H experience.

"I know we have someone to go to if we need any advice," Makayla said. "She's a great person. You can call her and ask if she will be here to help me and she is there in an hour. I couldn't ask for a better person



Armani Torres holds the lead to her first steer, Buddy, Sept. 28, 2020, in Big Cypress. Armani has put in many hours feeding, cleaning and caring for him and is proud she was able to halter train him and walk him around by herself.

Courtesy photo

to help me with my project."

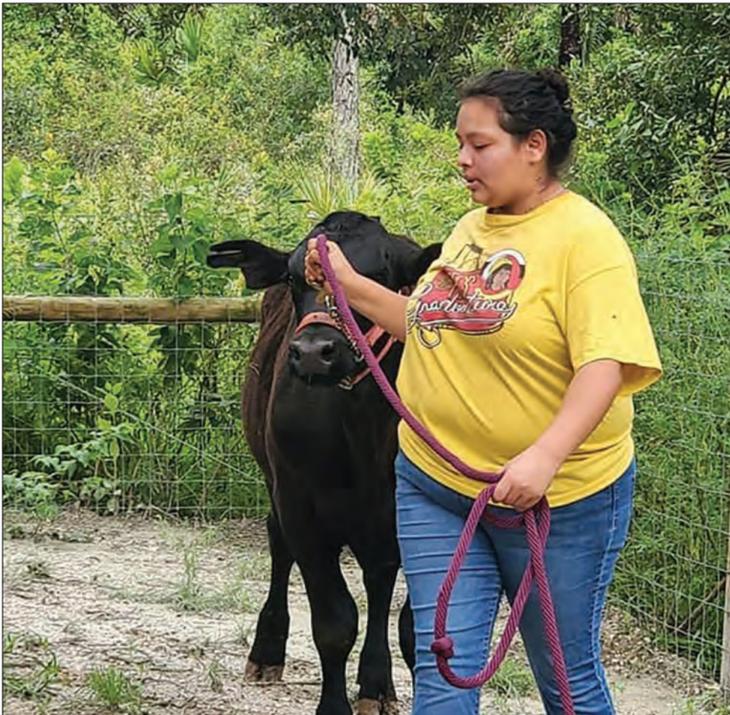
The show is shaping up to be a good one, regardless of the circumstances. Kids in Hollywood will show 16 swine, one steer and two heifers. Big Cypress 4-H'ers will present 10 swine, 13 steer, two heifers and three 2-year-old bred heifers. Immokalee kids have been busy raising 13 swine. Brighton's 4-H'ers will exhibit 19 swine, 22 steers, five heifers, one 2-year-old bred heifer, two cow/calf and three Salacoa Valley Farms registered bred 2-year-old heifers.

During the videotaping of the virtual show, the kids will be in show attire and walk their animals for three minutes similar to a normal year, but they won't be in the ring with other contestants, animals and

judges. This time, they are exhibiting to the camera and need to make sure they showcase every angle of their animal for judges to see it on video. They will also be judged for showmanship.

After the kids have shown their steers, heifers or hogs, they will be sorted into classes. The videos will be sent to the judges. First-place winners in each class will be considered for grand champion and second place will be considered for reserve grand champion. Each exhibitor will be judged for showmanship in the junior, intermediate and senior categories for swine, steer and heifer.

Information on when and how to view the show and bid on the animals at the sale will be forthcoming.



Karalyn Urbina exercises her steer while training him to walk on the lead Sept. 29, 2020, in Brighton.

Courtesy photos

Seminole veteran Billie Micco was lifelong Brighton resident, longtime employee

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Billie Micco is known as someone who stayed connected with his family and the tribe during his often busy life.

The lifelong resident of the Brighton Reservation worked for the Seminole Tribe for almost four decades in all – for 13 years in the public works department (specifically in water treatment), and also for many years as a transporter for the health clinic (taking patients to and from appointments).

He retired in 2013.

Micco once reminisced to The Seminole Tribune about growing up in his early years with the "old-timer cowboys" and helping with farming and other jobs.

He spent time at Brighton's senior center and attended a lot of the events at the Veterans Building, too. Micco was also a member of All Family Ministries in Brighton.

Micco, who was born in Brighton on Sept. 20, 1942, died Jan. 16 at 78. The cause of death was not disclosed.

He is survived by his sons Michael (Feather), George and Joey (Reina), all of Okeechobee.

His grandson, Wade, and his brother, Jerry, preceded him in death. His wife of 47 years – Mary "Jo" Micco – died Jan. 30.

Billie Micco's sisters are Louise Cypress and Jennie Shore (Eddie) of Brighton. He had 15 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

When the Tribune interviewed him in 2019 about his military service, he joked when asked about how many grandchildren he had.

"Fifteen. Or maybe more," he said with a chuckle.

Micco used to watch his grandkids play softball games. He was known as a supporter of local sports for tribal kids and enjoyed bowling, tennis and shooting pool himself.

Micco, of the Otter Clan, was drafted in 1968 and served for two years in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War.

He spoke about his military experience for a special tribal publication in 2019.

Micco was going to college in Oklahoma when he received the draft letter. He was sent

to Fort Gordon in Georgia to complete basic training and then went to infantry training at Fort Jackson in South Carolina.

"It was hard at first," Micco said. "Basic [training] is kind of rough. I wasn't used to getting up at 4 a.m. It taught me discipline and responsibility. It's too bad for our youngsters that they did away with the draft."

Micco was sent to Fort Sherman in Panama for 18 months where he stayed with his Bravo Company until 1970. He then left Panama for home after serving his two-year term.

"I remember [Panama] as a poor country; it's where (Jungle Warfare School) was, to simulate Vietnam. I was used to the heat and rain though," Micco said. "They kept saying: 'Get ready we're going to Vietnam.'"

Micco said he came close, but was never sent to Vietnam.

Graveside services were scheduled to take place Jan. 19 at the Ortona Cemetery. Those wishing to leave a condolence message or send flowers or a memorial gift to the family can go to okeechobeefuneralhome.com.



Image via The New Yorker

The Seminole Tribe has a long held connection to alligators and alligator wrestling.

Documentary 'Halpate' traces Seminole-alligator bond

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

A newly released documentary short examines the complex and colorful history of the Seminole Tribe and its relationship to the alligators of the Everglades.

The New Yorker magazine is the thrust behind "Halpate" – which means alligator in the Mikasuki language. (The Seminoles and Miccosukee are culturally connected).

The 14-minute film was shot primarily on the Big Cypress Reservation last year. It is also interspersed with several archival clips. Native American filmmakers Adam Khalil and Adam Piron are co-directors on the project.

The film notes that the Seminole Tribe once relied on alligators for survival – for food during the Seminole Wars when the U.S. government was pushing them ever deeper into the Everglades.

The relationship to alligators began to transform decades later when South Florida tourists would throw money at Seminoles from their car windows as they were hunting alligators near roadsides. The tourists thought what was happening was for show.

White landowners later brought alligator wrestling to their properties and exploited Seminoles, paying them next to nothing for their efforts that were often very dangerous.

The wrestlers in the film describe it as a time when seeing Indians "do their thing" was considered "romantic" – whether it be wrestling alligators, creating arts and crafts or dancing at pow wows.

For the Seminole Tribe, the first in the U.S. to successfully venture into Indian gaming, alligator wrestling would be brought under their control, at their own sites, generating their own revenues.

"But alligators aren't just moneymakers," states an accompanying article in the New Yorker. "What started as a means of sustenance has become a cultural touchstone – what was once a form of exploitation transformed into tradition."

The tradition, the film notes, is not one that has attracted a lot of Seminole youths. Indeed, it's mostly non-tribal people taking it up – through organizations like the Freestyle Alligator Wrestling Competition that was launched in 2009.

Seminole alligator wrestlers who are featured in the film include Billy Walker, Everett Osceola, James Holt, Clinton Holt and Tre Burton. Osceola is also one of the film's producers.

In the case of Clinton Holt, the oftentimes suspenseful tone of the film takes hold when it shows an incident in 2011. It was when an alligator bit Holt on the head during a live wrestling demonstration.

Holt tells the story of being in the alligator's grasp, "listening to my skull crack," he says.

The New Yorker article: "How Florida's Seminole Tribe Transformed Alligator Wrestling Into a Symbol of Independence," is available at newyorker.com. The documentary can be viewed on the New Yorker site, or via YouTube by searching "Halpate documentary."

◆ FAIR From page 3A

"We are encouraging people to submit entries as early as possible," said Michael Cantu, Hollywood culture and language office coordinator. "If there are discrepancies, there will be time to correct them or reenter a different item."

Holly Tiger Bowers is in charge of the clothing contest; the Hollywood community culture department will oversee the fine arts and arts and crafts contests for all reservations.

As in previous years, members of the Ah-Tah-Ti-Ki Museum staff will serve as judges for the arts and crafts and fine arts competitions. Winners will be posted by Seminole Media Productions.

The arts and crafts contest rules state all entries must have been made in the last six months, have no store-bought items embellished or decorated and must be Seminole made. The limit is one entry per category.

Age divisions are 10 to 17, 18 to 32, 33 to 45, 46 to 59 and 60 and up.

Female-only categories are: Seminole dolls – body and head must be made of palmetto fiber. Baskets – no measurement requirement.

The sole male only category is woodcarving. The rest of the categories are

for everyone.

Seminole patchwork design must be a minimum of four-yards.

Beadwork: Adult entries no single strand necklaces and loom bracelets must be at least 5 beads wide. No medallions are allowed.

Seminole clothing with patchwork: Must be self-made, which means the entry must have been sewn from start to finish by person entering contest. The entry must be new and never worn.

Entries entered into Tribal Fair arts and crafts contest cannot be used in any other 2021 Tribal Fair events and/or contest.

The fine arts rules state entries must reflect the Florida Seminole theme, must have been made in the last six months, no store-bought items embellished or decorated and must be Seminole made. All entries must be matted and framed. The limit is one entry per category.

Age divisions and categories:
Ages 6 to 9, participation only: pencil, mixed media.

Ages 10 to 17: watercolor, pencil or pen and ink, mixed media, photography.

Ages 18 and up: oil, acrylic, watercolor, pencil or pen and ink, mixed media, photography.

Ages 60 and up: oil, acrylic, watercolor, pencil or pen and ink, mixed media, photography, ceramics.

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'Farewell' to Cheyenne Kippenberger set for April 24

STAFF REPORT

The Gathering of Nations Powwow, annually one of the biggest events in Indian Country, will be a livestreamed live virtual powwow April 23-24. The event will include contest dancing, a variety of festive entertainment, the traders market, musical features from stage 49 and a dance party. Vendors scheduled to be in the 2020

Gathering of Nations Powwow will once again be featured, highlighted and promoted during the live virtual event. The schedule for April 24 includes a "Special Farewell to Miss Indian World Cheyenne Kippenberger," the first Seminole Tribe member to serve as Miss Indian World. Kippenberger, a former Miss Florida Seminole, won the Miss Indian World Pageant in April 2019. She agreed to serve for a second year when the pandemic forced

the cancellation of the 2020 pageant. "She graciously accepted to hold the title for a second year and has done an amazing job," the pageant's website stated in an announcement. The 2021 pageant has been cancelled, but will be held in 2022, according to the website. For more information visit gatheringofnations.com

MMIW gets more focus, including podcasts

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter
and
ARI RIOSECO
Special to the Tribune

Indigenous people across the country – particularly women and girls – go missing and murdered at higher rates than other demographic groups.

For example, the Montana Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force reports that Native Americans are 6% of the state's population but comprise 27% of missing person's cases. The U.S. Department of Justice has found that in some tribal communities, Native American women are murdered at more than 10 times the national average.

But the epidemic (often abbreviated on social media as #MMIW or #MMIP) has attracted more attention and action in recent years.

In 2019, four Native American members of Congress introduced the "Not Invisible Act," and "Savanna's Act." Both were signed into law in late 2020.

The laws established an advisory committee on violent crime comprised of law enforcement, tribal leaders, survivors and others. The committee then makes recommendations to the Department of Interior and Department of Justice.

The laws also establish best practices for law enforcement on combatting the epidemic of missing, murdered and trafficked Native Americans. It created a new position within the Bureau of Indian Affairs – an expert charged with improving coordination of violent crime prevention efforts across federal agencies.

Many state and local governments have done more as well.

In addition, last December marked the conclusion of a national task force's first year of addressing the issue.

"Operation Lady Justice" (OLJ) so far has analyzed the data of missing and murdered Natives in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska and Washington State. It's accomplishments, according to a status report, include the creation of more resources, access to programs, and data organized by state.

OLJ officials hosted four listening sessions where Natives – including tribal leaders –voiced their concerns. It assembled teams to help solve cold cases in multiple states. The operation touted its collaboration with law enforcement to establish culturally sensitive training and protocols to better serve Indigenous communities. Tribal leaders assisted in the development of the protocols, which are tailored to individual tribes.

"The fact that they're even doing that just means they're taking a step to understand us better," Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie said. "Making sure they approach us in a different way, for us to feel comfortable and safe, that's the best feeling in the world." Billie said plenty of work remains to be done.

"It took a very long time. It breaks my heart to see that it took this long for us to get that recognition," she said.

Last November, Billie participated in a virtual walk/run organized by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center to help increase awareness.

Billie believes sharing information on social media is one way to support the family members of missing and murdered Natives.

"There's something about it that sparks something in you. You have to keep on spreading the information," she said.

MMIW podcasts

As the mainstream media has begun to cover the issue more frequently and social media campaigns thrive, the issue has

increasingly become the subject of podcasts. One recent podcast reviews several cases that have happened in the Northwestern region of the U.S.

"Vanished: A Native American Epidemic," examines the issue by interviewing family members of victims and looking at situations that contribute to the problem.

The podcast is produced by NBC affiliate KHQ-TV based in Spokane, Washington. The station's media company has a broadcast reach into areas from central Washington through Idaho to eastern Montana, which contain dozens of tribal communities.

"Many Indigenous People in our communities know a friend or family member who has gone missing or was murdered," the producers said in a statement. "We are launching "Vanished" to take a deeper look at this issue as it affects our Native populations [including] external factors that seem to aggravate the issue."

Episodes are expected to debut every other Tuesday. The first episodes are available on Spotify and were expected to be eventually accessible on Apple Podcasts.

There are other entire podcasts dedicated to the issue, or already established broadcasts that contain singled out episodes on the epidemic.

The "Taken" podcast, produced by Indigenous-owned Eagle Vision, features a 10-part series on the subject.

The podcast involves families, law enforcement, advocates, academics, elders and others to shed light on the stories and possibly help to solve open cases.

"Taken" is available on Spotify. Search your preferred podcast provider for availability of any podcast on the subject.

Meanwhile, the producers of "Vanished" are soliciting stories about the issue from anyone who would like to share. Email vanished@cowlesmontana.com for more information.

Seminole Tribe granted 'opportunity zone' funds

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe has been awarded funds to study the viability of an economic development project in Hendry County just outside the Brighton Reservation.

The Indian Affairs' Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) recently announced more than \$760,000 had been set aside for 14 federally recognized tribes (and tribal entities) to start new businesses and commercial projects in designated "opportunity zones." The Seminole Tribe's share of the funds is \$52,000. Details of the project have not yet been disclosed.

Opportunity zones are located in "economically distressed" areas where new investments, under certain conditions, become eligible for preferential tax treatment.

The Brighton and Immokalee reservation areas are included in two of Florida's opportunity zone tracts.

The funds, distributed through Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) grants, are set up either as a partnership or corporation for investing in eligible property or businesses located in the zone.

"Since their inception in 2007, NABDI feasibility studies have created blueprints for business projects in Indian Country and Alaska," outgoing Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Tara Sweeney, said in a statement. "This year, we broadened their value for tribes by focusing on attracting private investment."

Sweeney said proposals were evaluated on their potential to create jobs and stimulate economic activity within a Native community, among other measures.

The following is a full list of grantees with corresponding funding amounts.

- Angoon Community Association (Alaska): \$37,600
- Aroostook Band of Micmacs (Maine): \$26,400
- Chippewa Cree Tribe (Montana): \$35,000
- Delaware Nation (Oklahoma): \$42,000
- Nez Perce Tribe (Idaho): \$75,000
- Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation (Utah): \$75,000
- Oglala Sioux Tribe (South Dakota): \$59,250
- Passamaquoddy Tribe (Maine): \$43,696
- Pueblo of Laguna (New Mexico): \$41,000
- Rosebud Sioux Tribe (South Dakota): \$75,000
- Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (Michigan): \$70,000
- Seminole Tribe of Florida: \$52,000
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (North Dakota): \$58,100
- White Mountain Apache Tribe (Arizona): \$72,300

More information on opportunity zones can be found at bia.gov.

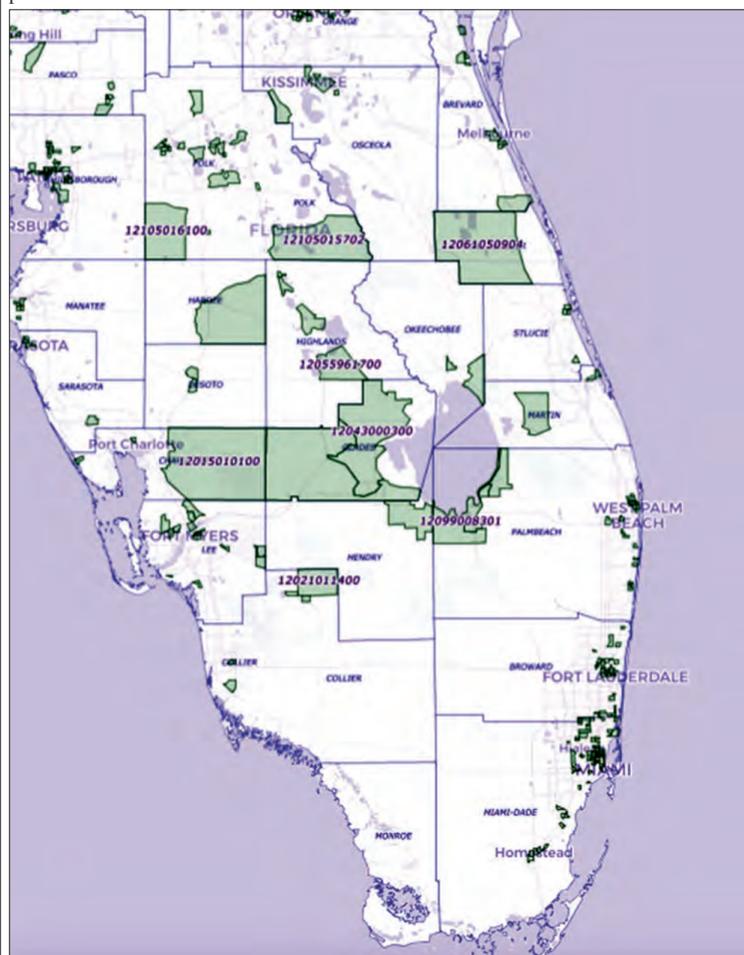


Image via bia.gov

South Florida "opportunity zones" are shown in green shading. Areas in and around the Brighton and Immokalee reservations are included. Image via bia.gov.

Stranded manatee rescued from canal near Moore Haven

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

A manatee found stranded in a canal near Moore Haven has a new home after being rescued by biologists from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

A SFWMD field crew working on the Lake Hicpochee restoration project, just west of Moore Haven and south of the Brighton Reservation, noticed the manatee in a 1.5-mile stretch of canal Jan. 7. They called FWC and together, with some volunteers, were able to rescue the 1,300-pound female.

The manatee was trapped between two water control structures, according to the Lee County Sheriff's office. It took about 20 people to lift the animal onto a powerlift and into the FWC's marine mammal rescue truck.

The manatee was successfully released into the safer waters of the Orange River in Fort Myers, not far from a Florida Power and Light plant on the Caloosahatchee River.



Image via SFWMD video

A manatee stranded in a canal near Moore Haven is rescued by biologists and volunteers on Jan. 7.

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

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London casino on tap as Hard Rock acquires license

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock International continues to expand its casino presence internationally – this time in London, England.

The globally recognized brand has acquired a casino license from the Ritz Club – a famous casino that opened in 1998. The casino suspended operations in March just as the United Kingdom was entering a lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It never reopened.

The Ritz Club is located in the world famous Ritz Hotel, which was sold in March but continued to operate.

The casino license transaction will allow Hard Rock to “seek out and establish a new

casino premise in London, continuing [its] expansion into major gateway cities around the world,” a release said.

“We look forward to expanding our brand offerings within London and bringing our award-winning hospitality, gaming and entertainment to the birthplace of Hard Rock,” Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in the release.

Peter Morton and Isaac Tigrett established the first Hard Rock Cafe in London in 1971. There is a Hard Rock Hotel in London as well as three Hard Rock Cafes.

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

For more, go to hardrock.com.



Image via Facebook

The now-closed Ritz Club is located in the Ritz Hotel in London, England.

Native companies, individuals honored with business awards

FROM PRESS RELEASE

SAN DIEGO — Indian Energy LLC was honored in December by Native Business as the inaugural recipient of the Native Business of the Year Award. The award was presented at the recent Native Business Virtual Summit. The awards program celebrated Native American-owned companies and entrepreneurs who demonstrate courage, innovation and commitment to economic self-sufficiency and prosperity.

“Indian Energy is demonstrating innovation in the energy sector at an unprecedented scale by creating energy storage and microgrid solutions for Tribal Nations and Department of Defense clients, and ultimately playing a vital role in advancing the U.S.’s energy sovereignty,” said Cherokee Nation’s Gary Davis, the founder, publisher and CEO of Native Business.

“I am delighted — and grateful — to see Indian Energy viewed as an influential and change-making Native business within North America’s exceptional tribal community,” said Allen G. Cadreau, the Company’s CEO. “We are honored to be recognized by Native Business, an organization whose mission includes the advancement of Native American business and economic development. Through hard work and innovation, Indian Country’s talented entrepreneurs have long been advancing, delivering and achieving across all industries, and we hope this honor for our company will further promote and inspire the ongoing development and acknowledgment of the tribal community.”

Indian Energy, a 100% Native American-

owned utility-scale microgrid development and systems integration firm, was developed in response to an overwhelming desire for sustainable energy independence among our tribal nations. Founded in 2009 from the wish of a handful of Tribal Nations to pursue a utility-scale power plant, the company, aptly nicknamed “two guys and a dog,” grew into an advanced renewable energy development firm. Since this humble beginning, Indian Energy’s mission has been to empower Tribal communities with the technical support needed to own and operate energy infrastructure that serves their own citizens. Now certified as a Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and a Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE), Indian Energy is rapidly expanding to develop projects and sell renewable energy to military organizations and off-reservation communities in the Southern California region.

The Native Business Virtual Summit presented five awards to recognize businesses and individuals who rose above challenge and circumstance in an extraordinary year. Indian Energy was joined by 2020 Native Business Award honorees Mark N. Fox, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (MHA Nation), and Cedric Cromwell, chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe who jointly won the Tribal Sovereignty Champion of the Year Award; JC Seneca, founder of Tallchief Hemp, Native Pride Travel Plaza and Six Nations Manufacturing, who was presented with the Entrepreneur of the Year Award; Chuck Garrett, CEO of Cherokee Nation Businesses, who received the Tribal Enterprise of the Year Award; and Clara Lee Pratte, CEO of Strongbow Strategies, who was honored with the Native Disruptor of the Year Award.

Native economic summit in Vegas offered in-person, online

STAFF REPORT

The Res2021 economic summit will be held March 15-17 in Las Vegas. Attendees can attend in person or participate virtually.

The event is hosted by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development. Guests expected include tribal leaders; CEOs, members of Congress; and

local, state and federal officials.

Topics include agriculture, economic development, finance, natural resources, procurement and workforce development.

There will also be an American Indian artisan market and a “buy Native” procurement matchmaking expo.

For more information and to register visit res.ncaied.org.



Kevin Johnson

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood awarded more than \$615 million in jackpots in 2020.

Jackpot winnings top \$615M in 2020 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Highlighted by its largest winning jackpot ever, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood announced in January that it paid out approximately 214,250 jackpots totaling more than \$615 million in 2020.

By far the largest jackpot came July 23

when a woman won \$3.8 million on a \$5 wager while playing a \$1 IGT Megabucks slots game. According to Seminole Hard Rock, it marked the highest land-based payout in 2020, the highest payout in history for all six Seminole Gaming properties and the largest slot jackpot ever awarded in Florida on an IGT game.

Additional large jackpots won in 2020 included more than \$321,000 on June 12 and

more than \$282,000 on March 14.

After closing for nearly three months in 2020 due to the pandemic, Seminole Hard Rock reopened June 12 under the company’s “Safe + Sound” guidelines, which includes required mask-wearing for guests and team members inside any facility except while in the pool, eating, drinking or smoking in designated areas.

Hard Rock Hotels plans new venue at entertainment complex in Canada

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The Hard Rock name is growing in Canada.

Vancouver is home to a Hard Rock Casino. Niagara Falls has a Hard Rock Cafe on the Canadian side of the giant Falls. Ottawa, the nation’s capital, is in the midst of seeing a Hard Rock Casino and plans for a hotel emerge on the site of an existing harness racetrack and casino.

Now London, Ontario, can be added to the list.

Hard Rock Hotels announced plans Jan. 15 for a new hotel to be built in London on the site of a former cereal factory.

On Twitter, Ed Holder, London’s mayor, praised the announcement as “very exciting news” and welcomed Hard Rock to the city.

Hard Rock, along with managing partners at Dora Hotel Company and The Cribbage Group, will transform the site of the former massive Kellogg’s Canada factory into Hard Rock Hotel London, Ontario.

The 353-room hotel at the 100 Kellogg Lane development is scheduled to be completed in two phases, with an initial 163-room opening planned for late 2022 and

final site completion in 2025.

100 Kellogg Lane already features some development, including attractions. It bills itself as Canada’s largest entertainment complex with what is described as the largest indoor ropes course in the world and Canada’s largest virtual reality facility. A



children’s museum is scheduled to move to the venue. The site also features restaurants and other attractions.

According to a press release, the hotel development will embrace “historical aspects of this site,” and “the design will embody luxury industrial elements that preserve the original atmosphere and charm of the site.

This includes the original courtyard that is highlighted by a building developed by Albert Khan, widely acknowledged as the foremost industrial architect of his time and the ‘Architect of Detroit.’”

London is located between Detroit and Toronto, about a two-hour drive either way.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Dora Hotel Company and The Cribbage Group on this project, bringing Hard Rock’s world-class entertainment experiences to an already-bustling area in Ontario,” Todd Hricko, SVP of Hotel Development at Hard Rock International, said in a statement. “This property will provide a multitude of local attractions and unique on-property activities sure to create lasting memories for all who visit.”

“We are excited to begin work on this property and bring to life the unparalleled energy of Hard Rock. There is no doubt this hotel will be a game changer for Canadians and those traveling from around the globe to Ontario for this Hard Rock Hotel experience,” Tim Dora, president of The Dora Hotel Company, said in a statement.

The hotel will feature Hard Rock musical amenities for guests and a Rock Spa.

◆ TEJON From page 1A

The proposed project has been in various stages of approval since 2016. A big hurdle was cleared when Kern County Supervisors approved a government-to-government agreement by a 4-0 vote in 2019 – the same year Hard Rock came onboard.

“This has been a long but worthwhile journey for the tribe and its citizens,” Escobedo said in his statement.

Escobedo also thanked the Seminole Tribe, who is the parent entity of Hard Rock

International, as well as federal officials and local supporters.

He said the Seminole Tribe “stood shoulder-to-shoulder with us to help make our dream of restoring our land base a close-at-hand reality.”

Plans call for an 11-story hotel with 400 rooms and a 166,500-square foot gaming floor. There would be convention and meeting space, an event center, restaurants, an RV park and tribal offices.

The development would be built on 52 acres of a 306-acre parcel the tribe owns in Mettler. The project is expected to generate thousands of temporary and permanent jobs.

As of press time there was no specific timeline for construction or a predicted opening date.

The Tejon Tribe was federally recognized in 2012 and today has approximately 1,100 members, the majority of which live in the Bakersfield area.

According to the tribe, its ancestors lived in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, along the southern tip of the San Joaquin Valley, and they were known as the Kitanemuk people.

Since the 1950s, most of its tribal members moved to Bakersfield, where Tejon descendants remain.



Rendering courtesy Hard Rock

The proposed Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tejon marks a significant milestone for the Tejon Indian Tribe.

THPO mapping project centers on community participation

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

A typical map is a one dimensional portrayal of a place comprised of lines, names and numbers. A participatory map is a lot more personal and driven by the culture and experiences of those who live there.

Participatory mapping, also known as community mapping, is based on the knowledge of local residents. The end result is a map which encompasses a community's impressions of the place in which they live.

The Seminole Tribe's Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) has embarked on a tribalwide mapping project that will depict the importance of places to tribal members.

"It is a way to gather locational information that is important to the tribe," said Lacey Cofer, THPO chief data analyst. "It's an organic process led by the participant. We don't tell them what's important; we want to know what they think is important."

Cofer hopes participants will include places like restaurants, buildings, a favorite river to fish or place to hunt.

To create the maps, participants receive a box with instructions on how to make their own maps in a diorama form. The boxes include supplies such as pins to mark the map's locations, sticky notes, stickers and markers. The boxes may include multiple maps.

The maps can be a multigenerational project and children are encouraged to participate. Playdough and construction paper are included in the boxes so the entire family can create the map together.

"Creativity is encouraged," Cofer said. "We hope kids, parents and grandparents can do it together as a hands-on activity while everyone is cooped up inside the house."

THPO aims to map the southern half of Florida. Participants aren't limited as to what area they want to map. Tribal members and students at the Ahfachkee School and Pemaayev Emahakv Charter School were invited to participate.

"It's a pretty big area, so we supplied small maps for small areas," Cofer explained.

"We hope people give us information for areas that are important to them."

A h f a c h k e e middle and high school students who wanted to participate received their boxes in the fall. About a dozen or so volunteered to complete maps with their families. Boxes were delivered directly to those families.

"The students were intrigued about being part of their own history," said Joseph Burley, high school social studies teacher.

"We told them they are the journalists on this and you are reaching out to your families, who are the historians. It was an interesting dialogue. Their tendency was to leave it to their parents, uncles and grandparents to do that. They didn't realize they would be those historians someday. It was eye opening for them."

Burley, who offered extra credit for photos of students' projects, said they were enthusiastic and looked forward to getting their families involved. Students were directed to turn their maps in directly to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

"The timing was interesting; we do current events and discuss Covid," Burley said. "The Navajo lost so many elders



Quenton Cypress examines maps of some areas THPO would like participants to describe for the community mapping project.

and so much of their history during the pandemic. We talked about the importance of oral history and being able to document it through the mapping project for them and their children in the future."

Since the school is in session only virtually, the impact of face-to-face conversations with elders has been absent.

"Elders used to come in and speak to the

data will be used as a reference document for future consultation with the tribe. Cofer said the project will be used to ease the off-reservation consulting process with agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

This is the first time THPO has done a project of this nature. Feedback from the community has been positive. Boxes have been brought to community meetings and about two dozen tribal members are working on theirs.

"I've had a few people tell me it's a good idea and they like the concept of it," said Quenton Cypress, Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO) community engagement manager.

"A friend of mine took a box and said it would be good for him to do with his kids."

"This is a great opportunity to sit with your grandparents and listen to stories to see where things took place," added Lois Billie, Executive Operations Office executive assistant.

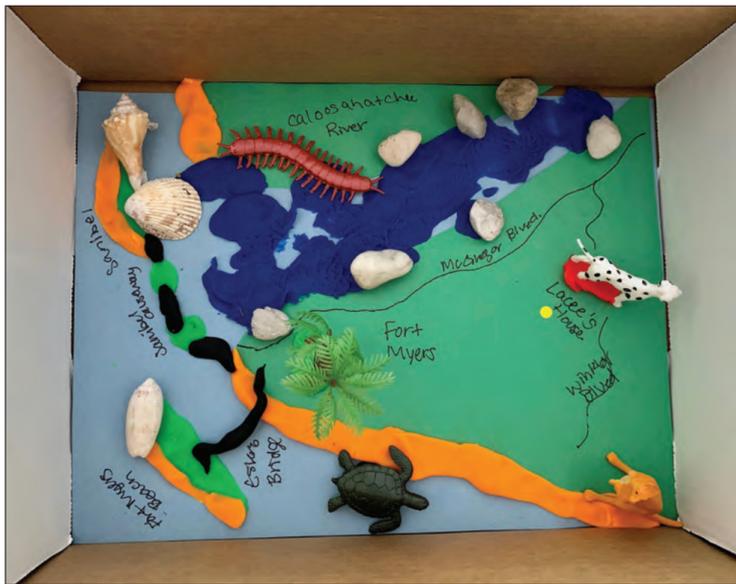
"These are things you want to know for future generations."

Cypress believes the cultural aspect of the project is good for families.

"It will bring families closer by doing this with us," he said. "Even better, it can bring kids and parents together as they learn the history of where things were and how camp life was in the day."

The mapping project is ongoing. The goal is to be able to compile the information by spring or summer and complete the study by the end of the year.

Those who would like to participate may contact Cofer at lacecofer@semtribe.com or call (863) 983-6549, ext. 12263.



Lacey Cofer provided this example of a mapping project diorama of her own neighborhood. Included are landmarks such as bodies of water and roads along with items to be found in those areas.

students," Burley said. "When students see tribal members place value on something, it has a huge impact. If we weren't virtual, it might have helped to have a guest speaker talk about it."

About 50 students in grades seven and eight at PECS were to receive their boxes at the end of January and are scheduled to return them in February.

THPO's objective for the project is to gain as much information as possible. The

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe member appointed to USDA leadership post

STAFF REPORT

Heather Dawn Thompson (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe) has been appointed director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Tribal Relations.

The announcement from the USDA on Jan. 25 described Thompson as "an expert in American Indian law, tribal sovereignty, and rural tribal economic development."

Thompson is a Harvard Law School graduate. Most recently she worked at Greenberg Traurig, an international law firm that started more than 50 years ago in South Florida. Thompson was a member of the firm's American Indian law practice. Her background includes work in federal Indian law and Tribal agriculture.

Thompson will report to the Secretary of Agriculture. Former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who served in the Obama Administration, has been nominated by President Joe Biden to return to the position.

"Heather's appointment to lead the Office of Tribal Relations is a step toward restoring the office and the position of director so that USDA can effectively maintain nation-to-nation relationships in recognition of tribal sovereignty and to ensure that meaningful tribal consultation is standard practice across the Department," Katharine Ferguson, chief of staff, Office of the Secretary, said in a statement. "It's also important to have a director who can serve as a lead voice on tribal issues, relations and economic development within the Office of the Secretary because the needs and priorities of tribal nations and Indigenous communities are cross cutting and must be kept front and center."

According to the USDA, the Office of Tribal Relations "serves as a single point of contact for Tribal issues and works to ensure that relevant programs and policies are efficient, easy to understand, accessible, and developed in consultation with the American



Greenberg Traurig
Heather Dawn Thompson

Indians and Alaska Native constituents they impact."

Thompson serves on the advisory board of the Tribal Business Journal, according to TBJ's website. The Seminole Tribe's S.R. Tommie is also on the board. Thompson has also served in positions for the National Congress of American Indians, National Native American Bar Association and South Dakota Indian Country Bar Association.

Thompson's background in public service includes stints at the Department of Justice and Attorney General's Office for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. She also served as an assistant U.S. Attorney for South Dakota's Indian Country section.

Thompson holds a Juris Doctor cum laude from Harvard Law School, a master's degree in public policy from the University of Florida, and a bachelor's degree in International Studies from Carnegie Mellon University.

Michaela Goade becomes first Native American winner of Caldecott Medal

FROM CNN

Michaela Goade just etched her name into the history books.

[On Jan. 25] she became the first Native American to win the Randolph Caldecott Medal for her illustrations in the children's book "We Are Water Protectors," according to the American Library Association. The Caldecott Medal is a prestigious award given annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

"It's a great honor to be the first Indigenous artist to win this award, but I am of course standing on many shoulders," Goade, a member of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, said in a statement to CNN. "I think it's important to acknowledge and reflect on the significance of being the first in 2021, while also looking towards the future with much hope. I won't be the last! It brings me so much joy to think about Indigenous youth who will see themselves in this recognition and know that their stories are powerful and valid."

"We Are Water Protectors" was written by Carole Lindstrom, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe. The story follows a young Native American girl as she takes a stand against a black snake threatening to poison her people's water, according to the book's description.

The snake, which is shaped like a pipe in the book, represents the Dakota Access Pipeline -- a controversial crude oil project that spans 1,172 miles and extends over four states -- and is a reference to the Black Snake Prophecy, according to Goade.

The book draws its inspiration from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's struggle to stop the construction of the pipeline. In 2016, the tribe filed a complaint in federal court alleging "the construction and operation of the pipeline ... threatens the tribe's



Courtesy image

"We Are Water Protectors" was illustrated by Michaela Goade.

environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the tribe."

"I wanted to make the Standing Rock water protectors proud while also speaking to everyone, particularly children," explained Goade. "As I learned more about this historic gathering of over 500 Native Nations and non-Native allies from around the world, I was so moved and inspired. This book helped me better understand the work I can do and the world I can help change as an artist activist. For that I'll always be grateful."

The American Library Association announced the award.

"Michaela Goade's semi-transparent color palette beautifully bathes every page with powerful illustrations," said Annisha Jeffries, Caldecott Medal committee chair.

Rep. Sharice Davids named vice chair of Transportation and Infrastructure committee

FROM KMBC NEWS
Kansas City, Mo.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Sharice Davids (D-KS) announced Jan. 27 that she has been named vice chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

"As someone who used to work at the Department of Transportation and as a self-proclaimed 'infrastructure nerd,' it's an immense honor to be named vice chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure," said Davids, who is a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation.

"I'm ready to go to work with my colleagues and President Joe Biden to pass an infrastructure package so we can build back better."

Davids became a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure committee when she took office in 2019. She worked at the U.S. Department of Transportation as a White House Fellow before her election.

"I look forward to working with our Subcommittee Chairs and all of our Democratic Members, both new and returning, who hail from all corners of the country and represent diverse districts and communities," Chair DeFazio said. "Our work begins now to get transformational infrastructure legislation through Congress



Rep. Sharice Davids

and signed into law in order to create millions of jobs, boost U.S. manufacturing and address the climate crisis. I can't wait to get started."

Davids said the committee has big work to get accomplished.

"During this moment of crisis, we have the opportunity to make meaningful, long-lasting investments in our infrastructure," Davids said. "Ones that create millions of good-paying jobs, reduce carbon emissions to tackle the urgent climate crisis and build our economy back better than before."



Courtesy photo

Members of the THPO participatory mapping project team, from left, Lois Billie, Quenton Cypress and Nic Butler, sit around the fire outside of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum with boxes to be given to project participants.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

A photographic collection that celebrates community spirit

BY CHELSEA NIELSEN
Catalog Assistant, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

BIG CYPRESS — The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum remains closed, but continues to serve the Seminole community, in part by cataloging thousands of photographic negatives. The project, funded by a

grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, is increasing collections accessibility by organizing and describing 9,000 negatives donated by The Seminole Tribune in 2015. The negatives are scanned and assigned numbers that link them to their records. They are then placed in protective housing that helps preserve them for future generations. Finally, a catalog record is

created for each negative. The photo is described to facilitate database searches, and information about its location is included to make it easy for staff to locate negatives if community members wish to make copies of them.

The photographic negatives showcase events from the 1970s to the early 2000s. They capture joyous moments from holiday



Billy L. Cypress, veterans and the Seminole Tribe's Color Guard during a grand entry at the Seminole Tribal Fair in 2001.



A group photo during a Big Cypress recreation field trip to Sunsplash Family Waterpark.

festivities, sporting events and formal occasions. Among the collection are photos of adults covered in mud and laughing during tug-of-war as others play volleyball and horseshoes on the Fourth of July. Other negatives show youth beaming with pride as they participate in 4-H livestock shows or receive academic achievement awards. There are also images of grand entries and patchwork clothing contests at tribal fairs, where many gather to honor Seminole culture. Unique about this collection is that some photos appear in Seminole Tribune articles, which enrich the collection's visual story by providing information such as the event, location and people present in negatives. Collections records include these details and information about the associated article, which allows you to learn more about photos that interest you.

The photographic negatives are a celebration of recent Seminole history. You can relive moments, share them with others or learn about local history by browsing our online catalog. The museum also accepts requests for copies of photos, and what is special about this collection of negatives is that they can be printed in various sizes to suit your needs. Upon request, negatives are re-scanned at a higher resolution to create quality copies for your family albums. You can view records and make requests on our website: semtribe.pastperfectonline.com/.

Already online for viewing are 1,000 of the project's 9,000 photographic negatives, specifically records 2015.6.32000-33000. Over the next year and a half, the rest of the

negatives will be cataloged and uploaded to the online database. As you browse the collection you may notice that some records lack details. Should you recognize a person, location or event and wish to share that information you can submit feedback through the website, or contact Collections Manager Tara Backhouse at tarabackhouse@semtribe.com. New information is used to update records, which makes searching through them easier.

The project aims to preserve memories for the Seminole community now and in the future, and the museum hopes that the growing online catalog will help people feel connected to their past and each other. As the pandemic continues to separate people in an unprecedented way, it is nice to remember the joy brought by community gatherings and look forward to their return.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Service FY20 Program.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum welcomes Durante Blais-Billie as new assistant director

FROM AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

BIG CYPRESS — The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum is excited to welcome Durante Blais-Billie, of the Hollywood Reservation, as the new assistant director. The position assists with the day-day operations of the museum, including oversight of educational and outreach programming, exhibit development, preservation initiatives, and supporting the museum's mission through its community and public efforts.

"I'm excited to bring my passion for Indigenous knowledge and Native empowerment into my position at the museum. Joining an institution that is committed to claiming space for Native history is an amazing opportunity to apply my love for our Seminole people and culture," Blais-Billie said.

Blais-Billie earned a Master of Arts in art history and management from the

University of St. Andrews in Scotland. She has demonstrated strong leadership, advocacy and community engagement efforts throughout her reign as Miss Florida Seminole, which will continue through July of 2021, and her more recent work with the Future Indigenous Leaders of South Florida. Blais-Billie has collaborated with many museums and organizations over the years, including co-curating the exhibit "Patchwork Mosaic: An Indigenous Gathering of Seminole Masterworks" at History Fort Lauderdale.

Although the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's physical buildings remain temporarily closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the museum is open online and working hard to stay connected and accessible.

"I am looking forward to Durante joining our team in February," Kate Macuen, the museum's director said. "Like most museums throughout the country, we have

been through some challenges over the last 11 months. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and having Durante join us at this juncture as we are working towards our future reopening is very exciting. Along with her experience, she brings a contagious enthusiasm and a strong community commitment. I have no doubt that Dante is going to do great things for the museum."

Blais-Billie will start at the museum on Feb. 8.

"I'm incredibly thankful for the opportunity to serve my tribe alongside them," she said. "It is an honor to assist our staff and community members, while also being a part of such a great support network. I cannot wait to begin."

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
Durate Blais-Billie is the new assistant director at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.



Kevin Gover named Under Secretary at Smithsonian

FROM PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Kevin Gover has been appointed the Smithsonian's Under Secretary for Museums and Culture, effective Jan. 17. Since February 2020, Gover (Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma), who was director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), has served as acting Under Secretary. The position oversees the Smithsonian's history and art museums, its cultural centers, and the archives of American art, Smithsonian exhibits and the national collections program.

Gover began as director of NMAI in 2007. He oversaw the Washington, D.C., and New York City museums as well as the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland. Last November, NMAI opened the National Native American Veterans Memorial, which honors the contributions of American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians who served the military.

"Upon the completion of the memorial, I really began to feel that we had accomplished a wonderful achievement and that this could be a good point to close this chapter for myself and the museum," Gover wrote in a letter posted on NMAI's website. "I know that the museum is in good hands while we look for my replacement. It also is easier knowing that I will remain at the Smithsonian and serve NMAI in new ways, including as a member of the museum's board of trustees."

Machel Monenerkit, who joined



Kevin Gover

the museum in 1994 as a volunteer, will continue to serve as acting director of the museum following Gover's departure. She is currently the museum's deputy director. She also worked as a program manager at the museum. In 1998, she transferred to the museum's location in Washington, where she oversaw three major projects for the museum's 2004 opening. She joined the museum's executive office in 2006.

Harvard, Stanford to host panel of Indigenous scholars in free webinar

STAFF REPORT

The Harvard University Native American Program and the Stanford American Indian Cultural Center will host a panel of five Indigenous scholars to celebrate the 50th anniversary of both university's programs.

The free webinar, which will highlight Indigenous excellence around the country, will be held Feb. 11 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (ET).

The panelists are:

Henrietta Mann, Cheyenne, professor emerita of Native American studies at the University of Montana, Missoula and Montana State University, Bozeman, and founding president of Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College. In 2008 she received the



Henrietta Mann

Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Indian Education Association and in 2016 she became one of two Native Americans ever to be elected to the National Academy of Education.

Greg Sarris, Federated Indians of Grafton Rancheria, Tribal Chairman of the Federated Indians of Grafton Rancheria (Coast Miwok) and endowed chair in creative writing and Native American studies at Sonoma State University. He received his Ph.D. in modern thought and literature from Stanford University, where he was awarded the Walter Gore Award for excellence in teaching.

Philip Deloria, Yankton Dakota, Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University. His research and teaching focus on the social, cultural and political histories of the



Philip Deloria

relations among American Indian peoples and the United States.

K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Creek Nation, professor in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University and co-founder of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Her research and teaching interests include the status of Native people as U.S. citizens and Native nations as Indigenous sovereigns, the role of Native nations in shaping U.S. federalism, American Indian policy history, Indigenous knowledge systems, and the history of American Indian education.

Robert Warrior, Osage Nation, professor of American literature and culture at the University of Kansas. He is past president of the American Studies Association and is the founding president of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association.

For registration go to: https://bit.ly/AAAS_Indigenous.

Indigenous leader who helped steer Autry Museum dies of Covid-19

FROM LOS ANGELES TIMES

Marshall McKay, a Northern California Indigenous leader of Pomo-Wintun heritage who helped secure economic independence for the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation near Sacramento, and whose deep support of cultural causes led to his becoming the first Indigenous chairman on the board of the Autry Museum of the American West, has

died at 68 after contracting the coronavirus. McKay and his wife, Sharon Rogers McKay, tested positive for the coronavirus and were both hospitalized after experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms. Rogers McKay recovered and was eventually released. Her husband did not. Marshall McKay died Dec. 29 at Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center in Los Angeles. His death was confirmed by a representative

for the Autry Museum and his stepson, Alex Aander.

Rick West, president and chief executive at the Autry, said McKay's death marks a huge loss for the museum but also Native culture at large. McKay was, West said, "one of the five — maybe even three — significant Native leaders in the late 20th century and early 21st century period."

Health

VACCINE

From page 1A

Councilman Howard, who is diabetic, has been open about his experience of contracting the virus last summer. He said after almost three weeks in the hospital he fully recovered with no lingering symptoms.

Some might wonder if it's necessary to receive the vaccine if a person has previously had the virus. The answer is yes, according to health officials, because it's still unclear how long antibodies keep someone immune.

In addition, health officials stress that it's a myth that the vaccine can give someone the virus.

Kiswani-Barley said it's true that one side effect of the shot is mild Covid-19-like symptoms – like a fever, chills or joint pain – but that those occur in a very low percentage of those who receive the vaccine. The most common side effect, she said, was soreness at the site of the injection – similar to the flu shot.

However, the vaccine is not a treatment for people who are currently sick with Covid-19, she said.

"We are all in it together and the safety of the tribe is of utmost importance to us," Kiswani-Barley said.

President Mitchell Cypress joined Councilman Howard and others to promote the importance of the vaccine.

"It's like the O.K. Corral; they're ready to shoot," President Cypress said to lighten the mood a bit before he received the shot Dec. 28.

Afterwards, he said the process was easy. "Everybody should be getting the vaccine," President Cypress said. "This is a serious virus that has destroyed people."

President Cypress and Big Cypress Councilman David Cypress both received the vaccine at tribal headquarters.

The pair shared that one of their brothers had recently passed away from the virus.

Councilman Cypress also contracted the virus last summer.

"And here I am and hopefully everybody comes and gets their shots," Councilman Cypress said. "It's not something to play around with."

Tribal leaders have encouraged younger people who sometimes experience mild or no symptoms to get the vaccine in order to prevent spreading it to others – including elders who are typically more vulnerable.

"At the end of the day we're here to protect our community and our fellow neighbors," Councilman Howard said.

Tribal members can call their local clinic or the Health and Human Services hotline at (833) 786-3458 to determine eligibility and be placed on a waiting list.



Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, above, and President Mitchell Cypress, below, receive Covid-19 vaccination shots from Stephen Zitnick, of Seminole Fire Rescue, Dec. 28 at tribal headquarters in Hollywood.



Webinar series focuses on Indigenous women chefs

STAFF REPORT

The culinary expertise of Indigenous women chefs is featured in a live webinar series hosted by the annual Conference on Native American Nutrition.

The series, which kicked off in January, features monthly live cooking demonstrations.

The series is held from 1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. (ET). Upcoming programs include:

Feb. 9: Featured Chef: Elena Terry (Ho-Chunk) - Executive chef/founder of Wild Bearies, a non-profit community outreach catering organization. She is also the Food and Culinary Program coordinator for the Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance.

Commentary will be provided by Loretta Barret Oden (Potawatomie). Oden realized the potential opportunity to educate others about Native American history and culture through cuisine. She has spent the past 30-plus years cooking, studying, teaching and adapting recipes to preserve the culinary legacy of her upbringing. In the early 1990s, she and her son, the late chef Clayton Oden, opened the Corn Dance Cafe in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the first restaurant to showcase the bounty of food Indigenous to the Americas. She is best known in the public eye for her five-part television series, "Seasoned With Spirit: A Native Cook's Journey," by PBS.

March 9: Featured Chef: Kim Tilsen-Brave Heart (Oglala Lakota) - chef/owner, Etiquette Catering Co.

April 13: Featured Chef: Hillel Echo-Hawk (Pawnee and Athabaskan)

May 11: Featured Chef: Crystal Wahpepah (Kickapoo) - chef/owner, Wahpepah's Kitchen

June 8: Featured Chef: Tawnya Brant (Mohawk)

For more information go to hfh.umn.edu/indigenoucheefs.



Elena Terry, executive chef/co-founder of Wild Bearies.

AICAF names interim CEO

FROM PRESS RELEASE

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — American Indian Cancer Foundation Board of Directors Chairperson Gary Ferguson (Aleut/Unangan) announced Jan. 21 that Melissa Buffalo (Meskwaki) has been named interim chief executive officer.

Buffalo's appointment follows the departure of Kris Rhodes (Bad River & Fond du Lac Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa) on Dec. 31, 2020, after a decade of service to AICAF. Rhodes led AICAF from its inception to last month, guiding the organization's work in addressing the cancer burdens of Indigenous people.

Buffalo has been with AICAF since 2019. She currently serves as both interim chief executive officer and deputy director.

Buffalo is an enrolled member of the Meskwaki Nation and a descendant of the Crow Creek and Lower Brule Sioux Tribes. She received an undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities and earned a Master's of Science in human development from South Dakota State University.

"We are focused on reducing Indigenous cancer burdens every day, and I will continue to drive that work both as interim CEO and as the deputy director of the American Indian Cancer Foundation," Buffalo said in a statement.

Buffalo will serve as both interim CEO and deputy director until a new chief executive officer is announced.

California tribe donates \$75,000 to healthcare agencies

FROM PRESS RELEASE

JAMUL, Calif. — On Jan. 4, the Jamul Indian Village of California, owner and operator of Jamul Casino, announced its 2020 year-end donations totaling \$75,000 to local healthcare agencies, including \$45,000 to Sharp Grossmont Hospital, \$15,000 to Southern Indian Health Council, and \$15,000 to Indian Health Council, Inc.

JIV provided these year-end healthcare donations in addition to its annual fall philanthropy and community outreach campaigns, which included contributing more than \$40,000 to non-profits for breast cancer research and awareness, veterans' programs, and other local causes.

"We are incredibly grateful to Jamul Indian Village Tribe for their generous

support of Sharp Grossmont Hospital's COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund. The funds will go directly to support our efforts to care for our East County community and our caregivers as we continue to fight the pandemic," Scott Evans, CEO of Sharp Grossmont Hospital, said in a statement.

"As we reflect on the past year, the tribe wanted to give back to those who have been impacted by COVID-19. We are donating these funds to honor the courage and resilience of our front-line healthcare workers and to support the children and families who are suffering as a result of the pandemic. We are truly grateful for the extraordinary and tireless efforts of each of these organizations and their workers," Erica Pinto, JIV chairwoman said.

Conference to be held on infection and tribal communities

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Diné College in Arizona will host a one-day virtual conference titled "Emerging Infection & Tribal Communities: What We Learned" on Feb. 21. Expected invitees/presenters and participants of the event will include individuals from Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation Tribal Epidemiology Center, CDC, IHS, American Society for Microbiology and others.

To register for this free program go to <https://www.dinecollege.edu/emerging-infections-tribal-communities/>.

Program to discuss Covid-19 in Indian Country

FROM PRESS RELEASE

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Native communities throughout the United States. Join experts for a conversation about combating this devastating pandemic in Indian Country on Feb. 11 from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Registration for this free online program is required at smithsonian.zoom.us.

The program will feature Rear Admiral Michael Toedt, MD, chief medical officer, Indian Health Service; Dr. Loretta Christensen (Diné [Navajo]), chief medical officer, Navajo Area Office Indian Health Service; and Phyllis Davis, Tribal Council member, Gun Lake Band Pottawatomie and chair of the Great Lakes Area Tribal Health

Board. The program will be moderated by Dr. Charles Grim (Cherokee), Chickasaw Nation

secretary of health. It is presented by the Smithsonian in partnership with Indian Health Service.



Lt. Sara Mantick, pharmacist, and Lt. Christopher Mendoza-Troung, acting chief pharmacist, begin drawing COVID-19 vaccines at the Zuni Comprehensive Health Center in New Mexico.

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SEMINOLE SCENES



Mark Yamasaki (2)

HUEY LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT: The Huey helicopter on display in front of the Florida Seminole Veterans Building in Brighton has a few added features. Two mannequin “pilots” seem ready for action as the chopper’s lights put on a show, thanks to a small solar panel that powers a battery all day long. The light show may not complete with the Guitar Hotel’s in Hollywood, but it has historical significance.



Miami Dolphins

IN MEMORY: Hard Rock Stadium joined buildings around the country, including The Guitar Hotel, in lighting up in color Jan. 19 as a tribute in memory of those who have died from Covid-19.

Hard Rock Tampa

WHEEL OF FORTUNE: Five dollars went a long way for a guest at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. The guest, described as Christopher R. by the casino, hit a \$560,000 jackpot on a \$5 bet Jan. 15 while playing the \$1 Wheel of Fortune Red Stevens slot machine. It turned out to be the largest jackpot hit during a recent stretch of a week that saw the casino award more than \$1 million. Other large payouts were \$360,000 on a Wheel of Fortune slot machine, \$133,000 on a Eureka Reel Blast slot machine and \$100,000 on a Triple Double Bonus Poker slot machine.



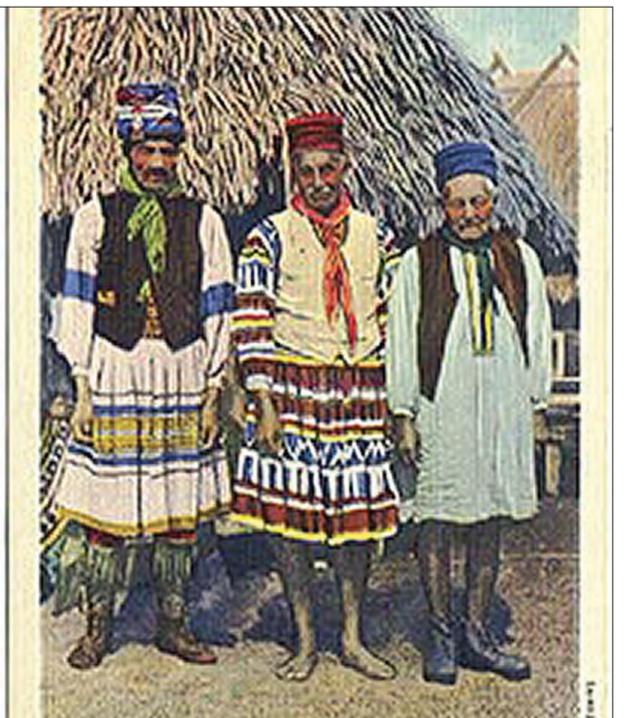
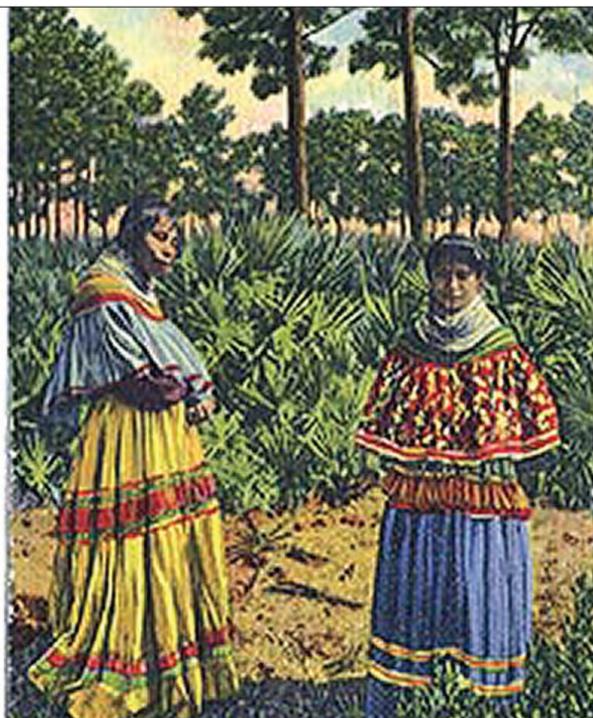
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
MASK UP: The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum store has face masks available for purchase. Orders can be placed at Seminole-store.com or call 863-227-3430 or 863-902-1113, ext. 12209.

Face Mask
 Large
 Strap Adaptor Included

Courtesy photo
WORKS OF ART: Paintings by Seminole artist Elgin Jumper were on display throughout January on a wall at Blick Art Materials in Fort Lauderdale.



Seminole Scenes Rewind: Images from the past - Postcards



NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Tribal Police officer who died was a longtime Special Olympics volunteer

For those familiar with the Special Olympics in Washington, Jay Hughes was known as someone who would do whatever it took to raise money and awareness for amateur athletes.

That included jumping into freezing cold water on an annual basis.

Hughes, an officer for the Kalispel Tribal Police, and his fellow “Copsicles” embodied their team name over the years as part of the Special Olympics Washington’s Polar Plunge Challenge. He was a “super plunger,” taking to the water multiple times in a single day.

This year, however, the Copsicles are taking the plunge in memory of Hughes, who died in early January. He was 64.

Hughes suffered a medical emergency while responding with two other officers to an altercation Jan. 4 on the Northern Quest Resort and Casino floor, according to the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. Hughes collapsed as police detained one of the suspects, prompting the officers to call for backup and perform CPR.

Hughes underwent surgery at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center and was admitted to the cardiac intensive care unit, according to the Kalispel Tribe. He died Jan. 6. The cause of his death has not yet been released.

In a statement, the Kalispel Tribal Police said Hughes was a kind soul with a sharp sense of humor who was a mentor for his fellow officers.

“Officer Hughes was a valued member of our team and he will be deeply missed by all who knew him,” police said in the statement. “He lived a life of service and was selfless with the generosity of his friendship and his time.”

Hughes joined the Kalispel Tribal Police in July 2016 after nearly 40 years as a corrections officer and reserve deputy for the Spokane County Sheriff’s Office, according to the Kalispel Tribe. He also served 18 years as a volunteer firefighter for Spokane County Fire District 4.

The Kalispel Tribe said Hughes, an EMT since 1979, was recently nominated for a life-saving award after performing CPR to save an infant’s life while responding to a possible drowning at the Copper Landing Apartments. He is survived by his wife, four children, 12 grandchildren and a great-grandson.

- Spokesman-Review (Spokane, Wash.)

Premium Brands, Indigenous groups’ \$1-billion bid to buy Clearwater completed

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia – A billion-dollar deal that marks the single biggest investment in Canada’s seafood industry by an Indigenous group was finalized on Jan. 25, with one First Nation’s chief calling it a “significant achievement for the Mi’kmaq.”

Vancouver-based Premium Brands Holdings Corp. and a coalition of First Nations in Atlantic Canada have each acquired half ownership in Clearwater Seafoods Inc. through a new partnership, FNC Holdings Ltd., at a price of \$8.25 a share.

The \$1-billion transaction, including debt, is expected to see the Mi’kmaq First Nations partnership hold Clearwater’s Canadian fishing licenses.

Membertou First Nation Chief Terry Paul said the deal will transform Indigenous participation in the commercial fishing sector.

“This is a significant achievement for the Mi’kmaq,” he said in a statement. “This collective investment by First Nations in Clearwater represents the single largest investment in the seafood industry by any Indigenous group in Canada.”

The partnership, which includes Membertou, Miawpukek, Sipekne’katik, We’koqma’q, Potlotek, Pictou Landing and Paqtnkek communities, will provide more opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in the Atlantic region and bring prosperity to the communities, Paul added.

The participation in the commercial seafood sector is not expected to impact ongoing efforts by Indigenous communities in Atlantic Canada to establish a “moderate livelihood” or treaty rights-based fishery.

Clearwater fishes a variety of seafood, including scallops, lobster, clams and crab in Canada, Argentina and the U.K., with sales in 48 countries around the world.

The acquisition will allow the Halifax-based seafood company to continue to grow while preserving its culture and community presence, said Ian Smith, president and CEO of Clearwater.

- Canadian Press

Nez Perce Tribe granted administrative power of its water rights

LEWISTON, Idaho – The Nez Perce Tribe has received approval to begin administration of its water rights, instead of that duty being performed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In December, the tribe’s water rights administration code was approved by officials at the U.S. Department of Interior. According to a news release from the tribe, the code “provides for the Tribe’s use and protection of its water rights, including those confirmed through the Snake River Basin Adjudication.”

In 2004, the tribe signed a historic water rights agreement with the federal government and the state of Idaho. During

the Snake River Basin Adjudication, a decadeslong state court process to sort out more than 180,000 water rights in the basin, the Nez Perce Tribe filed about 1,100 water right claims on the Snake and Salmon rivers. The claims, seeking to protect flows for salmon and steelhead, were based on the tribe’s reserved fishing rights in its 1855 treaty with the federal government. The claims, if granted, would have been among the oldest in the state and thus senior to other claims.

Under the agreement, the tribe gave up most of those claims in exchange for more than \$90 million; 11,000 acres of land; salmon conservation measures, including 487,000 acre-feet of water from the upper Snake River to be used as flow augmentation; and fish friendly minimum flow standards in several tributaries to the Salmon and Clearwater rivers. The minimum flows are administered by the state of Idaho.

The tribe also received rights to 50,000 acre-feet of water for its own use. That is the water that will be subject to the tribe’s administration.

“As we look forward to a future in which water becomes even more valuable for all uses, this code ensures that the tribe will be responsible for making the decisions about the protection and use of its water rights,” Tribal Chairman Shannon Wheeler said. “We will be putting a team together to develop strategies, but we are confident this will be a great opportunity for the tribal membership. This large step will allow us to further diversify our revenue streams and continue development for a healthy and prosperous people.”

Wheeler said the water could be tapped by the tribe as an entity or by individual members for a variety of commercial purposes, including growing fruits, vegetables or hemp; processing food, such as making jams; or even viticulture. He said the tribe is interested in attaining greater “food sovereignty” by growing more of its own fruits and vegetables and being a regional supplier of food products. He noted fruits and vegetables sold in southeastern Washington and north-central Idaho are often trucked in from hundreds and even thousands of miles away.

The tribe submitted its water rights code to the Department of Interior in 2018. The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee formally adopted it in December 2019.

- Lewiston (Idaho) Tribune

Kansas bill ‘good first step’ to address epidemic of crimes against Indigenous people

Kansas state Rep. Ponka-We Victors said anytime she travels long distances, she checks in regularly with her family so they know she’s safe. When she’s on the road, one statistic lingers in her mind: murder is the third-leading cause of death in American Indian and Alaskan Native women.

Indigenous people go missing or are murdered at a higher rate than any other ethnicity, according to the Urban Indian Health Institute. Most of these go unreported to the U.S. Department of Justice’s missing person database.

“It seems like nobody cares or nobody’s doing anything about it,” Victors told Kansas representatives during a hearing on the bill this week.

Now, the Kansas House will consider a bill that would allow the attorney general to coordinate training for law enforcement on missing and murdered Indigenous people. Victors, who also serves as the vice chair of the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators, has worked on addressing the epidemic with other Indigenous lawmakers across the country.

The proposed law was passed by the House with support from all 125 representatives last year, but died in the Senate when the Legislature went into recess due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The measure would call for Attorney General Derek Schmidt — who supports the bill — to consult the Native American Indian tribes, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and other law enforcement organizations to coordinate the training.

Currently, Kansas knows of five missing Indigenous people, KBI Executive Officer Robert Jacobs told lawmakers at the hearing.

Discrepancies exist in how cases are reported, according to a study by the Urban Indian Health Institute.

The study found that 5,712 Indigenous people were reported missing or murdered in the U.S. in 2016 alone. But when the institute asked for that information in open records requests, just 506 cases were identified since 2000 across 29 states. Around 75% of those cases had no tribal affiliation listed in the report.

“Our nation’s history has a tragic story to tell about how we have valued Indigenous lives, and I think that now that we know better, know more, we can do better,” said Sarah Rust-Martin, policy director for the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence.

“This bill is not going to fix the problem, but it is a good first step in getting us in the right direction to really understand the scope of the problem.”

Victors, a Democrat from Wichita, was the only Indigenous representative last year. Now, she is joined by two other Indigenous women in the Kansas House: freshman representatives Christina Haswood, D-Lawrence, and Stephanie Byers, D-Wichita. Victors co-sponsored the bill with Haswood.

Victors and Haswood also sponsored a bill to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day, a move seven other states and dozens of cities have made to officially change the designation of the day.

“I really am excited to see bills like

this that have been introduced previously are showing up each and every year,” Haswood said in a previous interview with the Star. “We’re still fighting for it, as well as empowering Native peoples and Indigenous peoples to help us amplify this.”

- Kansas City Star

NYDOT to install murals on Northway honoring Capital Region’s Native American heritage

ALBANY, N.Y. – New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez announced that work would begin the week of Jan. 25 to install engraved murals on the Northway exit 3 flyover northbound and southbound ramps that honor the Capital Region’s rich Native American history.

As part of the environmental review process for the Albany Airport Transportation Corridor project, the State Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) identified artifacts within the project limits deemed culturally significant for three federally recognized Tribes and Nations: the Delaware Tribe of Indians, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians.

“These murals commemorate and honor the Native Americans indigenous to the Capital Region. We are excited that this historically and culturally significant component of the Albany Airport Transportation Corridor project will be complete,” Commissioner Dominguez said. “The addition of these beautiful murals to the bridge abutments will be appreciated by millions of visitors and motorists every year.”

NYSDOT and FHWA collaborated with the Tribes and Nations to develop murals for the flyover bridge as a way to commemorate their rich history, which show artistic representations of Tribal members dressed in ceremonial regalia and performing a dance of celebration. One wingwall will depict male dancers, while another on the opposite side will illustrate female dancers. Motorists will be able to view these murals driving both northbound and southbound on I-87.

- News10 (Albany, N.Y.)

Catawba tribe overcomes major hurdle to opening first casino following deal with NC

Gov. Roy Cooper and the Catawba Indian Nation signed a revenue-sharing agreement Jan. 22 that clears the way for Vegas-style gaming to be offered at a planned resort in Kings Mountain, tribal leaders and the state said Jan. 23.

Federal approval is still needed for the type of gaming agreed to by Cooper, but the deal with the state means construction can now start at the site, according to the Catawbas.

The Rock Hill-based tribe is now a big step closer to making good on its more than seven-year effort to open a casino in North Carolina. Besides bingo halls, North Carolina has two casinos, both operated by the Eastern Band of the Cherokees, in Cherokee and Murphy.

In a Catawba Nation news release, Chief Bill Harris called the agreement “the key step in bringing economic benefits and thousands of jobs from our casino project to the citizens of North Carolina.”

The tribe would own and operate the planned \$273 million Two Kings Casino Resort, about a half hour west of Charlotte. A temporary gaming facility at the site could be ready to open by the fall, Harris said, the Observer previously reported.

- Charlotte (N.C.) Observer

Wisconsin college marks Native American burial site on campus

A memorial on the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point campus now marks the land as a gravesite for Native Americans buried there in 1863.

It’s the first time the campus has marked the site, and a “hard-won first step,” said Karen Ann Hoffman, who helped lead the effort.

By 1863, hundreds of Indigenous people of several tribes were living in a camp in what is now Stevens Point. The members of the group were essentially refugees displaced by American settlers.

“Their traditional homelands had been flooded by settlers,” Hoffman said. “Refugee” is not too strong of a word for them — and to be a refugee in your own homeland is a very sad thing.”

As many as 100 Indigenous people died when the scarlet fever swept through the camp. About 30 years later, the university purchased the land where its campus is today.

The plaque installed last month on campus recognizes that history. It comes after years of work by Hoffman, Stevens Point anthropologist and researcher Ray Reser and others. In September, they led a community letter-writing campaign aimed at convincing the university to take action.

Hoffman, a member of the Oneida Nation and a nationally recognized beadwork artist, called the plaque a positive step, but not an endpoint. She wants to see a permanent sculpture on the site commissioned to a Native American artist, funded by the UW System as well as city and county governments.

The site has not previously been marked by the university, but it was locally known to be a gravesite as recently as the 1930s,

when a local newspaper account described the discovery of human remains on the site. Reser began efforts to mark the site shortly after he learned about those accounts in 2016.

Archeologists have found evidence of Native Americans living in what is now Wisconsin dating back more than 10,000 years. By the 1800s, the Menominee were the most populous American Indian nation in the territory that would become Wisconsin, which was also home to the Ho-Chunk, Ojibwe, Potawatomi and others. Thousands were driven from the region as a result of forced treaties, and more were removed by the United States government following the 1832 Black Hawk War.

In a statement read as the plaque was unveiled, UW-Stevens Point Chancellor Bernie Patterson said the university is committed to establishing a permanent memorial on the site.

- Wisconsin Public Radio

South Dakota tribes applaud cancellation of Keystone XL Pipeline, Thune decries ‘bad decision’

Tribal leaders in South Dakota are applauding President Joe Biden’s day one move to halt the Keystone XL Pipeline at the country’s northern border, calling the action a willingness to listen to Native American voices.

Tribes in South Dakota have been opposed to and protesting the pipeline’s construction for more than a decade. Biden canceled its permit as part of a number of promises to address climate change.

President of the Oglala Lakota Nation, Kevin Killer, said Jan. 20 the cancellation of the pipeline permit “sends a strong message to tribal nations, and symbolizes a willingness to build on government-to-government relationships established through our treaties,” referencing the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie treaties of the Great Sioux Nation.

Chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Harold Frazier said the project posed a danger to tribal land and people.

“This project has scarred our territorial and treaty lands with its presence and threatened our people like a dagger to our throats,” Frazier wrote Jan. 20. “We have witnessed the invasion of our land and the genocide of our families — this project is an extension of the racial, environmental and social injustices we have suffered.”

Sen. John Thune on Jan. 21 released a statement on Twitter, calling Biden’s action a “bad decision.”

“Disappointing to see the new admin jump at the first opportunity to eliminate a project that provides high-paying jobs to 11,000 Americans & bolsters energy security,” Thune wrote. “Blocking the Keystone XL pipeline — after years of work already put in — is a bad decision. This admin can’t ask for unity & bipartisanship one minute but continue to push bad left-wing policy the next.”

- Sioux Falls (S.D.) Argus Leader

Apache group sues to stop Oak Flat land swap, site of a planned copper mine

The grassroots group Apache Stronghold sued the U.S. Forest Service on Jan. 12 to stop the federal government from issuing a final environmental impact statement that would clear the way for a huge copper mine on land held sacred by Apache people and other Arizona tribes.

The suit, filed in U. S. District Court in Tucson, alleges among other things that the U.S. Forest Service failed to give sufficient notice to the group or to nearby tribes to prepare a response, and that the land is still Apache land according to an 1852 treaty.

The suit asks for an injunction to stop the release of the environmental impact statement and to hold a jury trial on the mine project.

The group’s leader said the lawsuit was necessary to protect the rights of the Apache people.

“What was once gunpowder and disease is now replaced with bureaucratic negligence and mythologized past that treats us, as Native people, as something invisible or gone,” Wendsler Nossie said in a statement included with the suit. “We are not.”

If the Forest Service issues the environmental review as planned later this week, the clock would start on a land swap that would allow a mining company to extract copper from Oak Flat, a site about 5 miles east of Superior.

Known to the Apache people as Chi’chil Bildagoteel, Oak Flat is in the Tonto National Forest, and the parcel currently used as a campground has been protected since it was made part of the national forest in 1955.

It also sits on a large copper ore deposit that has been mined off and on for decades. The site of the newest mine, Magma Mine, is visible from the campground.

Previous mining operations drove shafts into the earth to locate the ore, but the newest mine owner, Resolution Copper, a subsidiary of British-Australian firms Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton, wants to use a technique known as block cave mining to extract the ore.

The method involves drilling a shaft about 7,000 feet below ground level and then excavating the ground underneath the ore body, causing it to collapse under its own weight. The rubble is then moved through another tunnel to a processing facility for extracting the copper. Eventually, as the mine is excavated, Oak Flat would turn into a sinkhole.

Mine opponents say the operations would devastate not only one of the Apache

people’s most significant cultural sites but the ecology and possibly the underground springs that feed nearby Queen Creek and other springs in the area.

Opponents also say that groundwater supplies that Pinal County and part of Gila County depend on could be contaminated, and significant species like the Emory oak and other important plants would die from lack of water and habitat.

The land swap dates back to December 2014, when Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., attached a rider to a defense appropriations bill known as the National Defense Authorization Act during a late-night session. The rider authorized the U.S. to trade 5,376 acres of private land for 2,200 acres of forest land, including Oak Flat to Resolution Copper.

Apache Stronghold’s attorneys argue in the suit that the tribes and interested Native people did not learn about the exact date for the issuance of the environmental impact report until a Reuters article broke the story on Jan. 4 that the document would be released Jan. 15. The date is important because the land swap becomes final 60 days after the report is issued.

- Arizona Republic

Report outlines deficiencies in education for Native American students

While Native American students in New Mexico are showing improvement in graduation rates, third-grade reading and math proficiency, they continue to perform well below their peers on state and national measures of achievement.

As a result, a report released Jan. 18 makes several recommendations to help close the gap. They include asking the Legislature to reduce or eliminate the so-called Impact Aid credit from the state’s public education funding formula, freeing up the money for affected school districts to spend on evidence-based interventions.

“If the Legislature were to remove the Impact Aid credit from the public education funding formula, Impact Aid districts could locally decide to spend the additional operational funding on added supports for facility needs, instruction, tribal collaboration activities, or tribal education departments,” the Legislative Finance Committee wrote in a progress report on the implementation of the Indian Education Act, which was passed in 2003.

Federal Impact Aid compensates school districts and charter schools for the loss of property tax from tribal lands and other tax-exempt federal property within their boundaries.

Other recommendations in the report, which was presented to lawmakers on the Legislative Finance Committee, include:

- The Legislature should invest in broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved tribal communities and request a plan from the state Department of Information Technology to prioritize funds for those communities.

- The Public Education Department should annually assess the implementation and success of a four-part strategy to address the landmark Martinez/Yazzie lawsuit, which found the state failed to adequately serve Native American children, among other students at risk of poor outcomes.

- Native American-serving school districts and charter schools should take full advantage of K-5 Plus and extended learning time programs for Native American students.

Brian Hoffmeister, a Legislative Finance Committee program evaluator, said the state is “investing significant financial resources” to address shortcomings in the education of Native Americans.

“Nevertheless, a history of understaffing in PED’s Indian Education Division, difficulties with utilizing all available funding, difficulties with local collaboration and challenges with ensuring funds are aligned to targeted outcomes have resulted in a system that does not serve Native American students in a comprehensive and coordinated manner,” he told lawmakers.

State Rep. Derrick Lente, D-Sandia Pueblo, was critical of the report, saying it “appears to neutralize rather than understand the tribal remedy framework.” The framework, which was developed by Indigenous people, delineates actions the state must take to comply with the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit and the Indian Education Act.

“I’m disappointed because it seems that the LFC and the staff believes that its own experts — and I say this with all due respect — that they believe their own experts know more about Indian education and Indian life and Indian communities than our own renowned indigenous experts, our own renowned indigenous tribal leadership, and those that are close to the communities,” said Lente, who is Native American.

Lente described the report as an “effort to maintain the status quo.”

Lente did not return a message seeking comment.

Some districts are “significantly affected” by Impact Aid, the report states. For example, the fiscal year 2021 preliminary funding formula takes credit for 75 percent of the \$30 million that Gallup-McKinley County Schools are anticipated to receive, according to the report.

The funding formula has created clashes, as well as litigation, between school districts and the state. In the past few legislative sessions, some lawmakers have introduced measures that would increase funding for poor districts that rely on the federal aid — mostly without success.

- Santa Fe New Mexican

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THE GUITAR HOTEL



Education

B

Ahfachkee unveils new e-learning portal

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — The Ahfachkee School launched a new portal Jan. 11 to make virtual school easier for students to navigate.

The Clever portal acts as a file cabinet with everything the students and teachers need inside it. They log on once a day and have access to everything from Google Classroom to assignments, textbooks and every other program used during the school day.

“The whole idea is to keep things in one place and keep it easy for students,” said Principal Dorothy Cain. “Parents can access it as well for student’s grades.”

The school relied on its own website when it transitioned to virtual classes in the spring of 2020, which proved difficult for students. With the new school year in August, Ahfachkee began using Google Classroom, but students still had to look for the other programs and e-books they needed.

Clever solves that issue; with one click, everything is literally at their fingertips.

Cain is so pleased with the portal she plans to keep it active when the school eventually goes back to in person classes.

“Our goal is to get back to face-to-face again,” Cain said. “Virtual is hard for younger kids, getting their attention is difficult. In a classroom you can move them around to different stations. Online it’s really hard to get them up to stretch. We’ve adjusted our schedule so they aren’t on screens all day.”

For middle and high school students, Ahfachkee added a homeroom period for teachers to help students if needed, give special presentations and provide guidance.

“We have come so far with virtual learning,” Cain said. “It’s amazing how much we have learned about how to do things. The school is moving in the right direction.”

Ahfachkee mentoring program popular with students, teachers

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Some kids take to school easily, but others need a bit more encouragement to thrive in the classroom.

For those students, the Ahfachkee School uses the Check & Connect mentoring program to help them meet with success.

Check & Connect is a student engagement and dropout prevention program that pairs teachers as mentors with Ahfachkee students in grades 6-12. The mentor and the student develop a relationship focused on problem solving, coping skills and trust.

Teachers-mentors also work with families of students and engage them in the process, becoming liaisons between home and school.

“We want to develop a connection with the student and their families that can span all of the years the student will be in school,” wrote Valerie Whiteside, Ahfachkee teacher coordinator, in an email to the Tribune. “A mentor can act as a primary point of contact for the school.”

Teachers go through specific training to be mentors. To date, 19 teachers and 58 students participate in the program, which began at Ahfachkee in November 2019.

“The mentors are there to support the students and be a cheerleader as well,” said Dorothy Cain, Ahfachkee principal. “They also act as an intermediary when problems arise with classroom teachers. We haven’t evaluated the data yet, but she [Valerie Whiteside] sees a lot more kids online and fewer are skipping class. It helps with social and emotional issues, especially since we are in virtual school.”

The Check & Connect program was created by the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration in 1990. It is intended for students who show warning signs of disengagement with school and are at risk of dropping out. Indicators may include poor attendance, behavioral issues and low grades.

♦ See MENTORS on page 2B

New Native American studies program begins at University of Miami

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The University of Miami introduced its new Native American and Global Indigenous Studies (NAGIS) program with the spring semester Jan. 25.

The first course, “Introduction to Native and Indigenous Peoples and Perspectives,” will provide students with a critical overview of the experience of Indigenous people in the U.S. and globally.

The NAGIS program evolved from a realization there was a lack of Indigenous perspectives on campus. It is part of a social equity grant in response to the George Floyd murder and Black Lives Matter activism.

“This is the first time Indigenous studies has been taught at UM,” said Caroline

LaPorte, who is teaching the course. “I hope it generates some really needed conversation on campus.”

LaPorte, an immediate descendant of the Little River Band of the Ottawa Indians (Bear Clan) of Manistee, Michigan, earned her law degree at the UM School of Law. She is a judicial advisor for the Seminole Tribal Court. One of her goals for the class is to get students to scrutinize some of the false narratives in history.

“It’s about truth telling,” she said. “I want them to understand what it means to be Indigenous to a place. We will talk about colonization and genocide. It isn’t only in the past, it is continuing. I want students to examine their own biases and assumptions.”

The class will delve into a variety of issues including missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, Indian



This drawing by Seminole descendant Chelsey Ford is being used as the cover of the course syllabus.



Courtesy photo

Seminole Trial Court Associate Judge Tina Osceola was a guest lecturer for a new Native American studies class at the University of Miami.



Courtesy photo

Caroline LaPorte is the instructor for the NAGIS program’s first class, “Introduction to Native and Indigenous Peoples and Perspectives.”

boarding schools, the Indian Child Welfare Act, identity policies such as enrollment and blood quantum, cultural appropriation and the environment. UM, located in Coral Gables, is on ancestral lands of the Seminole, Miccosukee, Tequesta and Calusa Indians.

“This is a class the university had a responsibility to do,” LaPorte said. “There was no Indigenous representation on campus, given how close it is to the Miccosukee and Seminole tribes. That’s strange to me since it is literally between their reservations.”

The program will focus on U.S. tribes and issues that are a result of colonization, but it will also stay true to global Indigenous topics. Guest lecturers and experts on global issues will speak to the class from time to time.

LaPorte wants to invalidate the perception that Native Americans are part of the past and not living in the present day. She said there is an invisibility factor around Native Americans and Indigenous people.

“People don’t think of us as being here still,” she said. “That makes it easy to

dehumanize you and ignore the issues. I feel that Indigenous issues are human rights issues and the more advocates you can make, the better. I just want the conversation to get started at UM.”

The first guest speaker was Miccosukee environmentalist and educator Betty Osceola, who spoke at a virtual event in December about Native Americans’ spiritual connection to their homelands.

The hybrid class is held in the evenings twice a week. Some students are virtual, others attend class in person. Tina Osceola, an associate judge in the Seminole Tribe’s Trial Court, was a guest lecturer in the class and spoke over Zoom about land acknowledgements.

The next guest speaker will be Cherokee playwright Mary Kathryn Nagle on March 11.

NAGIS isn’t a fully funded program yet. It is part of a social equity grant from the University of Miami Laboratory for Integrated Knowledge, or U-Link initiative.

For more information about NAGIS contact nagis@miami.edu.

PECS sixth grade virtual walk raises money for South Sudan

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Sixth graders at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School put themselves into the shoes of those less fortunate as they conducted a virtual walk fundraiser. The money raised will help clean water reach more people where little exists, in South Sudan.

Teacher Amy Carr continued November’s theme of “HOPE>HATE” by having the class read the novel “A Long Walk to Water” by Linda Sue Park. The novel follows two Sudanese 11-year-old kids, a boy in 1985 and a girl in 2008. Both endured hardships caused by lack of water and a safe place to live. The students learned the Sudanese people are still suffering today.

“The women walk over 3.7 miles every single day carrying heavy buckets of water,” Carr said in an email. “We asked teachers, family and friends to help us raise money so

that wells and clean water can be brought to those less fortunate than us.”

Students wore pedometers every day for the month of December and competed to see who would walk the most miles. Landon French walked 9,390 miles, Timothy Urbina clocked 9,144 miles and Oreste Perez put 9.1 miles on his pedometer.

The effort raised \$684, which will be sent to Water for South Sudan, a nonprofit that aims to provide clean water, hygiene education and sanitation programs to rural communities.

When the students were asked how they felt learning what Sudanese women must go through every day just to get clean water, they sent their responses to Carr.

Clayson Osceola wrote, “I was very heartbroken to learn what the Sudanese had to do just to get water and survive.”

“I feel proud about how hard these women work to help their families survive the harsh conditions in their village,” wrote Ila Trueblood.



Courtesy photo

Ila Trueblood runs through the Brighton Reservation as a way to raise money for Water for South Sudan, a nonprofit that helps provide clean water, hygiene education and sanitation programs to the African country.



Courtesy photo

Oreste Perez walked 9.1 miles and Timothy Urbina walked 9.144 miles during the fundraiser for Water for South Sudan and helped the class raise \$684 to assist the Sudanese people with access to clean water.

Joleyne Nunez wrote, “I feel sad knowing that they walk just to go to water that could be contaminated, and all we have to do is walk to the fridge, store, or gas station which is not even far.”

Joleyne added her thoughts about what the challenge must be like for the Sudanese people.

“I think it was difficult, but even harder for them because they had to walk to water and face jaguars, lions and many other things. Also, it is very easy for them to catch diseases. There is even war going on and many families got split apart and

heartbroken. I feel sorry that they have to go through that harshness,” Joleyne said.

Carr said the fundraiser is officially over, but they will continue to accept donations at this website: classy.org/team/329442.

Principal Tracy Downing was pleased with the fundraising project.

“I am impressed with the thoughtful comments these students made,” Downing said. “They are heartwarming. I am so proud they are taking part in a real life situation and helping others.”

PECS immersion students mark 100th day of school

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — The eight students in the Creek immersion program celebrated the 100th day of virtual school Jan. 25 with some learning and fun in Creek and English.

To celebrate the special occasion, some of the students “aged” overnight and looked to be 100 years old, thanks to some makeup and props. Others displayed their creativity by wearing 100 items on their clothing, such as hearts and pom poms.

Creek activities included sorting and eating an assortment of snacks similar to trail mix, a scavenger hunt in their homes where they described the items they found, speaking only in Creek.

Activities in English for the six first graders and two kindergarten students included various writing tasks, such as writing sight words and their names in 100 seconds.

Students also wrote about what they think they will be doing when they are 100 years old and what they would do with \$100. They also learned about what life was like 100 years ago and made comparisons to life today.

Arrow “Herake” Johns wrote when she is 100 she will play with Hopanv, Hvse, Vtvsv and Lala.

Amariah “Vtvsv” Lavatta wrote when she is 100 she will knit blankets.

Kindergarten student KyLynn “Vpeyet” Lawrence would buy a girl doll if she had \$100.

Kindergarten student Sebastian “Ceyafkompe” Cypress already has a bucket list ready of things he wants to do before he turns 100: Play his Xbox, go to New York, have babies, get married.

“We engaged in so many activities in Creek and English and had a blast,” teacher Eduarda Anselmo wrote in a Facebook post. “Who said we can’t have fun while learning?”



Courtesy photo

Amariah “Vtvsv” Lavatta does her best to look old with the help of some makeup.



Courtesy photo

KyLynn “Vpeyet” Lawrence dons a shirt filled with hearts along with a crown and construction paper glasses in celebration of reaching the 100th day mark with school.



Courtesy photo

Daniel “Emvnicv” Nunez III wears 100 pom poms on his shirt to celebrate the 100th day of school in the PECS Immersion program.



Courtesy photo

Jolietta “Hvse” Osceola is decked out in 100 hearts for the 100th day of school.



Courtesy photo

Arrow “Herake” Johns holds her writing assignment and a photo of what she may look like at 100 years old.

MENTORS From page 1B

Mentors regularly monitor each student’s progress, behavior and adjustment to school. They also try to maintain the student’s connection to school and enhance their social and academic competencies.

“The fundamental goal for the Check & Connect mentoring program at Ahfachkee is to increase school engagement,” Whiteside wrote. “Research from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research indicates that students’ likelihood of graduation increases when they have stronger levels of school engagement.

Our goal is to use the Check & Connect program to provide mentors and teachers a map to better assist students to reach their educational goals.”

The program has scientific research-based evidence of its effectiveness. A typical roll out for Check & Connect is three to four years, so it is too early to estimate its success at Ahfachkee, Whiteside wrote. However, it has proven to increase students’ success in school and increase graduation rates nationwide.

“When students know someone is checking on them, they do better,” Cain said. “It works.”

Power of empathy in Native youth leadership

BY KYLEIGH SHIPMAN

Editor’s note: This article is from the United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) under the heading Healing Indigenous Lives Youth Submission.

In my early childhood, I witnessed close relatives struggling with substance abuse. After speaking with them, I have come to the understanding that these are battles in which a person begins to lose control. This has had a major impact on my life, and I had to learn how to handle situations that include substance abuse and alcoholism at a very young age. I learned that letting a person know that people are supporting them and assisting them in whatever they need. Learning empathy for others has shaped my leadership. These struggles with incarceration and generational addictions have made me stronger and a better helper for my people.

A close cousin-sister of mine was recently jailed as the result of her addiction, but I know that when she is able to talk about the situation, the conversation usually leads to why she was under the influence. She talks to me about the underlying issues and allowing her to talk about them seems to lift a weight off her shoulders and provides an outlet to everything that goes on in her mind. So many struggle. They simply need that extra push to realize how many people want them to succeed. We can help people turn pain into growth if we take time to be there for them.

“I have learned about the importance of empathy. Learning from other peoples’ perspectives and opening my mind to different points of view has shown me how to assess situations and handle them with everyone involved in mind. Empathy is crucial within a leader because they need to be capable of understanding a problem fully to work towards a solution and moving forward from there.”

Cultural knowledge is very key when it comes to a person’s identity. There are a lot of people who did not grow up traditionally and have difficulty trying to get into the

culture but do not know how or where to start. Because of this, people lose a sense of who they are or where they come from, especially among Indigenous Youth. Growing up in the city, and off of the reservation, it has been difficult to find my identity because not only are Native Americans not prevalent, but many of my peers are unaware that we still exist. However, with my recent involvement in UNITY, and my youth council, I realize that being around other Natives has had a positive impact on my overall social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health. Being able to dive into learning about my inter-tribal cultures has given me a sense of belonging and I have encouraged so many of my Native peers to do so as well. Providing opportunities to even just meet with other Natives from different tribes and their upbringings is very empowering because they can identify with a group of people very similar to themselves.



UNITY

Kyleigh Shipman is Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Navajo, and Chickasaw.

Establishing a Youth Council: In my life, I am most proud of co-establishing and co-leading my school’s first ever Native American Club. As mentioned earlier, I’ve struggled with cultural identification my whole life because I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona. When I would go back home to the reservation, I was seen as a city kid because I grew up much different than the kids there. However, when I went to school, it felt like I was the only person who did not speak Spanish or grow up with a Hispanic background. I felt out of place and once I got older, I began to realize that I was not the only person that felt this way. Another Native friend and felt these same strong feelings, so we came together and set goals to work toward. If we could create an environment where people felt they belonged and promoted Native pride, we could all come together. This ball was hard to get rolling and we faced very discouraging times, but we overcame them and continued to push through. We did not expect to have very many members, but we believed if we could do this and impact even one person, it was worth it. Eight months later, we created a proud community beyond our school and

to the other schools in our district to just celebrate being Native Youth and going to places where members found opportunities to develop and exercise their leadership skills.

What would you tell a Native youth who struggles to see themselves as a leader?

I would remind my fellow Native Youth to reflect on our great historical Indigenous leaders. I would let them know that we were not meant to be divided into strictly leaders or strictly followers. Becoming a leader is a matter of an individual finding their own personal calling or purpose and standing for it. Many fail to understand that leaders do not always have to be so large scale. A great leader will stand by their word and will lead those around them to reach a common goal, inspiring others to lead as well.

UNITY conferences to be held in April, July

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The 2021 UNITY Mid-Year Conference will be a virtual conference with limited hybrid (in-person) elements and has been rescheduled for April 23. The Mid-Year

will be hosted in collaboration with the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. NMAI will host a Virtual Youth Summit on Earth Day, April 22nd.

The National UNITY Conference will be an in-person event from July 2-6 in Dallas,

Texas. There will be a virtual component for all who cannot attend in-person.

Registration for both conferences and hotel booking will open by the end of the month.

For more information visit unityinc.org.

More than \$1M in grants awarded for Native language immersion programs

FROM PRESS RELEASE

LONGMONT, Colo. — For the fourth year in a row, First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) is continuing its Native Language Immersion Initiative (NLII) with the awarding of nine grants to Native-led organizations and tribes building language in their communities through immersion programs.

First Nations launched the initiative in 2017 as a three-year project to support Native nations and organizations actively working to stem the loss of Indigenous languages and cultures through Native language immersion. The initiative was made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provided a \$2.1 million challenge grant that First Nations matched thanks to generous support from multiple foundations and many individual donors across the U.S.

Now – with ongoing support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Kalliopeia Foundation, NoVo Foundation, Wells Fargo, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, and many individual contributions – the initiative is extending to a fourth year to support the continuing demand and needs of Native language immersion programs.

“The number of grant applications First Nations receives every year for language programs is a testament to the importance of cultivating and preserving Native languages,” said Michael Roberts, First Nations president and CEO. “People recognize that Native language is critical not just for passing down knowledge, but for fostering pride and culture, which is the foundation of Native resilience and success.”

Since the NLII began, more than 30 Native organizations and tribes have received over \$4 million in funding to build the capacity of and directly support their Native language immersion programs. The fourth year of the initiative brings funding to these additional nine grantees:

- Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (Porcupine, S.D.) - \$90,000
- Ke Kula ‘O Pi’ilani (Wailuku, Hawaii) - \$90,000
- Lower Sioux Indian Community (Morton, Minn.) - \$90,000
- Pueblo of Sandia (Bernalillo, N.M.) - \$90,000
- Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (Baraga, Mich.) - \$90,000
- Northern Arapaho Tribe (Ft. Washakie, Wyo.) - \$90,000
- Kulaniakea (Honolulu, Hawaii) - \$90,000
- Oneida Nation (Oneida, Wisc.) - \$90,000
- Lakota Waldorf Society (Kyle, S.D.) - \$90,000.

New FSU master’s program to focus on sustainability

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE — Florida State University’s Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship is launching a new online major in the Master of Science program this fall to prepare students to help companies meet the demands of today but not at the expense of tomorrow.

The Master of Science in Entrepreneurship Social and Sustainable Enterprises will offer graduates an opportunity to learn sustainable practices and good corporate governance, according to Mark McNeese, faculty adviser to the program and social entrepreneur in residence at the college.

“This is one of the fastest growing

aspects of corporate America,” he said. “Through millennials and young people, we see that a company’s pollution, its supply chain, whether it’s committed to ethical trade, are all part of how it’s viewed and all factor into how successful a company is.”

In addition to entrepreneurial studies, the interdisciplinary program will incorporate courses from departments across the university, including earth, ocean and atmospheric science. It will feature an experiential curriculum taught by faculty and industry professionals in social responsibility, innovation, entrepreneurship and environmental sciences.

For more information, visit jimmorancollege.fsu.edu.

Moore Haven Middle/High School Honor Roll - 1st semester

Honor Roll

A HONOR ROLL		8th Grade Class	
Junior Class	Freshman Class	7th Grade Class	
Natalie Aguirre	Brian Batista	Yanevi Jose Matias	
Ryan Cowen	Caydence Cisneros	Wesley Life	
Rylie Patterson	Edgar Murillo Jr.	7th Grade Class	
Rosmary Rubio	Blake Patterson	Jennifer Lopez	
Brandon Stafford	Calia White	Addison Ridgill	
Sophomore Class			
Shirley Mazariegos Morales			
A-B HONOR ROLL			
Senior Class	Sophomore Class	Roselin Rodriguez-Zamarri	Troy Castaneda III
Katelynn Barnes	Aliyah Cardona	Angel Sangabriel	Bristol Hendry
Mariah Billie	Alondra Chiquito	Colby Spooner	Austin Jones
Anta'sha Braham	Noemi De La Cruz	Kaydence Spooner	Emmalee Kidd
Luz Delacruz	Emmanuel Endo	Herman Summers Jr.	Angela Luevano
Kianna Emery	Lillian Everett	Jalayah Thomas	Adrian Pereyra
Daniela Garcia	Ruby Jose-Matias	Omaria Thomas	Hazel Reese
Luis Jose Matias	Maurice McClain Jr.	8th Grade Class	Neri Rico
Jenny Pardo	DyVeeshia Myers	James Brinkley	Victor Ruiz-Luevano
Jordan Perez	Pilar Paniagua	Aracely Hernandez	Hayden Sexton
Vun'Tavia Reid	Stephen Redus	Raymond James Jr	Albrey West
Lizbeth Ruiz Luevano	Rubi Rodriguez	Albert Perez	
Jakhia Smith	Freshman Class	Teziaria Tolbert	
Elle Stafford	Anshely Ambrocio Velasquez	7th Grade Class	
Junior Class	Char Brown	Omar Bautista	
Cristal Arciga	Destiny Garcia	Jo'Ellen Erkin	
Bri'ana George	Elissa Herrera	Sa'Nyree Myers	
Jose Mirabal	Ever Mazariego-Morales	Aileen Rojas	
Savannah Palmer	Jesus Morales	Cassandra Simmons	
Camden Rhymes	Alison Munoz-Trejo	5th Grade Class	
Makinna Turner	Josaleen Pineda Martinez	Wyatt Bruised Head	

image via Facebook

Moore Haven Middle/High School posted its honor roll Jan. 25 on Facebook for the first semester.



EVERY STUDENT HAS A STORY.

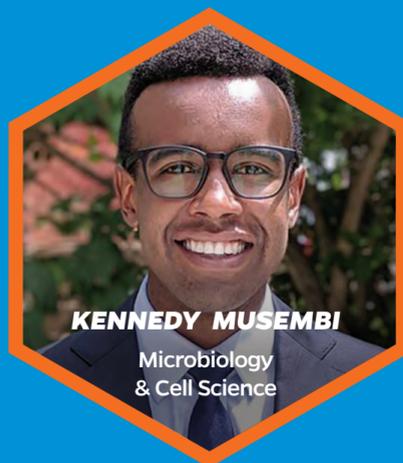
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Dark comedy-thriller ‘Reservation Dogs’ coming to FX

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

FX Networks recently gave the green light for a new TV series described as a mix of dark comedy and thriller.

More notable is that many of those involved in “Reservation Dogs” are Native American or Indigenous – including actors, writers and producers.

The series is seen as a positive step toward more representation of Native Americans and Indigenous People in Hollywood, which has always been lacking. When there is representation of Native characters, they are often stereotyped or problematic and not portrayed by Native actors.

“Reservation Dogs” seeks to change those dynamics.

The series is about four Native teenagers in rural Oklahoma who spend their days committing crime and also fighting it. The title is meant to be fun word play: it invokes the 1992 Quentin Tarantino film “Reservoir Dogs” and the term “rez dogs” – stray dogs that roam on reservations.

Sterlin Harjo (Seminole Nation of Oklahoma) and Taika David Waititi (New Zealander of Māori descent) are producing the series, which stars all Native American actors – D’Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, Paulina Alexis, Devery Jacobs and Lane Factor.

Harjo is a writer and director with several credits to his name. Waititi won an Oscar in 2019 for best adapted screenplay for his movie “Jojo Rabbit.”

The half hour series pilot was shot on location in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s



“Reservation Dogs” is a new series featuring these four Native American actors who portray teens in rural Oklahoma.

Image via FX

capital – Okmulgee – in Oklahoma.

“Sterlin Harjo draws deeply on his experiences as a native Oklahoman to make Reservation Dogs a true-to-life and incredibly funny story of youth, courage

and misadventures,” Nick Grad, FX’s head of original programming said in a statement. “Taika Waititi lends his considerable talents to the series, helping ... produce a unique and original series we can’t wait for audiences to

see.”

Harjo and Taika are longtime friends. Harjo describes the show as one that “celebrates the complementary storytelling styles of our Indigenous communities – mine

in Oklahoma and Taika’s in Aotearoa.”

The date for the series debut has not been announced, but it is expected to take place sometime this year.

FSU museum to feature program with Wendy Red Star

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TALLAHASSEE — The Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts (MoFA) will host a series of guest lectures, including Wendy Red Star, who was raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) Reservation in Montana. All events are conducted online and are free and open to the public.

Red Star uses photography, performance, fiber arts and video to recast and interrogate historical narratives. She draws upon deep research in archives to

reexamine primary source photographs and cultural heritage. Her work has been shown and collected by the Met, MASS MoCA, the Portland Museum of Art and the St. Louis Museum of Art. She guest-edited Aperture’s September 2020 issue on Native American photography.

The program will be held March 11 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. General registration opens Feb. 25.

For additional information, including the complete series schedule, and to register visit mofa.fsu.edu.

2021 Brighton Field Day virtual arts and crafts contest information

STAFF REPORT

BRIGHTON — Adult Arts and Crafts contestants for the Brighton Field Day must be an enrolled member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Limit one entry per category.

There are five adult age divisions: age 18 to 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59 and 60 and over.

Men’s categories are beadwork, woodwork, turban and baskets.

Women’s categories are patchwork

(three yard minimum), Seminole basket, Seminole doll and beadwork.

All items must be made personally by the contestant, from start to finish. Do not enter items entered in previous years.

Youth Arts and Crafts contest entrants must be an enrolled member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Limit one entry per category. There are two youth age divisions.

Ages 6 to 11 – Beadwork (boys and girls), woodwork (boys) and patchwork (girls)

Ages 12-17 – Boys- beadwork,

woodcarving; Girls- patchwork (two yards minimum), beadwork.

Items entered must be personally made by youth from start to finish. Do not enter items entered in previous years. All prize money will be subject to taxation.

Deadline to enter is Feb. 19. Items will be judged Feb. 24.

More information about how to submit entries will be forthcoming and posted at www.seminoletribune.org

Fellowship winner announced at Sundance’s Native Forum Celebration

FROM PRESS RELEASE

PARK CITY, Utah — Sundance Institute announced Jan. 29 Marja Bål Nango (Sámi) as the 2021 recipient of the Merata Mita Fellowship, an annual fellowship named in honor of the late Māori filmmaker Merata Mita (1942-2010). The announcement was delivered at the Sundance Film Festival’s Native Forum Celebration by N. Bird Runningwater (Cheyenne/Mescalero Apache), director of the Sundance Institute’s Indigenous Program and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work.

Sundance Institute selected Marja Bål Nango from a global pool of applicants, and will be awarded cash grants and a yearlong continuum of support with activities, including a participation in the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, access to strategic and creative services throughout the year offered by the Institute’s artist programs, and ongoing mentorship opportunities.

Marja Bål Nango is a film director, screenwriter and producer. She wrote, directed and produced the short film “Hilbes biigá,” which has screened at nearly 30 film festivals, and won the UR Award for Best Film at the Uppsala Int Film Festival, and the Skårungen-award at Tromsø International Film Festival. Her latest short film, “The Tongues,” follows a woman’s psychological aftermath as she fights for spiritual survival after being raped in a snowstorm on a mountain. The film has been a success worldwide, winning four awards, three of them at Oscar Qualifying Film Festivals. Marja and co-writer Ingir Bål are now developing their first feature film together, “I love my Reindeerherder.”

“This annual fellowship celebrates and honors the immense artistic contributions and

memory of our beloved Sundance Institute colleague and friend Merata Mita, who was a mother, an activist, a documentarian and the first Indigenous woman to solely write, direct, and produce a dramatic feature film,” said Runningwater. “The fellowship is a testament to her influence on our global commitment to supporting Indigenous artists, which we see as even more important especially during these most challenging of times.”

Merata Mita (Ngāi Te Rangī/Ngāti Pikiao) served as an advisor and artistic director of the Sundance Institute Native Lab from 2000 to 2009, where she championed emerging Indigenous talent who have gone on to have impactful careers, such as Sterlin Harjo (Creek/Seminole Nations), Andrew Okpeaha MacLean (Inupiaq); Sydney Freeland (Navajo), and Taika Waititi (Te Whanau a Apanui).

The Merata Mita Fellowship is supported by the New Zealand Film Commission, Indigenous Media Initiatives, Felix Culpa, Sarah Luther, Susan Shilliday, and an anonymous donor.

Sundance Institute’s Indigenous Program champions Indigenous independent storytelling artists through residency labs, fellowships, public programming, and a year-round continuum of creative, financial, and tactical support. The Program conducts outreach and education to identify a new generation of Indigenous voices, connecting them with opportunities to develop their storytelling projects, and bringing them and their work back to Indigenous lands. At its core, the program seeks to inspire self-determination among Indigenous filmmakers and communities by centering Indigenous people in telling their own stories.

Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program dedicated to ‘Foundational Theater Of America’

BY RAY HARDMAN
Connecticut Public Radio

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Since its inception six years ago, the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program has become a focal point nationally for up-and-coming Native American playwrights, storytellers and actors.

Every year the program, also known as YIPAP, presents the Young Native Playwright’s Contest, the Young Native Storytelling Contest, and for the first time this year, the Young Native Actor’s Contest.

YIPAP’s big annual event is the New Native Play Festival, which will be held virtually in April this year.

Yale student Kinsale Heuston, a member of the Navajo Nation, won the storytelling contest in high school. The Los Angeles native said she was blown away when she arrived on campus and saw YIPAP in action.

“What I saw was this really amazing arts community that had such a hyper focus on identity and lifting up Native artists,” said Heuston. “Honestly, it’s what I love about the Native arts community, the gathering and the storytelling and learning from one another through these deep connections that we have.”

Yale grad student Madeleine Hutchins, a member of the Mohegan Tribal Nation, has been involved with YIPAP since her undergrad days. She said what makes YIPAP so special is its affiliation with Yale.

“A lot of times the programs for Native students have to be done by Native students. They have to do all of the legwork,” said Hutchins. “One of the things I love about YIPAP is that it’s run by people whose job it is to run it. The program isn’t dependent on people who are already overstretched to keep it going. Because it is run by Yale, it is more consistent in a way that other programs don’t get to be.”

Madeline Sayet is a member of the Mohegan Tribal Nation and executive director of YIPAP. She says modern Native plays are as varied as the writers themselves, but they all seem to share common goals, like a better understanding of the Native American experience and an effort to fix historical misrepresentations.

“For so long it was pretty common for our Native representation [to be] a non-Native person playing Tiger Lily in a production of Peter Pan,” said Sayet. “A lot of us grew up where our relationship to mainstream theater was going on school

trips and seeing red face, and being confused about why is this the way our people are being represented, and so many Native plays over the years were about a need to actually intervene and say, ‘No, actually this is what’s true.’”

Sayet pointed out that Native theater is the foundational theater of America.

“It is the storytelling tradition of the place that we are in, and I feel like that’s very often forgotten,” said Sayet. “Very often we set our minds on theater as a very

Anglophilic tradition from somewhere far away, when in fact there are stories and storytelling traditions of this place. Native theater isn’t new. It’s something that’s been happening for thousands of years. It just hasn’t been listened to by non-Native people.”

Applicants for the Young Native Actor’s Contest have until Feb. 15 to submit their monologues. Winners will be cast in YIPAP’s New Native Play Festival in April.

2021 SEMINOLE TRIBAL FAIR AND POW WOW
50th Annual Celebration of Native Arts and Culture

Virtual Contests

ENTRY DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 12 (BY 5:00 PM)

Featuring:

- FINE ARTS CONTEST
- ARTS & CRAFTS CONTEST
- CLOTHING CONTEST

More Details To Follow!

U. of Minnesota to use \$5M grant to improve relationship with tribal nations

FROM PRESS RELEASE

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded the University of Minnesota a \$5 million grant to address racial justice and create more just and equitable futures for all through public humanities.

“This land-grant institution was built on lands stolen from our ancestors, and the main campus was constructed

on one of the Dakota’s most sacred sites near the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, Bdote,” said Robert Larsen, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council Board Chair and President of Lower Sioux Indian Community. “However, this is an opportunity to work collaboratively with the university to build better tribal-university relations. Through the university, this project gives tribes the platform to tell our stories accurately.”

Sports



Haskell athletics receives technology boost from Seminoles

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

It is smoother streaming for broadcasts of Haskell Indian Nations University sports thanks to a few Seminoles.

When Jason Billie, who lives on the Hollywood Reservation, heard that the athletics department at Haskell was struggling with the streaming of its games, he didn't hesitate to help his alma mater halfway across the country.

"Haskell is a big part of my life. I've met so many friends," said Billie, who first attended Haskell in the 1990s and then returned to continue his studies in 2016 after his children were grown.

Throughout the past several decades, Haskell, located in Lawrence, Kansas, has featured some of the best athletes from the Seminole Tribe, such as Paul Bowers Sr., Moses Jumper Jr., Peter Hahn, Duelle Gore and others.

The athletics department was in need of an upgrade to the technology they use to broadcast games over the internet. Equipment errors had interrupted broadcasts in the past, including last winter for basketball games. (Haskell has yet to resume sports due to the pandemic).

After contacting Haskell Sports Information Director Aja McCormick, Billie reached out to the Hollywood Council office, and soon after, a donation came from Councilman Chris Osceola and assistance

from executive assistant Thomasine Motlow that allowed Haskell to purchase the equipment it needed in order to successfully stream games and create other media content.

Haskell posted an article on its website Jan. 5 to express gratitude for the help it received from the Seminoles. Its statement read:

"Haskell Athletics would like to take the time to thank Haskell Alumni and Seminole Tribe of Florida member Jason Billie, Seminole Tribe of Florida Council Representative Christopher Osceola, and Executive Assistant to Councilman Christopher Osceola, Thomasine Motlow for their support of our athletics department.

"Through their support and the councilman's donation our Sports Information Department was given the opportunity to purchase a new laptop to be utilized for web streaming and media purposes. With the new addition of the HP - Spectre x360 2-in-1 15.6" 4K UHD Touch-Screen Laptop, Haskell Athletics will be able to provide an enhanced view of our home competitions without interruptions due to equipment errors like we have seen in the past. We cannot thank Jason Billie, Thomasine Motlow and the councilman, Christopher Osceola, enough for their kind gesture and we hope to continue to develop this relationship."

Billie said he was glad to help out a school that has meant a lot to him in his life.

"Haskell is another home for me," he said.



Ryan Coody

Duelle Gore, one of the Seminole Tribe's all-time top athletes, takes a shot while playing for Haskell Indian Nations University in the 2015-16 season. Gore, who went on to play professional basketball, led Haskell in scoring that season.

Team, area honors for OHS football's Lee Edouard

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The Seminole Tribe's Lee Edouard received accolades after his outstanding season for the Okeechobee High School football team.

Edouard, a 6-foot-1 sophomore quarterback, was named Okeechobee's most outstanding player on offense for the 2020 season. He also earned recognition as First Team All-Area.

He earned TCPalm.com's Game Ball recognition for his performance against South Fork in September when he threw for 150 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 154 yards and two touchdowns.

Other highlights included more than 200 yards of total offense and two TD passes against Westwood in October.

He had 271 yards of total offense, including a rushing and passing TD against Sebastian River.

The Brahmins finished with a 5-4 record.



Okeechobee girls finish regular season as No. 1 seed in district

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The Okeechobee High School girls basketball team, which includes Seminoles Adryauna Baker, Caylie Huff and Haylie Huff, capped off a strong regular season by clinching the top seed in the Class 5A-District 13 playoffs.

The Brahmins, with a 10-3 overall record, earned a first-round bye. They are scheduled to play in a semifinal Feb. 3. The championship is slated for Feb. 5. All games are at Jensen Beach High School, which is the No. 2 seed.

Okeechobee won its first nine games of the season before dropping three of its final four.

Baker, a junior starting guard, is among the team's top leaders in several categories. She is second on the squad in scoring with an average of 10 points per game, one point behind leader Jasmine Shanks. Baker scored in double digits each game during a six-game stretch in December, including a season-high 24 against Central.

She's averaging 5.2 rebounds per game and leads the team in assists, blocks, steals and field goal percentage.

The Huff sisters, both seniors, have contributed coming off the bench. Caylie Huff scored five points and grabbed a rebound in a loss to Centennial on Jan. 22.

Haylie Huff had a total of nine rebounds, one steal and one block in the team's final two games. Her 34 rebounds is fourth highest on the team.

OHS boys on a hot streak as postseason nears

The Okeechobee High School boys basketball team knows how to start the year on the right note.

The Brahmins, who include the tribe's Leon Edouard and Lee Edouard, went a perfect 5-0 in January with wins against Port St. Lucie, Sebastian River, Westwood, Moore Haven and John Carroll Catholic.

Okeechobee, a two-time defending district champion, entered February with an



Kevin Johnson

The Okeechobee High School girls basketball team has plenty of reasons to clap after finishing the regular season with a 10-3 record.

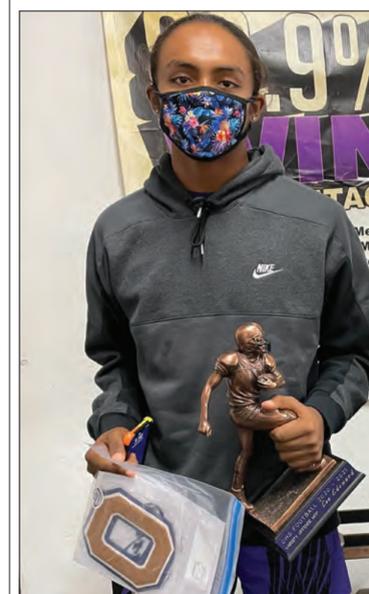
8-2 record as the district playoffs neared.

Lee Edouard, a sophomore guard, was fifth on the team in scoring with an average of 7.3 points per game (with nine games of statistics available). He poured in a season-high 22 points, which included four

3-pointers, in a win against Sebastian River on Jan. 8. His big night also included six rebounds, two steals and two assists.

Meanwhile, 11 points from Leon Edouard, a junior guard, helped propel Okeechobee past Moore Haven, 98-59, on

Jan. 14. He also had three steals, two assists and two rebounds. He is averaging six points per game.



Okeechobee High Twitter

Okeechobee High School quarterback Lee Edouard holds the award he won after being named the team's most outstanding player on offense.

Lexi Foreman helps Anadarko win MidFirst tournament

STAFF REPORT

The Anadarko (Okla.) High School girls basketball team, which includes Seminole tribal member Lexi Foreman, won the MidFirst Warrior Classic Championship on Jan. 9.

Foreman, a senior guard who has signed with the University of Central Oklahoma, dished out a game-high six assists in the 54-38 championship win against MacArthur-Lawton. She also tied with teammate Layni Zinn for most rebounds with seven.

In a semifinal win against Capitol Hill, Foreman scored 13 points and added four assists. It was the fourth time this season Foreman reached double digits in scoring.

Foreman scored a season-high 18 points in a win against Newcastle on Jan. 5.



Darin Sicurello

Lexi Foreman is shown here playing for Native Soldiers at the Native American Basketball Invitational in 2019.



Jeff Romance

Texas A&M and North Carolina meet in the 87th Capital One Orange Bowl on Jan. 2 at Hard Rock Stadium. Attendance restrictions were in place due to the pandemic. The Aggies defeated the Tar Heels, 41-27.

National spotlight shines on Hard Rock Stadium with college football

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

A quieter than usual Hard Rock Stadium was in the national spotlight in early January when it hosted two prominent college football games.

The stadium hosted the College Football Playoff National Championship between No. 1 Alabama and No. 3 Ohio State on Jan. 11. The Crimson Tide cruised past the Buckeyes, 52-24, in front of 14,926 fans.

The title tilt came nine days after Hard Rock Stadium was the site of the 87th Capital One Orange Bowl, won by Texas A&M, 41-27, against North Carolina with

13,737 spectators.

Attendance for both games was limited to 20% capacity due to the pandemic.

The championship averaged 18.7 million viewers across ESPN channels.

The stadium has been known as Hard Rock Stadium since 2016 when Hard Rock International and the Miami Dolphins entered into an 18-year naming rights agreement.

Miami Open update

Hard Rock Stadium will host the Miami Open tennis tournament March 22 to April 4 with some modifications due to the pandemic.

Officials said there will be no stadium court set up inside the stadium this year. All matches will be played on the courts in the tennis complex outside the stadium.

As of press time, a decision regarding in-person fan attendance had yet to be announced.

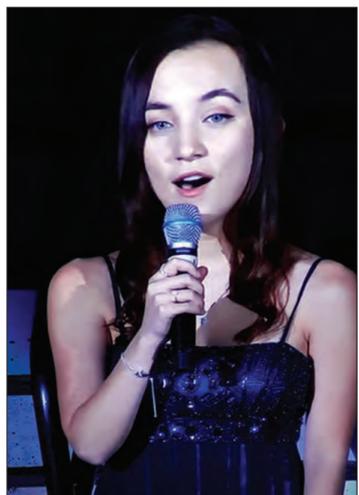
Fight night

Hard Rock Stadium is scheduled to host the WBA/WBC Super-Middleweight Championship fight between Canelo Alvarez and Avni Yildirim on Feb. 27. Attendance is limited to 15,000.



University of Alabama Athletics

Alabama celebrates at Hard Rock Stadium after winning the 2020 National Championship game Jan. 11. The Crimson Tide defeated Ohio State, 52-24.



From NAIG to NHL

Courtesy image

Mary Nahwegahbow, from White Fish River First Nation in Ontario, Canada, sang "Oh, Canada," the nation's national anthem, to open the start of the National Hockey League season Jan. 15 at the Toronto Maple Leafs vs Ottawa Senators game. She sang it in English, French and Ojibwe. In 2017, Nahwegahbow sang the anthem at the opening ceremonies of the North American Indigenous Games in Toronto. She also played in the Games as a member of Team Ontario's girls soccer team.

Shout-out to the tribe from NABI

STAFF REPORT

The Native American Basketball Invitational Foundation gave a big social media shout-out to the Seminole Tribe on Jan. 28, taking to Facebook to thank the

tribe for its continued support of NABI. The annual NABI tournament in the Phoenix area is the largest Native American basketball tournament and draws hundreds of the top players from throughout Indian Country.

This year's tournament and educational youth summit is scheduled for July 11-17.

NABIFoundation
January 28 at 10:40 AM

NABI Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization, is dependant on generous grants and donations to continue to bring quality education and sports programs to our Native American and Indigenous youth from all over the U.S, Canada and New Zealand. Like so many non-profits during this current crisis, our Foundation is doing our best to keep our doors open and plan for our 2021 programs.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida has supported our mission through their youth involvement and annual generous donations. We want to say a big "Thank you" for your continued support! Your commitment to support our programs and our talented youth are the reason the NABI Foundation and more importantly- our Native youth will continue to be successful!

#seminoletribe
#NABI2021
#NativeYouth
#futureleaders

Indigenous former NHL player Jordin Tootoo celebrates 10 years of sobriety

BY DARRELL GREER
The Kivalliq News

Jordin Tootoo was a happy and contented man as he celebrated being 10 years sober earlier in December.

It's been a long hard road for the former NHLer from Rankin Inlet, and one he feels he'd no longer be on if he had continued with his former lifestyle.

Tootoo said his life has been quite the journey.

He said he's looking forward to everything the future has in store for himself and his family.

"Living up North is hard with the substance abuse, domestic violence, dysfunction in the households and all that," said Tootoo.

"I tell people — and I said it in my book — I don't resent anyone. I don't resent my parents for the experiences I had. I'm actually grateful because it's opened up my eyes in sobriety to understand the cycle.

"I don't go around preaching to people because, to me, it's each to their own. I try to lead by example for our people and our Indigenous communities.

"I chose this life and a lot of my buddies who I grew up with in Rankin now see. We learn by watching, especially in the Northern communities. What you see is what you do."

Tootoo said he's honoured to be an example of someone who chose a better way of life.

He said it was something that he chose — to stop one cycle and start a new cycle for he and his family.

"For me, the first two years of sobriety was probably the toughest experience of my life.

"I had to find different avenues, different ways to keep myself busy.

"Ultimately it was the land that kept me grounded. When you go out on the land nothing else matters. You're living in that moment.

"It's out on the land where we heal as Inuit, as Indigenous people. It's where we come together and help each other out and, that's what really kept me going on a day-to-day basis during my first two years of sobriety."

Tootoo said when he first went sober, being in the south during the NHL season, he really didn't have those kinds of opportunities.

He said having the support of the Nashville Predators organization meant a lot to him, and he surrounded himself with positive people who wanted him to succeed.

"You find out pretty damn quick who your real friends are when you change your life.

"You start to eliminate people who want to take you down. And I've seen that first hand in our communities.

"When someone starts to become successful or is doing good, jealousy sets in

and some community members want to bring them down to their level.

"I choose this path and when someone says, 'Oh Jordin look, you've got everything thanks to your God-given talent,' I say, 'No! I've worked hard for this. I earned every damn bit of what I have. It wasn't just given to me.'

"I started learning during sobriety that when you become comfortable and content in your own skin, you start to become successful within yourself."

Tootoo said he didn't want to get sober to impress others. He wanted to do it to stop one cycle and start another.

Grateful for wife and children

He said he wouldn't have what he has today if not for his wife, Jennifer, and their two daughters Sienna Rose, 4, and Avery Grace, 2.

"This is what sobriety has given to me. I know for a fact that I didn't fix myself. There's no possible way I would have the life today that I have without support and it takes time for individuals to heal.

"During the first three years of my sobriety, I felt like every day was a damn test, but that's how many people I affected throughout my life by using and I just said, 'Wow!'

"I had three years of every other day when there were people coming up to me and asking if I remembered this happening or that happening, and for me to be able to say, 'I'm sorry' took all that weight right off of my back.

"But I knew, deep down inside, that if I didn't stop what I was doing I would be the next victim. I would be the next person six feet under. I knew my late brother, Terence, didn't want that, and I chose to believe him that, at the end of the day, everything will be OK if you have clarity and the right mindset. My mind had been foggy for the past 15 years — from the age of 12 until 26, when I entered rehab."

Tootoo said it's a battle in the mind but as the days, months and years go past you start to become comfortable in your own skin and choosing a different way of life has become OK.

He said he couldn't imagine being in an isolated community up North and trying to change your perspective on life, because everyone around you is stuck in a stagnant life of living pay cheque to pay cheque and looking for someone else to make them happy.

"Ultimately, you create your own happiness and, for me, the future is about being a present father for my kids, being there to watch them grow and learn.

"And now, with sobriety, I'm able to do that. I'm able to get up at 6 a.m. to feed them and be a part of their every day life.

"It's something that, oh man, it's something I am so grateful to have."

Darrell Greer is editor of Kivalliq News in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, Canada. This article was posted at nunavutnews.com on Dec. 26.



The Kivalliq News

Jordin Tootoo played for four NHL teams in his career that spanned 723 games from 2003-17.

Pokagon Band of Potawatomi to host Symetra Tour event

FROM PRESS RELEASE

SOUTH BEND, Ind. – The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and its Four Winds Casinos announced in December that the 2021 Four Winds Invitational, part of the Symetra Tour on the "Road to the LPGA," will be held from Aug. 13-15, 2021, at South Bend Country Club in South Bend, Indiana.

"We are very excited to announce our new partnership with South Bend Country Club to host the 2021 Four Winds Invitational,"

said Matthew Wesaw, Tribal Chairman of the Pokagon Band and CEO of Pokagon Gaming Authority. "Not only is South Bend Country Club known as one of the top golf courses in Indiana, it has a long history of hosting many prestigious tournaments. From the grounds and clubhouse facilities, to the course location which is just 10 minutes from our Four Winds South Bend casino, we feel this new location will further enhance the appeal of the tournament to players, attendees and sponsors."

NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To the Tribal Community at large, the Draft Control Schedule for Tribal and BIA Roads is available for review/comments at the office of Tribal Community Development of the Seminole Tribe of Florida located at 5700 Griffin Rd Hollywood FL 33314. Comments must be received no later than February 12, 2021. For additional information, contact Emran Rahaman of the Public Works Department at (954) 894-1060 Ext. 10924.