



# The Seminole Tribune

Voice of the Unconquered

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## Precautions for Tribe, Indian Country continue in battle against COVID-19

STAFF REPORT

Although the coronavirus pandemic has taken a toll throughout Indian Country, the Seminole Tribe has been diligent in its efforts to protect its communities on every reservation.

Tribal Council's March 16 declaration of an emergency closed Tribal offices and businesses until further notice, but the Public Safety Department – which includes Seminole Police, Fire Rescue and Office of Emergency Management – has been working meticulously to keep Tribal members and their loved ones safe.

SPD officers have been reinforcing the importance of safer-at-home guidelines to Tribal members on each reservation. The guidelines are also posted on the reservations' electronic message boards.

Police and fire personnel self-monitor twice daily and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for every response tribalwide.

As of April 20, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, Billie Swamp Safari and the Swamp Water Café in Big Cypress remain closed. Sadie's café is open for pick up orders only and its general store continues to restrict the number of customers inside at one time.

♦ See COVID-19 on page 5A

## Schools, families adjust to remote learning amid COVID-19

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor  
and  
BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

The COVID-19 pandemic has shut down school campuses, but not education.

The learning process for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year continues from a distance as schools – including Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton and the Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress – have settled into online classwork.

On April 18, Gov. Ron DeSantis announced all public schools in the state would remain closed for the rest of the academic year and continue operating online.

PECS students are sheltered safely at home and adjusting to the school's virtual instruction, which began March 30.

Principal Tracy Downing began to prepare for the possibility of closing PECS on March 13. Spring break was scheduled for March 16 but was extended until March 30. During that time, teachers created lesson plans for their classes using the distance learning plan developed by Downing. At the same time, computers were distributed to students who needed them.

According to Downing, things are going well.

"I couldn't be happier and more proud to be working with a community of people (students, parents, Brighton, teachers, staff members) who are dedicated and devoted to the education of young people. There is no profession more noble than that of



Courtesy photo

Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students from the Jimmie family take their classes online at home in April in the school's virtual learning program that was set up when the campus closed in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The siblings are, from left, first-grader Micah Jimmie, sixth-grader Milley Jimmie and fourth-grader Marley Jimmie.

an educator, and I have seen first-hand the character of the people I work with. I've always said that our character is defined by

the manner in which we conduct ourselves when faced with challenges and adversity," Downing wrote in an email to the Tribune.

♦ See SCHOOLS on page 2B

## Hard Rock, Seminole Gaming provide community support during pandemic

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Hard Rock International motto "All is One" is taking on additional significance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through food donations, free meals and other charitable outreach, Hard Rocks across the country and Seminole Gaming are showing support for those on the front lines, including health care workers, firefighters, paramedics and police officers, as well as community organizations.

Here are some examples of how Hard Rock and Seminole Gaming have been helping communities:

- Hard Rock Café in Orlando shared its generosity during these difficult times by supplying complimentary lunch for health care workers at AdventHealth Orlando.

"...we jumped at the chance to help XL 1067's (radio host) Johnny Magic when he asked if we could cook and serve hot meals to health care workers on the frontlines," Hard Rock Café posted on its Facebook page April 10. "Today, thanks to the generosity of Johnny and some Hard Rock Orlando food truck magic, we were able to deliver lunch to our brothers and sisters at the AdventHealth Orlando campus. We will all get through this together one day at a time."

- Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood delivered food and



Seminole Casino Hotel/Facebook

Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee donates food to the Community Cooperative in March. The soup kitchen serves the homeless and hungry in Southwest Florida.

beverages to The Pantry of Broward, which supports seniors in need and grandparents who are raising their grandchildren throughout Broward County.

"The Hard Rock mantra "Take Time to be Kind" is more important now than ever before. We care. We share. We are proud to support The Pantry of Broward with

Hard Rock San Diego/Facebook

Thanks to Maryjane's restaurant at Hard Rock Hotel San Diego, free meals were provided to first responders in San Diego on April 6.

a delivery of food and beverage items to support the families and friends within our community at this time. #AllIsOne," Hard Rock Hollywood posted on Facebook on March 25.

Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa donated more than 11,000 pounds of food to Metropolitan Ministries on March 24 in support of the Ministries' initiative to serve 3,000 to-go meals at 25 locations daily during the COVID-19 crisis. The organization helps the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless in the Tampa

Bay area.

"We're thankful to have such an amazing community partner and for the opportunity to give back to our Tampa Bay community," Hard Rock Tampa wrote on Facebook.

- Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee provided a big boost to Community Cooperative in Southwest Florida with the donation of thousands of pounds of food.

♦ See SUPPORT on page 4A

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# Editorial

## Indian Country’s pandemic recovery plan

• **Patrice H Kunesh, JD MPA**

The world is reeling from an unprecedented global economic shock brought on by the sudden onset and rapid spread of the highly infectious COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) virus.

In Indian Country, tribal leaders have stepped up to protect their communities by closing casinos and related businesses (such as hotels and convenience stores). For tribal leaders, though, combatting the virus comes at a severe cost. Tribal governments are both the providers of essential services to tribal citizens and major employers of thousands of people.

Closing casinos not only shuts down reservation economies and disrupts the social fabric of Native families, the shock will shake the future financial stability of many Native communities. Moreover, given the slow fuse of COVID-19, we’ll likely see more economic and social damage to our already vulnerable communities.

The crucible of this crisis is the opportunity to forge stronger and effective social institutions. As Indian Country recovers from the pandemic, it will need to adjust to a society profoundly altered by COVID-19. No matter what, this adjustment will test the resilience of even the most well-administered tribal governments.

To surmount a future fraught with financial challenges and restore its social fabric, Indian Country must address three key challenges: economic diversification, balanced self-governance, and inclusive prosperity.

This matters greatly because Indian Country is a distinctively important component of the U.S. economy and a significant contributor to state economies. Two hundred forty-five tribal governments operate 500+ gaming enterprises in 29 states. Tribal government gaming has experienced tremendous revenue growth in the past 30 years and currently is a \$37 billion industry.

According to the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, tribal governments generate extensive gaming and non-gaming economic impacts and benefits well beyond the reservation borders with over \$100 billion in outputs (the value of sales and services reflecting an extensive supply chain network). Collectively tribes are the 13 largest employer nationwide, employing more than 1.1 million jobs, paying out more than \$35 billion in wages and benefits. In addition, tribal governments pay over \$20 billion in taxes and direct payments to federal, state, and local governments through revenue sharing agreements.

Tribal government gaming allowed tribes to return revenues to their communities through essential government services. These include reservation infrastructure from roads to broadband, support social and economic programs and services such as health care, education, housing, public safety, and youth and elder care programs. With a steady improvement in revenues, Indian Country per capita income has increased substantially from 1990 to 2020: about 48%, compared to 9% growth for all Americans.

Tribal governments also use gaming revenue to make significant payments to states and local governments, who rely on those funds to support their own essential services. Facing the loss of \$20 billion in tribal revenue payments is no trivial matter. Suspending those obligations while the casinos are shut down is an obvious necessity (a rare triggering of the “Act of God” provisions), but also must be considered for a period of time once casinos are re-opened.

To forestall further damage and re-establish a sustained stream of government revenue and per capita income, it is imperative that tribal governments pursue three changes to their current business and governance models.

The first change is to diversify reservation employment opportunities. While gaming has boosted reservation economies and provided vast number of

employment opportunities, these jobs are too often highly concentrated in just two sectors - public administration and gaming-related businesses. Compared to nearby county areas, reservations overall have significantly fewer workplaces per resident and slightly more jobs per resident due to a workforce concentrated in government and casino-related jobs.

This glaring imbalance and over-dependence on a narrow range of employers creates high vulnerability to economic and social shocks. Indian Country experienced similar exposure during the 9-11 attacks and the 2008 Great Recession, but most survived by recalibrating their operations and restructuring their debt. This recovery will be different, however. Indian Country’s response to these changes requires effective leadership and a commitment to an inclusive economic revival.

The gaming market today already is saturated and likely will shrink dramatically, at least during a protracted period of recovery and recession. Moving gaming to an on-line platform might save a pocket of business, but it would be much less lucrative and would require a much smaller physical and workforce footprint. With the biggest benefits being derived from jobs and paychecks, it behooves tribes to implement a robust economic diversification strategy incorporating these essential features:

- Expanding the number and type of tribal business interests, beyond the gaming/entertainment and public administration sectors
- Creating a positive climate for private business development that includes a collateralized lending system
- Developing bonding capacity and a strong public finance posture for much needed infrastructure enhancements such as roads and broadband service
- Establishing tribal administrative capacity to directly interface with state and federal agencies and philanthropic institutions and avail the tribe of many rich and diverse funding sources

- Using trust lands efficiently for both business and community needs such as housing

In addition to pursuing economic security, tribes should ensure equality of opportunity within their own institutions and reliable delivery of public services. For decades now, tribes have valiantly pursued self-governance despite historical and current severe underfunding for basic services, including education, health care, public safety, food, and housing. Post-pandemic tribal governments must smooth out of the delivery of trust services and allocation of responsibilities with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

For example, wherever possible tribes should assume responsibility for land use and development. Their ability to control and manage the leasing process of trust lands efficiently will greatly enhance their ability to develop and expand their economies.

As tribal governments were shutting down casinos, their primary and often sole source of income, they requested federal aid to help them address the severe consequences of the pandemic in their communities. Congress responded with a \$8 billion set aside for tribes in the enormous \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

Now, tribes must be able to readily access those federal funds and available state funds, and maneuver policy hurdles to put those funds to maximize use. They must be agile and responsive, with administrative systems in place to capture resources and deploy them to the highest and best use quickly.

Third, tribes must create an environment for more inclusive prosperity. Economic shocks and recession make people much worse off. In Indian Country, tribes have always had far fewer resources. Now, in addition to containing the virus, tribes also are battling even more difficult issues of food scarcity, housing instability, and income insecurity. In the midst of relief “triage,” however, tribes must take care to

lift up those most at risk, both now and over time.

This also means recognizing that business enterprise and social welfare are two sides of the larger issue. The work here will involve deep investments in enhanced educational opportunities from birth to adulthood, with an emphasis on quality early childhood development and workforce training. Moreover, embedded in this approach is the pursuit of structural changes and pathways to economic opportunities and resources. Overall economic and social life will be radically more equal for Native peoples.

So what do tribes do now?

They have to start talking and thinking about tomorrow, making it a priority to restore the social and cultural fabric of their communities. Tool that will be necessary for this restoration project include diversifying highly concentrated business structures, recalibrating self-governance to optimize sovereign authorities, and maintain a robust safety net that protects against hardships resulting from exposure to colonialism and the global market place – in short, a more inclusive prosperity.

*Of Standing Rock Lakota descent, Patrice is a nationally recognized thought leader and advocate, well known for influencing, inspiring, and equipping cross-sector leaders to create inclusive economic systems and thriving societies, particularly with Native communities. Kunesh is the founder and director of Pehiy Haha Consulting, a social enterprise committed to building more engaged and powerful Native communities by expanding assets, fostering social and human capital, strengthening capacity, and pursuing economic equity through research and advocacy. This article appeared on IndianCountryToday.com and was posted April 21.*

## NIGA statement concerning distributions to Alaska Native Corporations

*This letter from the National Indian Gaming Association was sent April 13 to Steven Mnuchin, Secretary of Treasury; David Bernhardt, Secretary of the Interior; and Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs.*

Dear Secretary Mnuchin, Secretary Bernhardt, and Assistant Secretary Sweeney:

The National Indian Gaming Association, with over 150 Tribal Nations as Members, is deeply troubled that Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs) are going to be included as eligible tribal governments for relief under the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). As recently as this morning, the Interior Department Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs stated that she intended to include ANC’s in the distribution

during a conference call with tribal leaders.

We support funding for Alaska Native village tribal governments included on the Interior Department’s list of federally recognized tribes eligible to receive federal services. Treasury and BIA must not include state chartered Alaska Native Regional and Village Corporations under Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) as Tribal governments under the CARES Act.

Although ANCs are referenced in the first part of the definition of Indian tribe set forth in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), ANCs do not qualify as Indian Tribes because they are not eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to federally recognized Tribal Governments. Only those entities listed on the Interior Department’s annual List of Federally

Recognized Tribal Nations are recognized by and eligible to receive, services from the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs. The most recently published list came out on January 30, 2020, and comes within the definition of Indian tribe under the ISDEAA.

Construing the ISDEAA definition of Indian tribe to include ANCs completely misconstrues Congress’ intent in the CRF and represents a misreading of the ISDEAA itself. Worse, distribution of crucial relief funds for tribal governments would be shortchanged by having these funds distributed to entities that provide no governmental services or benefits to tribal members. Furthermore, this would allow for double or triple counting of Alaska Natives due to the fact that there are three layers for each Alaska Native village: federally-recognized Alaska Native village Tribal government; Alaska Native Village

Corporation; and Alaska Native Regional Corporation.

Depending on the formula Treasury ultimately uses and the factors contained therein, some estimates have Alaska Native Villages and ANC’s consuming up to \$4 billion of the \$8 billion allocated to Indian Country.

It is significant that the Alaska Inter Tribal Council, a non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of Alaska Tribal governments, does not include Alaska Native Regional or Village Corporations because they are not Tribal governments. It would be improper to include ANCs as Tribal governments in the CRF allocation formula because the crucial need and delivery mechanisms are with the Alaska Native Tribal governments not the ANCs.

As the Alaska Native Claims Settlement

Act (ANCSA) makes clear: Alaska Native Regional Corporations and Alaska Native Village Corporations are state chartered, stockholder-owned corporations, held by Alaska Natives. They are not Tribal governments, nor are they arms of tribal governments, and should not be permitted to unfairly benefit from funds appropriated for tribal governments. In contrast, Alaska Native tribal governments are Indian Tribes and Tribal governments recognized by the Secretary of the Interior, as such, under the Federally Recognized Tribe List Act of 1994.

For the reasons set forth herein, we strongly urge that ANCs be excluded from the distribution formula for the CRF.

**Sincerely,  
Ernest L. Stevens, Jr, Chairman  
National Indian Gaming Association**

## Dakota Access Pipeline should be shut down while the new environmental statement is being prepared

• **Loretta Donoghue**

Despite the United States government’s alleged desire to address the worries and preserve the heritage of Native American peoples, numerous U.S. decisions and actions go against the wishes and concerns of Native nations and tribes.

One well-known example was the government’s approval of the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2017, despite strong protest from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The tribe’s reservation is less than a mile away from the pipeline, and members fear that a spill would contaminate their water and disrupt sacred lands.

In the past week, an important decision involving the Dakota Access Pipeline was made. U.S. District Judge James Boasberg ruled that the U.S. government failed to adequately study the pipeline before

approving it. He said a new environmental impact statement must be completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before the pipeline’s permits can be reapproved. While the ruling is a victory for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Judge Boasberg has yet to decide whether oil can continue to flow while the USACE review is being completed.

The court’s decision to review the pipeline was centered on the finding that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was not thorough enough in issuing the pipeline’s easement approval. The memorandum opinion of the case stated that “too many questions remain unanswered,” and that the USACE’s decision remains “highly controversial.”

Boasberg requested that the two sides of the lawsuit — the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — submit briefings next month for and against keeping the pipeline in

service. Jan Hasselman, an attorney with the environmental group Earthjustice who represents the Standing Rock tribe in the lawsuit, said the tribe would ask for the pipeline to be shut down until the review is completed, while the USACE is expected to take the opposite position. Because the USACE’s last report did not accurately describe the risks of running the pipeline, with data and claims from the tribe and the USACE conflicting each other, the United States should shut down the pipeline until the USACE finishes its new environmental statement.

Four main “unresolved scientific controversies” of the case were the pipeline’s leak-detection system, the operator’s safety record, winter conditions and worst-case discharge. With all of these four factors, the court ruled that the USACE did not sufficiently address concerns raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s experts. In

other words, risks raised by the tribe could be realistic, even though the USACE claims they are unfounded.

It is worth noting that these four factors — leak-detection system, operator safety record, winter conditions, worst-case discharge — are not small issues. A functioning leak-detection system, for example, is key in monitoring leaks, ruptures and seeps, so when Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s experts found problems with the Dakota Access Pipeline’s system that the USACE was unable to refute, this raised a huge concern. The tribe’s experts found that the leak-detection system used by Dakota Access, called a CPM system, failed to detect spills 80% of the time.

Additionally, experts found that the system would not detect leaks that constituted 1% or less of the pipe’s flow rate, which meant approximately 25,000 gallons of oil could be released “continuously, over

a long period of time, without detection.” As Judge Boasberg stated, the USACE failed to adequately dispose of these concerns, meaning that it is very possible that the tribe’s findings are accurate. These concerns that the USACE failed to remedy are not small issues — they are serious problems that, if they occur, could potentially pollute Native water and land.

Until a more in-depth environmental statement is complete, we will not know the full scope of the pipeline’s risks. It’s possible that the USACE was accurate in its findings, but it’s also possible that the tribe’s concerns are valid. If this is the case, then the pipeline is a serious threat to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, as well as the environment. Until the USACE answers these questions — if they can — the pipeline must be shut down.

♦ See PIPELINE on page 8A

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# Community



## Churches reach beyond the pews to connect with members

BY AARON TOMMIE  
STOF Executive Management Trainee

The advent of the coronavirus has caused billions of people in the world to adjust their lives to what has become a new normal. Governments, schools and businesses have been drastically affected and have evolved with social distancing rules.

Since stay-at-home orders began, tens of millions of Americans have filed for unemployment benefits. Schools have transitioned to online learning.

Churches have had to adapt, too. Most places of worship have been closed to services since mid-to-late March. Many churches, including some whose congregations include Seminoles, are reaching their members by broadcasting their services on Facebook or YouTube.

“Everyone is just kind of taking it one day at a time,” said Big Cypress First Baptist Church Pastor Salaw Hummingbird.

For the resurrection service on Easter morning April 12, Pastor Hummingbird led an outdoor sunrise gathering from the banks

of a canal on the Big Cypress Reservation. Many in attendance wore masks and either stayed in their vehicles or stood next to them along a dirt road. The service was shown on the church’s Facebook page and drew hundreds of views.

In his sermon, Pastor Hummingbird provided assurance.

“Even in our moments of our darkness, even in the moments of our life that we feel that there is no hope or we feel like we’re up against a situation that we can’t prevail against, but we’ve got to realize that God has never left anyone of us. He knows in this very moment where we’re at, about this darkest moment that we’re in right now. He hasn’t forgot about us,” he said, adding that God “will rescue us from this tragedy that we’re in.”

The service included music from Jonah Cypress on guitar along the canal banks. He sang “Jesus Paid It All” and “Were You There” with the sun ascending behind him.

At Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church, Pastor Arlen Payne has been using Facebook and YouTube to broadcast sermons on the Big Cypress Reservation. He also stays in touch with members via phone and wants the church experience to return to pre-coronavirus conditions.

“We miss everybody and miss the fellowship,” said Pastor Payne.

During New Testament’s resurrection sermon broadcast on Facebook, Pastor Payne said the day’s meaning doesn’t change despite the conditions.

“...we can still praise the Lord and give him glory for that glorious day he rose from the dead,” he said.

On the Brighton Reservation, Pastor Billy Blomberg continues to call and text the members of All Family Ministries Church for well-being updates, prayer requests and for sharing Bible scriptures to help uplift them.

“We’ll have to ask the Lord and trust Him to give us wisdom to deal with this,” said Pastor Blomberg when asked how he and his congregation were dealing with the effects of the coronavirus. “[The] ministry [exists] to help us encourage and support one another.”

In Immokalee, Pastor Josh LeadingFox said during Immokalee First Seminole Baptist Church’s Easter service on Facebook that he spent part of the week gathering videos of worship music to show during the service. With empty pews behind him,



Big Cypress First Baptist/Facebook

**Big Cypress First Baptist Church Pastor Salaw Hummingbird provides a sermon Easter morning, April 12, on the banks of a canal in Big Cypress. It was shown live on Facebook.**

Pastor LeadingFox emphasized peace can be attained during turbulent times.

“...even when life is crazy and all these things going on around us and the fear that is built up inside of the country and all the things you’ve seen and heard from friends or on the news, whatever your situation is, I pray that you know that because He lives you can have peace, even in troubled times,” he said.

For communion, he suggested viewers use crackers and juice as substitutes for the usual communion wafers and wine.

Daniel Harris, the Chaplain for Public Safety, has worked with the Tribe since 1994. He, as is the case with all of the pastors, has strong relationships with many Tribal citizens.

“We are trying to be a positive influence,” said Chaplain Harris. “People feel authenticity and sense that.”

*Senior Editor Kevin Johnson contributed to this story.*



Immokalee Seminole Baptist/Facebook

**Immokalee Seminole Baptist Church Pastor Josh LeadingFox on Facebook during service.**



New Testament Church/Facebook

**Big Cypress New Testament Baptist Church Pastor Arlen Payne provides a sermon on Facebook during the resurrection day.**

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# Hard Rock, Seminole Gaming donate 350,000 bars of soap in fight against COVID-19

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**HOLLYWOOD** — Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming are doing their part in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

They donated 350,000 bars of soap to The Clean the World Foundation, a global health organization focused on improving the quality of life in vulnerable populations through resources, education and programs related to hygiene, sanitation and water.

“Soap is not federally subsidized, so individuals and families, especially living in transitional housing or experiencing homelessness, rarely have access to soap and other hygiene supplies to keep them safe,” Sam Stephens, executive director of Clean the World Foundation, said in a statement. “Handwashing with soap is the most effective way to fight COVID-19, so it is crucial that we get supplies out to

relief organizations as quickly as possible. We are incredibly thankful to Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming for their donation, which allows us to meet demands quickly.”

Clean the World Foundation is distributing more than 1.5 million bars of soap across North America in response to COVID-19. Shipments have been sent to Florida, Louisiana, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Washington, Wisconsin and Mexico. The foundation said it plans to send an additional three million bars of soap in the next 90 days to areas hardest hit by the pandemic around the world.

“We are incredibly grateful to be able to help this worthy cause especially right now,” said Tracy Bradford, executive vice-president of administration for HRI and Seminole Gaming. “‘Save the Planet’ is one of our founding core beliefs since 1971. We have a significant investment behind the meaning of this principle.”

HRI and Seminole Gaming’s efforts

received positive feedback on Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood’s Facebook page. Comments included “Great job, thank you” and “You guys always do something good for the people.”

HRI and Seminole Gaming currently participate in Clean the World’s hospitality recycling program. Soap and bathroom amenities left behind by hotel guests are shipped to a Clean the World facility. The soap goes through a process – including being grounded, sanitized, melted and reprocessed – to become a new bar of soap. The plastic bathroom bottles are sent to recycling or an energy-from-waste facility. Since 2018, HRI and Seminole Gaming have diverted a combined 15,000 pounds of waste from landfills and distributed almost 33,000 bars of soap to those in need.

Clean the World was founded in Orlando in 2009. According to its website, the organization has distributed more than 50 million bars of soap, hygiene kits and other supplies throughout its history.



Clean the World Foundation/Twitter

The Clean the World Foundation provides soap to areas hard hit by COVID-19.

## ♦ SUPPORT From page 1A

Community Cooperative is a Fort Myers-based soup kitchen that provides meals and assistance to those in need, including homeless people and home-bound seniors.

“Tough times don’t last, but tough people do! Thank you Seminole Casino for donating all of the perishable foods from your restaurant so we can make meals for folks in need,” the Cooperative posted on Facebook.

“We are honored to partner with them and donate 7,000 pounds of food, enough to provide over 3,000 meals,” Seminole Casino Hotel posted on Facebook on March 24.

• Seminole Casino Coconut Creek donated food to a variety of area charities, including Gateway Community Outreach, SOS Children’s Villages – USA, Kids in Distress, Family Central, Tomorrow’s Rainbow and Teen Challenge.

Gateway is a Deerfield Beach-based organization that serves Broward and Palm Beach counties. Its mission is “to safeguard and protect our most vulnerable community members by providing intensive case management, food, housing assistance, referrals to those in need of emergency aid.”

“Let’s spread hope and food! Thank you to the Seminole Casino Coconut Creek!” Gateway posted on Facebook.

Fort Lauderdale-based Kids in Distress (KID) helps families, including children who have been abused or neglected.

“A big thank you to Seminole Casino Coconut Creek who dropped off a large food donation this week. This food helped feed the many families and children that

we serve in community. We are so blessed to have such caring partners that go above and beyond, especially in times of need,” KID said March 27 on Facebook.

• New Jersey organizations that help feed people in need received a lift thanks to the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City. In mid-March, Hard Rock donated two truckloads of food to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey and Turning Point Day Center for the Homeless.

“Though uncertain and frightening, times of crisis can also inspire incredible acts of kindness,” Community FoodBank posted on Facebook. “Our friends at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City have come to our aid, donating a tractor-trailer load of food to help us feed individuals, families, and communities in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

On the other coast of the U.S., first responders from the San Diego Police Department, San Diego Fire-Rescue and other area paramedics received free meals from Hard Rock Hotel San Diego Maryjane’s restaurant April 6.

“It was an absolute pleasure feeding over 10 stations, 100+ first responders in the San Diego area. Thank you all for what you do during these times, not all heroes wear capes,” Maryjane’s wrote on Facebook.

• The Hard Rock Café in Biloxi, Mississippi, handed out to-go lunches and loaves of bread for its team members, many of whom took to Facebook to express gratitude and an eagerness to return to work.

“It was so great seeing our team today! We had a couple loaves of bread and a hot lunch for each of them! Our drive-thru service had everyone in and out – safe and sound!” the café posted March

27 on Facebook.

• Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming donated 350,000 bars of soap from its hotels to Clean the World Foundation, a global health organization focused on improving the quality of life in vulnerable populations through resources, education and programs related to hygiene, sanitation and water.

• Two major events scheduled for Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens – the Miami Open tennis tournament and Jazz in the Gardens – were cancelled, but the facility has remained active in the fight against the pandemic. Its parking lot is being used as a testing site for thousands of residents.

On April 9 – just two months after it hosted Super Bowl LIV – Hard Rock Stadium, whose naming rights are held by Hard Rock International, joined stadiums and buildings throughout the country as it showed support for health care workers by lighting up the stadium in blue at night.

“Tonight we #LightItBlue in support of health care professionals around the world. We want to say thank you. Thank you for fighting on the front lines against COVID-19,” Hard Rock Stadium posted on Facebook. “With your commitment, we know we will be back stronger than ever.”



Hard Rock Cafe Orlando/Facebook

Hard Rock Cafe Orlando provides lunches at AdventHealth Orlando in April.



Hard Rock Cafe Biloxi/Facebook

Hard Rock Cafe Biloxi provides food to team members in March.



Hard Rock Hotel San Diego/Facebook

A first responder gives thumbs up after receiving a free meal from Maryjane’s at Hard Rock Hotel San Diego.



Hard Rock Cafe Orlando/Facebook

AdventHealth Orlando workers enjoy a free Hard Rock Cafe Orlando lunch April 10.



Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood/Facebook

Food from Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood is delivered to The Pantry of Broward in March.

# Protective mask makers praised by Board

STAFF REPORT

Describing the masks that were made for its employees as “awesome,” the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. showed its appreciation

to the makers of the masks. In a Facebook post April 17, the Board thanked Melissa Osceola DeMayo, Allison Osceola, Danielle Nelson and Holly Tiger. The post included photos of Trading Post employees wearing the masks.

The masks will be used by employees at Board entities, including the Trading Posts in Brighton and Hollywood, Smoke Shops, Seminole Petroleum and Natural Resources.



Trading Post workers wear protective masks made for the Board.



STOF Inc. /Facebook (2)

◆ COVID  
From page 1A

In Brighton, Alice’s, Windmill and Subway are also open for pick up orders only. The Brighton and Hollywood Trading Posts remain open with limited hours. Brighton hours are 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Hollywood is open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Churches tribalwide remain closed, but some offer services online. The health department is open in a limited way. Triage over the telephone is ongoing, clinics are open for essential services, staff continues to monitor patients in local hospitals and clinic nurses are using open consultation rooms to ensure social distancing. Elder services staff are distributing meals to seniors and disabled Tribal members daily. The staff at the Center for Behavioral

Health is on call should a need arise. The department is also continuing its remote crisis management and offers services through telehealth. The Ahfachkee School and Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School students are attending classes and learning remotely. At Ahfachkee, classroom video conferencing through Zoom will be replaced May 4. Parents who want more information can find it at the virtual learning tab on the school’s website seminolewarriors.net. PECS parents may log on Skyward to monitor their child’s progress, grades and assignments. After three weeks of at-home learning, students are now earning grades for the fourth 9-week grading period. Around Indian Country As of April 20, the Navajo Nation reported nearly 1,200 cases of COVID-19, which is a per capita infection rate 10 times higher than that of neighboring Arizona. It is also the third highest infection rate in the

country after New York and New Jersey. To help contain the coronavirus, the Navajo Department of Health issued an order on April 17 requiring everyone on the 27,000 square mile reservation to wear protective masks in public. So far, 44 Navajo tribal members have lost the battle with COVID-19, more than in 14 states. Native Americans represent 10% of New Mexico’s population, but account for more than a third of the state’s cases of COVID-10. New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan-Grisham, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland and other tribal leaders discussed how the pandemic is disproportionately affecting Native Americans during a PBS town hall on April 19. One reason for the surge in cases is the outbreak in the Navajo Nation, which is more than half of the coronavirus cases documented by the Indian Health Service.



Brighton health clinic staff show and wear some of the items being used in the battle against COVID-19.

Brighton health clinic



Elder Service)

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Elder services continues to make sure food is delivered to seniors and disabled Tribal members.



Elder Services

Above, Elder services delivers food to Tampa.



Elder Services (3)

Elder services employees shown working during the COVID-19 pandemic as they get food to seniors and disabled Tribal members on the reservations. At left, food is delivered to Trail.



# Documentary on Ainu woman’s visit to Tribe receives more than 1M views

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

As the owners of Hard Rock, whose brand dots nearly all corners of the globe, the Seminole Tribe already has a well-established international footprint in the business world.

Recently the Tribe’s culture has received global recognition across seas and continents thanks to a 20-minute documentary.

“Ainu My Voice,” a documentary that follows an Ainu woman’s trip to the Seminole Tribe last November, was posted on YouTube in late January and has generated more than 1 million views on YouTube.

The documentary was made by Tokyo-based 3Minute Inc. It explains the journey of Rie Kayano, an Indigenous mother from Japan, and her determined effort to reestablish culture and language from her Ainu heritage.

The Ainu are Indigenous to Japan,

but their way of life and traditions nearly evaporated due to centuries of colonization and assimilation.

“The government forced assimilation (and) attempted to erase Ainu culture and language. Ainu culture faced annihilation,” the documentary explained.

Before Kayano’s trip, which was sponsored by Hard Rock Japan, the documentary provides viewers with background on Kayano, who explains the mistreatment she suffered as a child because she is Ainu.

“When I was in elementary school, I was harassed as an Ainu. They made me hate myself as an Ainu. The trauma continued until I was 18,” she said in the documentary.

Kayano attended Sapporo University and was among the early recipients of the school’s Ainu scholarship. She was also part of a band called Marewrew that performs traditional Ainu folk songs.

In the film, her interest in promoting



Ainu My Voice/YouTube

Rie Kayano, second from left, participates in an activity in November 2019 with the emerging language class at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Brighton. Kayano, an Ainu woman from Japan, visited the Seminole Tribe as part of her journey to reestablish Ainu culture and language in her homeland. Her trip is documented in “Ainu My Voice,” a 20-minute documentary that is on YouTube.

Ainu culture seems to dwindle. She mentioned that she gave birth to a daughter and didn’t sing with the band often anymore, but the spark inside her continued to flicker.

“I knew I had to do something, but I didn’t know how to begin,” she said. “Then, the opportunity to visit Florida emerged. I was invited to meet the Seminole Tribe. I jumped on it, thinking this can help me with my future.”

Half of the film is devoted to Kayano’s trip to the Tribe. She arrives at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, where she is wowed by the new Guitar Hotel. The documentary includes her conversations with Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. and Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie.

“Up to about 10 years ago I was working hard on spreading Ainu culture, but it all felt useless. My heart was broken,” she told Chairman Osceola. “My baby’s birth made me think I have to do something. That’s when the opportunity to visit you arose.”

Kayano received encouraging advice from Chairman Osceola to continue to pursue her dream.

“To become chairman of the Seminole Tribe didn’t come without its own struggles,” Chairman Osceola told her. “There were times when I wanted to give up, but again, picking myself up and continuing to try to finish what I believed in for my people and my family and what my ancestors believed in is the only reason I sit here today with you. So don’t be discouraged. You’ll face many more challenges in life before you finish the journey. So remain strong and vigilant and you’ll achieve whatever it is you set your mind to.”

Before stepping foot on Seminole land, Kayano knew plenty about the Seminole Tribe in part because Blais-Billie visited her in Japan weeks earlier. The two met again at Billie Swamp Safari, where they briskly glided through the Everglades on an airboat.

“This land is very important to us,” Blais-Billie told Kayano. “We turned to the Everglades during our wars. The harsh nature protected us and gave new life to our



Ainu My Voice/YouTube

During her visit, Rie Kayano meets with Seminole Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. in the auditorium at Tribal headquarters.

culture and people. We now fight to preserve it.”

In the film’s most emotional moment, both women shed tears as Kayano praises Blais-Billie.

“Meeting you has inspired me. I want my Ainu culture to nurture youths like you,” Kayano told her.

Kayano also visited the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School’s emerging language program in Brighton. She is greeted by Emma Johns Brown, the school’s dean.

“No English, only the Creek language,” Brown tells her as they approach the emerging language classroom.

Inside, Kayano is seen clearly enjoying her time while participating in activities in the middle of Tribal generations spanning from the young students who are learning Creek and the staff and Elders who teach it. Establishing the language Ainu used is one of Kayano’s goals. Similar to her visit with Chairman Osceola, Kayano departed PECS with inspirational support.

“You are right where we started,” Brown told her. “It probably seems like a distant dream that can’t be done, but it can, and what you saw today is proof of starting with almost nothing to having our language being revitalized and brought back.”

Progress appears to be moving forward in Japan. In early 2019, the Japan government passed a bill that officially

recognizes the Ainu as an Indigenous People of Japan and helps promote education about their language and culture.

Kayano’s trip wasn’t the first time Ainu have visited the Tribe. In 2016, a group of Ainu men and women came to Brighton and shared their culture, including songs, musical instruments, traditional robes and hand-carved prayer sticks.

For Kayano, her trip in November reenergized her efforts to continue to spread the culture.

“Meeting the Seminole people changed my mind,” she said. “I now want to do all I can to express Ainu culture. I’ve been inspired to do all I can, whatever I can. I now believe I need to do this for my ancestors. The Ainu culture is worth sharing with the world. I want to tell everyone about the Seminoles, what they have achieved, how much they have endured, and how we can learn from them. We as Ainu can rebuild our society in this way.”

“Ainu My Voice” was directed by Daichi Tomida. The executive producer was Chuck Beshner and the producer was Keita “Rusher” Tsukamoto. Drone footage was provided by Seminole Media Productions’ Matheus Goes and Martin Ebenhack. The documentary can be seen on YouTube.



Ainu My Voice/YouTube

Rie Kayano is greeted with her name in lights at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in November 2019.



Ainu My Voice/YouTube

Rie Kayano and Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie take an airboat ride at Billie Swamp Safari.



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RICHARD CASTILLO  
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY  
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# Calvin Harrison, who worked 28 years for SPD, passes away

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Calvin “Cal” Harrison, a recently retired police officer who spent nearly 30 years working for the Seminole Police Department, passed away April 17 at the Cleveland Clinic in Weston. He was 76.

William R. Latchford, the Seminole Tribe’s director of Public Safety, said Officer Harrison’s “positive outlook on life was most admirable.” Latchford announced the passing to the Tribe in a statement.

“On behalf of all of us here at Seminole Tribe of Florida Public Safety and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, I have taken the liberty of sending out, to Cal’s family, our most heartfelt condolences and sympathy,” Latchford said in the statement.

“He went above and beyond the call of duty,” said Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. “The whole Tribe was praying for him.”

According to a press release from the Tribe, Harrison, who retired in February, had been hospitalized since March 27 and died from COVID-19 infection and other complications.

He began his 28-year career in 1992 with SPD at the Brighton and Fort Pierce reservations and worked at other reservations, including Hollywood, Immokalee and Tampa. He was Corporal in Training when he first joined the department.

“Over the years, he felt blessed to train new officers who came to the department,” Latchford said.

In 1995, Officer Harrison was wounded in the line of duty. He was shot in the head by a rape suspect during an investigation. He underwent surgery and spent nine days in the hospital. He recuperated and returned to his job at SPD.

“He fought through those very difficult times to ensure he could get back to work as a police officer and train recruits until recently retiring on February 25, 2020,” Latchford said. “Regardless of the challenges he may have had along the way, everyone who’d ever had the privilege of working with him, always found Cal to be a special pleasure to work with.”

Officer Harrison and fellow Officer Doug Zamora were recognized in 2004 by the Seminole Department of Law Enforcement for helping save a life. They were presented



Calvin “Cal” Harrison

SPD

“Officer of the Year” awards and lifesaving awards after they responded to a call at Hollywood Estates mobile homes, where they performed CPR and resuscitated a man who had stopped breathing and had no pulse.

“Such an extraordinary person Cal Harrison was,” Latchford said. “This is truly a great loss to our Seminole Tribe Public Safety family, to the law enforcement community, and to our community as a whole. He will be profoundly missed by everyone whose lives he touched. Nevertheless, by Cal’s own last wishes, let us remember Cal each time, with a smile upon our faces.”

Officer Harrison, who had been in law enforcement since 1978, was a resident of Pompano Beach. He is survived by sons Calvin J. Harrison, of Sunrise, and James Harrison, of Boynton Beach, and a brother, David Harrison, of Ohio.



File photo

Seminole Police Officer Calvin “Cal” Harrison receives “Officer of the Year” and lifesaving awards in 2004.

# Irvin Peithmann remembered for Seminole writings, connections

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

An organization in Illinois recently recognized two people for their contributions to Randolph County – located about an hour south of St. Louis, Missouri.

Irvin Peithmann and Ruth Gilster were recently inducted into the Randolph Society’s class of 2020. The group recognizes “prominent persons who have lived in and contributed to Randolph County.”

The two worked together and were good friends. They both had an enduring interest in history, including that of Native Americans.

However, what will most likely interest Tribal members is the connection Peithmann had with the Seminole Tribe from the 1950s



Randolph Society

Irvin Peithmann in Florida, ca. 1950s.

through the 1970s.

It was Peithmann who would eventually move from Illinois to St. Petersburg and spend considerable time writing about, visiting and taking many photos at several Seminole reservations.

One of his books was “The Unconquered Seminole Indians: Pictorial History of the Seminole Indians,” published in 1957 by the University of Wisconsin Press.

“Since I had studied and written about the Indians who had lived in the Midwest, my thoughts turned to the Seminoles and their past,” Peithmann wrote in the book’s foreword. “I returned to the Everglades in December 1955, to study these people and their way of life. I found these Indians, their culture, almost unspoiled by our civilization, still living in much the same manner as their ancestors over a century ago.”

By all accounts, Tribal members welcomed Peithmann during his visits and assisted him in his research. He was an experienced historian, lecturer and storyteller as well.

“The story I began to piece together was a sad account of a people who have suffered much,” Peithmann wrote. “As Americans we should know the story of how the ancestors of the Seminoles were driven into the Everglades over 100 years ago, a story of historic resistance against the white man and his power. The story of the Seminoles is an epic in American Indian history.”

Peithmann wrote about his interactions with William McKinley Osceola, Charlie Cypress and the Rev. Billy Osceola, among others.

Records show he donated a collection of more than 1,000 Seminole photographs to the State Library and Archives of Florida.

Peithmann, who died in 1981, was born in Washington County, Illinois, in 1904.

He spent his childhood on his father’s farm, learning how to search for artifacts left behind by Indigenous Peoples who used to live and hunt on the same land, according to the Randolph Society.



Randolph Society

Irvin Peithmann, at left, with members of the Seminole Tribe, ca. 1956.

Gilster was born in Franklin County, Illinois, in 1915. She was heavily involved in preserving the history of her adopted hometown of Chester, located in Randolph County.

Throughout her life, she served on numerous boards and committees devoted to the history of Illinois, according to the Randolph Society. Gilster died in 2008.

“He and Ruth were really good friends. They did a lot of running around together and worked together at [Southern Illinois University in Carbondale],” Marc Kiehna, chair of the Randolph Society Foundation, said. “They were fascinated by the history of the Indians.”

Kiehna said Peithmann’s collection was recently given by his family to the archives at Southern Illinois University’s archeology department.

For more information visit [randolphsociety.org](http://randolphsociety.org).



Randolph Society

Irvin Peithmann and Ruth Gilster, date unknown.



L. L. COOK COMPANY

These Seminole Indian cattlemen display the individual branding irons used in branding their cattle. Since approximately 3500 head of cattle graze over the 36,724 acres of land on Brighton Reservation, they must be branded for identification at roundup time.

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

# AH-TAH-THI-KI

M U S E U M

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

## Longstanding partnership provides online access to community history

BY JULIE RUHL AND TARA BACKHOUSE  
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

For more than 10 years, the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum has partnered with The Seminole Tribune in a very special way.

It has long been the Tribune’s mission to chronicle the daily lives and special events of the Seminole Tribal community. For over 63 years the Seminole Tribune has recorded Princess Pageants, council meetings, marriage announcements, grand openings, birthdays, parades, and so many more community events from the different reservations. After they produce an amazing

newspaper each month, they set out to do the same thing the next month. This is an amazing responsibility and they do a great job. These days, the newspapers are put online and can be enjoyed there long after the month of that issue has passed at [seminoletribune.org](http://seminoletribune.org). The museum’s role in this process also takes place for a long time after



Dancers gather and wait to perform. From left to right are: Bobby Henry, Barbara Sisnero, Susie Henry, Stephen Bowers, Alan Jumper, Jimmy O'Toole Osceola and Linda Lee Henry. Do you know anyone else in this picture, or can you guess the date?



Seminole royalty Vanessa Frank and Suriaya Youngblood Smith lead the grand procession at the 1997 Tribal Fair. A young man walks between them, do you recognize him?

an issue of the paper is revealed. Our collection contains approximately 150,000 photographs that were taken by Seminole Media Productions and their predecessors from the late 1970s to the early 2000s. With the purpose of preservation in mind, the employees of the museum’s collections division have consistently been working on the conservation, safety, and accessibility of the collection. Through an ongoing project, over 25,000 of these photos have been made accessible to the Tribal community through the museum’s online collections. Browse our photos from the museum’s website: [semitrbe.pastperfectonline.com](http://semitrbe.pastperfectonline.com). These photographs are extremely important to the museum because they preserve the recent history of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and all its activities. The museum’s primary goal is to serve the Seminole Tribe of Florida and with these photos we are able to protect, preserve, and make accessible the Tribe’s history to its Tribal citizens. One of the biggest events that the Tribe hosts every year is Tribal Fair in Hollywood. This is an event that celebrates Native American culture and the rich heritage of the Seminole Tribe and of other Native people across Indian Country. With last

February’s 47th Tribal Fair and Powwow still fresh in our minds, it’s important to reflect on what a significant event this is for the community. This is especially true in the spring of 2020, when an unforeseen situation has waylaid our busy spring event season. Because of The Seminole Tribune, the museum houses over 1,500 photographs of the numerous Tribal Fairs over the years ranging from the 1970s to the early 2000s. The photographs include grand processions, clothing contests, concerts, dancing, talent contests, vendors, arts and crafts, and all other activities pertaining to the Tribal Fair. Many of these are available to view through our online collections. If you find a picture you like, you can request a digital copy through the website. We’ll be sure to send a copy quickly to the email address you provide. While the museum on Big Cypress is closed for everyone’s safety, we can still search our database for your friends and family. So let us know if you can’t find what you’re looking for and we’ll be glad to help. Email Tara Backhouse at [tarabackhouse@semitrbe.com](mailto:tarabackhouse@semitrbe.com) for any image requests or questions about our collection.

## Billie Swamp Safari staff remains busy caring for animals during closure for COVID-19 crisis

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**BIG CYPRESS** — While it has been more than a month since the Seminole Tribe closed Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation out of an abundance of caution due to the COVID-19 virus, a handful of staff members have remained busy caring for all of the animals that call the safari park home. “Unfortunately, we have not been able to share animal encounters with our guests, but our animals still need our utmost attention,” said Melissa Sherman, Operations manager. “We have hundreds of animals in our 2,200-acre safari wildlife preserve that need to be fed and looked after on a daily basis.” Each day, five staff members from the park’s animal care department attend to more than 250 animals who are on exhibit in enclosures and over 100 more in the safari preserve. “We have a diverse group of animals in

enclosures ranging from birds to mammals to snakes,” Sherman said. More than 120 birds are on display, including two newly hatched macaws, and lorikeets. Among the many mammals include a Florida panther, timber wolf, Florida black bear, grizzly bear, opossum and capybara. The 50-plus cold blooded animals featured include crocodiles, American alligators and snapping turtles. “During normal business days when the park is open, guests can typically have a lorikeet feeding encounter,” Sherman said. “To that end, we must continue to condition the lorikeets with interaction from our handlers to prevent stress.” The wildlife preserve features such animals as zebras, water buffalo, bison, red deer, feral hogs, ostrich, panthers and bears. “Each one of our animal family deserves the best possible care that we can provide – we love all of them,” Sherman said. “We can’t wait for the day when our guests can return to enjoy these beautiful creatures.”



Tre Huntoon feeds Francesca the Capybara as they wait for guests to return to Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation.

## First Native American Poet Laureate unravels why genre is necessary

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are spending more time reading books to take a break from the seemingly constant drumbeat of bad news. For those who enjoy poetry, they might consider reading one of Joy Harjo’s books. Harjo is the 23rd poet laureate of the U.S. and the first Native American to hold the position. She is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Harjo visited the Big Cypress Reservation in November 2019, after her official inauguration, as part of a traveling tour she took to perform both solo and with musicians. She’s an accomplished musician herself,

as well as an author with many awards and accolades to her name. “I wouldn’t be alive if I didn’t have poetry and music,” Harjo said during her BC visit. “I’m always happy when I come to this part of the world. My grandfather loved the Seminole people and that’s continued through me. This place holds such incredible beauty and a storied history.” One of Harjo’s many poems is “Don’t Look Back,” a nod to her ancestors’ forced removal to Oklahoma. More recently, Harjo did an interview with the Christian Science Monitor, where she explored the question of why poems are necessary in the first place. “Poetry tries to hold all aspects of human memory – grief, failure, love, joy – and moves toward a liminal space in the borderlands between here and there, in between yes and no, what was and what is to

come,” Harjo said. “The great paradox is that poetry uses language to create a place you can go when human words fail.” She said that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, poetry book sales had increased. “The audiences for poetry have grown dramatically since the last national elections four years ago,” Harjo said. In the interview, she talks about how poetry is “soul talk;” why listening is important; how she came to love poetry; and how she sees her place among other Native writers. “I am only one of many gifted poets, one of many Native poets, one of many voices who have something to offer in these times and in timelessness,” she said. The full interview by Elizabeth Lund for the Christian Science Monitor is on [csmonitor.com](http://csmonitor.com).



In November 2019, U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo spoke at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki-Museum's lecture series in Big Cypress.

### ◆ PIPELINE From page 2A

To make matters worse, the court-mandated environmental impact statement will not be a quick undertaking. Because of the nature of the review, the study is expected to take years to complete. This means that if not shut down while the review is being done, the pipeline could have years to run without knowing the full risks. It’s bad enough that we don’t know the true problems with the pipeline right now — we shouldn’t

allow the pipeline to continue for years until the new statement is done. Above all else, the pipeline should be shut down because the unknown scope of risks could have direct effects on Native land, water and ways of life — and this gets into the issue of tribal sovereignty. According to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is one of more than 500 federally recognized tribes, with the United States recognizing the tribe’s “inherent Tribal sovereign rights and powers.” This means that when the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe voices its concerns about

the Dakota Access Pipeline, it is not merely a group of worried citizens — it is a tribal sovereign nation making an important claim about self-determination. Even if the Dakota Access Pipeline is technically not in the jurisdiction of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe because it is outside of the reservation, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Tribe still has a greater say over the development and implementation of federal programs and policies that directly impact the tribe and its members. This idea of tribal self-determination is supported by several

pieces of legislation, such as The Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1994. The United States ought to consider the weight of the tribe’s concerns — the U.S. government is interacting with a sovereign government, not a special interest group, individuals or some other type of nongovernment entity. The future of the Dakota Access Pipeline is uncertain, and until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers properly completes an environmental impact statement, the risks of the pipeline are unclear. Shutting down a system as big as Dakota Access is not a decision that should be taken lightly, but it is

the only logical choice. Without shutting down the pipeline and ignoring the scope of risk, we are actively threatening the water, land and livelihood of sovereign Native tribes and nations.

*Loretta Donoghue is senior staff columnist for The Pitt, the University of Pittsburgh's daily student newspaper. The article was posted on [Pittnews.com](http://Pittnews.com) on March 30.*

Beverly Bidney

# Health

## NICWA transitions in-person conference to virtual one

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The National Indian Child Welfare Association did what many organizations have done during the coronavirus pandemic: make a quick switch from in-person conferences to virtual ones.

The child welfare nonprofit did just that, completing the first-ever virtual version of its “Protecting Our Children” conference, which ran from March 30 to April 1.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida was the host sponsor of the 38th version of the conference.

“COVID-19 is a direct threat to the safety and wellbeing of Native families everywhere,” Sarah Kastelic, NICWA executive director and conference organizer, said prior to the event’s start. “Now more than ever, we need to rely on our culture and teachings.”

Conference organizers said there were 1,557 registrations in all, and as many as 700 participants on any given call.

“As a staff, we had two-and-a-half weeks while working from our homes to transition our in-person conference to a virtual, amended version. That timeline was the greatest challenge,” Kastelic said. “We worked hard to make [it] a meaningful experience for our stakeholders, who embraced it and ran with it.”

NICWA is a nonprofit based in Portland, Oregon, whose mission is to protect Native children and keep them connected to their families, communities and culture.

Its work includes helping tribes prevent child abuse and neglect, in addition to being an advocate for pro-Native American child welfare changes in state, federal and tribal systems of government. NICWA is a strong proponent of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

The conference lineup included keynote presentations, breakout sessions and a membership meeting – similar to what would have taken place in Denver, Colorado, where a four-day in-person conference was previously scheduled to take place.

Conference topics included child welfare and ICWA, family “healing-to-wellness” courts, substance abuse, tribal-state child welfare collaborations, how to provide culturally based programs, recruiting and engaging foster and adoptive families, intergenerational trauma and more.

The second day of the conference featured a keynote presentation by Cindy Blackstock (Gitksan Nation), the executive director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.

She was also presented with the “2020 Champion for Native Children” award – given each year by NICWA to an individual or organization that has made “outstanding contributions” to Indigenous and Native children.

Terry Cross, the founder and senior adviser of NICWA, presented Blackstock with the award through a prerecorded video.

“This award is so well deserved; I am such an admirer of your work,” Cross said.

He displayed a plaque to be sent to Blackstock. It read: “For outstanding leadership to protect Native children.”

“I feel so privileged that I’ve been able to work with others, and particularly children, to bring them a little bit closer to the dream our ancestors had for them: to be proud of who they are and carry the dream forward with them,” Blackstock said in accepting the award.

Amory Zschach, NICWA strategic communications manager, and Betty Bryant, NICWA project coordinator, shared some



Cindy Blackstock, executive director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, participates in NICWA's virtual version of its “Protecting Our Children” conference.



Sarah Kastelic, NICWA executive director and conference organizer.

of the comments participants wrote on the post-conference evaluation form. Here is an edited sample of those comments:

*“It was a beautiful and empowering training overall. I gained so much from the ICWA court case session and active efforts information to intergenerational healing and the journey to healing.”*

*“On Monday I was lamenting about not being face-to-face in Denver. By Tuesday I was really getting into the citations and other helpful info from the audience. Then on Wednesday I became a full-fledged convert of the virtual conference format.”*

*“I am thoroughly impressed with the high quality and organization of this conference presentation and the lack of problems encountered, especially under such stressful and trying times and such short notice. Thank you.”*

*“I really appreciate the NICWA team’s*

*swift efforts to convert the conference to a virtual platform rather than cancelling the conference. I enjoyed being able to hear from and engage with some of the presenters, especially since I am now working from home. It was really great to see other people virtually and be inspired by their work.”*

*“The entire conference was very informative and provided great insight. I enjoyed hearing from the youth [and] their role models. It’s awesome to see across the nation what’s happening and what impact people like the presenters and their partners are making. Thank you so much for all that you’re doing for our future generations.”*

More information is available at nicwa.org. For additional coverage of the conference, go to [seminoletribune.org](http://seminoletribune.org) and search “NICWA.”



Courtesy photo

IHS Director Rear Adm. Michael D. Weahkee (Zuni Tribe)

## Senate confirms Weahkee to lead Indian Health Service

STAFF REPORT

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Senate has unanimously confirmed Rear Adm. Michael D. Weahkee as the director of the Indian Health Service.

Weahkee, an enrolled member of the Zuni Tribe, was confirmed April 21 for a four-year term.

He has served as the interim head of the agency for the past three years.

The IHS falls under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The agency serves as the principal federal-level advocate and provider of health care services in hospitals, clinics and other settings for about 2.2 million Native Americans.

There is a network of 12 IHS regional offices that oversee clinical operations at facilities. Florida, and the Seminole Tribe, are included under the auspices of the Nashville, Tennessee, regional office.

“Director Weahkee continues to show up for Tribes during turbulent and trying times like during the 33-day government shutdown in 2019 and now in the era of Coronavirus,” National Indian Health Board Chairperson Victoria Kitcheyan (Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska), said in a statement. “[He] has proven to be an adept and inclusive leader who has earned the trust and confidence of Tribal Nations.”

During his three years as the interim director, Weahkee traveled throughout Indian Country to meet with tribal leaders to discuss health care issues and to help develop strategies to advance ways for the federal government to honor its trust responsibility for the health of Native Americans.

“Rear Adm. Weahkee has displayed a great willingness to integrate Tribal feedback and priorities into IHS’s policy development,” the NIHB said in its statement.

Most recently, IHS has led tribal consultation teleconferences on the administration of more than \$1 billion in funding to combat coronavirus in Indian Country under the CARES Act.

“Weahkee has been instrumental in getting Coronavirus relief funding to Tribes as quickly as possible and is in regular communications with Tribal leaders,” Kitcheyan added in her statement.

More information is available at [ihs.gov](http://ihs.gov).

## IHS offers remote intern program

BY MADALYN GRASS

This year, the Indian Health Service welcomed a new group of student interns to work remotely on projects throughout the agency.

The Virtual Student Federal Service, formerly known as the Virtual Student Foreign Service, managed by the U.S. Department of State, is the largest virtual internship program in the world. IHS became the 31st federal agency to participate, joining agencies like the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Peace Corps, NASA, Central Intelligence Agency, and the U.S. Department of Education in connecting with students across the globe on developing innovative ideas and projects across the government. The VSFS internship is available to U.S. students from the college level or above degree or certificate program. Because of its flexibility, students can participate in the internship from anywhere in the world.



IHS

Imani Hicks (Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians) is a Duke University student and an intern in the IHS Virtual Student Federal Service.

Interns are unpaid, thus volunteering their time to assisting the IHS through online projects. Meanwhile, e-Interns are also establishing connections and gaining valuable experience. Imani Hicks, a member of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians and a Senior Public Policy student from Duke University, said she chose the VSFS program because it exposes her to the Office of Urban Indian Health Programs as well as health care policy for American Indian and Alaskan Native people. She is looking forward to the many projects within her position at the OUIHP, but more specifically in addressing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IHS is employing an “all hands on deck” approach, which includes opportunities for virtual interns to work on projects that have an immediate impact within tribal communities that continue to experience some of the highest rates of infection. Some of the projects include:

- Creating handouts on COVID-19 resources for Residential Treatment Centers;
- Creating social media strategies and campaigns for health promotion and improving health literacy.
- Creating educational materials for Cancer and Tobacco Prevention;
- Developing a tracking mechanism for Hepatitis C Surveillance; and
- Organizing materials for the 3rd Annual Autism Awareness Interagency Roundtable.

The IHS accepted 23 students, in both the undergraduate and the graduate levels. With a wide variety in their topics of study and their background in tribal and urban Indian communities, we are excited to see the support they will bring to our programs.

More information on the Virtual Student Federal Service, including how to apply, is available on the IHS student Opportunities web site. Applications for the 2020-2021 academic year will be accepted in July 2020.

*Madalyn Grass, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, is from Oklahoma. She is a Virtual Student Federal Service intern in the Office of Urban Indian Health Programs at Indian Health Service headquarters.*



### In challenging times, we are careful to protect our physical health.

### Don't forget to take care of your mental and emotional health, too.

Contact your local Indian health care provider for more information, visit [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov), or call 1-800-318-2596.

## UNITY provides update on conference status

STAFF REPORT

The United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY) remains in planning mode about the National UNITY Conference slated to be held July 3-7 in Washington, D.C. In a letter April 6, Mary Kim Titla, UNITY executive director, explained that the organization’s top priority is the health and safety of attendees. Titla said options are being considered to move forward with an in-person conference, but there’s also a possibility of moving it to a later date.

“As we continue to monitor daily updates and news regarding COVID-19, our goal is to have final decisions and direction confirmed by the first full week of May. This includes a possible postponement of the conference to August 2020,” Titla said.

Annually, the conference is well attended by Seminole youth. Last year’s conference was held in Orlando and featured several Seminole culture-related aspects, including booths, demonstrations and speakers.

Registration for the 2020 conference is open, with a cancellation policy in place through June 30. The organization said if anyone wants to cancel his or her conference registration and request a refund, a \$25 per person processing fee for each registrant will apply to cover associated costs as outlined and agreed upon during the registration process.

Another option is for people to apply their 2020 registration fees (full amount) to the 2021 UNITY Midyear Conference or the 2021 National UNITY Conference.

# SEMINOLE SCENES



Big Cypress First Baptist/Facebook

**PEACEFUL MORNING:** Jonah Cypress sings during the early morning service of Big Cypress Firrst Baptist Church on Easter morning along the banks of a canal on the reservation.



Hard Rock Stadium/Facebook

**BLUE SUPPORT:** Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens is lit up in blue April 9 as part of a nationwide effort to show support for health care workers. Stadiums and buildings throughout the country showcased blue.



Hard Rock/Facebook (2)

**SIGNS OF SUPPORT:** Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, above, and Seminole Classic Casino, right, were among the Tribe's gaming venues that put out montages that included team members showing signs of togetherness from a distance during the shutdown from the COVID-19 pandemic.



## *Seminole Scenes Rewind: Old photos from our files - Seminole Okalee Indian Village*



# NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

## Foxwoods president and CEO resigns

**MASHANTUCKET, Conn.** — Foxwoods Resort Casino CEO John James, 59, resigned April 14 after just eight months on the job and in the midst of a pandemic that has shuttered casinos in the Northeast.

In a statement to employees, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation said that James left effective immediately “to spend more time with his family and focus on his overall health and wellness in a time that it is critically important for all of us to do.”

James became the CEO in August, replacing Felix Rappaport, who died of an apparent heart attack in June 2018. Prior to coming to Foxwoods, James had spent more than 25 years in the gaming industry.

Jason Guyot, senior vice president of Resort Operations at Foxwoods, will act as interim CEO while a search for John’s successor takes place, the tribe said.

- *Masslive.com*

## Census in rural, Native American communities delayed until June

Native Americans living on some reservations and other remote areas must wait until June to participate in the U.S. Census due to COVID-19 restrictions. It’s a delay that some fear could lead to a drastic undercount.

Those living on reservations or hard-to-count areas, many of whom don’t have traditional addresses or internet and are dependent on post office boxes, must wait for census workers to hand-deliver their materials to their door. Those areas, which the census categorizes as “update leave” responses, include the Spokane Indian Reservation and significant swaths of sparsely populated north-central Washington.

A little more than 95% of people living in the United States can fill out the census anytime between March 12 and the new extended deadline of Oct. 31. They are categorized as “self-response” by the bureau. They’re asked to fill out the census online after they have received a prompt with a code in the mail.

Many Native Americans living on reservations and those living in rural areas were initially scheduled to receive census materials between March 15 and April 17. Census workers are now scheduled to visit those areas between June 13 and July 9 instead.

Native Americans are one of several historically undercounted groups in the U.S. Some, such as Rachelle Bradley, the Spokane Tribe’s liaison to the U.S. Census Bureau, fear the delay could lead to a larger undercount than in the past. Bradley said she and others have spent months promoting the census and fear that three additional months of promoting it and urging people to wait for a packet to be delivered to their door could lead to apathy when census workers do arrive.

“I’m worried the longer we wait, the more people are going to put it in the back of their mind and it will be forgotten about,” she said. “I really don’t want that to happen.”

Bradley said she understands the importance of safety but wishes the census would consider mailing to post office boxes, or find other ways besides in-person delivery to involve those living on the reservation in the census as soon as possible.

If Native Americans are undercounted, or if they are counted but their race is misstated as biracial or another race and not Native American, that could mean less federal funding for tribes in the future, she said.

Samantha Biasca, engagement coordinator for the Na’ah Illahee Fund, a nonprofit that received a grant to encourage Native American participation in the census, said she was concerned rural areas and Native Americans living on reservations had received no official materials from the census, while many of the communities around them had already completed theirs.

“These hard-to-count areas just got even harder to count,” she said.

The Na’ah Illahee Fund is one of several groups that worked to inform and encourage hard-to-count groups to participate in the census. It has also had to cancel or significantly revise many of their efforts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Biasca said the census likely would have run into issues with hard-to-count groups launching an online platform anyway, but said the COVID-19 pandemic likely made planning and carrying out the census much more difficult.

- *Spokesman.com (Spokane, Wash.)*

## Harvard researchers advocate economic aid for tribes

**CAMBRIDGE, Mass.** — Harvard researchers sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven T. Mnuchin [in April] advocating for support for Native American tribes facing economic hardship in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

The team of four researchers — affiliates of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development — argued the public health crisis directly threatens nearly three decades of steady economic development for the tribes.

They wrote that of the hundreds of self-governing tribes in the United States, they are unaware of any tribal gaming enterprises — primarily casinos — that have not shut down amid the pandemic.

Kennedy School emeritus professor Joseph P. Kalt — a letter co-signer who co-founded HPAIED in 1987 — said tribal governments are “tremendously dependent”

on revenues from these enterprises.

The results of the researchers’ preliminary economic analysis, which were included in the letter, indicate that tribal governments stand to lose \$12.5 billion in revenues, in addition to the social and cultural losses borne by economically diminished tribes.

Kalt repeatedly compared tribal governments to local and state governments that provide a slew of essential services for their citizens. The Navajo Nation — spanning over 17 million acres in the Southwest — is home to roughly 330,000 residents and is about the size of West Virginia by area.

Yet tribal governments like the Navajo Nation lack traditional state and local tax bases. Instead, they are funded almost entirely by tribe-run gaming and non-gaming enterprises, like tourism and manufacturing. With casinos closed and customers few and far between, tribal governments — which run more than half of healthcare facilities within their borders, according to Kalt — may not have resources to adequately respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Before the pandemic, tribal economies were experiencing long-run growth, despite pockets of enduring poverty. They began to gradually blossom decades ago after the federal government took steps to enable self-governance and self-determination.

But the pandemic may upend that progress. As tribal governments lose revenues, the letter co-signers argue, the tribes could collectively lose more than \$127 billion in annual spending on goods and services, 1.1 million jobs, and \$49.5 billion in wages and benefits for workers.

Kalt said their analyses also considered spillover effects on non-native populations, as tribal enterprises can economically boost neighboring towns. The researchers found that non-Native Americans will actually face the brunt of tribal decline — 70 percent of the total losses.

HPAIED Research Director and letter co-signer Miriam R. Jorgensen wrote in an emailed statement that “devastated” tribal governments need federal assistance.

“Stimulate monies from the federal government help their economies stay afloat,” she wrote.

Kalt and Jorgensen both stressed that tribal governments must retain autonomy over emergency relief funds, such as those provided by the CARES Act signed into federal law on March 27.

“We think it would be very inappropriate for the federal government to put a lot of strings on how tribal governments spend their CARES Act monies,” Kalt said. “Tribes have proven that, on average, they’re much better at making those calls about how to allocate resources.”

Though Mnuchin’s office has received their letter, Kalt said, the researchers have not received a response.

In addition to federal advocacy, HPAIED assembled an online resource toolbox for tribal leaders struggling to adapt to the pandemic.

Kalt said the team plans to conduct further economic modeling in the coming weeks and release a final report. Despite the plight, the researchers say they remain hopeful. Kalt said tribal officials were “extremely grateful” for their letter.

“American Indian nations are resilient. If they were not, they wouldn’t be here 500 years after the colonization project began in North America,” Jorgensen wrote. “They have survived pandemics before.”

- *The Harvard Crimson*

## Natural gas plant construction causes concerns for Native American landowners

A plan for Piedmont Natural Gas to construct a liquefied natural gas plant in Robeson County is causing conflict among Native American landowners.

For Piedmont to construct the plant, it must connect the 685-acre development site to existing natural gas infrastructure via pipelines. On-site construction has continued despite the COVID-19 outbreak, with workers engaging in social distancing and wearing adequate personal protective equipment.

Meanwhile, landowners living along the proposed pipeline await eminent domain court cases delayed by the pandemic that could grant Piedmont access to their properties.

Piedmont, a regional subsidiary of Duke Energy, proposed the facility in 2019 to store super-cooled natural gas — which takes up just a fraction of the space it does at higher temperatures — for use during winter months when energy demand is higher. The facility in Robeson County is expected to supplement demand for 100,000 homes and businesses across the state’s eastern counties.

Piedmont said the development of the natural gas facility will lead to an increase in the county’s tax revenue and provide temporary and permanent jobs during and after development. Many of the affected landowners, however, are affiliated with tribes such as the Lumbee Tribe or the Tuscarora Nation and have deep familial and cultural ties to the land.

Piedmont plans to lay a 4.5-mile pipeline to link the facility with their distribution network, said Tammie McGee, a spokesperson for Piedmont. To do so, they are seeking easement rights to cross the property of landowners along the pipeline route, either through contracts with landowners or through court proceedings.

“It is our preference to exercise our right of eminent domain when every other option has been exhausted,” McGee said. “So we do try to work with these landowners and take their considerations and concerns into account.”

Landowners Foncie and Belton Oxendine, members of the Lumbee Tribe and brothers who farm on their properties along the pipeline route, said their interactions with a contracted land agent have made them concerned Piedmont isn’t interested in working with the landowners

to find a mutually beneficial way to access the easements.

Piedmont has held open meetings since the facility was proposed to include the community in discussions about development. Belton, who attended one meeting, said the company representatives dismissed his questions and concerns about how the pipeline could affect his property.

Last month, Foncie received a letter of condemnation after choosing to not sign a contract with a price he considered too low. David Barton, a member of the Tuscarora Nation and a farmer, said the land agent promised Piedmont would work in good faith with the landowners. After Barton expressed wanting certain restrictions with the easements, he said the land agent dismissed his proposals.

“There’s no act of good faith about this whatsoever,” Barton said. “They want all the terms to be in their favor. There’s nothing in the favor of the landowner whatsoever.”

The main concerns of the Oxendine brothers and Barton include damage done to drainage ditches on their properties during development. When Duke Energy has gone through their properties to repair damaged power lines, they have inadvertently clogged drainage ditches, causing subsequent flooding of parts of their fields which they said has caused the loss of crops.

Landowners said the facility and pipelines have damaged the environment and the health of those who live nearby.

Donna Chavis, a local Lumbee activist who has frequently opposed fossil fuel development, raised concerns about a cancer cluster in Robeson County associated with fossil fuel infrastructure. Barton and the Oxendine brothers said they have family members with property along pipelines who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Because of the high expense of academic research on cancer clusters, there have been no formal studies into cancer clusters in Robeson County, which has one of the highest poverty rates in the state.

Some cancer clusters have been attributed to the presence of toxic chemicals in water and soil that leak from industrial facilities or pipelines, according to the National Cancer Institute. But methane, the main component of natural gas, is nontoxic and is transported through pipelines in a gaseous state that dissipates into the atmosphere when it leaks rather than linger in soil or water, McGee said.

However, methane is a potent greenhouse gas that alarmingly contributes to global warming, the effects of which are disproportionately harmful to Black and indigenous people of color. In Robeson County, people of color compose more than 70 percent of the population, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Alongside landowners, Chavis has attended some meetings held by Piedmont. She said she is reaching out to allies in the legal and nonprofit communities on behalf of the landowners and others opposed to both the pipelines and the liquefied natural gas plant as a whole.

Piedmont said they are committed to minimizing the impact of development on the environment. The facility, which itself is much smaller than the plot of land it sits upon, will be surrounded by a buffer of green space.

“We’re going to plant trees and make it nice-looking and restore the land as much as we can to what it looked like before,” McGee said.

McGee also said Piedmont will employ construction techniques that will allow for placing pipelines beneath sensitive waterways and wetlands with minimal environmental impact. Some waterways in Robeson County, particularly the Lumbee River, are culturally significant to the Lumbee.

The Lumbee people are a traditionally agrarian society with deep ties to their historic land, said Wendy Moore, a member of the Lumbee Tribal Council. They have historically lived in southeastern North Carolina, particularly in Robeson, Scotland, Cumberland and Hoke counties.

“These are people who feel a responsibility to care for this land, not just for themselves, but for their children into the future,” Chavis said.

Moore represents the Oxendine district where Piedmont is building the liquefied natural gas plant. She ran for council to remind the people of their power in governance, and since December, she has worked to create a council committee to handle issues related to agriculture and natural resources.

“There are Lumbee who actually have no problem with (the facility), and some of them are in governmental positions,” Moore said. “That being said, that does not negate the adverse impact on the families that I’ve been meeting with.”

- *Dailytarheel.com (Chapel Hill, N.C.)*

## Court Case tied to Tribe’s reservation land to be heard in May

**MASHPEE, Mass.** — The court case that has postponed a U.S. Department of the Interior order to disestablish the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe’s reservation will be heard by the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., on May 7 via video or teleconferencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tribe sued the Interior Department in 2018 over the department’s determination that the tribe does not meet one of the definitions of Indian under the law that establishes land in trust.

The tribe and the Interior Department will be allotted 75 minutes each for oral arguments during the hearing.

The case could determine the fate of the tribe’s 321 acres of reservation land in Mashpee and Taunton. The Interior Department ordered the land to be taken out of trust late last month.

“If implemented, the department’s decision to remove the trust restrictions from the Tribe’s land and disestablish its Reservation will have a tremendous negative impact on the Tribe’s sovereignty,

jurisdiction, economy, health, culture and spiritual life,” Tami Lyn Azorsky, a lawyer for the tribe, wrote in a court filing on Friday, April 10.

Among the many ramifications of taking the land out of trust: The order would disqualify the tribe from Indian gaming, with a \$1.5 billion casino planned on reservation land in Taunton; interfere with an affordable housing project under construction in Mashpee; and impact funding from the federal government.

After an emergency motion by the tribe, the court ordered a 45-day postponement of the Interior Department order pending oral arguments on the motion.

The court has since consolidated the emergency motion by the tribe with earlier motions for summary judgment, bringing the entire weight of the case to the hearing in May.

In the case, the tribe contends that the department’s determination that the tribe was not under federal jurisdiction in 1934, the year the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) was passed, was “arbitrary, capricious, and contrary to law.”

That year has underpinned the definition of “Indian” under the IRA since a US Supreme Court decision in 2009, known as the Carcieri decision, determined the word “now” in the phrase “now under federal jurisdiction” to mean “in 1934.”

The Interior Department could cede part of its time for oral arguments to the intervening Littlefield party, which is composed of residents from Taunton who sued the tribe in a separate case in 2016, shortly after that the tribe broke ground on the casino project. The project has since stalled.

When the First Circuit Court of Appeals found in favor of the Taunton residents in that case in February, the court determined that the second definition in the IRA incorporated the part in the first definition requiring a tribe to be under federal jurisdiction in 1934 to be qualified for land in trust under the IRA.

The Interior Department cited a court mandate from the Littlefields’ case against the tribe as the impetus for the order to disestablish the tribe’s reservation.

“On March 19th, the court of appeals issued its mandate, which requires Interior to rescind its earlier decision,” the department said. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, at the directive of the Interior Department, notified Tribal Council Chairman Cedric Cromwell on March 27.

- *Mashpee (Mass.) Enterprise*

## Montana judge blocks Keystone XL permit for river crossings

TC Energy Corp.’s Keystone XL oil-sands pipeline was a dealt a setback with a judge’s ruling that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers improperly approved a streamlined permit process without fully evaluating the impact on endangered species.

In a legal challenge brought by environmental groups, a federal judge in Montana on April 15 ordered the agency to conduct further review and barred it from authorizing dredging in waterways covered by the permit.

“We have received the judge’s ruling and continue to review it,” Calgary-based TC Energy said in a statement. “We remain committed to building this important energy infrastructure project.”

The stakes in the legal challenges to Keystone XL rose higher than ever last month, when Canada’s oil-rich province of Alberta announced \$5.3 billion in aid to help finance the conduit’s construction and TC Energy formally committed to building the line. Already, the project was seen as a key lifeline for Alberta’s oil-sands producers, which have suffered from a lack of pipeline capacity that has weighed on local crude prices and restrained their ability to boost output.

Even short delays to Keystone XL’s construction could set the project back by a full year because pipeline work is highly seasonal, requiring unfrozen ground and other conditions. Legal delays last year caused TC Energy to miss the 2019 construction window, pushing the already-delayed project back even further. TC Energy Chief Executive Officer Russ Girling said during a presentation last week that construction may progress more slowly because physical distancing measures in response to the coronavirus.

The Sierra Club and other groups that sued the Army Corps in July said in a statement that the ruling invalidates a nationwide permit used to fast-track Keystone XL as well as other pipeline and utility projects. They said it could block Keystone’s construction through hundreds of water crossings along its route.

Sonya Savage, Minister of Energy of Alberta, Canada, said the ruling was narrow and only directs the Army Corps to conduct additional review on two river crossings.

“Keystone XL is critical for the future of Alberta, Canada and the U.S.,” Savage said in a tweet. “We remain committed to this extremely important project.”

The Army Corps didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

- *Bloomberg*

## 3 North Dakota colleges may soon acknowledge campuses are on Indigenous land

**FARGO, N.D.** — Staff with North Dakota’s two flagship universities and a college in Wahpeton, N.D., are working on statements that will recognize the campuses sit on land that once belonged to Native Americans.

Experts say land acknowledgments are a way to respect tribes who occupied

the land before the U.S., recognize the atrocities committed in taking that land, give people an understanding how colonialism impacts Native Americans today and start a conversation about the future.

“That practice, even if it is only a ritual formality, it nevertheless, I believe, sets a tone that makes for a more civil society in a land where a settler society lives alongside Indigenous peoples,” said Tom Isern, a history professor at North Dakota State University.

Several NDSU employees have addressed Fargo’s Native American Commission, sharing two draft versions of a land acknowledgment agreement that says the Anishinaabe, Dakota, Lakota and Nakota peoples lived on and cared for land now occupied by the campus.

“We feel at NDSU that it’s really important to honor and acknowledge and remember the land we’re on and its people who were here before NDSU was established,” Seinquis Leinen, associate director of the university’s admission office, said during a Feb. 6 meeting of the commission.

Vanessa Tibbitts, an Oglala Lakota from South Dakota who serves as a public health education manager at NDSU’s American Indian Public Health Resource Center, said a land acknowledgment statement is a good opportunity to work on reconciliation.

Members of Fargo’s Native American Commission seemed supportive of a land acknowledgment statement for NDSU. Commission Chair Lenore King said it is important to recognize who came before NDSU.

“We’re standing together, and we’re being strong together,” she said.

It will help raise awareness of Indigenous history that is often suppressed, forgotten and disregarded, said Ryan Eagle, an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes in North Dakota who also works at the center.

“Our land is not just a space that we occupy,” said Eagle, a public health research project manager at the center. “It’s the depository of our culture, history and traditions.”

The University of North Dakota in Grand Forks and North Dakota State College of Science, with campuses in Wahpeton and Fargo, are pursuing similar efforts, spokespeople confirmed.

Several stakeholders and experts have contributed input to the land acknowledgment efforts, Leinen said.

NDSU leadership declined to comment on work to develop a land acknowledgment statement. “It sounds like the small group that went to the commission was seeking discussion and input for a possible statement that they might use,” NDSU spokeswoman Brynn Rawlings said in an email. “They did not intend to represent a universitywide decision at this time.”

When asked if NDSU would support a land acknowledgment statement, Rawlings said, “There has been no formal discussion on this topic, so it would be premature to speculate.”

- *Grand Forks (N.D.) Herald*

## No charges for officer who shot Native American man at fireworks display

The Poulso (Wash.) police officer who in July shot and killed a Native American man in a crowd gathered for a fireworks display will not face criminal charges, the Kitsap County prosecutor announced April 17.

Relying mainly on eyewitness accounts from the crowd and physical evidence gathered July 3 from the scene at the Poulso waterfront, Prosecutor Chad Enright wrote Officer Craig Keller was justified in shooting Stonechild Chiefstick, 39.

“They have no bias, they have no interest in this case,” Enright said of the 21 witnesses he cited in his report. “These were people whose only involvement was they happened to be there on July 3. What they saw and what they described was what really drove this.”

The initial investigation into the shooting at Muriel Iverson Williams Waterfront Park, as a crowd of families waited for sunset to watch the Third of July fireworks, was completed in October by a group of Kitsap County-based police officers called the Kitsap Critical Incident Response Team. Poulso police were not involved in the investigation and Keller, who was hired by the city in 2015, remained on administrative leave until Enright’s decision. Chief Dan Schoonmaker said on April 17 that Keller will return to work.

Chiefstick was not a member of the Suquamish Tribe but was part of the tribal community locally.

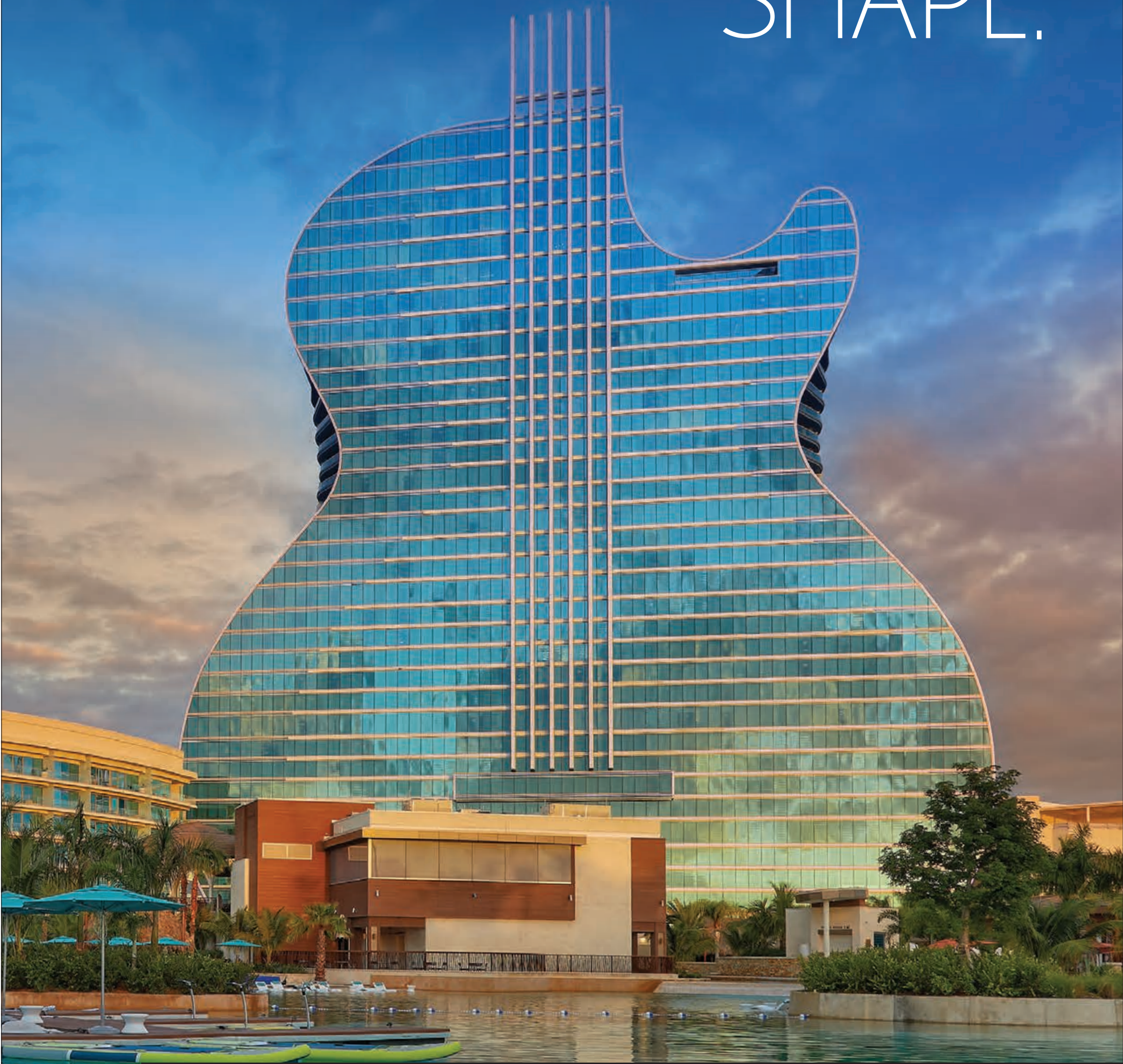
In a statement, the Suquamish Tribal Council said Enright’s decision not to charge Keller was “of concern to the Suquamish Tribe,” but directed its criticisms toward the police response that night.

“That local police were unable to manage an uncomfortable situation involving a person of color without violence has become all too common,” the council said. “We believe that this was a preventable homicide. This father of five, a valued member of our community, did not have to die.”

Police could have asked Chiefstick to leave the event earlier in the evening “when it was evident that he was experiencing either a mental health or substance abuse episode,” or, “Had police officers used de-escalation methods and more skillfully handled the interaction, the encounter could have ended peacefully,” the statement said.

- *Kitsapsun.com (Bremerton, Wash.)*

# HARMONY HAS TAKEN SHAPE.



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# Education



## First comes graduation, then the Navy for Brighton's Eecho Billie

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Just like any other high school senior, Eecho Billie wants to be able to turn his tassel and celebrate graduation with classmates – in person.

But with the COVID-19 pandemic wreaking havoc across the country during what should be the best time in a high school student's life – the spring of their senior year – questions remained as of press time whether graduation ceremonies would be altered or held at all. A virtual ceremony isn't the way Billie would want his high school career to end.

"It would be pretty disappointing because I've been looking forward to walking across the stage to get my diploma," said Billie, a senior at The Pine School in Hobe Sound, where he's attended since grade seven and played lacrosse and soccer.

Since the pandemic forced campuses to close in March, Billie has been completing his studies online at home on the Brighton Reservation.

While schools and districts wrestle with what direction to pursue for graduation, Billie already knows where he's headed after high school. The 18-year-old will follow in his father's footsteps and join the U.S. military.

Billie has enlisted in the U.S. Navy. His goal is to become a Navy SEAL – the Mount Everest of military challenges. Knowing it's an incredibly difficult challenge that only few achieve – the SEALs are often regarded to have the toughest military training in the world – is what appeals to him the most.

"Just being the best of the best," he said. "It takes a lot to make it through."

A 2017 article from the Independent online publication in Great Britain listed the eight most elite special forces in the world. The U.S. Navy SEALs were ranked No. 1, noting that "many foreign militaries base their special ops on the SEALs."



Courtesy photo

Pine School senior Eecho Billie, 18, receives his cap and gown and a graduation yard sign from Kelly Hilton-Green, an administrator from the school, in April at the Billie family's home in Brighton.

Billie, the son of former Chairman James E. Billie and Maria Billie, and brother of Miss Jr. Florida Seminole Aubee Billie, received the blessing of his dad to join the military. At first, Billie thought about joining the Army, where his dad served in the Vietnam War, but he switched his decision to the Navy.

"It didn't matter what branch it was; he

was always for it," Billie said.

Shooting is one skill Billie has excelled at which should help in the military. Whether hunting wild hogs for leisure or competing in international events, he's had success with guns. He won two gold medals in rifle shooting at the 2017 North American Indigenous Games in Toronto. He was eligible to compete in 2020 NAIG this

summer, but it has been cancelled.

Now Billie hopes his graduation ceremony doesn't meet a similar fate. He did receive his cap and gown and a graduation yard sign in April thanks to Pine School administrators who presented their seniors with those items in surprise home visits.

"We miss all of our students right now but it's especially tough for our seniors,"

Head of School Binney Caffrey posted on Facebook. "This is meant to be a time of togetherness and celebration - they've all worked so hard to reach this point! This was about showing them in a tangible way how very much they mean to us."

## University of Oklahoma receives \$4.8M gift for Native Peoples Initiative

BY NURIA MARTINEZ-KEEL  
The Oklahoman

**NORMAN, Okla.** — A \$4.8 million donation to the University of Oklahoma will launch a new institute dedicated to studying Native American nations.

The Horizon Foundation, a grant-making nonprofit from the Dallas area, made the donation to establish the Native Peoples Institute.

The university hailed the gift as one that will make OU "the premier center for Native American research and teaching," according to a news release March 30.

"This gift fortifies the universitywide Native Peoples Initiative, led by the OU Native Nations Center, and will enhance our collective understanding and appreciation of the compelling landscape of Native experiences, benefiting all people," OU Interim President Joseph Harroz said in the release.

The Horizon Foundation's donation includes three \$1.5 million endowed chairs to attract nationally recognized scholars in Native American studies.

Areas of study for these endowed chairs will include Native American spirituality and the environment, Native American history and culture, and Native American language preservation and revitalization.

Leading the initiative, OU's Native Nation Center will receive \$300,000 for a building study to "provide a home" for the center and the Native American Studies

Department.

The Native Nation Center, or NNC, received an endowment from the Chickasaw Nation two years ago to refurbish its event space in Copeland Hall and the Native American Studies Department.

The Horizon Foundation's gift will support classrooms and spaces for community events and interdisciplinary research.

NNC Director Amanda Cobb-Greetham said the Native Peoples Initiative will help advance issues of tribal sovereignty, increase understanding of indigenous cultures and enrich experiences of native students.

"This initiative highlights collaboration with Oklahoma's 39 Native Nations," Cobb-Greetham said in OU's news release. "We are committed to listening closely and responding to tribal needs and are establishing an advisory board, chaired by OU Tribal Liaison Officer Warren Queton, to ensure strong community engagement."

Horizon Foundation President Rod Sanders said OU is the "perfect location" for the initiative, as it operates in a state where 39 tribal nations are headquartered.

Sanders is the co-founder of Highland Homes, one of the largest private home building companies in the country.

"The Horizon Foundation is very pleased to make this gift, which we hope will deepen engagement with the Native Nations and communities in Oklahoma and across the country," Sanders said. "We believe it is important that there is a better understanding of Native American cultures, spirituality, values and views of the world."

### ♦ SCHOOLS From page 1A

Teachers are armed with an array of tools including Google Classroom, which has a live stream section where students can post messages to classmates and the teacher, a dashboard where students access their assignments and a place for them to upload their work.

"Remote learning is an adjustment, but students are calling, texting, and Zoom meeting with us teachers daily. Their dedication to their academics is inspiring given the circumstances we are all trying to survive in," said Amy Carr, a sixth-grade teacher.

Many middle school students have been using the program so they are familiar with it. Elementary students have been getting small group and individual support through Google Hangouts and Zoom, both of which are conferencing platforms where they can see each other and communicate face-to-face in real time.

The school also has a Google Classroom for Creek language, arts and crafts, physical education, media center and morning announcements where Downing gives her daily "Words of Wisdom."

Downing didn't let a worldwide pandemic stop the PECS school spirit. She figured out a way to have a virtual "spirit week" where students upload pictures showing their spirit on the PECS Friends group Facebook page.

Each day is a different subject. On Monday of the first week students posted photos of themselves in their pajamas; Tuesday they uploaded photos with their pets; Wednesday asked for photos in their favorite reading spot; Thursday's photo was of posters with encouraging words; and the week wrapped up Friday as students posted photos wearing a PECS shirt.

The spirit week was such a success, Downing turned it into a weekly event. For April 13-17, some of the topics for photos included the Easter holiday, reading and working out.

"It's a nice way to bond with everyone and stay connected," Downing said. "We can focus on the students socially and emotionally while they are home."

During a typical four-hour day of distance learning, students spend about three hours working on academics; 30 minutes in music, physical education, music or media; and 20 minutes in recess.

Downing said the students are involved and completing their work. Although the Florida Standards Assessment tests were cancelled for the year, assignments are still being graded and those grades will be used to determine promotion.

Parents play an active role in the process by supporting the educational process at home.

"They are truly our partners in education. The whole community has been involved in supporting us," Downing wrote.

The school is still teaching the standards, so the virtual lesson plans are the same as if PECS was still open.

"We must be rigorous so that when our students go back to school, they aren't behind.

We are a high performing school (A middle school and B elementary), so our students are able to complete rigorous assignments independently and with support," Downing wrote.

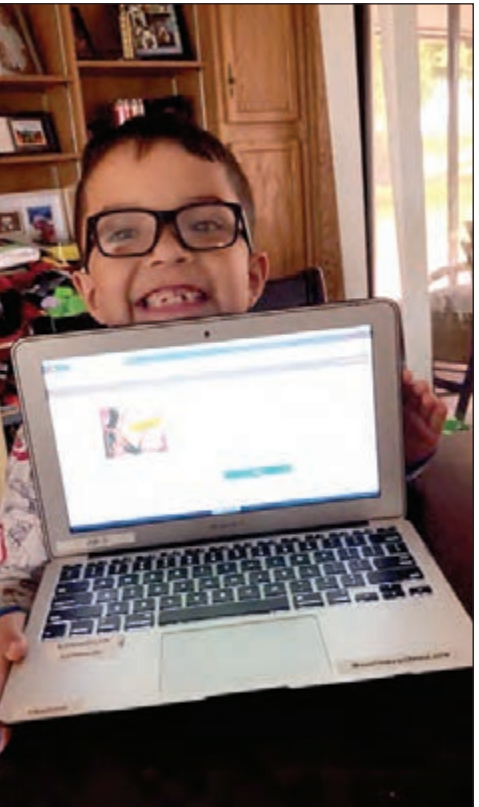
PECS parents have been very engaged in their children's education and Downing appreciates their efforts.

"All parents are communicating with us and instructing their children. Many of our parents have asked to join our Google classrooms, so that they can see what assignments are due and can help keep the students on track. We happily added them to the classroom so they can provide support," Downing wrote.

Tutoring is available in small groups and one-on-one daily through Zoom and Google Hangout. Students may enter a Zoom Conference at any time during the day and get one-on-one assistance.

The school uses Google Docs to ensure all students are online daily and completing their work. Downing said 99% of the students are completing their work. One family lives too far out for internet or cell phone service, so the school sends packets which the students complete.

"Our students, our parents, our colleagues, and our community are all working together to reassure and provide stability and normalcy to our students during these unprecedented times. The PECS family has been a group of professionals and has conducted themselves in an ethical way and they have been a model for all. They have reassured our students and parents and have reminded them that our stakeholders and the tribe are all committed to taking good care of everyone. I told our staff that when we are on the other side of this, we will all be commended for our proactivity and our well thought out decision making. Our teachers



PECS Facebook

First-grader Kaisen Bush is ready for PECS' on-line learning.

have stood tall, with their heads up, and they are doing this with pride and confidence. I genuinely, truly love my PECS family," Downing wrote.

### Ahfachkee

With its campus closed, Ahfachkee's hub of learning shifted to online education in early April through the school's website at seminolewarriors.net.

A lot of the usual aspects of a normal school day – attendance, lessons, grades, homework – are all still part of the students' academic lives. The school has tried to make the transition as smooth as possible.

"No one is not going to get promoted or graduate because of COVID-19, provided they do the schoolwork," Principal Dorothy Cain wrote in an email to the Tribune in early April. "We certainly don't want COVID-19 to stop students from completing the school year as long as they show up for their classes."

Teachers post weekly schedules and students must complete their lessons. Some portions of the classwork are live, such as Jennifer Brittingham's art lessons. Education-based programs – including USATest Prep, Edgenuity and Holt McDougal – are being used. Flexibility is also part of the implemented system.

"As long as kids complete the work for the day they are fine," Cain said. "If [a student] wants to sleep in and work later, or if parents have a lot of kids and not enough laptops and are sharing the technology, we can't expect them all to adhere to an exact schedule. We tried to create scenarios for families."

Learning programs from Discovery Education have been incorporated into some classes. For example, the schedule for one week in Rebecca Tiger's second-grade class included sessions on animals, holidays and neighborhoods. YouTube is also being used for instruction such as physical education, where students are directed to fitness exercises; those are in addition to other instructions to practice, such as dribbling and sprinting.

Ahfachkee has made sure students have access to their lessons. Any student without a laptop was provided one by the school. Google Chrome Books were distributed April 15.

"A big thank you to Douglas Zepeda and Bello Solano for distributing the laptops to our families and to the entire IT team for their support during this time," the school wrote in its daily update for Tribal programs.

For the few students who don't have internet access in their homes, arrangements were made to deliver packages containing their required school work.

The Ahfachkee community has learned to work together from a distance.

"We would like to thank our Ahfachkee students, parents, teachers, teacher assistants, and support staff who are doing an amazing job to support our Virtual Learning Program. This has truly been a team effort," the school wrote in its daily update for Tribal programs.

## NICWA offers training in June

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Child Welfare Association's June training institute, due to take place in Portland, has been moved to a virtual format. The training, "Enhancing Basic Skills for Tribal Child Welfare Workers," is geared toward tribal child welfare workers who want to improve on their basic skills. The training will strengthen an ability to work with children and families and improve caseload management. Topics include effective interviewing skills, case management plans and services, working with substance-abusing families, writing effective court reports, and case records and documentation.

Training will be offered twice over two separate weeks. The first week will be from June 1-5 with a daily 90-minute web-based training each morning. The second option will take place on June 17-18 in a more condensed two-day training format. Both trainings will be taught by Terry Cross, NICWA founder and senior advisor. Participants will learn from Terry as well as have small group discussions sharing best practices from their community. Note that to attend, you must have access to the internet, computer sound, a microphone (or phone), and a computer. Early bird registration ends May 15. For more information visit nicwa.org.

## College president earns American Indian College Fund honor

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

The American Indian College Fund announced March 26 that Sandra Boham, president of Salish Kootenai College, is its Tribal College and University Honoree of the Year. Boham was chosen for the award for her contributions to American Indian higher education. She will receive a \$1,200 honorarium from the American Indian College Fund.

Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) serve remote reservation communities where residents would find earning a higher education to be difficult, if not impossible, without them, while also growing a pool of professionals in careers that tribal communities desperately need.

Salish Kootenai College (SKC), located on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Pablo, Montana, will provide a four-year nursing curriculum beginning in the fall of 2020, thanks to Boham and nursing department director Dr. Lisa Harmon. SKC is the first TCU to offer a four-year Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. Culturally responsive nursing training helps nurses give health care with better outcomes in their tribal communities, where people experience higher rates of health disparities.

Boham's career in education started with her role as an adult basic education teacher on her home reservation, born of her desire to work in the realm of social justice, knowing that education creates opportunities. But it wasn't her first job that hooked her. Rather, it was her first experience with SKC as a student herself.

"I first became interested in higher education in high school because my parents didn't go to college. They didn't have the opportunity. My mom is from the reservation and dad is from Southeast Kentucky, where his path was going to be in the military or coal mining. He went into military. They both wanted me to go to college. In 1977 Salish Kootenai College started and was holding classes."

"Let's try this together and see what you think," my mom said. It started with taking night classes with her, and that got me excited about higher education," Boham said.

Boham graduated from St. Ignatius High School in 1978. In the winter of 1979, while she was attending the University of Montana as a freshman, SKC was looking for someone to teach adult education classes.



Courtesy photo

**Sandra Boham, president of Salish Kootenai College.**

"I loved it because it served a social justice issue at the time: I was helping to increase the very low graduation rates in my community. We had a lot of students interested in getting their GEDs. For every student that was told college wasn't for them and had barriers put in place, I felt by going into education I could help break down those barriers," Boham said.

After working for the Tribal Work Experience Program (TWEPE), Boham gained a wide array of experience learning about the tribal college from the ground up. She became the college's registrar and the director of admissions. She also served as the assistant director of Upward Bound and Gear Up and worked in financial aid before pursuing other education career opportunities both outside of and in the state of Montana with a variety of learning communities. She worked at the Northern California Indian Development Council in Eureka, California where she taught Indian Studies at Humboldt State and the College of the Redwoods. She rounded out her education experience back in Montana serving students from K-12 as the Director of Indian Education for the Great Falls School District in Montana, and at the Department of Corrections as the Education Director for women.

After returning home to SKC, in 2013-14 she was named Academic Vice President and later Acting President in 2015, until she assumed the role of president in February 2016.

## Museum offers 'Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists'

### STAFF REPORT

WASHINGTON, D.C. — As of publication time, the Smithsonian's American Art Museum and its Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., are temporarily closed due to COVID-19. Still, art lovers and anyone else can view the current featured exhibition "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" online in the current exhibits category at [americanart.si.edu/visit/renwick](http://americanart.si.edu/visit/renwick).

Photos, videos and audio are part of an extensive online exhibit that features 82 artworks dating from antiquity to the present, made in a variety of media from textiles and beadwork, to sculpture, time-based media

and photography.

The exhibition is organized by Jill Ahlberg Yohe, associate curator of Native American Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art and Teri Greeves, an independent curator and member of the Kiowa Nation. An advisory panel of Native women artists and Native and non-Native scholars provided insights from a range of nations. The presentation is organized in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian.



Minneapolis Institute of Art

**Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock), Adaptation II, 2012, shoes designed by Christian Louboutin, leather, glass beads, porcupine quills, sterling silver cones, brass sequins, chicken feathers, cloth, deer rawhide, and buckskin.**



Richard Church, Odawa-Pottawatomi

**Cherish Parrish (Ottawa/Pottawatomi), The Next Generation — Carriers of Culture, 2018, black ash and sweetgrass.**



Denver Art Museum

**Nimi'ipuu (Nez Perce) artist, Bag, ca. 1900, corn husk, yarn, rawhide, and wool.**



NMAI Photo Services

**Sisithunwan Dakhóta artist, Tablecloth, 1900–1910, wool, glass beads, brass beads, and cotton thread.**



Minneapolis Institute of Art

**Nellie Two Bear Gates (Gathering of Clouds Woman) (Ihankthunwanna Dakhóta, Standing Rock Reservation), Valise, 1880–1910, beads, hide, metal, oilcloth, and thread.**

## MIT program seeks solutions from Native innovators

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — MIT Solve, an initiative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, announced April 7 that it has launched the third year of its Indigenous Communities Fellowship, seeking Indigenous-led solutions that drive social, environmental, and economic impact in Native communities across the US.

The Fellowship, made possible in part by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, invites applicants with innovative solutions that leverage traditional knowledge and technology to support and scale positive impact. To that end, Solve welcomes Native-led solutions that:

- Increase access to jobs, financial capital, and skills development opportunities;
- Support language and cultural revitalization, quality K-12 education, and support for first-generation college students;
- Provide healthy and sovereign food, sustainable energy, and safe water; and
- Improve healthcare access and outcomes, including for mental health and substance use disorders.

The Solve Indigenous Communities Fellowship is now accepting solutions through July 7, 2020. Each selected Fellow will receive a \$10,000 grant, as well as access to a nine-month program of support for additional resources and partnerships.

"Indigenous communities are on the frontlines of tackling many social, economic, and environmental issues, bringing culturally relevant, inter-generational solutions," said Alex Amouyel, executive director, MIT Solve. "We are thrilled to offer this Fellowship for a third year — and to expand the application to innovators across the entire US, while continuing our commitment to Ojibwe, Hopi, Navajo, and Navajo Nation communities."

The Fellowship is open to applicants from all sectors. Submitted solutions must include the use of technology for practical and functional purposes. Strong preference will be given to tribal members and Native-led projects that directly benefit and are located within Native communities in the United States. Apply at <https://solve.mit.edu/> by July 7, 2020.

## Dear Sally, What's it like being an alligator during the coronavirus?

BY CARRIE DILLEY

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Visitor Services and Development Manager

BIG CYPRESS — While the domesticated animals in our lives (particularly our dogs, maybe less so our cats) have enjoyed seeing us all day during these recent times, have you wondered how our free roaming friends have been faring? Our Alligator Pen Pal program, launched on April 13th, brings Sally, our resident alligator, into the homes and hearts of people everywhere. Sally has brought smiles to the faces of Museum staff and visitors for years, and now people who may not be able to see Sally in person can interact with her through handwritten or email correspondence. People can chose to either write Sally a letter and send it to the Museum, or send an email to us at: [museum@semtribe.com](mailto:museum@semtribe.com). Everyone who writes to Sally receives a personalized letter or email in return.

We have been trying to come up with fun ways to reach our community during the closure and engage in new and interesting ways. The Alligator Pen Pal program is just one of a number of new activities that we have launched in the past few weeks. Our education coordinator created numerous games and puzzles, along with a guided painting activity, which have been distributed on our social media channels. These activities bring our exhibits and collection into people's homes. Although the Alligator Pen Pal program is intended to keep youth and adults alike occupied during the closure, we don't plan to stop the program once we resume normal business operations.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

**Sally the Alligator, seen here in the Cypress Dome, is accepting letters.**

So far the program has been very well received. In the first week, we have already received five letters in the mail and three emailed letters. All the letters we have received are from children, the youngest being just three years old! Of course, the author may have had a little help penning that letter. Most of the senders have asked her specific questions including: what she looks like, how she likes being an alligator, what kind of toys she likes, does she like

bacon, and does she like cars? The letters are signed with love and many include drawings. It has been great to see the support and appreciation of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki from our youngest constituency, especially during this challenging time.

We are currently promoting the program on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Reach out to Sally today—she's sure to write you back!

## NLC hosts youth poster contest

### STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe's Native Learning Center is holding a poster contest for all Tribal youth titled "What Home Means To Me." All forms of art are welcomed, but it needs to be poster-friendly. Posters must be original art work. Markers, paints, crayons, colored pencils, beads and fabric can be used. Create a poster that shows what home means to you. Submit a photo of your poster to [wilmanoah@semtribe.com](mailto:wilmanoah@semtribe.com) or [krystalcedeno@semtribe.com](mailto:krystalcedeno@semtribe.com). Entries will be accepted from April 1-June 30. The age categories are 5-10, 11-13 and 14-18. Prizes will be awarded.

## IAIA student wins award for 'Yaku, the Water Spirit'

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

Tribal College Journal announced April 1 that Suni S. Vizcarra Wood, of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), is the recipient of the 2020 TCJ Student Best Film Award for his original work, "Yaku, the Water Spirit." As part of the award, Vizcarra Wood will present his film at the Pocahontas Reframed "Storytellers" Film Festival in Richmond, Virginia.

Vizcarra Wood is from Taos, New Mexico, but spent much of his life growing up in the Sacred Valley of the Incas in Cusco, Peru, where he was immersed in the Indigenous Peruvian culture of his father. He studied sculpture at Bellas Artes Diego Quispe Tito in Cusco and is currently pursuing a BFA in sculpture at IAIA. He is a member of the Kusi Kawsay Educational Community, and a musician of the Kusi Nan traditional Cusqueña music group.

"In my artistic works I try to transmit and communicate messages to awaken the conscience of our people about the importance of our ancestral cultural identity," he said.

The short documentary, "Navajo Winters" by Lonnie R. Begaye, also of IAIA, earned an honorable mention. This is the second year that TCJ Student is partnering with the Pocahontas Reframed "Storytellers," a national film festival that features a wide array of Native filmmakers and films.

"We're thrilled for Suni, and look forward to featuring his outstanding film, "Yaku, The Water Spirit," at tcjstudent.org. Suni's work illustrates the great artistic energy so prevalent at TCUs, while also underscoring the creative connections between Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas," said Bradley Shreve, editor of Tribal College Journal.

# Alligator pen pal

**Sally, our resident gator, is missing visitors. Write her a letter and she'll write back!**

## Send letters to:

**Sally**  
**Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum**  
**30290 Josie Billie Hwy, PMB 1003**  
**Clewiston, FL 33440**

OR  
**[museum@semtribe.com](mailto:museum@semtribe.com)**

SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA  
**AH-TAH-THI-KI**  
A PLACE TO LEARN • A PLACE TO BELONG

# Tribal leaders struggle against ‘very slow’ allocation of COVID-19 aid

BY JOSHUA GERARD GARGIULO  
Cronkite News

PHOENIX — The Navajo Nation has the country’s third-highest rate of COVID-19 infections, but it has had to watch as funds go to less hard-hit areas in a “very slow” federal aid process, Navajo President Jonathan Nez said [April 17].

Nez was one of several tribal leaders from around the country participating in a virtual House Natural Resources Committee session on the federal response to coronavirus in Indian Country – and their consensus was that the response has not been good.

“Tribal nations are the first citizens of this country, but sometimes we feel that we are pushed aside and that we are bidding against each other,” Nez said on the videoconference that included state and tribal leaders from Minnesota, New Mexico, the Great Plains and Alaska.

“All these tribal leaders on the panel, we are all bidding against each other for these finite resources of gloves, of masks, of gowns, face shields,” Nez said. “We are even bidding against governors ... and it seems like the person with the most money gets the resources.”

Officials on the videoconference said they appreciate the \$8 billion in aid set aside for tribes in the \$2 trillion federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security, or CARES, Act, but that it is taking too long for the funds to reach Indian Country.

Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Tucson, and chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, convened the session to “profile and bring to attention, what is going on and what is not going on in Indian Country.”

“This virus doesn’t see Democrat or Republican ... and it shouldn’t rely on political patronage to provide resources to the neediest and the hot spots,” Grijalva said.

The Indian Health Service did not respond directly to complaints raised in the online session, but said in a statement Friday that it is working hard with partner agencies to deal with a “rapidly evolving situation.”

“The potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is very high,” the statement said. “We must be vigilant in our efforts to slow the spread of infections among our



The Navajo Nation flag.

Navajo Nation/Facebook

patients and within the communities we serve.”

The committee session came as Nez said the Navajo Nation saw the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases rise to 1,042 on [April 17], 122 more than [April 15’s] total. The number of deaths from the virus rose to 41, he said.

Even though that is the third-highest number of cases per capita, outside of New York and New Jersey, Nez said federal funds are not being sent to the hardest-hit areas, like his. Allocation is being made instead by population, he said.

Beyond the immediate health concerns, speakers said the COVID-19 pandemic is as much of an economic catastrophe in Indian Country as it is in the rest of the U.S.

“Many tribal communities have found their entire revenue snapped off overnight. These tribal leaders are making impossible decisions,” said Minnesota Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, a citizen of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe.

With many tribal areas already struggling with poverty and high unemployment, Flanagan said, it’s even more important for Indian Country to pull together in the face of the pandemic.

“When it comes to COVID-19, we are all in this together,” she said. “During good times, we are often erased and forgotten, so during a time of crisis I find myself kicking and screaming and doing everything I need to do to make sure our people are seen.”

Speakers in the event raised a long-standing complaint about the federal government’s lack of respect for tribal sovereignty. Nez said tribes are being forced to apply for grants, which slows the process.

“Tribal leaders have been advocating for direct funding to tribal governments for a very, very long time,” Nez said. “And this is an emergency, and so you would think

the money would go directly into tribal communities ... but chairman, it has been very slow.”

Michael Chavarria, governor of the Pueblo Santa Clara Tribe in New Mexico, said tribes cannot get the help they need if they are not part of the conversation, but that no one in the federal government is consulting them. He said he was glad to hear that the Interior Department might pause its development of scores of policies.

“We urge the department to take the next step, which is to suspend any of these policy decisions and focus on addressing the response of this COVID-19 effort,” Chavarria said.

“Our relationship with the federal government is not race-based. It is based upon the political status of us as sovereign political governments,” he said.

Nez said the Navajo recently received rapid test kits from the government, but it can take many tests to calibrate the machines correctly and his tribe is only getting a finite number of tests.

But Nez said he is hopeful that Congress will “get things right” with tribal funding in an expected fourth stimulus package, and leaders at Friday’s event optimistic in general about the near future.

“A couple weeks ago, we were told that coronavirus ... would wipe us all out. But I want to tell all our listeners today that Native American people are resilient. We are overcomers, and we will get through this together,” Nez said.

“Times are tough right now but Navajo people, and Indian country, have been through a lot and we will also get through this,” he said. “We are a strong and resilient people and we will get through this together.”



iStock

Land O'Lakes products will no longer use the image of a Native American woman on its packaging.

## Land O'Lakes removes image of Native American woman from packaging

STAFF REPORT

An iconic yet controversial image has been removed from the packaging of a well-known food product after 92 years.

The Arden Hills, Minnesota-based Land O'Lakes butter company no longer features the image of a Native American “maiden” on its packaging.

Land O'Lakes President and CEO Beth Ford said in a statement that the company has redesigned its packaging to acknowledge its farmer-owners “whose milk is used to produce Land O'Lakes products as it prepares to turn 100 years old.”

The new packaging has the same familiar yellow background with trees and a lake, but “Farmer-Owned” is now featured above the brand name, absent the Native American woman in the center.

“As a farmer-owned co-op, we strongly feel the need to better connect the men and women who grow our food with those who consume it,” Ford said in April. “Our farmer-to-fork structure gives us a unique ability to bridge this divide.”

Over the years, Native American tribal members and groups have said the imagery was insensitive and a form of cultural appropriation.

The imagery was described by Indigenous author Lisa Monchalin in her book “The Colonial Problem: An Indigenous Perspective on Crime and Injustice in Canada” as an example of the “romanticized and sexualized” construction of Indigenous women.

Native American imagery is also the subject of an ongoing exhibition that opened in 2018 at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

The “Americans” exhibit looks at how Native Americans have been, and are still, presented in popular culture through different examples of imagery.

Examples include food products like the Land O'Lakes maiden and the Calumet baking powder can, motorcycles (Indian Motorcycle) and even U.S. military weapons systems (the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile, Apache helicopter and Black Hawk helicopter).

## First Native American woman named to lead Southwestern arts organization

STAFF REPORT

The Southwestern Association for Indian Arts in April named Kim Peone, an enrolled member of the Colville Confederated Tribes of Washington, as its first female Native American executive director.

“The Board is excited by the impressive background Peone brings to SWAIA to lead Indian Market through our Centennial year (2022) and into the next century. Peone’s 30 years of experience in Indian Country, astute business and financial background, as well as great managerial and leadership skills are a perfect fit for SWAIA’s needs going forward,” Board Chair Tom Teegarden said in a press release.



SWAIA

Kim Peone

disciplined Native organizations that exceed expectations of key stakeholders.

# Hard Rock Atlantic City sees biggest winner yet on its ‘live’ slots

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Hard Rock International recently moved into the “live” slot machine space at its Atlantic City property.

The 12 slot machines are located at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City in New Jersey. They look exactly like the same ones found on the gaming floor – because they are actually real. The difference is you play them online from your home.

The concept has become especially popular in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that has seen the temporary closure of casinos across the U.S. – including those run by Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming. (The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the parent company of Hard Rock International).

In addition, casino customers are, naturally, spending more time at home. For those who want to still play slots, Hard Rock offers the option.

The Atlantic City online slots recently had the biggest jackpot winner to date. Player “Gary M.” won \$230,553 on a \$5 bet, according to Nikki Balles, director of public relations and community affairs for the Hard Rock Atlantic City.

Balles said the winner – who was



Hard Rock

The play-from-home slot machines are exclusive to Hard Rock.

recently furloughed by his company – was playing the “Divine Fortune” slot machine when he won the jackpot amount.

Just two weeks before that jackpot, Balles said, the largest winner was “Michael M.” who won almost as much (\$226,170) on the “Lock It Link” slot machine.

The unique Atlantic City slot machines are located in a locked room without public access. In order to play, you use an online device and receive a virtual invite from HardRockCasino.com.

While it’s a virtual experience, the player is controlling the real slots.

Hard Rock officials say there is room to expand the online slots in the future.

You don’t have to be a New Jersey resident to play, but at this time you do have to be located within the state’s borders.

Joe Lupo, the president of Hard Rock Atlantic City, said the experience is similar to live table games. In New Jersey, Hard Rock fans can already play those.

He said online gaming has been available in New Jersey for about six years, and that the live slots were a natural evolution for Hard Rock presence.

Just like the in-person experience, Lupo said, whenever you win, you get a payout – the live slot is linked to a bank account that allows both deposits and withdrawals. Players also can earn rewards.

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# FHSAA cancels spring sports

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

No state champions will be crowned this spring for Florida high school sports thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Florida High School Athletic Association, which oversees high school athletics, announced the cancellation of all FHSAA-affiliated spring sports April 20, two days after Gov. Ron DeSantis decided schools will continue distance learning for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year.

“...it is with heavy hearts that the FHSAA has decided to cancel all FHSAA affiliated events, inclusive of the state series and all championship events, for spring sports. The safety of our student-athletes, coaches, officials, and fans is our top priority. With the evolving threat of the CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19), we must ensure that we do not contribute to the spread of this illness. We are deeply saddened for our student-athletes who have seen their seasons and/or high school careers end so abruptly. Our Association knows the impact and role high school athletics play in the lives of so many and will continue to work towards the betterment of high school sports. We know this is a trying time, but the health and safety of all is of utmost importance to this Association,” the FHSAA stated in a statement. .

The FHSAA also announced that it will not grant additional eligibility to the student-athletes impacted by the abrupt end of their seasons. The announcement means Okeechobee High School seniors, including the Tribe’s Jacee Jumper (softball), Ozzy Osceola (baseball) and Kaleb Thomas (baseball), have played their final games for the Brahms. The softball and baseball teams were less than halfway through their regular seasons when play was halted in March.



Kevin Johnson

**Ozzy Osceola squares up for a bunt in a playoff game against Jensen Beach on May 7, 2019. The remainder of the 2020 high school spring sports season, which was halted in mid-March due to COVID-19, has been cancelled by the FHSAA.**

# Ready to rebound again, Skyla Osceola focuses on staying positive and healthy

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

**HOLLYWOOD** — When Skyla Osceola is healthy and playing a lot of minutes, she can be a force on the floor.

Proof of that came in her freshman season on the Nova Southeastern University women’s basketball team two years ago when the standout guard from the Hollywood Reservation played in every game, led the Sharks in assists and finished second in the nation in the best assist-turnover ratio in NCAA Division II.

Turn the clock back even further and more evidence can be found in her high school days at American Heritage in Plantation where she was the Patriots general who could dictate the pace of a game.

Unfortunately, her health hasn’t always cooperated.

Similar to some of her other injury-plagued seasons in her career, the 2019-20 season at NSU, which wrapped up in March, won’t be found on Osceola’s list of favorites. It started out with plenty of promise. She got the front row, center seat in the team photo, and she poured in 17 points in a preseason exhibition game against Division I Florida Atlantic University. But the good, early momentum — which she had worked so hard to attain after sitting out the previous season due to injury — didn’t last long.

A variety of injuries interrupted her season and hindered her effectiveness when she did play. Knee, rib and head injuries were the culprits.

“Not my greatest moments,” Osceola said in an email to the Tribune.

She appeared in only 15 of the team’s 28 games, and started just six. She averaged 16 minutes and 2.7 points per game.

“Injuries played a huge factor. They were injuries out of my control, but I had to do the best I could with them. It was tough and I’m not happy about this season, but I know what I got to do to be better for my team and myself,” she said.

The Sharks struggled with injuries and consistency, posting a 14-14 record that included an early exit in the Sunshine State Conference tournament.

“Overall, our season was disappointing due to the number of injuries our players sustained throughout the season,” NSU coach LeAnn Freeland-Curry said in an email to the Tribune. “In her limited action, Skyla did impact the game very positively. For two seasons, she has been consistently very positive with her plus/minus statistic. When she is in the game, we usually either improve a lead or take the lead back.”

Having sat out a couple of seasons due to injuries in her career, Osceola is all too familiar with how missing significant amounts of playing time makes it that much more difficult to bounce back, but she is determined to be healthy come opening tip of next season as a redshirt junior.

“Conditioning is going to play a huge factor in how great I want to be,” she said. “Since the injuries it’s hard to stay in shape and that’s what I lack the most right now. I just need to get in the best shape I can right now and that’s what I’m doing.”

The team is eager to have a healthy Osceola, too.

“We are optimistic that Skyla will be healthy next season,” Freeland-Curry said. “She has dedicated herself to getting in the best shape of her life this summer, so we are hopeful this could reduce injury moving forward. I know Skyla wants to be on the



Jeff Romance

**Nova Southeastern University guard Skyla Osceola calls a play during a game from the 2019-20 season. Osceola’s season was hampered by injuries, but she’s determined to return in good health for next season.**

floor.”

Certainly, injuries have been obstacles throughout her career, but the daughter of Marl and Francine Osceola has always maintained a positive attitude thanks to a solid foundation of faith and family.

“The key for me to staying positive is keeping my faith strong,” she said. “I know there’s a reason why I went through a rough patch and it allowed me to get my priorities straight. Keeping my family and friends close to me and keep building my relationships helps me keep going. My

determination comes from wanting to be the best that I can be for my team, coaches, family, and myself, but most of all for God. I feel like I am back on his path instead of my own and I’m all in.”

“Injuries are always very difficult, however, I do feel Skyla tackles the injury with the right mindset,” Freeland-Curry said. “She is very mature and does everything she needs to do to return to play as quickly as possible. I believe her family is very encouraging and supportive through her injury which helps her tremendously.”

Osceola, who is majoring in exercise and sports science and on track to graduate next spring, doesn’t take for granted the support she has received on her rollercoaster journey.

“I just want to say thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout my collegiate career so far,” she said. “It’s been a bumpy ride, but nobody said it was easy trying to be great, right? It’s such a blessing knowing I have support no matter what. My support system is truly like no other. Thank you God for making this all possible.”



Jeff Romance

**Skyla Osceola launches a 3-point shot during a game in the 2019-20 season.**

# Schimmel sister signs with University of Cincinnati

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Another Schimmel sister will be playing NCAA Division I basketball.

Milan Schimmel, a younger sister of former University of Louisville stars Shoni and Jude Schimmel, signed with the University of Cincinnati, the team announced April 21.

“It’s been quite a ride so far, but I’m beyond blessed and happy to say I’ll be continuing my career at the University of Cincinnati,” Schimmel posted on Instagram.

The Schimmel family is from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon. In 2013, Shoni and Jude drew a huge following in Indian Country when they helped propel Louisville’s memorable run all the way to the NCAA championship game. Now it’s their younger sister’s turn to play D1 ball.

“Congrats lil sis; you earned it, you deserve it. Keep growing & glowing, you’re nothing short of amazing,” Jude Schimmel tweeted.

In her second year of college basketball, Milan Schimmel played the 2019-20 season for Eastern Florida State College in Melbourne, where she earned All-Suncoast Conference honors.

“I call her ‘Miss does it all on the floor and some’!!,” Eastern Florida assistant coach Rob McDonald tweeted.

Indeed, the 5-foot-8 guard put up strong



**After playing one season at Eastern Florida State College in Melbourne, Milan Schimmel, younger sister of Shoni and Jude Schimmel, is headed to the University of Cincinnati.**



Milan Schimmel Instagram (left)/EFSC YouTube (right)

numbers across the board as she averaged 14.5 points, 7.2 rebounds, 4.1 assists and 2.5 steals in 30 games.

“Milan is a versatile guard that has the ability to play multiple positions in our system. She is able to score in a variety of ways and brings great experience to our

teams as we continue to build a championship culture,” said Cincinnati coach Michelle Clark-Heard.

Cincinnati went 22-10 last season and reached the championship game of the American Athletic Conference where the Bearcats fell to the University of Connecticut.

The NCAA Tournament, which would have included the Bearcats, was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schimmel started her college career at Hutchinson Community College in Kansas. She has two years of eligibility left.

Although she spent just one season in

Florida, she made quite an impression.

“Congratulations to (Cincinnati) for gaining a phenomenal PG & person in Milan! She is an incredible unstoppable force! Her light will shine bright at Cincinnati & we can’t wait to witness her journey!,” Eastern Florida head coach M.J. Baker tweeted.

# Angel Goodrich goes from lighting up scoreboards to putting out fires

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

After several years as a basketball standout, Angel Goodrich (Cherokee) has found a new team and a new career.

Goodrich recently became a member of the Tulsa Fire Department in Oklahoma.

“It was crazy and tough to imagine what I’d do once basketball was officially over. All I knew was I wanted to help others and God made that possible this past year with his plans. I am so blessed to be part of something bigger and I can’t wait to start my career serving the Tulsa community,” Goodrich said in a post April 3 on the Native American Basketball Invitational (NABI) Foundation Facebook page.

Goodrich, a 5-foot-4 guard, was a standout at Sequoyah High School, where she led the team to three Oklahoma state championships. She also played in NABI, an annual basketball invitational in the Phoenix area that attracts some of the best Native American high school-age players, including those from the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Last year she was a guest speaker at the NABI Educational Youth Summit.

“Congrats Angel Goodrich (NABI Alumn/WNBA) on another great accomplishment!,” NABI posted on its Facebook page.

In 2013, Goodrich and fellow Native American sisters Shoni and Jude Schimmel received the Phil Homeratha Leadership Award at NABI. The award is named for the late Haskell Indian Nations University women’s basketball coach.



Neil Enns/Storm Photos

Angel Goodrich during her days as a member of the WNBA’s Seattle Storm in 2015.

Goodrich, 30, starred at the University of Kansas, where she holds the school record for career assists and was named Big 12 First Team. As a pro, she played a total of 83 games in the WNBA for the Tulsa Shock, which drafted her in 2013, and the Seattle Storm. She also played for pro teams overseas.



Kofi Wallace/Facebook

Angel Goodrich, center, with fellow members of the Tulsa Fire Department.



Kofi Wallace/Facebook

Former WNBA player Angel Goodrich, who also played in NABI, receives training as a member of the Tulsa Fire Department.

## Honorable mention honor for Silas Madrigal

STAFF REPORT

**OKEECHOBEE** — Some of the key players in Okeechobee High School boys basketball’s memorable 26-3 season this winter have been honored by the Treasure Lake Conference.

The Tribe’s Silas Madrigal was one of three Brahmans who earned recognition by the conference. Madrigal, who led the team in scoring, was named All Conference Honorable Mention.

The senior guard averaged 10.8 points per game. He also led the squad in field goal percentage (59%) and 3-pointers (45).

Okeechobee brothers Malcolm and Markeze Kelly were named First Team.

Okeechobee had two 13-game winning streaks, which included a victory against Suncoast in the Class 5A-District 13 championship. The Brahmans reached the 5A regional finals where they were eliminated by Pembroke Pines Charter.



Kevin Johnson

Silas Madrigal, center, and the Okeechobee High boys basketball team had plenty of reasons to smile in the 2019-20 season as the Brahmans went 26-3 and won a district title for the second straight year.



Kevin Johnson

Gabby Lemieux hits a tee shot in February at the Seminole Tribe’s Chairman of the Greens Charity Golf Tournament in Plantation.

# NABI cancelled for 2020

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Native American Basketball Invitational, an annual highpoint for some of the best young players from the Seminole Tribe and the rest of Indian Country, has been cancelled for 2020. NABI announced its decision April 13.

“It is with a heavy heart that we are sad to officially announce that due to the current COVID 19 pandemic, the NABI Foundation has moved forward with the full cancellation of the 18th annual Native American Basketball Invitational and 2nd annual Educational Youth Summit (NABI), scheduled for June 21-27, 2020 in Phoenix, Arizona,” the NABI Foundation posted on its Facebook page. “The decision was based solely on the health and welfare of all the youth and communities we serve. With the state of Arizona and many parts of the country still considered

unsafe, and social gatherings are restricted due to the current virus, the NABI Foundation strongly feels a full cancelation is warranted.”

Each year NABI attracts more than 120 teams with boys and girls ages 14-19 from throughout Indian Country for the weeklong tournament at sites in and around Phoenix. It was just two years ago that a Seminole Tribe team – the Savage Storm – won the Division I boys championship. This year’s championship games were scheduled to be held at the Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix.

Registered teams will have the option of a full refund or be automatically entered into the 2021 NABI.

The cancellation’s impact will be felt beyond the courts. NABI is more than just basketball games; academic components, guest speakers and other opportunities are a big part of the experience. The schedule included a college fair, a basketball camp,

the educational youth summit, trips to see the Arizona Diamondbacks host the Los Angeles Dodgers and a “Night with the Phoenix Mercury of the WNBA.”

Once restrictions are lifted, NABI hopes to move forward with its junior camps as well as its golf tournament, which has been rescheduled to Oct. 5, and its first alumni classic for ages 21 and over set for December. All proceeds from the events benefit the foundation and its youth programs.

The NABI cancellation comes on the heels of the cancellation of the North American Indigenous Games in Nova Scotia, Canada, which traditionally draws about 5,000 Indigenous athletes. The NAYO basketball tournament that was scheduled to be hosted by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians during Easter weekend, has been postponed indefinitely.

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# Duelle Gore in action in Mexican professional basketball league

With nearly all professional sports shut down across the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic, here are some photos from February of the Seminole Tribe's Duelle Gore playing for Petroleros De Camargo in the Chihuahua State Basketball League in Mexico. Gore was a standout at Haskell Indian Nations University before he turned pro a few years ago. The photos are from Petroleros De Camargo team's Facebook.



## Notah Begay III emotionally describes the coronavirus plight of the Navajo Nation

BY NICK PIASTOWSKI  
The Golf Channel

The call started out about golf. It turned into something bigger. On a Golf Channel conference call on April 9 to discuss weekend programming, Notah Begay III described how members of his Navajo Nation community were being “decimated” by the coronavirus. The Navajo Nation, which stretches 27,000 square miles across Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, had seen 22 deaths and 558 positive cases as of Thursday among its population of more than 150,000, according to the Navajo Department of Health. In comparison, the entire state of New Mexico, which has a population 13 times larger, has had 17 deaths and 989 positive cases as of April 10, according to the New York Times.

“It’s kind of with a heavy heart that I deal

with that and try and push through, and you know, it’s been difficult but — I don’t know why I’m getting emotional,” said Begay, an analyst for Golf Channel who is half Navajo and 100 percent Native American. “I haven’t gotten emotional through this whole thing till now. I guess it’s just there’s a historical context here that’s just tough for me to deal with. ... What we have been working on is just getting supplies and food, as much resource.”

At that point, Begay began to tear up. “Sorry, guys, I apologize,” he continued. “I really do.”

The New York Times reported that several factors have led to the quick spread of the virus. Among them are a high prevalence of diseases like diabetes, a lack of running water and several generations of families living in one house.

“It’s a scary thing for me,” Begay said. “It’s scary. It’s been a scary process. I’m

going to lose some family members, I’m quite certain of it, and I just don’t know who it’s going to be.”

With the PGA Tour on hiatus until at least the middle of May, Begay said “it’s boots on the ground for me” in doing work with his foundation, the NB3 Foundation. Through it, he said he has been directing food, water and resources to families in the rural areas of the Navajo Nation. Begay hoped to get more support.

“There are people out there that have zero internet access,” Begay said. “They don’t have mobile phone reception, that a lot of times aren’t — don’t know what’s going on, and so it’s just a matter of using the network and trying to connect, and you know, hopeful that we’ll be able to get through all this and hopeful that we’ll be able to get back into a regular golf schedule at some point.”



Kevin Johnson

Four-time PGA Tour winner Notah Begay III.

The Brighton Reservation/ Seminole Tribe of Florida Environmental Resources Management Department hereby gives notice of the intent to revise the floodplain hazard information located in Glades County, Florida. Specifically, the flood hazard information shall be revised within the entire Brighton Reservation, along the C39A-C40 Canal and C41 Canal. The downstream limits of the C41 is approximately 7,000' south of the S71 Spillway. The upstream limits of the C39A-C40 Canal is approximately 7,250' NW of the intersection of Billy Bowlegs Rd NE and Buster Twin Rd NE, near the northern border of the Brighton Reservation.

As a result of the revision, the 1% annual chance water surface elevations will be established and the 1% annual chance floodplain will be established, increase and decrease.

Maps and detailed analysis of the revision can be reviewed at the Environmental Resource Management Department, Seminole Tribe of Florida, 31004 Josie Billie Highway Clewiston, FL 33440. Interested persons may call Mr. Kevin Cuniff, Director at 863-902-3200 ext 13411 for additional information from Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm.



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