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Swamp Water Cafe reopens with new look

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — After shutting down due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Swamp Water Cafe reopened April 22. The cafe's hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Located at Billie Swamp Safari on the Big Cypress Reservation, the restaurant returned with a limited menu that includes favorites such as the swampburger and chicken wings as well as swamp sauce, the wings' most popular sauce developed by operations manager Haftu Kahsay. It is a sweet chili sauce with a few secret ingredients.

The safari – a tourist attraction – has remained closed since the start of the pandemic, so most of the cafe's customers come from the tribal community, including residents and employees.

One key change made to the cafe was a redesign of the kitchen, making it more efficient so food comes out quicker and gets into the hands of customers faster.

"These changes will speed things up," Kahsay said.

Now cooks take fewer steps to get what they need for a dish, which has sped up the process.

✦ See CAFE on page 6A

Hard Rock pledges support for child-protection code

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The protection of children and the prevention of human trafficking in the tourism and hospitality industry was the focus of an intimate and somber signing ceremony May 25 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Stephanie Piimauna, senior vice president and chief diversity and inclusion officer for Seminole Hard Rock, led an hour-long program featuring the Seminole Tribe's chairman, Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., and Hard Rock International's chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO, Jim Allen. Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie was also in attendance. The occasion was to sign ECPAT-USA's tourism child-protection code of conduct – a voluntary set of business principles to help prevent human trafficking.

Human trafficking is generally defined as the unlawful act of transporting or coercing people, often young people, in order to benefit from their work or service, typically in the form of forced labor or sexual exploitation.

Brooklyn, New York-based ECPAT-USA, led by its CEO Lori L. Cohen who was also at the signing, is a leading U.S. anti-child trafficking organization whose goal is to end commercial sexual exploitation of children through awareness, advocacy, policy and legislation. Its code offers a framework for companies to establish policies and protocols and to train and educate employees on how to identify a human trafficker or a victim of human trafficking while going about their workday.

Allen said signing the code is the progression of an ongoing commitment by Hard Rock and Seminole Gaming to "help prevent sexual, labor and other forms of exploitation of children and vulnerable people, while supporting human rights."

"This topic is something that is uncomfortable, but the reality is that we need to do more," Allen said in a ballroom that included dozens of Hard Rock employees. "Today is the next step forward to protect those who are being exploited."

✦ See SIGNING on page 6A

Chris Almeida/Hard Rock International

From left to right, Jumorrow Johnson, anti-human trafficking coordinator, community outreach director and president of the Broward Human Trafficking Coalition for the Broward State Attorney's Office – 17th Judicial Circuit of Florida; Stephanie Piimauna, senior vice president and chief diversity and inclusion officer for Seminole Hard Rock; Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie; Hard Rock International Chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO, Jim Allen; Broward County State Attorney Harold F. Pryor; Seminole Tribe Chairman, Marcellus W. Osceola Jr.; ECPAT-USA CEO Lori L. Cohen; Angie Martinez, Hard Rock's director of global social responsibility and tribal government relations; and Paul Pellizzari, Hard Rock's VP of global social responsibility, gather May 25 after the signing ceremony.

Powwow 'full circle' moment for Cheyenne Kippenberger

Miss Indian World farewell

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Scores of fans and supporters came for a hug, to say hello, and to take pictures with the Seminole Tribe's outgoing Miss Indian World, Cheyenne Kippenberger, at the 2022 Gathering of Nations powwow from April 28 to April 30 in Albuquerque.

It was another trip filled with a flurry of activities – appearances, speeches, and a grand finale, front-of-the-line moment at the event's final grand entry – where hundreds of dancers and drummers from across Indian Country gather on the floor of Tingley Coliseum at the Expo New Mexico fairgrounds in front of thousands of spectators. Soon after, a new Miss Indian World, Kippenberger's replacement, would be crowned to end the night.

"I appreciate all of you who came to share this with me. Being here is such a full-circle moment," Kippenberger said at one of her appearances at the Stage 49 music venue. Her father, Joe Kippenberger; grandmother, Lawanna Osceola; and brother, Dante Kippenberger were sitting nearby.

Kippenberger's reign as Miss Indian World from 2019 to 2021 was historic in at least two ways. She was the first Miss Indian World from the Seminole Tribe and due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the first to be asked to extend her reign for an additional year. The pandemic brought the Gathering of Nations event and the Miss Indian World competition to a halt in 2020 and 2021.

A video montage of Kippenberger's journey as the 36th Miss Indian World was produced by Seminole Media Productions and was broadcast for attendees at various times throughout the weekend.

"It makes me cry every time I see it," Kippenberger said. "The Gathering of Nations organization and Miss Indian World committee has really made this special for me."

Kippenberger's first year involved a lot of travel and in-person events across the U.S. and even in New Zealand. The second year would become a mostly virtual one, with Kippenberger setting up a media studio in her living room to accommodate requests to appear at virtual events through Zoom and on social media.

She used her reign as an opportunity to speak out on a number of issues – including stigmas around mental health.

"I chose to pursue initiatives that were very personal to me. I have experienced the shame and guilt of mental health," she said at one of her final appearances. "When you're having those moments where it may not seem like you can't get through it, you can, because you are strong, you are powerful, and you are capable."

✦ See KIPPENBERGER on page 4A

Damon Scott

Cheyenne Kippenberger is recognized on the Gathering of Nations' powwow floor on the event's final night April 30, accompanied by hundreds of tribal dancers and drummers, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Everett Osceola produces feature film with all-Native cast

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Everett Osceola grew up watching horror movies and has a strong passion for the genre.

Now he's involved in making them.

Osceola is the executive producer for "Don't Let It In," a feature-length horror film with an all-Native American cast. The film is in post-production after about two weeks of filming on the Big Cypress Reservation and other South Florida locations. The cast consists of nine Seminole tribal members and two actors from other tribes.

It isn't Osceola's first film. During the pandemic he produced a short 15-minute film – also called "Don't Let It In" – and released it to virtual film festivals in 2020.

"The pandemic was a blessing in disguise; virtual film festivals had a much broader reach," Osceola said.

The short version was so successful that Los Angeles-based Canvas Media Studios provided funding to expand it to feature length, 90 to 100 minutes.

Canvas recently signed a six-film deal with Fox Entertainment-owned MarVista Entertainment to focus on diverse, emerging filmmakers. The deal includes a global distribution commitment for the films. "Don't Let It In" is the first film to be made under the agreement.

"Don't Let It In" is based on a Seminole legend of an owl woman and shape shifter, whose name cannot be mentioned or she will come for you. Many tribes have similar legends. A deer woman shape shifter was featured in the TV show "Reservation Dogs," created by Sterlin Harjo (Seminole Nation) and Taika Waititi (Māori).

✦ See MOVIE on page 5A

"Don't Let It In" executive producer Everett Osceola, center, joins Geraldine Osceola, left, and Daniel Nunez for filming at the SemFuel gas station in Big Cypress on March 26. Osceola and Nunez appear in the movie.

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Visit the Tribune's website for news throughout the month at seminoletribune.org

Editorial

Their land, once again

• The Virginian-Pilot & Daily Press Editorial Board (Virginia)

For generations, the Rappahannock Tribe lived along the river that bears its name as it flows through Virginia's Northern Neck to the Chesapeake Bay, through fertile lands lush with fish and wildlife.

That changed roughly 400 years ago when English settlers began spreading through the region, driving Native Americans from their lands. Even as their numbers dwindled, some determined Rappahannock people held on, guarding their identity and memories.

Their persistence has been rewarded through a remarkable partnership among environmentalists, generous donors and government agencies.

Early this spring, the Rappahannock Tribe became the owners of more than 460 acres of marshland and white cliffs along the eastern shore of the river, part of a larger area known as Fones Cliffs. The tribe has vowed to care for the land and its rich environment, including the many bald eagles that nest there. The Rappahannock consider the eagles sacred.

That this gem of a natural area has been preserved is something of a miracle, as is the survival of enough of the tribe to accept the gift and become the land's official caretakers.

Archaeologists have recently found evidence that the Rappahannock were a large, powerful tribe. Because their territory was farther from the earliest European settlements, and because they rarely interacted with the colonists, they were largely overlooked in the historical chronicle of the commonwealth and the country.

The tribe was nearly wiped out as European and then American settlers drove the natives from their lands. In the early 20th century, the eugenics movement and racist leaders sought to erase the identity of those who remained. Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924 insisted that every resident be identified as White or Black, eliminating Native Americans as a classification.

Fortunately, some of the remaining Rappahannock persisted in saving their cultural identity. One of them incorporated the tribe in 1921. His great-niece, Anne Richardson, is the tribe's chief; she was there for the announcement of the land acquisition.

The tribe has worked to preserve its records and culture. More than a decade ago, a cultural center was established on 100 acres at Indian Neck. Gaining official tribal recognition was a challenge, largely because of the requirement that a tribe demonstrate "cultural continuity," even though it had been nearly obliterated by historical accounts, state laws and racial discrimination.

The commonwealth recognized the tribe in 1983. Federal recognition finally came in January 2018.

Meanwhile, the site now ceded to the Rappahannock barely escaped commercial development as an upscale residential area. Along with nearby areas of Fones Cliffs, it has become a high priority of conservation groups.

The Chesapeake Conservancy bought the site with help from a Charlottesville benefactor and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Conservancy gave a permanent easement to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and donated the title to the Rappahannock Tribe, which is placing it in trust with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Now, in addition to protecting the eagles' habitat, one of the tribe's goals is to tell its history through a replica 16th century village and a system of trails with informational kiosks.

Virginia has made considerable progress confronting the commonwealth's troubled history with the Native Americans, whose ancestors were here long before Jamestown. The new Machicomoco State Park in Gloucester County is another positive development. The 40th state park, it is the first to focus on Native American tribes of the area, including the Rappahannock.

Fones Cliffs should be a model as Virginia continues to do better by its Native Americans. The "landback" movement has been growing out West, but slower to take hold in the East. An extensive partnership like this one is rare anywhere.

The commonwealth now has a wonderful example of how to preserve history, the environment and cultural heritage by returning special places to their historic stewards. In turn, it provides a clearer, more accurate telling of the American story for future generations to learn and respect.

Remarks from Federal Reserve chair

• Jerome Powell

Jerome Powell, chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, made the following remarks via prerecorded video at the Reservation Economic Summit hosted in May by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development in Las Vegas.

Good morning, and welcome. It is a great pleasure to welcome all the attendees to RES 2022.

The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development has been a strong and consistent partner to the Federal Reserve, collaborating with us on small business COVID surveys, serving on the Leadership Council for the Minneapolis Fed's Center for Indian Country Development, and moderating our policy webinar series on tribal enterprise diversification, just to name a few.

Trust is earned and developed through relationships. This is particularly important in Indian Country. The Federal Reserve has built an enduring and sturdy bond with the National Center, and we value that partnership.

We are excited to be participating in this year's conference, learning alongside you. There is undoubtedly more research and engagement to be done on the specific and unique economic needs of tribal nations and Indigenous communities. RES 2022 is a great meeting ground for such collaboration.

The best insight and analysis come from people who live and work in communities and have an inside view of the struggles and opportunities within. The Federal Reserve System has made a priority of engaging with leaders and stakeholders on opportunities most relevant to tribal economic prosperity. For example, input from tribal stakeholders has been invaluable to informing the important work of modernizing the Community Reinvestment Act, which was incorporated into the recently published proposal that we are looking forward to getting comments on. We also value the growing representation of tribal voices on our boards of directors and advisory councils at Reserve Banks, helping us to better understand economic conditions in Indian Country.

Many of you are aware of the Center for Indian Country Development (CICD), our national institute dedicated to helping tribes reach their full economic potential. We are excited to be expanding its capacity to conduct economic research and data analysis to support the long-term economic prosperity of Indian Country, in partnership with Indian Country. We look forward to CICD's ongoing collaboration with tribal communities on research and data.

Additionally, an initial St. Louis Fed partnership with the Osage Nation, to provide youth financial education, has led to partnerships with tribal governments across the country that provide personal finance education, often in their Native languages. Tribal leaders nationwide have also joined recent listening sessions to discuss the impacts of inflation. Similar sessions were held on our pandemic response facilities, which were adapted after hearing their input.

Other Federal Reserve partnerships with Indian Country include initiatives on access to credit; Native community development financial institutions; financial education programs tailored to early childhood, secondary, and higher education; workforce development; housing; social services; and elder programs.

And as part of our ongoing effort to deepen our understanding of tribal economies, last year, the Federal Reserve Board announced that we had joined the Central Bank Network for Indigenous Inclusion, along with the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, the Bank of Canada, and the Reserve Bank of Australia. This is part of our commitment to learning best practices and expanding our international partnerships with central banks that are similarly invested in supporting Indigenous people and communities.

✦ See RESERVE on page 3C

Release of Lake Okeechobee draft plan delayed

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Writer

Army Corps, Jacksonville District

The final version of LOSOM will guide the Army Corps' Lake Okeechobee decision-making for at least a decade.

The release of the latest draft plan that addresses a variety of issues concerning Lake Okeechobee has been delayed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who manage the lake, has been working on its Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual, or LOSOM, since 2018. Its purpose is to come up with guidelines to improve lake conditions, control water discharges and address the interests of the Seminole Tribe, among other goals. It is designed to guide the Corps' Lake Okeechobee decision-making for at least a decade.

The latest draft was expected to be available for review this spring, however the Corps said in a statement May 11 that the draft wouldn't be released until mid-summer. According to the Corps, the delay is necessary for further review of feedback received from federal, state and tribal entities and members of the public.

"Through the last three years of this process, LOSOM has enjoyed extraordinary levels of engagement from our partners and stakeholders," Tim Gysan, LOSOM project manager, said in a statement. "This latest part of the process continued that trend of unprecedented public engagement. The Jacksonville District team feels the substantive comments we received deserve careful consideration as we work to find the best solution for the future management of Lake Okeechobee."

The tribe's interests include ensuring that water levels are high enough that current and future agricultural needs are met on the Big Cypress and Brighton reservations. The tribe has also sought treatment as a sovereign entity when it comes to Lake Okeechobee water allocations.

The Corps is faced with a juggling act to ensure LOSOM meets a variety of needs. Those include sending water south to areas of the Everglades National Park and Florida Bay, maintaining enough water during drought conditions, and protecting estuaries from lake discharges that can set off toxic blue-green algae blooms.

The new LOSOM timeline, required under the National Environmental Policy Act, is now scheduled to begin in late July rather than in May. A final plan expected to go into effect late this year is now set to be in place in early 2023. More information about LOSOM can by visiting saj.usace.army.mil/losom/.

Native veterans memorial to be dedicated Nov. 11

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Writer

Matailong Du for NMAI

TThe central feature of the memorial is an elevated stainless steel circle resting on a carved stone drum. It is located on the grounds of NMAI.

After two years of pandemic related delays, the National Native American Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., is scheduled to be dedicated on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. A dedication ceremony is part of three days worth of events from Nov. 11 to Nov. 13.

The first of its kind memorial – one that honors Native American veterans in the nation's capital on the National Mall – was completed in 2020, but a Native veterans procession and in-person dedication never took place.

The memorial is one that Indian Country has sought after for many years. It is located on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) – part of the Smithsonian Institution. Like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial about two miles away, it is open to the public 24 hours a day.

The Seminole Tribe is one of at least 85 tribes that provided financial support to make the memorial a reality. The late Stephen Bowers, the tribe's former veteran affairs director, and President Mitchell Cypress, campaigned and helped to raise funds for the memorial for a decade. The memorial, commissioned by Congress, has been widely supported by tribal governments and tribal veterans organizations, as well as individuals, corporations, foundations and other organizations.

The memorial recognizes that Native Americans have served in every major U.S. military conflict since the Revolutionary War. It was designed by Marine Corps Vietnam veteran Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes of Oklahoma) and features an elevated stainless steel circle resting on a carved stone drum. It incorporates water for sacred ceremonies and benches for gathering. The memorial also includes four lances where visitors can tie cloths to signify prayers and healing.

"The dedication of this memorial is an opportunity to gather and reflect on the extraordinary service and sacrifice of Native veterans and their families," NMAI director Cynthia Chavez Lamar (San Felipe Pueblo, Hopi, Tewa and Navajo), said in a statement May 12. "I hope everyone will join us for this momentous occasion, so together we can offer them our thanks for their contributions to our country."

The Nov. 11 events are set to begin in the afternoon with the Native veterans procession, which will make its way along the National Mall to the memorial for the dedication ceremony. Organizers said there will be viewing areas along the procession route for supporters to gather to honor the participating veterans.

Throughout the weekend, NMAI plans to host special programming in honor of the dedication, including hands-on activities, films and performances.

Attendees can also visit the NMAI exhibition "Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces," which began in 2021 and runs through Nov. 30, 2023. The exhibition tells personal stories of Native Americans who have served in the U.S. armed forces for more than 250 years.

For more information about the memorial and the dedication events, including how to register to participate in the Native veterans procession, visit americanindian.si.edu. NMAI is located on the National Mall at Fourth Street and Independence Ave. SW.

Sunshine Sykes confirmed to serve as U.S. District Court judge

FROM NATIVE NEWS ONLINE

The United States Senate on May 18 confirmed Judge Sunshine Sykes to serve as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. She is a citizen of the Navajo Nation.

When sworn-in, she will become the first Native American Article III federal judge in California, the fourth active Native American federal judge in the nation, and just the seventh Native federal judge ever appointed.

Judge Sykes has served as a California Superior Court Judge on the Superior Court of Riverside County since 2013. She currently presides over a civil litigation department and is the presiding judge of the appellate division.

Judge Sykes received her J.D. from Stanford Law School in 2001 and her B.A from Stanford University in 1997. From 2001 to 2003, she was a staff attorney for California Indian Legal Services. From 2003 to 2005, Judge Sykes worked as a contract attorney for the Juvenile Defense Panel at the Southwest Justice Center. From 2005 to 2013, she served as a Deputy County Counsel in the Office of County Counsel for Riverside County, handling litigation on behalf of government entities and serving as a juvenile dependency trial attorney representing the California Department of Public Social Services on matters concerning abused and neglected children.

"On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we congratulate Judge Sykes on her historic nomination and becoming the first Diné person to serve as a U.S. District Court Judge. Her upbringing, exceptional experience, and commitment to serving the public and the justice system will bring new and unique perspectives to the justice system," Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez said.

The Seminole Tribune is a member of the Native American Journalists Association.

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CORRECTIONS

In the Yearling Middle School softball story on page 4C in the April 29 print edition, Yearling's opponent was incorrectly identified. The opponent was Sebastian Middle School.

In the Purvis siblings story on page 2B in the April 29 print edition, a reference to high school was incorrectly associated with the Weiss School. It is a pre-K to 8th grade school.

Community

Paul 'Cowbone' Buster honors sons with memorial ride

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Paul "Cowbone" Buster, a dad who lost three sons over the years, lovingly memorialized them with a journey through the woods of the Big Cypress Reservation.

Loaded onto ATVs and side-by-side off road vehicles, 10 family members and friends joined Cowbone on May 21 to commemorate the lives of Chunky, Sigmund (Merle) and Ira Buster. The sons of Daisy and Paul were all born in Clewiston and grew up in Big Cypress.

"They all played sports and had a lot of friends," Cowbone said. "They grew up with cousins, but just like a tree, they went on different branches."

Chunky, who passed in 2016, was a musician who played in the "Cowbone" band. He could play drums, bass and harmonica and he wrote songs. He had his own band which played gigs from time to time in local places and as far flung as South Dakota.

"Chunky lost his leg to diabetes and went down from there," Cowbone said. "Most of us [Seminoles] have diabetes. If you tell me you're not diabetic, then you're not an Indian."

Ira, the youngest son, died in 2007 due to mental health issues. Sigmund (Merle) died in a car accident on Snake Road in 1996.

Cowbone said the ride also recognized the boys' aunt, Mary Louise Johns, who was very close to them. She passed away in 2019.

Before the pandemic, the memorial ride was an annual event that started as a music jamboree for about five or six years. This year's ride was designed for participants to be socially distanced for safety's sake.

"We hope next year we'll have a gathering with music, cornhole, horseshoes and food," Cowbone said. "The first couple of years we had about 100 people. Since Covid, we've just done the ride and had about 10 or 20 people."

Last year, Jackson Tanner (Cherokee), happened upon the ride while doing some work in Big Cypress.

"I made sure to be here this year again," said Tanner, who drove 1,500 miles from Oklahoma to participate in the memorial ride.

It took the caravan a couple of hours to travel a few miles from West Boundary Road through the woods to the Junior Cypress rodeo grounds where they enjoyed lunch.

Beverly Bidney

Friends and family join Paul "Cowbone" Buster, at far right, in a ride through Big Cypress to memorialize his sons. From left are Michael Cantu, Miken Cantu, Heide Cypress, Jayleigh Perez, Mary Pauline Cantu, Zara Cantu, Jackson Tanner, Anquenette Smith and Shaniqua King.

Beverly Bidney

Michael Cantu, Miken Cantu, Heide Cypress and Mary Pauline Cantu in their vehicles.

Beverly BIdney

Paul "Cowbone" Buster, at far right, leads the caravan of vehicles into the woods of Big Cypress on May 21.

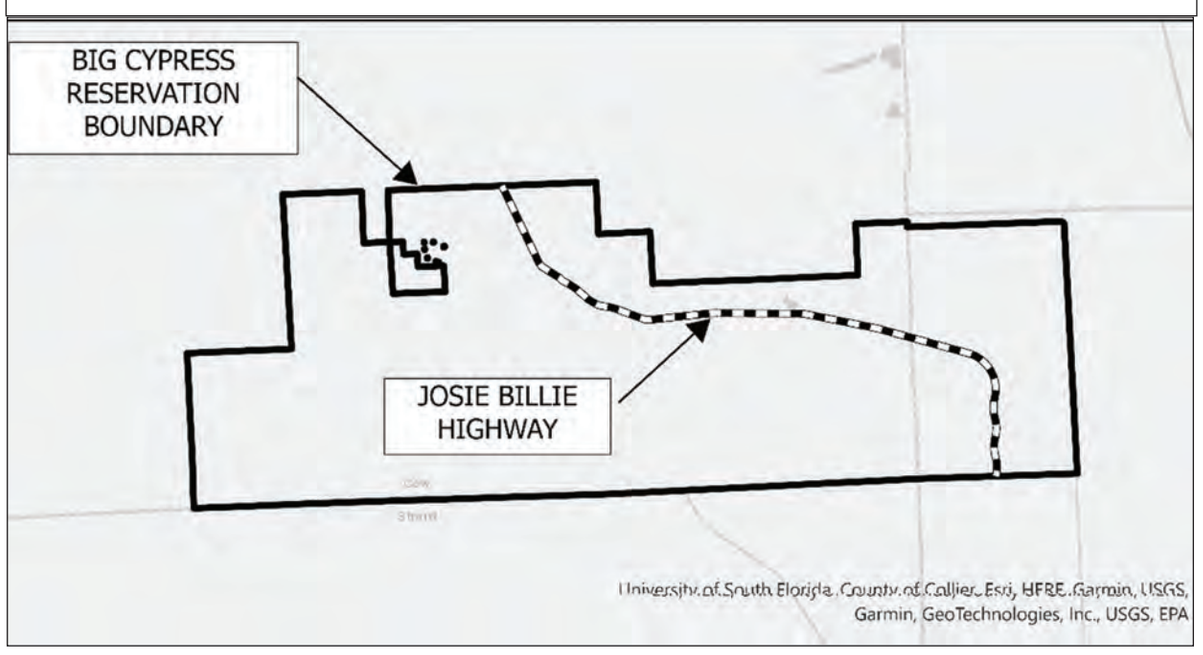
Public Notice of Traffic Change

Notice is hereby given that new truck travel restrictions will be implemented on the Seminole Tribe of Florida Big Cypress Reservation in accordance with Tribal Ordinance No. C-01-22, adopted April 14, 2022.

Effective May 19, 2022, the following vehicles shall be restricted from using Josie Billie Highway (also known as Snake Road or BIA Road 1281) between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. daily:

- Vehicles classified as Class 5 or higher under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Vehicle Category Classification System; and
- Vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) greater than twenty-six thousand (26,000) pounds including the load being carried.

Drivers of such vehicles must avoid Josie Billie Highway during the restricted times and to use alternate routes in the area. Certain exemptions may apply. Failure to comply with these road restrictions may result in trespassing charges, fines, or other penalties including arrest.



RESERVE

From page 2A

The Federal Reserve works for all of us, and our research and analysis must reflect the specific needs and circumstances of all of our communities. I am grateful for our partnership with the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, and I want to thank you, as well as all our colleagues, advisors, and stakeholders who help us work toward a stable and inclusive economy for all.

Thank you.

KIPPENBERGER

From page 1A

Kippenberger spoke in front of the U.S. Congress and made appearances in scores of classrooms and at many conferences. Her audiences ranged from handfuls of people in personal settings to hundreds of Natives across Indian Country.

"I'm so proud to be who I am, to have shared with the world who the unconquered Seminole Tribe of Florida is," she said. "It was so important to me to show what it is to be a modern Native woman. I wanted to show through being transparent and being honest, especially on social media, that's it's OK to just be you."

After Kippenberger's final grand entry at Tingley Coliseum, Tashina Red Hawk (Sicangu Lakota Nation/Rosebud Sioux Tribe) was crowned the 2022-2023 Miss Indian World.

Seminole talent, support on display

Several tribal members made the trip from Florida to support Kippenberger, and to see two Seminole musicians perform on Stage 49 – Doc Native and Carradine Billie.

Native and Billie are both Native American Music Award (NAMA)-nominated musicians who perform songs in the hip-hop and rap genre, with lyrics that often speak to their Seminole heritage. Native is from the Hollywood Reservation, while Billie, whose stage name is "Seminole Prince," is from the Big Cypress Reservation.

"I'm a South Florida boy and it's straight humidity out there. I'll tell you, the humidity is so bad you have to take three showers before you hit the grocery store," Native joked with the crowd who came to see him perform. "I'm all the way from Hollywood, Florida, and the Seminole Tribe – a proud member of the Panther Clan."

Everett Osceola, a cultural ambassador for the tribe, was also at the event to support Kippenberger, Native and Billie. The film buff also talked to attendees about the Native Reels Cinema Festival, which he created.

Others from Hollywood in attendance were Wanda Bowers, who formerly oversaw the tribe's princess program while Kippenberger was running, and Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall, who is also a former Miss Florida Seminole.

Pageantry and beyond

At press time, Kippenberger was preparing to compete as Miss Hollywood USA for the Miss Florida USA crown – also a first for the tribe. The three-day competition from May 27 to May 29 was scheduled to be held in Coral Springs with the winner to advance to the Miss USA pageant.

Kippenberger is also busy as the communications lead for the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) – a national nonprofit at the Aspen Institute. She is also a peer guide for UNITY – the United National Indian Tribal Youth organization.

Soon after departing Gathering of Nations, she took part in the inaugural "Aspen Ideas: Climate" conference in Miami Beach. She spoke about the environment and was part of a roundtable discussion focused on youth mobilization and the need for younger voices in the climate justice movement.

"I have been traveling a lot to judge pageants, and to present and speak at different events. I'm hoping to somehow find time in between all of this to get back into school," Kippenberger said.

Damon Scott

Cheyenne Kippenberger and her father, Joe, watch a tribute video to Cheyenne at the Gathering of Nations.

Damon Scott

Cheyenne Kippenberger speaks at the Gathering of Nations' powwow in Albuqurque, New Mexico.

Damon Scott

Cheyenne Kippenberger gets emotional after a video montage of her Miss Indian World reign was broadcast at one of her public appearances.

Damon Scott

Seminole cultural ambassador Everett Osceola spreads the word about one of his projects, the Native Reels Cinema Festival.

Courtesy photo

Cheyenne Kippenberger's father, Joe Kippenberger, and her grandmother, Lawanna Osceola, traveled to Albuquerque to support Kippenberger.

Damon Scott

From left to right are Wanda Bowers, Cheyenne Kippenberger and Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall.

Gathering of Nations

Tashina Red Hawk (Sicangu Lakota) was crowned the new Miss Indian World.

Damon Scott

Seminole musician Doc Native performs on Stage 49 on the Expo New Mexico fairgrounds.

Damon Scott

Carradine Billie, whose stage name is "Seminole Prince," performs on Stage 49.

Tribe's first department – ERMD – turns 35

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe's first governmental department – one tasked with protecting and managing its environmental resources – marks 35 years in operation this year.

The Tribal Council created the Water Resources Department in 1987, which became the Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD), for the purposes of developing a tribal water code. Two years later, the Council would also create the Seminole Water Commission to oversee ERMD.

Since those early years, ERMD has expanded into a bustling and complex department with many employees, six sections and three offices. Its mission is to protect, manage, and conserve the tribe's environmental and natural resources in a culturally sensitive manner. Today, one of its most important functions is to assist tribal members who are planning projects which use or discharge water or affect surface or storm water drainage.

"Having an environmental department has been, and will continue to be, centrally important to the future sovereignty and success of the Seminole Tribe of Florida," Paul Backhouse, the senior director of the Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO), said.

ERMD, the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum fall under the tribe's HERO umbrella.

"Working amongst the whole staff of ERMD for the last several years, I have seen how every single one of them puts their heart and soul into the important work they do to serve the tribal community and to protect and manage the tribe's precious environmental resources," Backhouse said.

'Indispensable'

Attorney Michelle Diffenderfer, of the Lewis, Longman & Walker law firm, began work on behalf of ERMD in 1994 and continues to do so today. She remembers many of the tribal leaders, attorneys and employees who laid the groundwork for a successful department.

"Jim Shore was indispensable to the beginning of it," Diffenderfer said. "It was Jim and Steve Walker, who was general counsel at the South Florida Water Management District, who negotiated the Seminole Water Rights Compact on behalf of the state in the late 1980s."

Walker went into private practice in 1991 but was asked by Shore several years later to advise the tribe on Everglades restoration issues.

"I have been working with the tribe, most frequently with ERMD, on a variety of environmental and water related issues ever since," Walker said.

Diffenderfer said she, Shore and Walker have worked with a number of individuals over the years that have had an impact on ERMD. Her list includes Craig Tepper, the first director of the Water Resources Department, Trail Council liaison Norman Huggins, former Big Cypress Councilman Mondo Tiger, former Chairman James Billie, President Mitchell Cypress and more recently Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. She also remembers working with the late former Big Cypress Councilman Cicero Osceola and the late David "Bob" Motlow. Agnes Motlow, his widow, has been Shore's executive assistant since 1989. Diffenderfer said there are many more that could be mentioned.

Success story

Diffenderfer helped to implement the Water Rights Compact and tribal water code, which provided a structure for entitlements – whether from surface water or groundwater. Initially the focus was surface water rights for agricultural and ranching needs, she said, and, later, rights for aquifer water.

Diffenderfer said ERMD has grown as the tribe's needs have grown.

"Along with other projects, ERMD is hard at work doing an update to its water quality standards right now," she said. "It's about how the tribe manages its environmental resources on the reservation – water, water quality, wetland systems and habitat."

The tribe's unique Water Rights Compact also allows it to challenge projects that are proposed on adjacent lands to the reservations. A recent example is ERMD's successful pushback of a proposed Lake Okeechobee water storage project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that was to be located near the Brighton Reservation. The tribe believed it could result in flooding on the reservation and would be a threat to cultural assets, among other issues.

After years of opposition by the tribe, the Corps recently dropped the project. Diffenderfer said ERMD keeps a close eye on such proposals because they often resurface.

"The tribe has been able to become self supporting through gaming and now is extremely successful in endeavors that enable them to protect themselves," Diffenderfer said. "ERMD has really come a long way and it's ultimately for the benefit of the tribe and for future generations for their environmental resources to be clean and well protected."

More about ERMD can be found at semtribe.com under the "Services" tab.

Redline Media earns NCAIED business of year award

STAFF REPORT

Redline Media Group, owned by Seminole tribal member S.R. Tommie, has been recognized with the NCAIED "American Indian Business of the Year" award.

NCAIED – the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development – made the announcement at its annual Reservation Economic Summit in Las Vegas, Nevada, held May 23 to May 26 at Caesars Palace.

Redline is a marketing, advertising and communication agency located in Dania Beach. Tommie is the company's founder and president.

"Each year we honor outstanding individuals and companies for their contributions to economic parity and the betterment of Indian communities," Chris James, president and CEO of NCAIED, said in a news release. "It is my honor to announce that Redline Media Group was selected this year to receive the award, signifying their success as a American-Indian owned business, and their demonstration of excellent corporate citizenship."

NCAIED is the longest standing and largest American Indian business and economic development organization in the U.S.

"This is an incredible honor, and a true milestone in our history," Tommie said in the release. "We just celebrated our 19th anniversary, and when I founded this business all those years ago, I knew success would be based upon a team effort."

Tommie launched Redline in 2003 with three employees. The company now has 50 employees and has done business in 76 countries.

"We focused on our commitment to creative excellence, superior service, and outside the box thinking, developing collaborative relationships with the client-partners and brands that we have had the privilege to represent," she said in the release.

The company lists some of its clients as Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, FX Networks, Nike, Harley-Davidson, Flora Fine Foods, Audi, Jaguar, Infiniti, Land Rover, Lamborghini, Bugatti and more. The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International and the owner of Seminole Gaming.

For more, go to redlinemediagroup.com.

MOVIE
From page 1A

"Other nations recognize the characters," Osceola said. "All tribes have similar legends that are scary and not so scary. It's a sensitive issue for Indians. When we take it to film festivals, it will bring Natives together through horror films."

The story is about a Native woman with a troubled past that awakened a creature, which latched onto a family over the years. She returns to the reservation when her sister and other people go missing to try to figure things out.

"It's a creaky door type of horror movie, it's not too bloody," Osceola said. "We want it to be PG-13. The film takes place on Seminole land, but some interiors were filmed off the reservation."

The film was written and directed by Jay Henric. Osceola added rez slang and Elaponke and Creek languages in the script.

"It's always been my dream to put our language in a movie," Osceola said. "Actors wore their own clothing since the budget was so low. I'm happy to have patchwork on the big screen."

Osceola is in the cast along with Seminoles Aubee Billie, Carradine Billie, Delilah Hall, Doc Native, Daniel Nunez, Everett Osceola, Maryjane Osceola, Geraldine Osceola and Avadie Live Stewart. Taylor Kinequon (Cree/Anishabee) and Beniaren Kane (Arikawak) round out the cast.

Nunez plays a gas station attendant whose scene was filmed at the SemFuel gas station in Big Cypress.

"When I saw the post for casting, I was down to help out or act," Nunez said. "I think it's cool to be part of that."

Geraldine Osceola learned a lot about filmmaking and loved being part of the film.

"I don't see movies the same now," she said. "I went to see 'The Lost City' and noticed a mic had moved during a scene. You have to memorize a lot of lines, but I did it in increments so it was easy. You also do a lot of waiting during filming, but it was fun and I enjoyed it. I'd do it again if anyone asks."

There will be a soft release – possibly in August – with a wider release slated for mid-to-late September.

Courtesy photo

The filming of a night scene in a swimming pool for "Don't Let It In."

Courtesy photo

Maryjane Osceola reads the script for "Don't Let It In."

Like Seminoles, tribe strives for energy independence

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe in southeastern Montana has made a move toward energy independence. It has entered into a partnership with the Indigenized Energy Initiative (IEI) for help to develop a $4.1 million solar project on the reservation.

IEI, a Native-led nonprofit that works with tribal communities that are interested in such projects, made the announcement in a news release May 19.

IEI said its goal with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is to "diminish energy poverty and restore self-determination with [a] regenerative, clean energy workforce and [through] economic development programs."

The White River Community solar project is expected to include one large array (a collection of multiple solar panels), three smaller systems and 15 residential systems for tribal elders.

The U.S. Department of Energy is providing $3.2 million for the project, which requires the tribe to contribute 20% in matching funds, or about $900,000. IEI is tasked to secure the matching funds through sponsors and donors.

In 2016, according to the release, the Northern Cheyenne tribal council passed a resolution to pursue renewable energy projects. The IEI partnership represents a first step for the tribe to generate its own energy from renewables, and also create jobs and spur economic development. IEI is expected to train tribal members to work on the project as well.

The Seminole Tribe has pursued similar goals toward renewable energy projects and energy independence, including solar projects that are now in progress on the Big Cypress and Brighton reservations.

Solar panels are being installed to charge battery energy storage systems (BESS) to power generators at four different sites on each reservation so that essential services for tribal members won't be disrupted during power outages. It means less reliance on outside utility companies.

Tribal members will also be offered training in order to work on the projects and maintain the infrastructure once it's completed.

Tribal energy independence efforts were set into motion by Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. soon after Hurricane Irma caused significant power outages on both reservations in 2017. He subsequently launched an energy committee to take a broad look at renewable energy and sustainability projects the tribe could embark on, which includes an annual renewable energy conference in Hollywood.

For more about IEI, visit indigenized.energy.

Sarah Yeoman

The Indigenized Energy Initiative is a Native-led nonprofit.

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

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Annie, Bobby Henry celebrate 66th anniversary

Peter Gallagher (3)

A celebration for the 66th wedding anniversary of Seminole medicine man Bobby Henry and his wife Annie was held in the their backyard in Tampa on May 14 with several family members and friends.

Seminole Gaming named 'best managed' for second year

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Seminole Gaming has been recognized for the second consecutive year as one of 51 "best managed" companies in the U.S. Hard Rock International made the announcement May 16. In 2021, Seminole Gaming was the first privately owned gaming company to make the list.

Deloitte Private and the Wall Street Journal sponsor the program and use a panel of judges to compile the rankings based on a set of criteria that includes "demonstrated excellence in strategic planning and execution, a commitment to people and fostering a dynamic, resilient culture, as well as strong financials."

"This year's designees continue to propel their businesses forward by prioritizing purpose, investing in their workforces, and demonstrating their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion," a news release said.

Seminole Gaming has six Florida locations, including its flagship properties in Hollywood and Tampa – the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood and the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. The other locations are the Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, Seminole Classic Casino Hollywood, Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee and Seminole Casino Brighton. The Seminole Tribe of Florida is the owner of Seminole Gaming and the parent entity of Hard Rock International.

"[The honor is] a true reflection of our passionate team members who maintain and uphold brand standard excellence across all of our properties, at every level of our business," Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in the release. "Today more than ever, we believe in bringing to life the mottos we were founded on: 'Love All-Serve All,' 'Take Time to Be Kind,' 'Save the Planet,' and 'All is One.' There's nothing more gratifying than seeing these mottos infused in everything we do as a company, and to be recognized for these efforts as one of the top private companies in the country."

CAFE

From page 1A

"The old one wasn't a proper kitchen," Kahsay said. "This one is designed for cooks; they don't have to walk from place to place for ingredients. It makes their job easier and gets the food out faster."

Other changes include how guests order their meals. Table service is a thing of the past; the redesigned cafe features a counter-based service with an electronic menu board. Printed menus, complete with pictures of the food, are available at the counter for those who are more comfortable using them to place an order.

Another new feature is the option to order online at swampwatercafe.com.

In the restaurant, a QR code is prominently displayed on napkin holders. Customers can scan the code with their phone's camera and the menu will appear. They can also pay from their table.

Employees bring orders to tables, so there is no need to stand and wait for food.

The back room can be reserved for meetings or private events. Kahsay sees a lot of potential in the air conditioned space with its hot and cold buffet stations. The cafe is also available for catering and plans to cater the Ahfachkee School's graduation in June.

Another new addition is a state-of-the-art Freestyle 7000 drink station, which has more than 99 flavor combinations. Guests can mix and match flavors to create their own unique drinks.

The cafe has seven employees. Every employee is trained to do more than one job.

"They enjoy working here," Kahsay said. "I believe you have to be happy at work. When everyone comes in happy, it's management's job to make sure we keep that mood until the end of service. I say 'let's do this' instead of 'you do that.' I step in to help when I see the need. Teamwork always wins; we help each other and work together."

Kahsay runs the restaurant with an open mind and flexibility. During daily staff meetings he considers comments from the community and employees and makes changes when appropriate.

Kahsay's connections to the tribe date back to 2009 when he began working as a line cook at the Seminole Casino Coconut Creek. He worked his way up to chef and then manager. He has been working at the cafe since 2016.

"This is my dream job," he said. "I've got no other dreams, I'm more than happy here."

Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Ricky Doctor, Linda Beletso, Judy Jim and Deloris Alvarez get together for lunch at the Swamp Water Cafe.

Beverly Bidney

Customers line up to place their orders at the Swamp Water Cafe's electronic menu board May 6.

Beverly Bidney

Swamp Water Cafe operations manager Haftu Kahsay helps out in the kitchen during the lunch rush.

SIGNING

From page 1A

Earlier this year, Hard Rock and ECPAT-USA were partners in the "Social Identity Quest" program designed to educate young people on ways to protect themselves from online predators, who often coerce and groom young people into human trafficking through social media channels. ECPAT-USA said the program has reached more than 1 million high school students across the U.S. so far. Hard Rock and ECPAT are also exploring ways to adapt the program for Native American communities and Indigenous populations – groups that disproportionately suffer high rates of sex trafficking and child exploitation.

"This is a problem and it's only going to get worse if we don't do something about it and bring awareness," Chairman Osceola said in his remarks. "We have a platform and we're able to use that for the good. We are here, we understand and we want to bring awareness at a global level."

Broward County State Attorney Harold F. Pryor, whose office operates a human trafficking task force, pledged his support and signed the code with Chairman Osceola and Allen. He said it's important because South Florida is a hub for human trafficking.

"We will do everything in our power to find, arrest and prosecute every last human trafficker who we have jurisdiction to bring justice to," Pryor said in his remarks. "We will continue to expend the resources and the time to halt the online exploitation of children and the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation in the travel and tourism industry."

The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International, which operates venues in 68 countries with 253 locations. More is at hardrock.com. To access the Social Identity Quest program, go to socialidentityquest.com. More information about ECPAT-USA can be found at ecpatusa.org.

Chris Almeida/Hard Rock International

From left, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie , Jim Allen and Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. were at the code's signing.

New York City hotel becomes newest chapter in Seminole Tribe's Hard Rock success story

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

NEW YORK CITY — The grand opening of the 36-story Hard Rock Hotel New York in the heart of Midtown Manhattan marked a return for the Seminole Tribe to the city where its ownership of the global brand began.

Since acquiring Hard Rock International nearly 16 years ago – when tribal members stood on the outdoor balcony of the nearby Hard Rock Cafe in Times Square to celebrate the announcement – the tribe and its 4,000-plus members have benefitted from owning an entity whose venues have nearly doubled throughout the world.

"Hard Rock gave us world recognition and the ability to create a presence in a space where Native Americans didn't have a presence," Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. said at the hotel's opening May 12. "We said this can be done. We aren't the example, we are the proof."

When the tribe purchased Hard Rock, it was a successful brand with 124 cafes, four hotels, two casinos and two Hard Rock Live venues in 45 countries. Under the leadership of the tribe and Hard Rock Chairman Jim Allen, the brand's growth – now up to 253 locations that include performance venues, cafes, 26 hotels and nine hotel-casinos in 68 countries – has helped the tribe support and expand its own infrastructure and services, including education, health care and housing.

"Because of Hard Rock, we've made a lot of improvement and can give benefits to the tribe," President Mitchell Cypress said. "We have more programs and housing. The younger generation has a better chance of getting an education and coming back to help the tribe. I never had that opportunity growing up in Big Cypress, but I'm proud I helped pave the way for the younger generation."

Beverly Bidney

The traditional Hard Rock guitar smash celebrates the grand opening of Hard Rock Hotel New York on May 12. From left to right are Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, emcee Kenan Thompson, Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., President Mitchell Cypress, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola and actress Vanessa Hudgens.

Beverly Bidney

From left to right are S.R. Tommie, Gina Osceola, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Kyle Doney and Thomasine Motlow in the NYY Steak restaurant at Hard Rock Hotel New York.

"It's made us fully independent," said Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola. "We can afford to give tribal members everything they need; health care, education and more. It gives us the financial ability to build the future of the tribe."

Chairman Osceola, President Cypress, Councilman Osceola and Allen participated in Hard Rock's traditional guitar smash alongside Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie and actress Vanessa Hudgens.

Joel Frank Sr., a former president of the National Indian Gaming Association and United South and Eastern Tribes Inc., was among a handful of the Seminoles in the audience.

"Things like this were only a dream when we first starting talking about it in 1969," Frank said. "We were sitting around a campfire talking about getting gaming revenues for the tribe so we could live comfortably. At the time, we were in the hole to the [Bureau of Indian Affairs] and federal programs. We said we can do this; eventually we did and we're here today."

Stars come out for grand opening

Before the guitar smash, S.R. Tommie gave a traditional Seminole blessing and addressed the crowd.

"We are people from the Everglades and we give to the earth because the earth gives to us," Tommie said. "We live our culture, heritage and traditions daily. To be in New York City means you have arrived. I want to acknowledge [former Hollywood Councilman] Max Osceola, his spirit is with us today. He knew one day we would expand our spirit to New York."

When the tribe announced the purchase of Hard Rock at the Hard Rock Cafe in Times Square on Dec. 7, 2006, Max Osceola famously said, "Our ancestors sold Manhattan for trinkets. We're going to buy Manhattan back, one hamburger at a time."

The 446-room hotel is located at 159 48th Street, near Rockefeller Center and just a few blocks from the Hard Rock Cafe in Times Square. It features NYY Steak and Sessions restaurants and a Rock Shop.

The opening featured a high-energy party that began with a star-studded red carpet and continued into the wee hours with DJs. Emcee Kenan Thompson of "Saturday Night Live" entertained the audience at The Venue on Music Row, an intimate club in the hotel with a capacity of 500. The evening's performances were by some of the most recognizable names in entertainment, including John Legend, DJ Cassidy, Nas, Busta Rhymes and Fat Joe.

RT60, a roof-top bar and terrace which Allen believes can become a hot spot on the city scene, has two outdoor spaces and an inside bar with ample booths along with a private room and a DJ booth. The celebration continued on the roof with guests that included New York City Mayor Eric Adams, who chatted with Chairman Osceola and others.

"When we bought Hard Rock in 2007, we always identified New York City as one the places to be," Allen said. "It's incredibly exciting for the Hard Rock brand to be in this new building."

The Rock Star suite on the 36th floor comes with its own large outdoor terrace, a living room, dining room and bedroom with floor-to-ceiling windows that provide striking city views. The suite goes for $15,000 per night and there are already reservations on the books.

Already with a restaurant and hotel presence in the city, Hard Rock would like to add another venue. In April, the New York legislature approved issuing three new casino licenses intended for the downstate area, which includes New York City. A handful of existing casino operators, including Hard Rock, are interested in bidding for a license.

"We've been here at the Cafe down the street," Councilman Osceola said. "That was our first bite of the Big Apple. This hotel is our second bite and we hope to take a third bite soon."

Beverly Bidney

From left to right, former Miami Dolphin wide receiver Nat Moore, Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., CEO of Hard Rock Japan Ed Tracy, and Chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming Jim Allen tour the outdoor terrace of the Rock Star Suite, a glass-enclosed penthouse with a generously sized living room, bedroom and expansive city views.

Beverly Bidney

From left to right, David Cypress, President Mitchell Cypress and Charley Cypress attend the grand opening of the Hard Rock Hotel New York.

Beverly Bidney

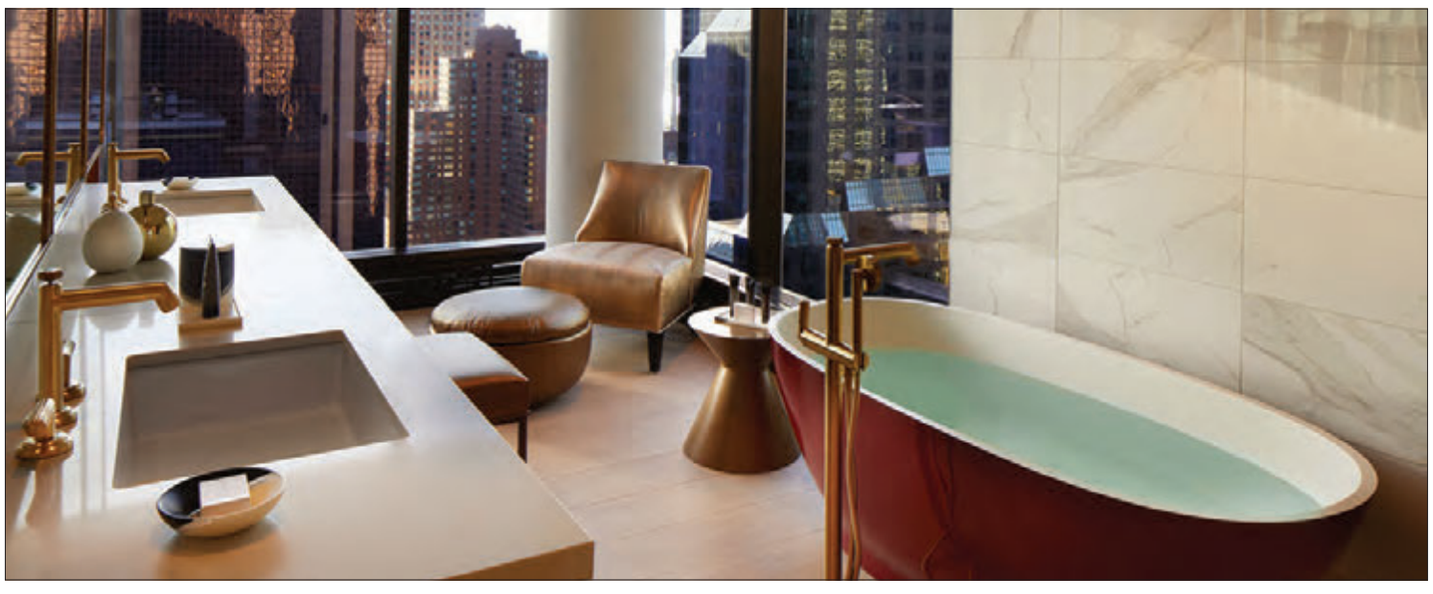
New York City Mayor Eric Adams, left, and Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. at the grand opening.

Beverly Bidney (2)

"Saturday Night Live's" Kenan Thompson, left, and singer-songwriter John Legend were among the stars from the entertainment industry who attended the Hard Rock Hotel New York grand opening. Thompson was the emcee and Legend performed at The Venue on Music Row.

Hard Rock

The Venue on Music Row is a multilevel, versatile entertainment event space.



Hard Rock

A view of the bathroom in the Rock Star Suite.

Photograph preservation documents early 20th century history

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

BY MARIA DMITRIEVA
Conservator
and
TARA BACKHOUSE
Collections Manager

BIG CYPRESS — The archive of the tribe's museum carefully stores documents and photographs that testify to the difficult historical periods of existence and survival of the noble and proud Seminole people. One of the collections that shows this history includes many albums that were created by the family of W. Stanley Hanson, a white Fort Myers doctor who devoted his life to medically treating Seminole citizens, as well as fighting for Seminole rights and facilitating communication between Seminole people and other local residents. These photographic prints from the last century tell us about lives and traditions, about outstanding leaders and tribal citizens, and also have a teaching mission. These photographs are antiques. Many have physical and chemical damage, and therefore need significant treatment work. This year we started a new project to preserve these archival documents and photographs. So far 26 objects from this collection have been treated in the conservation lab.

In this article we will talk about just two photographs that were conserved as part of this project. Professional conservation implies an individual approach to each object. A photographic print is a multi-component object, usually having a two- or three-layer structure. The nature and characteristics of these layers, as well as the state of preservation of each photograph, means that each one requires a customized conservation treatment.

The first image shows a 1924 black and white photograph of a man in a patchwork big shirt, possibly Sam Huff, standing amongst a group of chickees (Fig. 1 a-b). Original writing on the back says: "Indian in costume, Indian camp, Ft. Lauderdale, FLa. Clothes copied from coral snake (most deadly poison). 5/'24". This photograph, almost 100 years old, with iron gall ink on the back, was curled and deformed. For better storage and better preservation, this photo needed to be cleaned and flattened. Usually, to flatten a curled photograph, it is enough to put it in water till fully soaked and dry it in a straightened form.

In this case, it was impossible to dip the photo into the water because of the ink that would flow down the reverse side. Therefore, we had to apply the method of remote wetting, in which the ink writing does not have time to get wet and spread, and the emulsion, or top layer, absorbs/soaks moisture in small portions, swells, and makes the paper flatten. For this photograph, remote wetting followed by drying in a press was carried out 5 times until the desired result was achieved.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Fig. 1 - Gelatin silver photographing print of a man in a patchwork big shirt, possibly Sam Huff, standing amongst a group of chickees, 1924: a - before conservation treatment, b - after conservation treatment.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Fig. 2 - Gelatin silver photograph print – a portrait of Mary Tommie (Mrs. Smallpox Tommie) wearing beads and traditional hairstyle, 1959: a - before conservation treatment, b - after conservation treatment.

The second black and white photograph featured here is a 1959 portrait of Mary Tommie (Mrs. Smallpox Tommy) wearing beads and a traditional hairstyle (Fig. 2 a-b). This photograph had different damage than the previous one. There were tears, creases, scratches, tape remnants and glue residues, as well as a newspaper clipping attached on the back. Also, the photograph had losses along the right edge, where part of the original photograph was missing. Therefore, after a general cleaning and removal of foreign deposits, the losses were filled up with appropriate conservation paper. The right edge was strengthened from the back with equal-strength Japanese paper. The photograph was flattened using the remote wetting method to avoid the spreading of the water soluble ink of the red stamp. At the last step, the filled area was retouched with watercolor paint to match the pattern of the areas adjacent to the patch. An associated newspaper clipping was treated as well and now is stored together with the photograph.

The conservation treatment of old photographic prints will be continued to improve their preservation state and make them more available to the Seminole community. If you would like to see how we are working to preserve Seminole history, arrange a special tour by calling (863) 902-1113 or by inquiring at museum@semtribe.com.

Mural by Seminole artists unveiled in Tallahassee

SUBMITTED BY GORDON O. WAREHAM
Director, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

TALLAHASSEE — On April 27, the official unveiling of the 135-foot-long mural "The First Mothers" took place at 728 Macomb Street in downtown Tallahassee. The mural was created by Seminole artists Wilson Bowers and Samuel Tommie.

The Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority Board reached out to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum for help with a "call out to artist" for the project. Assistant museum director Marcella Billie and head of exhibitions James Patrick took the lead on finding the artists and also to make sure that the artists' vision was not compromised.

The mural project started the last week of March and lasted 10 days. Amid a few days of rain and some hot Florida days, the mural was completed on time.

James Patrick/Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Seminole artist Wilson Bowers talks to officials in Tallahassee during a ceremony for the unveiling of a mural he and Samuel Tommie created.

The unveiling drew a crowd of Tallahassee dignitaries, political leaders and Florida State University officials. Guest speakers were Mayor John Dailey, FSU President Richard McCullough, Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority Board Chair Slaton Murray and Director of the At-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Gordon O. Wareham.

"I'm proud of this story, the true history of the Seminole Tribe and people," said Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, who attended the ceremony.

Tommie created the diamond patchwork design on the mural.

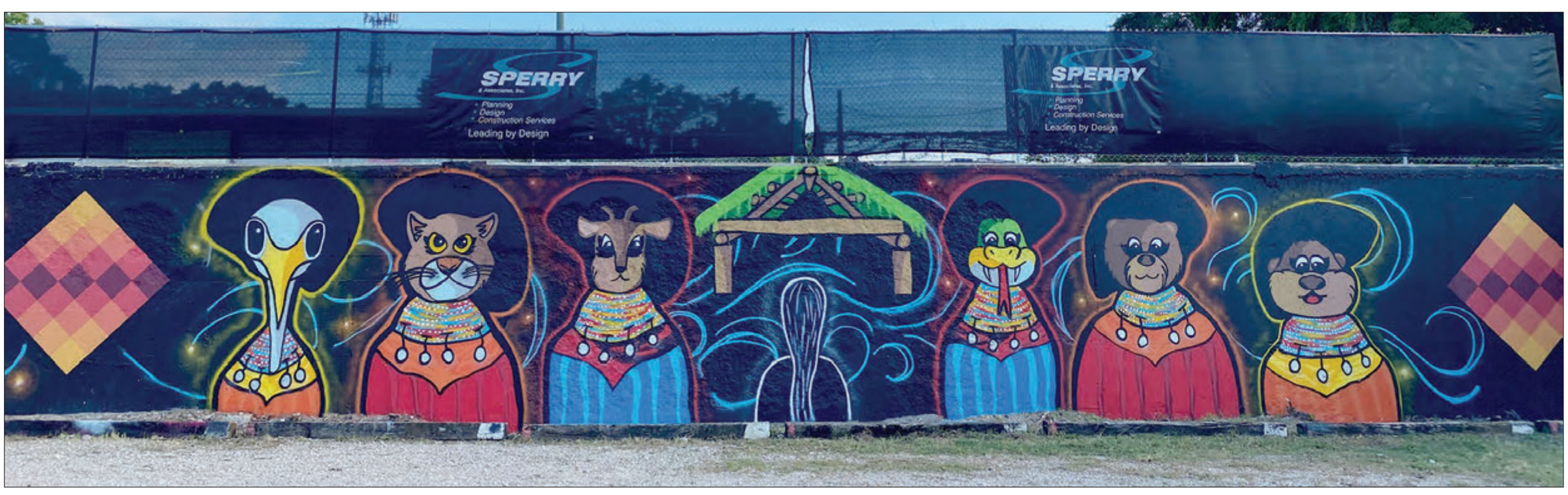
"I choose this design because this design pulls us all together, the colors stand for fire. It's important for each clan for each village," he said.

Wilson, who was last to speak at the ceremony, gave his views on the mural and its meaning.

"We have a history, we have a rich and colorful culture. We have traditions that survive today despite all that we have faced. I believe it's a disservice to the name and who we are not to help educate the people more on the name and the visuals that are represented by the university…," he said.

James Patrick/Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Plenty of representation from the tribe was in Tallahassee on April 27 for the unveiling of a mural by Seminole artists Wilson Bowers and Samuel Tommie. From left, in the front row are Charlotte Tommie, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, Wilson Bowers and Krystal Bowers. From left, in the back row are Samuel Tommie, Paul Bowers, Randall Osceola and Gordon O. Wareham.



James Patrick/Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

The mural created by Wilson Bowers and Samuel Tommie at 728 Macomb Street in downtown Tallahassee.

Health

HHS hires new doctors, warns on monkeypox

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Tribe's Health and Human Services (HHS) department has recently made two key hires to its staff.

Dr. Belleitha Lambkin-Alexander is a pediatrician who was hired to primarily serve the Hollywood and Big Cypress reservations; and Dr. Mary-Joy Monsalud is a family medicine physician who was hired to primarily serve the Brighton Reservation.

Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley, the head of HHS, made the announcement in a tribalwide memo May 24.

She said the hires are significant as the Brighton community, while having two nurse practitioners, hasn't had a dedicated physician for about two years. In addition, for the Hollywood and Big Cypress communities, the need for a pediatrician has been on the rise.

Kiswani-Barley said tribal members can schedule appointments with the new doctors by contacting their tribal health clinics.

Meanwhile, HHS has issued a warning about the monkeypox virus, which has recently surfaced in the U.S. Kiswani-Barley said May 26 that two suspected cases had emerged recently in Broward County.

"We should treat it like any other virus," she said. "It's important and wise to maintain the use of a mask, even though it's optional."

Kiswani-Barley said the contagious virus can be contracted through respiratory droplets that are inhaled, similar to the Covid-19 virus. She said HHS is trying to source a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved vaccine to have on hand at the tribe in case it is needed. She added that the current risk is considered low and that it's too soon to predict whether it will become widely transmitted in the U.S.

Kiswani-Barley said monkeypox symptoms usually begin with a fever and can include a headache, muscle aches and exhaustion. Chills and backache may also be present. After a fever, a rash develops within one to three days (sometimes longer), often beginning in the face and spreading to other parts of the body. Lymph nodes in the neck, armpits or groin may also swell.

"The key is for individuals to know their own body and get help immediately if they have any symptoms," she said. "Get checked to be safe and get ahead of the game."

Kiswani-Barley said if individuals think they've been exposed, they should isolate themselves and call their tribal health clinic.

Covid-19 uptick

In addition, the tribe has recently seen a slight uptick in positive Covid-19 cases.

Kiswani-Barley said the positivity rate had been consistently at less than 5%, which is considered under control, but is now hovering around 10%.

"The data show this will likely continue until about mid-June and may continue after, but there should be a steady decline after that," she said.

However, Kiswani-Barley warned that summer vacations and national holidays like Memorial Day and the Fourth of July usually coincide with a spike in cases.

"The main message is you can still live with some level of normalcy, but if you do have signs and symptoms, don't expose your family for the short-term gratification of a holiday," she said.

On the horizon

Kiswani-Barley said the proposed expansion of the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Center on the Hollywood Reservation is still in progress. HHS is waiting for its grant request to be finalized before the design is completed and work can begin.

A two-story medical center annex would be located north of the main facility and would house offices and an imaging center for services like basic X-rays and ultrasounds.

Kiswani-Barley said if all goes as planned, the new annex could open in 2024 or 2025.

HHS is also in the midst of creating a new home health aide department. The tribe currently contracts with several outside agencies to provide tribalwide home health aide services, but would rather provide those services in house.

Kiswani-Barley is hopeful the new department could be in place by the end of 2023.

"It will end up being a huge cost savings for the tribe and a lift in the quality of care," she said.

Also on tap are two new Elder Services buildings for the Hollywood and Big Cypress communities. Elder Services falls under the HHS umbrella.

"The conversations have started and we are finalizing designs to meet the needs of the community," Kiswani-Barley said.

For more information about monkeypox, Covid-19 or other health concerns, tribal members can call the HHS hotline at (833) 786-3458.

Lumbee researcher to study cancer among American Indians in NC

BY SARAH NAGEM
Border Belt Independent (North Carolina)

As a medical researcher and member of the Lumbee Tribe, Dr. Ronny Bell has plenty of professional reasons to study cancer rates among Native Americans in North Carolina.

But for Bell, it's also personal. His father died of colon cancer in 2014 at the age of 82.

Bell said his father, a retired educator with Robeson County schools who instilled in his children the importance of education, maintained a looming presence at 6 feet, 6 inches tall and 270 pounds.

"Just a big man," said Bell, who grew up in Robeson County. "And to see him, see how cancer ravaged his body until he passed away, it was just really hard."

Bell and two other cancer researchers in the state have been awarded a one-year, $225,000 grant funded by the the V Foundation for Cancer Research's Victory Ride, which was held Saturday in Raleigh.

The state's three cancer centers designated by the National Cancer Institute – Duke University, the University of North Carolina and Wake Forest University – are teaming up for the project.

Bell is leading the charge at Wake Forest, where he serves as associate director of community outreach engagement and director of the Office of Cancer Health Equity at the Wake Forest Baptist Comprehensive Center.

He said he reached out to his counterparts at Duke and UNC to pitch the project, which is being led by the Southeastern American Indian Cancer Health Equity.

"I said, 'Hey, I'm American Indian by heritage. It's important for me to reach out to this community and provide services,'" Bell recalled. "I said, 'What if our three cancer centers work together to provide cancer services to the American Indian populations in North Carolina?'"

Bell said he hopes the project will help researchers better understand how to encourage American Indians to get screened for cancer and to live a healthy lifestyle.

"Most of the major cancers, we know that we can treat them if we catch them early enough," Bell said. "So we need to make sure that people are getting screened for lung cancer and colorectal cancer and breast cancer and prostate cancer.

"It's a matter of increasing awareness of these issues," Bell continued, "ensuring that people are having conversations with their doctors about making sure they're getting screened when they need to."

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That's also true in North Carolina, according to data from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. Cancer is the second leading cause of death, including for Native Americans in the state.

North Carolina, which has the largest Native American population of any state east of the Mississippi River, is home to eight state-recognized tribes. Only one of them – the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in western North Carolina – is federally recognized, meaning it gets money from Washington for health care initiatives.

"They have a wonderful health care service there," Bell said of the Eastern Band of Cherokee. "They have their own public health services facilities."

The Lumbee Tribe, which is based in Robeson County and has about 60,000 members, has been pushing for more than a century for full recognition.

NIHB conference to be held in DC

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Health Board's National Tribal Health Conference will be held Sept. 25-29 at the Hyatt Regency in Washington, D.C. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the organization. For more information visit nihb.org.

Protect yourself from mosquitoes this summer

BY NINA LEVINE
The Florida Department of Health in Broward County

For Floridians, mosquitoes are nothing new. In fact, since Florida temperatures are typically always above 50 degrees, mosquitoes are present in Florida year-round. We know one thing for certain, with the rainy and warmer season right around the corner, mosquitoes will be out in full swing.

These pesky nuisances aren't just annoying, they can also carry transmittable viruses such as Zika, chikungunya, West Nile and Dengue. The risk of disease transmission through bites of infected mosquitoes to humans often increases during the warm, rainy months.

To protect against mosquitoes, the Florida Department of Health in Broward County recommends Floridians "Drain and Cover."

"Everyone should be aware of mosquitoes and take steps to protect themselves," says Dr. Paula Thaqi, Director of the Florida Department of Health in Broward County. "The best way to do that is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. We recommend a practice called Drain and Cover."

Drain standing water in and around the house. Eliminate even puddles because Aedes can breed in containers as small as a bottle cap.

Get rid of water that collects in garbage cans, tires, buckets, roof gutters, pool covers, coolers, toys, flowerpots and plants with pockets, such as bromeliads. Discard items where rain or sprinkler water collects. Clean bird baths and pet water bowls twice a week.

Inside the home, mosquitoes can breed where water collects, such as refrigerator ice makers, electric toothbrush holders and drips under sinks.

Cover yourself and the openings in your home. If you go outdoors when mosquitoes are active, wear shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves. Spray your skin and clothing with repellent containing DEET or other approved ingredients (check the label). Keep windows and doors closed, and repair damaged screening.

Visit cdc.gov/mosquitoes/index.html for more information on protecting yourself and your family from mosquitoes.

'Next Level Chef' winner to be keynote speaker at UNITY conference

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Stephanie "Pyet" DeSpain, winner of the first season of Gordon Ramsay's "Next Level Chef," will appear as the keynote speaker at United National Indian Tribal Youth's (UNITY) National Conference from July 8-12 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Pyet impressed the judges with her Indigenous fusion cuisine, which combines the food of her Native American and Mexican heritage.

"Chef Pyet is an excellent role model and an example of someone uplifting Indigenous culture and traditions on a national stage," Mary Kim Titla, UNITY executive director, said in a statement. "Her story demonstrates to our Native youth that there are many paths to success that honor their culture and their talents."

Pyet is short for Despain's inherited Native American name, Pyetwetmokwe.

In 2021, Pyet was named the seventh-best private chef in Los Angeles by Entrepreneur Magazine. Her life's work has involved uplifting Indigenous culture and traditions via storytelling, traveling and cooking.

Pyet's passion for cooking developed as a child while being the help in the kitchen. She was intrigued by the spices and aromas in her family's taquerias and restaurants in the Kansas City area. She attended culinary school to pursue a culinary education and has earned a certification in wellness and nutrition.

Pyet started a personal chef business, 'Pyet's Plate,' in 2016 to promote her passion for wellness, nutrition, and quality of food to the public. Her focus now is to encourage Indigenous ingredients in everyday cooking. While doing so, she hopes to encourage others to pass along healthy cooking, lifestyle choices, and traditions within their own families.

Pyet will join UNITY trainers and presenters at the conference, engaging Native youth from across the country through workshops, breakout sessions, music and cultural sharing. The event will also include a fashion show, a 3-on-3 basketball tournament, and additional keynote speakers.

Courtesy photo

Chef Stephanie "Pyet" DeSpain

To register for the conference and for more information visit unityinc.org/.

SEMINOLE SCENES

Beverly Bidney

SIGN OF THINGS TO COME: Construction on the next phase of the Ahfachkee School in Big Cypress is expected to commence soon. The new building will look like the existing one and house kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms, administrative offices and a new gym.

Kevin Johnson

SISTER SAYS: Moore Haven High School softball coach Jaryaca Baker, right, makes a point to her sister, Preslynn Baker, during the Terriers' district championship game against Bradenton Christian on May 5. Preslynn is a freshman pitcher and infielder. The Bakers are from the Brighton Reservation.

Beverly Bidney (2)

SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER: Above and below, PECS kindergarten students celebrate their last day of school with a party that included a slip-n-slide, play time, music and an impromptu dance party on the grass at the school's culture camp May 26.

Kevin Johnson

RODEO ON REZ: Eric Osceola, from Bigg E BBQ, cooks up meaty meals at the Bill Osceola Memorial Youth Rodeo on May 14 on the Hollywood Reservation. All youth participants in the rodeo were treated to complimentary food from Bigg E thanks to the office of Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola.

Sean Zanni/Patrick McMullan via Getty Images

DONATION OVATION: Hard Rock International Chairman and Seminole Gaming CEO Jim Allen, fourth from left, is joined onstage by "Saturday Night Live" actor Kenan Thompson, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. and New York City Council speaker Adrienne Adams to present $100,000 donations from Hard Rock to the YWCA of Queens and South Asian Youth Action Inc. during the grand opening of the Hard Rock Hotel New York on May 12.

Facebook

CHEERS!: Actor Kelsey Grammer, of "Cheers" and "Fraiser" fame, poses with fans during an event in mid-May at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City. Grammer was at the property to promote his Faith American Brewing Co. "What a pleasure it is to be at an iconic venue like the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. Atlantic City is basically where it all started with my beer. Every chance I can … I come here...I love Atlantic City," Grammer said in a story on WPG Talk Radio's website.

NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

Tribes celebrate Montana land ownership and bison range restoration

MOIESE, Mont. — A narrow gravel road takes visitors zig-zagging up a mountain, alongside a creek, and, if they're lucky, they'll see buffalo roaming freely on the terrain.

The bison range sits on more than 18,000 acres of undeveloped land in northwest Montana — land taken by the U.S. Government without the consent of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

In 2020, Congress passed a law that transitions management of the land from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service back to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, who signed off on the law last year, said with the loss of tribal homelands in the early 1900s and depletion of bison herds, Plains tribes lost traditional connections with the mammal.

"But in spite of that tragedy and loss, we are still here. You are still here. And that's something to celebrate," Haaland told a crowd celebrating the restoration of the bison range at the Salish Kootenai College [in May].

She said returning management of the land to the tribes is a culmination of Native peoples' resilience, conservation guided by Indigenous knowledge and the Biden administration's commitment to honor treaty obligations. She called it a return to something pure and sacred.

"When our Indigenous ancestors lived on this land alongside the plethora of animals, and they each respected their place and the balance of nature," Haaland said.

She said the people then relied on bison for food and subsistence, believing future generations would do the same.

"We all know history took a brutal and tragic turn after that," Haaland said, referring to settlers colonizing Indigenous people and hunting bison near extinction.

And that history wasn't represented accurately at the bison range's visitor center.

Whisper Camel-Means, the tribes division manager for the wildlife refuge, said under the Fish and Wildlife Service supervision the tribes' story wasn't quite correct. She said the exhibits there previously used a different tribes' word for bison.

"We're not lumped together Indian language, Indian things. We're Sèliš, we're Qlispè, we're Ksanka. We all have different stories," Camel-Means said.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have corrected inaccuracies at the visitor center located on the Flathead reservation. They previously tried to change the information but couldn't because they said the Fish and Wildlife Service prioritized wildlife preservation.

The visitor center is now open, featuring new exhibits that better reflect the tribes' involvement in bison conservation. Oral histories now included there recount how the U.S. discriminated against and excluded tribal members from land management operations when it was turned into a wildlife refuge.

A documentary recently produced by the tribes titled "In the Spirit of Atatice" sets the record straight about who initially brought bison to the area.

Stephanie Gillin, education program manager for the tribes' natural resources program, said she worked with cultural committees to get the correct history for the new exhibits.

"We listen to our elders to where some stuff we have to protect because if we don't, if we put it out there, we lose what it gives to us — you know, we lost that power it gives us," she said.

Generational trauma, Gillin said, is still felt today within tribal communities and correcting the information at the visitor center is about respect and preserving the tribes' history.

The tribes are working to build a bigger museum that will be closer to U.S. Highway 93. It's a push to share their history with more people.

- NPR

Newsom signs Hurtado bill exempting 2 tribal gaming agreements from environmental review

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law May 25 a bill introduced by state Sen. Melissa Hurtado, D-Sanger, that would exempt certain tribal gaming projects from review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Senate Bill 900, co-authored by Assemblyman Rudy Salas, D-Bakersfield, ratifies gaming compacts between the state and two groups: the Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe and the Middletown Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians.

SB 900 does this partly by classifying the two compacts as non-projects for the purposes of CEQA, which ordinarily requires that developments undergo detailed environmental reviews that can invite intense public scrutiny.

A news release from Hurtado's office made no mention of the CEQA exemption and instead focused on the two compacts' economic and community benefits.

"For decades the Tachi Yokut Tribe has been a valuable partner in the Kings County Community," Hurtado said in the release. "The tribe provides scholarship assistance, job training and adult education programs, health and welfare assistance and other social services. I am pleased that the Tachi Yokut Tribe will receive the recognition they deserve."

In the release, the Tachi Yokut tribe's chairman, Leo Sisco, thanked Hurtado, who is running for California's 16th Senate District seat.

"On behalf of the Tachi Yokut Tribe, I would like to thank both Gov. Newsom and Sen. Hurtado for leading the effort to pass our tribal-state gaming compact," Sisco stated. "We are pleased to continue our role as a positive economic force in the local community while maintaining the important opportunities and resources for our members, many of which are made possible by our gaming enterprise."

- Bakersfield.com (California)

Muskegon County casino approval complicated by another tribe that calls it 'shameful'

MUSKEGON COUNTY, Mich. – Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer wants to delay a decision on a Muskegon County casino until a federal decision is made on whether to recognize a different tribe that may want to open its own casino.

A decision on whether to federally recognize the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians is due by Oct. 12. If it does receive federal recognition, the tribe could open its own casino, according to Whitmer.

Whitmer is frustrated by a June 16 federal deadline to decide whether to approve the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians' proposal for an off-reservation casino near I-96 and U.S. 31 in Fruitport Township.

In a recent letter to a federal official, Whitmer sought an extension of her deadline, or an earlier decision on the Grand River Bands' recognition.

"Shameful" is how the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians termed the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians' plan to open a casino on property the Grand River Bands says is in its ancestral homeland.

The Grand River Bands has been seeking federal recognition, which the Little River Band already has, since 1994.

Meanwhile, the Little River Band has been seeking to open the Fruitport Township casino for the past 12 years, and already has received federal approval for it. The tribe currently operates a casino in Manistee.

"I am deeply concerned and disappointed that another tribe is attempting to pressure the governor to give away some of our homelands in order to build an off-reservation casino on the treaty lands of our tribe," Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians Chairman Ron Yob said in a prepared statement. "This is morally wrong and unjust, and we call on Governor Whitmer to reject this cynical effort."

Little River Band Ogema Larry Romanelli called Yob's comments "unfortunate" and said the property the casino is planned on is "our homelands as well." He said his tribe's original reservation was in Muskegon County, 17 miles from the proposed casino site.

"We share heritage," Romanelli said of the two tribes. "We share the same bloodlines."

Whitmer clearly is unhappy with having to make a decision on the casino before the federal government decides if it will acknowledge the Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians.

In a terse letter sent Monday, May, 23, Whitmer pressured U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to decide on the tribe's recognition before June 1 "so that I can take it into account" in determining the fate of the casino. Alternatively, she said her deadline should be extended.

"This is a problem of the (Department of Interior's) making, and it is a problem that DOI must solve," Whitmer wrote to Haaland.

Romanelli said the issue of the Grand River Bands' sovereignty and the Little River Band's casino should not be tied together, and puts Whitmer "in a very awkward spot."

"We wish them well," Romanelli said of the Grand River Bands' quest for official acknowledgement from the federal government. "Their recognition has taken a long time."

The Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians first sought federal recognition in 1994, and has been on the "active consideration list" since 2013, according to Yob. The recognition was needed to solidify its plans to open a casino near downtown Muskegon several miles west of the Fruitport Township site.

For decades, tribal leaders held out hope that a casino eventually would be developed on the "Harbor 31″ site on Muskegon Lake. In 2014, city officials began to back off their endorsement of the plan, and ground recently was broken on a $110 million mixed-use development of the Harbor 31 property.

Yob praised Haaland for pushing the tribe's petition for recognition "back on active consideration." He also expressed "the greatest respect" for Whitmer.

"It is shameful that another tribe would seek to alienate our people from the lands of their ancestors," Yob said. "I am hopeful that Governor Whitmer will preserve and protect the lands of the Grand River Bands for generations to come."

Whitmer wrote to Haaland, the Grand River Bands "may wish to open their own gaming facility" not far from the Little River Band's proposed casino site. She could "frustrate" those plans if she were to approve the Little River Band's casino, Whitmer wrote.

The Little River Band's plans for an off-site casino at the site of the former Great Lakes Down horse racing facility has been in the works for more than 12 years. It is proposing a $180 million development, including a 149,000 square-foot casino and 220-room hotel on the 60 acres in Fruitport Township.

Because it would be an off-reservation casino, it requires federal and state approval.

The Department of Interior gave its approval of the casino in December 2020, just prior to former President Donald Trump leaving office. That gave Whitmer a year to make her decision, but she later was able to get federal approval for a six-month extension.

In her letter to Haaland, a President Joe Biden appointee, Whitmer complained that the deadline "forced" by the Trump administration was "unworkable" because of the pending issue of the Grand River Bands' recognition.

She wrote that if a decision on tribal recognition isn't made by June 1, her June 16 deadline should be extended until there is a decision.

The governor wrote "it is critical that we have this information available to enable us to weigh the various considerations and accurately assess the impact and consequences of this decision."

While broad local support buoyed the Little River Band's planned casino for the past 12 years, it has received pushback from other Michigan casinos that oppose off-reservation gaming.

The Detroit City Council and the Wayne County Board of Commissioners, where three state-licensed casinos operate, issued resolutions last year to disagree with off-reservation gaming efforts. They're concerned approval of an off-reservation casino will lead to "an influx in casino gambling operations."

- Mlive.com. (Michigan)

Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians pledges a commitment of $9 million to tribal college initiative

The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians announced May 26 it was committing more than $9 million to support the California Indian Nations College. The educational effort aims to become the first stand-alone, fully accredited tribal college in California in decades, according to a statement issued by the tribe.

The announcement from the tribal chairman, Darrell Mike, said the primary mission is to build a solid foundation for new generations and that this donation is aligned with that vision.

"We believe that education is the foundation for success in life," Mike said, adding "CINC offers a springboard for Native and non-Native students pursuing opportunities that can be best achieved with a college degree and the knowledge that comes with it."

The donation represents the largest funding pledge to CINC since it was established nearly five years ago, according to a tribal statement. The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians says it's already donated $3.75 million to the project and has now committed to spending $1.9 million annually over the next three years. The total donation is $9.45 million.

Mike said he hopes that other regional tribes with students enrolled in tribal colleges will step up to match this pledge.

CINC was established with a vision to provide two-year accredited Associate of Arts degrees. A statement from the tribe says the college prepares graduates for careers and further educational opportunities at colleges and universities nationwide.

"Through well-rounded coursework that incorporates indigenous culture, Native language revitalization, and the re-institutionalization of traditional Native American values, CINC seeks to educate students in such areas as business and hospitality administration, American Indian studies, film, communications, philosophy, and sociology, among more than 20 learning tracts," the statement said.

A statement from the tribe says the College received its initial seed money early in 2018 after being chartered by the tribe in September of 2017.

The funding allowed the college to quickly build a staff and capacity. The College taught its first classes in the fall of 2018 in cooperation with UC Riverside Extension. An instructional partnership was also formed with the College of the Desert in Palm Desert, to allow for all California Indian Nations College classes to be fully transferable.

The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians are Chemeheuvi people whose traditional lands include parts of California, Utah, Arizona, and Southern Nevada. In 1867, a group of Chemehuevi settled at the Oasis of Mara in Twentynine Palms. The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians are their descendants. Today, the Tribe's lands consist of two Reservations, which are located near the town of Twentynine Palms and the City of Coachella.

For more information on the California Indian Nations College, visit www.cincollege.org.

- KESQ (Thousand Palms, California)

Titanic expedition a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these Indigenous artists

A pair of Indigenous artists from Newfoundland and Labrador are going to sail to the site of one of the most famous maritime disasters in history and interpret the experience through their art.

Alex Antle and Nelson White will spend eight days this summer travelling to the place where the Titanic struck an iceberg in 1912 and sank almost four kilometres beneath the sea.

It's an initiative of Miawpukek Horizon Maritime Services, a company dedicated to developing First Nations seafarers, and OceanGate Expeditions, which is conducting scientific surveys of the Titanic wreck.

The artists will interact with an Indigenous crew, as well as research scientists and tourists, and could get the chance to dive to the wreck themselves.

When Antle, a Mi'kmaw beadwork artist from the Bay of Islands area, saw the call for Indigenous artists, she leapt at the opportunity.

"I called in every favour I had for that one. I got some letters of support from all kinds of community members and arts organizations."

Antle has been expanding into printmaking and traditional crafts such as caribou tufting and quill work but she isn't committing to any one art form for this expedition just yet.

"I have some plans going into it or what I think I want to do but I'm not making any decisions until I actually go and see what I'm most inspired by," she said "Right now, I'm really just thinking about how cool the wreck is going to be. But maybe I get there and I'm really inspired by the stars or something like that.

"I'm trying not to make too many plans before I actually go and get to experience the journey."

Nelson White is a Mi'kmaw painter and member of the Flat Bay First Nation Band who lives in St. John's. His work often focuses on ordinary Indigenous people, frequently at work, and that's what is inspiring him most about this opportunity as well.

"The Titanic is an exciting name and it's an exciting wreck and things like that. But my real interest is working with Indigenous crew and seeing how they interact on such a large vessel with a science crew, with adventure tourists, with all these different elements and things like that," said White.

Like Antle, White doesn't know yet what he will create out of the experience. But he does know how he's going to go about it.

"I'll take lots of reference photographs and I'll talk to people, the same as I work now. I talk to people and I paint people who I find interesting and situations that I find interesting and I'm sure over the course of eight days, I'll find more than one thing interesting on the voyage."

The plan is to take the experience and translate it into art, and, for Miawpukek Horizon Maritime Services, a chance to introduce more Indigenous people to the potential of a maritime career.

White said the artists will get to interact with everyone on board and, if the weather and time agrees with them, could get to go on a dive to the wreck.

"I will be very happy if I get to do a dive," he said. "I'm really, really hoping that we get to go down."

Antle is interested in the scientific application of the dives as well.

"I know on this mission they're going to be taking environmental DNA samples of the water to figure out how the Titanic wreckage actually acts as an artificial reef," she said.

"So I'm really interested in that, to see what grows around the Titanic site and what kind of marine life is around there. That's what I'm kind of hoping to incorporate into the art that I'll be creating."

- CBC (Canada)

US Indigenous women face high rates of sexual violence – with little recourse

Amnesty International has called on the US government to fully restore tribal jurisdiction over crimes on Native lands in the face of staggeringly high rates of sexual violence against Native women, according to a report released on May 17.

Nearly one in three American Indian and Alaska Native women have been raped – more than twice the average for white women and probably an undercount given gaps in data collection, according to the report.

These high numbers, the authors explained, result from the US government stripping tribal nations of their authority, followed by a "complex jurisdictional maze" that, depending on whether the survivor and perpetrator are Native and the location and severity of the crime, could place responsibility in the hands of tribal, state or federal authorities.

"You have then people who survive an assault, they have police show up who are then arguing on their doorstep who has to take this, who doesn't want it, who's responsibility it is, whose [it] isn't," said Tarah Demant, the report lead.

The 98-page report came 15 years after Amnesty International published a study on the crisis of sexual violence against Native women. Demant said it was rare for the organization to revisit an issue in this way. But after seeing no significant decrease in these crimes despite a series of related federal policies viewed as huge steps toward rectifying the situation, she said it was clear they needed to reinvestigate.

There was the 2010 Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA), which allows tribal courts to sentence people to up to three years' imprisonment. There was also the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was recently reauthorized and is expected to make it possible for some nations to prosecute non-Native perpetrators of sexual violence.

Although TLOA had some positive effects on women's safety, it still only allows for limited sentencing and the requirements to implement it are "onerous", according to the report. As of October 2021, only 16 tribes had implemented it. At the same time, many tribes don't have the needed funding to be able to move forward with prosecutions under VAWA, according to the report.

"All these half measures are Band-Aids on a tumor," said Demant. "The tumor here is that the United States has stripped tribal governments of their sovereignty and their authority and their ability to protect their populations and prevent this type of violence."

In the report, Amnesty International urged Congress to take broader steps to address the sexual assault epidemic, including overriding the supreme court's 1978 Oliphant v Suquamish decision, which established that Native courts do not have criminal jurisdiction over non-tribal citizens. Amnesty also pushed for amending the Indian Civil Rights Act to give Native nations broader sentencing power.

The authors also detailed how the high number of sexual assaults has been exacerbated by the US government under-resourcing tribal police, healthcare and other support services.

While the national average is one law enforcement officer for every 286 people, on Native lands the average is one officer for 524 people, according to the report. At the same time, "of the 650 census-designated Native American lands analyzed in 2014, only 30.7% of the land was within an hour's drive of a facility offering sexual assault examination services," the authors wrote.

Demant said the federal government "has obligations because of their actions and attempted elimination of Indigenous people … through that trust responsibility".

Tami Truett Jerue, executive director of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, who helped with the report, said having sovereignty over these issues is a "good final step". But, she said, "there's a lot of things that have to happen in the meantime."

In Alaska, which has some of the highest rates of sexual assault against Indigenous women in the country, Jerue, a tribal member of Anvik village, said nations would need to have control over such things as rape kits and be able to readily provide counseling, including more traditional methods with elders.

Rachel Carr-Shunk, executive director of Uniting Three Fires Against Violence in Michigan, a tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalition, who also helped with the report, said it was important that the response to local problems were local, tribal solutions. Handing off cases to the FBI and the US attorney's office, who, she said, may be several hours away and offer little communication and accountability, can be extremely detrimental.

She gave the example of a woman who had been sexually assaulted on Native trust land in Michigan several years ago, and whose case was taken up by the FBI. But after about 18 months of delays, Carr-Shunk said the woman eventually couldn't bring herself to continue with the process and so the charges were dismissed.

Carr-Shunk, an enrolled member of the Sault Ste Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, asked: "How is that justice for that survivor?"

Ultimately, Demant said, sexual violence against Indigenous women is a human rights crisis, one that the entire US government needs to come together to address.

She said: "The US government is obligated by its international human rights law obligations, and frankly its own treaties here in the United States with tribes, to do more to actually solve this problem."

- The Guardian

BIA approval clears land in Beloit for Ho-Chunk Nation casino project

MADISON, Wisc. — The Bureau of Indian Affairs approved the placing of 33 acres of Beloit land into trust for the Ho-Chunk Nations casino project. The move allows for the building of the casino on a portion of the 70-plus acres purchased by the Ho-Chunk Nation for a casino, hotel, conference center, waterpark, and multiple restaurants. It is a project 30 years in the making.

"It was 1992 when Governor Tommy Thompson signed a compact with the Ho-Chunk Nation that agreed to have another casino for the Ho-Chunk," said Ho-Chunk Nation public relations officer Casey Brown. "It's going to be great, not just for the tribe but also the surrounding area."

Brown says much of the wait over the past decade has been on approval to place the land into trust, which allows for the construction of a casino. Brown says construction will create 3,000 jobs and, when complete, 1,300 jobs for the area.

Beloit city manager Lori Curtis Luther says she is excited about more jobs for the area. But she adds it is also invigorating to return the land to the Ho-Chunk Nation, which occupied the area long before the city.

"This certainly is home to the Ho-Chunk Nation, and we think it's appropriate that they now have the land that they can generate revenue and support their people," said Luther.

Brown says the following steps are finalizing the paperwork for the casino to begin construction. The groundbreaking and project launch is anticipated to happen in the next several months. Brown says the casino is phase one, and once complete, phase two (the rest of the destination location) will begin construction.

- WMTV (Madison, Wisconsin)

SOUTH FLORIDA'S ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION

JUN 3
BRANTLEY GILBERT

JUN 9
THE BLACK CROWES

JUN 17
AFL RIZE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

JUN 23
THEO VON

JUN 25
RINGO STARR & HIS ALL STARR BAND

JUL 10
NEHA KAKKAR

JUL 14
CHRIS TUCKER

JUL 28
STEELY DAN

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Education

B

Brighton breaks ground on new buildings

Culture, B&G Club, immersion, library part of project

BY DAMON SCOTT
Staff Reporter

Damon Scott

Tribal leaders, elders, family members, students, tribal employees and PECS' administrators and staff marked the groundbreaking of soon to be built facilities.

BRIGHTON — The Seminole Tribe's Brighton Reservation is known not only for the Pemayetv Emahkv Charter School (PECS), which opened in 2007, but also the unique Creek language immersion program it initiated in 2015. Now, after years of planning and effort, the school and the program will see a big boost with new facilities that are now under construction.

The Brighton community gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony May 24 to mark the occasion of a building that will house the immersion program – which is now using portable classrooms – and a separate complex that will host a new Boys & Girls Club, library and community cultural center. The entire project also includes an expansion of the school's cafeteria, a chickee village for cooking and special events and additional parking. The new development, at 26,000 square feet, is located just west of the school and is expected to be completed in late 2023.

"All these buildings that are going up – they're all about preservation – knowledge, identity, the language – and all those things that make us Seminole," Lee Zepeda, the tribe's executive director of administration, said.

It was noted at the groundbreaking that many tribal leaders, elders, parents and employees past and present played a part in the creation of PECS, it's immersion program, and now the construction of new facilities. But it is three Seminole women in particular that were held up as having the most influence on it all – Jennie Shore of the Otter Clan, the late Lorene Bowers Gopher of the Snake Clan and the late Louise Jones Gopher of the Panther Clan.

The trio is credited for imagining a charter school on the Brighton Reservation in the first place – and one with culture and immersion programs. The three took it from imagination to reality.

"The accomplishments of each of these ladies have left a lasting footprint in our tribal history," Jade Osceola, the immersion program manager, said. "To us this is more than just buildings. It's the perfect rendition of the past meeting the present in order to preserve our future."

✦ See GROUNDBREAKING on page 3B

Florida Indian Youth Program returns to in-person format

STAFF REPORT

A student experience that is available to tribal youth each summer is making an in-person return. The Florida Indian Youth Program (FIYP) is scheduled from July 10 to July 22 at Florida State University in Tallahassee. Due to the pandemic, the last time FIYP took place at its home at FSU was 2019.

FIYP is a free, two-week, college preparation and exploration program available to members and descendants of the Seminole Tribe who live in Florida or Georgia and are from 14 to 19 years old. Organizers describe it as a career focused academic enrichment program that will expose students to a range of educational and employment opportunities.

Several tribal members and Education department staff attended in 2019. Participants typically live in a residence hall on campus or nearby and classes and activities usually take place between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Some students take college site tours and explore academic programs they are interested in exploring.

In the past, the evening hours and weekends are reserved for parties, trips to the mall and other activities, like bowling. An awards banquet is usually scheduled on the last night to recognize all the attendees.

"The program is designed to engage students and will be both intensive and challenging in order to awaken and cultivate each student's full potential toward becoming future leaders in their communities," a program description reads.

The Tallahassee-based Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs Inc. is the nonprofit that sponsors the program.

Those interested in applying can visit fgcia.org, click the "Youth Program" tab, and then "Florida Indian Youth Program." Questions can be directed to (800) 322-9186 or info@fgcia.org.The deadline to apply is June 10.

Via Facebook

The Tallahassee-based Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs Inc. is the nonprofit that sponsors the program.

Big Cypress preschool graduates earn their diplomas

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Dressed in bright yellow caps and gowns, the Big Cypress preschool class of 2022 walked down the aisle and collected their diplomas May 24 as family and friends cheered their accomplishment.

Preschool center manager Andrea Jumper thanked the parents.

"This is a great group of kids, you all did a great job," Jumper said. "They are all ready for kindergarten."

Teacher Tara Pruitt told the students how much they meant to her.

"As this chapter finishes and the next begins, I want to thank the students," Pruitt said. "As I teach, I also learn. A little bit of each of you will always be with me."

The graduation program began with a few songs, complete with choreography, in which the students displayed their knowledge of the alphabet as well as their dancing and singing skills. The nine graduates beamed throughout the program.

After the diploma presentations, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie got emotional as she told the students she watched their parents grow up.

"You are making a difference, so keep being you," Councilwoman Billie said.

With that, the students were embraced by their families, posed for photos and enjoyed lunch together.

Tribune reporter/intern Calvin Tiger contributed to this story.

Beverly Bidney

Proud graduate Loraine Jumper walks down the aisle as her big brother Andre Jumper smiles in the background at the Big Cypress Preschool graduation May 24.

Beverly Bidney

Shayln Koenes shows her excitement on her way to receiving her diploma.

Beverly Bidney

Dressed in their caps and gowns, the soon to be preschool graduates wait patiently to make their grand entrance and get their diplomas.

Beverly Bidney

Toby Pruitt, Taezleigh Pruitt, 1, Zailani Bear Osceola and Tana Bear Pruitt in front of the backdrop the students made for the graduation at the Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club.

Beverly Bidney

Dressed in cap, gown and sparkly silver shoes, Akira Gore is all business as she walks down the aisle to get her preschool diploma.

Beverly Bidney

Graduate Harvey Bowers prepares to give a high five as he walks down the aisle to collect his preschool diploma.

Eighth graders bid farewell to Pemeyetv Emahakv

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — On the final day of school, May 26, eighth graders at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School took their last walk through the hallways of the school they have known for most of their lives.

They walked past cheering students, staff and family members as they made their way to the gym for the traditional eighth grade farewell. The ceremony included speeches, awards, snacks and a slideshow of the students' history at school.

Principal Tracy Downing started things off by reminding the students and their families that they were out of school for a year and nine weeks during the pandemic and had to pivot to online classes.

"We were able to provide a really rich, high quality education from afar," Downing said. "We couldn't have done that without you parents. You were there with them, you pushed them and partnered with us. We accomplished an incredible feat; we educated them really well."

When students came back to in-person classes in April 2021, they were in small groups, socially distanced and wearing masks.

"We faced that adversity with drive and determination I've never seen before," Downing said. "I'm confident you are well prepared for ninth grade next year. This is to honor and recognize you for your hard work and academic excellence."

Middle school teacher Quenten Pritchard announced the awards for students in various categories and Culture instructor Jade Osceola gave out awards from the Culture department.

Three "Founding Mothers" educational awards were announced. The awards are named for three women who were integral in the creation of PECS: Lorene Gopher, Louise Gopher and Jennie Shore.

Lorene Gopher educational award

Lewis Gopher spoke about his mother Lorene Gopher before presenting the award.

"She always said 'you can't know where you're going if you don't know where you come from,'" Gopher said. "By participating in this school, you are helping our culture come back."

Criteria for the Lorene Gopher educational award include attending PECS for a minimum of three consecutive years, maintaining a 3.0 GPA in Seminole Creek language classes, are active and knowledgeable in Seminole culture, shows enthusiasm and a willingness to learn more about Seminole history and culture, displays leadership qualities in school and the community and believes culture should be present everywhere, not just the classroom.

The award was given to Sariya Alvarez.

Beverly Bidney

Eighth graders take their final walk through the halls of PECS May 26 as students and teachers cheer for them.

Beverly Bidney

Winners of the three "Founding Mothers" educational awards, from left, Jayleigh Braswell, Yani Smith and Sariya Alvarez, display the awards on stage during the eighth grade farewell ceremony.

Louise Gopher educational award

Rita and Carla Gopher spoke about their mother Louise Gopher. Rita acknowledged that most of the students didn't know Louise Gopher, so she told them about her.

"She was the first Seminole woman to graduate from college," Gopher said. "She spent the rest of her life in education. She wanted good teachers here. You don't realize how much of an advantage you have here. Just know how much these three ladies worked so you have this school."

Gopher told the audience that her mother received an honorary doctorate degree from Florida State University and gave the commencement address.

"She always ended her commencement speeches with this," Gopher said. "We move more confidently into the future when we are grounded in the lessons of the past."

Criteria for the Louise Gopher educational award include attending PECS for a minimum of three consecutive years, maintained a 3.5 GPA in overall academics, exhibits positive moral attributes, takes pride in their studies while striving to achieve excellence, shows engagement and enthusiasm for academic material and perseveres even when tasks may seem difficult to master.

The award went to Yani "Eslicet" Smith.

Beverly Bidney

Eighth graders Kashyra Urbina, Aaryn King, Truly Osceola and Jayleigh Braswell sit together in the gym as they await the start of the farewell ceremony.

Jennie Micco-Shore educational award

Osceola introduced the Jennie Micco-Shore award with a brief summary of Shore's 40 years in education.

"She won't retire," Osceola said. "Now she is in the immersion program, where we vitalize and bring the language and culture back to life. I encourage you all to walk that path."

Criteria for the Jennie Micco-Shore educational award include attending PECS for a minimum of three consecutive years, maintained a 3.0 GPA overall, hardworking individual who strives for excellence in both standard academics and Seminole Creek language studies, shows enthusiasm and a willing to learn more about Seminole history and culture and exemplifies Seminole virtues: to be humble, to be loving, to be truthful, to be meek and to be respectful.

Shore announced and presented the award to Jayleigh "Apoke" Braswell.

After cake and punch, the students posed for photos and watched the slideshow.

Beverly Bidney

One of the "Founding Mothers," Jennie Shore, announces the recipient of the award in her name as Culture instructor Jade Osceola watches.

Beverly Bidney

Eighth graders display their culture awards as principal Tracy Downing, at right, applauds their accomplishments.

FSU holds cultural graduation

STAFF REPORT

Florida State University recognized 176 graduates April 28 during its cultural graduation, known as V-rak-ke-ce-tv. V-rak-ke-ce-tv is a Seminole Creek word meaning "to honor."

The ceremony began in 2013 as collaboration between the Center for Leadership and Social Change, CARE, SGA and the Black Alumni Association. They partnered with the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum to create the ceremony which highlights the culture and tradition of the Seminole Tribe.

There is no specific curriculum for the ceremony, but students learn about elements of tribal culture including the significance of patchwork and storytelling. During the Estonko Welcome Mixer, held in conjunction with the ceremony, students learned about the history of the Council Oak, where in 1957 tribal leaders and a representative from the federal government signed papers recognizing the Seminole Tribe of Florida under the generous boughs of the tree.

Graduates received hand-woven stole from someone who has supported them during their collegiate journey. The ceremony honored and acknowledged the contributions of these support networks as well as the accomplishments of the graduates in a much smaller setting than the full university commencement.

"This is an intimate ceremony where we can take time to look back on their experiences and acknowledge the different ways it might have been challenging and also the different ways it might have been amazing," said Challen Wellington, from the Center for Leadership and Social Change. "We get to honor both of those experiences in the same moment."

Keynote speaker Stefany Moncada encouraged the graduates to embrace any lingering uncertainty as they begin the next chapters of their lives. He recalled his own feelings when he first got to FSU in 2011, but had no doubts the graduates are ready for the next step in their journeys.

"When you get a seat at the table, it is so easy to allow the circumstances to make you feel like you are not qualified," said Moncada, an FSU alumna and current program coordinator in the RISE Office. "But today, I'm here to remind you that you are. FSU has prepared you for the real world. Be confident in the lessons that you've learned on your journey. Share your thoughts when given the opportunity, because your experiences not only matter, but they have shaped you and helped you get to where you are."

The center is exploring more ways to work collaboratively with the tribe to increase programing and continue to introduce students to the culture, history and present priorities of the tribe.

FSU

FSU students participate in the school's cultural graduation.

NCAI to host conference in Alaska

STAFF REPORT

The National Congress of American Indians' 2022 Mid-Year Conference & Marketplace will be held June 12-16 in Anchorage, Alaska.

Attendees will have the opportunity to work collaboratively to protect and enhance tribal sovereignty. This year's theme is "Thinking Beyond Self-Determination."

Tribal leaders, NCAI members, Native youth, and partners from across Indian Country will gather to discuss proactive strategy development, advocacy, and more. In addition to three days of NCAI General Assembly, attendees will begin to define this period of tribal governance through task forces, tribal caucuses, and breakout sessions highlighting issues unique to tribal communities.

For more information visit ncia.org.

NAEFP names new leader

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Native Agriculture Education Fellowship Program announced May 19 the appointment of Nicole DeVon as executive director to oversee the Tribal Agriculture Fellowship for Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students studying agriculture and related fields. DeVon is a member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe and was born and raised in Washington State.

DeVon previously held the role of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Tribal Affairs Manager for the Family Support Division of Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. She has more than 20 years of experience in Native education, having worked with Native students from Headstart to college. Prior to working at DCFS DeVon was at Eastern Washington University, where she served as a coordinator for American Indian student programs and later as the inaugural Director of Native American Affairs and Tribal Liaison to the President of the Eastern Washington University.

PECS alums return to their roots

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Four years after completing eighth grade at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School, 17 high school graduates returned to their alma mater May 20 for the traditional graduate walk through the halls of the school.

Students from kindergarten through eighth grade lined those halls to applaud the grads and perhaps get some inspiration from the impressive caps and gowns. High fives, hugs and huge smiles were shared between students and teachers as they snaked their way through the PECS breezeways.

This was the fourth year PECS invited the high school grads to celebrate their accomplishments while setting an example for younger students. Previous walks were held in 2017, 2018 and 2019; the pandemic didn't allow for the event in 2020 and 2021.

The 2022 grad walk was followed with photos and one last goodbye to the students' elementary and middle school.

Beverly Bidney

Seventeen high school graduates from the class of 2022 returned to PECS for the traditional grad walk May 20.

Beverly Bidney

Okeechobee High School graduate Kyandra Harris and her baby, Essence Crawford, 1, greet teacher Mindy Wells during the grad walk.

Beverly Bidney

Okeechobee High School graduates Elle Thomas, left, and Adryauna Baker, right, pose with Culture teacher Suraiya Smith during the grad walk.

Beverly Bidney (2)

Above, Moore Haven High School graduate Pherian Baker hugs a teacher as he walks through the hallways of PECS. At right, as graduates walk by, Culture students hold up letters to spell the Creek word "heremahe," which means "very good."

Construction on the horizon at Ahfachkee

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Spring usually brings signs of new life, but at the Ahfachkee School it brought a dozen new portables.

Construction is expected to begin soon for the school's elementary classrooms and gym; the portables will be the students' home for the 2022-23 school year. When the portables are completely set up, they will all be linked together with six on each side of a covered walkway.

The new building is scheduled to be complete in January 2024. The building will house K-5 classrooms along with two collaboration rooms, a computer room, music lab, clinic and administrative offices. The design will be modeled on the existing middle and high school building.

The gym will have a fitness room, restrooms and locker rooms complete with showers. Additionally, the gym will have a stage for school presentations and assemblies.

✦ **See page 6C for more renderings**

Courtesy rendering

A rendering of the completed elementary school, on the right, with the existing middle and high school building on the left.

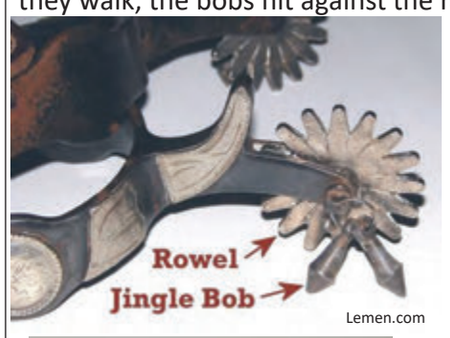
Courtesy rendering

A rendering of the gym and its stage.

Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office — June 2022

Spurs have endured through centuries as important tools from the ancient Romans to modern cowboys. They were originally designed to help riders control the movement of a horse without the use of the reins. While the most recognizable part of the spur is the rowel, the tool actually consists of five different parts. The heel band and button allow for the spur to remain attached to the boot, while the chap guard and shank allow for the spur to fit with the contour of the boot and keep it from scraping. The rowel spins freely along the back of the spur. American rowels tend to be significantly larger than those used in Europe due to the bulky leather that is used for American saddles which causes the boots to sit further away from the body of the horse. The rowel is often mistaken for the making the well-known jingle sound heard when cowboys are walking in their boots. In fact, cowboys were actually known to attach "jingle-bobs" to the rowel (top left) so that when they walk, the bobs hit against the rowel creating the familiar sound (Arizona Ghostriders).



Lemen.com

In 2015 (bottom left) and again in 2021 (below), the archaeology team found two different spurs in different stages of deterioration on the Brighton Reservation. Most people, when our historians tell them that the Seminole Tribe of Florida has a rich history with cattle and the cowboy life don't believe it. However, NPR's Jacki Lyden wrote a story in 2016 called "South Florida Seminole Cowboys: Cattle Is 'In Our DNA" and we highly recommend you check it out!

THPO

THPO

Immokalee celebrates preschool graduates

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

IMMOKALEE — The Immokalee preschool class of 2022 took the first steps to the rest of their lives as they walked down the red carpet ready to receive their diplomas May 18.

Proudly dressed in bright red caps and gowns, the eight graduates beamed as they stepped onto the stage. The class recited the Pledge of Allegiance in English and Elaponke, sang a few songs and each grad took the microphone to tell the assembled crowd a little bit about themselves, including their favorite color.

The students' preschool years were disrupted by the pandemic; they spent two years doing virtual school from home.

"Today they are here live and in person," said tribalwide preschool director Thommy Doud. "They worked so hard and are ready to go on to kindergarten."

Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, Immokalee Board Liaison Ralph Sanchez and Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers all congratulated the students.

"We all wish you loads of love as you graduate today," Rep. Bowers said. "Never stop growing, exploring, learning and challenging yourself. Be brave, strong and happy and know you are loved by all of us."

Executive Director of Administration Lee Zepeda thanked the families for raising the children.

"The days are long, but the years are short," Zepeda said. "It goes like that, so enjoy all these moments."

Preschool teacher Alex Ibarra said it wasn't easy coming back from virtual school and thanked the parents for their help.

"We want them to become independent learners," Ibarra said. "Our students are well equipped to take on the next chapter of their lives. We feel we have given them a great start in life."

Beverly Bidney

The Immokalee preschool class of 2022 performs on the stage during the graduation program May 18.

Beverly Bidney

Graduate Xion Garcia is embraced by his proud father Edward Garcia after the Immokalee preschool graduation.

Beverly Bidney

Graduate Chance Rodriguez shakes preschool director Thommy Doud's hand before receiving his diplomas.

Beverly Bidney

Alayna Ortega walks on the red carpet to get her preschool diploma.

Beverly Bidney

From left, Executive Director of Administration Lee Zepeda, Immokalee Board Liaison Ralph Sanchez, Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie and Big Cypress Board Rep. Nadine Bowers congratulate Kenai Micco during the Immokalee graduation ceremony.

✦ GROUNDBREAKING

From page 1B

Shore has taught Creek for decades and helped implement an initial "pull out program," wherein tribal students attending local elementary schools were pulled out of class once a week and taught Seminole language and culture. But Shore and others soon realized that one day a week wasn't enough.

"Most know that there is a large gap in those who speak the native tongue and those that do not," Shore said. "It is something that wouldn't be learned unless the person is immersed in it. Now for the first time in a very long time, the children are learning and playing all while speaking the language. It makes me happy."

Bowers Gopher, in addition to helping create the pull out program and the school's Creek classes, also contributed to a Florida Creek dictionary.

"I'm glad this day's here; I wish she were," an emotional Deanna Osceola, her granddaughter, said. "She never let me miss a Corn Dance to learn our cultural ways and I'm very thankful to have that from her."

Similarly, Jones Gopher was a force in the development of an early cultural education program that led to the formation of PECS. Her family said her focus was always to help retain Seminole culture and keep children in school.

"She worked tirelessly to help preserve our culture and our language. Her whole life was education," her daughter, Rita Gopher, said. "She always encouraged and pushed for the children to learn their language, learn their culture, learn who they were, where they came from."

Part of the excitement among students, teachers and staff is the forthcoming stability the new state-of-the-art facilities will provide. For example, there will be no more need for dilapidated portable classrooms – and the Culture department and Boys and Girls Club will have a new, permanent home.

"The young kids I see here today are the future leaders of this tribe, way beyond when I'm gone," Brighton Councilman Larry Howard said. "We're blessed. There are people in this world that will never see something like this. So don't take it for granted."

Councilman Howard asked former Brighton Councilman Andrew Bowers Jr. to speak at the groundbreaking. Both have worked over the years to help bring the project to fruition.

"I've been thinking about what I want to say and what came to my mind is three Seminole ladies. I would focus on what they did, not what I might have done," Bowers said. "They saw that the Seminole way of thinking, Seminole way of living, Seminole way of talking, was being lost. So they started out thinking: how can we teach this and continue this?"

Brighton Board Representative Helene Buster previously taught in the immersion program for two years. She said she'd like to do it again someday.

"Every day was a learning experience and the children were just sponges soaking up everything we were teaching them," Rep. Buster said. "I know that we're blessed as a tribe and as a community to have this school here."

Damon Scott

Jade Osceola, the immersion program manager, started teaching Creek at PECS in 2016.

Damon Scott

Rita Gopher spoke about her mother, the late Louise Jones Gopher.

Damon Scott

Brighton Councilman Larry Howard talked about the project's impact on the community.

Damon Scott

Jennie Shore helped to establish PECS' immersion program in 2015.

Damon Scott

Former Brighton Councilman Andrew Bowers Jr. spoke about the project at the ceremony.

Damon Scott (2)

At left, a sign provides details about the immersion program building. At right, representatives of the PECS student council recite the Pledge of Allegiance in Creek and English before the groundbreaking.

Mother's Day

Beverly Bidney

Ahnie Jumper celebrates her first Mother's Day as a mother with her daughter Sawyer, 7 months old, at the Big Cypress Mother's Day luncheon May 10.

Robert Kippenberger

From left, Cierra Baker, Lahna Baker, Kalisa Baker, Margaria Baker and Charlene Baker, far right, celebrate Jaryaca Baker's next baby at the Brighton Mother's Day event April 26.

Beverly Bidney

Claudia Doctor shows off a gift of purple flowers at the Mother's Day luncheon in Big Cypress.

Robert Kippenberger

Jennifer Osceola skillfully balances her two grandchildren at the Brighton Mother's Day event.

Julia Ritter

From left, Gianni Boyce, his mom Tiffany Frank, Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall and her mom Wanda Bowers along with Bobbie Lou Billie and Edna Bowers celebrate the Hollywood's Mother Day event April 26 in a ballroom at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Robert Kippenberger

From left, Mitchell Runkles, Rosalie Runkles and Nauthkee Henry celebrate Brighton's Mother's Day.

Robert Kippenberger

From left, Kalgary Johns, Jo Johns, Catinna Tubby, Melissa Gopher-Carter, Dionne Smedley and Clarissa Urbina celebrate Mother's Day in Brighton.

Julia Ritter

Anahna Sirota picks up a gift from Blake Osceola, from the Hollywood Council's office, during the Hollywood Mother's Day raffle.

Beverly Bidney

From left, Garian Dixon, Carson Dixon, Clarissa Jumper, Elgin Jumper and Emery Jumper celebrate Mother's Day together in Big Cypress.

Beverly Bidney

From left, Brianna Bowers, Thomlynn Billie, Alice Billie and Tahnia Billie commemorate Mother's Day together at the Big Cypress celebration.

Beverly Bidney

Randee Osceola plays bingo as her niece Cher Osceola pays attention to everything but the bingo card in Big Cypress.

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Sports

Thomas sisters wrap up final season together at OHS

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

STUART — Elle Thomas is excited to embark on the next chapter of her softball career – college ball – but she also wanted her final high school season to last as long as possible.

Thomas, a senior four-year varsity player who is headed to Indian River State College, and her sister Lexi, a sophomore, made sure Okeechobee High School's season wouldn't end in the district tournament. The Seminole sisters from the Brighton Reservation combined for three hits and three RBIs in a Class 5A-District 8 semifinal May 3 as the Brahmans eliminated Suncoast-Riviera Beach, 11-1, in four and a-half innings at South Fork High School in Stuart.

"They've been doing really well, especially lately. They've been doing a great job of doing their job," said Kelci Breaux, who guided Okeechobee to a 12-9 record in her first season as head coach after the tribe's Mary Huff led the team for nearly a decade.

Pitcher Laci Prescott fanned nine in a five-hit complete game victory and Madison Hargraves had two hits and two RBIs.

The victory turned out to be the final triumph of the season for the Brahmans, who fell to South Fork in the district championship, 3-0. Seeded No. 8 in the 5A regionals, Okeechobee saw its season end with a 2-0 loss at No. 1 seed South Lake on May 12 in Groveland, about 30 miles west of Orlando. South Lake went on to reach the state championship game, where it lost to Middleburg, 1-0.

After an 0-2 start this season, the Brahmans eventually found their groove. They compiled a 7-2 mark during a nine-game stretch in the second half of the season.

"The beginning was a little rough because we didn't push together, but now we're playing as a team," Lexi said after the win against Suncoast.

"At the beginning we had little miscues; one game it was struggling hitting; one game it was struggling on defense," Breaux said. "It was just getting those pieces to click together; the last several games we've been able to do that."

Elle started the Brahmans off in the right direction against Suncoast by scoring the game's first run following a one-out walk in the first inning.

Suncoast knotted the score at 1-1 in the top of the third before Okeechobee erupted for 10 runs in the bottom of the inning.

Lexi, who already had smacked a hard-hit double earlier in the game, came through with a sharply hit, bases-loaded single past third base that brought in one run to make it 3-1.

Kevin Johnson

With her sister Lexi on the base path at third, Okeechobee senior Elle Thomas takes an at-bat in a Class 5A-District 8 semifinal May 3 at South Fork High School in Stuart.

Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Elle Thomas gets ready to take a lead off third base in the Brahmans' 11-1 win against Suncoast.

Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee senior Elle Thomas, left, and her sister, sophomore Lexi, have plenty of reasons to smile after they combined for three hits and three RBIs in an 11-1 win against Suncoast in a Class 5A-District 8 semifinal at South Fork High School in Stuart.

A couple of batters later, Elle kept the momentum going by drilling a two-run double to center that gave Okeechobee a 6-1 cushion.

Throughout the season, the sisters were consistent producers at the plate. They had hits in nearly every game.

Elle batted out of the No. 2 spot, where generated 17 hits, 10 RBIs and a .309 batting average while scoring 19 runs. She led the team with nine doubles. Meanwhile, Lexi produced similar numbers from the lower half of the batting order. She had the team's third highest batting average at .347 batting average to go along with 17 hits, nine RBIs and five stolen bases.

In the field, Elle played her third year as the team's starting shortstop; Lexi was a starting outfielder for the second season in a row.

Although both played volleyball last fall, they didn't play together very often because Lexi was on JV for most of the season. Being starters on varsity softball afforded them a chance to play together, which they said is usually a good thing.

"It's been good," Lexi said. "We bump heads a little bit, but we help each other out. Whenever we mess up, we'll yell at each other to do better, and then we will."

"It's been good and bad – sisters, you know – but mostly good," Elle said.

They come from an athletic family with deep roots in softball and baseball thanks to their parents Jason and Laverne and older brothers Layton and Layne.

In August, Elle will head to IRSC in Fort Pierce to study business and start her college softball career. IRSC played a doubleheader on the Brighton Reservation in April, something Elle hopes will happen again next season.

"That would be really cool," she said.

Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee's Lexi Thomas, who finished third on the team in batting average, blasts one of her two hits in the Brahmans' win against Suncoast.

USF

University of Sioux Falls shot put and discus standout Tyler Hiatt.

Record-setting season for track & field standout Tyler Hiatt

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

Tyler Hiatt generated impressive numbers and records in his first season on the University of Sioux Falls track and field team in South Dakota.

Hiatt, the son of Seminole tribal member Stephanie Bowers Hiatt and grandson of the late Seminole veteran Stephen Bowers, set school records in the discus throw and shot put, qualified for the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track and Field Championships and earned all-conference honors.

In his first outdoor season, he won four titles and had 12 top-three finishes in either the shot put or discus throws. In the shot put, he has the top-six throws in school history with five tosses of 55 feet or better. He placed second in the shot put at the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference Championships to earn all-conference honors.

Hiatt broke the school record for longest discus throw May 4. Breaking the record was nothing new to him; the record he broke was his own which he set earlier in the season.

The new record at 53.85 meters, or a tad over 176 feet, came in the Maverick Open in Mankato, Minnesota. It was good enough for second place at the meet.

He also won the shot put at the meet with a throw of 17.11 meters. In a meet in late April, Hiatt set the school record in shot put with a throw that covered 17.95 meters.

The D-II outdoor championships were held in mid-May at Grand Valley State Track and Field Stadium in Allendale, Minnesota. Hiatt registered a throw of 16.91 meters, which was good enough for 18th place in the shot put. In discus, he finished 17th with a throw of 47.57 meters.

Hiatt also excelled inside in the winter season. He competed in the D-II indoor nationals.

IRSC softball comes to Brighton

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Members of the Seminole Tribe joined Indian River State College students and employees and Lady Pioneer fans at IRSC's softball games played at the Brighton Reservation on April 11. IRSC won both games, defeating South Florida State College, 2-1 and 3-2.

The IRSC games — the first time the team has ever played at the reservation — are one of several activities planned to support the growing relationship between the tribe and the college, according to a news release.

"Our tribal members are strongly into sports, and softball is especially important to our reservation," Brighton Councilman Larry Howard said in a statement. "We enjoyed hosting these games and look forward to expanding our partnership with IRSC and holding more games here at the reservation for many years to come. We hope that IRSC's presence here encourages our youth to get involved with IRSC sports and educational programs as student-athletes."

After a lifetime at Heritage, Canaan Jumper prepares to head west

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

PLANTATION — Canaan Jumper has spent about 12 years heading east for her education, but she is planning to head west for college, very far west.

Jumper, who graduated from American Heritage School in Plantation on May 21 and played on the softball team, will attend the University of Arizona in Tucson.

She visited the campus and is eager to return in August to start her freshman year.

"I like the campus and I like how people greeted us. Everybody was really nice," she said. "They have a lot of things for Native students, so I really like that. I just like how they are really involved with the Natives."

Jumper said she hopes to live in the college's Native learning and living center. She plans to study behavioral science. She hopes to continue playing softball recreationally.

For nearly her entire academic life, Jumper, the daughter of Andrea and Josh Jumper, has made the hour-long journey each way between the Big Cypress Reservation and Plantation.

"I've been going here since first grade, so I grew up with most of these people. I know a majority of the staff. It's like a second family here," she said.

Before she turned the tassel on her graduation cap, Jumper finished her high school softball career. She was one of nine seniors on the team. She spent most of the season as a pinch-hitter and backup first baseman. Her playing time in the field was not extensive, but she made the most of her plate appearances.

"One thing Canaan has [is] a really good knack of coming in and pinch hitting in critical situations because nothing affects her," Heritage coach Marty Cooper said. "She doesn't show any nerves. She just comes in and takes good hacks. She's come through a few times with base hits when we needed them. Not many people can come off the bench and be cold and swing the bat as if you've been playing the whole game."

Kevin Johnson

American Heritage senior Canaan Jumper takes an at-bat in the Patriots' 7-2 win against Jensen Beach in a Class 4A regional quarterfinal on May 11 in Plantation.

Jumper finished with four hits and four RBIs in 17 at-bats this season.

Being a tough out is something she learned from years of watching older sister Ahnie play at Heritage and then at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"I learned a lot," she said. "The way Ahnie played, she really taught me how to carry myself in tough situations, like if I get a strikeout, not to let it get into my head."

Through the years, she watched Ahnie win state championships in softball and her brothers Andre and Blevyns win state titles in football. Heritage's softball team wasn't as powerful this season as it has been in the past, but the Patriots did win a district championship. They beat Jensen Beach, 7-2, in a Class 4A regional quarterfinal before narrowly losing to St. Brendan in the semifinals, 6-5.

Heritage finished with a 13-14-1 record.

Cooper said he'll have to get used to not having a Jumper in the program next season.

"Very nice family. Good people," he said. "They're supportive whether their kids are playing or not playing. They're team people."

Kevin Johnson

Canaan Jumper fields a ball during warm-ups before facing Jensen Beach.

Kevin Johnson

Summer Gopher makes solid contact for a hit against Bradenton Christian on May 5.

Moore Haven poised to grow after solid season

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

MOORE HAVEN — Had this season been like previous ones, the Moore Haven High School softball season would have continued past the district tournament.

But despite being runner-up in their district and compiling a 13-5-1 record, the Terriers saw their season end May 5 with a 7-1 loss to visiting Bradenton Christian in the Class 2A-District 11 championship game.

Teams that finished runner-up in district tournaments used to automatically qualify for regionals, however, the selection process is now done by a power ranking for the runner-ups. Moore Haven's ranking fell outside of the top eight spots that qualify.

The good news for the Terriers is that they will return nearly their entire team next season. What appeared to be a rebuilding year at the start of the season – the team had only two seniors – instead turned into a successful one in the win column.

"We had a significantly better season than we did last year," said coach Jaryaca Baker.

In addition to Baker, the tribe was well represented on the field with Preslynn Baker, Tahnia Billie, Summer Gopher and Halley Balentine. In the final game, Baker (pitcher), Billie (third base) and Gopher (shortstop) started.

The Terriers were on an 8-1-1 roll heading into the final, but hadn't played a game in about two weeks due to weather and forfeits by opponents. They also played the championship game without three starters, who were replaced by eighth graders. Needless to say, rust and nerves were factors as Moore Haven struggled in the field at times.

"We [hadn't] played in two weeks. That hurt us," Baker said.

Preslynn Baker and Gopher were among the team's strongest hitters all season. Baker led the team with five home runs and tied for the team lead with three doubles; Gopher had the most doubles with four.

Coach Baker said she liked what she saw from her team this season and is looking forward to next year.

"This is one of the best teams I've ever coached because of the amount of effort, the want-to-be-here," she said. "Our record shows it."

Kevin Johnson

Moore Haven pitcher Preslynn Baker winds up for a pitch against Bradenton Christian.

Kevin Johnson

During a break in action, Moore Haven coach Jaryaca Baker chats with her sister Preslynn (11) and Tahnia Billie (20).

Kevin Johnson

Halley Balentine warms up for the Terriers.

Kevin Johnson

Summer Gopher gets ready to field at shortstop.

Seminole Bass Fishing Tournament debuts in Lakeport

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

The third time proved to be a charm for the inaugural Seminole Bass Fishing Tournament.

After being previously scheduled twice only to get postponed both times due to the pandemic, the tournament finally debuted May 7 on Lake Okeechobee.

The first boat departed Harney Pond Canal boat ramp in Lakeport at 6:30 a.m.

"We had 11 boats; I hoped for 20," said tournament organizer Amos Tiger.

Potential bad weather in the area may have deterred some folks, but it was never a factor.

"It was a good tournament. Everyone had a good time. There was some pretty nasty weather, but it went north and south of us," Tiger said.

Many people wore shirts and hats with the tournament logo on them. Brighton Councilman Larry Howard was on hand to congratulate the participants.

The weigh-in began mid-afternoon.

The overall winning team featured three generations of the Johns family, led by big bass champion Norman Johns. He and his daughter Jo and granddaughter Kalgary along with Jamie Thomas took home the top prize.

Norman reeled in the day's heaviest bass at 5.3 pounds.

Darlene Evans

The Seminole Bass Fishing Tournament championship team included, from left, Jamie Thomas, Jo Johns, Kalgary Johns and Norman Johns. They were joined by tournament organizer Amos Tiger and Brighton Councilman Larry Howard at the awards ceremony May 7 in Lakeport.

Darlene Evans

From left, Amos Tiger with James Tommie and Brighton Councilman Larry Howard at the awards ceremony.

Kalgary was also a double winner. She won the top female angler award which earned her a new rod from Fast Break Bait & Tackle in Okeechobee.

Caylie Huff and Gauge Chandler finished second. Craig Gopher, Josiah Gopher, Austin Clay and Charles Clay rounded out the top three.

Nobody went home empty handed. Everyone received a gift. Ice coolers and Hard Rock packages were among the gifts handed out.

Tiger said there's been talk about holding the tournament on a yearly basis. If so, he hopes to see more boats.

"I want people to know they missed a good tournament," he said.

Darlene Evans

The third place winners were Craig Gopher, Josiah Gopher, Austin Clay and Charles Clay, who were presented wtih a trophy by Amos Tiger, second from right.

Darlene Evans

Norman Johns holds up the 5.3 pound bass he caught, which proved to be the biggest in the tournament.

Triple Crown Fishing Series crowns champions

STAFF REPORT

The third and final event in this year's Seminole Sportsmen's Triple Crown Fishing Series was held May 21 in Big Cypress.

The duo of Mike Tiger and Kenny Descheene won the event. Rafael Sanchez and Allen Venzor finished second. Trewston Pierce and Marshall Tommie came in third.

Tiger captured the Sam Nelson Bigg Bass award by reeling in a bass that weighed more than five pounds.

It wasn't big enough to overtake Brian Billie, who won the George Grasshopper Memorial Bigg Bass for the biggest bass of the series, which was six pounds, two ounces.

Sanchez won the overall grand champion title with a total of catch of more than 45 pounds accumulated over the three tournaments.

✦ See FISHING on page 5C

Seminole Recreation

At left, Triple Crown Fishing Series grand champion Rafael Sanchez and his teammate Allen Venzor hold up the prizes they won at the series' final event May 21 in Big Cypress. They finished second as a team in the final event.

Seminole Recreation

Mike Tiger shows the 5 pound, 13 ounce bass he caught that earned him the Sam Nelson Bigg Bass award.

Bill Osceola Memorial marks return of rodeos

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

HOLLYWOOD — The turnout for the first Bill Osceola Memorial Youth Rodeo far surpassed the expectations of Cynthia Osceola.

The rodeo grounds on the Hollywood Reservation were filled with dozens of kids eager to get back to competing in rodeo, or for some, simply get started.

Rodeos had been dormant in the tribe since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, but that changed May 14 with the inaugural youth rodeo held in memory of Osceola's late father.

"This is a great thing for them. They were waiting," said Osceola, who decided to hold the rodeo to give kids something to do and to remember those, such as her father, who were leaders in the tribe.

"That's what I want the kids to learn, who were your people back then; a lot of them don't know," she said.

Thanks in part to rodeo, her father helped the tribe stave off termination and earn federal recognition.

In need of money for Seminoles to go to Washington, D.C., and state their case, Bill Osceola organized a plan to build a rodeo arena and open it to the public.

"They had over 500 spectators in their first rodeo. They made enough money to go to Washington," Cynthia Osceola said.

The tribe received federal recognition in 1957 and Bill Osceola became its first president, a remarkable feat for someone who didn't have any formal education.

"He grew up in the Everglades. He didn't know how to read or write," his daughter said. "He didn't have education, but he had a vision. This is what he wanted for us; Hard Rock standing there and us not having to worry about things."

She said her father always stressed to her to never take things for granted, something she wants younger generations to realize, too.

"We didn't just wake up and have all this. Those people back then worked and suffered and did a lot of things for us to have the things we have today," she said.

She hopes the youth rodeo in her dad's memory will become an annual event. She also praised the work and support of everyone in the rodeo, including the Jumper family. Moses "Bigg Shot" Jumper Jr. served as the announcer with multiple generations of his family also working or competing.

"The Jumper family is great. They take care of everything and make a good rodeo," she said. "Without Bigg Shot and his family, it wouldn't be possible."

Kevin Johnson

From left, Bill Osceola's daughter Cynthia Osceola and granddaughter Cyiah Avila are joined by Moses Jumper Jr., S.R. Tommie and Pastor Josh LeadingFox during a ceremony at the Bill Osceola Memorial Youth Rodeo on May 14 at the Hollywood Reservation's rodeo grounds.

Kevin Johnson

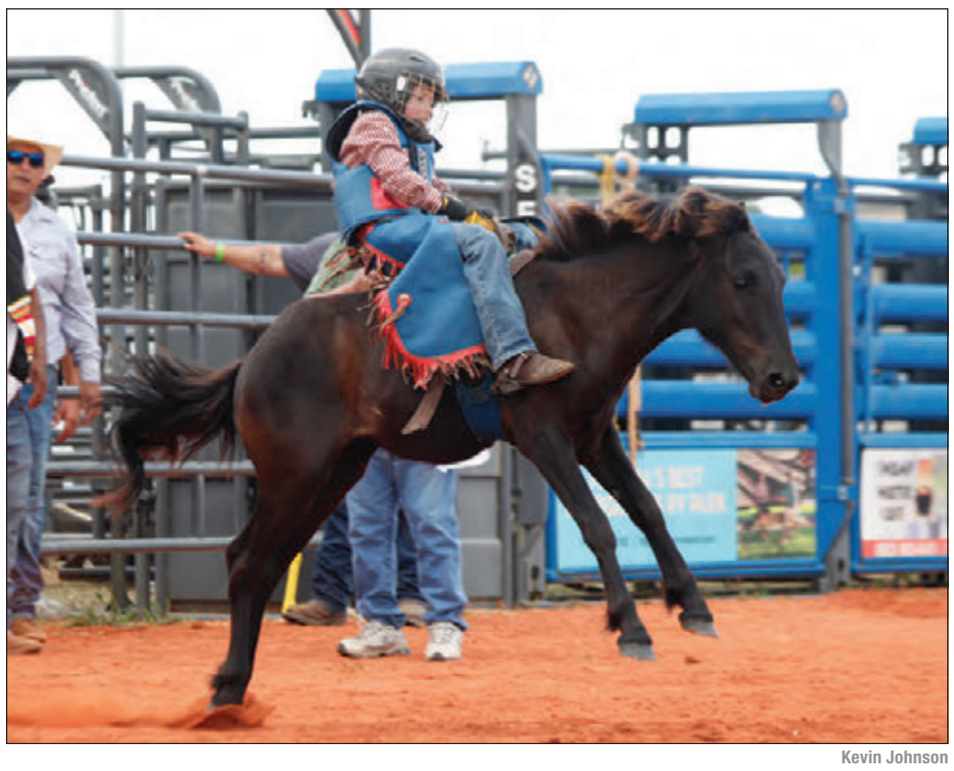
Leona Cochran receives some guidance from Ahnie Jumper with learning how to rope.

Kevin Johnson

Caden Jumper goes airborne after riding a tough steer.

Kevin Johnson

Cash Jumper takes control out of the gate.



Kevin Johnson

Ryker Miller gets off to a good start in pony riding.

Kevin Johnson

Cody Tommie does his best to remain on the pony.

Kevin Johnson

Candy Osceola shows great form with her roping.

Kevin Johnson

Cassius Gopher shows focus and concentration in roping.

Kevin Johnson

Alisandra Jacobs is determined to stay on for as long as possible in the pony riding event.

Bill Osceola Youth Memorial Rodeo results

Hollywood, May 14

Mutton Busting
1. Jacob Tigertail
2. Blayne Osceola
3. Issac Osceola
4. Cassius Gopher
5. Aponi Cochran
6. Kaidence Alvarez

Ribbon Pull 2-4 years
1. Bill Osceola
2. Brayden Osceola
3. Blayne Osceola
4. Justice Perez
5. Zone Delgado
6. Leona Cochran

Dummy Roping
1. Candy Osceola

Pony Riding 7-9
1. Ryker Miller
2. Cody Tommie

Pony Riding 10-12
1. Milo Osceola Jr.
2. Brace Miller
3. Alisandra Jacobs
4. Talen Jumper
5. Cash Jumper

Calf Riding 7-9
1. Issac Osceola
2. Alberto Delgabo
3. Ryker Miller
4. Cody Tommie
5. Kylo Cochran
6. Caden Jumper

Steer Riding 10-12
1. Cash Jumper
2. Ada Bruisedhead
3. Brace Miller
4. Milo Osceola Jr
5. Caden Jumper
6. Koty Gopher-Turtle

Jr Bull Riding 13-19
1. Grayson Johns
2. Tommie Osceola

Chute Doggin
No winner

Breakaway Roping
1. Milo Osceola Jr

Barrel Racing 8
1. KD Coleman
2. Lilly Coleman
3. Cassius Gopher
4. Aponi Cochran
5. Leona Cochran

Barrel Racing 9-11
1. Alisandra Jacobs
2. Ada Bruisedhead
3. Caden Jumper
4. Layla Osceola
5. Mesa Gopher

Barrel Racing 12-15
1. Atley Driggers
2. Summer Gopher
3. Talen Jumper
4. Paizlee Miller
5. Josie Osceola
6. Wyatt Bruisedhead

Barrel Racing 16-19
1. Cyiah Avila

FISHING
From page 3C

Beverly Bidney (above)/Seminole Recreation (below)

Above, Amos Tiger, left, and Marvin Hines team up in the final Triple Crown Fishing Series on a canal in Big Cypress on May 21. Below, Trewston Pierce, left, and Marshall Tommie show their trophies for third place.

Silas Madrigal helps set track records at North Park University

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

It's been a record-setting spring on the track for the Seminole Tribe's Silas Madrigal.

Madrigal was a part of two relay teams at North Park University in Chicago that set school records.

Madrigal and teammates Michael Kleiner, Jereme Ombogo and Terence Hollis ran the fastest 4x100 relay time in school history in a meet April 23 at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. Their blazing time of 42.29 seconds was good enough for second place at the meet.

At another meet, Madrigal helped set another school record as he, Kleiner, Sean Sanaghan and Luis Chavez shattered an 11-year-old record in the 4x800 relay by more than 26 seconds in a late season meet.

Madrigal earned all-conference recognition by virtue of the 4x100's third place finish at the College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin outdoor championships.

Madrigal, who also plays on the school basketball team, is a sophomore majoring in exercise science. He is a graduate of Okeechobee High School and Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School.

He is the son of Letty and Howard Madrigal.

North Park is a private Christian school on the north side of Chicago.

North Park University

Silas Madrigal, second from right, and his North Park University 4x100 relay teammates show their medals at a meet this spring.

JW

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Formula 1/Youtube

The Hard Rock logo is present near the tires on an Oracle Red Bull Racing car during the Miami Grand Prix on May 8 at the Hard Rock Stadium campus.

Hard Rock revs up presence in Formula 1 racing

BY CALVIN TIGER
Reporter/Intern

One day before the checkered flag was waved at the inaugural Formula 1 Miami Grand Prix, the Oracle Red Bull Racing Team and Hard Rock International signed a multi-year agreement in Formula 1. The agreement makes Hard Rock an official team and viewing partner.

The Hard Rock logo was visible on the Oracle Red Bull race cars for the May 8 race on the Hard Rock Stadium campus in Miami Gardens. The sponsorship paid off immediately as Oracle Red Bull driver Max Verstappen won the race and his teammate Carlos Sainz Jr. finished third.

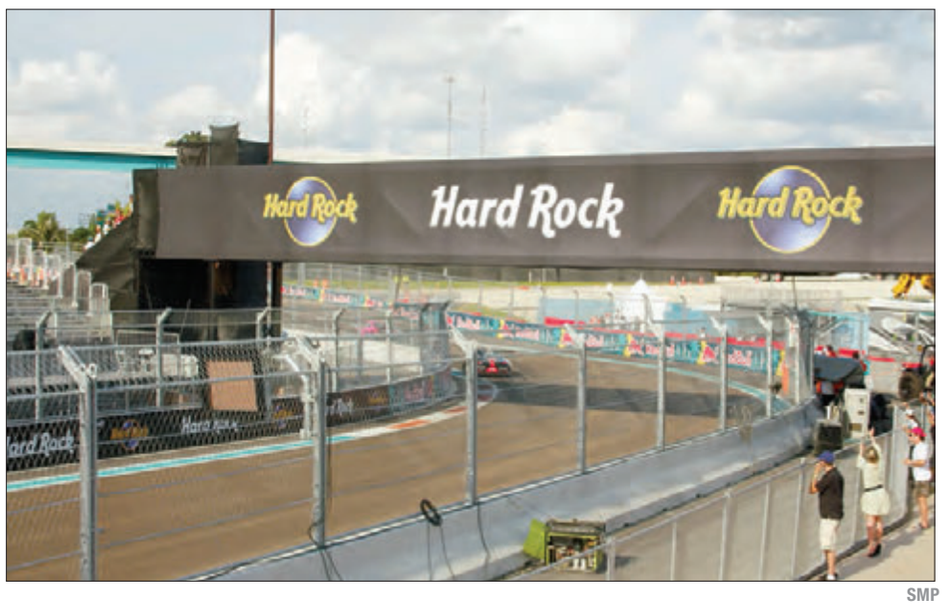
"Hard Rock is thrilled to partner with Oracle Red Bull Racing and their culture of winning both on and off the track to bring more dynamic entertainment experiences to our fans around the globe," Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in a statement a day before the race. "This partnership represents our ongoing commitment to collaborations with the best in class in sports, music and entertainment, while connecting with the next generation of fans from around the globe."

The partnership gives Hard Rock a presence on a team in a sport that attracts a global audience. Formula 1's race locations include Australia, Japan, Monaco, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the U.S. Las Vegas, where Hard Rock plans to build a guitar-shaped hotel on the Strip, will be the third U.S. track added starting next season in addition to Miami and Austin, Texas.

According to an article from si.com, Formula 1's popularity is gaining traction, noting that its highest ratings ever in the United States came last season. Additionally, the Saudi Arabia Grand Prix earlier this year was the most viewed race on ESPN since the broadcast giant took over the network rights for Formula 1 in 2018.

The alliance between Hard Rock and Oracle Red Bull will also encompass a collaboration with Oracle Red Bull Racing's Esports team. Founded in 2018, the squad has since won seven world championship titles across multiple Esports racing disciplines. Its involvement with Hard Rock will see the Esports team bring its experience of virtual racing to the fan experience through sim racing rigs in select Hard Rock territories. These sim racing rigs are simulators that mimic the real world environments of driving a Formula 1 car on a track.

Red Bull has been competing in Formula 1 since 1995 and has accumulated 78 race victories along with five driver's championship wins, including Verstappen's world championship triumph last year.



SMP

Fans and drivers can't miss the Hard Rock signage on the track at the Miami Grand Prix.

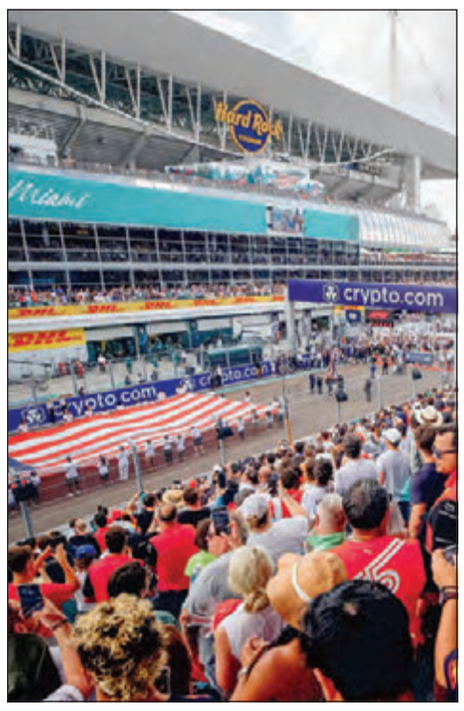
"Oracle Red Bull Racing is committed to bringing the excitement of Formula 1 to as many people as possible, all over the world, and this agreement with Hard Rock is a landmark for the team.," Christian Horner, Oracle Red Bull racing team principal and CEO, said in a statement. "It gives us the opportunity to provide our fans with some incredible experiences, and in turn it plugs the Hard Rock brand directly into a fan base that is expanding at an exceptional rate. F1's popularity has grown exponentially in recent years, especially in the US. Oracle Red Bull Racing is at the forefront of that explosion in interest in America, and now with Hard Rock International on board we can look forward to giving those fans an even more intense, immersive and engaging F1 experience."

Hard Rock's presence at the race was evident on and off the track, which drew 242,955 fans over the course of the race weekend, according to the race's Instagram page.

During the weekend, artists such as Maluma, Post Malone, The Chainsmokers, Tiesto and Zedd performed at race-related functions. The Hard Rock Beach Club, complete with pools, sand and cabanas near one of the track's turns, featured a stage for DJs and performances.

The race also attracted several celebrities, such as Michael Jordan, Tom Brady, Bad Bunny and David Beckham.

The track – known as the Miami International Autodrome – was completed earlier this year. It weaves around Hard Rock Stadium with 19 turns and three straights.



Hard Rock Stadium/Facebook

Opening ceremonies take place in front of Hard Rock Stadium.

SMP

Fans gather to listen to music at the Hard Rock Beach Club area at the race.

Superheroes visit Hollywood preschoolers

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — A group of superheroes greeted preschool students on the Hollywood Reservation prior to their lunch hour at the Dorothy S. Osceola (DSO) complex on April 20.

Staff members from the tribe's Advocacy and Guardianship department came dressed up as superheroes – Wonder Woman, Superwoman, Superman Batman and Robin – to have fun and interact with the kids. Instructors and staff at the school got into the sprit as well – as did many of the youngsters – dressing up as their favorite superhero characters.

Advocacy and Guardianship staff read the children's book "Super Rawr!" about a dinosaur dressed in a cape who can jump over tall buildings and saves the day. By the end of the picture book Rawr likes just being himself – at least until he goes to sleep and dreams of being an astronaut.

The visit was part of "National Child Abuse Prevention Month" which is observed every April. From April 18 to April 22, the Advocacy and Guardianship department's tribal family and child advocates hosted several activities to encourage the tribal community to show support for child abuse prevention.

Advocacy and Guardianship is part of the tribe's Health and Human Services department (HHS) and includes the Tribal Family and Child Advocacy (TFCA) program.

Damon Scott

Dressed as superheroes, from left to right are Advocacy and Guardianship staff members Monique Young, Kayla Weatherspoon, Tiarra Anderson, Kimberly Thompson and Anthony Terry on April 20 as they visited students at Hollywood Preschool.

Damon Scott

Hollywood Preschool students get excited about a special visit by a group of superheroes.

AHFACHKEE

From page 3B

Courtesy renderings (2)

Additional renderings of the Ahfachkee School expansion plans include a colloboration room, above, and a classroom, below.

FOR SALE

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17733A	N/A	AMERICAN SPORTWORKS UTV	2WD-340 CW11	N/A	Poor	$34
580342	N/A	SCAG TIGER CUB RIDING MOWER	STC48A-19KA	1,354	Poor	$59
003745	N/A	JOHN DEERE UTILITY CART	GATOR 6X4	N/A	Poor	$93
439158	2006	EZ-GO GOLF CART	SPORT 2+2E	N/A	Poor	$234
160556	1983	DORSEY TRAILER	FLATBED 45FT	N/A	Poor	$499
040778	N/A	JOHN DEERE RIDING MOWER	777 ZTRAK W/60" DECK	N/A	Poor	$509
672614	N/A	JOHN DEERE TRACTOR	2755	N/A	Poor	$569
009406	1998	LANDOLL LOWBOY TRALER	LOWBOY 317 48FT	N/A	Poor	$736
227034	2006	CHEVROLET MINI VAN	UPLANDER LT (AWD)	54,098	Fair	$1,219
600327	N/A	SCAG CHEETAH RIDING MOWER	SCZ61V-921FX 61" CUT	N/A	Fair	$1,279
250491	N/A	JOHN DEERE TRACTOR	5525 (LINE 1 ONLY)	N/A	Poor	$1,812
688987	N/A	LAND PRIDE ROTARY CUTTER	BATWING 15FT	N/A	Poor	$2,144
119306	2008	CHEVROLET PICKUP TRUCK	2500HD CREW CAB (4WD) DIESEL	182,559	Poor	$7,029
412594	2009	CHEVROLET DUMP TRUCK	C5500 4X4 Diesel	34,001	Poor	$13,152

Note - Previously advertised items are not reflected on this advertisement, only new listings. For more information contact Fixed Assets Dept. 954-967-3640, 954-966-6300 ext. 20034.

NEW!! - Tribal Members only- access this information at the website: http://semtribe.com/FixedAssets. (Registration required)