



The

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Voice of the Unconquered

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Decision expected soon on potential Hard Rock in Queens

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock International and New York Mets owner Steve Cohen should know in the coming weeks if their bid for a casino license is approved or rejected.

The New York Gaming Facility Location Board is overseeing the siting and evaluation process for up to three commercial casinos. The board expects to make decisions by Dec. 1, followed by Commission licensure by Dec. 31.

Metropolitan Park – the name of the \$8 billion Cohen/HRI proposal – would include a Hard Rock hotel and casino to be built next to the Mets stadium in the Queens Borough. The plan also includes turning what is currently a paved area into 25 acres of public park, an aspect that is emphasized on the project’s website. Restaurants, a live music venue and improvements for public transportation and infrastructure are also part of the plan.

According to Metropolitan Park, the project would create thousands of permanent union jobs with a priority on hiring local residents.

After several community meetings, Metropolitan Park received approval from a community advisory committee (CAC) on Sept. 30. The committee voted 6-0, and Metropolitan Park became the fourth and final casino proposal to receive CAC approval ahead of a final decision by the gaming board.

◆ See NYC on page 7A

Josh Jumper wins INFR world champion title in team roping

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

For many years, cowboys and cowgirls from the Seminole Tribe of Florida have been making the long trek to Las Vegas to compete in the Indian National Finals Rodeo (INFR). None has ever returned as a world champion...until now.

Josh Jumper, from the Big Cypress Reservation, won the INFR team roping championship with Clay Gunshows on Oct. 18 at South Point Arena.

At the champion buckle awards ceremony, Jumper was introduced as being the first INFR World Champion from the Seminole Tribe and the first INFR World Champion from east of the Mississippi River.

“This is for everybody back home,” Jumper said at the ceremony. “People who know me know how hard I’ve worked.”

The Jumper-Gunshows victory was somewhat of an upset considering they were far back in the standings at the start of the day. Even when they put up a time of 6.74 in the final round, two powerful teams had yet to go.

“The two teams in front of them never miss,” said Boogie Johns, who competed in barrels and was in the arena to see the team roping final.

But those two teams did miss.

“We’re like ‘Josh just won the World,’” Johns said.

For the four-day rodeo, Jumper (header) and Gunshows (heeler) had an average time of 29.39, six seconds faster than second place Braydon Boyd-Denton Begay. Gunshows is from Lodge Grass, Montana.



Clay Guardipee/INFR

Josh Jumper successfully does his job as header as he teams up with heeler Clay Gunshows to win the 2025 Indian National Finals Rodeo championship in team roping Oct. 18 in Las Vegas. Jumper is the first INFR world champion from the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

Perhaps it was the performances by Seminoles on the first day that foreshadowed something special was going to happen this year. Led by Josh’s daughter, Ahnie, six

Seminoles finished in the money in round one. Ahnie won the first round in ladies breakaway with a blistering time of 2.62 seconds. Josh Jumper (5th, team roping,

6.41) and his son Blevyns (8th in steer wrestling) also had strong outings.

◆ See INFR on page 4C

Asah Jumper marches in parade honoring Navy, Marines

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Asah Jumper, a sophomore at Fork Union Military Academy in Virginia, presented the colors Oct. 13 at a Philadelphia parade celebrating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps.

The Navy and Marine Corps were commissioned in Philadelphia in 1775 by the Second Continental Congress as two battalions of the “American Marines,” so the parade was a homecoming for these two branches of the modern U.S. military.

It was also a big moment for Jumper, a member of his school’s Color Guard. They marched past Independence Mall on Market Street with more than 100 other marching units including floats, historic groups, bands and members of the ROTC, NROTC, JROTC and Sea Cadets.

“Being in these big parades at a young age feels like I’m not only representing my family but my tribe,” Jumper said in an email to the Tribune. “Being a part of the Color Guard gives me so many opportunities in life. Being in a parade that big was such an honor, honoring the people who are in service, were in service and who died in service. Also honoring my family and tribe.”

According to news reports, thousands of Navy and Marine soldiers attended the parade and the week’s other events including a parade of ships on the Delaware River, flyovers by Navy and Marine aircraft, a Naval Academy vs Temple University football game, a gala and a concert by the U.S. Navy Band and the Marine Band and Drum Corps.



Courtesy photo

Asah Jumper, second from right (carrying rifle), marches with his unit from Fork Union Military Academy at a parade in Philadelphia Oct. 13 that celebrated the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps.

Seminole art exhibition opens in downtown Miami

BY DANIELLA HAKIM
Staff Reporter

MIAMI — In a world of overwhelming colonization, the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s roots continue to shape the Florida we know today. A cultural legacy that can’t be undone, one brought about by centuries of adapting, surviving, and remaining unconquered. A world united in tradition: a Yakne Seminoli.

HistoryMiami Museum, in partnership with the tribe’s Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, has announced the opening of “Yakne Seminoli,” an exhibition showcasing the resilience, creativity, and cultural legacy of the Seminole people. Roughly translated as “Seminole World,” “Yakne Seminoli” showcases the idea of “all Seminole traditions coming together.”

“Through our art, we honor those Seminole and Indigenous ancestors we call family,” said Gordon Oliver Wareham, a featured artist and the director of the Ah-Tah-

Thi-Ki Museum. “We celebrate the thriving of our tradition and culture in a world that has been colonized. Through our art, we keep the promise to future generations of the Unconquered people.”

History is at the forefront of this exhibition, which highlights the works of over 25 Seminole artists. The exhibition is primarily composed of 21st-century pieces, with several others dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. “Yakne Seminoli” showcases contemporary adaptations of Seminole traditions, such as sweetgrass basket weaving. Lena Osceola Frank’s basketry is displayed alongside the work of her daughter, Donna Frank, and adjacent to theirs are Hali Garcia’s coil baskets. Illustrating the evolution of this practice across generations, Hali’s “Sonic” and “Spidey Sense” baskets reflect her commitment to inspiring future generations to embrace their culture and traditional art.

◆ See ART on page 4A



Daniella Hakim

With his artwork behind him, Seminole artist Wilson Bowers does an interview with SMP in Miami.

Editorial

A tribute: Ernie Stevens Jr. – A giant warrior

• Levi Rickert

We Native people speak often about our ancestors from generations ago and preparing for the next seven generations. Part of preparing for the next seven generations is preserving the stories of our contemporary leaders. We need not always mention Crazy Horse or Geronimo when referencing great Native leaders because we have great ones among us today.

Future generations should know the struggles and triumphs of those working hard for Indian Country today. For that reason, some day a book should be written about Ernie Stevens Jr. (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin), the giant warrior who served as chairman of the Indian Gaming Association for the past quarter century until his sudden death on Friday. It is a death that shocked and stunned Indian Country.

After reading a post on Facebook, I could not believe what I was reading. On the Thursday a week before his death, Stevens was at the National Congress of American Indians’ Embassy of Tribal Nations. He participated in a press conference to discuss the results of some 150 tribal nation leaders who were in Washington for the National Congress of Indians Tribal Unity Impact Days. I was there to moderate the press conference.

Upon arriving at NCAI, I was greeted by Ernie and Indian Gaming Association Executive Director Jason Giles. We exchanged greetings. In a jovial mood, Ernie told some jokes that kept the room laughing.

As the tone became more serious, Ernie and I continued an ongoing conversation we’ve been having for about three years. Back then, he asked me to help him with his autobiography. In his Washington office, he told me he wanted the book to be released after his retirement. That day, he told me a story he wanted to be included in the book. After he told me the poignant story, he said: “Levi, you cannot write about it now. It’s for the book.”

The following February during the NCAI executive winter session, we spoke again about the book. I told him we needed to start the interviews so the book would be ready once he retired. He agreed.

In our conversation on Thursday at NCAI, he mentioned plans to visit Michigan to see the new hotel at the Gun Lake Casino Resort. He said the Gun Lake Tribe

held a special place for him because they persevered and won in court and now have a beautiful casino resort. I told him I live only about 20 minutes away. We agreed to tape interviews for the book then. It was our last conversation.

So on Friday evening when I began to see postings about his death, I was shocked and saddened.

In Indian Country, leaders and even Native news editors often become more than just colleagues — they become conference friends, even family. Ernie felt like family to me. Over the years, we shared rides between hotels and from airports, always catching up in those in-between moments. I remember one time we bumped into each other at the baggage claim area at the Las Vegas airport. He asked if I wanted to split a ride, and I said sure. He mentioned his luggage was still coming around. Then he grabbed a cart and pulled off five pieces of luggage. I laughed and said, “Ernie, I know you’re a big guy, but why do you need so much luggage?” He chuckled and explained he was heading to visit several tribal casinos in California after the conference. I was glad he had ordered a large SUV to pick us up to take us to the Paris Hotel.

Tall in stature, Ernie was a giant of a man in more ways than one. A true champion for Native people, he had a unique ability to connect with prominent figures — including athletes like A.C. Green, former Los Angeles Laker; the late NBA great Bill Walton; and even comedian George Lopez. While watching Muhammad Ali’s nationally televised funeral, I noticed Ernie seated alongside Chief Sidney Hill, Tadodaho of the Onondaga Nation, and Chief Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation. Later, he explained to me that Ali’s widow, Lonnie Ali, had reached out to him to help arrange for a Native American prayer to be included in the funeral service.

The first time I observed Ernie on Capitol Hill, I was truly amazed by how many U.S. senators and House representatives knew him. Typically, it’s the congressional aides who introduce their bosses to the host. But in Ernie’s case, it was the members of Congress themselves who approached Ernie with huge smiles and embraces. A true warrior, he was known on Capitol Hill.

A characteristic of a great leader is the ability to lead in times of uncertainty.

Last December, on the day after the White House Tribal Nations Summit, he hosted tribal leaders at the Indian Gaming Association headquarters in Washington,

D.C. to help them prepare for the presidential transfer of power back to Donald Trump. He told the leaders that each administration brings its own set of priorities, and that tribes needed to look for the opportunities the incoming administration might offer.

Ernie often reminded us that Native people must work with both sides of the aisle in Washington because Native issues are bipartisan. He reminded us that trust and treaty responsibilities to tribal nations are not partisan issues. A true warrior, he reminded us tribal sovereignty is a non-partisan issue.

At the NCAI press conference, Stevens said about Indian Country: “We at the Indian Gaming Association are not always about gaming, but we are always about tribal sovereignty. While there may be some tough times we are dealing with, it’s good to remember our ancestors faced even tougher times. Our ancestors had to deal with a lot more with a lot less ... I try to put it in a positive context because that is what we do.”

He admonished tribal leaders to keep fighting.

Through the years, I have observed Stevens be a good warrior for Native people. But, one of his best attributes was his love for his family. Often, he would speak about his wife Cher and talk openly about the accomplishments of his children. His love for his mother and the care he gave for his father, Ernie Stevens Sr., who passed away in June 2024 was a testimony to how Native men should take care of family.

Yes, Ernie Stevens Jr. deserves a book to be written about a life well lived so that future generations of Natives will realize you can be a giant warrior in modern times.

Please keep the Stevens family and Indian Country in your prayers. I shall miss my friend.

Thayék gde nwéndëmen - We are all related.

(This opinion was published Sept. 29 on NativeNewsOnline.net).

Levi “Calm Before the Storm” Rickert (Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation) is the founder, publisher and editor of Native News Online. Rickert was awarded Best Column 2021 Native Media Award for the print/online category by the Native American Journalists Association. He serves on the advisory board of the Multicultural Media Correspondents Association. He can be reached at levi@nativenewsonline.net.

Ernie Stevens Jr. remembered as “a champion for all of Indian County”

STAFF REPORT

Ernest L. “Ernie” Stevens Jr., 66, who served as chairman of the Indian Gaming Association (IGA) for more than two decades and advocated for tribal voices in federal policy, was laid to rest on his beloved homelands of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin after his sudden passing on Sept. 26.

A wake Oct. 3 at The Turtle School gymnasium drew more than 1,600 mourners, according to NativeNewsOnline. The next day a funeral ceremony was held at the Oneida Nation Longhouse, organized by Oneida ceremonial leaders. Burial was held at Oneida Sacred Burial Grounds Cemetery.

Throughout Stevens’ 25-year term as IGA chairman, tribal gaming revenues across the United States grew from \$11 billion in 2000 to a record-breaking \$43.9 billion in 2024. His advocacy ensured that tribal gaming revenues continue to fund education, healthcare, housing, and cultural preservation programs across Native communities.

“We mourn the loss of a friend who championed the sovereign rights of all Tribes to advance the livelihoods of their members through successful gaming enterprises,” Seminole Tribe Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. said in a statement. “Florida’s Seminoles will be forever in his debt for all that he accomplished on behalf of our Tribe and Tribes throughout Indian Country.”

“Beyond his advocacy, Ernie was a bridge-builder, committed to forging trust



Courtesy photo

Ernie Stevens Jr.

among tribes, regulators, and Congress alike,” National Indian Gaming Commission Acting Chairwoman Sharon Avery said in a statement. “He was a visionary who advocated for Indian gaming on an international stage, and also understood how strong oversight, integrity, and partnerships were essential for tribes to extend the blessings of tribal gaming for another seven generations.”

Stevens earned an associate’s degree from Haskell Indian Junior College (now

Haskell Indian Nations University) in 1983. His wife, Cheryl, and all five of their children, also graduated from Haskell.

“He loved Haskell deeply and often spoke of the mentors who believed in him before he believed in himself,” according to his obituary.

In 1996, Stevens earned a degree in criminal justice from Mount Senario College in Wisconsin.

Jason Giles, Executive Director of the Indian Gaming Association, announced Oct. 6, at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in Las Vegas, that the IGA will continue to honor Stevens’ legacy with a tribute at the National Congress of American Indians Conference in November.

“Ernie Stevens Jr. was more than a chairman; he was a warrior, a statesman, and a champion for all of Indian Country,” Giles said in a statement. “His vision and commitment built bridges across tribal nations, Congress, and federal agencies, ensuring that tribal gaming remained a cornerstone of tribal self-determination and economic growth. His legacy will be unmatched, and his voice will echo for generations to come.”

In addition to his wife, Cheryl, and their five children, Stevens is survived by 20 grandchildren, eight siblings, and his mother, Marjorie.

Donations in memory of Stevens can be made to the Soaring Eagle Foundation in support of the newly established Ernie Stevens Jr. Scholarship Fund. For more information email legacy@soaringeaglefoundation.com.

Rising country music star to headline Field Day

STAFF REPORT

BRIGHTON — Academy of Country Music Awards New Male Artist of the Year nominee Tucker Wetmore will be the headline performer at the Brighton Field Day Festival Feb. 19-22, 2026, on the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Brighton Reservation.

Wetmore, 25, is a former high school all-state football wide receiver and track and field standout from Kalama, Washington, who went on to play football at Montana Technological University. When an injury ended his playing career, Wetmore shifted his focus and decided to pursue a career in country music. He has quickly ascended to rising star status.

Wetmore attributes his trust in God as paving the way in his career.

“Honestly, I owe it all to God, first and foremost,” Wetmore said in an interview with Grammy.com earlier this year.

“Nothing is possible without Him. I trusted Him moving away from the football career, dropping out of college. That was just me listening. And since that moment, I was like, ‘I’m going to listen, no matter what He

says.’”

Wetmore already surpassed 1 billion career streams and had a No. 1 hit “Wind Up Missin’ You.”

Wetmore will take the stage in Brighton on Feb. 21.



Tucker Wetmore/Facebook

Tucker Wetmore

Country and pop singer-songwriter Dasha, 25, from California, will open the concert. She has performed in Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade and Dick Clark’s Rockin’ New Year’s Eve.

The festival also features PRCA Rodeo, Xtreme Bull Riding, Native dancing, alligator wrestling, wildlife presentations as well as several aspects of Seminole culture, including clothing contests, food and a Seminole Indian Village.

Brighton Field Day is an annual tradition in the Seminole Tribe that dates back to 1938.

Advanced tickets may be purchased online

only via TicketWeb (https://www.ticketweb.com/events/org/391363) as well as at the gate during the event. There are no other online retailers. Feb. 21 tickets will include the Tucker Wetmore concert. For more information visit brightonfieldday.com.

Aaron Lewis to perform in Brighton

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Aaron Lewis and the Stateliners: 2026 American Tour is heading to Seminole Brighton Bay Hotel & Casino on, Jan. 31,

2026, at 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$63 and are available at Ticketmaster.com. Guests must be 21 and older to attend.

Lewis has two No. 1 Billboard country albums.

NICWA launches new policy advocacy platform

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Indian Child Welfare Association announced in October the launch of new web-based advocacy software to assist advocates in their efforts to support federal policy change that prioritizes the needs of Native children, families, and tribal nations.

NICWA’s team plans to curate succinct materials for tribal leaders, tribal program directors, Native organizations, and

advocates for Native children and families—making it easier to stay informed and take action. The advocacy tool is designed to help track and take action on state and federal legislation, administrative policy (regulations), appropriations, and other policy priorities that promote the well-being of Native children and families. It will allow users to send direct messages to legislators and take action in other ways, such as submitting public comments on regulations or accessing advocacy materials.

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CORRECTION: In the printed issue of the Seminole Tribune for October 2025, names were misidentified in the “Mary Ann Doctor” story on page 5A. Her son was Teijo Smith, her father is Virgil Doctor, her stepfather is Chucky Osceola. The corrected version appears in the issue online.

Community



Participants at the Justin Campos Memorial Golf tournament gather for a photo Oct. 25 before hitting the links at the Panther Run Golf Club in Ave Maria.

Beverly Bidney

Justin Campos Memorial Golf Tournament raises money for BC group home

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

AVE MARIA — Justin Campos would be 40 years old today if he lived, but he died in 2013 at age 28. His father Jimmy Wayne Holdiness has made sure the memory of his son lives on in the annual Justin Campos Memorial Golf Tournament.

The 11th edition of the tournament was held not far from the Immokalee reservation at the Panther Run Golf Club in Ave Maria on Oct. 25, where 48 golfers played, competed and enjoyed the camaraderie on the links.

Holdiness created the golf tournament as a tribute to his golf-loving son, but it is now also a fundraiser for Immokalee Seminole Charities (ISC). Money raised at the tournament was for the Big Cypress youth home.

Founded about six months ago, the Immokalee Seminole Charities' mission is to make a lasting impact in the lives of those

who need it most. Holdiness is grateful for the assistance he received from President Holly Tiger, who invited him to speak at the Seminole Hearts Denim and Diamonds Gala in August.

"She is a good friend," Holdiness said. "We have lively debates. I couldn't have started this without her. I needed a little kick and someone to point me in the right direction."

At the gala, Holdiness said he hopes ISC can become a source of healing, connection and inspiration. Its growth sparked a new idea, to transform the golf tournament into a force for good.

"We can actually make a difference to help kids and that's everything," Holdiness said before the tournament. "I've read about philanthropists since I was a kid and now I am raising money to do it."

Holdiness recently interacted with the kids at the youth home in various ways; he did some decorating for Halloween and

purchased some new furniture for the home. The golf tournament raised \$2,500 for the home, which he presented to Nyeisha Rainey, youth home program administrator, during the post-tournament luncheon.

"They can spend it however they see fit," Holdiness said. "It can be used for extracurricular activities they aren't funded for."

Rainey, who is grateful for the support of Holdiness and the ISC, brought a few kids to the luncheon.

"We will use the funds to put a smile on their faces," Rainey said. "I want them to feel like being at the group home isn't so negative. With the new couch, it feels like a home. They love sitting on it."

♦ See JUSTIN on page 5A



Beverly Bidney

Jimmy Wayne Holdiness gives his grandson, Ivan Herrera, 10, advice on how to get his ball out of the rough and onto the putting green.



Beverly Bidney

Trey Boone hits one down the fairway.

AIAC to be held Nov. 7-8

FROM PRESS RELEASE

BIG CYPRESS — The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum will hold its annual American Indigenous Arts Celebration (AIAC) on Nov. 7 and Nov. 8 on the museum's festival grounds in Big Cypress from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The festival features Native arts, culture and heritage. There is free admission.

The celebration will begin with a Grand Entry Powwow led by Seminole Medicine Man Bobby Henry, Tribal dignitaries, Native drummers, dancers, and hoop dance performers. The lineup also includes Pharaoh's Wildlife Kingdom critter

show, alligator wrestling with Billy Walker, Powwow dancers & Native drummers, and hoop dance competition.

A Native fashion showcase will be held Friday featuring Ahfachkee School students. On Saturday, a featured fashion show will be held by Seminole designer Lenora Roberts.

Other highlights include a live painting demonstration by Seminole artist Elgin Jumper, hoop dance workshop with world-renowned Tony Duncan, Mexican Cultural Academy Dance exhibits presented by Ameyal Productions, photo opportunity with Native American actor Dallas Goldtooth, a meet and greet with Miss Florida Seminole and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole.

Visitors can shop from authentic Native craft vendors and artists, enjoy traditional food vendors, and take advantage of free admission to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, home to an extraordinary collection of Seminole history and culture.

"The American Indigenous Arts Celebration is one of the best opportunities to experience Native culture, living traditions, and artistry in one place," Gordon Wareham, museum director, said in a press release. "It is both a celebration and an invitation to learn, connect, and honor Indigenous heritage."

For more information, visit ahththiki.com/AIAC/ or call 863-902-1113.

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Tribe honors Agnes Billie-Motlow for more than 50 years of service

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Agnes Billie-Motlow, whose service to the Seminole Tribe of Florida stretches back to the early 1970s, was honored by the tribe with a retirement luncheon Oct. 2.

Dozens of well-wishers filled the Terrace Ballroom at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood as Billie-Motlow heads into retirement after more than half a century of service to the tribe.

She was hired March 1, 1973, and for the next 52 years worked for the tribe in various positions. Her jobs have included working in Health as a coordinator, field supervisor and field administrator; for the Board as an administrative assistant, executive manager and contract administrator; for the Administration as a planner; for Legal as an administrative assistant; and for 36 years as

executive assistant to General Counsel Jim Shore.

Members of the Tribal Council praised Billie-Motlow for her dedication to the tribe.

“From the bottom of my heart, my family, and every single tribal member... we are deeply indebted for your service to the tribe, the time you put in,” Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. told the audience.

While working for the tribe, Billie-Motlow furthered her education by earning a master’s degree in administration from Barry University at age 64 in 2015.

“I’m really proud that I was able to do this,” she told the Tribune when she graduated. “I challenged myself to complete it and I did. I saw my granddaughters’ shiny eyes as I walked down to get my diploma. I want them to have positive role models. If they see grandma doing this, then they know they can do it. Age is no barrier.”



Calvin Tiger
The balloon says it all as Agnes enjoys her retirement gathering with her sister Louise Osceola, at left.



Calvin Tiger
Honoring Agnes Billie-Motlow for her 52 years of service to the tribe as she retires are, from left to right, Hollywood Councilman Chris Osceola, Brighton Councilman Larry Howard, President Holly Tiger and Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. She was presented a gift from the Tribal Council for roundtrip airfare to any destination she wants.



Calvin Tiger
Agnes with Jo-Lin Osceola.



Calvin Tiger
Agnes with Tony Sanchez and Paula Bowers Sanchez.



Calvin Tiger
Agnes with Ronnie Billie Sr.

ART From page 1A

Wareham described this exhibition as a “reflection of the past and promise to the future.” The collection features sweetgrass basketry, beadwork, patchwork, wood carvings, artwork by students from the Ahfachkee School, a life-sized Seminole doll, digital art, and photographic prints.

Participating artists include Jimmy John Osceola, Brian Zepeda, Erica North Deitz, Wilson Bowers, Elgin Jumper, Virginia Osceola, Jojo Osceola, Bobby Henry, and Hali Garcia, among others.

“Yakne Seminoli” houses five of Wareham’s pieces, spanning beadwork, photographic prints, and digital art. At its heart is “Unity,” a striking digital mural that serves as the centerpiece. The piece closest to his heart, however, is a beaded design

that honors Missing Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP). The inspiration for his alligator tooth necklace, which is in the exhibit, came to him in the form of a dream.

“I dreamt of these women,” Wareham said. “They stood beside each other as they transformed into eagle feathers. Their blood flowed on, like a tidal wave. I began drawing, and it led me to this design.”

With this piece, Wareham memorializes the women affected by these tragedies.

“They’ve walked on, but their tragic stories are left behind for others to hear,” he said.

HistoryMiami Museum houses more than 30,000 artifacts, with this collection featuring over 100 pieces of Seminole art.

“We’re excited to showcase this exhibition,” said Natalia Crujeiras, HistoryMiami’s CEO and executive director. “By housing this collection in partnership with the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, we’re

bringing Seminole culture and history to the epicenter of South Florida, making it accessible to the local Miami community.”

The exhibition at HistoryMiami Museum, 101 W. Flagler in downtown Miami, will run until March 29, 2026. An opening celebration was scheduled to be held Nov. 1. For more information go to historymiami.org.



Daniella Hakim
Seminole patchwork is prominently featured in "Yakne Seminoli" at HistoryMiami Museum.



Daniella Hakim
'A Crisis Exists' is the title for art that emphasizes the importance of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP).



Daniella Hakim
A wooden bust by Jimmy John Osceola.



Daniella Hakim
The "Yakne Seminoli" exhibition is open until March 29, 2026.



Daniella Hakim
Sweetgrass basketry by Hali Garcia alongside work by Ricky Doctor is part of the exhibition.

River Bowers succeeds in CBH re-entry program

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Fueled by drug use, River Bowers got into a fight at a party a few years ago and nearly killed a man. He was arrested for aggravated assault and spent three years in a South Dakota state prison. In March 2024, Bowers was released and is now learning to navigate his new life.

Bowers has a lot of help and support from Center for Behavioral Health's Re-entry program, which helped prepare him for the transition to a life outside of prison.

"The program had a huge impact on me," said Bowers, 26. "They stayed on top of me, and I needed that push. They give you motivation and were there to talk to you whenever you wanted to. I didn't even know the program was there, it has helped a lot."

Case manager Joshua Strachan talked to Bowers while he was in prison and afterward about avoiding triggers and other ways to avert a relapse.

"After his release it was important to get him stable," Strachan said. "We helped him find a home and furnish it and got him mentally prepared to transition to normal life. There is a period of a few weeks after

an inmate is released that they are likely to reoffend or relapse from sensory overload."

Strachan talked to Bowers about triggers for substance abuse and how they can be as simple as going to a familiar neighborhood with familiar old friends. Strachan reminded him to be careful of who he is around and be aware of what others are doing.

"He's young, but very wise and aware of the triggers," Strachan said. "As soon as he got out he was put in pressure situations when those friends showed up. He had to make a very mature decision to turn those friends down. He felt bad, but he knew for his own good he shouldn't be with them. He worked hard to make his situation better so he wouldn't go back to prison."

When Bowers' probation is over at the end of December or January he plans to move home to Florida. He is originally from Big Cypress but was raised in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Looking back on what happened, Bowers believes going to prison saved his life because he stopped using drugs and drinking.

"The transition coming out of prison was amazing," Bowers said. "My parole officer and Josh talk to each other and we all communicate with each other."

Bowers, who has kept busy with his

seven-year-old daughter and six-month-old son, said it's time for him to settle down. He isn't sure which reservation he will live on, but he said he would like to be near his grandfather David Bowers who lives in Big Cypress.

"A fresh start will be refreshing and better for my kids," he said. "The goal is to raise them in a different environment than the one I was raised in."

Strachan said Bowers is doing a really good job, he attends a substance abuse program, is active in the classes and has taken a leadership role there.

"He came out of prison with a focused goal of steering his life away from what he was doing and do more positive things," Strachan said. "He's a real good kid. It was a pleasure getting to know him and I hope he does very well in life."

Bowers has advice for others who are struggling with addiction; he said it's important to keep going even when things are dark.

"When you go in that dark place, you are lonely," Bowers said. "When you have enough time and money, you act on impulse and can make bad decisions. Find something you love and just settle down. Staying away from negativity will really help a lot."

Minneapolis Fire Department features all-Indigenous crew

STAFF REPORT

The Minneapolis Fire Department (MFD) has an all-Indigenous crew that the department highlighted in a Facebook video on Indigenous Peoples Day (Oct. 13).

The 'A' Shift's Engine 10 is comprised solely of Native firefighters: Captain Michael Graves, Johnny Crow, Bobby Headbird and Jesse Strong.

According to MFD, they are the department's second busiest fire crew.

Three of the firefighters are in the Anishinaabe. One is Oglala Lakota.

"The community, and the Native community specifically, has had a tremendous response. Just loving seeing an all-Native crew," Graves said in the video.

"I carry the values that were instilled in me of being a protector and provider, doing that for our community. Not just the Native community, but for the city," Crow said.



MFD/YouTube

An all-Indigenous fire crew from the Minneapolis Fire Department. Three of the firefighters are Anishinaabe; one is Oglala Lakota.

RUSH to play Hard Rock Live twice in 2026

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — RUSH is coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood Nov. 5, 2026,

and Nov. 7, 2026. Both shows start at 8 p.m. Tickets went on sale Oct. 31 at myHRL.com.

RUSH has sold more than 45 million albums, garnering seven Grammy Award

nominations. The band has been inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, and the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame,

JUSTIN

From page 3A

Rainey said coming to the tournament was a big deal for the kids, who had never been to a golf course before. She hopes to plan something special during the holidays,

which can be a tough time for the kids. She's thinking about Disney World.

"I'm looking to make the kids smile and mend their broken hearts," Rainey said. "This is a different kind of enrichment for them."

Winners of the tournament were announced at the luncheon. The first

place foursome was Ozzy Garza, Kayden Grimaldo, E.J. Marrero and C.J. Siner. Second place winners were Mitch Blankenship, Mateo Jimenez and Kevin Osceola. Third went to Elizabeth Eberhart, Jimmy Wayne Holdiness, Ray Yzaguirre Jr. and Ray Yzaguirre Sr.



Beverly Bidney

Second place winners, photographed during the tournament are, from left to right, Mateo Jimenez, Kevin Osceola and Mitch Blankenship.



Beverly Bidney

Jeremy Smith takes aim at the flagstick.



Beverly Bidney

Allen Venzor gets out of the way of Kenny Davis's putt as K.J. Davis and Eric Grimaldo cheer it on. Alas, the ball barely missed going in the hole.



Beverly Bidney

Jimmy Wayne Holdiness with first place winners Kayden Grimaldo and C.J. Siner. Ozzy Garza and E.J. Marrero were also in foursome, but are not in the photo.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, the third place winners are Ray Yzaguirre Sr., Elizabeth Eberhart, Jimmy Wayne Holdiness and Ray Yzaguirre Jr.



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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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‘A legend among us’ - tributes honor Jim Shore’s life

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Jim Shore spent four decades building legal accomplishments for the Seminole Tribe of Florida as its general counsel. Along the way, he earned and established a legacy of admiration and respect throughout Indian Country and beyond.

Mr. Shore passed away Aug. 30 at Cleveland Clinic Hospital in Weston at age 80. According to the tribe, Mr. Shore suffered a sudden cardiac arrest at his home in Davie earlier in the day.

A member of the Bird Clan, Mr. Shore grew up in a chickee on the Brighton Reservation where he and his family raised cattle. It was a far distance from those humble beginnings to the halls of power and success he would achieve for the benefit of the tribe. Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. described Mr. Shore as a man of few words, but with a big heart.

“Jim Shore worked tirelessly to ensure a prosperous future for the members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida,” Chairman Osceola said in a statement. “We owe him a huge debt of gratitude for everything he accomplished on the Tribe’s behalf.”

It was only seven months ago that Mr. Shore guided the tribe to victory in an \$800 million lawsuit against Wells Fargo Bank, which a jury determined mismanaged a trust fund set up on behalf of the tribe’s children.

As the tribe delved into casino gaming, Mr. Shore was there for every step, playing a pivotal role. He helped with the establishment of the tribe’s first gaming compact with the state of Florida in 2007, which brought slot machines and table games to Seminole casinos. Later that year, the tribe purchased Hard Rock International, which has blossomed into one of the giants in the gaming, hotel, restaurant and entertainment industries.

In 2021, Mr. Shore helped pave the way for a new compact between tribe and the state which added craps, roulette and sports betting to the tribe’s menu.

Agnes Billie-Motlow worked as Mr. Shore’s executive assistant every day for 36 years. She witnessed all the changes and accomplishments made under his direction.

“Mr. Shore was my mentor and advisor whom I greatly respected and admired,” Billie-Motlow wrote in an email. “He was one in a million. He was the son of a great healer and was raised in the traditions of our people. He was taught in the traditional ways as well as in mainstream education. As an attorney, he used his knowledge for the benefit of our tribe. I will miss most our conversations about our tribal legends, the various clan families and anything dealing with our Indigenous culture.”

Mr. Shore’s nephew, Everett Osceola, the tribe’s cultural ambassador and founder of the Native Reel Film Festival, grew up going to Tribal Council meetings with his mother, who worked in the clerk’s office.

“I knew [Mr. Shore] was a big deal; he always wore business suits and spoke at Council meetings,” Osceola said. “But he was never egotistical; he was modest and humble.”

Mr. Shore, blinded in a car accident in 1970, was a strong influence in Osceola’s life.

“There were times I wanted to give up, but then it hit me that he never gave up,” Osceola said. “He had all the odds against him, but he prevailed. He was like the superhero, Daredevil, the blind lawyer.”

Mr. Shore was tough on Osceola as a teenager and checked up on him while he was in college. During Sunday suppers with the family, Shore would talk to him about movies, books, history and anything else Osceola was interested in.

“He was always looking after us,” he said. “I felt comfort knowing he still had that obligation. He had a strong connection with all of us and we all respected him. Not seeing him at the dinner table is what I will miss the most.”

Mr. Shore was a familiar face at Tribal Council meetings. Sitting in the front row at meetings for several years, he was often called upon by the Council, who sought his advice, guidance and knowledge on a variety of issues, including legalities. The first meeting after his death was held Sept. 17.

President Holly Tiger knew Mr. Shore for more than 30 years and worked with him on many projects.

“He was a good man,” President Tiger said. “He was steadfast in the manner in which he handled everything, but he was never too serious to not tell a joke. I’ll miss his ability to just call him up and hear him say ‘Holly Tiger, whatcha got?’ My standard response was ‘Why, what did you do?’ He was serious when he needed to be and good natured when he got the chance to be. We are all in mourning for him.”

Tribes launch commission to safeguard Chuckwalla National Monument

BY KPBS (SAN DIEGO, CALIF.)

Five tribes in the Colorado River region are launching a commission to safeguard the Chuckwalla National Monument, a newly-protected expanse of high desert on the border of Imperial and Riverside County [in California].

In an announcement [in October], tribal officials said their goal for the new Chuckwalla National Monument Inter-Tribal Commission is to make sure that their values and knowledge are part of the decision-making process in Washington.

The national monument, declared by

Mr. Shore served on the Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School Board of Trustees since the school opened in 2007. PECS posted condolences to his family on Facebook which said “He will be missed by many. Journey well, Mr. Shore.”

A graduate of Stetson Law School, Mr. Shore was the first tribal member to earn a law degree, and he was determined to receive it in his hand. A bio on Stetson’s website notes that despite breaking his ankle after slipping on wet pavement a few days before graduation, Mr. Shore still attended his graduation in a wheelchair.

Stetson remained close to Mr. Shore’s heart. Three years ago, he established the Jim Shore Scholarship for the Seminole Tribe of Florida Endowment to encourage fellow Seminoles to pursue the same path he took and seek a legal education at Stetson University College of Law.

Stetson posted this on social media about his passing:

“The Stetson Law community mourns the loss of Double Hatter Jim Shore ‘77 ‘80, a 2010 Stetson Law Hall of Fame inductee who spent decades tirelessly advocating for his community as general counsel for the Seminole Tribe of Florida. The first Native American to graduate from Stetson Law, and Shore was known for his work ethic and for persevering despite challenges such as losing his vision at a young age. His legacy at Stetson includes establishing the Jim Shore Scholarship for the Seminole Tribe of Florida Endowment, which supports members of the Seminole Tribe of Florida to follow in Shore’s footsteps by pursuing a law degree at Stetson.”

Accolades for Mr. Shore are lengthy. In 2005, he received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws Degree from Florida State University. In 2010, he was inducted into Stetson Law’s Hall of Fame; 10 years later came another hall of fame, this time from the American Gaming Association.

The American Bar Association recognized Mr. Shore in 2020 with its Energy, Environment and Resources Government Attorney of the Year Award.

In 2020, Shore won the American Bar Association’s Energy, Environment and Resources Government Attorney of the Year Award for his legal work and achievements in matters dealing with the environment, energy and natural resources.

Nikki Fried, chairwoman of the Florida Democratic Party, honored Mr. Shore with this social media tribute: “Jim Shore was a legend among us. As the first member of the Unconquered Seminole Tribe to become an attorney, his tireless efforts on behalf of his people will leave a lasting legacy.

“Far more than the legal architect of Indian gaming in Florida, Jim transformed our State for the better by creating not just the pathway for a prosperous future for the Tribe, but also by creating employment opportunities and financial stability for thousands of people employed in the hotels and casinos.

“Beyond gaming, through his landmark work on water rights, energy, and the environment, and the scholarships in his name that will afford more members of the Tribe with a legal education, Jim’s impact will be felt for generations.”

U.S. Senator Rick Scott posted this on social media: “Ann and I are sad to hear of Jim Shore’s passing. Jim was a good friend, an incredibly successful man, and a pleasure to be around. Please join me in praying for his family and the Seminole Tribe as they mourn his loss.”

Miami-Dade Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz posted “I am deeply saddened by the passing of Mr. Jim Shore, General Counsel of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, loved ones, and the Seminole Tribe during this difficult time.”

On Sept. 1, hundreds of tribal members and others attended a graveside service and burial for Mr. Shore at Ortona Cemetery in Glades County. Some of his parting words were published in a pamphlet distributed at his funeral:

“My work here on this earth is not done but God has other plans for me and his Kingdom so for now I must say see you later to my loved ones and this world which I truly loved. I’m just going home to another world embracing loved ones and dearly missed, for now I say see you later my friends and family.”

Mr. Shore is survived by his brother, Eddie Shore (Jenny), sisters Geneva Shore, Nancy Shore and Elizabeth Shore, nephews Paladin Willie, Everett Osceola, Duane Jones, Elton Shore and Robbie Shore and nieces Stacy Jones, Beverly Shore, Brenda Shore and Holly Shore, plus many great nieces and nephews, and cousins.

President Biden in January, covers 600,000 acres of federally-owned mountains and canyons. The landscape is sacred to a number of Tribal Nations, who trace their origins to the region along the river.

Zion White is a council member for the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe, one of the signatories to the commission. In an interview with KPBS, White said their first priorities were to launch an ethnographic study to map out the landscape in greater detail and set clearer guidelines for responsible hiking and vehicle use.

History Fort Lauderdale to feature “The Seminole Collection”

FROM PRESS RELEASE

FORT LAUDERDALE — “The Seminole Collection” will run throughout Native American Heritage Month in November 2025 at the New River Inn History Museum in downtown Fort Lauderdale. The collection features art and artifacts of the Seminole Tribe of Florida from History Fort Lauderdale’s archive.

“History Fort Lauderdale is proud to showcase the rich cultural and artistic contributions of the Seminole Tribe of Florida year-round, but especially during Native American Heritage Month,” Patricia Zeiler, executive director of History Fort Lauderdale, said in a press release. “This curated collection features archival works and important artifacts depicting the shared experiences of our Indigenous ancestors. From family life portraits to landscapes to beadwork, we invite the community to join us in honoring the spirits of those who paved the way for our great city’s success.”

History Fort Lauderdale is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with docent guided tours, daily at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Group walking tours are available upon special request. Admission is \$15 for adults;



History Fort Lauderdale’s “The Seminole Collection” runs all of November.

\$12 for seniors and \$7 for students (through age 22 with a valid student ID). Admission is free for museum members, military and children ages six and under. For more

information, call (954) 463-4431 or visit historyfortlauderdale.org.

Big Cypress kids display their pumpkin carving skills

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — Kids gathered in the Herman L. Osceola gym Oct. 22 to

carve some big pumpkins for Halloween. Each kid was given a carving kit to cut through the tough skin of the pumpkin and create whatever their imaginations desired.

The event was organized by Big Cypress Recreation.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Lorraine Jumper, Zendaya Quintana and Justice Jumper scoop the seeds out of the pumpkins before they start to carve faces in the seasonally large squash.



Beverly Bidney

Ryder Frank Bad Bear, left, and Gunnar Frank Bad Bear carved and painted their crazy faced pumpkin.



Beverly Bidney

Briella Hall’s pumpkin is so large she had to stand on a chair to get all the way inside to scoop out the seeds.



Beverly Bidney

Equoni Cypress concentrates on carving the mouth on his pumpkin.

5 Seconds of Summer coming to Hard Rock in ‘26

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — 5 Seconds Of Summer’s “The Everyone’s A Star Tour” is coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood Aug. 12, 2026, at 8 p.m.

Tickets are available at myHRL.com. Formed in Sydney, Australia, in 2011, 5 Seconds of Summer has grown from local high school friends into one of the biggest bands of the 21st century. Over 14 years, the multi-platinum group has sold more than 18 million albums, moved more than six

million tickets worldwide, generated over 10 billion streams and achieved three Billboard 200 No. 1 debuts, while winning multiple accolades at the ARIA Awards, MTV EMAs, MTV VMAs and beyond



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Opening date set for Hard Rock Casino Tejon in California

STAFF REPORT

Two tribes will celebrate the official opening of Hard Rock Casino Tejon in California on Nov. 13. The Tejon Indian Tribe partnered with the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Hard Rock International for the casino, which is on Tejon land in Kern County, about 90 miles north of Los Angeles. The facility is owned by the Tejon Indian Tribe and managed by Hard Rock.

According to a press release, the project has generated thousands of construction jobs and 1,000 permanent roles upon opening. The release also mentioned that Hard Rock Casino Tejon has committed to infrastructure improvements in the area at no cost to taxpayers and will provide long-term

investment in community services, education and economic development initiatives for the Tejon Indian Tribe.

"The opening of Hard Rock Casino Tejon is not only a celebration of our Tribe's heritage and resilience but also a bold step forward in creating opportunity and prosperity for future generations," Octavio Escobedo, III chairman of the Tejon Tribe, said in the release. "This project will bring thousands of jobs, fuel economic growth and serve as a gathering place where culture, entertainment and community come together."

"We are incredibly proud to bring our iconic brand to Kern County and are thankful for our partnership with the Tejon Indian Tribe," Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock

International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in the release. "Hard Rock Casino Tejon will set a new standard for entertainment in the region, blending our world-class hospitality with the tribe's inspiring vision for cultural and economic growth."

The property features a 150,000-square-foot gaming floor with more than 2,000 slot machines and more than 50 live table games in addition to music memorabilia, Hard Rock Café, Rock Shop, Deep Cut Steaks, a marketplace food hall and other dining options.

In October 2024, Seminole Tribe of Florida Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. attended a topping off construction ceremony at the property.

Seminole Gaming/Hard Rock earn humanitarian honor

STAFF REPORT

Seminole Tribe of Florida entities received high praise Oct. 8 at a South Florida Red Cross fundraiser.

The 10th annual Dine & Dock honored 2025 Humanitarian of the Year honorees, which included Hard Rock International, Seminole Gaming and Hard Rock Heals Foundation. The Red Cross highlighted Seminole Gaming/Hard Rock's charitable and philanthropic efforts, an extensive array which ranges from supporting breast cancer research, preventing human trafficking, fighting hunger, aiding environmental causes, and more.

President Holly Tiger represented the tribe at the event, which was held at the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Marina Hotel.

Other humanitarian honorees were retired Judge Cindy Imperato; Rick Scopa, a community risk reduction specialist for the City of Pembroke Pines and a retired fire lieutenant; and Kingdom Charitable Trust.

Proceeds from the evening, which included a live auction, go toward helping the Red Cross provide relief to local families affected by disasters like hurricanes and home fires, equip communities with lifesaving skills like CPR and first aid training, and offer critical support to U.S. service members and veterans across Broward County and South Florida.



South Florida Red Cross

President Holly Tiger with Dine & Dock co-chairs Katy Ellis and Liz Caldwell at the Oct. 8 fundraiser in Fort Lauderdale.

Hard Rock properties help breast cancer awareness through Pinktober

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock properties worldwide spent October participating in Hard Rock Heals Foundation's 26th Pinktober, which raises awareness and supports the fight against breast cancer.

Here are a few examples.

- Hard Rock Hotel Maldives, on the island country in the Indian Ocean, offered an exclusive Pinktober room with themed items. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Cancer Society of Maldives.
- Hard Rock Hotel Goa, on India's southwest coast, hosted a breast cancer awareness talk by Dr. Nidhi Talkar. The talk was described on Hard Rock social media as "a powerful morning of awareness, learning and action."
- Three team members from Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Ottawa in Canada appeared on a CTV morning show to showcase ways guests can contribute while enjoying their visit at Hard Rock Ottawa. As of mid-October, Hard Rock Ottawa reported that nearly \$5,000 had been raised through Pinktober merchandise, themed culinary creations, and special events.
- Hard Rock Hotel San Diego hosted a Pink Brunch in partnership with Strings for Hope and special guest, the Susan G. Komen organization. Guests ate and drank pink, shopped the Pinktober collection at the Rock Shop and made jewelry out of upcycled guitar strings.
- Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana was the presenting sponsor of the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk for the fifth year in a row on Oct. 12. Hard Rock's \$25,000 sponsorship will help fund breast cancer research and programs.



Hard Rock Maldives

The pink room at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives.



Hard Rock Northern Indiana/Facebook

Hard Rock Northern Indiana made a \$25,000 contribution to the American Cancer Society on Oct. 12.

Hard Rock earns accolades at Global Gaming Awards

STAFF REPORT

The 12th annual Global Gaming Awards for the Americas was held Oct. 6 in Las Vegas. According to organizers, the honors recognize and reward the gaming industry's strongest performers across the previous 12 months.

Hard Rock received the following honors:

- Hard Rock International: Land-Based Operator of the Year, runner-up
- Hard Rock International: Responsible Business of the Year, runner-up
- Hard Rock Bristol: Property of the Year, third place
- Allie Evangelista, President, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol: Executive of the Year, third place.

Upcoming shows at Seminole Brighton Bay

FROM PRESS RELEASE

BRIGHTON – Here's a look at upcoming entertainment at the Seminole Brighton Bay Casino & Hotel on the Brighton Reservation:

Nov. 21: Kameron Lowe, 8 p.m.
Raised in North Carolina, country music singer Kameron Lowe had a hit debut album "We Were Cowboys" and has toured with the likes of Thomas Rhett, Riley Green, Morgan Wallen, and Lainey Wilson.

Nov. 22: The Lalas Burlesque, 7 p.m.
The Lalas present a show that is equally hilarious and sexy. The show is ideal for date night, girls' night out, or just to see some empowered women rock the stage during 75 minutes of classic rock and blues music, choreographed dance moves, and fringe galore. The Los Angeles-based women on stage are all full-time working pros in the biz. No two shows are ever alike.

Dec. 5: Australia's Thunder from Down Under, 8 p.m.
Known for their charismatic personalities, chiseled physiques, and mesmerizing dance routines, Thunder from Down Under has been leaving audiences in awe for years. The show is recommended for adult audiences.

Dec. 17: Will Moseley, 8 p.m.
Moseley was runner-up in season 22 of American Idol and has toured with the Zac Brown Band.

For tickets and more information go to casino.hardrock.com/brighton.

NYC From page 1A

Since then, MGM Resorts International has withdrawn its casino gaming license application, leaving Metropolitan Park, Bally's Bronx and Resorts World New York City as the remaining applicants. In the early stages, there were as many as 11 applicants.

Brighton project earns award for Miami firm

STAFF REPORT

The work done on the Brighton Reservation's Reservation Road (CR 721) has earned an award for Ardurra, a Miami-based engineering and design firm.

Ardurra's project for the Seminole Tribe of Florida was named the Cuban American Association of Civil Engineers (CAACE) Project of the Year – Category III. The award was presented Oct. 11 at CAACE's gala in Miami.

"This recognition celebrates the power of collaboration with the Seminole Tribe of

Florida, OHLA USA, and Ardurra working together to deliver 11.5 miles of roadway improvements through an innovative Progressive Design-Build approach," Ardurra posted on social media.

According to Ardurra, the \$65 million project was completed in 12 months and improved safety, access, and resiliency for residents, employees, and thousands of visitors to reservation.

As part of the opening of the new Seminole Casino Brighton Bay, major upgrades were made to Reservation Road, including widening, paving, the addition of paved paths and new lighting.



Ardurra/Facebook

The Miami firm Ardurra receives an award for its work on Reservation Road in Brighton. James Jackson, second from left, senior project manager Seminole Tribe's Public Works, was in attendance.

Judge tosses Colorado tribal lawsuit over online sports betting

BY TOM HESSE
Colorado Public Radio

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes that claimed the state of Colorado was violating Tribal gaming rights in how it managed online sports wagers.

The decision ends a dispute between the state and Colorado's two recognized Tribal nations over a matter that brings in millions of tax dollars each month.

The ruling from U.S. District Court Judge Gordon Gallagher focused on a key dispute raised by the lawsuit: whether an online bet placed off Tribal lands would be subject to Indian Gaming rules if that bet were processed by the Tribes.

"This Court finds that the gaming occurs where the bettor is located — in this context, the location of the bettor is the only determining factor for whether gaming is on Indian land," Gallagher wrote in a decision published today. "If the bettor is on Indian land, the gaming activity is on Indian land and (the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act) applies. If the bettor is off Indian land, e.g., in Denver, the bettor is not engaged in gaming on Indian land and IGRA does not apply."

A spokesperson from Gov. Jared Polis' office said in a statement the state was pleased with the ruling.

"We deeply respect the government-to-government relationship the state has with the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes. We are glad that the court ruled in the state's favor to ensure Colorado can continue to manage sports betting in a way that works best for Coloradans and our

state and continue funding important water projects around the state. We are dedicated to working together with the Tribes on gaming matters, and we look forward to ongoing conversations with the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes on this important issue," the statement reads.

Representatives from the Southern Ute Tribe, as well as the governor's office, had not yet responded to comment as of publication.

The Southern Ute Tribe first sued Polis and the Colorado Division of Gaming in July 2024, with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe joining the suit shortly after. The Tribes argued that they were within their rights under federal gaming law to form an online sports book following the passage of Proposition DD in 2019, which legalized online sports betting.

The Tribes argued they ran into problems with the state because the state asked that they align with new state laws for bets placed outside of reservation lands. That includes paying the 10% tax on sports wagers, which the state uses to fund water projects. This prompted a debate as to what constituted a bet placed on Tribal lands. Elsewhere in the country, Tribes have argued for a "spoke-and-hub" understanding that suggests that all online wagers constituted a wager on Tribal land because of where the bet was being accepted.

Gallagher noted in his opinion how technology had complicated the interpretation of the nearly 40-year-old law covering Tribal gaming.

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HOLLYWOOD, FL

ATTK staff present on Tribune photos at ATALM

BY LAURA DELLO RUSSO
Collections Manager, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

BIG CYPRESS — In October, seven staff members from the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum traveled to Cherokee, North Carolina, to attend the 2025 Conference for the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM). ATALM is a nonprofit organization that supports the work of Indigenous cultural institutions, provides culturally relevant programming and services, and promotes Indigenous cultural sovereignty. The organization also encourages collaboration among tribal and non-tribal cultural institutions, with many of these partnerships formed at their annual conferences.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki staff members who attended this year’s conference are all part of the museum’s Curatorial Section, which

consists of the Collections Division, Exhibits Division, and Research Division. While at the conference, these staff members not only participated in sessions relating to activities and practices from other tribal cultural organizations, but also hosted presentations discussing some of their own projects.

“Journey of a Photograph: Collections Accessibility and Community Impact” was one of the presentations given by ATTK Collections staff members. This session focused on a donation of photographs the museum received from the Seminole Tribune in 2015, which, astoundingly, consisted of nearly 150,000 photos and negatives. These photographs, taken by the Tribune’s reporters, document hundreds of events and activities that took place within the Seminole Tribe of Florida from the 1970s to the early 2000s. Covering everything from tribal fairs and official meetings to Christmas parties and celebrations, the memories of the

Seminole community are captured within these images.

The presentation began by discussing the process of housing, digitizing, and cataloging these thousands of photographs, a process which has involved many SWEP/ WEP participants, Ahfachkee interns, and museum employees from the Seminole community. The Tribune project has proven that it truly takes a team to achieve such monumental accomplishments. Since the photographs came to the museum in 2015, over 20 individuals have worked with these photographs.

It was also important to convey that the lives of these photographs don’t stop once they are cataloged and stored in the museum’s vault. The presentation showed how the Tribune photographs were reconnected with the Seminole community through the museum’s traveling photo binder program. As many reading this may know, the museum’s Collections staff bring binders of photographs to events around the various reservations and communities, usually setting up tables and chairs where tribal members can look through these binders at their leisure. These interactions also provide the museum with vital identifications of people, places, and events depicted within the images. Therefore, creating a more thorough database of photos and information, which can then be shared once more with the community.

“Journey of a Photograph” was highly attended and enthusiastically received by

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



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Organizing Tribune photos in ATTK's archival vault.

fellow ATALM participants. Many attendees inquired as to how they could bring similar photo programs to their own tribal communities, highlighting the importance of making museum collections accessible to their most important audiences. The presentation not only demonstrated the technical aspects of managing such a large donation of photographs, but also showed that bringing the human connection back to these images is just as crucial.

While the process of organizing, numbering, housing, and cataloging 150,000 photographs can seem a daunting

one, it has been one of the most rewarding projects undertaken by ATTK’s Collections team. In many ways, it is a project that has become pivotal to connecting the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum’s collection with the tribal community it serves.

If you would like more information about this presentation, or if you would like to request the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum’s photo binders, please contact Laura Dello Russo at lauradellorusso@semtribe.com.



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

From left to right, Rosa Martinez, Iretta Tiger and Laura Dello Russo present at ATALM.

Pumpkins populate museum's sculpture garden

STAFF REPORT

BIG CYPRESS — The threat of inclement weather Oct. 10 altered activities for the opening of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum’s Pumpkins of Devil’s Garden, but there was still plenty of fun inside and outside the To-Pee-Kee-Ke Yak-Ne Community Center on the Big Cypress Reservation.

The sculpture garden, which was full of dozens of decorated pumpkins from the community, usually draws a big crowd for the annual event that celebrates the opening of the exhibit. With threatening clouds in the area, it was decided ahead of time to move activities a short trip down the road to the center, where the likes of Morticia, Gomez, Wednesday and Uncle Fester were waiting... at least on a large screen.

The main attraction for the evening was a showing of “The Addams Family” movie from 1991. Guests enjoyed popcorn and other treats as well as activities such as face-painting and photo opportunities.

Meanwhile, outside, members of the Bert family cooked food for all to enjoy. Gordon Wareham, museum director, is a big fan of their food, saying they have the number 1 ribs in South Florida.

“And their smash burgers are divine,” he said.



Kevin Johnson

Even the green monster was alarmed by the long-haired Cousin character from "The Addams Family" at the opening.



Kevin Johnson

A colorful pumpkin by Franco Stefani.



Kevin Johnson

Two creative pumpkins in the garden are from Gordon Wareham, left, and Rebecca Petrie.



Kevin Johnson

These brave pumpkins are placed in an area of the garden that has a warning sign about alligators and snakes.



Kevin Johnson

Draco Arledge, wearing the Venom character costume, participates in a face-painting activity.



Kevin Johnson

The pumpkins of Kiki Roberts, left, and Lenora Roberts show plenty of detail and imagination.



Kevin Johnson

Cody Bert makes tasty smash burgers at the event.

November 2025

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

Past peoples were highly resourceful; they were experts in utilizing their environments to the fullest extent, creating tools and other crafts from only the materials that were naturally available. Their craftsmanship is exemplified by the bone tools that archaeologists recover from sites, like this month's artifact. Pictured below, this bone fragment, which likely came from a large mammal, was once part of a larger tool. Based on its shape, the tool was probably used for cutting or scraping. One of the edges of this fragment is worn down, which indicates that this was the working edge.

Florida has produced an impressive assemblage of bone tools, despite the unfavorable preservation conditions found in some parts. Florida soils are generally more acidic, and higher acidity has been linked to poor preservation of skeletal remains (Gordon & Bulkstra, 1981). And while waterlogged remains tend to preserve well, the continuously changing Florida waterways result in the dehydrating and rehydrating of remains, and the fluctuation of moisture contributes to the degradation of bones (Emmons et al., 2022).

In spite of this, we have found a variety of bone tools, such as awls, decorative bone pins, and fish hooks, some of which have been featured in previous Artifact of the Month posts.

Although evidence of bone-whittling goes all the way back to what is called the Paleoindian period as early as 12,000 BCE (Byrd, 2011), the practice is not trapped in the past; people today still practice the craft, keeping this millennia-old tradition alive.

(Above) Decorated Bone Pin, Artifact of the Month May 2014

(Left) Bone Fish Hook, Artifact of the Month August 2015

Deer metapodial bone, commonly used for bone tool production

To learn more about all the incredible artifacts within our collection, please visit the THPO website at www.stofthpo.com.

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Timeline of Florida History:

- 12,000 BCE: Paleoindian Period
- 8,000 BCE: Archaic Period
- 1,000 BCE: Mississippian Period
- 1500 CE: Spanish Period
- 1763 CE: British Period
- 1763 CE: Seminole War

SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - NOVEMBER 2025

THE SEMINOLE WAR:
“BILLY BOWLEG’S WAR”

Hollata Micco, who the Americans knew as “Billy Bowlegs,” was a veteran of the war, the head of a prominent town, and a respected leader who helped keep the Seminole Tribe together after the United States declared the “Florida War” over. He spent the following decade working to ease relations and find a place for the tribe in the new Florida. He found common cause with the American Indian Agent, Captain John C. Casey. The two agreed that it was possible for the Seminole to remain in Florida and made these arguments to the federal government.

Despite this, Indian Removal remained the position in Washington. One of the strongest proponents was Jefferson Davis, the Secretary of War, who would be the president of the Confederate States of America six years later. Davis directed the Army to pressure the Seminole, looking to either convince them to leave, or spark an incident that could be used to justify war.

The pressure campaign proved to be a success. In December of 1855, an Army patrol deep in Seminole territory vandalized and looted a Seminole camp. They woke up later that week to a Seminole attack. Only three of the American soldiers survived. In response, the United States declared the third Seminole War.

The military had learned the lesson of the Florida War, and was for combat in the wetlands environment. With less than a thousand Seminole still in Florida, and new American tactics, the war would only last three years.

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

Above: Billy Bowlegs, (Ca. 1850)

Health

Tribal traditional healing gets Medicaid reimbursement in 4 states

BY NADA HASSANEIN
Statenline

CHANDLER, Ariz. — Art Martinez has seen the power of ceremony. Martinez, a clinical psychologist and member of the Chumash Tribe, helped run an American Indian youth ceremonial camp. Held at a sacred tribal site in Northern California, it was designed to help kids' mental health. He remembers a 14-year-old girl who had been struggling with substance use and was on the brink of hospitalization.

On the first day of the four-day camp, Martinez recalled, she was barely able to speak. In daily ceremonies, she wept. The other kids gathered around her. "You're not alone. We're here for you," they'd say.

Traditional tribal healing practices are diverse and vary widely, unique from tribe to tribe. Many include talking circles, sweat lodge ceremonies with special rituals, plant medicine and herb smudging, along with sacred ceremonies known only to the tribe.

Martinez and the girl's counselor saw her mental health improve under a treatment plan combining tribal traditional healing and Western medicine.

"By the end of the gathering, she had broken through the isolation," Martinez said. "Before, she would barely shake hands with kids, and she was now hugging them, they were exchanging phone numbers. Her demeanor was better, she was able to articulate."

Indigenous health advocates have long known the health benefits of integrating their traditional healing practices, and studies have also shown better health outcomes.

Now, for the first time, tribal traditional healing practices are eligible for Medicaid coverage in California and three other states under a new initiative. Last October, the federal government approved Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program coverage of traditional healing practices at tribal health facilities and urban Indian organizations in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Oregon.

These were approved under a federal program that allows states to test new pilot health programs and ways to pay for them.

Arizona's waiver went into effect Wednesday. While California's waiver currently only covers patients with substance use disorder, like the girl in Martinez's camp, any Medicaid enrollee who is American Indian or Alaska Native is eligible in the other three states. Officials have said California's program will expand to have such coverage in the future.

Under the waivers, each tribe and facility decides which traditional healing services to offer for reimbursement. Services can also take place at sacred sites and not necessarily inside a clinic, explained Virginia Hedrick, executive director of the California Consortium for Urban Indian Health.

"If a healing intervention requires being near a water source — the ocean, creek, river — we can do that," said Hedrick, who is of the Yurok Tribe and of Karuk descent. "It may involve gathering medicine in a specific place on the land itself."

Tribes long had to practice out of sight. The U.S. government's assimilation policies had targeted tribal languages, cultural and religious practices — including healing. It

wasn't until 1978, when the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was enacted under President Jimmy Carter, that they regained their rights.

"It was illegal to practice our ways until 1978 ... the year I was born," said Dr. Allison Kelliher, a family and integrative medicine physician, who is Koyukon Athabascan, Dena. "Traditional healing means intergenerational knowledge that have origins in how our ancestors and people lived generationally to promote health, so it's a holistic way of looking at well-being."

[In September], Kelliher and hundreds of others gathered at the National Indian Health Board's health conference on Gila River Indian Community land in Chandler, Arizona. During a panel discussion about the waivers, tribal members discussed how health centers will bill for services, ways to protect the sacredness of certain ceremonies, and how to measure and collect data around the effectiveness of the treatments, a federal requirement under the waivers.

But teasing out those new protocols didn't dull the enthusiasm.

"This is where we really start intersecting the Western medicine as well as traditional healing, and it's exciting," said panelist Dr. Naomi Young, CEO of the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board in Arizona.

The Trump administration announced earlier this year that it doesn't plan to renew certain other Medicaid waiver programs approved under the Biden administration. But it hasn't announced any changes around the traditional healing waivers.

Studies have found that incorporating sweat lodge ceremonies and other cultural practices in treatments led to substance use recovery and emotional health, and better quality diets when incorporating traditional foods, according to analyses of research by the National Council of Urban Indian Health.

"When there is an opportunity to braid traditional healing with Western forms of medicine, it's very possible, and the research is indicating, we may get better health outcomes," Hedrick said.

Traditional practices

Decades of historical trauma, such as displacement and forced assimilation in boarding schools — where American Indian and Alaska Native people were forbidden from speaking their languages — are behind their disproportionate rates of chronic illness and early deaths today, tribal health experts say.

Tribes have long offered traditional healing — both outside brick-and-mortar health care settings as well as within many clinics. But health centers have been paying out of pocket or budgeting for the services, said retired OB-GYN Dr. John Molina, director of the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care and member of the Pascua Yaqui and Yavapai Apache Tribes.

Molina said the new Arizona waiver may help clinics afford to serve more patients or staff more traditional healers, and build infrastructure, including sacred spaces and sweat lodges. For other clinics, "They've been wanting to start, but perhaps don't have the revenue to start it," he said.

♦ See **TRADITIONAL** on page 6C

BC, Brighton support breast cancer awareness with 'pink' days



Calvin Tiger

The Big Cypress Reservation held its annual "Indigenous Pink Out" group photo Oct. 16 in front of the Frank Billie Field Office. The gathering was organized by Big Cypress Integrative Health. It was held the same day as the American Indian Cancer Foundation's Indigenous Pink Day, a national breast cancer awareness day across Indian Country.



Brighton Integrative Health (2)

Pink was the popular choice Oct. 23 as the Brighton Reservation supported breast cancer awareness with wear pink photo opportunities organized by Brighton Integrative Health. At left, Education Department staff; and at right, other members of the community.

IHS names Clayton Fulton, from Cherokee Nation, chief of staff

FROM PRESS RELEASE

PHOENIX — Clayton Fulton, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, has been named Indian Health Service's chief of staff. In an Oct. 14 press release, IHS said Fulton's responsibilities include overseeing the coordination of key agency activities and supporting the Office of the Director in the development and implementation of IHS

initiatives and priorities.

Fulton earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance and a Master of Business Administration in Native American enterprises from Northeastern State University. He went on to earn his Juris Doctor from the University of Michigan Law School, where he served on the national board of the National Native American Law Students Association.

After law school, Fulton returned to Eastern Oklahoma to work with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Office of the Attorney General as an assistant attorney general. He supported the nation in developing practical frameworks to strengthen community programs, expand economic opportunities, and align regulatory efforts with long-term growth, according to the release.

National Indigenous domestic violence hotline provides culturally specific help

BY GABRIELLE WALLACE
Cronkite News

PHOENIX — Seven days a week, 365 days a year, the StrongHearts Native Helpline provides care and services for Indigenous people experiencing domestic violence. On Sept. 24, it earned the title of National Indigenous Domestic Violence Hotline with new direct funding from the federal government.

The coalition line was first established in 2017. The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center and the National Domestic Violence Hotline collaborated on its creation after identifying a service gap for Indigenous callers.

"I don't think that people fully understand how challenging it is for us to seek service," said Memory Dawn Long Chase, domestic violence response director at the Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition. "People have heard of missing and murdered Indigenous people, but I don't know that people that haven't lived it or do this work fully understand how pervasive the barriers are."

The coalition already refers people to the line — Long Chase noted she had the number memorized because "you never know when somebody's going to need that number."

The grant for StrongHearts was announced just ahead of Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. It's just one part of the recent push and advocacy for domestic violence and missing and murdered cases in Indigenous communities.

Indigenous communities experience high rates of violence. More than 50% of Native American and Alaska Native women have been victims of sexual violence, according to the Department of Justice. Additionally, 84% of Indigenous women and 82% of Indigenous men have experienced violence at some point in their lifetime.

American Indian and Alaska Native women are 1.7 times more likely to experience violence compared to their white counterparts, according to the National Congress of American Indians.

Long Chase is especially close to the fight for missing and murdered Indigenous women and violence against Indigenous people. Her older sister, Lori Long Chase, went missing in 1983 at the age of 17. A body was found roughly a month after Lori, a member of the San Carlos Apache Reservation, went missing. The remains remained unidentified until 2024, when it was finally named as Lori's body, 41 years after she disappeared.

Long Chase and the Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition work with Indigenous communities to better respond to violence through education and advocacy. A culturally specific hotline better aids the needs of Indigenous communities across the nation, and the direct funding provides the opportunity for further improved care, she said.

"Having that direct relationship is really important so that we have that streamlined communication," said Rachel Carr-Shunk, deputy executive officer of StrongHearts Native Helpline.

Streamlined communication with the Administration for Children and Families could improve practices because StrongHearts can now directly communicate the needs of callers, Carr-Shunk said.

The \$15 million, five-year grant to StrongHearts comes from the ACF, the second-largest agency in the Department of Health and Human Services.

StrongHearts previously operated as a subgrantee of the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The line received discretionary funds from the Family and Youth Services Bureau, which it allocated to StrongHearts.

The National Indigenous Domestic Violence Hotline takes calls from anyone, regardless of whether the caller is Indigenous. The advocates who answer the phones direct callers to services in or near their community.

Advocates for StrongHearts work remotely, though the organization's headquarters are near Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, on the ancestral lands of the Sioux Santee Wahpekute people.

Renewed interest amid uncertainty

In May, Arizona passed the Turquoise Alert, also known as Emily's Law. It is named for Emily Pike, a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe who went missing in January. Her remains were found Feb. 14 in garbage bags along an Arizona highway. Her murder remains unsolved.

The Turquoise Alert went into effect in July 2025.

Arizona Rep. Brian Garcia (D-Tempe) co-sponsored the bill for the Turquoise Alert. He said he was pleased with the announcement of StrongHearts' new funding and culturally specific services for Indigenous communities.

"My hope would be that any program and funding that impacts Native people, right, is always centered around the impact of Native people that it's intended to serve, irrespective of where the funding is coming from," he said.

But more needs to be done at the state level, Garcia said. He said Arizona could do more to provide what the federal government can't, such as eviction support, additional funding to tribes and programs, and legal services. But that's easier said than done.

"There obviously isn't enough money in the state budget, and now with the federal cuts coming, it's pretty difficult to try and find that financial piece of support to be able to fund the gaps that tribes are in need of," he said.

Carr-Shunk said the federal government shutdown has not had an effect on the grant, but she's not sure if it could in the future. And at the end of the five years, StrongHearts will be left with a "what-if" on the renewal of their funding, though Carr-Shunk is hopeful.

"I certainly hope that this, this level of commitment, this five years, continues beyond five years," she said. "Because we know that the need is so significant."

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, visit StrongHearts Native Helpline — 844-7NATIVE (762-8483) and online at strongheartshelpline.org, available 24/7.

HM OCTOBER 18, 2025 TO MARCH 29, 2026
Yakne Seminoli/Seminole World
In partnership with Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum



Art and history — present and past — intersect in *Yakne Seminoli*, a vibrant exhibition in partnership with Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum at HistoryMiami Museum. Roughly translated as "Seminole World," the title reflects the idea of "all our traditions coming together". The Seminole people have a history of adapting, surviving and thriving despite irreversible changes in lifestyle, government, and environment. They have also helped shape the Florida we know today. This exhibit will showcase an impressive number of Seminole artists and a diverse collection of art, revealing how these artists bring that history and culture to life. Come experience how diversity brings a community together and learn how Seminole history is Florida history.

Some of the artists featured will be: Wilson Bowers, Elgin Jumper, Erika Deitz, Brian Zepeda, Gordon Oliver Wareham, CeCe Thomas, Brody Osceola, Jojo Osceola, Donna Frank and Haley Garcia.

HM HistoryMiami Museum
www.historymiami.org/ #HistoryMiami

101 West Flagler Street Miami, FL 33130

SEMINOLE SCENES



Courtesy photo

COURTHOUSE VISIT: On Friday, Aug. 29, Tribal Court staff visited the Broward County Courthouse and met with State Attorney Harold F. Pryor and his staff to discuss the new Seminole Youth Tribal Healing to Wellness Court. This diversion program blends tribal culture with evidence-based treatment to support tribal youth involved in the justice system. The goal is to help them heal, grow, and succeed. From left to right, Ta'Ami Bajamour, Court Case Manager; Luann Fuentes, Clerk of Court; Jeanine Bennett, Judicial Advisor; Harold F. Pryor, State Attorney; Moses Osceola, Director of the Administrative Office of the Seminole Court; Regina Faulk, Chief Assistant State Attorney; Felipe Diaz, Staff Attorney; Michael Kamen, Attorney; Jacqueline Gonzalez, Special projects Administrator; and, Elizabeth Hodge, Attorney.



Kevin Johnson (2)

MOORE HAVEN MOMENTS: At a recent Moore Haven High School volleyball game, Salina Dorgan, above, gets the crowd fired up with cheers. Dorgan is a Moore Haven High alum who helps at the concession stand during games. At right, after the Terriers' district championship victory, Alice Billie, a big supporter of the program, receives a birthday cake and flowers from Moore Haven head coach Mona Baker on behalf of the Terriers.



Beverly Bidney (3)

HAPPY HAUNTING: Children enjoy being creative at the Big Cypress Recreation Department's haunted houses and crafts decorating event Oct. 9 at the Herman L. Osceola Gymnasium. Participants included (above) Andre Goodleigh, left, and Equoni Cypress; (middle below) Marhz Edwards; and (bottom) Ayden Goodleigh, left, and Thomas Koenes.



Kevin Johnson

FALL FOLIAGE: The lobby at tribal headquarters is decked out with colorful fall scenery.



Hard Rock

PATCHWORK FOR T-PAIN: Rapper singer T-Pain receives a Seminole patchwork jacket prior to his soldout show Oct. 15 at Hard Rock Live in Hollywood. T-Pain, 41, a winner of BET and People's Choice awards, grew up in Jacksonville.

Kevin Johnson

SENIOR MOMENT: Okeechobee High School volleyball senior and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Yani Smith (6) is surrounded by family and friends following the team's senior night game Oct. 8, a 3-0 win against Port St. Lucie. See Sports for more coverage of OHS senior night.



NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

South Dakota board approves funding for satellite voting centers in tribal areas

A South Dakota board that oversees federal election grants approved funding Oct. 15 for satellite voting centers in three counties where travel distances have made it harder for Native Americans to cast ballots.

The state's HAVA Grant Board, which administers federal money from the Help America Vote Act, met virtually to approve grant requests from Lyman, Oglala Lakota and Todd counties. Those counties are home to much of the Lower Brule, Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations.

The board voted unanimously to fund the three counties' requests, totaling about \$50,000, to operate in-person, satellite voting sites during the 2026 election cycle. The satellite locations are in addition to early voting and election-day polling places typically located in county courthouses.

Lyman County received \$17,800 to hire poll workers, pay travel expenses and rent space for a temporary voting site. Oglala Lakota County was approved for \$25,400 for similar expenses, and Todd County received \$6,500.

Courts have repeatedly found that South Dakota and some counties have failed to provide equal access to polling locations, registration opportunities and early voting for Native Americans. In some of those lawsuits, judges have ruled that without such voting sites, those Native American voters faced barriers that violate the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

- *South Dakota Searchlight*

On cannabis fight, Ojibwe man tests limits of the state's authority

MAHNOMEN, Minn. — The day after Minnesota officially legalized recreational marijuana in August 2023, agents with the Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force raided a squat, single story cinderblock building across the railroad tracks from a grain elevator in the sleepy northwestern Minnesota town of Mahnomen.

The search of the Asema Tobacco & Pipe Shop yielded approximately 7.5 pounds of marijuana, much of it stored in plain sight in mason jars bearing labels like “Black Plague” and “Ghost Candy.” Investigators also seized just under a pound of marijuana wax and, from the till and several people who were present, \$2,748 in cash.

Eight months later, Todd Jeremy Thompson, Asema's owner, was charged by the Mahnomen County Attorney with one count of felony first-degree possession of marijuana.

For Thompson, a blunt talking, occasionally profane 56-year-old enrolled member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, neither the raid nor the criminal case came as a surprise.

“I was told by certain individuals that they were going to come. Two different sources,” Thompson told the Reformer during a pair of wide-ranging interviews at what he refers to as his “old school head shop.”

Still, those warnings did not dissuade Thompson from exercising what he believes are his rights under treaty law, applicable federal precedent, Minnesota's 2023 cannabis legalization law, and the constitution of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

Thompson has a long history of successfully asserting his rights as a Native in the face of an array of legal authorities, but this constitutional clash is not without risk: He could face up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

In the more than two years that have passed since the raid, the retail sale of marijuana has exploded across Minnesota, first with a proliferation of tribally-owned dispensaries located on reservations, and more recently, with a slew of tribal and non-tribal outlets opening off-reservation.

At White Earth, Thompson explained as he gave a driving tour of Mahnomen, the band got a head start in the burgeoning industry because it already had a functional medical marijuana operation up and running.

Rolling down the road, it's hard to miss that enterprise, which is every bit as aromatic as you would guess. The growhouse is located in a 40,000-square-foot former potato chip factory, now encircled with tall fences and concertina wire. The tribally run dispensary, Waabigwan Mashkiki, is close too, just across the street from the Shooting Star Casino.

As his court case drags on, Thompson has continued to operate Asema, where products on display include bulk tobacco, incense, posters, and a wide array of paraphernalia: glassware, vapes, stash containers, cheap cigars, wraps, vape juice, scales and the like.

Competition from the tribal dispensary has cut into his glassware sales, said Thompson. He's still making enough to pay his bills, he said, adding ruefully that he probably won't be in the market for a new truck any time soon.

In seeking dismissal of the felony charge, Thompson's defense has hinged largely on a jurisdictional claim.

Under a 1953 law called Public Law 280, the U.S. Congress granted policing authority on Indian reservations to state law enforcement in six states, including Minnesota. But, broadly speaking, that authority does not extend to what are referred to as civil/regulatory matters. So when Minnesota legalized marijuana, the argument goes, the regulation of cannabis on reservations fell outside the purview of state courts.

Thompson's defense also points to the language of the 2023 state law that legalized

recreational marijuana in Minnesota. That law explicitly “acknowledges the sovereign right of Minnesota Tribal governments to regulate the cannabis industry and address other matters of cannabis regulation [on reservations].”

Nonetheless, in March, District Court Judge Seamus Duffy rejected Thompson's motion to dismiss. In his ruling, Duffy allowed that it was a close call but pointed out that Minnesota's cannabis law still contains criminal provisions, including limits on allowable quantities and a prohibition on products such as marijuana wax.

Duffy was less sympathetic to a second argument — that possession and sale of cannabis by Thompson and other band members is a reserved right under the 1855 treaty. Noting that the treaty is silent on the subject and that cannabis use among the Ojibwe is a relatively modern phenomenon, the judge wrote that “Thompson has not shown that marijuana was envisioned with any of the reserved rights at the time of the Treaty.”

The legal setback proved fleeting.

In a highly unusual move, the Minnesota Court of Appeals agreed to take up Thompson's appeal prior to the conclusion of the district court case. The grant of this interlocutory appeal typically signals a court's view that the case raises a significant legal question.

Oral arguments are scheduled for November 4.

The Asema raid is not the first time Thompson has found himself in legal crosshairs of state law enforcement. In the past decade, Thompson has been involved in long-running court cases that tested the bounds of state authority over netting fish and harvesting wild rice in the so-called “ceded territories” — land that the Ojibwe sold to the U.S. government in a series of 19th century treaties.

After extensive legal wrangling, he came out on top both times. In the fishing case —brought after Thompson and a friend set gill nets in Gull Lake — the Office of Crow Wing County Attorney dismissed the charge after a district court judge found that Thompson, as a White Earth band member, retained the right to fish on Gull Lake. (Thompson's friend, a Fond du Lac band member, was convicted after the judge ruled that Fond du Lac band was not a signatory to the relevant treaty.)

Last spring, a different district court judge dismissed the ricing case after concluding that the state had violated Thompson's right to a speedy trial by charging him, dismissing the charge after three months, and then re-charging eight months later.

Thompson also successfully rebuffed a trespass charge stemming from his participation in a 2021 protest over the construction of an oil pipeline, called Line 3, across the headwaters of the Mississippi River

In that fight, Thompson managed to get the case transferred to White Earth's tribal court. In dismissing the charge, Tribal Court Judge David DeGroat ruled that Thompson's actions were “in conformity with the goal of protecting environmental resources that impact ceded and reservations land.”

Thompson's string of legal victories — and his willingness to put his neck on the line — has earned him admirers.

“Todd is out in front of most tribal members trying to figure out how to use treaty rights for economic benefit, whether it is standard hunt, fish and gather, or if it is something a step beyond,” said Frank Bibeau, a White Earth band member and an attorney for the 1855 Treaty Authority, which advocates for Ojibwe people's off-reservation rights. “To me, Todd is the tip of the spear. He can see what his rights are. He doesn't need to be told.”

Bibeau is not representing Thompson in the Asema case, though he filed a friend of the court brief on behalf of the 1855 Treaty Authority.

Claire Glenn, a former Hennepin County public defender who now works with the Climate Defense Project, is Thompson's attorney in the cannabis case.

Glenn got to know Thompson when she represented him — and nearly 100 other “water protectors” — who were involved in the Line 3 protests. More recently, she was his attorney in the ricing case that was dismissed this spring.

“He has a lot of integrity,” Glenn said of Thompson. “He lives his life in accordance with his values and without apologies. He has undertaken his own study of the treaties and the history of treaty making and Indigenous genocide. And he has learned a lot from the elders who came before him.”

(Editor's note: To see the full article, go to <https://minnesotareformer.com/2025/10/14/on-cannabis-fight-ogjibwe-man-tests-limits-of-the-states-authority-again/>).

- *Minnesota Reformer*

Do tribal citizens need state-issued hunting, fishing licenses off trust lands? Okla. officials say yes

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation shared a press release on Oct. 8, drawing disapproval from several tribal leaders of the five largest tribes in Oklahoma and tribal lawyers. It highlighted a gray area of where tribal citizens can hunt and fish with tribally issued licenses.

Micha Holmes with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation said the department wanted to provide clarification in light of two recent court decisions involving jurisdiction in Indian Country: Strobele v. Oklahoma Tax Commission and Stitt v. Tulsa.

He said tribal citizens need state-issued hunting and fishing licenses if they plan to hunt or fish outside of trust land. Without

one, he noted, that's a misdemeanor or a state-issued citation.

“Those two recent court cases indicate that citations that would be issued as a result of not having a hunting and fishing license, for example, would be something that would stand up in state court,” Holmes said. “So that's why we are, you know, just making that affirmation that we are going to make sure that all Oklahomans have hunting and fishing licenses.”

One case, Stitt v. City of Tulsa, involves Cherokee Nation citizen Keith Stitt (brother of Gov. Kevin Stitt) challenging the city's jurisdiction to issue a traffic citation he received within Muscogee Nation boundaries. Stitt lost that case in March, and this week the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal.

The Strobele case questioned whether Muscogee Nation citizen, employee and resident Alicia Strobele was exempt from state income tax. Ultimately, the court determined that only tribe-owned trust land meets the legal definition of “Indian Country,” not entire reservations.

Holmes said the Strobele decision is more relevant to the ODWC's enforcement practices than McGirt v. Oklahoma, which determined tribes have jurisdiction over major crimes committed on their reservations by members of a federally recognized tribe.

“We've been following this case law closely,” Holmes said. “We think that the Tax Commission has a direct effect on what we do — hunting and fishing. Because if you don't have a hunting fishing license, that's a misdemeanor. It's not a major crime.”

Stephen Greetham, an attorney at Greetham Law, PLLC, who represents Tribal nations, said the Strobele case did not raise any questions about criminal jurisdiction, though.

“There is a broad sweep of federal law that affirms they don't have the jurisdiction they're [ODWC] claiming,” Greetham said. “That federal law includes the Oklahoma Enabling Act, which, as a condition of Oklahoma even becoming a state, had to accept that it had no authority whatsoever to interfere with tribal rights or the federal authority with respect to tribes. That's a condition of statehood.”

Robert Gifford, a Cherokee Nation Citizen and tribal court judge for two major tribes, said, ultimately, hunting and fishing rights are essentially treaty rights, and the Oklahoma Supreme Court does not have the authority to overrule a treaty.

“It kind of goes back to the McGirt thing where they said, ‘Hey, if Congress enters into a treaty, only Congress can do away with it. No one else.’” Gifford said. “You can't write laws around it. ...So the state of Oklahoma, you know, the Oklahoma Supreme Court, within its authority, does not supersede and take precedent over an act of Congress or a federal treaty between a tribe and the United States government.”

Gifford said he believes this issue will further lead to litigation, as trust land often hosts important tribal property, such as casinos, tribal housing or government buildings.

Some leaders of the five largest tribes in Oklahoma similarly vocalized that the court cases are not relevant to the issue at hand, noting they are following federal law.

“Our Cherokee Nation Hunting and Fishing model that we created is fully in line with federal law and the sovereign treaty rights with the United States,” Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. said in a statement. “It is dangerous and misleading for the state of Oklahoma to twist unrelated legal rulings to claim otherwise.”

Hoskin Jr. pointed the blame at Gov. Kevin Stitt for refusing to renew hunting and fishing compacts with his nation and the Choctaw Nation in 2021, as did Muscogee Nation Principal Chief David Hill.

Following the compacts' expiration, the five tribes signed a reciprocity agreement last summer, allowing tribal members of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole and Muscogee Nations to hunt and fish within their respective reservations using tribally-issued licenses. In many cases, tribal membership can act as a license.

Holmes acknowledged that the end of those compacts left some gaps at the ODWC.

“They provided some funding for the wildlife department, and they provided some clarity for those folks who, you know: ‘Do I need a license or not?’” Holmes said. “Without those compacts, what was lost was, was some funding for the Wildlife Department and some clarity for those folks.”

William Norman, a lawyer at Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker and a Muscogee Nation citizen, also took fault with Gov. Stitt and the state's legal interpretation of hunting and fishing rights on Indian reservations, calling it “inflammatory” and “nonsensical.”

“Stitt recently vetoed S.B. 208, stating, ‘I refuse to sign legislation that creates more unnecessary [hunting] licenses for Oklahomans.’” Norman said in a statement.

“Yet when it comes to tribal citizens, he is more than happy to threaten punishment for the exercise of sovereign hunting and fishing rights. Native people were here hunting and fishing on their ancestral and treaty lands long before Oklahoma was a state.”

Although the ODWC's statement is in line with Stitt's stances on tribal jurisdiction, there's no indication Stitt had any role in ODWC's decision to issue a statement.

“I'm not aware it was the request of anybody,” Holmes said.

Stitt's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton said his sovereign nation will continue safeguarding the rights his people have always exercised.

“The Choctaw Nation will defend the rights of our tribal members and our Nation against intimidation and harassment in

violation of tribal and federal law,” Batton said. “Any tribal member who receives a citation or has personal items confiscated by an Oklahoma game warden while fishing or hunting within the boundaries of one of the Five Tribes' reservations should contact the Choctaw Nation Tribal Public Defender's Office.”

Hill also directed Muscogee citizens to contact the tribe's Department of Interior Affairs if they receive a citation for not having a state license within their reservation.

- *KOSU (Stillwater, Okla.)*

Menominee County property owners argue land can't be transferred to tribal trust

The Wisconsin Supreme Court on Oct. 13 heard oral arguments in a case that could have ramifications for tribal sovereignty when it comes to land development.

At issue was whether the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and its members are subject to restrictive covenants, which are requirements on how property can or cannot be developed, used or transferred — or whether federal tribal sovereignty preempts those local requirements.

The court is also considering whether the Menominee Restoration Act of 1973, which restored federal recognition to the tribe with certain conditions, means land developers can't enforce restrictive covenants on lands bought by tribal members.

The land in question abuts Legend Lake in Menominee County, and has been represented by the Legend Lake Property Owners Association since 1972 — before the Menominee tribal rights were restored. The association implemented its restrictive covenants in 2009.

According to the 2018 lawsuit brought forward by the association, tribal member Guy Keshena bought 40 parcels of land in the Legend Lake development “sometime after 2017” with the intention of placing the land in trust with the federal government.

That would subject the parcels to the same kinds of tax-exempt status as other tribal properties.

The lawsuit argues that Keshena, like anyone else buying property within the development, had to abide by certain requirements. That includes a prohibition on transferring the properties off of county tax rolls — as happened when the Bureau of Indian Affairs accepted Keshena's parcels into trust.

The lawsuit argued Keshena bought the land as an individual tribal member, not on behalf of the tribe, so sovereign immunity doesn't apply and he would have to follow the restrictive covenants.

The Menominee County Circuit Court sided with the tribe, finding that the lawsuit violates tribal sovereignty. The property owners' association appealed, and on Oct. 13, the Wisconsin Supreme Court heard arguments from both sides.

Erik Olsen, an attorney for the association, argued that the covenants are enforceable because the Menominee Restoration Act is written to leave in place “any property rights or obligations, any contractual rights or obligations, including ... any obligations for taxes already levied.”

Attorneys for Keshena and the tribe said sovereign immunity overrules local rules.

“To sue an Indian tribe, you must show either a clear abrogation of immunity by Congress or an unequivocal waiver of sovereign immunity by the tribe,” said Michael Roy, a lawyer for Keshena.

A central issue in the arguments was to what extent the United States should be a party in the lawsuit. Justice Brian Hagedorn asked how the state Supreme Court should weigh in on a matter of federal property concerns without the federal government participating.

Olsen, the plaintiff's attorney, argued that covenants are “reciprocal agreements” and that the plaintiffs want the court to declare “that those covenants that were already in full force and effect continue in full force and effect.”

Roy, the defendant's attorney, said tribal sovereignty rendered that concern moot.

The Supreme Court case is not the only legal action that the property owners have brought against the tribe. They also brought a challenge to the U.S. Department of the Interior, following a decision by the Interior Board of Indian Appeals. In 2023, that board found that the Bureau of Indian Affairs had acted properly when it accepted the parcels into trust because the Menominee Restoration Act preempted restrictive covenants.

The association then appealed that suit in federal court. The appeals court upheld some of the findings from the Interior Board of Indian Appeals and ultimately dismissed the case.

The association has also filed a related lawsuit against Menominee County, the town of Menominee and the Menominee Indian School District, alleging taxation discrimination and arguing that the local tax system disproportionately burdens non-tribal landowners.

- *Wisconsin Public Radio*

B.C. program offers Indigenous offenders alternative to criminal charges

The B.C. First Nations Justice Council has opened a new Indigenous Diversion Centre in downtown Prince George, B.C., Canada, which will offer some Indigenous people who commit minor crimes an alternative to being criminally charged.

The organization says it's the first of its kind in Canada.

During a grand opening ceremony on Oct. 14, council chair Kory Wilson and Prince George RCMP Supt. Darin Rappel signed an agreement officially launching the program.

The diversion centre offers Indigenous offenders the option to participate in a 90-day therapeutic plan in which they would commit to a set of activities in order to have their charges dropped.

Rappel said people eligible for the program will be facing charges for non-violent offences like shoplifting, fraud or mischief.

“There's a gross over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system, so we need to do something about it,” said Wilson.

She said the program focuses on the root causes of offending by providing a caring and cultural environment where healing can occur, aiming to intervene early to prevent reoffending and provide participants with an alternative path.

“People often think it's a get out of jail free card, but in fact it's much harder to face a group of your elders, and to face your victim and the people that you've wronged and harmed and to take ownership over that,” said Wilson.

She said dealing with the trauma and other issues that have led to an offender's actions can also be difficult.

According to B.C. Corrections, 36 percent of individuals in B.C. provincial custody self-identify as Indigenous, despite Indigenous people making up approximately six percent of B.C.'s adult population.

Wilson also noted the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre is currently overcapacity, with 63 percent of inmates identifying as Indigenous.

“So we need to do something that's different and we need to do something that's outside the box,” she said.

According to Lheldi T'enneh elder Marcel Gagnon, the centre's elder-in-residence, the program will give participants a sense of belonging, worthiness, and connection.

“Hopefully when they come and work with us, with the social workers, clinical counsellor, all these talented people we have here to assist them in housing and all those basic needs, I think it's going to be very successful.” he said. “Especially reconnecting with ceremony and being on the land.”

Rappel said he's also hopeful the program will have an impact on policing in Prince George and break the cycle of reoffending.

“Prince George, not unlike other communities, has had a more difficult time of late with some issues around repeat offending and the more options that we have on the table, the better,” said Rappel.

He said the program is an opportunity to address socio-economic, mental health and additions issues that do not get enough consideration in the regular justice system.

“Certainly this is something that needs to be tried, and we're very optimistic that it will produce results,” he said.

The diversion centre will also work with Indigenous people who have been released from correctional institutions to support them reintegrating into the community.

- *CBC*

Musqueam to appeal Cowichan Tribes ruling on Aboriginal title

The Musqueam Indian Band is the latest government to announce its plans to appeal the recent British Columbia (Canada) Supreme Court decision that found another First Nation government holds Aboriginal title for land and fishing rights in an area of Metro Vancouver.

The ruling (in August) granted the Cowichan Tribes Aboriginal title over a portion of almost 7½ square kilometres of land they claimed in Richmond, B.C., as well as fishing rights along a stretch of the south arm of the Fraser River.

The ruling declares Crown and city titles to be “defective and invalid,” and while the Cowichan Tribes did not seek the same designation for private land titles, Justice Barbara Young found granting them had unjustifiably infringed on Cowichan title.

The Musqueam and Tsawwassen First Nations, along with the federal and provincial governments, the City of Richmond and the Vancouver-Fraser Port Authority all opposed the Cowichan claim during the 513-day trial.

Musqueam and the City of Richmond have each issued statements saying they have filed notices of appeal in the case, with Musqueam saying the Tsawwassen First Nation supports their appeal while moving forward with its own.

Musqueam Chief Wayne Sparrow says his nation is “deeply concerned” by the Aug. 7 ruling and its potential effects on future land claims.

“Like many Musqueam families, I come from generations of fishers who worked tirelessly to protect our territory, rights and resources,” Sparrow says.

“We will continue to follow the guidance of our elders and ancestors by vigorously appealing this decision,” he says.to appeal the decision, with Attorney General Niki Sharma saying (in August) that it could have “significant unintended consequences” on private property rights in the province.

- *CBC*

SOUTH FLORIDA’S ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION



NOVEMBER 1
ROSARIO FLORES



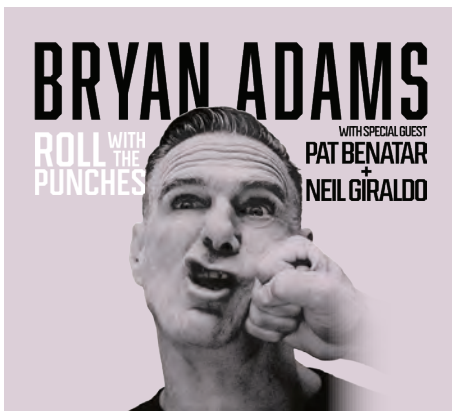
NOVEMBER 2
PETER FRAMPTON



NOVEMBER 6
STARS & STRINGS



NOVEMBER 7 & 8
STING



NOVEMBER 9
BRYAN ADAMS



NOVEMBER 14
THE BEACH BOYS



NOVEMBER 15
OLGA TAÑÓN



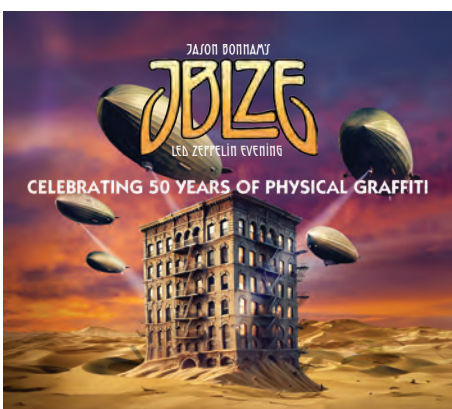
NOVEMBER 20
FITO PÁEZ



NOVEMBER 21
CARLY PEARCE



NOVEMBER 22
KATT WILLIAMS



NOVEMBER 26
JASON BONHAM



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Education



B

FGCU professors teach PECS students about STEM

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BRIGHTON — Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School welcomed a group of educators from Florida Gulf Coast University on Oct. 7 to show students how much fun learning can be in the STEM curriculum through hands-on activities.

PECS has an ongoing relationship with FGCU; eighth grade students visit the university every year and teachers who want to attend, may go to summer conferences and trainings on a voluntary basis.

During the summer of 2024 some PECS teachers went to FGCU for a week-long, faculty led professional development program on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). In turn, PECS invited FGCU to come to the school and interact with the students.

Students in the Immersion program, kindergarten and first grade participated

in the program. The students were asked if knew any of the STEM courses and they all did. Then Heather Skaza-Acosta, director, Whitaker Center for STEM Education, asked them which ones they liked best.

In a rush of enthusiasm, students responded. Some of the answers were “math keeps my brain working,” “I like science because we get to learn how things work” and “I like doing puzzles.”

The Immersion students, teachers and FGCU staff went to the PECS culture camp to do some scientific exploration.

“STEM shows students a way to understand the world,” Skaza-Acosta said. “Science doesn’t have to be complicated, it starts with just noticing. If you do this at the same place all year long, you will see things are going to change. It’s fun to keep a notebook of the changes.”

Each student was given a small notebook and a pen to write and draw their observations. During the first activity,

students sat still for three minutes and used all their senses to look, hear, smell and feel the environment around them.

“Go forth and be scientists,” Skaza-Acosta told the students as they dispersed for the activity.

For the second activity, hula hoops were placed around the camp to define small areas. The students examined what they saw on the ground inside of the circle. They sketched what they saw and talked about the differences based on whether they were in sun or shade, or by a tree or a chickee.

They reassembled in the chickee to talk about what they found. From a distance, the areas look pretty much the same, but upon closer inspection, differences become apparent. Students found rocks, flowers, grass, leaves, plastic and bugs within the confines of the hula hoops.

The next activity was pushing a corer, or auger, into the ground to dig up a few inches of soil for examination. The corer pulls up a sample about the width of an apple core.

Students examined the differences in the samples from various areas, some just a few feet away. In the culture camp’s garden the differences in the samples were significant. One was mostly dark dirt, the other had much lighter dirt closer to the surface and



Beverly Bidney

PECS immersion students listen as Heather Skaza-Acosta, FGCU professor and director of the Whitaker Center for STEM education, explains their next scientific activity during the university's visit to the school Oct. 8.



Beverly Bidney

PECS immersion students Eli Hill and Eliana Maldonado pay attention to FGCU educator Heather Skaza-Acosta as they examine a core sample of the dirt below their feet.

got darker as the sample went deeper down in the ground. The reason for the substantial difference was one area was in shade and the other in full sunlight.

“We hope they get a connection to the sciences and math,” Skaza-Acosta said. “We wanted to bring students an experience they don’t always get in a classroom. The goal is to have some fun investigating the world and to light a fire in the students.”

Beverly Bidney

KyLynn Lawrence sketches a picture of what she found within the circle of the hula hoop on the ground.



Big Cypress Preschool students dash into Walktober

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

BIG CYPRESS — Big Cypress Preschool students spent the morning of Oct. 23 walking and running in circles during the school’s first big event since its new building opened in August.

Organized by the parent committee, Walktober was a fundraiser in which the children raised money based on how many laps around the parking lot they walked. Donors had the option of donating a flat sum or an amount for each lap the child completed.

“It was our first big event,” said Randee Osceola, chairwoman of the parents committee. “I thought it was going to be all

walking, but the kids are running.”

By the end of the event, the most laps completed by a student was 26 times around the parking lot. Each child got a medal, which they displayed proudly. The money will be used for an end-of-the-year fun day or event or giveaways.

The festive Walktober included music by DJ Kevin Holata, and a vendor selling cute pajamas and outfits for little ones. Lunch was provided by Councilwoman Mariann Billie.

“We plan to have a lot of fundraisers throughout the year,” Osceola said. “It’s all for the kids.”

♦ See WALKTOBER PHOTOS on page 3B



Beverly Bidney

Kids race around the parking lot during the Big Cypress Preschool's Walktober event Oct. 23.

Donna Harmon earns master's degree in nursing

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

After working as a Registered Nurse in hospitals for 26 years, Donna Harmon recently graduated with a Master’s Degree in Science, with a specialty as a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP).

The Sept. 27 graduation ceremony was held at Frontier Nursing University’s campus in Versailles, Kentucky. As an FNP, Harmon will see patients as a medical doctor would; for routine checkups and to treat those with chronic issues.

She went to graduate school so she could do something other than bedside nursing in a hospital, where she only saw patients briefly while they were in the hospital.

“It’s exciting, it’s a different role,” said Harmon, 57. “I’m sure there will be a certain level of stress, but not as much as working on your feet for 12 hour shifts. I want to make a difference in patients’ lives. This way I get to follow my patients for years, hopefully.”

Harmon took her classes online but completed her clinical practicum, or placement, at Seminole clinics in Hollywood, Immokalee, Big Cypress and Brighton from July to December 2024, and in a Navajo clinic in Tuba City, Arizona, from mid-January through July 2025. Harmon lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, about an hour from the Navajo reservation.

During her clinical placements, Harmon worked with pediatrics, adults and geriatrics. She treated those with adult chronic care, adult episodic care, prenatal patients and women’s healthcare. As an FNP, she will assess, diagnose patients, manage medications and focus on disease prevention through education.

The Navajo clinic created a position for her and she will start in mid-December.

“I look forward to using all the knowledge I have,” Harmon said. “I even went to cooking school. Health has been



Courtesy photo

Donna Harmon, center, with, from left to right, her cousin Naomi Wilson, children Levi Harmon and Jessi Harmon, and daughter-in-law Kylie Harmon at the graduation ceremony Sept. 27 at Frontier Nursing University in Versailles, Kentucky.

important to me for a long time, so I’ll be happy to incorporate that and teach my patients.”

Harmon has four children; Levi serves in the U.S. Army, Eli serves in the U.S. Air Force, Jessi serves in the U.S. Army and Anna is a college student at Sacramento

State in California, where she competes on the school’s cross country team.

“It was a lot of work, but in the end it was worth it,” Harmon said. “My kids are so proud of me. It was hard work and I’m glad it’s over. Now I’ll take my board exam and start working.”

Study: Tribal colleges, universities in Arizona and beyond added nearly \$4B to national economy

BY KJZZ (PHOENIX, ARIZ.)

While dozens of tribal colleges and universities — or TCUs — are facing federal funding cuts that could force them to shut down, a new report highlights some of the economic impacts generated from tens of thousands of alumni. It’s meant to show the “positive return on investment for students,

taxpayers and society.”

Using data from 35 institutions, including the oldest, Diné College, this study was commissioned by the nonprofit American Indian Higher Education Consortium. It found that more than 40,700 former students added nearly \$4 billion to the U.S. economy between 2022 and 2023.

“TCUs are a direct expression of

sovereignty over our education systems,” said Ahniwake Rose, who is Cherokee and the nonprofit’s president and CEO, “that drive job creation in our local economies, that are land and community based and that are also grounded in Native culture and traditions.”

Anti-bullying activities held tribalwide at Boys & Girls Clubs

STAFF REPORT

October was National Bully Prevention Month and the Seminole Boys & Girls Clubs commemorated the month with some fun activities.

The theme for the anti-bully events was “Buddy Bash: No Bullies, Just Buddies.”

The Immokalee B&G Club held an energetic dance party complete with a DJ Oct. 16. Kids also created posters, signs and other artwork for the month, which were displayed on the walls and tabletops in the clubhouse.

“This was an event to encourage youth to be buddies, not bullies,” Immokalee B&G Club manager Steven Alvarado wrote in an email. “Youth should feel safe from being bullied as it can cause negative effects on academics, social well-being, physical and mental health.”

Big Cypress, Brighton and Hollywood B&G Clubs also held events in October. In Hollywood, Doc Native and Paul Buster performed.



Calvin Tiger
Doc Native performs at the anti-bullying event Oct. 16 in Hollywood.



Calvin Tiger
Hollywood kids show their support for “Buddy Bash: No Bullies, Just Buddies.”



Calvin Tiger (2)
Language Program Director Francine Osceola, left, and Paul ‘Cowbone’ Buster show their support to help the Boys & Girls Clubs’ anti-bullying event in Hollywood.



Calvin Tiger
Jett Billie, Aviana Osceola and Zaedyn Bell get ready to drum up support for the anti-bullying activities.



Calvin Tiger
Luke Lamb and Braxton Osceola enjoy taking part in the Hollywood activities to promote anti-bullying.



Beverly Bidney
Lots of energy from these kids in the “Buddy Bash” event at the Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club.



Calvin Tiger
Arifa Khan, from the Boys & Girls Clubs in Hollywood, holds a friendly sign.



Beverly Bidney
Kids show plenty of enthusiasm during the “Buddy Bash” event at the Big Cypress Boys & Girls Club.



Beverly Bidney
Signs in Immokalee get the point across about preventing bullying.

University of Kansas collaborates on \$1.5M grant to train teachers for Native-serving schools

BY TIM CARPENTER
Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA, Kan. — University of Kansas indigenous studies director Alex Red Corn said a \$1.5 million grant would allow a five-year collaboration with tribal nations and school districts in three states to broaden the pipeline of K-12 teachers working in schools serving Native American students.

The difficulty of attracting and retaining teachers to serve Native American students has been fueled from insufficient funding, isolation of rural communities and lack of job-market recruiting.

KU was awarded the grant from the Office of Indian Education in the U.S. Department of Education. The program involves the Southern Plains American Indian Teaching Pathways Project, which is a partnership that included Haskell Indian Nations University, or HINU, in Lawrence.

The goal is to work with Native Nations and school districts in Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma to prepare and mentor 15 teachers in elementary or secondary education.

“We look forward to getting started recruiting folks from Native communities and offer them a funded pathway to full teacher licensure through KU and Haskell

and continuing to grow our longstanding partnership with Haskell in new and exciting ways,” said Red Corn, an Osage member, the lead principal investigator on the project and a KU associate professor.

Under the program, researchers plan to recruit individuals who earned or were approaching completion of an associate’s degree and want to pursue teaching certification by earning a bachelor’s degree at HINU or KU.

Upon graduation, these certified teachers would be required to work in Native-serving schools, where they would receive career mentorship from experienced

teachers and cultural leaders.

KU officials said students involved in the program would be eligible for financial support in the form of tuition and fees, monthly living stipends, books, laptops and academic conference travel.

“We’re very appreciative of this opportunity from the Office of Indian Education, which is such a critical resource for tribal nations looking to advance sovereignty in education,” Red Corn said.

He said tribe and school partners in the region were eager to participate in work on a sustained program to bolster the teacher-development pipeline.

Project partners on the grant application included HINU, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Osage Nation, Quapaw Nation, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

Other partners in the teacher development effort would be Royal Valley Schools and South Brown County Schools as well as Daposka Ahnkodapi (Osage Nation School), Darlington Public Schools, Umo’ho Nation Public School and the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly.

Education Department debuts Youth Empowerment Program

BY CALVIN TIGER
Staff Reporter

With the approval of the Tribal Council and Board, the tribe’s Education Department has rolled out its new Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) as a tribalwide program from ages 14 to 22. The program focuses on creating a positive mindset, encouraging tribal youth to become potential leaders in their communities and personal growth which includes communication skills, cultural pride, and civic engagement.

The program will be comprised of monthly workshops, youth-led community projects, mentorship opportunities and cultural integration. Students enrolled in YEP will also be able to earn volunteer hours. Parent workshops will also be part of the program along with a community collaboration project showcase and an end of year family picnic. Students will be able to discuss decision making, growth and

personal development. The program would like to include tribal elders speaking to the students during select workshops about tribal culture.

“I want these kids to understand who they are,” said Chris Paul-Etienne, student success specialist in Education and creator of the YEP program. He said the youth should be the voice, and they create the vision for the program.

YEP currently has 10 program ambassadors. Program ambassadors are selected by students in the program to act as a supervisory role in the different tribal communities and act as a point of contact to relay information.

The YEP mission statement states: “To empower Seminole youth to become confident, capable, and culturally grounded leaders through engaging workshops, mentorship, and community involvement while supporting families to raise resilient and connected young people.”

♦ WALKTOBER PHOTOS From page 1B



Beverly Bidney

Jeannette Cypress and her granddaughter walk in the preschool event.



Beverly Bidney

Participants in the Big Cypress Preschool Walktober event get a chance to explore a Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue truck and SPD police car.



Beverly Bidney

Ashley Cornelius holds her son Darren Jim during the Walktober event at the preschool.



Beverly Bidney

Cypress Billie, who was the emcee at the Walktober event, and his daughter Sabal Billie enjoy the day.

Wabanaki Alliance celebration honors generational wisdom as foundation for progress

BY EMMA DAVIS
Maine Morning Star

Maulian Bryant can remember when few people knew about the issue of tribal sovereignty. Now, serving as the executive director of the Wabanaki Alliance, the 41 year old said she is blown away by the breadth of people engaged with the issue.

She shared these reflections with Maine Morning Star in light of the alliance’s third celebration of “Nihkaniyane: Let’s Go Forward Together” [in October], when members and allies came together to recognize the coalition’s work and the relationships that make it possible.

Noting the current political instability in the United States, Bryant said it is a precarious time for tribal rights, “but also, I see a lot of people turning to us and asking what they can do and I think that a lot of people want to work in their one little corner of the world.”

Since its founding in 2020, the Wabanaki Alliance has expanded, physically — with a coalition of more than 300 organizations across Maine and the addition of staff

members — but also in the reach of its cause.

The Wabanaki Alliance was formed to advocate for changes to the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act. That land agreement has resulted in the Wabanaki Nations — the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Mi’kmaq Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribe and Penobscot Nation — being treated differently than other federally recognized tribes, with a relationship to the state more akin to municipalities than sovereign nations.

Since the organization’s creation, progress has been made. For example, the state expanded tribal authority to prosecute crimes. But Gov. Janet Mills vetoed the latest proposed change this year, bipartisan legislation that would have prevented the state from being able to seize tribal land for public use. Mills has rejected sweeping reform and instead approached changing the relationship on a case-by-case basis.

Though, already fairly widespread gubernatorial candidate support for tribal sovereignty suggests the state’s approach could change when Mills is termed out in 2026.

♦ See ALLIANCE on page 6C

Stavros Halkias to play Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood

FROM PRESS RELEASE
HOLLYWOOD — Stavros Halkias’ “The Dreamboat Tour” is coming to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood Friday, Jan. 16, 2026, at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at www.myHRL.com.

Halkias is a comedian, actor, and writer from Baltimore, Maryland, now based in New York City. He most recently wrote, produced, and starred in the indie comedy “Let’s Start a Cult.” His latest

stand-up special, “Fat Rascal,” is streaming on Netflix, following his debut special Live at the Lodge Room, which hit one million views in its first four days and has since surpassed seven million.



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Kevin Johnson
Carlee Billie, left, is accompanied by the giant inflatable mayor from “Nightmare Before Christmas” at the Big Cypress Fall Festival Oct. 24 on the rodeo grounds.



Kevin Johnson
It's a smooth ride for Charles Balentine as he enjoys a carpet ride on a giant slide at the festival.



Kevin Johnson
Allie Billie shows creativity with her costume, an inflatable toilet decorated as if it came from a horror movie.

Brighton fills rodeo arena for Halloween bash



Kevin Johnson
Kids enjoy a popular carnival ride at the Brighton Halloween Carnival on Oct. 24 at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena. Families filled the arena floor as they enjoyed a night of food, games, rides and costume contests.

Creative costumes and fun highlight BC Fall Festival



Kevin Johnson
Up into the clouds on a fast and high carnival ride are Thomas Koenes, left, and Lashawn Pascal (front row) and Jada Harris, left, and Atreyu Cypress in the back row.



Kevin Johnson
Tommy ‘Happy Gilmore’ Doud serves as emcee for an evening filled with costumes from all walks of life, including ‘Michael Myers.’



Kevin Johnson
A Halloween costume contest and displays of pumpkins set the scene for Big Cypress's event.



Kevin Johnson
Brighton Councilman Larry Howard with Squidward from ‘SpongeBob SquarePants.’



Kevin Johnson
Sandy Billie Jr. entertains the audience late in the evening in the King's contest. He was the winner.



Kevin Johnson
A trio from Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue serve as judges for the costume contests.



Kevin Johnson
While on board a carnival ride, Leona Cochran, left, and Stanlo Jackson say hello to a friend.



Kevin Johnson
A variety of costumes fill the stage during one of the contests.

Happy Halloween in Immokalee



Beverly Bidney
President Holly Tiger arrives at the festival dressed as Lydia Deetz from “Beetlejuice,” complete with the camera.



Beverly Bidney
The Alvarado family arrives at the Immokalee Halloween carnival Oct. 25. From left are Namari, 4, Jyotis, Juelz, 5, and Alphonso Alvarado. The event was held in the pavilion by the Immokalee rodeo arena.



Beverly Bidney
Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie and Immokalee Council Liaison Jaime Yzaguirre pose together in the large Immokalee pavilion as Halloween revelers arrive.



Beverly Bidney
Tribal departments had booths in which to entertain and challenge the children. Every participant was given plenty of candy for trying their hand at whatever the game was. At the Education Department booth, kids used bean bags to play tic tac toe. From left are Zarra James, 8, Immokalee K-12 advisor Bianca Serpas, library assistant Dolores Lopez and Gerren James, 10.



Beverly Bidney
Leaves do change colors in Florida, or at least for this fall-themed activity.



Beverly Bidney
Dressed as the character in the movie “The Mask,” Ayden Goodleigh learns to play cornhole at the Advocacy and Guardianship Department booth.



Beverly Bidney
Cheyenne Billie displays the sweatshirt that every participant received at the Immokalee Halloween carnival.



Beverly Bidney
Preschool director Tommy Doud and Alphonso Alvarado show off their “Nightmare Before Christmas” costumes, which was the theme of the event. Doud, left, is dressed as Jack Skellington and Alvarado is the Mayor of Halloween Town.

NATIVE LEARNING CENTER

FROM NLC

HOLLYWOOD — The Native Learning Center offers free Training, Technical Assistance, and Kerretv Online Webinars to Native Americans and those working within Indian Country. The NLC’s housing-related training opportunities and resources focus on areas that are critical to the growth and improvement of tribal communities.

Here’s a look at programs offered by the NLC in November. For more information visit nativelearningcenter.com or call 954-985-2331.

Webinar: How to Write a Business Plan

Instructor: Russ Seagle
Trainer/Facilitator: Seagle Management Consulting

Date: Nov. 4 Time: 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Training Description:

A clear and compelling business plan is essential for any entrepreneur. This webinar guides you through the process of writing a professional, realistic, and actionable business plan. Attendees will learn key components to include (and what to leave out!), tips for effective writing, and how to clearly communicate their business goals to funders and stakeholders.

Training Objectives:

- Identify and understand the key components of a business plan
- Learn to articulate clear business goals and strategies
- Develop accurate financial projections and realistic operational plans
- Understand how to tailor your business plan to attract funding and investment

Webinar: Don’t Treat Your Grantmaker Like an ATM

Instructor: Diane Leonard, GPC, RST
Grant Professionals Association approved trainer, president DH Leonard Consulting & Grant Writing Services, LLC

Date: Nov. 6 Time: 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Training Description:

When do you go to the ATM? When you are out of cash and need more for an upcoming expense. Grantmakers should never feel like an ATM—that is, grantmakers should not feel that your interactions with them are purely transactional. Yes, you need their funding to operate your programs and deliver your services, but the relationship should be focused on creating a funding partnership. Both parties in the relationship need each other to achieve their goals.

Training Objectives:

- Learn how to approach stewardship of grantmakers
- Understand how to avoid treating a grantmaker in a transactional way
- Learn how to utilize the individual stewardship activities of your organization to

help improve relationships with grantmakers

- Discover how to engage board members in helping to steward grantmakers

Webinar: Coaching and Mentoring

Instructor: Dr. William R. Latchford, DCJ, president Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC, a Native woman-owned public safety consulting firm, retired executive director of Public Safety/chief of police for the Seminole Tribe of Florida, co-director of Florida State University College of Criminology and Criminal Justice Native American Crime and Justice Research & Policy Institute

Date: Nov. 18 Time: 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Training Description:

Coaching is based on a partnership that involves giving employees support, along with giving them challenging opportunities. Knowing how and when to coach is an essential skill that can benefit both you and your organization. This course defines coaching and gives participants the opportunity to assess their strengths and opportunities as a coach. It will also outline several items that should be in every coach’s toolkit and look at a coaching model that will help trainees get tangible results.

Training Objectives:

- Understand how coaching can be used to develop team members
- Develop the coaching skills that help improve individual performance
- Demonstrate the behaviors and practices of an effective coach
- Recognize employees’ strengths and give them the feedback they need to succeed
- Use a number of coaching tools within their practice
- Use a coaching model to help trainees get tangible results

Webinar: Becoming Management Material

Instructor: Dr. William R. Latchford, DCJ, president Native Peacekeeper Consulting Group, LLC, a Native woman-owned public safety consulting firm, retired executive director of Public Safety/chief of police for the Seminole Tribe of Florida, co-director of Florida State University College of Criminology and Criminal Justice Native American Crime and Justice Research & Policy Institute

Date: Nov. 19 Time: 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Training Description:

At its core, leadership means setting goals, lighting a path, and persuading others to follow. By accepting the challenge to lead, you come to realize that the only limits are those you place on yourself.

Training Objectives:

- Define your role as a manager and identify how that role differs from other roles you have had
- Understand the management challenge and the new functions of management
- Discover how you can prepare for and embrace the forces of change
- Identify ways to get you and your workspace organized and get a jump on the next crisis
- Identify your leadership profile and explore ways to use this knowledge to improve your success as a manager

♦ See NLC on page 6C

NCAI to hold convention in Seattle

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will hold its 82nd annual Convention and Marketplace Nov. 16-21 at the Seattle Convention Center in

Seattle, Washington.

The event offers opportunities to unite, amplify voices, and shape a collective future. Tribal leaders, NCAI members, Native youth, and allies from across Indian Country will gather to tackle critical issues, strategize for the future,

and strengthen nation-to-nation relationships.

Additionally, attendees will be able to browse the NCAI Marketplace, which features a variety of booths.

For more information and registration go to ncai.org.

College Fund names board members

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The American Indian College Fund announced in October five members to its governing board of trustees for three-year terms.

The three tribal college presidents named to the board include Dr. Sean Chandler of Aaniiih Nakoda College, Eva Flying of Chief Dull Knife College, and Dr. Dawn Tobacco-Two Crow-Frank of Oglala Lakota College.

The two private sector trustees include Nicole Bellefeuille, J.D., a vice president in the financial services industry, and Nalnees Gaur, a partner with PwC in their Cybersecurity practice.

New name for Indigenous tourism organization

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) announced Oct. 13 its official transition to the American Indigenous Tourism Association. The new name is effective immediately.

According to a press release, the

mission of the American Indigenous Tourism Association is to define, introduce, grow, and sustain American Indigenous tourism that honors traditions and values.

“While we honor the foundational legacy of AIANTA, our new name reflects a broader identity,” Sherry L. Rupert (Paiute/Washoe), chief executive officer of

the association, said in the release. “This change allows us to unify all Indigenous cultures across the United States and its territories under a single, powerful banner, strengthening our collective voice and our ability to promote and preserve our unique heritage.”

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Sports

Stanley Cup comes to Coconut Creek

STAFF REPORT

COCONUT CREEK — Hockey’s Stanley Cup, often regarded as the most famous trophy in sports, made a guest appearance at the Seminole Casino Coconut Creek on Oct. 6. Casino team members, including the Seminole Tribe’s Michael Cantu, and VIP guests were able to have their photos taken with the Cup, whose history dates back to 1892 in Canada.

The Cup didn’t stay at the casino for too long; it had plans later that night, being part of the Florida Panthers’ banner-raising ceremony. The Panthers have won the Cup two years in a row and will attempt three this year.



Seminole Casino Coconut Creek (2)

The Stanley Cup is visited Oct. 6 by Michael Cantu, left, Human Resources manager at Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, and Angel Luis Resto Jr., right, director of Culinary at the casino.

Moore Haven repeats as district champions

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

MOORE HAVEN — Just like championship teams in college and pro sports, the Moore Haven High School volleyball team happily put on T-shirts celebrating a triumphant accomplishment.

Moments after the Terriers swept visiting Frostproof, 3-0, to claim their second consecutive district championship Oct. 17, the players, which include eight from the Seminole Tribe of Florida, donned gold shirts. The front of the shirt reads “Moore

Haven Lady Terriers District Champions” while the back features “Rural Region 4 District 8 Back2Back” along with two volleyballs, one with “2024” and the other with “2025.”

The same teams met in a Class Rural regional semifinal Oct. 25 in Moore Haven with the Terriers prevailing, 3-0. Moore Haven was scheduled to travel to Williston for a regional semifinal Oct. 28.

Despite losing valuable starters from the 2024 squad to graduation, including Preslynn Baker and Akeelah Ling, the 2025 Terriers returned plenty of depth. They’ve compiled a 15-10 record.

With six seniors – all tribal members – the Terriers had an advantage in experience against a younger Frostproof team, and it showed in the district final. Moore Haven played confidently and never trailed on its way to posting wins by scores of 25-10, 25-23 and 25-16.

Being district champion this season was as sweet as it was last season for the Terriers.

“When I started here six years ago, we couldn’t pass the ball, we couldn’t set the ball, we couldn’t serve the ball. Now we’re where we are. Everybody is doing phenomenal. We’re running plays, we’re making plays. It’s super remarkable,” said Moore Haven head coach Mona Baker, who noted the program’s surprising turnaround has been aided by the addition of assistant coach Jerry Veloz.

“Jerry being here is a tremendous blessing for us. We were very blessed to be able to pick him up,” Baker said.

Outstanding serving from Truley Osceola sparked the Terriers early. The senior delivered four aces as Moore Haven surged to a 10-1 lead in the first set. Along the way, the Terriers received kills from Tiyanini Anderson (match-high 17 kills), Rae Gentry and Tara Person, and aces from Anderson and Trinity Guerry.

The second set featured more Terrier dominance at the net behind kills from Anderson, Gentry and Miley Jimmie. Frostproof fought back from a 20-11 deficit and drew to within one point before Moore Haven won the final point for the 25-23 win.

Thanks to strong defense led by freshman libero Kulipa Julian (19 digs), Moore Haven excelled in winning side outs throughout the match, preventing Frostproof from generating momentum, including in the third set. Again, it was Osceola’s serving and Anderson’s hitting that set the early tone



Kevin Johnson

Tahniah Billie is focused on defense during a point in the senior night game.



Kevin Johnson

The Moore Haven High School volleyball team won its second straight district championship Oct. 17 in Moore Haven. Seminole Tribe of Florida tribal members on the team are, from left to right, Rae Gentry, Miley Jimmie, Truley Osceola, Tiyanini Anderson, Kulipa Julian, Halley Balentine, Jalene Smith and Tahniah Billie with the district championship trophies from 2024 and 2025.

as the Terriers built a 13-5 lead. An ace by Jimmie put the Terriers up 21-16. Soon after, the Terriers celebrated with the winners’ plaque and the back-to-back championship T-shirts, which were made by Quality Tees in Okeechobee.

“I wanted the girls to have them because it’s a super special thing,” Baker said.

Before the game, the team honored Julian for reaching the 500-dig career plateau in just her second season. She had 246 digs as an eighth-grader last year and has close to

300 this season.

“That’s amazing,” Baker said. “She also had 100-something aces. Only a freshman. She’s got good things ahead of her.”



Kevin Johnson (2)
Above, Tiyanini Anderson (13) sends the ball over the net against Frostproof. At right, the Terriers and their fans celebrate winning a big point.



Kevin Johnson

The shirt says it all as Moore Haven wins a district title for the second straight year.



Kevin Johnson

PECS' varsity squad has plenty of reasons to smile after finishing the season with a 10-0 record.



Kevin Johnson

Avani Hopanv Smith sets up a pass for a teammate during PECS' 2-1 win against Osceola Middle School.

Undefeated PECS stretches winning streak to 4 years

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

BRIGHTON — The varsity volleyball team at the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School completed yet another undefeated season with a thrilling 2-1 win against Osceola Middle School on Oct. 6 at PECS' gym on the Brighton Reservation.

PECS finished its season with a 10-0 record and extended the program's winning streak to 53 matches that stretches back four seasons.

The win against Osceola Middle was certainly one of PECS's toughest during the streak. Osceola Middle dominated the first set, winning 25-12.

In the second set, PECS' winning steak was in serious jeopardy of ending as Osceola Middle led 7-2, but PECS roared back to win, 25-23, and force the winner-take-all third set.

Osceola Middle led the third set, 5-2, but PECS was determined to keep the streak alive and rallied again thanks to two aces from Avani Hopanv Smith and kills by Kaliyah Hodge, Jamelynn Anderson and Kanae Jumper. When a serve by Osceola Middle went long, PECS erupted in jubilation and relief with a 15-12 win.

Earlier, PECS' junior varsity team also won a close match against Osceola Middle. PECS won the first game, 25-17, and led game two 24-18 before Osceola Middle battled back to tie it. PECS survived two match points by Osceola Middle and won 29-27.

In between matches, PECS honored its eighth graders with gift baskets and flowers before their final game for the school. Honored with their families were varsity's Jaiden Fludd, Cassie Pearce and Jaelle Weimann and JV's Okalani Collins and Onnie Cypress.



Kevin Johnson

PECS players show a variety of emotions after a tough 2-1 win in their season finale against Osceola Middle School Oct. 6.

- 2025 Undefeated PECS varsity volleyball**
- 1 – Ameliana Osceola
 - 3 – Cassie Pearce
 - 7 – Kanae Jumper
 - 8 – Kaliyah Hodge
 - 11 – Serenity Bishop
 - 14 – Macayden Sardina
 - 15 – Jamelynn Anderson
 - 20 – Jaiden Fludd
 - 21 – Avani Hopanv Smith
 - 25 – Jaelle Weimann
 - 99 – Dallye Baker
- Head coach: Monica Koger
Asst. coach: Suraiya Smith
Team manager: Miranda Tommie



Kevin Johnson

Prior to the varsity game Oct. 6, eighth graders in the PECS volleyball program were honored with gift baskets and flowers. With athletics director Jovanny Torres, far left, and assistant coach Suraiya Smith, far right, the eighth graders are, from left to right Jaelle Weimann, Cassie Pearce, Jaiden Fludd, Onnie Cypress and Okalani Collins.



Kevin Johnson

The JV team celebrates its win against Osceola Middle JV.



Kevin Johnson
In their final game of the season, PECS made sure to have fun and win the match.

OHS honors its seniors, including Alyssa Madrigal, Yani Smith

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

OKEECHOBEE — The Okeechobee High School volleyball will lose a valuable core of seniors to graduation, including two from the Seminole Tribe.

Yani Smith and Alyssa Madrigal have been key figures in the program; Smith played three years of varsity after one year on JV. Madrigal has been on varsity for two years. Both are multiple sport student-athletes at OHS; Smith also plays basketball and flag football; Madrigal plays softball.

The Brahms will lose a vocal leader in Smith, who at times would go from teammate to teammate in a huddle, urging each one on in an attempt to provide a spark or rally.

“She speaks her mind. She really gets us going with cheers and things like that,” Madrigal said.

Meanwhile, Madrigal tends to be a quieter player.

“She’s quiet, but if you get her to open up, she’s super funny,” Smith said.

Smith and Madrigal spent a lot of time this season playing next to each other at the net. Smith pounded 111 kills, third most on the team; Madrigal contributed 59.

Both players also excelled in serving. Smith led the Brahms with 51 aces; Madrigal was third with 37. They were also among the top three in blocks.

On Oct. 8, after a team dinner that included popcorn chicken and letters exchanged among teammates about what the seniors have meant to the program, Smith and Madrigal stepped onto the OHS court for their final home match.

“I don’t know what the program is going to do next year; I don’t know what I’m going to do next year. I’ve been with these girls since I was six or seven years old. All



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee High's Alyssa Madrigal sets the ball with teammate Tehya Nunez behind her during the Brahms' 3-0 win against Port St. Lucie on senior night Oct. 8.

of us seniors,” Smith said.

After a senior ceremony with family and teammates, Okeechobee didn’t have any problem shutting out Port St. Lucie.

Five days later, the Brahms season ended with a 3-1 loss at Jensen Beach in a district quarterfinal. They finished with an 11-10 record, which was a decent showing considering a shaky 1-4 start to the season.

College is on the horizon for Smith and Madrigal.

Smith lists Howard University and Georgetown University as her top choices. Madrigal, who wants to be a dermatologist, isn’t sure yet which school she will attend.

In addition to her academics and athletics, Smith has had more to balance on her plate this season as Jr. Miss



Kevin Johnson

Alyssa Madrigal, left, and Yani Smith at the final home volleyball match of their high school careers, Oct. 8 against Port St. Lucie.

Florida Seminole. Her first big trip came in September to the Seminole Nation in Oklahoma. She also attended the student council inauguration at her alma mater, Pemaytev Emahakv Charter School.

She’ll join Miss Florida Seminole Bailey Marie Osceola Latchford for homecoming events at Florida State. The football homecoming game Nov. 1 features the crowning of FSU’s king and queen by the tribe’s princesses on the 50-yard line.

Smith said the main reason she wanted to be Jr. Miss is to meet new people, new Native Americans and other Indigenous People.

Through experience in programs such as Close-up, Smith said she’s realized that some tribes struggle.

“We’re so blessed with everything we have and that we’ve worked for, but everybody doesn’t have those same blessings,” she said.



Kevin Johnson

Alyssa Madrigal delivers a hit at the net against Port St. Lucie.



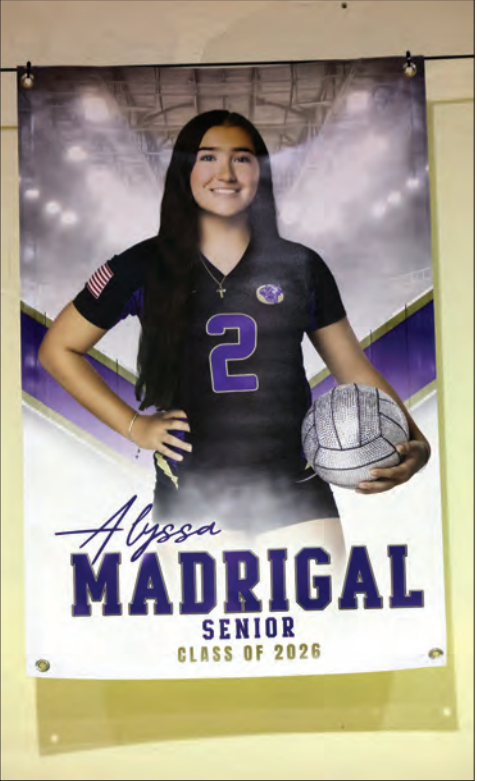
Kevin Johnson

Yani Smith delivers a serve in her last home match.



Kevin Johnson

Okeechobee players, including Yani Smith, center, get fired up on senior night.



Kevin Johnson (2)

Banners on the wall of the OHS gym highlight the seniors.





INFR buckle award ceremony with INFR World Champions, including Josh Jumper, fifth from right.

Clay Guardipee/INFR

◆ INFR
From page 1A

The Jumpers weren’t alone on that first day. Jacoby Johns finished sixth in bareback, Boogie Johns was fifth in ladies barrels (15.548) and her daughter Kalgary was three places back in eighth.

Round two highlights included two outstanding runs by Blevyns Jumper (3rd, steer wrestling, 5.65, and 4th, team roping,

5.33) and Jacoby Johns (4th, bareback, 73 points). Those two also had the best showings by Seminoles in round three with Johns placing 4th in bareback and Jumper 8th in steer wrestling.

In the fourth (and final) round, Josh Jumper and Gunshows’ 6.74 was sixth in the round, but it was good enough to earn them a world championship on their average times.

Johns had another fourth place in round four and wound up finishing third overall with 299 points in bareback.

Blevyns finished sixth overall in steer

wrestling with an average of 34.04.

No other Seminoles finished in the top eight in average.

Local rodeo fans will get a chance to see the INFR Seminoles when the Eastern Indian Rodeo Associations’s Betty Mae Jumper Memorial Rodeo comes to Hollywood in January. Jumper, grandson of Betty Mae, is not only a world champion, but he’s also president of the EIRA. .

EVENT LEADERBOARD	
TEAM ROPING	
1.	JOSH JUMPER/CLAY GUNSHOWS
2.	BRAYDON BOYD/DENTON BEGAY
3.	CAMERON KANUHO/SCOOTER GARCIA
4.	RORY BILLIE/JACE SMITH
5.	RENO STOEBNER/CASEY CUMMINS
6.	DWIGHT SELLS/CHANCE HUNTER
7.	TY VAILE/WYATT GIBSON
8.	WAWA BEN/BRANDON BEN



INFR

INFR World Champion team ropers Clay Gunshows, left, and Josh Jumper wave to the audience at the buckle awards ceremony.

NSU University relies on Mary-Sally Osceola for leadership and plenty more

BY KEVIN JOHNSON
Senior Editor

MIAMI GARDENS — Mary-Sally Osceola’s senior year on the volleyball court required some adjustments.

First, there was the return to her former team. She played for NSU University School in Davie as a freshman and then suited up for Hollywood Hills for two years before returning to University for her senior year. She joined the team a few weeks into the season, but never missed a beat.

“She’s done amazing. Even though she was a late addition, she’s contributed a lot,” said University coach Hope Leavy-Gaskins.

The other adjustment Osceola had to make was getting used to playing without her sister, Xiya. They formed a dynamic duo wherever they played, but Xiya graduated last year.



Kevin Johnson

NSU University School senior Mary-Sally Osceola keeps her eyes on the ball in a district semifinal against Don Soffer Aventura High School Oct. 14 at Monsignor Pace High School in Miami Gardens.

“It’s been different. No balls hit the floor when I played with her. I’m not used to it yet,” Osceola said.

Osceola, a lefty who can do a lot of things well anywhere on the court, played most of the season as a setter and in the backcourt, but Leavy-Gaskins said she can play any position.

“She’s definitely one of those players that if you need something to happen, a quick spark, we use her for that,” Leavy-Gaskins said.

The team has also relied on Osceola for her leadership. She is

one of four captains.

“We especially saw it over the last few weeks. We’ve been on a little bit of a losing streak up until [Oct. 14], and her leadership allowed us to kind of breakthrough that wall,” Leavy-Gaskins said.

Osceola and some of the team’s other starters were used sparingly in the team’s 3-0 win against Don Soffer Aventura High School Oct. 14 in a district semifinal at Monsignor Pace High School in Miami Gardens.

The next day it was all hands on deck as University battled Pace for the district title. Pace won, but it took five sets.

Before the game, University thought it needed to win to make the state regional tournament, but it still got in. Three days later, though, University’s season – and Osceola’s high school career – ended with a 3-0 loss at Gulliver Prep. University finished with a 13-10 record.

Osceola said she wants to play in college, preferably at a four-year school.

“I think a coach will be lucky to have her,” Leavy-Gaskins said.



Kevin Johnson

Mary-Sally Osceola (4) with her NSU University School teammates during a break.

Southeastern pros come to Davie rodeo in November

FROM PRESS RELEASE

DAVIE — The University Dodge Southeastern Circuit Finals Rodeo will be held Nov. 14-16 Bergeron Rodeo Grounds in Davie. Advance discount tickets are available at Grifs Western and online at davieprorodeo.com.

Times are 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 14 and Nov. 15, and 2 p.m. on Nov. 16.

The Seminole Tribe is a sponsor of the event. Championship buckle presentations will be held at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino at night following the day’s rodeo Nov. 14 and Nov. 15.

Early detection helps save lives.

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For more information, contact your local Indian health care provider, visit [HealthCare.gov/coverage](https://www.healthcare.gov/coverage), or call 1-800-318-2596.

Minnesota Vikings, tribe partner for youth flag football

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC)’s IndigeFit Kids campaign and the Minnesota Vikings announced Oct. 2 a new grantmaking partnership to expand flag football programs in Minnesota’s Native American communities.

Flag football has become one the fastest-growing sports in the United States. The Vikings have held a significant role in the introduction of flag football curriculum into schools, and their partnership with the SMSC is designed to help advance the sport in Native communities across Minnesota.

“Working alongside incredible partners like the Minnesota Vikings, IndigeFit Kids is focused on giving our Native youth more resources to lead active, healthy lives,” said SMSC Secretary/Treasurer Ashley J. Cornforth, co-chair of the IndigeFit Kids campaign.

IndigeFit Kids and the Vikings will provide grants to schools that serve Native youth in Minnesota for flag football curriculum adoption and high school girls team formation:

- * Flag-In-Schools kits: Elementary schools and Native youth organizations can request free equipment and curriculum to adopt the NFL’s Flag-In-Schools program.
- * High school girls team formation: Grants and equipment donations, promotional support, coaching resources, and opportunities for experiential benefits are available to high schools serving Native youth to start a high school girls flag football team in spring 2026.

IndigeFit Kids is a philanthropic campaign of SMSC to support the health and well-being of Native youth in Minnesota.

Hard Rock Hollywood to host fight week events

FROM PRESS RELEASE

HOLLYWOOD — Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood will host Most Valuable Promotions (MVP) and Netflix fight week, headlined by events featuring boxing’s biggest disruptor, international superstar, and the WBA’s No. 14 ranked cruiserweight Jake “El Gallo de Dorado” Paul (12-1, 7 KOs) vs. undefeated three-division champion, reigning WBA world champion, and pound-for-pound great Gervonta “Tank” Davis (30-0-1, 28 KOs).

As part of the build-up to the boxing mega-event at Kaseya Center in Miami on Nov. 14, MVP and Netflix will host three fight week events at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Nov. 11: open workouts for Jake vs. Tank, and four sanctioned professional fights, starting at 6 p.m. The entire event, including the four fights, will stream live on MVP’s YouTube Channel and Netflix Sports’ YouTube Channel.

Nov. 12: a final press conference will be held for Jake vs. Tank at 6 p.m. The press conference will feature the final war of words between the main event stars as well as co-main event stars Alycia Baumgardner and Leila Beaudoin, and undercard fighters. The press conference will stream live on MVP’s YouTube Channel and Netflix Sports’ YouTube Channel.

Nov. 13: Jake vs. Tank public weigh-in, streaming live from Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino at 6 p.m. on MVP’s YouTube Channel and Netflix Sports’ YouTube Channel.

Nov. 14: Jake vs. Tank streams live on Netflix from Kaseya Center in Miami, Florida. The preliminary card begins at 4:45 p.m. on MVP’s YouTube Channel and Netflix’s Tudum, with the main card starting at 8 p.m. live only on Netflix.

“Jake vs. Tank is one of the biggest events in boxing history, and we’ve built an unforgettable fight week to match it, all happening at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, FL,” Nakisa Bidarian, CEO and co-founder of Most Valuable Promotions, said in a statement.

Panthers home 8 times in November

FROM PRESS RELEASE

SUNRISE — The two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers will be home eight times in November.

The home games in November are:

- Nov. 1 vs Dallas, 6 p.m.
- Nov. 13 vs Washington, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 15 vs Tampa, 5 p.m.
- Nov. 17 vs Vancouver, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 20 vs New Jersey, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 22 vs Edmonton, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 26 vs Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 28 vs Calgary, 4 p.m.

For tickets go to [seatgeek.com](#).

Verstappen wins twice in Texas

FROM F1

Max Verstappen had already been on a good run of form when F1 touched down in Austin for the United States Grand Prix weekend [in October], having collected two Grand Prix victories across the last three rounds.

This had brought his deficit to championship leader Oscar Piastri down to 63 points with six events remaining – but a near-perfect outing in Austin has reduced that gap even further, setting up a thrilling title fight as the 2025 F1

season nears its conclusion.

Verstappen laid down a gauntlet early on by grabbing pole in the Sprint Qualifying, while he avoided the chaos that unfolded behind him on Lap 1 of Saturday’s Sprint – a melee that eliminated both McLarens – to seal another win.

Pole position for the Grand Prix followed, and from there the Red Bull driver was unstoppable in [the Oct. 19] race, leading cleanly away off the line before stretching out his advantage in the opening laps.



With Hard Rock on his racing suit’s arm, left, and Hard Rock on his wheel flaps, right, Max Verstappen celebrates winning the U.S. Grand Prix and the sprint race in Austin, Texas.

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NAIG pushed back to 2028; new host city sought

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) Council announced in October that, following the withdrawal of hosting rights previously granted to the Calgary Host Society and efforts to identify a path forward, it will delay the next Games by one year. According to a press release, this decision reflects the Council's commitment to maintaining the hosting standards and ensuring the continued success and sustainability of the NAIG movement.

A new, Canada-wide bid process is being developed to identify a host community for a 2028 North American Indigenous Games, now scheduled for the summer of 2028.

In its ongoing commitment to Indigenous youth throughout Turtle Island, NAIG Council has also approved adjustments to the athlete age categories to ensure that those eligible to compete in 2027 will remain eligible for the 2028 Games.

The NAIG Council was scheduled to convene its annual General Meeting and Members Meeting in Ottawa from October 22-23. During these meetings, Council was expected to review and ratify a new bid procedures manual with the intent of launching the 2028 bid process in November.

Further information on the bid process will be shared in early November.



Ready to Rally

Kevin Johnson

A large banner at the Big Cypress ballfield lets people know about the the tribe's annual Rez Rally, known this year as Rez Resiliennce Rally. It is scheduled to be held Nov. 15 on the Big Cypress Reservation. The event features a run/walk and a senior 1-miler. The start and finish line will be at the Junior Cypress Rodeo Arena. The course goes from the arena to the Frank Billie Field Office and back. Awards will be presented after the race. The race is open to tribal members, tribal community members and employees.

♦ BETTING From page 7A

“While not without its definitional hurdles, a retrospective look back to when IGRA was enacted in 1988 shows a simpler technological time when both the gambler and the game, e.g., a roulette wheel, were likely in the same place at the same time,”

Gallagher wrote. “If the gambler and roulette wheel were on Indian land, IGRA applied. However, in 2025, a gambler can be in Denver and the electronic game processed through a computer server on Southern Ute Indian Tribe land or Ute Mountain Ute Tribe land. Where then does the gaming occur?”

The state has argued that the Tribes did not have grounds to sue the state, given that the state is immune from the suit under the Eleventh Amendment and that, independent

of that, the Tribe’s interpretation of the law was incorrect. The state noted their efforts to regulate the Tribe’s gaming activities only extended to bets placed outside of Tribal territory, and that the Tribe could continue operations within their lands as they always had.

“If Colorado were attempting to regulate the Tribes’ acceptance of wagers placed within the bounds of their respective reservations, it would be overstepping

into the Tribes’ jurisdiction under IGRA. But, Colorado is only seeking to regulate the acceptance of wagers placed off the reservations and thus occurring off Indian land,” Gallagher ruled.

Sports betting has accounted for millions of dollars in tax revenue to the state of Colorado. In the last fiscal year, more than \$6 billion in wagers were placed in Colorado, netting nearly \$37 million in tax revenue, according to the state Department

of Revenue. That money is directed to the state’s water plan grant program. Online betting outpaces retail betting. In August of this year, the state raised more than \$3 million in revenue from \$38 million in online bets. For retail betting, the state brought in almost \$40,000 from less than \$500,000 in wagers.

♦ ALLIANCE From page 3B

“I think it’s hard for tribal people sometimes to be widely accepted in the state,” Bryant said. “It’s such a weird line to walk sometimes, of being set in your stances of tribal sovereignty and having people accept you. There’s few people that do that very well.”

One of those people, she said, is John Banks, a citizen of the Penobscot Nation who has dedicated his life to environmental stewardship.

Banks, one of the Nihkaniyane honorees, was the longest serving member of the Maine-Indian State Tribal Commission, which is tasked with continually reviewing the effectiveness of the Settlement Act as well as the relationship between the Wabanaki Nations and state. He was also the first natural resources director for the Penobscot Nation, a role he served in for 41 years until his retirement in 2021.

Banks received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Natural Resources Council of Maine in 2021 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2019.

One of his many contributions to the protection of natural resources was his role in the Penobscot River Restoration Project that

was completed in 2016. The project, which removed two dams and created a bypass around a third to open nearly 2,000 miles of habitat, led to millions of river herring, Atlantic salmon and other species returning in numbers not seen for two centuries.

Laura Rose Day, executive director of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, has credited Banks with saving the negotiations between environmental groups and the hydro company to allow the project to move forward. She said Banks reminded everyone of the concept of “all my relations,” the Indigenous idea that everything is interconnected, in explaining the shared responsibility for the river.

Banks and the two other honorees this year represent the passing on of generational wisdom in several respects.

Brianne Lolar, the Wabanaki Studies specialist for the Maine Department of Education, is a former teacher who has been working to help other educators include Wabanaki studies in their curricula. While it has been required teaching under state law since 2001, a 2022 report found it had not been meaningfully implemented across the state.

The author of that 2001 law, Donna Loring, suggested Lolar as an honoree, which Bryant said speaks volumes about how everyone is in this work together.

“Instead of feeling any kind of



Passamaquoddy citizen Emma Soctomah, who was the 2025 valedictorian at the University of Maine at Machias.

complicated feelings about it not landing perfectly or being supported, she wants to really push forward Brie’s work,” Bryant

said of Loring, who formerly served as Mills’ senior advisor on tribal affairs and on behalf of Penobscot Nation as a nonvoting member of the Maine Legislature, among other positions.

The Legislature has attempted several times to pass a new law to allocate resources to ensure that this required curriculum is adequately taught, however such efforts have so far failed. The latest bill that sought to do this wasn’t funded last session and is being carried over to the coming year for further consideration.

When talking about Passamaquoddy citizen Emma Soctomah, who is being honored for her academic achievements, Bryant highlighted the foundation for change laid by her father, Donald Soctomah.

As a state representative for the Passamaquoddy Tribe, he got a law passed to remove the sq-slur from place names in Maine. That was the first bill Bryant had ever testified on as a teenager, so she also personally credits Soctomah for sparking her desire to fight for legislative change.

(Similar to the implementation of the Wabanaki studies law, there are continuing efforts to rectify noncompliance with Maine laws prohibiting racial slurs in the names of municipalities and other landmarks. But earlier this year a senator withdrew a bill that sought to do that because of the current political realities at the federal level.)

Soctomah’s mother, Elizabeth Neptune, is also a prominent name in public health work, having served for more than 13 years as director of health and human services for the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township.

So Emma Soctomah, too, exemplifies the kind of generational echoes seen between Loring and Lolar, Bryant said.

“I’m familiar with the work of her parents,” Bryant said, “and then she gets to step in, educate, learn and be an example.”

This year, Soctomah was the valedictorian at the University of Maine at Machias.

“My late grandmother always said the proudest moment of her life was when her children and grandchildren were to graduate,” Soctomah said in her valedictorian address.

“I never truly understood why that was the case until fairly recently. Of course, she was happy to see us succeed but the pride went deeper than that. It comes from the obstacles that we, as Indigenous peoples, have to overcome.”

One in seven people in her Passamaquoddy community graduate with a bachelor’s degree, she said, compared to one in three people for the overall population.

♦ TRADITIONAL From page 9A

“I’m hoping that when people engage in traditional healing services, a lot of it is to bring balance back into the lifestyle, to give them some hope,” Molina said.

That’s the effect traditional healing practices have had on Harrison Jim, who is Diné. Now a counselor and traditional practitioner at Sage Memorial Hospital in Arizona, Jim, 70, said he remembers his own first all-night sweat lodge ceremony when he returned from a military tour.

“I [felt] relieved of everything that I was carrying, because it’s kind of like a personal journey that I went through,” he said. “Through that ceremony, I had that experience of freedom.”

Kim Russell, the hospital’s policy adviser, who also spoke on the panel about the traditional healing waivers, told

Stateline her team hopes to bring on another practitioner along with Jim.

Tribal health leaders have expressed concern about people without traditional knowledge posing to offer healing services. But Navajo organizations, including Diné Hataalii Association Inc., aim to protect from such co-opting as it provides licensures for Native healers, Jim said.

Push in Washington

Facilities covered under the new waivers include Indian Health Service facilities, tribal facilities, or urban Indian organization facilities. In Arizona, urban Indian organizations can get the benefit only if they contract with an Indian Health Service or other tribal health facility.

In Oregon, Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center spokesperson Shanna Hamilton said that while the center can’t speak on behalf of other tribes or clinics, many are still in the early stages of developing

programs and protocols. She called the waivers a “meaningful step forward in honoring Indigenous knowledge and healing practices.”

Meanwhile, in neighboring Washington state, the legislature this session allocated \$165,000 for the state to apply for a waiver by the end of this year.

The Washington State Health Care Authority in a statement to Stateline emphasized that each tribe would determine its own traditional health services available for reimbursement.

Azure Bouré, traditional food and medicine program coordinator for the Suquamish Tribe, a community along the shores of Washington’s Puget Sound, called the waivers “groundbreaking.”

“We’re proving day in and day out that Indigenous knowledge is important. It’s real, it’s worthy, and it’s real science,” Bouré said.

On a brisk summer day in 2009, Bouré recalled, she had attended a family camp

hosted by Northwest Indian College. It was then she tasted the salal berry for the first time. A sweet, dark blue berry, it’s long been used by Pacific Northwest tribes medicinally, in jams, and for dyeing clothing.

“It was just that one berry, that one day, that reignited that wonderment,” Bouré said. For her, it unlocked the world of Indigenous plant medicine and food sovereignty, a people’s right to the food and food systems of their land.

She got her bachelor’s in Native American environmental science and now runs an apothecary, teaches traditional cooking classes, recommends herbs to members with ailments and processes foraged foods.

One day she could be chopping pumpkins or other gourds and the next, cleaning and peeling away the salty-sweet meat from dozens of sea cucumbers harvested by shellfish biologist divers employed by the tribe.

Bouré’s grandmother died when her mom was 12 years old. “That’s a whole generation of knowledge that she lost,” she said. One way she unearths that lost knowledge is by learning tribal medicine and teaching it, and holding on to memories like watching her great-grandmother Cecelia, who wove traditional sweetgrass dolls even when she was blind.

“I think that I come from a long line of healers,” she said.

Gary Ferguson, who is Unangaġ (Aleut), is the director of integrative medicine at the Tulalip Health Clinic about 40 miles north of Seattle. He’s certified in naturopathic medicine in Washington and Alaska.

His health center already has a variety of integrative medicine offerings, he said, including traditional ones grounded in Coast Salish traditions of the Pacific Northwest. He said he hopes the waivers and continued support for Indigenous ways of healing will help tribes address health disparities.

♦ NLC From page 5B

Webinar: Communication Strategies
Instructor: Dr. William R. Latchford
Date: Nov. 20 Time: 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Training Description:
Have you ever wondered why it seems so difficult to talk with some people, yet so easy to talk with others? This course explores how to improve your communication skills to make it easier for you to get along in the workplace, and in life.

Training Objectives:

- Identify common communication problems that may be holding you back
- Develop skills to ask questions that give you information you need
- Learn what your non-verbal messages are telling others
- Develop skills to listen actively and empathetically to others
- Enhance your ability to handle difficult situations
- Deal with situations assertively.

Nearly half-million in jackpots doled out to 3 SWFL residents

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Three Southwest Florida residents hit it big in October at Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee, with their jackpots combining for a total of \$434,733.47.

On Oct. 11, a player from Naples, Fla won \$123,550 on a Money Link slot machine with a \$20 bet.

On Oct. 12, a Fort Myers resident scored a jackpot of \$165,067.18 on a Dragon Link slot machine with a \$5 bet.

On Oct. 21, another Naples resident took home \$146,116.29 on a Quick Hit Platinum slot machine.

Over the course of 2024, players won more than \$383 million in total jackpots at Seminole Casino Hotel.

Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee features a 51,000-square-foot casino offering 1,400 slots and 39 live table games, including two craps table and three roulette tables. Cash bets on sports can be placed with the Hard Rock Sportsbook kiosks available only at Seminole Casinos in Florida.

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