

# The Seminole Tribune

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## Tribe wins court appeal in sports betting fight

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe has won a significant legal battle that could pave the way for sports betting to return to Florida.

On June 30, a federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., in a unanimous decision, reversed a 2021 district court ruling that said the tribe's gaming compact with the state of Florida violated federal Indian gaming laws. The ruling on Nov. 1, 2021, had abruptly shut down the Hard Rock Sportsbook sports betting app just three weeks after it had gone live. The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International.

Sports betting is part of a historic gaming compact that was signed between the tribe and the state on April 23, 2021.

"The Seminole Tribe of Florida is pleased with today's unanimous decision. It is a positive outcome for the Seminole Tribe and the people of Florida, and for all of Indian Country," Gary Bitner, spokesman for the tribe, said in a statement. "The tribe is fully reviewing the decision to determine its next steps."

The decision by a three-judge panel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit orders the Department of Interior to reinstate the agreement that gave the tribe and its Hard Rock casinos the ability to operate the Hard Rock Sportsbook sports betting app in the state. The ruling also paves the way for the tribe to pursue potential new casinos in South Florida.

♦ See BETTING on page 7A

## Princesses crowned at pageant

Thomlynn Billie, Tahnia Billie to represent tribe

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — The Seminole Tribe's Princess Pageant returned July 29 after a three-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Dozens of excited family members and supporters gathered in the auditorium at tribal headquarters in Hollywood to cheer on the contestants who gave it all to vie for the titles of Miss Florida Seminole and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole.

Titleholders serve as tribal ambassadors and attend an array of events at the tribe and beyond. Former princesses have become tribal leaders and employees and have been influential across a wide spectrum.

Thomlynn M. Billie, 23, was crowned Miss Florida Seminole, while Tahnia M. Billie, 15, was crowned Jr. Miss Florida Seminole. Felicia H. Buck, 16, was first runner-up in the Jr. Miss Florida Seminole category. All three are from the Big Cypress Reservation.

The contestants spent days practicing, being interviewed and photographed, and interacting with each other, the judges, and the pageant committee. The competition requires public speaking, essay writing, wearing traditional clothing, a personal interview, demonstration of a traditional talent, and answering an impromptu question on stage.

While there were only three participants this year, it marked the return and revitalization of a tradition that first began



Beverly Bidney

Newly crowned Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Tahnia Billie, second from left, and newly crowned Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie, second from right, take center stage at the Princess Pageant on July 29 in Hollywood. Cheering for the new royalty are former Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie, left, and former Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie, right.

in 1957, when Connie Frank Gowen of the Hollywood Reservation wore the first crown. The Jr. Miss Florida Seminole category was added in 1981. Michelle Madrigal Thomas of the Brighton Reservation was the first to

attain the title.

'Crowns dusted off'

It was a night of celebration for the

contestants and the community, as well as an acknowledgement of past princesses, many who were in the audience or were back stage serving as pageant volunteers.

♦ See PAGEANT on page 4A

## Tribal cattle owners ship calves to feedlots

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BRIGHTON** — July's record-breaking heat did not deter 61 tribal cattle owners in Brighton and Big Cypress from shipping about 3,400 calves to feedlots in Western states during the annual calf shipping weeks from July 10-20.

The calves, whose average weight at shipping was 481 pounds, typically remain at the feedlots until they reach about 1,350 pounds, when they will be sent to market.

Brighton's pastures were busy on July 12 as calves from seven owners' herds were rounded up and brought to the marsh pen, as temperatures reached into the mid-90s without a cloud in the sky to provide shade. Work started shortly after sunrise to prevent cattle and crew from overheating.

Cattle owners and cowhands on horseback worked together to find the animals in the pasture and woods, moved them into the owner's cow pens and then separated the calves from the cows. The calves were loaded onto cattle trailers and taken to Brighton's marsh pens to be weighed, catalogued and loaded onto massive cattle semi-trailer trucks for the drive westward.

Cattle ranching is a family affair and in many families, every generation is involved. Melissa Gopher's daughters Aponi Cochran,

7, and Leona Cochran, 6, helped unload calves from the cattle trailer and into the marsh pens. Both girls help with cattle every day, are members of the Seminole 4-H Club and are barrel racers in the rodeo.

"They get up with me at 5 a.m. and jump in the truck to help," Gopher said.

In the marsh pens, cowboys worked on foot to herd the animals from pen to pen and ultimately onto the cattle truck. Before the animals are loaded onto the semi, they are weighed and information about them is logged into the records.

Working with unpredictable animals can be treacherous if an animal doesn't go along with the herd. It's the cowboy's job to make sure every animal gets where it is supposed to be. Emma Urbina's job is to keep track of every animal.

"I count them in and I count them out," Urbina said. "I've been counting calves for at least 30 years."

After the morning's cows were hauled away, a hearty cowboy lunch was provided by the cattle owners' families.

♦ See SHIPPING on page 5B



Beverly Bidney

Todd Johns herds a group of calves into place July 12 in Brighton. The calves were loaded onto a cattle truck headed for Oklahoma.

## Hard Rock Hotels ranked No. 1 in J.D. Power survey

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock Hotels has again received high scores in an annual J.D. Power study of guest satisfaction. J.D. Power is a data and analytics company. Hard Rock made the announcement in a news release July 26.

The study ranked Hard Rock Hotels as the top brand in its "upper upscale" category, tying the Margaritaville Hotels & Resorts. Hard Rock has achieved the high mark for "outstanding guest satisfaction" in four of the last five years among more than 100 hospitality brands in nine markets. It bested

other well-known hotel brands such as Hyatt Regency, Marriott, and Hilton Hotels & Resorts. The Waldorf Astoria was tops in the "luxury" category, while Cambria Hotels and Suites was tops in the "upscale" category.

The 2023 study measures "guest satisfaction, advocacy and loyalty" by analyzing guest responses to survey questions. Hard Rock Hotels also received top marks within the "food and beverage" and "value for price" categories, the release said.

"We are honored to be named number one by J.D. Power in our industry once

again," Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in the release. "Our team is deeply committed to providing our guests the absolute best experiences when they stay with us. This award is a testament to their hard work, dedication and attention to detail and excellence."

♦ See HOTELS on page 3A



Hard Rock

Hard Rock Hotel Singapore is one of the company's many properties across the globe.

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Visit the Tribune's website for news throughout the month at [seminoletribune.org](http://seminoletribune.org)

# Editorial

## Ball's in Ben & Jerry's court to give back Vermont land

• Boston Herald Editorial Staff

Great news for Ben & Jerry's: the virtue-signaling ice cream company has a chance to put its money where its mouth is.

After flexing social justice warrior cred with the tone-deaf Independence Day post: "This 4th of July, it's high time we recognize that the US exists on stolen Indigenous land and commit to returning it," the company faced backlash and threats of a boycott.

Now, however, Ben & Jerry's has a chance to make amends with the some of the indigenous people whose land was stolen, personally.

As Newsweek reported, an indigenous tribe descended from the Native American nation that originally controlled the Vermont land the Ben & Jerry's headquarters is located on would be interested in taking it back, its chief has said.

Don Stevens, chief of the Nulhegan Band of The Coosuk Abenaki Nation — one of four descended from the Abenaki that are recognized in Vermont — told Newsweek it was "always interested in reclaiming the stewardship of our lands," but that the company had yet to approach them.

It comes after the ice cream company was questioned as to when it would give up its Burlington, Vermont, headquarters — which sits on a vast swathe of U.S. territory that was under the auspices of the Abenaki people before colonization.

In that July 4 statement, it added that the "land back" movement was about "ensuring that Indigenous people can again govern the land their communities called home for

thousands of years." It focused much of its statement on the taking of land from the Lakota in South Dakota.

Odd, given that social justice can begin at home — Ben & Jerry's home.

"If you look at the [Abenaki] traditional way of being, we are place-based people. Before recognized tribes in the state, we were the ones who were in this place," Stevens told the New York Post.

Ben & Jerry's has expressed strong views on people it deems "were in this place," not only in America.

Last year, it slammed parent company Unilever for selling its operations in Israel to a local licensee — effectively circumventing a boycott of Jewish settlements on the occupied West Bank.

"We continue to believe it is inconsistent with Ben & Jerry's values for our ice cream to be sold in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," Ben & Jerry's tweeted.

But it was OK to sell ice cream on American soil it says was stolen from indigenous people? Is that a take on its Core line of ice creams — posturing on the outside, profiting on the inside?

Unilever bought Ben & Jerry's more than 20 years ago in a deal valued at \$326 million. The ice cream company insisted that its board have autonomy on social and political issues.

Ah, the perks of being a champagne socialist.

This is a teachable moment for Ben & Jerry's, and its political fan base. Will it stand up to its statement and start negotiating with members of the Abenaki Nation to return the Vermont land? Or does it have a crisis management team working OT to stanch the flow of "put up or shut up?"

We await the scoop on justice served.

## Q&A: Meet new ERMD director Whitney Sapienza

BY DAMON SCOTT Staff Reporter

Whitney Sapienza was promoted May 30 to director of the tribe's Environmental Resource Management Department (ERMD) after serving as assistant director for three and a half years. She filled the position previously held by Kevin Cunniff.

Sapienza has worked in several positions within ERMD since 2011. She has a degree in environmental science with a minor in sustainable aquatic sciences and a concentration in watershed hydrology from State University of New York in Syracuse. Sapienza also has a master's degree in marine biology from Nova Southeastern University in Davie. Originally from the Long Island, New York, village of Northport, she has lived in South Florida for the past 15 years.

ERMD — with many employees, six sections and three offices — was the tribe's first governmental department. It falls under the tribe's Heritage and Environment Resources Office (HERO), which also includes the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.

The Tribune asked Sapienza to share more about ERMD and her involvement in it. Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

**Tribune:** Tell us about your experience at ERMD.

**Sapienza:** Over the last 12 years I have had the honor of serving the tribe in several different capacities.

I started working for ERMD in 2011 as a temporary employee in the department's permitting program as an environmental protection specialist. From there I worked in the water quality program as a water quality technician, and then returned to the permitting program as an environmental resource technician. In 2013, I accepted the position of environmental protection specialist III, charged with oversight of the tribe's environmental science division — implementing the wetlands and wildlife programs. In 2019, I was appointed as the



Courtesy photo

Whitney Sapienza

acting assistant director.

Having the opportunity to work in several different programs and levels of the department has given me a unique prospective of understanding the opportunities we have to provide a high level of service to the tribal community.

**Tribune:** ERMD is charged with protecting the tribe's environmental resources in a culturally sensitive manner.

**Sapienza:** For the tribe, cultural and environmental resources are one in the same. The ERMD is embedded within HERO — bringing together the ERMD, THPO and museum. Working together we have built a stronger understanding of culturally sensitive environmental resources through discussion with tribal community member representatives. Understanding the tribal community's perspective on natural resource management projects is a priority within ERMD to ensure sustainable use of resources for the next seven generations.

**Tribune:** One of ERMD's main

functions is to assist tribal members who are planning projects that use or discharge water or affect surface or storm water drainage. Can you give us an example?

**Sapienza:** The ERMD is one of the oldest departments, established within the tribe in 1987 (originally the Water Resources Department), with the original mission to implement the provisions of the Water Rights Compact among the tribe, the federal government and the state. With time, the programs and functions of the department have grown to meet the resource management needs of the tribe.

One of the core missions of the department is to ensure compliance of the criteria manual to the Water Rights Compact and tribal water code. Through this regulatory framework, ERMD reviews proposed projects that have the potential to impact surface or groundwater. For example, for projects that are adding additional roads, concrete, etcetera, onto a parcel for development purposes, we are ensuring that the appropriate criteria is met for protection of water quality, storm water storage availability, and that floodplain impacts are mitigated for.

**Tribune:** Anything else you'd like to say to the tribal community?

**Sapienza:** I am a devoted and hardworking employee, and as I step into my new role as director of the ERMD, I am honored to be able to provide support and recommendations for resource management within tribal lands. As a department, we have many exciting initiatives that are underway — including use of technology to increase our ability to monitor exotic vegetation and habitat changes on a wide scale. We welcome input and coordination from the tribal community, and I look forward to working with you all in my new role for the tribe.

For more about ERMD, go to [semtribe.com](http://semtribe.com), click on "Services," and "Environmental Resource Management."

## Protecting the sacred right to vote for Native Americans

• U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján, (D-New Mexico)  
 U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids, (D-Kansas and Ho-Chunk)  
 U.S. Rep. Mary Sattler Peltola, (D-Alaska and Yup'ik)  
 U.S. Rep. Tom Cole, (R-Oklahoma and Chickasaw)

When the U.S. joined the war effort after the attack on Pearl Harbor, thousands of Native Americans walked into recruiting offices to serve a country that had already taken so much from them.

And yet, Native Americans have fought to protect our democratic institutions by serving in the U.S. military at higher rates than any other demographic. These brave men and women were willing to sacrifice their lives despite being denied the most basic rights guaranteed by our Constitution. Until the mid-20th century, this included the right to vote.

World War II veterans were among the first generation of Native Americans to be eligible to vote. However, states denied this right despite their heroic military service and U.S. citizenship. Although the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920 and the Indian Citizenship Act passed in 1924, finally granting citizenship and the right to vote to Native Americans, states continued to restrict their access to the ballot.

In 1948, Miguel Trujillo, Isleta Pueblo, came home from World War II a decorated war hero, but was turned away when he tried to register to vote because he lived on tribal lands and was therefore "an Indian not taxed" (tribal members are indeed taxed). Miguel challenged this injustice in court "in order to bring equality to the Indian people." He won the case and changed state law to secure the right to vote for all Native Americans in New Mexico.

Another World War II veteran, Frank Harrison, Yavapai Nation, won the same right for Native Americans in Arizona. In Alaska, Elizabeth Peratrovich, Tlingit, secured Alaska Natives the right to vote by fighting bravely to pass the Alaska Equal Rights Act in 1945, making it the first anti-discrimination law in the nation.

Despite these victories, Native voters still face obstacles at every turn when attempting to make their voices heard at the ballot box.

Historically, Native voters had to overcome literacy tests, intimidation, and poll taxes when voting. Today, barriers include geographic isolation, non-traditional mailing addresses, lack of broadband, limited transportation, fewer polling and registration sites, scarcity of Native language assistance, and precincts that divide tribal nations. These extraordinary problems confront Native voters every election cycle, which is why Congress must advance legislative solutions.

Native voters should not have to fight this hard to ensure their ballot is cast freely, fairly, and safely in the U.S. That is why in every Congress since 2019, legislators from both sides of the aisle have come together to protect the Native vote by introducing the Frank Harrison, Elizabeth Peratrovich, and Miguel Trujillo Native American Voting Rights Act.

In honor of these great American civil rights leaders, we understand the need to address the unique voting challenges faced by Alaska Natives and American Indians across the country.

It is critical to ensure Native voters have fair access to the ballot by allowing tribes to request at least one voter registration site, dropbox and polling location per precinct on tribal lands, directing states and local governments to accept tribal I.D. cards for voter identification purposes and requiring prior notice and consent before states and precincts remove or reduce voting locations on tribal lands. Finally, Congress should authorize modest grant funding for states that hope to establish task forces addressing the unique issues faced by Native voters.

It is incumbent upon every member of Congress to honor our trust responsibility to tribes and to our Native brothers and sisters, not only for the precious blood they spilled for our democracy, but also for the promises the U.S. has made to tribal nations — promises to safeguard unique protections and their inherent sovereignty under the law.

For too long, our democracy has excluded those to whom it owes the most. As we approach the 100-year anniversary of the Indian Citizenship Act, our country must make an honest effort to hold free and fair elections by ensuring all Americans, including Native Americans, can participate in these elections without obstruction.

*U.S. Senator Ben Ray Luján represents New Mexico in the U.S. Senate, and U.S. Representatives Sharice Davids, Marry Sattler Peltola, and Tom Cole represent Kansas, Alaska, and Oklahoma, respectively, in the U.S. House of Representatives. Senator Luján and Representatives Davids and Cole introduced the Native American Voting Rights Act during the 117th Congress.*

## Battiest brothers to perform at Native Cinema Showcase

PRESS RELEASE

The Seminole Tribe's Spencer Battiest and Doc Native are scheduled to perform a concert at the National Museum of the American Indian's Native Cinema Showcase in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The brothers are slated to perform Aug. 19, at 7 p.m. MDT as part of a special program highlighting Indigenous music videos. The program will also include music from DJ Emcee One.

In 2017, Battiest, Native and Taboo, of the Black Eyed Peas, were part of the Magnificent Seven group that won an MTV Video Music Award for their "Stand Up/ Stand N Rock" video.

The annual showcase is a celebration of Indigenous film with 41 films to be shown Aug. 17-20 at the New Mexico History Museum.

For more information and a complete list of films and events go to [americanindian.si.edu/](http://americanindian.si.edu/).



File photo

Doc Native, left, and Spencer Battiest.

## Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood's Abiaka to participate in 'Dine Out Lauderdale'

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Abiaka, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood's award-winning, wood fire grill restaurant, will participate in Visit Lauderdale's "Dine Out Lauderdale" throughout August.

Dine Out Lauderdale is Visit Lauderdale's restaurant campaign that offers locals and visitors a curated, three-course dining experience. Abiaka will feature two prix fixe menus at \$55 and \$75.

The luxe \$75 prix fixe menu will feature an appetizer choice of jamon toast with olives, roasted garlic and red wine jam; or hush puppies with blue crab, ranchera sauce and honey butter. For the main entrée, guests can choose from tenderloin with whipped potatoes and aji panca jus; halibut with Veracruzana sauce; or Joyce Farms chicken with truffle, beets and avocado crema. Topping it all off with dessert, guests can indulge in the warm chocolate banana bread pudding with banana ice cream, chocolate crémeux and salted caramel sauce.

The \$55 prix fixe menu will feature an appetizer choice of toasted pan de cristal,

tomato, queso fresco, EVOO, and herb salad or hush puppies with blue crab, ranchera sauce and honey butter. Main entrée options include Iberian pork with garbanzo and chorizo stew and mojo verde; cedar roasted salmon with jamon chips smoked carrots and mezcza butter; or Joyce farms chicken with truffle, embered beets and avocado crema. For dessert, guests can enjoy warm chocolate banana bread pudding with banana ice cream, chocolate crémeux and salted caramel sauce.



Courtesy photo

Abiaka restaurant at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood.

Abiaka is open Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. For more information on Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino's fine-dining

options, visit [seminolehardrockhollywood.com/dining/fine-dining](http://seminolehardrockhollywood.com/dining/fine-dining).

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Publisher: The Seminole Tribe of Florida  
 Phone: 954-985-5700

Senior Editor: Kevin Johnson, ext. 10715  
[KevinJohnson@semtribe.com](mailto:KevinJohnson@semtribe.com)

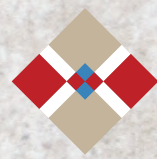
Staff Reporter: Beverly Bidney, ext. 16466  
[BeverlyBidney@semtribe.com](mailto:BeverlyBidney@semtribe.com)

Staff Reporter: Damon Scott, ext. 10704  
[DamonScott@semtribe.com](mailto:DamonScott@semtribe.com)

Staff Reporter: Calvin Tiger, ext. 10739  
[CalvinTiger@semtribe.com](mailto:CalvinTiger@semtribe.com)

Advertising: Donna Mason, ext. 10733  
[DonnaMason@semtribe.com](mailto:DonnaMason@semtribe.com)

# Community



## Moses B. Osceola ends 10 years at Tribal Court

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

**HOLLYWOOD** — Moses B. Osceola recently resigned from his position as chief judge of the Seminole Tribe's trial court after a decade of service. He left the post to run for president of the tribe's board of directors.

Osceola previously ran in the election that was won by the late James Holt II who died unexpectedly just three days after being inaugurated. Osceola said he's also running in the special election to install Holt's successor Aug. 10.

Tribal Court — which consists of a trial court and appellate court — recently began a

search to fill the chief judge position Osceola held. Court staff was accepting resumes through July 28.

Osceola was selected as chief judge of the trial court in December 2013 and was inaugurated in February 2015 by then-Chairman James E. Billie. (Tribal Court consists of a trial court and appellate court). Joining Osceola in the trial court at the time were associate judges Tina Osceola and Mary Tigertail. The appellate side consisted of the late Willie Johns, Moses Jumper Jr. and Amy Johns.

Sitting on the bench was the latest step on a unique life path for Osceola.

Born and raised on the Hollywood

Reservation, Osceola, 73, said he first worked for the tribe around 1970 at the former Seminole Indian Village on State Road 7 after serving in the military.

"I started out as a tour guide there. It used to be an A-frame-style building — there was a big exhibit area," he said.

Osceola guided visitors for about two years to the Seminole women who made arts and crafts underneath chickees and to the Seminole men who carved different items.

"We'd take them around and explain everything and they would see animals, we had panthers, bears ... and we had an alligator wrestling show," he said.

Osceola said it was a time before bingo

and casinos, of course. Tax-free cigarette shops would come later as would bingo, class III gaming and other businesses.

"It was more survival than anything else. Our mothers, the Seminole ladies, were making arts and crafts to sell in Fort Lauderdale and Dania where the tourists would come in," he said. "Seminole kids would sing songs and have a little tin cup and the tourists would drop in pennies, nickels, whatever."

Osceola went on to study business administration for two years at the former Broward Community College. He completed a business management degree at Florida International University in Miami two years after that.

"All the while I was working for the tribe off and on. I was an accounts payable clerk. I was in charge of the food stamp program — which we had at one time in conjunction with the state of Florida," he said. "Then we also developed what was called the Women, Infants, and Children program — WIC they used to call it. That's where we helped new moms with baby food."

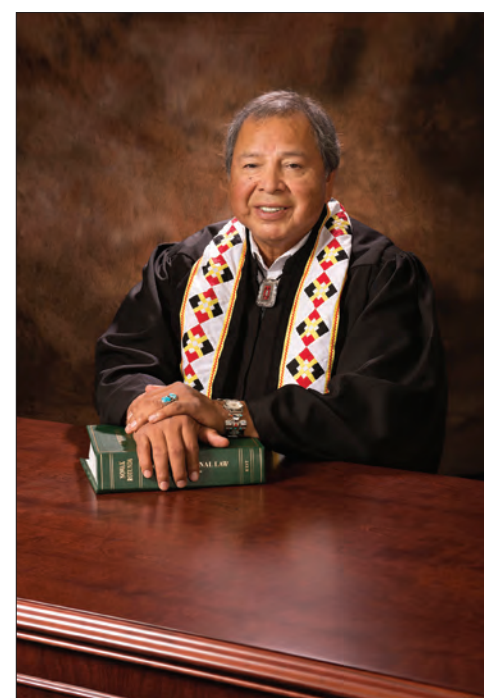
Osceola also worked as a smoke shop clerk and opened his own tribal smoke shop at 6571 Sheridan Street in Hollywood in 1980. He operated it for 10 years before selling it to the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. (STOFI). The tribe still operates it today.

In 2003, Osceola was elected president of STOFI and served until 2007. It was at the tail end of his term that the tribe would acquire Hard Rock International.

### 'Blessed to become a judge'

Osceola said he learned a lot during his term as chief judge. Prior to the court being established, it was primarily the duty of the Tribal Council to resolve tribal disputes.

"Tribal Court is still in the growing stages. You might say we're coming out of infancy into childhood," Osceola said. "There are a lot of things we have to work together on to continue to grow into a full blown judicial system."



Moses B. Osceola

Courtesy photo

Osceola said when he was first appointed to the position, he hadn't engaged much in the social issues that many tribal members faced.

"But when I was blessed to become a judge, it got me into that side of life. It's exposed me to social issues and family issues — it's completed my life education," he said.

Osceola has many family members in Florida and elsewhere. He has seven grandkids — three in Oklahoma and four in Hollywood. His mother is the late Maggie Osceola and his cousin is the late Max B. Osceola Jr. Among his eight siblings, he said he was the first boy and the last one to be born outside of a hospital.

"My parents came from out of the Everglades," he said. "They didn't speak any English — my dad spoke maybe a word or two because he used to guide hunters for a living, but my mom never spoke any English at all."



File photo

Moses B. Osceola meets with international visitors at tribal headquarters in 2018.

### HOTELS

From page 1A

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

There are 37 Hard Rock Hotel and Hard

Rock Hotel & Casino properties across the globe. The properties are known for featuring music and entertainment touches and other amenities — like iconic music memora-

bilia and live music shows — that span genres and appeal to different generations.

Hard Rock said it expects to open 13 additional hotels and three hotel-casinos

through 2025. Newer properties under development are located in Brazil and Portugal, while expansions are underway in Las Vegas and Athens.

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**Tribal Smoke Shop #6** on 441 (across from Hollywood Trading Post)  
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Beverly Bidney (2)

Above, former Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie makes sure the crown properly fits Tahnna Billie. At right, former Princess Durante Blais-Billie places the crown on Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie's head.



◆ PAGEANT  
From page 1A

"It's just great to be out and to be with the community again," LaVonne Rose, tribal secretary and director of the princess program, said. "It's nice to see the crowns getting picked up again and dusted off and getting ready to travel around the country again and making sure that the Seminole Tribe is represented."

Thomlynn Billie has participated in the pageant since she was 12. She previously attended the Ahfachkee School and was salutatorian of the 2019 class. Billie said her mother, Jane Osceola Billie, is a mentor who taught her to let her talents shine and helped prepare her for life.

"I believe it is important to enter the pageant to become a good role model to your peers, whether you win or not, as long as you try to do something out of your comfort zone," she said. "What I like about the pageant is being able to make unforgettable memories with new friends."

As Miss Florida Seminole, Billie said being a good role model is what's most important.

"Not only for our Seminole people, but to all Indigenous people. I see Miss Florida Seminole as more of ambassador



Beverly Bidney

Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie describes patchwork during the talent portion of the competition.

Extended reigns come to a close

When Durante Blais-Billie and Aubee Billie were crowned Miss Florida Seminole and Jr. Miss Florida Seminole in 2019, respectively, the expectation was to serve a traditional one-year reign. But the pair would serve for two years, due to a pandemic that affected the pageant program and many other tribal departments and activities. The duo quickly shifted from a schedule full of travel and public appearances to online outreach.

"I am forever grateful to the princess program for supporting me and helping me find ways to serve my people despite all of the uncertainty of the pandemic," Blais-Billie said. "Something I will always hold dear was the committee's ability to empower me to explore who I am as a person."

Blais-Billie created an online LGBTQ+ affirmation program called "Two-Spirit Tuesdays" in June 2020.

"As a two-spirit person myself, this project was deeply personal, transformative, and healing," she said. "I'm immensely grateful to have been able to take on this challenge while serving as princess, as it brought a sense of liberation to have the tribe officially support this work."

During her reign, Blais-Billie served as assistant director of the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and spoke on Indigenous rights at a climate conference. She is currently an anti-human trafficking specialist for Hard Rock International.

Blais-Billie said one of the most profound memories of her reign was hosting, and then visiting, the Indigenous Ainu people of Japan prior to the pandemic.

"[It] meant so much to me ... to officially pass on the goodwill of the Seminole Tribe across the ocean and represent our people on Ainu lands," she said. "The most important takeaway I have from my reign is that support, collaboration, and connection are everything. I would not be who I am without these support systems."

Blais-Billie's mother is France Blais-Billie and her father is the late July Billie.

◆ See PAGEANT on page 5A



Beverly Bidney

Jr. Miss Florida Seminole contestant Tahnna Billie shows how to make a baby hammock from sticks and fabric during the talent portion of the competition.

than just being crowned royalty, because we become a representative for our tribe and for all Native kind," she said. "We can fully embrace our individuality and be proud to be a part of a rich Indigenous history and culture. I encourage others to keep learning, whether that means learning how to speak our language, sew, do wood carving, do traditional crafts, cook, or prepare our traditional foods."

Billie showcased traditional and modern Seminole patchwork that she created during the talent portion of the competition.

Tahnna Billie said she was involved in pageants when she was younger, and recently participated in several county pageants.

"What I like about it is that surreal feeling I get when I'm on the stage," she said.

Billie is entering her sophomore year at Moore Haven Middle - High School and is a three-sport athlete in volleyball, basketball and softball. She's vice president of her class and participates in 4-H.

"It was important for me to enter the

pageant so I can do something for not only myself but for our people," Billie said.

As Jr. Miss Florida Seminole, she wants to "be an outlet for the younger generations and be someone that they can relate to and talk to."

Billie said one of her mentors is her grandmother, Jane Osceola Billie, who taught her about culture and family. (Thomlynn is Tahnna's aunt).

In the talent competition, Billie demonstrated how to make a traditional Seminole baby hammock using string, cloth and sticks. At the end of the night, she was given the award for best essay, which was titled "Why I Would Like to Become Jr. Miss Florida Seminole."

Meanwhile for Buck, the night would serve as her first pageant experience. Short of the crown, it was considered a success. Buck won both the Miss Congeniality award, which is voted on by her competition, and the talent award, where she demonstrated the process of sweetgrass basket making.

"My family encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and try something new,

which is also helping me be more in tune with my culture and who I am as a strong Seminole woman," she said.

Buck said her mother, June Jumper, inspired her to compete. Jumper was a Jr. Miss Florida Seminole in 2001.

"I remember her telling me stories of her time with this distinguished honor," Buck said.

Buck begins her junior year at LaBelle High School in August. She said her goal in the pageant was to make her loved ones proud and be an advocate for the tribe.

"And to also pave a way for the future generations to come," she said. "I hope to show the future generations that we can

always branch out and chase our dreams and be a change in the world."

Buck thanked her family for being her mentors and biggest supporters. She singled out her grandmother, Tammy Lee Billie, and aunts Kennedy Huggins and Mari Veliz.

"Donna Frank has also been a guide to me and has helped nurture my aspirations for the art of sweetgrass basket making," she said. "I want to thank everyone who has played a huge role in my life, because I would not be the person I am today without them."



Beverly Bidney

Jr. Miss Florida Seminole contestant Felicia Buck gives a presentation about how to make sweetgrass baskets during the talent portion of the competition.



Newly crowned Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Tahnia Billie and Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie smile at each other on stage. Tahnia is Thomlynn's niece, so this year's royalty is a family affair.

Beverly Bidney



Felicia Buck waves to the audience.

Beverly Bidney

◆ **PAGEANT**  
From page 4A

'Love and care first'

Aubee Billie, the outgoing Jr. Miss Florida Seminole, noted that she was a sophomore in high school the last time many in the audience had seen her in person.

"I am now entering my junior year of college (at Elon University) and double majoring in musical theater and business," she said. "These past few years have been the hardest of my life, but have been the most beneficial and fulfilling within my career and self discovery."

Billie, the daughter of Maria Billie

and former chairman James E. Billie, said visiting the tribe's youth home in Big Cypress to hand out Christmas presents was a moment during her reign that stands out.

"I will never forget the moment Durante and I walked in and instantly the children's faces lit up. It make me feel so blessed to have a connection with these kids and give them such joy and happiness and to inspire those little girls to want to be princesses one day as well," she said. "Some might see this as just a small moment, but for me it encapsulated the essence and core of why I love being Jr. Miss Florida Seminole – to bring joy to others and put love and care first."

Brian Zepeda, Naples liaison, served as the master of ceremonies for the 66th annual

pageant. Pageant judges were Dustin Cozad, a councilman for the Apache Tribe; Miss Indian World 2023 Tori McConnell (Yurok Tribe and Karuk heritage); and Regina (Burgess) Lankford (Seminole Nation of Oklahoma), a former princess, former tribal council representative, and current treasurer of the Seminole Nation's personnel board.

The Princess Pageant volunteers, including the year they were Miss Florida Seminole, were Alice Billie (1997), Wanda Bowers (1968 and 1969), Charlotte Burgess (1987), Connie Gowen (1957), Cherelee Hall (2003), Cassandra Jimmie (2010), Christine McCall (2005), Rande Osceola (2017), LaVonne Rose (Princess Program director) and Naomi Wilson (1985).



Beverly Bidney

Outgoing Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Aubee Billie, left, and outgoing Miss Florida Seminole Durante Blais-Billie present gifts to princess committee members who helped them through their reigns, including Wanda Bowers, Miss Florida Seminole in 1968 and 1969, who waves to the audience.



Calvin Tiger (4)

Clockwise, from left to right, Tahnia Billie, Thomlynn Billie, Felicia Buck and Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall speak at a pre-pageant banquet July 28 in a ballroom at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. The banquet featured a short video of all Miss Seminole from throughout the years. It also highlighted the pageant judges. Naomi Wilson served as emcee. Board Rep. McCall (2005 Miss Florida Seminole) spoke about the importance of the princesses and how the roles can benefit the tribal community.



Beverly Bidney

From left to right are Miss Florida Seminole Thomlynn Billie, Jane Osceola Billie, Jr. Miss Florida Seminole Tahnia Billie and Alice Billie. Jane Osceola is the mother of Alice and Thomlynn, while Alice is Tahnia's mother, making Thomlynn and Tahnia aunt and niece, respectively. Alice Billie was Miss Florida Seminole in 1997.



Courtesy photo

Judges of the Seminole Princess Pageant visited the Frank Billie Field Office on the Big Cypress Reservation on July 28. From left to right are Regina (Burgess) Lankford, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma; Miss Indian World 2023 Tori McConnell, Yurok Tribe and Karuk heritage; and Dustin Cozad, Apache Tribe.

# California, like Florida, frustrated with development on Indigenous sites

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Tribes located in central California have something in common with the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes in South Florida – frustration with development that threatens or has already been built on culturally significant sites. Tribes also describe what they say is a betrayal of the consultation process with government agencies and developers involved in such projects.

A case in California involves construction of a Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) nearly \$70 million highway expansion project where workers have discovered multiple sets of human remains. The area of U.S. Highway 395 that winds along the east Sierra Nevada range is near to the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe and the Big Pine Paiute Tribe, among other Indigenous communities.

Tribal representatives say they warned Caltrans for more than 25 years that the area is rich in Indigenous history and contains human remains and artifacts.

"A handful of tribes entered into consultation with Caltrans, but the meetings went nowhere," Kathy Bancroft, a member of the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe and its tribal historic preservation officer, said July 11 on the Native America Calling radio program. "We had always warned them about how sensitive the area is. They speeded up construction when we asked them to stop. Finally they said 'we're going to plow through these burials' and we said 'no you're not,' and we've asked the public for support."

The project was temporarily halted this summer, with the hope of more consultation between Caltrans officials and tribal representatives. Bancroft said tribes have compromised and asked for a 2.5-mile stretch of the 12.6-mile project to be reconfigured.

"People have lived in this valley since the beginning of time and the land is very sacred to all of us," Bancroft said. "The area of concern is a very sacred area. They do not care about our families remains."

Bancroft said while tribes don't like to make public the areas of its ancestors, it

participated in a Los Angeles Times story to try and place public pressure on Caltrans. On May 22, the Times published the story "Indigenous tribes warned of a buried kingdom in Owens Valley. Now, Caltrans crews are unearthing bones."

Bancroft added that the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) doesn't apply in their case because of right-of-way jurisdictions.

## Downtown Miami

In Florida, a compromise between the developer of a high-profile luxury apartment project and the city's historic preservation board appears to have made progress after months of wrangling.

The site, commonly known as 444 Brickell, sits on a 4-acre parcel in downtown Miami on the southern bank of the Miami River. The site is adjacent to the Miami Circle National Historic Landmark.

Similarly to California, tribal officials and archaeologists knew of the historically significant site for many years. The list of discoveries that have been unearthed since the current project began include artifacts that are 7,000-years-old, including the remains of Seminole and Miccosukee ancestors.

The Seminole Tribe's Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) has worked with state officials since the launch of the project, describing it as "a long and drawn out process." Under Florida state law, tribes must be notified and consulted when ancestral human remains are found, in order to supervise their reburial at an undisclosed location.

THPO director Tina Osceola recently said the goal of her office is to make sure ancestors at the location are treated as the law requires.

"Sometimes it gets very frustrating when you see an important site like that excavated," she recently told the Tribune, adding that state officials had been cooperative so far.

The Miami site has also seen its share of protests by those who want excavation to halt completely. Some of the more active protesters include the Seminole Tribe's

Martha Tommie, the Miccosukee Tribe's Betty Osceola, and Robert Rosa (Taino), president of the American Indian Movement Florida chapter and chairman of the Florida Indigenous Alliance.

The potential compromise may include preservation of part of the site – something the developer – Related Group – was willing to consider at a recent city meeting. There have been calls for preservation to be done in the fashion of the 2,000-year-old Miami Circle, discovered in 1998. The land where it sits was purchased to prevent a high-rise development from rising on top of the ancient Indigenous site.

If the city approves a historical designation for 444 Brickell, Related Group could be required to preserve all or a portion of it, and exhibit the artifacts in a public space while highlighting its archaeological and historical significance. Much of the site has been excavated, however.

"It's already been partially developed," Rosa said on the July 11 Native America Calling radio program. "They've already pillaged out of [one] site. It's been going on for two years, but they had it under wraps. We came in late in the game – after digging started during Covid. The [developer] takes every loophole and weaves right through it."

Rosa said state archeologists working with Related Group won't disclose where the remains and artifacts are that have already been unearthed.

"The Miccosukee want it reinterred at the site and the Seminole have it reinterred somewhere else. We're still fighting," he said.

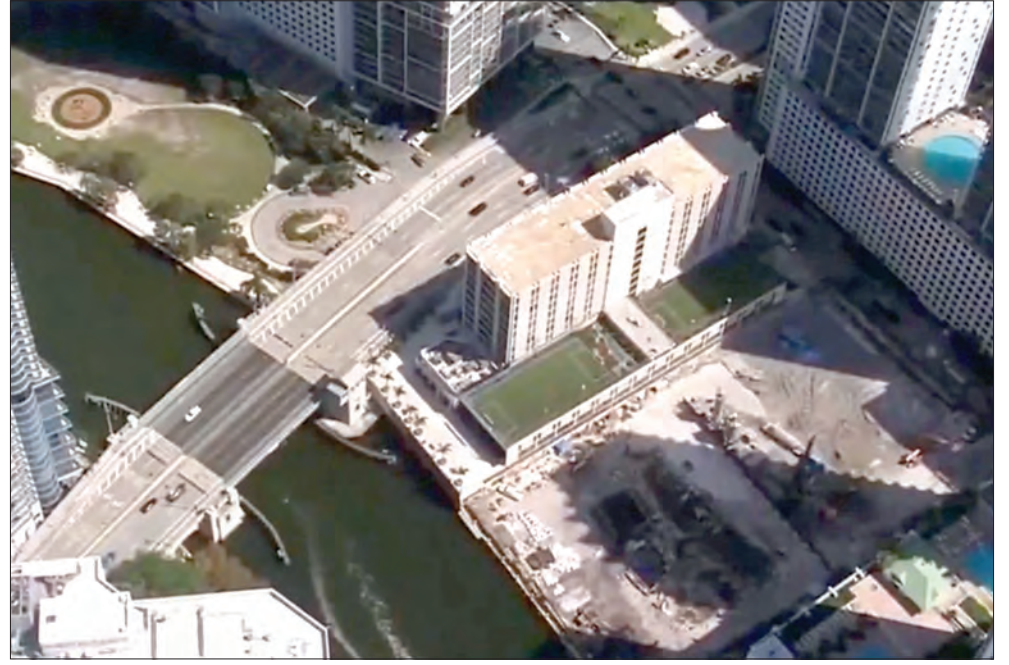
Rosa is also involved in a similar situation in Jupiter, 90 miles north of Miami.

On July 25, the Jupiter Town Council voted 3-2 to allow a developer to partially dig on a property known as Suni Sands for a proposed mixed-use hotel project. The Jupiter Inlet Foundation and town documents state that Suni Sands is a prehistoric Indian village site.

Rosa said he's considering legal action in response to the vote.

## 'There's a better way'

Back in California, Danielle Gutierrez



Excavation has been ongoing at Miami's 444 Brickell site, at right. The Miami Circle National Historic Landmark can be seen at left.



The nearly \$70 million highway expansion has been a concern of tribes for many years



Tribal members who live in communities near the Caltrans project protest its construction.

## Tribal employees present at Trinidad conference

STAFF REPORT

Three Seminole Tribe employees recently served as delegates for the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum at a five-day peace conference in Trinidad – a first.

The International Peace Research Association's (IPRA) "Rooted Futures: Visions of Peace & Justice" event in late May was attended by Abena Robinson, Cypress Billie and Van Samuels. The trio were also conference presenters.



Cypress Billie wears traditional clothing at the conference.

"[It was] a unique opportunity for an international audience to hear from tribal members, museum educators and Seminole experts with the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum," Robinson said.

The conference was held at the Hilton Trinidad & Tobago Conference Centre. About 400 people attended. Robinson is a museum education coordinator, while tribal members Billie and Samuels are museum educators.

Robinson's session topic was "Tribal Perspectives: Peace and the True Seminole Story." It included a workshop on Seminole-inspired books. Billie and Samuels shared aspects of Seminole culture, including music and clothing, at their "Addressing Aspects of Seminole Culture" session. Robinson and Samuels were also featured guests on the local morning TV show "NOW" to promote their sessions and the conference.

"Many people associate the Seminoles with the Hard Rock, but there is a plethora of information regarding these unconquered, resilient people," Robinson said. "It was a



Cypress Billie, left, and Van Samuels, co-presented a session on Seminole culture.

great opportunity to tell the true Seminole story in Trinidad."

According to its website, IPRA was formed in 1964 as a nonprofit international scientific association of peace researchers and educators with a mission to "advance research into the conditions of peace and the causes of war and other forms of violence."

For more information on IPRA and the conference, go to ipra2023.org. To view the morning show video featuring Robinson and Samuels, search "IPRA conference" on YouTube.



Van Samuels joined Abena Robinson on a local morning TV program to promote the conference.



Abena Robinson led a session on "Peace and the True Seminole Story."



Hard Rock

Hard Rock Atlantic City team members celebrate the property's fifth anniversary.

## Charities benefit as Hard Rock Atlantic City turns 5

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City's fifth anniversary celebration featured a series of donations totaling \$100,000 for local organizations.

Hard Rock welcomed community leaders and elected officials to the celebration June 28.

"While music is a part of Hard Rock's DNA, philanthropy is a part of our soul," George Goldhoff, president of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City, said in a news release. "Since opening in 2018, Hard Rock Atlantic City has made intentional efforts to keep our charitable giving local, ensuring the residents of Atlantic City are our number one beneficiary. Today, we are thrilled to announce yet another effort that will have an impact on our community."

Through its first five years, Hard Rock has donated more than \$1 million to local charities. As part of its fifth anniversary celebration, Hard Rock donated \$20,000 each to Atlantic City Rescue Mission, Atlantic City Leaders in Training, Hope Exists Foundation, Jewish Family Service

(JFS) and Veterans Haven South.

"...the company reinforced its commitment to assisting the Greater Atlantic City community. Many thanks to the Hard Rock team," JFS posted on Facebook.

The Atlantic City property opened as a Hard Rock on June 28, 2018, with several members of the Seminole Tribe – Hard Rock's parent entity – in attendance. Recent upgrades include increasing the number of slot machines to more than 2,300, enhancing hotel suites, and making improvements to its 150,000 square feet of meeting space – all part of a \$45 million capital improvement program.

"From the outset, the power of the Hard Rock brand combined with the hard work of our 3,600 team members propelled Hard Rock Atlantic City to become the most successful casino on Atlantic City's famed boardwalk," Goldhoff said in the release. "Together with our owners, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and our partners, Jack Morris and Joe Jingoli and Michael Jingoli, we are celebrating our hugely successful first five years by saying 'thank you' to our guests, our team members and the Greater Atlantic City community."



Hard Rock Atlantic City general manager Michael Sampson, left, and President George Goldhoff, right, present Andrea Steinberg, CEO of Jewish Family Service of Atlantic & Cape May Counties with a \$20,000 check.

## John Legend to perform in Tampa

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TAMPA — Grammy award winner John Legend is bringing his "An evening with John Legend" tour to Hard Rock Event Center at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel

& Casino Tampa on Oct. 29 at 8 p.m. For ticket information go to [seminolehardrocktampa.com](http://seminolehardrocktampa.com) or [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

## NIGC: Indian gaming revenue breaks record (again)

STAFF REPORT

Indian gaming revenue continued to break records as the Covid-19 pandemic waned.

Revenue reached a record \$40.9 billion in fiscal year 2022 (Oct. 1, 2021 – Sept. 30, 2022), according to the National Indian Gaming Commission's (NIGC) gross gaming revenue numbers released July 19. The total represents a 4.9% increase over fiscal year 2021's \$39 billion – the previous record.

Seven of NIGC's eight regions showed an increase over fiscal year 2021. The Washington, D.C.-region, which includes Florida and six other states, reported the highest revenue at \$9 billion. The Sacramento region, which includes California and northern Nevada, was the region that did not show an increase in revenue – down 1.4% from fiscal year 2021's revenue of \$11.9 billion.

The NIGC said revenue changes by region shouldn't be used as a direct indicator of the local economy in any specific region. It said many other factors could have an impact on revenue at the regional level,

such as new gaming operations, expansions or renovations to existing operations, temporary or permanent closures, or changes in a gaming operation's fiscal year.

"This year's historic revenue reflects the resiliency of many tribal gaming operations and how tribal gaming continues to rebound and remain strong," NIGC chairman E. Sequoyah Simermeyer (Coharie Tribe), said in a July 19 news release. "Tribal governments and the operations they license continue to explore new and innovative ways to expand and deliver world-class experiences to cultivate sustainable economies."

Before fiscal year 2021, the previous record high was \$34.6 billion in 2019. In the pandemic-laden year of 2020, the NIGC reported revenue of \$27.8 billion – a 19.5% decrease compared to 2019.

The NIGC said fiscal year 2022 revenues were calculated from independently audited financial statements from 519 gaming operations owned by 244 federally recognized tribes. Indian gaming operations are currently located on Indian land in 29 states.

For more, go to [nigc.gov](http://nigc.gov).

## Hard Rock Sportsbook opens at Arizona's Twin Arrows

STAFF REPORT

Hard Rock Digital and Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise (NNGE) hosted a grand opening of the Hard Rock Sportsbook at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort in Flagstaff, Arizona, on July 8.

The retail Sportsbook is adjacent to a remodeled sports bar and restaurant and features eight kiosks and two betting windows. According to a news release, the kiosks are designed to provide a similar experience to that of the Hard Rock Sportsbook app. The kiosks offer pregame, in-game and futures markets across major sports, including same game parlays, head-to-head-best and play-by-play betting, the release said.

"We are very pleased to take this next step forward in our partnership with the Hard Rock Sportsbook team," Brian Parrish, CEO for Navajo Gaming, said in the release. "Our two organizations continue to work seamlessly together in pursuit of NNGE being able to offer our guests outstanding

products, values, services, and experiences with event wagering."

Former MLB outfielder Luis Emilio Gonzalez, known as "Gonzo," was on hand for a ribbon cutting at the grand opening event. He was one of the most popular players during his years with the Arizona Diamondbacks. Gonzalez' game-winning hit in game seven of the 2001 World Series against the New York Yankees clinched the Diamondbacks' first and only World Series championship to date.

Navajo Gaming operates five gaming and hospitality facilities across Arizona and New Mexico. More is at [navajogaming.com](http://navajogaming.com).

Hard Rock Digital was launched in 2020 as the Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming vehicle for interactive gaming and sports betting. More is at [hardrockdigital.com](http://hardrockdigital.com). The Seminole Tribe is the parent entity of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming.

Editor's note: Hard Rock Sportsbook was renamed Hard Rock Bet on July 17 in Arizona, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia.



Twin Arrows/Facebook

Former MLB outfielder Luis Emilio Gonzalez, right, signs a 2001 World Series cap for a fan at the event.

## Immokalee to host hispanic music festival

FROM PRESS RELEASE

IMMOKALEE — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee will host the Hispanic Heritage Music Festival featuring headline performer Tito Nieves on Oct. 7 at 2 p.m. with gates opening at 1 p.m. General admission tickets for this outdoor concert

start at \$39; VIP tickets start at \$69. Tickets are available from Ticketmaster or at [www.moreinparadise.com](http://www.moreinparadise.com).

In addition to Nieves, festival performers include The Celia Cruz All Stars, Cachao's Mambo All-Stars, Cortadito, and Bajo Zero.

## Hard Rock Hotel to be built at Portugal beach

STAFF REPORT

A new Hard Rock Hotel in Portugal is scheduled to open in the summer of 2026.

In a July 17 news release, Hard Rock International (HRI) announced development plans for Hard Rock Hotel Algarve.

The project is expected to create more than 400 construction jobs and permanent positions. Construction is slated to start in 2024. The property will have direct access to Praia do Vau, a beach that features red cliffs in the city of Portimão on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean in the southern part of the country.

The hotel will have about 275 rooms and suites, 150 branded serviced apartments, three restaurants, three bars, three pools, a Rock Shop retail store and a Rock Spa.

"We're delighted to expand Hard Rock Hotel's unparalleled offerings to the beautiful country of Portugal in 2026," Todd Hricko, senior vice president and head of global hotel development for HRI, said in the release. "This new development will further extend the enhanced entertainment experience our guests know and love to yet another part of the world, while incorporating the country's amazing culture."

The project is a collaboration between HRI and Portugal-based Mercan Properties.

"The Hard Rock brand is consistently elevating and expanding its luxury offerings and it's a pleasure to be a part of this amazing evolution," Jordi Vilanova, president of Mercan Properties, said in the release. "We're excited to create a unique asset on the shores of Praia do Vau that reflects the Portuguese culture and attracts visitors from around the globe."

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

## Babyface coming to Hard Rock Tampa

FROM PRESS RELEASE

TAMPA — Babyface will be performing at the Hard Rock Event Center at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa on Nov. 21 at 8 p.m.

Tickets starting at \$95 are available via [seminolehardrocktampa.com](http://seminolehardrocktampa.com) and Ticketmaster.

Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds is a 12-time Grammy award winning recording artist, songwriter and producer. He is the only producer to win the "producer of the year" category four times.

## BETTING From page 1A

The appeals court said that the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which regulates gaming agreements known as compacts between states and tribes, was flexible enough to allow for Florida's arrangement.

"IGRA does not prohibit a gaming compact – which is, at bottom, is an agreement between a tribe and a state – from discussing other topics, including those governing activities outside Indian lands," the court said in a 24-page ruling.

The tribe and the state are now allowed to enter into a 30-year agreement. The tribe would control sports betting in Florida and could add roulette and craps to its casino operations. In return, it would pay the state at least \$2.5 billion over the first five years of the deal. It has been described by the state as the largest gaming compact in U.S. history.

Opponents of the ruling said, as reported in the Miami Herald, that the appellate decision opens the door for additional legal challenges – including the possibility that the agreement could be challenged in state courts.

## Seminole Hard Rock adds to its leadership team

STAFF REPORT

HOLLYWOOD — Seminole Hard Rock has hired Vincent Zahn as the executive vice president and chief financial officer of Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming. The company made the announcement in a news release July 7.

Zahn now oversees accounting, financial planning and analysis, risk management, treasury, corporate finance and capital markets execution for Hard Rock International and other enterprises under the control of Seminole Gaming, the release said.

Zahn has more than a decade of experience in public gaming entertainment companies with a focus on corporate finance, risk management, treasury, investor relations, capital markets, and

strategic development. He began his career in the financial sector on Wall Street, where he spent five years as an equity analyst covering casino gaming and hospitality companies at Bank of America (formerly Bank of America Merrill Lynch). Zahn then served as the vice president and treasurer of Pinnacle Entertainment Inc. for seven years. Most recently, he was the senior vice president and treasurer for Wynn Resorts Ltd. from 2019 to 2022.

"Vincent's expertise and background in casino gaming and financial markets make him an invaluable asset to the global growth of our organization," Jim Allen, chairman of Hard Rock International and CEO of Seminole Gaming, said in the release.

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



Hard Rock

Vincent Zahn

information is at [hardrock.com](http://hardrock.com) and [theseminolecasinos.com](http://theseminolecasinos.com).

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

A PLACE TO LEARN, A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

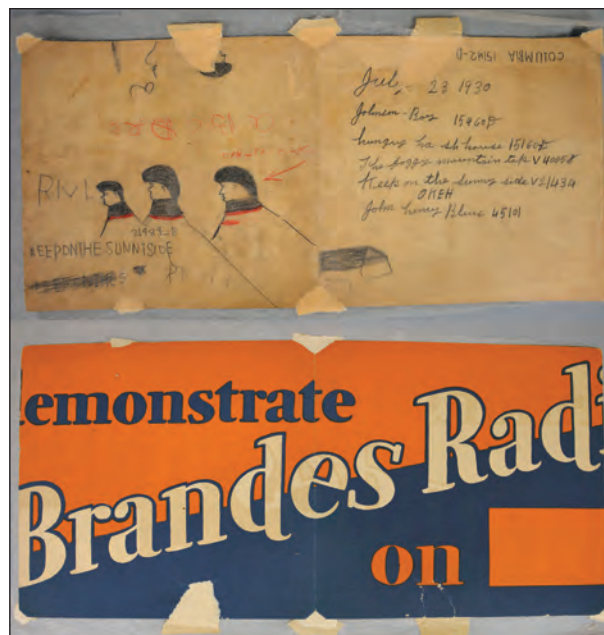
## Children's drawings tell us stories

BY MARIA DMITRIEVA  
Conservator  
and  
JOSEPH A. GILBERT  
Research Assistant

**BIG CYPRESS** — These amazing children's drawings were processed last month in the conservation laboratory at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum. Almost 80 years ago Seminole kids, like other children all over the world, learned to write, and would doodle the scenes they saw around them. The drawings offer a glimpse of their learning process and what was around them at the time. These innocent and cute drawings tell a story of how they were made and the commonalities of children in different cultures.

These drawings, among other objects, were acquired by the museum as part of a collection grown by the Hanson family of Fort Myers. W. Stanley Hanson was a medical doctor and advocate for the Seminole and Miccosukee people during the early 20th century. Hanson dedicated his time to document and serve Seminole communities collecting many cultural and historical Seminole items along the way. He and his family collected documents and photographs for decades. When Hanson visited the Seminole communities,

he developed relationships with people who lived there. On those visits he would bring crayons, pencils, and scrap paper



The front and back of one drawing. The back side of the drawing shows it was made on waste scrap paper; during the conservation treatment the losses were filled in, the tears were mended, the residues of rust were removed, and all the paper was enforced from recto by Japanese tissue.

for the community's children to use. They would draw on the back of irregularly cut cardboard that was most likely originally used to package a radiator, as evidenced by the imprint on the opposite side. The drawings depict a car (probably driven by Hanson) that might be the new model of Cadillac with a V8-cylinder engine. The first V8 engine appeared in America in 1915, and it seems the children were very excited about this, going so far to specifically sign the drawing by red letter V with digit 8 inside (upper right photo). Besides, we see Seminole women in traditional dresses, with their beads and hairstyles, some of the patchwork styles (Snake, Lighting) on their clothing, the children's writing practice, and a building that was probably the local wooden church. The letters on the drawings are the alphabet, written names being practiced, song lyrics, and names of children's stories. They demonstrate the unbound curiosity of childhood, the creative nature of Seminole people, and appreciation for their own culture and artwork.

The drawings are in fair condition. After an assessment was made on the drawings, it was determined that they needed conservation treatment. The papers needed to be stabilized which would allow for safer storage and preservation. The stabilization process includes cleansing, mending, lining, neutralization, and flattening. It is proper practice to treat each object's needs. Generally, tears were mended and losses were filled using wheat starch glue and a special conservation grade paper called Japanese equal strength tissue. To mitigate the difference between the



Drawings before the conservation treatment.

color of the original and conservation paper, the treated areas were retouched with watercolors and crayons. In order to decrease the acidic degradation of the paper, a thin but strong conservation paper made with long fibers and a buffer material was adhered to the drawing on verso (back side) or recto (front side), while reinforcing the original (left photo). For all these procedures a remote wetting method was applied, which helps avoid color bleeding of the water soluble crayon. It also makes the drawings more flexible, and assists in the flattening process. After the remote wetting, the papers were dried and flattened in a press between a felt lining. After the conservation treatment these drawings obtain their new home in the museum's archive (lower right photo).



Drawings after the conservation treatment and housing.

## Seminole Nation princesses visit Big Cypress

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BIG CYPRESS** — Princesses from the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma traveled to Florida for the 66th annual Seminole Princess Pageant on July 29, but first they visited the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Billie Swamp Safari on July 27.

The group consisted of Jr. Miss Seminole Nation Amira Newsom and her mother Joley Singer, and Little Miss Seminole Nation Olivia Harjo with her grandparents Wendell and Kahleeta Williams and sisters Annalees Martinez and Jazmyn Williams. Miss Seminole Nation Ayani Tebe arrived after the Big Cypress visit.

Museum educator Chandler Demayo led a tour of the museum while sharing key aspects of tribal traditions. For example,

once a bride and groom agree to be married, the ceremony takes just three minutes. The couple lives together in the wife's clan's camp and if they divorce, the wife throws the husbands belongings out of the camp, signifying the divorce is complete.

Demayo described the camps and why sleeping chickees have raised platforms.

"It keeps us above the water during hurricanes or flooding," Demayo said. "We aren't the only creatures who are looking for safety, so you have to be careful of the other critters coming in."

It was a first-ever visit by the princesses and their families to the Seminole Tribe. They were surprised to see the similarities between the two tribes' arts and crafts. Newsom, 16, does similar beadwork and Harjo, 11, shakes cans at stomp dances.

"The arts and crafts are basically the same, but their songs sound different than



Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum crafter Linda Beletso explains the process of making a sweetgrass basket to members of the Seminole Nation at the museum's culture village on July 27.



At right, museum educator Chandler Demayo leads the group on the boardwalk to the culture village, including Jr. Miss Seminole Nation Amira Newsom. Along the way he pointed out flora and fauna that live in the cypress dome.

ours," said Newsom after learning about the tribe's stickball and corn dance traditions.

During a walk on the boardwalk to the culture village, Demayo pointed out pond apple and other trees which now have fruit. He warned that unripened pond apples are dangerous to eat.

"We learned from the animals which fruits were safe to eat," he said. "But when there are a lot of trees with fruit on them, it brings out the bears."

A cypress tree with fresh bobcat scratches was examined by the group.

"They like to sharpen their claws on the bark," Demayo said.

In the village, the group met Linda Beletso, who was making a sweetgrass basket, and wood carver Ricky Doctor. Beletso told them about making baskets and how hard it is to find sweetgrass.

After lunch at the Swamp Water Cafe, the group enjoyed a swamp buggy ride through the safari area.

"The museum was cool," said Martinez, 16. "Everything is almost the same as we have back home, but a little bit switched up. Our dances and beadwork and clothing are different."

The Seminole Nation's princess pageant is scheduled for Sept. 14, so the princesses

are nearing the end of their reigns. Harjo and Newsom said they've enjoyed visiting various tribes and reservations. In addition to Florida, their trips have included visits to New Mexico and Mississippi.

"It was a great year learning about other cultures and traditions and talking about mine," Newsom said. "We went to Gathering of Nations in New Mexico, to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians princess pageant, and now we are here."



Members of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma take a buggy ride at Billie Swamp Safari.



At left, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum educator Chandler Demayo informs members of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma about items on display in the diorama and their significance to the Seminole Tribe. Seminole Nation members, from left, are Joley Singer, Jr. Miss Seminole Nation Amira Newsom, Little Miss Seminole Nation Olivia Harjo, Jazmyn Williams, Wendell Williams, Kahleeta Williams and Annalees Martinez.



# Health

## BC walk/run provides healthy way to wrap up Fourth



Kevin Johnson (3)

Two days after July 4 there were still reasons to celebrate in Big Cypress. The Big Cypress Firecracker Walk/Run was held at 8 a.m. on July 6 along the canal bank. The event was sponsored by Big Cypress Councilwoman Mariann Billie, who was among the nearly 20 participants. Big Cypress Integrative Health was the organizer. The walkers and runners were greeted by festive Fourth of July decorations at the starting line and plenty of water on a sunny day with temperatures reaching 95 degrees. After being guided through about 15 minutes of stretching by health educator Jamie Diersing, some participants started the journey running and others opted for walking.



## Harvard program honors tribal governance excellence

FROM PRESS RELEASE

Nine tribal governance programs have been selected by the Harvard Kennedy School Project on Indigenous Governance and Development's Honoring Nations program as 2023 All-Stars from the family of 142 Honoring Nations awardees. The program honors excellence in American Indian tribal governance. Applications are evaluated on the basis of a program's effectiveness, significance to sovereignty, cultural relevance, transferability, and sustainability.

The nine Honoring Nations 2023 All-

Stars are:

1. Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
2. Fort Peck School Based Health Centers
3. Ho-Chunk Village Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska
4. Myaamiaki Eemamwiciki Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
5. Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries Department
6. Owe'neh Bupingeh Rehabilitation Project

7. Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Child Welfare Program
8. Treaty Rights/National Forest Management MOU Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission
9. Umatilla Basin Salmon Recovery Project, Cultural Resources Protection, Caw Pawá Láakni Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.



File photo

Karen Two-Shoes takes part in a cooking demonstration in 2022 inside the Betty Mae Jumper Medical Clinic on the Hollywood Reservation.

## Tribal member employees help guide HHS

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

The Seminole Tribe's Health and Human Services Department (HHS) has a number of programs under its umbrella in addition to oversight of health clinics and pharmacies. The list includes integrative health, case management, behavioral health, the tribe's health plan, as well as non-clinical services such as environmental health, advocacy and guardianship, and elder services to name a few.

HHS executive director Dr. Vandhana Kiswani-Barley describes it as "a huge list that is all linked to health and mental health" in some way. The huge list also requires a lot of employees.

"Luckily the current team we have is a good fit and are motivated for the right reasons," Kiswani-Barley said.

Some of the programs have tribal member employees, which she said is particularly important. For example, there are tribal member employees in nursing and integrative health; there's a dietician, health educators and a crisis response team member with the Center for Behavioral Health (CBH). Kiswani-Barley said she'd like to see the numbers grow.

"We try to keep tribal members; they add that value of cultural sensitivity to ensure that what we're providing is culturally sensitive. We like when they come through and stay for

a long time," she said. "They guide the team; they help the team. There's no class out there to teach you the dos and don'ts in health care when it comes to the cultural piece."

Kiswani-Barley said HHS is in the beginning phases of composing a curriculum on culturally sensitive issues that would be included in the onboarding process for new employees. She said Geraldine Osceola, who participates in a CBH program, is helping to guide the process.

"There are also things that we should not know [about the culture], that we respect," Kiswani-Barley said. "We also need an elder perspective on things. It helps us to have that."

She expects more tribal member employees to join Osceola on the project, like Edna McDuffie, a health outreach coordinator in Big Cypress; Karen Two-Shoes, the Hollywood health nutrition coordinator; and Patty Waldron, a Brighton clinic supervisor.

"Karen helps us tremendously when it comes to knowing certain things about the culture, health, food, how to say things in a certain way, because she's knows what we're trying to achieve," Kiswani-Barley said. "She's informed us in terms of trauma and things of that sort, too."

For more information on HHS' programs, go to [semtribe.com](http://semtribe.com) and click on "Health and Human Services" under the "Services" banner.

## Native health conference to be held in San Diego

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The Association of American Indian Physicians will hold its 51st annual meeting and national health conference at the Paradise Point Resort & Spa in San Diego, California, Sept. 7 through Sept. 10.

Pre-register before Aug. 16 to get early bird pricing. Go to [aaip.org](http://aaip.org) for more information.

A limited number of student scholarships for college students to attend the conference are available. The deadline is Aug. 11. For scholarship information contact Gary Lankford at [glankford@aaip.org](mailto:glankford@aaip.org).

## Renewable energy conference to be held in Hollywood

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The sixth annual Seminole Tribe of Florida Renewable Energy & Sustainability Conference will be held Feb. 6-8, 2024, at the Native Learning Center in Hollywood.

The conference is geared toward tribal officials, tribal government staff, tribal housing departments, utility staff, tribal code officials and construction staff.

For more information visit [nativelearningcenter.com](http://nativelearningcenter.com).



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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.

RICHARD CASTILLO  
FLORIDA CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY  
[WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM](http://WWW.CASTILLOLAWOFFICES.COM)

# SEMINOLE SCENES



Mandel Public Library (2)

**ARTIST IN LIBRARY:** The Mandel Public Library in West Palm Beach welcomed Seminole artist Elgin Jumper for a program July 2. Jumper talked to the audience about "Elgin Jumper's Colorful Journey," a documentary by Seminole Media Productions that highlights his life and artistic creativity. The documentary was shown to the audience and Jumper answered questions. The documentary premiered Oct. 6, 2021, at the tribe's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum.



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Beverly Bidney

**CAREFREE KIDS:** Five year olds Axton Baxley and James Osceola frolic in the fields at the Bowers pasture during calf shipping July 12. The boys could be cowboys-in-training or they could just be kids having some fun.



Hard Rock/Facebook

**LONG JOHN, BIG WINNER:** Pro golfer and two-time major champion John Daly holds a Hard Rock guitar after being a winner in Hard Rock Atlantic City's BMW sweepstakes in July.



Beverly Bidney/Kevin Johnson

**BUSY, BUSY:** Several construction projects are underway on the tribe's reservations, including a new preschool and senior center in Big Cypress, (photos at left), a new casino and hotel in Brighton (upper right), and a new preschool in Hollywood, which will have the Guitar Hotel in its background (lower right). Hollywood will also have a new senior center.



FHSRA/Facebook

**GRATITUDE:** The Seminole Tribe received a shout-out on Facebook in May from the Florida High School Rodeo Association, which thanked the tribe for its sponsorship of the 2023 FHSRA state finals.

## 35 years ago: Gospel singers travel to New Mexico



File photo

In late July 1988, a group of Seminole gospel singers from Hollywood traveled to Gallup, New Mexico, to participate in a Christian music festival. The singers included (in alphabetical order) Judy Baker, Susie Baker, June Battiest, Junior Battiest, Betty Mae Jumper, Joann Micco and Judy Bill Osceola.

# NATIONAL NATIVE NEWS

## Tribes object. But a federal ruling approves construction of the largest lithium mine

WASHINGTON — In a blow to tribes, a U.S. appeals court has denied a last ditch legal effort to block construction of what's expected to be the largest lithium mine in North America on federal land in Nevada.

In a decision July 17, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the U.S. government did not violate federal environmental laws when it approved Lithium Nevada's Thacker Pass mine in the waning days of the Trump administration.

Lithium is a key component of electric vehicle batteries, and despite pressure from west coast Paiute tribes and environmentalists, the Biden administration did not reverse the decision and had continued to advocate for the mine, which would be located on remote federal land near the Nevada-Oregon border.

"We have always been confident that the permitting process for Thacker Pass was conducted thoroughly and appropriately," says Jonathan Evans, CEO of Lithium Americas in a statement provided to NPR. "Construction activities continue at the project as we look forward to playing an important role in strengthening America's domestic battery supply chains."

Several area tribes and environmental groups have tried to block or delay the Thacker Pass mine for more than two years. Among their arguments was that federal land managers fast tracked it without proper consultation with Indian Country.

"They rushed this project through during Covid and essentially selected three tribes to talk to instead of the long list of tribes that they had talked to in the past," Rick Eichstaedt, an attorney for the Burns Paiute Tribe, said in an interview late last month.

The land is considered sacred to some Native people as it's believed to be the site of at least two ancient massacres. Tribal elders still go there to conduct ceremonies and gather traditional plants.

But in their ruling, the Ninth Circuit judges responded that only after the mine was approved by federal land managers did it become known that some tribes consider the land sacred.

Full construction of the mine is expected to begin in earnest this summer.

- NPR

## California's 1st-of-its-kind partnership merges Indigenous tribe and fire station to fight wildfires

Ahead of peak wildfire season, the state of California has officially enlisted a local tribe community and fire station as a partner in a mutual aid agreement. It's the first legal partnership with a tribe in state history.

The new agreement includes an additional Type III fire engine equipped for wildland topography and reimbursement for resources that can include calls for service to anywhere in the state.

The agreement may be new, but the relationship dates back decades. Pala Fire Chief Anthony Ravago told NBC 7 he leads a group of 27 firefighters that service the remote parts of the county, along with CalFire and other agencies.

- NBC 7 San Diego (California)

## Maine lawmakers fail to override governor's veto of tribal bill

AUGUSTA, MAINE — A bill to allow the four Wabanaki tribes of Maine to access the same benefits available to every other federally recognized tribe in the United States died on Thursday after the Maine House fell 10 votes shy of overriding a gubernatorial veto.

House members voted 84-57 in favor of overriding Gov. Janet Mills' veto, but an override requires the support of at least two-thirds of those in attendance to succeed. The failure effectively sustains the veto and kills a bill that Wabanaki leaders considered a step toward restoring tribal sovereignty.

Tribal leaders used words like tyrant and oppressive when describing Mills and her veto.

"The governor is out of touch," said Penobscot Chief Kirk Francis. "Her hard-line stance in opposition to the tribes is something of a bygone era, though apparently just effective enough today. Though today was a loss on the floor of the House, we're confident moving forward we will only gain greater support."

At stake was a bill giving the Wabanaki tribes access to the same federal laws and programs, including those that could override state authority, that are available to the nation's 570 other federally recognized tribes. Currently in Maine, federal laws pertaining to the tribes apply only if they do not interfere with state jurisdiction.

The amended bill made clear that tribes would still have to follow state gambling, clean water and major criminal laws.

Bill advocates say access to such federal laws and programs would help promote tribal economic, social and educational outcomes, and point to studies that show the Wabanaki tribes fare worse in these areas than tribes that have access to these benefits.

Tribal leaders have pointed to examples of the state preventing their communities from taking advantage of federal laws, such as the state's refusal to allow the tribes to hire medical professionals with out-of-state licenses as allowed under federal law and the tribes' inability to seek federal disaster funding without a state emergency declaration.

Opponents argue the proposed bill is too

vague and would lead to costly state-tribal lawsuits. They said the state allows tribes to receive almost all of these benefits and is willing to work with the tribes to get access to those that they are currently shut out of on a program-by-program basis.

Tribal supporters filled the State House on Thursday morning, lining the hallways carrying homemade signs that urged lawmakers to "Stand with the Wabanaki" and "Set Them Free." Another read "10,000 years," a reference to the time that the Wabanaki have called the area now known as Maine home.

Demonstrators ranged from civil libertarians on the right to social justice advocates on the left.

Tribal leaders who had gathered to watch the vote from the House balcony — where a collective gasp was heard when the vote tally was announced, followed by a sob and a walkout of tribal observers — said they were disappointed by how hard Mills personally worked to kill the bill and how many supporters cared.

"I am thankful to my colleagues who had the courage to vote their conscience and not succumb to the incessant calls by the governor and her staff to strong-arm them into voting against what they know is good policy for Maine," said Pasmaquoddy Tribal Rep. Aaron Dana.

- Press Herald (Portland, Maine)

## Up to four new NC casinos could be included in proposal GOP leaders are working on

North Carolina could open up to four new casinos, three of them on nontribal lands, under a proposal that House and Senate GOP lawmakers are discussing, Republican leaders said July 20.

As talks on gambling between Republicans in both chambers continue, both House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger said that at least three new casinos could be authorized in Anson, Nash and Rockingham counties. A fourth casino could be authorized for the Lumbee Indian tribe to operate in Eastern North Carolina, they said.

The Lumbee don't have full federal recognition from Congress — something North Carolina U.S. Sens. Thom Tillis and Ted Budd are seeking to address with legislation they introduced earlier this year — but Moore said he doesn't believe the tribe would need any federal legislation to be able to operate a casino of their own under the proposal state lawmakers are considering, since "it's entirely a state licensure agreement."

The proposal, which would allow the casinos to be built as part of so-called entertainment districts that would include hotels and other commercial developments, would likely also give the green light to state-licensed video gambling machines, Moore said.

The effort by Republican lawmakers to reach an agreement on new gambling legislation before the end of this year's session, which was originally slated to wrap up by the end of June before being extended into the summer due to budget negotiations that also remain ongoing, comes as more casinos open across the state line in Virginia.

In particular, GOP lawmakers have cited the new Caesars casino resort opening next year in Danville, just an hour-and-a-half northwest of Raleigh, as a reason to consider allowing casinos in North Carolina, where the only casinos currently allowed to operate are on tribal lands in the western part of the state.

But while the top-line provisions of the proposal seem to be the same in both chambers, the two GOP leaders had different updates to share on Thursday regarding the status of talks between the House and Senate. Moore said that the House received a "draft" of the gambling bill from the Senate on July 19 that had been shared with House Republican leaders to get their feedback.

He said there's been a "decent amount" of support for the "Senate-backed" proposal within the House GOP Caucus, and said he felt "it was very important that members start seeing actual legislation, because so far, a lot of this has been talked about conceptually," adding that he hoped to share the draft with the rest of the caucus "in a matter of days."

Berger, on the other hand, told reporters that while there have been "drafts of various parts that have been shared," there isn't a full bill. He also said that there hasn't been a "Senate proposal," and that instead, lawmakers in both chambers have held discussions with each other.

"I believe that goes back and forth," Berger said. "The House has presented some concepts, the Senate has presented some concepts."

- News & Observer (Raleigh, N.C.)

## As Canada reels from wildfire, First Nations hope for larger role

With Canada in the throes of a record-breaking early wildfire season, the country's Indigenous communities, which include First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples, say it is time for them to be given a more prominent role in shaping the country's approach to fire and forest management.

"Settlers brought a vision of removing fire from the landscape to Canada. But when you take away fire, these landscapes become overgrown," Amy Cardinal Christianson, an Indigenous fire specialist with Parks Canada from Treaty 8 Metis territory in Alberta, told Al Jazeera in a recent phone call.

"Indigenous people have been removed from conversations about fire management. We want to be able to steward the land and use fire on our territories."

Those who try to do so, however, say they face numerous obstacles, from indifference to difficulty obtaining funds and equipment. Access to assistance from federal and provincial authorities can also vary by region, creating a patchwork system where Indigenous communities sometimes fall through the cracks.

But as Canada struggles to subdue wildfires that have grown in scope and intensity due to climate change, Cardinal Christianson says empowering Indigenous communities is a necessity.

"Canada has faced some bad fire seasons, so the public is looking for new solutions," she said, pointing to options like cultural burns, the Indigenous practice of using controlled fires to reduce tinder and create healthier ecosystems.

"But if we, as a society, have decided that we want fire back on the land, it just makes sense, and it's a matter of justice, for Indigenous people to be leading that process."

Over the last several weeks, Canada's fires have captured the world's attention as clouds of smoke and ash envelop cities across North America, placing more than 100 million people under air quality warnings.

With the warmest summer months yet to come, hundreds of blazes continue to dot the landscape, from British Columbia in the west to Quebec and Nova Scotia in the east. Nearly 8.5 million hectares (21 million acres) of land have been scorched so far.

"The fires in Canada are really quite unprecedented," Chief Ken McMullen, the president of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC), told Al Jazeera. "We have fires all across the country, and they started so early."

McMullen said that wildfires burned about 180,000 hectares (445,000 acres) of land last year in Alberta. But this year, he said more than 2 million hectares (4.9 million acres) have already burned in that province alone.

According to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC), fires across the country have thus far torched nearly 1,600 percent of the yearly average.

"There are many variables," said McMullen. "But I'm not out of line saying that people will be working on some of these fires for months, possibly until snowfall in October or November."

Indigenous experts and firefighters say the current infernos have underscored the failure of fire suppression policies and other approaches that see fire as a hostile force to landscape management.

They add that this is a view with roots in colonial thinking, which understood the subjugation of the natural world as a precursor to human progress.

By contrast, they say that Indigenous knowledge teaches that fire is a vital and healthy part of maintaining a balanced landscape. Controlled burns, for example, can be used as a tool to stimulate biodiversity and thin out overgrown areas that might otherwise fuel bigger fires.

Cardinal Christianson told Al Jazeera that the first total fire suppression policy in Canada was enacted in 1610, in present-day Newfoundland. Ever since, she explained, Indigenous perspectives on fire have been discouraged, if not stamped out.

As out-of-control blazes become a persistent issue, however, reintroducing fire to Canada's landscapes through practices such as prescribed burns and cultural burning has received greater attention.

But Cliff Buettner — the director of Forestry and Emergency Protective Services at the Prince Albert Grand Council, which represents 12 tribal governments in Saskatchewan — told Al Jazeera that First Nations still face bureaucratic hurdles when it comes to cultural burning.

"We want to be able to take care of our own back yard," said Buettner. "But liability and costs are big obstacles."

Spaces known as Crown land, which are owned by federal or provincial authorities but contested by some First Nations communities, also have restrictions on burning practices.

"To this day, Indigenous people did not agree to the arrangements that put these lands under the control of federal and provincial authorities," said Buettner. He added that some Crown lands were designated for First Nations under treaties that were never enforced or broken outright.

Dane de Souza, a citizen of Metis Nation and former wildland firefighter who specializes in Indigenous fire management, sees a connection between today's fires and the restriction of Indigenous practices.

"Indigenous people have been managing fires for thousands of years," de Souza told Al Jazeera in a recent phone call. "Putting fire on the land is a very human thing to do. But we've replaced fires of choice with fires of chance."

He said there is a "beautiful truth" in the Indigenous approach to fire, one that has taken on even greater importance as countries struggle with climate change.

"When we talk about climate resilience and sustainability, that's Indigenous knowledge," he said. "What is being Indigenous? It's a connection to the land."

- Al Jazeera

## FireKeepers Casino Hotel unveils 56-foot long honorary tribal mural

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. — FireKeepers Casino Hotel unveiled the installation of a mural to pay tribute to the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Tribe.

The mural is 8 feet tall and 56 feet in length and features more than 60 crafted images with a historical timeline of the Tribe, according to a FireKeepers spokesperson.

"By displaying our profound legacy and story in such an illustrative fashion at FireKeepers, this mural provides an opportunity for its thousands of annual visitors to briefly learn and acknowledge our history in the area and stands as a testament to NHBP's past, present and future in the Southwest Michigan region and beyond," NHBP Tribal Council Secretary and NHBP Culture Committee Chairperson, Nancy Smit said.

"We are deeply honored to collaborate with the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Tribe to create this mural, which stands as a symbol of respect and admiration for their enduring history and remarkable cultural legacy," CEO at FireKeepers Casino, Frank Tecumseh said.

The NHBP Tribe has a historical legacy rooted in the Potawatomi Nation, which once occupied lands along the Southeastern shoreline of Lake Michigan, stretching into Northern Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois.

- News Channel 3 (Kalamazoo, Mich.)

## Nevada tribe sues feds over water rights, failure to protect endangered fish

For nearly two decades the federal government mismanaged tribal water rights and failed to preserve enough water to protect two threatened and endangered fish in Pyramid Lake, alleges the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in a federal lawsuit.

Despite federal protections and efforts by the tribe to protect important habitat, the culturally significant cui-ui and Lahontan cutthroat trout in Pyramid Lake have continued to decline in the last decade, according to federal wildlife managers.

Pyramid Lake and the lower 20 miles of the Truckee River are located within the boundaries of the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation.

In a lawsuit filed earlier this month in the US District Court for the District of Nevada, the tribe claims the Interior Department "entirely failed" to fulfill their obligations to the tribe to manage certain excess water for the conservation and recovery of the cui-ui and Lahontan cutthroat trout under a 1990 settlement deal with the tribe.

From 2002 until 2019, the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service used excess water meant for Pyramid Lake to stabilize the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, an important wetland for migratory birds, located about 80 miles east of Reno, says the tribe.

While those water diversions to the wildlife refuge were awarded on a temporary annual basis, since 2019 the federal government has sought to permanently transfer those water rights to the wildlife refuge, despite a settlement guaranteeing the water for the benefit of Pyramid Lake and tribal efforts to recover cui-ui and Lahontan cutthroat trout populations.

Federal wildlife managers first pushed for a permanent transfer of the water rights to the wildlife refuge in 2019, which the tribe successfully opposed. The federal government made a second attempt at a permanent transfer of the water rights to the wildlife refuge in 2022 without notifying the tribe, according to the lawsuit. That application is still pending before the Nevada state engineer, the top water authority in the state.

Pyramid Lake Paiute leaders are now asking the court to find the permanent water rights transfer unlawful and force the federal government to withdraw their application for a permanent water rights transfer. The tribe is also asking for a court order requiring the Interior Department to send certain excess water to Pyramid Lake going forward.

The federal government's "inaction comes at a significant cost to Pyramid Lake and its fishery" wrote attorneys for the tribe in the lawsuit.

Both the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and FWS declined to comment, citing active litigation.

The lawsuit is the tribe's latest attempt to secure water for Pyramid Lake, a terminal lake whose only major source of water is inflow from the Truckee River.

Traditionally both, the Lahontan cutthroat trout and cui-ui sucker are important to the culture of the Paiute people. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe refer to themselves as the "Kooyooye Tukadu" in their native language, or "people who eat cui-ui."

A century ago, swarms of Pyramid Lake fish would swim far up the Truckee River to safely lay their eggs in the pebbly bottoms of the freshwater river. But a badly planned diversion dam on the river blocked the trout from their native spawning grounds.

The Derby Dam was completed in 1905, and diverted half of all Truckee River water to agricultural fields near Fallon, greatly destabilizing the lake. By 1967, Pyramid Lake dropped by an estimated 80 feet.

After a long struggle and numerous court actions, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe was able to use the Endangered Species Act as a powerful legal lever to secure enough water to keep the lake and its two native fish alive.

In a major step to end the constant fighting among the major players on the Truckee River, Sen. Harry Reid brokered a 1990 settlement titled, the Truckee-Carson-Pyramid Lake Water Rights Settlement Act. The agreement set the stage for dramatic changes, including tighter controls on Northern Nevada irrigation water and restoration of wetlands.

The act also required the Fallon Naval Air Station to meaningfully reduce water use in order to reduce water diversion from the Truckee River for the conservation and recovery of cui-ui and Lahontan cutthroat trout.

"If used for the primary purpose required by the Settlement Act, the Navy Water could

represent up to approximately 5,000 acre-foot of water per year flowing into Pyramid Lake," the lawsuit said.

The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe has a recent history of successfully securing water for Pyramid Lake through litigation.

The tribe reached an agreement in 2015 to acquire up to 2,750 acre-feet of water from a Nevada water utility. Two years later, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the tribe was entitled to 8,300 acre-feet of water that was diverted from the Truckee River by a Nevada irrigation district decades ago.

- Nevada Current

## Pamunkey Tribe withdraws Norfolk casino development plan

The Pamunkey Indian Tribe and their development partners have pulled a development application for their planned Norfolk casino.

The plan was set to be presented to Norfolk's Architectural Review Board — a body that oversees building standards before proposals go before the city's Planning Commission.

Despite presenting a \$500 million casino development plan years ago, the Pamunkey Tribe contracted it to a \$150 million casino and parking garage.

The tribe framed the scaled-down development plan as the first of multiple phases. However, Norfolk Mayor Kenneth Alexander said July 24 that the deal the city signed in 2020 with the tribe did not permit a phased development plan.

"We're not going to settle for anything less than (the original plan), and we just want to make sure they understand that," Alexander told WHRO News. "We intend to adhere to what the voters were told as it relates to what we're going to get."

Alexander said his staff had conversations with the tribe's representatives, telling them the application could not be presented to the City Council in its current form. He said more discussions are scheduled about how to move forward.

"If there is something that is keeping them from adhering to the agreement, that's something the council would have to amend," Alexander said.

Jay Smith, a spokesman for the Pamunkey Tribe, says the tribe was following directions from a city letter sent to the tribe on March 1 when it submitted the phased development plan.

The letter says the tribe is required to submit "a complete application" to the city for anything it plans to construct "during the first phase of development" and that the tribe should also plan to describe what will be constructed "in a future phase."

According to an email from Smith, the tribe received another letter from the city on July 14 asking the tribe not to present its phased development application at the review board.

Pamunkey Chief Robert Gray said in the statement that the tribe "intend(s) to follow through on this pledge to build a \$500 million resort and casino featuring a high end 300-room hotel and other amenities."

The two parties were scheduled to meet July 25.

The Virginia Center for Investigative Journalism at WHRO reported earlier this month that Norfolk leaders have privately discussed scrapping the development deal with the Pamunkey and seeking a different developer for the casino.

Alexander said July 24 that the tribe "is our partner."

Scrapping the deal would leave Norfolk starting nearly from square one for any future casino development.

- VPM (Virginia Public Media)

## Montana tribal members say they were caught up in massive Arizona fraud

**BROWNING Mont.** — There are numerous cases of Indigenous people being reported missing in Arizona in a massive Medicaid fraud scandal.

Several behavioral health companies are allegedly scamming the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System by recruiting Native Americans with Medicaid from various tribes across the nation, including the Blackfoot and Crow reservations in Montana.

Many facilities have been accused of billing the Arizona Office of Public Assistance dealing with Medicaid for services that were misrepresented, and in some cases untrue.

According to a report by Scripps News in Phoenix, there are potentially thousands of victims in a scheme that the governor of Arizona said may have "defrauded the state medical program out of 100's of millions of dollars."

Josh Racine, a Blackfeet tribal member, was one of those who made the decision to get treatment to Arizona. According to him and his family, he was recruited by Sunrise Native Recovery, a treatment program in Arizona accused of fraudulent behavior.

"Well, there was quite a few people going there, so I just took it as a trip to Arizona at first, you know, and it ended up being three months of misery," Racine said. "I spent two months on the streets in Arizona before I finally made it home."

Racine said that while at the facility he was moved to several sober living houses before eventually being kicked out and left to live on the streets.

Through the efforts of his family, Racine was eventually found and brought home.

- KRTV 3 (Great Falls, Montana)

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**THE O'JAYS**



**AUGUST 9**  
**SETH MEYERS**



**AUGUST 11**  
**SONU NIGAM**



**AUGUST 13**  
**RUBÉN BLADES**



**AUGUST 18-20**  
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# Education



## BIE tribal schools to keep counseling, crisis services

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Virtual counseling and onsite crisis services are being extended at Bureau of Indian Education-funded (BIE) tribal schools.

The Department of Interior announced June 29 that the BIE had entered into a five-year contract to increase access to behavioral health and wellness support for students and staff. The program first began during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are 183 BIE-funded elementary and secondary schools. Of those, 55 are BIE-operated and 128 are tribally controlled. The Seminole Tribe's Ahfachkee School on the Big Cypress Reservation and the Miccosukee Indian School west of Miami are Florida's two BIE-funded, tribally controlled schools.

"The Interior Department is committed to creating positive, safe and culturally-relevant learning environments," Interior Secretary Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo), said in a news release. "I am proud of the hard work by the Bureau of Indian Education to ensure that Indigenous youth have the support they need in a culturally-relevant and supportive environment for their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing."

The news release said the program gives students and staff Indigenous-focused support in behavioral health and wellness. It said services are tailored to meet "the unique and diverse mental, cultural, spiritual, emotional and social needs of Indigenous communities served by BIE."

"Mental wellness is a key component of every student's success," BIE director Tony Dearman (Cherokee Nation), said in the news release. "We will focus these resources on the unique issues that face our Indigenous students with a clear emphasis on suicide prevention, crisis services and behavioral health through an Indigenous lens."

Services include virtual behavioral health counseling, a BIE-specific 24/7 crisis hotline, and onsite crisis support. The release said the program's clinical team is primarily staffed with Indigenous clinicians, who have direct experience serving Native communities.

Tribal Tech LLC – a Native American owned small business – has been hired to execute the contract.

## Minnesota tribal college names new president

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**CLOQUET, Minn.** — Anita Hanson, an enrolled member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, was named president of Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) in June.

FDLTCC is a tribal land-grant college in Cloquet, Minnesota.

Hanson holds a bachelor's degree from North Dakota State University and a master's degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota Duluth. She has worked at FDLTCC since 1994 in several capacities, including acting president.

"Anita's engagement with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and her ability to continue the work being produced as part of the Achieving the Dream initiative have been very impactful for the college," Devinder Malhotra, chancellor of Minnesota State, said in a statement.

## NIEA Convention to be held in October

FROM PRESS RELEASE

The 54th annual Native Indian Education Association (NIEA) Convention will be held Oct. 18-21 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This year's theme is "Education Sovereignty. It Begins with Us."

The election of four seats on NIEA's board of directors, including from the Southeast region, will be held during the convention.

For more information go to [niea.org](http://niea.org).

## Caleb Hiatt develops business, technology chops

BY DAMON SCOTT  
Staff Reporter

Caleb Hiatt is set to enter his sophomore year at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, in the fall. The 19-year-old has spent the summer in his hometown of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as an intern with manufacturing company Viaflex.

In his studies and through the internship, Hiatt is fulfilling an interest he has in both business and technology.

"My first major is business intelligence and analytics," Hiatt said. "The other is fintech – finance and technology. They're two very similar majors that have some classes that overlap."

Hiatt is also involved in the Business Intelligence & Analytics Association at Creighton.

"We do community analytics consulting. I've always really enjoyed math and statistics and data," he said.

The Viaflex internship – which started May 15 and runs through early August – was set up after a connection with the company's executive director of corporate development, Joe Beck, who attends the Hiatt family's

church in Sioux Falls.

"On paper I'm a human resources intern, but I don't really deal with the day-to-day HR things," Hiatt said. "I'm doing an HR metrics dashboard which requires putting a bunch of [Microsoft] Excel data into graphs and Microsoft's Business Intelligence Tools. That's my big project."

Viaflex, formerly Raven Engineered Films, manufactures polymer films and sheeting (plastic tarps) for agriculture, construction, industrial and other applications.

"They actually laid plastic at the



Caleb Hiatt

Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo

From left to right are Lucas Hiatt, Stephanie Hiatt, Wanda Bowers, Hollywood Board Rep. Christine McCall, Caleb Hiatt and Tyler Hiatt at the tribe's inauguration day event June 5 in Hollywood.

Hard Rock Guitar Hotel under the waterfall," Hiatt said. "There are tons of applications. A lot of the business is in California; for reservoirs in Colorado; and for agriculture in Texas. It's a big thing."

Hiatt said he might want to use his experience for a future business analyst or information technology job.

"There's some different things I've been thinking about, but I'm not sure what the job title would be," he said. "There are a few Fortune 500 companies in Omaha."

Hiatt is the son of Jon and Stephanie Hiatt. His mother is a tribal member and the daughter

of the late Stephen Bowers. Hiatt's two brothers are Tyler, 21, and Lucas, 16.

Hiatt grew up in Sioux Falls, which is about a two and a half hour drive to Creighton.

"When we were younger we'd be asked where we're from and we'd say South Dakota and Florida. We'd go to Florida two or three times a year," he said. "This last time we went for inauguration day. [Hollywood Board Rep.] Christine McCall is my mom's cousin. Since my grandfather's passing we've gotten to know Wanda [Bowers] and Christine more."

Hiatt said in his free time he's been getting back in the gym and playing a lot of basketball and golf. He particularly enjoys spikeball – which he describes as "if volleyball and four square had a baby."

He said his family is "pretty athletic all the way around." Hiatt's mother is in the sports hall of fame at the University of Sioux Falls for volleyball, and brother Tyler has established himself as track and field standout at the same school.

## Tribe, Brighton casino provide scholarships to Okeechobee High class of 2023

STAFF REPORT

The Okeechobee High School scholarship night for the class of 2023 in May included \$5,000 worth of scholarships each from the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Seminole Casino Brighton.

Nancy Jimmie and Dana Osceola presented the tribe's scholarships to graduates Kendra Henderson and Judy Sienes in the amount of \$2,500 each.

Ten OHS graduates received \$500 scholarships each from Seminole Casino Brighton. Justin Adorno, the casino's director of human resources, made the presentation. The recipients were Jasmine Desai, Zarina Judilla, Hannah Lewis, Lauren Maggard, Adam Moore, Diana Rodriguez-Gomez, Conner Rucks, Judy Sienes, Joshua Viray and Janessa Whidden.

Overall, 112 members of the class received 360 scholarships from the community, state and military that totaled nearly \$1.2 million, according to the school.

"This rural and mighty Okeechobee community raised nearly three quarters of a million dollars and more importantly decided to invest that money in the future of the Okeechobee High School class of 2023," Lauren Myers, principal of OHS, said to the class during the program. "What a privilege for you to live in a community who truly supports you through and beyond your high school experience."



OHS

Dana Osceola, far left, and Nancy Jimmie, far right, presented Okeechobee High School class of 2023 graduates Kendra Henderson, second from left, and Judy Sienes with scholarships from the Seminole Tribe in the amount of \$2,500 each at the school's scholarship night.



OHS

These 10 students from Okeechobee High School's class of 2023 each earned \$500 scholarships from the Seminole Casino Brighton.



OHS

Justin Adorno, center, director of human resources at Seminole Casino Brighton, makes a presentation to four of the recipients of the casino's scholarships from Okeechobee High School's class of 2023.

# Students given insider look of FSU campus

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

TALLAHASSEE — A group of the Seminole Tribe's recent high school graduates, college students and their families got an insider's tour of the home of the Florida State University Seminoles on July 8.

The trip was organized by the chairman's office and included a tour of the campus, a private meeting with Osceola and Renegade on the Doak Campbell Stadium field, a celebration and dinner in the university president's box, and an IMAX screening of "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny."

Students Bailey Marie Latchford, Heith Lawrence and Amara Martinez began as freshmen at FSU in June. High school graduates Bella Garcia, Isabella Josh, Mariana Mora-Lara and Jake Osceola also attended.

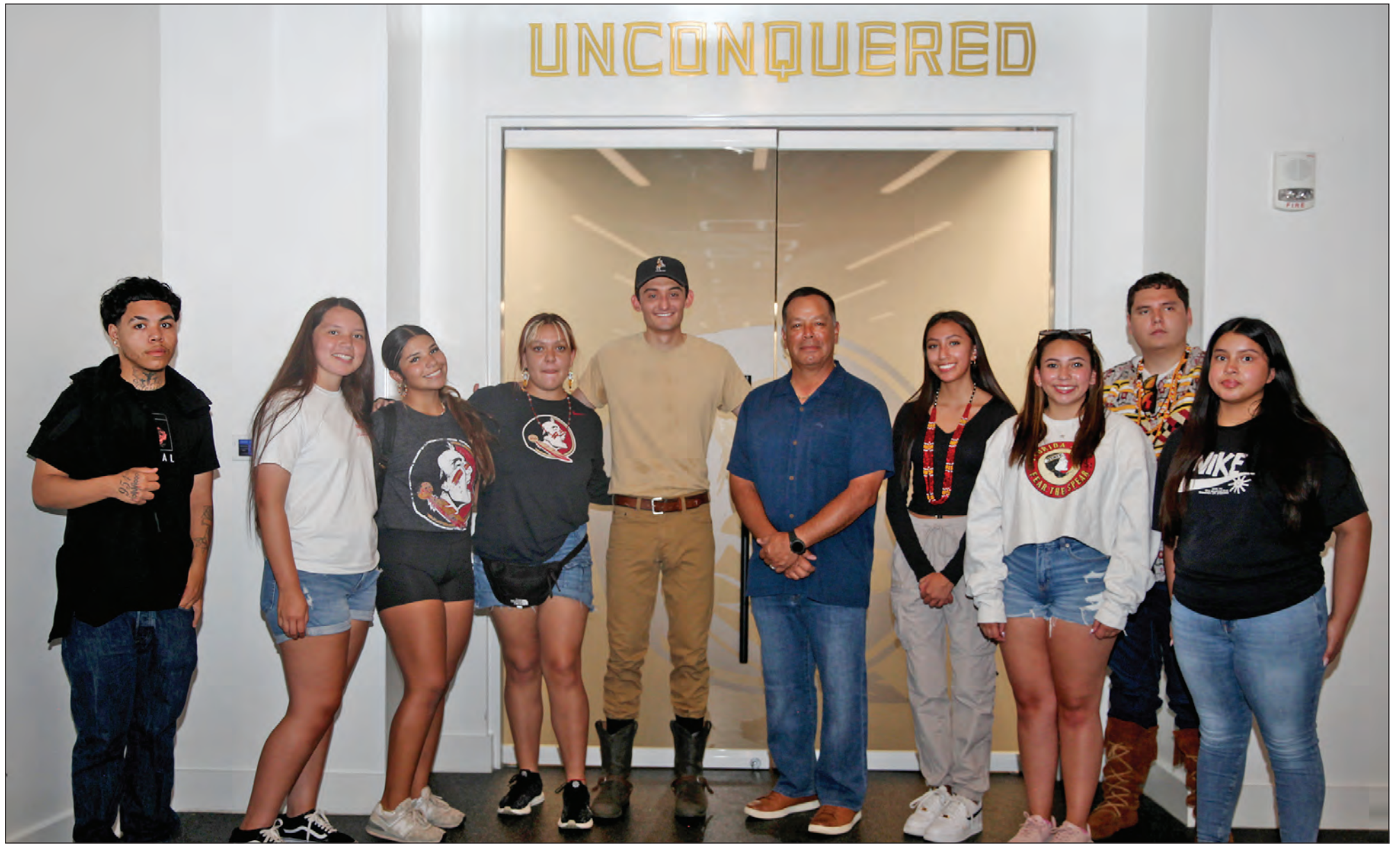
Lawrence graduated high school in 2021 and then worked for the housing department through the Education Department's Work Experience Program. He believes attending FSU will give him an opportunity to grow the relationship between the tribe and the university.

"I want to help maintain the tribe's good name," Lawrence said. "I believe you should embrace your culture, who you are and the traditions you were brought up with. I want to understand different walks of life and plan to share aspects of Seminole culture with non-tribal friends and anybody who asks."

The tour began after a presentation by Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. and tribal department heads. The first stop was the FSU wellness center, which is a hospital, provides physical therapy, contains classrooms and a large gym.

Director of university relations Jimmy Cole conducted the tour and said a major FSU initiative is health care science and creating doctors and health care professionals.

"People go to universities to find out



In center, Christian Weisz, aka "Osceola" from the Osceola and Renegade team, and Chairman Marcellus W. Osceola Jr. pose with graduates and students in Florida State University's Seminole football team's locker room July 8.



From left to right, Amara Martinez, Heith Lawrence and Bailey Osceola Latchford pose with Osceola and Renegade on the field of FSU's Doak Campbell Stadium during the visit.

what their interests are and to learn skills," Cole said. "A university can change the trajectory of someone's life. Any student in Florida who earns an associate's degree at a Florida community college is guaranteed acceptance to any state university."

About 25% of FSU students are the first in their families to attend college, including FSU's president Richard McCullough. Ninety percent of FSU students graduate in four to six years.

"The three tenets of the university are strength, skill and character," Cole said. "We want to see what people are made of and how they can be inspired to be successful. Students come here from all over the world; they meet people they wouldn't have met anywhere else."

Freshman Bailey Marie Latchford is proud to be an FSU student and plans to study criminology and psychology. She hopes to educate new friends about the tribe. "I worked hard to get here and all the work was worth it," she said. "I hope to make the tribe proud. I'm thankful for all those who supported me and helped me get through school."

Mariana Mora-Lara will attend Valencia College in Orlando in the fall, but wants to transfer to FSU later. She came on the tour to better understand the school's programs.

"I can feel a sense of pride coming

here," she said.

Bella Garcia lives in North Carolina, is a freshman at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is studying drama, musical theater and Native American studies.

"This was an opportunity to meet other people from my tribe," Garcia said about attending the tour. "Later on I might want to transfer to FSU."

"The first step to applying to a university is visiting," Cole said. "You all just took the first step. College is for everyone, anytime. The role of a university is for students to go change the world."

After the campus tour, the group went to the football stadium for a private meeting with Osceola and Renegade.

But first, they entered the field just as the football team does during every home game; through a tunnel lined with flashing garnet neon lights. The difference on this day was all 70,000 seats were devoid of screaming fans cheering them on to victory.

Allen Durham, who oversees the Osceola and Renegade program, met the group on the field and gave a history of how Osceola and Renegade became an FSU tradition. When Durham's father Bill was an FSU student, class of 1965, he wanted to pay tribute to the Seminole Tribe by having Osceola ride in on horseback, Renegade,

and plant a spear in the turf. It took until the 1970s to get it done.

"[Former FSU football] Coach [Bobby] Bowden loved the idea," Durham said. "In 1978 he met with tribal leaders and Chairman Howard Tommie and it was approved."

Osceola and Renegade's first appearance was the opening game in 1978 against Oklahoma State University. Since then, 17 FSU students have portrayed Osceola and six horses have been Renegade.

The selection process for Osceola is strict; the student must maintain a 3.0 GPA, be an accomplished equestrian and learn the history of Osceola and the Seminole tribe. The regalia worn by Osceola is authentic, it was made by Seminole women.

Osceola and Renegade appear at home games and occasionally at bowl games, but Durham said the highest honor is when they appear at the tribe's annual Brighton Field Day celebration each February.

The current Osceola is Christian Weisz, a former polo player from an equestrian family. He will graduate this year with a Master of Business Administration degree, so this will be his fifth and final season as Osceola.

◆ See FSU on page 4B

## ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

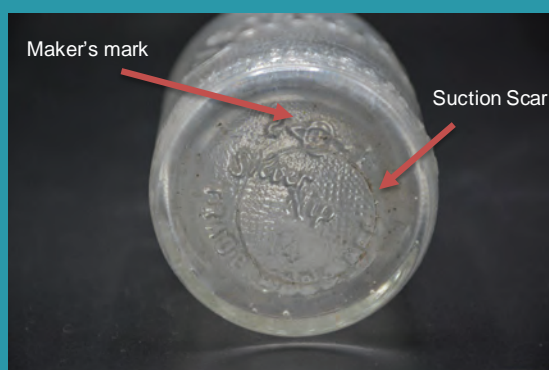
August 2023

We all love to have a refreshing beverage, whether it be at dinner time or in the hot summer sun. This month the Collections team is highlighting two glass Silver Nip bottles. Historic bottles offer a very relatable insight into the recent past. At one time these bottles contained a grapefruit beverage. The Silver Nip brand was first trademarked in 1928. The producer of this drink was a company called Florida Fruit Canners, Inc., which was based in Frostproof, Florida, (Justia, 2023). This company was owned by citrus tycoon Latimer "Latt" Macy, who started his citrus enterprise in 1917 when he opened Lake Reedy Packing Company in Frostproof (Florida Citrus Hall of Fame, n.d.).



Sadly, there is no Silver Nip on the shelves today. Although it is unclear when, it seems that Florida Fruit Canners changed its name to Silver Nip Citrus. Silver Nip Citrus was then acquired by Alico, Inc. in 2014 (mergr, n.d.). Alico is based in Fort Myers and is a holding company with related operations in agriculture. Some of their more notable citrus processing clients are Minute Maid and Tropicana (Layden, 2018).

Although the Silver Nip drink was produced in Frostproof, the glass bottle itself wasn't. From the maker's mark on the base of the bottle, and its adjacent number codes, it can be confirmed that these bottles were produced by Owens-Illinois Glass Co. and were most likely made in their factory in Huntington, West Virginia. Also on the base of the bottle is a suction scar, which is a mark left during production when using an Owens automatic bottle machine (Lindsey, 2021) (Lockhart and Hoenig, n.d.). Presumably after the bottles were produced, they were shipped to Frostproof for packaging.



The resources provided by the Society for Historical Archaeology are a great way to learn more about glass bottles and other historical artifacts. Check out the links below to learn more.

<https://sha.org/>  
<https://sha.org/bottle/>

If you are interested in learning more about the objects in the collection, check out the previous artifacts of the month on our website: [stoftpo.com](http://stoftpo.com)



## SEMINOLE HISTORY STORIES - AUGUST 2023

### KING PAYNE OF PAYNE'S PRAIRIE

Paynes Prairie is a broad savannah and state park, just south of Gainesville, that offers an incredible glimpse into ancestral Florida. Wide grassy spaces and marshy woods are home to native birds, fish, alligators, and even bison who have only recently been reintroduced after being gone for two and a half centuries. Often untold, however, is how this region was named... not Paynes Prairie, but Payne's Prairie.

Payne (Snake Clan) was a prominent leader and spokesman among the Seminole communities of the 18th and 19th centuries. The son of Ahaya (Cowkeeper), he took on many of his father's responsibilities after his death in 1783. He would soon establish the community of Payne's Town on the southern end of the prairie. Over the next three decades he expanded on his father's cattle operations and brokered trade with the Spanish at St. Augustine. He negotiated and traded with Florida tribal communities as far away as Tallahassee, opposed joining the growing Creek Confederation, welcomed Africans who had escaped enslavement, and proposed creating a confederation of Florida tribes. Soon the Spanish and English records referred to him as "King Payne."

In 1812, the prosperity Payne helped build was threatened by expansionist American militias. Operating out of Georgia they sought to exploit the shrinking Spanish presence and claim Florida for the United States. Payne wanted to remain neutral in the war, but found himself out-voted by council. The Seminole allied with the Spanish, attacking the invading militias, and Payne himself joined the effort. In September, his soldiers trapped and routed a large contingent of Georgian militia men, a blow that helped to end what became known as the Patriot War, but Payne had taken a bullet early in the battle. He succumbed to his wounds four days later. Payne's Prairie is the land that he both lived and died for, and it is named in his memory.



ABOVE  
American Bison graze in Paynes Prairie, Florida.  
Photo courtesy Florida State Parks.



# 'Time for a Story'

BY ELGIN JUMPER

*Author's note: "Myths and Tall Tales continue to fascinate me. The imagination just soars. Everything is heightened, "larger than life" and so, "Time for a Story" is like that as well. Man vs. Giant has been a significant part of world mythology and epic poems, etc and etc, for ages upon ages. Jon is a mythic hero, modeled on indigenous heroes, and on Odysseus, on Beowulf, among many others. And so, "we're not in Kansas anymore." We are in the very midst of fiction. But the scenes with the Seminole couple makes sure the story within the story stays grounded. I thank you."*

"There's always room for a story that can transport people to another place."

- J.K. Rowling

The chickee hut was on the reservation in the Everglades, it was spacious with picnic tables and lawn chairs underneath and a floor of white sand and rock. The lighting from the red-orange sunset was bright enough to see, and yet, not so overpowering as to become unruly. It was agreeable, which quite complimented the glowing vermilion hues that played across the scene.

It was a relatively new chickee, the palmetto fronds were still golden, recently obtained, and the cypress logs were fresh, debarked in the not-too-distant past.

A Seminole couple, having just left a Storytelling event on the reservation, drove up, and sat down at a table. The man paused in conversation about stories, looked about. The night had become an army now, advancing more upon the battalions of day. The man arose and flipped a switch that was attached to a cypress pole. And there was light!

He was a storyteller, this man, and so, he loved to observe the world around him. And take notes, of course. He was of medium-height, long black hair in a ponytail. He had on blue jeans and a red t-shirt and black blazer atop. Most of the times, he wore a hat, but not tonight. He wore many hats, actually. And shiny black cowboy boots to boot.

The woman was of medium-height, too. Her hands were small and smooth. She wore her long black hair down. Her grey skirt hung just below her knees, and her grey blouse commended her like a grey caress. She wore no hat, only a red flower.

She spoke sincerely in a lovely voice that could've created worlds with its beauty. "Please tell me a story," she said. "Come on, just one, I still remember all those stories you told me. All of them."

"I'm a Storyteller alright," he admitted, smiling, "a Maverick. True story. "Told by a storyteller, full of sound and fury, heh-heh." "Oh, you - Madcap!" She giggled and took his hand in hers. Then, she addressed an imaginary audience. "Uh, folks, uh, no need for worries, uh, this is all just a part of his process. We'll get back to our regular programming in just a sec."

"What would you have me do?" He winked, squinted, and gazed at her. She thought for a moment. "Hmm. Something good."



Elgin Jumper

'Confronting the Giant' - Elgin Jumper

"Ah, something good, something good - it's what all the ages have been striving for," he sighed. "Okay, I see."

She was his lady, you see, so she could command like that, and he must acquiesce, and deliver, as all good storytellers must. Even so, he was very much okay with that. In this case, at any rate.

He had a notable glint in his eye. "Okay, here we go," the man began. "This is what happened. This is the Truth. In modern times, as the Seminole sages speak of it, there was a young Seminole man, Jon, who dwelled in a peninsula of coastal cities and inland villages, inland seas and serpentine rivers, a watery Everglades, too, the natural world, flowing south, and all intermingled with crowded highways and roads."

"The land we love," she said. "True. And was this man not a philosopher? Was he not a poet? Had he had not served his country well in distant wars? And was he not renowned for glory and military abilities earned upon the battlefields of today? Had he not proven physical strength and agility in countless sporting events and competitions?"

"And when challenged by a rival, had he not wrestled ten formidable alligators, a different alligator each time, in ten straight days? That's a hundred battles in ten days! A stirring song, indeed! For here we have a hero, don't you see?"

"In the land we love," she added softly. "So true. Yet, let us return to Jon's story, shall we? Without further ado. His achievements were many! One particular operation pitted him against a motley tribe of giants! Yes, it's true. Giants! And it was a perilous mission, too. The giants were huge, towering, taller than even the age-old cypress trees in the Fakahatchee Strand. They were an ominous-looking rabble. They were battle-scarred, vulgar, barbarous, and severe in action. They were the fearsome vestiges

from Florida's prehistoric wilderness eons ago.

"But now, having plundered and pillaged the coastal cities in the northern peninsula, they had moved noisily south, and were at present terrorizing Seminole families in the Everglades regions. They advanced out from threatening fogs and struck on the darkest of nights!

"Horrendous damages were inflicted to buildings, to vehicles, and to businesses, precious, irreplaceable eco-systems laid to waste. Destruction on a grand scale lay in their wakes. They took precious jewelry and money hoards, artworks of great monetary and sentimental value, which they then guarded over in their villainous Everglades lair. For they existed in haunted pine and cypress hammocks away from the people. Something had to be done! Could Jon just stand by and do nothing?"

"Jon's heart and mind were set. He was going to do what was right, one way or another, and end this heartrending ruination wreaked by the tribe of giants. Being a great hunter and tracker, as well, Jon located the haunted pine and cypress hammock. Jon could see them sharpening their spears and gathering their warclubs and other blunt weapons and preparing for battle.

"The leader of the giants was called, Marr, the Havoc-wrecker. Vultures had warned him of Jon's approach. Marr laughed a fiendish laugh and brandished his warclub with unbelievable skill, but in a failed effort to intimidate the hero.

"We will bring you to your knees, warrior!" Marr roared out.

"All to no avail. Jon was silent, ever the serious warrior. Till the right moment. He could see all the giants surrounding him. Even so, in the midst of this action, he charged thunderously at Marr. He took them on with his bare hands, performing feats of tactical brilliance, oh, they went round and round, and then some, a modern-day David vs. Goliath, if you will, and tore Marr down, marring Marr, making the others leaderless. And then, in due course, he dealt out the retribution. Peace had been restored! What had once been lost could now be rebuilt!

"His story is the stuff of legend, dear. That legend would continue to grow, to expand with ever more exploits and challenges. This young Seminole man, whose only intention, on this day, was to help others. And he was humble about it, too, mesmerizing in the respectful way in which he carried himself."

The man caressed the woman's long black hair. The woman smiled affectionately. They gazed into each other's eyes. She well-knew his passion for storytelling, how hard he'd worked to get here.

"O h , you . . . " She let her words trail off. "There's always time for a story," he said, joyfully. He looked up at the chickee's wooden framework and palm fronds, and yet, he was peering beyond them, transcending them. "Colorful stories, you see," he added in a gentle voice. "Lovely butterflies, fluttering about."

Seminole artist and writer Elgin Jumper is a contributor to the Seminole Tribune.

## Starz Sanchez graduates from University of Colorado



Courtesy photo

Starz Sanchez graduated this year with a bachelor's of arts degree in English literature and film studies from the University of Colorado.

## Alyssa Osceola graduates from Ringling College



Courtesy photo

Alyssa Osceola graduated this year from Ringling College of Art & Design in Sarasota with a bachelor's degree in illustration.

## US Appeals Court to review Wyoming convictions against Crow hunters

VOICE OF AMERICA

A federal judge in Wyoming has agreed to review a 34-year-old dispute over whether the Crow Tribe in Montana has the right to hunt beyond reservation borders.

In late 1989, Wyoming fined Crow citizen Thomas L. Ten Bear for shooting an elk in Wyoming's Big Horn Forest.

The Crow sued Wyoming, arguing that the 1868 treaty signed with the U.S. gave them the right to hunt on unoccupied U.S.

lands "so long as game may be found" and relations with whites were peaceful. Wyoming ruled against the Crow, saying those treaty rights expired when Wyoming became a U.S. state.

But 25 years later, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in another case that Crow hunting rights did not expire.

The Crow have since fought to have the original ruling overturned. This week, a federal appeals judge said he will "more thoroughly" review the facts.

## Seminole Casino Hotel to host Marie Osmond's Orchestral Christmas Tour

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee welcomes Marie Osmond performing live as part of her Orchestral Christmas Tour with special guest David Osmond Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. For tickets go to ticketmaster.com or moreinparadise.com.

Attendees must be 21 years old.

Marie Osmond has spent more than six decades in the entertainment business as a successful singer, television performer and talk show host, dancer, actor, author, entrepreneur and public speaker. She has continued to maintain relevance, remaining an instantly recognizable

figure across the globe. Osmond is a multiple gold and platinum selling artist and CMA winner, garnering numerous Billboard chart-topping singles and albums, and writing three New York Times bestselling books.

## Elvis tribute coming to Immokalee

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**IMMOKALEE** — Chris MacDonald's Memories of Elvis in Concert, a tribute to Elvis Presley, will return to Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee on Aug. 19 at 8 p.m. For tickets, go to ticketmaster.com or moreinparadise.com.

MacDonald is the star and creator of the tribute, which is a national touring full-production, multi-media production, complete with a band and singers. MacDonald has performed in Vegas and Branson, and with Legends in Concert stage productions.



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Beverly Bidney

With the bucket full of ice water, Zoey Garcia fills the bucket of the teammate behind her as Immokalee Recreation fitness specialist Liz Epps watches the competition. The goal was to have more water in the bucket than the competing team.

## Recreation departments unite rez to rez on playing field

### STAFF REPORT

**BIG CYPRESS** — The recreation departments from Big Cypress and Immokalee got together for a camp fun day on the Big Cypress ballfield July 19. Activities for the 66 kids included water kickball games, the ice water challenge, egg toss, hungry hippo, baton relays and potato sack races. In addition, there were inflatable water slides and an inflatable water volleyball court.

Beverly Bidney

Jayceon Billie gets airborne during the sack race as his teammates await their turns.



Beverly Bidney

From left, Winter Hernandez, Dannie Gonzalez and Gia Garcia enjoy a game of water kickball as they try to get the ball to throw the runner out.



Beverly Bidney

Recreation campers enjoy a game of water volleyball, which was a fun way to beat the summer heat.

# Lucy Bowers reflects on first year on Florida CattleWomen executive team

BY LUCY BOWERS  
Florida CattleWomen Inc.

*Editor's note: After a year serving as parliamentarian of the Florida CattleWomen Inc., Lucy Bowers received the organization's rookie of the year award by outgoing FCW President Holly Newsome at its annual meeting on Marco Island from June 20 to June 22. Bowers wrote about serving on the FCW executive team and noted some of the year's highlights.*

### My first year on the Florida CattleWomen (FCW) executive team as parliamentarian

Before I start I want to say "THANK YOU" to Holly and all of FCW for the Rookie of the Year award, it was certainly a pleasant surprise, I promise that I will do my very best to earn it. It is an absolute honor to work with the FCW Executive Team and I am looking forward to this upcoming year.

My first year was very busy; it went by pretty quick for the most part. At times it can be challenging to balance the responsibilities between my job and FCW, but my boss is very supportive of my involvement with FCW which I am most thankful for. My first year was mainly focused on learning the flow of the organization. The executive team follows a grooming process where each member moves up through the ranks each year and will eventually be President, it's a multi-year commitment, so after my first year, this past June at the convention, I was given the opportunity to step down if I felt I was not ready to make the commitment. I have committed so I am now the Treasurer.

As Treasurer, I will mainly be collaborating with FCW's bookkeeper on all things FCW budget and presenting the quarterly financial statements at our quarterly meetings. I am responsible for prepping the meeting for the current budget's audit and budget review for the next year. I also collaborate with the membership coordinator to maintain accurate membership records.

We have quarterly meetings beginning in June during the convention on Marco Island, September in the hometown area of the FCW President, December in the hometown area of the Florida Cattlemen President, and March is our legislative quarterly in Tallahassee. At the legislative quarterly we also meet with our state legislators, as one of the more important roles of the organization is advocacy, it is known as "Boots on the Hill". We discuss all things agriculture, animals, land, water – our environment – also our product (BEEF) and its byproducts. I did miss this year's "Boots on the Hill" because of my work schedule, but I have attended in the past and it is quite the experience, I learned a lot just sitting in and listening. It is open to ALL members of the Florida CattleWomen, Cattlemen, and Jr associations, I look forward to seeing more participants in 2024.

We host an annual Beef Short Course event for ALL FCW membership – this event covers various topics of the beef cattle industry, including but not limited to seminars with guest speakers, and hands-on demonstrations with live animals, and FUN, like roping competitions, beef cook offs, and ranch work (fitness) competitions, etc. It's usually a one day educational beef class for producers from beginners to "experts" within the beef industry.

Throughout the year we participate in a variety of events to educate the public about the beef industry, like the Junior League Holiday Market in Tampa in November, that is a three day event and local chapters (CattleWomen) are invited to volunteer to distribute collateral, prep and cook the samples of beef that we share with the visitors who pass by our booth. It's a pretty big event, 20,000+ people come through the doors over the three days. This past November we used 44 pounds of steak, 65 pounds of ground beef, and 21 pounds of beef sausage for the samples that we shared during the event which we provide recipes. There were even a few people who "do not eat meat" that tried the samples and left with a recipe. With that said, we don't spend time downplaying a person's choice not to eat beef, but we will use that time while they are trying the sample(s) and asking questions, to educate them on the nutrition of beef to

assure them that it can be an option for them. Another big event is the Florida State Fair in February, it's the same type of set up as the Holiday Market and is a 12-day event.

Our Ag Literacy Program is our outreach to the classrooms throughout the school year to educate the students on agriculture focusing on beef and its by-products. The sessions vary, depending on the grade, we read children's books about agriculture, provide power-point presentations, activities, games, etc. The children have a lot of fun. The outreach is at every level – National, State, and Local CattleWomen organizations.

One of my favorite events is "Beef for the Holidays" which supports Hope Children's Home in Tampa. The local chapters of FCW are invited to receive one or two children's information (infant to 18 years of age) and provide gifts for those children, we also receive monetary donations to purchase beef certificates to give to the home to use toward purchasing beef for their meals. Beef certificates are processed through the Florida Cattlemen Association, they work like a check and are accepted wherever beef is sold.

I am also the Co-Chair of the FCW Ranch Tours, with Pauletta Bowers, excited to be working with her this year - we spend a Saturday morning with multi-generational ranch owners learning their history as beef producers and conservationists, they share their knowledge, of being stewards of the land, and that education helps us in the fight to keep Florida green. Last year we hosted three (3) tours – Southern Cattle Company in Marianna, Bull Hammock Ranch in Ft. Pierce, and Seminole Tribe, Inc. hosted a tour in Brighton. I am currently working on three (3) tours for this year – I don't have all the details locked in so I don't want to share specific locations, but we are planning to go back up to the north Florida area, we will also visit the central Florida area, and I will be specific with this one, Seminole Tribe, Inc. will host again in Big Cypress.

The executive team has a weekend retreat every year, this retreat is to bring in the new members of the executive team, for the next year to get to know each other, discuss their roles and to answer any questions they may have. The President-Elect shares her plans for the upcoming year when she serves as President, and we discuss those plans. We also take this time to take our group and individual photos for the next year that will be used for media, social media, etc.

We are also involved on the national level as well with American National CattleWomen (ANCW). We are not expected to participate until we are at the President and President-Elect rank, but it helps to get involved as soon as you can as part of the FCW executive team, a lot of networking happens, and it can be beneficial when they are advocating at the national level. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and ANCW host their convention and trade show at the end of January and first of February every year – this event is known as "CattleCon" and you will experience ALL THINGS beef industry at this event, 2024 is in Orlando. At the local level (Florida Seminole CattleWomen) I'm excited for us to include some of Seminole Tribe in this event. We don't have specifics locked in, but the attendees will learn about the Florida Seminoles before they leave Florida. Yes, I am also still involved with Florida Seminole CattleWomen as much as I can be.

Somewhere in all of this I have earned my Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) and Masters of Beef Advocacy certification. BQA helps beef producers raise quality beef to assure the consumer that what they are purchasing is healthy and delicious. The certification is offered both online and in-person, various classes are offered throughout the year and throughout the state. Masters of Beef Advocacy is a self-guided course online that provides all that are in the beef industry the resources to be a strong advocate for our industry. The courses offer the history of the US beef industry, beef nutrition and safety, animal welfare, sustainability of the environment and so much more. It took me about three days to complete. The certifications are tools that you gather and learn to use as you move up through the executive team grooming process.



Courtesy photo

Lucy Bowers was named Florida CattleWomen's rookie of the year at its annual conference in Marco Island from June 20 to June 22.



Courtesy photo

Lucy Bowers, left, and outgoing Florida CattleWomen president Holly Newsome at the annual convention.

### Highlight of my first year

I have been a member and involved with FCW since 2017 and I am always calling and texting the executive team members asking where to find various documents, asking for dates of events, etc. so I inquired about developing a website where all that information would be in one place. I decided that my goal during my first year on the executive team would be the development of the Florida CattleWomen website; I am excited to say that we have made big strides with this goal, and we will be launching the website in the very near future, just need a few more tweaks. That is the highlight of my first year.

My plan with FCW for this year, aside from my duties as Treasurer and Ranch Tour Co-Chair, is to start utilizing and applying the resources that I received last year to do my part in building on the foundation of the FCW organization. I will also start working on MY story, I am a third generation cattle rancher, but as a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, our cattle ranching story goes way back to the early 1500's and I want to bring awareness to our story just as Alex Johns did when he was the Florida Cattlemen's Association (FCA) President.

I know that I've shared a lot of insight into FCW and yes, it can be as overwhelming as it seems at times, but I do have a HUGE support system of my Family, Friends, Florida Seminole CattleWomen, the Seminole Tribe, fellow FCW and FCA members. I do appreciate every single one of you!!

Wakv Blessings,  
~L



Courtesy photo

Seminole members of Florida CattleWomen Inc. gather at the annual conference. From left to right are left Dinorah Johns, Kay Braswell, Janae Braswell, Angie Martinez, Pauletta Bowers, Lucy Bowers, Martha Jones, Michele Thomas, Connie Whidden and Jade Osceola.

## Brazilian music comes to Hard Rock Live

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

Titãs is bringing its "Encontro Tour" to Hard Rock Live at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood on Oct. 3 at 8 p.m.

The Brazilian supergroup is looking to

bring the wildly diverse blend of pop, rock, punk, funk and reggae to the stage. Famed Brazilian director Otávio Juliano oversees the artistic direction of the band's stage show.

Ticket information is at myhrl.com.



◆ SHIPPING  
From page 1A



Beverly Bidney

Emma Urbina counts calves as they are loaded onto a cattle truck headed for Oklahoma.



Beverly Bidney

Above, Kane Jumper and his dogs work together to get an wayward cow back into the pen at the Bowers pasture in Brighton July 12.



Beverly Bidney

Cattle owner Melissa Gopher (holding gate) gets some youthful help moving her calves off the cattle trailer.

### Clint Raulerson joins tribe as interim natural resources director

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY  
Staff Reporter

**BRIGHTON** — Clint Raulerson, who was recently named interim natural resources director, comes from a long line of Florida cowboys; his family has about 100 years of history with the Seminole Tribe.

Raulerson's family has roots in Immokalee. His grandparents Evelyn and Robert Raulerson honeymooned just north of Big Cypress in 1929, where they met members of the tribe. His father Gary Raulerson was foreman for the board's cattle operation for 25 years.

Raulerson had been managing a large ranch in Kansas before he took the job in Brighton. He worked for the tribe briefly in the 1990s before moving to Kansas to manage ranches.

"It's a real honor for me to be here," said Raulerson, who started working in June. "I've been running ranches all my life. I came back here for the job and everyone has been really welcoming."

Raulerson said he is a big ideas guy who wants to do good things for the tribe. He plans to spend time observing how things are done before he makes any changes, if necessary.

"It's all about what I can do to make things better for the tribe," he said. "I truly love what I do and have a passion for it."



Beverly Bidney

Clint Raulerson

### Seminole 4-H program cattle projects off to good start

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe's 4-H's program year, which runs until the annual show and sale in March, is off to a strong start.

During calf shipping in Big Cypress and Brighton from July 10-20, contracts for 55 steers and 14 heifers were made. According to 4-H special projects coordinator Kimberly Clement, the goal is to have a 100% success rate and to have all of the calves in the final project at the show and sale.

"The amazing stories we are getting from parents already is so heart touching," Clement said in an email to the Tribune. "Calves that completely wrecked pens and took down cowboys are now completely halter broke, being walked and getting baths. Some parents have said it is therapy for their child to have responsibilities of taking care of their projects and getting to see the reward so quickly."

Upcoming 4-H events:

**Aug. 1:** 4-H online membership enrollment opens. The first 150 enrollments will be free

**September:** Swine clubs initial meetings tribalwide

**Sept. 30:** 4-H youth field day and membership drive at Junior Cypress Rodeo Grounds, Big Cypress

**Oct. 1-7:** National 4-H Week

**Oct. 31:** Last day for swine and cattle members to enroll in 4-H online

**Feb. 20-23:** County Fair exhibits to be turned in for judging.

**March 4-8:** Seminole Tribe of Florida Country Fair – Livestock Show and Sale at Brighton Fred Smith Rodeo Arena



Beverly Bidney

From left to right, Kimberly Clement, 4-H special projects coordinator; Sara Whitehead, 4-H program assistant; and Sheri Trent, youth agriculture extension agent, keep somewhat cool in the shade as they keep track of 4-H'ers who picked up calves at the shipping event.

◆ FSU  
From page 2B

"He respects the role of Osceola and makes it look easy out there, in front of a

crowd of 70,000, on bareback and holding a spear on fire," Durham said.

While in makeup and regalia, Osceola doesn't speak to anyone out of respect for Osceola. Durham said he isn't playing a part, he is representing a person.

After learning about the duo and posing

for pictures with horse and rider, tribal members adjourned to the team locker room to wait for Weisz and Durham. The locker room was a hushed, dimly lit place with no distractions. The atmosphere is meant to focus the players' minds only on the game.

Weisz entered the locker room in

civilian clothes, where he met with tribal members and talked about being the longest person to depict Osceola.

"It's an honor to carry on this great tradition," Weisz said. "I grew up playing polo and didn't know anything about football. But the biggest thing has been

learning about you as a people. I want to honor Osceola and make you proud."

"Thank you for representing us the way you do," said Chairman Osceola. "I hope what you've learned will guide you through all of your life."



Members of the Seminole Tribe pose on the football field at Doak Campbell Stadium where the FSU Seminoles play their home games.

Beverly Bidney

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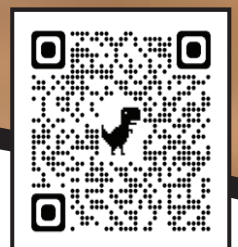
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# Sports



Unconquered at NABI in Phoenix included, front row, from left to right, head coach Charles Frye, Seth Pratt, Anthony Earth, Jordan Ben, Dyami Berridge, Bryce Osceola and assistant coach Victor Others. Back row, from left to right, are Caleb Cole, Hayden Smith, Chanon Frye and Juelz Billie.

## After winning multiple tournaments, Unconquered finishes 3rd at NABI

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

Unconquered has lived up to its name this year.

The team filled is filled with elite talent and has won tournaments throughout the country, including Battle in Plainz, Best In the Midwest and Native American Junior National Platinum. Unconquered was eyeing another title in July – the 68-team Native American Basketball Invitational (boys division) – but finished third. Most teams would be thrilled to finish in the top three in one of the strongest Native tournaments in the country, but Unconquered comes to tournaments with lofty goals.

“Finishing third overall wasn’t the ultimate goal; we came to NABI with the intention to finish strong,” said coach Charles Frye.

Unconquered features two Seminoles – Chanon Frye, the coach’s son, and Bryce Osceola, as well as Juelz Billie (Miccosukee). All three are different type players and each contributes.

“Juelz gives us the rebounding strength inside, Bryce is a phenomenal outside shooter, and Chanon is an all-around player. They have each excelled at critical moments throughout this tournament,” coach Frye said.

The NABI team also included standouts from other states, such as Seth Pratt and Hayden Smith from Oklahoma and Anthony Earth from Nebraska.

Unconquered had a strong start with three straight wins, but lost to Northern Elite

after Frye suffered an injury.

He would miss a game, but returned to action.

Unconquered reeled off eight straight wins in do-or-die games – most by 20-point plus margins – before losing to OKR-Kiowa Tribe, 68-61, with a trip to the championship game at the home of the NBA’s Phoenix Suns and WNBA’s Phoenix Mercury on the line.

Overall, Frye said he was pleased with his team’s performance.

“I believe we played very well and unselfish as a team,” Frye said. “We had a gifted group of players and each contributed to the overall success of the team. The majority of our players had never played all together, they usually competed against one another. That seemed to work in our favor as we trusted one another and knew the strengths of our players collectively.”

“Unfortunately, we lost in the first round of bracket play after we lost Chanon to injury. But these young men regrouped and fought hard to make it back to the semifinals; I have a lot of respect for that accomplishment.”

Unconquered finished with an 11-2 record; that’s 13 games in five days, but they weren’t ready to rest; instead the team immediately headed to Oklahoma to play in the Lindy Waters III tournament.



Darin Sicurello

Juelz Billie and the rest of the Unconquered team have had a lot of reasons to smile this year.

◆ See UNCONQUERED on page 2C



Darin Sicurello

Unconquered’s Bryce Osceola receives plenty of attention from the opposition, who triple-team him.

## All-stars from tribe shine for OCRA

STAFF REPORT

All-star tournaments involving softball teams from the Okeechobee Citizens Recreational Association (OCRA) took place July 7-11, and Seminoles were a big part of it.

Five Seminoles played for the Darlings 8U team and three Seminoles were on the

Angels 10U team. The girls played rec ball during the regular season and earned their way onto the all-star teams.

Also, OCRA’s SweeTees team reached the Dixie Sweeties World Series that was being played July 28-Aug. 1 in Louisiana. As of press time, OCRA had advanced all the way to the championship game. The team includes Seminoles’ Whitleigh Huff and Jasie Smith.



Courtesy photo

From left to right on the 8U team are Mahala Bishop, Kaillin Coleman, Alijah Osceola, Lillie Coleman and Mae Madrigal.



Courtesy photo

From left to right for the 10U team are Kaliyanita Hodge, Isabella Spencer and Serenity Bishop.

## Stars to return for Pickleball Slam

FROM PRESS RELEASE

**HOLLYWOOD** — Another round of pickleball featuring former tennis stars will be coming to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Feb. 4, 2024.

After competing in the inaugural Pickleball Slam in April, John McEnroe and Andre Agassi will return for Pickleball Slam 2. Joining them will be former women’s tennis stars Maria Sharapova and Steffi Graf.

The husband-wife team of Agassi and Graf will play McEnroe and Sharapova at 8:30 p.m. live on ESPN.

All of the players ascended to world No. 1 rankings during their careers. They won a combined 44 grand slam titles, including 22 by Graf.

For more information, including tickets, go to thepickleballslam.com.



Courtesy photo

John McEnroe

# Florida Warriors establishing a name for themselves in Indian Country

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Florida Warriors showed up at the Native American Basketball Invitational (NABI) for the first time in July. For a team filled with mostly ninth and 10th grade players from the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes, nobody would have been surprised if the bigness of the tournament – 68 boys teams – and their age and lack of experience would have resulted in a quick and quiet exit.

But the Warriors laid the groundwork for future success with a strong showing. Not only did they win their first two games, but did so by 28 and 19 points, respectively.

They finished first in their three-team pool and then generated an overwhelming win, 57-25, against ONB.

The Warriors nearly kept the early momentum going, but fell to NW Hoopers by three points.

The Warriors shook off that first loss and edged NW Hoopers, 58-53.

The victory set up a Florida showdown between the Warriors and Unconquered, which has an older team and has won major tournaments.

Unconquered emerged with a 73-53 win, but the elimination loss didn't dampen the spirits of the Warriors.

"We loved the opportunity to play against Unconquered," said Kelvin Huggins, who is an assistant coach for the sixth grade and NABI teams. "They are one of the best teams in the country. We definitely respect Unconquered coaches and players. Most boys from both Unconquered and Florida Warriors are cousins and friends so it's great to see older boys being role models for younger boys following their in footsteps."

The Warrior program spent two weeks in Arizona playing in all-Native tournaments. Before NABI was the Lori Piestewa National Native American Games basketball tournament in Mesa. The Warriors' sixth grade team made it all the way to the championship game in the 11-team bracket. They finished runner-up.

"The sixth grade boys have come a long way in their growth on and off the court. We are so proud to see how far they have come," Huggins said.

The Warriors' also had a seventh and eighth grade team. In the boys 7th and 8th



Mark Jones

Florida Warrior's Kingston Billie battles in the paint during the Lori Piestewa National Native American Games basketball tournament in Mesa, Arizona.

grade division, which featured 18 teams, the Warriors won their pool by defeating the Spartans, 44-28, and Northwind, 69-40, on July 15.

The Warriors kept their momentum going early the following day by defeating the WMA Warriors, 55-33, and the Cavaliers, 62-36. The Warriors were ousted with a 34-30 loss to the NBv Assassins.

The trip provided plenty of opportunity to build camaraderie. Several families either went to Arizona early or stayed later in order to watch and support their fellow Warrior teams.

"Florida Warriors teams are cousins, brothers or community lifetime friends. Most families stayed for almost two weeks in Arizona to support younger boys in the Piestewa tournament, leading to high school boys NABI tournament," Huggins said.

Tournament season doesn't end. The

sixth grade team and the seventh and eighth grade team will play in Las Vegas from Aug. 18 to Aug. 20 in the debut of a new Native American tournament.

Huggins said the future of the Warrior teams is bright. He's enjoying each step along the way.

"I would like to thank all the parents for trusting me with their children," Huggins said. "I've been coaching most of them since they were in fourth/fifth grade, so it's bigger than basketball for us. My younger kids, nieces and nephews are next up, so generations will continue growing mentally and physically through sports. I'm humbled and excited for the future."

♦ See WARRIORS on page 3B

## ♦ UNCONQUERED From page 1C

### Unconquered results (11-2)

W 108-22 vs SC Apaches  
W 56-48 vs OKR-Kiowa Tribe  
W 91-36 vs Omaha Warriors  
L 66-60 vs Northern Elite

W 67-54 vs NW Buckets  
W 73-53 vs Florida Warriors  
W 77-42 vs SR Ba'ag  
W 58-54 vs Fort Mojave  
W 85-68 vs Young Guns  
W 76-49 vs KI Washowa  
W 63-60 vs Northern Elite  
W 90-64 vs AZ Warriors  
L 68-61 vs OKR-Kiowa Tribe



Darin Sicurello

Unconquered's Bryce Osceola smiles as he takes a foul shot.



Darin Sicurello

Florida Warriors Elijah Osceola, center, and Louis Billie vie for a loose ball in a NABI game in the Phoenix area.



Darin Sicurello

Unconquered's Seth Pratt tries to get past an opponent.



Mark Jones

Amos Huggins Jr. tries to get past a defender at the Piestewa tournament.



Courtesy photo

Unconquered celebrates its championship win in June at the Native American Junior National.

## F1 tickets go on sale

### FROM PRESS RELEASE

Tickets for the Formula 1 Crypto.com Miami Grand Prix went on sale July 30. The Grand Prix will be held May 3 to May 5, 2024, at the Miami International Autodrome

on the Hard Rock Stadium campus. Last year's Grand Prix drew more than 270,000 fans grandstands. For more information go to [f1miami.com/tickets/](https://f1miami.com/tickets/).

**WARRIORS**  
From page 2c

W 67-48 vs Valley Crue  
(finished first in pool with 2-0 record)  
W 57-25 vs ONB  
L 58-55 vs NW Hoopers  
W 61-56 vs Lakota Ballers  
L 73-53 vs Unconquered

Florida Warrior results at NABI  
(4-2)  
W 76-48 vs AKC



Mark Jones

Florida Warrior's Christian Shaffer tries to clear a path at the Piestewa tournament



Mark Jones

Captain Osceola takes a free throw in a 6th grade game in Mesa, Arizona.



Mark Jones

Florida Warriors' Zaiden Frank makes a layup.



Darin Sicurello

Florida Warriors' Louis Billie goes airborne in a NABI game.



Darin Sicurello

Florida Warriors' Ezekiel Billie eyes the basket in a NABI game.



Mark Jones

The Florida Warriors 6th grade team at the Piestewa tournament in Mesa, Arizona. In the back row, from left to right, are assistant coach Amos Huggins, Amos Huggins Jr., Jamere Osceola, Raiden Tigertail, Waylon Osceola, Homer Huggins and head coach Kelvin Huggins. In the front row, from left to right, are Captain Osceola, Lanvin Fairclough and Kyrie Huggins.



Mark Jones

The Florida Warriors 7th and 8th grade team at the Piestewa tournament. From left to right are head coach Jovanny Torres, Kingston Billie, Lucan Frank, Jovanny Torres Jr., Jeremiah Cam Osceola, Terrance Osceola, Zaiden Frank, Michael Moote-Petrucz, Christian Shaffer, King Hughes and assistant coach John Osceola.



Darin Sicurello

The Florida Warriors' high school team that competed in NABI. From left to right are assistant coach Lindsey Sauls, Elias Issac, assistant coach Kelvin Huggins, Jovanny Torres Jr., Kelvin Huggins Jr., Louis Billie, Darwin Brooks, Charles Osceola Jr., Randall Billie, Ezekiel Billie, Elijah Osceola, Zylter Clemons and head coach Jovanny Torres.



Mark Jones

Jovanny Torres Jr. launches a 3-point shot in the Piestewa tournament as his bench anticipates a successful shot.



Darin Sicurello

The Misfits at NABI were, from left to right, head coach DeForest Carter, Yonsi Grass, Xavier Hill, Zylar Thomas, Alan John Jr., Bryson Rainbow, Kaleo James, CJ Freeman and asst. coach Alex Baker.



Darin Sicurello

Zylar Thomas puts the ball up while being closely guarded with Zaiden Hill looking on.

## DeForest Carter settles into coaching at NABI

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

As a player, DeForest Carter enjoyed a long ride through the boys bracket one year at NABI with his team ultimately finishing third.

Now that he's a coach, Carter wanted his players to experience a similar journey, but his Misfits team fell into the losers bracket early, which is never a good sign.

After opening with a pair of convincing wins, the Misfits ran into the powerful OKR-Kiowa Tribe team, which went to play in the championship game in the tournament that features 64 teams.

"We ended up playing the team that got second (overall) in the first round. Our team had just come together on Sunday," Carter said.

Not having depth also hurt. The team was supposed to have nine players, but one got hurt and another didn't make it to the tournament, so the Misfits played with just seven.

The Misfits finished 4-2. Their final loss was by one point.

This was the second NABI as a coach for Carter, who, as one of the Seminole Tribe's most accomplished athletes, starred at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University where he remains the school's all-time leader in assists and steals.

The Misfits featured just one Seminole Tribe player, Xavier Hill, who also happens to be Carter's younger brother.

"He did pretty good," Carter said.

The rest of the team was comprised of players from Arizona, Mississippi, North Dakota and Oklahoma.

During its free time, the team visited Medieval Times, which features medieval reenactments. The squad also attended an off-court session at NABI that featured a Native female athlete, who is also a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) activist.

Carter said it was good for his players to hear first-hand experiences.

"She talked about the injustices Natives go through their whole lives," Carter said.

When their games were done, the team went to a giant mall.

"The kids wanted to buy things. I was like that when I was their age here; I wasn't going to stop it," Carter said.

### Misfits results

- W 74-29 vs AZ Wolfpack
- W 99-47 vs Smash Bros
- L 80-59 vs OKR-Kiowa Tribe
- W 109-63 vs SC Apaches
- W 64-47 vs One Tribe
- L 55-54 vs Spokane's



Darin Sicurello

Once a player at NABI, DeForest Carter now coaches in the tournament.



Darin Sicurello

Yonsi Grass, from Oklahoma, fires a pass upcourt during a Misfits game at NABI in the Phoenix area.

## 4Nations finishes 7-3 at NABI

### STAFF REPORT

After coaching NABI teams to back-to-back championship games the past two years, Skyla Osceola was not on the sidelines for this year's tournament in Phoenix. However, her younger brother Grant Osceola was at the helm of a team in the girls division.

Grant Osceola coached the 4Nations

team to a 7-3 record.

4Nations was 2-2 after four games, but then cranked out five straight wins before being ousted by Rezilient Dreams in a close loss, 56-53.

### 4Nations (girls) results

- W 75-26 vs Lady Rebels
- L 49-31 vs Quiet Storm

- W 56-40 vs OVO
- L 53-47 vs Contenders
- W 80-24 vs WM Select
- W 61-34 vs NM Sting
- W 75-40 vs Hozho Girls
- W 41-40 vs Lady Runners
- W 69-54 vs Roc Steady
- L 56-53 vs Rezilient Dreams



Darin Sicurello

Grant Osceola provides advice for the 4Nations girls team at NABI.



## Championship ring

Courtesy photo

The Seminole Tribe's Jherricko Baker, 6, shows off the ring he won for being part of a Poarch Creek championship baseball team that won a tournament in July. Poarch Creek hosted the tournament in Alabama.



Jacoby Johns at Brighton Field Day in 2018.

## Jacoby Johns, 'Squirm' Osceola notch rodeo wins in Oklahoma

BY KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

The Seminole Tribe was well represented at the Muscogee Nation Festival Tour Rodeo held June 16-17 at Bob Arrington Rodeo Arena in Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

The tribe's Jacoby Johns and Norman "Squirm" Osceola won their events and Ahnic Jumper finished third in ladies breakaway.

Johns captured first place in bareback with a score of 60. He was the only rider to register a score.

Johns earned \$3,553 for the victory,

which vaulted him into sixth place in the Indian National Finals Rodeo Tour bareback standings.

Meanwhile, Osceola won the bull riding competition with a score of 81, which was four points ahead of hometown rider Ryan Roberts.

Osceola won \$2,153 with the victory and moved into fourth place in the bull riding standings.

Jumper's time of 2.60 seconds helped her earn \$1,502 for third place.

The rodeo served as an automatic qualifier for INFR, which will be held Oct. 24-28 in Las Vegas. Johns and Osceola have qualified.

## Shelby Osceola competes in National Finals Rodeo Open

STAFF REPORT

The Seminole Tribe's Shelby Osceola competed in the National Finals Rodeo Open in July at the Norris Penrose Event Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Osceola did not finish in the money in breakaway roping, which featured more than \$85,000 in prize money. Her times were 3.8 in round 1 and no time in round 2.

Maddy Deerman, of New Mexico, won the NFR title.

The NFR Open featured the top two 2022 breakaway ropers from each of the Women's Professional Rodeo Association's 13 divisional circuits. Osceola earned the trip to the Open thanks to finishing in the top two in the Southeastern circuit.

Osceola is a former Eastern Indian Rodeo Association end of year champion and former National High School Rodeo Association reserve breakaway champion.



Shelby Osceola

Alysia Hargus Photography



NAIG Facebook

Team Wisconsin's Asalia Williams, right, and Team Ontario's Keenya Murray compete in a track event at the North American Indigenous Games in July.

## NAIG returns for first time since 2017

KEVIN JOHNSON  
Senior Editor

For the first time in six years, the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) returned to the courts, fields and water July 15-23 in Nova Scotia, Canada.

The Olympic-style competition, which twice had been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, drew thousands of Indigenous youth athletes from across Canada and parts of the U.S. Delegations from the U.S. registered for the Games included California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Washington and Wisconsin.

There was no Florida contingent. Florida, with mostly Seminole Tribe athletes, has competed in previous Games, including 2017 in Toronto, but it did not field a team this time.

NAIG, which is usually held every three or four years, features 16 sports in age categories ranging from 14U to 19U.

Throughout the Halifax region, teams vied for medals in sports such as archery, badminton, basketball, canoe/kayak, golf, lacrosse, rifle shooting, swimming and others. Team Saskatchewan won the most medals with 175. Team British Columbia finished second with 161 followed by Team Ontario with 127. Team Wisconsin captured the most medals among U.S. teams with 56,

four more than Team New Mexico.

Justin Trudeau, prime minister of Canada, spoke to the athletes at the opening ceremony July 16 in Halifax. He participated in a canoe ride with representatives from Mi'kma'ki, the host nation. Athletes marched through the city streets in a parade and did likewise entering the opening ceremony at ScotiaBank Centre.

NAIG also featured a cultural village. The closing ceremony, scheduled for July 21, was canceled due to significant rain and floods, which had the province reeling again less than two months after it dealt with widespread wildfires.

The next NAIG is scheduled to be held in 2027 in Calgary, Alberta.



NAIG Facebook

Athletes compete in javelin, above, and archery, below, at NAIG.



NAIG Instagram

Wrestling medal winners at NAIG.



Justin Trudeau Facebook

Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, right, meets with members of Team Nova Scotia, which hosted NAIG.



NAIG Facebook

The opening ceremony was held at ScotiaBank Centre in downtown Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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# Fourth of July fun on reservations



Beverly Bidney

Amos Tiger adds a festive hat to his own FSU cap at the Brighton Fourth of July celebration July 3.



SMP

The Guitar Hotel wasn't the only thing lighting up the sky in Hollywood on the Fourth of July. The reservation was treated to a giant fireworks display.



Beverly Bidney

Joyce Jumper is all business as she tosses the beanbag during a game of corn hole at the Fred Smith Rodeo Arena.



Beverly Bidney

Destiny Garcia holds her daughter, Arya Garcia, 1½, during the Brighton celebration.



Beverly Bidney

Asher Micco, left, and Jaiden Gore enjoy some shaved ice at the Brighton Fourth of July celebration.



SMP

Sonja Buck, right, and Jessica Osceola compete during a friendly horseshoe match that was part of the Hollywood celebration at the Estates clubhouse. The event also featured watermelon rolling, a splash park, swimming and fireworks at nightfall.



Beverly Bidney

This group of girls in Brighton pull their hardest to avoid falling into the puddle of water. Alas, their opponents won the bout and the girls got wet.



SMP

A giant water slide was featured at the Estates pool for the Fourth of July event.

## FOR SALE

LAST SIX OF VIN#	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE/ HRS	CONDITION	STARTING BID PRICE
G41600	2013	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F-150 XL SUPERCAB (4WD)	114,126	Poor	\$9,211.00
226735	2012	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	90,444	Poor	\$1,239.00
706898	2013	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	70,560	Poor	\$1,423.00
821220	2006	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F150 4X4 XLT (4WD)	99,677	Poor	\$4,065.00
706908	2013	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	107,124	Poor	\$4,633.00
706917	2013	DODGE SEDAN	CHARGER POLICE (RWD)	62,516	Poor	\$1,543.00
100257	2004	HONDA ATV	TRX650FA4	N/A	Poor	\$43.00
322069	2017	FORD CARGO VAN	TRANSIT (FWD)	170,462	Fair	\$11,651.00
A82200	2007	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F150 CREW CAB (4WD)	180,627	Fair	\$4,198.00
859277	2015	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F250 XL SUPER CAB DIESEL (4WD)	202,797	Poor	\$12,835.00
C46670	2015	FORD PICKUP TRUCK	F-350 XL REG CAB (RWD) KNAPHEIDE ENCLOSED BODY	190,116	Poor	\$3,184.00
B05053	2014	FORD CARGO VAN	E250 SUPER DUTY (RWD)	221,563	Poor	\$3,432.00

Note - Previously advertised items are not reflected on this advertisement, only new listings. For more information contact Fixed Assets Dept.

954-967-3640, 954-966-6300 ext. 20034.

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