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creek corner



*Spirited Fire on a
Divided Front*

THE LIFE OF SAM MONIAC

**AUSTAL USA AND POARCH CREEK INDIANS SIGN MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING TO INCREASE U.S. DEFENSE SHIPBUILDING CAPACITY**

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MEGAN ZAMORA
Editor, Creek Corner

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

“

S

pring often brings renewed activity across our community. As the weather warms, our gathering places begin to fill again—with conversation, shared meals, and the traditions that continue to connect us to one another.

In April, the Pow Wow Grounds will once again host the Southeastern Indian Festival. Each year, the festival welcomes thousands of students and visitors who come to learn more about Native cultures of the Southeast. For many, it is their first opportunity to experience Native artistry, music, dance, and storytelling in an authentic setting.

At the same time, cultural connection is happening in many other ways across our community.

Recently, community members gathered at the museum for a stickball game, accompanied by outdoor cooking and fellowship that continued long after the game itself ended. The Cultural Department also recently announced an upcoming pottery class, creating another opportunity for people to explore traditional art forms and learn more about cultural practices that have been passed down through generations.

“

Moments like these—whether large or small—reflect the perseverance of our culture. Traditions continue not only because they are remembered, but because they are practiced, shared, and carried forward.

Moments like these—whether large or small—reflect the perseverance of our culture. Traditions continue not only because they are remembered, but because they are practiced, shared, and carried forward.

Through festivals, games, classes, and everyday gatherings, we are reminded that our culture is not confined to the past. It remains a living part of our community, continuing to bring people together and strengthen the connections that define who we are.

As opportunities arise throughout the year to learn, participate, and gather, we encourage you to take part. Whether attending an event, trying a new class, or simply spending time with others in the community, each moment helps keep our traditions strong and our connections to one another alive. **Mvto.**



TRIBAL LEADERS

The mission of the Poarch Creek Indians is to protect our inherent rights as a sovereign American Indian Tribe, promote our culture and beliefs, to help our Tribal Citizens achieve their highest potential, maintain good relations with other Indian tribes and units of government, acquire, develop and conserve resources to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency, and ensure that our people live in peace and harmony among themselves and with others.

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Charlotte Meckel, *Secretary*
Amy Gantt, *Treasurer*

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LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

STEVEN STEWART

By Sharon Delmar

When Steven Stewart stepped into the role of Chief Information Officer for the Poarch Creek Indians in Fall 2024, he brought with him nearly five decades of technology leadership experience – and a clear sense of purpose.

With a career spanning service in the U.S. Navy submarine force, private industry, gaming enterprises, and Tribal government, Stewart’s path to PCI reflects both depth of expertise and dedication to mission-driven work. Having led IT organizations at two Tribal governments and two Tribal casinos, he understands firsthand how technology can directly support community growth, operational excellence, and long-term self-determination.

“What led me here was simple: purpose,” Stewart shares. “The Poarch Creek Indians is forward-thinking, growth-oriented, and deeply committed to serving its people. When the opportunity arose to contribute to that mission, it felt like a natural next step.”

For Stewart, technology is not just infrastructure – it is a strategic asset that strengthens sovereignty and enables opportunity.

SERVICE THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Serving as CIO, Stewart views his role through the lens of responsibility and trust.

“It means responsibility. It means stewardship. And it means trust,” he says.

Technology now touches nearly every aspect of Tribal operations – finance, healthcare, public safety, education, housing, and gaming. The role extends far beyond systems and networks. It includes safeguarding Tribal information, enabling efficient services, and ensuring long-term operational stability.

“I view this role as service first,” Stewart explains. “When technology works well, it’s invisible – but it empowers everyone else to do their work better. That’s the standard I hold myself to.”

A FOCUSED TRANSITION

Since stepping into the CIO role, Stewart describes the transition as both energizing and deliberate. The Tribe’s continued growth presents tremendous opportunity – along with increasing complexity.

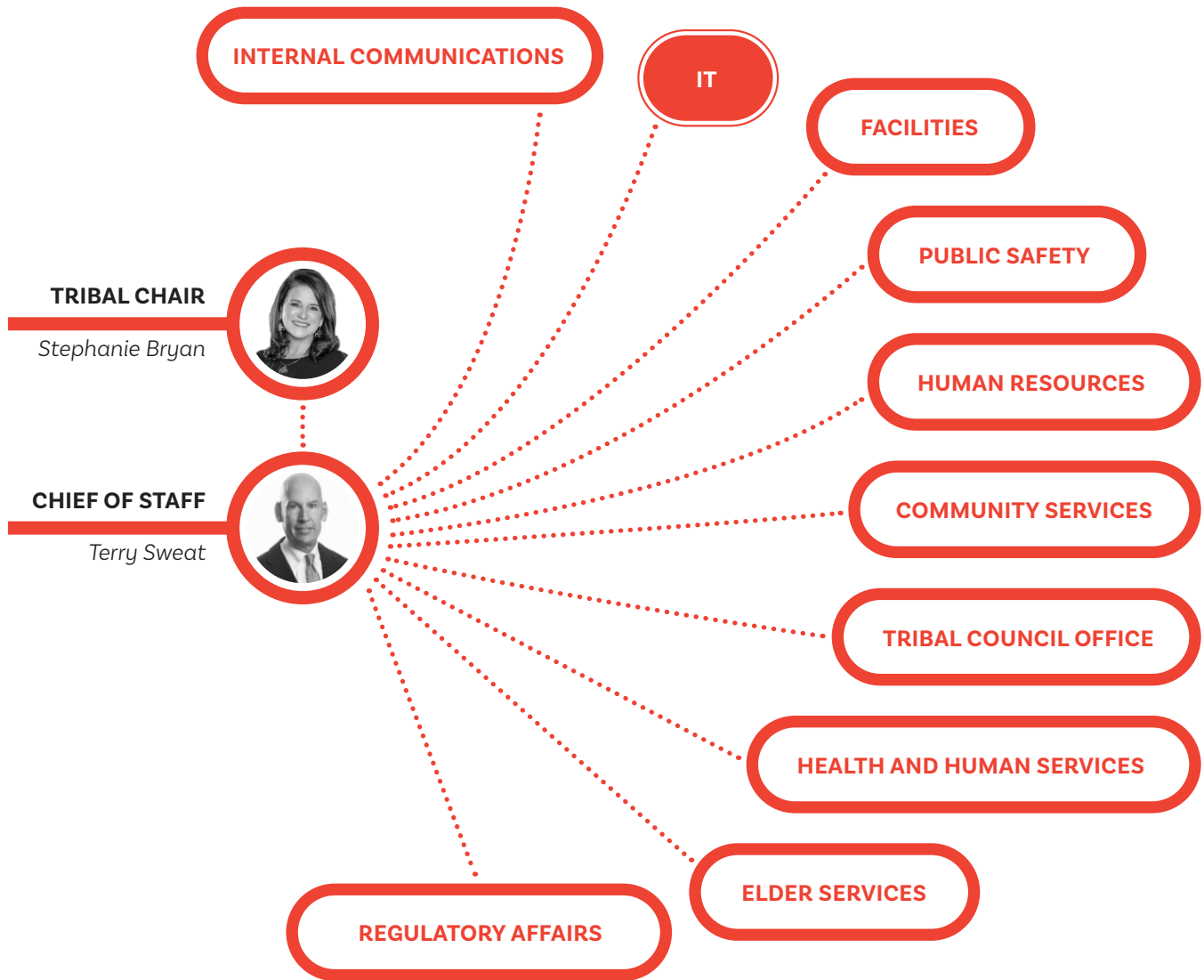
His early months were dedicated to listening and assessment. He met with leadership, engaged with departments across Tribal government, reviewed infrastructure, and identified strengths as well as areas of risk.

“We have a strong team in place, and that made the transition smoother,” Stewart notes. “My goal was not to disrupt what works, but to clarify priorities and build a structured roadmap for modernization.”

During his first several months, his top priorities included:

- Stabilizing and strengthening core infrastructure
- Evaluating long-term enterprise systems strategy, including ERP and HR platforms
- Enhancing cybersecurity posture
- Improving governance and project management processes
- Building a multi-year technology roadmap

His philosophy is straightforward: “Before innovation comes stability. Before expansion comes structure. Establishing those foundations ensures we can grow with confidence.”



A VISION FOR STRATEGIC MODERNIZATION

Stewart’s overarching vision is for technology to function as the invisible backbone of Tribal government – secure, modern, integrated, and scalable.

Technology, he explains, should:

- Reduce manual processes
- Increase transparency and accountability
- Improve data quality and reporting
- Protect Tribal information assets
- Enable leaders to make informed decisions

Ultimately, the goal is operational excellence without compromising autonomy. “Technology should empower the Tribe to operate with excellence while preserving autonomy and control over its systems and data,” Stewart says.

As the Tribe continues to expand economically and administratively, Stewart emphasizes that digital sovereignty is now an essential component of Tribal sovereignty.

“Owning and controlling our data, infrastructure, and strategic systems is foundational to self-determination,” he explains. “Technology, when strategically aligned, strengthens independence rather than creating dependency.”

Modern enterprise platforms, secure infrastructure, and responsible AI adoption will allow the Tribe to scale operations while maintaining efficiency and control.



STEVEN STEWART
Chief Information Officer

...continued on next page



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IMPACT ON CITIZENS AND EMPLOYEES

While much of IT work happens behind the scenes, its impact is deeply felt across the community.

For Tribal Citizens, Stewart envisions technology delivering convenience, reliability, and security. As systems become more integrated and modernized, *citizens can expect:*

- Streamlined services
- Faster response times
- Improved access to information
- Secure protection of personal data

“When service delivery improves behind the scenes, it directly benefits Tribal Citizens,” he says.

Employees will also experience meaningful improvements in their daily work. Stewart and his team are working toward platforms that reduce frustration and increase productivity.

Employees can expect:

- More reliable systems
- Reduced duplication of effort
- Better integration between departments
- Improved reporting and data access
- Clearer technology governance

“When employees spend less time navigating systems, they spend more time serving the community,” Stewart notes.

LEADERSHIP GROUNDED IN DISCIPLINE AND TRUST

Describing his leadership style as structured, accountable, and calm under pressure, Stewart emphasizes clarity and disciplined execution.

“I believe in clarity of expectations, disciplined execution, and direct communication,” he says. “Strong teams are built through trust and consistency.”

Technology environments can quickly become reactive if not managed strategically. Stewart sees his responsibility as providing steady direction and ensuring thoughtful, long-term decision-making.

That discipline is closely aligned with Tribal values.

“Innovation must always serve people,” he explains. “Technology initiatives are evaluated not just on capability, but on sustainability, security, and alignment with Tribal priorities.”

He adds, “Progress without principle is not progress. Our innovation must reflect our values.”

LOOKING AHEAD: THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS

Over the next three to five years, Stewart envisions a period of strategic modernization that strengthens infrastructure while positioning the Tribe for continued growth.

Key objectives include:

- Implementation of a modern enterprise ERP and HR platform
- Strengthened cybersecurity and risk management programs
- Improved data governance and reporting capabilities
- Expanded automation of manual processes
- Responsible integration of AI tools where appropriate

Importantly, modernization for Stewart is not about adopting technology for its own sake.

“The goal is not just modernization – it is strategic modernization,” he says. “Every investment must serve long-term stability and growth.”

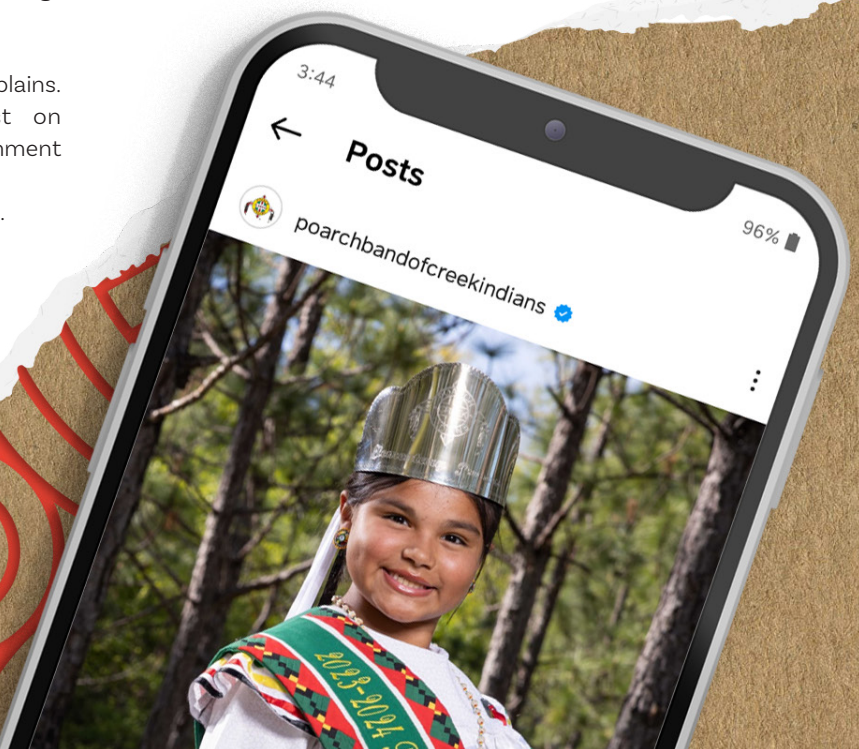
A MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

As the Tribe continues to advance, Stewart wants the community to understand that technology is more than hardware and software – it is infrastructure that supports opportunity.

“My commitment is to build systems that are secure, sustainable, and aligned with the Tribe’s future,” he shares. “Change will come thoughtfully and deliberately, with stability as the foundation.”

With steady leadership, disciplined strategy, and alignment with Tribal values, the future of technology within the Poarch Creek Indians is positioned for strength and sustainability.

“The future of technology within the Tribe is strong,” Stewart says. “And it will continue to strengthen as we work together.”





OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO TECHNOLOGY ACCESS IN RURAL TRIBAL AREAS

By Sharon Delmar



In today's world, access to reliable technology is no longer a luxury – it is essential. From education and healthcare to economic development and government services, broadband and digital tools shape how communities grow and thrive. Yet across Indian Country, many Tribal Nations continue to face significant barriers to technology access, particularly in rural areas.

For Tribal communities like the Poarch Creek Indians, the digital divide is not just a national issue – it is personal. It affects our students completing homework, our elders accessing telehealth, our citizens working remotely, and our businesses competing in an increasingly digital economy.

Tribal lands are among the most underserved areas in the United States when it comes to broadband infrastructure. Geographic isolation, low population density, and high infrastructure costs often discourage private providers from investing in rural Tribal areas. Historical underinvestment in Tribal infrastructure further compounds the problem.

The result is a gap that can limit opportunity. Without reliable high-speed internet, students struggle to access online learning resources, telehealth services become difficult or impossible, small businesses face challenges expanding into e-commerce, workforce development and remote employment opportunities are limited, and citizens may encounter barriers when accessing digital Tribal and federal services. The COVID-19 pandemic brought national attention to this issue, highlighting how deeply connectivity impacts daily life.



Investing in digital infrastructure is an investment in our future generations. It ensures that our youth have the same tools and opportunities as their peers across the country...

Access to broadband is more than convenience — it is an issue of Tribal sovereignty and self-determination. When Tribal Nations control and strengthen their own digital infrastructure, they increase their ability to govern effectively, deliver services efficiently, and protect their data and systems.

In rural South Alabama, the Poarch Creek Indians tackled these challenges head-on with a major investment to expand high-speed internet access for Tribal citizens. The Tribe invested more than \$5.5 million in WAN and private LTE infrastructure to deliver broadband coverage across previously underserved areas of the reservation — a project that benefits hundreds of Tribal households.

Expanding technology access also includes strengthening digital security and expertise. Through PCI Federal, the Tribe's federally certified 8(a) enterprise, the Poarch Creek Indians expanded into cybersecurity and advanced IT services when PCI Federal acquired Superlative Technologies, Inc. (SuprTEK) — a well-established cybersecurity and IT solutions provider with decades of experience supporting U.S. federal agencies, defense missions, and critical infrastructure. This move broadens the Tribe's footprint in secure technology services and creates new opportunities for Tribal citizens in high-tech fields.

For the Poarch Creek Indians, technology access supports every aspect of Tribal life — from education and healthcare to economic diversification and government operations. Improved connectivity enhances access to Tribal programs and services, supports digital learning initiatives for students, expands telehealth capabilities for citizens and elders, enables workforce flexibility and innovation, and strengthens cybersecurity and data protection for Tribal government systems.

Investing in digital infrastructure is an investment in our future generations. It ensures that our youth have the same tools and opportunities as their peers across the country, while allowing our elders to remain connected to care and community.

Access alone, however, is not enough. Overcoming barriers also requires digital literacy training, cybersecurity awareness, and affordable devices. Many Tribal Nations are pairing broadband expansion with community training programs to ensure citizens can confidently and safely navigate online spaces. By equipping citizens with digital skills, Tribes empower individuals to pursue education, launch businesses, access healthcare, and engage in civic life.

The path to closing the digital divide requires continued advocacy, strategic planning, and collaboration at the Tribal, state, and federal levels. Federal funding opportunities have expanded in recent years, but navigating complex application processes and compliance requirements remains a challenge for many Tribes.

Despite these obstacles, Tribal Nations across the country — including the Poarch Creek Indians — continue to demonstrate resilience and forward-thinking leadership. Technology is a bridge. It connects our citizens to opportunity, our businesses to markets, and our community to the broader world — all while preserving the cultural identity and sovereignty that define us.

As we work to overcome barriers to technology access in rural Tribal areas, we are not simply building networks. We are building opportunity, strengthening sovereignty, and ensuring that the next generation of Tribal Citizens can thrive in a digital world.



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POARCH 101

Totkvs Harjo, [SPIRITED FIRE] Sam Moniac

By Billy Bailey, Clayton Coon, Brandy Chunn, and Sehoj Barnett

Sam Moniac, known as Totkvs Harjo (Spirited Fire), lived a complicated and often misunderstood life at the center of one of the most turbulent periods in Creek history. He was the son of Polly Colbert, a Creek woman, and Jacob “William Dixon” Moniac, a Dutch trader and interpreter long active among the Tallapoosa Creeks. His mother’s lineage anchored him in matrilineal Creek Society while his father’s role as a trader and interpreter placed the household at the intersection of Creek and European worlds. In documents, he was affiliated with the Taskigi, Little Tallassee, and Thlopthlocco tribal towns over the course of his life.

By the time Sam reached adulthood, the Moniac name was already associated with translation and negotiation. He grew up around men who understood both Creek and European languages, who moved between towns and trading posts. That upbringing prepared him for the role he would play in 1790, when as a young man he traveled to New York with Alexander McGillivray for the Treaty of New York (see the February 2026 Creek Corner for more on Alexander McGillivray). Sam served as interpreter and signed the treaty as a representative of Little Tallassee. President George

Washington presented him with a medal during that visit, and Sam carried it for the rest of his life. The trip exposed Sam to the full force of the new United States government in a way that few Creek people would have witnessed directly. This likely affected how he judged risks later in wartime.

Article VI of the Treaty of New York said, “If any citizen of the United States, or other person not being an Indian, shall attempt to settle on any of the Creeks lands, such person shall forfeit the protection of the United States, and the Creeks may punish him or not, as they please.” Sam returned home from New York ready to enforce Creek sovereignty on these terms. He joined Lachlan Durant in at least one documented scalping raid against American surveyors who had trespassed into Creek territory. Sam’s wife Elizabeth and Lachlan Durant both came from the same Sehoj lineage, which helped forge a strong connection between Lachlan and Sam as they fought to defend Creek land. These surveyors had been measuring land, marking boundaries, and preparing the way for American settlement on Creek territory. Sam and Durant attacked the survey party and killed them at close range. Sam took a scalp and removed a surveyor’s compass from one of the

bodies, carrying the compass in his pocket as a trophy long afterward.

Sam's adulthood unfolded within the domain of the powerful Sehoj lineage, which his children matrilineally fell into (See November 2025 Creek Corner for more on Sehoj lineage). He married Elizabeth Weatherford, daughter of Sehoj Weatherford. And Elizabeth's brother, William Weatherford married Sam's sister, Polly Moniac. That double marriage was not accidental. It created a tight alliance between two families that already shared trading and political connections. William Weatherford, known as Billy in his time, spent much of his life close to his brother-in-law Sam Moniac, and the two frequently moved together through hunting, marketing, and social life.

By the early 1800s, Sam had become one of the most prosperous men in the Creek Nation. After the 1805 treaty authorized construction of the Federal Road through Creek territory, Creek leaders were required to provide ferries and resting houses for travelers. Benjamin Hawkins urged Sam to establish a tavern along the road because he had the means to maintain it. Sam built a tavern that quickly became one of the busiest points along the route. Archaeological evidence from his homesite shows Creek pottery used for cooking traditional sofke alongside imported English ceramics for serving meals to travelers. These were the tools of a tavern and inn, but also of a family deeply rooted in Creek tradition.

The Federal Road brought opportunity, but it also brought friction. Creek resentment grew as more Americans passed through. In March 1812, an American traveler named Thomas Meredith was killed near Sam's station by a Creek man who was reportedly intoxicated. Meredith's son described the killing as sudden and violent. Sam later referred to it as just an "accident" in his report, trying to minimize any backlash on Creeks. Then another man named William Lott was killed by Creeks after other murders in Tennessee. General Woodward said, "I have often heard Sam Moniac say, that if Lott had not been killed at the time he was, it was his belief that the war could have been prevented."

In the spring and early summer of 1813, Sam Moniac's position along the Federal Road placed him directly in the path of events. In June, U.S. General James Wilkinson stopped at Moniac's house to send a letter by post rider to Benjamin Hawkins regarding the Redstick attack on Tuckabatchee. Wilkinson and his party passed safely through the Nation, but they were among the last Americans to travel that route without danger. Soon after Wilkinson departed, the Redstick movement tightened its grip on the Upper Towns (See the March 2026 Creek Corner for more on the rise of the Redsticks and their attack on Tuckabatchee).

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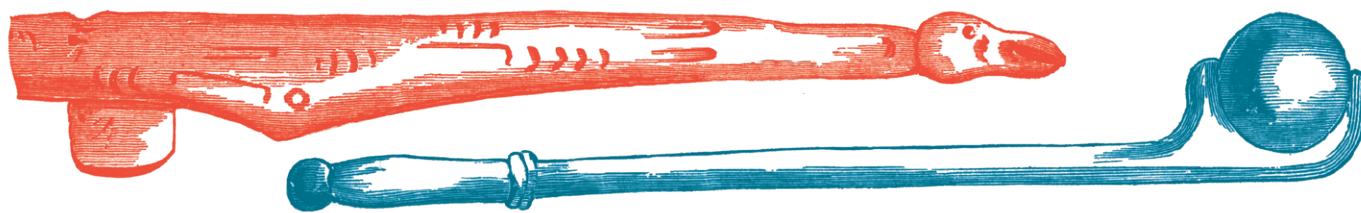


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Sam Moniac later described in a deposition what happened at his Federal Road home after returning from Pensacola: "I went up to my house on the road, and found some Indians camped near it, who I tried to avoid but could not. An Indian came to me who goes by the name of High Headed Jim.... He shook hands with me & immediately began to tremble & jerk in every part of his frame, and the very calves of his legs would be convulsed, and he would get entirely out of breath...This practice was introduced in May or June last year by 'the Prophet Francis'."

High Headed Jim of Atasi, sometimes called Jim Boy, was a warrior of the emerging Redstick religious movement. The prophets claimed that physical convulsions could identify those who had adopted American ways. They said that the Master of Breath had made them repulsed by salt, and that contact with those who consumed salted meat or dealt too closely with Americans would produce violent trembling. When Jim shook Moniac's hand and began convulsing, it was presented as spiritual proof that Moniac was aligned with American customs.

Moniac put them at ease so he would survive, telling Jim that he intended to sell his property, purchase ammunition, and join them. Satisfied for the moment, Jim revealed their broader plans to Sam Moniac. The Redsticks were going to Pensacola to obtain ammunition. After that, they intended a general war against Americans in Mississippi Territory, Tennessee, and Georgia. They claimed the war was "to be against the whites and not among the Indians themselves," and that the only Creeks they meant to kill were those who had "taken the talk of the whites," including Big Warrior, Captain Isaacs, William McIntosh, Tallassee Fixico, and other prominent leaders of the Nation.

Before long, however, Sam Moniac would be forced to take a stand, when he and William Weatherford returned home from traveling to Chickasaw territory to trade cattle. They returned to find Redstick chiefs assembled at the square sitting with the major Redstick prophets, Peter McQueen, High Headed Jim, and Josiah Francis. Moniac and Weatherford's families were gathered there. They were told that it was time for leaders of the Nation to join the Redstick cause.

Moniac refused and mounted his horse to leave. Josiah Francis, his brother-in-law, seized his bridle. Moniac grabbed a war club from Francis's hand and struck him hard. Then he rode out with a shower of bullets following him. Weatherford remained where he stood, and that choice set him on the

path to becoming the leader of the Redsticks. From that point forward, Moniac was a marked man.

In his August 2, 1813, deposition at Fort Stoddert, Sam Moniac testified that his sister and brother John joined the Redstick war party and burned his properties to the ground, as well as Lynn McGhee's and James Cornell's. His half-sister Hannah Moniac had married Josiah Francis, who Sam said, "pretends to be a 'prophet.'"

Even before the war broke out, Sam Moniac had been a target of American traders who persuaded him to sell his plantation and invest in their store. As tensions rose and war seemed to be at hand, those partners quietly liquidated the best goods, took the company's money, and fled, leaving Sam nearly ruined. The loss devastated the family. Sam's first-born son, Alexander "Dixon" Moniac, later said that had those men not robbed his father, he "should now be a rich man." Dixon believed the Creeks were justified in war and joined the Redsticks with his maternal uncle, William Weatherford.

Learning that his father had not joined their side filled Dixon with rage, and he saw his father as a traitor. He thought that, of all people, a Creek man who had suffered American dishonesty firsthand should have fought against them. At one point, William Weatherford was with a small Redstick party that included Dixon Moniac when a group of mounted men approached near a cornfield. The riders were scouting the area, and at their head was Sam Moniac. Father and son found themselves within shooting distance of one another.

Dixon, already committed to the Redstick cause, raised his musket and took aim at his own father. The distance was close enough that a single shot would have ended Sam's life. Weatherford reacted instantly. He struck the barrel aside and leaned toward Dixon, warning him not to kill his own father, even under the circumstances. The mounted men rode past, unaware of how narrowly death had been avoided.

Sam later served as a guide for American forces during the campaign against the Redstick stronghold at Holy Ground (Eknvncakv), which was located close to Sam's land on the Alabama River. He understood the local waterways, cane breaks, and channels through which men could move or become lost. During the December 1813 campaign, American forces struggled in that terrain. Movements were delayed, and units became confused about their positions.

Colonel Russell, who commanded Fort Claiborne, was furious about how events unfolded leading up to the Battle of Holy Ground. A court of inquiry was convened with Captain Woodruff, Captain J. E. Denkins, and Lieutenant H. Chotard. It was decided that “Sam McNac (Moniac), the guide, was chiefly to blame, for the failure of Cassels to occupy the position which had been assigned to him.”

The conclusion of the court makes clear that Sam did not simply serve as a straightforward American ally. While he was strongly against the movement of the new prophets and did not believe Creeks could survive a war against America, he also wasn't eager to see his own sisters, brothers, children, and friends be slaughtered outright. He evidently led American troops through routes that slowed them and circled through swamps in the wrong direction.

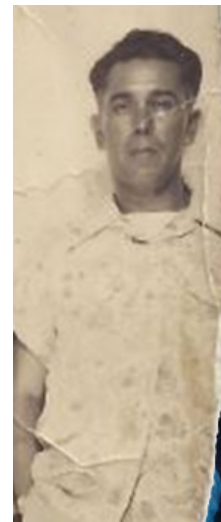
Holy Ground was eventually overrun by Americans and their Choctaw allies, but the delay allowed families to escape as they heard troops circling around them in the distance. After the battle, William Weatherford and many Redstick families withdrew to Manack's Island, a refuge associated with Sam Moniac's lands. The defeat at Holy Ground shattered promises made by the prophet Josiah Francis that American bullets would not harm Redstick warriors at their protected site. The town was burned to ashes, while survivors fled through swamps and rivers.

The war continued, ending with the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814, which would more appropriately be called a massacre on the Redsticks. Poarch Creek ancestors like Sam Moniac didn't fight in this battle, but Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws allies of the U.S. all helped the Andrew Jackson's forces defeat the Redsticks here. Only one known ancestral line to Poarch Creeks that assisted American forces at Horseshoe Bend was the Colberts of the Chickasaw Nation, who were blood-related to Sam Moniac's maternal grandfather. After this crushing defeat, Sam Moniac gave the message to Weatherford that it would be safe to surrender to Andrew Jackson, which ended the war.

After the war, Sam filed one of the largest compensation claims for destroyed property and received over twelve thousand dollars. The award allowed him to rebuild, but his recovery was short-lived. By 1822, David Tate (Weatherford's half-brother through their mother Sehoy) wrote to Sam's younger son, David Moniac, that Sam “kept continually drunk, & made bad trades & every advantage was taken,” and that he had moved back into the heart of what was left of Creek Nation to preserve what little remained of his money. His steep decline into alcoholism was likely related to the trauma of the war, since he was a highly respected and responsible figure before.


Years after the war, a confrontation between Sam and Dixon was recorded firsthand by William Zuber. When father and son met again in Montgomery County, the encounter unfolded in public view. Dixon approached a store near a small river where Sam was present with several men. Recognizing his father, Dixon hesitated and walked away toward the bluff leading down to the water. Sam rose and followed him without speaking. At the edge of the steep bank, Sam suddenly grabbed Dixon by the long plait of hair hanging down his back and dragged him down the steps toward the river. Dixon did not resist. Sam forced his son's head beneath the water and held him there until he nearly strangled. When Dixon was pulled up coughing and gasping, Sam plunged him under again, and then a third time.

After dragging him back to the top of the bluff and throwing him to the ground, Sam walked away and Dixon remained and wept in sorrow for a long time. In later conversations, Dixon admitted that when he had once aimed his musket at his father, he believed himself justified. But after Weatherford stopped him and after his father's punishment at the river, he felt the full weight of what he had intended to do.



PICTURED
From Top to Bottom
Jack Manac
Thelma Williamson
Verlie McGhee Bailey
Pearl Gibson


...continued on next page



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In 1825, William McIntosh signed the Treaty of Indian Springs, ceding massive amounts of Creek lands away without the consent of other Creek leaders. This was an outrage and a capital offense within the Creek Nation. A party of Creek men surrounded McIntosh's home, set it on fire, and shot him as he attempted to escape. Sam's willingness to uphold Creek law with violence never left him since his scalping days. He was verifiably present and assisted in carrying out the execution against McIntosh.

Sam's younger son, David Moniac, grew up to become a fighter like his big brother, but he took a different route. David famously became the first Native American graduate of the West Point Military Academy in 1822. He later commanded Creek and Choctaw troops during the Seminole War and was killed in the Battle of Wahoo Swamp in 1836 in South Florida. His father Sam also was persuaded into fighting in these Seminole Wars as an old man, ironically alongside many who were previously Redsticks, including his son Dixon Moniac and High Head Jim. The fact that Sam and Dixon fought there together, and that Dixon was listed as an heir on Sam's death record, suggests they might have made some peace in the end, as father and son.

No amount of service in the Seminole Wars mattered in the end to change the outcome for many Creek people. Sam, like many others, was forced west during Indian Removal. He died on August 21, 1837, at a deportation camp along the removal path in Pass Christian, Mississippi. Creeks were gathered there while awaiting further transport, in harsh conditions where disease spread rapidly. He was buried with the medal presented to him by George Washington in New York.

Dixon voluntarily attempted to go west with other Creeks but was stopped at gunpoint by Big Warrior's son, Tuskenehaw. The children of Dixon remained with their mother Betsy Elhert/Eliot Moniac, who is buried in Judson Cemetery at Poarch. She lived with her mother-in-law, Elizabeth "Betsy" Weatherford Moniac, who also died in Escambia County, Alabama. These children of Dixon and Betsy became some of the major patriarchs and matriarchs of the community that would later form the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

Sam Moniac's life helped make our presence here possible, his choices and sacrifices forming part of the long and difficult road that allowed our people to endure. His story shows the consequences a community faces when families are strained by deep disagreement and when powerful outside forces shape our way of life. These lessons remain just as relevant today as they were in his time.

The pictures of this article show just a few of the many descendants of Sam Moniac in our tribe. If you carry the names Rolin, Moniac, or Gibson in your family line, then you are a direct descendant of Sam Moniac – and an heir to his legacy.



PICTURED
From Top to Bottom
Alice Presley
Tracey Rolin
Chippy Rolin
Dollie and Jim Rolin,
with baby Mary Boyte



WARRIOR OUTREACH PROGRAM



The Warrior Outreach Program serves our relatives who are currently incarcerated or in rehabilitation centers by providing cultural, educational materials, resources and encouragement. We are committed to supporting your journey through connection to your Indigenous identity, healing, and or community reintegration.

If you know someone who meets these qualifications who would like to participate, please contact Rhea DeVilbiss at 251.281.8775.

Ask us about our mentorship and support program.

PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

To participate in the Warrior Outreach Program, individuals must meet the following criteria:

TRIBAL AFFILIATION:

- Be a PCI (Poarch Creek Indians) Tribal Citizen.
- Be a first-generation descendant of a PCI Tribal Citizen.

INCARCERATION/TREATMENT STATUS

Currently serving a sentence in an incarceration facility or enrolled in a substance abuse rehabilitation program.

LOCATION

Incarcerated or in treatment anywhere on Turtle Island, provided the facility has the ability to receive mail and correspondence programs.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Participation is completely voluntary. Must complete and return the program application, granting permission for correspondence with the Warrior Outreach Program. The Warrior Outreach Program does not offer legal advice.

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WARRIOR**

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INCLUDING ONLINE
RETAILERS.

POSITIVELY UNCIVILIZED

BY RENA PRIEST

By Sharon Delmar

In *Positively Uncivilized*, former Washington State Poet Laureate Rena Priest (Lummi Nation) offers a powerful collection of essays rooted in Indigenous knowledge, lived experience, and responsibility to land and water. Through personal reflection and cultural history, Priest explores the decline of Pacific Northwest salmon, the legacy of the “fish wars,” and the ongoing fight to uphold treaty rights and protect sacred resources. Blending story, memory, and environmental insight, Priest challenges the dominant idea of what it means to be “civilized.” Instead, she centers Indigenous teachings that emphasize reciprocity, stewardship, and community. Her essays remind readers that caring for Creation is not a new movement – it is an ancestral responsibility carried forward through generations. For Tribal communities, this book resonates deeply. It affirms that protecting natural resources is sovereignty in action and that our connection to land and water is sacred, lived, and enduring. At its heart, *Positively Uncivilized* is a call to remain grounded in who we are – resilient, connected, and committed to ensuring that future generations inherit both cultural strength and a healthy world.

The Tribe is committed to doing its part to further Native arts through books, media, movies, fashion, and similar artistic outlets.

Share your recommendation
with Sharon Delmar at sdelmar@pci-nsn.gov.





**ENVIRONMENTAL
DEPARTMENT**



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE & ELECTRONICS COLLECTION DAY

Sat, April 18 8:00am–Noon
Fire Station 1 / 5811 Jack Springs Rd

ENTER BY MARTIN RD / EXIT ONTO JACK SPRINGS

ACCEPTABLE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE ITEMS:

- Paints
- Automobile Batteries
- Motor Oil
- Antifreeze
- Household Cleaners
- Household Chemicals
- Fluorescent Bulbs
- Alkaline Batteries
- Pesticides
- Flammables
- Corrosives

ACCEPTABLE ELECTRONICS:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Computers | Small Electrical Appliances |
| Monitors | DVD/Blu-Ray Players |
| Printers | Flat Screen TVs |
| Hard Drives | Limit 2 Tubed (CRT) TVs |
| Scanners | Tape Drives |
| Power Supplies | Speakers |
| Battery Backups | VCRs |
| Rechargeable Batteries | Cables |
| Toner/Ink Cartridges | Radios |
| Keyboards | Walkman Products |
| CD ROM Drives | Calculators |
| Networking Equipment | Game Consoles |
| Fax Machines | Stereo Equipment |
| Digital Cameras | Cellular Phones |
| Audio/Video Equipment | Phone Accessories |
| Video/Tape Recorders | |

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surrounding area.

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Cylinders |
| Infectious And
Medical Waste | Radioactive
Materials | Smoke Detectors |
| Medications | Fire Extinguishers | Explosives |



AUSTAL USA AND POARCH CREEK INDIANS SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO INCREASE U.S. DEFENSE SHIPBUILDING CAPACITY

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

On Friday, February 27, Austal USA and the Poarch Creek Indians (PCI) announced a strategic outsourcing partnership, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to expand regional U.S. shipbuilding capacity in support of the Navy’s Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) and Submarine Industrial Base (SIB). Rising production requirements for both surface and undersea vessels—driven by national shipbuilding objectives—serve as the foundation for this collaboration.

Under the MOU, PCI anticipates support services associated with the ongoing expansion of Austal’s newest Module Manufacturing Facility due to come online in 2026. Workforce development initiatives and targeted production support programs are currently in design, with phased implementation to align with Austal USA’s active contract portfolio.

“This MOU is about forming new partnerships and expanding the maritime and submarine industrial bases in Alabama and along the Gulf Coast,” said Gene Miller, Austal USA Interim President. “By aligning with PCI, a proven partner known well for the economic impact the organization has had throughout the state of Alabama, we can scale production, reduce schedule risk, strengthen supply chains, and deliver for the U.S. government while investing in American skilled workers and suppliers.”

“We are proud to join Austal USA in supporting critical shipbuilding capabilities for our nation. This partnership creates new opportunities for our people, supports long-term workforce development, and strengthens Alabama’s role in advancing America’s maritime readiness. Together, we are investing in jobs, innovation, and a stronger future for the entire region,” said Stephanie Bryan, PCI Tribal Chair & CEO.

All activities conducted under the MOU will adhere to Austal USA’s specifications and U.S. government standards, including rigorous quality assurance, appropriate cybersecurity controls, export-compliance requirements, and applicable Buy American provisions.

“
By aligning with PCI... we can scale production, reduce schedule risk, strengthen supply chains, and deliver for the U.S. government while investing in American skilled workers and suppliers.

**GENE MILLER,
AUSTAL USA
INTERIM PRESIDENT**

Financial stress is on the rise nationwide, and we want to help! That's why we're offering **SmartDollar** — a powerful resource for Tribal Citizens packed with courses, tools, and coaching — FREE to you in hopes of helping you build healthy money habits and focusing on what matters most.

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- Group Coaching
- Ask SmartDollar AI
- Financial Tools



Financial Tools

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- SmartTax
- Wills and Power of Attorney
- Emergency Fund Tracker
- Debt Snowball Tool
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- Mortgage Payoff Calculator
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WIND CREEK CELEBRATES MARDI GRAS TRADITION AT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS KING CAKE-OFF

By Amelia Tognoli

Wind Creek was proud to kick off King Cake season as a sponsor of the Big Brothers Big Sisters King Cake-Off. This festive event celebrates Mardi Gras tradition and unites the community in support of youth mentorship. Held at the Mobile Convention Center in Alabama, the event featured local bakeries, restaurants, and stores competing to create the Gulf Coast's best King Cake-inspired treats.

"It was great to be part of such a fun community event while supporting an organization that makes a real difference for local youth," said Chimere Lambert, Sponsorship & Events Coordinator at Wind Creek Hospitality.

Proceeds from the event support Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Gulf Coast and its mission to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

"It was an honor to participate as a judge at the Big Brothers Big Sisters King Cake-Off and to support such an incredible organization. I'm proud of our Wind Creek 'Bigs' who dedicate their time to building meaningful relationships that help inspire and guide the next generation," said Trina Rackard, Director of Sponsorship & Events at Wind Creek Hospitality.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Gulf Coast is the largest one-to-one mentoring organization in South Alabama and Mississippi, serving over 600 children and positively impacting a minimum of 1,800 individuals annually across nine counties. Wind Creek is proud to support organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters that help strengthen our communities and create meaningful opportunities for local youth.

“

It was great to be part of such a fun community event while supporting an organization that makes a real difference for local youth.

**CHIMERE LAMBERT,
SPONSORSHIP & EVENTS
COORDINATOR AT WIND
CREEK HOSPITALITY.**



Changing the *Hearts & Routes* of Drivers, Everywhere!

Amid the hum of engines and the promise of open roads, Creek Travel Stores' Poarch location in Atmore, Alabama, has won a place in the hearts—and routes—of America's professional drivers. This year, the store was named one of the Top 100 Truck Stops by Trucker Path, a widely used mobile app that serves over a million North American truckers. It's a distinction that sets Creek Travel Stores apart, landing them among the top 1.1 percent of more than 9,000 truck stops nationwide.

For drivers who spend countless hours on the road, finding the right stop is about more than just finding fuel. It's about comfort, hospitality, and a sense of welcome that can make all the difference. At Creek Travel Stores' Poarch site, travelers can unwind with a hot shower, savor authentic Indian Tacos and local dishes, or shop for unique Native American gifts—a blend of amenities that has helped this location earn rave reviews from the trucker community year after year. Building on a tradition of excellence, Creek Travel Stores was named the #1 Independent Truck Stop in the country by Trucker Path in 2017 and has consistently ranked among Alabama's best since.

"This recognition is a tremendous honor for our Poarch location and the entire Creek Travel Stores family," said Cody Williamson, CEO of Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority, which manages the

chain. "We are incredibly proud to be one of only two Alabama truck stops to be recognized on this national level."

The annual Top 100 list is more than just a badge; it's a true measure of customer satisfaction, determined by in-app ratings and reviews from drivers themselves. To make the cut, a truck stop must deliver an experience memorable enough for drivers to recommend. Creek Travel Stores' Poarch location is a blend of meticulously maintained amenities, a diverse menu, and a welcoming atmosphere that consistently delivers what drivers want.

Creek Travel Stores operates additional locations in Atmore and Wetumpka, Alabama, each one reflecting the group's commitment to tradition and to serving travelers of all kinds. In a world where the journey is as important as the destination, Creek Travel Stores continues to elevate an average stop into something special.



- ✓ **2017 Top Independent**
- ✓ **Top Ranked in Alabama since 2017**
- ✓ **2025 Top 100**



By: CIEDA Marketing Dept.



TOP-RATED TRUCK STOP ELEVATES EVERY DRIVER'S BREAK

CREEK TRAVEL STORES' LOCATION NAMED A TOP 100 TRUCK STOP BY TRUCKER PATH

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

Creek Travel Stores' Poarch location has been named one of the Top 100 Truck Stops in the Nation by Trucker Path. The award-winning site is located at 4740 Jack Springs Rd., Atmore, Alabama.

Trucker Path is the most comprehensive and widely used mobile app for North American truckers. View the top 100 list here. This honor continues a tradition of excellence, as Creek Travel Stores – Poarch has received other accolades from Trucker Path over the years, including being named the #1 Independent Truck Stop in the nation and consistently ranking among Alabama's top truck stops.

Earning a place in the Top 100 Truck Stops means Creek Travel Stores is recognized among the top 1.1 percent of Trucker Path's participating truck stops nationwide. This prestigious recognition reaffirms Creek Travel Stores' unwavering commitment to providing superior service and amenities for professional drivers and highway travelers. Whether it is relaxing with a hot shower after hundreds of miles on the road, enjoying authentic Indian Tacos and other local dishes, or browsing unique Native American gifts in the shop, travelers experience the comfort and hospitality that make each stop memorable.

"This recognition from Trucker Path is a tremendous honor for our Poarch location and the entire Creek Travel Stores family," said Cody Williamson, CEO of Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority, the chain's parent organization. "We are incredibly proud to be one of only two Alabama truck stops to be recognized on this national level."

The annual list of highest-rated truck stops is determined by in-app ratings and reviews from Trucker Path's community of over one million professional drivers. Selections are made from a network of more than 9,000 truck stops nationwide, making this recognition a true measure of customer satisfaction and quality.

“

This recognition from Trucker Path is a tremendous honor for our Poarch location and the entire Creek Travel Stores family. We are incredibly proud to be one of only two Alabama truck stops to be recognized on this national level.

**CODY WILLIAMSON,
CEO OF CREEK INDIAN
ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**



SPRING INTO APRIL AT OWA PARKS & RESORT

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

Gather your friends, bring the family, and experience all the fun waiting for you this month at OWA Parks & Resort. April is blooming with excitement from classic cars and colorful skies to live music, comedy, and thrills at Tropic Falls. Mark your calendars and join the fun for these must-see events!

April 11

GULF COAST REGIONAL MUSTANG & MEGA CAR SHOW

The horsepower returns to Downtown OWA with this annual favorite! Car lovers won't want to miss this revved-up showcase of classic Mustangs and mega machines. Shine up your chrome and bring the whole crew for a day full of engines, excitement, and eye-catching rides. (Rain Day: Saturday, May 9th)

April 30 – May 2

GULF COAST HOT AIR BALLOON FESTIVAL

The skies will glow during this much-anticipated annual event! The Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival fills the air with vibrant colors and high-flying fun. Come out and enjoy balloon demonstrations, live entertainment and a weekend full of family-friendly activities. It's a picture-perfect way to wrap up April and kick off May!



Spring has officially arrived at **Tropic Falls Theme & Water Park**, where the fun is happening daily! Rides, slides, and endless excitement await as Tropic Falls opens daily at 10 am. Whether you're chasing thrills or cooling off in the water park, it's the perfect spring escape.

The laughs and magic continue all month long at Brandon Styles Theater with a full lineup of performances. Don't miss Brandon Styles Magic Show on select Fridays at 7 pm, and Brandon Styles Variety Show every Tuesday & Saturday at 7 pm. And on April 17th join us for a special performance as Miles Nielsen & Kelly Steward take the stage for an intimate night of rock and soul music you won't want to miss!

Downtown OWA keeps the music going at the **OWA Theater** with an exciting lineup of live entertainment. Check out these must see live performances!

April 9

Uptown: A Celebration of Motown and Soul

April 10

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For more information and a complete listing of events, checkout visitowa.com

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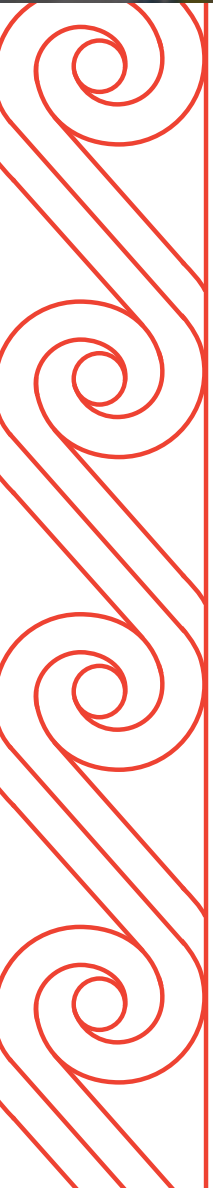
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BEWARE OF INFLATION

By Bryan Fayard



**COME BY TO SEE ME, CALL
OR EMAIL ME AND LET'S BUILD
YOUR CUSTOM SPENDING PLAN.**

Bryan Fayard
251-368-9136 ext. 2504
bfayard@pci-nsn.gov

I heard a story years ago that if you put a frog in boiling water, it will leap out immediately. If you put a frog in water at room temperature, then gradually increase the heat, the frog will stay there comfortably until it is boiled. The frog doesn't notice the rising heat because it's gradual. Inflation typically occurs in this same way, by gradual increases in price. You might not notice something that costs \$5.00 this year increases to \$5.10 next year because it's only a dime, big deal, right? But if we look ahead for 20 years, that \$5.00 item will cost about \$8.19. That's a noticeable increase. Let's see what we can do about this.

In a healthy economy, inflation averages about 2.5% each year. If you put a \$100 bill under your mattress and take it out in 20 years, it will look and feel the same BUT, it will not have the same purchasing power, i.e., it will not buy the same amount of goods and services as it would 20 years ago. Your \$100 is now worth \$61.03. To combat this, you need to invest your money and make it work for you. Ideally, your money needs to outpace inflation so consider/research investments that typically achieve returns greater than 2.5%. Some that do are stocks or bonds or perhaps a combination of stocks and bonds. When investing, think long-term, such as 20 years or more. In general, over long-terms, stocks have averaged 10% returns and bonds have averaged 5% returns. The higher the average returns you want, the more risk you must take on.

So, in the frog example above, sitting comfortably while the temperature gradually increases is akin to letting money sit idle in your checking or savings account while inflation creeps up to erode your purchasing power.

CURRENT AND HISTORICAL PRICES

ITEM	Price In		
	1980	2000	2026
Gallon of Milk	\$1.60	\$2.79	\$4.45
Gallon of Gas	\$1.19	\$1.48	\$2.79
Movie Ticket	\$2.69	\$5.39	\$8.75
Candy Bar	\$0.25	\$0.69	\$1.79
Car	\$7,200	\$21,850	\$49,077
House	\$68,700	\$169,000	\$440,387
Monthly Rent	\$308	\$841	\$1,234
Stamp	\$0.15	\$0.33	\$0.78
1lb of Hamburger Meat	\$0.99	\$1.56	\$7.32
Loaf of Bread	\$0.50	\$0.93	\$2.78
Ticket to Disney	\$8.00	\$46.00	\$189.00

Look at the table to the left to see inflation over long-term periods. Some of us 'seasoned' folks remember gas at \$1.25/gallon or movie tickets for \$2.50. You won't find that today. Check this out, my dad is 97 years old, and he used to go see movies for a dime back in the 1930's. Also, when Walt Disney World opened in Orlando, FL in 1971, it cost only \$3.50 to enter Magic Kingdom – you can't get a bottle of water for that price today. Just remember, keeping a large cash balance in your checking or savings account might not be as safe as you think. Seek ways to invest your money to out-pace inflation creep.

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Support Atmore Community Hospital

Alabamians have the opportunity to decide how some of their tax dollars are spent and support their local hospital at the same time. Through the Rural Hospital Investment Program, taxpayers can donate directly to eligible rural hospitals (like Atmore Community Hospital) and receive a **dollar-for-dollar state tax credit**.

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Make a reservation in My Alabama Taxes online portal.



Make a monetary donation directly to Atmore Community Hospital within 30 days of the reservation date.



Atmore Community Hospital verifies receipt of donation in My Alabama Taxes.

In all cases, please consult your accountant or tax advisor.



BUILDING A COMMUNITY

By Aya Prince



esci, everyone! I hope you have been having a wonderful 2026 so far. My name is Aya Prince, the daughter of Venus and Jim Prince, granddaughter of Jack Allen and Charlotte McGhee, and the great-granddaughter of Ernestine Daughtry and Julius Jack McGhee. Further, I am a high school junior currently attending Pensacola High School's International Baccalaureate program. Most importantly, though, I am a Tribal Citizen who loves the Poarch community. Ever since I was young, I have had the privilege of attending Pow Wows and getting to know different people around Poarch.

However, for some of us, it is harder to connect fully with our culture than others. The Cultural Department on the reservation does a fantastic job providing resources, but many Tribal Citizens, First Generation Descendants, and Second Generation Descendants do not live on the reservation anymore. As a result, not all of us have been able to attend in-person language classes or summer programs. At one point, I lived in Maryland, which certainly impacted my ties to the rest of the Tribe. The Roundhouse, the Tribe's central communications hub, offers many advantages, but Tribal youth cannot access it, so they can be closed off from important news and updates about our tribe.

I want to help change all of that.

In collaboration with the Tribe's Internal Communications team and Cultural Department, I will be piloting a new monthly feature in Creek Corner, called Community Connections, to share information and stories that help keep our community connected. The goal is to create short, easy-to-read updates that highlight opportunities, events, and cultural knowledge for Tribal Citizens, PCI Descendants, and the greater Poarch Creek community—especially those who may not live near the reservation. Future articles could include things like a Creek word or phrase of the month, shoutouts for achievements within our community, interviews with Tribal employees, or interesting moments from our Tribe's history. By sharing these stories and updates in Creek Corner, we hope to make it easier for everyone—near and far—to stay connected to the Poarch Creek community.

If you would be interested in seeing this type of content, or if you have ideas you would like to share, please scan the QR code to the right to take a short survey. Your feedback will help shape future articles and ensure this feature reflects what our community wants to see. The QR codes will also take you to the Creek Corner magazine and a subscription form so you can stay up to date with future issues, which will include Community Connections.

Finally, to everyone supporting one of our many incredible Tribal Citizens, First Generation Descendants, or Second Generation Descendants, please consider sharing this information and the survey with them. Their input and advice would be extremely useful throughout this process.

Thank you for your time, and I cannot wait to help bring our community together.

MVTO, AYA PRINCE

Scan the QR code below to take our Community Connections survey or share your ideas.



Scan the QR code below to subscribe to Creek Corner.



AYA PRINCE

Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Citizen
and Creek Corner Columnist



WELCOME
CATHLEEN “DANIELLE”
SANSPREE

By Megan Zamora

Please join us in welcoming Cathleen “Danielle” Sanspree as our new Internal Communications Specialist.

Danielle brings a strong background in storytelling and audience-focused communications. Her experience includes developing campaign messaging, producing newsletters, and turning complex information into clear, engaging content that connects with people.

In this role, she'll support employee communications, content development, and brand standards across the organization. You'll see her working alongside departments to help share important updates and highlight the great work happening across our teams.

We're excited to have her on board.

Welcome, Danielle — we're glad you're here.



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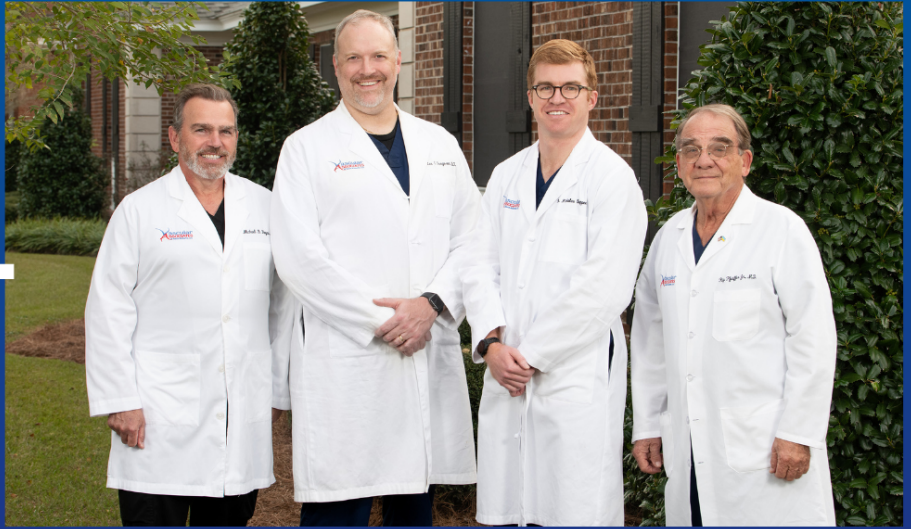


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Nicholas Clapper DO, Ralph Pfeiffer Jr. MD FACS

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Internal Communications

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CREEK CORNER

APRIL 2026 IMPORTANT DATES

- 4.1** | **SUBMISSION DEADLINE** May Issue
- 4.2** | **TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING** TC Chambers **4:00 PM**
- 4.3** | **GOVERNMENT OFFICE CLOSURE** Good Friday
- 4.7** | **TRIBAL COURT** Tribal Courtroom
- 4.16** | **TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING** TC Chambers **4:00 PM**
- 4.17** | **FAMILY COURT** Tribal Courtroom
- 4.21** | **TRIBAL COURT** Tribal Courtroom
- 4.24** | **FAMILY COURT** Tribal Courtroom

OUR MISSION

Creek Corner is a monthly magazine produced by the Internal Communications Team of the Poarch Creek Indians. Our mission is to celebrate our community by sharing stories of culture, people, and achievements, while also providing meaningful updates for Tribal Citizens.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for Creek Corner may be edited or declined at the discretion of the editorial team. Content is finalized one month prior to publication. The deadline for submissions is the first Monday of the month before the issue date.