



CREEK CORNER

The official magazine of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians

DECEMBER 2023



the MVSKOKE ROOTS of
*Southern
Hospitality*

Poarch Band of
Creek Indians
Awards \$25K Grant
to Huntsville
Botanical Garden's
STEM Education
Programs

More info on page 14



CONTENTS

CREDITS

Ashlee “Katie” Mothershed
Staff Contributor

Jeanna Morgan
Designer

TO SUBSCRIBE, fill out the Creek Corner Subscription form. You can find this form on the Tribe’s main website or on PBCIRoundhouse.com.

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, please email your submission and any photos to akmothershed@pci-nsn.gov.

TO VIEW THE DIGITAL COPY or download the PDF, please visit the Creek Corner page on PBCIRoundhouse.com.

FOR ALL OTHER INQUIRIES, please email Katie Mothershed at akmothershed@pci-nsn.gov.

OUR MISSION	4
FROM OUR LEADERS	5
DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE	6
DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: LEGAL DEPARTMENT	7
SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY GROUNDED IN MVSKOKE CREEK CULTURE	8
EMBRACING HERITAGE: A POWWOW REFLECTION	11
MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS: FRYBREAD FACE AND ME	13
WIND CREEK HOSPITALITY PARTICIPATES IN COMMUNITY EVENTS TO SUPPORT CANCER WELLNESS AND RESEARCH	16
LIFE ON THE FARM	18
CHRISTMAS AT OWA	20
DOWNTOWN OWA CONTINUES TO BOOM WITH THREE MORE BUSINESSES OPENING	23
PRESENTING THE SENIOR READING PROGRAM TO TRIBAL NATIONS	24
ELLOIE J. BRADSHAW TRAINING CENTER	29
ATMORE PROFESSIONAL EARNS ACCREDITATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS	30

FROM THE EDITOR



MEGAN ZAMORA
Editor, Creek Corner

“To me, this season is really about having hope for a new year, loving one another, and sharing in joy. You can’t put a price tag on those things...”

“**T**his month, I’m writing from my living room couch while persistently coughing up at least one lung and struggling to reserve my voice for when it really matters. This is not an easy feat for someone who enjoys good conversation on a regular basis and whose work frequently depends on phone calls and meetings.

As I was thinking about my current status, it occurred to me that more than likely my daughter shared her virus with me, which was shared with her from daycare. While I love most of the things she shares with me - cuddles, kisses, hugs, and giggles - this cold I could have definitely lived without. Likewise, it seems that these fall and winter months are responsible for the sharing of many things. Viruses, colds, and germs abound, but so too do celebrations, get-togethers, gifts, and all the foods we forbid ourselves from devouring except for this time of year. To put it mildly, we see Southern hospitality on steroids during this particular season. (For more on the origins of Southern hospitality, make sure you read this month’s Poarch 101 article.)

Labeled, “the most wonderful time of the year”, it’s up for debate on whether or not it actually is the most wonderful time of the year. Don’t get me wrong, I’m no “Bah-Humbug”, but I’ve also experienced the stress that comes along with picking out gifts, budgeting for the holidays, preparing for family and guests, traveling during the season, and so on. As the years have passed, I’ve had to intentionally recalibrate myself into focusing on what this time is really supposed to be about, and have mindfully ignored the hype surrounding gift-giving and perfect home-made desserts. (But, kudos to those of you who have mastered these particular artforms!)

To me, this season is really about having hope for a new year, loving one another, and sharing in joy. You can’t put a price tag on those things, and there isn’t a meal that tastes as good as genuine laughter with loved ones feels. Even if my life depended on it, I couldn’t tell you what Christmas gifts I received when I was 8, 22, or even 30 years old. But, I can remember the look on my Grannies’ faces when they laughed, the way it felt to hug them and be hugged back, and how one of them made homemade Play-Doh, probably because it was a more cost effective option, but I just recall thinking it was the most amazing thing.

Whether it’s the most wonderful time of the year or not really depends upon us individually. For me, the most wonderful time changes from year to year. In 2020, it was when I got married.

This year, it’s when our daughter was born. I’m anticipating a beautiful 2024 and remain open to the possibility that “the most wonderful time” might just happen before the Christmas season begins. Shoot, there might even be more than just one “wonderful time” in 2024. So, as we enter into this season of sharing, let’s share the things that you can’t put a price tag on, refrain from sharing too many germs, and endeavor to share many wonderful times across the year 2024.



TRIBAL LEADERS

The mission of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians is to protect our inherent rights as a sovereign American Indian Tribe, promote our culture and beliefs, to help our Tribal Members 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.

TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Stephanie Bryan, *Tribal Chair*
Robert McGhee, *Vice Chair*
Charlotte Meckel, *Secretary*
Amy Gantt, *Treasurer*

BOTTOM ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)

At-Large Council Members:
Dewitt Carter
Sandy Hollinger
Keith Martin
Arthur Mothershed
Justin Stabler



FROM OUR LEADERS

TREASURER AMY GANTT

Written by Amy Gantt | Edited by Megan Zamora



Tribal Treasurer Amy Gantt is widely recognized in our Tribal community for her passion and commitment to improving the lives of our people. While she works closely with her fellow Tribal leaders and staff, she also routinely engages with Tribal Members to address needs and find ways to enhance our global-wide Tribal community.

While PCI Gaming and CIEDA operate on a fiscal year, Tribal Government is on a calendar year budget cycle, and so, this time of year is abundant with budget meetings. Mrs. Gantt diligently collaborated with the Budget and Finance Committee and Tribal Council to analyze and approve the budgets for PCI Gaming and CIEDA in time for their new budget cycle to begin.

Meanwhile at Tribal Government, she joined the Executive Team at an off-site meeting in which Division Directors presented their proposed budgets for the upcoming 2024 operations, discretionary spending, and capital projects. After closely reviewing and analyzing the proposed budgets, she then worked with the finance team to provide proposed budgets to the Budget & Finance Committee. In turn, the proposed budgets for Tribal Government, ECKE and PCI Tribal Gaming Commission will be presented to the Tribal Council for their approval. This meticulous analysis, conducted by all

involved, ensures our Tribe's financial resources are allocated in a manner that best serves our Tribe and its Members.

Recently, Amy was appointed to the newly formed grant committee which is responsible for seeking federal funding opportunities. By securing additional federal funds, the committee aims to alleviate the strain on Tribal finances, expand services, and better meet the needs of Tribal Members.

Recognizing the importance of continuous professional development, Treasurer Gantt has undergone training on the Tribe's accounting software which equips her with valuable skills and enhances her ability to effectively supervise the Tribe's finances.

Of equal importance is planning for the Tribe's future. In order to do just that, she joined the Strategic Planning Committee where she was able to actively contribute her thoughts and input to our Tribe's long-term growth and prosperity. Additionally, she plans to propose updates to the Procurement Code and the Revenue Allocation Plan, ensuring our Tribe's financial operations align with best practices. She also aims to focus on financial literacy initiatives, empowering Tribal Members to make informed investment decisions and improve their financial well-being.

HOLIDAY TRIP HQ

Fuel
Snacks
Drinks
Drive thru windows

CCS WETUMPKA
Next to Wind Creek

DEAN'S Cake HOUSE
HOME OF THE FAMOUS SEVEN LAYER CAKE

Bring home an entire Dean's cake for Christmas!

CREEK
Travel Plaza

4740 JACK SPRING RD.

WE'RE HIRING

BOARD OF CREEK INDIANS
Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority

Apply online
ciejobs.com



DIVISION SPOTLIGHT

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

By Ashlee Mothershed



The legal landscape of Native American tribes is often complex and unfamiliar to many people outside of these communities. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is no different. The Attorney General's office is an integral part of our Tribe, and acts as a guardian and representative. Serving as the legal backbone and representative of our Tribe in matters related to law, governance, and external affairs, this office has many duties and responsibilities. Below are a few of their primary functions.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

The Attorney General's office is responsible for representing our Tribe in court, both in intra-tribal legal matters and in interactions with external legal systems, such as state or federal courts.

LEGAL COUNSEL

This office provides legal advice to our Tribe's leaders and governmental bodies. This advice can range from interpretation of Tribal laws and constitutions to the feasibility of proposed legislation or business ventures.

DRAFTING LEGISLATION

The Attorney General's office often plays a role in drafting constitutional amendments, policies, and procedures for the protection and betterment of the Tribe and our Tribal Citizens.

PROTECTION OF TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

One of the most crucial roles of the Attorney General's office is to defend and uphold the sovereignty of our Tribe. This can involve fighting against legislation or actions that would infringe upon Tribal rights or autonomy.

ENROLLMENT

The Legal Division oversees the Enrollment Department which facilitates enrollment procedures, blood quantum corrections petitions, supporting documentation, maintaining the official Tribal roll, and working with the Enrollment Review Committee as well as Tribal Council.

In conclusion, the Attorney General's office is a cornerstone of our Tribal governance and legal affairs. Their overarching object is to protect, represent, and uphold the best interests of our Tribe.

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

By Ashlee Mothershed

The Legal department plays a pivotal part in our Tribal Government. Its main role revolves around ensuring the Tribe’s legal interests are maintained and promoted. Below are a few of their fundamental functions.

LEGAL ADVISORY

The legal department offers continuous guidance on legal matters to our Tribal leaders and various Tribal entities and departments. This could pertain to Tribal laws, federal laws that affect our Tribe, or contractual issues with external entities.

CONTRACT REVIEW AND NEGOTIATIONS

The legal department reviews, drafts, and negotiates contracts that our Tribal Government enters into, ensuring they align with Tribal interests and are legally sound.

LITIGATION SUPPORT

While the Attorney General represents the Tribe in court, the legal department provides essential support by conducting research, preparing legal documents, and advising on litigation strategy.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

This department ensures that Tribal operations comply with applicable Tribal, federal and state regulations. This might involve areas like environmental standards, gaming regulations, or business practices.

INTERNAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

To ensure smooth governance and operations, the legal department often aids in drafting and revising internal policies, codes, and procedures for various Tribal departments.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Given the ever-evolving legal landscape, the department consistently engages in research to stay updated on laws and court decisions that might impact the Tribe.

Our legal department is a vital component of our Tribe’s governance and administrative apparatus. By safeguarding the Tribe’s legal rights, ensuring compliance, and providing various supportive functions, it helps our Tribe navigate the complex interplay of Tribal, state, and federal laws.

GENERAL COUNCIL

TRIBAL COUNCIL

TRIBAL CHAIR & CEO

Stephanie A. Bryan



ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE

ATTORNEY GENERAL/
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER

Lori Stinson



LEGAL DEPARTMENT

ENROLLMENT DEPARTMENT

“Serving as the legal backbone and representative of our Tribe in matters related to law, governance, and external affairs...”



POARCH 101

SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY GROUNDED IN MVSKOKE CREEK CULTURE

Written by Megan Zamora | With contributions from Alex Alvarez

We Southerners take special pride in exuding our Southern hospitality. Further, many advertising campaigns, company slogans, and swag items have succeeded in letting the world know that the South is a destination where you can expect a friendly smile and a welcoming hello mixed with a southern drawl. This cultural custom is taken seriously and is extended to relatives, guests, and strangers alike.

In practice, it looks and sounds like, “Come on in, honey.” “Make yourself at home.” “Have a seat.” “We’ve got plenty! Here’s a plate, have some food.” “What would you like to drink? We’ve got sweet tea, water, and coffee.” Generally speaking, Southern hospitality is putting another person at ease, making them comfortable, and ensuring their needs are taken care of. This almost always includes offering food and drink, good conversation, and a warm, cozy feeling.

While I’ve always heard this referred to as Southern hospitality, I recently learned that the roots of this practice in cordiality might actually stem from Mvskoke culture.

I had a chat with my Pwv [bow-uh] [Uncle] Alex Alvarez and learned that one of the principles of Creek people is to be hospitable and offer food and drink. In speaking with him, I found that it didn’t matter if you were a traveler, a stranger, or a person from a different Tribe, you could walk into any Creek village and you would be offered something to eat and a place to sleep. And, in return you should accept what is offered to you, even if you’ve already had something to eat and you can only manage to eat a little bit. In essence, the Creek custom of sharing food and drink with one another is our way of showing love and care for each other.

He even shared a story he read about a Creek woman who only had a few kernels of corn to eat. In the story, there’s a traveler that’s coming through the town who is hungry. Though she



“...it didn't matter if you were a traveler, a stranger, or a person from a different Tribe, you could walk into any Creek village and you would be offered something to eat and a place to sleep.”

has little, she shares what she has. It's a true testament to looking out for your fellow neighbor and being hospitable.

In the case of someone who wasn't welcome inside the Creek town, they were still tended to. While they couldn't step into the boundary of the town, food was tied up in a tree outside of the town so that individual could still be fed. This enabled the continuation of Mvskoke hospitality while also abiding by any standing restrictions imposed upon the person.

When talking about this Creek way of life, it's easy to make the connection between what was done then and how it is expressed today. Not so long ago, the hubby, baby, and I made a detour to my Aunt Charlotte and Uncle Martin's house to say hello. While there, we got cookies, beverages, conversation, and laughter. I'd wager you've recently had a similar experience.

Our collective experiences in extending and receiving hospitality exhibits one thing with certainty: our Mvskoke Creek culture is strong, runs deep, and is alive for our children to learn from and continue into the next era.

Get Pre-Qualified TODAY with the nation's most experienced HUD 184 Mortgage Lending Team!

- Purchase - Refinance - New Construction - Rehab
- On or Off the Reservation - Low Down Payment - Low Monthly PMI
- Credit is important, but you are not judged on your score



Call me today

Eric Sprenkle
Loan Officer (NMLS 402092)
eric.sprenkle@1tribal.com
Direct: 605-610-0961



1ST TRIBAL LENDING

The Nation's Most Experienced Section 184 Lending Team

5010 S. Broadband Ln., Suite 110
Sioux Falls, SD 57108
www.hud184loans.com

1st Tribal Lending, a dba of Click n' Close, Inc., NMLS 150009 Arizona Lic BK 091759; licensed by the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act Lic 4131103 and Finance Lenders Law Lic 6031732; Kansas Licensed Mortgage Company MC0025093; Massachusetts Lic ML150009; Oregon ML-5045; Washington Lic CL-150009.

United Bank



Mortgage Services



The Native American Indian Program (184 Program)*



No minimum credit score payment



2.25% down payment



Low monthly MI insurance



One time construction loan available



Primary residence only



*All loans subject to credit approval, verification and collateral evaluation. 184 Program is only offered to members on active tribal roll and in designated geographic areas. See a United Bank representative for complete details. United Bank NMLS# 494759

www.unitedbank.com/mortgage





Your family fun begins now.

Whether it's a big competition at Strikes Bowling Alley, a hit movie night at Cinema or a memorable dinner at FIRE Steakhouse, we've got excitement for all ages. So grab the whole family or plan a date night, and make it unforgettable at Wind Creek Atmore.

Escape every day at Wind Creek.



WIND CREEK®

**(866) WIND-360
WindCreekAtmore.com**

©2023 Wind Creek Hospitality. Management reserves all rights.

► Available on Apple Podcast, Spotify, or wherever you get podcasts. Scan the QR Code to listen on our website now.



PODCAST

EMBRACING HERITAGE: A POWWOW REFLECTION

By Ashlee Mothershed

In this special edition of our podcast, our hosts delve into the heartwarming and enriching experiences shared during the Annual Thanksgiving Pow Wow. Our guests open up about the profound impact of the Pow Wow, describing it not just as a gathering, but a homecoming; a time of reunion, reflection, and celebration of Native American identity.

Traditionally, our Pow Wow serves as a space where families, friends, and community members come together, creating an atmosphere charged with unity and pride. “When I was growing up, there was no question about where we would be during Thanksgiving. We were always at the Pow Wow,” our guest, Christopher Blackburn recalls, highlighting the event’s role in bringing together even those who have moved far away from their roots.

But the Pow Wow is much more than a reunion; it’s a vibrant showcase of culture, traditions, and strength. A prime example of this is the princess contest. Our guest, Mindy McGhee, takes a moment to clear up common misconceptions about this event, emphasizing that it is not a beauty pageant. “It’s a real hardworking ambassador that does a lot,” they clarify, shedding light on the role of the princess as a figure of leadership, responsibility, and cultural representation.

As we explore the layers of meaning woven into the fabric of the Pow Wow, we gain insight into the power of this gathering to fortify the sense of identity, pride, and community among Native Americans. These episodes are a tribute to the tradition of Pow Wow, and an invitation for all to reflect, appreciate, and celebrate the rich heritage of Native American culture.





VISIONS OF SUGAR PLUMS—PLUS SANTA & LOTS OF HOLIDAY *Magic*



Get your celebration in gear with our Elf Academy (12/9-10) and Sugar Plum Festival (12/16-17)! Make plans for a weekend breakfast with Santa and our Week of Christmas celebration (see dates online). There's big magic in our North Pole Experience—and onstage at OWA Theater with a tribute to Louis Armstrong & Ella Fitzgerald plus OWA's Christmas Special. See all the details, dates and showtimes online at VisitOWA.com!

OWA
Parks & Resort

THRILL, THEN CHILL.

A WORLD CLASS
DEVELOPMENT BY



FOLEY, AL | 7 MILES FROM THE BEACH | VISITOWA.COM | 251.923.2111 |    



ARRAY

presents

FRYBREAD FACE AND ME

Available Exclusively on Netflix

Written and directed by Billy Luther, Frybread Face and Me follows two adolescent Navajo cousins from different worlds as they bond during a summer on their grandmother's Arizona ranch, learning more about their family's past and about themselves. Produced by Chad Burris and executive produced by Taika Waititi, the film stars Kier Tallman, Charley Hogan, Martin Sensmeier, Kahara Hodges and Sarah Natani.



The Tribe is committed to doing its part to further Native arts through books, media, movies, fashion, and similar artistic outlets. We'd love to include your recommendation in one of our future issues. Please feel free to share those with me. Mvto!

Share your recommendation
with Megan Zamora at mzamora@pci-nsn.gov.



POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS AWARDS \$25K GRANT TO HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN'S STEM EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Written by Laura McPhail

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI) recently awarded a \$25K grant to support STEM educational programming at Huntsville Botanical Garden (HBG). The grant signals the start of a new partnership between PBCI and HBG with the goal of providing significant positive impact on children's education in Alabama, and ultimately contributing to a stronger workforce and healthier quality of life for the state.

"Plant science education is at the heart of what we do," said HBG VP of Institutional Advancement Annette Alexander. "The Garden provides a spectrum of programs to support STEM learning through teacher professional

development, student learning experiences, STEM youth volunteer programming, camps and more."

In addition to the many STEM-based programs offered by HBG, Cultivate, the Garden's new teacher professional development program, directly supports teachers both inside and outside the classroom to engage students in authentic STEM education throughout key locations in the state. This grant will enable HBG educators to support STEM education programs beyond schools located in Madison County. In addition, HBG will send instructors twice a year to the PBCI Reservation to provide their STEM education class to Poarch students.



ABOUT HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN

Huntsville Botanical Garden is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that exists to connect people to plants in order to support a healthier quality of life for the region. Open year-round, the Garden contains diverse ecosystems to explore within its 118 acres. From grassy meadows to woodland paths, aquatic habitats to stunning floral collections, the Garden invites guests of all ages to discover the beauty and wonder of the natural environment. For more information, visit hsvbg.org.



The Tribe has become a benevolent leader in the world of philanthropy. Given its long-standing tradition of sharing with those in need, the Tribe contributes to many charitable organizations in the community, helping to fund the arts as well as activities such as youth sports, senior care and emergency support services. Its generosity also benefits the broader Alabama community through job creation.

“We are excited about the opportunities made possible through backing from the Poarch Band of Creek Indians,” Alexander said. “Their recognition of the importance of STEM education for our children’s future and their support in making those programs accessible to as many people as possible in our state will result in a truly positive impact for all.”

“[PBCI’s] recognition of the importance of STEM education for our children’s future and their support... will result in a truly positive impact for all.”



WIND CREEK HOSPITALITY PARTICIPATES IN COMMUNITY EVENTS TO SUPPORT CANCER WELLNESS AND RESEARCH

By Amelia Tognoli

The tournament's primary beneficiary was the renowned St. Jude Children's Research Hospital—it received 100% of the event's proceeds and donations. Many residents of Mobile and Baldwin County are undergoing treatment for cancer and other life-threatening illnesses at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

"Our involvement in these events demonstrates Wind Creek Hospitality's commitment to making a meaningful impact on the communities it serves," said Trina Rackard, Director of Sponsorships and Events at Wind Creek Hospitality.

Wind Creek Hospitality recently participated in two significant community events, WAKA's Tickled Pink Women's Expo and the annual Joy of Life on the Gulf Coast Golf Tournament. These events not only provided opportunities for engagement and enjoyment but also supported notable charitable organizations in their missions.

The Tickled Pink Women's Expo, held in Montgomery, Alabama, showcased a diverse range of offerings dedicated to women's health, wellness, beauty, and fashion. At this year's event, 100% of admissions directly benefited the Cancer Wellness Foundation of Central Alabama. The Cancer Wellness Foundation is committed to providing quality programs and services to cancer patients and their families—bridging the gap in service provision once a patient receives a cancer diagnosis. The event's excellent turnout emphasized the community's support for this cause.

In another endeavor to support those in need, Wind Creek Team Members participated in the Annual Joy of Life on the Gulf Coast Golf Tournament, held in Mobile, Alabama. This charity golf tournament offered a fun-filled day for golfers, featuring various tournaments, including "closest to the pin."



St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is leading the way in the global understanding, treatment, and victory over childhood cancer and other deadly diseases. Remarkably, St. Jude never sends bills to families for treatment, lodging, transportation, or food since they believe that a family's primary concern should be ensuring their child's survival.



We have everything you need to make the right choice for your home:

- Easy In Home Financing Options
- Express Delivery & Set-up Service
- and a Great selection of Furniture for every room from Living Room, Bedroom, Appliances, Electronics, Lawn Mowers, Generators & More

Come visit us in-store so we can assist you in making the perfect purchase for your home

1107 Hwy 31 South, Bay Minette, Alabama
251-580-0101 | Locally Owned and Operated

Badcock & more^{Since 1904}
HOME FURNITURE

www.badcock.com

Thank You for the Opportunity for your business.



“Now, we own the farm... We can support ourselves now. That’s why I do this work here. I give back to my people and take care of the elders who took care of me.”

LIFE ON THE FARM

By Jen Peake

Riding around with Tribal Member Douglas Kelley, aka Poncho as he is more commonly known, and seeing him work at Perdido River Farms (PRF) gives an outsider the ability to appreciate what he does every day. Driving cautiously through a herd of bulls and cows, Poncho calmly stops and records the tag number of a bull. Later on, he points out a pregnant cow.

“We have the doc coming next week for preg checks,” he said. “That one is about ready to drop hers.”

As he pulls up to a gate, he stops the truck and looks around. The cattle is moving ever so slightly toward the gate. Poncho gets out and unlocks it, just in time for the herd to stomp through.

“Opening the gate is always the hardest,” he said with a chuckle. “They come in fast knowing they are heading to the

green. Then I just make sure they all made it in before I shut it again.”

For the past 12 years, Poncho has worked at PRF as a foreman/farm hand. He said life is never dull at the farm.

“From fixing fences, getting hay to the cattle, cutting hay in summer ... I’m always on the go,” he said. “Winter gets here and things slow down but not really. We have to prep for the spring and summer.”

Summertime is longer working hours, but Poncho said he doesn’t mind.

“I do this for my people,” Poncho said. “Back in the day, our people worked for the white folks in farming because we didn’t have our own means of business. Now, we own the farm; we own a hotel, a truck stop, a wildlife reserve, and other businesses. We can support ourselves now. That’s why I do this work here. I give back to my people and take

care of the elders who took care of me. It's a privilege to work for the Tribe."

Poncho said what he enjoys the most about working at PRF is the fact that every day is different.

"When you come through those gates, you know a brand new day has begun," he said. "It's exciting, and there is always something to do. If you want a job twiddling your thumbs, this ain't it!"

"It's hard work, but I love it," he said. "When the hay is right, you have to stay with it and get it up and cut by the time night comes. Keeping the cows in the pastures and making sure they are fed and healthy is what keeps us busy."

Poncho said he likes the unpredictability each day brings.

"It keeps you on your toes. I like that."

Perdido River Farms occupies most of Poncho's time during the week, but he has another important role away from the farm.



"I serve as Henehv, the second chief of Hvsossv Tallvhasse, which is our ceremonial grounds where we hold our stomp dance ceremonies. I started there in 1992. I have been called back to the farm during one of the dances to tend to a calf that had gotten loose. I had to fix another unforeseen occurrence. But that's all in a day's work," he said with a smile.

"It's definitely an adventure caring for that many animals," Poncho said. "We have a good team here, and it just doesn't seem like work to me."

General Manager John English said he is proud to have Poncho as part of the team.

"He's the glue that keeps things together around here," English said. "He takes the lead on a lot of projects and helps out others when he sees they need a hand. Poncho's work ethic just amazes me. He's been a blessing to the farm and to the Tribe."

VETERAN FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED

Friday, December 15, 2023
from 9:00am - 3:00pm

Buy One, Get One 50% Off on Beltone Rely™ and Achieve™*

Come see Our Beltone Hearing Aid Specialist at the Buford L. Rolin Health Clinic

***Discount based off of MSRP**

Introducing Our Best Yet Beltone Serene™

tiny but powerful hearing aids made for everyday life.

Please call us TOLL FREE for an appointment at **(251) 369-6400.**

Atmore Office
401 E Church Street
Atmore, AL

Pensacola Office
6024 N 9th Avenue
Pensacola, FL

SCAN ME



CHRISTMAS AT OWA

By Catherine Hasty

The magic of the holiday season is here at OWA Parks & Resort! Step into Christmas at OWA, brimming with festive activities, enchanting events, and exclusive offers. Whether you're indulging in retail therapy or enjoying a savory bit to eat in Downtown OWA, your perfect holiday experience awaits right here at OWA.

Beginning December 2, stop by the North Pole Experience in Downtown OWA and be transported into Santa's workshop! Warm up with Santa's favorite hot chocolate and cookies, make holiday-themed crafts with Santa's elves, and even purchase a photo with the jolly man himself! This cheerful holiday experience is available on Saturdays and Sundays through December 23.

You're invited to indulge in a delightful Christmas tradition by joining us for an exclusive breakfast alongside the merry man himself! On select dates throughout December, The Bohemian in Downtown OWA invites you to savor a memorable dining experience with Santa—delight in a scrumptious spread featuring all the breakfast favorites. Given Santa's tight schedule back at the North Pole, seating for this event is limited. Secure your spot to ensure you don't miss out on! Purchase your tickets online at VisitOWA.com and create unforgettable memories at Breakfast with Santa!

Calling all Elves! Join us in Downtown OWA on December 9th and 10th, and let the Elf Academy transport you on a journey through various stations designed to teach the playful and mischievous ways of Santa's beloved elves. From creating delicious cookies to helping fill Santa's toy bag, each station offers an interactive and delightful experience. Will you earn your elf hat?

That's not all for the holiday season! OWA will host our first annual Sugarplum Festival in Downtown OWA on December 16 and 17! Come on out and watch the enchanting dancing of the Luminary



Entertainment Company while also enjoying live music, cookie decorating, vendors, and so much more! There will even be a Gingerbread House competition, so check out all the details at VisitOWA.com!

Experience the magic unfolds onstage at OWA Theater with an unforgettable tribute to the legendary Louis Armstrong & Ella Fitzgerald, followed by Elf-Venture: A Race to Save Christmas Play produced by Seward Studio Production, promising a heartwarming celebration of the season. Immerse yourself in the timeless melodies and holiday cheer at these spectacular performances. For details, dates, and showtimes, go to VisitOWA.com and secure your tickets for an evening of musical splendor and festive delight!

After a day of holiday magic, stick around for our Christmas light show in admission-free Downtown OWA. Our 36-foot-tall Christmas tree will put on a mesmerizing light show to holiday music nightly.

That's not all for this holiday season! Welcome 2024 with us at our New Year's Eve Celebration on December 30th and 31st in Downtown OWA! Wave goodbye to 2023 with this epic party featuring live music, activities, and fireworks.



Russell Helton
850-356-4521

Cash Jobs Welcome



Free Windshield With Full Coverage Florida Insurance
Insurance Approved • Lifetime Warranty
Serving Escambia, Santa Rosa & Baldwin Counties
29+ Years Experience • Licensed & Insured
Email: outlawautoglass5@gmail.com

LAND & CRUISE VACATIONS
CRUISE PLANNERS
YOUR LAND AND CRUISE EXPERTS

JERRY REECE
POARCH CREEK TRIBAL MEMBER
707.407.3808
www.landahoycruising.com | greece@CruisePlanners.com

FL STA 30006
LA STA 74025
VA STA 6013399-504



Keep up with the latest news on events, entertainment, and activities, plus new tenant openings in Downtown OWA, via our website at VisitOWA.com or by following us on social media @VisitOWA.

Carol Cole
Independent Beauty Consultant

215 Hwy 136 E
Monroeville, Alabama 36460
251-253-3333
251-765-2356
ccole123@frontiernet.net
www.marykay.com

Call or Text me your order

MARY KAY

Going to Orlando to see a mouse or a wizard?

Let a tribal member travel planner guide you at no cost to you.



f KTTWClint

(334) 377-1939

Clint.Daughtrey@keytotheworldtravel.com

Clint Daughtrey
Travel Advisor

PCI Environmental
957 Martin Road
Atmore, AL 36502
(Down the road from PCCC)

If you have any
questions, please call
(251) 368-9136 ext. 2316



ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT **SPAY & NEUTER PROGRAM**

 **JANUARY 15**
- MAR 29, 2024*
9AM - 4PM
MONDAY - FRIDAY
Vouchers expire on June 30, 2024

The Environmental Department will be giving out spay/neuter vouchers for cats and dogs. Only one voucher per Tribal Member will be allowed. These are available on a first-serve basis for Tribal Members only. Tribal Members must present their Tribal ID to receive spay/neuter voucher and at their veterinary office to receive services.

*or until funding is depleted



DOWNTOWN OWA CONTINUES TO BOOM WITH THREE MORE BUSINESSES OPENING

By Kristin Hellmich

Towne Tap allows patrons to choose from a wide selection of craft beers and ales and pour their own perfect pints.



OWA Parks & Resort is excited to announce the opening of several new businesses to Downtown OWA, the admission-free shopping, dining, and entertainment district of the property. After a fun day of thrills at Tropic Falls, OWA's amusement and water park, there's no better place to relax and unwind than the pedestrian friendly streets of Downtown OWA.

New openings include Fluffy's Pet Shop which provides a wide variety of treats, chews, leashes, beds, harnesses, grooming tools, and stylish accessories for pets. Unique to the store is they use quality ingredients that are free from artificial flavors, colors, or preservatives, and are packaged sustainably.

Towne Tap, located in the heart of Downtown OWA, is a quintessential English pub that offers a unique and interactive drinking experience. With its distinctive pour-your-own-beer system, Towne Tap allows patrons to choose from a wide selection of craft beers and ales and pour their own perfect pints. It also boasts

a full menu of delicious British and American fare, making it the ideal spot for both foodies and beer enthusiasts. From traditional fish and chips, hearty shepherd's pie, or a mouthwatering burger, Towne Tap offers a wide variety for patrons.

Jason Will Real Estate is also opening an office on the property. "We were looking for an opportunity to consolidate our two centers in Baldwin County into one powerhouse location," said Jason Will. "When the opportunity arose to be the sole real estate office at OWA, we jumped at the chance, as it gave us high visibility, high foot traffic, and a super fun location for our agents to call home. We're really looking forward to being a part of all the annual events and helping to promote our fellow small business owners within the Downtown OWA community."

As Downtown OWA continues to grow, leasing opportunities are limited. For more information, contact Stirling Properties at 251-375-2481 or visit visitowa.com/leasing-in-owa/. And for all the latest information and events at OWA Parks & Resort, visit visitowa.com.

PRESENTING THE SENIOR READING PROGRAM TO TRIBAL NATIONS

By Deidra Suwanee Dees, Ed.D.

“Our Senior Reading Program is a model for other tribes to follow,” Tribal Council Secretary Ms. Charlotte McGhee Meckel said to an Indigenous audience at the Omni Hotel in Oklahoma City on October 25, 2023.

The audience was part of over 1,200 attendees at the International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM), held from October 24 to 26. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians had a strong presence at the annual conference which is designed to assist leaders working with Tribal Nations in specific areas of archives, libraries, museums, language programs, and education. We are proud to be a past recipient of ATALM’s Guardians of Culture and Lifeways Awards (2015) for excellence in the development of our archival repository in Records Management and Archival Preservation.

Office of Archives and Records Management staff, along with Ms. Meckel, gave a panel presentation on the Senior Reading Program, developed and taught by Archives Assistant, Ms. Leasha Martin. Staff shared with the audience that

she began the Program in 2009 to provide activities for our elders and has kept it steadily going for almost fifteen years.

Director/Tribal Archivist Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees explained how the reading books on Creek history are lived out through the fieldtrips which empower

elders with knowledge about our own historical records and places.

Records Specialist Ms. Emily Fayard let the audience know that Ms. Martin finds exciting fieldtrips in out-of-the-way places that are intertwined with the reading books. “The elders really enjoy going on these

fieldtrips. The Program keeps them active in mind, body, and spirit,” she said.

Staff gave insights into the curriculum and benefits of the Program by recording the oral history of our members and by playing clips of our elders who spoke candidly about the significance of why they joined. Program member Mr. Carl McGhee said, “Instead of me staying in my room and eating alone, I come down here to the Senior Center. Instead of me staying by myself, I’d rather be with my friends. It is better to be with friends than to be by yourself.”

Member Ms. Eloise Hall said, “It is wonderful to me! We can do things together.” She described the significance of learning Creek history with others in the classes. “Some of us didn’t finish school,” she said, so they are getting elements of history classes that they missed out on when they were growing up.

Member Ms. Linda Barnett said what she likes best is the “Fellowship together with the seniors.” She said she enjoys, “Listening to their stories, going on trips on the bus, and hearing them reminisce about what they did in their past. I like learning from them.”

Member Ms. Pug Roberson explained, “You learn a lot that you did not know. When you were going to school, you had to learn the history that they had for you, but now we get to step out and learn other history.”

Member Ms. Pamela Etheridge said, “Don’t wait too long. I didn’t do anything until after I retired [school teacher]. I missed so many trips and so many things that I should have taken the day off and went on, and I didn’t do it.” She encouraged everyone in our elder population not to wait one day longer, but to join the Senior Reading Program today. “Don’t wait!”

If you want a copy of the presentation, Records Coordinator and videographer Ms. Cheryl Thrower recorded it for the archival record. Please contact Ms. Leasha Martin at (251) 446-4961, and she will be happy to provide you with the recording.

“The elders really enjoy going on these fieldtrips. The Program keeps them active in mind, body, and spirit.”



While staff enjoyed training others about our Senior Reading Program, staff also enjoyed receiving training from other Native American presenters. For example, staff attended the training on Records Management put on by the federally recognized Ho-Chunk Nation (people of the sacred voice) who use the Mukurtu computer software that our Tribe recently acquired for our Online Archives. Staff learned the technical aspects of how they developed records inventories and metadata (data about the data) for their departments under Tribal Government that are spread out over large areas in present-day Wisconsin.

Staff attended the training on the development of the online archives by presenters of federally recognized Apsaalooke/Crow Nation (children of the large-beaked bird) who are located in present-day Montana. Staff learned experiential ways that they utilized this same software, Mukurtu, in the posting of thousands of digital recordings, along with the intricacies of creating virtual exhibits for Internet visitors.

Staff was invited to become members of the Tribal Library Council Leadership Team and the Mentorship Program which brought senior leaders and young professionals together for collaboration.

As a part of the conference, staff attended the mesmerizing fieldtrip to the First Nations Museum and learned about the rich cultural heritage of thirty-nine tribes that are in present-day Oklahoma.

Staff attended a four-hour bus fieldtrip to Chilocco Indian School, a boarding school that operated for almost a hundred years, educating thousands of Native students from over 120 tribes. Staff encountered a moving experience when we learned about the complexities of reconstructing historical data on the graveyard that was rediscovered at the school without markers and without documentation. Using modern technology without disturbing the graves, officials are planning to mark the over one-hundred graves and conduct research to find the names of the children who are buried there.

In the closing ceremony of the conference, staff witnessed the return of a 1906 Kiowa cradleboard from the Eastern Band of Cherokees whose leaders gave it back to its rightful owner under the Going Home Fund, because they said it did not belong to them. Tribal leaders said they hope this will serve as an example that others will follow to return displaced items to the tribe they belong to. Our Team agreed that this ceremony was a fitting way to close our remarkable time together of empowered learning. Mvto.

Diner
SKILLETS
Enjoy a breakfast skillet today!

4740 Jack Springs Rd. Atmore,
To Go- 251-368-0088

WE'RE HIRING
Find Your New Career Path

CIEJOBS.COM

HOLIDAY TRIP HQ

**Fuel
Snacks
Drinks
Drive thru windows**

**CCS
ATMORE**
Next to Wind Creek

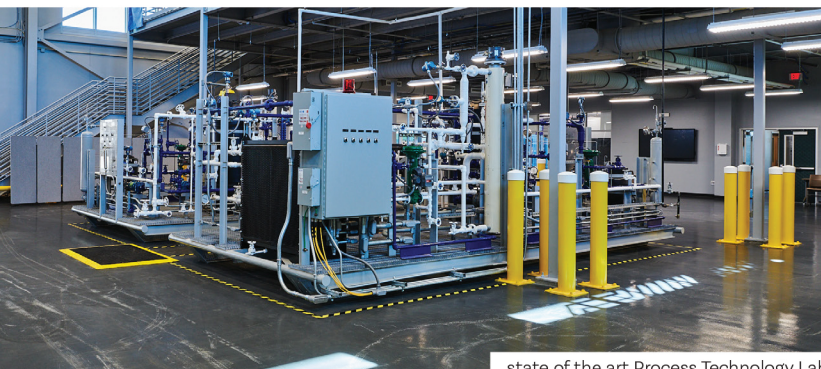


ROLIN CONSTRUCTION NAMED TO BUSINESS ALABAMA'S LIST OF ALABAMA'S LARGEST GENERAL CONTRACTORS

Rolin Construction was honored to be recognized as one of Alabama's largest general contractors by **Business Alabama** magazine for the year 2023. This accolade is rooted in a thorough analysis of the firm's 2022 project completions and contract awards through July 1, 2023. A few highlight projects for **Rolin Construction** include the **Carl Haas Advanced Manufacturing Facility** located on the Bishop State campus built in Mobile, Alabama, a \$21.2M project which reached completion in the early months of 2022. Additionally, the **LeFlore Mechanical Upgrades**, also situated in Mobile and valued at \$54.2M, is underway

with a projected completion in the second quarter of 2025. Positioned strategically with offices in Atmore and Spanish Fort, Alabama, **Rolin Construction** proudly stands as the largest contractor in Baldwin and Escambia Counties and one of the premiere contractors spotlighted across the Gulf Coast. This acknowledgment by **Business Alabama** not only spotlights Rolin's unwavering commitment to excellence but also solidifies their position as a pivotal player in Alabama's construction industry.

The team at **Rolin Construction** extends their deepest gratitude towards their dedicated team, loyal clientele, and supportive community, attributing the company's success and recognition of their collective efforts.



state of the art Process Technology Lab

“

Rolin Construction proudly stands as the largest contractor in Baldwin and Escambia Counties and one of the premiere contractors spotlighted across the Gulf Coast.

www.rolinbuilds.com



ROLIN CONSTRUCTION'S

SAMUEL 'SAMMY' SOUTHARD AWARDED "TOP 40 UNDER 40"

Rolin Construction is delighted to formally acknowledge Mr. Samuel 'Sammy' Southard as a distinguished recipient of the prestigious *Top 40 Under 40* award, an honor conferred by the esteemed **Alabama General Contractor's Association** in conjunction with **Business Alabama**. This distinguished accolade is intended to recognize remarkable emerging talents within the commercial construction sector across Alabama. The recipients are those individuals who demonstrate an exemplary level of leadership, unwavering professional excellence, and a steadfast commitment to the betterment of the construction industry. Sammy is the husband of Tribal member Franceska Gregson Southard. He has been a lead superintendent with **Rolin Construction** for almost a decade, leading construction activities in the field for several Tribal and non-Tribal projects. Some of the Tribal projects Sammy has been involved with are the **Buford L. Rolin Tribal Health Clinic**, **Lavan A. Martin Assisted Living Facility**, **Moniac Townhouse Project**, **OWA Tropic Falls build-outs** and currently the **Wind Creek Atmore Hotel Tower renovation project**.

"... an exemplary level of leadership, unwavering professional excellence, and a steadfast commitment to the betterment of the construction industry."



The Office of Archives and Records Management at the
Poarch Band of Creek Indians invites you to



Re-enactment scene from 1978 *Trail of Tears* film

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY: TRAIL OF TEARS FILM

Saturday, December 2, 2023

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wind Creek Coosawada Ballroom

Everyone is invited

Breakfast served at 9 a.m. & Lunch served at noon

You are invited to celebrate our community by watching how the community came together to make the Trail of Tears film in 1978—audio and video together for the very first time! Mr. Eddie Tullis will speak about the making of the film including his mother who helped re-enact the scenes. Producer Mr. Jim Robison will speak on shooting the film in our community. Mvto.

Questions? Contact Ms. Emily Fayard, Ms. Leasha Martin, Mr. Chad Parker, Ms. Cheryl Thrower, Ms. Torisha Matthews, or Dr. Deidra Suwane Dees at (251) 446-4942 or at cellular telephone (251) 253-9181

Top: Chairman Buford L. Rolin and Mrs. Elloie J. Bradshaw
Bottom: Newly Constructed: Elloie J. Bradshaw Training Center



ELLOIE J. BRADSHAW TRAINING CENTER

TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT

By Brandy Chunn

At the October 5, 2023 Tribal Council meeting, our Tribal Council moved to preserve the historical significance of the original Elloie J. Bradshaw Training Building by accepting the recommendation of the Tribal Historic Preservation Department to return the building's original designation as the "Elloie J. Bradshaw Training Center."

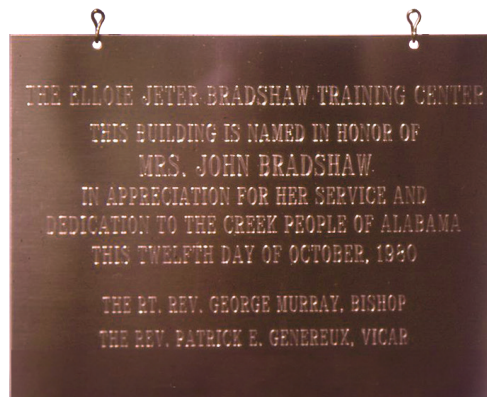
This small historical building was initially constructed using Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) funds and volunteer tribal labor. Upon completion, it was dedicated to Mrs. Elloie J. Bradshaw in 1980 by the Tribal Council and St. Anna's Episcopal Church as the "Elloie J. Bradshaw Training Center" used to house a CETA training Program providing Audio/Video and Sewing Training to Poarch Creek Tribal Members and other state-recognized Indian groups in the state. The building was dedicated to Mrs. Bradshaw as recognition for her efforts to assist Poarch Tribal Members in receiving education and training opportunities.

In the summer of 1954, Mrs. Elloie Bradshaw traveled to the Poarch Community to teach Vacation Bible School at St. Anna's church. The Episcopal Church attempted to get full-

time workers into the Indian Community, requesting Church Army people, deaconesses, and everybody they could think of. Everyone turned them down for one reason or another. In November of 1959, Bishop Murry called on Mrs. Elloie Bradshaw to return to the Poarch Community for a six-month stay. Mrs. Bradshaw remained in the Poarch Community until 1964. Even after her retirement, she remained dedicated to the education of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, raising money in various ways until she was no longer able.

Since Federal Recognition in 1984, Tribal Leadership has repurposed and utilized the Elloie J. Bradshaw Training Center according to the needs and growth of our Tribe. Some of the different services the Training Center has provided to our Community are: Audio/Video and Sewing Training, Health Department, Social Services, WIC, Day-Care, Teen Center, and Public Safety Training.

Having the original name replaced on the building is a part of the effort by the Tribal Historic Preservation Department to keep the history of the Tribe alive. The building and Mrs. Bradshaw's work represent a time when the Tribe relied on volunteer assistance from both inside and outside. The efforts of those involved should always be remembered and appreciated.



Above: Dedication Plaque to Mrs. Elloie Bradshaw October 12, 1980



Left to Right:
Sharon Delmar,
Megan Zamora,
Ally Dorrough, and
Jeanna Morgan

ATMORE PROFESSIONAL EARNS ACCREDITATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Megan Zamora, Director of Internal Communications with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians has successfully completed the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations. The announcement was made by the Universal Accreditation Board, a consortium of nine professional communication organizations that directs this competency certification program.

Mrs. Zamora shared, "I am grateful to my husband, daughter, work family, mentors, and friends for the support and encouragement they provided to me throughout this process. Earning the APR has both broadened my perspective and deepened my expertise in Public Relations. This achievement is a testament to the values of professionalism, continuous learning, and excellence that I hold dear. I am excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead and am eager to make a lasting impact in the field of Public Relations. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of my journey, and I look forward to the next chapter in my career."

The Accreditation program aims to improve the practice of public relations by assessing competence in 60 areas of knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the profession. The Examination is designed for public relations professionals with at least five to seven years of job experience and/or a bachelor's degree in a communication field. Candidates who successfully complete the rigorous process, including presenting her portfolio to a Panel Presentation of three peers and sitting for an examination, are granted the APR.

"Earning the APR reflects a mastery of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to succeed in our increasingly complex profession," said Joy Carter, APR, chair of the Universal Accreditation Board. "Practitioners who achieve the designation are demonstrating their commitment not only to our profession, but also to a strong code of ethics and to the betterment of their organizations and clients."

ABOUT THE UNIVERSAL ACCREDITATION BOARD

The UAB was established in 1998 by a coalition of public relations professional organizations that today includes the Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico, California Association of Public Information Officials, Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, National Association of Government Communicators, National School Public Relations Association, Public Relations Society of America, Religion Communicators Council and the Southern Public Relations Federation. Each organization contributes resources and senior-level volunteer members who represent all segments of the public relations profession. For more information about the UAB and the APR designation, visit praccreditation.org.



Sleigh Bells Ring, Can You Hear Them?



***With hearing aids
from us, yes, you can!***



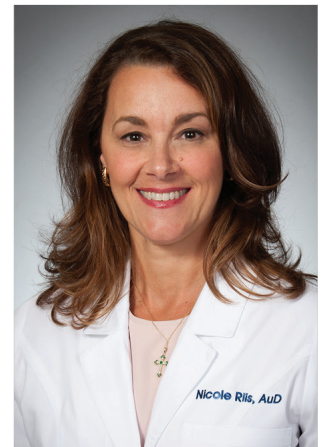
*Make use of your amazing zero out-of-pocket hearing aid benefit.
Call 251-272-8975 To Schedule An Appointment.*

Questions regarding your Poarch Creek hearing aid benefit?
Contact Nioma Till, Case Manager, 251-368-9136, Ext. 2386.



*Elizabeth M. Pickett, Au.D.
Audiologist*

2880 Dauphin St., Mobile, AL 36606
1302 US Hwy. 98, Daphne, AL 36526
610 Providence Park Dr., Bldg. 2, Suite 203
Mobile, AL 36609



Nicole Riis, Au.D.

Elizabeth Pickett, Au.D., CCC-A

Nicole Riis, Au.D., CCC-A, FAAA



Government Relations
and Public Affairs Office

5811 Jack Springs Road
Atmore, AL 36502



CREEK CORNER

DECEMBER 2023 IMPORTANT DATES

12.1	SUBMISSION DEADLINE January Issue	5:00 PM
12.2	CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY: TRAIL OF TEARS FILM Wind Creek Coosawada Ballroom	9:00 AM
12.4-5	MUSEUM GIFT SHOP CLOSED Inventory	
12.7	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	4:00 PM
12.7	CHRISTMAS PARADE	5:30 PM
12.8	FRED L MCGHEE EARLY LEARNING CENTER AND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB CLOSED	
12.21	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	4:00 PM
12.25-29	TRIBAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED Christmas	