



JULY
2024

No. 31

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the POARCH CREEK INDIANS

creek corner



FINDING MEANING IN
*Messages
from the Past*

**POARCH CREEK INDIANS' SUPPORT
HELPS KEEP ALABAMA CHILDREN SAFE**

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Poarch Creek Indians
Proudly Supports
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Shakespeare Festival
More info on page 30



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CREDITS

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KRISTIN HELLMICH
Interim Editor, Creek Corner

FROM THE EDITOR

“Family is at the core of the Poarch community, and July offers us all the perfect opportunity to celebrate this fundamental aspect of our lives.”

“

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As we turn the page to July, a month marked by warmth and vitality, we find ourselves immersed in the heart of summer. This is a special time for families and communities to come together, creating lasting memories and strengthening the bonds that tie us.

July is a month of gathering and celebration. It is a time when families unite, sharing in the joy of togetherness and the beauty of our traditions. Family is at the core of the Poarch community, and July offers us all the perfect opportunity to celebrate this fundamental aspect of our lives. Whether it's through shared meals, lively gatherings, or quiet moments of reflection, we find joy in the presence of those we hold dear. The long, sunlit days provide ample time for outdoor adventures, from fishing and hiking to simply enjoying the natural beauty that surrounds us.

In Creek Corner, this month we embrace the spirit of July with a series of articles that highlight the importance of coming together not just as a community, but as a family. It highlights the importance of gatherings filled with laughter, music, and the vibrancy of Native people.

This month, let us focus on coming together, not just as families, but as a unified community. In a world that often feels fragmented, Poarch's collective strength lies in its ability to support and uplift one another. By celebrating a shared heritage and embracing the diversity within the Poarch community, everyone is able to contribute positively towards a tapestry of connection and solidarity. Creek Corner is more than just a magazine; it is a reflection of the Tribal community's heart and soul. Through a variety of timely stories, we strive to preserve the Tribe's heritage, to educate and inspire, and to celebrate the vibrant culture of the Poarch Creek Indians. This summer, we invite you to join us in a season of celebration, reflection, and unity.

May your summer be filled with joy, peace, and the warmth of community.



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.

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





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I believe one of the most important things we can do for ourselves in planning for our future is wisely managing our own resources.

TRIBAL COUNCIL VICE CHAIR
ROBBIE MCGHEE

FROM OUR LEADERS:
**ROBBIE MCGHEE
ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

By Robbie McGhee

*Public service is not just a job
—it is a calling.*

I have always been drawn to service. I went to college to become a social worker, and I have focused both my education and my career on meeting the needs of others and preparing for challenges the future inevitably brings. Meeting those increasingly sophisticated challenges is the reason I pursued earning a Masters degree in business because I believe one of the most important things we can do for ourselves in planning for our future is wisely managing our own resources. Our resources include both our financial assets, as well as the great talents and abilities of our Tribal Citizens, especially our youth who will one day run our government and our industries. It is vitally important that the leadership of our Tribe today continues to provide opportunities for those future generations' education and personal growth.

It is important to stop and ask ourselves as a leader what do I need to do differently? What can I do or change to ensure a good life for our future generations? Dealing with each other honestly and respectfully is a good place to begin. The difficulties of leadership, particularly in small tribal communities with extensive family ties and relationships, can be quite complex and challenging. Managing interpersonal dynamics, addressing various personal and emotional connections, and navigating delicate family matters can present unique challenges for Tribal Council Members in these environments that we face daily. Building consensus, maintaining impartiality, and balancing the needs and

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It is important to stop and ask ourselves as a leader what do I need to do differently? What can I do or change to ensure a good life for our future generations?

TRIBAL COUNCIL VICE CHAIR ROBBIE MCGHEE

expectations of individual families while prioritizing the collective interests of our Tribal community can be demanding tasks. Additionally, ensuring transparent communication, fostering trust among our Citizens, and resolving conflicts effectively are crucial aspects of Tribal leadership in our community. By navigating these challenges with empathy, fairness, and a collaborative approach, we can strive to promote unity, harmony, and progress within the Poarch Creek Indians.

We must remember that we are an Indian nation that is comprised of families who persevered despite having the odds stacked against us. It is critically important that we stay true to our history and our bonds with one another. We as Council Members must strive to serve our people, uphold our Tribal Constitution, and truly understand the issues impacting our Government, our Tribe and our People. As a leader, I will continue to do my best to protect and secure what our ancestors have built.



ROBBIE MCGHEE
Tribal Council Vice Chair

Pardon our Progress

Here are a few of our upcoming changes!



Fully remodeled interior



Full hook-up RV sites



Dog park

New hot food vendors



Al fresco dining

as we work to improve our infrastructure and store offerings to create a better shopping experience for you.





DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

HOUSING: PART 2

By Ashlee “Katie” Mothershed

The Poarch Creek Indians is committed to providing safe, affordable, and quality housing for its Citizens. The Poarch Creek Indian Housing Department, led by a dedicated team of professionals, oversees various programs designed to meet the diverse housing needs of our Tribal Citizens. This article highlights the key roles and responsibilities within the department.

CHARLOTTE PARHAM: SENIOR & DISABLED EMERGENCY REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Charlotte plays a crucial role in ensuring that the housing needs of the senior and disabled Citizens of the Poarch Creek Indians are met. She is responsible for the Senior & Disabled Emergency Rehabilitation Program, which provides urgent repairs and modifications to homes to ensure they are safe and accessible for elderly and disabled residents. Additionally, she oversees the Rehabilitation Program, which focuses on renovating and improving existing homes to meet current standards and the specific needs of their occupants.

THERESA RUTHERFORD: RENTAL PROGRAM

Theresa oversees the Rental Program, which provides affordable rental housing options for Citizens of the Poarch Creek community. She ensures that the rental properties are well-maintained and that tenants have access to necessary resources and support. Her role involves coordinating with tenants, handling lease agreements, and addressing any issues that may arise during the tenancy.

REGINA BROWN: INSURANCE AND WARRANTY CLAIMS

Regina is responsible for handling all insurance and warranty claims related to Tribal Assisted Homeownership (TAHO) and rental properties. Her role is critical in ensuring that any damages or issues covered by insurance or warranties are promptly addressed, thereby protecting the investments made in housing infrastructure and maintaining the quality of housing for Tribal Citizens.

HEATH BRYARS: CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION SUPERVISION

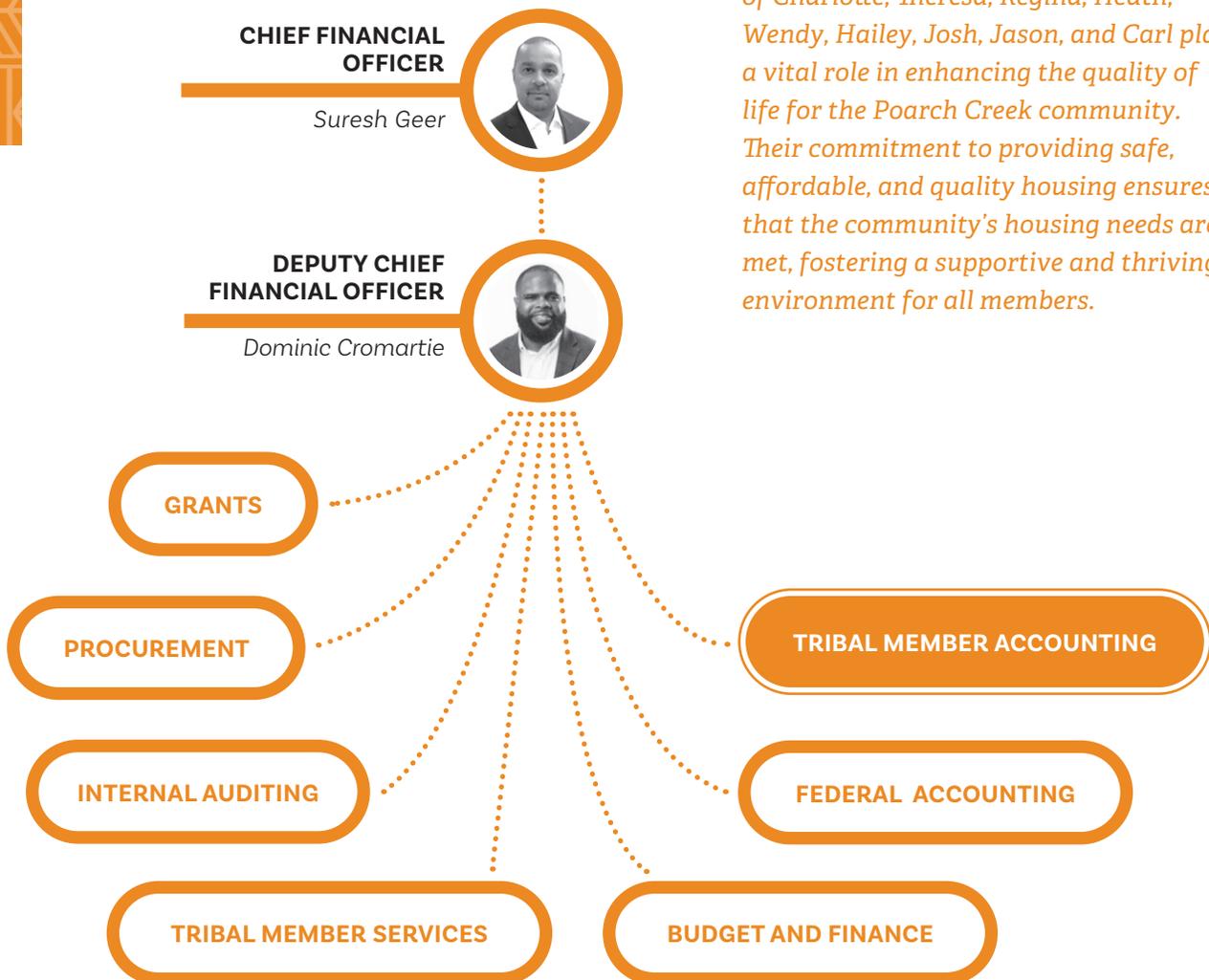
Heath's responsibilities encompass all construction and rehabilitation write-ups and inspections for TAHO, Rental, Rehabilitation, and Senior and Disabled Emergency Programs. He ensures that all construction and rehabilitation projects are

completed to the highest standards. Heath also supervises the construction assistance and inspectors, making sure that all work is performed efficiently and meets the required specifications.

WENDY DAVIS: DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT

Wendy oversees these Housing Department programs and staff, including the management of TAHO and all other programs within the department. Her role involves strategic planning, program development, and ensuring that all housing initiatives align with the goals and needs of the Poarch Creek Indians. Wendy's leadership ensures that the department operates smoothly and that all programs are effectively implemented to provide quality housing solutions.

The Poarch Creek Indian Housing Department, through the dedicated efforts of Charlotte, Theresa, Regina, Heath, Wendy, Hailey, Josh, Jason, and Carl plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for the Poarch Creek community. Their commitment to providing safe, affordable, and quality housing ensures that the community's housing needs are met, fostering a supportive and thriving environment for all members.





SUTTON KING AIMS TO BREAK DOWN CHALLENGES FACING NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN NYC

By Crystal Cranmore

Race and Culture reporter Crystal Cranmore talks to Sutton King, co-founder of the Urban Indigenous Collective.



*Afro-Indigenous
New Yorker Sutton
King is on a mission
to provide advocacy
and a safe space for
urban Natives.*



N

ovember 30th marks the end of Native American Heritage Month, but the work doesn't stop as a new generation of activists push for the rights and progression of indigenous people, including one woman who is advocating for her people in New York City.

In the heart of Midtown, Manhattan, there's a new resource for the region's Native American community. While the Urban Indigenous Collective has been around since 2019, it recently opened its first community center. The goal is to provide access to culturally tailored health and wellness services for those who identify as indigenous and are living in the Tri-State area.

Sutton King is the co-founder and a descendent of the Oneida and Menominee tribes of Wisconsin.

Moving to the Big Apple in 2011 meant new challenges in accessing healthcare.

"Having my own chronic illness that I experience, coming here at 18 years old, I really needed to be able to access a culturally tailored healthcare," Sutton said.

According to the National Council of Urban Indian Health, 78% of Native Americans in the United States live in urban areas, but only about 1% of the Indian Health Services budget is allocated to urban programs.

"We don't want to explain the misconceptions, or be able to have to educate a provider about our lived experiences," Sutton said.

In honor of Native American Heritage Month, King spoke to the Eyewitness News Belong team about her heritage and journey from growing up on a reservation to helping others find and reconnect with their own roots through community events.

The community center is a milestone, but the organization needs donations to start providing direct services to those in need.

"This is important to me because I grew up in the power circle, and I grew up connected to my traditions and my culture, very proud to be afro-indigenous," Sutton said. "But I also understood and saw a lot of the challenges that my community experiences."

Challenges she hopes to break down.

*To learn more
about the Urban
Indigenous
Collective
or to make
a donation,
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code below.*





POARCH 101

Spirituality, Stomp Dance, & Ceremonial Ways

By Greg McGhee and Justin “Bobo” Rolin

Spirituality is a general concept that is about exploring the deeper meaning and purpose of life. This concept is different for everyone. It may include practices such as self-reflection or meditation, but the overall goal is to connect with something greater than ourselves. Spirituality is the foundation upon which one can build their beliefs. Exploring one’s spirituality can help cultivate a deeper sense of meaning and overall well-being.

For Indigenous people, spirituality is intertwined with their cultural identity, beliefs, and practices. This serves as a way to symbolically connect to one’s ancestors. Spirituality provides a foundation of values, traditions, and community for Indigenous people. These foundations serve as a source of strength, guidance, and resilience in many Indigenous cultures.

Mvskoke Creeks traditionally have always had a deep connection with nature and the land itself. Every action had a purpose or reason that had spiritual symbolism behind

them. Ceremonies and storytelling play very important roles in Creek spirituality as well. These ceremonies are deeply rooted in Mvskoke Creek culture and help serve as important expressions of their spirituality.

The most important of these ceremonies would have been “Vce Lane em Pusketv” otherwise known as the Green Corn Ceremony. The Green Corn Ceremony was for cleansing and it is said that anything could be forgiven during this time. There are many stories that explain the actions taken at this ceremony. Within the meaning of each story, there is a moral and reason behind why we do things this way. This ceremony is also known as a time for spiritual renewal for many Creeks. It is said that this ceremony once lasted over two weeks long! Today, Creek Indians are able to finish this grueling, yet, rewarding experience in just one weekend.

It is said that the Opvkv Haco or “Stomp dance” was created so the night would pass by faster during the ceremony. Indigenous people of the southeast, including



Indigenous people of the southeast, including Creeks, have been stomp dancing for thousands of years. This dance is one of the oldest known dances in existence today.



PICTURED ABOVE
Deer Toe Shaker

Creeks, have been stomp dancing (or a form of it) for thousands of years. This dance is one of the oldest known dances in existence today. The dance wouldn't start until after the sun went down and it would last until the morning.

In order to properly stomp dance, there must be a Honvnwv ho nun wuh (Male) and a Hokte hoke dee (Female). The men sing, while the women keep the rhythm. A beautiful rhythmic sound is made by shakers that are tied onto the women's legs. These shakers are tied onto women's legs. Traditionally, these shakers would have been made of deer toes or turtle shells. In today's modern society, condensed milk or tomato paste cans are used to make these shakers. The leaders (men), who are called out to start and lead the dance. The pattern of the dance is man, woman, man, woman, and so on. The stomp dance moves in a counter clock wise motion around the ceremonial fire from which the smoke carries our prayers up to the Creator. Throughout the night, different leaders will be picked to lead each dance until the sun comes up. As the dance concludes, the men folk are dismissed and it's time to eat. Hompaks ci!

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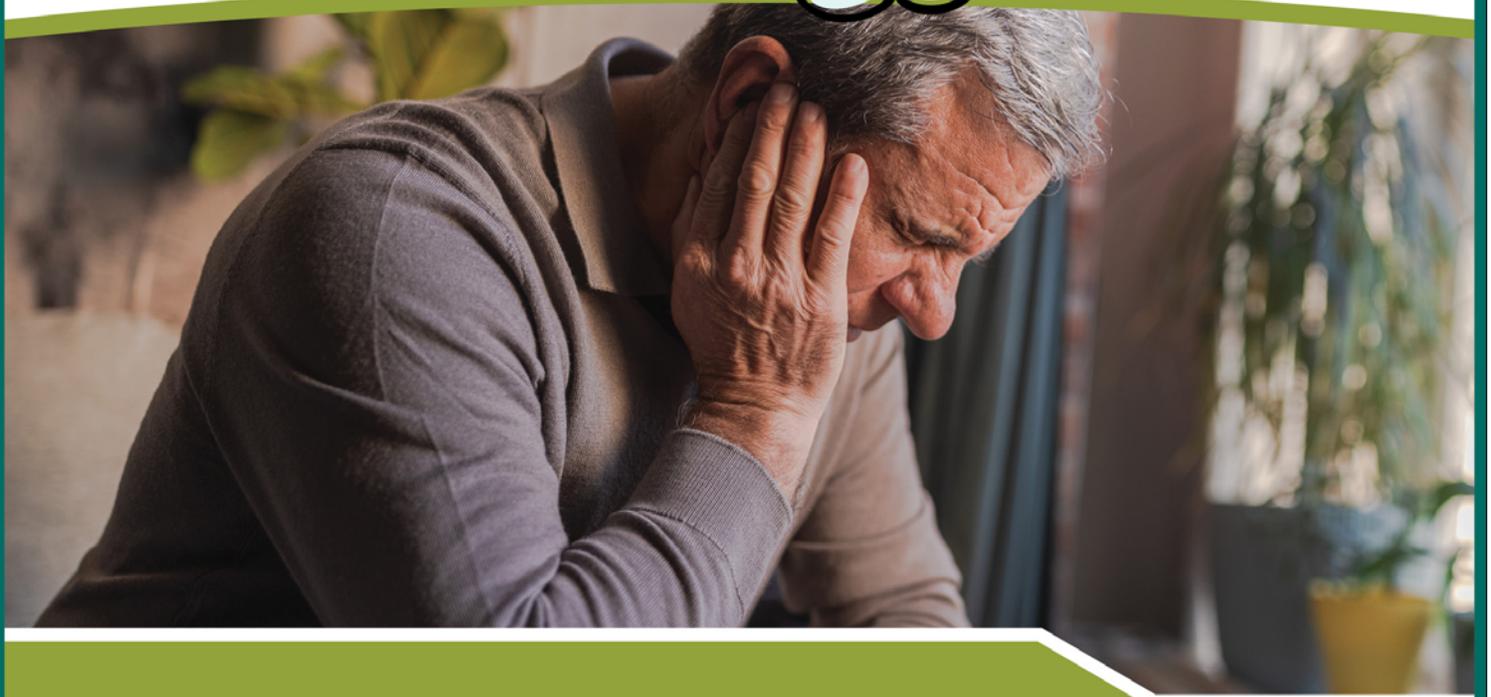
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Elizabeth Pickett, Au.D., CCC-A

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



ROCK ART BY ANCIENT ARTISTS AT PAINTED BLUFF

By Deidra Suwanee Dees, Ed.D.

“

T

he cosmos is revealed through the painted art by precontact Native Americans,” said Dr. Jan E. Simek to the audience at his book talk at the University of South Alabama on March 21, 2024.

He explained that Indigenous peoples, perhaps 500 to 700 years ago, had painted rock art on the face of the giant bluff in present-day Painted Bluff, Alabama. They painted cosmology symbols of circles, circles inside circles, and circles with sunrays which were documented in his book, *The Cosmos Revealed*, co-authored by Erin E. Dunsmore, Johannes Loubser, and Sierra M. Bow.

The USA Native American Student Association (NASA) sponsored the event which was attended by officers Brandon Schonour and Caitlyn Lambeth. NASA President Schonour said, “Through funds made available by the Poarch Creek Indians, NASA was thrilled to sponsor Dr. Simek’s book talk that discusses an especially significant site regarding Indigenous history and culture in the State. It was great for the members of our campus community to hear about the importance of the site and the efforts that are being made to preserve it.”

Tribal Historic Preservation Specialist Billy Bailey, who attended the event, said, “This book, and research like it, is

important to the history of Creek people and the history of Alabama. I appreciate NASA bringing in Dr. Simek to speak on this topic. He is spreading the word of the importance of the paintings on the bluff. These paintings show who we are; who our ancestors are.”

“I think visiting the Painted Bluff would make a good fieldtrip for our Senior Reading Program,” Bailey added. “I would like to go visit one day.”

“Some of the circles inside squares look like the layout of the stomp dance grounds,” said Douglas Kelley who attended the event with his wife, Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees. He serves as Henehv (second chief) of *Hvsossv Tvllahasse* Ceremonial Grounds.

Upon returning to their home in Tullis Manor after the book talk, Henehv and his wife looked around and realized they had similar symbols of the rock art in their home. There is a leather wall hanging of a circle inside a circle that was gifted to Dr. Dees from Dora Blackburn (1946-2010) who was like a mother-in-law to her in that she was a second mother to her husband. Blackburn was looked upon as the *beloved woman* of the ceremonial grounds.

There is an art drawing displayed on the wall of their home made by Henehv’s brother, John Kelley, which depicts



a circle inside a circle. The late Robert Thrower, Jr. (1961-2017) said he discovered that Kelley was drawing ancient symbols of our ancestors before he ever saw the symbols, something Thrower said was inborn.

There are three sunrise representations in their home on the storm door, the entrance door, and the makeup mirror which parallel the enigmatic sunrise glyphs that ancient artists painted on the bluff. The half circle with sunrays could represent the sunrise as a central part of the ancient artists' day.

The cross inside circle glyphs parallel the cross inside circle on several of their walls depicting what we reference as the modern-day medicine wheel, some of which came from the Tribe's Thanksgiving Pow Wow. There are multiple glyphs like this on the rock art which demonstrate the level of importance of this symbol.

Ancient artists painted rock art of bird glyphs, some of which may depict the woodpecker. One wall in their home displays a pileated woodpecker carving by Henehv who is an award-winning Tribal artisan. He said the pileated woodpecker represents the war bird.

Hvsossv Tvllahasse Ceremonial Grounds Micco (first chief) Paul Bell, Jr. said, "The woodpecker represents warriors (*tvstvnvke*) at the stomp grounds who are considered protector of people of the grounds. I know that only people who have been in military wear Pileated Woodpecker feather."

"The opportunity to bring an internationally renowned archaeologist, Dr. Simek, to speak about one of the great cultural sites in Alabama, Painted Bluff, which brought together USA students, Poarch Creek Indians Citizens, faculty, staff, and members of the public in the Chief Calvin McGhee Ballroom is what we had in mind when starting the Native American Studies Program in 2014. The generosity and support from the Tribal Council is what makes these events possible," said Dr. Philip Carr, the USA Chief Calvin McGhee Professor of Native American Studies. "We look forward to what the future will bring."

Staff purchased an autographed copy of Dr. Simek's book which is available in the Leola McGhee Manac Special Collections Library at the Office of Archives and Records Management, 100 Brookwood Road in Atmore. You are welcome to make an appointment by calling (251) 446-4942 to come in and look at this amazing book. You might find out that you have similar symbols as the rock art in your own home. *Mvto*.



PICTURED ABOVE

Woodpecker, Painted Rock Art at Painted Bluff, Alabama

PICTURED RIGHT

Top: Cross Inside Circle, Painted Rock Art at Painted Bluff, Alabama

Second Down: Circle Inside Square, Painted Rock Art at Painted Bluff, Alabama

Third Down: Circle Inside Circle, Painted Rock Art at Painted Bluff, Alabama

Bottom: Half Circle With Sunrays, Painted Rock Art at Painted Bluff, Alabama



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

MAL MCGHEE AND PCI FEDERAL SERVICES

By Jamie Sawyer



MAL MCGHEE

Founder, PCI Federal Services

Mal McGhee was born to humble beginnings in Poarch, Alabama, but you could say he was destined to lead. You could also say that while growing up in the heart of the Poarch Creek community, he never imagined the success he or the Tribe would achieve throughout the years. McGhee began his employment in 1992 and served in various leadership roles, then in 2016, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians founded Ecke Holding Company, of which McGhee was its first employee and is a valuable leader in Federal contracting today.

How he landed in this position was the result of decades of experience that didn't always come easy. McGhee's father was a full-blooded Creek Indian and the descendant on of Lynn McGhee, the original leader of the Creek Indians that is known today as the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. In 1836, Congress granted Lynn McGhee the land where the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation now stands off I-65 in Atmore, Alabama. When Mal was growing up, his father was a sharecropper and timber worker before opening a community store and mechanic shop across the street from the current Powwow Grounds. He was also a leader in the Head of Perdido community, an early Creek settlement at the headwaters of the Perdido River. He worked with Chief Calvin McGhee and others to lay the groundwork that eventually led to the Creek Indians being federally recognized.

As the youngest of four siblings, Mal was only four when his father passed away. A year later he started first grade at the Consolidated Indian School, a segregated school set up by Escambia County, Alabama to provide Indian



children with an education through the sixth grade. When he finished third grade, Indians were allowed to attend Atmore public schools, so he and about a dozen other Indian children transferred to the public elementary school in Atmore. Because the curriculum at the public schools differed so much from that at the Indian School, McGhee faced many struggles, both educationally and emotionally, but he persevered and completed his education in Atmore.

When Mal was a young teenager, a retired Airforce fighter pilot married a local teacher, moved into the community, and built a runway. He was awestruck and found a passion for aviation that would never leave him. After graduating from Escambia County High School, Mal pursued that passion and became a licensed airplane mechanic. In more technical jargon, he studied to work on both the airframe and powerplant of aircraft, earning an A&P license. After working at Montgomery Aviation for three years, he returned closer to home

When Mal was a young teenager, a retired Air Force fighter pilot... moved into the community and built a runway. He was awestruck and found a passion for aviation that would never leave him.

and became an aircraft mechanic for the Navy at Whiting Field, in Milton, Florida, where he worked for the next twelve years.

During this time, McGhee was elected as a Tribal Council Member and served in several capacities to include Treasurer, Secretary, and held an at-large seat prior to and after the Poarch Band of Creek Indians became federally recognized in 1984. Part of that effort was the founding of Creek Indian Enterprises. As the Tribal Council Treasurer, he held a position on the Creek Indian Enterprises Board of Directors, where he helped lay the foundation for early Tribal economic development and was part of their first acquisition, a manufacturing company that eventually became Muskogee Metalworks. As an aircraft mechanic, it was a natural transition to take the reins of this newly acquired manufacturing company, where he transformed it into a state-of-the art aerospace manufacturing facility, Muskogee Technology.

As the leader of this company, McGhee networked with Federal organizations and other tribal companies and learned about programs within the Small Business Administration (SBA) that could benefit disadvantaged citizens. He spearheaded the effort to become SBA 8(a) certified and, at the time, could easily prove that the Tribe was indeed economically disadvantaged. This helped open the door to federal contracts and programs that had previously been difficult, if not impossible, to win.



In a way, McGhee's life has come full circle. As a young man, he was actively involved in the struggle to become federally recognized. As a professional, he honed his skills and sought out opportunities to improve the way of life for his Tribe through economic development.

Gaining expertise and knowledge over these next two decades, he knew that it was time to develop the Tribe's Federal services organization. With the help of Chad Klinck, CFO, Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority, Ecke Holding Company was born. Since its inception, the Tribe has acquired or founded more than a dozen businesses with 8(a) designations and has grown its relationship with federal agencies. Today, all of these 8(a) designated companies operate under the Ecke Holding Company, DBA PCI Federal Services, umbrella, which offers a diverse portfolio of solutions providing everything from aviation and manufacturing services to facilities management, construction, and IT and employs a variety of professionals from aircraft mechanics, electrical and mechanical engineers, and IT professionals.

In a way, McGhee's life has come full circle. As a young man he was actively involved in the struggle to become federally recognized. As a professional, he honed his skills and sought out opportunities to improve the way of life for his Tribe through economic development. And now, he continues to set an example for the next generation of Tribal leadership, blazing a trail of success that is hard to ignore. Before the Tribe ever built its first casino and resort, McGhee was a business and Tribal leader working for his people. Today, PCI Federal Services has truly become a collection of growing companies that will sustain generations of Tribal Citizens and thousands of employees around the world for years to come.

Quick Facts about PCI Federal Services

NUMBER OF COMPANIES

There are 14 LLCs under PCI Federal Services; which increases to 15 companies including Muskogee Technology. Four of these companies are in start-up mode and are not currently slated to generate revenue.

8A CERTIFICATIONS

Nine of the 14 companies are certified under the SBA 8a program. Additionally, three companies are HUBZone certified.

SERVICES

The primary focus is on staffing for federal government projects, ranging from IT to janitorial work. They also generate revenue from construction and manufacturing.

WHAT IS 8A?

The SBA grants 8a status to disadvantaged individuals, tribes, Alaskan, and Hawaiian natives, making it easier for these companies to secure federal contracts. The goal is to grow beyond the 8a program.

JOINT VENTURES

The division is involved in 14 joint ventures, seven of which have already won contracts. This number is expected to increase.

COMPARATIVE STANDING

While there isn't a consolidated list, it is likely PCI Federal Services ranks among the top 50 Alaskan native and tribal entities nationally. Some Alaskan entities surpass \$1 billion in annual revenue.

HIRING TRIBAL MEMBERS

There is a priority to hire PCI Tribal Citizens and their descendants. This year, four Tribal Citizens were added to the training program.

HEADQUARTERS

Their headquarters are in Atmore, Alabama, with key offices in Huntsville, Reston, Virginia, and San Antonio, Texas.

To learn more, visit pcifederalservices.com or scan the QR code.





THE FOURTH IS JUST THE *Beginning!*



July celebrations begin with OWA's three-day July 4th celebration, 7/4-7/6 with fireworks 7/6! The fun just keeps coming with OWA Live on 7/6, 13, 20 & 27. Come back and help us celebrate the birthday of our mascot, Tuki, on 7/20. Crowd-favorite Island Day is 7/27, and check out the lineup at OWA Theater with a singer-songwriter showcase on 7/7 and two epic tribute shows—Purple Madness: a tribute to Prince is 7/5 & 6 and The Evolution of Beyoncé, 7/20! Check the calendar and plan your summer fun at VisitOWA.com!

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A close-up photograph of a pitcher plant (Sarracenia) with its characteristic reddish-pink, veined leaves and funnel-shaped traps. The background is a soft-focus natural setting.

“
Our culture
depends
on what
the land
provides.”

SEHOY THROWER

THE POARCH CREEK INDIAN WETLAND INVENTORY

By Sehoj Thrower

Wetlands lie low in the landscape, where rainwater collects and groundwater is close to the surface. They are the kidneys of the earth. Like kidneys, they filter waste and water. Wetlands do this for the land, soaking up runoff and pollution. Without them, our waterways become polluted, and wildlife loses its home and clean water.

These places are rich with life. Near us, wetlands are home to many plants and animals. Some of our wetlands are famously known, like the pitcher plant bogs with their insect-eating plants. We also have grady ponds, white cedar forests, bayhead forests, and lilyponds. Many medicinal plants and the waterfowl we hunt rely on these habitats.

The Poarch Creek Indians has been fortunate to bring many acres of land back into Tribal management. After a while, it became difficult to wrap our heads around what we had on all this newly acquired land. That's why the PCI Environmental Department took on the task of creating a Wetland Inventory.

We mapped the different types of wetlands on our roughly 20,000 acres of Tribal land. We detailed the plants and features of special sites, like the pitcher plant bogs and grady ponds with mayhaw trees that our elders love to make jelly from.

This inventory will make land management decisions easier for our Land and Forestry Department, and will improve the possibilities for our Cultural Department, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and more. Our culture depends on what the land provides. Recognizing and protecting our natural resources preserves our legacy as Creek people.

For more information on this project and our ongoing work with wetlands, call extension 2398 at the Tribal Offices. Mvto to our Tribal leadership for supporting our work to protect these special places for the future.



Uncovering the Influence of Indigenous Music

RUMBLE: THE INDIANS WHO ROCKED THE WORLD

By Ashlee “Katie” Mothershed

Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World is a captivating documentary that highlights the profound influence of Native American musicians on popular music genres. Directed by Catherine Bainbridge and Alfonso Maiorana, the film reveals the hidden history of Indigenous contributions to rock, blues, jazz, and more.

Key Highlights Include:

LINK WRAY’S POWER CHORDS

His 1958 hit “Rumble” introduced the power chord, influencing hard rock and punk.

BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE’S ARTISTRY

A trailblazing folk musician and advocate for Indigenous rights.

• **JIMI HENDRIX’S CHEROKEE ROOTS**

Exploring the Native heritage of the legendary guitarist.

• **RANDY CASTILLO’S LEGACY**

The Apache drummer who brought a unique rhythm to heavy metal.

Rumble is a celebration of diversity and the resilience of Native American musicians. Available on various streaming platforms, it’s a must-watch for music history enthusiasts.

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 Katie Mothershed at kmothershed@pci-nsn.gov.

For more information,
contact Bernie White at
bwhite@pci-nsn.gov or
(251) 368-9136 ext. 2316.

ANNUAL RABIES CLINIC

**Saturday, August 3, 2024
8am – 11am*
Fire Station #1**

Jack Springs Road, Atmore

*or until vaccines run out

Dogs/Cats - up to two animals per Tribal Member. Animal must be at least 16 weeks old to receive vaccination. Animal must be secured in a kennel, cage, and/or leash. **Tribal Member must present Tribal ID.**



**ENVIRONMENTAL
DEPARTMENT**



PERDIDO RIVER FARMS: A DAY IN THE LIFE

By Ashlee “Katie” Mothershed

Perdido River Farms (PRF) spans 2,900 acres of fertile land. The land’s rich agricultural history is carefully preserved and nurtured through modern techniques like soil testing, proper fertilization, and rotational grazing. PRF is not just a farm but a testament to the Tribe’s commitment to sustainable and high-quality farming practices. It is also a hub of community activity, hosting events like the Escambia County Youth Livestock Association Steer & Heifer Show and the Alabama South District FFA Fall Eliminations.

PRF is home to over 700 head of cows and 35 bulls, with its operations closely aligned with USDA’s NRCS Tribal Office to ensure the best stewardship practices. But what does a typical day look like for the workers who make this operation thrive? Here, we delve into the daily lives and experiences of PRF’s dedicated team.

A TYPICAL DAY ON THE FARM

Each day at PRF begins with the sunrise, casting a golden hue over the sprawling pastures. Austin Long, Cattle Tech, starts his day by checking four different pastures, making sure the cows and calves are healthy and have everything they need. His routine includes inspecting water troughs and fences, and ensuring the cattle have minerals and lick tubes. For Austin, riding through the cattle and witnessing new calves being born are the highlights of his day. The sense of accomplishment from seeing them grow and eventually providing quality meat for the community is deeply rewarding.

Meanwhile, Wade Kent, Cattle Tech, moves cattle to better grazing areas. His days are unpredictable, often

involving a mix of plumbing, fixing fences, and doctoring sick animals. The variety keeps him engaged and he enjoys being outdoors and working alongside his fellow employees.

Jamey Phillip’s, Ag Tech, tasks vary from feeding and working cattle to cutting and baling hay. He may spend time planting grass for the cattle or assisting a neighbor. His days are filled with the satisfaction of working with a great team and contributing to the community’s well-being.

Coley McGhee’s, Cattle Tech, focus is on ensuring the herds have ample food, water, and shade. During calving season, he meticulously tracks the calves, ensuring accurate records. When not attending to his herds, Coley is busy with various tasks like cutting, raking, baling hay, bush hogging, and fixing or building fences. He loves his job and the camaraderie among his coworkers, making every day enjoyable despite the hard work.

John English, PRF Director, finds that no two days are the same. His responsibilities range from overseeing hay production and grass planting to vaccinating cattle and assisting with births. He also manages meetings and gives tours of the farm. John values the sense of accomplishment that comes from working with a dedicated team to showcase the Tribal lands and produce quality cattle.

Perdido River Farms is not just a farm but a testament to the Tribe’s commitment to sustainable and high-quality farming practices.

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POARCH CREEK INDIANS' SUPPORT HELPS KEEP ALABAMA CHILDREN SAFE

By Lauren Giddeons

T

he Poarch Creek Indians have supported Children First for many years. Children First, a non-profit, non-partisan group of statewide leaders, serves as a driving force to shape public policy and enhance the quality of life for the children and families in Alabama.

The Tribe donates \$25,000 annually to help this important mission. The Tribe also believes in the spirit of volunteerism with this organization with Robbie McGhee, Poarch Creek Indians Vice Chair and Chief Governmental Affairs Officer, serving on their board.

“The funds donated by the Poarch Creek Indians are used to support our lobbying arm of Children First,” said Katie Jeter, executive director for the organization. “These funds are crucial to our mission to advocate for Alabama children in the legislature. Without these funds, we would not be able to do the work that we do.”

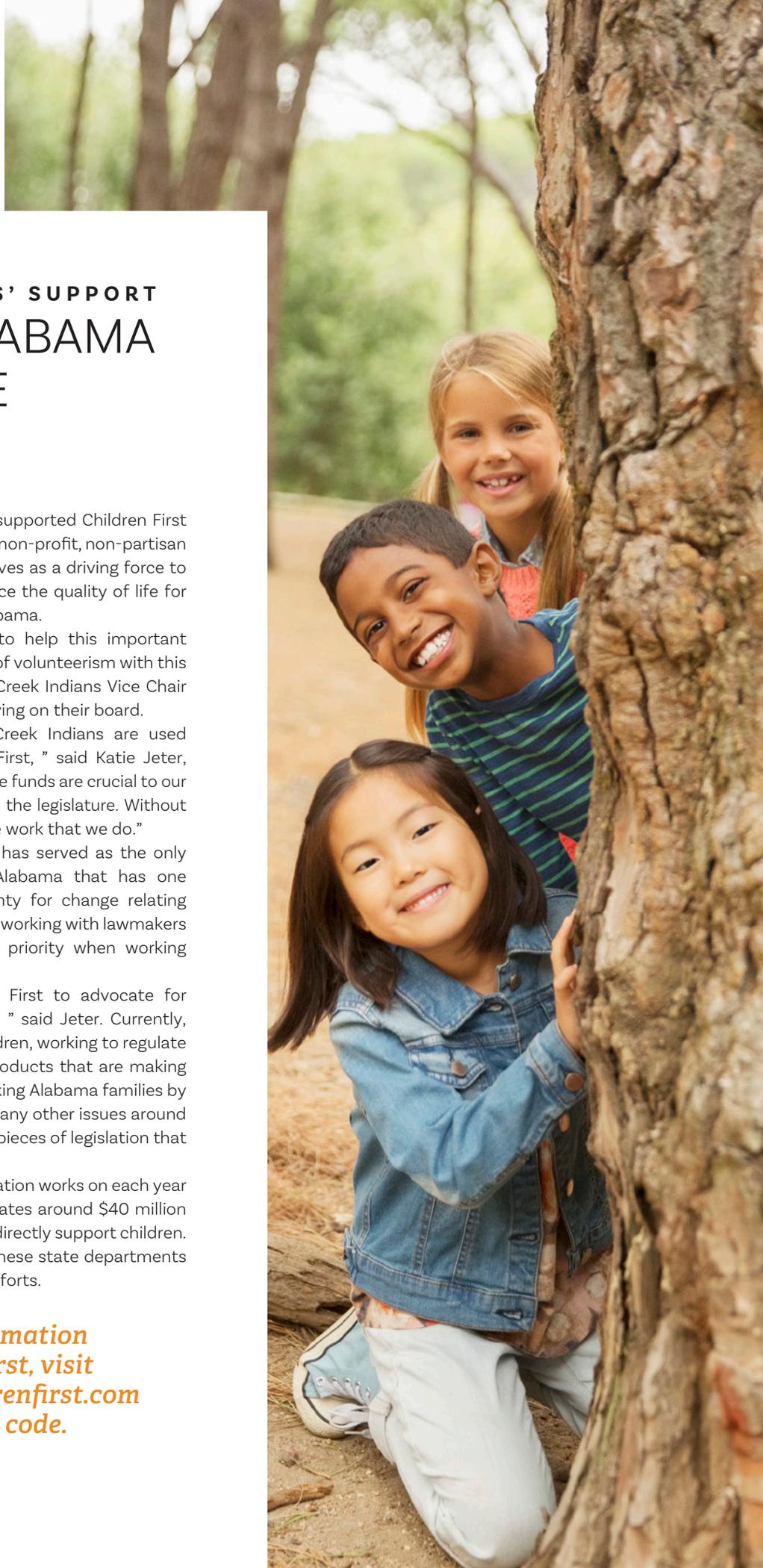
For more than 29 years, Children First has served as the only children’s organization in the state of Alabama that has one job—protecting children. They work diligently for change relating to children and children’s services, including working with lawmakers to ensure children are kept as the main priority when working on legislation.

“The Tribe’s support enables Children First to advocate for Alabama children in the state house daily,” said Jeter. Currently, they are advocating for Alabama foster children, working to regulate the vape industry and the harmful vape products that are making children sick, along with advocating for working Alabama families by helping with tax credits for childcare, and many other issues around the state. They also monitor more than 150 pieces of legislation that directly affect children.

The main piece of legislation the organization works on each year is the Children First Trust Fund, which allocates around \$40 million dollars to Alabama state departments that directly support children. Children First also works very closely with these state departments and other organizations supporting these efforts.



For more information on Children First, visit alabamachildrenfirst.com or scan the QR code.





WIND CREEK HOSPITALITY TEAM MEMBERS LEND A HELPING HAND AT GULF COAST FOOD BANK

By Amelia Tognoli



Wind Creek Hospitality's Sponsorship and Events team and Wind Creek team members recently volunteered at Feeding the Gulf Coast—an organization dedicated to supplementing the food bank network and ending hunger.

"Giving back has always been a part of Wind Creek and the Poarch Creek Indians' values. Our elders and ancestors believed strongly in the tradition of helping others, which they instilled in the generations after them," said Tiffany Bryan, Sponsorship and Events Supervisor at Wind Creek Hospitality. "These efforts drastically increase the quality of life for so many—yielding a ripple of positive changes within the community."

Missy Busby, the Volunteer Manager at Feeding the Gulf Coast, said they rely on organizations like Wind Creek and the Poarch Creek Indians to get the word out to the community—ensuring that volunteers want to visit and help.

"The impact that generous individuals make when they help us provide nutritious food to the community and our neighbors is priceless," Busby said. "Not only that, but they also helped us save over two million dollars in expenses last year."

Feeding the Gulf Coast, formerly Bay Area Food Bank, is a partner food bank of Feeding America, the nation's leading domestic hunger relief charity. It operates three branches along the central Gulf Coast: Gulfport, Mississippi; Theodore, Alabama; and Milton, Florida.

During the event, Wind Creek team members were able to sort over 100 boxes of food that will be distributed to select areas.

"Feeding the Gulf Coast provides a great service to the community," said Trina Rackard, Director of Sponsorships and Events at Wind Creek Hospitality. "We are thankful for everything they do and want to ensure we do our part to supplement their dedicated efforts."

“

These efforts drastically increase the quality of life for so many—yielding a ripple of positive changes within the community.

**TIFFANY BRYAN,
SPONSORSHIP AND EVENTS
SUPERVISOR AT WIND
CREEK HOSPITALITY**

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POARCH CREEK INDIANS

PROUDLY SUPPORTS ALABAMA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

By Lauren Giddeons

The Poarch Creek Indians is a longtime partner of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival (ASF), and continues to support their mission of community building by engaging, entertaining, and inspiring people through theater.

“As a leading investor in ASF’s statewide student-matinee program, SchoolFest, the Poarch Creek Indians and its generous support are essential to enabling students across Alabama to experience the wonder of stories brought to life on ASF’s stages,” said Eve Loeb, Development Director for ASF.

The Tribe is a major investor in SchoolFest which attracts tens of thousands of students across Alabama each year. Online study guide materials for each play enable teachers to incorporate the plays into students’ curriculum, enriching their classroom experience as well as their experience as audience members in SchoolFest performances. Post-show discussions with cast members allow students to ask questions as they learn more about the art of being an actor and producing plays.

“As the only fully professional producing theater in Alabama, ASF depends on the generosity of foundations, individuals, businesses, and local government, of which the Poarch Creek Indians is a leading investor,” said Loeb.

Each of ASF’s productions are handmade - from the actors who are individually cast for each role, sets and costumes which are handmade in the shops in the theater’s complex, to the directors and designers who envision each play, along with the administrators who carry out the business of operating the theater.

“PCI’s support ultimately affords students the opportunity to experience various cultures, time periods, ideas and people within each play- broadening their understanding of history, place, and people while sparking their imaginations.”



For a list of the remaining 2024 Alabama Shakespeare Festival shows, scan the QR code below.



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Are you interested in starting your own business?

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians TERO department has joined with the Alabama Small Business Development Center out of the University of Alabama to provide free quarterly seminars called *Building Your Business in '24*. The series will include seminars on planning, financing, starting, and marketing your business. Those wanting to move faster can receive no cost assistance from the ASBDC by registering at asbdc.org.

PLANNING

March 5, 2024 | 11:00am-1:00pm

FINANCING

May 7, 2024 | 11:00am-1:00pm

STARTING

August 20, 2024 | 11:00am-1:00pm

MARKETING

October 29, 2024 | 11:00am-1:00pm

TO REGISTER, email Jennifer Reynolds at jreynolds@pci-nsn.gov. All seminars will be held online and in-person at Building 200, First Floor Conference Room.

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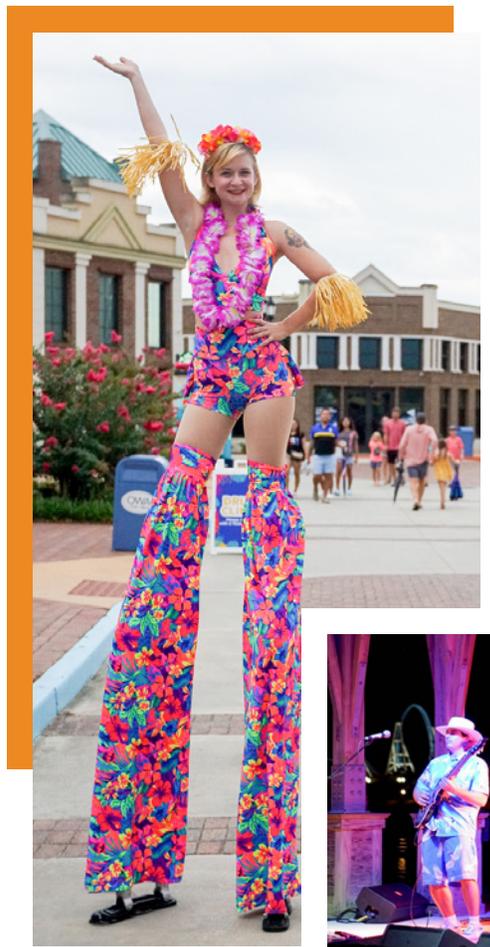


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SUMMER OF FUN AT OWA

By Catherine Hasty

G

ear up for a summer of fun this July at OWA Parks & Resort. Grab your family and friends and help us make our biggest splash yet with events to help beat the summer heat!

Bring the entire family out to celebrate the 4th of July with us! Throughout the weekend, July 4, 5, & 6, we have a lineup of events perfect for kids and adults. This free event has everything from a Patriotic Costume Contest to a Hot Dog Eating Contest! PLUS, enjoy a spectacular fireworks show on Saturday, July 6, synchronized with patriotic music playing throughout the property. The fireworks will go off at 8:50 pm sharp and can be seen in the air over Downtown OWA & Tropic Falls. Come ready to enjoy the show and indulge in the fun!

Mark your calendars and join the excitement as Tuki, everyone's favorite colorful Toucan gears up to celebrate another fabulous Birthday! The highly anticipated Tuki's Birthday Celebration is set to take place on July 20, promising a day filled with joy and laughter. This is a party you're not going to want to miss!

Make summer waves with our NEW Big Splash Pilsner! This refreshing new brew created by OWA Parks & Resort and Braided Rived Brewing Co. is set to make waves this summer! From NOW until Labor Day, enjoy Big Splash exclusively at Towne Tap and Libations and Breakers Bar & Grill inside Tropic Falls. Don't miss this limited-time opportunity to savor the crisp, cool taste of summer!

OWA Live Summer Concert Series is still bringing fun at the Island Amphitheater! This FREE summer concert series includes a sizzling hot lineup of live music! From indie rock bands at The Forum to award-winning sibling duo Dorsten, these free concerts offer something for every music lover!



Grab your favorite cold beverage to-go from any Downtown OWA restaurant, and join us on the Island.

Experience a July filled with diverse musical tributes at OWA Theater! From the iconic 'Purple Madness' paying homage to Prince on July 5 & 6, to the local talent shining at Songs & Stories Open Mic Night on July 18. The Songwriters Showcase on July 19 features Muscle Shoals' best, and 'The Beyonce Experience' electrifies on July 20. Finally, honor the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, on July 27. Don't miss these unforgettable celebrations of music legends! Secure your tickets before they sell out at OWATheater.com.

You can always 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.

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CONGRATULATIONS

**HALONA MAKINZE WALKER
REPRESENTED JU BLACKSHER
AND THE POARCH CREEK INDIANS
AT ALABAMA GIRLS STATE**

Sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), Alabama Girls State is a premier youth leadership program that took place June 2-7 on the campus of Troy University. Alabama Girls State is a week-long, hands-on learning opportunity for some of the best and brightest young women in Alabama.

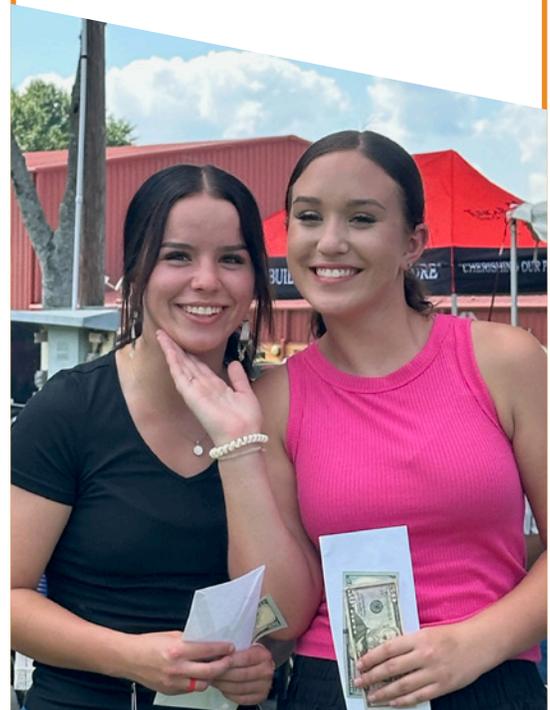
The program epitomizes the ALA’s mission to honor those who have brought us our freedom through our enduring commitment to develop young women as future leaders grounded in patriotism and Americanism. The young women become knowledgeable of the democratic process and how our republic form of government works at the state and national levels.

CONGRATULATIONS

**BAILEY SISTERS
TAKE TEEN JINGLE
DRESS TOP PLACES
AT TUNICA-BILOXI
POW WOW**

Kadence Bailey (17) and Poarcha Bailey (13) took the top two places in the Teen jingle dress dance category at the 26th Annual Tunica-Biloxi Pow Wow in Marksville, Louisiana that took place May 18-19. Both young ladies are daughters of the late Tribal Citizen Jake Bailey and granddaughters of Tribal Citizen William Bailey, Sr. Both girls have been dancing in pow wows and stomp dancing (traditional Creek) since they could walk and have been blessed to be in the Poarch Creek Indian Pow Wow Club for several years.

We are so proud of them both for their hard-work and dedication!





SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Poarch Creek Indians is participating in the Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all children without charge. Acceptance and participation requirements for the program and all SFSP activities are the same for all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, and there will be no discrimination during the meal service. Meals will be provided at all sites listed on the attached form showing the specified start and end times for meals.

Breakfast and lunch will be served beginning May 28, 2024, until August 6, 2024, Monday through Friday. No program on July 4, 2024, due to national holiday.

Breakfast will be served from 7:30-9:00 am.

Lunch will be served from 11:00-1:30 pm.

Location of service is 517 Martin Road, Atmore. AL.

Contact Genia Boutwell at 251-368-9136 ext. 2242 for additional information.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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CREEK CORNER

JULY 2024 IMPORTANT DATES

7.1	SUBMISSION DEADLINE August Issue	
7.1-7.2	MUSEUM CLOSED Inventory	
7.4	TRIBAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED Independence Day	
7.18	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	4:00 PM