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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS

# creek corner

*Honoring*  
OUR  
*Matriarchy*

THE POWER OF NATIVE  
REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA

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Ashlee “Katie” Mothershed  
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**MEGAN ZAMORA**

*Editor, Creek Corner*

## FROM THE EDITOR: ENGAGING IN RESPECTFUL DISCOURSE

“

**T**he Tribal political season is in full-swing and thus, we as Tribal Citizens gear our thoughts towards the future of the Tribe and how the candidates impact that reality. Like many of you, I was surprised when I saw the list of this year’s candidates who had signed up by the deadline: a total of four candidates for three positions. Not accounting for any potential write-ins, incumbent Vice Chairman Robbie McGhee is running unopposed, and incumbent At-Large Council Members Keith Martin and Sandy Hollinger are running for two positions against newcomer Danny Jackson.

The significantly low participation in running for an elected position at PCI begs the question, why? While I leave you to your own thoughts on the answer to that question, one additional important question comes to mind: Do we allow the space for respectful discourse within our PCI Tribal politics?

Respectful discourse is a way of communicating and discussing ideas with others in a polite, considerate, and courteous manner, even when there are disagreements or differences of opinion. It involves listening to others, expressing your views calmly and respectfully, and avoiding personal attacks or insults.

At its core, politics is about negotiation, compromise, and the pursuit of common goals for the betterment of society and, for us, the Poarch Creek Indians. However, politics can also be a tumultuous arena where positions often clash and heated arguments ensue. This can in turn make respectful discourse seem like an elusive ideal. The rise of social media and the 24-hour news cycle have only served to exacerbate this trend, turning political discourse into a battleground where insults and personal attacks reign supreme.

Yet, now more than ever, it is imperative that we reassert the value of respectful dialogue in shaping our collective future and engaging in the essence of democracy itself. The forthcoming years of our country, state, and Tribe depend on it.

Democracy thrives on the free exchange of ideas and on the willingness to engage with perspectives that may differ from our own. Respectful discourse is not merely a nicety, it is the lifeblood of democracy and is essential for the health of our society.

When we engage in respectful dialogue, we create an environment where diverse voices are heard and valued. Engaging in this practice fosters empathy and understanding and builds bridges across divides of race, class, gender, and ideology. And, when we can’t respectfully disagree or share opposing ideas, a climate of resentment, division, and social unrest will arise.

Actively participating in respectful conversation and learning to disagree in a healthy way is everyone’s responsibility. This means listening with an open mind, speaking with civility, and treating others with dignity and respect, even (and especially) when we completely disagree.

I’m in no way advocating for us to shy away from robust debate or refrain from holding our leaders accountable. However, there is a world of difference between passionate disagreement and personal attacks. We can and must cultivate our ability to strongly oppose ideas without demonizing the individuals who hold them.

In the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, “To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public.” Criticism is not only permissible in a democracy – it is essential. But let us critique ideas, not people; let us engage in debate, not attack.

As we navigate the current complexities of today’s world, let us remember that our strength lies not in our ability to shout down our opponents, but in our capacity to listen, learn, and grow together. Only through respectful discourse can we hope to build a more just, inclusive, and prosperous society for generations to come.



# 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: A MESSAGE FROM JUSTIN STABLER

By Justin Stabler



## *Fellow Tribal Citizens,*

This past year has been a whirlwind of change as I settle into my new role as being an At-Large Tribal Council Member and my position of being the Vice President of Operations for H2 PCI, which is a subsidiary underneath PCI Federal Services (PCIFS). The last several months of serving as an elected official for the Tribe has truly been an honor for me. The privilege of representing you and our families is one that I cherish, and I hope to continue building upon the foundation that has been laid by the elders and leaders that came before me.

I'm excited to share some information and updates with you about PCIFS, sometimes referred to as Ecke.

PCIFS is an area of our Tribe's diversification and economic development that continues to thrive. I am proud to report to our citizenship that PCIFS is close to eclipsing the 1,000-employee mark. This key employee metric is pivotal in showing the success and strides that our government contracting arm of the Tribe is continuously making. Not only are we

providing advanced employment opportunities to Tribal Citizens and their descendants, but we are also able to offer those same opportunities to potential employees around the country and, in some cases, around the world. As we continue to win more federal contracts across various agencies like the Department of Defense, Internal Revenue Service, and the Centers for Disease Control, those employment opportunities will only increase.

Previously, I worked for PCI Aviation and helped support the U.S. Air Force. During my

time there, I witnessed the employment of veterans across all our companies. The Office of Federal

Contract Compliance Programs has a benchmark of hiring veterans at 5.2% for federal contractors. I'm proud to share that we exceed that benchmark. Of our nearly 1,000 employees, approximately 8.5% of those are veterans from all branches of the military. I count myself blessed to be part of an organization and Tribe that supports the military and offers employment opportunities to those that have served our country.

As we continue to grow at PCIFS, I encourage you to keep up with all the wonderful work that our group continues to produce. As we are awarded more federal contracts and bring on more management expertise, our position as a significant contributor in the government contracting sector strengthens.

While we currently have a significant number of Limited Liability Companies (LLCs) and Joint Ventures (JVs), Tribal Citizens will continue to witness the creation of additional LLCs and JVs which ultimately requires Tribal Council's approval. Ultimately, the formation of these companies is one way the Tribe leverages its status as a Tribally-owned entity to diversify its portfolio in the business sector.

At any point if you have any questions about PCIFS, which includes any of our companies, or the future of where I think we can take the government contracting side of the Tribe, I would welcome the opportunity to answer those for you. I would also encourage you to visit [www.pcifederaleservices.com](http://www.pcifederaleservices.com) to learn more about our organization and our current capabilities.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Tribal Council Member and if I can help you in any way, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. God Bless you, our families, and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

*Mvto,*

**JUSTIN STABLER**

“  
*As we are awarded more federal contracts and bring on more management expertise, our position as a significant contributor in the government contracting sector strengthens.*”



## DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

# TRIBAL MEMBER SERVICES

By Ashlee “Katie” Mothershed

The Poarch Creek Indians Tribal Member Benefits Department stands as a testament to the Tribe’s commitment to our Members’ prosperity and well-being. This department is a cornerstone of the Tribal Government, ensuring that the needs of our Members are met with compassion and efficiency. The department offers a comprehensive array of services designed to support Tribal Members in various aspects of their lives, including:

### **BURIAL ASSISTANCE**

Eligible Tribal Members are entitled to a burial assistance benefit payment of \$10,000 for funeral and burial expenses. This may be made directly to a funeral home, cemetery, or other provider of funeral service or to an assigned beneficiary with submission of an invoice with a \$0 balance (funeral expenses must be paid in full).

### **ELDER SUPPLEMENTAL INCOME SUPPORT**

This program provides supplemental income to address the needs of Tribal Members 55 and older with costs

associated with aging. There are 3 age groups and amounts: 55 - 59: \$330 per month, 60-64: \$385 per month, 65 & older: \$660 per month.

### **GENERAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE (GWA)**

This program addresses multiple welfare needs such as utilities, health, housing, transportation, educations, child-care, needs of the disabled, food & clothing. To be eligible for this program, each Tribal Member must submit and maintain creditable health insurance..



### LEGAL REIMBURSEMENT

An adult Tribal Member is eligible for assistance with approved legal fees each calendar year up to \$500. A legal service reimbursement form must be completed, along with supporting documentation that is listed on the form.

### PER CAPITA

Per Capital Funds are distributed each year to all Tribal Members 18 and older. The amount of funds and scheduled payments are determined by Tribal Council each year.

### BIRTHDAY CHECKS

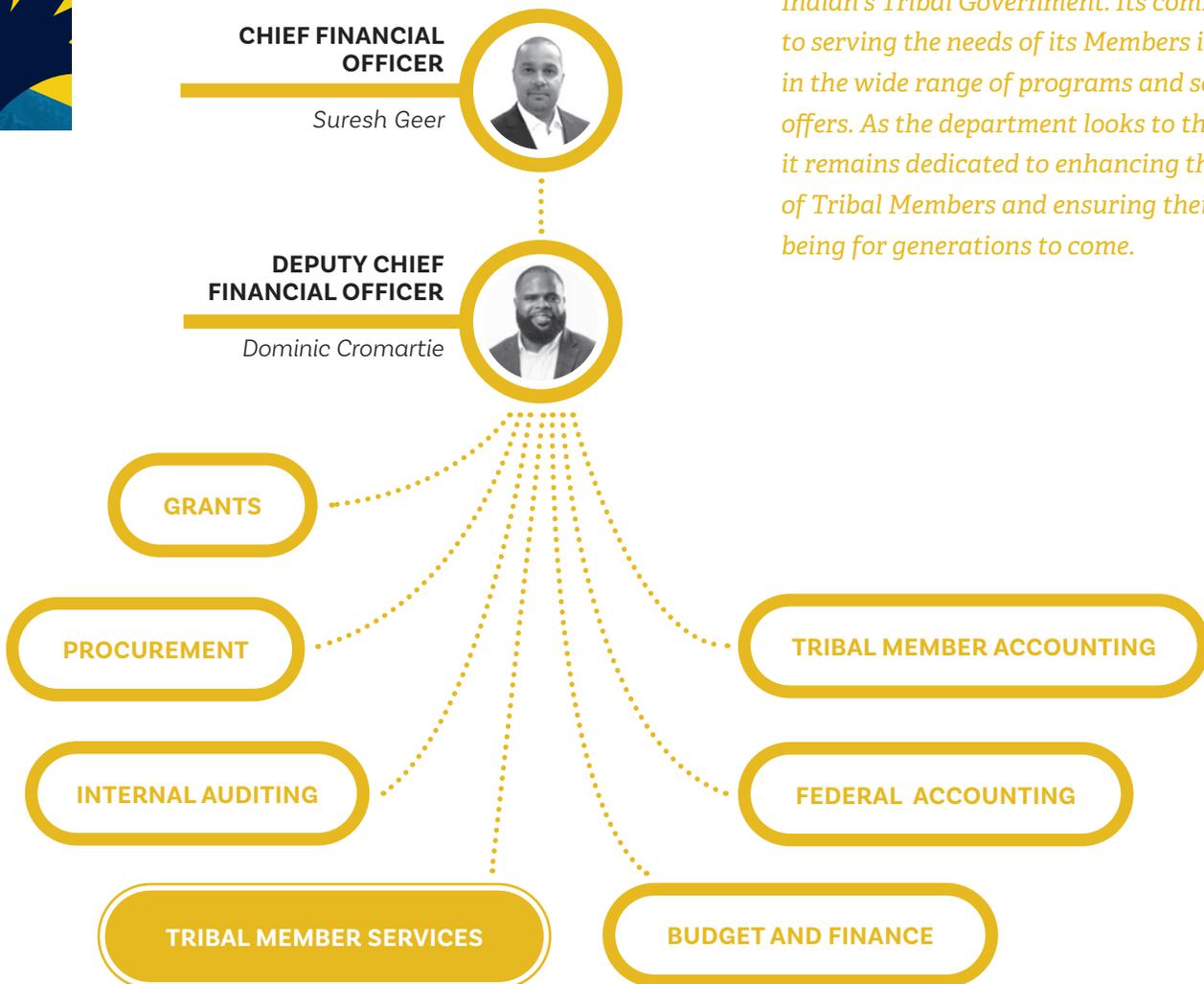
\$500 is distributed to each Tribal Member during their birthday month (This is part of the Tribal Member's Per Capita).

### 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION REIMBURSEMENT

This benefit is a one-time reimbursement for any eligible Tribal Member who is celebrating their 90th birthday. Funds, not exceeding \$2,000, may be reimbursed for the cost associated with food, non-alcoholic beverages, rental of venue/event space, decorations, and paper products. Itemized receipts must be provided with the completed reimbursement form upon submission.

The PCI Tribal Member Benefits Department has had a profound impact on the community, improving the standard of living and providing a safety net for those in need. Its programs have led to better health outcomes, higher educational attainment, and economic prosperity among Tribal Members.

*The PCI Tribal Member Benefits Department is a vital component of the Poarch Creek Indian's Tribal Government. Its commitment to serving the needs of its Members is evident in the wide range of programs and services it offers. As the department looks to the future, it remains dedicated to enhancing the lives of Tribal Members and ensuring their well-being for generations to come.*



POARCH 101

# Honoring Our Matriarchy

By Megan Zamora with consultation provided by Justin Rolin

*Instead of surnames, Mvskoke people understood family relationships and connections based upon the clan they belonged to. The clan a child belonged to was determined by the mother, and when you think about the physicality of the mother, father, child relationship, it makes logical sense as to why many Native American tribes are matrilineal.*





**O**n Sunday, May 12, 2024, we'll celebrate Mother's everywhere for Mother's Day. As a special tribute to this national acknowledgement, I thought it only appropriate that we highlight the roles of mothers within our Mvskoke culture. (Shout out to Brandy Chunn and the THPO and Cultural teams for this idea!)

You've probably read or heard that we descend from the Creek Nation and that our familial system is based upon clans and a matrilineal society. But, what exactly does it mean to be a matrilineal society? In the simplest of terms, it means that children take on the mother's family relationships rather than the father's. Essentially, it's the exact opposite of western society and what is typically practiced in America today.

Instead of surnames, Mvskoke people understood family relationships and connections based upon the clan they belonged to. The clan a child belonged to was determined by the mother, and when you think about the physicality of the mother, father, child relationship, it makes logical sense as to why many Native American tribes are matrilineal.

When a child is conceived, it is the mother who carries the child for 40 weeks and nurtures him with her body. She literally shares all her nutrients with the growing baby for the duration of the pregnancy and even beyond if she decides and is able to nurse. When it's time for labor and delivery, the baby literally comes from her body. In no way is this meant to diminish the role of fathers, but, when explained in this manner, one can easily understand why Mvskoke children come from the mother's clan just as the child comes from her body.

The implications of a matrilineal society for Creek people meant that the uncles and the mother's family played a more influential role in raising the child than the biological father did. Mvskoke women ran the household completely. Upon marriage, her husband would join her family. She would then go on to take care of the children, cook, clean, tan hides, tend the gardens, make clothing, and much more. If the marriage should end in divorce, the man was the one to move out of the home and the woman retained the property.

Women also played an important role during the game of stickball: they helped prepare the men for battle. Traditionally, Mvskoke women play stickball with their hands only and do not use sticks. Meanwhile, the men use two sticks to pick up and throw the ball towards the goal...they aren't allowed to use their hands at all. The purpose for this is that it gave women an advantage over the men and forced warriors to become adept at handling the ballsticks. It takes great precision to pick up the ball with two sticks and throw it at the goal, earning points. Similarly in battle, men used "sticks" or war clubs. So, the game of stickball, also known as the little brother of war, served a dual purpose in that not only was it a fun activity, it also resolved disputes and trained men for battle.

Still today, we Mvskoke Creeks see and feel the incredible impacts of our matriarchs. From how they've raised us to their indelible strength to the influence they have on the decisions that our families make, Mvskoke women, especially our mothers, are an incredible force in all our lives.



## ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: A CONVERSATION WITH GLENDA CARLTON

By Deidra Suwanee Dees, Ed.D.

**G**aming Commission Director of Finance, Ms. Glenda Carlton, retired after forty-eight years of service with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. A beautiful, well-attended retirement reception was given in her honor at the SAIL Center dining room on February 8, with her official retirement date being February 9, 2024.

Tribal Chair Stephanie A. Bryan gave her a heartfelt “Congratulations” on forty-eight years of service which reverberated throughout the room. Many teary-eyed guests expressed that they were saddened to see her leave.

When Tribal employees retire, our Team at the Office of Archives and Records Management tries to capture employee history through our Oral History Program. We are delighted that Ms. Carlton came in for a conversation with Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees on February 12, 2024, which was recorded for the record.

Records Coordinator Ms. Cheryl Thrower, who serves as our videographer, documented the interview with an audio recording, a backup recording, as well as with photographic images. This oral history interview documents the history of Ms. Carlton’s work at the Tribe pursuant to the Records Management Ordinance (TCO 2010-004; 1.2.1.F) which states, “All departments shall document their administrative history.”

Ms. Carlton began her interview by stating that she first started working at the Tribe, then-named Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, as Program Coordinator on December 8, 1975. She is the Tribe’s first official employee. She said she had graduated from Atmore High School the year prior in 1974 and had bought her class ring for \$113 with the first

land claims check that was issued in 1972. “It was a struggle for mom and dad,” she said, so she paid for it.

Her parents, Edgar Rackard and Ruthie May Rackard—sister of Chief Calvin McGhee—modeled their commitment to the Tribe in her childhood, she said. “Mama and daddy helped. Mama was always involved in everything, very active, very involved with the PTA at school.”

“Uncle Calvin and Aunt Joyce were working on getting the roll started,” so many people were at her house all the time when she was a child, she said.

“We didn’t have much. Nobody around here did.” She remembered the “chicken suppers” that were sold to raise money for Chief McGhee to travel to Washington, D.C. to represent the Tribe before Congress. “I saw through my parents their commitment to the Tribe. I saw determination in them—honest, hard work. Mom was always with Uncle Calvin.”

Ms. Carlton’s father insisted on her going to school, she said. “We didn’t get a chance to go to school,” her father told her, therefore, he made it a requirement for his children. “Daddy had a sixth-grade education, but he was the smartest person I met.”

Ms. Carlton talked about the work she did as the Program Coordinator saying she was hired by Tribal Chairman, Eddie L. Tullis, under a subgrant from the Coalition of Eastern Native Americans (CENA). They could not access federal funding because the Tribe was not yet federally recognized, only state-recognized, therefore they applied for state funding which was received through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA).

*She recalled the three categories under the grant which included:*

### 1. OUTREACH

Under the Outreach category, she said she developed a survey instrument to make discovery of the needs of Tribal Members. They hired Tribal Members to go into the homes to conduct the research for the surveys.

### 2. WORK EXPERIENCE

Under the Work Experience category, she said they offered jobs to Tribal Members for cleaning up the overgrown Tribal cemeteries. They cut grass to help identify where Tribal Members were buried. “They had to cut paths in some areas because they were so overgrown,” she recalled.

### 3. JOB TRAINING

Under On-the-Job Training category, she said she developed contracts with Atmore State Technical College for Tribal Members to receive training in classes such as auto mechanics and welding. “They were paid a stipend for attending classes,” she said.

“There was no office—no anything here at that time,” she emphasized. The eighteen-member Tribal Council held their meetings at the Consolidated Indian School. “I would work during the day at home, or meet at the school, or Saint Anna’s Episcopal Church dining hall. I walked around with books,” like a portable office, she chuckled.

“Mr. Tullis provided instructions,” she pointed out. “He found the grants. He had the vision.” She worked around his schedule while he did shiftwork at Monsanto in Pensacola, she said.

“It wasn’t just me. I didn’t do anything alone.” She worked on timesheets and reporting for the grant, she said. “I set up bank accounts, gave my home address until an office could be established. It did not happen overnight, but this is what we lived on until we got federally recognized—grants and contracts.”

She often times worked more than forty hours per week, but was paid for only forty. “It did not matter that I worked more than forty—I was thankful to have a job,” she said. “I was a kid!”

Ms. Carlton recalled that her father said to her, “Before you start a project, you have to see it finished.” She came to understand that he meant no matter what you do, you must plan ahead for it, she said.

“I put it to use my entire life. I figured out the cost of paying employees and expenses to meet objectives of the grants. *That was my world!* I would get lost in building infrastructure,” she laughed.

She said she took college accounting classes at night. “I’ve taken every accounting class I could take. Numbers make sense to me. I had to have things right. I don’t care if it took all night; I had to balance the budget. That budget *had* to balance. *That’s what I lived for!*”

“I’m thankful the Tribe got this grant,” she said in a reminiscing tone. “It had to be perfect so we could get another grant.”

“It snowballed from that day on,” she recounted. “The workload grew and became overwhelming. Mr. Tullis had more dreams than you could imagine!”

She recalled that they made a critical decision by hiring Ms. Jenny Dees as the Tribal Administrator at a time that they really needed her expertise. “She did the grant writing and I did the budgets. Some of the best years of my life,” she said smiling.

Ms. Carlton recalled setting up the infrastructure—“the way we account for things”—for Perdido River Farms, Muskogee Metalworks, and Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority. She also helped develop the financials for the Creek Bingo Palace, she said. “I reported back to the Tribal Council,” something she has done all of her career at the Tribe.

“There are things I got to experience because of the Tribe.” Like Chief Calvin McGhee before her, she traveled to Washington, D.C. with Mr. Tullis. “Nobody knew who we were then, but they knew who we were before we left—Creek Nation East of the Mississippi.”

“

*It wasn’t just me. I didn’t do it alone. I set up bank accounts, gave my home address until an office could be established. It did not happen overnight, but this is what we lived on until we got federally recognized—grants and contracts.*

GLEND A CARLTON

”

“I am happy to be involved; glad to do what I could,” she concluded. “Blessed to have the opportunity to see it grow.”

Our Team preserves conversations like this with Ms. Carlton, Dr. Dees said. Under the Records Management Ordinance, we are to manage Tribal records “to ensure their proper preservation” (TCO 2010-004; 2.1). “Conducting and recording this oral history interview is one way we can insure the proper preservation of historical data that comes from the vantage point of the Tribal employee,” she said.

If you would like to listen to the full recording, Tribal Members may obtain a copy of the recording at no charge by calling us at (251) 446-4942. We are happy to share this treasured conversation with Ms. Glenda Carlton with you.

*Mvto.*

# THE IMPORTANCE OF RECYCLING

By Kristin Hellmich in conjunction with the PCI Environmental Division

In the heart of Poarch, Alabama, a remarkable transformation has unfolded over the past 27 years, led by the Environmental Department's Recycling Program. What began in 1996 as a modest initiative, funded by a federal grant to purchase a single baler, has blossomed into a beacon of sustainability and community engagement.

Back in its early days, the program was a simple operation, focusing on collecting cardboard and shredded paper from an open shed for just a few hours each week. Fast forward to today, and the program has evolved into a comprehensive recycling hub, housed in a 4,800 sq. ft. facility. This state-of-the-art facility is where recyclable materials are collected, sorted, processed, and baled for sale, alongside a 1,200 sq. ft. building dedicated to storing baled materials until they can be shipped in bulk.

The journey of the program's growth is a testament to the vision and commitment of the PCI Environmental Department. From its humble beginnings with two vertical balers and a forklift, the program now employs two full-time staff members and has expanded its collection to include a wide array of materials such as aluminum, PET/#1 plastic, scrap metal, electronics, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, appliances, and even Mardi Gras beads.

"Recycling for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians is not just about collecting and separating material but rather about building a sustainable community where every action contributes to a healthier environment and a brighter future for our future generations." Kristi Weatherford, PCI Environmental Department Director.

The impact of this growth is not just measured in the diversity of materials collected, but also in the volume. In 2023 alone, the program recycled over 2 tons of plastic materials, equivalent to over 81,000 plastic bottles, and diverted over 328 tons of materials from landfills, equivalent to 19,656,384 aluminum cans, setting a new record for the community.

Beyond the numbers, the program has woven itself into the fabric of the community, actively participating in Tribal events by providing blue and green bins for collecting plastic and aluminum. It also collaborates with event organizers to collect cardboard associated with gifts and food, ensuring that the spirit of recycling is present in every celebration.

For those inspired to contribute to this recycling journey, the program offers two drop-off locations. The Community Recycling Trailer at the Poarch Creek Community Center is accessible 24/7 at 517 Martin Road, Atmore, AL 36502, while the PCI Recycling Center welcomes all approved materials Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, at 4449 Highway 21 in Atmore, Alabama. Both of these are open to the general public.

As the Environmental Department's Recycling Program continues its journey, it stands as a shining example of how dedication, community involvement, and a commitment to sustainability can transform a simple idea into a powerful force for environmental change. Contact the PCI Environmental Department at [environmentalinfo@pci-nsn.gov](mailto:environmentalinfo@pci-nsn.gov).

“

*Recycling for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians is not just about collecting and separating material but rather about building a sustainable community where every action contributes to a healthier environment and a brighter future for our future generations.*

KRISTI WEATHERFORD,  
PCI ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR



## POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS RECEIVE GRANT FROM EPA FOR SOLID WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RECYCLING

By Kristin Hellmich

T

he Poarch Band of Creek Indians was recently awarded the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) Grant for Tribes in the amount of \$787,397 from the Environmental Protection Agency, as part of a grant program funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The SWIFR Grant Program is a covered program under the Justice40 Initiative which aims to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, clean water, and other investments to disadvantaged communities.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians has been working with the City of Brewton for several years to grow a healthy relationship for both environmental education and active recycling efforts. “This valuable investment will give us the opportunity to continue to improve waste material management in our communities, and greatly enhance our recycling abilities,” said Yank Lovelace, Mayor of Brewton.

“Through this grant, we will be able to conduct a recycling feasibility and sustainability study to make improvements needed, provide education and outreach, as well as increase community recycling by providing more community recycling containers,” said Kristi Weatherford, Poarch Band of Creek Indians Director of Environmental Programs. She continued, “We are excited to continue our work with local partners like the City of Brewton, in growing a healthy relationship for both environmental education and active recycling efforts.”

The partnership between the Poarch Band of Creek Indians and the City of Brewton has been key for growing environmental efforts in the rural portion of the state and has been identified as a successful model for other small towns to follow. While other cities may be abandoning their recycling efforts, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians are looking to expand both availability to the public, and a growing list of recyclables.

The success of this partnership has resulted in the City of Brewton being eligible for grant funding through ADEM, while the Poarch Band of Creek Indians was able to accomplish the same efforts through federal funding. This partnership was recognized at a statewide meeting to showcase the values of cooperative recycling efforts within Alabama.

Currently, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Recycling program, located at 4447 Hwy 21 South, Atmore, AL, accepts a variety of materials from the community including, paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, as well as electronics, appliances, light bulbs, household batteries, ink cartridges, and toner.



# WELCOMING SURESH GEER

## CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

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*By Megan Zamora*

On behalf of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Government, we are pleased to introduce and welcome the newest member of our PCI family, Mr. Suresh Geer, who has joined us as our Chief Financial Officer.

Mr. Geer was born and raised in London, England before relocating to New York City where he earned his BS in Accounting at Saint John's University. He then moved to Florida where he attended the University of Miami, acquired his MBA, and subsequently began working for the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

With a combined twenty-one years with the Seminole Tribe of Florida's finance team, the last seven of which were served as the CFO, Mr. Geer brings expansive Tribal finance experience to the Poarch Creek Indians that will exponentially contribute to the ongoing success of the Tribe. He has also promoted the success of other Tribal government businesses and gaming operations through his consulting services.

Currently, Suresh lives in Pensacola with his beautiful wife Indira. He has two children, Arvind, 23, and Varsha, 24, both of which are attending graduate school in Boston, MA. While he enjoys traveling, he's also an avid cyclist and

runner. He's completed 5 half marathons, 1 full marathon, a triathlon, and plans to participate in a century ride within the next year.

Mr. Geer shared, "The Poarch Creek Indians have gained a reputation across Indian Country for their successful domestic and international business operations, philanthropy, and contributions within the State of Alabama. I'm honored to be part of their team by lending my years of education and experience in the Tribal finance sector to furthering the prosperity and financial well-being of the Tribe."

Tribal Chair and CEO Stephanie Bryan remarked, "It's an honor to have Suresh on our PCI team as he brings vast knowledge of the Tribal finance industry to our Tribe as well as valuable leadership experience. He is a welcomed addition to our team and I am confident that he will continue the impressive financial legacy that PCI has established."

Please make sure you introduce yourself to Suresh and welcome him to our community as he becomes an integral part of our PCI family. His years of experience in Tribal finance will be an invaluable asset to our organization, and we look forward to working together to achieve our shared goals.

COMING SOON

# INDIGENOUS MATTERS



## A POARCH BAND of CREEK INDIANS PODCAST

By Ashlee "Katie" Mothershed

Within the Poarch Creek Indian community, we honor our proud heritage and spirit, value our Tribal Members, and champion open communication and participation. We are excited to announce our new podcast Indigenous Matters which will serve as a platform for Indigenous voices to share their perspectives, experiences, and insights on diverse topics.

Through collaborative partnerships, respectful discussions, and community development opportunities, we aim to foster a deep understanding of Native American culture, history, and contemporary challenges. Our commitment is to be a supportive and welcoming community, breaking down stereotypes and amplifying the richness of Native American identities, thereby ensuring growth and understanding for all of Indian Country.

▶ Coming soon to Apple Podcast, Spotify, or wherever you get podcasts.



Are you interested  
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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](http://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](mailto:jreynolds@pci-nsn.gov). All seminars will be held online and in-person at Building 200, First Floor Conference Room.

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# THE POWER OF NATIVE REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA

By Virginia McGhee

In a study conducted by the University of Southern California, which evaluated the 1,600 top-grossing films between 2007 and 2022, only .25% of all speaking roles went to Native American characters. The percentage of Native American roles did not exceed 1% across any of the years evaluated, according to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma media. Although Native representation is low, there is a good variety of representation among these pieces of media.

The Marvel show *Echo* follows the character of Maya Lopez, played by Alaqua Cox, and focuses on Maya's Choctaw heritage and indigenous roots. The critically acclaimed HBO show *Reservation Dogs* followed four Indigenous teenagers in Okern, Oklahoma—a fictional stand-in for the city of Okmulgee. This show was the first to feature Indigenous writers and directors exclusively, as well as a primarily Indigenous crew, and to be shot on location in the Muscogee Nation. It was named Show of the Year in 2023 by TIME Magazine.

In addition to these television series, breakout movies such as *Frybread Face and Me* and *Killers of the Flower Moon* are expanding native representation. *Frybread Face and Me*, shot primarily on the Navajo Nation, and is a coming-of-age story of a young boy visiting his grandmother on the reservation over the summer. The Oscar-winning film from just last year entitled *Killers of the Flower Moon* is a three-and-a-half-hour drama starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Lily Gladstone based on a real series of murders in Oklahoma's Osage Nation during the 1920s.

Each of the previously mentioned films and shows provide insight of Native culture that is often misconstrued. They battle other forms of negative media portrayals that perpetuate insensitive Native American stereotypes. As

explained by the Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning Organization, in other films Native men may be depicted as warriors and medicine men, and women are portrayed as either objects of desire or inconsequential members of a tribe. Both, being grossly stereotypical, show why the growth in accurate Native portrayals is so crucial. These forms of media carry a heavy burden to undo a history of false portrayals and propagate a truthful depiction of Native culture—a depiction that Native men, women and children alike can watch and relate to their own shared experiences.

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*These forms of media carry a heavy burden to undo a history of false portrayals and propagate a truthful depiction...*

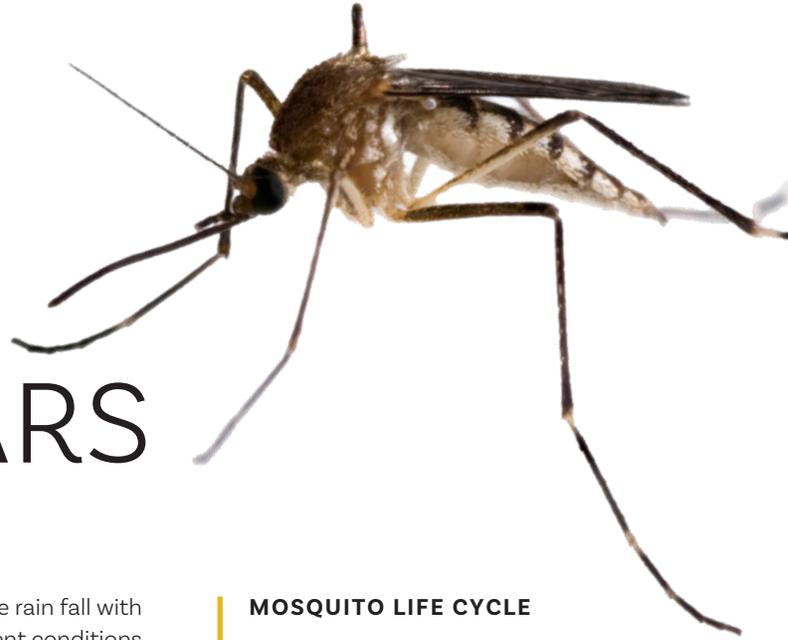
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Growing native representation in politics provides a voice to Native peoples who did not get their needs met by the American government for so long. For instance, as explained by NPR News, there is a Native American, an Alaskan Native, and a Hawaiian Native as members of the house—fully representing the United States percentage of Native Americans for the first time in American history.

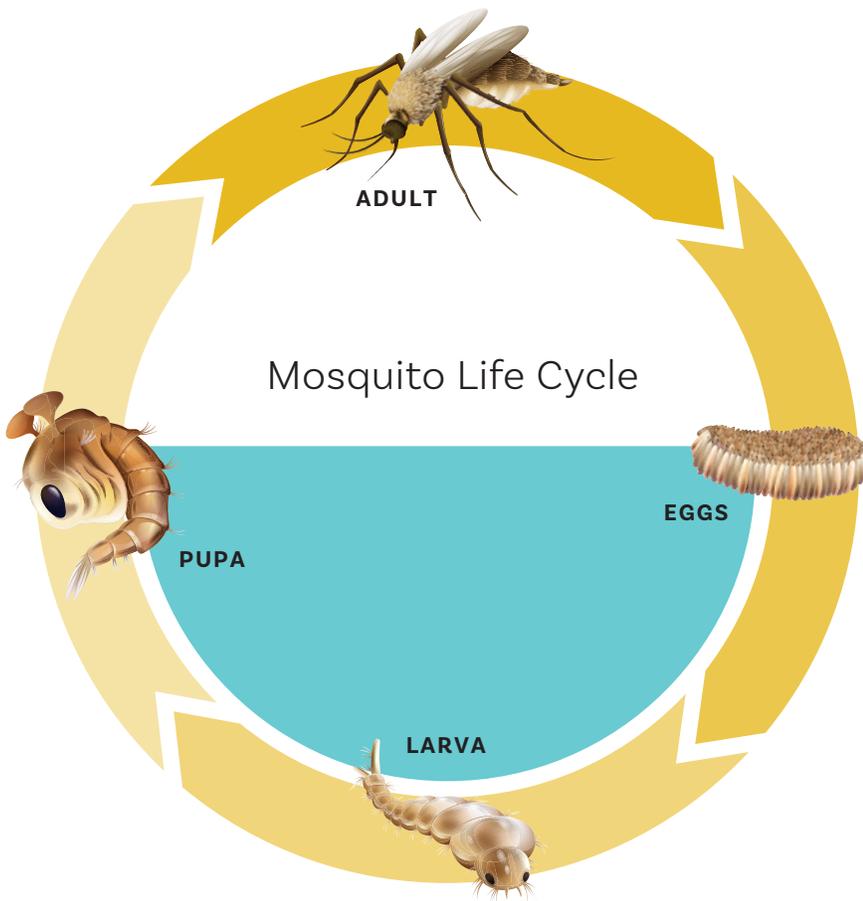
The growth of representation of Native peoples in both the media and politics allows Native voices and stories that were once ignored to be heard. Accurate Native media combats previously portrayed negative stereotypes, gives a medium to portray Native cultural values and practices, and tells the stories of Native peoples that were overlooked. Accurate media presence allows for the growth of Native representation that will positively impact future generations. It also gives current generations a heightened sense of Tribal pride and knowledge of Native history and culture. Allowing Native voices to be heard in the governmental sphere will provide new insights and represent Native ideals and interests—positively impacting Native generations for years to come.

# MOSQUITO SEASON NEARS

By *Barnie White, Environmental Health Specialist*



A large amount of rain has fell on Alabama this winter. Combine the rain fall with the mild temperatures we have had this winter and we have excellent conditions to have Biblical scale invasion of mosquitos in our area. Everyone at some point has been bitten by a mosquito. The bites can itch and cause redness of the skin. Mosquitos can also be carriers of serious diseases such as malaria, dengue virus, Zika, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and West Nile. Learning about the mosquitos' life cycle can help us learn how to control these pests.



## MOSQUITO LIFE CYCLE

The first three stages occur in water, but the adult is an active flying insect. Only the female mosquito bites and feeds on the blood of humans or other animals.

- After she obtains a blood meal, the female mosquito lays the eggs directly on or near water, soil and at the base of some plants in places that may fill with water. The eggs can survive dry conditions for a few months.
- The eggs hatch in water and a mosquito larva or “wiggler” emerges. The length of time to hatch depends on water temperature, food and type of mosquito.
- The larva lives in the water, feeds and develops into the third stage of the life cycle called, a pupa or “tumbler.” The pupa also lives in the water but no longer feeds.
- Finally, the mosquito emerges from the pupal case after two days to a week in the pupal stage.
- The life cycle typically takes up two weeks, but depending on conditions, it can range from 4 days to as long as a month.

The adult mosquito emerges onto the water’s surface and flies away, ready to begin its lifecycle.



### TIPS TO ELIMINATE BREEDING AREAS AROUND YOU HOME

- › Eliminate standing water in rain gutters, old tires, buckets, plastic covers, and toys.
- › Keep swimming pool water treated and circulating.
- › Drain or fill in areas that have mud puddles or pooling water.
- › Change water frequently in wading pools, rain barrels, bird baths, and potted plants at least once a week.

### AVOID GETTING BITTEN!

- › Keep mosquitos away from exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks.
- › Use mosquito repellent.
- › Replace your outdoor lights with yellow “bug” lights, which tend to attract fewer mosquitos than ordinary lights. The yellow lights are NOT repellents, however.

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Celebrate the fun of May all month long at OWA! Look to the skies for the Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival, 5/2-5/4. Two can't-miss weekend celebrations are coming up: Gulf Coast Regional Mustang and Mega Car Show, 5/11, and Aloha Summer Kickoff, 5/24-26. Don't miss OWA Live and two great tribute shows, "Elvis Remembered" and "Monsters of Rock" at OWA Theater. Plan your fun at VisitOWA.com!

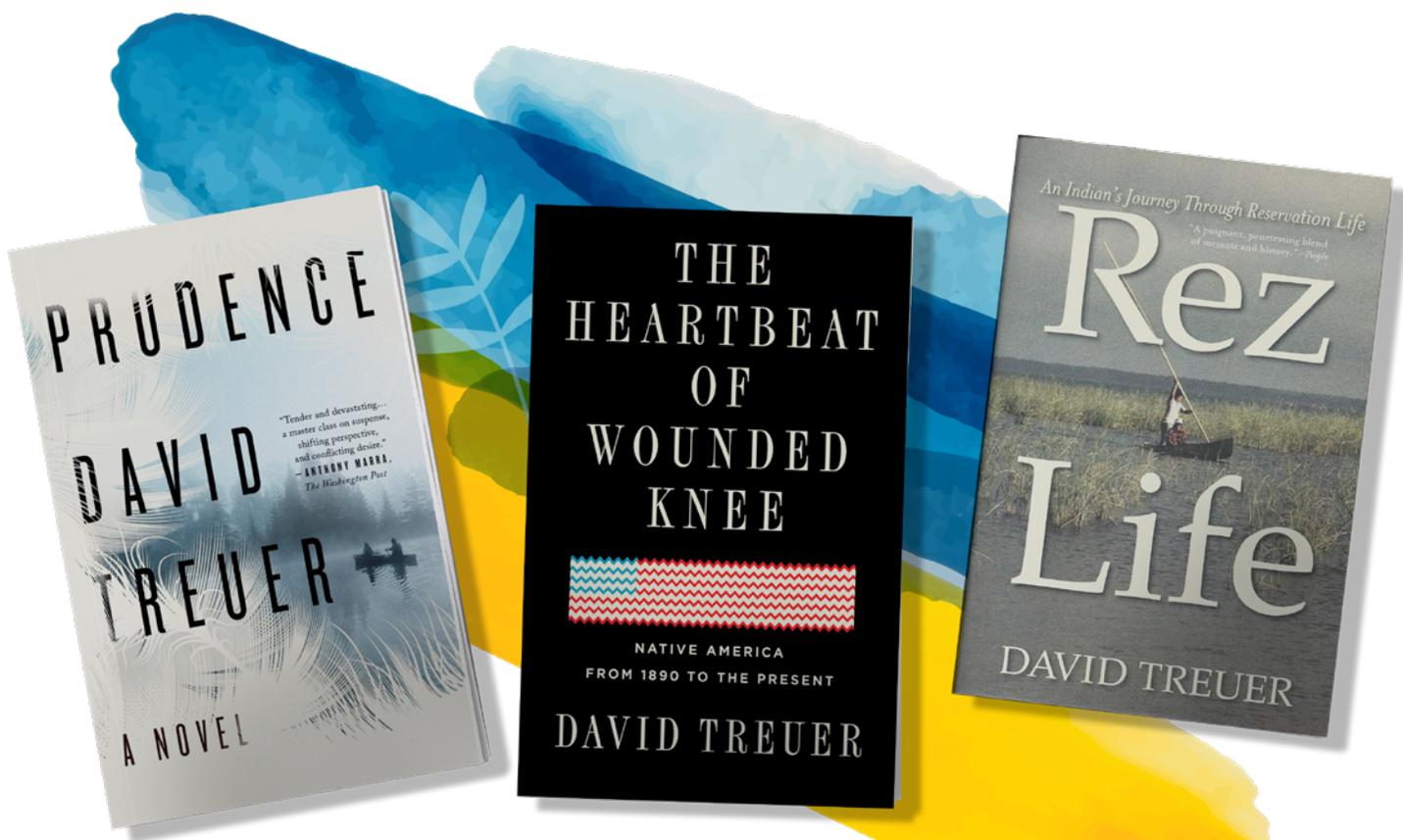
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## HIGHLIGHTING DAVID TREUER: *A Voice for Native America*

David Treuer, an Ojibwe author, brings Native American history and experiences to the forefront with his acclaimed book, “The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee.” This work challenges the notion that Native history is a thing of the past, presenting a vivid narrative of Native American life from the late 19th century to today. Beyond this pivotal history, Treuer’s repertoire includes impactful novels and memoirs

like “Rez Life,” exploring reservation life, and “Prudence,” a WWII historical novel. Treuer’s writings offer a profound look at America’s history and the ongoing story of its Native peoples, making his work essential for those interested in understanding the true breadth of American identity and history.

---

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](mailto:mzamora@pci-nsn.gov).



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## POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIAN TRIBE PAYS HOMAGE TO CHIEF CALVIN MCGHEE DURING THE 2024 FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS

By Kristin Hellmich

*The Poarch Band  
of Creek Indians  
Festival of Flowers  
Team won  
the Judge's  
Choice Award...*

### TEAM MEMBERS

John Stephens  
Jessica Emmons  
Joshua Burkett  
Logan Boatwright  
Greg McGhee  
Justin Rolin  
J Ross Railey  
Megan Zamora  
Breiah Adams  
Jeanna Morgan  
Devin Rodriguez  
Quinton Smedley  
Aaron Gregson  
Charles Obar  
David Rolin  
Kendall Reed  
John Stephens

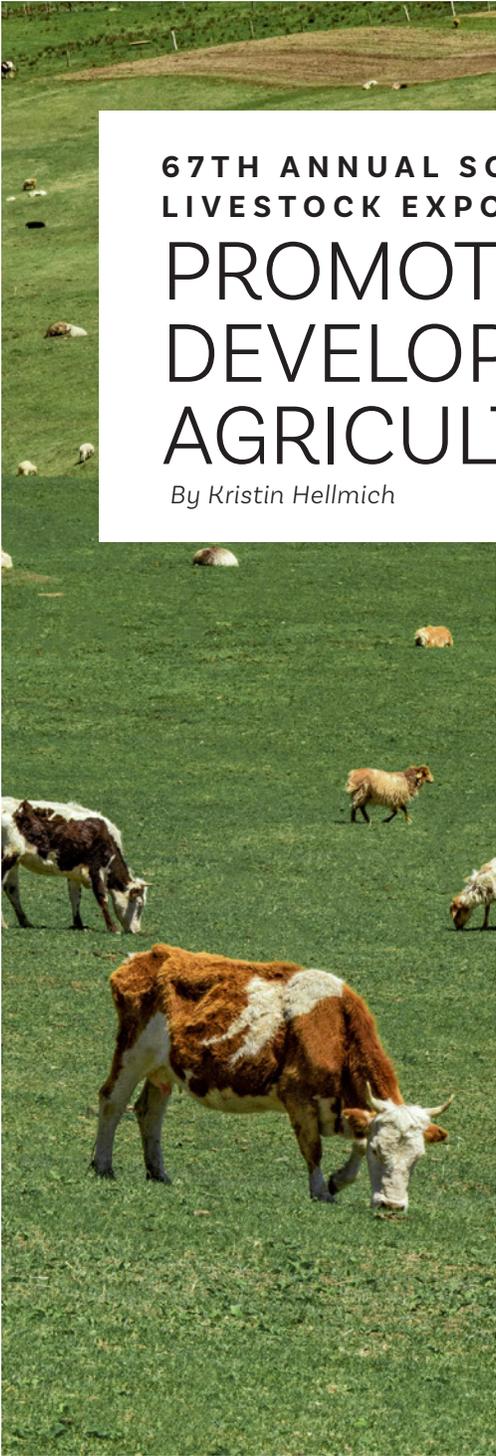
The Festival of Flowers was held on March 8-10 in beautiful downtown Mobile, Alabama's Cathedral Square. Celebrating its thirty-first year, the Festival of Flowers showcases the best in horticulture and design with this year's theme, "Make Your Mark." Providence Foundation produced the event, with funds being dedicated to the purchase of advanced medical equipment for USA Health Providence Hospital located in Mobile, AL.

As part of the sponsorship, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Alabama's only federally recognized Indian Tribe, had the opportunity to showcase a life-sized living sculpture for the event. Multiple departments from the Tribe created the display using native plants, including a sculpture of Chief Calvin McGhee, and designed it to incorporate culturally significant elements of Poarch's past, present, and future.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians Festival of Flowers team won the Judge's Choice Award for their Chief Calvin McGhee display.

Chief Calvin McGhee (1903-1970), a distinguished leader of the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, is remembered for his role as an activist and visionary. Together with numerous Tribal Elders, he laid the foundation for what has now evolved into the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

The mark these Tribal Leaders and Elders made is still strongly felt today. Their enduring impact enables us to embrace and preserve the Tribe's culture and traditions, allowing them to freely express their truth as a sovereign Native American nation. Today, the Tribe actively participates in Mvskoke language preservation, traditional stomp dancing, cultural songs, and various other preservation practices.



# 67TH ANNUAL SOUTHEASTERN LIVESTOCK EXPOSITION RODEO PROMOTING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE

By Kristin Hellmich

“Engaging youth about the fundamental role of livestock and agriculture is critical for the entire state, and we are thrilled to play a role in helping further their interest and development.”

KEITH MARTIN

**P**oarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI) and Wind Creek Hospitality are once again supporting the Southeastern Livestock Exposition’s (SLE) mission to drive youth involvement in agriculture. Collectively, they are donating a total of \$150,000 to support the vital cause.

Through the Poarch Band of Creek Indians’ donation, scholarships are provided for two students ages 9-18 in every county in the state. The scholarships are designed to recognize and reward youth who are active participants in Alabama’s beef industry, as well as to support the Alabama Junior Livestock Expo.

The Southeastern Livestock Exposition is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving farming and ranching by creating opportunities for youth through rodeos, livestock competitions, community activities, and educational events.

This year, the 67th Annual Southeastern Livestock Exposition Rodeo is set for March 15-17 in Montgomery with Wind Creek Hospitality as title sponsor. The event welcomes hundreds of exhibitors and animal entries for the rodeo’s Junior Beef, Swine, and Dairy expos.

Proceeds from the annual rodeo pour back into the state of Alabama’s youth through the support of scholarships, livestock shows, livestock judging contests, FFA Foundation scholarships, Alabama 4-H, the Children’s Miracle Network, youth rodeo associations, and more.

“We are thrilled to continue supporting the SLE’s important mission,” said Keith Martin, Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Council Member. “Engaging youth about the fundamental role of livestock and agriculture is critical for the entire state, and we are thrilled to play a role in helping further their interest and development.”



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# SLAM DUNK IN THE WIND-Y CITY

By Amelia Tognoli

**W**ind Creek Chicago Southland (WCCS) is the official casino of the Chicago Bulls, a partnership that was recently celebrated during an exclusive Court of Dreams event at the United Center—enjoyed by WCCS Team Members and their invited guests last month. “This event was one for the books,” remarked Cathye Amos, Executive Director of Casino Marketing at Wind Creek Chicago Southland.

“There’s nothing comparable to this experience and getting to watch our Illinois team unite for some friendly competition and fun in such an iconic arena.”

The day unfolded with insights from sports industry icons, an on-court scrimmage, dinner, and watching the Chicago Bulls beat Portland during a game later in the evening. In addition to the arena projecting branded Wind Creek signage throughout, Team Members were also provided with WCCS x Bulls jerseys and merchandise.

“The hours we spent on the court transported me out of my daily routine and into a realm I had only imagined in my wildest dreams,” exclaimed Michael Stankos, Director of Business Intelligence and Analysis at Wind Creek Hospitality. “I cannot give enough thanks to Wind Creek for bringing us together as a team and recreating my dreams from earlier times.”

Moreover, Michael and others shared a sentiment of gratitude for the opportunity, emphasizing how it Firefox served as a meaningful in-person connection ahead of Wind Creek Chicago Southland’s opening.

“This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” said Roger Kuehn, Executive Vice President and General Manager at Wind Creek Chicago Southland. “Our Team Members are diligently working every day to progress Wind Creek Chicago Southland toward the opening.



Opportunities like this allow us to break the day-to-day and strengthen our unity as a team. This is yet another reason why Wind Creek truly is a standout company of choice.”

*Once open, Wind Creek Chicago Southland will be an entertainment enthusiast’s dream destination. A fully integrated casino resort, the property will include a 70,000 square foot casino (1,300+ slot machines, 50+ table games, poker, and a sportsbook), an event center, spa, meeting space, hotel (250+ rooms and suites), food and beverage outlets in partnership with Fabio Viviani Hospitality, LLC, and more.*

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# NEW RESTAURANTS, PICKLEBALL AND MORE OPEN AT AWARD-WINNING OWA PARKS & RESORT

*Downtown OWA brings more options for dining, shopping, and fun to the Gulf Coast this Spring.*

By Catherine Hasty

**S**ince its opening in 2017, OWA Parks & Resorts has continued to grow and expand its offerings to guests. Along with current development trends in Baldwin County, which has been identified as the fastest-growing county in Alabama, OWA's continued growth highlights its popularity among locals and tourists alike. This award-winning property has once again been voted Best Amusement Park and Best Arcade in the 2024 Best of Baldwin Awards, as well as Best Waterpark and Best Attraction for Visitors in last years' awards. And just recently, the newest addition to Tropic Falls, Big Water Bay outdoor wave pool and Coastal Curl surf simulator, were recently recognized as one of the seven finalists in Business Alabama's "Project of the Year" awards for the state of Alabama. And it's only getting better!

## TROPIC FALLS AT OWA

Tropic Falls at OWA continues to be one of the area's most popular vacation destinations. Beginning March 11, guests can enjoy the fun of Tropic Falls theme and water parks seven days a week, as we kick off our spring hours continuing through the month of April, with summer hours beginning the last week of May. And a spring chill in the air won't stop the fun. The waters at Tropic Falls are heated, for tropical fun any day of the week!

## DOWNTOWN OWA

Downtown OWA, the resorts' admission-free shopping, dining and entertainment district continues to grow. In the past six months, five new dining, shopping and entertainment spots have opened in Downtown OWA, providing even greater entertainment options for guests.

## PICKLEBALL AT OWA

Get ready to hit the courts and serve it up with Pickleball at OWA! Join us for the ribbon cutting of our new four state-of-the-art indoor pickleball courts in Downtown OWA, March 16 at 10 a.m. Be the first to check out the Gulf Coast's first climate-controlled pickleball facility and register for special prizes to be given away including a Selkirk Vanguard Power Paddle valued at over \$250, including balls and a Pickleball bag. There will also be a chance to win two annual memberships with access to exclusive member events and 20% off retail items in the Pro Shop. The new courts are designed to provide enthusiasts with an all-weather haven for the rapidly growing pickleball craze. The facility includes a pro shop, seating areas, lockers, snacks, and beverages available to guests. Membership options ensure convenient 24-hour access, and guests can reserve courts online. Whether a seasoned pro or a newcomer to the sport, indoor Pickleball at OWA will be a haven of competition, camaraderie, skill advancement, and fun for all!

### COZUMEL BAR & GRILL

Newly opened is Cozumel Bar & Grill, which celebrates the richness of Mexican cuisine and hospitality at this locally owned eatery. Founded in Loxley, Alabama in 2010, Cozumel Bar & Grill is dedicated to offering its guests authentic Mexican dining. And on Saturday nights, enjoy more than dining with the rhythm of Latin flair at “Latin Nights’ ‘ from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sip on delicious drinks and dance the night away to the vibrant beats of salsa, merengue, and bachata, for an unforgettable evening of fun!

### WAFFLES R WILD BAR & GRILL

Waffles R Wild Bar & Grill is the latest culinary experience to open in Downtown OWA. Guests will be able to enjoy waffles “taken to a new level” at this unique eatery. Savor craft cocktails and tempting snacks at their full bar, or choose from a full selection of breakfast, brunch, and dinner items, including traditional waffles and waffle sandwiches, as well as hand-breaded fried chicken, waffle pizzas and desserts. Waffles R Wild truly has it all!

### TOWNE TAP

After a day of fun, relax and enjoy a unique experience at Towne Tap, Downtown OWA’s European-inspired pub offering a unique self-pour beer tap. Towne Tap offers a full selection of menu items, from soups and salads, to wings, fish-n-chips, burgers, and more. It’s a great place to relax, grab a bite, and just hang out.

“Our focus centers on offering a wide variety of unique experiences for our guests and we enjoy working with operators to bring their visions to reality,” said Cody Williamson, President/CEO of Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority. “These new restaurants and attractions are just one more reason to check out all the fun OWA Parks & Resorts has to offer on the Alabama gulf coast this spring and summer.”

Stirling is partnering with OWA Parks & Resorts to assist with the continued growth and development of the Downtown OWA area, which is currently 80% leased and leaves limited available space before the busy summer season. Adding to the continued growth of OWA Parks & Resort, is the recently opened 185 lot luxury RV Resort adjacent to Downtown OWA and a newly announced resort hotel opening Summer 2025. Combined, these attractions and experiences only enhance the unlimited entertainment options available to guests and locals along Coastal Alabama.

*For more information on leasing opportunities, contact Stirling at 251-375-2481 or visit [visitowa.com/leasing-in-owa/](http://visitowa.com/leasing-in-owa/). And for all the latest information and events at OWA Parks & Resort, visit [visitowa.com](http://visitowa.com).*



# Hearing Loss & Your Health

There is a connection between hearing loss and a variety of other health issues.



## COGNITIVE DECLINE

Adults with untreated hearing loss experience a **30% to 40%** faster decline in cognitive abilities compared to peers without hearing loss.<sup>1</sup>

## CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE (CVD)

Older adults in the U.S. who experience heart failure are **11%** more likely to have hearing loss.<sup>2</sup>



## FALLS

Patients with mild hearing loss (**25 dB HL**) are **3x** as likely to experience falls.<sup>3</sup>



## DIABETES

Hearing loss is **2x as common** in patients with diabetes, possibly due to inner ear blood vessel damage.<sup>7</sup>



## SMOKING

Current smokers have a **60%** higher risk of having hearing loss than nonsmokers.<sup>4</sup>



## TINNITUS

**90%** of people with tinnitus also have hearing loss.<sup>6</sup>



## DEPRESSION

One in five older adults with hearing loss experience symptoms of clinical depression.<sup>5</sup>



**Annual hearing tests are an essential part of your overall health.  
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<sup>1</sup> Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2013). Hearing loss accelerates brain function decline in older adults. [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing\\_loss\\_accelerates\\_brain\\_function\\_decline\\_in\\_older\\_adults](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_accelerates_brain_function_decline_in_older_adults)

<sup>2</sup> Sterling, M. R. et al. (2018). Hearing loss among older adults with heart failure in the United States: Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5854543/>

<sup>3</sup> Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2012). Hearing loss linked to three-fold risk of falling. [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing\\_loss\\_linked\\_to\\_three\\_fold\\_risk\\_of\\_falling](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_linked_to_three_fold_risk_of_falling)

<sup>4</sup> Rapaport, L. (2018). Smoking tied to higher risk of hearing loss. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-hearing-smoking/smoking-tied-to-higher-risk-of-hearing-loss-idUSKCN1GQ2FJ/>

<sup>5</sup> Cosh, S et al. (2019). Depression in elderly patients with hearing loss: current perspectives. *Clinical Interventions in Aging*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6698612/>

<sup>6</sup> Hearing Health Foundation. (n.d.). Hearing Loss & Tinnitus Statistics. <https://hearinghealthfoundation.org/hearing-loss-tinnitus-statistics>

<sup>7</sup> American Diabetes Association. (2013). Diabetes and hearing loss. <https://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-and-hearing-loss>



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Elizabeth Pickett, Au.D., CCC-A

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



## FUN IS IN THE AIR AT OWA

*By Catherine Hasty*

**M**ay events start by soaring to new heights with the 20th Annual Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival! Enjoy daily festivities, including live entertainment, arts & crafts exhibitions, kids' activities, and more! Balloon flights, nightly glows, and tethered rides add to the fun at dawn (weather permitting). The excitement starts on Thursday, May 2nd, and continues through Saturday, May 4th. For more details on the event schedule, check out their website at [GulfCoastBalloonFestival.com](http://GulfCoastBalloonFestival.com)!

Get ready for an automotive extravaganza for the 44th annual Gulf Coast Regional Mustang & Mega Car Show, proudly presented by the Gulf Coast Regional Mustang Club! This much-anticipated event is a spectacle of horsepower and style, set to take place in the heart of Downtown OWA on Saturday, May 11th. Join us for a day filled with awe-inspiring displays of automotive craftsmanship, where enthusiasts and spectators alike can marvel at the finest examples of Mustangs and an array of other mega cars. Admission to this showcase is free. Be sure to bring your family and friends!

Looking to treat Mom for Mother's Day Weekend? Join OWA Theater on May 11th at 3 pm for 'Elvis Remembered,' a tribute to the King of Rock and Roll by Shane Tucker. Sing along to timeless classics and enjoy a matinee treat for the whole family. Then, on May 24th & 25th, get ready to rock with 'Monsters of Rock' as the White Tie Rock Ensemble takes the stage. From Kiss to AC/DC and Def Leppard, experience the greatest hits of rock history live. Tickets are selling fast - don't miss out on these unforgettable performances!



That's not all that's happening! Start your summer with a splash by joining us for the Aloha Summer Kickoff Party, a weekend full of fun from May 24th through 26th. The full weekend includes kids' activities and crafts, as well as the OWA Live Summer Concert Series of live music from local bands on the Island. Then, enjoy OWA's annual Memorial Day firework remembrance on Saturday, May 25th, at 8:50pm, too! Be sure to check the calendar leading up to the weekend for a full schedule of events.

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



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# What Are the Risks of Untreated Hearing Loss?

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association recommends regular hearing screenings to protect your hearing and overall health.

That's because untreated hearing loss affects more than just your ears—it can lead to several negative health conditions, including:<sup>1</sup>



## **Social isolation & loneliness.**

Multiple studies confirm the link between hearing loss and social isolation, with younger ages being associated with greater loneliness.



## **Depression.**

One study confirms that the probability of a person reporting depressive disorder is 1.5 times greater per 25 dB of hearing loss.



## **Balance problems & falls.**

Researchers have found a 1.4-fold increase in falls for every 10 dB of hearing loss.



## **Cardiovascular disease.**

According to one study, 85% of diagnosed strokes were associated with patients who have low-frequency hearing loss.



## **Diabetes.**

The hazard ratio for developing hearing loss is 1.04 for those with prediabetes and 1.4 for people with diabetes.



## **Dementia.**

Many researchers hypothesize that hearing loss leads to increased cognitive load, increasing the risk of dementia in older adults.



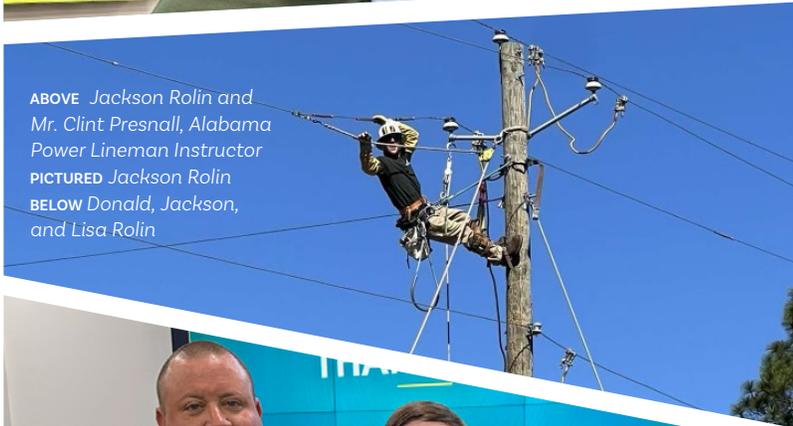
## **Mortality.**

Those with hearing loss have a higher risk of death from cardiovascular disease than those without.

**Treating hearing loss with hearing devices or other medical interventions can help prevent these and other comorbidities. Comprehensive audiological care from a licensed audiologist will help ensure your hearing stays as healthy as possible.**



<sup>1</sup>Abrams, H. (2017). *Hearing loss and associated comorbidities: what do we know? The Hearing Review.*  
<https://hearingreview.com/hearing-loss/hearing-loss-prevention/risk-factors/hearing-loss-associated-comorbidities-know#:~:text=>



ABOVE Jackson Rolin and Mr. Clint Presnall, Alabama Power Lineman Instructor  
 PICTURED Jackson Rolin  
 BELOW Donald, Jackson, and Lisa Rolin



## CONGRATULATIONS JACKSON ROLIN COMPLETES LINE WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM

Congratulations to Jackson Rolin, the son of Donald and Lisa Rolin, on completing the Line Worker Training Program at Bishop State Community College in March. This program teaches skills to further a lineman career as well as issuing a CDL license.

*We are so thankful to the tribe for their support in his education. We look forward to seeing where his training takes him as he has accepted a position with Alabama Power in the Atmore office. We are so proud of you Jack for always being such a hard worker and committing 110 percent to any task at hand. We know your continued hard work paired with this opportunity will lead you to many amazing things! We love you!*

MOM AND DAD

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# CREEK CORNER

MAY 2024 IMPORTANT DATES

|              |  |                 |
|--------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>5.1</b>   | <b>SUBMISSION DEADLINE</b> June Issue                                    | <b>5:00 PM</b>  |
| <b>5.1-2</b> | <b>MUSEUM CLOSED</b> Inventory   |                 |
| <b>5.2</b>   | <b>TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING</b> TC Chambers                                | <b>4:00 PM</b>  |
| <b>5.2</b>   | <b>STATE OF THE TRIBE</b> TC Chambers                                    | <b>5:30 PM</b>  |
| <b>5.2</b>   | <b>DEHYDRATING CLASS</b> RSVP required,<br>Buford L. Rolin Health Clinic | <b>10:00 AM</b> |
| <b>5.6-8</b> | <b>RECREATION GYM FLOOR CLOSED</b>                                       |                 |
| <b>5.7</b>   | <b>POARCH STORIES AND SUPPER</b><br>Poarch Creek Recreation Gym          | <b>6:00 PM</b>  |
| <b>5.16</b>  | <b>TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING</b> TC Chambers                                | <b>4:00 PM</b>  |
| <b>5.23</b>  | <b>FRED L. MCGHEE EARLY LEARNING CENTER<br/>GRADUATION CEREMONY</b> PCCC | <b>9:30 AM</b>  |
| <b>5.27</b>  | <b>TRIBAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED</b> Memorial Day                     |                 |