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creek corner

Overcoming Barriers
TO ECONOMIC GROWTH



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Sharon Delmar
 Staff Contributor

Jeanna Morgan
 Designer

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MEGAN ZAMORA
Editor, Creek Corner

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

“



arch has a way of meeting us mid-stride.

The energy of a new year has settled into routine. The days are getting longer, but many of us are still catching our breath. It's a month that reminds us growth isn't dramatic—it's steady. It's consistent. It happens in small, often unseen ways.

That feels especially fitting as we recognize both Women's History Month and Employee Appreciation Day. These observances invite us to look beyond headlines and titles and instead notice the everyday contributions that keep our community strong.

At Poarch, that kind of dedication is everywhere.

It's in the women who lead, mentor, and quietly move initiatives forward. It's in the employees who show up early, stay late, and carry responsibility without fanfare. It's in the problem-solvers who don't ask, "Is this my job?" but instead ask, "How can I help?"

This month, we're launching something new that reflects that very spirit: Mvto Moment.

Mvto Moment is simple in concept but powerful in practice. It's an opportunity to recognize one another—for the big wins and the small, unseen efforts that often make the biggest difference.

Our first Mvto Moment honors Devin Rodriguez. When his supervisor was unable to respond due to illness, Devin stepped in without hesitation to assist a Tribal Citizen facing a difficult situation at home. It was after hours. It wasn't convenient. And it wasn't about recognition. It was about responsibility, care, and doing what needed to be done.

That is what appreciation looks like in action.

As Mvskoke Creek people, gratitude is not just something we say—it's something we practice. "Mvto" carries weight. It acknowledges effort. It recognizes contribution. It reminds us that none of us carry this community alone.

March invites us to notice those moments more intentionally.

So this month, I encourage you to participate. Recognize someone. Send a note. Say "Mvto" and mean it. The small acknowledgments matter more than we realize.

If you have a Mvto Moment you'd like to share, please email Sharon Delmar at sdelmar@pci-nsn.gov. You can also reach her by phone at 251.368.9136, extension 2216.

Growth doesn't always arrive with fanfare. Sometimes it looks like showing up after hours. Sometimes it looks like stepping in when someone else cannot. Sometimes it looks like simply continuing to care.

And those moments deserve to be seen. **Mvto.**

“
'Mvto' carries weight. It acknowledges effort. It recognizes contribution. It reminds us that none of us carry this community alone.



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:
Christina Flint-Lowe
Sandy Hollinger
Keith Martin
Arthur Mothershed
Justin Stabler





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LEADING WITH PURPOSE

RUSTY MARTIN ON STEWARDSHIP, SERVICE, AND SECURING OUR FUTURE

By Megan Zamora

For Rusty Martin, leadership has never been about titles or hierarchy—it has always been about people. Whether managing teams across the country or serving his own Tribe, Rusty’s approach has remained consistent: show up, do the work, and make decisions that serve not just today, but generations to come.

As Division Director of Regulatory Affairs for the Poarch Creek Indians, Rusty oversees one of the most diverse and complex divisions within Tribal Government. His portfolio includes Tribal Employment Rights (TERO), the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), Environmental department, Tribal Archives and Museum—work that connects the Tribe’s past, present, and future in tangible ways. It’s a role that requires constant balance, adaptability, and a deep understanding of stewardship.

FROM THE STORE FLOOR TO STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Before returning home to Poarch, Rusty spent more than two decades with Walmart—beginning as an hourly associate in Enterprise, Alabama, and ultimately serving as a Senior Director within Health and Wellness at Sam’s Club U.S. as a subject matter expert, following his tenure as Division Director for optical and hearing center operations for Sam’s Club U.S., where he oversaw operations nationwide. In these roles, he provided enterprise-level leadership and oversight for optical and hearing services, with a strong focus on regulatory compliance, risk management, and adherence to federal, state, and professional standards. His career journey included holding leadership roles across both Walmart and Sam’s Club, managing teams across various parts of the United States and gaining firsthand insight into how leadership decisions ripple across organizations and the communities they serve.

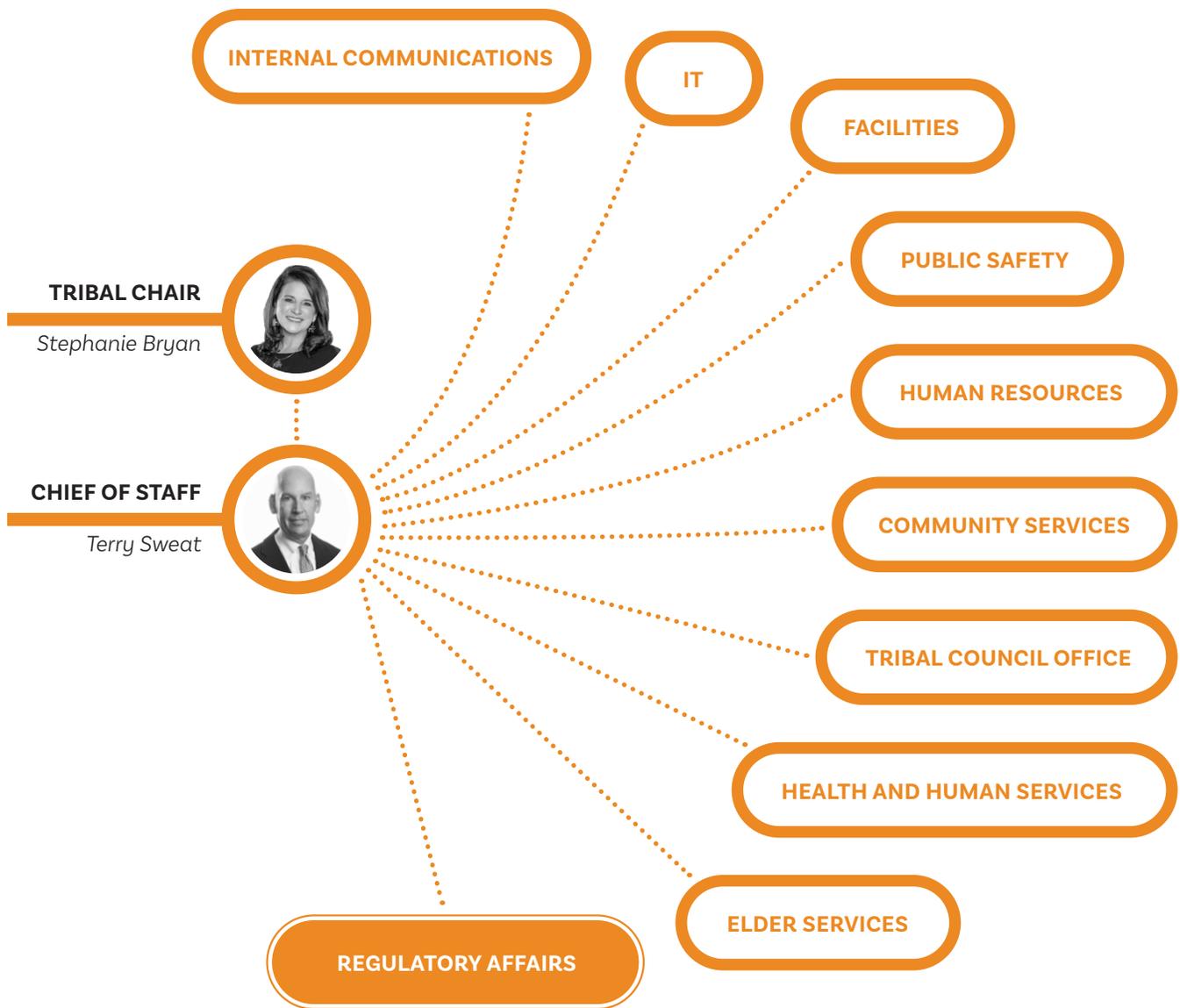
Walmart’s emphasis on internal growth and leadership development left a lasting impression. “You’re exposed to all kinds of leadership styles,” Rusty says. “The good ones teach you what to emulate. The others teach you what not to do.” What stayed with him most was a simple truth: no matter the scale of the organization, success depends on investing in people.

That philosophy followed him home.

COMING BACK—AND SEEING CHANGE

Rusty returned to Poarch in 2022 after time away, including a period of retirement and recovery from health challenges. Like many who leave and later come back, he noticed how much had changed—and how much responsibility now rested on Tribal leadership.

“We’ve grown so much,” he reflects. “And growth is good. But with growth comes the need to think differently—more strategically—about sustainability.” For Rusty, working for the Tribe carries a different weight than any corporate role ever could. Tribal Citizens, he notes, are both the community being served and the shareholders invested in the Tribe’s future. Every decision must be filtered through a simple but demanding question: Is this good for the Tribe as a whole—not just today, but long-term?



STEWARDSHIP AS A DAILY PRACTICE

Ask Rusty to define stewardship, and he won't point to a policy or a program. Instead, he talks about responsibility—to the land, to culture, to people, and to those who came before.

“Our job is to protect what was handed to us,” he says, “and to make sure we leave something sustainable behind.”

That mindset drives how Regulatory Affairs operates. Whether updating outdated codes, protecting historic sites, enforcing Tribal Employment Rights, or restoring environmental resources, the work is grounded in preservation and foresight. Even regulatory titles—often misunderstood—exist to safeguard the Tribe and ensure continuity across generations.

Stewardship also means making hard choices. Rusty has led efforts to reevaluate programs and initiatives, asking whether resources are being used in ways that benefit the widest possible group of Tribal Citizens. Sometimes that means redirecting funding or sunseting programs that no longer serve the broader community.

“It’s not about what benefits me,” he says. “It’s about what strengthens the Tribe.”

...continued on next page



RUSTY MARTIN
*Division Director
of Regulatory Affairs*



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BRIDGING GENERATIONS AND REBUILDING CONNECTION

One of Rusty's greatest concerns—and motivations—is the growing gap between elders, youth, and the generations in between. He remembers a time when community connections were instinctive, when everyone knew one another's families and stories.

That sense of connection, he believes, must be intentionally rebuilt.

Under his leadership, programs like the Senior Reading initiative were reimagined into something more purposeful. Seniors are now recognized as Historic Ambassadors, learning Creek history and sharing that knowledge with others. Through partnerships with the museum, archives, and THPO, history becomes a living, shared experience rather than something static.

"Every Tribal Citizen is a cultural ambassador," Rusty says. "If we don't know our story, we can't tell it—and if we can't tell it, we risk losing it."

PREPARING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Looking ahead, Rusty is candid about what keeps him up at night. His concern isn't scarcity—it's complacency.

"If everything went away tomorrow," he asks, "would our people have the skills, education, and independence to sustain themselves?"

That question fuels his focus on financial literacy, workforce development, and entrepreneurship. Rusty believes true sovereignty includes economic independence and generational wealth—not dependency. He wants to see

Tribal Citizens equipped not just to benefit from what the Tribe provides, but to build something of their own.

"We should be creating opportunities for people to thrive on their own," he says. "That's how we honor what past generations fought for."

LEADERSHIP AS SERVICE

Despite his executive experience, Rusty doesn't see himself as separate from anyone else. He tells a story about spilling coffee at the museum and immediately getting down on his hands and knees to clean it up—because leadership, to him, doesn't exempt you from responsibility.

"You can't say one thing and do another," he says. "People are always watching."

Mentorship is another cornerstone of his leadership. Even when team members move on to other departments, Rusty continues to support and guide them. Legacy, he believes, isn't measured by personal achievements, but by the people you help grow along the way.

PURPOSE OVER POSITION

Having already retired once, Rusty is clear about what motivates him now. It isn't money or prestige—it's purpose.

"As long as I wake up loving what I do and feeling like I'm making a difference, I'm where I'm supposed to be," he says. "The day that changes, I'll know it's time to step back."

Until then, Rusty Martin continues to lead with intention, humility, and an unwavering commitment to the Poarch Creek Indians—honoring the past, serving the present, and working tirelessly to secure a future worth inheriting.

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BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER

HOW POARCH CREEK LEADERS ARE OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

By Sharon Delmar



Long before gaming resorts, federal contracts, or national expansion, the Poarch Creek Tribe was already thinking about the future.

That future, grounded in economic sovereignty, careful planning, and responsibility to the community, is still taking shape today. Across federal contracting, non-gaming enterprises, and gaming and hospitality, Tribal leaders are working toward the same goal: reducing risk, creating opportunity, and building something that lasts for generations.

Three leaders helping guide that work are Mal McGhee, Executive Vice President of PCI Federal; Cody Williamson, President and CEO of the Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority (CIEDA); and Arthur Mothershed, Vice President of Business Development for Wind Creek Hospitality and a member of the Poarch Creek Tribal Council. Their roles are different, but their purpose is shared: to build strong enterprises that support Tribal citizens and protect Tribal sovereignty.

For Mal McGhee, economic development has always started with preparation. “We were thinking about economic development before we were federally recognized,” McGhee said. “That mindset made all the difference.”

Growing up in the Poarch Creek community, McGhee experienced what it meant to have limited opportunity, but also what it meant to plan ahead anyway. Long before gaming or federal contracting became realities, Tribal leaders were writing a constitution, preparing for recognition, and asking hard questions about how the Tribe would support itself.

“Government contracting isn’t something you can do without full commitment,” McGhee said. “You need accounting, legal, HR, compliance, everything.”

Today, PCI Federal includes 18 companies, employs 1,100 people globally, and generates roughly \$300 million in annual revenue. McGhee is quick to point out that none of that happened overnight. It took years of building the right

systems, hiring the right people, and being willing to take calculated risks.

That same long-term mindset is reflected in the work of Creek Indian Enterprises. CIEDA serves as the Tribe’s non-gaming economic development arm, launching new businesses, supporting Tribal entrepreneurs, and overseeing a portfolio of enterprises at different stages of growth.

While some ventures are designed to eventually stand on their own, CIEDA also continues to oversee and manage several long-term operations, including destination developments like OWA, which require sustained leadership, reinvestment, and strategic planning.

Today, Creek Indian Enterprises oversees and manages a diverse portfolio of non-gaming businesses and development projects, spanning tourism, hospitality, retail, manufacturing, and services. “Our job is to develop businesses, help them succeed, and then let them stand on their own,” said Cody Williamson. “If a business still needs us forever, then we haven’t truly reduced risk or created something sustainable for the Tribe.”

One example Williamson highlighted is the Tribe’s small business loan program, which is now fully self-funded. Nearly 100 Tribal citizens have participated, using the program to help launch and grow small businesses. “That tells us people want to succeed,” Williamson said. “And they’re serious about what they’re building.”

Williamson also noted that economic development often means making tough choices. Capital is limited, costs are rising, and competition from national companies is real. “We have to be disciplined,” he said. “We have to decide where our dollars will do the most good.”

On the gaming and hospitality side, Arthur Mothershed said those same principles guide Wind Creek Hospitality’s growth.

Wind Creek Hospitality operates a growing portfolio of casino and resort properties across multiple states, with flagship operations in Alabama and major properties



in Florida and Pennsylvania. Today, the Wind Creek brand has grown into a multi-property hospitality and gaming operation, employing thousands of team members across resort, dining, entertainment, and casino experiences.

In 2014, the Tribal Council held a retreat focused on economic diversification. For Mothershed, that moment helped clarify the Tribe's long-term direction. "That retreat helped us step back and really look at where we were headed," he said. "It gave us a clear direction to diversify and grow intentionally."

Wind Creek's role is to identify new revenue opportunities while protecting what the Tribe has already built. That includes navigating complex regulatory environments and, at times, correcting misunderstandings about tribal sovereignty. "In new markets, sovereign immunity is often the first hurdle," Mothershed said. "Once people understand it, things usually move forward, but it can slow the process."

He also pointed to internal challenges, especially when it comes to managing risk. "We're known as a reliable operator," he said. "But we still have to decide when to move carefully and when it makes sense to move forward."

External competition adds another layer. Real estate investment trusts, or REITs, often own casino properties and lease them back to operators, making it harder to acquire full assets outright. Because of that, Wind Creek carefully weighs partnerships, greenfield development, and long-term improvements to existing properties.

Across all three interviews, one message came through clearly: economic development only works if people are ready to step into opportunity.

McGhee talked about the importance of creating real career paths within PCI Federal and investing in Tribal employees over time. "We want our people to see these as careers," he said. "Not just jobs."

Williamson pointed to workforce challenges at large developments like OWA, noting that recruiting and retaining employees remains an ongoing issue. "Workforce development isn't just about filling positions," he said. "It's about building a pipeline."

With its size and reach, Wind Creek Hospitality supports thousands of jobs and offers entry-level positions, advancement opportunities, and long-term careers for Tribal citizens and surrounding communities.

**“
We were
thinking about
economic
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before we
were federally
recognized. That
mindset made all
the difference.**

**MAL MCGHEE
EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT
OF PCI FEDERAL**



MAL MCGHEE

*Executive Vice President
of PCI Federal*



CODY WILLIAMSON

*President and CEO
of the Creek Indian Enterprise
Authority (CIEDA)*



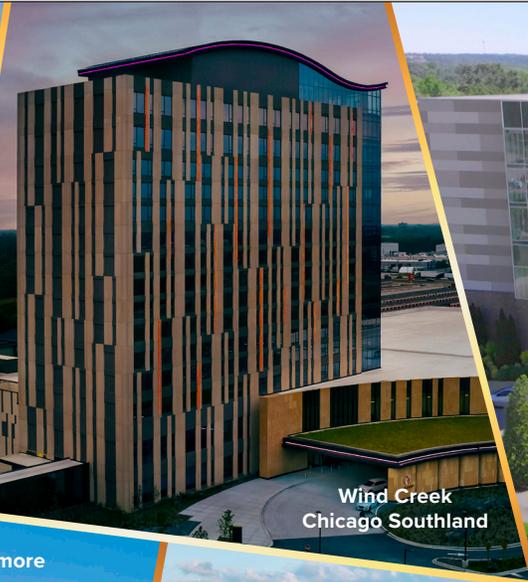
ARTHUR MOTHERSHED

*Vice President of
Business Development for
Wind Creek Hospitality*

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When it comes to measuring success, none of the leaders focus on revenue alone.

For McGhee, success means seeing Tribal citizens move into leadership roles and knowing the Tribe can compete on a national stage.

For Williamson, success means a business no longer needs CIEDA. “When something outgrows us and stands on its own,” he said, “that’s success.”

That way of thinking has led to conversations about selling certain assets, not because they failed, but because reinvesting that capital could create new opportunities elsewhere. Mothershed shared that perspective, noting that Wind Creek generally prefers to hold and improve assets, considering sales only when they clearly align with the Tribe’s long-term strategy.

All three leaders emphasized that true economic sovereignty means self-sufficiency, not dependence.

“We don’t need handouts,” Williamson said. “We have the people and the capability.”

McGhee highlighted the importance of working with other tribes and organizations like the National Congress of American Indians to protect Tribal economic tools while staying competitive.

Mothershed added that expanding outside Alabama was driven in part by legislative risk, another reminder that economic planning has to stay flexible.

When asked about defining moments, each leader pointed to decisions that required courage and long-term thinking.

For Mal McGhee, that moment came before federal recognition, when Tribal leaders made the decision to formally plan for economic development through the creation of Creek Indian Enterprises. “That was the turning point,” McGhee said. “We were planning, doing the work, and taking risks before anyone else believed we could.”

For Cody Williamson, it was watching ventures like Ecker grow, struggle, and ultimately stand on their own.

For Arthur Mothershed, it was the financing and development of Wind Creek Atmore in 2006, the Tribe’s first major step into significant debt. “That decision required faith,” Mothershed said. “But it proved what the Tribe was capable of and set the stage for everything that followed.”

When the conversation turned to legacy, none of the leaders talked about personal recognition. Instead, they focused on what they hope lasts.

For McGhee, legacy is about preparation and possibility. “What matters to me,” he said, “is knowing that what we built gives the next generation more options than we had.”

For Williamson, legacy is about independence, systems that continue to work long after today’s leaders move on. “If we’ve done this right,” he said, “the system keeps working long after we’re gone.”

Mothershed spoke about legacy in terms of stewardship. “Our responsibility,” he said, “is to make sure the Tribe is protected and positioned to succeed, no matter what changes come.”

They also shared advice for other tribes working toward economic growth.

McGhee emphasized the importance of planning early and building capacity. “You don’t wait until everything is perfect,” he said. “You build the foundation first.”

Williamson stressed clarity and alignment. “Define what success looks like,” he said. “Make sure leadership, boards, and the community are on the same page.”

Mothershed added that growth requires balance. “Manage risk,” he said, “but don’t let fear stop progress.”

Together, their message is clear. Economic development is not about chasing trends or short-term wins. It is about planning, discipline, and investing in people. As Williamson summed it up, “Success isn’t just profit. It’s improving quality of life for our people.”

“

When something outgrows us and stands on its own, that’s success.

**CODY WILLIAMSON,
PRESIDENT AND CEO
OF THE CREEK INDIAN
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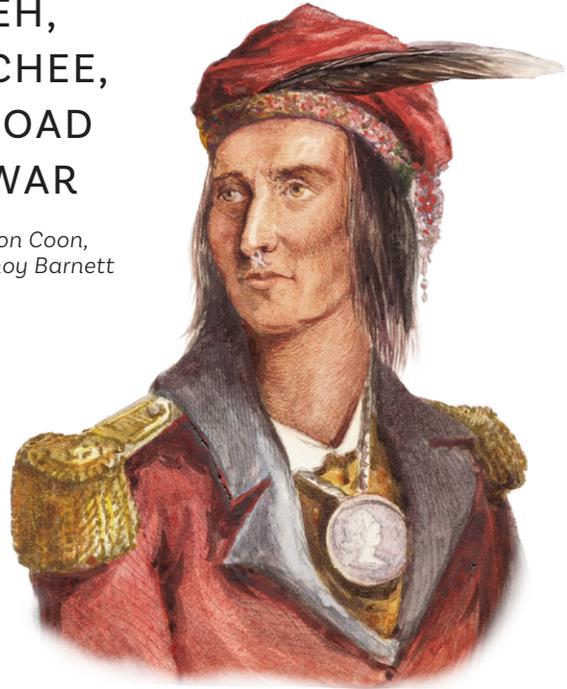
On Shaking Ground

TECUMSEH, TUCKABATCHEE, AND THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR

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



PICTURED Tenskwatawa,
Lithograph, 1836, after a painting by Charles Bird King



PICTURED Tecumseh, Painting, after an 1808 sketch

Last month's Creek Corner article on Alexander McGillivray ended with his death in 1793. By that time, Creek leaders knew the United States was a growing danger to their land and independence. Across the South, plantation slavery continued to expand, even as major slave revolts shook the upper class. Settlers pushed for land to expand plantation slavery, but much of this desirable land was right in the heart of Creek territory. At the same time, the Southeast became increasingly unstable. European powers arrived and withdrew, treaties were made and then broken, and violence spread wherever boundaries were unclear. By the early 1800s, the Creek Nation's political and spiritual foundations began to break apart.

Within the Creek Nation, tension had been building for years. American settlers pressed against the nation's boundaries, while surveyors entered Creek land without permission. The Federal Road, an American road cut through tribal lands, had begun just as a mail route, so they told the Creeks. But over time, the road transformed into a military highway and an opportunity for American settlers moving west. The American plan for civilization urged Creeks to

adopt fenced farming and private land ownership while abandoning traditional systems of communal exchange. Benjamin Hawkins, U.S. Indian Agent, called this plan progress. Many of our people saw it instead as an attack on the structure of their society.

These issues were discussed in long council meetings, where speakers talked for hours and every decision was measured against generations of tradition. Few places held more authority in these debates than Tuckabatchee. One of the oldest and most respected Creek towns, it served as a main meeting place of the Creek National Council. Historian George Stiggins later called it "the metropolis of the nation."

The Shawnee warrior Tecumseh arrived at Tuckabatchee in the fall of 1811, carrying the weight of a homeland that had been among the first targeted for American expansion. The Shawnee country of the Ohio River Valley became an early and violent battleground that Tecumseh was all too familiar with. He learned that treaties signed by a few leaders could be forced upon entire nations. Years of displacement, hunger, and broken promises shaped his belief that survival required total resistance, not compromise, and a complete rejection of American political and cultural control.

Tecumseh was not a stranger in Creek country. His family had lived among the Creeks years earlier in an Upper Creek town set up by Shawnees. When he traveled south, he carried the religious message of his brother, Tenskwatawa, who was considered a prophet. Once dismissed as a failure and an alcoholic, Tenskwatawa experienced visions that transformed him into a powerful religious leader. He condemned alcohol, American trade goods, and reliance on settlers, warning that these things weakened Native people and invited domination.

Tecumseh and his brother came to believe that Native division was one of the main reasons Americans kept taking land. The United States dealt with tribes one at a time, pressuring some, bribing others, and threatening those who resisted, making it easier to force unfair treaties and land sales. Because of this, Tecumseh rejected all land sales, arguing that the land did not belong to any single tribe but to all Native peoples together, so no one nation had the right to sell it. That message unsettled many Native communities, especially when the brothers also urged people to leave older spiritual practices behind and follow their new religious movement.

It was this message that Tecumseh brought with him when he visited the powerful Creek Nation in October 1811. For many Creek people, the religious side of his movement crossed an important line. Tenskwatawa called on people to abandon long-held medicines, rituals, and social practices in favor of a new, unified religious path. But Creek ceremonial knowledge was not decoration or superstition; it was how towns governed themselves, how people planted and harvested, and how balance was maintained. To many Creeks, abandoning those practices meant unraveling the fabric of their communities.

These concerns were not unique to the South. Many Shawnees contested Tenskwatawa's authority as he and his brother Tecumseh set up Prophetstown, a home base for their vision of a pan-Indian confederacy. Lack of food was a serious problem because not enough women were drawn to the cause at first. This gave the movement a shaky foothold to start with, but eventually Prophetstown would have thousands of warriors from many tribal nations joining the fight of unified Indian resistance.

When Tecumseh arrived at the Creek town of Tuckabatchee, tensions were already running high. The Creek National Council was meeting, with delegations from other nations in attendance. American officials were there at first, but arguments over the Federal Road quickly escalated. Benjamin Hawkins sparked outrage when he said the road would be built with or without Creek consent, then walked out. Only after the Americans were removed from the council meeting did Tecumseh finally speak about his mission.

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PICTURED Battle of Tippecanoe, lithograph by Kurz and Allison c. 1889.

No transcript of his speech survives, but accounts describe a dramatic scene. Tecumseh addressed thousands gathered in the square ground, speaking through a translator fluent in the Mvskoke Creek language named Seekaboo, who was also one of his prophets. He warned Creek leaders that deception posed a great danger and that continued compromise would lead to further loss of land. He urged them to reject false promises and land exchanges and to seek unity among Native nations. Tecumseh did not call for immediate war, arguing that peace was possible only if land and independence were preserved, and that the greatest threat was division.

A leader known as Big Warrior (Tvstvnvke Rakko) answered Tecumseh with caution. Contemporary accounts describe him as a large man, heavily tattooed, “as spotted as a leopard”, and he served as the nation’s principal speaker. Big Warrior did not fully embrace Tecumseh’s call and did not think aligning against the United States was wise. Many agreed with his restraint: some feared it would lead to destruction and war, while others did not want the sovereignty of Creek towns weakened within a pan-Indian confederacy. Still, Tecumseh’s message intrigued others.

Tecumseh left with a warning: when he returned home in the North, he would stomp his foot, the earth would shake, and the time would come for Native nations to rise up and unite against American expansion. Seekaboo remained in Creek Nation to bring in more followers. Within a month though, the movement seemed to be unraveling. In November 1811, while Tecumseh was still traveling, American forces attacked Prophetstown in what became known as the Battle of Tippecanoe. Tenskwatawa had promised his followers spiritual protection, but Prophetstown was burned to the ground. His reputation as a prophet suffered, and many survivors abandoned the movement.

Just a month later, in the early hours of December 16, 1811, the ground began to shake. A deep roaring sound rolled across the land like distant thunder. Trees snapped. Buildings cracked as far away as Pensacola. The Mississippi River surged backward, forming temporary waterfalls. Darkness fell as sulfurous vapors filled the air, and aftershocks followed for months. These were the most powerful earthquakes ever recorded east of the Rocky Mountains.

For many Creek and Shawnee people, it was a clear sign. Tecumseh had warned that when he stomped his foot, the earth would shake, and now it had. Also, around the time of his southern journey, a bright comet had blazed across the sky, reaching its peak while he was in the South and fading as he returned north. Tecumseh's name can be loosely translated as "Shooting Star," and together these events turned doubt into belief.

Across the South, people from every walk of life searched for meaning. Christian revivals swept through settler communities, drawing huge crowds and rapidly growing church membership in the months after the earthquakes. Among the Creeks, many saw the same events as confirmation of the Shawnee Prophet's teachings. Whatever hope had been lost after the Battle of Tippecanoe was reignited by the earthquakes and the comet.

Out of this moment emerged Josiah Francis (Heles Haco), a Creek leader influenced by Tecumseh's visit. He believed the land should not be sold and that American expansion threatened Creek survival. Francis worked with Tecumseh and adopted some of the new religious ideas, but he gained more support by fitting them into Creek political and spiritual traditions instead of asking people to abandon the old ways. His influence grew among Upper Creeks who were already leaning toward armed resistance, though, like Tecumseh, he did not speak for the entire nation.

Tecumseh and Josiah Francis travelled west together, speaking to nations like the powerful Osage. Tecumseh warned again that land sales would destroy Native peoples unless they acted together. People listened, but they did not fully commit. The same barriers appeared: fear of losing sovereignty, reluctance to abandon traditions, and dread of American military power. While Tecumseh's efforts helped spark a violent split within the Creek Nation, leading to what became known as the Red Stick movement, his message was failing to fully take hold among many other tribes.

Tecumseh and Josiah Francis returned home from their travels disappointed. They stirred unrest and urgency, but they had not united Native nations. All of this unfolded as the War of 1812 erupted, tying Native resistance to a global conflict between empires. The British promised support for anti-American tribal groups like Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa's resistance at Prophetstown, as well as the Redstick movement among the Creeks. The British raised their hopes for a successful alliance, but the British would prove to provide too little help too late.

A series of killings in 1812 further raised tensions within the Creek Nation. In one instance, a group of Creeks returning home from a visit to Tenskwatawa at Prophetstown was mistakenly told that war had already started between Creek people and American settlers. Believing this, they attacked and killed settler families. Benjamin Hawkins then demanded that the Creek National Council punish those responsible.

When the Creek National Council at Tuckabatchee agreed to carry out executions, the sentence was enforced by warriors rather than by clan leaders, as had been the custom in the past. For many, it was proof that national leadership had been corrupted by American influence. The Redsticks were rising as a unified group of hostile Creeks ready to fight not only the Americans but also the Creeks who stood in their way.

The January 2026 Creek Corner article on Atasi introduced Captain Sam Isaacs. After marrying one of Alexander McGillivray's daughters, Isaacs pursued Dixon Bailey down the Alabama River to Bailey's ferry and punished him and other Creek families who refused to pay taxes ordered by the Creek National Council. Given that Bailey later became a major target of the Redsticks at Fort Mims, many readers might assume Isaacs was a militant Redstick, and many might also assume that Tuckabatchee, as an ancient town, would have been dominated by Redsticks as well.

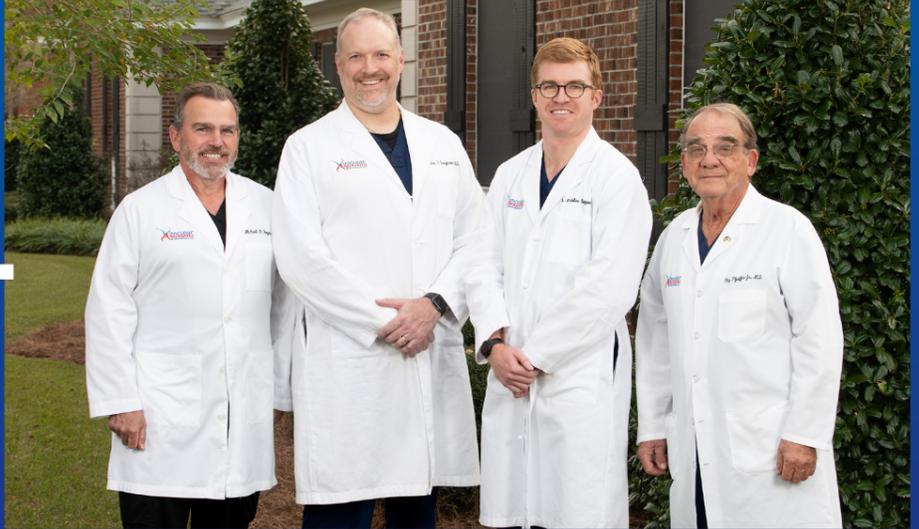
Tecumseh had warned that when he stomped his foot, the earth would shake, and now it had. ...a bright comet had blazed across the sky, reaching its peak while he was in the South and fading as he returned north. Tecumseh's name can be loosely translated as "Shooting Star," and together these events turned doubt into belief.



PICTURED The Great Comet of 1811 over the Katz Castle in the German town of St. Goarshausen in what is now Rhineland-Palatinate.

...continued on next page

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PICTURED Tukabatchee/Tokvpcce Historical Marker. Near Tallassee, Alabama, in Elmore County. One side lists the inscription in English, and the other side is listed in mvskoke.



Both assumptions would be incorrect. The reality of the Creek War was much more complicated. People splintered off into many directions with many interests. Quite a few people rose up as new prophets in Creek country during the time of Tecumseh's movement, but not all were on the same path. The events surrounding Tukabatchee expose how misleading it is to frame the Creek War as a simple contest between "traditionalists" and those who had been accused of assimilation.

The leaders of both sides were of mixed race. Many Redstick leaders were deeply traditional in some respects, and in other ways they took on radical changes. They rejected American trade goods, but they also adopted a new religious discipline that broke from older Creek ceremonial authority. Tecumseh's religious movement from the north brought new practices, like breaking out into violent muscles spasms all over the body. Tecumseh and his followers also taught them the Dance of the Lakes, which he spread from the Great Lakes of the North to the Deep South.

Leaders at Tukabatchee defended traditional knowledge and the independence of their towns, while also recognizing that some changes had already taken place and could not simply be reversed. Traditional headmen within the Creek National Council were wary of the Redstick ideology that would put their people head-to-head militarily with the American government.

In the years immediately before the Creek War, internal divisions within the Creek Nation deepened as militant prophets and war leaders pressed for violent resistance to American expansion. Captain Sam Isaacs had become someone who was considered powerful and prophetic, likely regarded as a *kērvv*, or a "knower" born with special

abilities. He distrusted Tecumseh from the start and openly rejected him during his Tukabatchee visit.

Because of Isaacs' powerful influence, he became the target of the new prophets influenced by Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa's teachings. Josiah Francis and Paddy Walsh were two Redstick prophets who would rise up in the new era, convulsing and tensing when they touched "impure" people, and dancing the Dance of the Lakes. They accused Isaacs of witchcraft and claimed he possessed dangerous powers. In a more cynical take, George Stiggins later wrote that they sought to pull him down "from the pinnacle of his fame," to secure their own authority. Isaacs was condemned as a witch and sentenced to death by burning.

Warned by followers who remained loyal to him, Isaacs fled to Tukabatchee, where he placed himself under the protection of Big Warrior. Luckily for Tukabatchee warriors, Isaacs arrived with a large supply of powder and lead at a moment when such resources were scarce. He strengthened the Tukabatchee defenses and angered the Redsticks.

Redstick forces moved fast. They surrounded Tukabatchee and attacked repeatedly. The defenders, badly outnumbered, held their ground behind quickly built defenses around the square grounds as arrows and gunfire poured in. Reinforcements from the Lower Creek town of Coweta eventually arrived to defend Tukabatchee from the Redsticks. After several days of fighting, the Redstick assault ended.

Tukabatchee leaders had no time to celebrate a victory. They understood that war among Creeks was now unavoidable, and they had just experienced the first battle. Big Warrior ordered an organized withdrawal of women, children, and armed men eastward to a safe point in what is now Georgia. For the moment, the Redsticks did not pursue. Tukabatchee's people survived, even as the Creek Nation itself slid fully into civil war.

Tecumseh did not come south to spark a civil war. He wanted Native nations across the continent to unite. But inside the Creek Nation, his message collided with existing realities, long-held religious traditions, and deep disagreements over when and why to go to war. Instead of bringing unity, it widened fractures that were already there.

By the time open fighting erupted in 1813, the lines were not clear. Towns and families were divided, and individuals changed sides as violence spread. Many tried to stay neutral, and both sides often punished them for it. This was not a simple fight between "old ways" and "new ways." It was a struggle over how a nation survives when every choice carries difficult consequences. When political authority, spiritual balance, and the land itself crumbles under pressure, division can spread faster than anyone intends.



picture from iaia.edu

BIPARTISAN VOTE KEEPS INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS ALIVE AND FUNDED

By Native News Online Staff

Congress has approved \$13.482 million in federal funding for the Institute of American Indian Arts for fiscal year 2026, rejecting a Trump administration proposal that would have eliminated the school's federal appropriation.

The funding is included in H.R. 6938, the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives on Jan. 8 by a bipartisan vote of 397-28 and was later approved by the U.S. Senate.

The appropriation keeps IAIA's funding level flat and signals continued bipartisan support for the Santa Fe-based institution's mission, regardless of the administration's priorities. The funding supports IAIA's academic programs, student services and general operations.

"This bipartisan funding provides critical stability for our students and for the faculty and staff who support them," said IAIA President Dr. Shelly C. Lowe, a citizen of the Navajo Nation. "It allows IAIA to continue empowering creativity and leadership in Indigenous arts and cultures through higher education, while affirming the enduring value of Native artists and cultural knowledge in this country. We are grateful to Congress and to New Mexico's congressional delegation for standing with IAIA and the communities we serve."

Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said the legislation reflects bipartisan cooperation and protects key programs for Indian Country.

"Developed through thoughtful, bipartisan, committee-led negotiations, we delivered a full-year spending measure that reduces energy costs, protects America's public

lands, and safeguards important programs that Indian Country relies on," Cole said. "As someone who has always championed both Tribal sovereignty and returning the appropriations process to regular order, I am very pleased to see the Interior and Environment bill move through the legislative process, and I thank Subcommittee Chair Mike Simpson for his work on this bill."

New Mexico Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández said she worked with lawmakers from both parties to preserve funding for the institution after the Trump administration proposed eliminating it.

"Art is a vital pathway to understand culture, identity, and heritage and IAIA is one of the best institutions in the country doing just that," Leger Fernández said. "That's why I fought so hard to secure this bipartisan funding for this beautiful institution—which elevates Indigenous arts and cultures around the world. President Trump proposed eliminating IAIA's funding — let's repeat that — he proposed zero funding."

"Pushing back against such an extreme attack, Democrats and Republicans came together last week to support Native artists, preserve Indigenous culture, and make sure these stories are carried forward for generations," she added. "I will continue working alongside Chairman Cole and Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro to keep funding IAIA's mission."

Founded in 1962, IAIA is the only four-year degree-granting institution in the world dedicated to contemporary Indigenous arts and cultures. Supporters said the latest funding decision underscores the school's resilience and the ongoing commitment of its community to carry Indigenous creativity, knowledge and culture forward for future generations.



THE BOY RAISED BY WOLVES

A LAKOTA LEGEND

By Sharon Delmar

The *Boy Raised by Wolves | A Lakota Legend* is a captivating short storytelling video that highlights the power of Indigenous tradition, culture, and connection to the natural world. Rooted in Lakota legend, this cinematic narrative invites viewers into a timeless story where wolves are more than animals—they are guardians, teachers, and symbols of survival.

The video follows the journey of a young boy who is raised by a wolf pack, learning strength and resilience through life in the wilderness. As he grows, he becomes a figure of courage and adaptability, representing the enduring bond between humans and nature. The story reflects themes found across many Native cultures: respect for the land, the wisdom of animals, and the importance of identity shaped by community and environment.

What makes this video especially meaningful is its dedication to oral storytelling traditions. The narration is steady and immersive, echoing the way tribal legends have been passed down through generations. The cinematic visuals enhance the mythic tone, making the viewer feel as though they are stepping into an ancient world where lessons of perseverance and belonging still resonate today.

For audiences interested in Native American history, mythology, or cultural storytelling, *The Boy Raised by Wolves* offers both an engaging experience and a reminder of the richness of Indigenous heritage. It stands as a tribute to the enduring legacy of tribal legends and the powerful messages they continue to share.

You can watch “The Boy Raised by Wolves” on YouTube by searching the full title.

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

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

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CONGRATULATIONS

AMBER ALVAREZ PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF TRIBAL ARCHIVES & MUSEUM

By Rusty Martin

The Regulatory Division is pleased to announce the promotion of Amber Alvarez to Director of Tribal Archives & Museum for the Poarch Creek Indians.

In this role, Amber will oversee the operations, staff, and programming of both the Office of Archives and Records Management (OARM) and the Poarch Creek Indians Museum, while also serving as the Tribe's official Archivist. She will lead the preservation of historical records and artifacts and help advance public understanding and appreciation of Poarch Creek history through exhibitions, outreach, research, and education.

Amber brings a strong and diverse background to this position, with more than two decades of service supporting Tribal programs across multiple departments. Her experience includes museum and cultural education, archives-related coordination, grant and program management, compliance, and leadership within Tribal operations. She has previously served in roles directly supporting the Museum and cultural programming, as well as in leadership positions requiring strategic oversight, collaboration with federal and state partners, and stewardship of Tribal resources. Her professional background, combined with her deep respect for Tribal history and culture, positions her well to lead this integrated Archives and Museum function.

Amber holds an Executive Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Business Administration, further strengthening her ability to guide both the operational and strategic responsibilities of this role.

Outside of work, Amber has been married to her husband, Alex, for 14 years and is the proud mother of four children—Sydney, Colby, Yanasa, and Eyaske. She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and creating through sewing and beadwork.

Please join us in congratulating Amber on her well-deserved promotion.

“...the TPC was created to help address the realities and challenges facing Native communities by providing a select group of service-minded Indigenous professionals...”



CHRISTINA FLINT-LOWE SELECTED BY THE NATIVE NATIONS INSTITUTE AS ONE OF TEN NEW MEMBERS OF THE 2026 TRIBAL PROFESSIONALS COHORT

By Craig Baker for the University of Arizona

The 10 individuals selected to participate in the year-long professional development program represent 10 unique Native nations across North America.

Now in its 11th year, the TPC has provided a framework for Indigenous professionals looking to gain experience, build networks, and serve their communities through a year-long commitment to professional development since 2016. The program begins on the University of Arizona campus at the James E. Rogers College of Law during NNI's annual accelerated Indigenous governance education event, January in Tucson (JIT).

Designed to provide Native Nation Building content that is actionable in Indian Country today, the TPC was created to help address the realities and challenges facing Native communities by providing a select group of service-minded Indigenous professionals with access to the knowledge and experience of NNI's Indigenous governance experts.

Cohort members receive a registration waiver to attend three accelerated graduate-level courses during JIT – an output of the Indigenous Governance Program held in partnership between NNI and the law school's Indigenous People's Law and Policy Program. TPC members also participate in quarterly seminars and other networking events with NNI faculty and staff throughout the year to help them find creative solutions to the most pressing issues in Indigenous governance.

This year's TPC welcomes 10 professionals representing 10 Native nations with expertise in government administration, healthcare, higher education, economic development and more!

Christina Flint-Lowe, DNP, MSN, MS, BSN, is currently elected to serve on the Tribal Council of the Poarch Creek Indians as its newest at-large Tribal Council member, bringing a unique combination of healthcare expertise and Indigenous leadership to the role.

Dr. Flint-Lowe holds a Doctor of Nursing Practice, a Master of Science in nursing, and a Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of Florida. Over the past 22 years she has served as a nurse practitioner in the Home-Based Primary Care Program for her Tribe, including 14 years with the Veterans Health Administration, delivering comprehensive care to high-risk geriatric veterans in their homes.

In addition to her clinical credentials, Dr. Flint-Lowe earned a master's in Native American leadership from Southeastern Oklahoma State University, reflecting her commitment to culturally informed governance. She has also served as the American Indian/Alaska Native special emphasis program manager at the Bay Pines Veterans Health Administration, where she worked to improve representation and support for Indigenous communities within federal healthcare systems.

Dr. Flint-Lowe previously served on her Tribe's ethics board and was selected as the 2023–2024 Poarch Creek Indian Senior Adult Princess. Her long-standing engagement in service roles underscores her commitment to the Tribe and its citizens.

Outside of her professional and council roles, Dr. Flint-Lowe is a devoted wife and mother who values time with her family. Her deep commitment to both family and community reflects the grounded, people-first approach she brings to her work in Tribal governance.

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POARCH CREEK INDIANS PARTNER WITH LEGAL SERVICES ALABAMA TO HELP BRING LEGAL AID TO THOSE IN NEED

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

The Poarch Creek Indians are proud to celebrate their partnership with Legal Services Alabama (LSA) with a \$50,000 donation to help expand access to legal aid in South Alabama by funding a full-time John Lewis Fellow. This support helps LSA reduce its case backlog and assist more families facing urgent legal issues in housing, consumer protection, family law, and elder rights. It also expands access to vital legal resources, ensuring every Alabamian receives fair and equal representation.

Through this partnership, Legal Services Alabama is proud to highlight the work of Tamonica Jones, a Staff Attorney and current John Lewis Legal Fellow in LSA's Mobile office. Her position is made possible by the Poarch Creek Indians, whose investment is not only funding a critical legal fellowship but also expanding access to free civil legal aid throughout South Alabama.

This collaboration was built on shared values of justice, service, and community empowerment. Ms. Jones' work embodies the spirit of both the Poarch Creek Indians and the John Lewis Fellowship by connecting compassion with advocacy to uplift underserved communities. On November 10th, she and the Mobile team hosted a Wills Clinic exclusively for Poarch Creek Tribal Citizens. During this event, Ms. Jones and a group of volunteer attorneys assisted Tribal Citizens in drafting wills, powers of attorney, and other essential estate planning documents, all at no cost.

This clinic is more than a legal service, it is an act of empowerment. By helping families secure their property and preserve their wishes for future generations, the initiative strengthens the foundation of the community and its citizens.

For the Poarch Creek Indians, this collaboration represents a deep and ongoing commitment to giving back and investing in programs that create lasting change. Their support ensures that legal help is not a privilege, but a right accessible to every person, every family, and every community across Alabama.

"Access to justice is essential for every community," said Ann Brown, Managing Attorney, Legal Services Alabama. "We are proud to partner with Poarch Creek Indians to ensure individuals and families receive the legal help they need."

Together, the Poarch Creek Indians and Legal Services Alabama are building a more just and equitable future where every voice is heard, and every community has the tools to thrive.

Legal Services Alabama provides free, client-centered, civil legal advocacy to low-income Alabamians and collaborates with others across the state and nation to find solutions to systemic issues caused by poverty and social justice inequities.

“

Access to justice is essential for every community. We are proud to partner with Poarch Creek Indians to ensure individuals and families receive the legal help they need.

ANN BROWN
MANAGING ATTORNEY,
LEGAL SERVICES ALABAMA



TAMONICA JONES
John Lewis Fellow

WARRIOR OUTREACH PROGRAM



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

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

PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

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

TRIBAL AFFILIATION:

- Be a PCI (Poarch Creek Indians) tribal citizen.
- Be a first-generation descendant of a PCI tribal citizen.

INCARCERATION/TREATMENT STATUS

Currently serving a sentence in an incarceration facility or enrolled in a substance abuse rehabilitation program with a duration of a year or more.

LOCATION

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

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

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

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POARCH CREEK INDIANS ANNOUNCE STATE-OF-THE-ART EV CHARGING COMING TO CREEK TRAVEL STORES IN POARCH

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

Poarch Creek Indians and Creek Travel Stores are pleased to announce the installation of state-of-the-art ChargePoint Level-3 DC fast electric vehicle (EV) chargers at its Poarch location, further enhancing the convenience and services offered to today's travelers. This new amenity reflects the Tribe's continued commitment to innovation, sustainability, and quality guest experiences.

The EV charging stations are located at the Creek Travel Store, 4740 Jack Springs Rd. in Atmore, Alabama. Installation of the chargers has been completed, with final activation pending delivery of the power supply equipment. The charging stations are expected to become fully operational in early March 2026.

Optimus Energy Solutions, an industry leader in EV charging station design, construction, and maintenance, was selected to perform the installation. The new charging facility includes three ChargePoint DC fast charging stations with the capacity to charge up to six vehicles simultaneously, allowing drivers to recharge quickly and continue their journey with minimal delay.

Designed to deliver an ultra-fast and reliable charging experience, the ChargePoint chargers can add approximately 200-250 miles of range in about 30 minutes, depending on the vehicle. The chargers offer universal compatibility with most EV models and include smart features such as real-time availability through the ChargePoint app and convenient contactless payment options.

"The addition of these EV charging stations at our Creek Travel Store represents an important investment in the future of our community and the region," said Tribal Chair and CEO Stephanie Bryan. "As electric vehicles become more common, providing reliable and accessible

charging infrastructure helps support economic growth, encourages sustainable travel, and ensures that Atmore remains a welcoming destination for travelers. This project reflects our commitment to innovation, environmental stewardship, and meeting the evolving needs of those who live, work, and travel through our area."

This initiative supports Creek Travel Stores' commitment to a cleaner future for transportation by helping reduce vehicle emissions and complementing the brand's mission to provide amenities that blend innovation, convenience and sustainability while meeting the evolving needs of modern travelers.

“ ...providing reliable and accessible charging infrastructure helps support economic growth, encourages sustainable travel, and ensures that Atmore remains a welcoming destination for travelers.

**STEPHANIE A. BRYAN,
PCI TRIBAL CHAIR AND CEO**





A MONTH OF MEMORIES AND MUST-SEE MOMENTS AT OWA

By Lauren Giddeons & Karen Rodriguez

M

arch means memories at OWA Parks & Resort! From Tropic Falls thrills and unique shopping and entertainment experiences, to southern comedy and live music nights, join us for a month of festive fun at OWA!

MARK YOUR MARCH CALENDARS FOR THESE MUST-SEE EVENTS

- **March 7** Gulf Coast Diabetes Walk
- **March 14** St. Pawtty's Day Parade and Celebration
Complete with costume contest, pet adoptions and a pet parade, join us for this special day celebrating our special four-legged friends.
- **March 21** Ronald McDonald House Rubber Ducky Regatta
Benefiting the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Mobile, this fun event will launch up to 10,000 adopted rubber ducks into the lake in Downtown OWA with a race to the finish line, including fantastic 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place prizes. But that's just the beginning! This full day of family fun also features live Family Feud-style games, a fan-favorite Jeep show, cooking demonstrations from local chefs, a bouncy house, face painting, and a scavenger hunt. Don't miss the fun and help us provide a home-away-from-home for families whose children are receiving medical care far from home.



Spring has arrived at **Tropic Falls** with new springtime hours beginning March 7th. Tropic Falls Theme & Water Park will open daily starting at 10 am for rides, slides, and endless fun. Check out our website for complete hours at visitowa.com/hours-calendar/.

The entertainment continues at the **Brandon Styles Theater** with a full lineup of comedy and magic. Check out Brandon Styles Magic Show on select Fridays at 7 pm, and the Brandon Styles Variety Show every Tuesday & Saturday at 7 pm. And don't miss Brandon Styles Trip Down Memory Lane Show on March 1st.

OWA Theater in Downtown OWA continues their new lineup of live music and entertainment this month, with great performances including:

- **March 1** Bluewater Highway
- **March 6 & 7** Night of Comedy - Southern Mama featuring Darren Knight
- **March 15** MOJO Thunder
- **March 19** Sister Hazel

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

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WIND CREEK SPONSORS PANINI SENIOR BOWL COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY

By Amelia Tognoli

“Visiting local children’s hospitals and schools reinforces that the Senior Bowl is more than just a game; it’s a community we are proud to support.”

**TIM RAMER,
EVP GENERAL MANAGER
AT WIND CREEK ATMORE**



Wind Creek was proud to sponsor the 2026 Panini Senior Bowl Community Service Day in Mobile, AL. The Panini Senior Bowl Community Service Day features top NFL prospects engaging in local community outreach.

This event brought together players, partners, and volunteers for a day dedicated to giving back before the big game. It was inspiring to see these talented athletes step off the field and into the community, making meaningful connections through service and compassion. Visiting classrooms and hospitals, the players brought encouragement and connection to students, patients, and community members, impacting lives far beyond the field.

“Participating in and supporting Community Service Day is something we take great pride in. Visiting local children’s hospitals and schools reinforces that the Senior Bowl is more than just a game; it’s a community we are proud to support,” said Tim Ramer, EVP General Manager at Wind Creek Atmore.

The experience continued Saturday as Wind Creek Guests enjoyed the excitement of the Senior Bowl game, further celebrating the spirit of teamwork and excellence. Events like this serve as a powerful reminder that impact, leadership, and teamwork extend well beyond the field and into the communities we call home. Wind Creek is honored to support initiatives that uplift, inspire, and strengthen the communities we serve.

“It’s always so meaningful to watch the players visit hospitals and bring smiles to the children. Seeing the joy they share truly brightens a child’s day,” said Trina Rackard, Director of Sponsorships and Events at Wind Creek Hospitality.

Powering Your Journey

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FACILITIES TECHNICIAN DEVIN RODRIGUEZ LITERALLY GOES THE EXTRA MILE

By Megan Zamora

When things go wrong at home, they rarely wait for a convenient time—and that was certainly the case for Tribal Citizen Lathaniel “Short Man” McGhee when a major plumbing issue caused his entire house to back up. What could have been a stressful, overwhelming situation quickly became a reminder of what service and dedication really look like.

Although the on-call plumber was sick, Devin Rodriguez, Facilities Technician II—Construction, stepped in without hesitation—driving from Poarch to Pensacola and working late into the night, until nearly 10:30 p.m., to make sure the issue was fully resolved.

Devin was quick to share credit with his supervisor, Mike Gaffney, who, despite being sick himself and unable to be on-site, stayed on the phone and walked Devin through the repair step by step. Together, their teamwork ensured the problem was handled quickly and correctly.

Asked about the experience, Devin downplayed the effort with characteristic humility: “It’s part of the job—you’ve got to do it! I’m glad I was able to help him out because he sure had a mess down there!”

The gesture meant so much to Lathaniel that he reached out to the Internal Communications team to make sure his “brother” received the recognition he deserved—asking that a simple mvto be shared in Creek Corner on his behalf.

This is what service looks like: showing up, supporting one another, and going the extra mile—literally—when it truly matters.

Mvto, Devin and Mike, for your dedication, teamwork, and commitment to caring for our community.

Have you had a positive experience with a Tribal Government employee or the Tribe that you’d like to share with our readers?

Share your experience.

Email Sharon Delmar at sdelmar@pci-nsn.gov.



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TIME IS MONEY; IT REALLY IS

By Bryan Fayard

S

uppose you want to save for a vacation next year. You've calculated your vacation will cost \$5,000, so what amount will you need to save per month for 12 months to cover the total cost? ($5,000 \div 12 \text{ months} = \417).

Now let's broaden our thinking a bit - say you want to become a millionaire 35 years from now. You can get there by saving \$2,381 per month for 35 years OR \$263 per month, your choice. Wait a minute, \$263 multiplied by 420 months (35 years times 12 months) equals only \$110,460, where does the rest of the money come from? It comes from compound interest or, money earns money, then that money that earned money, earns more money. To get this benefit of compound interest, you must invest your money, i.e., make your money work for you. Notice in this example that you invested \$110k, which is only 11% of the total so 89% comes via compound interest.

The above example is meant to inspire you to invest and get your money working for you. I used a 10% return in this example. If you think long-term, say 25 or 35 years, 10% is an achievable return. You can get 10% returns, or greater, in the stock market. BUT you can also experience negative returns. The key thing to remember when investing in the stock market is to think long-term.

To get the most benefit from compound interest, it is imperative to begin as early as possible. This adage, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now" especially applies to compound interest.

Look at the two charts on the next page. Notice how much it 'costs' if you wait to invest. Both charts are identical except the number of years to compound. Starting at age 18, your money will grow to one million dollars but if you wait until you're 35, the same amounts will grow to almost two hundred thousand—your choice.

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

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

HERE ARE 3 WAYS TO BECOME A MILLIONAIRE

Assumes Investing Begins At Age 18

PRINCIPAL	FREQUENCY	RETURN	YEARS	AMOUNT AT AGE 60
\$18,260	One-Time Investment	10%	42	\$1,000,000
\$1,860	Per Year	10%	42	\$1,000,000
\$129	Per Month	10%	42	\$1,000,000

THE 'COST' OF WAITING TO INVEST

Assumes Investing Begins At Age 35

PRINCIPAL	FREQUENCY	RETURN	YEARS	AMOUNT AT AGE 60
\$18,260	One-Time Investment	10%	25	\$197,845
\$1,860	Per Year	10%	25	\$182,925
\$129	Per Month	10%	25	\$171,330

Don't get discouraged if you haven't been investing. You can still reach your goals, you'll just have to invest more the longer you wait. At age 35, you'll need to invest \$92,296 to grow to one million by age 60, or \$10,168 each year or \$754 each month.

A great place to begin your investing journey is in your employer's retirement plan such as a 401k. If you own your own business, consider setting up a SIMPLE 401k plan. The most important point is to begin investing and the sooner the better. When you're really, really old, like say, Edie Baker, you'll be so glad you did. (Edie is one day older than me).

MAKE A TAX CREDIT DONATION

Support Atmore Community Hospital

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

This tax credit can be applied to:

- INCOME TAXES**
- UTILITY TAXES • EXCISE TAXES**
- INSURANCE PREMIUM TAXES**

HELP IN 3 EASY STEPS

You will need a My Alabama Taxes account to make a donation.



Make a reservation in My Alabama Taxes online portal.



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



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

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



Internal Communications

5811 Jack Springs Road
Atmore, AL 36502

CREEK CORNER

MARCH 2026 IMPORTANT DATES

3.2	SUBMISSION DEADLINE April Issue	
3.5	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	
3.10	TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom	4:00 PM
3.13	FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom	
3.14	WARRIOR RUN Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve	9:00 AM
3.19	TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING TC Chambers	
3.24	TRIBAL COURT Tribal Courtroom	4:00 PM
3.27	FAMILY COURT Tribal Courtroom	

OUR MISSION

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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