



# THE MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION

Office of Public Relations  
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JAMES R. FLOYD  
PRINCIPAL CHIEF

LOUIS A. HICKS  
SECOND CHIEF

Second Chief Louis Hicks,  
National Council Speaker Lucian Tiger III,  
Second Speaker David Hill, National Council Members, Supreme Court and District Court Judges,  
religious and traditional church leaders, mekkos, community and government leaders, we welcome  
you.

I recognize our Royalty:

Miss Muscogee Nation Princess Nina Fox and Junior Miss Louisa Harjo.

It is also my pleasure to recognize Muscogee (Creek) citizen Amberly Proctor, the current Miss Indian  
Oklahoma who is in attendance today.

I welcome our fellow Muscogee citizens within and outside our boundaries, those in attendance as  
well as those viewing online.

In preparing to speak to you today, I took time to reflect on our past, present, and future. This year  
marks the 40th anniversary of the ratification of our Constitution, which reaffirmed us as a sovereign  
Nation. The preamble reads:

Under the guidance of the Almighty God, our Creator, We the People of the Muscogee (Creek)  
Nation, to promote Unity, to establish Justice, and secure to ourselves and our children the blessings  
of Freedom, to preserve our basic Rights and Heritage, to strengthen and preserve self and local  
Government in continued relations with the United States of America, do ordain and establish this  
Constitution for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Since 1979, we've grown from 7000 enrolled citizens to now more than 86,000.

I remember when I started working for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in 1978. We had only a few  
permanent buildings, limited funds, and at most 100 employees. Today, we employ more than 5,000  
people and have an annual payroll exceeding \$169 million.

We started with only a plan for future economic development. A recent economic impact study found  
that our total economic impact in the state of Oklahoma is more than 8,000 jobs and \$ 874 million  
dollars.

This year I have been reminded that the decisions made in the past have had a profound impact on  
our sovereignty, and that the decisions we are making today will do the same to secure our future,  
especially now with the uncertainty in the US Government.

In looking back, one of the most important decisions I've appreciated as Principal Chief is that years  
ago our people wisely chose to create a Permanent Fund. Since its creation the Permanent Fund has  
grown to over \$372 million. I've seen the value it creates in helping to provide critical services for our  
people and financial security for our future.



Interest earned on the Permanent Fund has been used by our National Council to provide grants to schools, vans for chartered communities, funding for churches and ceremonial grounds, and for utility assistance to our citizens, just to name a few.

The value of growing the Permanent Fund base is that it strengthens our financial security and our credibility with the business community.

As your Principal Chief I repeat my promise to you to not borrow or decrease our base, but to increase it and to increase the interest for our vital needs. We must keep this foundation in place for a strong future for our Nation.

In the late 1970s we were the first tribe to own and operate a community hospital. In fact, we were highlighted as a success story on the PBS show Nova. We operated that hospital in the same location until last year when we opened the new Creek Nation Community Hospital at Okemah. In a time when rural healthcare facilities are decreasing, we made an investment and have increased our ability to provide services.

In the 1960s the Indian Clinic at Eufaula was just a small storefront. Through a joint venture with the Indian Health Service the Nation recently opened the new 70,000 square foot Eufaula Indian Health Center. In addition to expanding services, our Nation's investment has created 37 new, well-paying jobs.

It is important to note the Eufaula Indian Health Center is located in a county that over the past few years has had the highest in unemployment rate in the state. We are now the largest employer in that county.

As we all know it hasn't been an easy journey. When I came into office we faced a huge financial and operational deficit in our health care system that threatened its stability.

Thanks to innovation and hard work from every person at every level, I am glad to report that our healthcare system is financially sound. We can now place a greater focus on programs that will improve the overall health in our communities.

We had to make tough decisions to get there, but now it is rewarding to know we did what was right to serve our people and to protect our sovereignty: the greatest promises I can make to you.

Over the past year we have also had opportunities to show the strength of our Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Last month, we celebrated the passage of amendments to the Stigler Act. I placed a high priority on fighting this injustice when I became Principal Chief.

The Act had unfairly set a blood quantum requirement to inherit restricted land only on the Five Tribes. Since it was enacted in 1947 we have all lost more than 95% of our restricted land.

It took many trips and meetings with Congressional leaders from across the United States over the past three years to get these amendments passed.



The Senate allowed testimony from only one tribe on this Act, and I was deeply honored, as Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, to be able to present that testimony.

Now the children of our Muscogee citizens have the same rights of inheritance as every other tribe. And I am proud of our Realty department, as they lead our citizens in understanding how to claim those rights.

One of the most important roles a government plays **is** in protecting our citizens. I am proud to report last month that under the Violence Against Women Act we demonstrated our sovereignty as we successfully prosecuted our first non-native offender.

I want everyone, citizen and non-citizen alike, to know we are serious about combatting domestic violence and will take action to the fullest extent of the law to eliminate it.

This conviction was the result of a combination of having highly trained Lighthorse officers and prosecutors in the Attorney Generals office. Our prosecutor was very complimentary about the work of our Lighthorse officers.

They demonstrate the strength of our sovereign Nation. Now, in addition to meeting state training requirements, they are attending a federal training center in New Mexico.

Recently, a Lighthorse officer graduated at the top of the class as Platoon Leader. He earned an Expert Marksman Award as Top Shot of the entire class and Expert Driver.

I would like to recognize Lighthorse Officer Brandon Jackson for representing us in such a distinguished manner. Thank you Officer Jackson, our citizens are fortunate to have highly trained officers serving them.

The importance of the strength of our Nation was crucial in demonstrating our sovereignty in the Murphy Case that is being considered at the US Supreme Court. In November, as we sat near the front of the Supreme Court, escorted proudly by our Lighthorse Chiefs, I was deeply moved as the attorneys detailed significant accomplishments of our Muscogee Nation. By exerting our strength we are now being respected throughout the world.

When faced with the decision to join this case, an easy way out would have been to defer to other entities. But that would have weakened our sovereignty. Our Attorney General and his staff have worked tirelessly on this Case.

I thought of their hard work, and the hard work of all the leaders in our Muscogee Nation in the ways they honorably serve our people every day. Everything we all do, every thing we say, is crucial to keeping us strong.

The greatest examples of honorable service are our veterans. I've always appreciated that we honor our veterans, as we did this past November.

A tribal Vietnam veteran traveled to France to honor our fallen for the 100th commemoration of the end of World War I. He participated in ceremonies and the placement of our tribal flag on each soldier's grave, as well as soil from our home.



Now our fallen will always have a piece of home with them. John Sloan, could you please stand and be recognized for your dedication and representation of the Nation in France.

I've reported on our humble beginnings and our resilient journey, but now I want to report on our Nation's future.

In 2017, we initiated an ambitious proposal to develop a master site plan to guide our expansion for the next 20 years in the Okmulgee area.

We worked with a highly respected architectural firm, which included Muscogee citizen Jason Holuby. We have worked to get employee and citizen input.

While construction will not start immediately, I am glad to report that we have a plan. As we work through the details, and get even more citizen input, we hope to break ground on the first buildings in 2020. Our plan is to secure funding that will not draw from the Permanent Fund or high-interest loans.

In the lobby you will see the results of much of our proposal, including expansion on the main complex here. We must replace our 40 plus year old buildings, and plan to design it to better meet your needs by consolidating all member services in one location.

We have a plan for the country club property that includes a museum and cultural center with space for preservation and display of our historical archives.

At the Omniplex, we included needs for the annual festival: new venues for sporting events, a larger concert venue, a large expo center, improved wheelchair accessibility, and expanded parking areas.

With the support of the National Council, this past year we made an investment to upgrade the Dome with a new gym floor and stadium seating for 1,600 people, providing a venue to host more events. For the first time we've hosted a college basketball game between Haskell and Bacone.

This week we are hosting the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Okmulgee County High School Basketball Tournament. Actually, the Finals are tonight starting at 5:00.

And, I am happy to announce we have been chosen next month as a site to host an OSSAA Regional basketball playoff!

We've had a long journey to get to where we are today, but we've also maintained a focus on our future.

Our youth represent our future, and our youth council is a representation that our future is bright. The Mvskoke Youth Council is serving as our ushers today. As a group they've completed over 1,000 hours of community service and collected almost one million dollars in scholarships.

Members of the Youth Council have:

- Won 1st place in the Center for Native American Youth Creative Native art contest.
- Received 6 group and individual awards at the Oklahoma Native Language Fair, including 1st place in traditional song.
- Completed the Humanity in Action Fellowship in Copenhagen Denmark.
- Currently serving with NCAI on the Wilma Mankiller Fellowship.



In addition to our Youth Council, we have citizens working to do great things. Clint Summers was recently selected as TU College of Law's 2018 Oklahoma Bar Association Student of the Year. Clint has participated in our higher education department's Undergraduate, Post-Graduate, and Doctoral funding to complete his degrees. Clint has been published in the American Indian Law Journal and has secured positions as clerk for a U.S. District Judge and then as a clerk on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the fifth circuit.

Clint Summers, will please stand to be recognized.

To better prepare our youth for a secure future we have started financial literacy trainings. Through a partnership with Tinker Federal Credit Union, our youth have received life skills training from certified financial counselors on budgeting and decision making, along with classes on credit management and the dangers of predatory lending. I am proud to announce we have had 1000 youth participate.

In addition, we have implemented financial training for our children in Head Start. Research has shown that children develop money habits as young as 7 years old, so we are reaching them early.

Our Head Start program is also incorporating our language into these trainings. We are providing them the skills to be financially successful while learning the Mvskoke language.

Through our journey from the resilient past, strong present and bright future, I'd like to acknowledge someone in particular whose actions represent the best of our Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Darren DeLaune.

Darren works in our Mvskoke Media Department. Recently, during a recording of the live radio show a guest started having health difficulties. Using training Darren learned through his employment with the Nation, he recognized the symptoms and started CPR. Because of Darren's quick thinking and ability to act when needed, he saved a life. Yesterday, we gave Darren this plaque to recognize his actions. Darren DeLaune, please stand to be recognized.

Our Nation has come a long way. Over the past forty years we have fought to maintain our sovereign government.

Many of you know that we started with few resources, but we have always had our greatest resource: Our People. It is your strength that flows through us, and your struggles to overcome that inspire us today. It is our people that have always kept us moving forward.

As we've recognized today, we have citizens such as John Sloan honoring those who have come before us, Officer Brandon Jackson and Darren DeLaune showing how strong we are today, Clint Summers and our Youth Council representing why we can have hope in our future.

I hope you can see some of the reasons why it so important that we always maintain our focus on strengthening our sovereignty and serving our people.

I could tell you impressive examples from every department, but lack the time today. Even with the struggles today in dealing with the Government shutdown, because of their wise management, we are able to continue to serve our citizens.



I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my cabinet members if they would please stand.  
I also want to recognize all of our MCN staff if they would please stand.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you, and to take time to speak with you today.

Mr. Speaker, I report the state of our Muscogee Nation is strong and our future is even brighter.