



# Prairie Band Potawatomi News

+++ A Report to the People of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation +++

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## Epok 2021

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*Epok*  
"Winter time  
of the year"

This paper contains the  
activities and happenings  
that took place during the  
Winter time of 2021:  
December, January,  
February

## Native American Heritage Night Returns to Royal Valley High

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and Royal Valley USD #337 worked together celebrating the return of Native American Heritage Night on Feb. 25, 2022, at Royal Valley High School. The event was canceled last year, as were many events due to Covid-19 precautions.

More than 800 people attended the event featuring the presentation of the flags by We-Ta-Se Post 410 and a performance by the Royal Valley Singers and Dancers at half-time of the Boys Varsity game.

Special guest, Manny King, from Haskell Indian Nations University, announced each school's lineups and scoring during the varsity basketball games.

The event was originally scheduled for January, but it was pushed back due to concerns with the number of COVID-19 cases at the start of the year.

PBPN Tribal Council Member Raphael Wahwassuck said, "We appreciate everyone's flexibility with the re-scheduling, and, hopefully, as we settle into the new normal, it will be easier to plan these events in the future."

The first Native American Heritage Night was held at Royal Valley High School in 2019 to recognize the special relationship the school district has with the PBP Nation. USD #337 is one of the few districts in Kansas that serve the members of a tribal nation, and the Royal Valley Singers and Dancers are the only school-sponsored Native American singers and dancers group in the state.

While the Royal Valley Singers and Dancers often travel to perform at other schools, competitions, and special events, Native American Heritage Night gives them the opportunity to perform for their own community. The event is also planned so that it is shared with a different school in the



Big 7 League each time it is held, with the visiting school this year being Sabetha High School.

Leading up to the event, participants attended dance classes at the Boys and Girls Club and received assistance in creating or altering their regalia through classes and materials supplied by the Early Childhood Education Center. There has been increased interest in cultural performance among the children recently, and many new dancers gave their first performance at Native American Heritage Night.

"We are grateful for all the volunteers who made this possible, and we appreciate the school district recognizing the kids through this event. It is a great showcase for the community and families," Wahwassuck said.

"I love our school and community. Having the opportunity to celebrate and showcase the diversity in our community through the school is something I am proud to be a part of," USD #337 Superintendent Aaric Davis said after the event. "A big thank you to our Royal Valley Singers and Dancers group, the Wa-Ta-Se Color Guard and our Special Announcer, Manny King."



Top: Daniel, Doug Scholfield(Mens' Fancy)  
Center: Nonop Thomas, Anwabe Thomas (Traditional)  
Bottom: Alicia Scholfield (Fancy Shawl); Sacto Evans(Grass Dancer); Kache Hale(Fancy Shawl)





## Chairman Joseph “Zeke” Rupnick: Report to the Nation



Dear Tribal Members,

The holidays are behind us and so too is another year.

The past year was challenging, and we felt there was a glimmer of hope with the release of vaccines. Those hopes have been dashed with the recent variant plaguing our Nation. We do have a very good vaccination rate, but I feel more needs to be done.

We need to get everyone who is eligible vaccinated to protect ourselves and the community.

As I write this, many know we have had to cancel our January General Council meeting due to the increase in positive infections. Many departments have staff out due to the virus and based on a report from our medical facility, rates are climbing at an alarming pace. We are working hard to keep services open and while some services may be scaled back, we need everyone's help by following the recommended guidelines and safety measures.

Remember, masks do work and if you are feeling sick, stay home and isolate yourself.

The past quarter we saw some movement in our Illinois Claim.

Senator Moran filed a bill on our behalf titled S.3242 Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Shab-eh-nay Band Reservation Settlement Act of 2021. This is a huge step in the right direction to hopefully settle our claims and give us closure. I'm not sure how many realize how important this is but recall twenty years ago, there was a bill filed to invalidate our claim in both houses.

Since the bill has been filed, Council has been working hard meeting with different Congressional

leaders to build support. In a statement I released, I mentioned we have a long way to go and there are many obstacles we must overcome before everything is finalized.

In December, I was contacted by the Tribal Liaison to the White House asking if I would be willing to meet with President Biden for a photo in Kansas City. I asked if I would be given any time to discuss any issues with him and was told just the few minutes taking the photo was it. Not wanting to squander an opportunity to bring up issues concerning the Nation, I agreed and with Council's approval, met President Biden.

The two items I asked his help on was our legislation in Illinois and asked for his support on repealing the Kansas Act. I told him the Kansas Act directly impacts our Nation's sovereignty and self-governance and because of the Act, we receive little to no help from the Department of Justice or the U.S. Attorney's office. The ask was, in my opinion, well received and later, I was on a call with the White House's Legal Policy Advisor, briefing them on the status of both pieces of legislation and steps we need to take. While these two items are at the top of the list, they

are not the only items Council is focused on and in the State, we still need to work with that body to bring items to the floor here.

Now that the State Legislature is in session Council will monitor bills coming to the floor from that body. One area we are working on is medical marijuana and we want to make sure Tribes are consulted on any proposed legislation. We have directed our lobbyist to keep us up to date on this and to inform Council if we need to attend any session. Given that Kansas is a very conservative State, I feel this will be something that will be debated for a long time. I'm hoping there is some form that we can agree on, but we will have to wait and see.

In closing, I'll end as I have been for the last year and a half: protect yourself and those of your family, and follow established guidelines while we are working through this pandemic. Be safe.

Migwett

Joseph P. Rupnick, Chairman

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

## PBPEC Shares Positive Numbers and Progress on Projects

The Prairie Band Potawatomi Entertainment Corporation (PBPEC) is providing this operational update, since the January 15th 2022 General Council meeting was canceled due to increased COVID numbers in the surrounding area.

First of all, we would like to announce that for this year Prairie Band Casino & Resort has seen some of the highest financial numbers since 2011 which was prior to Statewide Gaming. We attribute this to patron loyalty, extra direct marketing incentives and the fact that our team ensures we are the safest casino in Kansas. Public health and safety is priority to our patrons and team members as we will continue to take extra precautions such as continuing to wear facemasks, provide safety incentives to our staff, wiping down machines and maintaining Plexiglas partitions at our games.

Secondly, we are continuing to move forward with our casino expansion anticipating an official soft opening in or around April 2022. Please monitor the company website and social media for updates and special event announcements as they become available.

A tribal member soft opening will be announced prior to a public grand opening. We look forward to the completion of this project, offering many new amenities to our property making us the top Gaming Destination in Kansas.

The casino, like most businesses, is still hiring so if you or anyone you know is looking for a job please apply at <http://jobs.prairieband.com/>. We continue to offer a great benefit package, competitive wages, differential pay, sign-on bonuses and the opportunity for training and advancement.

In closing, we are sharing a few pictures of the progress of Casino Expansion projects as they are nearing completion.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to share our progress.

Migwetch



At left: Walls are taking shape in one of the main hallways. Top: workers continue to finish ceiling work. Above left: Headboards for some of the rooms. Above right: tile work creates a mosaic in some of the showers.







# Tribal Victim Services Provides Insight Into Teen Dating Violence Awareness

February was “National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.” Teen Dating Violence is an issue impacting more than the teen. Everyone involved with that teen - parents, teachers, friends, as well as the communities where they live - feel the effects.

National studies estimate that 1 in 10 teens will experience dating violence. In addition, the incidents of rape and sexual assault are highest for youth between the ages of 12 and 19. Statistics show that among adolescents, 10% of youth in the U.S. report being the victim of violence at the hands of an intimate partner.

Adolescent girls appear to be particularly vulnerable to this behavior and are more likely to suffer from long term behavioral and health issues such as suicide attempts, eating disorders, and drug use. These adverse experiences often carry over into the victim’s future relationships.

Here are just a few of the warning signs that people, especially parents, should watch for so they will, hopefully, improve the chance of providing intervention when needed:

- **Excessive jealousy**
- **Excessive anger**
- **Insecurity**
- **Moodiness beyond what is normal**
- **Pressure to engage in unwanted sexual activity**
- **Controlling behaviors**
- **Verbal bullying**
- **One partner constantly monitoring the whereabouts of the other**
- **One partner consistently blaming the other for problems in the relationship instead of taking responsibility**

Teens should also be aware and be able to recognize these signs, so they understand that if they are experiencing these things, then they may be victims of violence.

Behaviors they may look upon as “harmless,” in actuality, may be violent acts. Parents should talk to their teenagers about what types of behaviors are not acceptable within their relationships.

If you think your child may be in an unhealthy relationship, ask your teen to take this quiz to help him or her know if his or her relationship is healthy.

## Does your boyfriend or girlfriend...

- **Communicate openly with you when there are problems?**
- **Give you space to spend time with your friends and family?**
- **Support and respect you?**

If your son or daughter answers YES to these questions, they are, likely, in a healthy relationship. Encourage your teen to trust their instincts about the relationship to stay safe and comfortable.

If your son or daughter answered NO to these questions, ask them the se questions:

- **Does your boyfriend or girlfriend ever...**
- **Try to stop you from seeing or talking to family or friends?**

- **Call you derogatory names, put you down, or criticize you?**
- **Threaten or scare you?**
- **Hit, slap, push, or kick you?**
- **Pressure or force you to do something sexual when you don’t want to?**
- **Humiliate you when you are alone or in front of others?**
- **Control where you go, what you wear, or what you do?**

If they answers YES to any of these questions, their health and safety may be at risk. Seek advice or help from a school counselor, pediatrician or family physician, the National Dating Abuse Helpline which is 1-866-331-9474 and visit their website at [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org) or seek assistance from a local domestic violence prevention organization.

Tribal Victim Services can be reached at our 24/7 Hotline which is 1-866-966-0173 and can assist families and teens who are seeking help.

In discussing Teen Dating Violence with your teen, it is beneficial to discuss characteristics of Healthy Relationships with them.

These include things such as:

- **Mutual respect – Both parties respect each other’s values and understand their boundaries**

- **Trust – Partners place trust in each other and give one another the benefit of a doubt**
- **Honesty – Honesty builds trust and strengthens the relationship**
- **Compromise – Each partner doesn’t always get his or her way. Should be equal give and take.**
- **Individuality – Neither partner should have to compromise who he/she is and his/her identity should not be based on their partner. Each person should be able to do the things that they love to do and each should be supportive of their partners pursuit of new friends and hobbies.**
- **Good communication – Open and honest communication to avoid miscommunication. Giving time to one another to sort out their feelings and waiting until they are ready to talk.**
- **Anger control – Anger can be managed in healthy ways. Taking a few deep breaths, counting to 10, taking a moment before speaking, taking a walk.**
- **Fighting fair – taking a short break from each other when the discussion gets too heated, avoiding insults, sticking to the subject and keeping it fair. Not using the word “you” when having disputes.**
- **Understanding – Each person should take the time to understand what the other person might be feeling**

We hope that this article has been helpful and welcome you to contact us if you need assistance or have any further questions.



## Boys and Girls Club Plans New STEM Center, Upgrades Facilities

Several ongoing improvements are being implemented at the Boys and Girls Club of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, including the ambitious project of transforming the current library space into a new STEM Center.

The Club recently received an anonymous donation of \$100,000 for educational purposes, which will be put toward the project. In addition, the Club has a relationship with the Orphaned Starfish Foundation, a non-profit that works with institutions and community centers to provide children with technology education.

The Foundation donates \$12,000 a year to the Club, as well as providing

equipment and coordinating remote classes with partners such as Apple and Google. With this funding and support, the Club has outgrown the old computer lab and plans to expand the space into the library to further develop their STEM curriculum.

The new STEM Center will include classroom and lab space for STEM education. There will still be a reading nook with books in the former library space, but the Club’s reading programs are mostly conducted in other classrooms and will not be affected by the update.

The library was also recently improved by the removal of the old skylight, which had been causing

trouble with leakage for several years. The skylight was capped off and new lighting was added, which will not only stop the leaking but also prevent the sun from overheating the classroom during the summer.

Outside of the library, the other classrooms have all been upgraded to a more digital atmosphere due to the Club’s virtual efforts during the pandemic.

New TV screens have been installed with connections to the staff’s computers for use with Zoom and other classroom activities. Throughout the rest of the building, all the lighting has been replaced with LED fixtures, and motion-sensing lighting controls

have been installed in some areas in an effort to conserve energy.

The Club’s pool was also renovated, with the pool and deck resurfaced, aging valves replaced, and various other parts updated to comply with newer code.

A new Chemtrol water treatment system was also installed, and the pool’s boiler was upgraded.

“There are still a few things such as an external wall leak, new paint for the walls, and sound dampeners to be completed,” Nathan Hale, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club said, “but we hope to have it up and going in time for our summer session.”





Treasurer Wade Pahmahmie: Report to the Nation



Good day to everyone, hope all is well as we move on into 2022. The past couple of years have been mixed with several ups and downs in the financial area so we are looking forward to 2022 as being a year to continue to get back to some pre-pandemic normalcy.

With that said, we have seen the financial markets dip up and down the first part of this year due to factors such as geopolitical tensions in eastern Europe and inflation.

In time, the financial markets will stabilize but, it is always a concern when we see the financial markets drop, especially following all time highs like we saw in early January.

As usual this time of year, audit season is underway with our Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Projects and our Tobacco Compact first on the list to be audited for FY2021. Those areas will be followed up by our Primary Government and Boys and Girls Club audits which take place as we get closer to mid-year. Prior to the audits getting underway, the W-2's and 1099's have been wrapped up and should have all been distributed and received at this point.

If for some reason you have not received your forms, you can contact my office and we can help get a copy sent out.

Below are a few additional highlights and updates on items of interest in the Tribe's financial area.

FY2021 Tribal Cash Distribution Highlights

For 2021 our monthly Tribal Cash Distributions (TCD) from the Casino were a very pleasant surprise. In January we had a respectable TCD as compared to recent years, but February's TCD was fairly dismal due to the impact of the record cold temperatures across the region.

Given that we had just seen our lowest annual TCD ever in 2020 and a below average figure for February I do not think anyone could have expected that the remainder of 2021 would rally and give us our best annual TCD since 2012.

Throughout much of 2021 we saw TCD's rival figures we have not seen since state gaming came on the scene. Month after month of TCD's from the Casino came with news of top 5 TCD's in the history of the property, nearly setting monthly records time and time again. Given just a few months ago in 2020 we were cutting back on budgets and planning for the worst, this rebound could not have come at a better time.

What this unexpected financial boost translated to on the Tribal Government side of things was a modified budget to increase spending midway through 2021 as well as our highest annual Per Capita Distribution amount since 2012. Although we modified our original budget, which was ultra conservative from the start due to the unknowns of the pandemic, we also surpassed our modified budget 10 months into the year.

We look forward to continuing this positive momentum on into 2022. Although the Casino will begin repayment of its share of the expansion project in July 2022, budgets have been established with a more positive outlook for 2022 than what we have seen in recent years. We are very fortunate to have such a great gaming facility and the hard work and dedication of the Casino staff is very much appreciated.

FY2022 Hemp Licensing

Applications for producers planning to grow hemp on the PBPB Reservation lands in 2022 are currently being accepted by the

Tribe's Tax Commission. The Tax Commission has been delegated the regulatory authority over hemp grown on the PBPB Reservation lands by the Tribal Council under the Tribe's Law and Order Code, Title 32. The Tribe's authority covers all Reservation lands including all Trust and Fee Lands including both native and non-native owned lands. The Tax Commission is dedicated to maintaining the utmost integrity of the Tribe's regulatory authority as well as adapting to the Licensee's needs.

The Tax Commission currently employs two individuals to oversee both tax and hemp matters. Both staff members are approved United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) hemp sampling agents for the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program under 7 CFR, Part 990. Additionally, PBPB was notified by the USDA this past July, that we were the first Tribe to receive official approval of the Tribe's Hemp Plan aligning with the USDA's Final Rule. At that time there had only been a total of 2 State Plan's approved with PBPB being the first Tribal Plan approved. Congratulations to the Tax Commission staff on this achievement and making PBPB a front runner in the industry.

While there is no deadline to apply for a Hemp License in 2022 it is recommended to apply for a license for outdoor growing no later than April 15th in any given year. Additionally, Hemp Licenses are good for 5 years and include a non-refundable application fee as well as a fee per acre based upon the size of the plot. For additional information you may contact the Tax Commission @ (785) 966-3998.

Ambulance Service Billings

As many of you know we have some of the best emergency services in the area right here on our Reservation. Our Potawatomi Tribal Fire Department (PTFD) provides top notch fire, rescue and emergency medical services 24/7. One of the high-quality services that the PTFD provides is our Ambulance Service.

From time to time we receive inquiries about the Tribe's Ambulance Service Billings in

which the recipient of the billing is asking if they are responsible for the balance due. The short answer is, no, if you are an enrolled PBPB Tribal Member, you do not pay that balance. Recipients of bills who are not enrolled PBPB Tribal Members do however need to pay the balance due.

Following patient transports, the billings are reviewed by PTFD staff and marked as to whether the patient is a Tribal Member or not. PBPB Enrollment information is verified with our Member Services Department. Whether a patient is a PBPB Tribal Member or not, if insurance is available then it will be billed for the Ambulance Service. From there any remaining balance due for a PBPB Tribal Member is then written off. Occasionally, a bill for Ambulance Services is sent out to PBPB Tribal Members before the bill can be written off and should be referred back to the PTFD for processing. For those who are not PBPB Tribal Members the balance due on the billing should be paid.

Additionally, for members of tribes other than PBPB they may check with their Purchase/Referred Care (PRC) office and see if there is assistance available for the billing before paying out of pocket. If you have any questions on the ambulance billings you contact the PTFD @ (785) 966-2164 or you can always contact my office and I will answer questions as best as possible or refer to the PTFD for specific questions about the billings.

If you have any questions on any of the topics mentioned in this article or financial questions in general about the Tribe's operations my contact information is: Office: (785) 966-3905 – E-mail: wadepahmahmie@pbpnation.org. Also, if you have any specific financial topics that you would like me to write about in future articles let me know and I can incorporate those in. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Tribal Council Treasurer and I look forward to continuing to serve our Tribal Members.

Respectfully  
Wade Pahmahmie (Wap-tti-ge)

Let Your Voice Be Heard, Remember to Vote

Bosho Tribal Members,

The Election Board would like to speak about the importance of the Elections. To remind you that you have a say in the future of our Sovereign Nation by using your right to vote. We as Prairie Band Potawatomi People can choose our leaders to represent us, not only with other Federal Leaders, but also with County and State Leaders. Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation will be the driving force behind positive change for our community. It begins with your voice to vote. So please let your voice be heard this year by voting.

If you are not registered to vote or not sure if you are already registered, please take that step in our future and call Member Services @ 785-966-3910 or 866-277-3722 and register. A lot of our Tribal Members are not updated with new addresses and phone numbers so please call and make sure we have your correct information.

This years Election will be on July 23, 2022. The Election Notices will be mailed out on April 1, 2022. If you have not received the Election Notices by April 11, 2022 please contact Member Services. The deadline for voter registration is May 6, 2022. So please get registered to vote and make a difference in our future. If you have any questions you may reach us through Member Services.

Igwien,  
The Election Board





# Tribal Council Member Tony Wahweotten: Report to the Nation



## Ho' PBPB Members

I first, would like to extend my continued thoughts and prayers out to the families who had suffered losses this year, due to accident, natural causes or of the Delta and Omicron COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to witness many heartaches during this time. I would also like to continue recognition of our front-line Clinical Staff, Hero and Essential workers during the pandemic quarantine periods of PBPB operations. Again, all departments deserve recognition during this time, and many thanks to the entire PBP Casino staff for the continued challenges and all they do. Tribal Council continues safety for membership and the PBPB workforce.

Secondly, I would like to wish all a Happy New Year for 2022. This also brings a new election year for PBP Tribal Council and the beginning of midterms elections at the US National level of Leadership.

Thirdly, many miigwetches to PBP voting membership for allowing me to be selected as your new PBP Tribal Council Representative. I am truly honored to serve at this capacity for the nation, and alongside with my colleagues, Chairman Rupnick, Vice Chairman Zach Pahmahmie, Treasurer Wade Pahmahmie, Secretary Camilla Chouteau, Councilman William Evans, and Councilman Raphael Wahwassuck. A special thanks to the Tribal Council Administrative

Assistants. Every day brings new challenges, especially during the 2020-2022 pandemic. Tribal Council is persistent through the course of responsibility, and remains diligent, to the PBPB and its members. Tribal Council, as a legislative body, has formally reviewed, expressed opinion or intensions, and have acted on 450 Resolutions, for the year of 2021.

Since being sworn into office as Tribal Council on 08/27/20, I have scheduled my birthday day off, ten and a half days of PTO three and a half days of SL, and 10 days total of virtual working covid family leave.

Since the last October 16, 2021 General Council meeting, I have attended nine special Tribal Council meetings, three third Saturday Tribal Council meetings, one Town Hall informational meeting, attended one dinner with LLC & PBPB Investment Committee, three ground breaking ceremonies for the Commodities, Health Center & Warehouse Buildings, one PBPB Economic Investment Semi Annual Meeting, two Land Management meetings, three PBPB Tax Commission meetings, eight Legal Counsel and Policy meetings, two Tribal Emergency Response Committee meetings with the PBPB Fire Chief, one virtual Potawatomi Economic Summit, attended one dinner with Jackson County Commissioner and their legal counsel, one PBPB Enrollment swearing in ceremony, one virtual Tribal Consultation Boarding School Initiative, two virtual Shab-eh-nay of Illinois discussions, attended a one day cattle operation tour in Quapaw, Oklahoma, and one PBPB Casino Expansion tour, all relating to information only or the business and welfare of the Nation. Other Meetings relating to the Nation's business and Departments include annual General Manager reviews, Board of Director MOA and Charter reviews, Acting CFO reviews, a series of CFO interviews and other leadership and funding challenges.

At the National and State level, the Nation continues Legal and Policy reviews, and new House/Senate Bills, to address specific concerns and funding, that may impact the Nation.

On continued leadership activity, the Tribal Council has attended

the 2021 Semi Annual Envision of Unified Leadership Economic Development Summit, sponsored by the LLC, held last October, at the PBP Casino. Again, this will be a five-year course effort, to steer our Leadership to possible additional enterprise solutions and opportunity. Since, Tribal Council has appointed a new Economic Development Investment Committee. The investment committee's newest projects will be the 150th and 75HWY Travel Plaza project, and RFP reviews of Solar Array (large scale) Energy, and other plan development.

Outside of my specific duties as Tribal Council, I have been appointed as one of the new Tax Commissioners for the Nation. This position was formed by Tribal Council as the Tribes, one out of three, designated taxing authority, one vacancy has been filled by Michelle Simon. Title 10 (General Taxes) and Title 13 (Business Licensing). Title 32 (Hemp Legalization and Control Ordinance). See tribal website or portal for Tribal Law and Order Codes and Tax Reports. Since being appointed, I have participated and acted in approximately twelve acting Tax Commission meetings. New applications involving the Nation's Tax Authority, are available on the Nations website.

Under our Prairie Band Potawatomi Constitution, it states under Article II-Land, Section 2 Tribal Council shall establish a Standing committee vested with the responsibility of protecting and preserving our land rights in accordance with our policies of the Nation. Tribal Council has appointed me as an additional Liaison, Vice Chairman, to the Lands Committee. I have participated in fourteen PBP Lands meetings, two canceled due to COVID related reasons. As the new Tribal Council Liaison, I have had monthly scheduled reviews of LMD activity reports, the Land Purchasing Office activity reports, Environmental Protection Agency reports and the cooperating USDA Natural Resources Conservation Reports. See the Tribal website or portal for Constitutional declarations under Article II-Lands.

Other continued news and interest I have been delegated to follow up

on, is a sought-after project called the Soldier Creek Watershed. This project consists of early assessments in water resource planning, natural resource conservation environmental protections within and outside our current boundaries. Our goal for the Soldier Creek Watershed Plan, in cooperation with recent established 2018 farm bill and final rule, and newly HR 3684: Infrastructure Investments and Job Acts is funding opportunities, in respect to new infrastructure development of rural water supply, water sovereignty, flood prevention and damage, erosion and sediment control, fish and wildlife habitat, wetland restoration, and recreation opportunities. Again, with the cooperation of other government agencies, we are still in the process of gathering historical information relating to any study on the SCWP before a formal letter of sponsorship is submitted.

One of the PBPB Mission Statements is to practice Indian Preference, exercise and promote employment opportunities, training and development of individuals to their full potential in climate of growth. Below, see the Nation's 4.25 for 2021 Employment Demographics.

Total Number of Employees: 327  
Female: 54.74% Male: 45.26%  
Tribal Member: 45.57%  
Other Tribal Members: 14.68%  
Caucasian: 37.31% Hispanic: 1.53%  
African American/Black: 0.91%

PBPB Current Job Listings, 30 total Current Jobs. Please visit our website, <https://www.pbpindiantribe.com> to learn more about openings and other information.

Although there is much more to cover, this is my report to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and its membership. Remember to continue to be safe out there, as we are still in a national pandemic, due to COVID-19, delta, and omicron variant. Not all people are vaccinated. Please continue practicing CDC or KDHE safety guidelines.

Miigwetch  
Tony Wahweotten

# Tribal Engagement Kicks Off Resilience Plan Development

In the next few years, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation (PBPB) will develop a comprehensive Tribal Resilience Plan to build a foundation for the Nation to Integrate natural and human systems to mutually-strengthen them and capitalize on nature's regenerative potential. Resilient communities, working with nature, fare better in times of crisis and adapt to changing conditions; are more efficient, livable, prosperous, and sustainable during normal times and across generations.

Studies of the Reservation identified a trend of increasing temperatures and precipitation in the region that will result in climate extremes. These extremes will also magnify periods of wet or dry weather resulting in longer more severe droughts and larger more extensive storms.

The first step is to engage the community and specific stakeholders in all aspects of the development process. Project Manager Verna Potts said, "By

engaging leaders in many facets within the tribal government, casino, and Prairie Band LLC, it is our objective to prepare the PBPB to plan, strategize, and become resilient in the face of natural or human hazards."

Their input is invaluable, guiding the vision, assessing threats and opportunities, and finally choosing strategies to manage future risks while improving prosperity. Potts said, "Our goal is to educate and engage tribal leaders about their role is in this planning effort, provide professional development on the latest trends in climate change adaptation policy and visualization tools critical for decision making."

Several community workshops are planned during the spring of 2022, interviews with elders on the wisdom of Traditional Ecological Knowledge over the summer, and meetings with the Tribal Council and staff.

The effort builds on a plan prepared by graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Kansas Edwards Campus (KUEC). The students had limited opportunity to educate and gather information from Tribal staff, but not from the broader Tribal community. The project also builds on several planning efforts, including a recent Land and Water Management Plan and planned updates to the Agriculture Resource Management Plan and Natural Resource Management Plan, among others.

The engagement work is funded through a FY2020 BIA Tribal Resilience Program Funding - Category 6: Capacity Building for Resiliency Scoping Efforts grant.

For more information contact Verna Potts, Senior Environmental Technician, Division of Planning & Environmental Protection (785-966-8031, or [VernaPotts@pbpnation.org](mailto:VernaPotts@pbpnation.org)).



# Chef Pyet Celebrates Native American Heri



Chef Pyet creating one of the dishes she used to earn her way to the final competition on Fox’s Next Level Chef cooking competition show. - Courtesy Photo

Stephanie “Pyet” DeSpain is a private chef currently based out of Los Angeles. She is a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation who battled 14 other contestant chefs for the title of “Next Level Chef” on Gordon Ramsey’s cooking reality show on the Fox Network.

Ramsey said she brought herself, her history and her heritage to every dish she prepared as he announced that she was now the First Ever Next Level Chef.

Throughout the show Chef Pyet constantly reinvented herself and her dishes by channeling her Native American heritage into her food. In this way she continually created delicious food the judges had never tasted before.

The title wasn’t her only reward for her hard work. As the winner of the competition, she earned a \$250,000 prize, and a year of mentorship from the three celebrity chef judges from the show Gordon Ramsay, Richard Blais and Nyesha Arrington.

She grew up on the Osage Indian Reservation in Oklahoma and in Kansas City, Kan., before moving to California. In 2021, she was named one of L.A.’s Top 25 Private Chefs by Los Angeles Entrepreneurs Magazine.

Both on the show and in her personal chef business, Pyet draws from her Native American and Mexican heritage in her cooking, specializing in “Indigenous Fusion” cuisine. Fusion food refers to recipes that combine flavors and ingredients from two or more cultures, and Pyet finds creative ways to incorporate Native American cuisine into

various dishes, such as through her use of Wojapi sauce.

Wojapi is a traditional Native American berry sauce often used as a condiment for fry bread originates with the Lakota People. In one episode of “Next Level Chef,” Pyet made Wojapi sauce to put on a Wagyu beef burger, and the dish won her the top spot that week. Since the episode aired, Pyet said

that orders of Wojapi sauce from her website have increased dramatically, showing the influence that a popular television show can have in promoting Indigenous food and culture.

“That stuff is selling like crazy,” Pyet said. “I’m trying to keep up with those orders and they’re in high demand at this point, so I’m making about two to three big batches a week right now. So I’m probably going to have to hire someone to help.”

Food, culture, family, and community have always been linked for Pyet. “I’ve been cooking my whole life. I’m both Native-American and Mexican-American, so I grew up in families that cook. On

my dad’s side, the Mexican-American side, I have a grandmother that owned a restaurant and two uncles who own restaurants in Kansas City, and they were just like small taquerias, so I was very familiar with being in the kitchen with family helping,” Pyet said. “And then, of course, your traditional family cooks together. Every holiday situation where we would have tamales, every cousin that could possibly help with making all the tamales for the family would do that together. And so I grew up in that type of environment where food was very family-centric and it was kind of like a community thing, and if another family made the meals and we did it that year, then they would bring them over to us, and so for me, I started out with family and community, and so that’s where my interest came from.”

Pyet explained that her commitment to honoring her heritage and championing Indigenous cuisine likely factored into her casting.

“That’s what kind of landed me on the show. I think they were interested in that different aspect of me,” she said. “I think that that’s super important because looking at the culinary world, there’s no representation of Indigenous people like anywhere. I think just now, we have Sean Sherman and a few other chefs that are trying to put Indigenous food back into the communities and the homes of Indigenous people because it’s been so colonized.”

In addition to providing representation for Indigenous peoples through her work, Pyet is also passionate about sharing her culture with people who are not familiar with it. “I love teaching people, I love sharing my culture with people,” Pyet said. “My name is Stephanie on my birth certificate, but







# Pyet To Win ‘Next Level Chef’ Competition

I also have my Native name, Pyetwetmokwe, which was my great-grandmother’s name, and so I started going by Pyet as a conversation starter because I’m a very spiritual person and I feel in tune spiritually with my past family members, and I truly believe it’s all important to stay connected to your roots.”

She went on to say, “People would ask me like, Oh, what does that mean? Is that French? And I tell them, No, it’s actually short for my Native American name, and it opens up that gateway and window for me to share about my culture to people.”

In the past, Pyet has created dining experiences that reflect and celebrate her personal experience with her heritage and culture while also giving others the opportunity to learn about and appreciate them. “As a chef, I think what I wanted to do was represent myself and the culture, my heritage. It was to bring those dishes and those ingredients forward and start cooking them for my clients, and so once I started doing one dinner, then they were interested, they went and told all their other friends about, Oh, we did this, we had this phenomenal Indigenous dinner,” Pyet said. “And I had traditional Aztec dancers there that were doing ceremony during the dinner, and I had live



**PBPN Boys and Girls Club director Nathan Hale and staff member Anita Evans bestow upon Chef Pyet a Pendleton Blanket and a beaded medallion during her visit.**



**Chef Pyet responds to questions while providing a Wojapi cooking demonstration at the Boys and Girls Club of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. Wojapi was one of the Native-American dishes she used during the Next Level Chef competition.**

singers and a band playing, and it was just the full experience of storytelling through food, through song, through dance, through ceremony, and it was so incredibly beautiful. It’s been the highlight of my culinary career, other than being on Gordon Ramsay’s show. To me they’re just as important.” Pyet hopes to offer similar experiences in the future, possibly as pop-up restaurants.

Beyond business, Pyet seeks to use her talents and knowledge to serve communities across Indian Country by teaching cooking classes, promoting nutrition and wellness, and sharing her passion for Indigenous cuisine and ingredients. “Maybe there’s cooking classes we can do together to help re-educate our people what indigenous food is,” Pyet said. “Not a lot of indigenous people are even familiar with what the food of our ancestors is, and so I’m just kind of hoping to be able to go back into these communities and teach as well as learn, because I know there are elders that have knowledge to pass on to people like myself that are very interested. I plan on doing a lot of volunteer work and seeing how I can get involved with organizations that are promoting food sovereignty and seed preservation.”

On Thursday, Feb. 24, Pyet visited the Boys and

Girls Club of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation to give a cooking demonstration and talk with the kids.

For the demonstration, she showed the kids how she makes her Wojapi with mixed berries, water, and maple syrup.

“Pyet put on a great presentation and answered all the kids’ numerous questions with humor and grace. The kids really enjoyed the visit and loved the snack that she made, vanilla cake with Wojapi and a strawberry on top,” Nathan Hale, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club, said.

Hale went on to say, “We hope to work with Pyet more in future visits and possibly some virtual classes with the kids.”

The following day, Pyet prepared lunches at the Fire Keepers Elder Center to be served curbside. She helped serve over 100 lunches, and she said that she plans to return in April to do more work in the community.

Pyet thanked everyone who has cheered her on in the show, supported her business, and shown interest in her work. “I’m so grateful for all of the people that are supporting me back in Kansas and all the people from the Indigenous communities in Indian country. I’m so incredibly grateful.”



**Chef Pyet provides some hands-on instruction with students during a cooking class she hosted in Kansas City recently.**



# General Council Meeting

◆ April 16, 2022 ◆

Enrolled Tribal Members  
age 18+ Only

8 a.m. | Registration Opens

9 a.m. | Light Breakfast

9:30 a.m. | Meeting Begins

Location Prairie Band Casino

[www.pbpindiantribe.com](http://www.pbpindiantribe.com)

## Charitable Contributions 4th Quarter Recipient List Total Donated \$97,936

- |                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • 20/30 Club                      | • Ms. Wheelchair of Kansas     |
| • Boys & Girls Club of Manhattan  | • SLI (Shelter Living)         |
| • Delia Community Pride           | • Stormont Vail Foundation     |
| • Doorstep Inc.                   | • TDC Learning Center          |
| • Glacial Hills Resource          | • The Salvation Army of Topeka |
| • Greater Topeka Youth Foundation | • Topeka LuLac Service Center  |
| • Heart of Jackson Humane Society | • Topeka North Outreach        |
| • Holton Community Hospital       | • Topeka Symphony Society      |
| • Let's Help                      | • Topeka Youth Project         |
| • Morning Star Inc.               |                                |

## The Prairie Band Potawatomi News

The *Prairie Band Potawatomi News* or *PBP News* is a quarterly publication of the Nation. Editorials and articles appearing in the PBP News are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or attitude of the PBP Media staff, Tribal Council, Gaming Commission or the Nation. The *PBP News* reserves the right to reject any materials or letters submitted for publication, including those submitted past the deadline.

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*Eshkēnibēk/Spring Time  
2022 Edition  
Deadline  
May 9, 2022*

## Kambottek

### Lorraine Bessemer

Lorraine Marie Bessemer, age 91, passed away peacefully Sunday, January 2, 2022. She was preceded in death by her husband, Raymond Bessemer; parents Levi and Ellen Whitepigeon; and siblings Vivian, Levi, James, Norma, and Delores. She will be deeply missed by her children June (Ernie) Clemence, Kenneth (Debbie) Whitepigeon; grandchildren Yvonne (Scott) Nelson, Jason Clemence; five great-grandchildren; sisters Jenny Wicker, Ruth (Bob) Carlton, Marlene Wade, Yvonne Whitepigeon; and many extended family and friends.

Lorraine was an enrolled tribal member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

Funeral Services were held January 6, 2022. Lorraine was laid to rest at Burnips Cemetery next to Ray.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Kubiak-Cook Funeral Services

### TimothyDyer

Timothy "Tim" Joseph Dyer, 42, of Topeka, KS passed away Sunday, December 19, 2021 at the St. Francis Hospital in Topeka, KS. He was born October 2, 1979 the son of Timothy Dyer and Sheila Ann (Martinez) Fitzgerald. He attended Washburn Rural High School and later earned his GED.

Timothy worked at various jobs. He was an avid lover of music and he occasionally performed rap music at several local venues. Tim was a fun-loving man and will be missed by his family and friends.

He was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomie Nation.

Timothy was preceded in death by his father, Timothy Dyer and mother and adopted father, Sheila and Michael Claire Fitzgerald; brother, Michael Christopher Fitzgerald; grandparents, Zelda and Logie Martinez.

Survivors include his uncle, Manuel Martinez; aunt, Laura Thackery; and his cousins, Clinton and Heather Thacker.

Graveside Memorial Service was held at Shipshee Cemetery in Mayetta, KS.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Mercer Funeral Homes

### Guy Edward Grinnell

Born 09/18/1954  
Died 01/10/2022

### Catherine Marlow

Born 9/30/1933  
Died 1/5/2022

### JOSEPH A. MENDEZ

Joseph Anthony Mendez, 78, of Topeka, KS, passed away Sunday, December 12, 2021 at Hillsdale Place in Topeka. He was born May 17, 1943 in Topeka, KS. His adoptive parents were, Joseph and Antonia (Hernandez) Mendez.

Joseph graduated from Topeka High School. He was a lifelong member of the Topeka community. He worked for over 20 years at Hill's in Topeka and later for Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Tribal Government Center both as a purchasing agent.

He was of the Catholic Faith and a member of Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

Joseph married Virginia Poe; they later divorced.

Survivors include his 2 daughters, Andrea Mendez-Herrera (Phillip) of Topeka, KS and Gabriella Villaponda of Lenexa, KS; 5 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren and caretaker, Angelo Garcia of Topeka, KS.

Graveside Service was, December 17, 2021 at the Shipshee Cemetery on the Prairie Band Potawatomi Reservation.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Mercer Funeral Homes

### Leilani Minnis

Leilani Raquel Minnis, 52, of Lake Dallas, TX passed away on January 27, 2022 at her home. Leilani was born in Purcell, Oklahoma on September 10, 1969 to Edwin Oliver Minnis and Theta Joy Fields Minnis.

Leilani was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Tribe. Leilani is survived by her cousin Carolyn Finch of Lake Dallas. A memorial service was held February 27.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Mulkey-Bowles-Montgomery Funeral Home

### John Christopher Smith

Born 02/22/1964  
Died 2/18/2022



# Kambottek

*\*\*All postings are reprinted from public obituaries or submissions from the family.\*\**



## Patricia Alexander

Patricia “Pat” Alexander, 72, of Topeka, passed away on Tuesday, February 1, 2022. She was born August 3, 1949 in Kansas City, Missouri, the daughter of Francis Stewart and Matilda Marie (Simon) “Jack” Alexander, Sr. Pat graduated from Hayden High School in 1967. She was employed by Blue Cross & Blue Shield and Volume Shoe Corporation before retiring. She was a member of Mater Dei Catholic Church and maintained her faith.

Survivors include one daughter, Shannon Edwards of Minneapolis, Minnesota, four grandchildren, Walter, Tasia, Bryana and Jayson, seven great-grandchildren, Josephine, Journey, Kayden, Leo, Trevion, Tristan and Kwyn and her parents, Francis Stewart and Matilda Marie “Jack” Alexander, Sr., and her brothers, Francis S. (Jennie) “Jack” Alexander, Jr. of Topeka and Terrell Lee (Lisa) Alexander of Topeka, her sister, Stephanie Rae Alexander of Topeka and a host of other family and friends.

Pat was preceded in death by her daughter, Lori Ann Alexander and her niece, Kori Lee Alexander.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Dove Cremations & Funerals

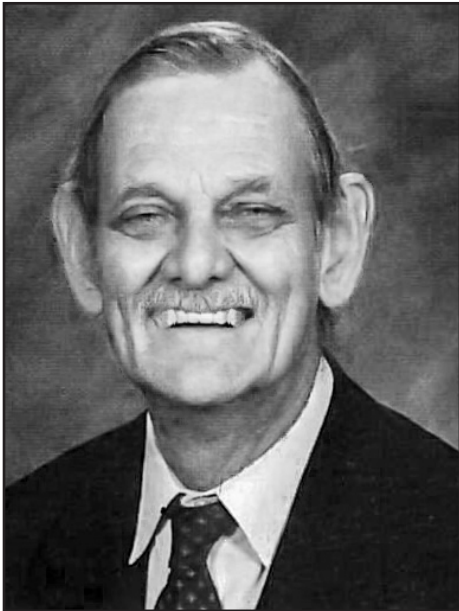


## Halidon Blakeslee

Halidon George Blakeslee, 81, of Muskogee, Oklahoma was born April 27, 1940 in Hayward, Wisconsin to George Halidon and Evelyn (Whitefish) Blakeslee and passed away Sunday, July 25, 2021 in Muskogee. Hal received his formal education from Muskogee Central High School and graduated with the Class of 1957 and attended one year at the University of Oklahoma. On April 4, 1964, Hal married his best friend, Glenda Goolsby. Hal had a passion for trains. He liked photographing them and building models train sets. He liked to tinker with cars out in his shop from time to time. Hal

retired in 2010 after more than 50 years serving as Vice President for H.E. Anderson Co. He liked to travel, frequented Boomerang Diner for breakfast, was always looking for a good cup of coffee to start the day, and a tall whiskey and a coke to finish it. He will be missed by all that knew him. Hal is survived by his son; Michael Blakeslee of Muskogee; his dog, who Hal entrusted to Michael, Schultz Otto Blakeslee; sister, Helen Cantrell of Lawton; two brothers, John Blakeslee and wife, Betty, of Abilene, TX, and Bill Blakeslee and wife, Sandy, of Muskogee. Hal is preceded in death by his parents; his daughter, April Blakeslee; and half-sister, Julia Barber. A service celebrating Hal’s life was held 10:00AM Tuesday, August 3, 2021 at Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home Chapel, Fort Gibson with Reverend Emery Mason officiating. Pat Salmon, Randy Nester, Jim Hale, Gary Fay and Andy Anderson served as urn bearers. The family of Hal Blakeslee has entrusted his care, service, and cremation to Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home, Fort Gibson. 918-478-2555. Online condolences may be left for the family at clifforddgarrettfamilyfh.com.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Clifford D Garrett Family Funeral Home



## George D. Blandin Jr

George D. Blandin Jr., 82, of Topeka, passed away peacefully on November 26, 2021. He had been blessed with good health until he was diagnosed with stage 4 Cancer and was asymptomatic. George was born in Tuba City, Arizona on September 24, 1939, the son of George and Ruth Blandin Sr. He graduated with the Class of 1958 from Hayden High School. He was a member of the Army National Guard.

George was a member of Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church where he was a member of the Knights of Columbus Council #4254 and the James W. Gibbons Assembly of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus. He and his family moved to St. Matthew Parish where he transferred his membership to St. Matthew Council #13012 of the K. of C. He was a life member with 55 years of service. His faith was very important to him, and he attended weekly church Rosary Group, was a faithful weekly Eucharistic Adoration Guardian, an usher, and helped decorate the church for the holidays. George was also a member of the Brown Scapular devotees and a member of the Topeka Serra Club for Priestly Vocations.

George was also an active member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi tribe.

He is survived by his sister and

two nieces. He was preceded in death by his parents.

A 3rd and 4th Degree Knights of Columbus Rosary and Chalice ceremony was held on Monday, December 6th at St. Matthew Catholic Church, 2700 SE Virginia. Mass of Christian Burial followed at 10:00 a.m. at the church. Interment is in Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Brennan Mathena Funeral Homes



## Darryl Wayne Brown

Darryl “Squankot” Wayne Brown, 60, of Topeka, KS, passed away Sunday, January 16, 2022 at his home. He was born April 18, 1961 in Topeka, KS, the son of Richard L. & Mary (Wahweotten) Brown.

Darryl graduated from Seaman High School. He was a self-employed Painter for the majority of his life.

He was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. Darryl enjoyed riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle, and fishing in his free time.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Richard & Mary Brown.

Darryl is survived by his brother, Allan L. Brown (Lydia) of Mayetta, KS; 2 nieces, Crystal Madrid (Jonny) of Topeka, KS and Melanie Witt of Topeka, KS; and 2 nephews, Michael Brown of Kansas City, KS and Anthony Christensen.

Memorial Service was held on January 21, 2022 at Mercer Funeral Home.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Mercer Funeral Homes



## Michael A. Cowell

Michael A. Cowell - age 77, of Hays, Kansas died Monday, January 17, 2022 at the Norton DSNWK Home.

He was born on February 5, 1944, in Topeka, Kansas to Marion

Emil and Maxine Claudia (Maines) Cowell.

Michael was raised in Topeka and Parsons then came to the Hays DSNWK family in 1973 at the age of 29. Michael was very proud of his Native American Indian heritage, keeping in touch with his guardian, and being with his DSNWK family and staff.

Survivors include his two brothers, Timothy Henderson, OK; Rex Yarbrough, TX; his one sister, Linda Smith, TX; his guardian, Kim Horton, Grantville, KS; his DSNWK family and Staff.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Ramona Lee Horton.

A celebration of life service was held on February 2, 2022, at Cline’s-Keithley Mortuary of Hays, with Rev. Troy Miller officiating.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Keithley Funeral Homes



## Geraldine Hamlin

Geraldine Marie Hamlin, 88, of Hoyt, KS, passed away Monday, January 3, 2022 at her home with family by her side. She was born December 13, 1933 in Hoyt, KS, the daughter of Charles M. and Goldie Irene (Stewart) Pappan.

Geraldine graduated from Circleville High School. She was owner and operator, with her husband, Kenneth, of Hamlin Plumbing and Heating in Hoyt. She was Royal Valley High School secretary for over 25 years, worked for Harrah’s Prairie Band Casino in soft count department and later for Prairie Band Gaming Commission.

She was a member of St. Aloysius Catholic Church in Meriden, former member of Circleville Christian Church and a member of Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

Geraldine married Kenneth Eugene Hamlin on December 18, 1952 in Chanute, KS. They celebrated over 49 years of marriage before his passing on November 20, 2002. She was also preceded in death by 4 sisters, Dorothy Simon, Theresa Anderson, Sharon McClane and Margaret Ann Pappan.

Survivors include 3 sons, Martin E. Hamlin of Topeka, KS, Charles Hamlin of Mayetta, KS and Bruce Hamlin of Hoyt, KS; daughter, Joan Wood (Allen) of Topeka, KS; sister, Charlene Anderson of Hoyt, KS; brother, Donald C. Pappan (Sherry) of Topeka, KS; 5 grandchildren, Casey, Colby, Chase, Cierra and Ashly and 4 great-grandchildren, Connor, Trinity, Amelia and Clyde.

Graveside Service were held January 5, 2022 at the Hoyt Cemetery.

Reprinted courtesy of -  
Mercer Funeral Homes



*\*\*All postings are reprinted from public obituaries or submissions from the family.\*\**



Marshall Gregory Hughes

Marshall Gregory Hughes (Show nosh), 67 years old of Colton, California passed away January 6th, 2022. Born on October 5th, 1954 in St. Bernardine Medical Center.

He worked on the railroad for 20 years, enjoying every moment of it. Unfortunately, a car accident he was involved in led him to having to retire early. During that 20 years, he met Susan Lucero Walker who he married and had his first child, Tanya Kingsley. Eventually separating, he later met Debbie Soto with whom he had three children, David, Josh, and Sarah.

He had grandchildren, Avery, Christian, Adam, Savannah, Aubrey, Anthony, Shayna, Jocelyn, and Xavier. He also has two great grandchildren and he will now have another later this year.

Marshall left a legacy behind through his family and friends that will live on through them. May the creator and Lord give this gracious man peace, love, and happiness as he reunites with loved ones dearly missed and awaits to greet us once more.



Marianna "Mahne" Diamond Jim

Marianna "Mahne" Diamond Jim departed this life and began her journey back to the source of all things in the early hours of Friday, January 14th, 2022, at the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, KS.

She was born April 23rd, 1996 at St. Francis hospital in Topeka, KS to William "Bill" Jim, Sr. and Leatrice Jim. She was the youngest of five siblings and a member of Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

She attended Royal Valley in grades K-12 where she shined brightest when sharing her gifts for song and performance. She was a dedicated member of the Royal Valley Forensics team; her hard work and talent enabled her to represent her school at the state tournament level and eventually perform at Nationals. She is survived by both of her parents, Bill and Lea Jim of Mayetta, KS. Other survivors include her siblings: her brother William "Billy" Jim, Jr. and sister-in-law Stephanie Jim of Mayetta, KS, her brother Jesse Jim of Mayetta, KS, her brother Brian Jim and sister-in-law Andrea Wahwasuck of Shawnee, OK, her sister Cassandra Jim and brother-in-law Jeffrey Cook, Jr. of Lawrence, KS. She is also survived by both of her grandmothers- Mary May of Holton, KS, and Corneil Donahue of Hiawatha, KS, as well as many uncles and aunties.

Other survivors include five nieces: Tressa Jim, Trulee Jim, Juniper Cook, Tatiana Wahwasuck and Juliet Jim; and six nephews: Abram Cook, Jesse Jim, Jr., Kane Wahwasuck, Vernon Jim, Dallas Jim, and Royal Jim. She is preceded in death by her grandfathers Paulino Jim, Sr. and Alvin May and her nieces Natalie Jim and Lyliana Shroeder.

Reprinted courtesy of - Chapel Oaks Funeral Home



Thomas I. Kreipe

Tom, who is also known as Ivan, was born in Topeka, Kansas and was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. He attended St. Joseph Military Academy in Hays, Ks. and graduated from Hayden High School where he played Tom Sawyer in their operetta "Mississippi Melody". He attended the University of Kansas.

He has had several occupations; Bartender, Sommelier, Taxi Driver, Free Lance Writer, Chef for the Dallas Cowboys and was in the independent Film Industry. He has lived in San Francisco, Dallas, New Orleans, and Houston Texas. He was among the Native American activists who occupied Alcatraz in 1969.

He is survived by his siblings Martha Kreipe de Montano (Jose) of Topeka, William Kreipe (Marvella) of Tecumseh, Patricia Kreipe Kelly (Tom) of Denton, Texas, John Kreipe (Cathy) of St. Joseph, Missouri, Joe Kreipe, Mary Jane Kreipe Wilson of Lawrence, and Elizabeth Kreipe Devin (Cedric) of Lawrence. He was preceded in death by his parents, Marie and Edward Kreipe.



Jacquelyn Levier

Jacquelyn Sue "Jackie" "Wamigokwe" Maheo noh" Levier, 46, of Mayetta, KS, passed away Monday, February 14, 2022 at St. Francis Hospital in Topeka. She born January 29, 1976 in Oklahoma City, OK, the daughter of Joseph Grant and Rosanna (Whiteskunk) Jessepe.

She was a member of Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church and Native American Church.

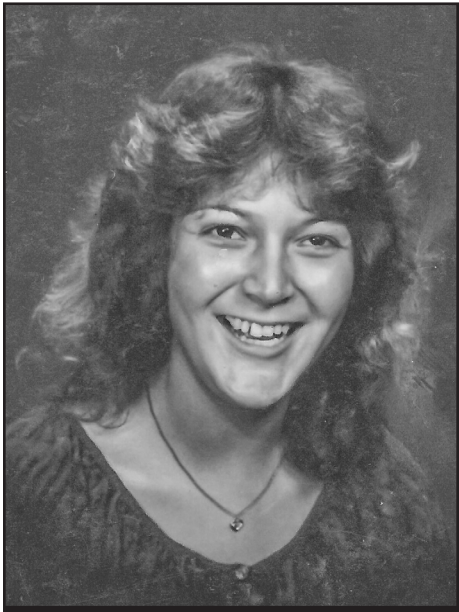
Jackie married John Henry Levier on March 17, 2008 in Topeka; they celebrated over 13 years of marriage.

Survivors include her husband, John of the home; her mother, Rosanna Jessepe (Ron) of Mayetta, KS; step-mother, Mary Jessepe of Mayetta, KS; 4 children, Sydney Jessepe of Mayetta, KS, Sylvana Levier-Jessepe of Tama, IA, Ivan Levier of Mayetta, KS and Alyssa Levier of Mayetta, KS; 3 sisters, Jodi Jessepe of Mayetta, KS, Leslie Marshno of Topeka, KS and Rose Charisse Warrior of Mayetta, KS; brother, Andrew Ortega of Topeka, KS and 2 grandchildren, Frankie Jessepe and Delena Kitchkommie.

She was preceded in death by her father, Joseph Jessepe.

Internment was February 19, 2022 at Shipshee Cemetery.

Reprinted courtesy of - Mercer Funeral Homes



Nancy Martin

Nancy Rene Martin, 59, of Holton, KS, passed away Friday, December 24, 2021 at KU Medical Center in Kansas City, KS. She was born November 6, 1962 in Topeka, KS, the daughter of Gerald Lee and Veronica Mary Kadese (Shoptese) Martin.

Nancy graduated from Holton in High School in 1980. She worked at various restaurants as a waitress and bartender. Most

recently she was a home health live-in attendant.

During her younger and school age years, she attended St. Dominic Catholic Church. She was a member of Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Rick Cochran.

Survivors include her son, Dakota "Cody" Cochran (Macaela Lewis) of Netawaka, KS; granddaughter, Arianna Cochran; brother, Mark Martin of Holton, KS; 3 nephews, Derek, David and Daniel Martin and a niece, Stacie Martin.

Funeral Service was Thursday, December 30, 2021 at the Mercer Funeral Home in Holton.

Reprinted courtesy of - Mercer Funeral Homes



Naomi J. "Din" Masquat

Naomi J. "Din" Masquat, 50, of Mayetta, KS, passed away Friday, January 7, 2022 at Stormont Vail Hospital in Topeka, KS. She was born October 2, 1971 in Holton, KS, the daughter of Curtis P. "Nin-We" Masquat and Julia K. Harrison.

Din graduated from Royal Valley High School in 1990. She worked at Member Services for Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, a clerk at the gift shop at the Prairie Band Casino and was currently working for Nelson's Retail in Mayetta.

Din was a member of Drum Religion and Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

She was preceded by her parents, Curtis P. "Nin-We" Masquat and Julia K. Harrison.

Survivors include her son, Jerald Cadue (Rockell) of Hoyt, KS; 2 daughters, Cass Cadue of Mayetta, KS and Jewel Cadue of Horton, KS; 3 sisters, Angela "Jubby" Masquat and Josie "Mitchi" Masquat both of Mayetta, KS and Janelle "Zahwee" Masquat of Lawrence, KS; brother, Elliot Wah Masquat of Mayetta, KS and 5 grandchildren, Marleigh, David, Harrison, Mayme and Julia.

Graveside Service was held at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at Masquat Cemetery (7510 182nd Rd, Mayetta). To leave a special message for the family, please visit [www.mercerfuneralhomes.com](http://www.mercerfuneralhomes.com).

Reprinted courtesy of - Mercer Funeral Homes



Kambottek

*\*\*All postings are reprinted from public obituaries or submissions from the family.\*\**



Lloyd Potts

Lloyd Galen “Et nwe tek” Potts was born 6-6-1948 in Horton, Kansas and passed into Glory on February 9, 2022 in Oklahoma City, OK. He was known as: “Et nwe tek”, Brother Potts, Pink, LG, Papa, Shisheh, Uncle, and Dad. He was preceded in death by his parents, Maynard Leo and Coralene (Keesis) Potts 2 brothers, Vernon “Shkomak” Potts and Norman Potts; sister, Barbara Tims and 2 sons, Roger and Danny Johnson. Survivors include: his wife, Peggy Johnson of the home; his mother, Venida Chenault, Lawrence, KS; 3 sons, Marland Ray Potts (Shelia) of Tama, IA, Terry Johnson (Barbara) and Larry Berryhill, both of Oklahoma City, OK; 3 daughters, Deana Shelley Kapayou of Tama, IA, LaDonna Marie Garcia-DeLeon of Toledo, IA and Loana Skalla (David) of Oklahoma, City, OK; brother, Mr. Ed Potts (Shirley) of Mayetta, KS; 3 sisters, Voncile Mitchell of Mayetta, KS, Doris Potts-Zyganiuk (Alexander) of Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada and Gloria June Keesis, dear older sister who stood by Lloyd throughout their past 70+ years together - mostly in Oklahoma City, OK; 26 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends. Funeral was February 15, 2022 at the Mercer Funeral Home in Holton.

Reprinted courtesy of - Mercer Funeral Homes



Tosha L. Reichstine

Tosha Lynn Reichstine was born May 25, 1983 to Twila Suzette Reichstine (Wahwassuck) and Thomas Gregory Reichstine III. She was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. She grew up in the city of Philadelphia. Later in her adult life she decided to be adventurous, travel and live in Jacksonville,Florida. She is survived by her Mother and Father. Siblings Theresa, Tommy, Tiffany, and Timothy.

Five beautiful children Angelina, Alexis, Benny,Alysia,and baby Javier. Uncountable extended family and friends. God called her home. She is now under his love and care. She will continue to shine her light on all her loved ones.

Reprinted courtesy of - Guckin Funeral Home



Pamela Bartels Sanchez

Pamela Rose Bartels Sanchez was born August 28, 1978 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, daughter of the late Charles Evan Daubon and Karen Bartels Daubon. She dedicated her life to loving and caring for her family as a homemaker. Pamela passed away on January 8, 2022 at the age of 43 years old. Along with her parents, she is preceded in death by sister, Chrystal Lea Bartels. Pamela is survived by her children, Kyla Sanchez, Juan Sanchez, Lilliah Sanchez, Jesus Sanchez and Julius Sanchez; her special companion, Bonifacio Rodriguez; brother, John Daubon, Jr., (Kim), and sisters, Amanda B. Minnick (John), Sherry Sandoval (Jorge), Elesha Harrington (Izeem); her grandchildren, Ami “Chocolate Thunder” Jordan Sanchez-Smith and Josiah Vincent Sanchez-Smith, along with a host of loving nieces and nephews. The funeral was January 13, 2022 and officiated by Rev. Tracy Gross.

Reprinted courtesy of - Richard Boles Funeral Chapel



Robert Shopteese

Robert “Shuckahosee” Larue Shopteese, 86, of Mayetta, KS passed away Sunday, November 28, 2021 at St. Francis Hospital in Topeka, KS. He was the son of King P. and Mary “Mae” Ruth (Williams) Shopteese. Robert

attended Marty Catholic Boarding School in Marty, SD. He served in the United States Navy as a mechanic on the USS Hector during the Korean War from 1952 – 1960 and was honorably discharged. Robert was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Reservation and the American Legion WE-TA-SE Post #410. Survivors include a daughter Vena Rodriguez of Long Beach, California; 2 sons, Raymond May of Everett, WA and Toney May (Holly) of Des Moines, WA; 8 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Mass of Christian Burial was at 10 A.M. Saturday, December 11, 2021 at Our Lady of Snows Catholic Church. Burial followed at the Shipshee Cemetery on the Prairie Band Potawatomi Reservation with military honors.

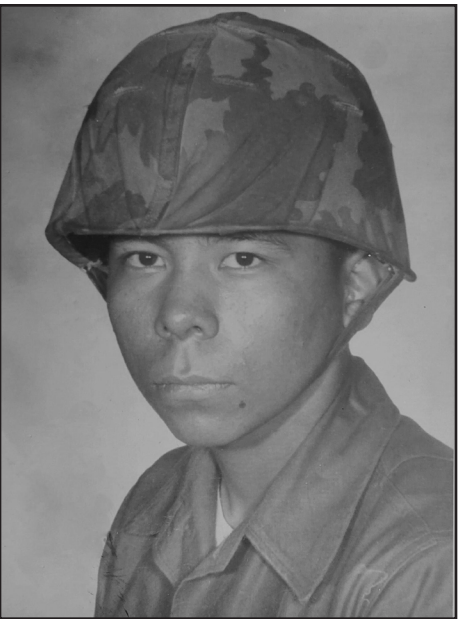
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Phylis Thomas Wahwasuck

Phylis Ann was born April 13, 1947 in Oklahoma City to Luther and Cecelia (Johnson) Wahwasuck. After graduating high school in Denver, she enlisted in the US Army. She served a year in Long Binh Post, Vietnam, and obtained the rank of Spec 5 before being discharged. During her military service, Phylis met and married Raymond Erlichman, and together they had three sons. Later, Phylis divorced and moved to Mayetta, Kansas, where she worked for the Prairie Band of Potawatomi Tribe, and where the boys grew up and attended school. Phylis attended school as well, obtaining a degree from Washburn University. She married Marlin Thomas, but they later divorced. Phylis was a member of the Prairie Band of Potawatomi Tribe, as well as a lifetime and charter member of the We-Te-Se American Legion Post 410 In Mayetta, Kansas. She was a member of the traditional Drum Religion. Phylis was predeceased by her parents, a son Brian Erlichman, and brother, Douglas Wahwasuck. She is survived by a sister, Donna Wahwasuck; sons Ashley Erlichman (Jeannie Reffruschinni) and Jordan Erlichman (Jackie Peterson); grandchildren Zachary Erlichman, Brandon Erlichman, Joseph Reffruschinni, Ashley Reffruschinni and Amber Kuhl; great grandchildren Kasen, Kalin, Colin, Maci, Kylyn, Sophia and Hudson; numerous nieces and nephews.

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George “Sha-Na-Ska” Wahquahboshkuk

George “Sha-Na-Ska” Wahquahboshkuk, 72, of Mayetta, KS, peacefully passed away Sunday, January 16, 2022, at his home surrounded by his family. He was born April 14, 1949 in Holton, KS, the son of Levi Richard and Marie (Wishteyah) Wahquahboshkuk. George proudly served in the United States Marines Corps from 1966-1969. He enlisted at the age of 17 and earned his GED while serving as an Infantryman. He earned the rank of Corporal and was Honorably Discharged. He earned the Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Bronze Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation with 1 Bronze Star, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Medal Color with Palm, Civil Actions Medal and First Class Color with Palm). George was a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Tribal Chairman for 12 years; VP of the Board of Regents at Haskell for 8 years, Potawatomi Child Welfare Judge for 9 years and the American Legion WE-TA-SE- Post #410. Survivors include his 7 children, Sheila Wahquahboshkuk (Toby) of Topeka, KS, Samantha Howerton (Danny) of Mayetta, KS, Georgia Smith (Robert) of Topeka, KS, Noah Wahquahboshkuk of Mayetta, KS, Levi Wahquahboshkuk (Kristina) of Mayetta, KS, Michelle Decker (Kevin) of Mayetta, KS, Marcus Wahquahboskuk of Mayetta, KS; 3 brothers, Roy, Pete and Gonzalo “Gunzy” Wahquahboshkuk all of Mayetta, KS; step-brother, William Jurey; 17 grandchildren; and 1 great grandchild. George was preceded in death by his parents; 4 sisters, Christine Cruz, Elizabeth Vanderblomen, Ada Vanderblomen and Alice Vanderblomen; 2 brothers, Leonard & Wallace Wahquahboshkuk; grandson, Harvey Lasley Wahquahboshkuk. Graveside Service will be 10 a.m. Thursday, January 20, 2022 at the Wahquahboshkuk Cemetery (10130 174th Road) with Military Honors. To leave a special message for the family, please visit www.mercerfuneralhomes.com.

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## Nishnabek Ntewmèn - “Who We Are”



Edward T. Ventura Jr. has been appointed to serve a four-year term on the Nebraska State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He is a member of the PBPB

Enrollment Committee. Ventura, a teacher-librarian in Omaha, is active with the Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee on the Nebraska State Education Association Board of Directors and has advocated for eliminating racist school mascots. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights was established as an independent, bipartisan, fact-finding federal agency to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws. The Commission is comprised of eight commissioners and national and regional staff in addition to State Advisory Committees. These committees serve as the Commission's eyes and ears on the ground across the country, investigating and researching civil rights issues specific to their jurisdiction.

## RHS Football Team Celebrate State Championship Win



The Rossville High School football team recently celebrated their 2021 Class 2A State Championship victory with a dinner sponsored by the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation. They won the state title in November when they beat Beloit 35-12. The Rossville Bulldogs had a perfect season, finishing with a 13-0 record. This is Rossville's second state title win in a row and their fifth overall.

The celebratory dinner was hosted on Jan. 4 at Fastdraws, a local business in Rossville, where they took a team photo. PBPB member Mshewe Hale is pictured holding the trophy. The team also includes Corey Catron, son of PBPB member Vern Catron, and Torrey, Tayson, and Thatcher Horak, members of Citizen Band Potawatomi.



Bryce Garrison reported to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, CA, on Monday, Feb. 14, 2022. Here he poses with his proud parents, Blake and Audria Garrison. Boot Camp will last for 13 weeks and then he will have the MOS of Infantry.



Jessica A. Rickert

Jessica A. Rickert, DDS, was the keynote speaker at the American Dental Association Institute for Diversity in Leadership in Chicago. Her presentation, “Changing Perceptions...Exceeding Expectations” was well received by

the 60 attendees, all dentists from the USA and territories. Since 2003, the ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership (IDL) has enhanced the leadership skills of dentists who belong to racial, ethnic and/or gender backgrounds that have been traditionally underrepresented in leadership roles.

To find out more about this opportunity, visit:

ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership | American Dental Association  
[www.ada.org/resources/careers/ada-institute-for-diversity-in-leadership](http://www.ada.org/resources/careers/ada-institute-for-diversity-in-leadership)

Thank you. Your continued support means everything to me. Stay Strong, Changing Perceptions ...

Exceeding Expectations  
Jessica A. Rickert, D.D.S.  
Dentist – National Speaker  
Member: Prairie Band  
Potawatomi Nation

Jacob Walter  
Happy Birthday  
Dan Walter (December 28th)  
and  
Jacob Walter, pictured  
(December 22nd)  
Best Wishes –  
Mary Walter  
and Bernadette Lewis

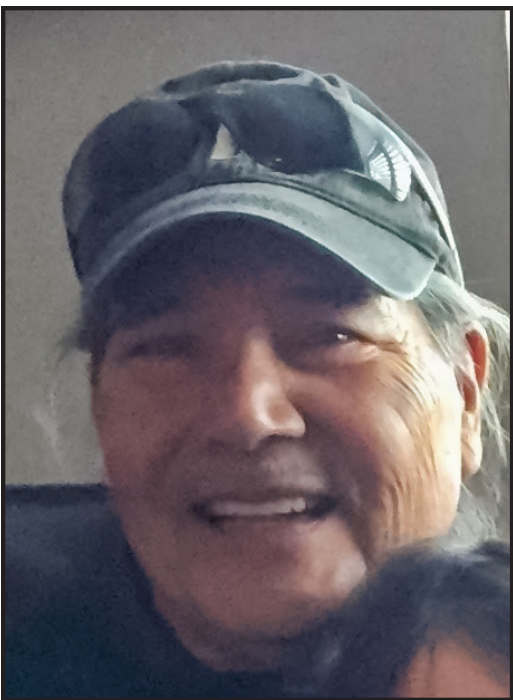


## William Jim Retires From the Nation After More Than 25-Years of Service

William “Bill” Jim is the son of Paulino Jim Sr. and Cornelia Harrison and the grandson of Charles Harrison and Minnie Nozackum. He attended elementary school in Kansas City then moved to the Big Soldier Creek area known as the Old Dance Ground with a family of ten including his mother, father and siblings.

Many happy memories were had there of fishing, hunting, ice skating, sledding, swimming, mudslides, gathering wood and gardening in the summer.

He attended Marty Mission School in South



Office of Environment Health, HAMM Quarries and Construction, Goodyear Tire & Rubber in Topeka,

Dakota in grades 8 through 10 and then attended Royal Valley in Hoyt where he was proud to have been a part of the second graduating class since the inception of the high school. After graduating he attended Haskell Indian JuCo for a time.

William began his working career at Skinners Nursery in north Topeka pulling weeds or hoeing during the summer months for about 3 years starting at age fourteen.

He has worked for many organizations: North Topeka Indian Center, Kickapoo Indian Action Team, PBPB Administration as clerk/typist,

Quaker Oats in Lawrence, KS, Potawatomi Bingo Hall where he was housekeeping and Pull Tab supervisor, PBP Gaming Commission Regulator for the casino, PBP Housing Maintenance and now retiring from the Building Maintenance Department.

William has lived on the reservation since the '60s and has always taken inspiration and strength from his family especially his grandmother, grandfather and uncles. He has always hoped to live in a way that aligned with the principles he was raised to value: peace, freedom, equality, unity and justice.

He is retiring with a full heart knowing that he has achieved his goals of contributing to gaming success and being of service to his community.

For him it has been a privilege, an honor and a pleasure being a part of the progress of the people of the Nation.

He encourages the younger generations to continue to set an example for our descendants and find the passion to make our world a better place to live.

