Tribal leaders face difficult decisions ahead

Rosemary Stephens, Editor-in-Chief

Tribal leaders across the country continue to take on new roles and provide leadership to their citizens in the midst of a world health pandemic. Much like state governments, Tribal governments are monitoring their dwindling budgets as Tribal leaders deal with loss revenues from the closing of their tribal casinos and businesses in an effort to stop the spread of the virus, and are operating essential services only.

Unlike state governments, Tribal governments have continued to pay their employees full pay and benefits during the shutdown. With casinos closed indefinitely and jobs turning into home, Tribal leadership is moving to keep their tribes moving forward as they look to temporarily furlough employees as they face the inevitable.

What is a furlough? A furlough is an employee mandated leave of absence without pay. Furloughed are intended to be short, with employees returning back to work after a short period of time. The majority of Oklahoma Tribal Nations closed their gaming businesses during the week of March 16. For Cherokee Nation in northeastern Oklahoma with over 380,000 citizens, Cheyenne and Arapaho’s Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin stated the tribe had strong reserves and could operate without disruption for awhile; but there is a limit. "We’re taking it in stages, but the truth is, as someone in the media said, we don’t make the timeline, the virus makes the timeline," Hoskin told The Tulsa World during an interview.

In other parts of the country, the Bay Mills Indian Community announced the temporary furlough of 400 employees, but will continue to carry health insurance on all their employees. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes based out of Concho, Oklahoma have also announced they are furloughing furloughing tribe employees, but they, too, will be continuing to cover employees’ health insurance. In addition, the tribe has set up a group of unemployed benefit to assist their employees in filing unemployment benefits.

On March 25 the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a $2 trillion economic rescue plan called the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, that offers relief to individual Americans and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Several key funding provisions of the CARES Act could provide tribes to refine that are suffering from the loss of revenues from casino closures, including the following the U.S. Dept. of Treasury Tribal Stabilization Fund. Section 601 provides $8 billion in emergency relief funds direct to Tribes. These funds will be available to Tribal governments who certify that the funds will be used to offset expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One centerpiece of the Act for Indian Country is the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CFVF). The "use of funds" provision in the Act states that CVF payments to tribal, state and local government can only be used for costs that: (1) are necessary expenditures that were not accounted for in the most recent budget; and (2) were not accounted for in the most recent approved tribal government budget; and (3) were incurred between March 1 – Dec. 30, 2020.

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Latoya Lonelodge, Staff Reporter

For many tribal citizens throughout the country, March and April mark the beginning of powwow season with annual big powwow events such as the Denver March Powwow, the Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque, N.M.

That is until the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic spread across the U.S. in a matter of weeks, bringing with it the cancellation of powwows, art markets, and thre.

For many Native American communities, powwows mean more than a way of life. Referring to the powwow season, Marger said the Native community in the United States provides the opportunity to showcase diverse cultural backgrounds of Native Americans, whether that was through the style of dress, the music, the art, the work, jewelry and handmade regalia. With the spread of the COVID-19 disease, vendors and vendors socialized to follow social distancing guidelines, with many unaware of the type of virtual powwow.

This is where the Social Distance Powwow page comes in. Its founder, Dan Simonds, the Pequot Tribe, was the original founder of the Social Distance Powwow page, along with co-founder Hebert. According to Simonds, the page was started on March 16, more than 140,000 Facebook users had joined the Social Distance Powwow page, with users openly sharing videos of dancing in regalia, artwork and songs.

"It's kind of important to have this as a bad time for everyone in the world but had times before us to look ahead to what we see. It is kind of a way to be resilient and in dark times, bringing some light to everyone that needs it," Simonds said.

With the Social Distance Powwow becoming a movement worldwide, Simonds said, "Very fast, the Indigenous peoples of North America, but has gained recognition in other countries such as Canada and Europe during this time." Early stage organizer so we're still trying to figure out do we want to do the non-profit route and how and when do we want to do that, with every social circle in the powwow community," Hebert said.

Through live streaming, video submissions and content posted to the Social Distance Powwow page, a clash of cultures and cultural backgrounds from around the world.

"There are so many people who have suited up to dance, it's in the early stages so we're kind of figuring out what it is," Simonds said.

"Saying and telling their stories, it's been great to see these stories and we also have a lot of Native musicians, and that's under the performers section, they've been going live throughout the page, there's also something else, the excitement of acknowledging people online, even if you've virtually, validates the importance of having a place for people to gather online, this helps as a tool.

"We're not in the social distancing order. Simonds specializes in wampum, a type of traditional jewelry from his tribe in the east coast, and also owns a business called Wampum Wear.

"I reached out to him to ask if he wanted or needed any help and he's been a great source of information," Simonds said.

As an artist, Simonds said he has always told people that even if you don't get out of your community much you don't realize that you are actually Native with green and blue eyes even prior to contact," Simonds said.

"There is also a way for dancers and singers to share their prayers and songs with others, which has been lift.

Today, we are being told to socially distance ourselves, help look completely in any way, and remain critical to most people's values. At the NDP, we are providing a space for those relationships to continue in a safe way, as well as widening the social circles in the powwow community," Hebert said.

"We have a lot of topics … one I like is called 'Our Story,' all too often our stories are silenced and not really shared publicly in a lot of ways, so that's a way that we can keep things to ourselves but there's times when the words and stories need to be shared, I think this is one of those times," Simonds said.

"Through the page, once we're not in a powwow, it's a platform because people have open minds and hearts for others, as well as support each other in these difficult times," Simonds said.

"Through media. Simonds said himself, along with fellow vendors and artists have had shows cancelled due to the social distancing order. Simonds specializes in wampum, a type of traditional jewelry from his tribe in the east coast, and also owns a business called Wampum Wear.

"A lot of powwow folks, even dancers and drummers, have been affected by what's going on, there wasn't any kind of group, to the level that I envisioned on any kind of social media platforms, so I wanted to make a group that I felt comfortable to participate in, I felt I was not alone in this," Simonds said.

Simonds said there's not many Indigenous outlets for the media and page how share important it is to have a social media platform. He also said, "This page is up and running," Simonds said.

"Through the Social Distance Powwow Page. Simonds said he realized the social distancing that is shown through media. Simonds said himself, along with fellow vendors and artists have had shows cancelled due to the social distancing order. Simonds specializes in wampum, a type of traditional jewelry from his tribe in the east coast, and also owns a business called Wampum Wear.

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Family holds onto hope while mother fights for her life after being diagnosed with COVID-19

Rosemary Stephens, Editor-in-Chief

On March 13, 2020 the Oklahoma State Dept. of Health reports four confirmed posi-
tives for COVID-19. Four short weeks later the data showed 2,184 confirmed positives, 488 currently hospitalized and 108 deaths from COVID-19 (as of April 14).

As the number of confirmed positives and deaths increase daily across Oklahoma and the United States, there seems to be many who still hold to the belief, ‘this won’t hap-
pen to our family.’

And that mindset is the most frustrating for Tami Bailey.

Tami’s mother, Shineesta Emily Bushyhead Adams (Shine) has been hospitalized with COVID-19 for over two weeks, fighting for her life. Shine, 61 years old, is a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes living in Newkirk, Okla., who, prior to becoming ex-
posed to the coronavirus and being diagnosed with COVID-19, was in good health and ac-
vive in her children and grandchildren’s daily lives.

“Stay home. Social distance … please. This is taking lives. It is separating families. … their grandparents or their grandpas. The hardest thing is you are alone in this. If they die from this, they die alone and you are not able to give them a funeral. This is serious. It is NOT the flu,” Tami said in response to being asked what was one message she would want to send.

How Shine came into contact with the virus is still somewhat of a mystery but the force and quickness the virus attacked Shine follows along with almost every account one reads about a person who becomes infected with COVID-19.

“My brother AJ came home on the 20th (March) and he wasn’t feeling very good so he went to the clinic here in Newkirk. They said he had a sinus infection and he ought to be around his mom and dad, and they said yes,” Tomi said.

By March 24 Shine began to show symp-
toms. Fever, a cough, and said she had had a headache for three days. On March 25 Shine went to her primary doctor who tested her for the flu, it came back negative, and the diagnos-
sis ended up being bronchitis. They gave her medicine and sent her home.

“For days my mom sheltered at home, exhibiting all the symptoms of COVID-19, getting worse with each passing day. The fol-

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CLINTON INDIAN HEALTH CENTER

COVID-19

DRIVE-THRU SCREENING

Available Monday – Friday

Noon to 2 pm

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR TESTING IF YOU HAVE:

• Symptoms of COVID-19: FEVER, COUGH, SHORTNESS OF BREATH
• Close contact with a person who has had COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks
• An order from your primary care provider

*Limit ONE patient per household*

***Testing may be limited based on available supplies***

CLINTON INDIAN HEALTH CENTER starts COVID-19 drive thru testing

Rosemary Stephens, Editor-in-Chief

When patients arrive at the Clinton Indian Health Center they follow road signs directing them to the registration area, known as the first check-point. Individuals are then screened for symptoms of COVID-19, and once con-

firmed they are instructed to move forward to the testing area. Lab and med-
ical staff will instruct the individual to roll down their window, tilt their head back and their nose will be swabbed. Follow-

ing this procedure, individuals will be asked to drive thru testing.

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Cheyenne and Arapaho

Latoya Lomedge, Reporter/Advertising Sales

405-422-7608 / llomedge@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov

1600 E. Hwy 66, Suite E, El Reno OK / P. O. Box 38, Concho, OK 73022 / Fax: 405-422-8204

Society of Professional Journalists members / Native American Journalists Association members

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Shine Adams (l) pictured with her son AJ Adams. Shine is currently hospitalized in Oklahoma City fighting to recover from COVID-19. (Photo via Facebook)
It’s time to talk about nature, weather and the animals that as a resource in taking walks as a family, said they began utilizing the trails and pow- er grounds in Concho, Okla., as a safe so- cial distancing outing area.

Alongside her children, Tahdooahnippah said out on the lake using the bow and arrow, we see a variety of birds and other wildlife. My 2-year-old has been a little pickier on what she wants to do. We teach them to be careful and respect nature and life,” Muskett said.

And while learning outdoors remotely, other parents are soaking in the time spent with their children and educating what it means to spend time together during the pan-demic.

“We have been using this time at home to organize our family, clean out clutter, en- joying the outdoors during nicer weather and cooking together,” Tahdooahnippah said. Tahdooahnippah, with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Education Department has children that go to Darlington Elementary School, El Reno High School, and a 2-year- old that attended the Child Development Center Pre-K through 6th grade and encourage them to work on free websites for college prep.

“Now would be a great time to set some short term and long term educational goals and begin working towards those. For sopho- mores and juniors now would be a great time to work on ACT prep courses online, a great-free website that includes videos and guide- lines for all grade levels and courses would be Khan Academy,” Tahdooahnippah said.

Tahdooahnippah said libraries are also a great help to parents wanting to work with their children in order to create structure so that students continue to have ac- cess to books.

“No matter what age your students are I recommend setting time aside for them to read each day,” Tahdooahnippah said. For tribally enrolled students, the myON online digital library has been made available by Native American tribes to provide a resource for students in Pre-K through 12th grade.

For further information about our schools, you can find the complete information on our websites at CalumetSchools.org and ArapahoCheyenneSchools.org.
It was hard. It was unfair: It was continued from pg. 3

SHINE ADAMS: COVID-19

and was told everyone Shine contacted from the hospital — crossed an ocean and final credit a pandemic that had needed to be on the ventilator happened to be the one who needed to be on the ventilator. A major situation without a real play book, tried to adhere to another store, and you can get exposed at any number of people doing that. “We are alone trying to find out how to take care of my mom from a distance. And to see people out there who treat this virus like it’s nothing or say it’s just the flu, it’s not like the flu. This is killing people,” Tomi said. “There needs to be more testing. We can’t get this under control. There are too many in the state of Oklahoma who have contracted the virus and something needs to be done.” And Tomi hopes for many other families, there will be more testing available.

“We need more testing. We need more testing for our people and our clients because without proper testing we are going to see our trib- al numbers decrease. What do you expect kids to do? Do you expect kids to be going to Grandma’s in its mes- siness? We took the family to the hearse waiting outside. ‘My mom is not a statistic of COVID-19. She has a name. ’”

Tomi said she believes “She said she is going to fight and giving up was not going to give up, she would fight and go on and that’s her job.” Shine told her daughter she was not going to give up, she would fight and go on and that’s her job. “My mom drove herself to the hospital. She’s a strong woman. We had quarantined, me and my children, when all this started happen- ing. I was in a very serious situ- ative case in Kay County. We had been staying inside and not going anywhere. That’s how we made it through the hardest part,” Tomi said.

“Tomi said on the way to the hospital she had told the women’s word that her daughter that day. Shine told her daughter she was not going to give up, she would fight and go on and that’s her job. “My mom drove herself to the hospital. She’s a strong woman. We had quarantined, me and my children, when all this started happen- ing. I was in a very serious situ- ative case in Kay County. We had been staying inside and not going anywhere. That’s how we made it through the hardest part,” Tomi said.

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Learning and Organizational Specialist
Catherine Denny said the program allows children to access thousands of books and is individualized for each student based on their interests and reading level. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Child Development program originally purchased the program for children enrolled in child development and for head start programs. However, the tribes opened it up to the public for all tribally enrolled children.
“Students are encouraged to spend time together reading and learning with myON,” Denny said.
Denny said the book reader allows students to select optional reading support in collaboration with teachers. It includes an embedded dictionary for any book they choose to read.
“myON includes fiction and nonfiction, with about 10% of the titles available in Spanish. Titles range from mentors and sports, to biographies and health to help expand a child’s imagination into the world of reading in a language,” Denny said.
Denny said parents can sign their children up through email with their child’s first and last name, and grade.
With schools working closely with their students’ families and configuring ways to continue classes on April 6, numerous plans were set into motion throughout school districts for distance learning.
The Reno Indian School Principal Pat Litckie said the high school has a remote learning plan in place that began on Monday, April 6, and that the school is working closely with their students and parents in order to determine if they prefer digital, online instruction or paper packets to work on. All work will be available either in Monday or in final format and parents can request in-person pick-up for teachers or for location distributions according to the student’s preference,” Litckie said.
With the pandemic continuing in class instruction, Litckie said the school is confident in its plan.
“there is no doubt the school closure will impact student learning, but we are confident in our plan. We feel we are able to stay engaged and continue learning and enriching previous learning. This is a time we have to embrace,” Litckie said.
Tahdooahnippah said that students choosing the online option would continue using familiar formats from schools and districts, MathXL, IXL, More Math, StudySync, USA Test Prep, Canvas, or Plato.
“We are distances and safe at home policies in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19, Litckie said the school is taking these policies very seriously,” Tahdooahnippah said.
“We regret that our students will miss out on the social and emotional connections associated with this school. These are very extraordinary times and need to be taken very seriously and we have to learn to live in places to continue instruction while keeping the health of our teachers and our students our top priority,” Litckie said.
For other schools with an Indigenous ac-
demic community, Sovereign Community School (SCS) in Oklahoma City have also set forth a distance learning program for students and their families.
Enrolled in their distance learning plan, SCS sixth and ninth grade students will en-gage with materials focused on Math, Read-
ing and English Language development and are expected to participate in lessons each day.
SCS’s distance learning online states, “we will work collaboratively with our SCS fam-
ilies for the duration of our distance learning program to ensure that students’ unique needs are met, and that the needs of our students who receive special education services.
Parents have consistent communication from their teachers and will have access to the online platforms teachers use to deliver instruc-
tion (e.g. Google Classroom, YouTube, etc.)
It is our hope that during this period of distance learning, SCS students continue to grow and develop, and most importantly stay healthy and safe.
For their learning daily expectations, a total of 135 minutes of learning is offered for sixth graders and 100 minutes of learning for ninth graders at SCS.
With practices in place for social distanc-
ing and distance learning, education contin-
ues to move forward with remote schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic.
“Think what is most challenging is our kids are missing their friends and wanting to get out and go places,” Mankiet said. “But the best part about the stay at home order is our children have learned to be creative. They are playing outside more, reading, running, learning about plants and playing with their animals. We have some caterpillars that were given to us at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, and one of the kids is watching them form into cocoons and the kids are excited to see them become butterflies and set them free.”
For Faculty and students, what was most chal-
enging was facing the unknown.
“With the awareness of how long they would be out of school or if we would return,” Tahdooahnippah said.
The Kennedy area served more than 754,000 Native Americans in 2019.
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For other schools with an Indigenous ac-
ademic community, Sovereign Community

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**OUTBITURIES**

**Alice Marie Seger**

Alice Marie Seger was born Aug. 6, 1949 to Arthur and Rossie (Black Beard) Rouse. She passed away March 31, 2020 in the Mercy Hospital Emergency Room in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and passed away on April 5, 2020 in an Oklahoma City (SWOSU). She served as a language instructor for the Native American Church. He was preceded in death by Gerald Panana.

**Winston Thomas Rouse**

Winston Thomas Rouse, Jr., was born Sept. 9, 1967 in Clinton, Okla., to Winston Thomas Sr. and Marie Watts, his grand-
niece Johnnie Marie Watts, his grand-
niece Blindy Soap, his niece John-
ny Marie Watts, his grand-

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**Joyce Marie Twins**

Joyce Marie Twins was born Dec. 30, 1943 to Harvey and Bessie (Blindy) Rouse. She passed away on April 2 at the Clinton Indian Health Center, officiated by Rev. Gerald Panana.

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**Drive-Thru Testing**

**Drivetheru Testing continued from pg 4**

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**Online Learning**

continued from pg 4
It's Official

Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal citizen Jennifer Wilkinson was officially named a candidate on the democratic ticket for Oklahoma Senate District 45 race. She is a candidate in the 2020 Oklahoma State election, which has been in our family since 1939, there was a sense of normalcy. As we worked throughout the day, drivers got out of their vehicles and took their hats off to show respect. Some altered the way we said our goodbyes to those we lost.

To our beloved son: You left us three years ago on April 24, 2017, but it seems like yesterday. People tell me it's time to move on. These people do not know what it's like to lose a child. I am grateful for the 39 years I had with you sonny. The laughs, jokes, pranks, all we used to talk about. Our little inside jokes … I love you and miss you to no end.

Happy 39 Birthday to our precious, one and only Julia Cozad.

Happy 9th Birthday Tystran April 4! Love all your friends & family, dad & Sarah, mom. Hope you had a great birthday!

In Loving Memory of Patrick Emhooolah II
Nov. 15, 1997 – April 24, 2017

45 on April 8, 2020.

such a blessing, hope you

Happy Easter to my friends back home:

My “phat” baby Ralen Bird and the one and only Julia Cozad. I love and miss ya’ll so much! Happy Easter. Stay safe and be strong.

One love from Caravass, Texas
Rachel Tonka White

On the Republican ticket, incumbent Paul Rosino will face off against Steve Cunningham on June 30, 2020. Pictured below Jennifer Wilkinson (r) and her daughter Livy (l) hold up the official paperwork declaring Wilkinson as a candidate in the 2020 Oklahoma State Senate District 45 race.

It was a small sense of closure. As we drove down Main Street and past Gore’s Phillips 66 Service Sta- tion, which has been in our family since 1939, there was a sense of normalcy.

There are no friends to hug or distant relatives who made the trip, no old class- mates to share stories about days gone by and no one from our little town express- ing how much Alton Gore had meant to our experiences growing up in a tight- knit community. It was hard. It was unfair. It was a fu- neral during a pandemic.

As we lingered outside the church before the procession to the cemetery began, there was still a feeling of incom- pleteness.

But as we drove down Main Street and passed Gore’s Phillips 66 Service Sta- tion, which has been in our family since 1939, there was a sense of normalcy.

Cars and trucks stopped along the road, drivers got out of their vehicles and took their hats off to show respect. Some from the community were able to be there for my family and to wave goodbye. It was a small sense of closure.

There is no doubt it has been a hard year for my family, losing our patriarch, our grandparents' home of more than half a century. And believe me, it was all there. This may seem like an unfortunate ch...
Oklahoma’s tribes have spent the last decade to ensure their citizens are properly counted by the U.S. Census. But the coronavirus pandemic is making that harder.

Some counties where tribes are predominant are far behind others in the statewide count that shows 41 percent of the state’s households have completed the census survey as of U.S. Census 2020 nears the end of the second week of the decennial count.

Counties that comprise the Choctaw, Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) Nations are below the current state average with 28.4 percent, 35.2 percent and 36.5 percent of households being reported, respectively.

Ozaukee County, home of the Osage Nation, is far behind with only 19.3 percent of households having completed the census with nearly the entire response, 19.2 percent, being turned in online.

In contrast, the response from Potawatomie County, home of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, is higher than the average state response at 45 percent.

“Our tribal nations are important and everyone needs to be counted,” said U.S. Rep. Kendra Horn (D, Oklahoma’s 4th Congressional District) and one that Native Americans and indigenous peoples are undercounted and one of the groups that is most likely to be undercounted.”

Horn and U.S. Rep. Tom Cole (R, Okla.) introduced in February a bill that would have allowed Native and indigenous peoples to be counted in their tribe’s district as well as members of the various tribes.

The tribe learned after the 2010 census that they are not included in “Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma” their tribal affiliation was not counted. This meant the roughly 15,000 respondents that responded with “Choctaw” or “Choctaw Nation” were excluded.

The 24,000 respondents that responded with “Choctaw Nation” of Oklahoma had an official count. The 24,000 respondents that identified as “Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma,” were then used to determine federal funding and grant monies.

“That’s one of the reasons that I’ve emphasized this so much is that it is very important when people fill out the census for tribal citizens to fill out the exact name of their tribe on the census form,” said Horn. “That’s something that we worked on the census with, but right now the solution is we need to make sure that when people fill out their census, they put the official name of their tribe.”

In response to the undercount and misinformation in 2010 the Choctaw Nation took steps leading up to the 2020 census by advertising and using social media. The tribe also started the complete count committee to promote the census and coordinated with the U.S. Census Bureau.

Choctaw Chief Gary Batton in a letter to Steve Dillingham, director of the U.S. Census Bureau, explained the tribe’s situation and asked if completing the form with “Choctaw Nation” would be sufficient in 2020.

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“Choctaw Chief Gary Batton in a letter to Steve Dillingham, director of the U.S. Census Bureau, explained the tribe’s situation and asked if completing the form with “Choctaw Nation” would be sufficient in 2020. The bureau agreed.”

The tribe is currently working to promote the census during Census Day Count Me Muscogee, but when you do, please be sure to write in your name and your family’s name as members of the Choctaw Nation,” said Landers.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation was also undercounted in 2010 due to variations in how tribal affiliation was recorded.

“Had similar issues and that’s kind of what we put an emphasis on how we are marked,” said Jason Salaman, a spokesman for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. “So we’re asking our citizens to either put Creek Nation, Muscogee Nation or Muscogee Creek Nation without the parentheses.”

The tribe is currently working to promote the census through its 15 casinos, travel plazas and on reservations.

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The tribes had to cancel or postpone events that were listed to promote the census as well, such as youth engagement events and a “roadshow” that would have made its way around the Nation’s travel plazas and casinos.

“So the downside is, while we saw a lot of excitement generated about the census early on, after it actually officially kicked off we’ve not been able to be in personal contact with our members. And so there’s a little bit of concern there,” said Landers.

Gaylord News is a reporting project of the University of Oklahoma Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication.