



FILE PHOTO

Sen. Tim Kaine, center, visited the Nansemond Indian Nation last April for a roundtable discussion with tribal leaders to discuss its challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. This week, it was announced that the tribe will be receiving nearly \$1 million to expand its community center at Mattanock Town to help it deal with the effects of the pandemic.

Nansemond nation gets nearly \$1 million

BY JIMMY LARQUE
STAFF WRITER

The Nansemond Indian Nation will get a much-needed infusion of federal funding to expand its community center at Mattanock Town that has been used to distribute COVID-19 testing, vaccines

and food.

The nation received \$998,250 through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Indian Community Development Block Grant program, extended under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. It allocated more than \$31 bil-

lion to Native American communities across the United States, including money that will benefit the state's federally recognized tribes.

Tribe Chief Keith Anderson said the money will be used to enlarge the lodge, which currently holds just 50 people safely, create a commercial

kitchen to provide meals, add food storage spaces, conduct medical services and install solar panels and battery storage for energy efficiency.

He credited interim tribal administrator Tom Badamo, tribal historian and cultur-

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al preservationist Nikki Bass, grant writer Joel Haspel and chief emeritus and Mattanock Town groundskeeper Sam Bass with making the grant award a reality.

“To say the least, we are extremely excited about the funding award,” Anderson said, “and look forward to enhancing the community landscape of the city of Suffolk and entire region.”

In a joint statement, Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner said the money going to the Nansemond Indian Nation, and the \$1 million going to the Chickahominy Eastern Division to rehabilitate homes to improve air quality is instrumental for Native American communities hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“As the Omicron variant continues to create challenges for

people across the Commonwealth, we’re glad to see that these federal dollars will provide critical relief for communities hit hard by the pandemic,” the senators said in a joint statement. “This funding will help provide these tribes with services necessary to protect their health and safety.”

Sens. Kaine and Warner helped steer passage of legislation to grant federal recognition to six Virginia tribes, including the Nansemond Indian Nation. Signed into law Jan. 30, 2018, it allowed the tribe to receive federal funding.

Kaine visited the Nansemond Indian Nation last April for a roundtable discussion with tribal members to discuss its challenges during the pandemic. At that time, then-chief Earl Bass said the tribe had been hard hit by the

virus and needed more access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Department of Housing and Urban Development deputy regional administrator Jane Miller said the agency is equipping tribes with key resour-

ces to help deal with the virus and keep people safe.

“We remain committed,” Miller said, “in supporting the affordable housing and infrastructure needs of tribal communities in Virginia.”



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Nansemond StoryMap up for Webby

BY RACHEL WARTIAN
STAFF WRITER

The Nansemond Indian Nation is nominated for a Webby Award for its StoryMap “Indigenous Life on the Nansemond River.”

The tribe has been creating online educational material to help others learn more about its people, the Nansemond River and the surrounding ecosystem. They made a StoryMap, a web map created to be a stand-alone resource, about the Nansemond River and its relationship with the tribe throughout history.

The StoryMap, which can be viewed at tinyurl.com/StoryMap2022, has been nominated along with five other sites, including one from NASA, for a Webby Award in the Sustainable and Environmental category of general websites and mobile sites. The Webby Awards recognize “the best of the internet” as people go online and vote for their favorites to win. Voting closes on Thursday at [tinyurl](https://tinyurl.com/StoryMap2022).

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com/VoteNRWebby2022.

“It’s exciting,” said Nikki Bass, author of the StoryMap and member of the tribe. “We are a small tribe and with this global recognition, many people are hearing about us for the first time.”

The site outlines the story of the Nansemond River and its surrounding ecosystem as well as the story of the indigenous people who live there. The story follows the generations who lived there, their displacement due to colonization, their return and how all of this affected the local environment.

The StoryMap is illus-

trated with various images to help tell the story. There are historical and current photos, old maps, newspaper clippings and pictures of artifacts. Also, there are interactive maps showing more precise locations of where historical accounts took place. According to Bass, old maps, like ones made by John Smith, can be hard to use to locate where sites actually are in modern times.

“You not only see where it is on a modern map, but you can zoom in on a specific spot to see the specific location,” said Bass.

To make this StoryMap happen, Bass worked with Dave Jasinski and Lauren Huey with Green Fin Studio, a marketing agency in Richmond. From the tribe, she worked with Leila Avery and Chief Keith Anderson to put it all together. They received funding from Chesapeake Bay Trust to help tell the story.

“We hope this website will get people excited to learn about traditional lifestyles and how the tribe lived in order to make informed plans for the future,” said Bass.



FILE PHOTO

After a two-year absence, the Nansemond Indian Powwow returns this weekend.

Nansemond powwow returns

FROM STAFF REPORTS
SUFFOLK NEWS-HERALD

The Nansemond Indian Powwow returns after being

anceled the past two years, bringing numerous tribes to Suffolk for a celebration of the Native American culture and heritage.

The 32nd annual powwow is a free, family-friendly event with traditional song, dance and dress, along with delicious food, traditional crafts and other fun

activities.

This year's event is set for Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 20-21

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Powwow: A celebration of culture and heritage

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on the tribe's Chuckatuck land at 1001 Pembroke Lane, which runs off Godwin Boulevard across from Oakland Elementary School. Festivities are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

The grand entry ceremony begins at noon Saturday and 1 p.m. on Sunday. Tribal chiefs, honor guard and dancers in traditional regalia present the colors before the drums start beating and the dancing com-

mences.

Returning this year are Clark Stewart (Chickahominy) as the powwow's master of ceremonies, and Maurice Proctor (Piscataway) as the arena director. The head man and woman will be Kalen Anderson (Nansemond) and Haily Holmes (Chickahominy), respectively, with Stoney Creek of Hollister, North Carolina as the host drum and War Paint of Lumberton, North Carolina

as the guest drum.

"Though we hold our powwow within the state of Virginia, state borders came long after us," the powwow website states. "Our history and our relationships have no borders."

The annual event has been held since 1988, with the exception of 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is no admission fee for the event. No drugs, alcohol or pets will be allowed, but therapy or

comfort pets may be permitted.

Organizers note that public health protocols will be in place for the event.

"All are welcome at this family-friendly event featuring Native American song, dance, food and crafts," the flier for this year's powwow states. Vendor space is also available.

For additional information, email chief@Nansemond.org.

Nansemond Powwow sees record crowds

BY JEFF MOORE
STAFF WRITER

After a two-year hiatus, the Nansemond Indian Nation Powwow returned with the largest crowd in the event's more than 30-year history to enjoy the music, dances, prayers and food.

Nansemond Tribal Chief Keith F. Anderson said Monday that those who are good at estimating crowds believe they exceeded more than 5,000 over the two-day event, held Saturday and Sunday at Mattanock Town, 1001 Pembroke Lane, which runs off Godwin Boulevard across from Oakland Elementary School. There also was excellent participation from tribes across the U.S. and Alaska with more than 50 taking part.

"I'm still on a natural high," Anderson said. He said the crowd was at or above capacity and parking actually exceeded the allotted space.

Additionally, the weather for the weekend was nearly perfect, with rain stopping early Saturday before activities started and then not showing up again until after the events ended Sunday.

"We were very blessed," he said.

Even with the large crowd, he said there was plenty of space for those who wanted to social distance or avoid crowded settings due to COVID-19, which led to the event's cancellation in 2020 and 2021. To ensure visitors' safety, he said they made personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves accessible for those wanting it.

The Nansemond tribe received lots of praise from those attending this year's event, thanking



JEN JAQUA/SUFFOLK NEWS-HERALD

Nansemond Indian Nation welcomed approximately 5,000 people to their powwow. Visitors learned the history and culture of the tribe while enjoying dancing, food, crafts and more.



Powwow: Event return exceeds expectations

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them for bringing the powwow back. Many in the crowd appreciated the explanations that Anderson offered during all the tribal dances and activities, providing them with an understanding of what was taking place and the protocol behind it.

Tribes from across Virginia and North Carolina were joined by those from Florida, many western states and even Alaska. He said there were about 70 dancers and more than 200 from other tribes joining in as drummers or other support roles for the powwow. Many of the Native people also brought their families to enjoy the weekend events.

Those from Native American nations in the western U.S. handed the Nansemond a big compliment because of the great job they did in keeping the educational aspects in place for visitors, Anderson said.

"We're very elated to hear that," he said, adding it's great to know that the east coast tribes are doing well with sharing the story of their people.

Those who missed the August powwow in

Suffolk will have another opportunity to attend one close to home as the Nansemond Nation hosts another powwow in Chesapeake Oct. 22 and 23. Anderson said it's been 10 years since they held one in the neighboring community, noting the nation has strong connections to all the communities around Tidewater.

The Nansemond Indian Nation also is planning a lot of other activities throughout the year at schools, colleges and museums around the region. He said these "mini-events" help them share the history of their people through educational and cultural activities and the chance to share how the tribe is thriving, particularly in the past four years since receiving federal recognition as a nation.

The Nansemond nation also plans to continue attending other weekend powwows held by their sister tribes throughout the region. These weekend activities occur all the way up to Thanksgiving, he said.

Additionally, Anderson said they are planning to bring back the Firebird



More photos and video at suffolknewsherald.com

Festival next spring, which is geared to help educate school age children. This also was canceled the last couple of years because of the pandemic.

They also are taking part in the Great Dismal Swamp Initiative that is working to secure National Heritage Area designation. He said there are a lot of programs going on there that provide education not only on the Native American ties to the Dismal Swamp, but also of the African American and European people. To support this event, he noted they are pleased with the new heritage center the City of Chesapeake has built near the entrance to the swamp.

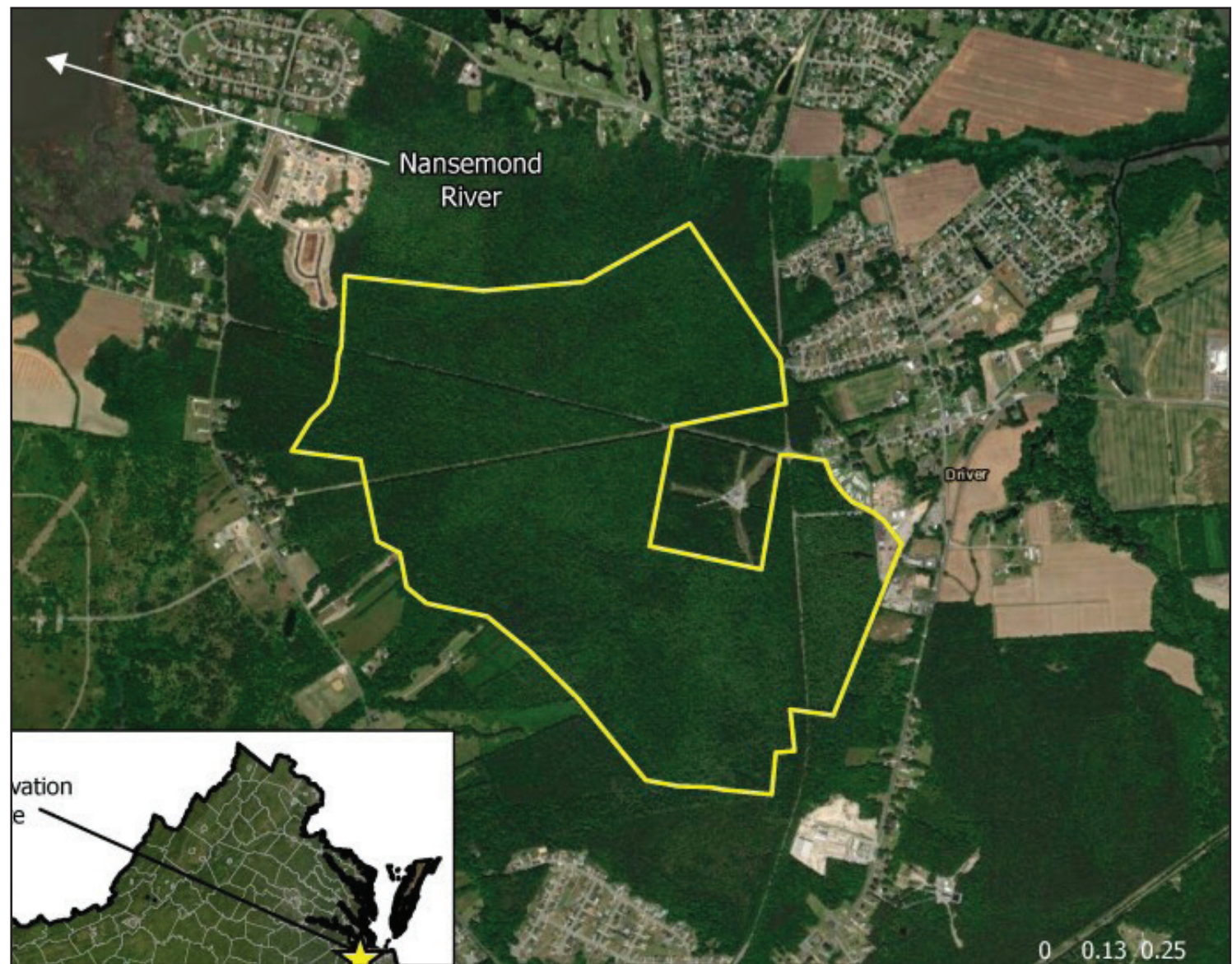
To make the event possible in Suffolk, Anderson said it took not only the support of other tribes, but also the excellent assistance they got from the City of Suffolk, area EMS, police and fire

departments and the city's Parks and Recreation Department. He said the tribe would not have been able to hold the event without all of the volunteers and the in-kind support they received from the community.

The Nansemond Indian Nation continues to work on its programs as it is in its fourth year of sovereignty. "We're still babies in the scheme of things," Anderson said.

He explained it takes time to get the right people in the roles needed to manage the tribal affairs, noting it is a huge responsibility. They have to ensure they are meeting all of the requirements that come with federal recognition and also be accountable to those who grant them funding and to the people of their nation.

Anderson said it's challenging but he believes it is going well. There is a big learning curve, particularly in Virginia, where federally recognized Native American nations are relatively new. Educating themselves and others is a big part of what they are working to do.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cross Swamp is located in the Driver community, about 15 miles from the Great Dismal Swamp. It is now back in the hands of Nansemond Indian Nation.

Nansemond Indian Nation looks to preserve Cross Swamp

BY GREG GOLDFARB
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As evening draws near, owls, otters, bullfrogs and bats quietly show themselves exploring for food and shelter.

During the day, raccoons, squirrels, foxes, deer, rabbits, turkeys and bear roam the flora and fauna, sharing the huge brown bog with snakes, hawks,

owls and even the endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpecker, with its blood-colored crown seeming to glow in the tall dark trees.

Welcome to Cross Swamp, 504 acres of federally protected forested wetlands about 10 miles north of downtown Suffolk in Driver and about 15 miles from the legendary Great Dismal Swamp.

But unlike its well-known nearby cousin, dominated by the 3,108-acre Lake Drummond, Cross Swamp has no lake. It is almost entirely covered with gum, pine and oak trees and the bamboo-like River Cane, used by Nansemond Indians to make hunting arrows.

It is also landlocked, has no tidal flow, only receiving

nutrients from fresh groundwater and rainfall. This means that depending on the annual rainfall amount and weather patterns, at any given time Cross Swamp could be covered in a few inches to a few feet of water, or it could be bone dry.

It is this stable diversity of

