

GLENPOOL â€” Muscogee (Creek) Nation officials broke ground Friday on roughly a \$10 million meat processing facility. Called the Looped Square Meat Co., it will encompass 25,000 square feet just south of the tribeâ€™s Duck Creek Casino a few miles south of Glenpool on U.S. 75. â€œWeâ€™re doing our best to put a lot of equipment in,â€• said Trenton Kissee, the tribeâ€™s director of agriculture and natural resources. â€œItâ€™s going to set us apart and make us unique from other processing facilities in the area or in the region.â€• The facilityâ€™s name, Looped Square, refers to the tribeâ€™s brand for its cattle and ranch operations. CARES Act money â€” the Trump administration \$8 billion in CARES Act funding to tribes in late March â€” is being used for the project, which is part of the Creek Nationâ€™s vision to promote long-term stability in food sovereignty and security. Offering meat processing and retail meats to the public, as well as the tribe, the facility is expected to employ up to 25 people and be completed by early 2021. Besides making available fresh cuts of beef and pork, it will have a dry-aging room and a large smoking capability for items such as brisket, pork shoulder ham and jerky. The facility also will be inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture. â€œHaving that U.S.D.A inspection really maintains that quality and that safety approach,â€• Kissee said. â€œThere are a ton of safeguards to make sure weâ€™re doing things the right way.â€• The retail space will feature items such as smokers, grills and local honeys and salsas. A wildlife wing will allow customers to bring in animals such as deer for processing. â€œThe thing about separating that from our beef and pork side is that weâ€™re not going to have to worry about cross-contamination,â€• Kissee said. â€œWe can keep rolling with our beef and pork side while weâ€™re bringing in those wildlife animals.â€• A study released last year indicated that the Okmulgee-headquartered Creek Nation had an economic impact of \$866 million in Oklahoma in 2017, supporting 8,700 jobs that paid \$303 million in wages and benefits to workers. Featured video Rhett Morgan 918-581-8395 rhett.morgan@tulsaworld.com Twitter: (

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