

Up in SMOKE



CCS
ATMORE

Creek Convenience Store Atmore (CCSA) and Creek Convenience Store Wetumpka (CCSW) both started off as Creek Smoke Shops. Long before the gas and convenience store concept, Creek Indian Enterprises Development Authority operated the two discount tobacco stores, exclusively selling tobacco products.



CCS
WETUMPKA

But like most industries, the economy changed how things were done. And so the move to a full-service convenience store and gas station emerged with the incentive of continuing to sell discount tobacco.

“The majority of our sales still comes from discount tobacco products,” Director of Retail Operations Leo Hammons said.

Tobacco in America dates all the way back to the 1500s, perhaps even later. Native Americans first introduced tobacco, and it was the first crop grown for money trading in the country.

Initially tobacco was used for spiritual and medicinal purposes by Indians and was smoked through a pipe; it wasn't until later years that it was rolled into cigarettes for smoking. However, Native Americans did not over use the product; tobacco was not recreational and wasn't smoked every day.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians have continuously capitalized on this industry and continue to profit from it.

Both CCSA and CCSW carry major national brands of cigarettes and tobacco, but the businesses are looking into

stocking Native American brands as well. Typically, these brands are less expensive, and are popular with the general public as well as Native Americans, and many contain no additives. Being additive free

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does not make the cigarettes healthier, it just means they are produced naturally without all the extra chemicals used in mainstream tobacco products.

According to online research, Native brand Light cigarettes are the most popular at smoke shops across the country, being compared as the best alternative to the Marlboro brand in terms of taste and price. Smoking Joes brand is the first Native American-owned brand to be fully licensed as a tobacco manufacturer in America.

And contrary to popular belief, Natural American Spirits brand is not a Native American Indian tobacco product and states on its website it is not affiliated with any tribe. However, its products are “based on our belief in the traditional American Indian usage of tobacco — in moderation and in its natural state.”

To find a list of all brands of cigarettes sold at Creek Convenience Stores, call 251-446-8801 in Atmore and 334-514-2700 in Wetumpka.

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