Chief Pyle retires

Durant OK 74702

BISKINIK

May 2014 Issue

The new Chief of the Choctaw Nation, Gary Batton, expended the call of office April 24, devoting to his "best efforts toward the welfare of the Choctaw people." In the presence of the heritage and traditions of the Choctaw Nation in order that all mankind may better understand, evaluate, and appreciate the history of its glorious past and enjoy its brilliant future.

Tribe's focus on 'Doing what is best for Choctaws'..." said Chief Batton. "This is an honor and a humbling experience to be up here and to serve as your Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma," said Chief Batton. "I want to tell the Council, the judges, Chief Pyle, and everyone how much I appreciate you all. One of the things I stand for is unity. As long as we stand together, there is nothing that will hold us back." Chief Batton's philosophy of "doing what is best for Choctaws" is evident in his plans to continue the Nation's progress, focusing on the health of the Choctaw people. I have been to many events throughout Oklahoma. Tourism is one way to bring people to our state of Oklahoma. The tribe is building new wellness centers in Atoka, Crowder, Idabel and Broken Bow, respectively to be completed this year," Chief Batton said as he announced the construction of new child development centers in McAlester and in the Bethel/Battin area.

Choice Nation of Oklahoma

Chief Justice David Burrage.

"Thank you for your support. It will take all of us to do what is best for Choctaws. God bless America, God bless Oklahoma and God bless the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma."
It is humbling to be the op- portunity to deliver the Word of God, to the Choc- twa. My family and I believe in the Chota are the first and most of our Choc- ation. The people ARE the Na- tion and focusing on faith, family, and the deep caring he has for his family, including his much- loved grandchildren, are great influences in our lives. By instilling these values in our children, we believe that the Choc- twa Nation can create its own future.

Chaplain's Corner

Are you over 18 years old?

Don’t forget to renew your membership card

If you have recently turned 18 or will be turning 18 within the next 60 days and have not yet renewed your membership card, please complete a new Tribal Membership application and return it to the Choctaw Nation Tribal Membership Department. The application can be found online at www.choctawnation.com or by contacting the Membership Department at 1-800-522-6170 or 502-304-6360.

Faith, Family, Integrity

The Choc- twa are a people who have been saved through the life and death of Jesus. In the expectation of His return, we have three distinct advantages. First, we have already died—always in the view of death, which should make us more knowledg- eable, and expectant of our Lord’s return over the years. Second, of all the brethren who are alive and remain, we will all be caught up together to be with the Lord. Then Paul assured us in the First Thessalonians that “When the Lord Jesus returns to reign over the earth...”

Go and follow Jesus Christ is coming again to reign over the earth. It could return at any mo- ment and the signs Jesus said would be fulfilled before His coming may view the coming of Jesus Christ as imminent, and many of believers who will hear and who may view the coming again when He personally returns to reign over the earth.

Apostle Paul, he and all the believers into His presence cate that some believers will well be a part of that number. A Catechism for the heart and soul of the Choctaw Chief. My family and I believe in the Chota are the first and most of our Choc-

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Choctaw Nation era closes
Yakoke, Chief Pyle, and happy trails to you

Mayor Jerry Tomlinson of Durant presents Chief Pyle with a proclamation of the Gregory E. Pyle Day for all the Chief has done for the City of Durant.

Photos by DEIDRE ELROD | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw dancers and guests perform the snake dance at the celebration.

Chief Pyle, Patti Pyle, Assistant Chief Batton and Angie Batton watch a video of Chief Pyle.

The Durant Choctaw Nation Head Start sings Happy Birthday to Chief Pyle.

Assistant Chief Batton presents Chief Pyle with a traditional Choctaw medallion for his birthday at the celebration.

Assistant Chief Batton and Chief Pyle smile as they leave the stage.

A guest writes her birthday wishes to Chief Pyle.

Chief Batton describes his vision of the future during the ceremony on April 28.

Chief Batton and Chief Pyle take the stage at the ceremony.

Photos by DEIDRE ELROD | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Chief Pyle with Melanie Powell after Chief's birthday/retirement celebration.

Employees and guests sing traditional Choctaw hymns at the celebration.

The crowd at the celebration listens to traditional Choctaw hymns being sung.

Assistant Chief Batton presents Chief Pyle with a traditional Choctaw medallion for his birthday at the celebration.

Photos by DEIDRE ELROD | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Batton sworn in as new Chief

Chief Batton talks to the crowd about the future of Choctaw Nation.

Chief Pyle congratulates Chief Batton.

The Color Guard poses for a picture in front of the Choctaw Nation Headquarters.
Pre-Workout Breakfast Salad

Recipe from The No Meat Athlete: Foodily.com

Yield: 7 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 4 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 cup subway dressing
- 2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 1/2 cup white rice

Prep Time: 30 mins

Nutrition Facts:

- Calories: 167
- Carbohydrates: 26.8g
- Total fat: 4.9g
- Saturated fat: 0.4g
- Cholesterol: 0mg
- Sodium: 239mg
- Protein: 6g
- Dietary fiber: 6.0g

DIRECTIONS:

1. Rinse chickpeas, drain and soak overnight.
2. Combine the chickpeas, cantaloupe, blueberries, and celery in a large bowl. Gently toss with subway dressing.
3. Place one cup of spinach on each of four plates, then divide the salad mixture onto each plate. Sprinkle with almonds. Garnish with sliced strawberries.

Drink water

Stay hydrated by drinking water instead of sugary drinks. Keep a reusable water bottle with you to always have water nearby.

Don't forget dairy

Foods like feta cheese, low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified soy beverages (almond milk) can help maintain strong bones needed for everyday activities.

Balance your meals

Use MyPlate as a reminder to include all foods groups each day. Learn more at ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Drink water

Stay hydrated by drinking water instead of sugary drinks. Keep a reusable water bottle with you to always have water nearby.

Reach your goals


NURSERY NEWS

Adley Malott

Keesh and Whitney Malott are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Halley Malott. The baby was born at Wusterholz Family Birthing Center in Sherman, Texas. She weighed 8 pounds and measured 20 inches long. Grandparents are Steve and Glenna Ehlert of Carlsbad, Curt and Kim Malott of Poteau, and Bruce and Will and Jill Darmady of Montgomery, Texas. Great grandparents are Milton and Lucille Malott of Idabel, and the late Bob and Angela Malott of New Breaks, N.L., and the late Richard and Barbara Maddrey of The Bronx, N.Y.

Carson Preweit

Carson James Preweit was born at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, March 17, 2023, at 9:56 a.m. He weighed 7 pounds 3 ounces and measured 20 inches long. His paternal grandparents are Lindsey and Mark Preweit and big brother, Grayson of Atwood, Ga. His maternal grandmother is LT Col (Ret) Kim Preweit Goler stationed at Ft. Antonio, Texas. His maternal grandparents are the late James A Mikel and Mikel (Russell) Lovejoy of Seper, Ga. His maternal great-grandparents, both Choctaw, are the late Denzil (Ed) Lovejoy-Bell of Seper and the late Isabel (Best) Russell of Rallton.

CHOTCOW FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Antlers: 1018 S. 3rd St., 580-426-6631

Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center 800-349-7026

Dietary fiber 6.0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Fat 4.9g, Saturated fat 0.4g, Sodium 239mg, Protein 6g

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Cornerstone gospel singing

A monthly gospel singing will be held at 7 p.m. on June 6 and repeat monthly on the first Friday of each month, at the Cornerstone Full Gospel Church, 601 S. Main, McAlester, at 5 p.m. It is free admission and all singers and listeners are welcome. Contact Gary Batton at 580-376-6147 for more information, contact Ronnie Crow at 580-761-6147.

Boston-Willmond family reunion

The first Boston-Willmond family reunion will be held May 29 at 5 p.m. at Pilgrim Church in McLoud. The potluck dinner will be held at 6 p.m. Please bring your potluck offering. For more information contact Malina (Folsom) Impson at 214-941-4702.

Wolf birthday gospel singing

All singers and listeners are invited for Birthday Gospel singing for Josephine Adams. The performance and concessions will be available. For more information please call 580-593-3209 or 580-761-6147.

Going family reunion

The Going family reunion will be held June 21, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Jones Academy Gymnasium in Harts- town. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy fellowship, games and for all ages! Please bring your photo and memories for sharing as well as any information related to your Going Family Cookbook. For recipe submissions, please include a small story and photo to accompany your recipe. For more information please contact Cindy Adams at 405-664-1562, Wayne and Nora Scott at 918-465-5421 or at 405-664-1562. There will be a charge for the event.

Wild Onion Dinners

Hugo

The Hugo Community Center Wild Onion Dinner will be held May 13, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Jones Academy Gymnasium in Harts-town. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy fellowship, games and for all ages! Please bring your photo and memories for sharing as well as any information related to your Going Family Cookbook. For recipe submissions, please include a small story and photo to accompany your recipe. For more information please contact Cindy Adams at 405-664-1562, Wayne and Nora Scott at 918-465-5421 or at 405-664-1562. There will be a charge for the event.

Checotah Seniors’ Day in McAlester

Checotah Seniors’ Day will be May 2 at the McAlester Expo Center at 4200 W. Hwy 75, McAlester, Okla. Location is one mile east of the Indian Nation Turnpike on Hwy 75. For additional information please contact Nicole Narmore, 580-931-8647. Events will begin at 10 a.m. and last until 3 p.m. in the expo hall.

Traditional Dinner in Atoka

There will be a Traditional Dinner held at May 2 6 at 6 p.m. at the Atoka Community Center, 515 Center St. For additional information please call 405-261-6699.

Panther Creek Memorial Powwow

The Dallas Indian Methodist Church, Red Path Warrior Society will be co-hosting the Panther Creek Memo- rial Powwow May in Farmerville, Texas, and would like to welcome all drums, dancers and vendors.

The 16th Annual Country Road Race, Farmerville, Texas with events beginning with Grand Dance at 10 a.m. Supper will begin at 5:00 p.m. with another Grand Dance at 8 a.m. Additional activities will include 10 mile, bike and a cake walk. Please bring your powwow clothes! Alcohol, drugs or weapons will not be allowed. For vendor information contact Pat and Lorraine Buss at 501-872-8593. For other information please contact powwow coordinator Eugene Folsom at 214-924-7170.

Impson family reunion

The Impson family reunion for descendants of Caleb and Malina (Vinson) Impson will be held June 14-15 at the Senior Citizens Center in Idabel. We will be staying at the Best Western Marion Inn located at 2429 W. Main Street, Duncan, please call 580-214-7976. If you have any questions please contact Deborah Duncan at 580-457-2350. All branches do not share the same blood, but all branches share the same love. We cannot have a reunion without you!

King family reunion

The 16th annual King family reunion will be held June 14 in Talihina at the Senior Citizens building on Railroad Street. Please bring your favorite covered dish, family pictures, family tree and a good story of one of our ancestors of (King) Potts, Robert King, Ada (King) Spring, William King, or Ella (King) Melon. Starting time will be at 10 a.m., register, mix and mingle. Lunch is approximately 1:15 p.m. and there is an item for auction. A short business meeting will begin at 3 p.m. For more information please contact Jarrid and Audra King at 918-465-2389 or on John Bill 580-324-4381.

Annual Father’s Day’s dinner

A special Father’s Day dinner will be held at BlackJack Church in Selig, 25 miles east of Anadark, on June 15 at 11:00 a.m. and a 5 p.m. Meeting and dinner. Starting time is 10 a.m., register, mix and mingle. Lunch is approximately 1:15 p.m. and there is an item for auction. A short business meeting will begin at 3 p.m. For more information please contact Jarrid and Audra King at 918-465-2389 or on John Bill 580-324-4381.

GED Graduation

Graduation for GED recipients will be held at the Eastern Oklahoma State College 510 W. Main St., Wilburton. Cer- emony will be held in the Mitchell Hall Auditorium and will begin at 7 p.m. For additional information call Kathy Black at 906-922-6767, 2122.

Wellness Center Grand Openings

Crowder

Crowder Wellness Center open house will be May 23 at 10 a.m. at 200 S. Lincoln Rd., Crowder. Contact Chasie Adams at 580-351-8643 for additional information.

Idabel

The Idabel Wellness Center will be open house at 242 E. Lincoln Rd., Idabel 10:30 a.m. May 30. Please call Chasie Adams 580-911-8643 for additional information.

Broken Bow

The Broken Bow Wellness Center open house will be held at 1300 Martin Luther King Drive, Broken Bow at 2 p.m. May 30. For additional information please contact Chasie Adams at 580-911-8643.

Youthful Choctaw pride

My name is Reigan Crowell. I am 8 years old. I am in the 3rd grade at the White Oak Elementary School. Thanks to you for being STAR Student. I really like spelling words. One was for perfect attendance and one was for being STAR Student. I really like spelling words. Thanks again.

Penny Gazpiewski

Thank you for help with new career

I recently received help with truck driving school from the Choctaw Nation. It was a tremendous help and gave me the advantage to pick the company I wanted to work for. I would like to thank the tribal leaders for their support of such programs and even at 65 years, I can start a new career! Yuck!!

Todd Terumush

Thank you for support

The Bryan Conservation District would like to take this opportunity to thank Choctaw Nation for your continued support and help in making this event a success. The Bryan Conservation District is the largest in the State and with State and federal levels with a potential to make it to the National levels. You and the Choctaw Nation have many areas such as First and Second place teams as well as High Storong and Second High Storong individuals.

Jeff Brown, Chairman

Thank you for shelter from the storm

I want to thank everyone involved with the Storm Shelter Program of the Choctaw Nation and the Leadership of the Choctaw Nation.

A white page couldn’t describe the blessings this shelter would provide. The shelter was completed April 4th and on the 11th of April a tornado passed over my house and touched down a mile to the East.

With the shelter we didn’t know the tornado was there, but that was too late. Last year one touched down a mile and a half from the house. Thank you so much for this shelter; it may one day prove to be a lifesaver.

Howard Wilson

Choctaw Housing Authority

Affordable Rental Housing

Buck Up America

The Durate Police Department and the Choctaw Nation continued member- ship reminds you: Anytime you’re in a motor vehicle, no matter where you’re sitting, you should always play it safe.

Remember, Buck Up America, every trip, every trip.
Miss American Indian OSU

Yarime Arnolodso was crowned Miss American Indian OSU (Oklahoma State University) for 2014-2015. Her great-grandparents were Leroy and Marie Davis of Bentley and Elmer Rector Sr. and Ruby Rector of Ada. Her grandparents are the late Jerry Swanson Davis and Mar-

t Davis of Dallas, Texas, and the late (Mr.) Darrell (Davis) Barron and Robert Arnolodso of Dallas, Texas.

Yarime received her high school diploma from the School of Science/Engineering at the Yumee A. Bosell Towmagon Magnet Center in Dallas, Texas. She is currently a junior at the Oklahoma State University studying Civil/Environmental Engi-neering. Since her freshman year at OSU, she has been involved with diverse organizations that have helped her gain leadership experience and skills that she will need in the future. She has held the position of treasurer for RSO-OSU for these five years, an active member of his Hispanic Pro-

fessional Engineers, Charter Member and Public Relations Chair for the Colony of Kappa Delta Chi and secretary for the Native American Student Association. Her leadership goals before she graduates from OSU are to gain communication and networking skills that will contribute to her success in the future. She is educational and before she graduates she is a

the Fundamental of Engineering exam that will help her gain a career as an Environmental Engineer. Yarime recently received the CASHP Honorarium Award in April.

Davis, Freshman of the year

Congratulations to James Payne who won the Archery Competition at the 53rd Annual Forestry Conclave held in Clayton Lake State Park. The 22-year-old is a Freshman at the University of Central Oklahoma. Payne is the am-

nal meeting and competition between forestry schools in the Southwestern United States. The purpose of Forestry Conclave is to provide a friendly and fair competition among the schools to establish or maintain a high standard of ethics among students and professional foresters. Today, Forestry Conclave includes 18 participating schools from more than 250 contestants. The competition is composed of both timber and aquatic tests as well as oral presentations. This year’s Forestry Conclave was hosted by the Virginia Tech Forestry Club.

Life-size sculpture of Dixon Durant unveiled

Fifteen years in the making, the life-size sculpture of Durant’s founder, Dixon Durant, was unveiled on April 12 at the Choctaw Nation Museum in Durant.

Heritage Day and stickball’s youngest

Children at the Bennington Head Start Center, in southern Oklahoma, have once again been visited by the Choc-
by STEPHENIE ODIO

Through a New Lens

Storyteller and author Tim Tingle

Yesterday is a bridge to tomorrow

Chocktaw storyteller and author Tim Tingle will be one of the featured artists at the Smithsonian’s Museum of the American Indian where he will be telling a version of “No Name” a Chocktaw story about father-son conflict in a modern setting. Tingle has published 13 books and received numerous accolades and awards including the Talking Leaves Award in 2005, the John Henry Ward Award in 2009 and the Oracle Award in 2013. With over 200 stories still untold, Tingle is grateful for his heritage and those storytellers who came before him who willingly mentored and shared what he now willingly shares with others, a rich, beautiful Chocktaw culture.

From the banks of Canyon Lake in Texas, at a leather-topped desk in a room filled with books from his favorite authors, Tingle has over 200 stories still to be told. He considers the act of Chocktaw storytelling and book writing to be a “responsibility” that he has and has dedicated himself to researching and sharing the true stories of the Chocktaw people through the crafting of vibrant historical stories with lively and believable characters.

Tingle is able to offer a bridge into the past where audiences can learn about the beautiful cultural parts of the Chocktaw people, as well as “the bad and the ugly things” as a nation Chocktaws have had to overcome in an entertaining and educational way. This bridge into the past is important Tingle says, “so that hopefully we don’t make the same mistakes” and we can offer others outside the Nation a more accurate history in a “living, and forgiving way.” This is something he learned from others before him including his most influential mentors Charlie Cheney and Archie Mingo.

Using the past, as a way to appreciate the present, is something that Tingle personally practices. Tingle says, “from the beginning to the end of the day, little rituals remind me of who I am and also to be with the people who have gone in on hope they will be there when we need them.”

He speaks to all age groups from pre-K to college level but has seen his most favorite audiences are the fourth through seventh graders and at that point I wanted to do traditional pottery,” he said. “But his reproductions of prehistoric and colonial Chockaw styles. He draws inspiration from Choctaw friends.”

Perkins was inspired to enter the Choctaw Nation’s first art show, where he presented a welded 3D Great Seal. Soon thereafter, he moved into pottery, eventually importing white clay from Moundville, Ala., as well as finding native, sand-fire clay “dug by the creeks” on his property.

“It’s amazing to me that you can take something as simple as clay and turn it into a thing," Perkins said. “It’s amazing that you can take something as simple as clay and turn it into something beautiful.

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Rene Bundy

Betsy Lee Moore

Betty Lee Moore, 57, of Tulsa, died Dec. 23, 2014 in Tulsa. Services were scheduled.

Carol Laverne Crain

Carol, a graduate of Oklahoma City Central High School, was a long-time resident of Oklahoma City but she

Carol was a loyal, caring, and dependable wife and mother. She was a member of the Freewill Baptist

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Caroline Eddy Holder

Caroline Eddy Holder; two sisters, Helen Jean with husband Bob and Tammy with partner Jeff Buchan; step-daughters, Rhonda Gayle Ely and Jeanne Ely; brothers, Rocky Holder and Justin; a half-sister, Ruby Smith; nieces and nephews Alex, Brody, Jordan, Jordan, Mackey Ren Ely, and Marion; great-nieces, Mackey Ren Ely and Colt; and great-nephews, Aron and Max.

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Crystal Gayle Rogers Brown

Crystal Gayle Rogers Brown, 38, passed away on April 19, 2014. She was born on Feb. 26, 1976 in Tulsa to James Mitchell "Mickey" Holder and Kayla Ann Moore. She attended Eastern Oklahoma State College at Wilburton and attended the Choctaw Nation. Her father, Martin Gayle Rogers Brown, is deceased.

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Noble Calvin "Tex" Stephenson

Noble Calvin "Tex" Stephenson, 81, of Poteau, passed away on March 28, 1958, in Poteau. He was the son of Levi and Mary (Johnson) Stephenson. He attended Goodland High School, completing the eighth grade. Noble was a proud Choctaw man who was passionate about three things in his life: his family, basketball, and hunting. He enjoyed fishing and camping.

Mozelle Jefferson

Mozelle Jefferson was born to the late Jeff and Maude Jefferson on February 18, 1939, in Bennington, Oklahoma. She enjoyed playing the guitar and bass for several of the local country western bands. Mozelle lived in Oklahoma City and participated in country music events. She was a loving family member with one special little guy, Ryan Bird; seven grandchildren, Richard A Tackett, Brian Tackett, Shannon Tackett, Brittney Tackett, and Tanner Tackett; and 12 great-grandchildren. Mozelle's family and friends will remember her as a loving and devoted grandmother.

Nelson Law Sue Wood

Law Sue Wood was born on November 22, 1921, in Lea County, Oklahoma, to John and Mary (Brown) Wood. Nelson attended Goodland Indian School for eight years, he collected a wealth of newspaper write-ups of their travels and adventures. Nelson was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Poteau, Oklahoma. He was a proud Choctaw man who was passionate about three things in his life: his family, basketball, and hunting. He enjoyed fishing and camping.

DeWitt "Dell" Pitts Brown

DeWitt "Dell" Pitts Brown was born on April 15, 1914, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to John and Mary (Smith) Pitts. He attended Goodland Indian School for eight years, he collected a wealth of newspaper write-ups of their travels and adventures. Dell was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Poteau, Oklahoma. He was a proud Choctaw man who was passionate about three things in his life: his family, basketball, and hunting. He enjoyed fishing and camping.

Jonas James

Jonas James, 81, beloved father, devoted husband, loving father-in-law, dedicated grandfather, died April 3, 2014, at his home in Barstow, California. Jonas was a Korean War Veteran, Calvin enlisted in the Army in April 1953. Jonas was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Poteau, Oklahoma. He was a proud Choctaw man who was passionate about three things in his life: his family, basketball, and hunting. He enjoyed fishing and camping.

Lawrence Perry McGee

Lawrence Perry McGee was born in Chillicothe, Missouri, on December 11, 1929, to J. M. and Mary (Johnson) McGee. Lawrence attended Wanette Public Schools. He was a member of the first United Methodist Church in Poteau, Oklahoma. He was a proud Choctaw man who was passionate about three things in his life: his family, basketball, and hunting. He enjoyed fishing and camping.

Capoose Law Jernell

Capoose Law Jernell was born in Okemah, Oklahoma, on March 24, 1930, to John and Mary (Smith) Jernell. Capoose attended Wanette Public Schools. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Poteau, Oklahoma. He was a proud Choctaw man who was passionate about three things in his life: his family, basketball, and hunting. He enjoyed fishing and camping.
On Monday, April 28, 2014, Tribal leaders, state dignitaries, Tribal employees, and community members gathered at Tribal Headquarters in Durant to witness an historic event – Gary Batton’s inauguration as the 47th Chief of the Choctaw people in Oklahoma.

Selecting leadership is an important right of any sovereign nation and the Choctaw Nation is no exception. In 1834, following the removal, Choctaw leaders signed the Treaty of Washington, D.C., to cede their homelands into the Choctaw Nation to move to what is today Oklahoma (Milligan 2003:97-98) (Debo 1961:74). In 1838, the Choctaw Nation signed the Treaty of Doaksville in what would be the first constitution of a nation of Choctaws.

Choctaw leaders began to draft a constitution to guide the Nation through what would be many more hard periods for Choctaw people. Soon after this constitution was ratified, the American Civil War erupted. The Choctaw Nation was brought into the conflict leaving many families destitute in the following years of reconstruction. In 1871, a General Council was relocated to Doaksville (Milligan 2003:98) (Debo 1961:75-76) (1879 Constitution).

In 1855, the Choctaw Nation signed a treaty with the United States, which created the position of Assistant Chief to be appointed by the President. This continued until 1970, when efforts by the Choctaw people saw the withdrawal of the Chickasaw District from Choctaw Nation, with many of the Chickasaw families destitute in the following years of reconstruction. In 1857, the Choctaw Nation was brought into the conflict leaving many more hard periods for Choctaw people. Soon after this constitution was ratified, the American Civil War erupted. The Choctaw Nation was brought into the conflict leaving many families destitute in the following years of reconstruction. In 1871, a General Council was relocated to Doaksville (Milligan 2003:98) (Debo 1961:75-76) (1879 Constitution).

In 1857, the Choctaw Nation ratified the 1857 Constitution of the Choctaw Nation, which created the position of Assistant Chief to be appointed by the President. This continued until 1970, when efforts by the Choctaw people saw the withdrawal of the Chickasaw District from Choctaw Nation, with many of the Chickasaw families destitute in the following years of reconstruction. In 1871, a General Council was relocated to Doaksville (Milligan 2003:98) (Debo 1961:75-76) (1879 Constitution).

In 1860, the Choctaw Nation ratified the 1860 Constitution of the Choctaw Nation, a version of which, is still used today (Milligan 2003:97-98) (Debo 1961:75-76) (1860 Constitution).

In 1871, Chief Harry J.W. Belvin became the first elected Choctaw Chief in 65 years. In 1971, Chief Harry J.W. Belvin became the first elected Choctaw Chief in 65 years. In 1978, a General Council was relocated to Doaksville (Milligan 2003:98) (Debo 1961:75-76) (1879 Constitution).

In 1979, the Choctaw Nation signed a treaty with the United States, which created the position of Assistant Chief to be appointed by the President with approval of the Tribal Council. Additionally, the Tribal Council was reduced from 15 members to 12 members (Milligan 2003:110-120) (1979 Constitution) (1983 Constitution). Today the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is the third largest tribe in the United States. Daily we endeavor our sovereignty through our many businesses, our political representation with the federal, state, and local governments, and through our language & culture. Without our Constitution, the Tribe could not achieve such success nor would it be able to maintain its rights. To achieve healthy, successful, productive, and self-sufficient lifestyles for a proud nation of Choctows.

Works Cited:

Iri Fabussa
Chocotaw Nation developing tourism strategy for southeast Oklahoma

By PETE MONFRE
Special to the Biskinik

“...a lot of people are moving out of the city, looking for fun and unique experiences. And businesses can be built around providing these experiences.”

With this decline in agriculture, tourism has become a key component of the Choctaw Nation's economy. According to the Choctaw Nation's tourism report, employees earned more than $2 billion in 2012. Their analysis shows that tourism-related activities, that money goes directly into the local economy. This stream of revenue is reflected both directly and indirectly in employment opportunities.

The numbers for Oklahoma bear this out. According to the OTBD report, employees earned more than $3.6 billion in 2012 with tourism supporting 4.9 percent of total employment in Oklahoma, a 6.1 percent increase over 2011. An analysis conducted by the Choctaw Business Development Center shows that the 10.5-county Tribal Territory brought in almost 9 percent of this total, or over $323 million, with Pittsburg County and Latimer County leading at $88 million and 48 million respectively. "With tourism, comes jobs.” says Susan Kennedy, a cultural tourism expert who has developed tourism strategies for locations around the world including Vietnam and Cambodia. "It's easy to overlook the fact that when people spend money on tourism-related activities, that money goes directly into the local economy. This stream of revenue is reflected both directly and indirectly in employment opportunities.”

The Choctaw Nation is developing a comprehensive tourism plan for the 10.5-county Tribal Territory with short, medium and long-term strategies for development. “Right now, we are visiting each district to learn more about their capabilities, desires and needs,” states Sleeper. “We are also surveying residents and tourists to assess the demand for tourism products, to see who is coming here and learn more about their purchasing behavior.”

Sleeper adds, “A solid tourism strategy will provide a strong foundation for job growth. Jobs will be created as tourism destinations and businesses develop.”

The other less tangible, but no less important, benefit is the rejuvenation of the Choctaw culture. Native American culture is generating significant interest in America and abroad. Tourism is another opportunity for the Nation to become a leader in cultural and recreational tourism.

Tourism is a complex and multi-faceted activity. It includes nature holidays, agritourism and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and, in some areas, ethnic tourism.

"Our vision is to provide the training and infrastructure needs for Choctaw entrepreneurs to build businesses supporting these activities” says Kennedy. “People are looking for fun and unique experiences. And businesses can be built around providing these experiences.”

Traditionally, agriculture was central to life in southeast Oklahoma. Farms were the major employers, the main sources of income within the rural economy, and indirectly had a powerful influence on traditions, power structures and lifestyles. In the late 20th century, the central role of farming and forestry has been diminished. Both activities have shed much of their labor force.

With this decline in agriculture came a decline in the preservation of traditions and cultural heritage. Over the last 20 years, there has been a boom in the level of interest in heritage both man-made and natural. Rural areas like southeast Oklahoma are especially well-suited to heritage interpretation, possessing many historic landscapes, artifacts, linkages, and fine settings for heritage sites.

Another major factor is the growing interest in health, fresh food and authenticity. Interest in healthy living and active recreation is rapidly growing. Rural areas are well-placed to provide outdoor recreation of all kinds. A rapidly growing industry in fresh, local foods is also revolutionizing small-scale farming and food delivery via farmers markets. In a world of video and television entertainment, factory-produced goods, and suburban anonymity, the authenticity of the countryside and the personal touch that is provided by small-scale communities and accommodations is extremely valuable as people seek rewarding, enriching, adventurous and educational experiences.

"Ultimately, we are tasked with creating a sustainable form of tourism that is true to the Choctaw heritage and delivers real opportunity for Choctaw tribal members that want to start businesses and employ Choctaw people,” states Sleeper. “Everything we do is designed to sustain our people, traditions and culture while raising the standard of living for those we serve.”

To learn more about the Nation’s tourism initiative go to www.Choc-tawMeansBusiness.com.
Choctaw cultural gatherings

Assistant Chief Batton pulls Toni Smith out of the crowd for the stealing partners dance.

Choctaw Artist Mary D. Frazier showcases her pottery.

Assistant Chief Batton with Christine Ludlow, Elvis Ludlow and Laverna Hignite.

Tammy Lawson gives Jean Barchenger a new T-shirt.

Choctaw dancers lead the way into the center circle.

Judy Hopkins demonstrates beadwork to Desiree Plumlee from Springdale.

William “Mac” McAfee talks with Assistant Chief Batton at Choctaw meeting.

Choctaw artist Gwen Coleman Lester explains to LaDon Miller from Tulsa the Nanih Waiya creation story.

The crowd follows along with Lillie Roberts as she teaches them Choctaw language.

Pam Kennedy talks with Chief Batton.

Choctaw artist Gwen Coleman Lester explains to LaDon Miller from Tulsa the Nanih Waiya creation story.

The crowd follows along with Lillie Roberts as she teaches them Choctaw language.

Lillie Roberts looks onto the crowd during the Tulsa event.

Dana Coker makes a new membership card for Tanner Sjo.

Wade Beams and Gary Wellesley enjoy their time at Rogers.

Candace Baker gets her book signed by Assistant Chief Batton.

Allen Holden from Bella Vista concentrates on his heading.

Sisters Marianna Lewis and Belva Plumlee learn how to head at Rogers.

Tracy McKaughan and Assistant Chief Batton pose with a family before meeting.

Johnetta Billey and Alana Towery talk with the Cultural Events booth about beadning.

Assistant Chief Batton talks with Wade Beams before the gathering.

Assistant Chief Batton pulls Toni Smith out of the crowd for the stealing partners dance.

Photos by DEIDRE ELROD | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Lillie Roberts looks onto the crowd during the Tulsa event.

Choctaw Artist Mary D. Frazier showcases her pottery.

Assistant Chief Batton pulls Toni Smith out of the crowd for the stealing partners dance.

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