

Halito my fellow District #9 Choctaw Members!

Can you believe it has already been a year since I, James Dry, was honored to be elected as your “Tribal Council Member”?

They say time flies when you’re having fun – and we sure had some fun over the past year!

Besides having fun, we also were able to serve our fellow tribal members in a manner that allowed us to live up to the “Tribal Slogan – Faith, Family and Culture”.

As I traveled throughout Choctaw Nation, a number of questions have been asked about what’s happening within the tribe, as well as within our own District #9 Community.

Unfortunately, I am not able to answer all questions asked or speak to every tribal member, so I’ve decided to do a “year-end review” and give a report that can be shared with you! I hope you will find this “State of the District” report informative, helpful and inspiring!

DISTRICT #9 - SENIORS

I must first mention our District #9 – Seniors. This is a group of people who not only inspired me to be a better person but they go out of their way to help others.

If you want to see a good example of people who live with a “servant’s heart,” then I encourage you to spend time with our tribal seniors and elders.

Here are some highlights of their year!

- Served as “Greeters” at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters, Casino’s and other events
- Indian Taco Event – all preparations, organization and sales were handled by the Seniors
- Other Events – Bingo, Cultural Classes, Hoop House and a Volleyball Tournament

A special highlight of the year took place when our “Senior Singing Group” were given the opportunity to perform at the “Grand Theater” as the opening act for a major group during the Christmas holidays – they were great!

We are honored to have “Sharon Zondor” recognized as the “Choctaw Nation Distinguish Elder” – representing District #9. Congratulations Sharon!

The “Seniors” were on the go all year! Now with a “cruise” under their belt, “Day Trips” to various places throughout District #9 and Choctaw Nation were taken throughout the year.

I am extremely proud of the participation of our “Seniors” during the “2018 Senior Appreciation Day” event, especially the accomplishment of winning the “Most Culturally Dressed” Award!

Many of our “Seniors” served in the United States military, so we took the opportunity to honor our Veterans with an “Appreciation Dinner” to thank, to salute and to honor for their ultimate sacrifices.

DISTRICT #9 – YOUTH

The future of the Choctaw Nation is Strong – and it can be seen in our young Choctaw Tribal Members!

We have some of the best young people in the country right here in District #9 – We are all proud of each one!

Here are some highlights of their year!

- District #9 Community Center hosted five (5) Summer Youth Associates – each participated in the “Leadership Skills Training” obtaining knowledge, training and learned skills – in the following:
 - How to operate a business
 - Serving as a Leader
- Tribal Princess Pageant – we had a strong interest with 10 outstanding candidates representing our District. We are looking for that number to grow in the future.

I believe the reason we have such good youth in our community is because we have wonderful parents and family along with a great supportive community!

With this said, this year we were able to raise an extraordinary amount of money to award \$1000 Scholarships to 17 Choctaw Youth and award two (2) outstanding young Choctaws an additional \$1500 to help further their education.

This scholarship money didn’t fall from the sky, it came from the tireless, hardworking and generosity of the people in our community participating in various fundraising events such as;

- Annual Inaugural Golf Tournament – raised \$10,000
- Indian Taco Sales
- Bake sales
- Concession Trailer
- Fish Fry

The “Chahta Foundation” graciously matched our \$10,000 in support of our student’s educational needs.

The Scholarship winners received their hard earned award at a reception held in their honor, along with their four (4) guests, at the Magnolia Ballroom at the Choctaw Casino.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

One of the needs we focused on - assisting our Tribal Members finding career opportunities. This is a part of our “give a person a hand-up not a hand-out” approach. We used a multi-tiered approach in this effort and it was an immediate success!

First, we hosted a “Job Fair” event to insure our District Tribal Members had the opportunity to meet employers and be interview for the job openings. A number of our participants were successful in receiving job offers that same day!

Secondly, to insure our tribal members dress for success, we initiated a “Clothes Closet” for those in need of interview attire. We were able to help 30 people “Dress for Success” through this program. “Thank you!” to you who donated clothes and/or monetary donations to this program.

Lastly but not least, beyond the “Dress for Success” program and “Job Fair”, we also utilized the tribes’ “Job for the Day” program to help Tribal Members with employment opportunities and further job training. This too was successful, as we had several find permanent placement within the Choctaw Nation.

Our community center offers a “Trade Day” for our local Choctaw members. This gives us the opportunity to highlight Choctaw owned businesses, artists and other tribal members who have items to sale or trade. It’s a great community effort and fun for all who take part.

Our District had been involved in so many activities and I could list more such as; the monthly breakfast where there is no charge to the “Seniors”, the Youth Christmas Party – had another great turnout; and the “Sewing Class” – a class for traditional Choctaw shirts and dresses and the “end of the class event” – “Twirl Around” – where each student participates in the “fashion cat walk” to demonstrate their own finished clothing.

As you can see, we have had a very exciting and busy year at District #9 – there’s more to come!

All of this was made possible by all of us working together.

The “WE” is always bigger than the “I” – together “WE” will continue to help improve our lives and the lives of our families across the District #9 Community.

Yakoke! May God continue to bless us all!

James Dry
Tribal Council
District #9

District #9 Fun Facts

Choctaw Community Center has 389 members

Choctaw Community Center served 10,089 meals

We had 65 Tribal members receive positions by utilizing Job For the Day

Durant Regional medical clinic successfully opened and performed over 850 surgeries

54,579 Tribal members visited our Regional Clinic

134,543 encounters at the Durant Regional Clinic

13,827 associates were seen at employee health

120,891 visits to our Wellness Center

1,632 CHR home visits/contacts

7,987 Tribal Members reside Bryan County

3,922 Registered Voters

84 college graduates

2,000 Tribal members received emergency assistance

400 Tribal members received LIHEAP

153 Tribal members received assistance through Next Step Initiative

12,488 Tribal members served through food distribution

Family Preservation cases 116 families and 182 kids served

Indian Child Welfare currently has 53 kids in custody

Reintegration served 103-ex offenders; No tribal member who completed program, has been charged with a crime.

\$1,016,021.43 spent for Homeowners Services

*Information from Oct 2017 to August 28th