



February 2021 Issue

The Journey of a Vaccine

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets rules for the four phases of clinical research so that researchers can learn about the effects of new therapies while keeping volunteers safe. This includes trials of new vaccines to protect against infection; researchers always test vaccines with adults first.

Phase 1

20-100 healthy volunteers

Researchers try to answer these questions:

- Is this vaccine safe?
- Are there any serious side effects?
- How does the vaccine dose relate to any side effects?
- Is the vaccine causing an immune response?

Phase 2

Several hundred volunteers

Researchers try to answer these questions:

- What are the most common short-term side effects of the vaccine?
- What is the body's immune response?
- Are there signs that the vaccine is protective?

Phase 3

One thousand or more volunteers

Researchers try to answer these questions:

- How do disease rates compare between people who get the vaccine and those who do not?
- How well can the vaccine protect people from disease?

FDA approves a vaccine only if:

- It is safe and effective
- Its benefits outweigh the risks

Phase 4

Treatment is approved by the FDA and made available to the general public.

FDA closely monitors the safety of the vaccine after the public begins using it. Researchers continue to collect data on the vaccine's long-term benefits and side effects.



Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)

VAERS, a national monitoring program run by the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, collects and reviews reports of any health problems that develop after a person gets a vaccine. Anyone can submit a report, including patients and healthcare professionals.

Medical recommendations for taking the vaccine may change if safety monitoring reveals new information about its risks. vaers.hhs.gov

For more information, visit [cdc.gov/vaccinesafety](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety)

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/journey-of-child-vaccine.html>

National Institutes of Health

COVID-19 vaccines arrive in the Choctaw Nation

By Kellie Matherly

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) has begun Phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan. This phase centers on CDIB holders aged 60 or older, their household members, teachers, and non-CNHSA health care workers. The goal is to vaccinate as many elders and frontline public servants as possible, based on their risk of contracting COVID-19. Future phases will include broader distribution to CDIB holders in lower risk groups.

Choctaw Nation photo

RN Charge Nurse Sarah Sharp receives the COVID-19 vaccination at the CNHSA Hospital in Talihina.

During Phase 1 of the vaccine rollout, CNHSA worked with Indian Health Services (IHS) to begin vaccinating frontline healthcare workers in mid-December 2020. Dr. Jason Hill, Chief Medical Officer for the Choctaw Nation received the first dose. “The novel coronavirus has impacted all of us in some way,” said Dr. Hill. “The vaccination will help protect our patients from contracting the virus or spreading it unknowingly to loved ones.”

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines will be administered at Choctaw Nation health facilities. Both require two doses, the second dose coming a few weeks after the first. When both doses are administered, the vaccines have shown to be over 94% effective in preventing a person from contracting COVID-19.

News of the vaccine’s availability has been met with mixed emotions. For many, the vaccine is a glimmer of hope that the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed over

400,000 Americans, is nearing an end. Others, however, are apprehensive about taking a vaccine they feel was rushed to production without sufficient trials and details about long-term effects.

In order to understand how the COVID-19 vaccine works, it helps to understand how the body fights illness. The immune system produces different types of white blood cells to combat infections. These cells work together to target and destroy germs and defend the body against future infections. Macrophages are white blood cells that swallow up and digest germs, leaving behind pieces called antigens. B-lymphocytes produce antibodies that attack the antigens left behind by macrophages; and T-lymphocytes attack cells that have already been infected. T-lymphocytes carry a memory of the virus and spring into action if the body encounters the same germ again, while B-lymphocytes produce more antibodies to fight it.

The memory of T-lymphocytes is different for each virus. Sometimes, the body can recognize a virus for the rest of a person’s life. Other times, this memory doesn’t last as long. While medical experts are certain the vaccine prevents COVID-19, they are still researching how long T-lymphocytes can protect a person from the virus that causes COVID-19 and its variants.

The two COVID-19 vaccines used by CNHSA belong to a category of vaccines called Messenger RNA (mRNA). There has been much discussion about these vaccine types recently, and confusion around how the vaccines work has fueled some of the concern and even backlash against them. Misinformation about mRNA vaccines has led some people to refuse the vaccine, even though infectious disease experts and the CDC have debunked the false claims.

Messenger RNA vaccines help the immune system do its job by introducing material from the COVID-19 virus into the immune system. Our own cells use this material as a blueprint for creating a protein that is unique to the COVID-19 virus. The immune system recognizes the protein and builds specific T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes that will target the COVID-19 virus in the future. The body literally teaches itself to recognize and attack the virus without ever being exposed to the actual virus.

During a newscast with Indian Country Today on December 21, 2020, Dave Wilson, Director for the Tribal Health Research Office at the National Institutes of Health described the vaccine as a sort of “email sent to your immune system that shows...what the virus looks like, how to kill it...” Wilson also stated, “Throughout this entire process of vaccine development and the clinical trial process, there have been absolutely no steps that have been skipped or bypassed, thereby impacting the safety of these trials.”

One myth circulating about the COVID-19 vaccine is that it can actually give a person COVID-19. Because mRNA vaccines do not use live viruses, it is impossible to catch COVID-19 from the vaccine. According to the CDC, it takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination, so it is possible to contract the virus just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. The vaccine simply has not had enough time to provide protection.

Another claim against the vaccine has been that mRNA vaccines can alter a person’s DNA. This is also untrue. DNA is housed in the nucleus of the cell, and because mRNA never enters the nucleus, it cannot be affected by the vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines CNHSA uses have been proven to be safe and effective in large clinical trials. Based on data showing the benefits of the vaccines outweigh the harms of contracting the COVID-19 virus, the Food and Drug Admin-

istration (FDA) has granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for both. In other words, getting the vaccine is safer than getting the virus.

The most common side effects of the vaccine include: pain and redness at the injection site, fatigue, headache, fever, chills and muscle and joint aches. The CDC recommends not taking any other vaccines two weeks before or two weeks after the COVID-19 vaccine is administered.

Studies have shown that American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have suffered disproportionately from COVID-19. A Morbidity and Mortality Report published by the CDC shows that COVID-19 has killed AI/AN people at nearly twice the rate of white people. Several of the hardest hit tribal nations instituted strict lockdowns and ramped up tribal services to ensure tribal members had plenty of food and supplies. In the Choctaw Nation, curbside food and supply distribution points were established at community centers, and CNO associates volunteered to help deliver care packages to homes where tribal members were quarantined. Millions of dollars in CARES Act funding were also allocated to assist tribal members with needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the number of tribal members who pass away from COVID-19 grows, so do concerns for how the pandemic will impact tribal culture. While the virus can affect people of all ages, it is well-established that elders are in one of the highest risk groups. Tribal communities across the country are working to ensure those who carry traditional knowledge, language and culture are kept as safe as possible. “Elders are like libraries. Losing one is like a library burning down,” said Loren Racine, creator of a Facebook page that coordinates assistance in the Blackfeet community. In many communities, the vast majority of tribal language speakers are elders. There is a real fear that losing large numbers of elders could do lasting harm to tribes. Vaccine rollout plans have prioritized high-risk groups, particularly elders and tribal language speakers.

The Choctaw Nation has also teamed up with the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) to administer COVID-19 vaccines to the public by appointment. On Jan. 6, the first public vaccination event was held at the Choctaw Event Center. By the end of the day, over 800 people, including frontline healthcare workers, first responders and people aged 65 and older, had been inoculated. “We will be returning to give vaccinations every Wednesday at the Choctaw Event Center for as long as needed,” said Paul Gilbert, Incident Commander with OSDH.

As of Jan. 4, 2021, vaccine appointments are available at CNHSA for CDIB card holders in our service area who are at least 60 years old, plus those CDIB card holders who live in the same household. Also eligible are teachers and non-CNHSA health care workers with a CDIB and CDIB holders 60 or older who reside outside of our service area but get their health care at CNHSA.

Todd Hallmark, Executive Officer of Health, said, “The vaccine is designed to build the immune system without giving the patient an active dose of the virus and requires two doses spread apart by a certain number of days. You will need to make sure you can make this second appointment to get the maximum effect of the vaccine.”

In the coming weeks, as production and supplies increase, vaccinations will be made available to more people within the Choctaw Nation.

To make an appointment to get vaccinated, call 800-349-7026 ext. 6. For more information, please visit www.choc-tawnation.com/covid-19.

Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

A big yakoke to CNO employee volunteers

We are fast approaching the one-year mark for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The health, education and welfare of the Choctaw people are the primary focus of the Choctaw Nation. The needs of our tribal members and our communities will always take precedence. Our goal has been to help our tribal members and surrounding communities during the pandemic through our programs and services. I want to take this opportunity to thank each person who helped serve the Choctaw people during this time.

During the pandemic, a large part of our workforce was sent home. However, several programs continued to provide vital services to tribal members. For these operations to continue, there was an urgent need for volunteers to ensure these services were still available. A total of 716 staff members volunteered 5497.8 hours

(about 7 and a half months) in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employee volunteers helped keep the shelves stocked at travel plazas and country markets. Others helped at our community centers serve essential meals to tribal elders. Other employees volunteered to help answer phones to assist with the higher volume of calls. Volunteers also helped our clinics and Poteau Prescription Refill Center by cleaning and packing prescription orders for patients and employees. Employees helped at food distribution centers by filling food orders for clients and delivering curbside meals to ensure those in need had plenty of food during the shutdown.

Additionally, 13 staff volunteers assisted over three weeks at McAlester, Poteau and Broken Bow distribution centers. The volunteers provided food delivery to tribal elders by helping package groceries or delivering food to elders waiting in their cars.

During the pandemic, Walmart donated thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables to the Choctaw Nation for its tribal members. Over 100 staff members volunteered to distribute the donated food to impacted communities within the Choctaw Nation.

These are just a few examples of the ways our employees helped during this time. I am so thankful for the dedication and selflessness our employees have displayed during these uncertain times. Our employees are the backbone that keep our Nation going.

As the pandemic continues to rage on, Choctaw Nation employees continue to rise above the call of duty. They have continued to step up and volunteer because they genuinely care about our tribal members and communities.

I want to thank our employees for always putting the needs of others before their own. They truly exemplify the Chahta spirit in all they do. If you are a Choctaw Nation employee reading this, I want you to know that you are appreciated. Your dedication has not gone unnoticed. Without your hard work, we would not be the strong nation we are today. Yakoke.

For more highlights from our programs and services, check out our 2020 Year in Review at www.choctawnation.com/year-in-review.



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

Gird Up

The Apostle Peter begins his letter by reminding his readers of the greatness and glory of salvation. He then declares the dynamic duty that is born in the heart of the gospel. Gospel truth will lead to gospel living. If the salvation which has redeemed the believer is so vital, dynamic and positive, the living out should reflect these attributes.

Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:13, “Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

This metaphor is taken from the form of dress that was common in his day. It is a loose outer garment that reaches down to the feet. To prevent this long garment from becoming a hindrance in times of action, a girdle was worn around the waist into which the ends could be tucked. This metaphor is teaching the believer to be mentally alert. The Holy Spirit should take control of the conscious and unconscious mind of the believer. The long garment is a

type of thought process which can become a listless lounging and careless wandering that gets in the way when a battle is presented.

Sometimes the believers do not set their affections on things above.

Colossians 3:1-4 reads, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye appear with him in glory.”

A long, loose garment can cause a man to stumble, and loose thinking can create loose living. When the believer’s mind is set on the Glorious Redeemer and the blessed plan of redemption, the thought is disciplined by the Holy Spirit, and life is channeled into the will of God. Satan’s purpose is to divert this process by careless thoughts and an undeveloped mind which is mostly carnal and not spiritual.

Romans 8:5,6 tells us, “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

Another reason to gird up the loins of the mind is to be aware of the enemy, the devil. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,” 1 Peter 5:8.

There is the story of an African native who was attacked by a lion and was severely hurt. He survived, but periodically the pain would return to the old wound, and the man would relive in his mind the horror of the attack. Although one is delivered from the devil, loose thinking can bring back vivid reminders of the sinful past and the old fears and the mind can be devoured by the enemy.

In current society, the need to gird up is a priority. This is not positive thinking nor optimism. It is a mind that is concentrated by the Holy Spirit to focus on the Lord.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:
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OR EMAIL:
HIGHSCHOOLSTUDENTSERVICES@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation High School Student Services



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

CNO vaccine plan

We are about a month away from the one-year mark for the COVID-19 pandemic. Cases continue to soar across the U.S. and world, but we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel with the development and rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) began the first phase of its vaccine distribution plan in mid-December 2020. In Phase 1, CNHSA worked with Indian Health Services to begin vaccinating frontline healthcare workers. With over 400 COVID-19 vaccines given to CNHSA employees, the Choctaw Nation moved into Phase 2 on Jan. 4, 2021.

Those eligible for vaccinations in Phase 2 include: CDIB cardholders in our service area age 60 years and over, plus those CDIB cardholders who live in the same household. Teachers and non-CNHS healthcare workers with a CDIB are also eligible.

Additionally, CDIB cardholders 60 years old or older who reside outside of our service area but get their health care at CNHSA can be vaccinated in Phase 2.

The above-identified tribal members will be eligible to get the vaccine. In the coming weeks, as production and supplies increase, vaccinations will be made available to more people within the Choctaw Nation.

Those eligible in Phase 3 include CDIB cardholders in our service area age 40 years and over, plus those CDIB cardholders who live in the same household.


To make an appointment to get vaccinated, tribal members will need to call 800-349-7026 ext. 6. They will then be prompted to select a clinic. Once a clinic is selected, the call will go directly to the scheduler for an appointment. Vaccines are given by appointment only. For more information, visit www.choctawnation.com/covid-19.

The Choctaw Nation has also partnered with the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) to provide a location for their public COVID-19 vaccine distribution. The first public vaccination event was held on Jan. 6 at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant. During the event, OSDH inoculated 814 Oklahomans. For more information on OSDH’s vaccination events, visit <https://vaccinate.oklahoma.gov>.

Although there is hope for the future, it is still necessary to take this virus seriously. The COVID-19 vaccines are an important tool to help us stop the pandemic and are a safe and simple measure to prevent illness and community outbreaks. However, they are not a treatment for people who are already sick with COVID-19. Encourage your loved ones to get vaccinated. The more people in your community who get vaccinated, the more protection there will be for everyone against COVID-19. By receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, you can help by preventing the spread of the disease and reducing your risk of getting sick, being hospitalized or dying.

I want to personally encourage everyone to continue taking the necessary precautions to keep each other safe. Wear a mask; avoid large gatherings; wash your hands; and follow social distancing guidelines. We will get through this pandemic by working together to do our part to stop the spread.

For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, check out the front-page story of this month’s issue of the Biskinik. It goes into more detail on the research and safety of these vaccines. I wish you all health and happiness in 2021. May God bless and keep you safe. Yakoke.

 Choctaw Nation Election Board		
PUBLIC NOTICE OF GENERAL ELECTION CALENDAR		
To the tribal members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 13, 2021		
In accordance with the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance, adopted CB-124-18, the Secretary shall provide a notice of filing dates and election deadlines, as well as the location of the Election Board Office, to be published in various newspapers inside the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, including the tribal newspaper and or other media outlets.		
Notice is Hereby Given that the Election Board office is primarily maintained by the Director of Voter Registration, serving as Secretary of the Election Board. The office is located at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters, 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701, in the Voter Registration Suite, Office #1253. The office hours shall be Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will close to observe all holidays recognized by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.		
The election schedule shall follow as:		
PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FILING PERIOD		
Elective offices are Council District 4, Council District 6, Council District 7, Council District 9, Council District 10, and Council District 12.		
Mon, April 19, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
Tues, April 20, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
Wed, April 21, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
CONTEST OF CANDIDACY PERIOD		
Thurs, April 22, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
Fri, April 23, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES		
Tues, April 27, 2021	3:30 P.M.	Informational Session for Prospective Candidate <i>*optional attendance</i>
	4:00 P.M.	Prospective Candidate Required Appearance Conference Center Tuklo Chito (Big Room 2) #1711 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
GENERAL ELECTION		
Sat, June 19, 2021		Deadline for the initial distribution of Mail-in Ballots to all currently registered voters. Ballots will continue to be issued through Election day for new or updated voters.
Fri, July 9, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	*Early Voting / Same Day Registration
	4:30 P.M.	Deadline that all Mail-in Ballots must be received and processed by the U.S. Postal Service in Durant, OK in order to be counted. The Election Board will <u>not</u> accept Mail-in Ballots at its office.
Sat, July 10, 2021	7:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.	*General Election / Same Day Registration
*Voting locations to be announced		
CONTEST OF IRREGULARITIES, DEATH OR FRAUD PERIOD		
Mon, July 12, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
Tues, July 13, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
Wed, July 14, 2021	8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Ibaichvffa (Membership) Room #1251 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
To update your Voter information, visit www.choctawnation.com/vote to print a Voter Registration Form and return to the Voter Registration Department. General instructions are located on the back of the form.		
For more information about tribal elections, visit https://www.choctawnation.com/elections or contact by email at ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com .		

Operation Lady Justice releases first year report

By Kendra Germany-Wall

The Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) recently released a report detailing accomplishments during its first year and outlining its future strategy.

Former President Trump’s Executive Order 13898 set forth a range of tasks to be completed over the Task Force’s two-year life, with required reports at the end of each year. Attorney General William P. Barr and Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt transmitted the status report to former President Trump, characterizing these accomplishments as “a productive first year of Task Force operations.”

The order required the Task Force to submit a status report in November 2020 and a final report in November 2021.

In its first year, the Task Force, also known as Operation Lady Justice (OLJ), held more than 15 in-person and remote meetings with tribes, individuals and stakeholder groups. It also established and convened ten working groups to address specific mandates of the executive order, including developing protocols, solving cold cases and expanding outreach and awareness. Readouts of the sessions are available on the Operation Lady Justice website.

“American Indians and Alaska Natives experience some of the highest rates of violence in the country, a situation that is all the more tragic in light of the generations of trauma already suffered by indigenous people,” said Attorney General Barr in the official press release. “Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented challenges it posed, the Task Force continued to progress with appropriate urgency to diagnose the symptoms of this intractable problem. They sought the help and input from tribal leaders and tribal communities to develop sustainable protocols that will lead to long-term resolutions tribal communities need and deserve.”

Attorney General Barr and Secretary Bernhardt are co-chairs, with Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T.

Sullivan and Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Tara Katuk Mac Lean Sweeney serving as their designees. Marcia Good, from the Justice Department’s Office of Tribal Justice, is executive director.

As noted in the report, the Task Force will continue to consult with tribal leaders and solicit stakeholder feedback. It develops strategies for strengthening investigations, raising public awareness, and improving data collection and information sharing. Submission of the report caps National Native American Heritage Month.

Though it has gained public traction in recent years, the Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives issue isn’t new. For decades, even centuries, Indigenous peoples in the U.S. have suffered from violence at a much higher rate than other ethnicities.

As stated in our previous article on the subject, the number of cases is hard to nail down. However, according to the Center for Disease Control, murder is the third leading cause of death among Native American women.

According to the CDC, nationally, 4 in 5 American Indian women have experienced violence in their lifetime. Statistically, 84.3% have experienced violence, 56.1% have experienced sexual violence, 55.5% have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, 48.8% have experienced stalking, and 66.5% have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner. Overall, 1.5 million American Indian women have experienced violence.

Though Indigenous women are at greater risk, Indigenous men have high victimization rates as well.

Nationally, more than 4 in 5 American Indian men, 81.6%, have experienced violence in their lifetime. That statistic includes 27.5% who have experienced sexual violence, 43.2% who have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, 18.6% who have experienced stalking and 73% who have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner. An overall total of more than 1.4 million American Indian and Alaska Native men have experienced violence in their lifetime.

One of the most glaring issues in Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives cases — particularly Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Indian Country has been the lack of a national database and data in general.

A 2018 study conducted by the Urban Indian Health Institute found that 5,712 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women cases were reported in 2016. Still, only 116 MMIW cases were logged into the Department of Justice database.

In the report, UIHI stated that “Due to Urban Indian Health Institute’s limited resources and the poor data collection by numerous cities, the 506 cases identified in this report are likely an undercount of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in urban areas.”

Oklahoma has the tenth-largest number of MMIW cases in the nation.

Nationally, reported violence against Indigenous women has reached unprecedented levels. Lack



of data makes it difficult not only to solve cases but to address the issue as a whole.

In 2018, the Office of Justice Services within the Bureau of Indian Affairs says they partnered with the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, the national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases across the United States (known as NamUs). New data fields have been created for tribal affiliation to help identify American Indian and Alaska Native missing and murdered victims.

This past year, the OJS has identified seven locations where cold case task forces should be established: Anchorage, Alaska; Billings, Montana; Rapid City, South Dakota; Bloomington, Minnesota; Nashville, Tennessee; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Phoenix, Arizona. They will be staffed by newly created special agents from the OJS and task force partners, including tribal officers and individuals from the FBI and the offices of U.S. attorneys.

In 2020, two new laws addressing the issue of Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives drew widespread praise as a step in the right direction for managing needs identified by tribes and experts in law enforcement and justice, including better data collection, coordination and increased resources.

Savanna’s Act and the Not Invisible Act were signed into law on Oct. 10, 2020.

Savanna’s Act is named after 22-year-old Savanna Greywind, Sioux, of the Spirit Lake Nation. Greywind was pregnant when she was murdered in Fargo, North Dakota, in 2017. Her unborn baby

was cut from her body. Two people are in prison for her death. Her baby thankfully survived.

Savanna’s Act requires the Justice Department to develop guidelines for responding to missing or murdered Native Americans, creating a public education strategy, providing law enforcement agency training, and working with tribes and tribal organizations in implementation.

Savanna’s Act gives the U.S. attorney general 180 days from its signing to consult with tribes on improved data collection.

The Not Invisible Act aims to increase efforts by establishing a joint commission to develop recommendations for the Interior and Justice departments. This commission is tasked with coming up with ideas for better identifying, reporting, and responding to missing persons, murder and human trafficking cases.

For more information on Operation Lady Justice, visit <https://operationladyjustice.usdoj.gov>.



Operation Lady Justice was named after the artwork of renowned Choctaw Artist DG Smalling. Smalling created “Lady Justice” during a Native American Heritage Month event held by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., in 2018.

GROWING HOPE PROGRAM




REVIVING AND SUSTAINING OUR CHOCTAW TRADITIONS AND CULTURE

By revitalizing our traditional crops and sharing related knowledge, the Growing Hope Program helps make it possible to revitalize traditional Choctaw foods. These foods are an important part of Choctaw heritage. Both tasty and healthy, they provide an opportunity to use our own culture to help us live healthier lives today.

To learn more about the Growing Hope Initiative and seed availability, contact Jacqueline Putman at 580-380-9397.

This program is funded in part through the US Department of Agriculture.

Choctaw Nation Cultural Services




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Choctaw Nation Housing Authority



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- Residence Verification - Physical & Mailing
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- Statement of Understanding (Applicants below 18 yrs. of age)

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APPLICATION OPEN FROM JANUARY 1ST - APRIL 1ST

Choctaw Nation Summer Youth Employment Services
(Program funded by Public Law 102-477)



Jennifer Woods

District 6

Halito from Dist. 6. When looking back on 2020 and looking forward to 2021, we can see that it has been a complicated year. We at the District 6 Community Center have seen a lot of changes in how we conduct the business of serving our tribal members. Many of the everyday activities have had to be adjusted to serve the people and remain within CDC guidelines for the safety of our staff and tribal members while still functioning at our highest standards. Our employees are outstanding, and the true Chahta spirit shines through every day. We are filled with gratitude.

During the uncertainty we all experienced with the COVID-19 outbreak; we were still able to accomplish a lot this year. At the beginning of the pandemic in March, District 6, along with District 3, was able to deliver meals to the Independent Elders and seniors living in the Belvin Housing in Tali-

hina three days a week, as well as our weekly curbside meal and delivery to the homebound that is regularly served on Wednesdays. This was a great group effort that touched many homebound members who would have otherwise gone without. The four days a week feeding lasted until May when we returned to our regular Wednesday lunch, which was curbside as well as delivering to the homebound. Curbside meals have continued through to the present time. This included our Veterans, Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and our Children's Christmas party. We were also very excited to participate in this year's Christmas Parade.

We had ten elders move into our new energy-efficient Independent Elder homes, and ten families move into their new Affordable Rental homes that were all built here in Wilburton. We are currently taking applications for the next round of affordable homes and five Independent Elder homes, so be sure to turn in your application as soon as possible.

Through the Community Partnership Program, we have donated to our counties and towns with much needed money to help with the upkeep, maintenance and upgrades to roads, as well as other much needed improvements. District 6 also made donations to six churches within our district for maintenance, repairs and upkeep of the churches.

Our CHR program and other programs within the Choctaw Nation donated PPE to our tribal members as well as paper towels, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, bleach, masks and thermometers.

Through the CARES Act, we have provided benefits to many of our tribal members. A few of the programs included: Children's Technology and Student Activity Funds, Food Security Visa cards for all those who are 18 and older, Elder Rental Assistance, Veterans Utility benefits and Unemployment Support.

We began our Children's Summer Feeding Program this summer and have extended it until September 30, 2021. The program provides families with a seven-day supply of meals and snacks for all children, not just Native American children, 18 years old and younger. We now have three locations where you can pick up the meals, Wilburton, Red Oak and Buffalo Valley. The meals are distributed one day a week in each location.

We also experienced many first-time events, such as the cancellation of our annual Choctaw Princess Pageant and the cancellation of the Labor Day Festival. That hasn't happened since the beginning of the Festival many years ago. This created the need for the existing princesses to continue to serve in their positions for the upcoming year.

District 6 was also very happy to receive our two new buses, one of which is handicapped accessible. The new buses will help us continue to serve our homebound seniors through food distribution pickup and delivery and Wednesday meals.

The COVID 19 vaccination is available. Just call your clinic to make an appointment.

And lastly, we are so thankful for the approval to purchase the BP building here in Wilburton. The beautiful 19,000+ sq. foot building and land will enable us to expand and bring in more departments from within the Choctaw Nation to better serve our tribal members. Having the different departments available will allow you easier access to information regarding these programs. Our goal at District 6 is to better serve our tribal members, and this new facility will enable us to reach that goal and beyond.

I want to say a very big yakoke (thank you) to all our staff and volunteers who have helped to make this a successful year of being a servant to the people of Dist.6. We are looking forward to serving you 2021 is here and we are ready.

Our continued prayers are with all our tribal members who have lost loved ones to the COVID and our communities who have been impacted by Covid 19. Press on in the Chahta Spirit of Faith, Family and Culture into the new year.

My door is always open. Please come see us if you need help with any applications or information on the many programs and services the Great Choctaw Nation provides.



District 6 Council Member Jennifer Woods, volunteers and staff show their Christmas and Chahta spirit at the Choctaw community center in Wilburton.

Native Americans still proving to be more than something else

By Kendra Germany-Wall

In January, we ran a story over the impact of Native Americans in politics. Since the publication of that article, there have been a few updates that we would like to share.

On Dec. 17, then President-Elect Joe Biden announced New Mexico Representative Deb Haaland as his pick for Interior Secretary, making her the first Native American to lead the department that determines policy for federally owned natural resources, as well as tribal lands.

Haaland, Laguna and Jemez Pueblo, will be the first Native American to serve as a Cabinet secretary if confirmed by the Senate. Biden also introduced Haaland on Dec. 19 as part of his environmental team. If confirmed, Haaland said she would ensure that the Interior engages in "early, frequent and meaningful consultation" with tribal leaders on decisions that affect Indigenous communities.

The 117th U.S. Congress officially includes a record number of Indigenous members. The following Indigenous people are now Congress members: Republican Rep. Yvette Herrell, Cherokee, of New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District, and Democratic Rep. Kailahi "Kai" Kahele, a Native Hawaiian representing Hawaii's 2nd District, were sworn in on Jan. 3, at the U.S. Capitol. They were joined by Democratic Rep. Sharice Davids, Ho-Chunk, Democratic Rep. Deb Haaland, Laguna and Jemez Pueblos, Republican Rep. Tom Cole, Chickasaw, and Republican Rep. Markwayne Mullin, Cherokee.

If the Senate confirms Haaland as Interior Secretary, that will still leave a record number of five Indigenous U.S. House members.

New Mexico Democratic State Rep. Georgene Louis, Acoma Pueblo, recently announced her candidacy to run as a Democrat in the state's 1st Congressional District. Louis hopes to fill Haaland's seat in the House of Representatives.

Louis is the first Native person to announce candidacy for the seat officially. She is an attorney, currently serving in her fifth term as a state representative. Louis is also the first Pueblo woman elected to New Mexico's Legislature.

New Mexico's major parties will hold internal elections to choose their candidates soon. The parties will then name their candidates at least 56 days before the special election date. Candidates will officially campaign until a special election is held in the spring.

In an official press release, Louis said, "It is long overdue that Deb Haaland bring her experience and leadership as a strong woman and a Native American to a Federal agency that has for

hundreds of years impacted the lives of the indigenous peoples of the United States."

Louis continued, "Deb's voice in Congress will be missed. Native Americans, and all Americans who face disadvantages, deserve to have a Congresswoman who is a committed fighter and leader - as Deb has been - and as I will be, on issues impacting everyday survival."

In last month's story, we also mentioned Chief Batton's letter to CNN but didn't share CNN's response. The network's CEO, Jeff Zucker, replied in agreement with Chief Batton with the message below.

"Dear Chief Batton,
Thank you for your email. I appreciate you reaching out.

We agree with you. You are absolutely right. Our exit poll results included a very poor choice of words. We were wrong.

In no way did we intend to minimize the importance of indigenous communities and the Native American vote.

We have corrected it for all of our coverage going forward.

Thank you again for reaching out.
Jeff Zucker"

Native Americans are continuing to make history in local, state and federal governments. To stay up to date on what is happening not only in Washington, D.C. but across the country, Indian Country Today is a great resource. Indian Country Today is the largest news site covering tribes and Native people throughout the Americas and can be found at indiancountrytoday.com.



Rep. Deb Haaland (D-NM) was announced as President Joe Biden's pick for Interior Secretary, becoming the first Native American to lead the department.

Did You Know?

The 152,894 square foot Choctaw Nation Hospital in Talihina opened in 1999. It has 44 patient beds, and the facility includes an outpatient clinic with 79 exam rooms and 13 treatment rooms. There were two previous hospitals there, the first being a wooden structure built in 1915, known as the Carter Hospital. The second hospital was a native stone structure originally built in 1937 as a tuberculosis sanatorium. The structure still stands, reminding visitors of earlier times and how far the Tribe has progressed over the years. The Choctaw Nation took over the second hospital administration in 1985, along with clinics located in McAlester, Hugo and Broken Bow. The historic agreement between Indian Health Service and the Choctaw Nation marked the first time a Native tribe in the mainland U.S. had fully contracted all the health services and facilities within their service area. In building the newest facility, the Choctaw Nation became the first tribe to fund its own hospital.



COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

The Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program offers assistance for high school students who are concurrently enrolled at an accredited college or university

GO TO [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/HIGHER-EDUCATION-0](https://choctawnation.com/higher-education-0)

CLICK ON THE PURPLE "APPLY NOW" BUTTON TO COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION AND UPLOAD THE FOLLOWING:

- AN UPDATED HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT
- COMPLETE COLLEGE TRANSCRIPT
- COLLEGE CLASS SCHEDULE
- A 2019 IRS.GOV W9 FORM WITH THE STUDENT'S INFORMATION

TO APPLY:
[HIGHERAPPLICATION.CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://higherapplication.choctawnation.com)
800-522-6170 EXT 2239

Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program

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TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP AND COVID-19 GUIDELINES

The Choctaw Nation is taking numerous steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Tribal Membership Department has released important guidelines that we want all members to be aware of.

The safest option for obtaining a tribal membership application is through our online application access.

Guidance can be found at

choctawnation.com/contacts-applications/cdibmembership-information

All membership cards are being mailed to recipients until further notice. Unfortunately, this means same-day card obtainment will not be available. Applications, supporting documentation, and photos can be emailed or mailed to us at the address listed below.

800-522-6170 EXT 4030
[CDIB-MEMBERSHIP@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://cdib-membership.choctawnation.com)
CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA | ATTN: TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP
PO BOX 1210 | DURANT, OK 74702

Choctaw Nation Member Services

NOTES

I just wanted to send a huge thank you for the financial support during COVID. The funds provided for childcare relief and groceries have been a huge help and answer to prayer. I appreciate the Choctaw Nation more than I can say!

Thank you,
Katy Burton

Thank you for being here for us during this time difficult times I am too proud to be Choctaw.

Mary Hudson

I want to thank you so much for the help you have given me this year.
Also for the grant for the storm shelter. It is greatly appreciated.
May God keep blessing you all.

Sincerely
Ramona Neal Warden

I want to tell you what a blessing the Choctaw Nation's Elder Food Security Program has been for my wife and me. We are both retired and on a fixed income. The ice storm in October created an emergency situation in which our son and his family lived with us for about ten days. Needless to say, our grocery budget took a pretty big hit. That said, because of the Elder Food Security Program, we were able to meet this unexpected increase in groceries. And December? Wow! Thank you so very much for reaching out and helping Choctaw seniors like me.

Yakoke,
Tim Jones, Moore, Oklahoma

NEED TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS?

Contact the Choctaw Nation
Circulation Department

580.924.8280 x4028

Read the Biskinik online at
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/NEWS



Biskinik
Announcement Guidelines

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above.
Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.
News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows.
We welcome all letters from Choctaw tribal members. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all letters our readers send. Letters chosen for publication must be under 150 words. We require full contact information. Only the writer's full name and city will be published.
All events sent to the Biskinik will run the month of the event or the month prior to the event if the event falls on the first of the month.
Mail to: Biskinik
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication
of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be typewritten and double-spaced. You must include an address and phone number where you may be reached. Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive. Items are printed in the order received. Faxed photos will not be accepted.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK or your address needs to be changed, our Circulation Department would appreciate hearing from you at ext. 4028.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation. Circulation is monthly. Deadline for articles and photographs to be submitted is the first day of each month to run in the following month.

Editor's note: Views and opinions in reader-submitted articles are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Choctaw Nation.

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CHOCTAW | **COUNTRY MARKET CURBSIDE**

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA
TRIBAL COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

January 9, 2021

- CALL TO ORDER
- OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
- ROLL CALL
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - Regular Session December 12, 2020
- WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - Veteran of the Month, District #4 – Ronnie Parent
- PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - Nellie Meashintubby – Access to Care – Individual Speaker
- REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
- NEW BUSINESS
 - Approve Application for the Community Opioid Intervention Pilot Program.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve the Filing of Application for the FY21 Small Ambulatory Program Application.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve the Funds and Budget for Year One of Five for the Special Project Demonstration Grant – Project Renew Indigenous Strength with Empowerment (Project Rise) Grant.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve a Right of Way Easement in Favor of the Public Service Company of Oklahoma on Choctaw Nation Fee Land in Latimer County, Oklahoma.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve Grazing Lease No. G09-1963 in Favor of Jesse Chip Lot II, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations of Oklahoma in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Amend CB-34-20, a Council Bill Authorizing the Chief to Place Property in Pittsburg County in Trust Status with the United States of America.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve an Amendment to Business Lease 4200028456, a Business Lease in Favor of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma on Choctaw and Chickasaw Tribal Trust Land in Latimer County, Oklahoma.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve the Adoption and Enactment of the United States Food and Drug Administration Food Code.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve the Application for the Energy Technology Deployment and Tribal Lands Grant.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Resolution Reappointing Bob Rabon to the Appellate Division of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Court.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Resolution Reappointing the Honorable Judge Frederick Bobb to the Constitutional Court of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Rescind CB-92-06 and Authorize and Approve Cross-Deputization Agreements between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Law Enforcement Agencies Operating within the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve Application to Request a Budget Modification and Carryover of Funds from FY2015 to 2018 and to FY2020 and FY2021 for the Choctaw Nation Early Head Start Program.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve a Council Bill Adopting the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Codification Authorization Act.** Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
- OTHER NEW BUSINESS
- OLD BUSINESS
- ADJOURNMENT
- CLOSING PRAYER

All Council Members present.

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

February 2	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 3	Coalgate	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 5	Atoka	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 9	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 10	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 11	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
February 16	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 17	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
February 17	Stigler	By Appointment
February 19	Crowder	By Appointment
February 23	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
February 26	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Call 580-326-8304 for an appointment

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

February Language Lesson

Days of the Week

Time markers ‘ash’ and ‘kma’

Svnti – Sunday Sun-ti	Hlvsti – Thursday Thlus-ti
Mvnti – Monday Mun-ti	Flaiti - Friday
Tusti - Tuesday Toosti	Fly-ti Satvti – Saturday Sa-tuh-ti

Winsti – Wednesday
Win-sti

Time markers are suffixed to days of the week, months, designated times during the day, and when speaking of times in the past and in the future.

ash (ah-sh) – time, in the past

kma (kmah) – time, in the future

- Winstiash aki pisa li tuk.
I saw my dad Wednesday.
- Mvntiash nvni hoklit iya li tuk.
Monday, I went fishing.
- Flaitikma vm vltoba chi.
I will get paid Friday.
- Satvtikma towa washohat il ilhkola chi.
We will go play ball Saturday.

www.choctawschool.com

Southeastern Oklahoma
Indian Credit Association
& Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement and agriculture loans. The Choctaw Revolving Loan Program offers micro-loans, available for emergency home improvements and small businesses.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at (580) 924-8280 ext. 2161, ext. 2158 or toll-free (800) 522-6170.

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association Loan
To Be Eligible to Apply:

- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund
To Be Eligible to Apply:

- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from the Choctaw Nation

If you are interested in applying for a loan a representative will be available at the:

Poteau Community Center
February 8, 2021
10:00 – 12:00

Kids Eat Free

ON TUESDAY'S
WITH PURCHASE OF ANY ENTREE,
ATOKA AND POTEAU, OKLAHOMA CHILI'S ONLY

SCHOLARSHIPS

Competitive scholarships
for all Choctaw students
from High School Senior
to Doctorate level degrees.

OPEN: January 15th

DEADLINE: MARCH 31st

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Peggy Lee Cox

Peggy Lee Cox, 64, passed away Sept. 28, 2020.

Peggy was born Sept. 17, 1956, in Claremore, Okla., to Richard Knox and Virginia Dickinson.

She was preceded in death by her husband Lee Cox; brother Shawn Dickinson; and her mother.

Peggy is survived by her children Kayse Reusser and spouse Nathan, Holly Ray and Jesse Cox; grandchildren Levi Turek, Spencer Turek, and Zane Reusser; god-granddaughter Jaylene Hylton and spouse Brad; sister Cathy Nyman and spouse Steve; brothers George Knox, Luke Dickinson, Justin Dickinson and spouse Linda; and many loved nieces, nephews, cousins, uncles, and aunts.

For the full obituary, please visit [McCarn Funeral Service](#).

**Shirley Lowman**

Shirley Lowman, 73, passed away Oct. 23, 2020.

Shirley was born Nov. 30, 1946, in Ludlow, Okla., to Randall Lewis and Minnie (Bond) Ludlow.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Edith Samuels and Juanita Ludlow; and brother Floyd Ludlow.

Shirley is survived by her husband Jerry; children Dewayne Lowman, and Karen Hackney and spouse Tommy; brothers Clifford Ludlow and spouse Cathy, Kenneth Ludlow and spouse Aileen, Marvin Ludlow and spouse Anita, and Austin Ludlow and spouse Darlene; sisters Wanda Ward, Eula Ludlow, and Carol Burge; numerous nephews and nieces; and many friends, including Alicia Wilson.

For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).

**Bobbie Jean Scheller**

Bobbie Jean Scheller, 79, passed away Nov. 14, 2020.

Bobbie was born Sept. 22, 1941, in Wilson, Okla., to Edgar Woolery and Martha Estell (Bates) Johnson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Victor Augusta Scheller; daughter Darla Scheller; son Gary Scheller; and brothers Eddie Johnson and Jerry Johnson.

Bobbie is survived by son Randy Scheller; daughters Debbie Josefy and spouse Carl, Sheila Scheller, and Gayla Chester; sisters Shirlee Dean and Patsy Tucker; grandchildren Angela Payne and spouse Keith, Gary Scheller Jr. and spouse Tiffany, Rachel Latimer and spouse Bucky, Brandi Phillips and spouse Josh, Jerry Hughes Jr. and spouse Ashley, Cody Hughes and spouse Amy, Jason Carr and spouse Nicole, Jessica Carr, Steton Chester, Travis Chester and spouse Kylee, and Lesley Casper and spouse Wyatt; 27 great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; and several nieces, nephews, and many friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Jackson Funeral Home](#).

**Jon Ferguson**

Jon Lon “Bub” Ferguson, 84, passed away Nov. 17, 2020.

Jon was born April 6, 1936, in Soper, Okla., to Scott C. and Edith (Wise) Ferguson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Scott C. Ferguson Jr.; and daughter Jerri Beardsley.

Jon is survived by his wife Jeanine (Smith) Ferguson; son Jonny Ferguson; daughter Jana Blasutta and spouse Tom; brother Jack Ferguson and spouse Pat; grandchildren Nicholas Poor, Brooke Anderson, Eron Ferguson, Travis Ferguson, and Jordan Moore; great-grandchildren Payton Moore, Elin Ferguson, Aly Ferguson, Stella Anderson, and Levi Anderson; extended family Meda and Harold Logan, Linda McFall, Jarvis Smith, Weldon and Sue Pratt; and a host of other family, friends and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit [Miller and Miller Funeral Home](#).

**Kata Lou Ward**

Kata “Kay” Lou Ward, 69, passed away Oct. 31, 2020.

Kay was born July 6, 1951, in Broken Bow, Okla., to Sweeney E. and Mary Mae (Ward) Wilson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Jonah; sisters Cynthia Billy and Joyce Williston; niece Katrina Anderson; and brothers-in-law Ed Billy and Rev. Randy Jacob.

Kay is survived by her sons David Clay Ward and spouse Jackie Swift, and Jonathan Anthony “Tony” Ward and spouse Amy; sisters Betty Jacob, and Juanita Pearl Henry; brother Walter “T-Loyd” Wilson and spouse Louise; grandchildren Peyton Ward, Kayla Ward, Dylan McCabe, and Notah McCabe; numerous nieces and nephews; and a host of real life-long friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).

**Virginia Jefferson**

Virginia Jefferson, 84, passed away Nov. 8, 2020.

Virginia was born Jan. 25, 1936, in Bethel, Okla., to Ed Samuel and Melcie (Bond) Peters.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sons Roy Dale, Jeffery, and Eugene Jefferson; sisters Effie Shomo and Jasney Wade; three great-great-grandchildren; and brother-in-law Ed Howell.

Virginia is survived by her children Albert Shomo, Huey Jefferson Jr., Russell Jefferson, Patricia Shomo, and Deloris Samuels; brother Sam Peters; sisters Melissa Bohanan and Francis Howell, 31 grandchildren; 65 great-grandchildren; several great-great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews; a host of other relatives and many friends, including her special friend and nurse Elenore Jefferson.

For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).

**Kenneth James Johnson**

Kenneth James Johnson, 64, passed away Oct. 31, 2020.

Kenneth was born Oct. 31, 1956, in Marietta, Okla., to Frank Johnson and Lavene (Brokehoulder) Johnson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Calvin Johnson, Jim “Tiny” Johnson, Ronnie Johnson, and Bill Johnson; and nephew Russell Johnson.

Kenneth is survived by his wife Andrea; daughter Alissa Marsch and spouse Josh; sons Daniel Johnson and Ryan Johnson and spouse Aleisha; sisters Shirley Thompson and spouse Edwin, Rita Scott and spouse Larry, and Barbara Johnson; along with numerous nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).

**Debbie Reeves**

Debbie Reeves, 63, passed away Nov. 18, 2020.

Debbie was born to J.R. and Evelyn (Hemphill) Brown on March 24, 1957, in Independence, Missouri.

She was preceded in death by her brothers Calvin and Monty; grandparents Opal and Jim Hemphill, and Jack and Dee Brown.

Debbie is survived by her parents; daughter Ceres (Anderson) McGee and spouse Chris; sons Wayne Anderson and spouse Stephani, Joe Anderson, and Lafe Anderson and spouse LeAnne; grandchildren Cole McGee, Bre McGee, Kaylin Anderson, Brayden Anderson, Jetta Anderson and Cade Anderson; great-grandchild Rylee Jo McGee; special friend Teddy Hefley; and other relatives, loved ones and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Evans and Miller Funeral Home](#).

**Patsy Marie Mitchell**

Patsy Marie Mitchell, 78, passed away Nov. 14, 2020.

Patsy was born Oct. 3, 1942, in Altus, Okla., to Emmett Bruce Ensey and Minnie Viola (Payton) Ensey.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Rex Mitchell; brothers Johnny and Kenneth; sons Ricky Lee Wilkins and Robert Dale Wikins; and granddaughter Dionna Glover.

Patsy is survived by her children Roger Dale Wilkins and spouse Nancy, Becky Lynn Houchen, Michael Neal Wilkins, and Melissa Rose Hohenberger and spouse Kevin; 25 grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren; siblings Ronnie Bruce Ensey, Iris Faye King, Vicky Lynn Ensey, Norma Jean Brown, and Rhonda Gayle Scheetz.

For the full obituary, please visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).

**Philip Carl La Pat**

Philip Carl La Pat, 48, passed away Sept. 9, 2020.

Philip was born Nov. 13, 1971, in San Francisco, Calif., to Philip P. La Pat and Billie L. McClure.

He was preceded in death by his father; two brothers; and two grandchildren.

Philip is survived by his spouse Elizabeth “Liz” Rose La Pat; sons Mike Valdez, Joseph La Pat, Philip La Pat, Justin La Pat, and Anthony La Pat; daughters Adrianna La Pat and Angel La Pat; his mother; brother David Herb; sisters Bernadette Dulae-Flores and Annette Hendren; and five grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Whitehurst-Norton-Dias Funeral Home](#).

**Lloyd Ray Loman**

Lloyd Ray Loman, 67, passed away Nov. 14, 2020.

Lloyd was born June 20, 1953, in Antlers, Okla., to Jimmie and Myrtle (Wesley) Loman.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and his brother Richard Loman.

Lloyd is survived by his wife Rebecca Loman; children Raymond Loman, Lisa Marie Bear and spouse Patrick, and Anthony Lloyd Loman; brothers James Loman, Terry Loman, and Howard Loman; sisters Clara Battice, Paula Jones, Ruby Theophilidis, and Iwana Morris; grandchildren William Ray Bear, Wesley James Bear, Lylee Marie Bear, and Raina Loman; and great-grandson Xavier Martinez.

For the full obituary, please visit [Serenity Funeral Service](#).

**Greta Joan Bruner**

Greta Joan Bruner, 88, passed away Nov. 18, 2020.

Greta was born Oct. 29, 1932, in Antlers, Okla., to Iley and Sina (Underwood) Nabors.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and her husband Jimmy Bruner.

Greta is survived by her brothers-in-law Harry Bruner and Jr. Bruner; cousins Meda Logan, Linda McFall, Jarvis Smith, Donna Pratt; and special cousin and caregiver Jeanine Ferguson.

For the full obituary, please visit [Miller and Miller Funeral Home](#).

**Opal Founda Berci**

Opal Founda Berci, 97, passed away Sept. 9, 2020.

Opal was born Jan. 7, 1923, in Atoka, Okla., to Lewis W. Armstrong and Marie Burgess Armstrong.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and her husband Ivan Berci.

Opal is survived by daughters Ladon Wagner and spouse Dick, Reva Harrard and spouse Tom, and Carolyn Gilbert; sons Doug Adkisson and spouse Sandy, David Adkisson and spouse Edie, and Ray Adkisson and spouse Susan; brother Virgil Armstrong; 15 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren; and numerous great-great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

Louis Junior Johnico

Louis Junior Johnico, 70, passed away Oct. 19, 2020.

Louis was born March 19, 1950, in Talihina, Okla., to Louis and Lorency Johnico.

He was preceded in death by his sister Myrtle King.

Louis is survived by his wife Dawn Johnico; daughter Cindi Joyce Johnico; grandson Cletus White; and adopted granddaughters Mykala Cheyanne Johnico and Jayda Ayiana Johnico; sisters Edna Johnico, Suzette Sims, and Mildred King and their families; and brother John Johnico and his family.

For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

**Frank Rosenthal**

Frank Rosenthal, 88, passed away Dec. 6, 2020.

Frank was born April 25, 1932, in Rattan, Okla., to Parker and Eva Mae (Boyett) Rosenthal.

He is survived by his wife Manolla Rosenthal; sons Rocky Rosenthal and spouse Teri, and Guy Rosenthal and spouse Karla; sisters Isabel Murray and Ernestine Krohn; and granddaughter Kelli John Proctor.

For the full obituary, please visit [Serenity Funeral Home](#).

**Mary Lou Meashintubby**

Mary Lou Meashintubby, 70, passed away Dec. 19, 2020.

Mary was born Jan. 10, 1950, in Honobia, Okla., to Lena Ruth (Samuel) and Junior Ray James.

She was preceded in death by her husband Norman Meashintubby Jr.; sons Nathan Meashintubby and Norris Meashintubby; grandson Mark Meashintubby; brothers Mitchell James and Eugene James; and sister Martha James.

Mary is survived by her children Norval Meashintubby and spouse Deleesa; Neville Meashintubby and spouse Alicia; Archie Meashintubby, Sherry Balderas and spouse Isidro, and Shirley Meashintubby; grandchildren Anissa, Melanie, Brandon, Leticia, Marisela, Neville Jr., Amondo, Nehmiah, Jalonda, Nakoma, Delida, Davida, Deidra, Norris Jr., and Kyle; great-grandchildren Isiah, Neela, Kamron, Kai, Lily, Emmet, Chase, Layla, Joshua, and Nathan; sisters Brenda Trejo and Doretha James; brothers Richard James and spouse Lela, Calvin James and spouse Letha, Nelson Samuels, and Paul Samuels.

For the full obituary, please visit [McCarn Funeral Services](#).

**Delores Morene Johnico Dye**

Delores Morene Johnico Dye, 84, passed away Dec. 20, 2020.

Delores was born Jan. 11, 1936, in Talihina, Okla., to Aaron and Auda (Anderson) Johnico.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Walter Dye; sons Ronnie and James Himes; sisters Melba, Ruby, and Dorothy; and brothers Dan “Buffalo” and Eugene.

Delores is survived by sons Vernon Himes and spouse Mary, Billy Himes, and Tim Himes and spouse Donna; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary please visit [McCarn Funeral Service](#).

**Janet Mary Phillips**

Janet Mary Phillips, 71, passed away Dec. 25, 2020.

Janet was born Feb. 20, 1949, in Talihina, Okla., to Custer and Alma (Jacob) Phillips.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Roger Phillips and Tony Phillips; and sisters Leona Vantrees and Marceline Lawson.

Janet is survived by daughter Janice Phillips Hyland and spouse Frank; grandchildren Dustin Hyland, Josh Hyland, and Jessica Hyland; brother Eugene Phillips; sister Christine James; along with many other relatives and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Miller & Miller Funeral Home](#).

**Lloyd Cleon Linton**

Lloyd Cleon Linton, 79, passed away Dec. 23, 2020.

Lloyd was born Dec. 5, 1941, in Hoyt, Okla., to Lloyd and Lorene (Walker) Linton.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Lloyd is survived by his wife Carol Linton; sons Mark Linton and spouse Sammie, and David Linton and spouse Debbie; daughter Lori Wheat and spouse Douglas; stepchildren David Clinton Blythe and spouse Andrea, and Garrett Blythe and spouse Abby; brother Curtis Linton and spouse Karen; sisters Gwenda Webster and spouse Bob, and Sandy Holt and spouse Jim; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Mallory-Martin Funeral Home](#).

**Donald Wayne Eades**

Donald Wayne “Don” Eades, 69, passed away Dec. 20, 2020.

Don was born May 7, 1951, in Ardmore, Okla., to Willis Eades Sr. and Rose Mae (Sam) Eades.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Linda Eades; daughter Dening Mechelle Reid; son-in-law Rick Reid; and sisters Dorothy Glass, Teata Dolezal, and Sally Eades.

Don is survived by his wife Betty Woody; children Judy Eades, Jodie Case, and Nolan Eades; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; sisters Mary Genn and Donna Norton; brothers Willis Eades Jr. and Billy Eades.

For the full obituary, please visit [Griffin-Hillcrest Funeral Home](#).



Joshua Robert Cordova

Joshua Robert Cordova, 35, passed away Nov. 4, 2020.

Joshua was born Dec. 4, 1984, in Albuquerque, N.M., to Roberto Luis Cordova and Rochelle Cordova.

He was preceded in death by his father.

Joshua is survived by his mother; brother Gabriel Cordova; grandparents Perry Gore and Virginia Gore; nephews, half-sisters, cousins, and many other extended family members.

For the full obituary, please visit [French Funerals and Cremations](#).

**Luther James**

Luther “Eugene” James, 65, passed away Dec. 4, 2020.

Eugene was born July 25, 1955, in DeQueen, Ark., to Lena Ruth (Samuel) and Junior Ray James.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Mitchell James; and sister Martha James.

Eugene is survived by daughter Wynona Gipson and spouse Scott; son Shawn James and Tanya Lowe; son Vance James; step-children Vanessa Cooper and Dana Swake; grandchildren Lauren Billie, Kaitlyn Gipson, Sadie Hernandez, Honda Figueroa, and Nathaniel James; wife Louetra Swake; siblings Mary Lou Meashintubby, Richard James, Calvin James, Brenda Trejo, Doretha James, Paul Samuel, and Nelson Samuel.

For the full obituary, please visit [McCarn Funeral Service](#).

**Robert Hugh Wade**

Robert “Bob” Hugh Wade, 88, passed away Oct. 29, 2020.

Bob was born Sept. 23, 1932, in Bray, Okla., to Alexander Earl Wade and Ethel Julia (Woolery) Wade.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Cloy Wade; sisters Betty Livermore, Patsy, Susie Wade, and Linda; and brothers Gordon Wade and Butch Wade.

Bob is survived by his children Robert “Bob” Wade Jr., Cindy Golden, Bruce Wade and spouse Diana, and Marty Wade and spouse Tammie; sister Gail Ann Fowler; grandchildren Justin Wade, Jhon Wade, Matthew Wade, Marti Ann Owings, Robert Wade, Joseph Schlagel, Chrystal, Mandy Wade, Steven Wade, and Bradley Wade; great-grandchildren Anthony, Skylar, Preston, Ben, Danica, Ivory, LaShana, Chelsey, and Emily; and great-grand-grandchildren Kingsley and Kashton.

For the full obituary, please visit [Boydston-Wilbourn Funeral Home](#).

**Gloria B. Sumpter Dittmore**

Gloria B. Sumpter Dittmore, 83, passed away Sept. 17, 2020.

Gloria was born Dec. 22, 1936, in Waurika, Okla., to Lillian and Jim Andy Sumpter.

She was preceded in death by her husband P.D. “Leo” Dittmore; son Andrew Dittmore; her parents; siblings Jim Sumpter, Victor Sumpter, Maybelle Sloan, Dixon Sumpter, Bill Sumpter, Voncile Caroland, Wynona Warren, and Buster Sumpter.

Gloria is survived by her children Leo Dittmore and spouse Patti, Patty Carr and spouse Tom, Frank Dittmore and spouse Rebecca; daughter-in-law Heidi Dittmore; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Falconer Funeral Home](#).

**Marlon Ray Stiles**

Marlon Ray Stiles, 60, passed away Nov. 23, 2020.

Marlon was born Nov. 2, 1960, in Talihina, Okla., to Paul Stiles and Janice (Hughes) Stiles.

He was preceded in death by his father; sister Carolyn Spivey; great-nephew Kolby W. Argo; mother-in-law Pauline Taylor; brother-in-law Leonard Taylor; and granddaughter Alexcia Acosta.

Marlon is survived by his mother; wife Tammie Stiles; daughter Maranda Stiles; step-daughters Ashley, Nicole, and Angela Lewis; step-son Dylan Lewis; 11 grandchildren; sisters Paula Bottoms and spouse Glenn, Rhonda Orr Stiles, and Angela Kenyon and spouse Frank; uncles David Stiles and J.C. Stiles; and numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and a host of friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Griffin Hillcrest Funeral Home](#).

**Leonard Everett Amos**

Leonard Everett Amos, 68, passed away Nov. 3, 2020.

Leonard was born March 5, 1952, in Sulphur, Okla.

He was preceded in death by Juanita and Everett Amos, Carrie Lynn, Greg Lynn, and Marlana Lynn.

Leonard is survived by family members Stacie Cornwell, Nathaniel and Tsuki Amos, Alvis Amos, Chris Lynn, Rodney Lynn, Martin Lynn, Amy Lynn, Dixon Harrison, and all their family members.

For the full obituary, please visit [DeArman Funeral Home](#).

**Paul Williams**

Paul Williams, 78, passed away Nov. 13, 2020.

Paul was born Feb. 26, 1942, in Red Oak, Okla., to Daisy (Hicker) and Freman Williams.

He was preceded in death by his parents; son Randall Williams; and daughter Marla Jean Williams.

Paul is survived by his wife Hanna; sons Wendall and spouse Kahleetah, Ryan and spouse Martina, and Timothy; daughters Mary Peters and Marla Williams; 10 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [McCarn Funeral Service](#).

**Paul Jackson Cowan**

Paul Jackson Cowan, 93, passed away Nov. 3, 2020.

Paul was born Dec. 12, 1926, in Bokoshe, Okla., to Ira and Ver-ville Cowan.

He was preceded in death by his wife Martha Cowan; and son Thomas Paul Cowan.

Paul is survived by daughters Shirley Sue Williams and spouse Woodie, Beverly Gail Baker and spouse Jim, Linda Beth Muse and spouse Guy, and Jana Lou Nelms and spouse Phillip; seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

For the full obituary, please visit [Mulkey-Bowles-Montgomery Funeral Home](#).

**Billy Francis James**

Billy Francis James, 75, passed away Oct. 5, 2020.

Billy was born Nov. 4, 1944, in Muskogee, Okla., to Aaron James and Cleo Johnson James.

He was preceded in death by his wife Jena James; sisters Betty Jo James, Stella Mae, Alice James, and Mildred James; brothers Frank, Aaron James Jr., Henry James, William James, and Jimmy James; cousin JD Martindale; brother-in-law Robert Holman; nieces Sarah Chandler, Terry Ragland, Laura Durant, and Sue Boren; and nephew Thomas Scott James.

For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

**Earl James Ishcomer**

Earl James Ishcomer, 92, passed away Dec. 12, 2020.

Earl was born March 25, 1928, in Golden, Okla., to Clayton and Minnie Ishcomer.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wives Ruth Fleener and Karen (Smith) Etnire; grandson Adam Ishcomer; granddaughter Tonya (Ishcomer) Kramer; and great-grandson Mitchell Kramer.

Earl is survived by his children Jim and spouse Bridget, Jack, Judi and spouse John, Jeff and spouse Peg, and Jerry and spouse Joetta; 15 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; and three great-grand-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Calvert-Belangee-Bruce Funeral Home](#).

**Marilyn Marie James**

Marilyn Marie James, 57, passed away Dec. 7, 2020.

Marilyn was born Nov. 19, 1963, in Talihina, Okla., to Juanita (Melton) and Robert Wallace James Sr.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Eddie James and Roger James; step-father Archie Meashintubby; and step-brother Norris Meashintubby.

Marilyn is survived by her husband Lucas Rodriguez; children Dave James and spouse Jacki, Crystal Thompson, Melissa Martin and spouse Steven, and Christopher James; 16 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; siblings Bobby James and spouse Denise, George James and spouse Lawanda, Lisa Beto Rodriguez, Shelly Renee Ludlow, and Delbert James; step-brother Archie Meashintubby; as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and extended family.

For the full obituary, please visit [McCarn Funeral Home](#).

**Mary Ann Collins**

Mary Ann Collins, 75, passed away Dec. 9, 2020.

Mary was born June 25, 1945, in Waurika, Okla., to Frank and Clara (Moore) McLellan.

She was preceded in death by her parents; daughter Cheryl Aden; granddaughter Denise Linderman; five brothers; and a sister.

Mary is survived by daughter Frances Roberts and spouse Geary; grandchildren Michelle Nichole Roberts and fiancé Steven Cappel, Annjelica Hope (Aden) Lindsey, and Sidney Aden; and a host of other family and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Alexander Gray Funeral Home](#).

**Jo Alice Stall**

Jo Alice Stall, 89, passed away Dec. 8, 2020.

Jo was born March 24, 1931, in Stonewall, Okla., to Russell Lee and Eva Alton (Thompson) Hale.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers; and husband Joe.

Jo is survived by children Leslie Widener and spouse Terry, Roxanne Hamilton and spouse Vernon, Celia Meadows and spouse Kendall, Doug Stall and spouse Jo Ann, and Eric Stall and spouse Teri; 15 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Moore Funeral Home – Southlawn Chapel](#).

**Timothy J. Moody**

Timothy J. Moody, 58, passed away Dec. 25, 2020.

Timothy was born March 6, 1962, in McAlester, Okla., to W.O. Moody Jr. and Wanda (Dyke) Moody.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and nephew Thomas William Bedford.

Timothy is survived by his brother W.O. Moody III and spouse Vicky; sister Susan Bedford and spouse Eugene; nephews John Moody and spouse Vivian, and Oscar Moody and spouse Jennifer; nieces Megan Moody, Regena Bedford, and Tammy Stockton and spouse James; numerous great-nieces and great-nephews, other family and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Bishop Funeral Home](#).

Dollie Jean Scott

Dollie Jean Scott, 80, passed away Nov. 27, 2020.

Dollie was born Feb. 14, 1940, in Talihina, Okla., to Ranes Rufus Coley and Lela (Yota) Coley.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Leroy Scott; brothers Cecil Coley, Solomon Coley, Wilburn Coley, and John Coley; and sister Sue Jefferson.

Dollie is survived by her son Daniel Coley and spouse Jessica; sister Bydia Pope; brother Joe Coley and spouse Mary; special buddy Malachi Coley; along with numerous nieces, nephews, and other family and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Jones Harkins Funeral Home](#).

**Leonard Leon Brokeshoulder**

Leonard Leon Brokeshoulder, 57, passed away July 15, 2020.

Leonard was born Aug. 29, 1962, in Ardmore, Okla., to Eugene Brokeshoulder and Frances (Parnacher) Brokeshoulder.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and his wife Wynoka S. Brokeshoulder.

Leonard is survived by daughters Christina Gore, and Chasity Jackson and spouse Ben; grandsons Spencer Gore and Chaio Jackson; sister Terri Ramirez and spouse Mike; and brother Darrell Brokeshoulder and spouse Janice.

For the full obituary, please visit [Griffin-Hillcrest Funeral home](#).

**Angela Ann Sharp**

Angela Ann Sharp, 45, passed away Oct. 2, 2020.

Angela was born Nov. 11, 1974, in Talihina, Okla., to Roger Sharp and Leota (Wilson) Phillips.

She was preceded in death by her father; grandparents Melton and Flora Wilson, and Marietta and Ovan Sharp.

Angela is survived by her son Jacob Boyanton and spouse Katie; her mother; siblings Lavon Hoyle and spouse David, and Daniel Wiley; nieces Shai Hunter and spouse Anthony, and Madelyn Hoyle; great-nieces Caroline Hunter, and soon to be born Kennedy Hunter; special friend Wayne Gunn; and best friend Lisa Adams.

For the full obituary, please visit [Bunch-Singleton Funeral Home](#).

**Carol Ann Helen McClure**

Carol Ann Helen McClure, 66, passed away Sept. 12, 2020.

Carol was born June 14, 1954, in Tulsa, Okla., to Dorothy Carolyn Waul McClure and Charles Grover McClure.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her aunt and second mother Helen Waul Bixler; and her grandmother Margaret Porter Waul.

Carol is survived by her children Joseph Charles Brussel; Leo Anthony Brussel, Abdullah Al Daffaie, and Laura Mae Brussel; cousin Sandy French and her daughter Jackie French Sacbabit, along with Jackie's son Talex; “little sister” Corrie Santos; and best friend Kathleen Sexton.

For the full obituary, please visit [Olinger Funeral, Cremation & Cemetery – Chapel Hill](#).

**Marsha Nan Purtell**

Marsha Nan Purtell, 69, passed away Nov. 16, 2020.

Marsha was born April 14, 1951, in Bethesda, MD, to Marcella Welois (Furry) Regan and Frank Clinton Regan.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and brother John Patrick Regan.

Marsha is survived by her husband Vaughn Clinton Purtell; son Clinton Tyler Purtell and spouse Amber; grandchildren Brooklyn Paige Purtell, Jacquelyn Nichole Purtell, and Clinton “Chip” Harrison Purtell; brothers Charles Regan and Bob Regan; nephews Jason Regan, John Regan, Cody Regan, and Casey Regan; and step-children children Keith Purtell, Jeff Purtell and Claire Purtell.

For the full obituary, please visit [Crawford Funeral Service](#).

**Russell Leland Hale**

Russell “RL” Leland Hale, 91, passed away Jan. 14, 2020. RL was born July 1, 1928, in Stonewall, Okla., to Russell Lee Hale and Eva Alton (Thompson) Hale.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Mary Louise Hale; and brothers Charles Homer Hale and Neville “Nick” Hale.

RL is survived by daughter Vannette McFatridge; grandson Justin McFatridge; daughter-in-law Emily McFatridge; great-grandchildren Jack and Lucy McFatridge; sister Jo Alice (Hale) Stall; and a number of beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw Nation tribal members only and are free of charge.

The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

Family members/individuals may submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspaper through a funeral home service.

Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws. Therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice.

Due to space limitations, there is a 150 word limit for obituaries. The online issue of the Biskinik will contain links to the full obituaries.

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik
PO Box 1210
Durant OK 74702
or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Smith celebrates 92 years



Jane was born on Dec. 24, 1928, to Martin and Ethel Lewis Duncan.

Many happy birthday wishes and kisses were given to Geneva Jane Duncan Smith as she celebrated her 92nd birthday on December 24, at her home in Fanshawe, Oklahoma. Many celebrated with her, including her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, friends and neighbors.

Sells graduates from Texas A&M



Amber Sells graduated Summa Cum Laude from Texas A&M University. She is the daughter of Richard and Nanette Sells of Taylor, Texas.



Nachand-Walker turns 80

Bill (Wickie) Nachand-Walker turned 80 October 15.

Wietelman turns 70



Bill Wietelman turned 70 February 3. Happy Birthday, Billy. He is the son of Newana Ferrall.



Hydens celebrate 25 years

Kelli and Dennis Hyden celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary Jan. 3, 2021.



Photo by Katie Hadley Photography

Oklahoma bridal magazine features Choctaw regalia

The Brides of Oklahoma magazine will be showcasing the traditional Choctaw wedding aesthetic with a modern twist in its 2021 Spring-Summer issue. The multi-page layout with numerous photographs highlights Choctaw regalia, along with trendy wedding pieces, fashion and florals. Choctaw regalia is described in detail along with traditional Choctaw wedding culture, including chants and dance. Choctaw tribal member Beckah Boykin was chosen to be the model for the layout, accompanied by Billy Eagle Road III.

Gibson defends thesis

Justus Gibson has successfully defended his masters thesis in Astrophysics at the University of Colorado, where he is a doctoral candidate. He is the son of Michael Gibson and Karen Gibson, the grandson of Bennie and Edna Gibson, late of Finley, Oklahoma and a former honor student at the University of Denver, where he graduated with distinction.



Tuhro celebrates 95 years

Frances McIntosh Tuhro celebrated her 95th birthday on Oct. 20, 2020. She was born in McAlester and lived there for many years while working as a nurse at the West Side Hospital and nursing homes. She had two children, Donna Roberts Davis and Melvin Lawrence Tuhro Jr. After graduating from high school, she attended Southeastern College. She has lived in Wichita, Kansas, for the last thirty years and resides in the Derby Assisted Living and Rehabilitation Center at 732 Klein Cr., Derby, Kansas, 67037. She would be pleased to hear from any of her old schoolmates.



Eller named Nickel's Worth publisher

Heather Eller has been hired as publisher of The Nickel's Worth, a North Idaho classified weekly paper. She has been a part of The Nickel's Worth for 14 years, leading classified ad sales and managing the website and business operations for most of her time with the publication.

Eller is the granddaughter of the late Norman Brian Watson Sr. and Shirley Watson of Kellogg, Idaho, and the daughter of Norman Brian Watson Jr. HMC/FMF/USN, retired, and Joyce Watson of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The Choctaw Career Development Program helped her in her career path by providing assistance with gaining her certification in Web and Graphic Design.

Griffin graduates from OCCC

Brooke Marie Griffin graduated from Oklahoma City Community College with a degree in nursing. Brooke wants to thank the Choctaw Nation for their support.



Garcia graduates RN school



Richelle Lee (Hankins) Garcia has graduated from Glendale Community College as a registered nurse. Richelle is married to Juan Garcia. They have two sons and one daughter. Richelle is the daughter of Richard Lee Hankins and the late Vangie Hankins, and granddaughter of the late Flora Mae Winship Hankins and Luther and Poppy Hankins. Richelle would like to thank the tribe for their support.



50 years for Williams

Doug and Scheryl (Winter) Williams celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on December 21, 2020.

Doug attended Murray State College. He served in the United States Navy, United States Air Force, and the Army Reserves. Following discharge, he worked for Total Petroleum Refinery, Ardmore Fire Department and Hill-Rom. He was also the fire chief at the Ardmore Airpark. He retired in 2012.

Scheryl attended college at East Central University and Southeastern Oklahoma University. She worked for Maxwell Avenue Church of Christ for 11 years and Mental Health Services of Southern Oklahoma as Human Resources Manager for 22 years before retiring in February 2020. The photo was taken by their grandchildren, Zan and Remi Williams.

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You should consider being screened using a Low-Dose CT Scan if you have all three of these risk factors:

1. 55 to 80 years old

2. Current smoker or former smoker who quit less than 15 years ago

3. A smoking history of at least 30 pack-years (this means one pack a day for 30 years or two packs a day for 15 years, etc.)

If you are in the high risk category, talk to your physician about whether screening is beneficial for you.

For more information:

Choctaw Nation Health Services Low-Dose CT Program

(800) 349-7026 ext. 6440

Choctaw Nation

Health Services



Location	Days	Hours
Antlers 580-298-3161	1st & 2nd Tue. Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Atoka 580-889-5825	Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Battiest 580-241-5458	1st Tue. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Broken Bow 580-584-2746	Tue. & Thur. (except for Battiest & Smithville days)	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Durant 580-920-2100 x-83582	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Hugo 580-326-9707	Daily Mon. - Fri	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Idabel 580-286-2600 x-41113	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
McAlester 918-423-6335	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Poteau 918-649-1106	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Smithville 580-244-3289	1st Thur. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Spiro 918-962-5134	Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Stigler 918-867-4211	Mon. & Tue.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Talihina 918-567-7000 x-6792	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wilburton 918-465-5641	Mon. & Fri.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Mobile Clinic	Tues., Wed., & Thurs.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Building Healthy Families Through Good Nutrition

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February 2021

All markets open weekdays, February 1-24

Closed: February 15, 25 and 26.

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Participants can request a calendar at their location.

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BROKEN BOW_109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842

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POTEAU 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431

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WIC van travel has been postponed. If you need assistance, please call 580-380-3628 or 580-380-9895 Ext. 83582.

ITI FABVSSA

A New Chahta Homeland: A History by the Decade, 1830-1840

Over the next year and a half, Iti Fabvssa is running a new series that covers Oklahoma Choctaw history. By examining each decade since Choctaw arrival in our new homelands using Choctaw-created documents, we will get a better understanding of Choctaw ancestors' experiences and how they made decisions that have led us into the present. This month, we will be covering 1830-1840, a period when Choctaws responded to removal and established themselves in the new homeland.

The Choctaw were the first of the Southeastern Tribes to experience removal, giving this deadly experience the name "Trail of Tears and Death." For Choctaws, the Trail of Tears would last for more than 70 years, with groups periodically being removed from the Choctaw homeland to Indian Territory up until 1903. However, the biggest group, approximately 12,000 people, made the journey in 1830-1834.

Between 1830-1840, the Choctaw Nation faced the monumental task of reestablishing its government, social structure, and economy in a new land. Removal was a period filled with losses but also rapid adaptation and learning from the experiences before, during, and after removal. The first of the Five Tribes to be removed from our homeland, Choctaws' experiences were particularly difficult due to the U.S. government's failure to provide adequate supplies and uncoordinated planning throughout the westward journey. Nevertheless, in the new homeland that Choctaws owned collectively, they persevered and succeeded in reuniting as communities with new sets of relations with the land and peoples living there. This first decade was critical to rebuilding their nation.

Before the U.S. Congress signed the 1830 Indian Removal Act, Choctaws had signed numerous treaties with the United States that laid the groundwork for possible removal. Yet, Choctaw leadership negotiated these treaties in the hopes that removal would not be inevitable. The 1820 Treaty of Doak's Stand exchanged part of the Choctaw homeland for land west of the Mississippi River. In exchange for half of the ancestral homeland, the western parcel of land included the land now known as western Arkansas. An estimated 2,000 Choctaws moved to these western lands before the Trail of Tears removal. Despite this treaty, Euro-American settlers continued to pressure Choctaws into ceding more land. This ultimately resulted in Choctaws and U.S. officials signing the 1830 Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek on September 27, 1830.

One of the most significant elements of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was securing the new Choctaw homeland in fee simple. As a legal title regarding the property, fee simple made landownership more straightforward and uncontested. At the time, it was unusual for an Indigenous nation to own their land this way. Choctaw treaty negotiators' insistence that Choctaws own the new homeland in fee simple is a stunning result of the Choctaw emphasis on education in both Choctaw and western traditions. Choctaw negotiators were trained in the western legal system and used this education to protect Choctaw sovereignty in dealing with the U.S. government. This was a critical decision that continues to support Choctaw sovereignty today. Another innovation regarding the land title was the decision to have the entire Choctaw Nation collectively own our new homeland. Since land belonged to all Choctaw people in Indian Territory, this ensured that individual Choctaws could not give away or sell the land to U.S. settlers. Just as previous Choctaw leaders had done for thousands of years, leaders allocated people enough land to live and create a livelihood for themselves. Families were provided only enough land that they could responsibly manage and improve. If a family left their farm and home, it would become free for anyone else to use. This ensured that everyone had ample supplies to live.

Choctaws were organized into three districts in the homeland. When it came to removal, most Choctaws moved with local leaders who decided which district leader to follow. This helps to explain why there were numerous waves of removal. The first wave of removals began in October 1831. Later waves occurred throughout 1832-1834, 1838, and throughout 1844-1855. Some Choctaws remained behind in the homeland, opting to live under discriminatory Mississippi law. In exchange for their homeland, removed Choctaws held the U.S. to its promise that they would be allowed to live undisturbed by Euro-American settlers that consistently tried to seize Choctaw lands for themselves. They would also remain their own nation, politically separate from the U.S., and would never become a part of any state. With these treaty terms, Choctaws worked together to get to the new homeland and rebuild their lives aligned with the values of their ancestors.

Removal caused catastrophic losses within the numerous Choctaw communities. The removal journey was particularly devastating to elders and children and many of them passed away during the journey. The loss of these community members was terrible because it meant the loss of knowledge keepers and the next generation. As a result, some of the knowledge and political processes that Choctaw ancestors had maintained for thousands of years could not be continued because people were focused on surviving. One such example is the collapse of the clan structure in part because people traveled in family groups rather than entire communities. This would lay the groundwork for Christian churches to become centers of the community later on. To recover from these losses, Choctaw leaders worked hard to reorganize as a government so they could provide for their people.



Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division.
Nanih Waiya Council House, date unknown.

On June 3, 1834, Choctaws passed their first post-removal constitution, which was primarily drafted by Peter Pitchlynn. This was the second constitution in Choctaw Nation history. Just like in the homeland, the Choctaw Nation was organized into three districts. In the new territory, these districts were named after prominent Choctaw leaders: Moshulatubbee, Apukshunnubbee, and Pushmataha. Each of these districts elected a Head Chief known as a minko. Lower-level chiefs were known as captains. Similar to the government of the homeland, the three districts largely acted independent of one another, coming together as needed. They also built a council house in the new capitol, which they named Nanih Waiya after the Mother Mound of the homeland.

To address problems that existed in the homeland and to prevent similar future ones, General Council passed numerous laws to protect the integrity of Choctaw Nation. The first law passed by the General Council was in 1834 regarding the sale of whiskey. In the homeland, alcohol was a problem because white settlers had used it to coerce individual Choctaws into unfavorable agreements that often ultimately resulted in land loss. In 1836, Council passed an act "declaring the punishment for selling land." The numerous laws focused on property indicate serious concerns about being able to maintain control over land. Still reeling from the loss of the homeland, General Council passed laws that ensured Choctaw control over the new territory. While treaties secured the title, Choctaw leaders were conscious of the fact that the U.S. might not implement treaties as stated.

One particularly important instance of this U.S. failure to honor treaty terms involved the Chickasaws. Choctaws had not even begun their westward journey when they began to hear rumblings about possibly selling part of their new homeland. In September 1831, before Choctaws

had even begun their journey, President Andrew Jackson charged Indian Agents with the task of convincing Choctaws to sell 4,500,000 acres of their newly acquired land in Indian Territory to the Chickasaws. At that time, those negotiations failed, but it would not be the last attempt at a land sale. The Chickasaws' 1837 removal treaty stated that they would move once they found land comparable to their homeland. Chickasaw leaders failed to find land they liked, so they turned to negotiating with Choctaws for land despite having been enemies during periods of their shared history. In January 1837, Choctaws and Chickasaws signed a treaty at Doaksville (near Fort Towson) to create a Chickasaw District within Choctaw Nation. Rather than being their own separate political entity with negotiating power akin to the Choctaws, Chickasaws would become a part of the Choctaw Nation, and the two would negotiate with the United States together. Chickasaws were the last of the Five Tribes to leave their homeland in the East for Indian Territory. By 1838, Chickasaws began moving through Choctaw territory to become a part of the Choctaw Nation. This marked a new chapter in Choctaw history with new challenges in a new territory.

Next month, we will cover the period of 1840-1850, where Choctaws developed a new economy and reformed their government numerous times to best address these new challenges. Additional reading resources on this period are available on the Choctaw Nation Cultural Services webpage at <https://choctawnationculture.com/choctaw-culture/additional-resources.aspx>. Follow along with this Iti Fabvssa series in print and online at <https://www.choctawnation.com/history-culture/history/iti-fabvssa>. If you have questions or would like more information on the sources, please contact Megan Baker at meganb@choctawnation.com.

Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

Our second year to implement the lawn care service is about to begin. Get your application in now!

To be eligible, you must be Choctaw, be at least 65 years of age, or have a documented ambulatory disability, and meet low-income guidelines. You will be eligible if you own your home and also if you rent your home but are liable for lawn care. Once eligibility is established, you will be given a booklet of 20 vouchers. Each voucher will be worth \$25.

This program will be similar to the storm shelter program. You will give the voucher to the person you choose to mow your yard, who will then redeem it with the Housing Authority. You can choose anyone you want to mow your yard as long as they are at least 16 years of age.






An example of how this will work is as follows: Your yard costs \$45 to mow. You would need to give the mower a \$25 voucher and \$20 to pay for the service, saving you over half of what you would pay for lawn care last year. There will be enough vouchers to mow your lawn on average every ten days from April 1 through October. So, even though you may need to mow weekly in May and June, you may only need four total vouchers through July and August. This gives you the flexibility to use them as you need them.

If you have questions or need an application, contact Derek Wesley at 580-326-7521. The Housing Authority applications are also online and at your local community centers.


Choctaw Nation

Housing Authority

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Choctaw Nation Cultural Services




INDEPENDENT ELDER HOUSING

1-800-235-3087 | Application available at your local Community Center

Choctaw Nation

Housing Authority



STUDENT SCHOOL AND ACTIVITY FUND

The Choctaw Nation offers a \$100 grant to Choctaw tribal students who are attending 3-year-old head start through high school. The grant is provided one time each funding year and will be on a Visa card specifically for clothing; it will be declined at ATMs, gas stations, restaurants, movie theaters, etc.

The Student School and Activity Fund Program current funding year is November 1 to May 1.
Applications can be submitted online.

APPLICATIONS OPEN NOVEMBER 1, 2020

CONTACT
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/STUDENT-SCHOOL-AND-ACTIVITY-FUND-SSAF
800-522-6170 EXT 2175 OR 2463

Choctaw Nation Student School & Activity Fund

Heart health at the forefront in February

By Chris Jennings

Nine years after suffering a heart attack, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the first federal proclamation designating February as American Heart Month.

Heart disease kills more people than all forms of cancer combined, and heart attacks affect more people every year than the population of Dallas, Texas. While 83% of people believe that heart attacks can be prevented, not everyone is motivated to do anything about it.

For over half a century, American Heart Month has been used to get more families, friends and communities involved in improving their heart health, an improvement that the Native American and Alaskan Native communities desperately need.

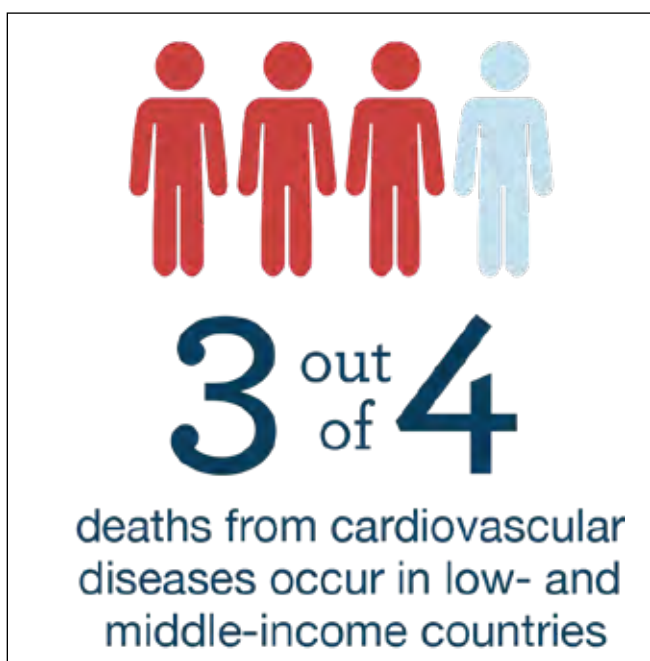
Native hearts

According to a statement from the American Heart Association in 2020, heart disease rates are about 50% higher among the 5.2 million people in the United States who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native.

“Racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. have suffered from inequitable policies for hundreds of years. These policies have contributed to mistrust in the traditional health care system,” Dr. Khadijah Breathett, chair of the statement’s writing committee, said in a news release.

Poor heart health can be attributed to many other health issues. An estimated 30% to 40% of American Indians are obese, a significant contributor to type 2 diabetes. The Strong Heart Study, cited in the statement, found some of the risks for obesity and diabetes are inherited.

By focusing on getting families actively involved in their health, the Native public improves future generations’ heart health.



someone has a heart attack or experiences another symptom that they discover they have heart disease.

It’s not all bad news, however. The Strong Heart Study, a long-term investigation by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute spanning 25 years, recently showed that new heart disease cases dropped among the study’s Native participants. “Heart disease is the number one killer in this community, and any downward trend in new cases is heartening,” said Barbara Howard Ph.D., a principal investigator for the SHS.

In part, the drop can be attributed to information about cardiovascular disease and its risk factors received by study participants. Participants were then referred for medical treatment if they presented with risk factors or conditions such as high cholesterol or blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease.

Howard said several factors could be responsible for the downturns. “Improvements in healthcare access, quality of care, medication adherence or positive lifestyle changes could all be playing a role.”

Heart disease and COVID-19

These studies highlight the need for greater awareness about medical conditions and lifestyle habits that are precursors to heart disease. This awareness could also help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Across the country, Native Americans, along with African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos, are experiencing the highest rates of illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19. A CDC report issued in November 2020 showed that Native Americans experienced 1.8 times the cases, four times the hospitalizations and 2.6 times the death rates when compared to white, non-Hispanic persons.

Having heart disease has been shown to increase the risk of complications of COVID-19. Data shows that the condition can lead to heart damage, secondary to lung failure and lack of enough oxygen in the tissue to sustain bodily functions. Another concern is those who have a heart condition but are afraid to see a doctor for regular treatments out of fear of being exposed to the virus.

The physicians of the Choctaw Nation Family Medicine Residency Clinic said in a statement, “We know that COVID-19 can have long-lasting effects on the heart. Those without the virus may also experience increased stress or find themselves more sedentary due to social distancing and fewer opportunities to participate in public activities. We are likely to see the pandemic’s effects

on heart health for years to come.

CNHS has worked hard to continue the practice of preventive medicine, including telehealth for routine checkups, to keep our patients healthy and safe. The concern for exposure to COVID-19 exists for us all; however, symptoms concerning heart disease should be addressed immediately with a physician.”

The solution

The good news is that heart disease is preventable in most cases. With healthy choices, including not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol and getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week, patients can improve their heart health.

Knowing the risk factors for heart disease is key to tackling heart health with your family as a team. Each risk factor increases your chances of having heart disease, so by eliminating just one, you’re improving your chances.

Some of the risks of heart disease are:

- High blood pressure**
 Nearly half of all adults in the United States have high blood pressure. High blood pressure usually has no signs or symptoms, but it does have consequences. The only way to know if you’re at risk for high blood pressure is to know your numbers.
 Monitor your blood pressure at home and check with your doctor on the proper technique.
 - High cholesterol**
 Heart-healthy eating involves choosing certain foods, such as fruits and vegetables, while limiting others, such as saturated and trans fats and added sugars.
 Start slow and make your favorite meals more heart-healthy by switching out ingredients high in saturated and trans fats. Cutting foods with added sugar is the next step.
 - Overweight or obese**
 A healthy body mass index is usually between 18.5 and 24.9. There are several tools online and on your smartphone to calculate your BMI.
 The little things add up when going for a healthier weight. An extra ten pounds adds more than 30 pounds of force to your knees, causing aches and pains.
 - Smoking**
 According to the American Heart Association, nearly 32% of American Indians and Alaska Natives use tobacco, a rate double that of other U.S. ethnic populations.
 Many hospitals, workplaces and community groups offer classes to help people quit smoking. For free help quitting smoking, you can call the National Cancer Institute’s Smoking Quitline at 1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848).
 - Do not get regular physical activity**
 Small changes can make a big difference in your physical activity. Taking the stairs, parking farther away from your destination and getting up and taking breaks from your computer all add up. By starting with just one of these, you can eventually aim to move for at least two and a half hours each week.
 Always consult with your physician about what types of physical activity are safe for you.
- By taking charge of your family’s health, you can ensure everybody lives healthier, happier and longer.



Poor heart health

Cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke combined) kills about 2,300 people a day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the term “heart disease” refers to several types of heart conditions. These include arrhythmia, cardiomyopathy and coronary artery disease. The latter is the most common heart disease type in the United States.

Despite the many Americans coping with diabetes, obesity, and excessive alcohol use, it’s often not until

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Income requirement: Earn no more than 80% of the national median income as determined by HUD.

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Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

CHOCTAW YOUTH ARTIST REGISTRY PROGRAM

SIGN-UP TODAY!

For registration: <https://bit.ly/3mH9pw4>

For questions: artistregistry@choctawnation.com

TEEN DATING AWARENESS

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. 1 in 3 teens will experience some form of dating abuse. Everyone deserves a safe and healthy relationship. It’s time to take action, talk to a friend in need, and share resources.

If you or someone you know has a question about your relationship or a friend’s relationship, please contact:

Choctaw Nation Family Violence Prevention Program
1-800-522-6170

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

BREAK THE SILENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Choctaw Nation Family Violence Prevention Program wants you to know that you deserve to be safe and free from intimate partner violence in your home, relationships and communities. If someone you love is a victim of abuse or violence, reach out! Let them know they are not alone! There is help for victims through the Choctaw Nation Family Violence Prevention Program. Together we’re more!

Know the signs of domestic violence, get involved. Visit choctawnation.com/domestic-violence or call 1-800-522-6170 for more information.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Luxury lakeside living awaits in Pittsburg county

By Christian Toews

Imagine a beautiful park right outside your front door. You are watching a breathtaking sunset over the lake from your porch, cozied up with loved ones in a luxury lakeside villa. Great food and activities are all within walking distance. That may sound like a destination in Italy or France, but you can actually enjoy all of that right here in Oklahoma.

While taking a vacation to Europe might be out of the question right now, you do not need to leave the country, or the state for that matter, to enjoy an idyllic getaway. Located on Lake Eufaula in Pittsburg County is the resort town of Carlton Landing. The Choctaw Nation’s northern territory holds many unique places, and Lake Eufaula is no exception.

Lake Eufaula holds the title of Oklahoma’s largest lake. According to the official Oklahoma Travel and Tourism website, TravelOK.com, the lake covers 105,500 surface acres with 800 miles of shoreline.

According to the website, Carlton Landing was developed by Grant and Jen Humphreys.

For more than 15 years, Grant and Jen Humphreys had vacationed in and around Seaside, Florida. Seaside’s charm, convenience and sense of community were unlike anything they had found in Oklahoma. Still, an extended stay was needed to justify the 16-hour drive or airline tickets necessary to get there.

One day, as Grant was driving through land he had recently purchased on Lake Eufaula, he thought aloud, “What if we created a Seaside-like community right here on the lake and close to home?”

With that thought, the vision for Carlton Landing was born.

This beautifully developed shorefront community has been established for almost a decade now. While most homes in Carlton Landing are residents who want lakefront property or a vacation home on the lake, there are also many rental properties available for vacationers from around the country.

Sarah Tunnell is the Director of Marketing for Carlton Landing and the Director of the Carlton Landing Foundation. She says they currently have around 300 homes in Carlton Landing, with 60 vaca-



Submitted photos

According to Sarah Tunnell, because the homes and rental properties in Carlton Landing are built with their driveways in the back of the house, your front door opens onto a green space. This makes it very safe for children.

tion rental properties.

There are many ways to enjoy your time at Carlton Landing. With parks, nature trails, pools, hot tubs, kayak rentals and more, there is never a lack of things to do.

If getting cozy inside is more of your style, various luxury properties are available to rent for the weekend or longer.

According to Tunnell, one of the main things people love about the community is the development’s thoughtfulness.

“Carlton Landing is designed for people rather than cars. Everything is designed for walkability. Kids can run out the front door straight onto a green space,” she said.

This convenience and abundance of open areas make it ideal for everyone to enjoy.

There are two main restaurants within the town. One is a top-notch pizza parlor with outdoor seating. The other restaurant is called The

Meeting House and serves food and drinks for all age groups. These are both great places to relax and unwind after enjoying the lake, trails, parks and pools.

Once a month during the winter and every Saturday during the warmer months, Carlton Landing invites local vendors to set up pop-up shops. These include food vendors, boutiques, fresh veggies, other locally grown product and more.

If that isn’t enough to entice you to stop by sometime, Carlton Landing also hosts many community events throughout the year, such as movie nights out in a park, floral workshops and even concerts. All these events are open to residents, guests and the public.

You might be thinking about getting away for a weekend or looking for the perfect spot to build that summer house. Either way, Carlton Landing is an excellent choice. Without traveling far, you can experience the luxuries of lakefront property in a picturesque setting.

When asked what she would tell someone who was considering renting there, Tunnell said, “I’d say give it a try. There are so many people who have found it to be their happy place.”

If you would like more information about Carlton Landing, you can visit carltonlanding.com. To find out more about Lake Eufaula and the surrounding area, you can visit www.travelok.com.



Left: Carlton Landing has three pools and a hot tub within the neighborhood. These amenities can be accessed by guests as well as residents.

Below: An aerial view of Carlton Landing. The person who designed Seaside, Florida (Where The Truman Show was filmed), also designed Carlton Landing according to Sarah Tunnell.



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STAR PROGRAM

SUCCESS THROUGH ACADEMIC RECOGNITION



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• ALL A'S: \$25 GIFT CARD	• ALL B'S: \$10 GIFT CARD
• ALL A'S & B'S: \$10 GIFT CARD	• PERFECT ATTENDANCE: \$25 GIFT CARD

AWARDING PERIOD: FALL, DEC 1 - MAR 1 | SPRING, MAY 1 - SEP 1

STARAPPLICATION.CHOCTAWNATION.COM
800-522-6170 EXT 2581 OR 2971

 Choctaw Nation STAR Program

CHAHTA HOMESTEAD PROJECT: 1830-1930



HOMESTEADS | OLD SCHOOLS | CHURCHES FAMILY HISTORY | PHOTOGRAPHS

Our project aims to bring together the information we do know with community knowledge to stitch together a map of the Choctaw Nation's early landscape. This project will help protect historical sites from getting destroyed, preserve family history for future generations and increase our understanding of life after the Removal.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!
What are you interested in learning from this project?
Do you have information to provide?

Choctaw Nation Cultural Services

Burial assistance program helps families during times of loss

By Shelia Kirven

No one is ever ready to say goodbye to a loved one. It is one of the hardest things in life to endure. The shock and grief after a loss can be severe and disabling. On top of dealing with emotional pain, there is also a long list of things that need to be done, including the immediate need to take care of a funeral and burial for the person who was lost.

The year 2020 was challenging, and far too many suffered the loss of family members or friends. The Choctaw Nation Burial Assistance Program assisted 760 families in need last year. Clint Rogers, Director of the Burial Assistance Program, said, “Our numbers saw a direct increase from the COVID pandemic.”

The department saw noticeable differences in how services and plans were made for loved ones once the pandemic hit. For example, staff noticed an increase in cremations, so services could be postponed until it is safe to gather with others. Rogers said some funeral homes did not do services at all except by online viewing. Sadly, some who have passed in larger cities are still awaiting services to this day. Rogers commented, “Loved ones most vulnerable missed that family interaction at a time when most needed. This has even more impact on multiple fronts, too numerous to count.”

Many times, family members wait until death occurs to make plans for their loved ones. It is always wise to have that conversation within your family and have a plan in the event of the unthinkable. Being prepared can help family members in making plans and decisions, relieving them of the task when grief, stress and discomfort make it so difficult.

It is a good idea to have a plan and to know where important documents for your loved ones are kept. Documents that may be needed include, but are not limited to, health records, insurance policies, living will, birth certificate, citizenship records, military service and discharge papers, marriage certificate and social security card.

Know which funeral home you wish to use and take care of funeral arrangements in advance if possible. Also, a list of those persons to notify and their phone numbers should be accessible to family members.

The Choctaw Nation has two options available for burial assistance if it is needed. Once the burial application is received, program staff will determine if the applicant falls within the eligibility guidelines for either program, then will correspond with the funeral home to determine which program is better suited for the tribal member.

Once an application has been approved, the Burial Assistance Program will pay the specific portion awarded directly to the funeral home. Program staff will work with the funeral home to obtain all required documents for expenses to help lessen the burden on the family.

The Tribal Burial Program aids families of eligible deceased Choctaw tribal members who live within the United States. The program is intended to alleviate the financial hardship and burden associated with the funeral, burial or cremation costs for families with little or no resources. All applicants must meet certain requirements to be eligible for services. The program is not an entitlement program.

- Eligibility requirements for the Tribal Burial Program are:
- Applicant must notify Burial Assistance Department at the time of death.
- Applications must be received within 30 days of passing.
- Choctaw tribal membership and CDIB cards must be submitted for the deceased.
- Valid social security card for the deceased must be submitted.
- Final funeral home itemized statement with an unpaid balance will be required.
- Certified copy of the death certificate must be submitted.

The Choctaw Nation is authorized to use Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Burial Assistance funding when applicable. This program is intended for families who have no resources available to them. Funeral homes are obligated to accept these funds as payment in full for service rendered. Services are limited and cannot be altered in any way.

Eligibility guidelines for the BIA Program are:

- Must reside within the Choctaw Nation territory.
- Must be a member of any federally recognized tribe, verified by a tribal membership card, and have a valid CDIB card.
- The deceased may not have resources (life insurance, veteran’s benefits, cash, savings accounts, etc.)
- Residential verification that the deceased has lived within the Choctaw Nation territory for six months prior to the date of death must be submitted.
- Must supply a utility bill or mail with physical location listed address as proof of residency.
- Proof of income for the deceased is required.

If you or your family would like to visit with the staff of the Burial Assistance Program, please call 800-522-6170. You can also access program information on our website at <https://www.choctawnation.com/tribal-services/member-services/tribal-burial-program>.

GROWING HOPE PROGRAM 2021 APPLICATION FOR TRADITIONAL CHOCTAW SEEDS

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- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isito
Choctaw Sweet Potato Squash | <input type="checkbox"/> Tvnishi
Lambsquarter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tanchi Tohbi
Choctaw Flour Corn | <input type="checkbox"/> Hakchuma
Perique Tobacco |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tobi
Smith Peas | |

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Mail this form to:
Growing Hope Project
163665 N 4355 RD
Tushkahoma, OK 74574

Contact:
Growing Hope Program Manager
580-380-9397

Seeds from the Growing Hope Project are intended for Choctaw people and family members. They will be given out on a first come, first served basis while supplies last.

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CLEAN AND DISINFECT FREQUENTLY TOUCHED OBJECTS AND SURFACES

STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK, EXCEPT TO GET MEDICAL CARE

WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS

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COVID-19 VACCINE FOR TRIBAL MEMBERS

Eligible Tribal Members can call for an appointment to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. To view current eligibility requirements, visit our website, **choctawnation.com/covid-19**

**FOR APPOINTMENTS, CALL:
800-349-7026, EXT. 6**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

February 2021

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Biskinik Mission Statement:
To serve as the source of information for Choctaw Nation tribal members by delivering community news through a variety of communication channels.

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