COVID-19 vaccination continues

By Sheila Kiven

The Choctaw Nation Health Care Services Authority had administered 31,307 total COVID-19 vaccinations as of May 18.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that over 210 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been given in the United States as of May 15.

These seem like staggering numbers, and things are improving somewhat, but there is still much to be done to get the pandemic under control. In order to achieve herd immunity in the United States, more people need to be vaccinated, and recommendations from the medical community still need to be observed and followed.

The New York Times reported on May 6 that the U.S. was still recording almost 50,000 new cases of COVID-19 infection per day and around 750 daily deaths.

In the United States, over 124 million people have been fully vaccinated, meaning they have had both doses of the vaccine. However, there is still a large percentage of the American population not vaccinated, many with underlying health issues which make them more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus and possibly with severe complications.

The vaccines also have not yet been approved for use in children under 16. However, the vaccine has been approved for use in children aged 12 to 15.

The CDC guidelines state that those who have received vaccinations are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.

Although there is evidence the vaccine is working in the U.S., people must continue to follow the guidelines and recommendations of our health care professionals. Please reach out to a health care professional if you have questions or concerns about COVID-19 or the available vaccines.

How to find a COVID-19 Vaccine:

• Call the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority at 1-800-349-7026.
• Visit https://www.choctawhealth.org/locations for an Indian Health Service facility (IHS) near you.
• Search vaccines.gov.
• Text your zip code to 888222.

Check your local pharmacy’s website or call the pharmacy to see if vaccinations are available. Find out which pharmacies are participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program.

Contact your state health department or visit https://covid19.universityofarkansas.edu/vaccination-sites/.

If you are placed on a waiting list, be sure to ask if you can receive a call if someone ahead of you cancels. This may move you up quicker on the list.


The Biskinik spoke with Cynthia Doane, Doctor of Pharmacy, and manager of the COVID-19 vaccination clinic for the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Doane answered our questions about the importance of being vaccinated against Covid-19.

Why is it so important to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

“COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness. Getting the vaccine will help you, as well as others in your household and community by reducing the threat of COVID-19 transmission. These vaccines were made using processes that have been developed and tested over many years. Safety is top priority when it comes to getting vaccinations, and this is why the process was so rigorous for the vaccine and the possibility of potentially being hospitalized. Clinical trials for all vaccines were approved for use, including the COVID-19 vaccines that we are using today.

COVID-19’s herd immunity threshold level is not yet known. Most estimates have placed the threshold at 60-70%, according to the peer-reviewed science journal Nature. We are seeing this happening in parts of the world, but we are striving to get the vaccine into as many people as possible so that immunity is reached, and our lives can return to normal.”

Is the Johnson & Johnson vaccine safe to take since it was put on hold for a short time?

“Yes. The pause has been lifted from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and it has been approved and deemed safe, per the CDC, to give to our patients again.”

Are we offering all three vaccines, and can someone choose which one they would prefer to receive when making their appointment?

“We do offer all three, but each clinic may only carry certain brands. For example, if you want the Pfizer brand, you have to come to Talihina to receive that one.”

Where can our readers get the vaccine?

“We have the vaccine available here at the hospital, as well as all of our clinics. We do not offer the Plasma vaccine only at the hospital location. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are offered at the clinic sites. Most communities are also offering of vaccine to local health departments, as well as community and retail pharmacy.”

(“You do not need to be a patient or Native American to receive a COVID vaccine from the Choctaw Nation.”)

Can I get COVID-19 after I have been vaccinated?

“Yes. It is still possible to contract COVID-19 after being vaccinated. Vaccination only protects you from getting the virus, not from coming into contact with it.”

If I have been vaccinated but my child has not, should I still socialize distance from others and wear a mask to protect my child?

“Yes. We are trying to get out into the communities as much as possible to offer the vaccine. It is important for not only vaccinated people but anyone who may have pre-existing conditions to wear a mask and be socially distant.”

Will we see popup vaccine stations at tribal events such as the Labor Day Festival?

“Yes. We are trying to get out into the communities as much as possible to offer the vaccine. It is important for not only vaccinated people but anyone who may have pre-existing conditions to wear a mask and be socially distant.”

How can our readers get the vaccine?

“Contact your state health department or visit https://www.cdc.gov/publichealth-modern-vaccines/vaccines.html. If a group is interested in having a popup vaccine event or is trying to find one, they should call 405-515-7600 (ok.).”

We receive the vaccine?

“Yes. Native Americans are one of the population groups that have been hit the hardest. We do not want to see this virus impacting those communities that are already struggling, and we are trying to get the vaccine into as many people as possible so that immunity is reached, and our lives can return to normal.”

Are Native Americans more susceptible to the virus? Is it vital that we receive the vaccine?

“Yes. Native Americans are one of the population groups that have been hit the hardest. We do not want to see this virus impacting those communities that are already struggling, and we are trying to get the vaccine into as many people as possible so that immunity is reached, and our lives can return to normal.”

What is the importance of being vaccinated?

“The importance of being vaccinated is to help protect ourselves and others by learning how to recognize and fight the virus. If you happen to contract COVID-19 before you had the shot(s), your illness will not be as bad.”

Many people have given blood and been checked for immunities and it shows many people have preexisting conditions such as COPD, or cancer, or an illness where they do not have symptoms, they think that they are well and go around their loved ones that may have pre-existing conditions. A carrier is a person that may actually have the disease but be asymptomatic, having no symptoms at all. Because they do not have any symptoms, they may be unaware that they are carriers, and they can unknowingly pass the disease to them. Unfortunately, it happens often. Many people have given blood and been checked for immunities and it shows they had the virus and never even knew they had it.

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Who will prosecute crimes that occur within Choctaw Nation

- No person within the Choctaw Nation, whether they’re a tribal member or not, is above the law.
- If either the victim or suspect is Native, then the jurisdiction for the prosecution of the crime falls to the Federal Court and/or Tribal Court.

Federal Sentencing

- Per the Federal Violent Crimes Act, a list of violent verbal crimes committed on Reservation lands is under the sole jurisdiction of the FBI to investigate and the U.S. Attorney’s Office to prosecute.
- The United States Attorney’s Office can also prosecute all other felonies, misdemeanors, and even assault onto State lands to prosecute these crimes.

Litigation & Enforcement

- On January 13, 2021, Choctaw Nation Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Cory C. Ortega was appointed to serve as a Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) for the Eastern District of Oklahoma under the United States Attorney’s Office. The goal of the SAUSA appointment is to increase the likelihood that every criminal offense occurring within the Choctaw Reservation is prosecuted.

Tribal Justice System

- The Choctaw Nation has a shared commitment to maintaining public safety and long-term economic prosperity for the Nation and Oklahoma.
- We have no cross-deprivation agreements among federal, state, and tribal jurisdictions, which means that the defense to one case cannot be used in another case.
- The tribal justice system includes police, justice, corrections, and probation and parole.
- There are special considerations, such as the necessity of maintaining law and order and protecting property and persons, and this law enforcement and protection of emergency response forces will continue to be banned and regulated.

Daily Life of the Believer

The believer in God has to practice a routine behavior to maintain a strong spiritual life.

- Start your day with a prayer and Bible reading. The Word of God must reach the heart of the believer. Cognitive understang of the Word does not produce results, it is the right thing that come along. Most sin is not something impulsive. It is something that has been in the thought process before the act is committed. Bible study and Book of Revelation must be the first step in the daily life. To make a daily Bible study habit is a must.

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- **Pastor Olin Williams**

Employee Chaplain

Celebrating fathers

On the third Sunday in June, Americans take time to honor fathers and their role in the family and community.

- First, I want to celebrate the role of fathers, particularly in the lives of their children, and the influence of fathers in society. It is a special day to focus on the important role that fathers play. While not all fathers have their children, for those who do, it is a special day to celebrate the love and support they provide.

- Choctaw Nation fathers are traditionally described as strong protectors. Many generations ago, in Choctaw society, they provided for their families by hunting, making tools and crafts, and raising crops.

- They were also teachers who passed on valuable lessons to their children.

- As I reflect on what a father stands for, I can help but think about my own father, the sacrifice he made, and the wisdom he instilled in me. I look forward to getting to spend time with him this Father’s Day. For so much a father has to offer, the opportunity to continue making memories with my father. Over the years, I have learned so many valuable lessons from him. Without my father, I wouldn’t be the man I am today. He instilled in me the Choctaw values of working hard and caring for others.

- I am counting those lessons as my children, who will hopefully continue the legacy of our ancestors for generations to come.

- On Father’s Day, we must remember that what time this day has with your loved ones. Our time together on this earth is short and precious. Now that we are aware of that, we have the opportunity to celebrate holidays together safely. If you haven’t gotten your vacation yet, I encourage you to do so. Buying healthy and safe in the coming year will allow us more time to spend together.
We require full contact information. Only the writer's name will appear. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all events. News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows. We do not post wedding announcements. Anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not publish independent, personal events, such as birthday parties. If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK or are missing issues, please contact us at ext. 4028. The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation. Copies may be mailed to a single address at $6.00 per year annuity at 5 years, or $70.00 or more annuities. We do not post pesticides or pest control information.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at 580.924.8280 ext. 215, ext. 215B, or email biskinik@choctawnation.com. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s Indian Credit Association is a dedicated source of financial support for Oklahoma’s Tribes. The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, student loan, and housing improvements and small businesses.

Visit website—https://bbbcamp.org

Take a stroll through Broken Bow, Robbers Cave, and more.}

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<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
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<td>YOUTH &amp; KIDS SUMMER CAMPS</td>
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Nearly 77 years after his death, a U.S. Army soldier and Oklahoma Choctaw, Ballard McCurley, has been laid to rest in his hometown of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

Pvt. Ballard McCurley entered the U.S. Army from California, who was a member of Company M, 12th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, and took part in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest. McCurley, 34, was killed in Germany, November 20, 1944. His death was witnessed and reported by members of his company yet his remains could not be located or recovered. Subsequent searches ended unsuccessfully. After the year-end, his remains were still missing, and the U.S. Army declared him non-recoverable.

Following McCurley’s death, Captain George W. Knapp, chaplain with the 12th Infantry, wrote to McCurley’s wife, Ethel, and told her of her husband’s passing.

In the winter of 1945, your tribal council had the mission of supporting the men in the attack on the town of Hurtgen, Germany in the Hurtgen Forest. On December 29, 1944, McCurley and other members of the company were engaged in clearing a field of tree stumps so that it could be used for vehicles of the forward echelons as an objective point for rations and supplies.

Knapp went on to explain, “While digging a tree stump, your husband set off an enemy anti-personnel mine. His body was unknown to the men working there.”

Ballard was instantly killed, and two other soldiers were seriously wounded, one of whom later died of his injuries.

A set of unknown remains were recovered from a sector of the Hurtgen Forest and interested in U.S. military cemeteries. They were eventually placed in the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery.

In 2019, the Department of Defense and American Battle Monuments Commission conducted a circumstantial and material evidence, and anthropological analysis, along with comparing dental and forensic methods, including dental and anthropological analysis, and identified the remains as Pvt. Ballard McCurley.

Ronald K. McCurley Sr., the son of Pvt. Ballard McCurley, was born on June 5, 1924, in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. McCurley died on May 8, 2021, at the Mt. Olivet Cemetery Memorial Park, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Ballard McCurley was buried in his hometown of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. His remains were interred with military honors at the Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, and the Tablets of the Missing in the Netherlands.

A memorial service was held Saturday, May 8, 2021, at the Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Okarche, Oklahoma. McCurley is survived by his wife, Ethel, four children, James Lewis McCurley, Judy M. McCurley, Jeacy McCurley, and Ronald K. McCurley Sr., all of whom have passed away.

His surviving family members are daughters-in-law Mary McCurley, grandchildren Ronald B. McCurley Jr., and great-granddaughter Ajae Frisken.

McCurley’s name can be found on the Tablets of the Missing at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, an American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) site in Hombourg, Belgium, along with others missing from WWII.

His name has now been able to be marked as being accounted for after being missing in action for almost seven decades.

Ballard McCurley was born in Garvin County, Oklahoma, November 7, 1919, to James and Rhoda McCurley. His siblings were Lewis McCurley, Arthurs McCurley, Precious McCurley, and Georgie McCurley.

“I am deeply humbled to be among the honorees. I share this honor with my family and friends, and the entire tribe of the Choctaw Nation. God has truly blessed me by surrounding me with wonderful people who want to make a positive impact on our community and our Nation.”

Baton honored at Hall of Fame reception

By Christian Towes

The Oklahoma Hall of Fame reception on May 5, 2021, to honor Choctaw Nation leader Chief Gary Batton, was held in Oklahoma City. The reception was included as part of the Oklahoma National Championship, the original virtual event in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief Batton joined 106 others who have been inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. He is the seventh Choctaw tribal member to receive the honor.

I am deeply humbled to be among the honorees. I share this honor with my family and friends, and the entire tribe of the Choctaw Nation. God has truly blessed me by surrounding me with wonderful people who want to make a positive impact on our community and our Nation.”

With COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, let’s get out and participate in our activities with our family and friends.

CAREERS.CHOCTAWNATION.COM

To apply online, visit CAREERS.CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Positions: Retail, Food and Beverage, Hospitality, Maintenance, and more!

For an instant application

Please send used CDs/CDs (or use website) and a current card or driver’s license. Review our policies for details. Call or visit website to order. Print additional 3.5 x 6.9” cards for $19.95 each. To order, a $20 minimum order is required. Purchase online at www.chotcahesports.com or by calling 1-800-851-2505. On all orders, we are happy to provide an instant order tracking number.

STRONG CULTURE. STRONG CAREERS.
Elections are held at alternating two-year periods for the four-year terms of Chief and Tribal Council. 19:00:00 a.m. to 7:00:00 p.m. April 10 for candidates for Tribal Council in Districts 4, 6, 7, 10 and 12. All candidates for the election offices of District 6, 7, 12 are qualified, unopposed, and will not appear on the ballot. Elections will be held for Council Districts 4, 7, and 10. The list of qualified candidates for election office are:

**Council District 4**
- Jess Henry
- Jennifer Roberts

**Council District 7**
- Adrian Johnico
- Melissa Reith
- James H. Smith
- Joey Tom

**Council District 10**
- Anthony Dillard (incumbent)

Sherman Bo Miller

Additional candidate and voting information is listed on the following three pages. All information submitted may have been edited per guidance of the Election Candidate Inactivity Policy.

### GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CHOCTAW VOTERS

Any person who has obtained Tribal Membership as defined by Article II of the Constitution and who has attained the age of eighteen (18) by the date of any election shall be eligible to register to vote in Choctaw Nation tribal elections. Every eligible tribal member must be registered with the Voter Registration Department to vote in tribal elections. Each eligible tribal member must fill out a Voter Registration form. The information provided on the voter registration form is signed under oath. Tribal members living inside the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma boundaries must be registered in the district in which they reside and may obtain an official ballot as provided in Article XXV of the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance. Non-resident voters may become affiliated with a district of their choice. Once a non-voter has affiliated with a district which includes the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma boundries, he or she must remain affiliated with their chosen district. Affiliation may change only when the voter moves back within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Non-resident voters may submit an official ballot as provided in the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance. Non-resident or unaffiliated voters are eligible to vote in an election for the Chief. Eligible tribal members may register to vote with the Voter Registration Department all year round during regular business hours except holidays. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is divided into district voting locations. Ballots will consist of candidates’ names or names with pictures, also known as pictorial ballots. A candidate’s name will appear as designated on the Declaration of Candidacy filed with the Election Board. If a seat is uncontested, no ballots will be issued for that seat.

1. Each ballot, except mail-in ballots, must be coded with a unique number in a way that can identify the voter’s name and tribe. A Voting Location Board member provides the voter a marking pen and the person’s eligibility is proven, the voter is asked to sign the registry. A Voting Location Board member then issues the appropriate ballot. A Voting Location Board member provides the voter a marking pen and directs the voter to a voting booth. When the voter has finished voting, the voter must promptly leave the voting location.

2. Voters may not cast a ballot during operation of an open voting location regardless of the district. The voter will provide the Voting Location Board with his/her name and address. The voter must present an ID issued by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (photo or non-photo) showing full name and date of birth or a photo ID issued by another government.

- A Voting Location Board member determines the person’s eligibility by locating his/her name on the registry and verifying that such voter has not previously cast a ballot in the impending election. Each voter’s eligibility is proven, the voter is asked to sign the registry. A Voting Location Board member then issues the appropriate ballot. A Voting Location Board member provides the voter a marking pen and directs the voter to a voting booth. When the voter has finished voting, the voter must promptly leave the voting location.

- A voter who is able to reach the voting location, but because of a physical or visual disability or infirmity is unable to come inside, can be assisted outside of the election enclosure. The Voting Location Board Inspectors will stop processing the voters inside the election enclosure. Voters who have already signed the registry will stop processing the voters inside the election enclosure. The return envelope will have the mailing address for the Election Board on it. Sample ballots are posted at each voting location on every voting day and are available in the Election Board office.

- Voting, whether in-person or by mail, shall be by secret ballot. Ballots shall be tabulated by electronic voting machines and/or done manually. Voting machines will be provided by the county to be used to conduct the elections.

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### CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

**Council District 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 & 12**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jess Henry</td>
<td>Jennifer Roberts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adrian Johnico</td>
<td>Melissa Reith</td>
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<tr>
<td>James H. Smith</td>
<td>Joey Tom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthony Dillard (incumbent)</td>
<td>Sherman Bo Miller</td>
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JESS HESS

On April 19, Pocola resident JESS HESS announced his bid for Choctaw tribal council District 4. “I know how to be a Choctaw boss and raise and run on a cattle ranch in Texas. Oklahoma and new trends, and our new one is high-street economics,” Hess explained how he has been building his businesses and helping them to grow. Hess attended OSU Tech in Oklahoma City and graduated with a degree in Business Administration and earned his associate degree at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Hess explained, “I will be working to provide the best representation our commun- ity’s needs. Leadership in this council position will be a must in order to achieve the highest rank.”

One of Hess’ goals is to address poverty in Choctaw communities, which he has seen firsthand in the LeFlore area. “The people,” Hess said, “know the farmers and ranchers all across LeFlore County and understand the problems our farmers and ranchers are facing. The most challenging problem is the high cost of plowing and fertilizing.”

Hess then discussed his plan for Choctaw seniors. “Our senior nutrition has been drastically decreased, and I believe we need to help all of our senior citizens in the Tribal Council, will fight to ensure all of our senior programs are up and running.”

Hess and his wife, Joan, have been married for 20 years. They have two grown children and four grandchildren.

DISTRICT 4

Jennifer Roberts

My name is Jennifer Carshall-Roberts and I am proudly announcing my candidacy to serve on the Choctaw tribal council to represent the Choctaw Nation. I was born in 1969 in Clayton, Oklahoma, to my mother, Lillie Roberts-Ott, and my late father, George Carshall. My maternal grandparents were John and Classie Walton, and my paternal grandparents were Robert L Prock and Evelyn Moore Prock. I attended school at Jones Academy and graduated from Roulston High School. In 1986 I received my bachelor’s degree in Human Resources from Central University where I graduated with a B.A. in Human Resources. Upon graduation from college, I began working at Jones Academy, promoted to Director of IC for CRIS. In 1998, I was hired as Director of Human Resources for Choctaw University. I am currently employed at Choctaw University in Employee Relations and as an Academic Advisor.

In 1990, my husband, Charles, and I purchased a piece of land in the LeFlore County area. We currently reside on this property and have owned it for over 30 years. We have raised a loving family of three children, Micah, Mia and Jace. My family and I love the Choctaw culture. The Choctaw culture is a big part of who I am. It has shaped me into the person I am today. My family and I love the Choctaw culture. The Choctaw culture is a big part of who I am. It has shaped me into the person I am today. My family and I love the Choctaw culture. The Choctaw culture is a big part of who I am. It has shaped me into the person I am today.

I have served on the LeFlore County Board of Education since 2010 and have served as a board member and board president. I have been active in my community and have served as the President of the Clayton PTO, Summer League Treasurer and a Reserve Deputy. I had the privilege of being a Tribal Councilman in the past and have run for many positions over the years. I have served as the Mayor’s Secretary, Budget Director, and Tribal Councilman. I have also served on the Tribal Council for District #7. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (918) 429-9041.

In 2017, I was elected to the Choctaw Tribal Council for District #7. I have served a term as Deputy and have not stopped. I will continue to push the progress and prosperity. I humbly thank you and ask for your vote in 2021.

Yukon

Jennifer Woods, Unopposed

My name is Melissa Reich. I am 23–22 Choctaw/Creek Native of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. I currently reside in Wright City, Oklahoma. I was born in Wilburton, Oklahoma, to my mother, Lillie Roberts-Ott, and my late father, Segregation. My grandfather was Robert L Prock and my grandmother was Evelyn Moore Prock. I attended school at Jones Academy and graduated from Roulston High School. In 1986 I received my bachelor’s degree in Human Resources from Central University where I graduated with a B.A. in Human Resources. Upon graduation from college, I began working at Jones Academy, promoted to Director of IC for CRIS. In 1998, I was hired as Director of Human Resources for Choctaw University. I am currently employed at Choctaw University in Employee Relations and as an Academic Advisor.

In 1990, my husband, Charles, and I purchased a piece of land in the LeFlore County area. We currently reside on this property and have owned it for over 30 years. We have raised a loving family of three children, Micah, Mia and Jace. My family and I love the Choctaw culture. The Choctaw culture is a big part of who I am. It has shaped me into the person I am today. My family and I love the Choctaw culture. The Choctaw culture is a big part of who I am. It has shaped me into the person I am today. My family and I love the Choctaw culture. The Choctaw culture is a big part of who I am. It has shaped me into the person I am today.

I have served on the LeFlore County Board of Education since 2010 and have served as a board member and board president. I have been active in my community and have served as the President of the Clayton PTO, Summer League Treasurer and a Reserve Deputy. I had the privilege of being a Tribal Councilman in the past and have run for many positions over the years. I have served as the Mayor’s Secretary, Budget Director, and Tribal Councilman. I have also served on the Tribal Council for District #7. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (918) 429-9041.

In 2017, I was elected to the Choctaw Tribal Council for District #7. I have served a term as Deputy and have not stopped. I will continue to push the progress and prosperity. I humbly thank you and ask for your vote in 2021.

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Yukon

Jennifer Prock-Wood

My name is Jennifer Prock-Wood, a proud Choctaw tribal member and District 6 Choctaw Tribal Council person. I have been a Choctaw tribal member all my life. My family and I have lived in the area most of my life. My wife, Linda, and I have 4 children and 6 grandchildren. My brother and sisters and I live in and around this area. I have worked with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s Indian Health Service Department since 1997. As a Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma employee, I have had many opportunities in this area. I started as the Office Manager at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Eastern Oklahoma and as the Drug Elimination Program, we interact with the parents as well as our young people. It is an honor to serve in this position and I will work hard to provide the best results only to continue to grow in the future. As a proud mother of two children in Ponca City, OK, I will continue to support the tribal developed programs and facilities in order to accommodate the ever-changing times and needs that we will experience in the Choctaw Nation. I have had a career in the workforce for over 20 years and will work hard to provide the best results for everyone that comes to the Tribal Council. As we know the importance of education, it’s for many of the freedoms we have today. I attribute my strong work ethic to Jones Academy, where I graduated with a degree in Business Administration and as an Academic Advisor.

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BISKINIK 7 June 2021

District 9

James Dry

Unopposed

Haitie. I am proud and honored to announce my candidacy for re-election as District 9 Councilman. I am humbly lambswool and grateful to have served as your councilman for the past four years.

I am the 42-year-old son of James H and LaDonna Dry. I graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University and began my career at the Choctaw Bingo Hall 31 years ago, as a cook to work my way through college. Together with my wife Carie, we have five sons, Kannon, Karson, Nic, Tucker and Noah.

While serving as District 9 Councilman the past four years, I received the honor of being elected Speaker Pro Tempore for two years. We have increased our land base by 390% from ~18,000 acres to ~71,750 acres, where we manage over 6,000 cattle, 1,000 pecan trees, and a participation in this program.

We continue to pursue opportunities in manufacturing and technology because of our IPP drone test site in Daisy and has since advanced into the FAA BEYOND program.

I have provided new homes for our members in Atoka and Stringtown, with 10 LEAP homes housing over the past years for our District. We have

families.

My goal if re-elected Councilman is to listen to the concerns of tribal citizens, gather their ideas, to be the voice for the people. I strongly believe in being a servant leader. I hope to have the opportunity to continue serving the members of District 9 to make our area be prosperous for our elders and our future generations. Yakoke!

James Dry

District 10

Sherman Bo Miller

Contact Phone Number: (918) 424-6289

District 11

James Frazier

Unopposed

Halito. It was instilled in me by my parents and family to honor, respect and take care of our tribe and our culture. I have been employed for the last 13 years. I began as an Elder Advocate working alongside Oklahoma Adult Protective Services. It was important as we can’t forget who we are as a tribal nation. My family and I strive to keep the culture alive through Choctaw social dancing and stickball. I’ve served as the Vice-President of the Choctaw Nation, teaching basic life skills, goal setting, and giving them the opportunity to grow. After becoming Interim Director of Youth Outreach, I began to grow in the leadership field with some great mentors in Outreach. With hard work, determination, passion and specialized training I became a Senior Director. I have held this position for the past 15 years. During my tenure as Senior Director with Outreach Services I have overseen approximately 15 programs with budgets as high as 2 million dollars. I believe our identity as Choctaw Nation is important as we can’t forget who we are as a tribal nation. I firmly believe and to strive to keep the culture alive through Choctow social dancing and stickball.

I have served as the Co-President of our youth stickball league for the past 7 years.

We have really been blessed to help many of our elders in our District. I meet with my wife Carie, we have five sons, Kannon, Karson, Nic, Tucker and Noah.

Joey Tom

District 7

Unopposed

Yakoke,

My name is Joey Tom, I would like to announce my candidacy for District 7 Choctaw Nation Tribal Council. I am very honored to announce my candidacy for re-election, as I continue to serve as Councilman, with the same focus on making our District and the Choctaw Nation a better place for our families.

I have been very involved in organizing养老 housing over the past years for our District. We have provided services for our members in Atoka and Stringtown, with 10 LEAP homes in each area, to grow even more. With 2023 being such a challenging year, we are still building in areas and continue to provide our members with the necessary housing units for our members. We will continue to provide strong education for our citizens and this will continue to work together, and I appreciate everyone’s support. You can contact me at janetdry9@gmail.com, Twitter @ RealJamesDry, Facebook at James Dry, Choctaw Nation District 9 Councilman. At phone call me at 918-628-6721.

Yakoke,

Anthony Dillard

ENROLL FOR CHOCTAW LANGUAGE CLASSES

Visit these pages for individual dates and enrollment information:

Carl Albert State College and Southeastern Oklahoma State University choctawschool.com/class/class/index.class

High School choctawschool.com/highschool/highschool-class/index.class

Online Classes choctawschool.com/class/online-index.class

Community Center choctawschool.com/class/community-class/index.class

Chairman

Carl Albert State College and Southeastern Oklahoma State University choctawschool.com/class/index.class

Contact Phone Number: (918) 424-6289

District 10

Enrollment for Choctaw Language Classes is now open and available for Choctaw citizens in all Choctaw Nation schools. Enrollment for the Tribal Language Class will begin on September 12th, 2021. For more information on how to enroll, please visit the Choctaw School website at choctawschool.com/class/index.class. Contact Phone Number: (918) 424-6289
The Operational Excellence Department recently provided the inaugural learning series Seven Keys to a Guest Centric Culture. The purpose of the learning activities for the intent of creating a guest centric culture is to ensure sustainability as well as the alignment of the capstone activity. Each of the action plans included graduation ceremony and a capstone activity. Action plans were created to ensure alignment and that the guest experiences are consistent.

Fifty-six CNO leaders completed a series of assignments and learning activities for the intent of creating a guest centric culture for our associates and gaming patrons. When business strategies center on business goals. When business strategies center on the importance of aligning both strategies to accomplish the desired outcome.

Choctaw Nation “Creating a Guest Centric Culture”

Brown graduates
Jadah Faith Brown graduated from East Central University Dec. 12, 2021. She is the daughter of Jeff and Melissa Brown.

Arkansas Hamilton graduated from the Vocational nursing program in April 2021 at Carl Albert State College, Okemah, Oklahoma. She received focused instruction on the effect of associate and gaming patrons. Over four months, the leaders of creating a guest centric culture for our associates and gaming patrons.

Benson graduates
Jennifer Michelle Benson, from Bellingham, Washington, graduated from the University of California in Stockton, California, on May 8, 2021. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Applying graduates
First generation college student, Chloe Christine Armstrong, graduated from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona, on April 30, 2021, with her bachelor’s degree in psychology.

Hamiton graduates
Reese Kellan Gordon
Reese Kellan Gordon was born at 10:10 a.m. on March 5, 2021, at Choctaw Saw Medical Center in Ada, Oklahoma. He weighed 7 pounds, 15 ounces and was 20 inches long. He is the son of Melissa and Russell Gordon of Seminole, Oklahoma, and joins his two sisters, Madison and Anna.

Payne vet of the month

Mayfield turns 85
Bob Mayfield celebrated his 85th birthday with a gathering of family and friends. He grew up in Ada and the family. He was the third of the five children of Earline and Lucille Gordon, and the grandson of Bud and Anna Gordon of Byrnes, Texas, and Patricia Monroe of Midwestern City, Oklahoma and the late William Monroe.

Chocanta College Freshman Year Initiative
For more details, please contact the local campus rep.

PAYMENT AVAILABLE WHEN PRESENTING CLUB MEMBERSHIP CARD
During the 1870s, the Choctaw Nation considered developing its own railway to prevent outsiders from leasing Choctaw lands. James Jackson McAlester, an engineer who was a citizen of the Choctaw Nation, applied for a permit to marry Rebecca Burney, a Chickasaw woman who was a citizen of the Choctaw Nation. McAlester first arrived in the Choctaw Nation in August 1872, and he later became a successful engineer. He made sure they paid the required fees and worked in the Choctaw Nation's coal mining-related business, tracking information on items that will focus on fostering 

The introduction of railroads and the emergence of the coal mining industry in the Choctaw Nation led to a massive influx of non-Choctaw people who worked in the railroad and coal industries. Indian Territory quickly became known in coal mining communities as a place that would be good for the increasing industrialization of coal mining in the Choctaw Nation. Coal quickly became an important industry in the Choctaw Nation’s most important export and source of long-lasting self-sufficiency.
BISKINIK  June 21, 2021  Blackberry Month – Bissa Hvshi

Elizabeth Louise Copshaw

Elizabeth “Betty” Louise Copshaw, 87, passed away March 9, 2021, in Iota, Okla., to Louis and Emily (Köhler) Copshaw. Betty was born Aug. 14, 1933, in Oktaha, Okla., to Louis and Hazel (Henderson) Raymond. She was preceded in death by her husband William “Pete” Morgan. Betty is survived by her daughter Joanne Copshaw; granddaughters, Katherine, her namesake, and Mary Margaret; and great-grandson, Stephen Ray Copshaw.

Jimmie Dean Green

Jimmie Dean Green, 79, passed away Feb. 8, 2021. Jimmie was born Jan. 19, 1942, in Prague, Okla., to Raymond L. and Nina Sue (Brown) Green. He was preceded in death by his parents, and brothers, James Dean D.B. “Dick” Green and Leslie Lee Green. Jimmie is survived by his wife Nance; children Halie Austin and spouse Robert; daughter Kimberly Green and spouse Capt. Marla Cleaver, Josh Green and spouse Amy, and Paul Kimball and partner Melissa Allen. He is survived by two sisters: step-siblings Bonnie Bommer, Cindy Melton, Rickie Lawton, Jerkay Lawton and Start Adams; and 30 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and 9 great-great-grandchildren. For the full obituary, please visit Davis-Smith Funeral Home.

Hampton W. Anderson

Hampton W. Anderson, 81, passed away Dec. 21, 2020, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Andrew and Betty (James) Anderson. Hampton was preceded in death by his father, husband, and parents, and grandparents. For the full obituary, please visit Bellmead Funeral Home.

Ernest Leroy Wood

Ernest “Ernie” Leroy Wood, 47, passed away March 30, 2021, in Keto Spring, Okla., to Errene and Marjorie (Hart) Wood. Ernie was born June 24, 1973, in Norman, Okla., to Ernest and Marjorie (Hart) Wood. He was preceded in death by his parents, and grandparents. For the full obituary, please visit Springs Funeral Home.

Aarion Nathaniel Choate

Aarion Nathaniel Choate, 14, passed away July 1st, 2021, in Davis, Okla., to the Choate family. Aarion was born Oct. 3, 2006, in Ardmore, Okla., to Paul and Kathleen Choate. Aarion is survived by his children, his parents, and grandparents. For the full obituary, please visit Sims-Myers Funeral Home.

Ruie Lee Wilcox Jr.

Ruie Lee Wilcox Jr., 59, passed away March 22, 2021, in Carthage, Mo., to Ruie Lee Wilcox Sr. Ruie was born Aug. 14, 1961, in Lowry, Okla., to Ruie Lee Wilcox Sr. and Margaret Victoria Wilcox. He was preceded in death by his brother, his parents, and grandparents. For the full obituary, please visit Sims-Myers Funeral Home.

Marlin Lee Keith

Marlin Lee Keith, 87, passed away March 13, 2021, in Talihina, Okla., to Marlin Keith and Frances (Stevenson) Keith. Marilyn was born April 18, 1933, in Tushka, Okla., to James and Elva (Kite) Keith. She was preceded in death by her husband, James Keith; son, Jimmie Keith; her parents, step-grandmother Amelia Rhodes-Barnes and step-grandfather General Rhodes-Barnes; and step-grandfather James Keith. Marilyn is survived by her children, her parents, brother, and her grandchildren. For the full obituary, please visit Halley-Mills & Coffee Funeral Home.

Lucas Wayne Schumer


Louis Dewayne Bond

Louis Dewayne Bond, 61, passed away Feb. 23, 2021. Louis was born June 15, 1959, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Louis and Emma (Ward) Bond. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Harris Wayne Bond, and sisters Betty Jo Ward, Bobbie Jean, Mary Lou Bond, and Josephine Bond. Louis is survived by his sons Louis Dewayne Bond Jr. and daughter Tabitha Marie Bond; his grandchildren, Britney Bond, Kayles Bond, and Dillon Bond; his brothers Dewey Bond, and Delbert Bond; and his nieces, nephews, and great-grandchildren. For the full obituary, please visit Miller-Dille Funeral Home.

Evelyn May Owens

Evelyn May (Halpin) Boone, 70, passed away Feb. 16, 2021, in Broken Arrow, Okla., to Bright and Odell (Hammond) Halpin. She was preceded in death by her parents, and siblings. Evelyn is survived by her son Bob Boone and spouse Paula; daughter Susan Boone and spouse Darrell; son Amanda Boone and spouse Jim; and daughter Mattie Boone. Evelyn is the great-grandmother of great-grandchildren, and great-grandson; the great-great-grandmother of their great-great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandsons. For the full obituary, please visit Truick-Finney Funeral Home.

Ricky Lynn Berry

Ricky Lynn Berry, 54, passed away March 31, 2021, in Broken Arrow, Okla., to Andrew and Nettie (Miller) Berry. Ricky is survived in death by his parents, and sister Linda Berry. Ricky is the great-grandfather of great-grandchildren, and great-grandson; the great-great-grandfather of their great-great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandsons. For the full obituary, please visit Finney Funeral Home.

Myra Deane Dorety

Myra Deane Dorety, 65, passed away March 30, 2021, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to John and Doretha (Russell) Deane. Myra was born Sept. 20, 1955, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to John and Doretha (Russell) Deane. She was preceded in death by her husband, son; her parents, and siblings. Myra is survived by her sister Glenda Selle; and daughter Deanne Davis and Warren Wade. Myra is the great-grandparent of 3 great-grandchildren, and great-grandson; the great-great-grandparent of their great-great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandsons. For the full obituary, please visit Waggoner Funeral Home.

Robert Anthony Southard

Robert Anthony Southard, 28, passed away March 31, 2021, in Broken Arrow, Okla., to: Marty and Marlene (Jennings) Southard. Bill was born Feb. 3, 1993, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to: Marty and Marlene (Jennings) Southard. Bill is survived by his children, his parents, and grandparents. For the full obituary, please visit Mckechnie Funeral Home.

Charles Robinson

Charles William “Bill” Robinson, 82, passed away March 31, 2021, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Margaret Lou (Skeap) Schneider and Richard K. Robinson. Bill was born March 22, 1939, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to: Stanley and Mary (Boswell) Robinson. Bill is survived by his children, his parents, and great-grandchildren. For the full obituary, please visit Martin Funeral Home.
The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food desert as an area where the poverty rate is greater than or equal to 20%. Also, at least 100 people, or 25% of the population, must live more than one mile from the nearest large grocery store in urban areas or more than 10 miles from the nearest large grocery store in rural areas. People living in these areas without access to healthy foods could be at risk of several diet-related conditions, such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

It's not just the eggs and vegetables that are healthy. Gardening tasks such as weeding, trimming and raking can burn up to 300 calories (about 24 minutes of running) an hour, making gardening a good exercise option. Spending time outdoors has also been shown to have health benefits ranging from increased vitamin D production to increased serotonin levels, which keeps your mood calm, raises your energy level and helps maintain focus.

The Backyard Initiative aims to improve the quality of life for people who live in these areas by giving them access to healthy foods that they control the source of and encouraging them to get outside.

“We hope through this program, it will show the community what can be done in their own backyard,” said Bragg. “To see the Backyard Initiative videos, go to https://www.chocatanation.com/backyard-initiative.

Backyard Initiative puts health in your hands
By Chris Jennings

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Off the beaten path in Choctaw Country

By Christian Toews

Are you looking for an off the beaten path adventure that is unique to ours? Look no further than exploring remote areas of Oklahoma in an off-road vehicle. All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and the larger Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) are a fun and unique way to access remote parts of Choctaw Country. These off-road vehicles allow you to explore areas that your traditional vehicle can’t handle, and it’s a different experience—climbing over rocks, traversing muddy spots, or making your way up steep inclines. These vehicles offer a chance to experience a little of the unknown. You might not know that one of the largest ATV and UTV retailers in North America is right here in Choctaw Country, Antlers Motorsports in Antlers, Oklahoma, offers everything ATV and UTV related. Joff Lucas is an employee at Antlers Motorsports and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. He said that sales of ATVs and UTVs have increased drastically over the past year.

“Right now, we are low on ATV and UTV inventory because we are selling so many,” he explained. “You can find something no matter what type of riding you enjoy,” he explained. “Maybe you want to get in a side-by-side UTV and drive up to a scenic location and have a picnic, or you like to get muddy on a high-powered four-wheeler. You might be a seasoned off-road enthusiast, or maybe you have never felt the adrenaline rush of powering down a trail. We encourage people to go into the trails and see a part of Broken Bow that’s off the beaten path. It’s a great way to get out and see wildlife and scenery that you won’t see any other way,” she said.

“Another area that many people explore are ATVs and UTVs is the Choctaw Country. Oklahoma area. Russell and Carrie Adams own Captain’s Hideaway Powersports Rentals. They offer Jeep and UTV rentals from their location near Hochatown. Carrie said that exploring the area in a UTV is a great way to see things you wouldn’t usually see. “It does my heart good to see everybody back together. It was appropriate that it was the Trail of Tears Memorial Walk. The commemorative 2-mile hike is only a fraction compared to the roughly 700 miles covered by foot in the 1800s when Choctaws were removed from their homeland. During the event, which was the first since the COVID-19 pandemic started, Chief Gary Batton said it was appropriate that it was the Trail of Tears walk. “It does my heart good to see everybody back together again,” said Batton.

Antler Motorsports

For more information, including availability and pricing, visit Antler Motorsports’ website or call 580-226-7900.

“Whether you are looking for an outside-the-box experience—climbing over rocks, traversing muddy spots, or making your way up steep inclines. These vehicles offer a chance to experience a little of the unknown. You might not know that one of the largest ATV and UTV retailers in North America is right here in Choctaw Country, Antlers Motorsports in Antlers, Oklahoma, offers everything ATV and UTV related. Joff Lucas is an employee at Antlers Motorsports and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. He said that sales of ATVs and UTVs have increased drastically over the past year.

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