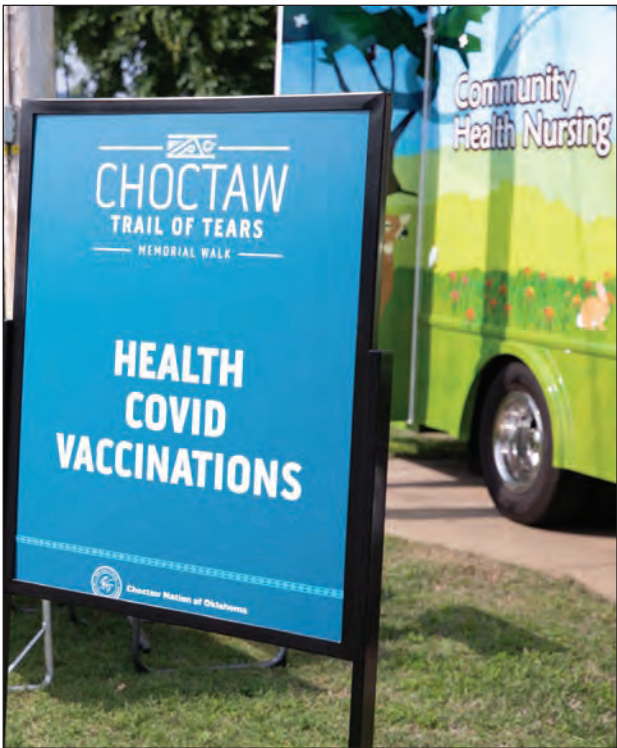




June 2021 Issue



Photos by Chris Jennings

Top, Participants on the 2021 Trail of tears Walk had the opportunity to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Bottom, Beth Ragan places Band-Aids on Grace Noley's arm after she received the COVID-19 vaccine at the Trail of Tears Walk at Tvshka Homma. Noley said she had not planned on getting the vaccine, but decided to when she heard they would be available at the walk.

# Choctaw Nation continues COVID-19 vaccination efforts

By Shelia Kirven

The Choctaw Nation Health Care Services Authority had administered 35,207 total COVID-19 vaccinations as of May 18.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that over 259 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been given in the United States as of May 10.

Those 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 700 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 may make them more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus and possibly with severe complications. The vaccines also have not yet been approved for young children, although the Pfizer vaccine has recently been approved for children as young as 12.

The Choctaw Nation continues to encourage tribal members to get vaccinated, not only to protect themselves but also to protect those around them. The Nation has also opened up vaccinations to the general public to supplement local community vaccination efforts.

Vaccine appointments are very easy to schedule, and the process is extremely quick. In most cases, the entire vaccine visit takes less than 20 minutes, and that includes the 15-minute waiting period post-shot. Anyone who has not yet received a vaccination for COVID-19 should continue to observe the CDC's guidelines for wearing masks and social distancing.

Vaccinations of youth and children are important in creating more immunity nationwide. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has now authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in adolescents 12 and older. Testing of vaccinations for children ages 2-11 is in process.

For people who have only had the first shot of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, it is imperative to keep the appointment for the second dose in order to be fully vaccinated. In the case of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, one shot is all that is required.

CDC guidelines state 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 pandemic is waning 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.ihs.gov/findhealthcare/> to search for an Indian Health Service facility (IHS) near you.
- Search [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov).
- Text your zip code to 438829.
- Call the National COVID-19 Vaccination Assistance Hotline at 1-800-232-0233.
- Check your local pharmacy's website to see if vaccination appointments are available. Find out which pharmacies are participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program.
- Contact your state health department or visit <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html>.

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.

For guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on protecting yourself and others, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>.

## Q & A

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 Tali hina, 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 creating herd immunity. Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools (masks, social distancing, and vaccine) we have available, and the vaccine is a great tool that we should take advantage of to help stop the spread of this disease. The higher the vaccination rate, the faster it is to get rid of the pandemic.”

### Where can our readers get the vaccine?

“We have the vaccine available here at the hospital, as well as all of our outlying clinics. We currently offer the Pfizer vaccine only at the hospital location. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are offered at the outlying clinics. Most communities are also offering the vaccine at local health departments, as well as community and retail pharmacies.” (NOTE: You do not need to be a patient or Native American to receive a COVID-19 vaccine from the Choctaw Nation.)

### 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 to get the Pfizer brand, you have to come to Tali hina to receive that one.”

### Why do some people not trust the vaccine? What are the consequences of not getting it?

“Many people believe the vaccine was developed too fast to be safe. However, though it was developed quickly, steps for safety were not skipped. The vaccines were made using processes that have been developed and tested over many years. Safety is top priority and the benefit of getting vaccinated far outweighs the risk of contracting the virus and the possibility of potentially being hospitalized. Clinical trials for all vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use, including the COVID-19 vaccines that we are using today.

Like the flu shot, many people think the vaccine will give them COVID-19. However, this vaccine is not a live virus. It will not give you COVID-19. You may experience some side effects, but that is a natural immune response, which is teaching your body to recognize and fight the coronavirus if you come in contact with it. Side effects only last a couple of days if you have them at all. This is much better than having the illness itself.

By not getting the vaccine, one could be a carrier of the disease, exposing 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 think that they are well and go around their loved ones that may have preexisting conditions such as COPD, or cancer, or an illness where they do not need to be sick, and unknowingly pass the disease to them. Unfortunately, this happens often. Many people have given blood and been checked for immunities and it shows they had the virus and never even knew they have had it.”

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

“When you have the vaccine, your body develops antibodies to fight it. If you happen to contract COVID-19 after you have had the shot(s), your illness will not be nearly as bad.”

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

“If you have been vaccinated, you will not carry the virus to your child, but you should continue to go by CDC guidelines for protection.”

### Most children are low risk, but what about those with immune deficiencies such as asthma? What do we do to protect them?

“Continue to follow CDC guidelines when at high risk, by wearing masks when appropriate, only socializing in small groups of vaccinated people and washing your hands often. I would also encourage anyone that is around the child to get vaccinated if they can to protect the child from a carrier of the disease. This is a good example of why it is important to get vaccinated to protect your loved ones.”

### Has the country reached herd immunity? If not, when will that happen and what can we do to help?

“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 do not know exactly when herd immunity will be reached, 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.”

### 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. However, due to vaccination programs, we are turning the tide on the data for this group of people. We have gone from the highest COVID-19 rates to the lowest hospitalizations, due to vaccinations. That is due to Indian Health Services (IHS) being one of the first places that the government sent the vaccinations to. This shows that the vaccination is working.”

### 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 to anyone that may want or need it. We hope to reach people that have not had the opportunity to receive it. Being easily accessible at large events is one of our goals.”

(If a group is interested in having a popup vaccine event or is trying to find one, they should call 918-567-7000 ext. 6732.)

### Many places are removing or scaling back their restrictions now. Can I go back to regular life as it was before or do I still need to practice commonsense restrictions?

“Commonsense restrictions would be appropriate at this time until the CDC tells us differently. Wash your hands. If you have not been vaccinated, you should be careful not to be in large groups.”

### There are negative conspiracy theories and scary information circulating concerning the vaccine. Is the vaccine safe?

“Yes. Absolutely. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine before it is used under what is known as an Emergency Use Authorization. All the vaccines being used at this time fall under this and are deemed safe for use. Many people believe it was developed too fast; however, these vaccines have been made with processes that were used to make things for many years. Safety is obviously going to be a top priority. The clinical trials for these vaccines must first show they are safe and effective. The Covid vaccine has been proven to do that. It was a top priority because it was a pandemic. FDA gave authorization to use. It went through a fast-track, putting it before others that are not as important so we could get a hold on this.

There are no tracking devices in the vaccine, no aborted fetuses, no fertility concerns. Pregnant mothers are being vaccinated, and no OB doctors or pediatricians have said they should not be immunized.

I would strongly encourage anyone concerned to talk to a health care provider to get accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccine.”



## Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

## McGirt misconceptions

The United States Supreme Court's landmark decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* has made national headlines and sparked great concern and interest among local and tribal citizens, media outlets and law enforcement agencies. Because of the impact this decision has had on southeastern Oklahoma, I want to make sure that we dispel some misconceptions you may have heard:

### What is the McGirt Ruling

- The Supreme Court's ruling in *McGirt* is specifically about the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and clearly establishes that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's treaty territory is a reservation.
- The *McGirt* decision affirms that sovereign Indian nations with treaty rights and land-based treaty territories, reservations, existed long before Oklahoma became a state in 1907.
- The decision upholds the Major Crimes Act of 1885.
- On April 1, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals' ruled in the Sizemore decision that the Choctaw Nation's 1866 reservation boundaries were never changed, and our reservation remains intact today. As a result, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals' decision in Sizemore will apply the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling regarding criminal jurisdiction in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* to the Choctaw Nation reservation.

### 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

- Under the Federal Violent Crimes Act, a list of several violent 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 U.S. Attorney's office can also prosecute all other felonies, misdemeanors, and even adopt State Law to prosecute if there is no specific Federal Statute for a particular crime.
- On January 13, 2020, 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 to serve under U.S. Attorney Brian J. Kuester. The goal of the SAUSA appointment is to increase the likelihood that every criminal offense occurring within the Choctaw Nation is prosecuted in tribal court, federal court, or both.

The Choctaw Nation has a shared commitment to maintaining public safety and long-term economic prosperity for the Nation and Oklahoma. We have 69 cross-deputization agreements among federal, state, and local officials in place to ensure that emergency response will continue to be handled the same way, and those committing criminal acts, whether they're tribal members or not, can be arrested by law enforcement to maintain law and order. Police protection and emergency response will continue to be provided for all.



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

## Daily Life of the Believer

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

First, there must be daily Bible reading. The Word of God must reach the heart of the believer. Cognitive understanding only does not produce resistance to temptations that come along. Most sin is not something impulsive. It is something that has been in thought process before the act is committed. In the thought process, the resistance has been crumbling. Sinful thoughts work like leaven for a while before acted upon. However, there are impulsive sins like telling a lie in the moment.

The Word of God prepares the believer to confront the long term struggle or the impulsive sinful acts. Daily reading of the Word transfers God's thought into the heart of the believer. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

The Word of God is a sword to fight against the temptations of Satan. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He confronted him with, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:8).

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" Ephesians 6:13,17).

Second, the believer should pray constantly. Prayer should be a part of the subconscious that it becomes automatic in the daily life. Prayer is asking God for direction and conforming to His will. "Pray without ceasing," (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Third, the believer should fellowship with other believers. Modern technology does provide televised services to shut-ins and those who cannot attend a local church for some reason. However, this should not substitute for being an active member and attending Christian fellowship in a local church. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10: 23,24,25).

The advantages to attending a fellowship in a local church are many. One, it bears testimony of the commitment to Christ. Also, we receive fresh instructions from the Word as a body of believers. Bible studies, worship services, and prayer meetings help believers to grow together and encourages each other when trials and temptations are faced. There are many counterfeit churches, however. The best way to detect deception is to spend time looking at the real Christ through His Word. In detecting counterfeit money, experts do not spend time studying counterfeits. They study real money extensively, that a counterfeit is easily detected. When a believer does not spend time with the Christ, he may be deceived by a false congregation.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

## Celebrating fathers

On the third Sunday in June, Americans take time to honor fathers and their role in the family and community. Father's Day is a celebration of fatherhood, paternal bonds, and the influence of fathers in society. It is a special time for us to honor the most important men in our lives—the men who raised us, who inspired us, and taught us important life lessons.

Choctaw fathers are traditionally described as strong protectors. Many generations ago, in Choctaw society, they provided for their families by hunting, making tools and crafting weapons to defend their communities.

They were also teachers who passed on valuable lessons to younger generations.

As I reflect on what a father stands for, I can't help but think about my own father, the sacrifices he made and the wisdom he instilled in me. I look forward to getting to spend time with him this Father's Day. It is such a blessing

to have 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 Chahta values of working hard and caring for others. I am passing those same lessons on to my children, who will hopefully continue the legacy of our ancestors for generations to come.

One thing this pandemic has taught me is to cherish what time you have with your loved ones. Our time together on this earth is short and precious. Now that we have access to vaccinations, we have the opportunity to celebrate holidays together safely. If you haven't gotten your vaccine yet, I encourage you to do so. Staying healthy and safe in the coming year will allow us more time to spend with our loved ones and continue to make special memories together.

For some, Father's Day isn't a time for celebration. It can be a time of grief if they have experienced the loss of their fathers. If you have lost a father, I hope that you can find comfort and peace with the memories you have.

I encourage the men in our community to strive to be the best fathers and role models our children need and deserve. If you need help on your journey to becoming a better father, the Choctaw Nation is here to help.

We provide several services that can assist our men in bettering themselves for their families. The Nation provides vocational training assistance and other educational programs to help our members complete their education. Our housing department assists tribal members with their efforts to meet their housing needs adequately. The Guiding Adolescent Parents project and the Fatherhood Initiative provide comprehensive and integrated services to improve family health, education, social, and safety outcomes for expecting and parenting teens and their babies by providing medically accurate and comprehensive service including linkages to critical resource, ongoing support for health and education, and positive parenting and relationship skills instruction using an evidenced based nationally validated model.

We offer many other programs and services designed to help our tribal members live successful, healthy and productive lives. Together, we are continuing the Chahta Spirit of our ancestors for our children and the generations to come. For more information and to find other tribal services, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/tribal-services>.

## OUTREACH AT THE BEACH

JULY 14, 2021 | 10 AM - 2:30 PM | SARDIS LAKE

877-285-6893 | [CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://www.choctawnation.com)

**Choctaw Nation** Outreach Services

## MEALS TO-GO PROGRAM

FUNDED BY THE USDA

**The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority's initiative is to serve free meals to all kids under the age of 18; CDIB is not required. Recipients will drive-through the relative locations to pickup their meal and/or snack. The Meals To-Go program is offered at 11 sites throughout the Choctaw Nation.**

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

## YOUTH OUTREACH SERVICES

877-285-6893 (TOLL-FREE) OR 580-326-8304

[choctawnation.com/tribal-services/member-services/youth-outreach](https://www.choctawnation.com/tribal-services/member-services/youth-outreach)

Making a difference in the lives of Choctaw youth with character building activities designed to establish a sense of independence and appreciation for service within the community.

- Life skills
- Mentoring
- Short-term and long-term goal setting
- Location of resources
- Safety camp training
- College preparation referrals

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- Choctaw tribal member
- Pre-kindergarten to high school senior
- Evidence of hardship circumstances

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma** TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

## CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

### ANNOUNCEMENT

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**SEPTEMBER 3 - 5, 2021**  
**TVSHKA HOMMA, OK**

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!  
[WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://www.choctawnation.com)

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**  
TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES

### WE CAN HELP YOU PLAN FOR YOUR EDUCATION AND CAREER AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

**FOR SERVICES AVAILABLE AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS VISIT:**  
**[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/HIGH-SCHOOL-STUDENT-SERVICES](https://www.choctawnation.com/high-school-student-services)**

**CONTACT: 800-522-6170 EXT. 4105 OR EMAIL**  
**[HIGHSCHOOLSTUDENTSERVICES@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:HIGHSCHOOLSTUDENTSERVICES@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)**



**Email- [jerry@bbbcamp.org](mailto:jerry@bbbcamp.org)**

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma** ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

**BISKINIK**

or email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

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.

**Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday**  
**Call 580-326-8304 for an appointment**

[www.choctawschool.com](http://www.choctawschool.com)



McAlester Community Center  
June 11, 2021  
9:00 – 11:00

All Council Members present with the exception of James Frazier.



## Late Choctaw WWII soldier returns home

Nearly 77 years after his death, a U.S. Army soldier and Oklahoma Choctaw, has been laid to rest in his hometown of Pauls, Valley, Oklahoma.

Pvt. Ballard McCurley entered the U.S. Army from California, was a member of Company M, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, and took part in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest. McCurley, 34, was killed in Germany, November 29, 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 war ended, 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 heroism.

Capt. Knight wrote, "Your husband was an ammunition-bearer in one of the heavy machine gun platoons of his company. At the time he was killed the company had the mission of supporting the rifle companies in the attack on the town of Hurtgen, Germany in the Hurtgen Forest. On November 29, Ballard and several 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 echelon as an unloading point for rations and supplies." Knapp went on to explain, "While digging out a tree stump, your husband set off an enemy anti-personnel mine whose presence was unknown to the men working there."

Ballard was instantly killed, and two others were seriously wounded, one of whom also died later that day.

A set of unknown remains were recovered in 1947 from a sector of the Hurtgen Forest and interred at a U.S. military cemetery in Neuville (now Ardennes American Cemetery.) The remains, surrounded by U.S. Army infantry equipment, had been found by a German civilian walking along a forest trail.

In 2017, the Department of Defense and American Battle Monuments Commission exhumed and transferred the remains to a Defense POW/MIS Accounting Agency (DPAA) laboratory. Using modern forensic methods, including dental and anthropological analysis, along with circumstantial and material evidence, McCurley's identification was confirmed and accounted for on June 7, 2019.

Private McCurley arrived at the Okla-



Photo from website of: Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)

Pvt. Ballard McCurley, fallen victim of World War II, and Choctaw from Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

homa City, Oklahoma airport on Thursday, May 6, 2021. He was met by family and the Choctaw Nation Color Guard, who escorted him with full honors to the Stufflebean-Coffey Funeral Home. A memorial service was held Saturday, May 8, 2021, at the Mt. Olivet Cemetery pavilion with interment at the Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

Pvt. Ballard McCurley was born in Garvin County, Okla., November 7, 1910, to James and Rhoda McCurley. His siblings were Lewis McCurley, Arizona McCurley, Precious McCurley, and Georgia McCurley.

Pvt. McCurley and his wife, Ethel, had four children, James Louie McCurley, Judy M. McCurley, Jerry McCurley, and Ronald K. McCurley Sr., all of whom have passed away.

His surviving family members are daughter-in-law Mary L. McCurley; grandson Ronald K. McCurley Jr.; granddaughter Jerry; and great-granddaughter April Frodsham.

Pvt. 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.



Choctaw Nation Photo

Pvt. Ballard McCurley, made his last trip home to be buried in his hometown of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. According to the Department of Defense, the Army declared McCurley unrecoverable when the 34-year-old unknowingly set off an enemy land mine in Germany and was declared killed during World War II.



Robert Karr

USMC Col. Tray Ardese were dignitaries and sat on the viewing stand. Our CNO Color Guard led the parade and posted the colors. Choctaw Defense and the Choctaw Veterans from District 11 had two of the best-looking floats in the parade. Yakoke to our employees at Choctaw Defense for building and decorating the floats!

District 11 senior lunches will continue to be curbside through June. Our senior nutrition staff and volunteers serve delicious meals every Wednesday between 11-12:30. We provide around 600 dinners to tribal members every month here at the community center. In July, we will open back up to in-person dining. We are planning arts and craft classes, chair volleyball and trips for our seniors.

In the last several months, your tribal council has been busy taking care of the business of the Nation, with more in-person meetings and events attended. The Council has been working on many items that include the upcoming FY 21/22 budget for the tribe, monitoring the American Rescue Plan stimulus funds, protecting our sovereignty with the McGirt ruling, and all the changes it brought.

Choctaw Nation received funds from the American Rescue Plan and is planning to expand/extend programs to help our Choctaw people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please let your family know about the programs when they become available and apply on the Choctaw Nation website.

In May, we attended many graduations. I am so proud of all our Choctaw students who received their diplomas and wish them well in their future. May 11 was the McAlester High school JOM banquet at Pete's Place. On May 14, we were at Jones Academy for the graduation ceremony.

Quality housing is a need for many people in District 11, and I am pleased to inform you that the council approved funding to build 20 more LEAP homes in Krebs during FY 21 with 10 in FY 22. We are also planning to build seven Affordable Rental duplexes in McAlester. I have seen firsthand how happy tribal members are when they receive the keys to these new homes. If you or your family need housing, make sure you fill out an application for a lease to own (LEAP) home, an Affordable Rental or an Independent Elderly home.

Words cannot express how honored I am to serve the great people of District 11. If I can help you in any way regarding the Choctaw Nation, please let me know. My door is always open; together, we're more!

Chihowa vt Achukma,  
Robert Karr

## Batton honored at Hall of Fame reception

By Christian Toews

The Oklahoma Hall of Fame hosted a reception on May 5, 2021, to honor the 2020 inductees recently included in its 93rd class of outstanding Oklahomans. The original ceremony was moved to a virtual event in 2020 due to the threat of COVID-19.

Chief Batton joined 706 others who have been inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame since 1928.

Chief Batton is the seventh Choctaw tribal member and fourth Choctaw Nation leader to receive this high honor.

In 2019, Chief Allen Wright/Kiliahot was inducted posthumously, having been recognized for naming the state of Oklahoma. Chief Gregory Pyle was inducted in 2007, and Chief William A. Durant was inducted in 1932.

Tribal members Anna Lewis, Michael Burrage and Muriel Wright are also inductees of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

"I am deeply humbled to be among the honorees. I share this honor with my family and friends, coworkers, 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 Tribe, communities and our state," stated Chief Batton.

Along with being honored at the formal induction ceremony in November, the 2020 Honorees will be recognized with the unveiling of their portraits at the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Gaylord-Pickens Museum. In addition, their biographies, photos and videos will be accessible through interactive exhibits in the Museum.



Photo by Christian Toews

Chief Gary Batton, second row, far right, was among several inductees to recently be honored at a reception for their 2020 Oklahoma Hall of Fame inclusion in the 93rd class of outstanding Oklahomans.



## SEEKING CHOCTAW PERFORMING ARTISTS

Please send demo CD/video (or website link) and a current band or artist photo with current contact information and CNO membership documents for review. Calls will be made to top prospects. Must be 18 years or older and a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to be considered. Open to groups, solo artists, and other performance-based mediums.

Choctaw performing artists are invited to apply to perform on the main Amphitheater Stage during the 2021 Labor Day Festival.

Submission Deadline is June 25, 2021.

**MAIL SUBMISSIONS TO:**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma | Choctaw Artist Committee  
P.O. Box 1210 | Durant, OK 74702

**EMAIL SUBMISSIONS:**  
tribalevents@choctawnation.com

SEPTEMBER 3 - 5, 2021 | #CHAHTALABORDAY

## CHOCTAW NATION PRINCESS PAGEANT



**THURSDAY, JUNE 3 - 6 P.M.**

District 1 – Choctaw Community Center, Idabel  
District 3 – Choctaw Community Center, Talihina

**THURSDAY, JUNE 10 - 6 P.M.**

District 4 – Choctaw Community Center, Poteau  
District 5 – Choctaw Community Center, Stigler  
District 6 – Choctaw Community Center, Wilburton

**THURSDAY, JUNE 17 - 6 P.M.**

District 7 – Choctaw Community Center, Wright City  
District 8 – Choctaw Community Center, Hugo  
District 9 – Choctaw Nation Headquarters Amphitheater, Durant

**THURSDAY, JUNE 24 - 6 P.M.**

District 10 – Choctaw Community Center, Atoka  
District 11 – Choctaw Community Center, McAlester  
District 12 – Choctaw Community Center, Coalgate

**THURSDAY, JULY 1ST - 6 P.M.**

District 2 – Choctaw Community Center, Battiest

**CHOCTAWNATION.COM/PRINCESS-PAGEANTS**  
**800-522-6170 EXT 5358 OR 2192**

**Choctaw Nation** Cultural Services

## CHOCTAW CAREERS

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# 2021 TRIBAL ELECTION GUIDE

Early voting: Friday, July 9 • 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
General Election: Saturday, July 10 • 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Same-day registration available

## Candidates file for offices of Council Districts 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 & 12

Elections are held at alternating two-year periods for the four-year terms of Chief and Tribal Council. This year, filing opened April 19 for candidates for Tribal Council in Districts 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12.

All candidates for the elective offices of Council District 6, 9 and 12 were 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 elective office are:

### Council District 4

Jess Henry

Jennifer Roberts

### Council District 7

Adrian Johnico

Melissa Reich

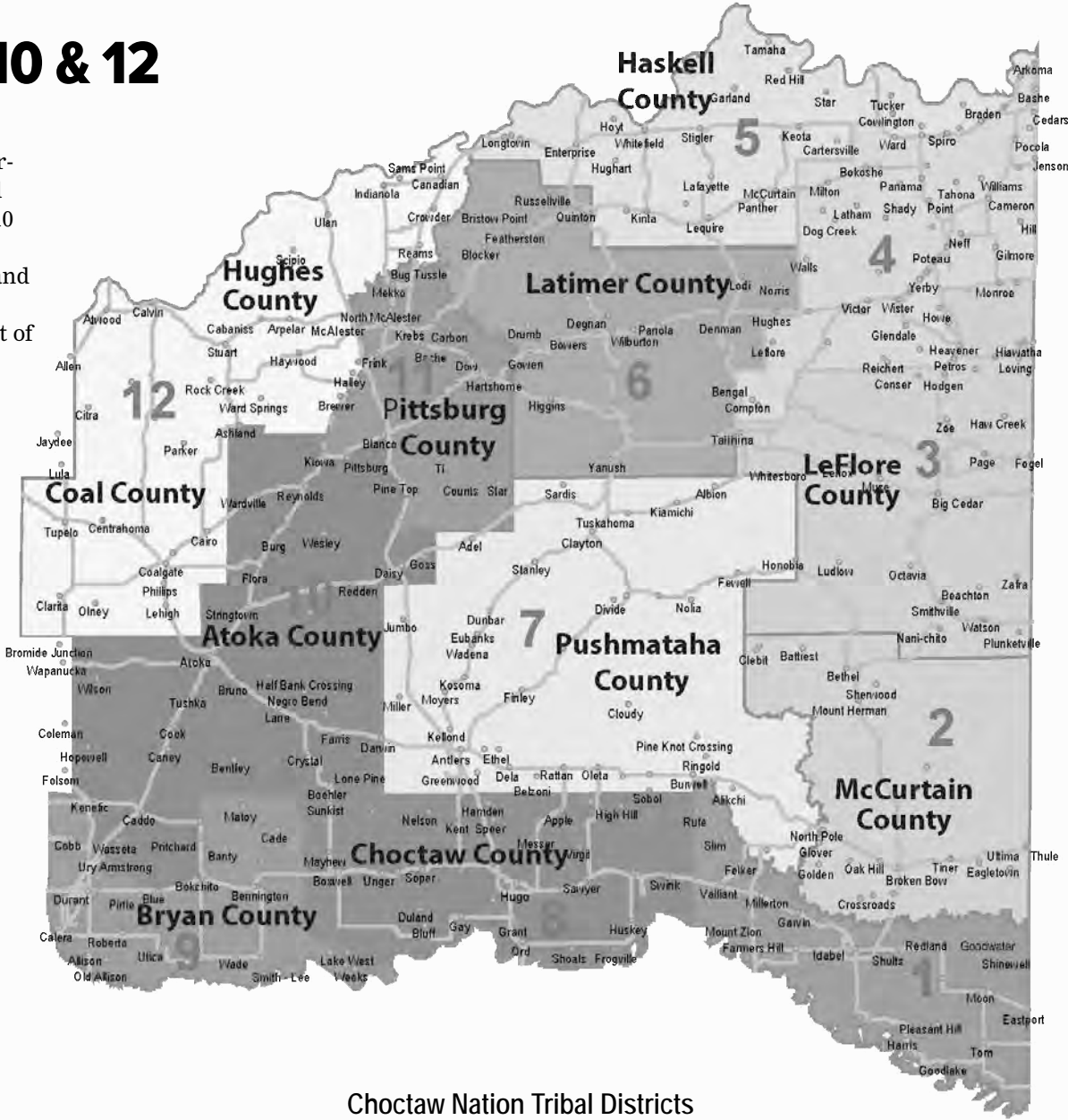
James H. Smith

Joey Tom

### Council District 10

Anthony Dillard (incumbent)

Sherman Bo Miller



Choctaw Nation Tribal Districts

Additional candidate and voting information is listed on the following three pages. All information submitted may have been edited per guidelines of the Election Candidate Insert 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 submit an official ballot as provided in Article XV of the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance.

Non-resident voters may become affiliated with a district of their choice. Once a non-resident voter has affiliated with a district while living outside of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma boundaries, he or she must remain affiliated with their chosen district. Affiliation may change only when a 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 only eligible to vote in an election for the Chief.

Eligible tribal members may register to vote with the Voter Registration Department all year during regular business hours except holidays recognized by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Ballots will consist of candidates’ names or names with pictures, also known as pictorial ballots. A candidate’s name will appear on the ballot as he/she so designates on the Declaration of Candidacy filed with the Election Board. If a seat is uncontested, no ballots will be issued for that seat.

Each ballot, except mail-in ballots, shall be coded with a unique number in a way that can identify the voting location from which the ballot was issued.

Mail-in ballots shall be identical to the regular ballots but shall be stamped “MAIL-IN BALLOT” and the date of the issuance shown thereon. The ballots, when mailed to the voter, shall be accompanied by a plain opaque envelope marked “BALLOT”, and a pre-addressed postage paid affidavit envelope for voter’s convenience. The return envelope will have the mailing address for the Election Board on it.

Sample ballots are printed for every election. Sample ballots are exact duplicates of regular issue ballots except that no numbers are printed on them and “SAMPLE BALLOT” is printed across the face of the ballot. 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 machine and/or done manually. Voting machines will be provided by the company hired to conduct the elections.

Voters may cast a ballot during hours of operation at any 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. Once 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, he/she must promptly leave the voting location.

A voter who is able to reach the voting location, but because of a physical disability or infirmity is unable to come inside, can be assisted outside of the election enclosure. The Voting Location Board Inspector will stop processing the voters inside the election enclosure. Voters who have already signed the registry will be permitted to complete voting first. The Voting Location Board Inspector and another Voting Location Member will approach the disabled voter outside the voting enclosure and provide whatever assistance is required. The disabled voter must subscribe to an oath, called a Request for Assistance Form (see Appendix Form E), that he/she is entitled to the assistance. The voter may mark his/her own ballot or he/she may choose to be assisted by a person of his/her choosing, provided that person is not the voter’s employer or an agent of the employer. The voter may also choose to be assisted by one of the Voting Location Board members other than the Inspector. At no time should the ballot box be left unattended.

A voter who is able to enter the election enclosure but is unable to mark his/her ballot because of a physical or visual disability/infirmity or is illiterate and cannot read and/or write, is entitled to special assistance. The Voting Location Board Inspector will stop processing the voters inside the election enclosure. Voters who have already signed the registry will be permitted to complete voting first. The disabled voter must subscribe to an oath, called a Request for Assistance Form (see Appendix Form E), that he/she is entitled to the assistance. The Voter then indicates whether he/she wishes to be assisted by one of the Voting Location Board members or by a person of the voter’s choosing, provided that person is not the voter’s employer or an agent of the employer. Assistance in marking ballots is then provided in the voting booth. At no time should the ballot box be left unattended.

Please note that any view or opinions presented in the election insert are solely those of the candidates and do not necessarily represent those of the BISKINIK, Election Board, or Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. The intent of this insert is for candidates of office to share with members of the Choctaw Nation their information and goals prior to the tribal election in which they seek office. Each candidate is provided the same space and followed the same policy for submission of information.

CHOCTAW

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OTE

Be a Voice

Be a Choctaw Voter

All voters affiliated with a Council District having an election will start receiving ballots in the mail beginning the week of June 14th. All ballots completed by voters must be mailed and processed by the United States Post Office in Durant, OK by 4:30 pm on July 9th. The Election Board will not accept hand delivered ballots.

To check on the status of your Voter Registration, contact the Voter Registration Department at [www.choctawnation.com/vote](http://www.choctawnation.com/vote) or by email at [VoterRegistration@choctawnation.com](mailto:VoterRegistration@choctawnation.com).

Early Voting will be July 9th and General Election will be July 10th.

For more information about Choctaw Nation elections, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/elections> or contact the Election Board Secretary by email at [ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com](mailto:ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com) or by phone at 580-924-8280, ext. 2989 or 2633.

OPEN VOTING LOCATIONS

Early voting: Friday, July 9, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
General Election: Saturday, July 10, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Council District 4

Choctaw Community Center at 208 B Street  
Poteau, OK 74953

Choctaw Community Center at 19400 AES Rd  
Spiro, OK 74959

Council District 7

Choctaw Community Center at 302 SW O Street  
Antlers, OK 74523

Choctaw Community Center at 5718 Rodeo Grounds Rd  
Wright City, OK 74766

Council District 10

Choctaw Community Center at 1203 West Liberty Road  
Atoka, OK 74525

# 2021 ELECTION CANDIDATES

## District 4

### Jess Henry

On April 19, Pocola resident Jess Henry announced his bid for Choctaw tribal Council District 4. “I know what it means to be Choctaw.” Said Henry. “I was born and raised on a cattle ranch in Tamaha, Oklahoma and my grandparents were on the Dawes Rolls as Choctaw full-blood enrollees.” Henry then explained how he is half- Choctaw as his mother was full- blooded Choctaw. After graduating Stigler Public Schools, Henry attended OSU Tech in Okmulgee and graduated with a Diesel and Heavy Equipment degree. Henry later earned his associates degree at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith. “I know the importance of education, “Henry explained. “It’s important that we as a nation continue to push for educational opportunities for our children and grandchildren.” Henry then described how he worked as a heavy equipment mechanic until he joined the Ft. Smith Police Department. Henry spent the next 32 years with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. “I retired as a Troop Commander and was the highest-ranked Choctaw on the Oklahoma Highway Patrol,” said Henry. Throughout his time in the Highway Patrol, Henry still found time to help local farmers with their equipment as the owner of Henry Diesel Service. “I got to know the farmers and ranchers all around LeFlore County and understand the problems they face daily,” said Henry. One of Henry’s goals is to address poverty in Choctaw communities, which he has experienced firsthand. ‘We didn’t have indoor plumbing in my house until I was 10.” Henry continued, “I want to see every Choctaw family overcome poverty, and I know we can accomplish that while ensuring fiscal responsibility.” Henry then discussed his plan for Choctaw seniors, “Our senior nutrition has been vital to ensure that our parents and grandparents are taken care of. As a member of the Tribal Council, I will fight to ensure all of our senior programs are prioritized.” Henry and his wife, Joy, have been married for 39 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 tribal citizens of District 4 Northern LeFlore County. My motivation has always been to carry on a tradition of culture, strength and leadership to provide the best representation our communities deserve. Leadership is something I do not take lightly, and it will be the highest priority of mine. District 4 has always been the place I proudly call “home” in LeFlore County with many generations of my proud Choctaw family living here since the forced removal from our homelands in Mississippi along the Trail of Tears. With a grateful heart to those ancestors who sacrificed so much before us, I will use that resiliency to continue to provide the best resources for our future generations. Choctaw Nation has a strong presence in District 4, and I will continue to support the existing tribally developed programs and facilities in order to accommodate the ever-changing times and needs that will keep flourishing our communities. New and refreshing perspectives and ideas are the change many District 4 Choctaws want to see, and I will work hard to provide that change and be the voice needed. District 4 has outstanding members, community members, medical services, tribal services, housing, businesses and educational opportunities that deserve to be highlighted as great successes and I will work to ensure this only continues to grow in the future. As a proud mother of two children in Poteau public schools, I know the importance of educational assistance and resources is the key to the future of our communities and my support of that will always be a priority. Along with education, my background in mental health advocacy has allowed me to see the needs of all populations of people from children and families to our elders. I believe our elders are the foundation of our tribal existence and treated with the upmost respect. I am a strong supporter of our law enforcement and veterans, and I will advocate for what’s best to provide safety and security to our communities. Having worked for the Choctaw Nation for ten years in several different capacities, I am grateful to our leadership for being a part of the growth and change that has brought us to the successful Nation we are today and I will continue this tradition. I will take pride in working hard for our tribal citizens and I feel it is an honor to assist in any way that better the life of our people and communities. I also want to encourage members to know they have a voice in our tribe and participating in tribal elections and the voting process is the best way for that change to happen. For more information about me and my campaign, please visit or message my Facebook page “Jennifer Roberts for Choctaw Tribal Council District 4” or my Instagram page “Jennifer Carshall-Roberts”. Or email me at jennroberts22@yahoo.com.



## District 6

### Jennifer Woods, Unopposed

My name is Jennifer Prock-Woods, a proud Choctaw tribal member and District 6 Tribal Council person. It has been my most honored privilege to serve you and advocate for our great district. I am asking for your support to allow me to continue to work for our great district. My parents were Robert L Prock and Evelyn Moore Prock Christie. My Grandparents were John and Classie Wallen. I attended school at Jones Academy and graduated in 1977. I attribute my strong work ethic to Jones Academy teachings. I attended Eastern State College and East 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 ICW for CNO, then worked as Director of CBSW for CNO. I completed Choctaw University leadership in 2015. We have seen tremendous growth across our Latimer County. We have 30 new homes and 20 more coming in the very near future. We have new businesses with the Travel Plaza and Childcare Center. There has been expansion at the Hospital that includes a new chapel and remodel on Chi Hullo Li Recovery Center. The purchase of the BP building will be the home of our new Community Center and will office many of the programs to better serve our people. We have 2 tribal police officers and will be hiring 3 more to serve our community. We have a new Seniors food trailer, 2 new buses to transport our seniors. We give money every quarter through our Community Partnership checks to benefit our communities. I am grateful for the efforts made to give money to our churches that are struggling and need repairs. Our five thousand-dollar forgivable loans have benefitted small businesses across District 6. The District 6 Children’s feeding program is provided weekly and appreciated. I support and appreciate our young people in the FFA and Premium sales for all the hard work they put into their animals and showing each year. Our Choctaw elders and veterans are held dearly in my heart as they teach us so much and have sacrificed for many of the freedoms we have today. During the last year with the COVID 19 pandemic, I was proud to support and work with our Choctaw departments continuously to meet the needs of our people by providing curbside meals, masks, and other things such as water to areas affected during the recent snow and ice storm. I work closely with our city and county leaders and schools to help meet our goal of making our district stronger and safer. When I was elected in August 2017 as your District 6 Choctaw Tribal Council person, I hit the ground working and serving and have not stopped. I will continue to push for growth and prosperity. I humbly thank you and ask for your vote in 2021.



## District 7

### Adrian Johnico

Adrian Johnico is a proud Choctaw and resident of Clayton for 31 years. Adrian is the youngest of four children. He has been married to Jessie Pugh Johnico for 21 years. Jessie teaches Kindergarten at Tvshka Homma. He has three children: a 20-year-old son, Carson; a 16-year-old daughter, Maggie; and a 12-year-old son Aidan. Adrian and Jessie are also blessed with two beautiful foster children. Adrian exemplifies true community leadership by taking pride in making a difference in his community. Through the years, Adrian emulates leadership with his focus on work ethic, compassion, resilience, integrity, and devotion. Adrian’s determination, passion and values will bring a “new energy” to the people. Adrian will consistently and compassionately walk beside the Choctaw people of District-7 and listen to all concerns and ideas. Adrian is constantly inspiring and motivating his community by living the example of a true servant and creating a “Community Strong” culture. He is an effective leader and will ensure that all members of the district are taken care of and their voices are being heard. Anytime the community is faced with adversity, Adrian passionately steps up to help them. Adrian takes pride in using his voice, his time and effort to build relationships and ensures that he gets the support he needs to get the job done to strengthen his community. Adrian is a problem solver and will create solutions with the help of others for the good of everyone. Community leadership is about people and Adrian Johnico is about helping people. He is always thinking for today and tomorrow on how to strengthen and impact others around him. Adrian is the perfect candidate for Choctaw Nation Tribal Council District -7 and has the ability to positively make an impact. Adrian is all about arriving early, staying late, cleaning up and generally rolling up his sleeves and getting to work. Adrian understands that it takes everyone to work together for the good of the community. He wants to be part of a Tribal Council that is progressive and is looking ahead for the betterment of the Choctaw people.



## District 7

### James H. Smith

My name is Jimmy Smith and I would like to announce that I am running for the office of Tribal Council for District #7. I have lived in the Clayton area most of my life. My wife, Linda, and I have 4 children and 8 Grandchildren all living in this area. I also have 5 brothers and sisters that live in and around this area. I graduated from Clayton High School and Southeastern Oklahoma State University with a bachelor’s degree. Over the 28 years I have worked for Choctaw Nation, I started as a Youth Coordinator for the Drug Elimination Program through the Housing Authority, then went on to be the Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club of the Choctaw Nation in Talihina. For the last 13 years, I have been an Elder Advocate with the Victims Services for Choctaw Nation Outreach Services. I have experience working with all ages of people. At the Boys & Girls Club as well as the Drug Elimination Program, we interact with the parents as well as the children. The last 13 years working with the elderly, I have collaborated with their children while working on getting them in a safe and healthy environment. Through my years of working, at one time or another, I have worked with about every program the Choctaw Nation has to offer. So, I know where and who I need to get in touch with to get the help for our Choctaw people. I have thought about being a Tribal Councilman for over 20 years. To me being a Tribal Councilman is someone that will be there when one of our Tribal Members needs us to be as well as being willing to stand up for the member. I have several areas of concern. Jobs are always an issue, especially in Pushmataha County, where we are one of the lowest economic counties in the state. Better wages for some of those who are trying to make a life in their home county. Culture is another big issue in which we, as a Choctaw Nation need to keep and offer as much as possible for our people. One of my biggest concerns is the fact that we have members that fall through the “cracks” of our system for one reason or another. As a Tribal Councilman, I feel that it is part of my responsibility to help those who find themselves in that situation. In the last 28 years of being with the Choctaw Nation, I’ve seen the tremendous growth of our Tribe and its people. As a Tribal Councilman, I fully intend to contribute to more growth and prosperity for the Choctaw Nation and its people. Over the next few months, I look forward to visiting each Tribal Member in District #7. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (918) 429-9041. Thank you very much for your support.



## District 7

### Melissa Reich

My name is Melissa Reich. I am 23/32 Choctaw/ Cherokee and I am a registered member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. I currently reside in Wright City, Oklahoma. I was raised in Wilburton, Oklahoma by my mother, Lillie Roberts-Ott, and my late father, Sequoyah Roberts. My grandparents were the late McKinley Taylor, Sr. and Lizzie Parish-Taylor of Damon Valley. I was fortunate enough to serve as District 6 Junior Miss Choctaw Nation. I am married to Jay Reich and we have three children Mick, Mia and Jace. After obtaining my High School General Equivalency Diploma, I graduated from Eastern Oklahoma State College with an Associate of Arts degree with a major in Psychology. I further continued my education at East Central University where I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Psychology. While attending college at East Central to complete my bachelor’s degree, I was employed by Eastern Oklahoma Youth Services at the Pittsburg County Juvenile Detention Center. After completing my bachelor’s degree, I was hired as a Domestic Violence, Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Counselor for the Choctaw Nation Tribal Police. I made some strong connections with McCurtain County while working for Choctaw Nation. I was offered a job as the first School Resource Officer in Idabel Public Schools through the McCurtain County Coalition and was commissioned as a Deputy through the McCurtain County Sheriff’s office. I obtained my Basic Peace Officer Certificate from Oklahoma Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training. As I spent more time serving the community as a Deputy, I quickly learned that I enjoyed being in law enforcement and I applied and was hired by Idabel Police Department. When my husband, Jay Reich, was accepted into the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy, I decided to seek a job with standard business hours to be home with our son in the evening and night, I was hired by a local attorney as a Legal Assistant. After my husband completed the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy, I applied and was hired by McCurtain County District 17 District Officer. When our daughter was born, I decided to devote my time to being a stay at home mom working occasionally part-time for local attorneys whenever time allowed, and also contracted to provide security at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festivals annually. As my babies grew to be school age, I became involved in volunteering as a coach, JOB Parent Committee at the Wright City School, Girl Scout Leader, Wright City PTO, Summer League Treasurer and a Reserve Deputy. I had the honor to be a witness of numerous Choctaw Nation activities while my daughter, Mia served as Little Miss Choctaw Nation. Last year, I decided to return to the workforce for local attorney, Kevin Sain, where I am the Office Manager. I enjoy serving the people and I will be a voice for all Choctaw people.





# 2021 ELECTION CANDIDATES

## District 7

### Joey Tom

Halito, I am Joey Tom, I would like to announce my candidacy for District 7 Choctaw Nation Tribal Council. I am very humbled to have the opportunity to run for this position. My parents are Betty and Jimmy Tom. Grandparents are Melissa (Peters) and Late Robert Bohanan and Genese (Columbus) and Albert Tom Sr. I am the oldest of 4 children – sisters Gennavie, Margo, and brother Jared Tom. My wife Hope and I have been married for 17 years. We were blessed with 3 children Konnor (17), Raynie (14), and Ace'Lee (2). We have lived in Wright City the past 16 years, returning after graduating from OSU-Oklmulgee where I received an Associate's degree in Applied Science. I attended Broken Bow High School, Wright City Elementary and Jr High. I have been employed for Choctaw Nation for 15 years. The first 2 years were spent at Broken Bow Choctaw Casino in Surveillance. I became a lead shift supervisor and learned how to provide quality supervision, teamwork and how to abide by policy and procedures. The next step in my journey was at Outreach Services where I have been employed for the last 13 years. I began as an Elder Advocate working alongside Oklahoma Adult Protective Services. It was instilled in me by my parents and family to honor, respect and take care of our elders. I also worked in the Youth Outreach department as an Advisor mentoring over 200 students throughout 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 11 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. My family and I strive to keep the culture alive through Choctaw social dancing and stickball. I've served as the Co-President of our Choctaw youth stickball league for the past 7 years.

Aside from Choctaw Nation duties and cultural activities I have served on the Wright City School Board for 7 years. I am a member of the Sons of American Legion and volunteer my time coaching in the community. I currently attend Tohwali United Methodist Church.

My goal if 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 work alongside the members of District 7 to make our area be prosperous for our elders and our future generations. Yakoke!

Phone: 580-236-0797  
Email: joeytom0419@yahoo.com  
Facebook: Elect Joey Tom for District 7 Councilman



## District 10

### Sherman Bo Miller

Contact Phone Number: (918) 424-4297

## District 12

### James Frazier

Unopposed

James Frazier is a proud Choctaw tribal member who currently serves as the Choctaw Nation District 12 Tribal Council Member. James has served in this position since 1990. He has greatly enjoyed serving Choctaw people and the communities in his service area throughout his tenure in this position. He feels very blessed to have the opportunity to connect people with the many resources and opportunities the Choctaw Nation provides.



James is a lifelong resident of the Choctaw Nation and is dedicated to serving the needs of the Choctaw families who reside within Choctaw Nation District 12. James also works diligently to help those Choctaw tribal members who live throughout and beyond the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation.

James grew up in a large Choctaw family. He was one of nine children born to Edgel and Lavada (Belvin) Frazier. His mother, Lavada, was a longtime employee of the Choctaw Nation, serving in the Women Infant and Children (WIC) program. James graduated from Kiowa High School in 1971. In 1973, while working in the Wrangler factory in Coalgate, he met and later married his wife Vicki. They made their home in Coalgate where they raised their two daughters Michelle and Valerie. They now have two wonderful grandsons, Colton and Jackson.

James worked as an employee for the city of Coalgate from the late 1970s until 1990. He first worked as part of the street crew and then acquired formal training and certifications required to become the city of Coalgate Water plant Operator. He later worked as the Physical Plant Operator II at MacAlford Correctional facility in Stringtown, Oklahoma.

James is particularly proud of the two Choctaw Community Centers located within District 12. He sees these centers as a vital part of the communities in which they are located. They serve as a hub for Choctaw people to gather and fellowship while sharing forward to the many events held at the community centers including the Thanksgiving dinners and the children and elder Christmas celebrations. These events allow people in the community to share the holidays and fellowship. James feels that all those that attend these celebrations are part of the Choctaw Nation District 12 family.

Along with serving as Councilman to the Choctaw people of District 12, James enjoys fellowshiping with his family, friends and neighbors. He also enjoys spending time outdoors with his two grandsons as well as working to improve and tend to his land. He is an avid NASCAR fan and participated in local stock car races, winning the Pure Stock Championship at the Ada Dirt Track in 2000.

## District 9

### James Dry

Unopposed

Halito,  
I am proud and honored to announce my candidacy for re-election as District 9 Councilman. I am immensely humbled and grateful to have served as your councilman for the past four years.

I am the 50-year-old son of James H and LaDona 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 having been elected Speaker Pro Tempore 2 of those years. We've seen tremendous growth in housing the past four years with 90 LEAP homes, 10 affordable rental units, and 12 independent elderly units currently under construction. Our District has also opened a new Tribal headquarters, Wellness Center and will be opening our new day-care, cultural center, and casino expansion very soon. We look forward to adding over 1,500 new good paying jobs in the coming months. We created a professional clothes closet to help our members dress for success and to also help members in need.

We have really been blessed to help many of our elders in our District. I meet weekly our CHR's, social workers, and field office worker to insure we stay on top of helping our members.

Our youth have been extremely important to me. We gave out over \$20,000 in additional scholarships the past four years and plan on increasing that amount in the years to come. Our YAB kids, Summer Youth, and Choctaw princesses are very active.

If re-elected, I will continue to have an open-door policy and continue to work extremely hard for our District. We have so much more we can accomplish if we continue to work together, and I appreciate everyone's support. You may contact me at jamesdry9@gmail.com, Twitter @ RealJamesDry, Facebook at James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council-District 9 or just call me at 580-920-0872.



Yakoke  
James Dry

## District 10

### Anthony Dillard

Incumbent

Halito,  
I would like to thank my fellow tribal members of District 10 for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Councilman. I am announcing my candidacy for re-election, so I can continue fighting for you as your Councilman, with the same focus on making our District and the Choctaw Nation a better place to live and raise our families.

I have been very involved in expanding much-needed housing over the past years for our District. We have provided new homes for our members in Atoka and Stringtown, with 10 LEAP homes in each area, to grow even more. With 2020 being such a challenging year, we were still able to provide ten independent elder homes and ten affordable housing units for our members. I will remain a strong advocate for open and transparent government within our Tribe, with the proper checks and balances to promote integrity and accountability.

The tribal economy is still a high priority both local and abroad, especially related to the diversification of all tribal businesses. The Tribe successfully applied for the IPP drone test site in Daisy and has since advanced into the FAA BEYOND program. We continue to pursue opportunities in manufacturing and technology because of our participation in this program.

During my time on council, we have increased our land base by 390% from ~18,000 acres to ~71,750 acres, where we manage over 6,000 cattle, 1000 pecan trees, and a Hunting lodge with high fence exotic hunts to serve our people better.

I serve on various community organizations to broaden my knowledge and help guide my decisions that will benefit the growth of the Choctaw Nation and its residents.

I ask you to join me in growing our sovereign Nation and continuing to help our Choctaw people.



Yakoke,  
Anthony Dillard

# JUROR SUMMONS

Choctaw Nation tribal members, spouses of tribal members, and any Choctaw Nation associate residing within Choctaw Nation territory may be summoned to jury duty with the Choctaw Nation court system.

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

# ENROLL FOR CHOCTAW LANGUAGE CLASSES

Enrollment open for Choctaw language classes in college, high school, online and community center classes. All classes begin in August.

**Visit these pages for individual dates and enrollment information:**

**Carl Albert State College and Southeastern Oklahoma State University**  
[choctawschool.com/classes/college-classes.aspx](https://choctawschool.com/classes/college-classes.aspx)

**High School**  
[choctawschool.com/classes/high-school-classes.aspx](https://choctawschool.com/classes/high-school-classes.aspx)

**Online Classes**  
[choctawschool.com/classes/internet-classes.aspx](https://choctawschool.com/classes/internet-classes.aspx)

**Community Center**  
[choctawschool.com/classes/community-classes.aspx](https://choctawschool.com/classes/community-classes.aspx)

**CHOCTAWSCHOOL.COM | 800-522-6170 | 580-924-8280**

**Choctaw Nation** School of Choctaw Language

## Choctaw Nation “Creating a Guest Centric Culture”

The Operational Excellence Department recently provided the inaugural learning series Seven Keys to Experience Leadership to the Pocola Region Gaming leadership. Fifty-six leaders completed a series of assignments and learning activities with the intent of creating a guest centric culture for our associates and gaming patrons. Over four months, the leaders received focused instruction on the effect associate engagement has on guest centricity and the importance of aligning both strategies to accomplish business goals. When business strategies center on associate engagement, the guest benefits from an improved experience and lays the foundation for guest loyalty. When guest loyalty is established, businesses are positioned to sustain revenue generation for tribal programs. The learning series culminated with a graduation ceremony and a capstone activity. Action plans were created by the Pocola leaders as a final capstone activity. Each of the action plans included tiered reviews for 30, 60, and 90-day increments to ensure sustainability as well as the alignment of the guest centric and associate engagement strategies.



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.



## Brown graduates

Jaley Faith Brown graduated from East Central University with honors, Dec. 12, 2020.

She earned a Bachelor of Science in education and is currently a kindergarten teacher at Sasakwa Elementary school.

Jaley is the daughter of Jeff and Melissa Brown and the granddaughter of James and Sue Brown, and David and Nancy Bingham.

Jaley thanks the Choctaw Nation Higher Education program and the Teach to Reach program for their assistance.

## James competes at State

Jocelyn James recently placed 5th in the 2021 Future Farmers of America state speech contest.

In the lead-up to the state contest, Jocelyn placed first in the district contest at the Pontotoc Technology Center in Ada, Oklahoma and second in the regional contest at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, Oklahoma.

The topic for her speech was “Native American Influence on Agriculture.”

Jocelyn is very proud of her Choctaw heritage and takes pride in representing the Choctaw Nation at the highest levels in all she does.

Jocelyn is an 8th Grade student at Latta Public Schools. She is the daughter of Jerrod and Laura James of Ada and the granddaughter of Pamela McKinney of Broken Bow, Oklahoma, and Ted and Sharon Brewer of Stonewall, Oklahoma.



## Warden turns 18

Audrey Warden turned 18 years old on May 26.

She will be a senior at Norman High School.

Audrey has played the flute for seven years and has been in the marching band for three years.

She holds a part-time job and started driving recently.

She is the daughter of Debora Guinn.

## Reese Kellan Gordon

Reese Kellan Gordon was born at 9:39 a.m. on March 9, 2021, at Chickasaw Nation Medical Center in Ada, Oklahoma.

He weighed 7 pounds, 11 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Reese is the son of Melissa and Russell Gordon of Seminole, Oklahoma, and joins his two sisters, Madilyn and Anna.

He is the grandson of Rodge and Anna Gordon of Bryan, Texas, and Patricia Monroe of Midwest City, Oklahoma and the late William Monroe.



## Hamilton graduates

Adrienne Hamilton graduated from the Vocational Nursing program in April from American Career College, Ontario, Calif.

She graduated with honors and perfect attendance.

Adrienne's cheerleaders were her two young sons, her parents, friends, and family. She would like to thank the Choctaw Nation Career Development team, especially Mr. Albright, for helping her achieve this goal.



## Appling graduates

First-generation college student, Chloe Christine Appling, graduated from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona, on April 19, 2021, with her bachelor's degree in psychology.

She was on the President's List four years in a row and graduated with a 3.82 GPA.

Chloe is the granddaughter of Barbara Sanders and daughter of Christine and Donald Appling.

She plans to go back to school to earn her master's degree in family and marriage counseling.



## Benson graduates



Jennifer Michelle Benson from Redding, California, graduated from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, on May 8, 2021.

She graduated with her bachelor's degree in English and declared three minors in philosophy, political science, and teaching professions.

Jennifer will be receiving her Single Subject Teaching Credential in English from the Gladys L. Benerd School of Education.

She is pursuing her dream of becoming an English teacher. She will be continuing her education in the future to obtain her master's and doctoral Degrees.



## Smith graduates

Garrett Stephen Smith of Wilburton, Okla. graduated from Oklahoma State University on May 8, 2021, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marketing.

“The Choctaw Nation has provided resources my entire life. I'm very grateful for the continual support the Nation provides through the many programs that are available for members. The opportunity to work with the Choctaw Nation Higher Education and Career Development programs over the last four years has been a blessing. I'm proud to be a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma,” stated Smith.

Garrett is the son of Dr. Stephen Smith of Porum, Oklahoma and Jennifer Smith of Wilburton, Oklahoma.

## Impson named one of 50 Most Powerful Young Professionals

Kyle Impson was recently named one of the 50 Most Powerful Young Professionals by the OKC Friday newspaper.

Impson is the Director of Community Development within the Chickasaw Nation Department of Communications and Community Development.



## Payne vet of the month

R.D. Payne, Hugo, Oklahoma, was Choctaw Nation's Veteran of the Month for May 2021.

Payne served in the United States Army Reserve from Nov. 13, 1955, to Oct. 31, 1963, where he achieved the rank of Sergeant E-5.

He received his basic training at Ft. Chaffe, Arkansas and was stationed at Ft. Bliss, Texas, White Sands, New Mexico and Fort Hood, Texas, where he began with light anti-aircraft artillery and switched to quartermaster.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma holds our Veterans in the highest esteem and appreciates the sacrifices and contributions they have made to preserve our freedoms and the way of life we hold dear.



## Mayfield turns 85

Bob Mayfield recently celebrated his 85th birthday with a gathering of five generations.

Pictured are Bob Mayfield, Pam Jenkins, Michael Jenkins, James Jenkins, Maverick Jenkins, Noni Sloan and Kenzie Sloan.

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**ITI FABVSSA**

## A New Chahta Homeland: A History by the Decade, 1870-1880

Iti Fabvssa is currently running a series that covers the span of Oklahoma Choctaw history. By examining each decade since the Choctaw government arrived 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 1870-1880, an era dominated by Choctaw Nation's engagements with railroad companies, its entry into the coal mining industry, and constant attempts by U.S. Congress to undermine Choctaw sovereignty over our own lands.

For years, railroad companies wanted to build a route between Kansas and Mexico through Indian Territory. But these companies were unable to do so because the Five Tribes owned their lands in fee simple. By holding outright title – unusual for an Indigenous nation at the time – it made it more difficult for Congress to pass legislation that would force them to give up their lands. Given this, Congress took advantage of the post-Civil War reconstruction treaties of 1866 to leverage concessions like allowing one north-south and one east-west railroad to be built through Indian Territory. As these treaties were being ratified, companies began building railroads.

Since there could only be one railroad in each direction, railroad companies raced each other to lay down track. The first company to build a railroad from one of its existing lines to the border of Indian Territory would be granted the official right of way through Indian Territory. Three railroads competed, but it ultimately came down to two: the Missouri River, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad (MRF&G) and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway (MK&T, also nicknamed the Katy). Due to trickery on behalf of an individual working for the MK&T, the MRF&G laid track up to the border of the Quapaw reserve, a place where they could not cross. As a result, when the MK&T reached in the Cherokee border in June 1870, Congress granted it the right to build through Indian Territory. From there, the MK&T passed through the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) Nations before arriving in the Choctaw Nation in 1871.

Following the 1866 treaty, the Choctaw Nation considered developing its own railroad to prevent outside companies and U.S. settlers seeking profits related to the railroad industry from invading our territory. The closest that the Choctaw Nation came to creating its own railroad was with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Thirty-Fifth Parallel Railroad Company. It published its charter in 1870 and distributed it among Choctaws and Chickasaws in both English and Choctaw languages. According to this charter, it would have only granted usage of the space, not land ownership. This was an important distinction, for the Choctaw Nation would have been able to maintain control over the land. Under U.S. laws, U.S. railroad companies sought to own the land that the railroads were on as well as townsites where the railroad would stop. Before any track for the Thirty-Fifth Parallel Railroad could be laid, Chickasaw opposition stopped a Choctaw-owned railroad from moving forward.

As the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad was built through Choctaw Nation, it gave rise to many of the towns that still exist today. The MK&T stopped in the towns of Reams, McAlester, Savanna, Kiowa, Stringtown, Atoka, Caney, Caddo, Armstrong, Durant, Calera and Colbert. In 1872, MK&T line construction was ended upon reaching Denison, Texas. Once completed, the MK&T made Indian Territory far more accessible to outside markets – which proved to be especially useful for the increasing industrialization of coal mining in the Choctaw Nation. Coal quickly became Indian Territory's most important export and spurred massive changes in Choctaw Nation.

In August 1872, James Jackson McAlester applied for a permit to marry Rebecca Burney, a Chickasaw woman who was a citizen of the Choctaw Nation. McAlester first arrived in Choctaw Territory in 1869, when he received a permit to work at a trading firm within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation. According to Choctaw law, white people could only live and work in the Choctaw Nation if they held a work permit for specific jobs, like doctor or trader, or intermarried citizens. Before coming to the Choctaw Nation, an engineer who helped survey Choctaw lands in the 1820s drew McAlester a map with the location of coal outcrops. McAlester followed that map with the hope of striking big. Because he was not a Choctaw citizen, he was unable to own land – until he married Rebecca Burney. Through marriage, McAlester was granted the rights of Choctaw citizenship. He then worked with other white intermarried citizens to lease lands from Choctaws, so they could then lease the lands to coal companies like the Osage Coal and Mining Company – which he had a controlling interest in. The various permits that McAlester had to get before he became a citizen show how the Choctaw Nation carefully regulated its lands and how permits were important tools for curbing the tide of white intrusion into Choctaw lands and affairs.

While wary of possible interference by outsiders, some leaders in Choctaw government



The completed Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway, traveling through Indian Territory. Courtesy of: Box 72, Robert S. Stevens Collection, Stevens family papers, #1210, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

saw coal mining as an opportunity for raising money to operate the government and improve life for Choctaw people. In 1875, Chief Coleman Cole called on the General Council to use natural resources to fund schools. As the coal industry grew, the General Council established the office of the Mining Trustee to keep track of all mining-related business, tracking information like how much coal was produced and shipped outside of Indian Territory. The Mining Trustee kept track of all the companies operating in Choctaw Nation and made sure they paid the required fees and taxes to mine. While the mining industry became an important source of revenue for the Choctaw Nation, the Tribe did not have complete control over the industry because of constant interference by U.S. citizens and Congress. In the early years of coal mining, white men like McAlester exploited loopholes in Choctaw law to purchase land that they would then lease to coal companies to enrich themselves at the expense of the entire Choctaw community. This had lasting consequences.

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 having new opportunities for work – especially for individuals who got blacklisted by East Coast mines for trying to improve mining working conditions. Many of these workers were recent immigrants from Italy, Poland and Ireland. To learn more about these mining communities in the Choctaw Nation, see [Iti Fabvssa's November 2020 article](#), "Putting the Coal in Coalgate, exhibit teaches about past." This migration of workers put massive pressure on Choctaw government that led to greater U.S. intervention in Choctaw affairs.

Following the Treaty of 1866, Choctaw Nation delegates working out of Washington, D.C. were constantly fighting against proposed legislation that would make Indian Territory into a U.S. territory. As an official U.S. territory, the U.S. would have more power over the Indigenous nations and pave the way towards statehood. To do so, the U.S. would have broken numerous treaty promises. In an 1870 response to a bill to territorialize Indian Territory before Congress, Peter Pitchlynn submitted a 21-page formal protest against the bill. He argued, “[Choctaw Nation] can plainly foresee that when such a Territorial government has once been established, their country will be filled with white men, their people defrauded out of and robbed of their lands, as they were in Mississippi, with the connivance of the officers of the Government; that the jurisdiction and powers of their local legislatures and judiciaries will be encroached on, and these themselves be soon swept away; and that at no distant day the Choctaw people will have disappeared, and the tongue of their ancestors have become a dead language.” This was precisely what the Choctaw Nation did not want and was made clear in the 1830 removal treaty that stated, “that no part of the land granted them shall forever be embraced in any capital Territory or State.” Nevertheless, the U.S. Congress still worked to claim and take over the Five Tribes and their lands.

Next month, we will cover the period of 1880-1890 when Choctaw Nation faced increasing challenges in governing its lands due to the massive migration of white settlers as well as attempts by the U.S. government to allot Choctaw lands and break up our government.

Additional reading resources on this period are available on the Choctaw Nation Cultural Service webpage (<https://choctawnationculture.com/choctaw-culture/additional-resources.aspx>). Follow this Iti Fabbvssa series in print and online at <https://www.choctawnation.com/history-culture/history/iti-fabbvssa>. If you have questions or would like more information on the sources, please contact Megan Baker at [meganb@choctawnation.com](mailto:meganb@choctawnation.com).

# Housing Headlines

By Carrie Blackmon

On June 7, 2018, the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (HACNO) was selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as one of 17 EnVision center Pilot communities and is the only Tribal Nation selected to participate. Currently there are 100 EnVision Centers across the United States with three of those being a Tribal Designated EnVision Center.

The goal of an EnVision center is to offer families access to support services that can help them achieve self-sufficiency, through making resources readily available. The EnVision Centers is premised on the notion that financial support alone is insufficient to solve the problem of poverty.

Other EnVision Centers are located in metropolis areas where the idea is a brick and mortar “one stop shop” for services and programs. However, the HACNO concept is to create a “pop-up” or virtual EnVision Center due to the immense reservation area.

Through the EnVision center mission, HUD identified four pillars as the focus on items that will focus on fostering long-lasting self-sufficiency.

1. Economic Empowerment
2. Education Advancement
3. Health and Wellness
4. Character and Leadership

Classes will be conducted at community centers or other public areas across our region for tribal members and participants in the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority Program.

Individualized counseling for tribal members and participants in the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority Program is offered as well.

The EnVision Center has partnered with the IRS to become a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. This Tax season the EnVision Center had filed 178 Returns with an estimated savings to our Tribal Members of \$53,400 in tax preparation costs.


The EnVision Center and Service Coordination Department are offering a holistic approach to addressing the needs of their participants in their housing program as well as other Tribal members.

Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
EnVision Center  
511 Nanih Waiya Rd. Poteau, OK 74953  
918-647-3668  
EnVisionCenter@choctawnation.com.

# BUSINESS CENTER AND COMPUTER LAB SURVEY

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Scan this QR code to register using a smartphone.



**Choctaw Nation** Community Centers



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The seal of the Choctaw Nation is circular, featuring a central emblem of a bow and arrow. The words "THE GREAT SEAL" are inscribed in a circle around the top, and "THE CHOCTAW NATION" is inscribed around the bottom. The entire seal is set against a blue background.

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The logo for Project Pehlich STEAM Camp features the words "PROJECT PEHLICHI" in a bold, black, sans-serif font at the top. Below this, the word "STEAM" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, with each letter contained within a colored circle: 'S' in dark blue, 'T' in green, 'E' in red, 'A' in yellow, and 'M' in light blue. The circles overlap slightly. Below "STEAM", the word "CAMP" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A horizontal line separates the logo from the event details. The details are presented in two columns. The left column has "July 18-23" in a large, bold, blue font, followed by "High School STEAM Camp" and "(Grades 9-12)" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The right column has "July 25-27" in a large, bold, blue font, followed by "Junior STEAM Camp" and "(Grades 5-8)" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. Another horizontal line separates the event details from the application information. The application information is on a light blue background and includes "APPLY AT: CHOCTAWNATION.COM/STEAM" in a black, sans-serif font. Below this, on a darker blue background, is the email "STEAMCAMP@CHOCTAWNATION.COM" and the phone number "918-297-2518 EXT 1083" in a white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, on a dark blue background, is the text "Choctaw Nation Jones Academy" in a white, sans-serif font. The entire graphic is framed by a decorative border at the bottom consisting of a repeating pattern of small, stylized blue and white geometric shapes.



### Elizabeth Louise Capshaw

Elizabeth “Betty” Louise Capshaw, 97, passed away Dec. 24, 2020.

Betty was born Aug. 11, 1923, in Kenefic, Okla., to Maud Kate and Raymond Harrison.

She was preceded in death by her husband William “Pete” Morgan Capshaw.

Betty is survived by daughters Jean Urbanski and Joan Capshaw; granddaughters Katherine, her namesake, and Mary Margaret.

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



### Jimmie Dean Green

Jimmie Dean Green, 59, passed away Feb. 6, 2021.

Jimmie was born Jan. 19, 1962, in Prague, Okla., to Raymond L. and Nona Sue (Boren) Green.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers James Dale “JD” Green and Leslie Gene Green.

Jimmie is survived by his wife Nancy; children Halie Alcorn and spouse Dan, Hannah Dye and spouse Cory, Melissa Chevere, Josh Green and spouse Amy, and Paul Kinman and partner Lana Iish; brother Tommy Green; step-siblings Bonnie Kommer, Cindy Melton, Rickie Lawson, Jackie Lawson and Shari Ashmore; and 10 grandchildren.

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



### Hampton W. Anderson

Hampton W. Anderson, 61, passed away Dec. 3, 2020.

Hampton was born March 18, 1959, to Leroy and Stella Anderson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and great-nephew Jonathan Thomas Cummings.

Hampton is survived by his wife Helen; step-sons Darren Berry and spouse Rebecca, and Shane Berry and fiancée Christy; sisters Ramona Cummings, Margaret Anderson, Lula Johnson and spouse Roy, and Judy Eaton; brother Gary Anderson and spouse Keri; grandchildren Courtney Berry, Amanda Berry-Merrill, Dakota Berry, and Morgan Berry; great-grandchildren Jayden, McKinleigh, and Callen; nephews Lakota, Tommy, and Timothy; nieces Tiffany, Cherokee, and Cheyenne; great-nephews Thomas and Tyler.

For the full obituary, please visit [Shipman Funeral Homes](#).



### Ernest Leroy Wood

Ernest “Ernie” Leroy Wood, 87, passed away March 26, 2021.

Ernie was born June 26, 1933, in Norman, Okla., to Ernest and Mary (Harris) Wood.

He was preceded in death by his parents; grandson Joshua Morris; sisters Alline Hoyer, Anna Faye Wood, and Louella Wood; and brothers Sherman Wood, Vernon Wood, and Mac Wood.

Ernie is survived by his wife Keitha; son Stephen L. Wood and spouse Beth; daughter Marci Morris and spouse Melvin; grandsons Stephen C. Wood and spouse Amy, Justin Wood and spouse Sue, Tanner Wood, and Tracey Wood; granddaughters Sarah Wood, Audrey Wood, and Paige Wood; great-grandsons Stephen M. Wood and Elijah Scott; brothers Kenneth “Ken” Wood and spouse Georgia and Gerald “Jerry” Wood and spouse Michelle; along with many loved nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [Sierra View Mortuary](#).



### Aaron Nathaniel Choate

Aaron Nathaniel Choate, 42, passed away March 1, 2021.

Aaron was born Oct. 2, 1978, to Paul and Kathleen Choate.

He was preceded in death by his great-grandfather George Washington Choate; and grandfather Ben Choate Jr.

Aaron is survived by his wife Cinamyn; daughters Autumn and Kaylee; his parents; sisters Sarah and Miriam; along with an uncle, aunt, and many nieces and nephews.

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



### Ruie Lee Wilcox Jr.

Ruie Lee Wilcox Jr., 95, passed away July 14, 2020.

Ruie was born Aug. 14, 1924, in Long Beach, Calif., to Ruie and Victoria Wilcox.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Lois.

Ruie is survived by brother David Wilcox; daughters Lois Lee Newkirk and Lynda Louise, along with their spouses; four grandchildren and their spouses; and five great-grandchildren.

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



### Marilyn Lee Keith

Marilyn Lee Keith, 87, passed away April 2, 2021.

Marilyn was born April 16, 1933, in Leflore, Okla., to James and Irene (McCann) Raleigh.

She was preceded in death by her husband James Keith; son James Elliott Keith; her parents; stepmothers Amelia Eldee Raleigh and Nettie Raleigh; paternal grandparents General Green Raleigh and Mary Elizabeth; sister Sylvia McFall; brothers Jake Raleigh and Paul Raleigh; nephews Joey Raleigh, Jason Raleigh, Kevin Brewer, and Basil Raleigh; nieces Brittany Brewer, Jacqueline Raleigh, and Paulette Raleigh; and great-niece Hannah McCarty.

Marilyn is survived by son Randy Lee Keith; grandson Randy Keith Jr.; great-granddaughters Madison and Madeline; sisters Elizabeth Loosier and her spouse, and Bonnie Turner; brothers Earl Raleigh and spouse Joyce, and Jennings Raleigh; along with numerous loving nieces, nephews, and special friends.

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



### Louis Dewayne Bond

Louis Dewayne Bond, 61, passed away Feb. 8, 2021.

Louis was born June 13, 1959, in Talihina, Okla., to Louis and Emma (Ward) Bond.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Harris Ward; sisters Anna Lou Ward Box, Mary Louise Jefferson, and Ruthie Jefferson.

Louis is survived by sons James Louis Bond, Adrian Littlestar Bond, and Randall Alan Bond; the mother of his children, Beatrice Bridges; grandchildren Randall Bond, Adrianna Bond, Adrian Littlestar Bond II, Beatrice Bond, Kaylee Bond, and Dillon Bond; brother Dewey Wayne Bond; sister Delores Ward; and many other family members, friends and loved ones.

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



### Evalyn Mae Owen

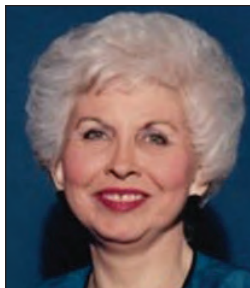
Evalyn Mae (Halpin) Boone Owen, 91, passed away Feb. 7, 2021.

Evalyn was born Feb. 8, 1929, in Caddo, Okla., to Oscar and Birdie Halpin.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Emmitt Owen; son William “Bill” Boone Jr.; and sister Fredricka Maddox.

Evalyn is survived by her son Bob Boone and spouse Pam; daughter Lynette Patterson and spouse Gary; sister Alma Snyder and spouse Jim; grandchildren Matt Harris and spouse Jennifer, Kelby Price, Blake Price, Jennifer Boone, and Wesley Boone; great-grandchildren Carter Harris, Abby Spragins, Lyric Boone, and Easton Boone; nephew Wil Snyder and spouse Donna; and niece Brynn Morris and spouse Steve.

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



### Ricky Lynn Berry

Ricky Lynn Berry, 54, passed away March 9, 2021.

Ricky was born Oct. 26, 1966, in Okla. City, Okla., to Andrew and Nettie (Miller) Berry.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister Linda Berry.

Ricky is survived by his son Nick LaLonde and Victoria; daughter Amber Skaggs and Blake; brothers James Berry and Michael Berry; sisters Mary Berry and Shirley Berry; grandchild Bentley Livingston; and many other relatives and friends.

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



### Myra Deane Dorety

Myra Deane Dorety, 83, passed away April 11, 2021.

Myra was born Sept. 30, 1937, in Moyers, Okla., to Warren and Voicey Marie Matherly.

She was preceded in death by brother Jerry Lynn Matherly; and sister Sandra Elaine Locke.

Myra is survived by her sister Karen Marie Galloway; sons William Dean and Warren David; daughters Deanna Lynne and Linda Marie; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and four nephews and nieces.

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

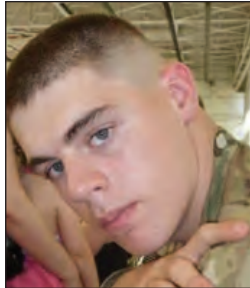


### Robert Anthony Southard

Robert Anthony Southard, 28, passed away April 1, 2021.

Robert was born March 26, 1993, in Tulsa, Okla., to Margaret Louise Baker (Neal) and Richard Earl Southard.

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



### Charles Robinson

Charles William “Bill” Robinson, 82, passed away March 31, 2021.

Bill was born Feb. 22, 1939, in Boswell, Okla., to Joel Cyrus and Polly Edna (Payton) Robinson.

He is preceded in death by his parents; son Brian Gregory Robinson; grandparents Joel Cyrus and Annie (Battiest) Robinson, and Ned and Mary (Dill) Payton; brothers Rex Robinson, Hoot Robinson, and Max Robinson; and sister Willie Mae Robinson.

Bill is survived by sons Shane Robinson, Charles Robinson and spouse Siouxsan, and Kevan Robinson and spouse Michelle; daughter Kristy Riess-Poor and spouse Donald; brother Jack Robinson; sisters Phyllis Elliott Griffin and spouse Bobby, and Rosemary Wood; grandchildren Nicole Moore and spouse Bryan, Nicholas Riess, Lindsey Riess, Chisholm Robinson, Shae Robinson Gonzales and spouse John Paul, Lakota Dodging Horse, Rosie Chasing Crow, Dante Bullshields, Nanaiya Robinson Owns Different Horses, Imaiya Robinson Owns Different Horses, Aianli Robinson Owns Different Horses, Tashka Robinson Owns Different Horses, Isabella (Eryn Isbell) Robinson; and great-grandchildren Claire Moore, Taylor Moore, Rylee Riess, and Laken Gonzales.

For the full obituary, please visit [Prater-Lamp-ton-Mills & Coffey Funeral Home](#).

### Lucas Wayne Columbus

Lucas “Luke” Wayne Columbus, 44, passed away March 15, 2021.

Luke was born Aug. 1, 1976, to Mike and Luanna Columbus.

He was preceded in death by his parents, and grandparents Herbert and Martha Fox.

Luke is survived by brothers Michael Columbus and Aaron Columbus; niece Sheriah Fox; nephew Josiah Columbus; numerous aunts and uncles; and his dog Hershey.

For the full obituary, please visit [Traditions Funeral and Cremation Services](#).



### Darrell Glenn Wallace Sr.

Darrell Glenn Wallace, Sr., 57, passed away April 11, 2021.

Darrell was born Feb. 8, 1964, in Ardmore, Okla., to David Johnson and Marina Wallace.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Anthony “Bolo” Wallace; sister Janet Marie Wallace; and niece Staci Wallace.

Darrell is survived by his son Darrell Wallace Jr.; daughter Casey Wallace; four grandchildren; brother Craig Wallace; numerous nieces and nephews; and a host of family and friends.

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



### Freda Stubblefield

Freda (Weathers) Stubblefield, 97, passed away Feb. 21, 2021.

Freda was born Dec. 17, 1923, in Cade, Okla., to D.W. Weathers and Rebecca (Olsen) Weathers.

She was preceded in death by her parents; siblings Christine (Weathers) Sluder, Oma (Weathers) Jackson, Jean (Weathers) Troop, David Dee Weathers; and great-grandchild Oakland Coyle.

Freda is survived by her children David Larry Stubblefield, and Cheryl Lea (Stubblefield) Scott and spouse Bill; grandchildren Cody Shane Stubblefield and Casey Danielle (Stubblefield) Coyle and spouse Casey; and great-grandchildren Vann, Rowan, Nixon, and Rawlings.

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



### Johnny Wayne Robertson

Johnny Wayne Robertson, 73, passed away April 9, 2021.

Johnny was born Nov. 10, 1947, in McCurtain, Okla., to Leona (Smittle) Robertson and Ted Robertson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Don Robertson and Tommy Robertson; and sisters Sue Olson, Glenda Brown, and Teddy Brasfield.

Johnny is survived by son Bobby Robertson and spouse Beverly; grandchildren Michael Robertson, Emily Robertson, and Eric Robertson; great-grandchild Emma Robertson; sister Ranell Mahan; as well as other friends and loved ones.

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



### Shirley Lou Marcille

Shirley Lou “Gan-Gan” (Winship) Marcille, 79, passed away April 4, 2021.

Shirley was born June 29, 1941, to Stella and Robert Winship.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister Norma Winship; daughter Shelly Stanley; granddaughter Michelle Thomas; brother James Winship; and son-in-law Kevin Hampton Sr.

Shirley is survived by her daughters Rowena Waggoner and Venise Kennedy; son George “Doug” Holman and spouse Joni; grandchildren Brandon and Chelsea Waggoner, Kasha Kennedy, Benji Muns, Kevin Jr. and Misty Hampton, Cash Hampton, Blake and Rachel Stanley, Mr. and Mrs. Eric Stanley, Winston Stanley, Victoria Holman, and Renee and Matthew Holman; great-grandchildren Kinsley Muns, Emmalyn Jo Waggoner, Ari-Ava Muns, Nadaleigh Hampton, and Carter and Colby Stanley; special friends Rita, Eleanor, and Marie; as well as many brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins, and a host of friends.

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



### Mercedes Shalyn McGough

Mercedes “Sis” Shalyn McGough, 29, passed away March 31, 2021.

Sis was born Sept. 9, 1991, in Talihina, Okla., to Jacqualine (Sampson) Sanchez.

She was preceded in death by her mother; aunt Audrea Sampson; maternal grandfather Albert Sampson; maternal great-grandparents George and Hester Battiest; paternal great-grandmother Maurelia Rocha; and great-grandfather Aurelio Sanchez.

Sis is survived by her husband James McGough; father Salvador Sanchez; step-son Billy McGough; brothers Jaden Sanchez and Galen Sanchez; sisters Maria McDonald and spouse Gage, and Adrienne Wallace; nieces Sophia McDonald and Amiya McGough; nephew Gaven McGough; grandmother Nettie Webb and Will (Papa) Watkins; grandparents Baleria Martinez and Salvador Sanchez Rocha; aunts Maria de Jesus and Maria Guadalupe; Becky Cheshire and Leigh Esterlyn; uncles George Pell and Robert Sampson; many cousins and other relatives.

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



## 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](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)



# Backyard Initiative puts health in your hands

By Chris Jennings

Choctaw Nation Land Management recently released four Backyard Initiative videos. The videos cover the construction of a galvanized raised bed, a compost bin, a chicken tractor and a universally accessible raised bed.

The purpose of the Backyard Initiative is to teach tribal members, along with the non-Choc-taw public, how to be more self-sufficient in feeding themselves and their families.

Emmlie Bragg, with Choctaw Nation Land Management, said, “With this initiative, we have a series of step-by-step in-struction videos on how to build each of these items. We hope through this program, it will show the community what can be done in their backyard.”

The Choctaw people have a long history of agri-culture, and many are farmers. Many others live in cities and towns or only have small backyards. That doesn’t mean they can’t take steps to be more self-sufficient.

Jeff Roebuck, Lehigh Project Technician, said, “Somebody who lives in town and has a small back-yard, they can still be able to grow vegetables, have some chickens...to be as self-sufficient as possible.”

Roebuck says the simplest project would be the raised galvanized bed. Once the bed is built, you fill it with dirt or potting soil. By having the garden raised, it’s easier for elders or people with disabili-ties to take care of the garden.

Some other benefits of raised garden beds are few-er weeds, no tilling, better drainage, and if you rent your home, a raised bed can be temporary.

A slightly more ambitious project would be the chicken tractor. A chicken tractor is a floorless mo-bile shelter for three or four chickens. The shelter is on wheels, so it can easily be moved around a yard. By moving the tractor around it allows for better management of soil health. Eggs are also easier to collect since the chickens aren’t roaming free.

One well-fed, high producing hen can lay 250-300 eggs a year. “For a small family, you’re going to have quite a few eggs by just having two or three chick-ens,” says Roebuck.

All of the Backyard Initiative projects help support a healthier lifestyle by creating access to healthy, organic foods in areas that are often classified as a food desert.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Jeff Roebuck demonstrates how a chicken tractor can be moved around a backyard area. The chicken tractor is one of several “do-it-yourself” Backyard Initiative Project videos published by Choctaw Nation Land Management.

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 500 people, or 33% 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 cardiovas-cular 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 min-utes 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 quali-ty 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 and how they can grow their own vegetables to sup-port a healthier lifestyle,” said Bragg.

To see the Backyard Initiative videos, go to <https://www.choctawnation.com/backyard-initiatives>.



# BACKYARD INITIATIVES

USE YOUR YARD TO SUPPORT A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

FIND OUT HOW AT:

**CHOCTAWNATION.COM/BACKYARD-INITIATIVES**

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

## Corn and Blueberry Salad

- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 3 1/2 cups corn, (canned, frozen/ cooked, fresh, grilled, etc.)

- 1 cup blueberries, fresh
- 1 cup cucumber, chopped
- 1/4 cup onion, red, chopped
- 1/4 cup Cilantro, chopped
- 1 cup bell pepper, red, chopped
- 1 Jalapeno, seeded, chopped, optional

### Preparation

- In a small bowl, mix lime juice, olive oil, honey and cumin.
- In a large bowl, mix corn, blueberries, cucum-ber, onion, cilantro, bell pepper and jalapeno.
- Drizzle dressing on top of salad, gently toss, and refrigerate.

## GET THE LATEST VERSION OF MYCNHSA APP

### ACCESS YOUR HEALTHCARE 24/7!

In our effort to provide the highest quality of care to the people we serve, the myCNHSA app continues to be updated and improved.

Version 4.1.0 is now available.

Use your smartphone to scan the code and download the app.

**Choctaw Nation** Health Services

## CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

### WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

Open 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

### June 2021

All markets open weekdays, June 1-25  
**Closed:** June 28-30.

Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation  
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

**ANTLERS** 400 S.W. “O” ST., 580-298-6443

**BROKEN BOW** 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773

**MCALISTER** 3244 Afullotha Hina, 918-420-5716

**POTEAU** 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

## SOONERCARE 2.0

### Expanded Health Insurance Benefits for Adults

**SoonerCare is expanding benefits which allows for more Oklahomans to have FREE healthcare! Coverage effective as soon as July 1, 2021!**

With lowered income guidelines and no monthly premiums, you may qualify for this new plan even if you were denied for SoonerCare in the past.

Choctaw Nation Health Services has benefit coordinators at each clinic location to assist patients with this new program, as well as other healthcare coverage, such as: Medicare, Marketplace and Veterans Affairs benefits.

Visit with your CNHSA Benefit Coordinator today to see if you qualify for SoonerCare 2.0 coverage. Health coverage like this provides a safety net for YOU and it compliments your Indian Health Service benefits.

**CHOCTAWNATION.COM/BENEFIT-COORDINATORS**

**Choctaw Nation** Health Services

## SHOULD I BE SCREENED FOR LUNG CANCER?

The more you smoke, and the longer you smoke, the higher your risk is for lung cancer.

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

- 55 to 80 years old
- Current smoker or former smoker who quit less than 15 years ago
- 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. 6545**

**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

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



## Off the beaten path in Choctaw Country

By Christian Toews

Are you looking for an outside-the-box adventure that is sure to thrill? Look no further than experiencing southeastern 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 more 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. Jeff 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 that they are sold before they even make it off the truck," said Lucas.

According to Lucas, there is an off-road vehicle for every type of rider.

"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 with your family and drive up to a scenic location and have a picnic, or you like to get muddy on a high-powered four-wheeler. Perhaps you want a UTV that will allow you to access places that a traditional vehicle can't take you. The off-road industry has a vehicle for everyone to enjoy.

According to Lucas, there are many great places to ride an ATV or UTV in southeast Oklahoma. Two of the most popular locations are Pine Mountain ATV Park in Rattan, Oklahoma, and Billy Creek Recreation Area

near Talihina, Oklahoma.

Pine Mountain offers over 1,700 acres of wooded trails, rock formations, creeks, and campgrounds in the Kiamichi Mountains. You can find more information about Pine Mountain at <https://choctawcountry.com/attractions/pine-mountain-atv-park/>.

Billy Creek Recreation Area has many trails to explore and even connects to the Ouachita National Recreation Trail, which is 225 miles, according to USDA.gov. You can find more information about Billy Creek Recreation Area at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/ouachita/recarea/?recid=11595>.

Another area that many people explore on ATVs and UTVs is the Hochatown, 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.

"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.

Carrie also mentioned that it could be an excellent way to spend some quality family time away from electronics and experience the outdoors. She said that Captain's Hideaway Powersports Rentals offers maps and guides for anyone who wants to explore the area in their own off-road vehicle. You can find more information, including availability and pricing, at <https://captainshideaway-rentals.com/>.

You might be a seasoned off-road enthusiast, or maybe you have never felt the adrenaline rush of powering down a trail in a UTV. No matter what your skill level or interest, Choctaw Country has something to offer you. Get muddy, enjoy some family time, and explore some of southeastern Oklahoma's beautiful country.

Photo by Christian Toews



Photos by Christian Toews and Chris Jennings

## Ancestors honored at Trail of Tears Walk

Many Choctaw tribal members and friends traveled to Tvshka Homma May 15, for the 2021 Trail of Tears Memorial Walk. The commemorative 2.5-mile hike is only a fraction compared to the roughly 700 miles covered by foot in the 1830s 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.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

## June 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.

Stay Connected to the Nation

CHOCTAWNATION.COM



## COVID-19 VACCINE NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Appointments for vaccines are now available to the public for ages 18 and older at any CNHSA clinic.

Patients ages 16 and older can receive the Pfizer vaccine at the Talihina location. Other locations will primarily be giving the Moderna vaccine.

**800-349-7026, EXT. 6**

**USE YOUR MYCNHSA APP, OR VISIT MY.CNHSA.COM**

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

**FEMA COVID-19**

**FUNERAL ASSISTANCE**

**CONTACT: 844-684-6333**  
( MONDAY – FRIDAY | 8 AM - 8 PM CENTRAL TIME )

THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) IS PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR COVID-19 RELATED FUNERAL EXPENSES INCURRED AFTER JANUARY 20, 2020

ELIGIBILITY AND MORE INFORMATION:  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/COVIDRELIEF](https://choctawnation.com/COVIDRELIEF)

FEMA

**CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL**

**SEPTEMBER 3 - 5, 2021**  
**#CHAHTALABORDAY**

**FOOD VENDOR APPLICATION NOW ONLINE**

Once your application is received it will be reviewed by the Labor Day Food Vendor Committee. If selected, you will be contacted by direct mail for instructions on where to submit your money order to secure your vendor spot.

Deadline for applications is July 30, 2021.

800.522.6170 EXT 4194 | 580-616-6784 | [VJROBISON@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:VJROBISON@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

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