



April 2019 Issue



Photos by Chris Jennings

Tribal officials, store employees and community members gather for the ribbon cutting of the new Choctaw Country Market in Boswell, Oklahoma.



Choctaw Nation photo



The Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant is 38 percent complete.



The Choctaw Nation Judicial Center is 99 percent complete and currently serving clients. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for April 25, 2019.



A panoramic image of the Choctaw Country Market in Boswell shows the wide selection of fruit and vegetables available. The store also features a diner that is currently serving hot meals. Gas pumps will be open soon, further adding to the convenience the market provides.

Growth Spreads Faith, Family and Culture

by CHRIS JENNINGS

The Choctaw Nation continues its initiative of keeping communities alive with ongoing growth across the 10 ½ counties. The most recent sign of this is the opening of the new Choctaw Country Market in Boswell.

On top of bringing a new level of convenience to nearby citizens, the new store is making strides to combat the problem of food deserts across the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes a food desert as an area that does not have access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains and other foods that make up a full and healthy diet.

The new Country Market has all of that and more. The fresh produce section is stocked well beyond what you would expect from a smaller-size grocery store. Apples, bananas, peaches, onions, avocados, tomatoes and even whole pineapples line the shelves.

As the Nation continues to develop its relationship with a new grocery supplier, customers can expect to pay prices closer to what they would expect to find in some of the larger grocery stores, now without the 30-minute drive.

That's one of the best parts, General Manager Paul Easley says. "People talk about how wonderful it is to be able to just drive five minutes to get their stuff. Even the surrounding communities are loving every minute the store is open."

As the community begins to shop at the new store, traffic continues to steadily rise on a daily basis. Easley says visitors are around 300 per day, but that number continues to grow as people tell friends and family what's available at the store.

Customers can expect the normal grocery selections along with a deli with hot foods and daily dinner items. Butchers also cut fresh meat daily. This wide selection of services and amenities, along with being centrally located, serves to draw in different members of the community. Kids before and after school, families after church and elders doing their grocery shopping can all be seen in the store on any given day.

Chief Gary Batton said, "If you can create this community here where they can come and eat and get to know each other and socialize they become part of something better than themselves. That's being part of a community."

It's not just the food that the store provides to the community. District 8 Councilmember Perry Thompson said he was glad the new store is in Boswell. "The main thing is we're giving people jobs and a place to shop," said Thompson. Keeping people in their community means when dollars are spent they're being spent closer to home.

Jessica Grant is a cashier at the store and says the Nation's decision to put the store in Boswell has been huge for her. Previously, as a single mother she would have to load three kids and take them to Durant or Hugo for regular shopping.

Working at the store also serves to ease her commute. "It took me 45 minutes [to get to work]. I would have to wake up at 4:30 to get there by 6 because I had to get the kids ready. Now it only takes me 20 minutes," said Grant.

"It's about providing good access to food, it's providing job opportunities for our people, it's them getting to stay home. Their dollars stay locally. They spend more there. It grows that community, it grows their families, helps the families stay together. That's the Chahta spirit of faith, family and culture," said Batton.

The Nation continues to grow in other areas as well. There are currently 17 active construction projects in progress across the Nation. These include Affordable Rental Homes in Atoka, Calera and Hugo; Independent Elderly Homes in Atoka and Coalgate; an Atoka Wellness Center, the Choctaw Country Market in Coalgate, Idabel Town Center, McAlester Facilities Maintenance, Poteau Child Care, Poteau Prescription Refill Center, Talihina Day Care, an expansion of the Talihina Med Surgical facility, construction of a new chapel at the Talihina hospital, and the Durant Cultural Center. Construction was recently completed on the Idabel Wellness Center.

The two projects closest to completion are the Choctaw Nation Judicial Center and the Choctaw Travel Plaza in Talihina.

The Choctaw Travel Plaza in Talihina, along with the Rustic Roast coffee shop located inside, are scheduled to open on April 1 with a ribbon cutting on April 4.

The judicial center is currently open to the public; however, clients can expect to see daily changes as landscaping, additional signage and installation of artwork are completed.

Executive Officer of the Judicial Branch, Pam Young, said of the artwork, "That

was a three-month process. I went out and met all the Choctaw artists and gave them our vision and they created the originals to meet our vision."

All of the artists will be available to talk about their art at a ribbon cutting for the federal building on April 25. Also available at the ribbon cutting will be Joy Culbreath and Kathy Carpenter for a book signing of their new book on the Choctaw constitution.

The public will be able to tour the building and get a hands-on demonstration of the electronic filing system. The system will enable people to file a petition from their phone and is one of the first of its kind in Oklahoma.

Traveling to the judicial center from south of Durant will eventually become easier with the FASTLANE project scheduled to go through Calera.

The project, which is scheduled to start accepting bids in April, will remove the stop lights, add frontage roads and extend the 70-mile-per-hour speed limit of U.S. 69/75 through Calera.

"We must grow our people and communities so that we have a healthy productive workforce for the future of the tribe. Our people and their creativity will be the key to our success," said Batton.

The strength of the area relies on the strength of the Nation. The strength of the Nation relies on the strength of each individual member. These projects go a long way to achieving both of those goals.

Current Construction Projects

	Cost to Date	Estimated Completion	Percent Complete
Atoka Affordable Rental Homes	\$58,194	October 2019	5%
Atoka Independent Elderly Homes	\$57,112	July 2019	6%
Atoka Wellness Center	\$924,887	March 2019	93%
Calera Affordable Rental Homes	\$75,810	October 2019	1%
Coalgate Country Market	\$347,060	November 2019	9%
Coalgate Independent Elderly Homes	\$384,658	July 2019	11%
Durant Cultural Center	\$19,928,873	February 2020	38%
Choctaw Nation Judicial Center	\$5,720,906	March 2019	99%
Hugo Affordable Rental Homes	\$275,680	October 2019	5%
Idabel Town Center	\$3,931,771	July 2019	62%
McAlester Facilities Maintenance	\$644,850	May 2019	54%
Poteau Childcare Facility	\$1,584,488	July 2019	27%
Poteau Prescription Refill Center	4,508,791	July 2019	19%
Talihina Day Care	\$1,661,406	July 2019	52%
Talihina Travel Plaza	\$4,509,726	March 2019	98%
Talihina Med Surgical Expansion	\$844,150	April 2019	70%
Talihina Hospital Chapel	\$199,039	August 2019	2%

CELEBRATING



Chief Gary Batton

Signs of Spring Bring Thoughts of Rebirth and Regrowth to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

It is finally spring-time here in the Choctaw Nation. Spring is a time of rebirth, regrowth, and resurrection. I love seeing what looked dry and dead after a long, cold winter turn green and full of life. The grass is growing and the flowers are blooming. Springtime is a glorious event.

One of my favorite things about the season is having the opportunity

to celebrate Easter. Easter is a time of love, hope, and celebration. Easter is one of the important holidays we celebrate as believers. We get to rejoice in Christ and his blessings. Jesus gave the ultimate gift, the hope of

everlasting life. What an excellent gift that is. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” – John 3:16. Jesus died on the cross for our sins, so that we may be forgiven.

If you are looking for a way to celebrate Easter a little early, I invite you to join us for the [2019 Chief Gary Batton Easter Celebration](#) April 13. The event kicks off at 10 a.m. and is always such a fun time for everyone in attendance. We would love to see you all there. There will be a worship service led by Olin Williams, stickball, cultural demonstrations, bunny pictures, and lunch. Of course, there will be Easter egg hunts for our young ones and elders. Who will find one of those sought-after prize eggs? A full list of events is located on Page 4 of this month’s Biskinik.

It is always fun to see everyone have a good time and fellowship with fellow tribal members. Whether it be at the Easter celebration, wild onion dinners, cultural meetings, the commemorative Trail of Tears Walk or Labor Day, it is great to have the opportunity for Chahtas to get together. These aren’t just events; they are celebrations of our faith, family and culture. When we gather together as Chahtas, we are honoring our ancestors and their struggles. Without their hard work, love and faith, we wouldn’t be able to fellowship as a nation of Chahta people.

No matter what religion you practice or if you practice a religion at all, we are all Chahtas. We strive every day to live out the Chahta spirit of faith, family and culture. A part of our culture is that we are a tribe and that every member has a calling to live out their purpose within the Tribe. A greater calling if you will, and we need to strive for that daily. Faith, family and culture can mean many things; you can decide that for yourself. It is important for you to live out the Chahta spirit in a way that reflects who you are and that would make our ancestors proud. We were all born with a purpose. It is okay if you haven’t found that purpose yet. Just know you have one. So, during this time of rebirth and regrowth, I hope you take some time to reflect on the past and push toward the future with a fresh spirit.



Photo By Kendra Germany

Chief Batton’s [Annual Easter Celebration](#) is always a fun event. This year’s celebration will be held April 13 at the Capital Grounds in Tvshka Homma.

LEAP Program Set to Build 140 New Homes for Choctaw Families in 2019



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

I hope everyone is enjoying this spring weather. Springtime is always a wonderful and busy time here in the Choctaw Nation.

We recently held a ribbon cutting for the new Choctaw Country Market in Boswell. We are delighted we can help Boswell and the surrounding communities have access to fresh food and necessities. It is one of our goals to help provide our tribal members with opportunities to live healthy, successful, productive lives. I feel we are helping them accomplish a step toward that goal by providing access to fresh meat, fruit and vegetables.

With our mission of offering opportunities for growth and prosperity, we have many facilities and programs that aim to assist in fulfilling that mission. One program we are so proud to offer is the LEAP program.

The LEAP program is a new homeownership program opportunity for Choctaw tribal members who meet the program income guidelines.

The goal is to assist families with credit issues to become mortgage-ready and lender-qualified over time with credit counseling services. The LEAP program works closely with the service coordinator team to help each family become budget- and credit-ready to finance a home in 15 years.

LEAP homes are energy-efficient three- and four-bedroom brick homes, with an enclosed two-car garage and vinyl plank flooring. In the 2018 fiscal year, the program helped place 110 families in LEAP homes. For the 2019 fiscal year, the LEAP program’s plan includes 140 LEAP homes. Currently, there are 110 families on the list to move into these new homes. The plan includes 10 homes in Calera, which are a part of the first phase of homes in the Durant area.

I can’t help but feel proud during every LEAP home ribbon cutting. It is an awesome feeling to be able to offer programs like this to our tribal members. We have come so far as a nation. I know our ancestors are looking down at us with pride. They labored tirelessly to lead the way for us to do what we do today. Our ancestors conceived and designed the chukka to transform raw materials into comfortable, strong buildings to meet their basic needs of shelter, protection and storage. These structures served not only as shelter but a place to spend time together as a family.

Today, having a comfortable and safe home to raise a family is just as essential as it was in the past. I am grateful our housing department and the LEAP program are working so hard to help provide families with that opportunity. Living a healthy, successful, productive life starts within the home. Through these programs, our tribal members are given the foundation for a better future.

Tribal members are encouraged to apply and our applications, along with a full list of guidelines, are available online and at all Choctaw Community Centers. For more information visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/leap-program>.



Photo By Diedre Elrod

In the 2018 fiscal year, the program helped place 110 families in LEAP homes. For the 2019 fiscal year, the LEAP program’s plan includes 140 LEAP homes. Currently, there are 110 families on the list to move into these new homes. The [LEAP program](#) is a new homeownership program opportunity for Choctaw tribal members who meet the program income guidelines.

Pastor Olin Williams

LEAVING BAGGAGE BEHIND



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

We tend to carry “baggage” that gets in the way of our present situations, relationships and goals. Our relationships and experiences in life tend to be difficult and painful at times. It is difficult to process this, and we walk around with certain feelings and conflicts that do not relate to the present but to people and events from a former time. This “baggage” will not go away until we learn to leave it behind. We try to leave it behind, but a similar hurt or circumstance brings it back. After a lengthy pattern of this, our past has become our present, and it begins to affect our future. Bitterness, resentment and suspicion begin to breed in the heart. The Book of Proverbs tells us in chapter 4 and verse 23, “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” When “baggages” take over, we have issues with everything in life. A wrong attitude has emerged. To leave the baggage of grief, we need to grieve. Ecclesiastes 7:3 tells us, “Sorrow is better than

laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.” To leave behind the “baggage” of the pain of failure of the past, we must forgive. But first, we must know we are accepted, forgiven, and loved. This kind can only come from God. 1 John 1:9 assures us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. “God made a new covenant with his people. In Hebrews 8:12, God says, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” God desires to forgive us and give us a fresh start. When we confess our sins and accept God’s forgiveness, we are free from guilt and shame. Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” When you receive this truth, the past loses its grip on you. You can now leave your “baggage” behind.

2019 District Princess Pageants

All pageants will take place at 6 p.m. at the corresponding Choctaw Community Center unless otherwise listed.

April 18 - Broken Bow

April 18 - McAlester

April 25 - Poteau

April 25 - Stigler

April 25 - Wilburton

May 16 - Antlers

May 16 - Atoka

May 16 - Hugo

May 23 - Coalgate

May 23 - Idabel

May 23 - Talihina

June 1 - Durant at the Choctaw Event Center

Date and location of District 9 pageant previously posted in the March Biskinik was incorrect. The correct date and location will be May 31, 2019 at the Choctaw Event Center.

www.choctawnation.com/2019-2020-district-princess-pageant-information

Good Dental Habits Lead to Lifetime of Health

Twenty percent of children aged 5 to 11 have at least one untreated decayed tooth, according to the CDC.

Choctaw clinics treat hundreds of children every year with toothaches from badly decayed teeth. Almost all of these cases can be prevented.

It is widely believed that sugar can be highly addictive. Research has also shown that sugar affects the same part of the brain as cocaine.

Many children who consume

large amounts of sugar continue that bad habit into adult life. This not only results in extensive dental problems but can attribute to prediabetes and obesity.

The human mouth was not designed for a constant bath of sugar. Drinks such as milk, juice, sweet tea and soda can wreak havoc on your child's mouth. Continually sipping these sugary drinks throughout the day can cause bacteria to rapidly reproduce, resulting in extensive tooth decay in a short amount of time.



Painting by Dr. Albert S. Grzech

The same applies to snacks. High starch snacks, such as crackers, have a natural tendency to stick in the nooks and crannies of the mouth. This makes them one of the highest cavity-producing snacks. Other snacks to watch out for are raisins, cookies, chips and candy.

One of the most effective ways to reduce the effects of sugary snacks is having a sugar-free time between meals. This gives the mouth time to clean itself, helping prevent tooth decay.

Parents should make sure their children drink fluoridated water every day. When fluoride is taken in at an early age, teeth are much more resistant to decay.

According to the CDC, children who live in fluoridated communities have 2.25 fewer decayed teeth than children living in non-fluoridated communities.

Most bottled water does not contain enough fluoride to have this effect. Visit www.cdc.gov/fluoridation to see if your town adds fluoride to their water supply.

From the time the first tooth appears in the mouth, start gently brushing your child's teeth every day. Continue this until they are capable of doing it on their own. Brush before bed and if possible, have them rinse with a fluoride mouth rinse.

Most importantly, children should not have sugary drinks or snacks before bed without brushing and rinsing their mouth out.

From the time the first tooth appears children should have dental examinations at least once per year. This will ensure that any problems can be treated easily and, in most cases, painlessly. Delaying treatment most often results in toothaches and painful injections for treatment.

By following these guidelines, you can help prevent an unnecessary fear of the dentist and ensure a happier a healthier life.

Editor's Note: This article was submitted by Dr. Albert S. Grzech, DDS of the Choctaw Nation Rubin White Health Clinic in Poteau. The article was edited to fit standards of the Biskinik.

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Denim Day Brings Awareness to Sexual Assault

Wheelock Academy Historic Site will host its fourth annual Denim Day April 24, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The first Denim Day was established in 1999 by a social service agency in Los Angeles, California to bring awareness to sexual assault.

Choctaw Nation programs and departments participating in the event this year include Project Empower, Choctaw Nation Sexual Assault Response Team, Project STRONG, Children and Family Services/Family Violence Prevention, Historic Preservation/Cultural Services and Native Alliance Against Violence.

This year's event has added more partners to make it bigger and bring more awareness to sexual assault and its misconceptions. There will also be a special focus on missing and murdered indigenous women.

Booths, cultural activities, guest speakers and a red shoe walk will also be part of the day's activities.

For more information contact Karen Lyons at (918) 429-6137, klyons@choctaw-nation.com or Sandy Hall at (918) 302-0052, smhall@cnhsa.com.



NURSERY NEWS

Lawson Howard Rollins



Lawson Howard Rollins was born Dec. 21, 2018 at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Waxahachie, Texas. He weighed 6 pounds, 6 ounces and was 19 inches long. Lawson is the first-born son of Austin and Kelli Rollins and he is the grandson of Cheryl Groomer Payne, Deborah Nichols, Whitney and Susie Payne and Dale and Barbara Rollins. Lawson is the great-grandson to Faye Groomer.

Elaina Jayne Pearce



Elaina Jayne Pearce was born April 24, 2018, at the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center. She weighed 7 pounds, 11 ounces and was 19 inches long. She is the daughter of Jay and Christy Pearce. She was welcomed by brothers Brennan, Bricen, Braylin and Braxton. She is the granddaughter of Connie and Bruce Click, the late Dajuana and Eddie Pearce and the late Bob Caddell. Elaina Jayne is the namesake of her great-grandmothers and a special friend.

Choctaw Nation WIC & Connecting Kids With Coverage are Coming to a Location Near You



Enjoy Full WIC Services and See If Your Child Qualifies for SoonerCare

April Mobile Unit Schedule

- 2nd Heavener - CV's Grocery
- 3rd Boswell - Pushmataha Family Clinic
- 9th Clayton - Pushmataha Family Clinic
- 10th Coalgate - Community Center
- 11th Heavener - CV's Grocery
- 17th Hartshorne - Caring Hands Clinic (A.M.)
- Quinton - Community Center (P.M.)
- 18th Clayton - Country Market (A.M.)
- Nashoba - Community Center (P.M.)
- 24th Antlers - Pruett's
- 25th Heavener - CV's Grocery
- 30th Calvin - Fishes and Loaves (3-5 P.M.)

For More Information Call (580) 380-3628

Free backpack with every approved Connecting Kids to Coverage application.

Honey Garlic Salmon



Nutrition Facts:
Servings: 4, Serving size: 1 slice, Calories: 200, Trans Fat: 0 grams, Cholesterol : 67 milligrams, Sodium: 130 milligrams, Total Carbohydrates: 7 grams, Dietary Fiber: 0 grams, Sugars: 6 grams, Protein: 25 grams

[Recipe by the American Heart Association](#)

Ingredients

- 3-4 salmon filets
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 lemons, thinly sliced
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon thyme, chopped
- 1 teaspoon oregano, chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped parsley, for garnish

Preparation

- Preheat oven to 425°. Meanwhile, line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil and prepare the parsley, thyme, garlic and lemons, set aside.
- Grease foil with nonstick cooking spray. Lay lemon slices in an even layer at the center of the foil.
- Season both sides of the salmon with salt and pepper to taste and place on top of lemon slices.
- In a small bowl, whisk together butter, honey, garlic, thyme and oregano. Pour over salmon.
- Bake until the salmon is cooked through, about 12 minutes.
- Switch the oven to broil, and broil for 2 minutes, or until the butter mixture has thickened and glazed.

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

Open 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Antlers: 400 S.W. "O" St., (580) 298-6443
Broken Bow: 109 Chahta Road, (580) 584-2842
Durant: 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, (580) 924-7773
McAlester: 3244 Afullotha Hina, (918) 420-5716
Poteau: 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431

April 2019

ANTLERS

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 19, 29 & 30.

BROKEN BOW

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 19, 29 & 30.

DURANT

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 19, 29 & 30.

MCALESTER

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 19, 29 & 30.

POTEAU

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 19, 29 & 30

Cooking With Carmen: Cooking With Carmen is cancelled until further notice.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; Fax: (202) 690-7442; or Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Convenient Health Programs Offered to Tribal Members

by APRYL MOCK

The Choctaw Nation is bringing health care to you with virtual visits and the new WIC van.

The Choctaw Nation Virtual Medical Visit service allows patients who are unable to travel to conduct video appointments with their doctors.

Patients with specific symptoms are allowed up to three virtual appointments in a 30-day period; then they must physically see a provider.

The process is simple: call the Virtual Medical Visit number, discuss your symptoms with a doctor to check eligibility, schedule an appointment, receive a link to the MEND app and have a video chat with your doctor. If medications are needed, the provider will order them at the patient’s pharmacy of choice.

In order to qualify, patients must be a CDIB card holder, have a current Consent to Treat form on file, live in Oklahoma, be over the age of 5, have an active chart at any Choctaw Nation Health Services facility, been seen in the past 12 months and have one of the symptoms approved for Virtual Visits. For more information and to see if you qualify for Virtual Visits call

(580) 916-9231 or visit choctawnation.com/virtualvisit.

For many years, Choctaw Nation WIC has served participants in “brick and mortar” settings throughout the 10½ counties, now they’re taking their services on the road to better accommodate the under served.

WIC has a mobile unit that is traveling throughout the Choctaw Nation, expanding the program from 16 service sites to 23.

Shelly Rector, director of the WIC program, said, “We have been dreaming of ways that we can reach people who may otherwise not have transportation to our widely dispersed sites, and the WIC mobile van is making that dream a reality.”

The van provides full WIC service and allows those who qualify to leave the van with benefits they can use immediately.



The WIC Mobile Unit travels throughout the Choctaw Nation to reach tribal members who are unable to make it to a traditional WIC appointment. The Mobile unit is just one of the many convenient programs offered through the Choctaw Nation.

In addition to those benefits, WIC is looking to partner with other programs who already serve as referrals to their participants.

For example, Connecting Kids to Coverage, a program that helps qualifying individuals access health coverage, has accompanied the WIC van on several road trips as an “instant referral” for WIC participants who have no health coverage.

The Choctaw Nation received the Connecting Kids to Coverage grant in 2013. The grant helps identify children eligible for Sooner Care and assists their families with enrolling.

The Connecting Kids Outreach staff can often be seen at events across the 10 ½ counties, including the upcoming Easter celebration at Tvshka Homma, the Labor Day Festival and the Harvest Carnival.

For more information on the [WIC program](#), call (580) 920-2100 extension 83582 or follow them on Facebook.

Council Corner



Projects to Bring Health, Prosperity to District 4

District 4 has had a lot of construction going on in the Poteau area.

The new Food Distribution Center was completed and opened for business in October 2018.

The new state-of-the-art store was built as a part of the Choctaw Nation’s continuing commitment to better serve our tribal members.

It is strategically located so we can serve tribal members in the surrounding area, but also those who live in the Arkansas counties that border the Choctaw Nation.

The store will serve around 675 families per month with over \$1 million worth of food annually.

The new Wellness Center is another building

constructed to help provide for the health of members of federally recognized tribes, employees of the Choctaw Nation, men and women in military service, veterans, and local first responders such as firefighters, police, highway patrol and emergency medical technicians.

Choctaw Nation employees, tribal members, military personnel and veterans may also add their spouses and children under the age of 26 on their membership. In December there were 2,632 visits by members, 3,595 visits in January and in February there were 3,583 visits before the end of the month.

The Rubin White Clinic is adding another 13,000 square feet of floor space to better serve our people. Due to the volume of patients, the Refill Center will be having to update its equipment and plans to move into that area by the end of summer.

According to patient records, between March 1, 2016, and Feb. 28, 2019, there were 16,690 patients seen out of 23,212 active patient charts. There has been a continual growth of patients causing a need to consider increasing the number of providers.

A new Child Development Center is now being constructed and will be housing the Choctaw Head Start and Child Care Center for the Poteau area.

It is planned that the Choctaw Head Start Center on the Carl Albert State College campus will be moving to this new building this Fall. It has been too small for a number of years and continually has had a waiting list of 15 or more.

There has also been a need for another child care center for this area for a very long time for working parents that is safe and secure for their children.

The Community Center has had a lot of activities in January and February with 694 clients/visitors to the office and 381 phone calls.

The Senior lunches on Wednesday of each week for the same period of time totaled 540.

The Choctaw Beaders’ Club had 18 meetings, the Culture Club had two meetings, and the Choctaw Language Class met seven times.

Other programs and services using the Center were Children and Family Services, Food Handlers Class, Head Start Meeting, Yappelli, CHR’s had one meeting, Greg Haney had six meetings, and Dewayne Hornbuckle had four meetings with the youth. There were five guest speakers, and the seniors had a Valentine’s Day party. The Center was rented most weekends to individuals and groups, with preference given to Choctaws.



District 2 Housing Projects Prosperous for Community

Halito from District 2. We are very thankful to the Biskinik staff for allowing us to deliver a message in their publication.

District 2 has seen a lot of progress in recent months. We have had 10 elders receive new homes through our Independent Elderly Home program, and 10 families receive new homes through our LEAP Program.

We started building our next set of LEAP Homes and Affordable Rental Homes in January. If you have not filled out an application, please do so as soon as you can – they fill up fast.

It has been great to see these homes being built to help fill a longtime need for our citizens. From this, we have received the “Community Improvement Award”

from the Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce this year.

We ask that you reapply for the Hunting and Fishing license this year. They will not be automatically renewed like in the past. Please take advantage of this service. Enjoy the sport and please remember, “Safety First.”

During this time of year, it’s all about basketball. We have many teams in District 2 who are doing great, and we encourage them to do their best.

Baseball will be starting soon as it warms up and our youth stickball season is under-way. Again, we have a lot of kids participating in a sport that is teaching them about our culture. Stickball has always been something District 2 has enjoyed playing throughout the years. We are led by a few of our elders, one being Curtis “Tody” Billy from Broken Bow. We recently dedicated and named the Broken Bow stickball field in his honor.


We would like to invite all seniors to come out and have lunch with us every Wednesday at 11:30 in our new community centers in Battiest and Broken Bow. There will be an Easter celebration at both centers in April.

The seniors also enjoy other activities such as Chair Volleyball every Thursday, walking events, trips, fundraisers, singing Choctaw Hymns, senior fitness challenges and many others. We are home to the award-winning “District 2 Singers” and defending Chair Volleyball Champions.

For more information, you can call the Battiest Community Center at (580) 241-5637 or the Broken Bow Community Center at (580) 584-6372. As we prepare for spring and warmer weather, there will be many events to come.

It has been great to see the progress for our district and it could not be done without the many who work for our great Nation. Yakoke and happy Easter!

Chief Batton’s 2019 Easter Celebration



April 13, 2019

Tvshka Homma

10 a.m. until dark
Stickball games

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Live cultural demonstrations at the Choctaw Village

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Lunch Served (Food blessed by Olin Williams)

11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Bunny Pictures
Tribal Membership Building

11 a.m. - end of event
Children 0-12 Pre-registration for child safety wristbands for 2019 Labor Day Festival located next to shirt table

1:30 p.m.
Kids Easter Egg Hunts
Ball Fields

2:00 p.m.
Elder Easter Egg Hunt
Museum Lawn

12:30 p.m.
Welcome
Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr.

Opening Prayer
Councilperson Jennifer Woods

Introduction of Chief Gary Batton
Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr.

Lord’s Prayer

Introduction of Speaker of Council
Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr.

Introduction of Tribal Council
Council Speaker

Announcements
Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr.

Easter Message
Olin Williams

Door prize drawing
Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr.

EVERY MOMENT IS AN EVENT



Choctaw Casino & Resort offers a range of accommodation experiences with well-appointed conference space, special event coordination and multiple amenity options for your personal and professional needs. Book your event with Choctaw Casino & Resort and choose from a variety of offerings such as hotel room blocks, catering, décor and technical support.

For more information please contact our Conference Center Sales at 580-931-2715



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888.652.4628 | ChoctawCasinos.com

EVENTS

Health Fairs

April 17
10 a.m.
Spiro Choctaw Community Center

April 24
10 a.m.
Durant Choctaw Community Center

May 5
10 a.m.
Idabel Choctaw Community Center

Ritter Family Reunion

May 18
8 a.m.

Quarry Island, Lake Wister State Park
25567 US-270

Wister, Oklahoma 74966

Relatives of Isaac & Georgia Ritter and Frank & Tennie Ritter, please bring a covered dish and drinks. Donations are greatly appreciated. For more information, contact Imogene (McCoy) Odell at (918)-647-3791 or (918)-647-7596.

District 6 Events

April 3 - Monthly Senior Meeting - after lunch
Food Distribution Pickup in McAlester - after meeting

April 5 - District 6 Councilmember Jennifer Woods Community Prayer Meeting 7 a.m. - 8 a.m. (Breakfast to follow)
Indian Taco Sale and Bake Sale 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

April 8 - Heritage Day 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

April 11 - Day Trip
Pocola Casino – leave at 4 p.m.

April 12 - KEDDO Sr. Day and Wellness Fair – McAlester Expo 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

April 17 - Pottery Demonstration (Historical Preservation Department) 12:30 p.m.

April 18 - Food Distribution Pickup (If needed)

April 18 - Family Night Bingo and Potluck 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Weekly Events

Mondays
Senior Fitness Program 55 + at 9 a.m.

Wellness Center Chair Volleyball at 9:30 a.m.

Language Class at 6 p.m.

Wednesdays
Lunch and Guest Speaker at 11 a.m.

Cake will be served on the first Wednesday of the month for that month's birthdays.

Career Development

JOB FAIR

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

April 18, 2019

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

CONNECT WITH LOCAL EMPLOYERS!

Explore Careers, Technical Training and College Opportunities!

Bring copies of your resume and dress professionally.

Oklahoma City Community College
7777 S. May Ave. OKC 73159 Main Bldg. CU 1, 2, 3

580.920.2260

www.choctawcareers.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication
of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Dara McCoy, Executive Director
Brad Gernand, Senior Director
Kendra Germany, Interim Managing Editor
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Durant, OK 74702
(580) 924-8280 • (800) 522-6170
www.ChoctawNation.com
email: biskinik@ChoctawNation.com

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

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK or your address needs to be changed, our Direct Member Communications would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Deadline for articles and photographs to be submitted is the first day of each month to run the following month.

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

LETTERS

The families of John Dorsey and Ida Edmond Umber Dorsey and Robert Benson Horton Sr. are searching for the descendants of their relatives.

Robert Benson Horton Sr. was orphaned at birth in 1891, and was raised by his maternal aunt, Ida Edmond Umber. After having two children, and being widowed, Ida married John Dorsey and had four more children. They lived in the Caney, Oklahoma area.

If anyone has any information on any of these people or their descendants, please contact Janet Horton Smock at jsmock79@hotmail.com.

Janet Horton Smock

Thank you so much for my beautiful Choctaw blanket I received for my 90th birthday. It is so pretty, and I have shown it to everyone who comes in the front door! Thank you especially for all the wonderful things you do for the Choctaw people – the wonderful health care, great jobs and housing for some; just to name a few of the benefits afforded to us.

Wilbert Scroggins

It's grave cleaning time family! All family members from the Wilson-Tims family are encouraged to join us on April 27 for our annual grave cleaning. We will meet outside the Choctaw Community Center at 9 a.m. I encourage family to include your children so that we can hold onto this family tradition of honoring our loved ones. Lunch will be provided. Call me if you have any questions - Jody Hendrickson at (918) 413-2084.

Jody Hendrickson

Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

YOUR HOUSING RESOURCE

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Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association Loan
To Be Eligible to Apply:
- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund
To Be Eligible to Apply:
- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from the Choctaw Nation

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

Coalgate Community Center
April 12
10 am - 12 p.m.

Biskinik
Announcement
Policy

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above. Couples may send in announcements of their silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.

News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows.

We welcome all letters from Choctaw tribal members. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all letters our readers send. Letters chosen for publication must be under 150 words. We require full contact information. Only the writer's full name and city will be published.

All events sent to the Biskinik will run the month of the event or the month prior to the event if the event falls on the first of the month.

Mail to: Choctaw Nation
Attn: Biskinik
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
or email: biskinik@ChoctawNation.com

Choctaw
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Physical and Mental Restoration

Tribal
Council
Holds Regular
Session

Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session on March 9, 2019, at Tvshka Homma, Oklahoma

Call to order
Opening prayer and flag salute
Roll Call
Approval of minutes: Regular session Feb. 9, 2019
Welcome guests
Reports of Committees
New business
a) Approve Funding for Construction of New Pocola Travel Plaza and Casino Too and, Upon Completion of Such Construction, the Demolition of the Currently Existing Pocola Travel Plaza and Casino Too
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
b) Approve the Supplemental Funds and Budget for the Regional Medical Response System (RMRS)
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
c) Approve the Funds and Budget for the Regional Emergency Medical Services System and Emergency Medical Services Capabilities/IJ#7
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
d) Approve Oil and Gas Lease #42000106980 in Favor of Stephens Production Company on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Cherokee Nation, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and Chickasaw Nation in Sequoyah and LeFlore Counties, Oklahoma
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed; Vote combined with e, f and g
e) Approve Business Lease #42000160867 in Favor of Lake Eufaula Rod & Gun Club on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed; vote combined with d, f and g
f) Approve Grazing Lease #42000160908 in Favor of Janet Dalton on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed Vote combined with d, e and g
g) Approve Business Lease #4200160863 in Favor of Lake Eufaula Rod & Gun Club on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed Vote combined with d, e and f
h) Approve the Application to the Family Violence Prevention Grant for Fiscal Year 2020
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
i) Approve to Dispose of Surplus Capital Assets
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
j) Approve an Amendment to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Code of Civil Procedure
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
k) Approve the Acceptance of IHS Funds and Allocate the Funds for Repair of the Idabel Clinic
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
l) Amend the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance Codified in CB-124-18
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
Other new business
a) Elect Speaker Pro Tem-James Dry nominated and approved
b) Tribal Council Proposes an amendment to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Constitution to be considered for adoption by a vote of qualified tribal members.
Vote Count-YEAs-Unanimous; Bill passed
Old Business
Adjournment
Closing prayer

Council Members Present:

Thomas Williston
Tony Ward
Kenny Bryant
Delton Cox
Jennifer Woods
Ronald Perry

Jack Austin
Perry Thompson
James Dry
Anthony Dillard
Bob Pate
James Frazier

Next regular scheduled council meeting will be 10 am, April 13, 2019, in Tvshka Homma. For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and Council bills, go to www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Legal Assistance

A licensed attorney will be available by appointment **ONLY** to provide assistance with simple legal documents free to all Choctaw members. Examples of matters that the attorney may be able to assist with:

Family law (divorces, custody, child support)

Guardianship and modifications

The office does not provide representation in court or assist in criminal matters. At this time the legal department is not providing assistance with wills and probate.

To make an appointment, or for any questions, contact Samantha Guinn at (580) 380-8149. Guinn will be available every Wednesday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. in the tribal headquarters building, located at 1802 Chukka Hina in Durant. Members with appointments for legal services should go to the front desk and ask for Kristi Phillips.

May 2019 Schedule

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Idabel and Broken Bow by appointment

May 6 • Durant • 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

May 15 • Talihina • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

May 21 • Poteau • 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

May 22 • McAlester • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

April by appointment

May 7 • Wright City

May 8 • Antlers

May 10 • Crowder

May 14 • Broken Bow

May 22 • Stigler

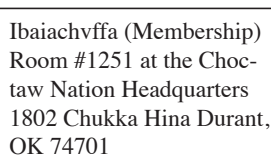
May 24 • Atoka & Coalgate

May 28 • Idabel

May 29 • Wilburton

Phone: (580) 326-8304
Fax: (580) 326-0115
Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com

Thurs, April 30, 2019	4:00 P.M.	Location to be announced to Candidates.
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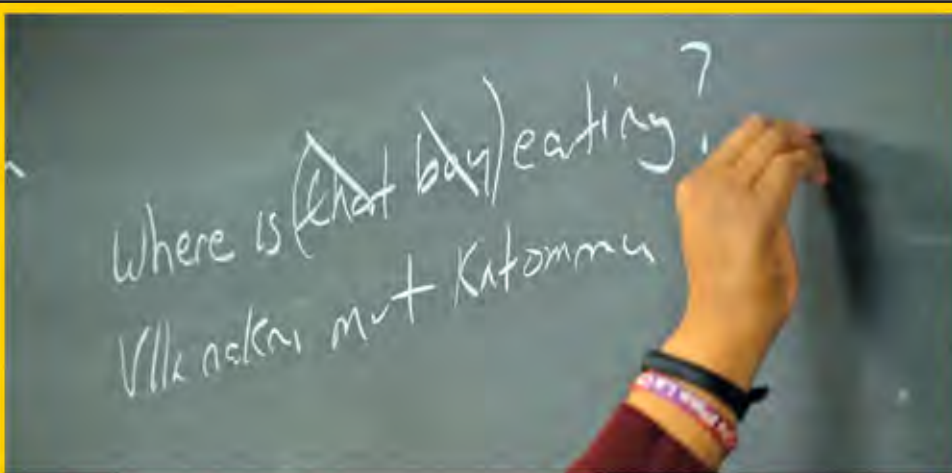
For more information about tribal elections, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/elections> or contact us by email at ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com.

Facebook.com/OklaChahtaClan | (661) 319-6308 | chahtaohoyo1@gmail.com



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April Marks 200th Anniversary of Choctaw Nation Exploration

By BRADLEY GERNAND

April marks the 200th anniversary of the first scientific exploration of the area which is now the Choctaw Nation.

English botanist Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859) visited present-day southeastern Oklahoma during the spring and summer of 1819, taking copious notes. Those notes are a gold mine of information and offer a look at a vanished world. Of particular interest: the notes describe the area as the Choctaws found it when they began relocating to the region 15 years later.

Nuttall, who crossed into what is now Oklahoma near the U.S. Army garrison at Fort Smith, headed southwest, to scout out the confluence of the Kiamichi and Red Rivers. Nuttall accompanied Army Major William Bradford and a company of soldiers, who were ordered to remove white intruders from the area. Mississippi had become a state in 1817, and Choctaw Indians were expected to soon begin arriving from there. The Treaty of Doak’s Stand signed the following year, gave the Choctaws much of present-day southwestern Arkansas and the region of present-day Oklahoma south of the Canadian River all the way “to its source,” as the treaty stipulated.

Starting along the banks of the Poteau River, Nuttall found the ground to be “gently broken or undulated, and thinly scattered with trees, resembling almost in this respect a cultivated park.” The meadows were covered with flowers. Everywhere in the area, he said the trees “appear scattered as if planted by art, affording an unobstructed range for the hunter, equal to that of a planted park.”

Cavanal Mountain made an impression on Nuttall, who sketched it in his journal. The resulting drawing is of a landmark instantly recognizable to anyone in LeFlore County. Nuttall recorded in his journal seeing a prominent point on its summit which guides told him was a mound of loose stones, erected either as a funeral pyre or as a beacon by the area’s Native American inhabitants. He also noted, “The natives and hunters assert that subterranean rumblings have been heard in this mountain.” The mountain was named by French fur trappers, who used the word “cavanol,” a corruption of the French word “caverneux,” meaning “cavernous.”

After passing Cavanal Mountain, the explorers saw two very fat bears. They were much taken with the countryside. After crossing into the valley of Caston Creek, north of Lake Wister near the present-day community of Victor, Nuttall mused in his journal of the area’s intense beauty and balance, saying “Nothing here appeared to exist but what contributes to harmony.”

Proceeding southwest, Nuttall and his party



Photo Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The above map shows the U. S. states and territories as of 1819. Nuttall crossed into what is now Oklahoma, to scout out where the Kiamichi and Red Rivers meet.

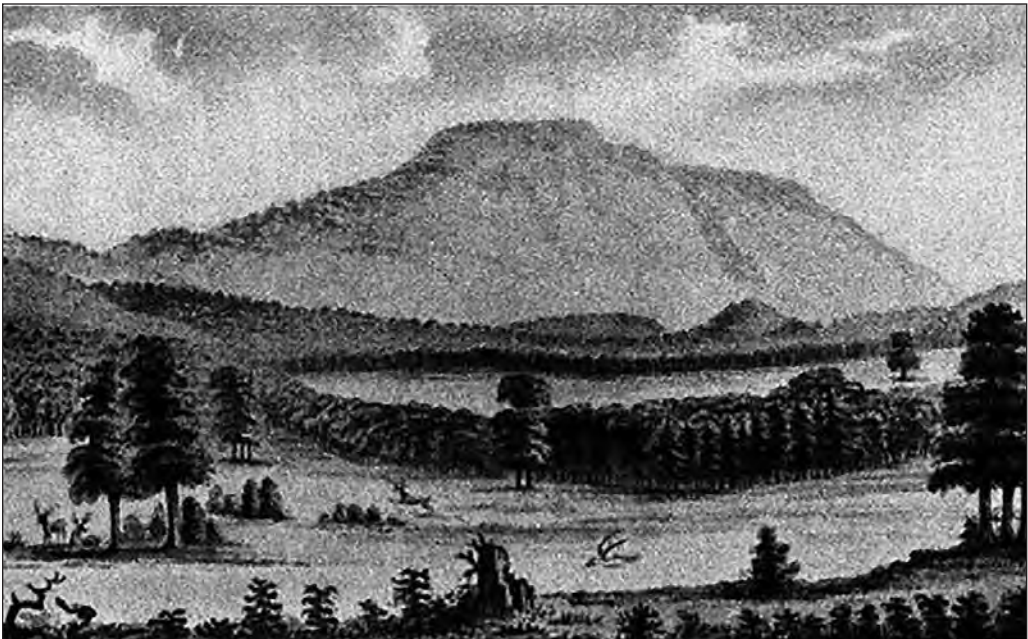


Photo Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Cavanal Mountain made an impression on botanist Thomas Nuttall, who sketched it in his journal. The resulting drawing is of a landmark instantly recognizable to anyone in Le Flore County.

crossed into the Winding Stair Mountains—then called the Mazerns, their original name. Near present-day Talihina, the group stopped in the Great Cove or “prairie of the Kiamichi.” To the west, the party saw the Potato Hills, which Nuttall described as a “chain of piney hills, with remarkable serrated summits.” Herds of bison roamed the prairie and bolted as the soldiers gave chase. In the bison trail was a pile of stones which Nuttall was informed: “had been thrown up as a monument by the Osages when they were going to war, each warrior casting a stone upon the pile.”

At the junction of the Kiamichi River and Jackfork Creek valleys—at present-day Clayton—Nuttall and his party saw on a tall mountain a “beacon of the Osages, being a solitary tree fantastically trimmed like a broom.” It was visible for miles. Nuttall appears to have been describing Flagpole Mountain, which may be seen several miles up the river valley.

South of Clayton, the group struggled through a trackless wilderness. The hills crowded the river, leaving no trails to follow. Turning west at the first gap in the mountains, they negotiated a rocky ravine, “scarcely passable for goats.” Hours later they came again into hilly, open woods. This ravine is thought to be that of Peal Creek, below the present-day Clayton Lake. In addition to being impassable, the party also discovered, “The woods were now disgustingly infested with ticks.”

Passing through the valley of Big Cedar Creek, north of Antlers, the party noted that deer were “uncommonly abundant, and scarcely timid, or conscious of the aim of their destroyers.” The group continued southeast from this point, crossing Rock Creek and Possum Creek in the Rattan area and camped at the headwaters of Spencer Creek, near present-day Spencerville.

After reaching the mouth of the Kiamichi River—its destination—the group began its return to Fort Smith. The trip back was difficult. After struggling through the lofty ridges of the Kiamichi Mountains, Nuttall and his party left them to follow the Kiamichi River north. A fire appeared to have swept through the mountains, leaving half-burned trees with ragged limbs which clawed and clutched at each member of the party until “everything about us, not of leather, was lashed and torn to pieces.” They camped for the night on the east bank of the river, somewhere.

Salt was an essential and hard-to-find commodity. Nuttall had

been told of a salt deposit in the area near Moyers and tried to locate it. He had already passed the largest—on present-day Salt Creek near Hugo—and is thought to have been hunting for a smaller one near the confluence of Pine Creek and the Kiamichi River, north of Kosoma. It is difficult to spot, and he does not mention finding it.

Heading northeast through the Winding Stair Mountains, vast hordes of flies tormented the horses so much they bolted and raced into the Kiamichi River. The flies continued to pester the horses for the next two or three days, during which time they wearily scaled the mountains, which appeared now to the weary Nuttall to be as “high as any part of the Blue Ridge” mountains. At last, June 21, 1819, Nuttall reached Fort Smith.



Photo Provided

English botanist Thomas Nuttall visited present-day southeastern Oklahoma during 1819, taking a wealth of notes. Those notes contain valuable information and describe the area as the Choctaws found it when they began relocating to the region.

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna April Language Lesson

Names of the Different Parts of a Tree – Iti Aiimma Na Hochefo

bark – hakshup
berry; fruit - vni
bloom; blossom - pakanli
branch; limb – naksi

bud – bikopli
foliage; leaf/leaves – iti hishi
bottom (of the tree) – akishtvla
root – akshish

seed - nihi
sprout – onchuloli
stump – iti kolofa
tree top – iti wishakchi

1. Iti hakshup mvt sokko fehna.
2. Iti bihi mvt vni i lawa.
3. Hakchopilhkvpi iti yvt pakanli.
4. Iti naksi chito yvt akka ma ittonla.
5. Iti vhleha yvt bikoplit isht ia.
6. Iti hishi vhleha yvt pisa achukma.
7. Iti akishtvla ma chukfi yvt bininli.
8. Iti akshish ma e hokma chi.
9. Iti hika i nihi yvt halupa.
10. Iti onchuloli ya chanli tuk.
11. Iti kolofa ma kolit e kucha chi.
12. Iti wishakchi ma fvni yvt bininli.

That tree bark is very thick.

The mulberry tree has a lot of berries.

The dogwood tree is blooming.

A large limb is lying (on the ground).

The trees are starting to bud.

The foliage is pretty.

A rabbit is sitting at the bottom of the tree.

We will burn the tree roots.

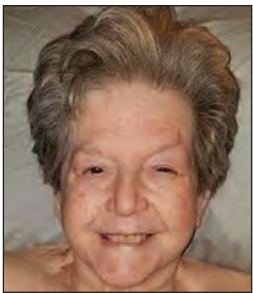
The sweet gum tree’s seeds are sharp.

He chopped the tree sprouts.

We will dig out the tree stump.

The squirrel is sitting in the treetop.

TS B O 8



Betty Jo Delgado

Betty Jo Delgado, 88, passed away Dec. 23, 2018.

Betty was born Sept. 12, 1930, in Denison, Texas to Emory and Leona (McLeister) Campbell.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son Dale Underwood; brothers Marvin and Delbert Campbell.

Betty is survived by her daughters Judy Underwood, Janie Ledford and spouse David; sister Patsy Johnson; grandsons David and Casey Underwood; and numerous other loving family members.

For the full obituary, please visit [White's Funeral Home](#).

Harper Lee Wilmoth

Harper Lee Wilmoth, 64, passed away Jan. 18.

Harper was born June 7, 1954, in Knoxville, Tennessee to Arthur and Betty Wilmoth.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Lisa (Stewart) Wilmoth; and son Christopher Shawn Wilmoth.

Harper is survived by his wife, Rebecca J. Wilmoth; children Angela Nicole Rosenfelder and spouse Mark, Brandy Stewart Cheatum and spouse Courtney, Keri Viner and Matthew Mulvany; grandchildren Drew, Kobe, Jaxon, Dakota, Luke, Avery, Michael and Katelyn; siblings Carolyn Johnson, Anthony Wilmoth and Kelly Dyer; seven nieces and nephews; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

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



Jan Jenkot

Jan (Ferguson) Jenkot, 70, passed away Jan. 14.

Jan was born Jan. 30, 1948, in Hugo, Oklahoma to James and Dorothy Sue (Oneal) Ferguson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother Danny Ferguson; and daughter Jamie Sue (Jenkot) Williams.

Jan is survived by her husband Hank Jenkot; daughter Meggan Taylor and spouse Caleb; brother James Ferguson; sister Gail Usry and spouse Ronny; grandchildren McCayla, Cason and Myka ; sister-in-law Linda Ferguson; and numerous nieces and nephews.

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



Margie Lee Ryan

Margie Lee (Litchford) Ryan, 87, passed away Jan. 20.

Margie was born Jan. 9, 1932, in Willow Spring, Oklahoma to Sillena Wilson and James Litchford.

She was preceded in death by her husband J.D. Ryan; son James "Jim" Ryan; grandchildren Margie and Jaired; son-in-law Johnny Ghiglieri Jr.; her parents; sisters Mattie Belle, Iren, Mary and Lucille; brother Buddy Litchford; and friend Elaine Fisher.

Margie is survived by her children Shirley Farley and spouse William, Gayl Ghiglieri and Melinda Hodge; daughter-in-law Shelia Ryan; grandchildren Greg Farley, Anngela Whittington, James Ryan Jr., Johnie Ghiglieri, Brad, Sheila and Jimmy Joe Ryan, Amanda and Joseph Webb, Angeliqa and Wes Gray, and Samantha and Billy Vaughn; 26 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

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



Harry Jessie

Harry Jessie, 90, passed away Feb. 2.

Harry was born Jan. 17, 1929 in Golden, Oklahoma to Henderson and Seley (King) Jessie.

He was preceded in death by his wife Ruby Jessie; and brother Harvey Jessie.

Harry is survived by his sons Roger Jessie and spouse Diane, Darrell Jessie, Mike Jessie, Harry Jessie and spouse Delores, Bruce Jessie and spouse Patricia, Tracy Lynn Jessie, and Jeff Jessie and spouse Shelli; daughter Pamela Thompson; brother Herbert Jessie and spouse Gloria; sister Susie Oliver and spouse Eddie; grandchildren April, Jason, Kimberly, Darrell II, James, Amanda, Kyle, Zac, Josh, Lauren, Mitch, Miah, Stephen and Lauren; and several great-grandchildren.

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



Anita Louise Bogart

Anita Louise Bogart, 89, passed away Feb. 6.

Anita was born Oct. 6, 1929, in Byars, Oklahoma.

She was preceded in death by her husband Robert Bogart and her sons Bruce and Eric Bogart.

Anita is survived by her son Neal Bogart; grandchildren Tracie, Jeff, Erica, Candice, Max and Ellia Bogart; great-grandchild, Quinncy Bogart.

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

Nancy Jean Tushka

Nancy Jean (McKinney) Tushka, 80, passed away Jan. 20.

Nancy was born Nov. 3, 1938, in Talhina, Oklahoma to Green and Listie (Wilson) McKinney.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Barrentine "Bear" Tushka; brothers Nick and James Colbert; sisters Mabel Davis-McKinney, Ida Elliot, Isnle Orteza and Nora McKinney; grandsons Steven "Army" Stewart and Angelo Tushka.

Nancy is survived by her sons Ray Tushka and spouse Fern, Darrell Tushka, Michael Tushka and Melvin Tushka; daughters Brenda Smith and spouse Steve, Gloria Bond, Peggy Jefferson and Theresa Tushka; brothers Eddie and Jackson McKinney; several nieces, nephews, family and friends.

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



Delores Anita Fennell

Delores Anita (Plumlee) Fennell, 84, passed away Jan. 11.

Delores was born July 8, 1934, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Lovie and Watie Plumlee.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband George Fennell; sister Beverly Thornton; and grandson Mark Lee Fitzhenry.

Delores is survived by sister Kathryn Reichardt; daughters Linda Janney and spouse Bill; Debbie Fitzhenry and spouse Bob; Cindy Cicchetti and her spouse Greg; and Karen Strong and spouse Robert; grandchildren Robin Walsh and spouse Francis; Rebecca Graham and Tray Camp; Matt Cicchetti and spouse Julia Cicchetti; Caitlin Cicchetti, Kelly Cicchetti, George Strong, and Kayla Strong; great-grandchildren Sean Thomas Walsh and River Graham-Camp.

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



Delbert Lewallen

Delbert Lewallen, 74, passed away Jan. 27.

Delbert was born June 19, 1944 in Hayward, California to Edison Eugene "Gene" Lewallen and Wanda (Sudbury) Lewallen.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Donnie and Elbert; and longtime companion Mary Hayducka.

Delbert is survived by daughter Lorrie Mueller; grandchildren Bryce, Korey, Haylee, Ricky and Hannah; two nieces, one nephew and lots of great nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles.

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



Robert Wayne Sherrill

Robert Wayne Sherrill, 72, passed away Dec. 25, 2018.

Robert was born March 29, 1946, to Robert and Florence (Miller) Sherrill in McAlester, Oklahoma.

He is survived by his wife Marian; sons Reece, John and Steve Sherrill; grandchildren Christie Boyd and Erik Hyatt; sisters Karen Montross, Beverly Ottermann and spouse Steve; and nieces and nephews Scott, Eric, Lee and Allison.

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

Irene Johnson

Irene Johnson, 79, passed away Jan. 29.

Irene was born June 26, 1939, in Oklahoma to Alvis Beshears and Geneva E. (Gardner) Andrews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and husband Willie Johnson Jr.

Irene is survived by her children; son-in-law Anthony; daughter-in-law Renee; grandson-in-law Kenneth Sr.; grandchildren Jwyan, Curtis Jr, Nina, Danielle and Gina; and great-grandchildren Amari and Kenneth Jr.

For the full obituary please visit [Thompson Rose Chapel](#).



John Fitzgerald Steve

John Fitzgerald Steve, 55, passed away Feb. 5, 2019.

John was born Dec. 15, 1963, in Talihina, Oklahoma to John B. and Lula Mae (Gibson) Steve.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

John is survived by his sisters Kathy Steve, Margaret Couch, Sally Canku, Norma Hickman and Margie Journeycake; and brothers, Peter John Steve, Timothy Steve and spouse Sally, Carl Steve, and Joe Steve and spouse Essie.

For the full obituary please visit [Brown's Funeral Service](#).



Murial Jay Fuller

Muriel "Murle" Jay Fuller, 67, passed away Dec. 18, 2018.

He was born to Jennings Bryan and Alice (Harrell) Fuller on Sept. 20, 1951, in Stigler, Oklahoma.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers JB, Bill and Jerry; and sister Gloria.

He is survived by daughters Camille Farmer, Christy Henry and Callie Fuller; grandchildren Justice, Laney, Tres and Jadyn; and sisters Linda Burgess, Melba Dennis, Donna Morris and Judy Herald.

For the full obituary, please visit [Gar Kelley's Advance Funeral Service](#).



Doyle Hood Baldwin

Doyle Hood Baldwin, 78, passed away Jan. 20.

Doyle was born Aug. 18, 1940, in Hugo, Oklahoma to William Wood and Velma Jo (Rosenthal) Baldwin.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Carol Baldwin; and brother Billy Baldwin.

Doyle is survived by his children Jennifer Jacks and spouse Sonny, Jill Allen and spouse Mike and Hood Baldwin and spouse Missie; sister Mozelle Maddox and spouse Ed; grandchildren Josh and spouse Carlee, Jayci, Cale and spouse Katy, Codi and Kenzi; and great-grandchildren Tripp, Tori and Markee.

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



Revonia Milner

Revonia "Jolene" Milner, 76, passed away Dec. 13, 2018.

Jolene was born Dec. 4, 1942, in Hanna, Oklahoma to Olen Cowan and Virginia (Hope) Ginn.

She was preceded in death by her husband Bill; her parents; and stepfather Wilson Hope.

Jolene is survived by her children Ronda States and spouse Craig; son Robert Tucker and spouse Lisa; daughter Regina Hobbs and Robyn Rinehart and spouse Max; niece Amy Nicewander and spouse Jaremy; brothers Jim Hope and spouse Shirley and John Hope and spouse Diane; 13 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

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



Leonard Garvin

Leonard Jackson Garvin, 64, passed away Feb. 8.

Leonard was born July 23, 1954, in McAlester, Oklahoma to Ray and Molly (Fleming) Garvin.

He was preceded in death by his father; and sisters Eva Rogers and Deborah Johnson.

Leonard is survived by his mother; wife Karen Garvin; children Stephney Hollan and spouse Russell, Stephen Garvin and spouse Meredith, Jeff Garvin and spouse Heather, Leonard Garvin, and Summer Beck and spouse Joe; grandchildren Kayla Edwards and spouse Jarrod, Kristen Stewart and spouse Blade, William Hollan and spouse Tiffany, Skylar Garvin and fiancé Matt Ross, Chase Garvin and spouse Miranda, Sabrina, Kyle, Blake and Trystin Garvin; great-grandchildren, Timberlyn, Daniel, Owen, Rebecca, Adilynn, Sam, Hazel, Mathius, Arianna and Elijah; and other family and friends.

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



Wanda Bruno

Wanda (Randolph) Bruno, 92, passed away Nov. 19, 2018.

Wanda was born April 1, 1926, to Alice and Cleaton Randolph in Stuart, Oklahoma.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Eagle Randolph and Cal Randolph.

Wanda is survived by her spouse Edward Bruno; sons Edward Bruno Jr., John Bruno and Joel Bruno; and granddaughter Sophia Bruno. For the full obituary, please visit [Santa Rosa Mortuary Eggen & Lance Chapel](#)



Earnest Harrison

Earnest "Earnie" Harrison, 75, passed away Jan. 26.

Earnie was born Jan. 5, 1944, in McAlester, Oklahoma to Limon and Mary Lee (Thrasher) Harrison.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Eugene and Tildon Harrison; sisters Rosetta York and Rose Talley.

Earnest is survived by his wife Shirley Jean (Heathcock) Harrison; son Rodney Joe Harrison and spouse Lindy; daughters Sheila Womack and spouse Keith, Dee Anna Kinnamon and spouse Dalton and Lee Anne Barker and spouse Tracey; grandchildren Keshia, Rowdy, Jessie, Tiffany, Shelby, Wynston, Samantha and Kyle; great-grandchildren Raylynn, Sayer, Ellie, Damien, River, Kelly and Kassie; and brothers and sisters, Donna Bell Miller, George William Harrison, Jessie Lee Harrison, Juanita Watts, Shirley Wane Harrison and Wanda Leona Gray.

For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Mills 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

Iti Fabussa Women’s Month

This article is part of a series titled “A Year in the Life.” Focusing on the time period around AD 1700, this series follows the traditional Choctaw calendar through a year, with each article providing a glimpse of the activities that our ancestors were up to during each month. This information is excerpted from a book, soon to be published by the Choctaw Nation, which is titled “Choctaw Food: Remembering the Land, Rekindling Ancient Knowledge.”

As mentioned in an earlier article, the Choctaw calendar was divided into two parts, separated by the equinoxes. The warm season began with the spring equinox, the point in the year after which the days become longer than the nights. In the Choctaw calendar, the first new moon after the equinox began Tek Ihvshi, Women’s Month, which roughly corresponds with April. This month was named in honor of women, the givers of life, who had the primary responsibility for the agricultural crops. Choctaw women were widely acknowledged as being the best farmers in the Southeast.

At the first new moon after the spring equinox, a ceremony called Hashi Atahli Holitobli, Respecting God, was held at the dance grounds within villages.



On the right, last season’s plant cover has been burned off. On the left, the charred soil has been broken up using a digging stick and a mussel shell hoe.

This was a time of praying for the success of crops that were soon to be planted. In the 1700s, Choctaw communities planted three different agricultural fields. The first to be planted, around the time of the equinox, were called chuka osapa, house fields. These were located around and between families’ homes.

Year-round, Choctaw families kept the area immediately around their homes clear of brush in the belief that evil spirits could hide in it. This was also an area where food refuse accumulated and composted, adding additional nutrients to the soil. Cleared of brush, enriched by compost, and located where they could easily be watched, these cleared areas were ideal places to plant. After horses started becoming common in Choctaw country, fences were built around the house fields to help protect them. These were made of wooden posts, driven into the ground at intervals, with split hickory or white oak rails. The fences were double insurance. During the growing season, boys kept the village’s horse herd out on pasture and tied up during the night to help prevent theft and damage to crops.

The task of breaking up the ground for planting was referred to as okchalhi. Groups of female relatives worked gardens and fields together cooperatively. Traditionally, the main tool they used was simple, an-

cient, and effective - a digging stick. This consisted of a shaft of hardwood that had its tip sharpened by burning and scraping away the charcoal. The tip of the digging stick was inserted into the ground and pried to loosen the soil. When the tip dulled, it was re-sharpened.

In field preparation, Choctaw women may have employed a technique that involved loosening the soil in a central area and expanding outward in concentric circles. To remove weeds and scrape the surface of the ground, Choctaw people also made garden hoes. Known as chahe, these had wooden handles and blades of mussel shell or deer shoulder blades. Shovels were made entirely from wood. Unlike the metal plow, these Choctaw tools did not turn over the soil, and thus kept the microbial strata that are important for soil health intact, similar to no-till farming. The soft, worked soil was called okchaha. It awaited the day of planting, na pehna holokchi nitak. Into this prepared ground, women planted the seeds of Tanchusi, a small-sized variety of corn that is said to have ripened within just eight weeks of sowing. In addition to the corn, women also planted different varieties of beans in these house fields, as well as African field peas. This began the agricultural season.

A list of works cited in this article is available by contacting the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department at (800) 522-6170.

Editor’s Note: For Iti Fabussa stories you might have missed please visit ChoctawNation.com and click on History & Culture.

FREE KIDS FAIR

Choctaw Nation Foster Care
needs S'MORE FAMILIES

When: May 4, 2019
Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Where: Choctaw Event Center
3702 Choctaw Rd., Durant OK 74701

Choctaw Nation Foster Care

WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM | 800-522-6170

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CHOCTAWCOUNTRY.COM

ATTENTION:

Choctaw Tribal Members, Have you heard about the Truck Driving Training in Antlers, Oklahoma?

Kiamichi Technology Center, Antlers campus, is excited to partner with Central Tech to offer residents of southeast Oklahoma **Professional Truck Driving Training April 2019!**

For program information contact: Christie at 580-298-6354 or chyatt@ktc.edu or Career Development: 866-933-2260

Student School and Activity Fund

Need money to buy school or activity clothing?

- \$100 VISA gift card available nationwide for Choctaw Tribal Members who are attending 3 year old daycare to 12th grade.
- Each student with a tribal membership can receive funding one time per school year.
- Apply online at ssafapplication.choctawnation.com

Applications for 2018-2019 School Year
Available July 1, 2018 - May 1, 2019

For more information contact
(800) 522-6170 ext. 2175 or 2463



10

“If you’re willing to better yourself, the Choctaw Nation will back you every step of the way.”

– Keith Carshall

Keith Carshall Earns Welding Certification from KTC

by APRYL MOCK

Keith Carshall is one step closer to achieving his dream. The Wilburton, Oklahoma native has dreamed of owning his own business for many years. Carshall recently earned his 6G Welding certification through the Kiamichi Technology Center in McAlester, Oklahoma, with the assistance of the Choctaw Nation Career Development program. Carshall has utilized the Choctaw Asset Building program to save for the purchase of equipment he will need as he begins his dustless blasting, fabrication, welding and paint business, Carshall’s Dustless Glassing. The CAB program offers participants Individual Development Accounts and will match contributions to the account. Entrepreneurial and educational accounts receive \$2 of matching funds for every \$1 of personal savings, while accounts for homeownership receive \$3. The total of your personal savings and matching funds can be used to pay for expenses associated with buying a first home, attending college or vocational school, or starting or expanding a small business.

Carshall began the welding program at KTC as a part-time student before moving into the full-time program. He worked extremely hard and finished ahead of schedule. Family is important to Carshall and will play an integral part in his business. His wife, Rhonda, will assist with the bookkeeping. Carshall is the father of two daughters, Katelynn, 16, and Rayle, 1. David Billy of Choctaw Nation Career Development said, “It has truly been an honor and a privilege to work with Keith and witness his dedication and hard work.” Carshall expects to have his business up and running by mid May of this year. Carshall’s Dustless Glassing will be based out of his home but will be completely mobile, bringing his services directly to customers. Carshall said, “If you’re willing to better yourself, the Choctaw Nation will back you every step of the way. David Billy and the Career Development Program definitely have a big ‘Yakoke!’ from me.” For more information on the CAB program visit choctawcab.com.



Keith Carshall will soon open his own business after completing Kiamichi Technology Center’s Welding and Fabrication training.

Holt Earns Media Excellence Award

Ron Holt was honored with a Media Excellence Award by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association. The award was presented during the Class A State Basketball Tournament March 1. This is the first award the OSSAA has presented to media members. Holt is a graduate of Big Pasture High School, Cameron Junior College and Oklahoma State University. Holt was the Stillwater NewsPress Sports Editor for 29 years, reporting on Oklahoma State, Stillwater High and 13 area high schools. He currently writes a weekly sports column for the NewsPress and Perkins Journal. He also covers Bixby High School football, women’s basketball and volleyball, and is a contributing writer for other publications. “I appreciated the honor from the OSSAA and appreciate the support from the Bellatti family, longtime owners of the NewsPress,” Holt said. “I also appreciated all the support I’ve received during my career from my family and the Choctaw Nation. “The services provided through the years by the Choctaw Nation have greatly benefited me, my sons, my granddaughter and grandson. I’m proud to be a Choctaw Nation member and appreciate the positive support for all members.” Holt is the son of Gladys and the late Walon Dare Holt. He is the grandson of R.O. and Annie Bowden and Walon F. and Clara Holt.



King Named 2019 Haskell Student of the Year



RaeLynn King was named the 2019 Haskell Student of the Year by Haskell Indian Nations University. King is a senior and will graduate this spring with a bachelor’s in Business Administration. King has consistently made the President’s Honor Roll and was recognized with the Lockheed Martin Native American Business Scholarship. She has been involved with both the local and Haskell’s community by working a summer internship in 2018 with Travois and Tapa. This internship gave her the chance to work directly with tribal communities, and gain a deeper understanding of her major. She was also part of the Haskell Off-Campus club. In addition to being a full-time student, King

also works at the Bursar’s office on the Haskell campus and in Lawrence’s local community. RaeLynn is the daughter of Toni King and BJ Dean, the sister of Emalyne King, Lydia Dean and CJ Dean and the granddaughter of Lynn and Anthony King, Jeanolivia Grant and Albert Dean.

Alan Simpson Inducted into Tennis Coaches Association Hall of Fame



Alan Simpson has been inducted in to the Oklahoma Tennis Coaches Association Hall of Fame. The retired coach from Byng, Oklahoma received the honor Feb. 16 at Quail Creek Golf and Country Club in Edmond, Oklahoma. Simpson’s coaching career spans 42 years, 35 of those spent at Byng, where he coached basketball and tennis. Simpson is a member of the Oklahoma Basketball Coaches Association, Oklahoma Coaches Association, Murray State College and most recently Oklahoma Tennis Coaches Association. Simpson is proud to be the only coach in Oklahoma to be in the OCA, OBCA and OTCA Halls of Fame at the same time. Simpson’s tennis honors include: OCA State Coach of the Year, 2006, 2012, 2014; Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association State Coach of the Year, 2014; United States Tennis Association State Coach of the Year, 2014; Class 4A Coach of the Year, 2011, 2014, 2015; National Federation of State High School Associations Southwest Section Boys Coach of the Year, 2014 (Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, Arkansas, and New Mexico); OCA Region 6 Coach of the Year six times. While coaching boys basketball, his 24-year record was 476-198, with an average of 20 wins per year. During his first year as a head coach, he took his alma mater, Hugo, to its first-ever state tournament in 1978. Simpson took nine teams to state in all. He led Hugo to the state tournament twice, while Byng appeared seven times. In 1986, Simpson was the Daily Oklahoman “Basketball Coach of the Year,” and in 1992 he was the OBCA “Basketball Coach of the Year.” He was OBCA President in 1992; 1999 Faith 7 Coach (Oklahoma 105, Texas 101). He was OCA Region 6 Coach of the year 1983, 87, 92, and 94. Alan has been married to Kim for 41 years. They have two children, Zac and Chelsea. The two were Byng’s first tennis All-Staters in 2000 and 2002.

Jones Academy STEAM Camp Applications Now Being Accepted Through May 1, 2019

Jones Academy students will soon attend a camp designed to engage and introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics, also known as STEAM. STEAM Camp will be held on the Jones Academy campus June 9-14 for rising first-year students through the 12th-graders. Students selected by an academic and recommendation process will attend this camp for free. Highlights of the STEAM Camp include workshops, fun field trips, college trips, cultural enrichment and many more exciting experiences. The deadline for submitting applications is May 1, 2019. There will be a [Junior STEAM Camp](#) June 5-7, for rising fifth grade through eighth grade students. This camp will be an abbreviated version of the high school camp. For [more information](#) email steamcamp@choctawnation.com or give them a call at (918) 297-2518 ext. 1083.



Miller to Cheer in D2 World Championship

Shiah Miller, 10, and the University of Gymnastics All Star Cheer Team are headed to Disney World for the D2 Summit World Championship in Orlando, Florida. Her team won the bid to compete at the championship earlier this year. According to Shiah’s mother, Carrie Schmitz, “The D2 Summit World Championship is a very prestigious honor. The D2 Summit is by invite only.” Shiah has been cheering since she was 3 years old and doesn’t plan on stopping anytime soon. “Shiah spends roughly 10-15 hours a week either at the gym, at home, or at the cheer clinic practicing. Cheer has become a way of life for our family and we are willing to make the sacrifices necessary for Shiah to continue her dreams,” Carrie said. Carrie said she and Shiah are very thankful to the Choctaw Nation for their support and financial contribution to her entry fees. Shiah says her favorite part about cheering is making friends and she wants to be a veterinarian when she grows up. The event will take place May 10-12. If you would like to donate to the team, [visit the Sherman, Texas University of Gymnastics Facebook page](#) and [show your support](#).



Renee Earns Second Doctorate Degree



Lourrinda Renee graduated with a Doctorate of Education in organizational leadership on Oct. 20, 2018, from Grand Canyon University. This is Renee’s second doctorate degree, her first being in Engineering with an emphasis in Safety Engineering. Lourrinda owns a consulting company where she manages construction safety practices. In 2015, she was named VIP woman of the year by the National Association of Professional women. Her goals include continuing research in other aspects, such as hospital safety climate, construction, and deepening the research in the oil and gas industry.

Mental Health Struggles Met With Help and Hope

By CHRIS JENNINGS

The crisis of mental health issues and substance misuse reaches into hearts and homes across America. The Choctaw Nation has taken a multifaceted approach to help tribal members who may be struggling.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 17.5 percent of American Indian or Alaska Natives self-admitted they needed help for an alcohol or illicit drug use problem, versus 9.3 percent of other demographics.

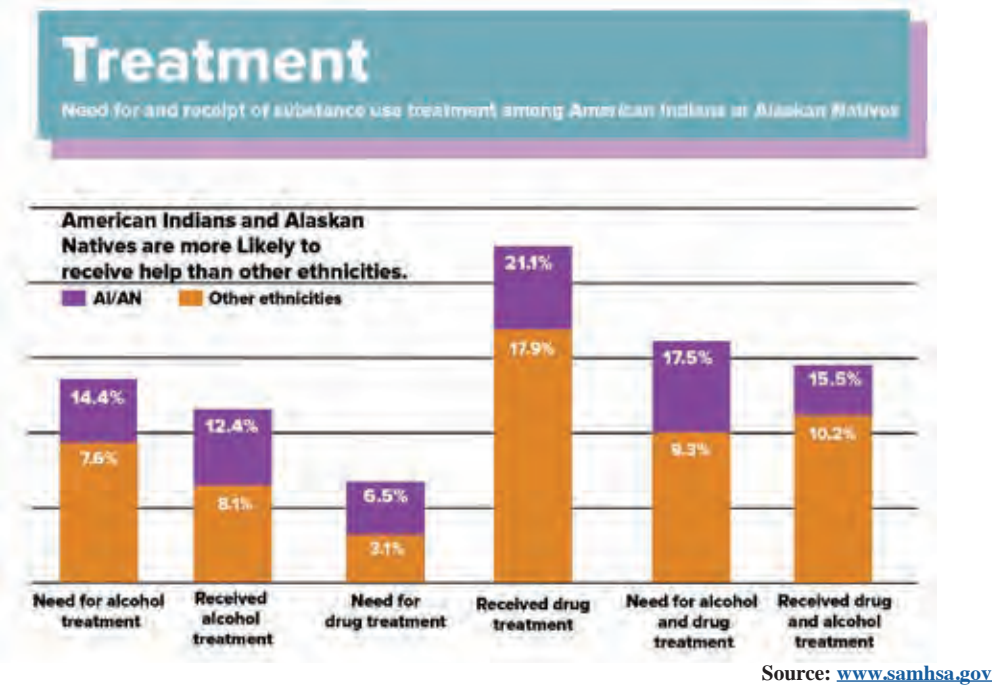
There is a positive side to that dire statistic. According to the same report, 15 percent of Native Americans were more likely to receive treatment versus 10.2 percent of other demographics.

While Native Americans may be more predisposed to these problems, many tribes recognize that and have worked to make sure help is available to those who seek it.

That holds especially true for the Choctaw Nation. Kristie Brooks, director of the Choctaw Nation Behavioral Health programs, says nearly all of the Choctaw Nation clinics have the behavioral health program integrated into them. Those clinics are home to 36 licensed clinicians that can offer help for a wide range of issues like — substance abuse, depression, anxiety, trauma, sexual abuse, sexual assault, bipolar, attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

There are also the two Choctaw Nation residential treatment centers in Talihiina, [Chi Hullo Li](#) for women and the [Recovery Center](#) for men.

Patients have successfully left these treatments centers, oftentimes working for



the Nation. In a way, using the strength they’ve gained by working through their recovery process to help make the nation stronger.

For years, Heather Pierce had been in and out of different recovery programs. In 2004 the Oklahoma Department of Human Services had placed her kids in foster care. She entered a program but didn’t stay.

“I ended up leaving with my kids and I hid out for months and months and then finally went into another treatment facility. I was there for four months and I was clean for a year,” said Pierce.

During that time Pierce enrolled in college but didn’t get away from the bad influences. “I just started hanging out with the same old crowd of people and my addiction got worse,” said Pierce.

In 2006 Pierce was sitting in a Madill, Oklahoma jail, facing five years in a state penitentiary for drug charges. That’s when she says God entered into her life.

“I ended up leaving with my kids and I hid out for months and months and then finally went into another treatment facility.”
– Heather Pierce

path to Chi Hullo Li.

The Choctaw residential rehabilitation center can be credited for empowering Pierce to turn her life around.

In the 13 years since getting out of Chi Hullo Li, Pierce has graduated from college and is in the process of starting graduate school. After that, Pierce says she plans to continue the journey with God that started all those years ago, by continuing to work in the Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehab department.

Pierce says, “Helping the Native American people that have disabilities get back into the workforce is my calling.”



Heather Pierce works at her computer at the Choctaw Vocational Rehab office in Hugo. Pierce credits the Nation and Chi Hullo Li for helping her through past struggles.

By continuing to do this work, the darkness that was Pierces’ addiction has given way to a light that shines at the end of someone else’s dark tunnel.

Pierce’s journey, and where she is now is a testament to the commitment the Nation has to its members and helping them with recovery.

Laura Sults’ path to recovery was a little different. Sults went into Chi Hullo Li just over one year ago. She says not because she had to, but because she needed to.

“I was using to the point to where I wanted to die. That was my goal, to die while using,” Sults goes on, “My life before Chi Hullo Li was a wreck. I had lost my kids to DHS and I was on drugs pretty bad,” says Sults.

Her kids were the catalyst that started her drug-free journey. Sults says, “I knew that the only way for me to get my kids back was to go to rehab.”

Sults had heard about Chi Hullo Li from a friend who was a former patient. She began the application process, and then impatiently waited. Sults said she called every other day, asking about her application. After two months of persistence, she finally received the good news and was admitted.

Sults says, “When I finally got in, I was nervous and scared. But by about the second week that I was there, I realized it wasn’t me needing to be there for my kids. It was I needed to be there for myself.”

Since getting out of Chi Hullo Li Sults has relocated to Talihiina. “It’s been amazing, my life is so much different. I have a house of my own for the first time in many years, and my kids, I have my kids back...me and my husband [Mike] just got married on Sunday, it’s been life-changing for us,” said Sults.

From life-changing to life-saving, it’s not just substance issues that the Nation helps with.

Brooks says one of the major focuses of the Nation is suicide prevention. Depression screenings have been implemented for anyone over 10 years old into normal visits to any of the Choctaw Nation clinics.

“Whether it’s mammograms, a screening for a colonoscopy or immunizations, if you come in for a cold we’re asking about depression,” said Brooks.

Asking these questions is helping to alleviate some of the preconceived stigmas that still surround mental health and depression. Getting people more comfortable with discussing mental health and depression is the main goal of these screenings says Brooks.

Depression is not a selective disease, it can affect anyone from any walk of life. According to the World Health Organization, 300 million people suffer from depression.

Charlene Kilpatrick was diagnosed with depression and has been able to take advantage of one of the seven psychiatrists through the Choctaw Nation health clinics. She says she felt like she needed more though.

Visits to a clinic or the ability to talk with a psychiatrist can be limited. That’s where peer support groups can help people who have that feeling of needing more. Kilpatrick relies on Celebrate Recovery to fill that need between clinic visits.

Celebrate Recovery, which is not affiliated with the Choctaw Nation, is a Christ-based program that offers peer counseling for many different things, ranging from substance misuse, to depression, to food addiction.

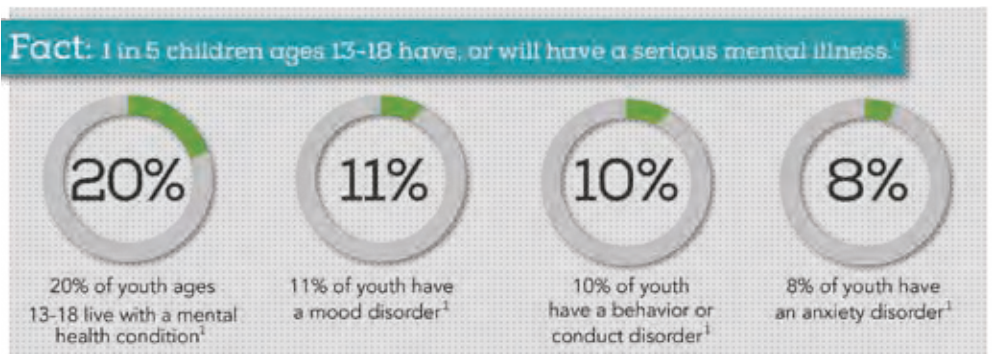
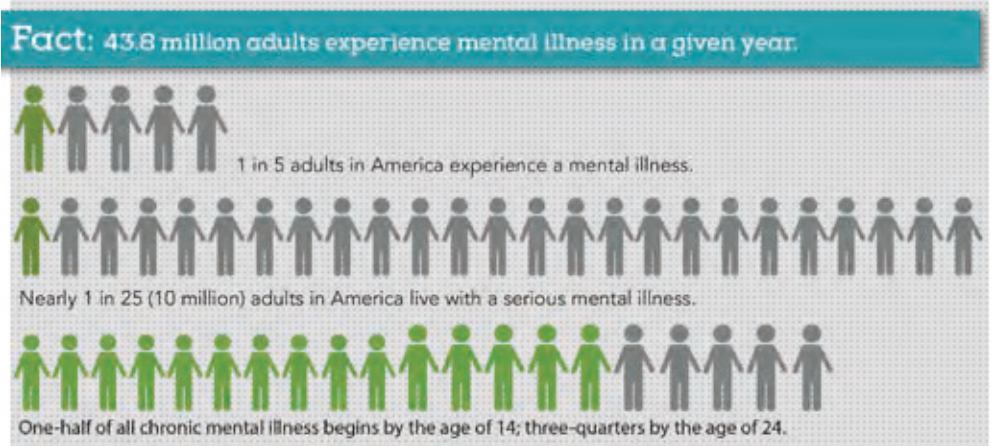
“We [Celebrate Recovery] meet every Monday night, regardless of holidays,” said Kilpatrick.

The importance of the group to Kilpatrick is evident as tears begin to form in her eyes. She struggles to get the words out, choking up, saying, “I can tell them what happened to me. I can cry, but they don’t go and tell others.”

It’s that sharing with others who have similar experiences that really helps, said Kilpatrick.

“It’s kind of like we can identify with each other, and we share with each other, and we become really close to each other,” said Kilpatrick.

The local Celebrate Recovery group has recently started a Native Nations sub-group to help with the identification process. Native Nations members attend regular Celebrate Recovery meetings. Being around members who have similar cultural identities can help on the journey to recovery.



It’s not just adults that the Nation is helping with depression screenings. A study done by the National Institute of Mental Health says nearly one-third of youth ages 10-12 screened positive for suicide risk in emergency department settings. Suicide is also the third leading cause of death in that pre-teen age group.

“Our [behavioral health](#) counselors do talk therapy or play therapy. We have some counselors who are trained in specific child-focused therapies. While mental health issues may affect children and adults differently, there are many similarities.

Brooks says some of the things to watch out for are declining grades and withdrawal from regular activities. In an adult, depression could manifest itself as regularly calling in sick or not participating in family activities.

The 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed that an estimated 16.2 million adults, or 6.7 percent of all adults in the United States, had at least one major depressive episode.

The survey describes a major depressive episode by a period of two weeks or longer during which there is either a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure and at least four other symptoms that reflect a change in functioning. Some of these symptoms could be problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, self-image or recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

Families often recognize these symptoms and will try to help. Often though, those offers are not heard or are ignored.

“That’s probably the hardest thing. I get calls from family members several times a week, every week, saying they have a daughter or son or husband or wife or any other family member that needs treatment, but until that person wants treatment there’s nothing we can do until [they] decide, ‘Okay, I’m ready,’” says Brooks.

In the meantime, Brooks says education is important. Making sure family members know about the illness and what to watch for. Making sure the resources are available when something finally clicks and they’re ready. When that does happen they often want to go right now. Figuring out what to do when that happens is the first step.

On the other end of that, to those who may be surrounded by the darkness of addiction or mental illness, Sults offers advice.

“For the ones that are out there struggling there is always hope at the end of the tunnel.

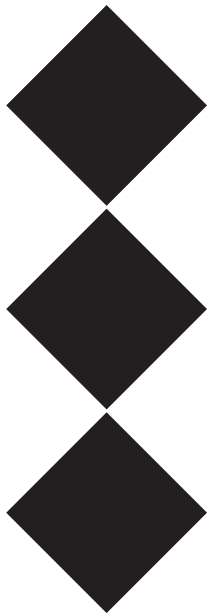
“Now, with God’s help, with the Choctaw Nation and with Chi Hullo Li I have my family back. I believe that if anyone is willing to fight for their sobriety, then it is possible,” says Sults.

That positive message serves as a testament to the strength of the Nation and its programs. Sults, who was at the lowest of lows, wishing for death, has now risen above her troubles and shines as her own light, showing the way for others. The Nation has grown stronger because of the programs and help it offers its members.

While mental health may not be as commonly discussed as some other health problems, it’s no less important. The Choctaw Nation recognizes that and has taken great strides to [help](#) those that seek it.

Hina Hanta

Bright Path — This is the first part in a series highlighting awareness and paths to better health.



Davidson Named Director of Atoka KTC

The Board of Education at Kiamichi Technology Centers voted to appoint Greg Davidson as director of the Atoka campus Feb. 12. Davidson has served communities in Atoka, Coal and Johnston counties since he began his career in education, most recently as the superintendent of Coalgate Public Schools. Davidson will begin his new role July 1.

“I am honored to be chosen as the campus director for the Atoka campus and excited about what the future holds for our students, partner schools and communities,” said Davidson. “We are truly living in exciting times for career and technology education in this area.”

Davidson brings over 16 years of academic and administrative experience to his role with KTC. He was a classroom teacher for nine years at Coalgate and Tushka, served one year as principal at Wapanucka, then rejoined the staff at Coalgate in 2013.

“KTC is pleased to have Greg’s leadership at the Atoka campus,” said Deputy Superintendent Doug Hall. “His professional experience and personal connection with the schools and communities served by the Atoka campus will ensure that workforce and training needs of the area are met.”

Davidson is a 1999 graduate of Olney High School. He holds a bachelor’s degree in social studies education and a master’s degree in education administration from South-eastern Oklahoma State University. Davidson also holds certificates as a principal, superintendent and CareerTech administrator.

A lifelong resident of Atoka and Coal counties, Davidson and his wife, Krystal, reside near Tushka and have four children, Kenlee, Jerriid, Justin and Kevin.

KTC has played an integral role in southeastern Oklahoma communities since 1968, serving 10 full and three partial counties. KTC is one of 29 districts in the Oklahoma CareerTech system with more than 30 career programs. KTC also offers a wide variety of evening and weekend short-term courses as well as certifications in many diverse career fields. KTC serves nearly 23,000 individuals each year, including many area companies who receive training through the Business and Industry Services division.



Tribal member Greg Davidson was recently named Director of the Kiamichi Technology Center’s Atoka Campus.

Detten Retires From Marine Corps After Serving 22 Years

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason N. Detten will retire from the U. S. Marine Corps April 26, after 22 years of service.

Detten entered the Marine Corps in 1997, after his graduation from Battiest High School in Battiest, Oklahoma. He is currently located in California, and has served in multiple deployments in many countries including Japan, Korea, Australia, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq. He has also deployed aboard various U. S. Navy vessels and at numerous Naval Air stations across the United States in support of USMC fighter aircraft at all these locations.

During his career with the Marines, Jason earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees and plans to utilize his education and many skills to begin a second career. At this time, he has not made a firm decision about a career path following retirement, but is looking at several opportunities that his training with the Marine Corps and his education have made available.

Detten and his wife, Alma, have a daughter, Jayna, and two sons, Nocona and Raito. Detten is the son of John and Evelyn Detten of Authur City, Texas. He is the grandson of the late Bes-sie Mae Samis Whisenhunt and the great-grandson of an original enrollee, the late Lyman Samis.



BIRTHDAY WISHES

Alyce Caldwell of Topeka, Kansas will celebrate her 98th birthday April 29. Her son Deen and Lisa Manis wish her a happy birthday and a special day.

Melba Boman recently celebrated her 94th birthday at her daughter’s home. Visiting with her were her three grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren and great-great-grand-children. Melba is the daughter of Roo-sevelt Bacon and Josie (Woods) Bacon. Happy Birthday! We love you, from your family.



“The Trade” by Lauretta Newby-Coker.

Red Earth Art Center Presents ‘She Persisted’ Art Exhibition

Oklahoma City’s Red Earth has partnered with Science Museum Oklahoma for its latest art exhibition entitled, “She Persisted,” on view through May 28 on the second level Art Gallery of the science museum located in northeast Oklahoma City’s Adventure District.

Choctaw Artist Lauretta Newby-Coker lives with her large family in Noble, Oklahoma and has taught elementary art to hundreds of students as a teacher in the Norman Public Schools.

She works in many mediums and has several colorful glass mosaic pieces on view in “She Persisted.”

As in all of her glass mosaics, “The Trade,” on view during the Red Earth Show, features hundreds of glass shards in all sizes, shapes and colors. When pieced together, the broken pieces of colored glass blend into a stunning bouquet of spring flowers.

Newby-Coker is a master at creating beautiful images out of colorful shards of glass. Lauretta has exhibited throughout the region and is recipient of the Choctaw Nation Cultural Award.

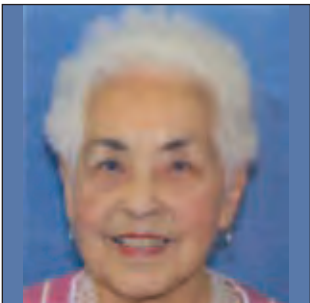
Red Earth is an Allied Arts member agency, and is funded in part by the Oklahoma Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau, Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation and the Kirkpatrick Family Fund.

The Red Earth Art Center exhibit, “She Persists,” continues through May 28 and is included with regular paid admission to Science Museum Oklahoma, 2020 Remington Place at NE 50th and Martin Luther King in Oklahoma City. Visit www.redearth.org or call (405) 427-5228 for additional information.



James “Earl” Ish-comer celebrated his 91st birthday on March 25. Family and friends of Earl wish him a happy birth-day. Earl currently lives in Monti-cello, Illinois but is formerly from the Idabel and Golden areas of Oklahoma. Earl is the son of Clayton and Minnie (Turner) Ishcomer.

Altha Murray will celebrate her 97th birthday on March 27. Altha is a proud resident of Bethany, Oklahoma. Happy birthday Altha, may you have many more to come.





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- The Choctaw Clothing grant is a **one time only** allowance.
- A grant of \$300 is provided for a semester GPA of 3.00-4.00
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Paper applications NO longer accepted

Yearyean Receives Realty Award



Kimberly Yearyean received eighth place in the individual awards at the 21st annual National Indian Realty Awards on Feb. 11. The NIRA’s are awarded to the top 20 Indian Land Professionals in the nation and the top 15 offices in the nation. The awards were presented in Las Vegas, Nevada by Lela Beckwith, President of ICC Indian Enterprises. “We are so impressed with her dedication and her will- ingness to provide the best possible service,” Beckwith said. The awards are based on test scores on all aspects of Indian Trust/Restricted realty subjects. Yearyean has also received the Indian Land Professional of the Year award seven years in a row.

SATURDAY May 18



Choctaw Nation

TRAIL of TEARS WALK

Living out the Chahta Spirit ♦ 2019

Capitol Grounds ♦ Tvshka Homma ♦ 10:00 a.m.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

ALBUQUERQUE



Community Meeting photos by Lisa Reed

JJ Jacob of Cultural Services, Richard and Wilma Salas, and Richard III and Xylana enjoy the Albuquerque meeting.



Chief Gary Batton presents Altie Seward, 85, with a medal for being the eldest Choctaw in attendance at Albuquerque. Altie was born in Durant and currently lives in El Paso, Texas.

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TUCSON



Tribal members of all ages enjoy the Snake Dance during the Tucson, Arizona Community Meeting.



Registered Choctaw artist Brandon Porter displays his creations at the Tucson meeting.

MCKINNEY



The eldest Choctaws at the McKinney meeting Gladys Dry Boren, 90, right, and Betty Heard Watson, 90, are pictured with Chief Batton and Assistant Chief Austin.



Izzie and Dean Attocknie concentrate on making a beaded bracelet.



Alex Monette and Adam Bull share techniques of their artistry at Albuquerque.



Cultural Services' Kay Jackson assists Ann and Ben Lacey during a beading make-and-take class.



Ten-month-old Atticus Monroe is wearing his first Choctaw beaded bracelet. Pictured are Taylor, Ying, and Atticus Monroe and Nicole Narcomey.



Linda and Dan Burton of Plano visit with Kayla William, Eyeglasses, Dentures and Hearing Aids program and Scott Wesley, Chahta Foundation. Linda still helps farm her family's allotted land in Oklahoma.

Travis Watts Promoted to Rear Admiral

Choctaw tribal member Travis Watts, PharmD, was promoted to Rear Admiral earlier this month.

A flag ceremony was held March 8 at the Chickasaw Nation Community Center in Oklahoma City by the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps in honor of this achievement.

Watts moved from the rank of captain to rear admiral, lower half.

This ceremony made him one of only 11 admirals serving in the Indian Health Service.

"I am blessed to work in a community where faith, family and culture are highly valued," Watts said.

Watts thanked his family and many friends for their continued support throughout his career.

Watts said, "It takes a village to raise an admiral."

A national clinical pharmacy specialist, Watts has received numerous awards, including the USPHS Outstanding Service Medal, USPHS Clinical Pharmacist of the Year, multiple IHS director awards and the Indian Health Service Senior Pharmacist of the Year award.

Watts serves as director of the Oklahoma City Area Indian Health Service.

He also oversees the programs of 43 tribal nations in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.

The IHS, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is the principal federal provider of health care services for American Indians and Alaska Natives in the region.

The IHS provides many medical services, including, dental, ambulatory, emergency, public health nursing and inpatient health care.

The majority of IHS facilities focus on primary and preventive care including preventive screenings and health education.

In addition to health services, IHS funds a number of activities related to its unique mission.

These activities include efforts to recruit and retain a skilled health workforce, maintenance and construction of IHS facilities, and support for overhead and expenses associated with contracts and compacts. OCAIH serves more than 350,000 patients annually.



Photos provided

Travis Watts was promoted from the position of captain to the position of rear admiral earlier this month, making him one of only 11 admirals serving in the Indian Health Service.



Rear Adm. Watts receives a salute as he is promoted during a March 8 ceremony.



Watts places his hand on the Bible during the "pinning" ceremony.

CHOCTAW LANGUAGE COLLEGE COURSES

ENROLL TODAY

1513	Choctaw Language and Culture (in-person & online)
1613	Choctaw Language and Culture II
1713	Choctaw Language and Culture III
1813	Choctaw Language and Culture IV
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4003	Advanced Conversational Choctaw

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SCHEDULES

Enrollment for Spring Semester
mid-October through January

Enrollment for Summer Semester
March through June

Enrollment for Fall Semester
mid-March through August

NOTE

- Students MUST pay all fees (books, tuition, etc.) associated with enrollment.
- All classes are taught at Southeastern and will be available at CASC by screen-to-screen.

Choctaw Nation

School of Choctaw Language

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f t i y

BISKINIK

April 2019

TEK I HVSHI

women's month

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Construction projects continue to bring prosperity and growth to the Choctaw Nation. Boswell welcomes its new Country Market and the Judicial Center opens for business.

Front Page Photos by Chris Jennings

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. ChoctawNation.com features access to information about tribal history, culture, news, services, government, businesses, applications and contacts. The Choctaw Nation's official publication, the BISKINIK, is available to tribal members by mail and archived editions are on ChoctawNation.com.

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