



# Cox and Austin Keep Council Seats While 2 Districts Face Run-Off



Delton Cox

4



Jack Austin Sr.

7

## Run-Off Information

Neither District 6 or District 9 had a candidate pass the 51% threshold. Each district will hold a Run-off Election Sat, Aug. 5.

by STACY HUTTO

Choctaw Tribal Councilman District 4 Delton Cox retained his council seat with 54.01 percent, or 498 votes during the General Election held Saturday, June 8. The results for the District 4 candidates are Brian Lee Barnard with 7.16 percent, or 66 votes; Bruce Curnutt with 8.35 percent, or 77 votes; and Jennifer Roberts with 30.48 percent, or 281 votes.

Choctaw Tribal Council District 7 Councilman Jack Austin Sr. won with 75.58 percent, or 715 votes. The results for the remaining candidates were Adrian Johnico with 20.08 percent, or 190 votes and Bobby Baker with 4.33 percent, or 41 votes.

Two districts, District 6 and District 9, did not have a candidate reach the 50 percent, plus one required by the Choctaw Election Ordinance. According to Article XXI, Section 3, "If a candidate does not receive more than 50 percent of the total votes cast for the respective office, then a run-off election between the two candidates receiving the most votes in the general election shall be conducted on the fourth Saturday following the General Election."

The results for District 6 were incumbent Joe Coley with 47.93 percent, or 347

votes; Jennifer Woods with 48.34 percent, or 350 votes; and Alice Caldwell with 3.73 percent, or 27 votes.

Coley and Woods will face each other in the Run-Off Election.

District 9 has been without a Councilman since October 2016. The results for District 9 were James Dry with 49.92 percent, or 957 votes; Berdie Williams with 32.92 percent, or 631 votes; Mike "Happy" Folsom with 14.71 percent, or 282 votes; and Tim Sexton with 2.45 percent, or 47 votes.

Dry and Williams will be on the ballot for the Run-Off Election.

The Run-Off Election will be held on Saturday, Aug. 5. Early voting will be held Aug. 2, 3, and 4. See Page 5 for voting locations and times.

The newly elected and re-elected Tribal Councilmembers will serve a four-year term. The Councilmembers will begin their terms after a Swearing-in Ceremony the last day of the Choctaw Labor Day Festival on Monday, Sept. 4.

The Swearing-in Ceremony will be followed by the State of the Nation Address by Chief Gary Batton.

The next election year will be 2019. During that election season the position for Chief, as well as Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11 will be up for election.

# Labor Day Means Music, Culture, Food, Fun, and Family

Summer is coming to an end, but not before the Choctaw Nation can celebrate it's Chahta Family.

Starting Aug. 31 to Sept. 4 the Choctaw Nation will host its annual Labor Day Festival.

The theme this year is "New Branches from Strong Roots."

Chief Gary Batton encourages all Choctaw families to gather together and celebrate Choctaw heritage all while creating new memories.

Labor Day is going to be lit up by the night life.

This year the music scene will be popping with special guest musicians like Neal McCoy, LOCASH, Jason Crabb and For King and Country.

Don't miss Saturday night when Aaron Watson will be opening for the headliner Alabama.



p.m., traditional Choctaw hymn singing will be held in the Chapel.

Before the Labor Day official ceremonies begin on Monday, Sept. 4, the Johnsons will be entertaining the audience with their traditional singing.

Concert start times are listed below.

Music and entertainment aren't the only reason to attend the Labor Day Festival.

The Choctaw village will be bustling with activities to participate in on Saturday and Sunday.

Come enjoy Choctaw dancing, a bow shooting contest and so much more.

There is something for everyone no matter the age. Don't forget the Chief's State of the Nation Monday morning on Sept. 4.

For a complete list of activities see page 11.

Alabama consists of a 17-year country music veteran from west Texas and three cousins from the Heart of Dixie who will kick up some dirt at th amphitheater at Tvshka Homma.

But if country music isn't your thing, there will also be Gospel Singing.

The Choctaw Village will host Choctaw hymns at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 2.

On Sunday, Sept. 3, Gospel singing will start at noon at the amphitheater.

Later that evening, at 7

## LIVE MUSIC

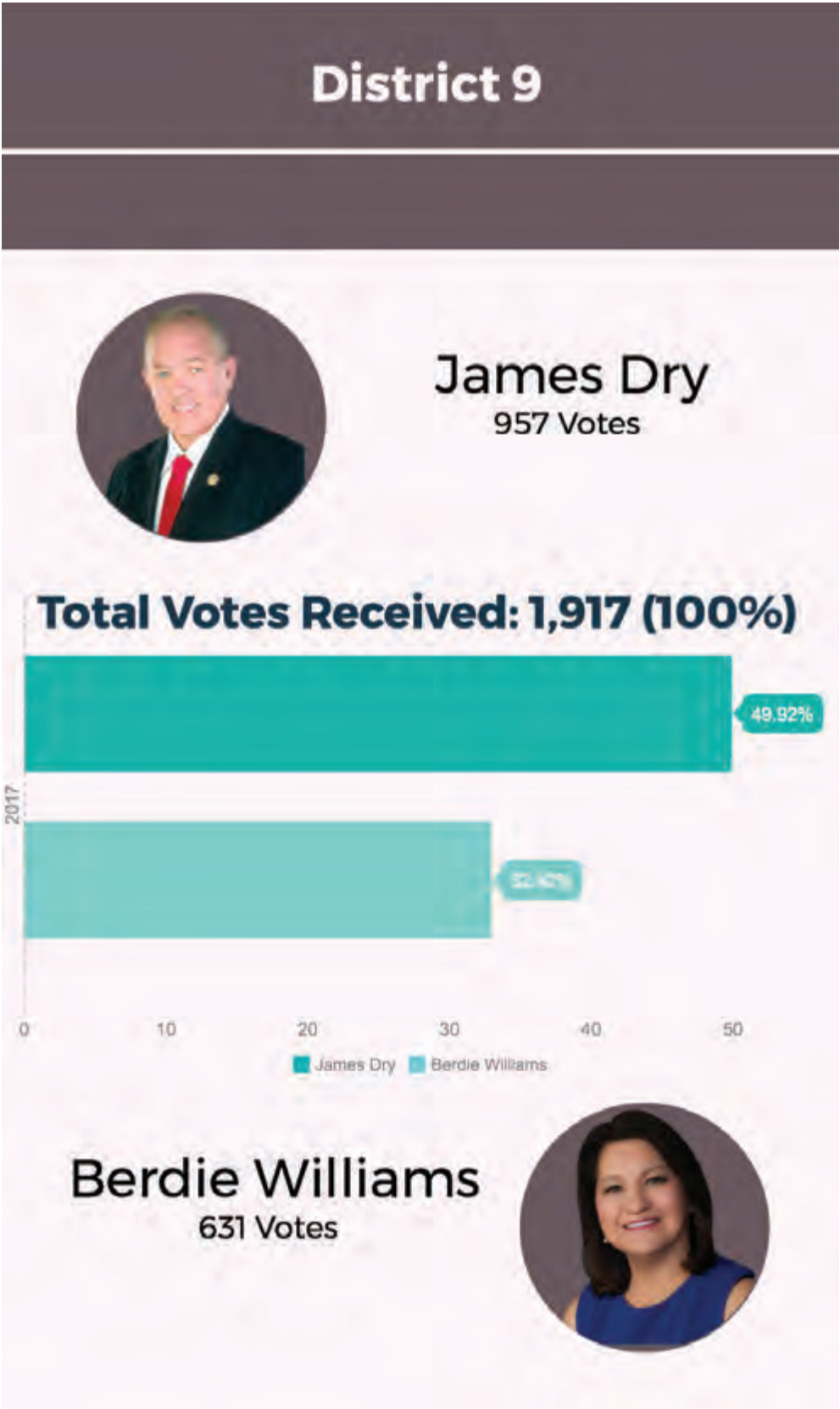
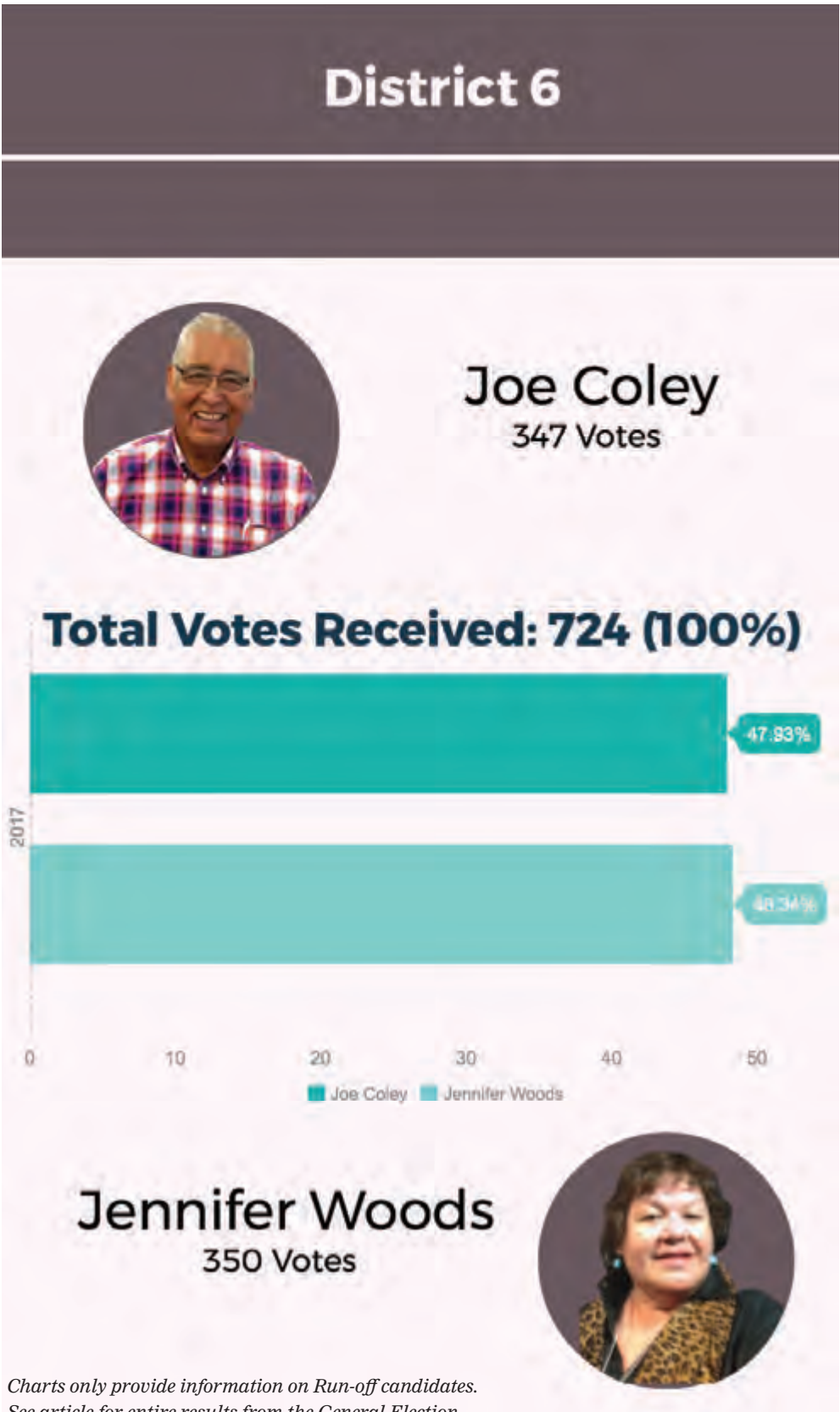
**Friday**  
6:00 pm - Joni Morris  
7:00 pm - LOCASH  
9:00 pm - Neal McCoy

**Saturday**  
6:00 pm - Jerry Tims  
7:00 pm - Aaron Watson  
9:00 pm - Alabama

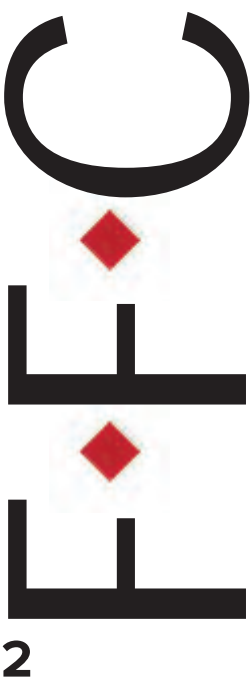
**Sunday**  
Noon - Gospel Singing  
5:30 pm - The

Williamsons  
6:30 pm - The Anchormen  
7:30 pm - Zach Williams  
8:30 pm - Jason Crabb  
9:30 pm - For King and Country

**Monday**  
9:30 am - Cultural Activities  
9:30 am - Tim Tingle  
9:45 am - The Johnsons







# Choctaw and Irish Kindred Spirits in Perseverance



Chief Gary Batton

From one outstretched hand to another, the Choctaw Nation and the Irish formed a connection 170 years ago.

In June, I had the privilege to travel to Ireland to attend the dedication of “Kindred Spirits,” a monument commemorating the gift of \$170 from Choctaw tribal members living in the Skullyville area to the people of Ireland who were suffering and dying during the Great

Hunger in their land.

Ireland lost more than 2 million people—approximately 1 million died of starvation and disease and over a million migrated to other countries.

The story of the donation has been passed down through generations in Ireland. I was unprepared however, for the extent of the welcome we would receive when we arrived in Ireland.

Their generous spirit reached out and embraced us wherever we went. It was a very humbling experience and we were very proud to walk in the spirit of our ancestors.

Ireland’s President Michael Higgins recognized the gift came from a people who shared similar experiences. He called it a gift of love and compassion and solidarity.

“Kindred Spirits” is such an appropriate name for the relationship between our countries. The Choctaw people came across the Trail of Tears where we lost one-fourth of our people. When our ancestors heard of the famine and the hardship of the Irish people, they knew it was time to help.

It is a spirit of hope and prosperity, one that has grown stronger through things we have overcome and endured. The Choctaw people and the Irish people

are still here today.

The monument created by Alex Pentek pulses as if it contains life, the life and spirit of the many people lost through both tragedies and those who survived.

He chose eagle feathers because the eagle is symbolic of peace and revered by Choctaw people. The steel feathers stand 24 feet tall and when you look closely you can recognize the talent and precision used to create each one.

On such close inspection, it is obviously metal. When you stand back to see the entire creation, it isn’t steel you see. It’s life. The feathers, cupped like a bowl, are reaching for the heavens and they shimmer with every hint of light.

Alex said that even though the histories are tragic and unimaginably horrific, there is a feeling of rising above it by standing together. As much as ever, standing together against adversity from those who are persecuting is a message we can still move forward today.



Photos by Deidre Elrod

Above: Dancers from Comhaltas Ceolteoiri Eireann perform during the dedication ceremony for “Kindred Spirits” monument in Bailick Park, Midleton, Cork County.

Left: Choctaw and Irish cultures come together as Comhaltas Ceolteoiri Eireann dancers teach Choctaw members Payton Guthrie, Mandy Lawson and Callie Armstrong an Irish dance.

## Communities Still Celebrate Life in the Choctaw Way



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

The closeness of communities coming together is one of the things I love the most about life in the Choctaw Nation.

In our rural communities, everyone pulls together to help someone in need or to celebrate life in the Choctaw way with our friends and families.

I had the opportunity to attend the first day of the meeting at Bobb-Myers Methodist Church in Antlers and thoroughly enjoyed myself.

It was a perfect example of community as people gathered together to hear a message, take communion, and visit the camp houses where there was great food and fellowship.

We are blessed to still have camp meetings to connect and inspire people in ways I remember as a young boy.

Boom in the Valley is always a great community event and is very reflective of family values and time spent together.

It was held July 3 at Tvshka Homma, the

first time the event was held on the Choctaw Nation’s capitol grounds.

Boom in the Valley reminded me of that small-town feel of families getting together to enjoy the day.

A spectacular fireworks display closed the evening. Yakohe to all who pitched in to provide a wonderful celebration.

Tvshka Homma will literally become a community of thousands for a short time as the annual Labor Day Festival kicks off August 31.

Choctaw staff members spend weeks preparing the grounds and more work throughout the long weekend to ensure everyone has a good time.

Many Choctaw families are already preparing for Labor Day. Those who play softball set up camp near Red Warrior Park to be close to the fields. They don’t want to miss any of the action provided by the approximately 50 teams in the tournament.

It isn’t uncommon to see two or three generations on a fast pitch or volleyball team or in the horseshoe pits.

Opening night brings Choctaw families in from across the Nation to support and cheer for their favorite young ladies in the princess pageant. The contestants model in their Choctaw dresses and jewelry often made by a member of their family.

Mom, Dad, brothers, sisters, grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts, uncles and cousins are in the audience. It’s one of the most anticipated events every year. Other highlights include village activities, a stickball tournament, and an inter-tribal pow wow.

The grounds at Tvshka Homma will be filled with culture, art, sports, food and entertainment. It gives us an opportunity to forget our troubles and bring us closer while we celebrate our Choctaw traditions.



by Jack Austin Jr.

During Boom in the Valley on July 3, fireworks lit up the sky in Tvshka Homma. The large crowd watched as the fireworks illuminated the Capitol Building. This year was the first time the fireworks show was held in the heart of the Choctaw Nation.

### Labor Day Softball/Fast Pitch Registration

The deadline to register for Softball/Fast Pitch games held during the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival in Tvshka Homma is

Saturday, August 12.



For more information, contact Larry Wade at (580) 775-0881.

Mail the name of team, contact person, address, phone, e-mail and if the team is a men’s team or women’s team to: Choctaw Nation Hugo Community Center Attn: Larry Wade P.O. Box 86 Hugo, OK 74743

## BISKINIK

# August TAKKON HVSHI peach month

### In This Issue

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### Page 1:

The results from the General Election for Districts 4, 6, 7, and 9 are in. Two districts will have a Run-Off Election.

The annual Labor Day Festival is a time to reconnect with family and old friends. It is also a time to make new friends and celebrate Chahta heritage and traditions.

Election illustration by Tina Firquain

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.

- [www.facebook.com/ChoctawNationofOklahoma](https://www.facebook.com/ChoctawNationofOklahoma)
- [www.twitter.com/ChoctawNationOK](https://www.twitter.com/ChoctawNationOK)
- [www.instagram.com/ChoctawNationOK](https://www.instagram.com/ChoctawNationOK)
- [www.youtube.com/ChoctawNation](https://www.youtube.com/ChoctawNation)

## CHOCTAW VETERANS HUNT

DRAWING VETERANS DAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2017

### 3-DAY WHITETAIL HUNT

Five Choctaw Veterans will be drawn from eligible entries on Veterans Day for a 3-day whitetail hunt at the Choctaw Hunting Lodge. (Must be present to win. Subject to verification of CDIB and Veteran eligibility.)

- Day 1 - December 1st - Half Day Hunt (Begins at 12pm)
- Day 2 - December 2nd - Full Day Hunt
- Day 3 - December 3rd - Half Day Hunt (Ends at 12pm)

#### HUNT INCLUDES:

- All meals and one overnight stay in the Choctaw Hunting Lodge
- 3-Day Rifle Hunt - Last 3 days of rifle season (management buck only)
- Selected hunters may bring one person with them if assistance is needed.

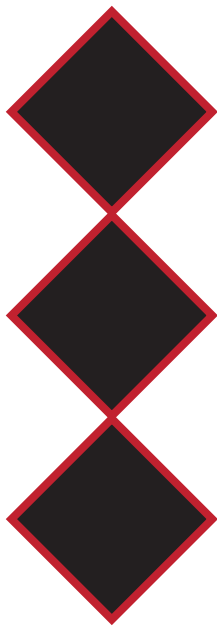
**CHOCTAW** **WWW.CHOCTAWHUNTINGLODGE.COM**

HUNTING LODGE Travis Benes at 580-740-0040 or tbenes@choctawnation.com

The Choctaw Hunting Lodge is owned and operated by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.







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# Internship Program Teaches More Than Future Skills

by WYATT STANFORD  
Since day one of my college career my instructors and mentors have pounded into my head that I needed to complete an internship during school or face big challenges when looking for a job after graduation. Halfway through my junior year and without an internship, I knew I was in desperate need of real-world experience. It made sense to look for opportunities through the Choctaw Nation. I have always been passionate about Choctaw people and my heritage. In addition, the nation has helped me in so many ways, this would be the perfect way to give back.

When I saw the reporter/photographer internship posted on the recruiting website I applied as soon as I could.

I was studying for my history final in the Bizzell Library at the University of Oklahoma when I received the call. I would be joining interns from all over the state, Texas and even from as far away as Michigan for the summer.

The internship began May 30 and ran until July 21. That gave me along with the other interns in various departments within government, commerce and health-care about eight weeks to learn everything we could about our future career fields and gain hands-on experience from skilled associates at Choctaw Nation.

Vallerie James interned in the Reintegration department, which assists tribal members who have been convicted of felony crimes become productive citizens through its services. James had the opportunity to help these individuals.

## Recipe of the Month

### Chicken and Bean Burritos



Recipe by Cooking Light

#### Ingredients

- ¾ pound chicken breast tenders, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 ½ tsps. chili powder
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp canola oil
- ½ cup lower-sodium canned black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 (10-inchd) whole wheat tortillas
- 1 oz. shredded Monterey Jack cheese (about ¼ cup)
- Cooking spray
- ½ cup Pico de Gallo
- ¼ cup reduced-fat sour cream

#### Preparation

1. Combine first 6 ingredients in a bowl; toss well.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add oil; swirl to coat. Add chicken mixture; cook 8 minutes or until chicken is done, stirring occasionally. Add beans and garlic; cook 2 minutes or until heated, stirring frequently. Divide chicken mixture evenly among tortillas. Top each burrito with 2 tbsps. cheese. Roll up each burrito jelly-roll fashion.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Coat both sides of burritos evenly with cooking spray. Place burritos in pan; cook 2 minutes on each side or until browned. Cut burritos in half. Top with Pico de Gallo and sour cream.

#### Nutrition Facts:

Servings 4  
Serving size 1/2 burrito, 2 tbsp Pico de Gallo, and 1 tbsp sourcream  
(per serving)  
cal. (kcal) 287, fat, total (g) 8.8, chol. (mg) 57, sat. fat (g) 2.6, carb. (g) 25.4, Monounsaturated fat (g) 3.8, polyunsaturated fat (g) 1.6, fiber (g) 2.9, pro. (g) 24.7, sodium (mg) 499, calcium (mg) 101, iron (mg) 2.4

For further information, you may contact Erin Adams, RD, LD. Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center (800) 349-7026 ext. 6959.

“It’s been a great experience to be part of something that’s making a difference somewhere it’s needed most,” James said. James liked the working environment of Choctaw Nation, describing it as a second family. “It’s very welcoming. It’s like walking into a second home. I’m going to miss everyone,” James said. For many of the interns, like revenue-audit intern Megan Doyle, this program offers them the chance to see if their career choice is right for them.

“My favorite part was probably learning about the cultural stuff, but also connecting with interns that are striving towards the same goals that I am to see what they really want to do with their lives and see if what they’re interning in is for them,” Doyle said. The program gave insight into future career expectations and how to be prepared for them. Quality intern Chelse Winklepleck said she felt more informed regarding what positions are and how they work.

“I feel like I could be confident about a job and how it works,” Winklepleck said. Interns attended trainings designed to teach us what is expected at Choctaw Nation and skills that would help in any future employment. The afternoon sessions were devoted to cultural activities that taught us more about Choctaw history, language and traditions.

The cultural activities brought many of the interns closer to their heritage. “I didn’t know much about Choctaw history prior to this. I feel like I’ve learned a lot,” information technology intern Ryan Brannan said. “I had no idea what to expect and had no idea it (the Choctaw Nation) was so culturally embracing to its members and how much they make you feel like you are a part of this nation.” IT intern Russell Thurman said.



by Wyatt Stanford  
**Interns pose for a picture with Chief Gary Patton after the Luncheon with Chief on June 9. The Choctaw Nation employed 38 interns for the summer program.**

During the course of my internship, I have written pieces and taken pictures for the Biskinik, as well as assisted in the design and layout of this month’s and last month’s edition. In addition, I have traveled across the Choctaw Nation, met some inspiring people and heard their stories.

I wouldn’t have had these kinds of experiences through any other internship opportunity.

My biggest takeaway from the internship program was learning what it truly means to be Choctaw. I previously thought I knew, but the program has taught me about what it really means to be a member of the Choctaw Nation by embracing Faith, Family and Culture.

When I asked my fellow interns if they would work full-time for the nation, they replied unanimously with “definitely.”

I think I speak for all of the interns when I say yakoke for giving us the opportunity to learn, grow and arm ourselves with intangible experience that will help us in all our future endeavors, both inside and outside the Choctaw Nation.

## NURSERY NEWS

### Case Maccai Burns



Case Maccai Burns was born on April 30, 2016. He was welcomed into the world by his proud parents Howie and Elise Burns of Wichita, Kansas. Case is the grandson of Howard and Deloris McCann Burns, and great-grand son of Donald Dwain McCann of Purcell.

### Camden Conway Burns



Camden Conway Burns was born on Feb. 9, 2017. He was welcomed into this world by his parents Jonathan and Marley Burns of Wichita, Kansas. Camden is the grandson of Howard and Deloris McCann Burns, and great-grandson of Donald Dwain McCann of Purcell.

### Flexible Spending Account

**August 24, 2017 at 3:30pm**  
Join us for this free informative webinar to help you decide if a **Flexible Spending Account** is right for you.



Hosted by Choctaw Asset Building & **Eileen St. Pierre**  
The Everyday Financial Planner

To register, go online:  
[goo.gl/KTxUJS](http://goo.gl/KTxUJS)



Come join us for a breast-feeding class in your area! Many mothers want to learn more about breastfeeding so they can feel more confident in their decision to breastfeed. This breastfeeding class will address the following topics:

- latch
- frequency of feedings
- breastfeeding resources
- positioning
- growth spurts

#### Idabel

Wednesday • Sept. 6 • 9am  
Wednesday • Nov. 1 • 1pm  
Located at the Choctaw Nation Clinic (Education Room)

#### Poteau

Wednesday • Sept. 13 • 9am  
Wednesday • Nov. 8 • 1pm  
Located at the Choctaw Nation Community Center (behind Rubin White Clinic)

#### Talihina

Tuesday • Aug. 15 • 9am  
Wednesday • Oct. 18 • 1pm  
Located at Kiamichi Vo-Tech

#### Durant

Thursday • Nov. 9 • 9am  
Location TBD

**Breastfeeding assistance is just a phone call away.**  
1-800-522-6170 ext. 2507.

CHOCTAW		
Women, Infants and Children		
Location	Days	Hours
<b>Antlers</b> 580-298-3161	Every Tue.	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
<b>Atoka</b> 580-889-5825	Mon. Wed., Thurs. & Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Battiest</b> 580-241-5458	1st & 2nd Tue. Every Month	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
<b>Boswell</b> 580-380-2518	1st Thurs. Every Month	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
<b>Broken Bow</b> 580-584-2746	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Coalgate</b> 580-927-3641	1st Wed. of Every Month	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
<b>Durant</b> 580-916-2100 x 83517	Daily Mon – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Hugo</b> 580-326-5404	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Idabel</b> 580-286-2510	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>McAlester</b> 918-423-6335	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Poteau</b> 918-649-1106	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Smithville</b> 580-244-3289	1st Thurs. Every Month	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Spiro</b> 918-962-5134	Wed., Thurs. & Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
<b>Stigler</b> 918-867-4211	Mon. & Tue.	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
<b>Talihina</b> 918-567-7000 x-6792	Mon., Tue., Wed. & Fri.	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
<b>Wilburton</b> 918-465-5641	Every Thursday	8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### 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

#### September

##### ANTLERS

Market open weekdays September 1-30, except for:  
Closed: September 4, 27, 28 & 29.  
Cooking with Carmen: September 11 & 25, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

##### BROKEN BOW

Market open weekdays September 1-30, except for:  
Closed: September 4, 27, 28 & 29.  
Cooking with Carmen: September 7 & 21, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

##### DURANT

Market open weekdays September 1-30, except for:  
Closed: September 4, 27, 28 & 29.  
Cooking with Carmen: September 5 & 12, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

##### MCALESTER

Market open weekdays September 1-30, except for:  
Closed: September 4, 27, 28 & 29.  
Cooking with Carmen: September 1 & 18, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

##### POTEAU

Market open weekdays September 1-30, except for:  
Closed: September 4, 27, 28 & 29.  
Cooking with Carmen: September 14 & 26, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and 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, or 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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

Spring 2016/2017 Awarding Period is now open!

**Deadline**  
**October 1, 2017**

Submit online at  
**WWW.STAR.CHOCTAWNATION.COM**



## Adult Education Graduation Held in Wilburton

The Choctaw Nation Adult Education Program held the 2017 graduation at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton on Friday, May 12. The graduates were students from all locations who passed the program during the past year. Keynote speaker James Parrish, Executive Director of Education had many words of wisdom for the graduates. Parrish also had the students channeling Rocky when he had them face the audience and say, “Yo, mom and dad, I did it!” He also had the graduates face the stage and say, “Yo, Chief, I did it!”

The 2017 Adult Education graduates, in alphabetical order, are Seth Akers, Andrea Alexander, Bridget Baker, Byron Billy, Tesla Bond, Ashlee Bourne, Troy Branham, Pagan Butler, Kirsten Byram, Britiany Cameron, Gage Davis, Jeremy De Young, Tosha Edwards, Aspen Fandrich, Robert Flood, Jeremiah Frazier, Roni Fults, Haliegh Gallant, Krista Grubbs, Sterling Hammond, Melissa McGuire-Hunter, Mathew Hutto, Jessica Kerns, Candice Lanier, Raymond Loman, Shane Marley, Sarah McKibben, Heather Moon, Angelica Myers, Ricky Nelson, Kaylee Pair, Erica Parker, Douglas Peters, Mercedes Potter, Tige Richbourg, Lee Rutson, Courtney Rutz, Rachel Sam, Katlynn Shelton, Isabell Soriano, Ashlee Southern, Kara Stewart, Summer Stude-man, Houston Stull, Isaiah Taylor, Jasmine Terrell, Michael Thin Elk, Conchatee Thomas, Cliff Tomlinson, Zachary Vaughn, Mary Villegas, Kelsey Waltz, Emily Westmoreland and Candida White.

The next Traditional class sessions will begin at the Stigler Choctaw Community Center on Monday, Oct. 2, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. On Tuesday, Oct. 3, classes will be held at Wilburton Choctaw Community Center from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Southeastern Oklahoma State University McCurtain County campus in Idabel from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and at the Tribal Headquarters in Durant from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Distance Learning classes start Monday, Aug. 7. For times and locations, questions about the Adult Education Program, or for more information contact Kathy Bench at (800) 522-6170 ext. 2122.



## Epperson Awarded Fellowship

Dr. Anna E. Epperson was awarded a multi-year training fellowship in Cardiovascular Disease Prevention at Stanford University the fall of 2016. The award-winning fellowship program is led by Stanford Prevention Research Center and is funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Epperson’s research focuses on helping people quit cigarette smoking. She is involved in several smoking treatment programs with a focus on priority populations, including American Indian/ Alaska Native (AIAN) and unemployed smokers.

Her projects also examine tobacco marketing practices and smoke-free policies of AIAN tribes and tribal casinos. Epperson credited her success and achievements to her heritage, “I couldn’t have done this without strong support from my family and my tribe. The Choctaw Nation always supported me with educational grants and I know I couldn’t have done this without their help. I am proud to represent our tribe as a university health researcher.”

She received her doctorate in May 2016 from the University of California, Merced. While at UC Merced, Epperson trained as a health psychologist in the Department of Psychological Sciences. She was awarded the Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship Award, which aims to help students focus on their research and to increase the number and diversity of qualified candidates for university faculty positions.

Epperson lives in Palo Alto, California with her husband, Steven, a business professor, and two children, Tess and James.

She is the granddaughter of Edmond and Martha John of Ardmore. She is the daughter of Allison and Randall Epperson of Modesto, California and has one brother, John Epperson.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Juanita (Goins) Mullins turned 96 years old on June 4. She was able to celebrate this occasion with her family and friends in Highlands, Texas. Ray Mullins would like to wish her a happy and great birthday.

### TO YOU

Nina Fay Crossett Hardy is turning 95 on August 23. She will be celebrating with friends and family in Granite Bay, California. She is the daughter of Daisy Baxter, an original enrollee, and Guy A. Crossett.

### AND YOU

Ryan Belvin celebrated his 16th birthday May 17, 2017. He is the son of Samantha L. Johnson and she said, “Be safe in your travels on your new paths through life. I love you, my son.”



## MATEVIER MADE A WISH

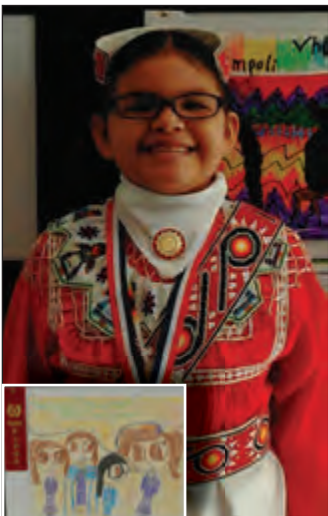
Matevier Thompson is 15 years old and loves to be read to, listen to music and laugh. He has several disabilities and had his first stroke at 29 days old.

After several attempts, Thompson’s wish to meet Judge Alex finally came true. He was able to travel to Oklahoma City and meet Judge Alex when he was there for a conference.

Greta Meyers of Wright City is his legal guardian and he has a sister Sarah.

## Choctaw Takes Home Second in Contest

On April 3, the Sam Noble Museum in Norman hosted The 15th annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. Riley Waterman from Oklahoma City won second place in pre-k through second grade poster art category. Riley is in the first grade and attends Franklin Pierce Elementary School in Oklahoma City, and is a member of the Native American Student Service OKC and OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance in Oklahoma City.



## Hancock Receives Scholarship

Lindsey Hancock is the 2016 recipient of the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance Education Scholarship. Hancock has volunteered at numerous health clinics and ran a Native American diabetes awareness and education booth at the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance. Motivated by her father being diabetic, Hancock wants to become a doctor and focus on preventing and treating diabetes, especially in Native Americans. While at OSU she has maintained a 3.81 GPA. During the summer she won a NIH Medical Research Fellowship for native students. She was able to work with Dr. Neil Henderson, a Choctaw Ph.D. diabetes researcher at OU Medical School. This past year at OSU, Hancock was named “Freshman Research Scholar” and worked under her mentor, Dr. Gilbert John, on a project indirectly related to preventing foot infections that lead to amputations in diabetics.



## Hart Graduates Magna Cum Laude

Megan Hart graduated from Cascia Hall Preparatory School with honors. She graduated Magna Cum Laude and at Senior Scholastic Night, Hart was recognized for Outstanding Excellence on AP Calculus BC and Art. The staff of the Fine and Performing Arts departments voted to award Hart with a Cascia Silver Medal for Art. While in school Hart was a member of the National Honor Society, an Oklahoma Academic Scholar, Student Council, Key Club, STEM, Chinese Club, was co-president of the Art Club and attended KAIROS ‘97. In the fall, Hart will work towards a double major in Chemical Engineering and Math at Oklahoma State University. She is the daughter of Jim and Ginger Hart of Glenpool. Her grandparents are Bill and Celia Scherman of McAlester and Doug and Jacque Hart of Ponca City.



## Dr. Alexandria Stanton Graduates

Alexandria Stanton successfully defended her doctorate thesis titled, “Organically-modified Silicon Photonic Microring Resonators for Chemical Sensing” at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the Department of Chemistry. She was honored by the University’s Native American House on May 13, for her contributions while earning her doctorate. Dr. Stanton has been hired by the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington D.C.



## Pierce Named Co-Valedictorian

Andrew Pierce was the co-valedictorian of the Yreka High School Class of 2017. He graduated with an overall GPA of 4.39. He was a member of the Varsity Soccer and Varsity Track teams. Pierce was Senior Class President and a member of the Associated Student Body. He was also the editor of the yearbook. Pierce will be attending the University of California, Berkeley in the fall and majoring in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

His parents are Shannon and David Pierce of Yreka, California. His grandmother is Teresa Wooten and his great-grandmother was Geneva Wright (Bryant), originally from Oklahoma.



### Choctaw Asset Building 2017 Financial Education Class Schedule

Saturday, August 19  
The Ross Group  
510 E. Second St., Tulsa

Saturday, September 16  
Choctaw Career Development Lab  
2807 Enterprise Blvd., Durant

Saturday, October 14  
Choctaw Community Center  
3105 Elks Rd., located behind the Happy Days Hotel, McAlester

For more information, please email: [dhix@ChoctawNation.com](mailto:dhix@ChoctawNation.com).

### COME JOIN US THIS FALL!



### Enroll Now @ Jones Academy!

We are accepting applications for the 2017 Fall Semester. We have openings in specific grades 1-12. Tuition, travel, and services are cost free to families. **Tour our elementary school facilities and dorms.** Come Join Us! Be a Part of the Future! Take advantage of the residential program benefits:

- Tutorial Assistance for All Grades (1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)
- Rewards for Academic Achievement
- High School Graduation Expenses Paid/Scholarships
- Career Counseling/College and Post- Secondary Preparation
- Voc-Tech Training
- Summer Youth Work Program
- Medical and Counseling Services Provided
- Alternative Education Program
- Traditional/Cultural Activities
- Recreational Activities & Educational Trips
- Agriculture Program

Please call for a tour or an application @ toll free (888) 767-2518 or access <https://www.choctawnation.com/applying-jones-academy> or write to: Jones Academy  
909 Jones Academy Rd.  
Hartshorne, OK 74547



# NEWS

## Tribal Council Holds Regular Session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Saturday, July 8, in its chambers at Tvshka Homma.

During the regular, session committee reports were presented. New business included approval of the following items:

- Disposal of surplus capital assets.
- Application for the Native American Grave and Repatriation Act.
- Application for the Tribal Homeland Security Grant program.

Funds and budget for Connecting Kids to Coverage.

The acquisition of assets of, and additional funding for, Waterfall Creek Pecan Farm.

For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and Council bills, go to [www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills](http://www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills).

The next Tribal Council meeting will be held on Saturday, Aug. 12, at 10 a.m. in Tvshka Homma.

### Judicial Branch Seeking Peacemakers

The Choctaw Nation Judicial Branch is currently seeking Peacemakers to serve the Tribal District Court in an effort to resolve disputes in a fair, informal manner in accordance with the traditions of the Choctaw people. Applicants must be of good moral character, be familiar with the history and traditions of the Choctaw people, and proficient in oral and written communication.

Interested applicants should contact Donna Heflin by phone at 918-567-4134 or email: [dheflin@choctawnation.com](mailto:dheflin@choctawnation.com).

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Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and the Tribal Council would like to invite you to the

## CHOCTAW NATION'S ANNUAL VETERANS CEREMONY

November 11, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.  
Choctaw Capitol Grounds at Tvshka Homma

### HONORING OUR VETERANS

Staff will be set up at 9:00 a.m. to present each Choctaw Veteran with a gift of appreciation. The ceremony will begin at 10:00 a.m. A free lunch will be served to all who attend.

This year, there will be a drawing for:  
3-Day whitetail deer hunt at the Choctaw Hunting Lodge.  
3 days, 2 nights at Choctaw Hunting Lodge.  
All meals provided.  
Must be present to win. Subject to verification of CDIB and Veterans eligibility.

## YAKOKE TO ALL OUR VETERANS!

## 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)
- Contracts and leases
- Guardianships 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.*

August Community Center Schedule	September Community Center Schedule
8-3 Wilburton: 10-1 & 1:30-3	9-7 Atoka: 10-1 & 1:30-3
8-10 McAlester: 10-1 & 1:30-3	9-14 Crowder: 10-1 & 1:30-3
8-24 Durant: 10-1 & 1:30-3	9-28 Coalgate: 10-1 & 1:30-3
8-31 Smithville: 10-1 & 1:30-3	

**Gary Batton**  
Chief

**Jack Austin Jr.**  
Assistant Chief

The Official  
Monthly Publication  
of the  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Lisa Reed, Executive Director**  
**Ronni Pierce, News Director**  
**Stacy Hutto, Managing Editor**  
**Kendra Germany, Reporter/Photographer**  
**Tina Firquain, Reporter/Photographer**  
**Wyatt Stanford, Reporter/Photographer**

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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal Members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be typewritten and double spaced. You must include an address 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.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs to be changed, our Circulation Department 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

Halito and God bless everyone! I wanted to write and say thank you to our tribe. The tribe helped me in buying eye glasses. I really needed them. You don't realize how bad your vision is until you get a good pair of glasses.

**Mark Davis**  
Perry, Oklahoma

I just wanted to say thank you times a million to the Higher Education Program. I cannot thank you all enough for the constant help and support I received while working towards my undergraduate degree. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering at Texas A&M in College Station, Texas. I graduated debt-free in four years. Thanks to the Choctaw Nation I am set up to have a great career in civil engineering.

**Maddie Hirsch**  
College Station, Texas

## ELECTION VOTING LOCATIONS

The Run-Off Tribal Election for District 6 and District 9 will be held **Saturday, August 5, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.** at all voting locations. Locations marked with \* will be open for Early Voting on August 2, 3, and 4, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., as well as August 5, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

District 6 (Latimer County):	Choctaw Community Center, 1056 NW 1003 Avenue
* <b>Buffalo Valley</b> - Buffalo Valley School, 4384 SE Hwy. 6	
<b>Quinton</b> - Quinton Community Center, 1020 Main Street	
* <b>Red Oak</b> - Red Oak High School Home Ec. Room, 404 N. Main Street	
* <b>Wilburton</b> -	
District 9 (Bryan County):	Bennington - Choctaw Head Start, 820 North Perry
* <b>Durant</b> - Choctaw Community Center, 2750 Big Lots Pkwy.	

## Choctaw Nation Soil Health Seminar

**August 10 5:30-8 p.m.**  
Choctaw Nation Community Center  
408 North M St. in Hugo  
RSVP by August 8

To RSVP contact Clay Pope at (405) 699-2087, [claypope@gmail.com](mailto:claypope@gmail.com)  
Jack Hicks at (580) 326-3201 ext. 6019  
Carol Crouch at (405) 612-9331 [carolcrouch@ok.usda.gov](mailto:carolcrouch@ok.usda.gov)

## Choctaw Nation Housing Authority Pre-Homeownership Education

August	September
8-14 Broken Bow	9-14 Smithville
8-18 Coalgate	9-19 Crowder
8-19 Talihina	9-21 Hugo
8-20 Wright City	9-21 Poteau

No Fees. All materials furnished. Pre-registration required.

Please contact Amanda Russell at (800) 522-6170 ext. 4127 or [arussell@ChoctawHousing.com](mailto:arussell@ChoctawHousing.com) to pre-register.

## Biskinik Announcement Policy

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 in the first of the month.

We apologize for any inconvenience. This is a necessary adjustment due to rising production and mailing expenses.

Send to:  
Biskinik, Attn: Notes to the Nation  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702  
or email to: [biskinik@ChoctawNation.com](mailto:biskinik@ChoctawNation.com)

## Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association and Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement, and agriculture loans. To be eligible to apply, a person must reside within the 10 1/2-county service area of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and must possess a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) from a federally recognized tribe. Micro-loans are available for emergency home improvements and small businesses. The loans are available up to \$2,500 and are to be repaid within 24 months. To be eligible to apply you must be Choctaw, possess a CDIB and reside within the 10 1/2 county area of the Choctaw Nation.

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

If you are interested in applying for a loan from the SOICA or the Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund, there will be a representative from the Choctaw Nation Credit Department at the:

**Poteau Community Center**  
**August 21**  
**9:30 - 11 a.m.**

## Choctaw Housing LEAP Program

The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation is now accepting applications for the Lease Purchase (LEAP) Program. The LEAP Program is a new homeownership program opportunity for Choctaw tribal members who meet income and credit guidelines. The goal of the program is to assist families with credit issues become mortgage ready and lender qualified over time with credit counseling services available. For an application or more information on the LEAP Program contact Donna Courtwright at (800) 235-3087.

## EVENTS

### Choctaw Nation Community Center August Health Fairs

**Wilburton**  
Wednesday, August 9  
Poteau  
Wednesday, August 16

All Health Fairs begin at 10 a.m. at the Choctaw Nation Community Center unless otherwise noted.

## Annual Tims-Wilson Reunion

**Saturday, September 21 at 12 p.m.**  
Choctaw Nation Community Center  
Smithville, Oklahoma

After the potluck lunch there will be a family business meeting. Bring an item for the auction. There will be an evening cookout.

For more information contact Jody Hendrickson at (918) 413-2084.

## Labor Day 2017

Shirts & Souvenirs

**Labor Day T-shirts**

Size	Color	Quantity	Subtotal
		x \$15 =	
		x \$15 =	
		x \$15 =	
		x \$15 =	
		x \$15 =	

**Labor Day Caps**

Color	Quantity	Subtotal
Carbon Gray	x \$12 =	

**Labor Day Visors**

Color	Quantity	Subtotal
Sapphire	x \$12 =	

**Labor Day Bags**

Color	Quantity	Subtotal
Brilliant Blue & Deep Smoke	x \$10 =	

**Grand Total = \$**

To order, send payment in the form of cash, money order, or cashier's check with completed form to:  
\*\*\* NO PERSONAL CHECKS \*\*\*

**Labor Day T-Shirt**  
PO Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Look!

### Tribal Members in 10.5 Counties

The Choctaw Nation Next Step initiative is a supplemental food and necessities voucher program that promotes self-sustainability through foundational training opportunities.

Contact a Next Step Social Worker to see if you are eligible.

Antlers	Broken Bow	Durant	McAlester	Poteau
(580) 298-6443	(580) 584-2842	(580) 924-7773	(918) 420-5716	(918) 649-0431

[nextstep@choctawnation.com](http://nextstep@choctawnation.com)



## Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

Definite and Indefinite Pronouns

Specific question words (t-form)	Non-specific (n-form)
1. <b>Nanta</b> - what? Nanta ish pisa? What do you see?	<b>Nana</b> - thing, something Nana achukma pisa li. I see a good thing.
2. <b>Kvta/Kvta hosh?</b> - who? Kvta hosh via tuk? Who came (arrived here)?	<b>Kvna</b> - someone Kvna yvt via tuk. Someone came (arrived).
3. <b>Katimma/ Katomma</b> - where? Katimma ia tuk? Where did (he, she) go?	<b>kanimma</b> - somewhere Ohoyo mvt kanimma ia tuk. That woman went somewhere.
4. <b>Katimi ho</b> - why? Katimi ho ia chi bvna? Why do you want to go?	<b>Kanimi ho</b> - for some reason Kanimi ho ia tuk a ak ik hano. I don't know the (the reason) why he went.
5. <b>Katohmi</b> - how many? Hushi katohmi ish pisa? How many birds do you see?	<b>kanohmi</b> - some/several Hushi kanohmi hosh iti ma binohmaya tuk. There were several birds sitting in the tree.
6. <b>Katimikma</b> - when (future)? Katimikma ish ia chi? When (in the future) are you going?	<b>Kanimikma</b> - sometime (future) Kanimikma Hawaii ia chi. I will go to Hawaii sometime in the future.
7. <b>Katimikash</b> - when (past)? Katimikash ish ia tuk? When (in the past) did you go?	<b>Kanimikash</b> - sometime (past) Kanimikash tmahia ia li tuk. I went to town the other day.

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

## Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

**September 2017**

Durant - Monday, Wednesday and Friday Phone: (580) 326-8304 Fax: (580) 326-0115			Broken Bow - Monday, Wednesday and Friday Idabel by appointment Email: <a href="mailto:ddavenport@choctawnation.com">ddavenport@choctawnation.com</a>				
						1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
			Antlers by appt.				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
	Durant 8:00-4:30	Talihina 10:00-2:00 Poteau 11:30-1:00			Wright city by appt.		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
		Broken Bow By appt.	McAlester 10:00-2:00 Stigler by appt.		Atoka & Coalgate by appt.		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
	Idabel by appt.	Wilburton by appt.			Crowder by appt.		





# Crowder

Top: Concetta Gragg is giving a presentation on World War I.  
Right: Twelve veterans are honored at the veterans lunch on June 28.  
Far right: District 12 Jr. Miss Cheyenne McCoy hands out gifts to the veterans.



# Wilburton

Top left: District 6 Little Miss Emma Battiest presents Wayne Scott Sr. with a veteran's blanket. Scott served in the Army from 1963-1965. A draftee, Scott was stationed in Incheon, Korea.  
Top right: Before the dinner, District 6 Junior Miss Danielle Enriquez helps to prepare the rolls.  
Below: Wilburton hosted its veteran's dinner June 14, 2017. District 6 Councilman Joe Coley poses for a picture with veterans in attendance.



# Talihina



Top Left: District 3 Junior Miss Aryanna Ludlow hands a blanket to Bob Emmert.  
Top Right: Howard Bryant, Corey Teddi Irwin and Corey James sing Hymn 48.  
Bottom: Thirty-veterans receive honor at the Talihina Veterans Dinner July 13. Talihina held its dinner in the newly-opened community center.



Veteran's Advocacy, along with YAB, volunteers and family members of Choctaw tribal members who fought and died while protecting our freedom honored soldiers for Memorial Day on Friday, May 26. The Choctaw Honor Guard laid wreaths on the War Monuments and YAB members read poems. After the wreaths were laid on the monuments, everyone went to the Veteran's Cemetery and laid wreaths on the warriors' graves.



# Stigler

Left: Tanya Leach presents to other veterans.  
Right: District 5 Junior Miss performs the Lord's Prayer.  
Below: Twenty veterans receive honor at the Stigler Veterans Dinner.



# Durant

Top left: A large group of veterans is honored at the Durant Community Center.  
Top right: Jack Mayo and Ruth Lance Wester pose with Chief Gary Batton while they are honored for their service.  
Right: Durant is overflowing with veterans and other Choctaws as they all came together on June 14 for their annual veterans dinner.

Photos by and courtesy of Kim Eberl, Kendra Germany, Stacy Hutto, Tracy McKaughan, Ronni Pierce, Wyatt Stanford and Ruth Lance Wester.



# Wright City

Top left: A large group of veterans is honored at Wright City on June 21.  
Middle: Several helped serve the veterans. A group of ladies plate strawberry shortcake for the dessert at the dinner.  
Bottom: Three veterans cover their hearts as the National Anthem was sung at the Wright City veterans dinner.

And Thank You to the Chahta Soldiers Who Paid



# Veterans



...s Benny McCoy as  
...h blankets.  
...iss Juanita Gonzalez  
...er.  
...represent District 5 at  
...er June 21.



**Top:** Choctaws enjoy their meal during the Bethel Community Center honor their community veterans on June 14.  
**Bottom left:** Fran Williams sits next to her mother, Lilliella Willis, while her niece, Enchil Tonihka, smiles from the back.  
**Bottom right:** District 2 Councilman Tony Ward with the Bethel veterans.

## McAlester



**Smithville**  
**Top left:** Bobby Ludlow posts the American flag before a word of prayer.  
**Top right:** (From left) Doug Nixon, West Nixon, Joy Mitchell and Brittany Conley make plates for veterans.  
**Below:** District 3 holds its veterans dinner in Smithville June 28. Seventeen veterans are honored for service to their country.



**Spiro**  
**Top:** Veterans take a moment to pose for a picture during Spiro's Veterans Dinner on June 14.  
**Bottom left:** District 4 Councilman Ron Perry presents the veterans of Spiro with blankets during a special ceremony at the veterans dinner.  
**Bottom right:** Director of Spiro's Community Center, Jessica Diaz, presents veteran John Casey with a blanket. Casey volunteers at the center.



**Broken Bow**  
**Left:** John McKinney enjoys his spaghetti dinner at the veterans dinner in Broken Bow June 21.  
**Middle:** Randall Watson is a Vietnam Veteran of 1st Battalion 9th Regiment. He is holding a shadow box with all of his medals.  
**Right:** Travis Ward visits with friends during the veterans dinner.

## McAlester



**Top left:** District 11 holds its veterans dinner June 15, 2017, in McAlester.  
**Bottom left:** District 11 Junior Miss Ariana Byington serves veterans with other community volunteers.  
**Right:** Veteran Walter Amos shares his experiences serving in the Pacific during World War II along with veterans of other wars.

...d the Ultimate Price. You Shall Not be Forgotten.

Veterans Dinners for Antlers, Atoka, Coalgate, Hugo, Idabel and Poteau were in the July 2017 issue of the "Biskinik."



# S T I B O 8

## Norma Anderson



Norma Jean (Ringwald) Anderson, 69, passed away March 5, 2017, in Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

Norma was born Jan. 23, 1948, in Finley to Norma “Chick” and Beatrice (Roebuck) Ringwald.

She is survived by her husband Hubert; daughter Tonja Smalling and spouse Mike; granddaughter Ashley Hotella and spouse Matt; grandson Weston Smalling; great-grandchildren MaKayla Hotella and Kage Caldwell; sister Patricia Rose and spouse Joe; and many family members and friends.

Interment was held at Cupco Cemetery.

To read the full obituary please visit [Burkhart Funeral Service](#).

## Michael Glenn Ferguson

Michael Glenn Ferguson, 61, passed away July 14, 2017, in Caney.

Michael was born April 14, 1956, in Dallas, Texas to Finus B. and Joyce B. (Tigert) Ferguson.

He was preceded in death by his parents and friend Faye Waggenor.

He is survived by sister Judy Ferguson; aunts Nelda Tigert, Julia Dean Alexander and Bernice Whitten; cousins Donald Keel, Linda Darling Smith and spouse Terry, Todd Tigert and spouse Kim, Chad Tigert and spouse Tiffany, Cedana Lanig and spouse Jason, Robbi Tigert Watson and Larry, Paula Whitten Gray and spouse Will, Nowana Whitten, Mariann Arnspiger, Charles Arnspiger and spouse Sharon, Clifton Hargis Arnspiger Jr, Glenda Sue Arnspiger Warrin and spouse Jack, and Perry Joe Arnspiger and spouse Sandra; along with other relatives and dear friends.

Interment was held at Stewart-Gammon Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Browns Funeral Service](#).

## Jimmy Randolph Rogers

Jimmy Randolph Rogers, 71, passed away June 16, 2017, in Tulsa.

Jimmy was born April 2, 1946, in Stonewall to George Wesley Rogers and Gladys Lugine Gift.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brother Charlie Rogers.

Jimmy is survived by his wife Barbara Rogers; and siblings George Anne Rogers, Robert Rogers and spouse Jeanett, Leonard Rogers and spouse Daisy, Norman Rogers, Francis Davis, Paul Rogers, Karen Griffis and spouse Anthony, Larry Johnson and spouse Dana, Carolyn Johnson, Cindy Johnson and Ricky Johnson and spouse Tammie as well as a host of nephews, nieces, great-nephews, great-nieces, relatives and friends.

Interment was held at Stonewall Cemetery To read the full obituary please visit [Howard-Harris Funeral Services](#).

## Billy Joe Hendrix

Billy Joe Hendrix, 67, of Hugo passed away June 28, 2017, in Paris, Texas.

Billy was born Aug. 3, 1949, in Talihina to Earl Eugene and Katherine Marie (Bohanan) Hendrix.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brother Larry Wayne Hendrix.

Billy is survived by his wife Vickie Hendrix; daughter Alicia Hendrix-Gibson and spouse Terry; sisters Wanda Callahan and spouse Don and Karen Bates and spouse Kenneth; grandchildren Braxton Gibson, Bryson Gibson and spouse Tyna, Brendon Gibson, Shy’Anne Gibson and Caleb Gibson; great-grandchildren Terry Joe Gibson, Tripp Lee Gibson, and Katheranne Marie Gibson; and a host of other family and friends.

Interment was held at Mount Olivet Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Miller & Miller Funeral Home](#).

## Marian Winlock

Marian Winlock, 65, of Harts-horne passed away March 17, 2017, at her residence.

Marian was born July 22, 1951, in Talihina to Ellis and Lorene (Harris) Ramsey.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Larry Joe Winlock; brothers LeRoy Sealy Sr. and Ellis Franklin Ramsey; sisters Lillian Ramsey Sullivan and Eliza Scott; and great-nephews Leslie Scott and Rodney Sealy.

Marian is survived by sister Nora Scott and spouse Wayne Sr.; nieces Sonya Christie and spouse Gaylon, Sherry Picone and spouse Vence, Kimberly Scott, Ashley Miller, Roxie Whilelance, Jaxie Willis, Jolene Willis and Michelle Ramsey; nephews Michael Winlock, Wayne Scott Jr., Jeremy Scott and spouse Honni, LeRoy Sealy, Bobby Sealy, Ellis Scott, James Scott and Michael Ramsey as well as numerous great-nephews, great-nieces, great-great-nephews and great-great-nieces.

To read the full obituary please visit [Waldrop Funeral Home](#).

## Rebecca Tolley

Rebecca Lynne (Morris) Tolley, 46, of Elgin passed away June 21, 2017.

Rebecca was born Jan. 18, 1971, in Lawton to Dorothy Morris and Monty Morris Sr.

She was preceded in death by her mother; brother Monty Morris Jr.; maternal grandparents Henry and Mary Samis; and paternal grandparents Glen and Bessie Morris.

Rebecca is survived by her father; children Corey Morris and Mikayla Tolley; sister Angela Stanley Coolahan and spouse James; half-sisters Kathy Robertson and spouse Kearney, Theresa Brazell, Debbie Morris and Sheila Morris; nephew Wayne Morris; and nieces Myranda and Jacynda Stanley as well as numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, friends and extended family.

## Wynona Reitha Lawrence

Wynona Reitha Lawrence, 79, of Cartwright passed away April 29, 2017, in Brownsville, Texas.

Wynona was born Nov. 27, 1937, in Liberty to William and Thelma (Franklin) Gibson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Marie Harkins and Serena Gibson; brothers Sonny Gibson, Clayton Gibson and Amos Gibson; son Bobby Norton; a great-grandson; and nieces Mary Harkins, and Quida Ramirez.

Wynona is survived by her husband Clarence Lawrence; daughter Betty Norton and spouse Scott; son Kenneth Norton and spouse Susan; sisters Linda Newsum and Norma Embry; grandchildren Lisa Hobbs and spouse Nolon, Raitha Hale, Quida Norton, Bobby Norton and Alex; great-grandchildren Christopher Guhl, David Norton, Joshua DaVault Jr. and Emily DaVault.

Interment was held at Mead Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).

## Lucy McKinney

Lucy McKinney, 78, of Honobia passed away June 15, 2017, in Tulsa at the OSU Medical Center.

Lucy was born April 17, 1939, in Bethel to David Bond and Caroline Johnson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; one brother Earnest Bond; one sister Rose Bond; and stepdaughter Carol Ishcomer.

Lucy is survived by her husband Eddie McKinney; children Norma Ludlow, Dorothy Ludlow and Newman Ludlow; stepchildren Larry McKinney, Carrie Ward, Jerry McKinney, Gary McKinney and Pam McKinney; sisters Daisy Watson and Helen Samuels; numerous grandchildren, step-grandchildren, great-grandchildren step-great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews; and a host of friends.

Interment was held at McGee Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).

## Michael Ray Columbus

Michael Ray Columbus, 60, of Kiefer passed away May 1, 2017.

Michael was born June 25, 1956, in De Queen, Arkansas, to Ida Mae Haddock and Nicholas John Columbus.

He was preceded in death by his brother William Lee Columbus; father Nicholas John Columbus; and brother James David Haddock.

Michael is survived by his wife Luanna Columbus; mother Ida Mae Haddock; sons Michael Anthony Columbus, Lucas Wayne Columbus and Aaron Ray Columbus; brothers Johnny Ray Columbus and Nicholas John Columbus Jr.; sisters Patsy Columbus, Sharon Columbus, Carol Neasa and Malena Lewis; and granddaughter Sheriah Fox; and three grandchildren as well as numerous nephews and cousins.

Interment was held at Fox Family Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Green Hill Funeral Home Chapel](#).

## Verna Lee Barnard

Verna Lee Barnard, 72, of Poteau passed away Jan. 6, 2017, at her residence.

Verna was born Feb. 8, 1944, in Red Oak to Leslie and Bydia (Coley) Pope.

She was preceded in death by her father; son Harvey Ray James; great-grandchild Baby Bonapart; and granddaughter Lacota James.

Verna is survived by her mother; son Brian Barnard; daughters Linda Sivic and spouse Johnny and Wanda James; and brother Deroy Jerry Pope as well as 13 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Interment was held at Cedar Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Waldrop Funeral Home](#).

## Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw tribal members and are free of charge. The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes. Family members/individuals may still submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspapers 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. Full obituaries can be read online. Send official obituary notices to: Biskinik PO Box 1210 Durant OK 74702 or email: biskinik@ChoctawNation.com

## Virginia “Ginnie” Hampton

Virginia “Ginnie” Hampton, 64, of Utica passed away June 23, 2017, in Durant.

Virginia was born Aug. 9, 1952, in Durant to Bo and Louise (Yandell) Hampton.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother Joe Hampton; and significant other Charles Dale Trent.

Virginia is survived by her daughter Trista Winnett and spouse Anthony; granddaughter Krislan Turner and spouse Dustan; grandson Joshua Winnett; niece Tina Bennett and spouse Rex; great-nieces Ariole Layton and spouse Kyle and Josie Bennett and fiancé K.C. Walls; sister-in-law Maryetta Hampton; and life-long friend Nelda Roundtree along with numerous other relatives and friends.

Interment was held at Mead Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).

## Melvin Robert Jones

Melvin Robert Jones, 89, of Fate, Texas, passed away July 3, 2017, at his home.

Melvin was born March 4, 1928, in Duncan to Robert Melvin Jones and Essie Jones.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Priscilla (Brownie) Jones; and siblings Paul, Margaret, Ruth, Josephine, Juanita, Ward and wife Carol, Harley, Shirley and Ray.

Melvin is survived by his children Jimmy and spouse Diane, Patricia, Sue, Roberta and spouse John and Melvin Jr. and spouse Angie; grandchildren Shawn and spouse Vida, Jerol and spouse Jennifer, Eric, Carrie, Micah and spouse Becky, John David, Matthew, Robert, Marcy and spouse Joe, Erin and spouse Thomas and Kelsey and spouse Colt; great-grandchildren Shawn and spouse Annalyse, Philicia, Sarah, Chase, Christopher, Bryce, Brittane, Landin, Derek, Austin, Priscilla, Evelyn, Chadwick, Ronnie, Zadyn, Grayson, Logan, Jaylee, Caryssa, Colby and Carter; great-great-grandchildren Emma, Ana Lou, Jayden and Joslin; and many nieces and nephews.

To read the full obituary please visit [Rest Haven Funeral Home](#).

## Willard “Bill” Leroy Ward

Willard “Bill” Leroy Ward, 100, of Palestine, Texas, passed away June 19, 2017, at his home.

Willard was born Aug. 17, 1916, in Spiro to Robert J. and Maude C. Ward.

He is preceded in death by his wife Bertie Maxine Ward; sisters Tillie Cundiff and LaCretia Vickery; brother T.R. Ward; half-brother Hugh Moore; and son Donald Ray Ward.

Willard is survived by his son Dennis Ward and spouse Charlotte; daughters Vicky Letson and spouse Steve and Leisa Kirby and spouse Steve; and grandchildren Aaron Ward, Melissa Ward and Kameron Ward along with numerous nieces, nephews and great-grandchildren.

Interment was held at Land of Memory Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Herington Land of Memory Funeral Home](#).

## Zedrec Benny Anderson

Zedrec Benny Anderson, 96, of Smithville passed away June 4, 2017, in Mena, Arkansas.

Zedrec was born Dec. 12,1920 in Broken Bow to Emmitt and Daisy (Jones) Anderson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Grady and Jimmy Anderson; and sister Hazel Webb.

Zedrec is survived by wife Goldena Anderson; nephews Paul, Terry and Mark Anderson; nieces Sharon Mahoney, Linda Gammel, Lana Fell and Lacreata Armstrong; numerous great-nephews, great-nieces and other relatives.

Interment was held at Smithville Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Beasley Wood Funeral Home of Mena](#).

## Winford Ray “Sonny” Watts

Winford Ray “Sonny” Watts, 81, passed away May 1, 2017, in Antlers.

Winford was born May 28, 1935, in Oklahoma City to Flim and Vinnie (Frazier) Watts.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sisters Dean Seymour and Merle Smithson.

Winford is survived by his wife Joyce; children Lloyd Watts and spouse Mary; Tammy Watts, Debbie Watts, Teresa Garrison and spouse Sean, Linda Watts, Jammey Watts, Oma-Nell Clay; and a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as many other relatives and a host of friends.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Burkhart Funeral Service](#).

## Steven Scott Gainer

Steven Scott Gainer, 64, of Dahlgren, Virginia, passed away June 20, 2017, in Austin, Texas.

Steven was born Jan. 31, 1953, to Richard Dale and Tommye Jeanette (Webster) Gainer.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Steven is survived by his brother Jeff Gainer; sister Kimberly Gainer; brother-in-law Marc Kendrick; nieces Morgan Kendrick and Christina Munoz; and nephew Gary Brandt as well as other family and friends.

Interment was held at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

To read the full obituary please visit [Mission Funeral Home](#).





# Choctaw and Irish Join to Celebrate Gift From the Heart

by CHARLES CLARK

On Sunday, June 18, the Choctaw Nation was honored at a dedication of the sculpture “Kindred Spirits” in Middleton, County Cork, Ireland.

“Kindred Spirits” is a sculpture comprised of nine stainless steel eagle feathers that are almost 23 feet high.

Representing a bowl of food for the hungry, the piece evokes the story of how the Choctaw people came to the aid of the Irish in 1847 during the Great Famine of 1845-1852.

When Choctaws became aware of the famine, they gathered \$170, which is equivalent to \$4,400 today, and sent it across the Atlantic Ocean to help feed the people of Ireland.

Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. were a part of the Choctaw delegation that attended the special ceremony in Bailick Park, where the sculpture is located.

In an interview with the Irish Examiner, Chief Batton said, “Your story is our story. We didn’t have any income. This was money pulled from our pockets.” Referencing the Choctaw’s Trail of Tears, he said, “We had gone through the biggest tragedy that we could endure. The bond between our nations has strengthened over the years. We are blessed to have the opportunity to share our cultures and meet the generous people who have continued to honor a gift from the heart.”

The Irish Examiner also ran a statement from Joe McCarthy, County Cork Council’s East Cork municipal district officer, who noted at the time the gift was made the Choctaw people were still recovering from their own injustice. “But they put their hands in their pockets and they helped strangers. It’s rare to see such generosity. It had to be acknowledged. They bestowed a blessing not only on the starving Irish men, women and children, but also on humanity.”

With an eye toward the commissioning of public sculptures and the promotion of history, heritage and tourism, “Kindred Spirits” was among capital projects approved by Middleton Town Council.

“Kindred Spirits,” an original artwork by Cork-based artist Alex Pentek, is a reminder of the good that can come when people pull together their resources to benefit others. Speaking at the ceremony, Pentek said, “There is this sort of feeling of rising above it by standing together. I think even today as much as ever, standing together against adversity from those who are persecuting, is perhaps a message we can still move forward today.”

Pentek credited students from Crawford College of Art Design for assistance. He said it had to be installed on-site as it was too big to assemble in the studio. The sculpture, he said, “Took a year to make. There was no quick way of doing it... For me it was very important to be hand-tool finished, to give a human element to the work; and respect, to show the dignity and humanity of the combined histories.”

The day of the sculpture dedication hundreds of people traveled to the park, some walking from homes nearby, and some traveling from across the country. An outing for the whole family, there were people sitting on the grass under the trees and on benches along the small lake, some spread blankets on the ground, all

facing and surrounding the monument. There was one tent under which several sat and the speakers talked from the podium.

In addition to the local Irish population and the official Choctaw delegation, other Choctaws made their way to the ceremony. Douglas Colbert, a Choctaw and a resident of Colorado, was visiting Ireland at the time and joined in the festivities wearing his blue traditional Choctaw shirt.

Jessica Ludlow also was on hand for the event. A Choctaw who lives in Ireland, Ludlow also had ancestors who were on the receiving end of the historic Choctaw gift. “It was a three-hour drive for us, but we were there to meet the Choctaws as they got off the bus,” said Ludlow, who took in the day with her husband and two sons. “I think they were expecting maybe 75 or so people, but at least 300 showed up. It was so exciting.”

Cathy and Joe Izzo are from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. She works for an organization that coordinates sister cities. They arrived in the park as the final feather was installed. They were the first visitors from Oklahoma to see the sculpture. “Throughout the world, everyone will know of the Choctaw generosity and friendship and kindness,” Cathy said.

The Mayor of the County of Cork, Councillor Seamus McGrath said, “We have a shared past as people who have experienced unwelcome intrusion, and a shared sense of injustice. During the great famine, up to 1 million perished during those years and approximately 600,000 immigrated. It was a truly defining period in their history. One that had a lasting impact. ‘Kindred Spirits’ is a lasting tribute for the act of humanity and generosity by the Choctaw Nation.”

Chief Batton added, “‘Kindred Spirits’ is such an appropriate name for this relationship. We endured and overcame; we came across the Trail of Tears where we lost one-fourth of our people. When our ancestors heard of the famine and the hardship of the Irish people, they knew it was time to help... The Choctaw people and the Irish people are still here today. Our two nations stand here together and proudly reflect on the strength and fortitude of our people. We can celebrate overcoming diversity and our history as kindred spirits.”

The program of the dedication of “Kindred Spirits” included displays of both Choctaw and Irish cultures. After welcomes from local officials and the visiting dignitaries, an opening prayer was given in Choctaw, followed by a singing of “The Lord’s Prayer” in Choctaw that was accompanied in Native American sign language. America’s national anthem also was performed in Choctaw.

Pipers played the Irish national anthem on bagpipes and were joined by a youth chorus. A performance by traditional Irish Bodhran drums was another highlight. Other traditional music and dance by Irish and Choctaws were demonstrated, bringing crowd members into the performance and celebration.

At the end of the event an oak tree was planted, indicating the longevity of the bond between the two cultures.

Before and after the sculpture dedication, the Choctaws exemplified themselves as goodwill ambassadors. On Tuesday, June 20, they visited then-Lord Mayor



by Deidre Elrod  
The dedication of the sculpture “Kindred Spirits” in Bailick Park, Middleton, County Cork, Ireland on Sunday, June 18, drew a large crowd. The sculpture recognizes the \$170 gift the Choctaw Nation made to the Irish in 1847 during the Great Famine of 1845–1852.

Brendan Carr in his residence, the Mansion House.

A plaque commemorating the donation to the Irish people from the Choctaw people hangs in the Mansion House. Miss Choctaw Nation Karen Crosby, Lillie Roberts, and Brad Joe sang “Hymn 48” near the plaque in honor of the Choctaw and Irish ancestors. Brad Joe also played “Amazing Grace” on a Choctaw river cane flute made by Presley Byington.

The group visited President Michael Higgins at Áras an Uachtaráin, Phoenix Park. President Higgins spoke eloquently about Choctaw and Irish history.

He recognized the gift from their Choctaw ancestors to his Irish ancestors, who shared similar experiences. He called it a gift of love, compassion, and solidarity. “The gesture your ancestors made, it was an extraordinary one—the compassion for strangers that they had heard of.” He said, what they did was to say, their “nation is alive and capable of reaching out across oceans to help people.”

That afternoon, Choctaw native speakers Lillie Roberts and Brad Joe met with Professor Ruairi Ó hUiginn, Senior Professor, School of Celtic Studies, and a group from Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

They discussed the history and importance of their native languages, the near loss of the languages, as well as challenges and successes in revitalizing the language among the people.

Also, T.R. Kanuch, Senior Executive Officer for the Choctaw Nation Division of Commerce; and Choctaw Tribal Councilmen Anthony Dillard and Tony Ward met with David Kennedy, International Market Manager for Bord Bia, Irish Food Board; and John MacNamara, Department Manager for Digital Technologies; and Conor Fahy, Regional Director, Central Europe, Russia, and more.

On Wednesday, June 21, U.S Embassy and staff at Pavee Point welcomed the Choctaws. The Choctaw representatives were included in several traditional Irish activities, such as baking bread, crafts, tinsmithing, and singing. Chief Batton spoke at the event and joined in a “fireside chat.” He answered questions from the audience during a Q&A. There were many questions about the Choctaw Nation concerning health, business, and government relations.

## Iti Fabussa Choctaw Removals

August marks the month that many families prepare for the Labor Day weekend of competitions, cultural activities, and visiting with friends and family. This year will mark 133 years Choctaw people have been gathering at our Capitol Grounds of Tvshka Homma alongside the Old Choctaw Council House, which is currently the Capitol Museum.

This year our Annual Trail of Tears Commemorative Walk was held at Tvshka Homma. Hundreds of Choctaw families came to honor the sacrifice of the many Choctaw people who were forced to move from our homelands.

This month, Iti Fabvssa will look at the many removals that our ancestors endured from 1830 to 1903. We will also take a look at the updated Trail of Tears exhibit that will be featured at the Choctaw Capitol Museum during this year’s Labor Day festival.

In 1830, President Andrew Jackson and Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. In the eyes of the American government, this act made it legal for the United States to remove native people from their homelands.

Choctaw leadership understood the threat the United States could pose to the Choctaw people. Hoping to forge a strong alliance with the United States, Choctaw warriors fought alongside Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812 and Choctaw chiefs signed treaties that promised lasting friendship.

Despite this, Andrew Jackson, and many others turned their backs on the Choctaw people and created a system of Indian policy that was meant to disenfranchise native people.

A few months after the Indian Removal Act was passed, our chiefs were forced to sign the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. Under the threat of destruction, the Choctaw chiefs understood that removal would guarantee the possibility of continued sovereignty for the Choctaw Nation.

Many Choctaw people were upset, having to leave their homes and their families who laid in rest. However, the chiefs secured funds to reestablish the Choctaw Nation government in Indian Territory, primarily focusing on education.

The first removals, from 1831 to 1833, were some of the darkest days in the recorded history of Choctaw people. Over a quarter of the Choctaw people removed during those years passed away from the harshest winters in recorded history.

They died from disease, exposure, “benign” neglect by the federal government, and homicide. Most of the Choctaw people who passed away were our elders and our very young.

This led to not just the loss of much traditional knowledge, but almost a great loss of the next generation. Communities were fractured as families took different routes, causing our traditional Iksha, or clan system, to collapse.

Most Choctaw families did not have the means to transport their family possessions, yet many Choctaw people brought small eating bowls with them that represented their home and their family who rested there.

Soon after the first groups arrived in Indian Territory, the Choctaw chiefs and council re-established the Choctaw government. They passed the Constitution of the Choctaw Nation of 1834 and built a council house at the new capitol, known as Nvnihi Waiya, which was named after the Mother Mound of the Choctaw people still standing in Mississippi. From 1835 to 1849 more Choctaw families were removed from Mississippi and from Mobile, Alabama.

In the early 1900s, the United States was trying to remove more Choctaw from Mississippi to Indian Territory to secure land allotments. Despite government funding and preparations, many Choctaw people chose to go with private sponsors or investors, trading some of their land allotments for safe removal to the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma.

Unfortunately, these arrangements often resulted in the exploitation of Choctaw labor at local farms in Indian Territory and/or confinement until land allotments were secured.

One such instance in the winter of 1902. Seven hundred Choctaws were taken to Ardmore, but the land office did not open until April of 1903. They were kept in unheated warehouses with little provisions and many of them grew sick and died. It is unclear where the Choctaw people from this removal ended up.

In 1903, more Choctaw families were brought by train, under the direction of the United States government. They arrived in Atoka, where they were put into a camp. In the following months, many passed away due to disease until they were given land allotments and finally settled near Bennington.

Chief Harkins, in 1831, stated in the Farewell Letter to

the American people, “I could cheerfully hope, that those of another age and generation may not feel the effects of those oppressive measures that have been so illiberally dealt out to us; and that peace and happiness may be their reward. Amid the gloom and horrors of the present separation, we are cheered with a hope that ere long we shall reach our destined land, and that nothing short of the basest acts of treachery will ever be able to wrest it from us, and that we may live free”.


Today, our people are thriving because of the perseverance and resilience of our ancestors. In an effort to share information with the community, the Tvshka Homma Capitol Museum, Historic Preservation Department, and the Wheelock Academy Historic Site have worked together to create a Choctaw Removal map to display in the Trail of Tears exhibit at the Museum.

It is our hope that this map will help show important landmarks and stories along the many routes our ancestors walked. This upcoming Labor Festival, let us remember our ancestors that sacrificed so that we may thrive as big hearted, humble, and strong Choctaw people today.



by Donovan Arleigh Sprague 2007 Arcadia Publishing Pg 19  
In 1903 Choctaw families were put in the Atoka encampment after the U.S. government brought them to Oklahoma by train. Many died from disease until they were given land allotments and settled near Bennington.

**STUDENT SCHOOL AND ACTIVITY FUND**



**NEED MONEY TO BUY SCHOOL OR ACTIVITY CLOTHING?**

- Applications for 2017-2018 School Year available July 1st 2017 and will end May 1st 2018. Each student with a tribal membership can receive this one time per school year.
- \$100 Assistance available Nationwide for Choctaw Tribal Members attending 3 year old daycare to 12th grade High School Students.
- Apply Online at [saafapplication.choctawnation.com](http://saafapplication.choctawnation.com)

**2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR FUNDS**  
**JULY 1, 2017 - MAY 1, 2018**

**You're Invited**

**4th Annual Choctaw College Connect**  
A Tribal Member Exclusive Event

**NOV. 4TH | 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM**

**REGISTER NOW**



**Choctaw Event Center • 3702 Choctaw Rd. • Durant, OK 74701**



# 2017 PRINCESS PAGEANT

The 2017 Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival begins with the Princess Pageant on Aug. 31, at 7:00 p.m. at the amphitheater in Tvshka Homma. Each talented young lady will compete within her respective division for the titles of Little Miss, Junior Miss, and Miss Choctaw Nation 2017-18.

Each contestant qualified to appear in the pageant by winning their district pageant. They also finished their interviews with the pageant judges before the pageant at the festival.

They will each be judged in personality, goals as princess, beauty and poise, traditional dress, and traditional accessories. All junior and senior contestants are also required to compete in the traditional talent category.

## Senior Miss Division



### BreAnna Jefferson, District 1

BreAnna Jefferson of Millerton is the 18-year-old daughter of JoAnna Jefferson. BreAnna is a 2017 graduate of Valliant High School.



### Deedra Tonihka, District 2

Deedra Tonihka of Battiest is the 18-year-old daughter of Dewayne and Michelle Tonihka. Deedra is a 2017 graduate of Battiest High School.



### Jordan Carver, District 4

Jordan Carver of Heavener is the 18-year-old daughter of Waylon and Priscilla Carver. Jordan is a 2017 graduate of Wister High School.



### Alisha Hardy, District 7

Alisha Hardy of Wright City is the 19-year-old daughter of David and Sarah Trusty. Alisha is a 2017 graduate of Wright City High School.



### Christian Potter, District 9

Christian Potter of Durant is the 19-year-old daughter of Noel and Latisha Potter. Christian is a sophomore at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.



### Jerai Billy, District 10

Jerai Billy of Atoka is the 19-year-old daughter of Shannon Billy. Jerai is a sophomore at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

## Junior Miss Division



### Krystal Noah, District 2

Krystal Noah of Broken Bow is the 17-year-old daughter of Katie and Reggie Baker and Kenneth Noah. Krystal is a sophomore at Broken Bow High School.



### Aryanna Ludlow, District 3

Aryanna Ludlow of Talihina is the 15-year-old daughter of Jessica Ludlow. Aryanna is a freshman at Talihina High School.



### Jade Cossey, District 4

Madison Jade Cossey of Spiro is the 16-year-old daughter of Karla McGee. Jade is a sophomore at Spiro High School.



### Juanita Gonzalez, District 5

Juanita Gonzalez of Stigler is the 17-year-old daughter of Victoria Gonzalez. Juanita is a senior at Stigler High School.



### Danielle Enriquez, District 6

Danielle Enriquez of Hartshorne is the 17-year-old daughter of Daniel and Carla Enriquez. Danielle is a junior at Hartshorne High School.



### Melissa Wren, District 7

Melissa Wren of Clayton is the 13-year-old daughter of Earl and Carlynn Wren. Melissa is in the eighth grade at Crain Elementary.



### Kalin Beller, District 9

Kalin Beller of Durant is the 14-year-old daughter of Brandon and Crystal Beller. Kalin is in the ninth grade at Durant High School.



### Hailie Pittman, District 10

Hailie Pittman of Atoka is the 13-year-old daughter of Eric and Rachel Pittman. Hailie is in the seventh grade at Atoka Middle School.



### Ariana Byington, District 11

Ariana Byington of McAlester, is the 13-year-old daughter of Tawanna Byington. Ariana is in the seventh grade at Puterbaugh Middle School.



### Chayenne McCoy, District 12

Chayenne McCoy of Coalgate is the 14-year-old daughter of Thomas McCoy. Chayenne is in the eighth grade at Wallace Byrd Middle School.

## Little Miss Division



### Baylee Byington, District 1

Baylee Byington of Idabel is the 11-year-old daughter of Presley and Suzanne Byington. Baylee is in the fifth grade at Denison Elementary.



### Brooklyn Frazier, District 2

Brooklyn Frazier of Broken Bow is the 9-year-old daughter of Micah and Andrea Frazier. Brooklyn is in the second grade at Dierks Elementary.



### Diamond Henry, District 3

Diamond Henry of Smithville is the 12-year-old daughter of Teresa Watson and James Henry. Diamond is in the fifth grade at Smithville Middle School.



### Brooklyn Wind, District 5

Brooklyn Wind of Stigler is the 12-year-old daughter of Casey Bigger and William Stanley Wind. Brooklyn is in the sixth grade at Stigler Middle School.



### Emma Battiest, District 6

Emma Battiest of Wilburton is the 9-year-old daughter of Heather Ramsey and Jimmy Battiest. Emma is in the third grade at Wilburton Elementary.



### Akeiley Willis, District 7

Akeiley Willis of Wright City is the 9-year-old daughter of Kerry and Christina Willis. Akeiley is in the fourth grade at Wright City Elementary.



### Mya Thomas, District 8

Mya Thomas of Boswell is the 11-year-old daughter of Sammie Jo and Lynsey Thomas. Mya is in the sixth grade at Boswell Elementary.



### Paishence Thrash, District 9

Paishence Thrash of Durant is the 8-year-old daughter of Chiquita Donaldson and Reginald Thrash. Paishence is in the second grade at Washington Irving Elementary.



### Serenity Bicknell, District 10

Serenity Bicknell of Tushka is the 8-year-old daughter of Brandon and Christina Hibdon. Serenity is in the second grade at Tushka Elementary.



### Jordyn Washington, District 11

Jordyn Washington of McAlester is the 8-year-old daughter of Curtis Jr. and Jacqueline Washington. Jordyn is in the second grade at Will Rogers Elementary.



### Cherokee McCoy, District 12

Cherokee McCoy of Coalgate is the 12-year-old daughter of Thomas McCoy. Cherokee is in the sixth grade at E.E. Emerson Elementary.



**Chief Batton's Youth FITNESS CHALLENGE**

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1**  
**Registration at 5:00 p.m.**  
**Event begins at 6:00 p.m.**

This annual event promotes fitness and health in a fun and challenging atmosphere. The challenge will conclude with a tug-o-war contest and each participant will receive a free T-shirt.

**Contact Waddel Hearn**  
**800.522.6170 (ext.2524)**  
**whearn@choctawnation.com**

**TOUGH CHOCTAW** **Saturday Sept. 2, 2017**

**Registration @ 3:00 p.m.**  
**Event begins at 4:00 p.m.**

This year will feature a male and female division. Prizes awarded for first and second places. Free T-shirt for participants.

**Contact Waddel Hearn**  
**(800)522-6170 ext. 2524**  
**whearn@choctawnation.com**  
 Choctaw Labor Day Festival 2017 Tvshka Homma.





FESTIVAL RV/TENT CHECK-IN TIMES

The gate is not locked. Both RV and tents check in at the same gate. No alcohol, drugs, dogs (service dogs allowed), golf carts, or ATVs allowed on tribal grounds. The times people will be at the gates are listed below:

RVs:

Wednesday (8/30/15)  
9 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Thursday (8/31/15)  
8 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Friday (9/1/15)  
8 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Saturday (9/2/15)  
8 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Sunday (9/3/15)  
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

TENTS:

Wednesday (8/30/15)  
9 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Thursday (8/31/15)  
8 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Friday (9/1/15)  
8 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Saturday (9/2/15)  
8 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Sunday (9/3/15)  
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

CHOCTAW VILLAGE ACTIVITIES

Saturday

10:00 a.m. Choctaw Dancing  
10:30 a.m. Stickball Skills  
10:30 a.m. Choctaw Hymns  
11:00 a.m. Storytelling  
11:30 a.m. Rabbit Stick Throw  
1:00 p.m. Stickball  
1:30 p.m. Language  
1:45 p.m. Corn Game  
2:15 p.m. Choctaw Dancing  
3:00 p.m. Community Language Presentations

Sunday

Noon Choctaw Village  
1:00 p.m. Rabbit Stick Throw  
1:30 p.m. Storytelling  
2:00 p.m. Corn Game

THURSDAY

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Museum Gift Shop hours  
8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Capitol Museum hours  
7:00 p.m. Princess Pageant, Amphitheater

FRIDAY

8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Capitol Museum hours  
8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Museum Gift Shop  
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Crafts for youth at playground by CCA & YAB  
9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Mobile Library at playground  
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Education Tent  
10:00 a.m. Arts and Crafts exhibits  
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Going Green Tent  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Information Booth  
11:00 a.m. Choctaw Social Dance Class on Capitol lawn  
Noon-5:00 p.m. Quilt entries at Information Center  
Noon-6:00 p.m. CDIB/Membership/Photo ID building  
Noon-6:00 p.m. Voter Registration  
Noon-8:00 p.m. Healthy Living Expo, next to Council Chambers  
2:00 p.m. Gourd Dancing on Capitol lawn  
5:00 p.m. Registration for Chief Batton Physical Fitness Challenge, on Council Chambers lawn  
5:00 p.m. Inter-Tribal Pow Wow Break  
6:00 p.m. Gourd Dancing on Capitol lawn  
6:00 p.m. Joni Morris, Amphitheater  
6:00 p.m. Chief Batton Physical Fitness Challenge  
6:00 p.m.-Midnight Carnival  
7:00 p.m. Stickball Tournament at Stickball Field  
7:00 p.m. Inter-Tribal Pow Wow Grand Entry on Capitol lawn  
7:00 p.m. Fast-Pitch Tournament at Red Warrior Park  
7:00 p.m. LOCASH, Amphitheater  
9:00 p.m. Neal McCoy, Amphitheater

Free Admission to All Concerts

SATURDAY

6:15 a.m.-7:15 a.m. 5k registration, Capitol Museum  
7:30 a.m. 5k Race begins and ends at Capitol Museum  
8:00 a.m. Fast-Pitch Tournament continues  
8:00 a.m. Fittest Choctaw Registration, at Council Chambers lawn  
8:00-8:30 a.m. Co-ed Volleyball Check-in  
8:30-9:30 a.m. Choctaw War Hoops, 3-on-3 Basketball Team Check-In  
9:00 a.m. Co-ed Volleyball Tournament  
9:00 a.m. Quilt Show at Information Center  
9:00 a.m. Horseshoe Tournament  
9:00 a.m. Fittest Choctaw, Council Lawn  
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Crafts for youth at playground by Daycare & YAB  
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Education Tent  
9:45 a.m. Terrapin Race Registration at playground  
10:00 a.m. Choctaw War Hoops, 3-on-3 Tournament  
10:00 a.m.-Noon Buffalo Tours, load bus at Capitol Museum  
10:30 a.m. Terrapin Races, playground  
10:00 a.m.-2:15 p.m. Choctaw Village activities (see schedule)  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Healthy Living Expo, next to Council Chambers lawn  
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Going Green Tent  
10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Museum Gift Shop hours  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Information Booth  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Capitol Museum hours  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. 14th Annual Choctaw Nation Art Show, Capitol Museum  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. CDIB/Membership/Photo ID  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Voter Registration  
Noon-Midnight Carnival  
1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Mobile Library at playground  
3:00 p.m. Tough, Tough registration on Council Chambers lawn  
3:00-5:30 p.m. Community Language Presentations, Village Amphitheater  
4:00 p.m. Tough, Tough contest on Council Chambers lawn  
6:00 p.m. Jerry Tims, Amphitheater  
7:00 p.m. Aaron Watson, Amphitheater  
7:00 p.m. Bicycle Drawing, MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN and PRESENT ID  
8:00 p.m. Stickball Tournament at field north of carnival  
9:00 p.m. Alabama, Amphitheater

Free Admission to All Concerts

SUNDAY

8:00 a.m. Bow Shoot, Choctaw Village  
8:00 a.m. Fast-Pitch Tournament continues  
8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. National Choctaw Day of Prayer and Worship, Chapel  
8:30 a.m. Golf Tournament, Sycamore Springs Golf Course, Wilburton  
10:00 a.m. Worship Services at Chapel  
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Going Green Tent  
10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Information Booth  
Noon Choctaw Village activities (see schedule)  
Noon Gospel Singing begins at amphitheater  
Noon Domino/Checker Tournament registration (see map)  
Noon-2:00 p.m. 14th Annual Choctaw Nation Art Show, Capitol Museum  
Noon-4:00 p.m. Museum Gift Shop hours  
Noon-4:30 p.m. Capitol Museum hours  
Noon-6:00 p.m. CDIB/Membership/Photo ID booth  
Noon-6:00 p.m. Voter Registration  
Noon-Midnight Carnival  
1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Mobile Library at playground  
1:00-5:30 p.m. Healthy Living Expo, next to Council Chambers  
1:00 p.m. - Suicide Prevention  
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.-Health checks  
1:30 p.m. - Healthy Families  
2:00 p.m. - Limited Mobility Exercises  
2:30 p.m. - Diabetes Prevention  
3:00 p.m. - Couch to 5K  
3:30 p.m. - Importance of Insurance to Native Americans  
4:00 p.m. - Culinary Kids  
4:30 p.m. - Shake that Sugar-Creating a Healthy Snack  
5:00 p.m. - Mindful Eating  
1:00 p.m. Domino/Checker Tournament (see map)  
1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. Choctaw Village activities (see schedule)  
1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Education Tent by Outreach Services Youth Activity  
1:30 p.m. Golf Tournament, Sycamore Springs Golf Course, Wilburton  
1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Choctaw Code Talker Association Board Meeting, Council Chambers  
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Buffalo Tours, load bus at Capitol  
4:00 p.m. Choctaw Dancers, Capitol lawn  
5:00 p.m. Stickball exhibition, Capitol lawn  
5:30 p.m. The Williamsons, Amphitheater  
6:30 p.m. The Anchormen, Amphitheater  
7:00 p.m. Children's stickball exhibition, stickball field  
7:00 p.m. Traditional Choctaw Hymn Singing, Chapel  
7:30 p.m. Zach Williams, Amphitheater  
8:00 p.m. Women's stickball exhibition, stickball field  
8:30 p.m. Jason Crabb, Amphitheater  
9:00 p.m. Championship stickball game, stickball field  
9:30 p.m. For King and Country, Amphitheater

Free Admission to All Concerts

MONDAY

8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Capitol Museum hours  
8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Museum Gift Shop hours  
9:00 a.m.-Noon CDIB/Membership/Photo ID booth  
9:00 a.m.-Noon Voter Registration  
9:30 a.m. Cultural Activities, Amphitheater  
9:30 a.m. Tim Tingle, Storytelling  
9:45 a.m. The Johnsons, Traditional Singing  
10:00 a.m. Labor Day official ceremonies, Amphitheater  
Posting of Flags-Choctaw Nation Color Guard  
The Lord's Prayer in Sign Language-Choctaw Royalty and Brad Joe  
Introduction of Tribal Council and Judges  
Swearing-in Ceremony  
State of the Nation Address by Chief Gary Batton  
Door Prize Drawings  
11:30 a.m. Free lunch for everyone, cafeteria  
Noon Pick up quilts from Quilt Show  
Noon-3:00 p.m. Carnival

Your attendance at the Labor Day Festival is permission for your photograph and video footage to be taken and used in publications by Choctaw Nation.

No alcohol, drugs or dogs allowed at the Choctaw Nation Capitol grounds at Tvshka Homma.

Schedule subject to change.



# Festival Map



**HIGH TEMPERATURES** are expected during the Labor Day Festival. It is recommended to take the proper precautions to stay safe in the heat. Here are a few hot weather safety tips to help those who plan on attending the Choctaw Labor Day events.

#### HYDRATE

Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.

#### PROTECT SKIN

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.

#### REST OFTEN

- Try to rest as often as possible in shady areas.
- Avoid strenuous activity, and take breaks

if you are participating in outdoor sporting events.

#### USE THE BUDDY SYSTEM

Although any one at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on:

- Infants and young children.
- People aged 65 or older.
- Those who are physically ill, especially heart disease or high blood pressure.

## Pastor Olin Williams

### Crowns



**Pastor Olin Williams**  
Employee Chaplain

All believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is not a judgment to determine whether a person is saved or lost.

It is a judgment of works, of service, to determine the believer's reward (1 Corinthians 3:14, 15).

Five different crowns will be rewarded to believers at the judgment seat of Christ

1. The Incorruptible Crown—(1 Corinthians 9:25). This crown is for those believers who maintained temperance in living a spirit filled life and not to yield to carnality and worldly influences.

2. The Crown of Rejoicing—(1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20). This crown is for those who led others to Christ. This is the soul winner's crown.

3. The Crown of Righteousness—(2 Timothy 4:8). This crown is for those who loved the second coming of Christ. These believers lived with the hopeful return of the Lord anytime and lived accordingly.

4. The Crown of Glory—(1 Peter 5:4). This is the pastor or elder's crown, or for the person who surrenders himself or herself for full time Christian service and serves God faithfully.

5. The Crown of Life—(James 1:12, Revelations 2:10). The crown of life is the martyr's crown. It is given to those who sacrifice their lives for their testimony.

"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Revelations 4:10, 11 KJV.

These elders cast their crowns at the Savior's feet. Believers will also cast their crowns at the feet of the Savior.

Not all works or service will be rewarded. 1 Corinthians 13:3 tells us, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Service or works motivated by the love for Christ will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ. If a work or service was performed for self-glory and for the praise of other people, then that work will be burned and will suffer loss.

## MEET THE ARTIST

### Deborah Selby

Saturday, August 12, 2017 | 11am - 4pm



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Like Us On



We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the 2017 Labor Day Festival at Tvshka Homma. This year's theme is *New Branches from Strong Roots*. All Choctaw families are invited to join me, Assistant Chief Austin and Tribal Council as we celebrate Choctaw heritage. The festival weekend is the perfect time to have a Choctaw reunion and let everyone know, Chahta hvpia, we are Choctaw!

*Gary Patton*  
— Chief Gary Patton

No Alcohol, Drugs, Dogs, Golf Carts, or ATVs allowed on Tribal Grounds.  
Schedule is subject to change.

Your attendance at the Labor Day Festival is permission to be photographed and/or filmed for use in publications by Choctaw Nation.

This issue of the Biskinik contains important Labor Day Festival information for Choctaw tribal members. Labor Day brochures will only be available at the Information Booth and other select locations during the festival at Tvshka Homma. Labor Day information can also be found at ChoctawNation.com and on Choctaw Nation social media.

Clip  
&  
Save

Labor Day Map and Schedule