

February 2018 Issue

Choctaw Nation Releases Choctaw Veteran Tags

Tribe Continues Longstanding Mission to Honor Choctaw Veterans

by KENDRA GERMANY

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has always strived to honor the men and women who have proudly served this country.

“Our veterans and their families have made great sacrifices for the freedoms we take for granted,” said Chief Gary Batton.

In accordance with the nation’s long-standing mission to honor our service members, Choctaw veterans will now be eligible to receive Choctaw Veteran Tags.

“This is just a small way of showing our Choctaw veterans that we appreciate them, and their sacrifices aren’t going unnoticed,” stated Batton.

The Veteran Tags was a project spearheaded by Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. Austin, a veteran himself, understands the importance of honoring our veterans.

“Traditionally speaking we as Choctaws honor veterans, holding them in high esteem. They are seen as warriors or protectors that give so much of themselves for our freedom,” said Austin. “As a veteran myself, I understand our veterans’ sacrifice of time away from their families, friends and homes.”

The idea came to Austin while he was visiting one of the nation’s travel plazas.

“I was at one of our travel plazas one day. I saw a veteran getting out of his car, which was parked in one of our designated veterans parking spots. I had an opportunity to strike up a conversation with him and had a great time visiting. On my way home, I couldn’t stop thinking about my visit and how he had inspired me,” said Austin. “Seeing a car in front of me with our tribal tag, and it hit me to research a veteran tag for our Choctaw Veterans.”

Austin is very passionate about this project and hopes our veterans will enjoy having these tags as well.

“The tag was important for me to accomplish from an honoring perspective. I hope our veterans are proud of the recognition,” said Austin.

The veteran tags are now available for request at Oklahoma tag agencies. These tags are considered specialty tags and will not be available for same day pick up. Individuals will need to order their tags in advance to receive them by their tag renewal deadline date.

To receive a Choctaw Veteran Tag the veteran must be an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Individuals may visit their local tag office to request their tag. To obtain a veteran tag, individuals must provide all required documentation that is necessary to obtain a car tag. In addition to the normally required documentation, individuals must provide a membership ID, and a military ID or DD214 papers.

Much like with a regular Choctaw tag, Choctaw Veterans will receive a reimbursement gift card in the mail after purchasing their veteran tag. There will be a \$3 mail service fee in order to receive a tag as well.

Individuals may request an early tag replacement if they wish. However, by doing so they will not be eligible for reimbursement and will have to pay an additional \$9 replacement fee.

The tag design features the Tvshka Homma Red Warrior statue, as well as the Choctaw crossed flags symbols. The crossed flags symbolize the merging of two nations.

Brent Oakes, Choctaw Community Services Senior Director, assisted in the design of the new tags.

According to Oakes, the design signifies the strength of Choctaw Veterans and their pride of being both Choctaw and American.

Oakes feels it is important to show our veterans how much we appreciate their service.

“The Choctaw Nation wants to honor our veterans in any way we can. From establishing preferred Choctaw Veteran parking spots at our facilities to giving out Choctaw Veteran jackets,” said Oakes. “With the new license plates, we are providing our veterans a way to display their pride of being a Choctaw veteran.”

The Choctaw Nation will continue their mission to support and honor our veterans. Whether it be through veteran tags, Choctaw Veteran only parking spaces, veteran jackets or Veteran’s Day celebrations, the Choctaw Nation will strive to let our veterans know just how much we appreciate their hard work, dedication and sacrifice.

If you are a Choctaw Veteran and would like more information on how to obtain your Choctaw Veteran Tag, contact your local tag office.



Left: Choctaw veteran parking only spots are available at Choctaw Nation facilities, including the headquarters and travel plazas.

Above: WWII veteran Stephen McGillberry visits the Choctaw WWII War Memorial during the Choctaw Veteran's Day Ceremony in Tvshka Homma.

Right: The Choctaw Color Guard is an essential part of many Choctaw events. The Color Guard is made of numerous brave men and women who have served their nation and country.



Revisiting the Water Settlement for Sardis Lake



Chief Gary Batton

It has been about a year since we completed the water settlement agreement, and there may be some confusion in regards to the terms of the agreement between the Choctaw Nation, the Chickasaw Nation, the State of Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City.

This message is to hopefully clarify the terms for anyone who has not had an opportunity to carefully review the provisions of this historical agreement.

Neither the Choctaw Nation, nor the Chickasaw Nation received any money from the settlement. The lawsuit which produced the settlement was simply about water protection and land stewardship.

Everyone will recall from previous litigation that there was a strong need for the tribes to protect the water from overuse or improper use, as well as securing water for our local communities.

The settlement was extremely successful. Under this agreement, we were able to secure 37,908 acre feet of Sardis lake storage to be reserved for local use, which is more than 12,352,375,954 gallons of water.

With respect to the Kiamichi River, neither Oklahoma City, nor any other person or entity can divert water from this very important resource without leaving a flow of at least 50 cubic feet per second during diversions.

This will protect fish and wildlife while also ensuring enough water is available for downstream users, including the City of Antlers and local citizens. None of these safeguards were present before this settlement agreement.

There is a broad misconception that the State of Oklahoma or Oklahoma City is now able to drain the lake by simply filing an application for a water permit with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

This is not true. There is a lake-level management plan in place. Prior to the settlement, the State/Oklahoma City had the water rights to Sardis Lake.

If you review the settlement agreement carefully, we now have a regulatory framework which protects lake levels, wildlife and recreation.

While anyone, including Oklahoma City, may file for, or even be granted a permit, they must now adhere to these rules and regulations which were not in place prior to the settlement agreement.

We will enforce these provisions, regardless of whether a permit is granted or not.

Prior to this settlement agreement, anyone wanting to protect their interests in water, including the tribes, were forced to

litigate against the state or other entities in state court.

In fact, the original lawsuit, which prompted us to act, was filed in state court.

Due to our efforts with congress, the regulatory provisions secured by this settlement agreement are now enforceable in federal court. Not only does this protect our tribal sovereignty, it also provides a fair playing field for any future disagreements.

Finally, while all of these protections are incredible advances for our tribal members, local citizens, and communities located within the Choctaw Nation, it is always best to read the facts for yourself instead of relying on false rumors or inaccurate interpretations.

I would encourage everyone to view the terms of the settlement agreement at waterunityok.com.



by Krislan Turner

The State of Oklahoma, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, City of Oklahoma City Water Settlement puts protections in place for Sardis Lake, pictured above, and the Kiamichi River in Southeastern Oklahoma. The agreement protects the water from improper use, overuse and secures water for local communities. It also protects fish and wildlife and ensures good land stewardship.

A Choctaw Program Improves Chahta Lives One Job at a Time



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

One of our most successful programs has been Job for the Day. It offers tribal members six weeks of temporary work with the Choctaw Nation that can turn into a permanent opportunity either within the Nation, or with a business in their community.

Job for the Day works with other Choctaw Nation programs such as Work Force Development and Career Development to enhance skills and opportunities.

They identify and address issues that may be preventing an applicant from being hired and start coaching the member to alleviate the issues.

Jerry Wood Jr. is a great example. He visited with Job for the Day staff and expressed a strong desire to work for the Nation.

They discussed his work experience and education and he was added to the list. Jerry said he had applied to Choctaw Nation in the past, received interviews, but had not been hired.

One of the services Job for the Day extends to program participants is providing suggestions on how to improve the interview process. It was noticed that Jerry appeared extremely nervous and that could cause him to present poorly during an interview.

Job for the Day went to work. Jerry's skills were identified. He had the experience and education required to make him a good fit in any accounting role. He was placed in the Choctaw Nation Purchasing Department and also connected with Career Development, who provided video and audio for him to take home to hone his interview skills and become more comfortable.

At the end of the six-week position in the purchasing department, he interviewed and was hired by purchasing. He has enrolled in Choctaw U, has interviewed and will transfer from purchasing to Choctaw Nation Fleet in the next few weeks.

Jerry is cheerful and interactive and shows a level of confidence he did not have when he first contacted Job for the Day.



by Taryn Carey

When Krystal Cato discussed her experience, education and where she wanted to be in the future during her assessment for the Job for the Day program she appeared to be a good fit for the administrative assistant position the Job for the Day program needed filled. Cole has been a Job for the Day team member since Aug. 29, 2016.

position. Krystal was placed with Job for the Day on Aug. 29, 2016, where she continues to be a valued part of the team.

The Job for the Day program has made a difference in many lives. They have helped build confidence, and with good work ethics, the members are following career paths they hadn't thought possible.

To read more about the Job for the Day program turn to Page 11 in this issue of the *Biskinik*.

Krystal Cato contacted Job for the Day while working as a shift manager at McDonald's in Atoka. Krystal's hours had been cut and she was in need of more stable employment.

During her assessment for Job for the Day she discussed her experience, education, and where she wanted to be in the future. Krystal was about seven hours from being a junior in college and was interested in reception or secretarial work that would keep her busy.

Job for the Day was in need of an administrative assistant at the time so her skills were discussed more in-depth. Krystal was very comfortable with Microsoft Office, Excel and PowerPoint.

Based on the way she presented during the assessment and the way she answered questions she appeared to be a good fit for the

BISKINIK

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Choctaw Nation and the State of Oklahoma have agreed to expand the Choctaw Car Tag program to give military veterans recognition for their service.

Photo illustration by Kendra Germany

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
- www.twitter.com/ChoctawNationOK
- www.instagram.com/ChoctawNationOK
- www.youtube.com/ChoctawNation



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Please give the Circulation Department a call.

We'll make sure your contact information is correct.

The Circulation Department can be reached at:

(800) 522-6170
Ext. 2116, 2409, or 2310

Vision Testing Coming to Choctaw Homes Soon

The Better Beginnings Home Visitation consists of three programs: Chahta Inchukka, Chahta Vila Apela, and Guiding Adolescent Parents. These programs combined have 11 home visitors across the 10 ½ county service area.

The SPOT Vision Screener is produced by WelchAllyn and was purchased through the supplier, School Health. There are currently four screeners being shared by the programs with an additional two to be purchased within the next six months.

All home visitation staff were trained by School Health on Nov. 14, 2017, in the use of the SPOT Screener. It is our plan that all participant children and their families (everyone in the household) will be screened annually, in addition to free screenings available at Outreach Community Meetings and events. We will also work to partner with other Outreach

programs, such as Youth Outreach, to ensure our children and young adults are not having vision issues that can contribute to educational/behavior issues.

The SPOT Screener can be used on children starting at 6 months of age through adulthood. It screens both eyes at the same time and takes less than 2 seconds and a non-threatening three foot distance. In that small amount of time and space, it is ideal to use for screening on even the most difficult circumstances (fussy child, ADHD, low functioning disabilities and other special circumstance situations).

The screening is human error free in that the LED screen displays one of two options: Screening Complete or Complete Eye Exam Recommended. After screening, a detailed report can be printed and given to the guardian or participant to be taken to the ophthalmologist or optometrist of their choice. Home Visitation policy for eye exam recommended (below level readings) will be to initiate a referral for services with the family.



Thanks to the Better Beginnings Home Visitations programs and the SPOT Vision Screener, vision testings will now be more accessible for tribal members.

NURSERY NEWS

Oliver Dane Watson



Oliver Dane Watson was born June 22, 2017. He weighed 7 pounds, 7.5 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Oliver was welcomed by proud parents Joshua and Kirsten Watson.

He is the grandson of Louann Morales, Emerson Willis, Kris and Peggy Sharp. He is the great-grandson of Toney and Lou Robison, Emerson and Helen Willis, and Mel and Phyllis Meskill.

Oliver Janelle Shay



Oliver Janelle Shay was born on Monday Nov. 13, 2017. Oliver weighed 8 pounds 15 ounces and measured 21 inches long.

Oliver is the first child of Chelsea Ann Whitlow Shay and Tristen Shay. Oliver and Chelsea are descendants of Choctaw Chief Reverend Allen “Kilihote”Wright.

Jack Thomas “J.T.” Shelley-San Juan



Jack Thomas “J.T.” Shelley-San Juan was born on Nov. 2, 2017, at Mercy Memorial in Ardmore, Oklahoma. He weighed 6 pounds, 5 ounces and was 19 inches long.

J.T. was welcomed into the world by his parents Aishlene Shelley and Evan San Juan of Ardmore.

He is the first grandson of Melissa Roberts of Tulsa and Steve Shelley of Ardmore. J.T. is the great-grandson of the late Carrie Wallace, and the great-great-grandson of the late Otis and Francis Roberts.

Jackson Newman Tisho



Jackson Newman Tisho was born on Sept. 12, 2017, at the Choctaw Nation Hospital in Talihina. He weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces and was 20 3/4 inches long.

His parents are Derek and Veronica Tisho of Battiest.

He is the grandson of Vernon Willis of Battiest and Dorothy Willis of Broken Bow, Robbie and Tracie Tisho of Oakhill, and Doris and Johnny Webb of Clebit. Jackson is the great-grandson of the late Amos Jackson Steele and Sweeley Steele of Hochatown, late Newman Tisho and Mary Tisho of Oakhill, the late Larry and Mary Jackson of Clebit.

Micah Ray Kenneth Toussaint



Micah Ray Kenneth Toussaint was born June 25, 2017. He weighed 7 pounds 13 ounces and was 20.5 inches long.

Micah is the son of John and Cassandra Toussaint. He is the grandson of Stephanie John-Schafer and Scott Schafer of The Woodlands, Texas, and Kenneth and Tina Toussaint of New Orleans, Louisiana. Micah is the great-grandson of the late Stephen John, and the great-great-grandson of the late Raymond and Adaline John.

Rodney Leon Lowder



Rodney Leon Lowder was born on Dec. 9, 2017. He weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and was 20 inches long.

Rodney is the son of Rob and Sarah Lowder from Porterville, California.

He was welcomed with joy and happiness from his big brother Robert, 4, and big sister Audrey, 1.

Rodney is the grandson of Kameron Amos and great-grandson of Sarah Amos. He received his middle name in honor of his late great-grandfather Vernon Leon Amos.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR A CHILD

We support our foster resource families every step of the way with:

- Comprehensive training and support
- One-on-One relationship with your Foster Care worker
- Extensive resources through the Choctaw Nation

INTERESTED?
CONTACT KAT DECAIRE AT
KDECAIRE@CHOCTAWNATION.COM
OR (580) 924-8280 EXT. 2643

FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma FAITH • FAMILY • CULTURE

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 Afullota Hina, (918) 420-5716
Poteau: 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431
March 2018
ANTLERS
Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:
Closed: March 27, 28, 29 & 30.
Cooking with Carmen: March 12 & 23, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
BROKEN BOW
Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:
Closed: March 27, 28, 29 & 30.
Cooking with Carmen: March 8 & 16, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
DURANT
Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:
Closed: March 27, 28, 29 & 30.
Cooking with Carmen: March 1 & 14, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
MCALESTER
Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:
Closed: March 27, 28, 29 & 30.
Cooking with Carmen: March 2 & 19, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
POTEAU
Market open weekdays March 1-31, except for:
Closed: March 27, 28, 29 & 30.
Cooking with Carmen: March 5 & 13, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Spiro Hoop House Food Demo: March 7 & 21, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
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Recipe of the Month

Bison Stuffed Bell Peppers



Photo provided by myculturedpalate.com

Recipe by Carmen Robertson

Ingredients

- 1 pound bison or ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 2 cups white rice, soak & rinse
- 1 cup water
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 6 medium green peppers
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Preparation


1. Cook bison or hamburger, onions and seasonings.
2. Soak rice for 10 minutes and rinse.
3. Stir in water, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce (reserve ½ cup) and rice.
4. Let simmer 5 minutes.
5. Remove tops and seeds from the bell peppers.
6. Place in a pan of boiling water for 5 minutes.
7. Drain peppers and stuff with the meat mixture.
8. Place in baking dish top with remaining tomato sauce.
9. Cover and bake 45 minutes or until peppers are tender.

Nutrition Facts:

Servings 6
Serving size 362g

(per serving)
Calories 321, Total Fat 7 grams, Trans Fat 3 grams, Cholesterol 51 milligrams, Sodium 227 milligrams, Total Carbohydrates 41 grams, Dietary Fiber 4 gram, Sugars 7 grams, Protein 23 grams, Vitamin A, 15 percent, Vitamin C, 126 percent, Calcium, 6 percent and Iron 32 percent.

For further information, you may contact Choctaw Nation Nutritionist Carmen Robertson (800) 522-6170 ext. 2733, email crobertson@choctawnation.com, or go to a Cooking with Carmen demonstration.

 CHOCTAW Women, Infants and Children		
Location	Days	Hours
Antlers 580-298-3161	Every Tue.	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Atoka 580-889-5825	Mon. Wed., Thurs. & Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Battiast 580-241-5458	1st & 2nd Tue. Every Month	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Boswell 580-380-2518	1st Thurs. Every Month	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Broken Bow 580-584-2746	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Coalgate 580-927-3641	1st Wed. of Every Month	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Durant 580-920-2100 x 83517	Daily Mon – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Hugo 580-326-5404	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Idabel 580-286-2510	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
McAlester 918-423-6335	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Poteau 918-649-1106	Daily Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Smithville 580-244-3289	1st Thurs. Every Month	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Spiro 918-962-5134	Wed., Thurs. & Fri.	8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.
Stigler 918-867-4211	Mon. & Tue.	8:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.
Talihina 918-567-7000 x-6792	Mon., Tue., Wed. & Fri.	8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Wilburton 918-465-5641	Every Thursday	8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

TAG Tours Tenaska Kiamichi Generating Station

The Tenaska Kiamichi Generating Station is a natural gas-fueled combined-cycle facility developed by Kiowa Power Partners, LLC.

The generating station is in the northern part of Atoka County near the Atoka/Pittsburg County line.

According to the Tenaska website, Tenaska affiliates manage and operate the plant, which includes four General Electric Frame 7FA gas turbines, four heat recovery steam generators and two General Electric steam turbines.

Tenaska Kiamichi is one of three Tenaska plants capable of delivering power into two reliability grids.

The station's design allows electricity to be delivered to either the Southwest Power Pool, where the plant is located, or to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) via an interconnecting transmission line.

The transmission line, developed by Tenaska, was the first to connect a generating plant located outside Texas to the ERCOT grid.

The facility has a long-term electricity production agreement with Shell Energy North America (US), L.P. (Shell) for the entire electrical production of the generating station, enough to power more than 1 million homes.

Under this long-term agreement, Shell markets the electricity produced by the facility throughout the

regional wholesale power market.

Shell also supplies the natural gas to fuel the facility.

The plant provides 35 well-paying, full-time positions and, in 2016, paid approximately \$5.4 million in salaries and payments to local subcontractors and vendors.

Through 2016, the Tenaska Kiamichi Generating Station paid more than \$33.1 million in property taxes.

The Talihina TAG group went on an extensive, two hour tour of the facility led by Scott Achelpohl, Plant Engineer.

Project Impact, also known as "TAG" (Tigers Achieving Greatness), is a comprehensive college and career readiness program offered through elective courses for eighth through 12th grade students attending school in Talihina.

Courses consist of ACT Prep, College and Career Readiness, and Introduction to Careers.



Students from the Talihina TAG Program toured the Tenaska Kiamichi Generating Station on Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017. The tour was led by Tenaska Plant Engineer Scott Achelpohl. The TAG program allows students to learn about different career paths to help them plan for their future.

Shaw Flag Bearer at Intertribal Ag Council



Randa Shaw represented Choctaw Nation by carrying the flag during the opening events at the National Intertribal Agriculture Council in Las Vegas, Nevada. Shaw was also an essay finalist and hopes other native youth help with the preservation and sustainability of Indian agriculture. Over 70 students from 35 tribal nations attended the council in December 2017.



Team Chahtas Win Third Place in Vegas at National Women's Fast Pitch Tournament

The ladies fast pitch team Chahtas placed third in the USSSA All Native Women's Fast Pitch World Tournament in Las Vegas, Nevada on Dec. 8 - 10. Three players, Talissha Clay, Lexy Taylor and Adrianna Canard were named All-Stars in the tournament.

These athletes competed in the tournament against teams from all over the United States and even Canada. (Picture from left to right) Bottom: Lexy Taylor, Talessha Clay, Rebecca Hobbs, Marcella McKinney, Yulonda Mathis. Top: Cheryl Billy, Daisah Daniels, Adrianna Canard, Reisa Bakenhus, Clarissa Peters, Shawn James and Marcell McKinney.



Samis Graduates with Masters Degree

Janey Samis recently graduated from Arkansas Tech University with a Master of Science in Information Technology.

Samis is the 25-year-old daughter of Eddie and Denise Samis of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Janey and her family would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for its support in achieving this degree.

Choctaw Nation HSE/GED Classes

The class will meet each week for approximately 12 weeks. Books, supplies, and testing fees are provided. If you have turned in an application with our Adult Education Program for HSE classes and wish to attend the upcoming class, please contact our office. If you have not applied and wish to attend these or future classes, please contact Lisa Bebout at the Durant office, (800) 522-6170, ext. 2122. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) is required.

Bryan County, Durant

Beginning date and time

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

Tuesday and Thursday

5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Choctaw Nation Tribal Complex

South Bldg. 1st Floor

529 N. 16th, Durant

Choctaw County, Hugo

Beginning date and time

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

Tuesday and Thursday

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Choctaw Nation Community Center

Leflore County, Poteau

No session scheduled at this time.

Online Academy is available for students in the area.

Please contact Lisa Bebout at Adult Education (580) 924-8280 ext. 2122 for more information.

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Tuesday, January 2, 2018

Tuesday and Thursday

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Choctaw Nation Community Center

Choctaw Nation Tribal Complex

South Bldg. 1st Floor

529 N. 16th, Durant

Choctaw County, Hugo

Beginning date and time

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

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1:00 p.m. - 4:0

EVENTS

Choctaw Nation Community Center
February Health Fairs

Stigler
Wednesday, February 7

Atoka
Wednesday, February 14

Coalgate
Wednesday, February 28

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

Fruit and Landscape Tree Orders

Orders accepted through Friday, Feb. 23
200 Gerlach Dr.
Durant, Oklahoma

Bryan County Conservation District is currently taking orders for a variety of fruit and landscape trees.
For details, call Angela Blue at (580) 924-5464

Healthy Me, Healthy We Workshop

Friday, Feb. 23
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Antlers Choctaw Nation Community Center
District 7 sixth to eighth-grade girls are invited to the Healthy Me, Healthy We workshop
For more information, call Consuelo Splawn at (580) 775-5016

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.

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 program income and credit guidelines. The goal of this program is to assist families with credit issues to become mortgage ready and lender qualified over time with credit counseling services available.

For additional program information or for an application, please contact Donna Courtwright at the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation at 1-800-235-3087

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.

February Community Center Schedule	February Community Center Schedule
2-1 Coalgate: 10-1 & 1:30-3	2-1 Coalgate: 10-1 & 1:30-3
2-8 Crowder: 10-1 & 1:30-3	2-8 Crowder: 10-1 & 1:30-3
2-20 Spiro: 10-1 & 1:30-3	2-20 Spiro: 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
Stacy Hutto, Managing Editor
Kendra Germany, Reporter/Photographer
Apryl Mock, Reporter/Photographer
Taryn Carey, Multimedia Support/Traffic Coordinator

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www.ChoctawNation.com
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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

My name is Steve Dill and I am writing on behalf of my family, trying to convey the feelings of extreme gratefulness to Chief Batton and the Choctaw Nation. My son, Travis Dill, and my nephew, David Dill, are at this time being deployed to Afghanistan with the Oklahoma National Guard. They were at Ft. Bliss getting their mission specific training. Over the Thanksgiving holidays they were given some leave days. The Choctaw Nation provided transportation home and back. This gave them another day or two to spend with their families. This time was priceless to us. Your commitment and dedication to the troops is remarkable and deeply, deeply appreciated. The Nation did not have to do this, but chose to do this for our Oklahoma boys, for all of them, Chahta and those outside the tribe also. This thank you seems so short and I can promise you I did not get the depth of my thankfulness conveyed. Once again, thank you from my family and me.

Steve Felton Dill
Bokchito, Oklahoma

I served 40 years in the U.S. Army as Airborne and Military police. I served in Vietnam, Panama, SWA and GITMO and retired as a 1st Sgt. I have observed and conducted several Military Funeral details state side and over seas. My brother, Dennis M. Cantrell, passed away December 2017. Many thanks to the Choctaw Nation and Bob Pate for the McAlester Choctaw Center and for the very good food. The Choctaw Nation Color Guard was at the gravesite. The men and women performed the best that I have seen. The Choctaw Nation Color Guard were very professional with the red berets, highly shined boots, uniforms, firing and Taps. Thank you again.

Dale Cantrell
Krebs, Oklahoma

I would like to thank a few people and departments. First of all, I would like to thank Dakota in Patient Relations. Year after year she helps us obtain the proper documentation to get glasses. This is so helpful and such a gift to us. Also, Shelby and Shayna in Emergency Services recently assisted us to help my brother with his rent when he moved to a new apartment. God bless all of you in this great Choctaw Nation.

Jackie Witt
Auburn, California
Jerome Patton
Auburn, California
Jeanne Patton
Rocklin, California
Jeff Patton
Roseville, California

Choctaw Asset Building
Financial Education Classes

February 10th - Stillwater
University Heights Baptist
Church's Coffee House
519 W. 3rd Street
Class begins at 9:00am

To register, go to the following URL:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAB_FinEd

For more information, Email:
dhix@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 10½ 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:

Antlers Community Center
February 9
9 – 11 a.m.

Tribal Council
Holds Regular Session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Saturday, Jan. 13, in their chambers at Tvshka Homma.

During the regular session committee reports were presented.

The minutes of the regular session held on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2017, were approved.

New business included approval of the following items:

- Authorize Chief Gary Batton to place property in Bryan County, Oklahoma in Trust Status with the United States of America.
- Amend CB-82-15 to authorize Chief Batton to place property in Choctaw County in Trust Status with the U.S.A. as amended.
- An underground electric easement on Choctaw tribal fee land in favor of Public Service Company of Oklahoma in Pushmataha County, Oklahoma.
- Amendment to CB-124-16 to correct the number of rods contained in right of way No. T-150 in favor of ONEOK Gas Transportation, LLC, on land held by the U.S.A. in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Latimer County, Oklahoma.
- A grazing lease on Choctaw Tribal Fee land in favor of Monty Richards in McCurtain County, Oklahoma.
- The proposed budget for the Food Distribution Program.
- Funding for construction of a new Day Care Center in Talihina, Oklahoma.
- Funding for construction of a Child Development Center in Poteau, Oklahoma.
- Funding for construction of a new Choctaw Country Mart in Coalgate, Oklahoma.
- Funding for construction of a Travel Plaza in Talihina, Oklahoma.
- Funding for Strategic Acquisition.
- To dispose of surplus capital assets.

For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and Council bills, go to www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills.

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

SUMMER WORK PROGRAM
APPLICATIONS

The WIOA department will be visiting schools throughout Oklahoma to help students sign up for the summer work program.
Deadline to apply is Sunday, April 1, 2018.

1/30/18	COLEMAN	10:00	2/6/18	HAWORTH	9:00
1/30/18	WAPANUCKA	11:00	2/6/18	IDABEL	11:30
1/31/18	STRINGTOWN	12:30	2/12/18	WRIGHT CITY	9:30
2/1/18	EAGLETOWN	10:00	2/12/18	VALLIANT	1:00
2/5/18	BATTIEST	8:45	2/21/18	BROKEN BOW	9:00
2/5/18	SMITHVILLE	11:00	TBA	JONES ACADEMY	TBD

Bring a copy of CDIB/Membership Card, Social Security Card, Drivers License, Physical Address verification, Selective Service (if male and over 18). Further eligibility requirements listed on the website, or contact WIOA staff at (800) 522-6170. Applications available at <https://wioaapplication.choctawnation.com>.

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 on 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

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

March 2018

Durant - Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Phone: (580) 326-8304; Fax: (580) 326-0115

Broken Bow - Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com

Idabel by appointment

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Durant 8: 00-4:30	6 Antlers by appt.	7 Talihina 10:00-2:00	8	9 Wright City by appt.	10
11	12	13 Idabel by appt.	14 Poteau 1:00-2:00	15	16 Crowder by appt.	17
18	19	20	21 McAlester 10:00-2:00 Stigler by appt.	22	23 Atoka & Coalgate by appt.	24
25	26 Broken Bow by appt.	27	28 Wilburton by appt.	29	30	31

Choctaw Nation 2017

January



Choctaw elder, Emmaline “Happy” Carney assists with coaching in Tannehill, Oklahoma. Carey is a member of the Oklahoma Amateur Softball Association Hall of Fame.



Sage Dyer, a Choctaw tribal member, invented a universal bulletproof door shield to better protect classrooms. Dyer is the founder and CEO of Safer America. Now students at the Choctaw Nation Child Development Center in Durant are protected by the Safer America System.



Chief Gary Batton speaks during a forum at the Annual Meeting for Oklahomans for Responsible Water Policy in McAlester, Oklahoma. Following five years of negotiation, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act became law.

February



Russell Marcum, Executive Director of Choctaw Print Services, Chief Gary Batton (left) and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., (right) cut the ribbon at Choctaw Print Services in Durant. Members of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council, local officials and staff members at the facility joined in the ceremony.



The Choctaw Nation sent representatives to the United Nations during a session of the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Stacy Shepherd, Executive Officer of Member Services, Seth Fairchild, Executive Director with the Chahta Foundation (foreground with back to camera), and Josh Riley, Senior Policy Analyst with Tribal Policy wait for the session to begin.



While they wear badges instead of a red ribbon in their hat, the heart of the Choctaw Lighthorsemen live on in the Tribal Police Officers. Just as their counterparts in the past, the Tribal Police keep the Choctaw Nation and Choctaw tribal members safe. They continue to patrol tribal land and assist local law enforcement as needed.

March



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. cuts the ribbon for the Choctaw Regional Medical Clinic on Feb. 21. Representatives from Indian Health Services, Chief Gary Batton, Tribal Councilmembers, Choctaw royalty, Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority employees and tribal members attended the event.



The City of Tahlequah and Cherokee County citizens joined Native Americans across the country in protesting the proposed oil pipeline at Standing Rock. Choctaw tribal members Walter R. Davis, Joanne Anderson Davis and Noah Davis also participated.



Hansen Henry works on a traditional shirt at the Idabel Community Center. Oneida Winship, an instructor with Choctaw Nation Cultural Services has been teaching how to make traditional Choctaw clothing at Idabel since May 2016. Henry is her youngest student.



Chief Gary Batton holds a copy of the New Choctaw Dictionary, the first book of its kind since the 1800s. Members of the Choctaw Nation Language Department, along with volunteers, spent the last 14 years editing, reviewing, researching and translating the Choctaw language for the book.



Paden Stacey from Indianola, a taekwondo black belt, is training hard and competing in competitions around the country in hopes of making the 2020 Olympic team. She is coached by Master Dong Lee.



Chief Gary Batton joins the beading class at the Tampa, Florida Community Meeting in making a mini breastplate. When he finished he gave it to one of the visitors.

April

May



Elders search for the golden egg during the Elder Easter Egg hunt on the lawn of the Capitol Museum during the Easter Celebration.



During the annual Choctaw Nation Healthy Aging/Senior Nutrition's Senior Fitness Challenge, 85-year-old Jannette Taylor from Crowder, Oklahoma took home the top spot in the 80 years of age and older category during the Fitness Challenge Walk.



Bluegrass legend Bill Grant was inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame. Grant has influenced many musicians such as Virgil Bonham, Vince Gill, Ricky Skaggs, Keith Whitley and many more.

June



Choctaw tribal members and guests at the Okla Chahta Gathering in Bakersfield, California participate in the Snake Dance.



The Annual Trail of Tears Walk at Tvshka Homma drew a large crowd. The Trail of Tears Walk honors our ancestors who made the journey from Mississippi to Oklahoma.



Duke Muncy serves up a sample to Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. before the Wild Onion Dinner. Matthew Sam spent the day preparing the meat for the guests in Wilburton.

Year in Review

July



Stickball campers at the Stickball Camp quickly work to pick up the ball. Students learned the fundamentals of stickball as well as its history and significance in Choctaw culture.



The Trail of Tears Bike Team and Chief Gary Batton pedal into the Choctaw Nation Tribal Headquarters on May 26, 2017, escorted by tribal police.



Barbara Porter with her raised bed garden at Jones Academy, which contains tomatoes, basil, cilantro and much more. The gardens are courtesy of the Choctaw Nation Agriculture Outreach Ag in the Classroom program.

August



The dedication of the sculpture "Kindred Spirits" in Bailick Park, Middleton, County Cork, Ireland on Sunday, June 18, drew a large crowd. The sculpture recognized the \$170 gift the Choctaw Nation made to the Irish in 1847 during the Great Famine of 1845-1852.



During the Talihina Veterans Dinner 30 veterans were honored on July 13. The dinner was held in the newly opened community center.

September



Native American rapper Supaman performs for Jones Academy students. In addition to his live act, he gave students words of wisdom and a call to action to respond to adversity and hardships with prayer, love, hope and faith.



Bill Harrison, from Okla Chahta, presented Stella Wright with a blow gun. Wright is starting to learn her Choctaw heritage and Harrison said she was a natural with the blow gun.



Councilperson District 6 Jennifer Woods and Councilperson District 9 James Dry were elected to the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council during the Run-Off Election on June 8.

October



(from left) Chief Gary Batton, Little Miss Mya Thomas of District 8, Miss Choctaw Nation BreAnna Jefferson of District 1, Junior Miss Jade Cossey of District 4 and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. pose for a photo after the 2017-2018 princess pageant. The new royalty will serve as ambassadors of the Choctaw Nation through the next year.



Steve McGee, Facility Manager Director, Choctaw Nation Health Service Authority, discussed how to set up a field hospital in Marathon, Florida with the Disaster Medical Assistant Team (DMAT).



Members of the Antlers Good Guys Program spend time decorating pumpkins with their little guys. The program strives to introduce positive male influences in to the lives of children.

November



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. takes a look at the family tree Ali Morris put together after finding her long lost family. During her research she discovered her family's connection to the once Chief of the Choctaw Nation Moshulatubbee.



Gerald Johnson from District 1 and Sharon Zonder from District 9 are pictured (center) accompanied by (left to right) Chief Gary Batton, District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston, District 9 Councilman James Dry and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. Johnson and Zonder were named Outstanding Elders for 2017-2018 at the banquet held at the Choctaw Casino Resort-Durant.



Niko Colby of Scottsdale, Arizona competed in the world's largest motocross race. Niko, who is 5 years old, and his family traveled to Hurricane Springs, Tennessee for the 36th Annual Rocky Mountain ATV/MC AMA Amateur National Motocross Championship. The kindergartner competed against 22,000 racers to earn his spot.

December



Choctaw Nation Head Start students in McAlester went to the Choctaw Community Center to sing a Christmas song to District 11 Councilperson Bob Pate. After they sang Councilperson Pate gave each student a gift.



The Environmental Stability Department collected 1,942 pounds of used toys. The team worked with Ministry in Action, Native American Outreach and the One Way Mission to touch the lives of approximately 370 children.

STORIES BORN

Harlan Moffatt



Harlan Moffatt, 94, passed away Nov. 14, 2017. Harlan was born Oct. 31, 1923, to Helen Dillard in Atoka, Oklahoma.

Harlan was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years Beatrice Moffatt.

He is survived by sons John and Chris and spouse Linda; daughter Constance Moffatt and spouse John Maloney; two grandchildren John and Lynde; sister Loretta; and many nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [Bastian and Perrott, Oswald Mortuary](#).

Marion Franklin Norris

Marion Franklin “Frank” Norris, 66, passed away Nov. 20. He was born on Feb. 13, 1951, in Grapevine, Texas to Henry Paul Norris and Ora Dale (Vander-pool) Norris.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Lynda Wobser; niece Lavonne Norris; and brothers Paul and Ronald Norris.

He is survived by his wife Eugenia; daughter Dyani Whatley; son Michael; brothers Leroy, Steven and Carey Norris and four grandchildren.

He was laid to rest at Rose Hill Cemetery in Calera, Oklahoma.

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

Leslie Lynn Beams

Leslie Lynn Beams, 73, passed away Dec. 4, 2017. Leslie was born Aug. 4, 1944, to Levi Lee and Dolye Beams.

Leslie is survived by his wife, Roberta; daughters Michelle and spouse Dan Ytuarte, Michelle Grajeda and spouse Frank Alfaro and Sarah Beams; brothers Joe and Jesse Beams; grandchildren Robert Ytuarte and spouse Tanya, Jason Ytuarte and spouse Brissa and Abigail Grajeda; and great-grandchildren Dominic and Hannah.

Leslie was laid to rest at Lytle Community Cemetery in Lytle, Texas.

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

Robert Shelby Wood

Robert Shelby Wood, 66, passed away Sept. 17, 2017.

Robert was born on Sept. 17, 1951, to Lillie Mae and Norman Shelby Wood.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

He is survived by his wife Carol; daughter Cassie Mill-sap and spouse Darrin; step-father Charles Brecheisen; sister Sharon; brother Jim Wood; step-children Mark Sitton and spouse Monica, Debra Beamer and spouse Robert and DeAnna Gardner; grandchildren Aerik and Toni Sitton and Dawson Beamer.

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

Joseph Lynn McCorkle

Joseph “Joe” Lynn McCorkle, 57, passed away Dec. 11, 2017 Joe was born on July 3, 1960, to Lawrence and Rosa Mae (Lawrence) McCorkle, in Coalgate, Oklahoma.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers Carl Dwayne McCorkle and David Glenn McCorkle.

He is survived by his son Jarred and spouse Maranda; granddaughters Dahlia and Violet McCorkle; father Rafael Barron; brothers Larry and Keith McCorkle; nieces Marisa and Briana; aunt Maggie Anderson; and cousins Paula, Mary Jo, Buddy Ann and Shirley. Joe was laid to rest at Lone Star Cemetery, in Coalgate, Oklahoma.

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

Robert Warren Edwards

Robert “Bob” Warren Edwards, 70, passed away Nov. 2, 2017.

Bob was born Dec. 9, 1946, in Wichita, Kansas, to Henry and Alice “Mary” (Hopkins) Edwards.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents and daughter Jennifer McColey.

He is survived by his wife of 34 years Patricia; sons Kenneth, Adam and spouse Melissa; daughter Debbie Parsons and spouse Brad; brothers Don and spouse Donna, Jack and spouse Dawn and Travis; grandchildren Erika, Robert, Colten, Brandon and Connor; great-grandchildren Ava, Otis and Opal; as well as and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Bob was laid to rest at El Pason Cemetery in Derby, Kansas.

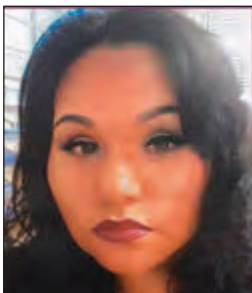
For the full obituary, please visit [Smith Mortuary](#).

Duana Dee Davis

Duana Dee Davis, 40, passed away Aug. 24, 2017. Duana was born Jan. 26, 1977, to Marian and Jerry Davis.

Duana was preceded in death by her father and sister Patricia Davila.

She is survived by her husband George Villa; daughters Sylvia, Desiree and Priscilla; son-in-law Tony; granddaughter Amerie; sister Jerri; brother-in-law Sam; nieces Jessica, Ruby and Veronica; and mother, Marian.



Deidra Gwyn Battiest

Deidra Gwyn Battiest, 40, passed away Dec. 22, 2017.

Deidra was born Jan. 2, 1977, to Ivan Lee and Loretta Kaye (Williams) Battiest.

Deidra was preceded in death by her paternal grandparents Johnson and Katherine Battiest; maternal grandparents, Hampton and Frances Williams; uncles Sonny and Donell Williams; aunts Lucille Sealy and Viola Battiest; and great-grandmother, Hafis Willie.

Deidra is survived by her parents; daughter, Sarah; brothers Michael and Matthew Battiest; sisters Tonya Dillard and Ivanna Romero; and special friend Willis Young.

Deidra was laid to rest at Canfield Cemetery in Idabel, Oklahoma. For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).



Harvey Hardy Jr.

Harvey Hardy Jr., 60, passed away Nov. 27, 2017.

Harvey was born, Jan. 23, 1957, to Harvey Hardy Sr. and Mary (Wood) Hardy.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Myrtle (Noah) Hardy; parents; children Jerimy Speck and April Hardy; and brothers Donald and James Hardy.

He is survived by children Bruce and spouse Linda, Sarah and spouse David and Joe and spouse Monica; grandchildren Bristina, Mason, David, Adam Noah, Maliyah, Alisha, Jarrod, Jourdan, Jessica, Jared and J.D.; great-grandson Ezra Mason; sister Shirley Hardy; aunt Jennifer Brokensick; and nephew Bradley Hardy and spouse Loretta.

Harvey was laid to rest at Slater Memorial Cemetery in Wright City, Oklahoma.

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



Martin Dewayne James

Martin “Marty” Dewayne James, 44, passed away Dec. 24, 2017.

Marty was born on March 5, 1973, to Henry and Aline James in Talihina, Oklahoma.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter Marty Nichole; brothers David Wayne Ashalintubbi and Ferris Larson Ashalintubbi; sisters Verloyn Ashalintubbi and Vanessa James; and niece Marla Williams.

Marty is survived by wife Deanna James; daughter Jennifer Lynn James and fiance Jeremy Impson; grandson Nita Paul Dewayne Impson; brothers Jessie James, Henry Floyd James and Dennis Ashalintubbi; sisters Denese Johnson and Hanna Williams; as well as a host of nieces, nephews, great nephews, family and dear friends.

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



Jackie Lee Mackey

Jackie Lee Mackey, 59, passed away Dec. 12, 2017.

Jackie was born on May 19, 1958, to Delma and Calvin Mackey in Sacramento, California.

Jackie was preceded in death by his parents and brother David Mackey.

He is survived by his wife Shelley; brother Randy Mackey; sisters Linda Ashby and Brenda Musgrave; children Billy Jack and Leah Mackey; grandchildren Jaxon, Bryce, Kayden, Hailey, Alexis and MiaBella; step-children Jessica, Michelle, Alex and Dylan; step-grandchildren Logan, Melody and Jhevon; as well as numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

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



James O'Neal Crutchfield

James O'Neal Crutchfield, Sr., 89, passed away Dec. 14, 2017.

James was born March 10, 1928, in Bokoshe, Oklahoma, to Edward and Velma (Pulliam) Crutchfield.

James was preceded in death by his parents; wife Virginia Pearl Crutchfield; son, Terry Crutchfield; sister Lavada Parker; and brother Joe “J.E.” Crutchfield.

He is survived by his daughter Debbie Pio and spouse Roger; sons James “Jim” Crutchfield, Jr. and spouse Pam and Randy Crutchfield and spouse Carrie; sisters Wanda Riley, Shelba McConnell, Barbara Fowler, Beverly Carey and Karla Dill; brother W.T. Crutchfield and spouse Glenda; daughter-in-law Carla Crutchfield; 11 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren

James was laid to rest at Old Bokoshe Cemetery in Bokoshe, Oklahoma.

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



Donald Ray Stone

Donald Ray Stone, 54, passed away Dec. 1, 2017. Donald was born on June 22, 1963, in Tulare, California to Raymond S. Stone and Patricia Slate.

Donald is survived by his mother; son Donald Ray Stone Jr.; daughters Amber Long and spouse Caleb, Katrina Bedsaul and spouse Matthew and Tasha Stone; brother Steven Stone; sister Cynthia Stone; grandchildren Jax-son Bedsaul, Ethan Cooper, Sadie Long, Alyssa Long, Natalie Meyer and Mackenzie Robinson.

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



Aaronette Lee Allen

Aaronette Lee Allen, 55, passed away Dec. 11, 2017. Aaronette was born Oct. 22, 1962, to Aaron and Geraldine (Dana) Allen in Coalgate, Oklahoma.

Aaronette was preceded in death by her parents; and brothers Aaron Allen and Jimmy LeFlore.

She is survived by her partner Deb Smith; step-son Jefferey Sells and spouse Erica; siblings Vester and Charles Allen, Clay Simpson and spouse Jan, Betty Simpson, Kathleen Hosler and spouse Bill, Berdie Williams and spouse Jim, Diana Child and spouse Larry and Maria Horton and spouse Al.

Aaronette was laid to rest at Butler Cemetery in Lane, Oklahoma.

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



Gilbert Lee Lawrence

Gilbert Lee Lawrence, 87, passed away Dec. 8, 2017.

Gilbert was born on Jan. 13, 1930, to Mary G. (Hickerson) and Green David Lawrence.

He was preceded in death by his parents; siblings Catherine and Cassel; sisters-in-law Billie, Sarah and Grace; brothers-in-law Shirrell, Tom, Bill, Wayne; mother-in-law Lena Lett; and father-in-law D.E. “Duck” Lett.

Gilbert is survived by his wife of 66 years Wilma Jean (Lett) Lawrence; grandchildren Jason, Kristi, Duston, Evan, Michelle, Leslie, Helen, Cameron and Tara; daughters-in-law Mary, Pamela, Rhonda and Wanda; sons-in-law Dean, Doug and Dirk; and sisters-in-law Patsy and Willa; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Gilbert was laid to rest at White Chimney Cemetery in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma with full military honors.

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



Naomi Ruth Johnson

Naomi Ruth Johnson, 88, passed away Dec. 2, 2017. Naomi was born on May 23, 1929, to Sampson and Margaret (Crowder) Scott in Antlers, Oklahoma.

Naomi was preceded in death by her husband McDonald Douglas Johnson; parents; brothers Jasper and Jessie Scott; sister Lorena Scott-Cooper; sons Melvin and Ulysses Johnson; and grandchildren Marvin and Peaches.

She is survived by her sons Jarvis and spouse Sheila, Marvin and spouse Cheryl, Donald and spouse Alma, Samuel, and Richard Johnson Sr.; daughters Delvagene and spouse Ruben, and Wilma Watan and spouse Mitch; 23 grandchildren, 39 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

Naomi was laid to rest at Arlington Memory Gardens in Arlington, Texas.

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



Ida Faye Pillars

Ida “Faye” Pillars, 86, passed away Dec. 20, 2017.

Faye (McKee) Pillars was born Dec. 3, 1931, in Soper, Oklahoma, to Stan Watie and Ida Leota (Roden) McKee.

Faye was preceded in death by her husband of 56 years Bill; parents; brother Stanley McKee; and sister Charlene Ishmael.

Faye is survived by sons Bill and spouse Carol, Stan and spouse Robin “Chip,” and Willy and spouse Janet; daughters Cathy Moffatt and spouse Richard, Teresa Gallant and spouse Danny, Donda Moffatt and spouse Raymond and Kim Butler; sisters, Juanita Smith and Ruth Blam and spouse J.R.

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



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. The online issue of the Biskinik contains links to the full obituaries.

Send official obituary notices to:

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

Schuth-Mitchell Named Significant Woman in Oklahoma Agriculture



Photo Provided
Nikki Schuth-Mitchell serves as a Tribal Extension Agent for the Choctaw Nation's Agricultural Outreach Program. She was named a Significant Woman in Oklahoma Agriculture by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. Honorees were selected by industry professionals.

Nikki Schuth-Mitchell of Calera, Oklahoma has found her true calling, agriculture. The Choctaw Nation employee has been named a Significant Woman in Oklahoma Agriculture by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. Honorees were nominated by their peers and selected by a committee of industry professionals. Agriculture has been the cornerstone of Schuth-Mitchell's family for many years. At 9 years old, she got her first two lambs, with the help her Ag teacher, and joined the Bryan County Clover Leaves 4-H Club. That was just the beginning. "It snowballed and by my senior year of high school I had 23 show lambs," Schuth-Mitchell said. In 2009, she was inducted into the Bryan County 4-H Hall of Fame. After graduating from Durant High School, Schuth-Mitchell went on to Oklahoma State University where she enrolled as a double major in Agricultural Education and Animal Science. After graduation, Mitchell was brought on as the first Tribal Extension Agent for the Choctaw Nation's Agriculture Outreach program. The program strives to promote agriculture opportunities and success for Tribal members. "I was the first one hired with the agriculture outreach program," Mitchell said. "We work with members of the tribe, the community and youth within the southeast corner of Oklahoma." Ag Outreach connects socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers to USDA opportunities and programs as well as provide youth and producer education. In 2017, Choctaw Nation's Ag Outreach program reached over 100,000. Mitchell also gets the opportunity to work with over 2,000 students in 26 different schools and incorporate curriculum from the Ag in the Classroom program.



9

"We started teaching Ag in the Classroom once a month to the Jones Academy and now those students are learning about Oklahoma commodities," Mitchell said. "I would say it's having a positive impact."

Everything Old is New Again Powell Family Donates Recycled Artwork as Thank You Present to Choctaw Nation



from left, Recycling Manager Jason Lilley, Director of Project Management Tracy Horst, Director of Environmental Sustainability Jeff Barnett, Chief Gary Batton, Ethan Powell, Jordan Powell, Christine Powell, Andy Powell and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. are pictured with an art piece made entirely of recycled container caps, including those from laundry soap and milk jugs. The Powell family wanted to give back to the Choctaw Nation for providing medical care for Jordan and help with school for Ethan. The project took four years to complete and will be displayed on the third floor of the new headquarters. (Not pictured, Taylor Powell.)



Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. visit with the Powell family in the headquarters lobby on Dec. 20, 2017. The Powell patriarch, Andy, joked, "At our family get-togethers, everyone would show up with a bag full of lids." Christine, the mother of Jordan, Ethan and Taylor, also presented Chief Batton with a tube of E600 glue in case the artwork needed repair. "That will hold anything together," she said with a smile. (Not pictured, Taylor Powell.)

Descendants of Bob Horton, Joe Umber Reunited



On Thanksgiving weekend, November 23 and 24, 2017, the first known Horton-Umber Family Reunion in 100 years was held. Relatives from Michigan, Alaska, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Arkansas and Tennessee met up in Memphis, Tennessee and shared photos, stories, gifts, talent and food for two days. Elwanda Tatum, Joe Umber's 93-year-old daughter also attended the reunion. Some family members met for the first time; others had not seen one another in over 50 years. Chief Batton gave a special treat to the family by sending a recorded video greeting. The descendants hope to hold another family reunion in the summer of 2019.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Teddie Bigley turns seven on Feb. 23. She is the daughter of Kristi Bigley, granddaughter of Deborah Bull and great-granddaughter of Cleo Shoemaker. Happy Birthday Teddie, your family loves you!



Clint and Nadine Sharp Mark 60th Anniversary



Clint and Nadine Sharp recently celebrated their 60th anniversary. They were married on Dec. 3, 1957, by Joe Reed in Wilburton, Oklahoma. They were blessed with five children Laura, Jeanette, Sandra, Jay and Patricia; seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. They are truly loved by all.

Harmon Looking Toward Budding Acting Career



Photo Provided
Bryon Harmon of Ochelata, Oklahoma will appear as an extra in the upcoming film "Up Close and Personal." Bryon is also an avid runner, boxer and obstacle course enthusiast. He is currently training to make his amateur boxing debut at Engine Room Fight Night 6 in Tulsa, Oklahoma later this Spring. His earlier film appearances include "Starbright" and "The Last Exorcist."

Begins at 11 a.m. at the Council House

- Lunch provided 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Welcome Chief Gary Barton at 12:30 p.m.
- Pictures with the Easter Bunny 10 a.m. in Membership Building
- Youth Stickball Game Starting at 10 a.m.
- Easter Egg Hunts
 - Ages 2-4 (1:30 p.m. at Ball Fields)
 - Ages 5-7 (1:30 p.m. at Ball Fields)
 - Ages 8-10 (1:30 p.m. at Ball Fields)
 - Elder egg hunt (ages 55+) (2 p.m. on Museum Lawn)

Door prize tickets available by T-shirt booth. Door Prizes will be immediately after Chief's speech. Must be present to win. (Locations of activities may change due to inclement weather.)

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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma *Living out the Choctaw Spirit*

Iti Fabussa

The Choctaw Academy: Investing in Future Choctaw Leaders

Continuing the *Iti Fabussa* series on missionaries and education, this month’s article focuses on an early Baptist school in Choctaw country.

As many are aware, the boarding and mission schools of the 1800’s and 1900’s hold a complicated legacy in our nation’s education history.

While there were few Baptist boarding schools in Choctaw country, one

Baptist school holds a special place in history: the Choctaw Academy of Scott County, Kentucky.

Following the treaty of Washington City in 1825, the United States promised the Choctaw Nation \$6,000 per year, forever, as part of the payment for Choctaw land. Article 2 of the treaty dedicated the first 20 years of the payment to “the support of schools in [Choctaw] nation, and extending to it the benefits of instruction in the mechanic and ordinary arts of life” (“Treaty with the Choctaw, 1825”).

By request of Choctaw leaders, the school was placed outside Choctaw lands. In doing so, Choctaw people could better control their own direct environment without foreigners living amongst them.

The school for native children would still expose Choctaw children to the ways of Euro-Americans without putting them in an otherwise all-white school.

The overwhelming push for education by the Choctaw people was strategic. Armed with the proper skills, the next generation of Choctaws would defend the people’s rights and lands going forward.

Funded by the government money and sponsored by the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, the Choctaw Academy began in 1825 and closed in 1845 with the last students leaving in 1848.

Colonel Richard Morton Johnson, lawyer, politician, and future Vice President of the United States, provided his farm and buildings in Great Crossings, Kentucky as the site of the school in exchange for monetary compensation.

Reverend Thomas Henderson, minister of the local Great Crossings Baptist Church, served as superintendent for the academy more than 15 years.

Reverend Henderson was known for his kindness, patience, and good intentions towards the students. He singlehandedly ran and taught a variety of subjects at the school for years until further teaching staff was hired.

He also served as the middle man between Richard Johnson and the students. As the superintendent, Henderson advocated for educational quality and opportunities for the boys while Johnson pressured to save the school’s funding so that he could pay off personal debts.

Enrollment at the academy often ran around 150 students with the ability to hold up to 200 students. While the academy always had a majority of Choctaw students, the school brought in sons from prominent families from many other tribes including Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Apalachicola, Miami, Quapaw, Pottawatomi and Chicaga as well as some white families in the region.

The early years of the Choctaw Academy promised a bright future for Indian education. Many students thrived here and learned to wield a strong, modern voice through literacy and education in the classics.

These students continued on to serve in core leadership positions in their tribes in the capacities of chiefs, councilmen, lawyers, ministers, teachers, administrators, doctors and more.

Their subjects of study included reading, writing, history, Latin, mathematics, astronomy, geography, surveying and accounting, with a few motivated students pursuing medicine and law.

Later in the mid-1830’s the focus moved to learning trade skills such as blacksmithing, boot and shoe making, tailoring and wagon making. Notable alumni of the Choctaw Academy include Peter Pitchlynn, Adam Nail, Alfred Wade, Adam Christie, John Page, David Folsom, Israel Folsom, Peter Folsom and Thompson McKinney among many others.

During the time of the Choctaw Academy, the Trail of Tears began.

Students’ families moved westward and some joined for the journey while others followed later upon leaving their schooling.

After removal and in the years that followed, government officials increasingly struggled to find Choctaws that wished to send their children to Kentucky.

Many boys were too weak after the long journey from the homelands. Soon after arriving in Oklahoma, newly established missions started up schools in Choctaw Nation that were far closer to home and easier to regulate.

As education continued at the Choctaw Academy, the students began to use their newfound voice to work as activists.

During his time as a student there, Peter Pitchlynn wrote an extensive report of complaint during his stay at the academy citing unkempt living conditions and difficult relationships between the school staff and students.

Pitchlynn was a star student at the Academy, but his report did not please Richard Johnson. Johnson benefited from a well-run school full of satisfied students and parents.

Disagreements between outspoken students and the Choctaw Academy staff would continue and increase over the course of its years as a school for elite native students.

In later years, Choctaw student and future doctor Adam Nail created more waves for the Choctaw Academy.

Under the close instruction of the Academy’s doctor, Nail became a doctor that incorporated his new understanding of Western medicine with his own knowledge of Choctaw medicinal practices.

During his time at the Academy where he eventually became the students’ physician, Dr. Nail advocated for the well-being and health of the students.

Further, his concern about the education and moral conditions of the school as it declined led him to take steps to raise awareness of the problems at the Academy.

Dr. Nail organized a petition and submitted reports to leaders in the federal government and the tribe.

In 1841, following lobbying efforts and the start of a successful career, Pitchlynn filled the position of superintendent of the school.

Rather than moving to improve the school, Pitchlynn planned to close the school in favor of attributing funds to schools located within the Choctaw Nation territory.

He recognized the significance of his role as a Choctaw person and his ability to act as strong force



by Francine Locke-Bray

This is the only original building remaining from the Choctaw Academy near Georgetown, Kentucky. The school was funded by government money following the Treaty of Washington City in 1825 and sponsored by the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. It opened in 1825 and closed in 1845, with the last students leaving in 1848. Colonel Richard Morton Johnson, a lawyer, politician and future Vice Present of the United States, provided his farm and buildings in Kentucky as the site of the school in exchange for monetary compensation.

on behalf of his people (Snyder 245).

As Francine Locke-Bray points out in an unpublished manuscript, these actions by students like Pitchlynn and Nail were part of the light that came out of the Choctaw Academy.

While sometimes complex and controversial, the Academy provided a space that shaped and formed future activists who would work on behalf of our people for the good of the tribe in the fields of education, medicine, law and government.

Some Choctaw Academy alumni went on to serve as influential leaders in growing Christian communities.

Known as the first Choctaw ordained as a Baptist minister, Peter Folsom left the Choctaw Academy and joined his tribe in Oklahoma in 1830, a year after becoming a Christian.

Folsom continued in the faith and baptism he gained at the Academy to promote Christianity in Oklahoma.

Through his leadership, Folsom welcomed the first Baptist missionaries into the new Indian Territory.

He would spend his life’s work preaching, starting Baptist churches both in Oklahoma and back in Mississippi in the homelands, and contributing to Baptist publications like “The Indian Missionary” in the 1880-1890s.

Folsom was a key part in the spark and growth of the Baptist Church in Choctaw lands.

Following this great Choctaw Baptist’s death, fellow Baptist Dr. J. S. Murrow wrote of Folsom that, “In physical appearance, Brother Folsom was tall and commanding. He was born a leader. He had a sweet and gentle disposition, was extremely hospitable and easily imposed upon. In the councils and business affairs of his nation he was also a leader and his impress on its welfare was large and good. His character is in every respect was unimpeachable. The nation, the church, and the world have lost few better or more useful men than Peter Folsom” (quoted in Marks).

Many stories came out of the Choctaw Academy, Baptist missions, and boarding schools. If you have a story you would like to share, please contact the Historic Preservation Department at jbyram@choctawnation.com or 1-800-522-6170 ext. 2512.



Courtesy Choctaw Tales, pg 7

Reverend Peter Folsom was known as the first Choctaw to be ordained as a Baptist minister. He was a key part of the growth of the Baptist church in Choctaw lands.

[For a list of the sources mentioned in this article please go to www.ChoctawNation.com and click on the History tab.](#)

From the Choctaw Nation Mail Room

When sending mail to the Nation please address as follows:

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
(Name of Department)
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702**

Unclaimed Funds Notice

The Accounting Department of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is trying to contact the individuals listed below. Choctaw Nation is in possession of unclaimed funds (uncashed payroll checks) that may be due to these individuals. If you are an employee or former employee of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and your name is listed below, please contact:

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
Attn: Jessica Pickens, Payroll and Employee Services Accountant
Or phone (580) 924-8280 ext. 2408
Allie Marie James
Kathryn Nicole Miller
Donald Stevens
Samantha Duncan
Charlea Michaels



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Job for the Day Connecting Tribal Members With Work

by CHARLES D. CLARK

The Choctaw Nation’s Job for the Day Program is a lot more than its name may seem at first.

The jobs can actually run for up to six weeks. At the end of that period, a temporary job could turn into a permanent position.

“We are going into our third year of helping tribal members,” Job for the Day Program Director Mike Fryer said. “We’ve had a lot of growth and made a number of changes since the program started.”

Increased funding is allowing for more outreach into the community.

“Most of the program’s promotion has been by word-of-mouth, but that’s about to change,” Fryer said, adding that a new brochure, posters and more are on the way.

The goal of Job for the Day is to empower Choctaw members in their search for finding employment.

Program participants are Choctaw tribal members with a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood card, over 18 years of age, have transportation to and from worksites, and be either unemployed or underemployed.

Five offices service Choctaw tribal members in 10 ½ counties in southeastern Oklahoma.

Each has several Choctaw districts that allow applicants to search for jobs with a reasonable commute.

The program also assists Choctaws that live outside southeastern Oklahoma.

“What we do is help those members who might live just outside Choctaw Nation borders, but are still able to travel to

Choctaw Nation jobs and find temporary work within our program,” Fryer said.

Fryer noted that he also looks for businesses outside the Choctaw Nation that might be hiring and where Job for the Day can send possible applicants.

“If we know of a company looking for someone that we have available we will put them in contact with each other,” he said.

Since opening its doors, Job for the Day has made contact with 1,900 Choctaw members looking for employment.

“In 2017, Job for the Day placed 348 people in jobs,” Fryer said, adding that its waiting list is at 68. Less than two years ago, the waiting list stood at 250.

The program primarily places qualified Choctaw members into positions, often entry level, in Choctaw Nation programs. Success stories are not hard to find.

Christa Lampkin, for example, was divorced with two small children when she moved to Durant from California.

With no training aside from her GED, she joined Job for the Day in June 2016 and was put to work in the employee cafeteria at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters.

After that initial work experience, she was hired on full-time in the cafeteria. She later applied for an opening in Accounts Payable.

Last summer she became a full-time employee in the Choctaw Nation’s Finance Office.

The 25-year-old said, “I would definitely recommend the program to anybody.”

The staff will work with you whatever your circumstances are, she added. “It’s



by Deidre Elrod

Director of Job for the Day Mike Fryer, left, heads up the growing program which finds work for tribal members throughout the Choctaw Nation. Coordinator for Districts 7, 9 and 10 Bob Culley assisted Christa Lampkin, who entered the program doing cafeteria work. Lampkin now works full time in the Finance Department.

been a great opportunity,” Lampkin said.

“We work with applicants one-on-one,” Fryer said, explaining that the program tries to help clients be as prepared as possible for their job interviews.

Job for the Day sometimes partners with Choctaw Nation Career Development and other employment programs to get them off to a good start.

“We truly want to help them get the right job,” Fryer said.

- Job for the Day locations include:
- Broken Bow, serving District 1 and District 2, Broken Bow Family Investment Center, 210 South Chahta Rd., (580) 584-2045.
 - Durant, serving District 7, District 9 and District 10, at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters, 529 N.16th, (800) 522-6170, ext. 2962.
 - Hugo, serving District 8, Hugo

Community Center, 1304 West Victor St., (800) 522-6170, ext. 4067, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

- McAlester, serving District 6, District 11, and District 12, 1636 S. George Nigh Expressway, (918) 429-7719.
- Stigler, serving District 3, District 4, and District 5, Stigler Community Center, 2208 East Main, (918) 967-9376.

Potential clients should be ready to provide their name, address, phone number and email address.

Fryer is based in Durant at Choctaw Nation Headquarters, and can be reached at (866) 933-2260 or by email, JFTD@ChoctawNation.com.

More information can also be found online at careers.choctawnation.com.

Tribal Police Volunteer to Evacuate Puerto Rican Hospital

by APRYL MOCK

Not every man would voluntarily leave his home behind to help perfect strangers rebuild their lives.

Despite having no electricity, a diet consisting primarily of MRE’s and a near constant state of being soaked, four Choctaw Nation Tribal Officers volunteered their time to assist in a hospital evacuation that resulted in the rescue of 47 patients.

On Oct. 5, the Ryder Hospital in Humacau, Puerto Rico lost power for the third and final time in the wake of Hurricane Maria, which followed on the heels of Hurricane Irma.

Quick Response Team Four sprang into action.

One of the Department of the Interior’s emergency response teams to mobilize after the 2017 wave of hurricanes, Quick Response Team Four was made up of tribal public safety officers and Bureau of Indian Affairs agents.

This was the first Interior team to include tribal public safety officers for a FEMA-led response.

The team first responded to aid the Seminole Tribe in Florida following Hurricane Irma, then after Maria hit, 14 officers voluntarily reassigned to Puerto Rico.

Of those 14, four were Choctaw Tribal Police Officers Larry Master, Andy Kenyon, Marvin Jefferson and Zachary Hendrix.

The officers were sad to leave the hospitality of the



Photo Provided

Members of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Police, who had been working in Florida following Hurricane Irma, prepare to board their flight to Puerto Rico. They spent nearly two weeks there, strangers in a strange land, offering aid following Hurricane Maria. They did not speak the language and the hurricane had destroyed most of their means of communication. They washed their clothes by hand and put them back on while they are still damp, because there was no electricity. They ate military rations to fuel them for 18-hour days and they rescued 47 patients from the Ryder Hospital when the backup generators failed and lives hung in the balance.

Seminole tribe.

“There was one day we ate five times. They kept feeding us, so we kept eating. I’ll go back to help them anytime,” joked officer Kenyon, “I think it’s awesome Chief Batton sent us. It wasn’t a Choctaw problem, but he wanted to help anyway.”

The team boarded a flight to Puerto Rico and arrived to find total devastation.

“It changed the color of the ocean. You could see where the blue met the brown of the mudslides,” said Masters.

“It blew every leaf off the trees,” Jefferson said.

According to Masters, “We worked for 24 hours straight some days, and I can’t remember a day we didn’t work at least 16 to 18 hours.”

The team worked to

provide security and offer their services to anyone in need.

On the night the hospital went dark, the Choctaw officers escorted military vehicles to safe hospitals and helped land helicopters sent to rescue the most critical patients.

According to Hendrix, “The Puerto Rican people were very gracious. They kept thanking us for being there.”

While evacuating the hospital, the team was completely cut off from the rest of the world.

“There was no radio, the cell towers were down and it took an hour to drive to the hospital from where we were,” Kenyon stated.

Executive Director of Public Safety John Hobbs is proud of his team. “They just kept volunteering, kept going, there’s no

quit in them,” Hobbs said.

You won’t find any bravado or hubris if you ask the Choctaw Tribal Police about this experience, but you will find a group of men with a sense of humor.

The team encountered many struggles while in Puerto Rico, not the least of which, a language barrier.

“Our GPS gave us directions in Spanish. Some of the names were so long, by the time it finished telling us we had to make a U-turn,” Masters said, sending the team into a fit of giggles.

While the gentlemen enjoy telling stories and laughing together, there is no doubt they are true heroes. Bearing great physical and emotional discomfort simply because they are good men.

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- Online huntingandfishing.choctawnation.com

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The Historic Preservation Department is organizing a series of textile workshops. We plan on experimenting with:

- ◆ Natural fibers
- ◆ Natural dyes
- ◆ Spinning
- ◆ Weaving

For more information and to join us, please contact:

Jennifer Byram
Historic Preservation
jbyram@choctawnation.com
1-800-522-6170 ext. 2512

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

Oka – Water

This month’s lesson will feature how to correctly put together different verb usages with a commonly used noun.

1. Luak ma oka ont fohobli. *Pour water onto the fire.*
2. Yakah! Itipatalhpo ya oka hlatabli li. *Oh my! I spilled water on the floor.*
3. Oka libeshli la chi. *I am going to warm/heat the water.*
4. Banaha ma oka wahlali ibani. *Add boiling water to the banaha.*
5. Vlla yvt oka isht washoha hosh maya. *The children are playing with the water.*
6. Oka vlhto ma akka talali. *Set the water container down.*
7. Chim ofi ya oka ipeta. *Water your dog.*
8. Oka falama yvt chukka lawa okpani tuk. *The flood destroyed a lot of homes.*
9. Hattak mvt oka chaha oka nowa tuk. *The man waded high water.*
10. Chibbak a isht ahchifa micha oka isht achefa. *Wash your hands with soap and water.*

www.choctawschool.com

Pettigrew Achieves Dream of Working for NASA

by KENDRA GERMANY

Penny Pettigrew isn't one to let statistics hold her back. With women being drastically underrepresented in the world of Science, Engineering, Technology and Math (STEM), it seems men statistically dominate the field.

However, women like Pettigrew are blazing the trail for the next generation of women in STEM.

Pettigrew is now the NASA Payload Communications Manager. She spends her days in the Payload Operations Integration Center at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Her job is to communicate with astronauts conducting research aboard the International Space Station.

Pettigrew's journey to NASA started with a childhood dream.

"I grew up wanting to be an astronaut," Pettigrew said. "To be honest, I grew up in the era of the space shuttle. I remember watching space shuttle launches and learning about when Sally Ride launched. She was the first U.S. woman in space. To see someone who looked like me, a female, living out her dreams showed me that I could do that too."

With a dream and a goal in mind, Pettigrew was off on a great adventure of discovery.

"Just going to Space Camp as a kid basically set me on the path to where I am today. I continually thank them for that," stated Pettigrew.

Pettigrew was a 2007 Space Camp Hall of Fame inductee. Today, she likes to volunteer at the space camp. She encourages the next generation of campers to follow their dreams.

"I talk to the current group of kids that are going through the programs to show them what can happen if you follow your dreams and work hard. You may not get to be an astronaut. That's what I always thought I was working toward. But, wherever you end up, you won't regret the journey," Pettigrew explained.

Pettigrew's father was a U.S. Navy sailor and she was born in Honolulu, Hawaii. Her family moved frequently from station to station. They eventually settled

in San Diego, California, where Pettigrew calls home.

Her mother Betty Ward Pettigrew wanted Penny and her sisters to stay in touch with their Choctaw roots.

She would tell them stories of her ancestors who traveled the Trail of Tears.

Pettigrew is the great-granddaughter of Edward Algie Ward and granddaughter of Roy Samuel Ward Sr.

Pettigrew shares these stories with her daughter Aspen as well and tries to stay connected with their roots.

Pettigrew's love for space and science as a child led her to the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado.

She received a four-year scholarship from the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and graduated with a degree in chemistry.

Pettigrew went on to complete her graduate work in Microgravity Materials Science at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. After completing her masters, Pettigrew started working at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.

"I've had many jobs with NASA since graduating. But, my most recent job is the one I wish I had from the beginning," admitted Pettigrew. "I work as a Payload Communications Manager or PAYCOM. This mainly means I'm one of the few people on Earth who gets to talk to the astronauts living and working on the space station."

Even though she isn't an actual astronaut, Pettigrew finds her job to be rewarding.

"It's very cool. I always say it's like space camp, but the real thing," laughed Pettigrew. "I attended space camp as a kid because I've always been interested in the space program. I grew up wanting to be an astronaut. I didn't make that, but I get to work with them, so that's pretty close."

By the sheer excitement in her voice when she talks about it, you can tell Pettigrew truly loves her job.

"It's still really exciting to me. To me it is a dream job," said Pettigrew. "It's so exciting. You're never doing the same thing two days in a row. You're doing real space stuff in real time with astronauts. It's only second to being the real thing."



Photos Provided by Emmett Given/ NASA MSFC

Choctaw tribal member Penny Pettigrew is NASA's Payload Communications Manager. Pettigrew and her team communicate directly with astronauts on the International Space Station. Her group, known as "the cadre", are the flight controllers who monitor research on the space station around the clock. The team stays in direct contact with station crew, Mission Control in Houston, international control centers in Germany and Japan, and with scientists around the world.



Pettigrew communicates with astronauts aboard the International Space Station. These astronauts are conducting cutting-edge research in space.

START TODAY!

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN YOUR FUTURE?

Questions to ask:

- *What are my educational goals?*
- *What steps do I need to take?*
- *What education resources are available through Choctaw Nation?*



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Living out the Chahta Spirit

Pastor Olin Williams Cedars of Lebanon



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

"The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted." Psalms 104:16 (KJV).

Lebanon is of high elevation. The planting of the mighty cedar trees was left to the mysteries of the hand of God.

God himself waters the roots by irrigation through the rocks of the high altitude with the melted snow and the waters from the rain above.

The Creator himself protects the young cedar sprouts from the dangers of the environment that may endanger its life.

The grazing mountain goats may have destroyed them, or the heavy falls of snow may have completely buried them. In its solitude of growth, only the eye of the planter saw the future grandeur and purpose of the tree and exalted it. God himself knows the fragrance of his trees and venerability of them.

This is also true of a sincere child of God. If we have been converted, we did not convert of our own will. We were not self-planted. God utilizes human instruments, but the instruments have no real power except as God puts power into it.

It is not the eloquence of the minister or the stirring of emotions by a song, but that the Divine Spirit plants a seed in the receptive heart which was fertilized by the Great Planter to be ready for growth. The watering, the protection, the inspection, the exaltation and its future status are all developed by the Divine Spirit. Man's religion sometimes interfere. Sometimes it masks the truth of the plant.

Religion is contrary to Christianity. Religion is a moral effort to plant itself and maintain itself to the expectation of self. Religion is based on the operated principle of "I obey, therefore I am accepted by God."

Christianity is based on the principle of the gospel which is, "I am accepted by God through what Christ has done, therefore I obey." This creates a relationship between the individual and God. Religion is just man and his instruments.

Other trees like fruit trees have seasonal droughts and fallen foliage. These trees must continually require maintenance of human hands to thrive. The cedar tree stays green without human efforts. The cedars of spiritual Lebanon desire its growth from a divine source and will reach its potential. Cedars have oil within and have sweet fragrance, a type of the Holy Spirit living within a true believer.

If You're A Choctaw Veteran, We Want You.

Tell us your story for a video library. Send your information to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Veterans Advocacy: veteransadvocacy@choctawnation.com

Contact Roger Hamill
Deputy Director
(800)522-6170 ext. 2160

DRESSING FOR COLD WEATHER

CHILLY

Adding layers will help keep you warm on the temperature drop.



1-2 layers
outer layer to keep out wind
long layer to keep warm
warm shoes
weather.gov/cold

COLD



2-3 layers
warm hat
outer layer to keep out wind
gloves
boots
2-3 layers

EXTREME COLD



3+ layers
warm hat
face mask
outer layer to keep out wind
gloves
boots
3+ layers