



July 2019 Issue



Elections will be held for Council District 2, Council District 5, Council District 8, and Council District 11, and two ballot questions.

OPEN VOTING LOCATIONS

Early voting:
July 12, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
General Election:
July 13, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Council District 1
Choctaw Community Center
2408 E. Lincoln, Idabel, OK

Council District 2
Choctaw Community Center
210 S. Chahta Rd.,
Broken Bow, OK

Choctaw Community Center
3839 Battiest Pickens Rd.,
Battiest, OK

Council District 3
Choctaw Community Center
100 Railroad St., Tahleah, OK

Council District 4
Choctaw Community Center
208 B. St., Poteau, OK

Council District 5
Choctaw Community Center
19400 AES Rd., Spiro, OK

Choctaw Community Center
2208 E. Main St., Stigler, OK

Council District 6
Choctaw Community Center
1056 N.W. 1003 Ave.,
Wilburton, OK

Council District 7
Choctaw Community Center
302 S.W. O St., Antlers, OK

Council District 8
Choctaw Community Center
1304 W. Victor, Hugo, OK

Boswell School Auditorium
604 7th St., Boswell, OK

Fort Towson School Cafeteria
205 N.W. 3rd St.,
Fort Towson, OK

Council District 9
Choctaw Community Center
2750 Big Lots Pkwy.,
Durant, OK

Council District 10
Choctaw Community Center
1625 W. Liberty Rd., Atoka, OK

Council District 11
Choctaw Community Center
3274 Afullota Hina,
McAlester, OK

Council District 12
Choctaw Community Center
103 E. California, Coalgate, OK



Photo by Deidre Elrod

A celebration is held May 17 for the opening of 20 LEAP homes and 10 low-rent homes in Poteau.

Building a better future

Housing opportunities continue to expand

By Mallory Phelps

Recent ribbon cuttings across the Choctaw Nation have opened many new homes for tribal members and their families. The new lease-purchase (LEAP) program, now gaining momentum, is making a difference in the lives of Choctaws across the 10 ½ counties.

The LEAP program is a new homeownership program for Choctaw tribal members who must meet program income guidelines. It assists families in becoming mortgage-ready and lender-qualified with credit counseling services over time. The idea is that these families will in time be ready to finance the home after a 15-year lease and have the knowledge to do so with the education and home-buyer counseling services provided during the leasing period.

Since launching the program geared towards helping tribal members with affordable housing, the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority has welcomed 170 families into LEAP homes.

“We always say our mission is to provide opportunities for growth and prosperity...homeownership is a key essential part to that,” said Chief Gary Batton.

Chief Batton’s vision is to build 500 homes in five years, including the 170 homes that have already been built. The five-year plan started in fiscal year 2018, and is planned to be complete in 2022.

Last year, the program



Photo by Chris Jennings

Forty new homes are added in Durant, bringing the total to 170 LEAP homes in the Choctaw Nation.

helped place 110 families into LEAP homes. The plan for 2019 includes 140 homes. Currently, Stringtown, Krebs, and Broken Bow are in the works with Idabel and Hugo to close out the 2019 fiscal year.

Ribbon cutting ceremonies were recently held in Poteau and Durant. The ribbon cutting ceremony in Poteau May 17 opened 10 new low-rent homes and 20 new LEAP homes in the area. The May 30 ceremony in Durant opened 40 new LEAP homes for families who applied and met program income guidelines. These 40 homes were the first for Bryan County. An additional 10 homes are currently under construction in Calera.

Payments on a LEAP home start at just \$500, and allow families the opportunity to live more comfortably while working towards homeownership. Chief Batton said, “It’s able to put money back in their pockets, and also allow them to become homeowners and take care of their homes.”

According to Mandi Young, director of Help Management

Services, applications are received and processed on a first-come, first-serve basis. When an application is received, it is time and date stamped. The completed application is processed, and the background check is ran to determine the tribal member’s eligibility. A letter is then sent to the tribal member to let him/her know the outcome of the application.

The application for the LEAP program can be found online at www.choctawnation.com/leap-program or for additional information, contact the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation in Hugo at 580-326-7521.

The Housing Authority takes pride in showing a commitment to tribal members and their need for suitable housing. Their mission is “To appropriately assist tribal members in their efforts to adequately meet their housing needs.”

The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority has worked to better the lives of Choctaw tribal members since 1965. Aside from the LEAP program, the Housing Authority provides an

array of service options. One of those services is the Rental Assistance program, which offers low-income applicants the chance to live in affordable and safe housing.

An application process is required, with priority given to Choctaw tribal members. Applicants are urged to submit a copy of his/her tribal membership card with the application.

Affordable Rental Housing is another service provided by the Housing Authority. This service provides housing to lower-income households earning no more than 80% of the area median income. Applicants must meet requirements and be current CDIB cardholders.

In the month of June, the Housing Authority provided several opportunities for rental education. The goal was to give tribal members the necessary skills to become successful renters and potential homeowners. There were five opportunities in different cities and locations for tribal members to come together and learn more about renting and homeownership.

EnVision Center coordinates housing options

By Chris Jennings

In June 2018, the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as one of 17 EnVision center pilot communities. EnVision Centers are based on the idea that financial support alone isn’t enough to help get out of poverty.

The new EnVision Center, located in Poteau, Oklahoma, will focus on four areas to help tribal members – economic empowerment, educational advancement, health and wellness, and character and leadership.

Chief Gary Batton said, “People are always asking, they’re trying to figure out what is the path to self-sufficiency. Now they can come to one place and they will help guide you through that process.”

Just like the EnVision centers across the country, the Poteau location can help with various housing issues. Whether it’s from being homeless to getting a rental house, or getting help transitioning from renting a home to home ownership, the EnVision center is a one-stop shop for self-sufficiency.

Michelle Tinnin, Native American program specialist with HUD, said, “For Choctaw Nation tribal members, this is an opportunity for you to excel and to find ways to make your dreams happen.”

With over 140 programs available to Choctaw tribal members,



Photo by Deidre Elrod

A ribbon cutting ceremony is held May 17 for an EnVision Center in Poteau.

it can be hard to know who to ask, or where to go for help. Oftentimes, tribal members aren’t aware there is help available for their particular need.

Because of that, along with the new EnVision Center, tribal members will be able to utilize a coordination service that can help navigate the maze of programs available.

Carrie Blackmon, Service Coordination director with the Choctaw Nation, said, “What we’re trying to do is wrap around services to link our tribal members, to all the Choctaw Nation programs that they may not know about.”

Blackmon gave education as just one example of how

someone might get help. “If they don’t have a GED, we want to help them get that. If that means transportation, webinars, information, education, our department will work on trying to link our tribal members with those,” said Blackmon.

The help offered by Service Coordination aligns directly with the EnVision Center’s purpose of connecting low-income households with the resources and tools for economic opportunities and self-sufficiency.

However, access to these services across the nation is key. Blackmon encourages any tribal member that has a need, whether they live in the 10 ½

counties or outside, to contact the Service Coordination department, 800-522-6170 ext. 4127, and they will get them to the correct department if there is one that addresses their need.

“For our tribal members, it’s going to be critical that we set these places up throughout the Choctaw Nation,” said Batton.

While the first Choctaw Nation EnVision Center is in Poteau, plans are to do pop-up locations at Choctaw Community Centers wherever there is a need.

The Poteau EnVision Center is located at 511 Nanih Waiya Rd., Poteau, OK 74953. They can be reached at 580-380-9370 or 918-647-3665.

Faith, Family, Culture

Resilient spirit of Chahta ancestors paved the way



Chief Gary Batton

This year, springtime brought with it a pretty crazy storm season. It has been one of the wettest years on record, bringing flooding to not only Oklahoma but also the entire Midwest as well. Tornadoes and severe storms have been devastating to our region. Many of our tribal members have been affected by this weather and natural disaster.

With that in mind, we had to prioritize the safety of our tribal members and postpone the Trail of Tears Walk from its original date to June 1 due to the threat of inclement weather.

June 1 turned out to be a beautiful, sunny day, so many of you showed up to take part in the walk to honor our ancestors. It is always such an amazing and humbling experience. It is hard to fathom what the Chahta people went through and the atrocities they faced. On May 24, our Trail of Tears Bike Team returned from their 500-mile journey along a portion of the route our ancestors traveled from Philadelphia, Mississippi, to Oklahoma. Biking just a few miles can be grueling, but our team travels 500 miles to honor and connect with our ancestors in a spiritual, physical and emotional way. Even though biking 500 miles is a challenging feat, it still doesn't compare to the real Trail of Tears.

During our commemorative walk, we only cover 2.5 miles on a modern road. Our ancestors weren't afforded that luxury. They trekked over 700 miles, facing the elements, disease, hunger and exhaustion. They didn't have the opportunity to postpone for the safety of their people like we do today. They were forcibly removed from the safety of their homes and required to leave or face certain punishment. Today, we have tennis shoes to protect our feet from the terrain. We also have planes, trains and cars to get us from one place to another, shielded from the elements as we travel. Our ancestors didn't have anything to truly protect them on the journey. Many of them perished on the trail from exposure, disease and exhaustion. We will never honestly know what horrors they faced, and I can only imagine how traumatizing something like that would be.

So, when we walk in Tvshka Homma or ride with the Trail of Tears Bike Team, we aren't pretending to know and experience the real struggle our ancestors felt. It is a way for us to honor them and their memory, remembering the sacrifices they made for future generations to prosper. When they left, they had no clue what they were walking into. They had no clear vision of what would happen once they arrived in their new home. But they persisted. The resilient spirit of our Chahta ancestors is what paved the way for our prosperity today. So, when we take part in these events, we are saying yakoke for their strength, for giving us the foundation to rise to where we are today.

We will never forget the strength, resilience, and sacrifices of those who came before us, and what makes us the proud Choctaw Nation that we are today!



Photo by Chris Jennings

Strong, loving fathers integral part of human experience



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Choctaw fathers are traditionally described as strong protectors. Many generations ago, they provided for their families by hunting, making tools and weapons to defend their communities. They were warriors, protecting their communities. They were also teachers, tasked with passing on valuable lessons to younger generations.

We owe a great deal to the Chahta men who came before us. Continuing their legacy and the Chahta values they passed by becoming strong, loving, and providing fathers ourselves is a great way to honor them.

I enjoyed getting to spend time with my father this

Father's Day. It is such a blessing to have the opportunity to make memories with my father. Over the years, I have learned so many valuable lessons from him and credit him for the man that I am today. In true Chahta fashion, I am passing those same lessons on to my children hoping to continue the legacy of our ancestors.

The older we get, the more aware each of us becomes of how fast time passes by. I encourage all of you to slow down and soak in the moments you have with your loved ones. Our time together here on earth is precious, and the investment of time with loved ones is invaluable.

For some, Father's Day isn't a time for celebration. It can be a time of grief if they have experienced the loss of their father. If this is your experience, I hope that you can find comfort and peace with the memories you have. Many times, during family gatherings, you will hear stories passed down about those fathers who have gone on before us. This is always a great way of continuing those fond memories.

I encourage the men in our community to strive to be the best fathers and role models our children need

and deserve. No matter the decisions you have made in the past, or if you haven't had a good father figure in your life, you can be the one to break that cycle. It is up to you to decide to make the changes, and the Choctaw Nation is here to help you on that journey.

We provide multiple services that can assist our men. The Nation provides vocational training assistance and other educational programs to help our members complete their education. Our housing department assists tribal members with their efforts to meet their housing needs adequately. The Better Beginnings program helps parents and expecting parents in "at risk" situations, and provides them with the tools they need to become better parents. There are many other programs and services that are designed to help our tribal members live successful, healthy and productive lives.

I hope our families all enjoyed a wonderful Father's Day weekend. Together, we are continuing the Chahta spirit of our ancestors for our children and the generations to come. If you would like more information on programs offered by the Choctaw Nation, please visit choctawnation.com/tribal-services.

McCarthy honors donation to his people

By Kendra Germany

The Choctaw people had only been in their new home in Indian Territory for roughly 16 years, when they heard of the suffering of the famine in Ireland. The memories of the atrocities they faced during the removal were fresh in their minds. Even though they had every right to be bitter and angry, the Choctaw people never lost the Chahta spirit of resilience and compassion.

When the Choctaw people heard of the suffering of the Irish people, they knew that they wanted to help. They collected a donation of \$170, an equivalent to roughly \$5,000 today, to send to Ireland.

That donation is what tied the bond that has connected two nations for 171 years.

Charles McCarthy of West Cork, Ireland, recalled hearing of the donation as a young man and wanted to do something to honor that gift in some way.

"I have, for a long time, had the desire to make some personal gesture on behalf of my family to the Choctaw Nation for your act of humanity towards the starving people of Ireland," said McCarthy. "When you at the time in your history as a people, had suffered such great hardship on the Trail of Tears."

"It's head bending to think that some people, who were downtrodden to such an extent, found it in their hearts to do that," marveled McCarthy. "It's so, so rare. It is something the world we live in today needs very badly."

For McCarthy, it is essential to share and honor the story of the bond between our nations. So, he decided to make something that represents both cultures in a powerful way.

"I was aware of the significance of the bow in Choctaw culture. With this in mind, I was bold enough to attempt to make a bow in the fashion of the Choctaw bow, which bears similarities to the longbow of Europe, the best of which were made from yew, *Taxus bachata*," explained McCarthy.

He forged the bow from a very special type of yew called the Irish yew or *Taxus bachata fastigiata*.

McCarthy explained that the yew tree is revered and regarded as one of the noble trees of the woods. It is associated with the end of life and rebirth at a time of year called Samhain. Samhain is celebrated every year at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter.

According to McCarthy, Coleman Murphy, the caretaker of a local yew tree, permitted him to remove a bough from the tree.

"Having explained my intentions to the person responsible for the tree's welfare, he was delighted to oblige," stated McCarthy.



Photo by Kendra Germany

From left, Tony Dalton, Jacob Dalton, Charlie McCarthy, Chief Gary Batton, Joan Dalton, Gerry Dalton, David Dalton.

McCarthy, with help from his good friend, Nicholas Ward, removed the limb from the tree. Once the wood was back at McCarthy's workshop, the long tedious process of creating the bow began.

According to McCarthy, the bough was first split and then had to season for 12 months before it could be worked on further.

"After all the rough work is done, there is a crucial stage where the bow must be tillered," explained McCarthy. "This is where the bow's limbs are balanced to ensure the bow shoots correctly. During this process, the bow is subject to immense strain and pressure, and is likely to break."

If it survives the tillering process, it is safe to use according to McCarthy.

The entire bow making process took McCarthy a total of roughly 14 months to complete, and three attempts to get it just right.

To further signify the bond between the nations, McCarthy carved an inscription using the ancient Irish alphabet Ogham into the bow. Etched into the wood are the phrases, "mo chara" and "mo chalann," translated "my friend" and "my family."

The connection between both nations is truly one of friendship and family.

For McCarthy, it was a humbling experience to hand deliver the bow.

"Presenting the bow to Chief Batton and the Choctaw people was not just the final act of the time spent making the bow, but rather the fulfillment of an ambition to personally thank the Choctaw people for their incredible kindness. This has been a heartfelt desire of mine which has been a part of my life for a very long time."

Chief Batton accepted the gift on behalf of the Choctaw Nation and was honored to do so.

"Our relationship with the people of Ireland has been such a wonderful thing. Our ancestors went through their trials and tribulations, and both nations are still here," said Batton.

The admonition

The Church of Ephesus was noted for their zeal of missionary and evangelistic labor. It was a bee hive of activity. This was a working church, standing firm in its doctrine and spiritual discernment. However, the Lord says in Revelation 2:4, "Nevertheless I have something against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." This church maintained a spirit of sacrifice, separation and a keenness for detecting heresy, but they were guilty of a sin that no average person could detect. They had left their first love. Our Lord told His disciples, concerning the last days, "The love of many shall wax cold." (Matthew 24:12) Now the charge is not having any love at all for Christ, but that they had left their first love. Before his departure, the Lord asked of Peter this very question, "Lovest thou me?" A wife or husband may remain faithful and true to each other and yet there may be a decline in first love. A church member may be regular at service attendance, but no amount of activity can compensate for lack of first love. Sacrifice, even to the point of poverty and martyrdom shall profit nothing, if it has not love. (1 Corinthians 13:3) Like Martha, we can become so occupied with doing for Christ and miss becoming like Christ. (Luke 10:38-42) Christ like love is the first essential in Christian character and when it declines, the soul begins to drift.

So, what is the first step in reviving a declining love? In verse 5 of chapter 2 in Revelation, our Savior prescribes a retrospect of our situation. He says, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen." Memory is a precious gift. It can review a time and place when our first love began to wane. The next step is to repent. Repentance is a change of mind that will lead to a change of direction. Our Lord admonishes His church to turn from her sins to her first love. "As ye therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." (Colossians 2:6) Do Christians need to repent, confess and turn back to God? Most Christians quote 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will their land," and fail to see the hidden admonition of losing their first love. Outward physical sins are more concerned and dealt with than inward sins.



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain



Chief Gary Batton rings the bell to start the Trail of Tears Walk.



Photos by Chris Jennings

The Choctaw Nation Color Guard leads the way at the 2019 Trail of Tears Walk at Tvshka Homma. Hundreds of people gathered at the Choctaw capitol grounds to participate in the annual walk.

Hundreds participate in Trail of Tears Walk

Bell dedicated

By Chris Jennings

After speaking to the crowd at the Trail of Tears Walk, Chief Gary Batton rang a bell three times to dedicate the bell and begin the walk.

Batton said, “There’s something about the ringing of the bell ... it’s somber, but yet it’s quiet, at the same time that it’s loud; it’s a great fit here at Tvshka Homma.”

The bell originally hung in the Tuskahoma Female Institute, built in 1892, located a short distance from Tvshka Homma in the community of Lyceum.

The school burned in 1925, two weeks before Christmas. The next year, Beulah Baldwin, Allie Penny and Lottie Orr purchased the bell for \$3.50. It rang at the Tuskahoma First Baptist Church until 2018, when it was donated back to the Choctaw Nation.

“Some of their members actually contacted me and said, ‘We would love to donate that [the bell] and bring it home to the tribe.’ It’s great to have it back here on our capitol grounds,” said Batton.



Walkers of all ages, even those that couldn’t walk yet, honored the Choctaw people who traveled the Trail of Tears.



Chief Gary Batton greets the Choctaw Color Guard before the start of the Trail of Tears Walk.

Big step from where we were to where we are

By Chris Jennings

Over 188 years ago, the Choctaw people suffered terrible hardships as they traveled what would become known as the Trail of Tears.

Since that time, the descendants of those who began that journey have risen to a new high as a strong and vibrant Nation.

The suffering from the past has not been forgotten by those in the present. Hundreds of Choctaw tribal members and their families gathered at Tvshka Homma for the Trail of Tears Walk, to honor those that made the three separate journeys, the forced removal of the Choctaw Nation from its homeland in Mississippi.

Speaking to the crowd Chief Gary Batton

said, “Today is a solemn day as we recall the events that took place all those years ago, but it is also a day of celebration. All those sacrifices; that tvshka, or warrior spirit, that our ancestors had; their hope and faith for a better day is why we are able to have this event.”

Angela Adkins, who was on her third walk, said her daughter was a recipient of a scholarship from the Chahta Foundation. “It’s a big gap, from the Trail of Tears to the Chahta Foundation bestowing upon her scholarships to go to law school...That’s why we come here, to celebrate where the Choctaws are today,” said Adkins.

Some people may do the walk for personal reasons. Many, though, do it to keep the mem-

ories alive. When asked why it was important for her to do the Trail of Tears walk, Jan Britt from Shawnee said, “Bringing their legacy back to life...all the people who went through the Trail of Tears. We’re remembering them today and all the hardships they encountered.”

As the crowd made its way through the capitol grounds at Tvshka Homma, past stickball fields, the cafeteria and the capitol building, it’s evident that the Choctaws have come a long way in those 188 years.

Adkins sums it up saying, “Part of it is not just remembering, but the celebration of how far the Choctaws have come and how proud we are of being part of that Choctaw Nation today.”

Choctaw artist creates unique work for Oklahoma US Rep. Kendra Horn

By Kendra Germany

Choctaw artist D.G. Smalling recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to unveil his new artwork displayed in the office of Rep. Kendra Horn, D-Okla.

The piece, personally requested by Rep. Horn, is a representation of all women.

“The piece itself has no definite ethnicity, it’s from fro to braid,” explained Smalling. “Kendra wanted something that represented the ascending of women in Oklahoma.”

The piece, created in Smalling’s famous one-line style, depicts a woman holding a pen in one hand and a shield in the other.

Smalling went on to explain the symbolism of the artwork a little further.

“Instead of offering a peace pipe and the olive branch, she just has the shield from the state flag. Instead of a war club, she has a pen,” Smalling stated.

According to Smalling, Rep. Horn has been a champion for women’s rights and representation. She has been blazing a trail for future female leaders in the state. In the 2018 general election, she became the first Democrat to represent the 5th District since 1975, when she defeated Republican incumbent Steve Russell.

Rep. Horn is also the first Democratic member

of Congress to represent the state of Oklahoma in Washington, D.C., since Dan Boren in 2013. She is only the third woman elected to Congress from Oklahoma in history.

Oklahoma is among the lowest in the U.S. for female representation in office. Women currently represent only 14% of the legislative body, while women make up roughly 51% of the state’s population.

Both Horn and Smalling are advocates of the nonpartisan organization Sally’s List. The goal of the organization is to recruit, train and help elect women to public office in the state of Oklahoma. Sally’s List offers training to women from diverse backgrounds, empowering them to be strong, capable candidates.

According to Smalling, it is an honor to have his artwork displayed in the U.S. Capitol.

“It’s kind of funny for a kid from McCurtain County,” said Smalling with a smile on his face. “I’ve done a lot of firsts in my life, and I love that art has given me a lot of firsts.”

Smalling’s art is on display all across the world. He has also done portrait work for prominent figures such as former British prime minister and retired associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Sandra Day O’Connor. But for

Smalling, his artwork for Rep. Horn seems a little more special.

“This one means a lot to me because firstly she is a friend to me, my family and Indian Country. I think these are times that we need to find people who we can really trust. The fact that she is as embracing as she is to us, is a very important thing,” said Smalling.

Smalling considers himself very fortunate for the success and opportunities he has been given in life. Having his artwork on display at the capitol is a continuation of one of his

overall goals.

“This represents a continuation of trying to push for Indian Country, especially Choctaw Country in particular, into new spaces. Art gives me that. Art and that God made me with a very big personality. There’s nothing demure about me,” laughed Smalling. “If you give me an opportunity, I’m going to squeeze it. I’m going to take every bit of it and wring it.”

Smalling has quite a few big projects coming up, and just like the lines in his artwork, there’s no sign of stopping.



Choctaw artist D.G. Smalling and Rep. Kendra Horn

TRIBAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

Your response matters because you matter to the Choctaw Nation.
We want to hear from you.
The survey will be safe and create a national profile of our tribal members.

SURVEY OPEN
September 2 - October 18, 2019
WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Council Corner

Tribal Council
Monthly Regular Session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session June 8 at Tvshka Homma, Oklahoma.

Minutes of the May 11 regular session were approved.

New business included:

a) A bill sponsored by Perry Thompson to add a polling place.
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

b) Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

c) Approve Revocable Permit G09-1945 in Favor of Ralph Allred on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Choctaw County, Oklahoma
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

d) Approve a Natural Gas Pipeline Easement in Favor of Oklahoma Natural Gas Company on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Bryan County, Oklahoma
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

e) Approve an Electric Easement in Favor of Public Service Company of Oklahoma on Choctaw Nation Fee Land in Coal County, Oklahoma
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

f) Approve a Road Access Easement in Favor of Jeffrey and Carol Jackson and Nancy and Gary Horton, on Choctaw Nation Fee Land in McCurtain County, Oklahoma
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

g) Authorize Chief to Place Property in Choctaw County in Trust Status with the United States of America
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

h) Amend CB-79-16 and to Authorize the Chief to Place Property in McCurtain County in Trust Status with the United States of America as Amended
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

i) Amend CB-145-16 and to Authorize the Chief to Place Property in Bryan County in Trust Status with the United States of America as Amended
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

j) Approve a Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

k) Approve Funds and Budget for Tribal Victim Services Set Aside (VSSA) Expansion
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

l) Approve Funds and Budget for the Harold Hamm Diabetes Center Sub-Award
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

m) Approve the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) Indian Housing Plan (IHP) for Year FY 2020
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

n) Approve the Filing of the Application for the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program (DLT)
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

o) Approve Funding for Construction of New Garvin Travel Plaza, and upon Completion of Such Construction, the Demolition of the Currently Existing Garvin Travel Plaza
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

p) Approve the Filing of the Small Ambulatory Program Application
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

q) Approve the Conveyance of Land in Pittsburg County to Elk Roads Investment, LLC
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

r) Authorize Entry into Grant Agreements for Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program (Community Connect)
Vote Counts: YEAs-Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill Passed

Council members present: Thomas Wiliston, Tony Ward, Kenny Bryant, Delton Cox, Jennifer Woods, Ronald Perry, Jack Austin, Perry Thompson, James Dry, Anthony Dillard, Bob Pate, James Frazier.

The next regular scheduled council meeting will be 10:00 am, July 6 in Tvshka Homma. For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and Council bills, go to www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills.



Delton Cox, District 4

The greatest generation

“The Greatest Generation” is the name of a book written by Tom Brokaw but it is much more than just a book. It has become the term used to describe those men and women who grew up during the Great Depression, fought and won World War II, and then the survivors who came home to build this country into the greatest country on earth. It is about the thousands of young men and women who went overseas to help defeat the Axis powers of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan.

We should never forget the thousands of American lives lost to do this. The term refers to the millions of men and women who supported the war effort by working on farms and in factories, by producing equipment and supplies for our military. However according to most surveys done 40% of Americans today do not even know who the United States fought in World War II.

Many of the leaders of our country came from this generation such as presidents Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, George H. W. Bush, and Ronald Reagan. Most of us have known military veterans of this period of time but there are fewer each year. Get to know someone who is a World War II veteran and thank them for what they did.

In January, my wife and I visited Dave Heavener in the Heavener Nursing Home, a Navy veteran of World War II, to commemorate his birthday with a cake with 11 candles on it and a small present. He had turned 102 that month. He had some difficulty hearing and in blowing out the candles, but he enjoyed his cake with his friends.

In February, I was honored to accompany the Chief, Assistant Chief, and four tribal employees to a visit to the home of William Logan, a Marine veteran of World War II. He told the story of how he got his purple heart. He reminded me of my deceased two oldest brothers who were in the South Pacific during the time he was there.

My father-in-law, Willie Thompson, was also a World War II Army veteran who was point man of his squad during the invasion of Germany toward the end of the war. He got hit in his shoulder and leg with grenade shrapnel that he had some difficulty with the rest of his life. He came back home to the Mississippi Choctaw Reservation and raised his family there. We should never forget we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us!

Choctaw Community Partner Fund awards more than \$65,000 to Pushmataha County, cities

The Choctaw Nation awarded the City of Antlers \$15,000, the City of Clayton \$27,700 and Pushmataha County \$22,400 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue to help strengthen and develop the local area. This is the second voluntary contribution from the Choctaw Nation. The first took place in late January and distributed a combined total of \$71,300 to the cities of Antlers and Clayton and Pushmataha County. The initiative will continue on a quarterly basis to cities and counties that operate non-gaming businesses throughout the Nation’s 10 ½ counties.

“Tribal Council is very pleased with the status of the initiative thus far,” states Jack Austin Sr., Choctaw Nation Council Member. “Seeing all the changes solidifies the impact we hoped this initiative would have throughout the 10 ½ counties.”

The Choctaw Nation is a sovereign tribal nation that recognizes the impact and influence in the many cities and counties where their people live and work. The expectation is for each local government to apply the Choctaw Community Partner Fund contribution toward supporting and developing the communities that serve tribal and non-tribal citizens. Choctaw Community Partner Fund distributed \$371,800 in the first quarter and \$371,000 in the second quarter for a combined economic impact of \$742,800 to 24 cities and counties that operate non-gaming businesses in the Nation’s 10 ½ counties.

“We appreciate everything Choctaw Nation has done to help out the City of Antlers,” states Joel Taylor, Antlers city manager. “Our first set of funds were used on a manhole project and we plan to use the second set, in conjunction with a TSET Grant, to give the kids of our city a splash pad they can enjoy in the hot summer months.”

Pushmataha County used their first quarter funds to replace the boiler in their courthouse and plan to use the second set on a rural grant match for a future project.



John Redman, Choctaw Nation; Jack Austin Sr., Choctaw Nation Council Member District 7, and Mike Brittingham, Pushmataha County Commissioner District 1.



John Redman, Choctaw Nation; Jack Austin Sr., Choctaw Nation Council Member District 7, and Joel Taylor, Antlers City Manager.



Choctaw Nation photos

John Redman, Choctaw Nation; Jack Austin Sr., Choctaw Nation Council Member District 7, and Mike Brittingham, Pushmataha County Commissioner District 1.

ENVISION CENTER

A resource center to help Native American individuals and families living in HUD-assisted housing climb the ladder of opportunity.

Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

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- ✓ File your claim
- ✓ Get same-day decisions when you share complete information

EVENT DATE & TIME/S:

July 9, 2019, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm - Idabel

July 16, 2019, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm - Durant

LOCATION:

Kiamichi Votech 3205 Lincoln Road NE Idabel, OK 74745	Choctaw Headquarters 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701
---	--

POINT OF CONTACT:

Karen Massey, kmassey@cnhsa.com
Mary Culley, VA, Mary.Culley@va.gov
Tammy Jobe, tmjobe@cnhsa.com

PHONE NUMBER:

Karen Massey, (918) 567-7000, ext 6462
Mary Culley, (405) 626-3426

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Notes to the Nation



Choctaw Nation photo

From left, Connie Bell; Julia and Marvin Hampton; Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Council Member District 10; Jacob and Jozcelynne Luellen, co-owners of Luellen’s Rentals, LLC.

Luellen’s Rentals provided opportunity to grow business

The Choctaw Development Fund awarded Jacob and Jozcelynne of Luellen’s Rentals, LLC a \$5,000 Small Business Forgivable loan. For the past two years, Luellen’s Rentals, LLC provides clean, well-maintained, quality rental homes in Bryan County. Funds will be used to purchase an assortment of tools and equipment that will be used on the rental properties for maintenance and improvements as needed.

The Choctaw Development Fund supports economic viability and sustainability by partnering with Choctaw small business owners, cities and municipalities to create long-term growth and job creation within the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

“Our future plan is to acquire more properties, improve those properties as needed, and create a more desirable place for those in and around the Bryan County area to live,” states Jacob Luellen, co-owner of Luellen’s Rentals, LLC. “We are thankful for the Choctaw Nation for awarding us this loan, which will give us the opportunity to grow our business.”

Currently, Luellen’s Rentals, LLC operates 14 rental units in Bryan County. As their company grows, there will be the possibility of expansion to other counties.

“Bryan County is a promising location for rental properties,” states Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Council Member District 10. “As Bryan County continues to grow, so will the opportunity for Jacob and Jozcelynne to obtain more properties and tenants.”

Biskinik
Announcement Guidelines

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above.

Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.

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

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

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

Mail to: Biskinik
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
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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 type-written and double-spaced. You must include an address and phone number where you may be reached. Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive. Items are printed in the order received. Faxed photos will not be accepted.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK or your address needs to be changed, our Circulation Department would appreciate hearing from you at ext. 2116.

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 in 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.

EVENTS

- Heritage Day**
Monday, Aug. 5
- 8 a.m.-Noon** Wesson Farms (CNO Regional Medical Clinic front parking lot, back row, 1801 Chukka Hina, Durant)
- 8:30-9 a.m.** Opening prayer and devotional with Vince Maytubby of Chihowa I Chukka Assembly of God Church (Headquarters, Main Lobby. 1802 Chukka Hina, Durant)
- 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.** Wear traditional clothing or jewelry and receive a door prize ticket. Complete a morning or afternoon activity and receive another ticket (Headquarters, Main Lobby)
- 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.** Choctaw Artists (Headquarters, Main Lobby)
- 9:15-9:30 a.m.** Presentation: “Takkon Hvshi (Peach Month)” by Dr. Ian Thompson, CNO Historic Preservation and Museums (Headquarters, Conference Center Room 2)
- 10-10:45 a.m.** Choctaw Language with Dora Wickson, (Headquarters, Conference Center Room 2)
- 10 a.m.-2 p.m.** Program Booths: Connecting Kids to Coverage, Genealogy, Greenhouse (Headquarters, Main Lobby)
- 11-11:30 a.m.** Presentation: “Mississippi Choctaws” by Gwen Takes Horse, CNO Genealogy (Headquarters, Conference Center Room 2)
- 1-3 p.m.** Make & Take: “Beaded Daisy Chain Bracelet”- CNO Cultural Services (Headquarters, Conference Center Room 2)
- * RSVP required for Make & Take class.** Class is limited to 20 participants. Please email CulturalServices@choctawnation.com with your name, department, and class time.
- 3:15- 3:30** Choctaw Dance Chant Class- “Fast War Dance” (Headquarters, Third Floor Rotunda)
- 3:30-4:00** Choctaw Dance- “Fast War Dance” (Headquarters, Third Floor Rotunda)

LETTERS

One lucky man

My name is Travis Sargent. I have been the welding instructor at Kiamichi Technology Center in Idabel and Force Welding School in Valliant for 15 years. Recently I received a phone call from the Department of Corrections; and no, it was not a family member. It was my long-time friend and fellow welding instructor at Hodgens Correctional facility, Jamie Alstatt. He was wanting to know if I would be able to help an inmate that was in his program, and was about to be released. Jamie went on to say, “It will be worth your time because this guy is not normal.” You see, it can be difficult getting into my welding classes because they tend to stay filled and it is not always easy to finish them because they are quite demanding. So, I would say Jeremy Gray was lucky to get an interview as quickly as he did. When he called and I spoke with him on the phone, his voice had a humbleness to it that was filled with passion when he spoke about his welding. Jeremy was also lucky that we had a spot open for him to get started right away. He showed up early, stayed late and worked with an ongoing enthusiasm as he moved through his training. His training went at a rapid pace all while he maintained a welding job where he was receiving raises and promotions. During this time, he was driving to Idabel and Valliant from Durant two to three times per week for class. This is where most people’s luck starts running out, but not Jeremy Gray’s luck; he just kept pushing forward.

Toward the end of his training, he was spending more time with me getting prepared to take a welding test and go off to work. We were working weekly on perfecting his welding and applying for this TWIC card which is not an easy process for an ex-inmate to obtain. We were also dealing with a probation system that usually does not let people in the probation process leave the state, and if they are given permission to leave, they must report back once a month for drug testing and payment to the state. Most companies who hire welders do not like this because the person they hired is having to leave a current obligation to take care of a prior obligation.

Jeremy received his TWIC card in a normal amount of time and his probation officer told him he did not have to report to him any further. He passed his welding test for RSO Construction with flying colors. A welder can make up to \$100,000 within a year. It seemed that everything Jeremy touched went his way. Now, most people would say that Jeremy Gray was a lucky man, right? I say, “wrong,” because I personally do not believe in luck. I believe that every day people create their own opportunities.

Jamie Alstatt, at the Department of Corrections, saw Jeremy’s potential because of his attitude and work ethic. If I did believe in luck, then Jamie Alstatt, Jason Jackson at Force Welding School, Aaron Grimes at Force Welding School, Penny James and Jamie Hamil at the Choctaw Nation Career Development Program and myself would be the lucky ones. However, I choose to believe we have been blessed to be a part of the journey and bright future of one Jeremy Gray.

Storm shelter is a blessing

Thank you so much for providing us with a storm shelter! We are very grateful and will share this blessing with others in the event of a tornado. Thank you for blessing us.

Tammy Long
Choctaw,
Oklahoma

- District 6 July Activities**
- *Every Monday and Wednesday Senior Fitness Program “55+” 9 a.m. then

*Chair Volleyball Practice – 9:30 a.m. at the Wellness Center

*Every Wednesday – Lunch served, with guest speaker – salad bar opens at 11:00 a.m.

GED Classes Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m.-Noon
- July 3**
Senior Monthly Meeting – (after lunch)
Commodities pickup (McAlester) – after meeting
Boom In The Valley” - Tuskahoma
- July 4**
Center Closed – Happy Independence Day!
- July 5**
Council Member Jennifer Woods Prayer Meeting – 7-8 a.m. (Breakfast to follow)
Indian Taco/Bake Sale/Indoor Sale – 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- July 8**
Heritage Day 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- July 11**
Pocola Casino Trip – Bus leaves at 4 p.m.
- July 13**
Election Day
- July 17**
“Outreach At The Beach” Day Trip
- July 26**
Long Shopping Day (destination to be announced)
- July 30**
Tuesday – Family Night – Bingo and Potluck – 6-8 p.m.
**Jenk’s Aquarium day trip – date to be announced!

AUG 30 - SEP 2

PRE-ORDERS
July 1-August 19
Orders will not be taken after August 19

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The members of the Choctaw Nation have a genuine heart for giving, and we want to thank you for your kindness and shared vision for the future of our Native youth.

Your contributions provided much-needed opportunities to the incredible students at Jones Academy. By giving through fundraisers and the Chahta Foundation website, you have made a positive impact on the students at Jones and provided an opportunity to help many others. Please accept our sincerest thanks to all who have given, and if you or someone you know has any interest in learning more about how to make a difference, please feel free to reach out to the Chahta Foundation team.

Creating paths of opportunity for the Choctaw People.

<https://chahtafoundation.com/>
(580) 924-8280 Ext: 2993

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association Loan
To Be Eligible to Apply:

- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund
To Be Eligible to Apply:

- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from the Choctaw Nation

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

Poteau Community Center
July 8, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Harrison graduates Radford pre-med program



Choctaw Nation member Daniel Jeremiah Harrison graduated Summa Cum Laude from Radford University's pre-med program this past semester, with his Bachelor of Science in Biology.

Harrison is grateful for the support he received from the Choctaw Nation during his undergraduate study with the Higher Education Scholarship. During his time at Radford, Daniel was both the Radford University Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow and an American Society of Microbiology Undergraduate Research Fellow, as well as a teaching assistant for Physiology and Anatomy classes.

His research has been presented at various conferences in the U.S., including the American Society of Microbiology National Conference at the end of June. Daniel also served as the president of Radford's pre-med association and served as the student member for Radford's Library Advisory Board. Additionally, Harrison served as a student advocate for the university, meeting with members of the Virginia state legislature and the governor. However, his work as an academic coach and college mentor (for kids) were some of his most fulfilling moments while at Radford.

Harrison plans to soon apply to medical school.

Hard work pays off for STAR students

The Choctaw Nation Success Through Academic Recognition (STAR) Program shows that hard work pays off. Choctaw students in second through 12th grades are rewarded for academic achievements with Walmart gift cards at the end of each semester. All A's on a report card will earn a \$25 gift card and nothing under a B will bring a \$10 gift card.

"Students can collect an additional \$25 gift card by perfect attendance," said Jason Campbell, STAR Program director. "It's an incentive for success."

A recent poll of parents indicates that it is working. A total of 91.9% said the STAR Program has had a positive effect on their children's grades.

Currently, the program serves 20,000 students in 48 states and six foreign nations. Home-schooled students also may participate.

Students have until Sept. 1 to turn in their 2019 spring semester report cards and attendance records to obtain their rewards cards. To sign up for STAR or learn more, phone STAR Program Manager Ashley James at 800-522-6170, ext. 2573 or visit www.choctawnation.com/star-program.

Choctaw Nation

Success Through Academic Recognition

STAR PROGRAM

Success Through Academic Recognition (STAR) promotes high levels of achievement by rewarding students' academic success. To qualify for semester awards, students must be enrolled in second through twelfth grades and possess a tribal membership card.

Incentives are given twice a year at the end of each semester
(Spring: May 1 - September 1; Fall: December 1 - March 1) for the following academic achievements:

- All A's: \$25 gift card
- All A's and B's or all B's: \$10 gift card
- Perfect Attendance: \$25 gift card

STARAPPLICATION.CHOCTAWNATION.COM
800-522-6170 EXT 2581 OR 2971

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Click on the link to access the 2019 Applications:
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Dolan receives doctorate

Choctaw Nation tribal member Torey Dolan, daughter of Anita Self and granddaughter of Thomas Self from Hugo, Oklahoma, graduated from Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law with her Juris Doctor degree and a certificate in Federal Indian Law.

Dolan is originally from Bakersfield, California, and served as 2018-2019 Miss Okla Chahta Clan of California Princess and the 2017-2018 Jr. Miss Okla Chahta Clan of California Princess. She will be taking the bar exam in Arizona. After graduation, she will serve as the Arizona State University Indian Legal Program's Native Vote Fellow for one year, serving Arizona tribal communities through the Native Vote Election Protection project.

Drummonds graduates Arkansas highway police academy

Tanner Drummonds graduated the Arkansas Highway Police Academy and was commissioned March 22. Drummonds graduated from Valley View High School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and was working in Fayetteville, Arkansas, when he was chosen to enter the AHP Academy. He is the son of Mark Drummonds, the grandson of Shirley Nale-Drummonds and the great-great-grandson of original enrollee John B. Nale.



Parrish graduates

Jaidon Parrish graduated from Southern Arkansas University with a Bachelor of University Studies on Dec. 7, 2018. While at Southern Arkansas, Parrish played football for the Muleriders. He will continue to play football in the fall of 2019, as he works on his master's degree. A special thanks to the Choctaw Nation for the financial help. He is the son of Patrick Parrish and grandson of Henry and Norma Stevens.

Springs earns masters degree

Taylor Springs graduated with a master's degree in accountancy from UNC Greeley, Colorado in May. Springs was assisted with her bachelor's and master's degree by the Choctaw Nation.



Barrom receives Juris Doctor from Boston University School of Law



in thanking the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for their generous support.



Yeary recognized for contributions

On April 16, Dr. Mark Yeary received an award from the University of Oklahoma (OU) titled Vice President for Research Award for Scholarly Engagement with the Private Sector. This award is given annually in recognition of exceptional achievement in making important and lasting contributions to the economy by moving new ideas and/or innovations into the private sector for public benefit, demonstrating entrepreneurial success, or creating mutually beneficial partnerships that couple University knowledge with those of the private sector. Dr. Yeary has been with OU since 2002, where he is now a Hudson-Torchmark Presidential Professor. He spends most of his time at OU's Advanced Radar Research Center (ARRC) designing next-generation radars. He's worked with a variety of companies, including: Raytheon, Rockwell-Collins, CACI, etc. He also serves as a Faculty Advisor to OU's American Indians in Science & Engineering Society (AISES) chapter. His parents are Jim and Gail Yeary of Purcell, Oklahoma.



Pierce graduates from OSU

Cecilia Marie Pierce graduated from Oklahoma State University with a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts and a minor in Native American Studies.

While at Oklahoma State, Pierce was a member of Tri Delta sorority, on the Dean's honor roll, and the recipient of several scholarships, including the Choctaw Nation's Higher Education program, the Jerry Lockwood Endowed Scholarship for American Indian Studies, the Association of Energy Service Companies, and the Kirby Corporation.

She is the granddaughter of Carole and Don Ayers, and the niece of Cindy Rice. She would like to thank family, friends, benefactors, and the Choctaw Nation for their unwavering support. Pierce plans to continue her education with a master's degree.



Wilson graduates cum laude from California State University

Christopher David Wilson graduated from California State University, Long Beach in May. Wilson graduated cum laude and received his Bachelor of Arts in History, with an emphasis on United States and Modern European History.

He minored in Native American Cultures and said, "I was blessed with the honor of wearing an eagle feather during the graduation ceremony, along with a medal from the American Indian Studies program I was also a part of, and a tradition beaded Choctaw medallion."

He is a member of the honor society Phi Alpha Theta. He plans to continue his education at the graduate level. He plans to study the historical relationship between the United States and Native American Nations. "My ideal future is to teach history in a college setting," said Wilson.



Belvin graduates from Murray State

Hailey Belvin graduated from Murray State College in May. She is Choctaw tribal member who utilized the vocational development program, higher education and Choctaw Asset Building Program.

She plans to attend Southeastern and continue her career playing basketball there and finish with a Science degree to become a teacher and a coach. She has applied for the Project Reach program through the Choctaw Nation as well. Her goal is to graduate and work for a Oklahoma school that serves more than 50% Native American students.



Latassha Scott Beall



Calvin Julius Billy



Reuben Tirrell Cargil

Juan Dedios
Chatkehoodle

Mateo Lamar Chee

Francisco DeAngelo
CuellarGabriella Patreese
Angelia Farmer

Olivia Sue Gaffney



Kennedi Blaise Henry

Ralyn "Sam"
Wauqua Johnson

Judy Mae King



Tayah Marie Latimer



Alexander Lewis

Jonathan Chase
Mackey

Maria Nicole Mackey



Kyle Valdez Miller



Tyree Mekhi Moore



Cruz Alejandro Ortiz



Edwin Nathaniel Tejeda

Jasmine Mariama
Waldon

Corey Alan Whitecalf



Erin Marie Willis



Truvon Romain Willis

Class of '19 ready for the future

Twenty-three of the Hartshorne Class of 2019 are graduating seniors from Jones Academy. Congratulations to these Hartshorne Miners and good luck as you accomplish your dreams.

Latassha Scott Beall is the 18-year-old daughter of David and Pamela Beall of Oklahoma City and Latassha and Steven Moore of Kingston, Oklahoma. She is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Latassha attended Jones Academy for four years. She has been an active member of the 4-H club at Jones Academy. She was president of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America at Kiamichi Technology Center. Latassha has made both the Superintendent's and Principal's Honor Rolls at Hartshorne High School and is a member of the Oklahoma Honor Society and the National Technical Honor Society. She is enrolled at Oklahoma City Community College in Oklahoma City where she will pursue a career in Early Childhood Development.

Calvin Julius Billy is the 19-year-old son of Marie Davis and Timothy Billy of Durant, Oklahoma. Calvin is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He was an active member of the robotics Botball team at Jones Academy for three years. Calvin was enrolled in Health Careers Certification classes at the Kiamichi Technology Center and received licensing as a Certified Nursing Assistant and Home Health Aide. He was also named to the National Technical Honor Society at KTC. Calvin has been accepted at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, where he plans to complete his general education courses. Calvin is seeking a career in Agricultural Economics.

Reuben Tirrell Cargil is the 17-year-old son of Robin Carney of Kellyville, Oklahoma, and the late Jason Merrill. He is also the grandson of Bobby Cargil and Pamela Hardridge. Reuben is an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma. Reuben was active in the 5K and 10K CNO P.A.C.E. running program at Jones Academy and played on the varsity basketball team at Hartshorne High School. He is registered to attend classes at Haskell Indian Nations University this coming fall. Like his mother, he wants to pursue a career in the nursing field.

Juan Dedios Chatkehoodle, 18, is the son of Tanya Chatkehoodle of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is the grandson of Sandra K Chatkehoodle of Carnegie, Oklahoma, and the late Arlie Chatkehoodle. Juan is a descendant of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. He was active in FCCLA and a member of the Hartshorne High School yearbook staff. He played varsity basketball and participated in track and field. Juan also ran 5K and 10K races while in the CNO P.A.C.E. club. After high school, Juan will receive training at the Tulsa Technology Center and become an HVAC technician or a professional barber.

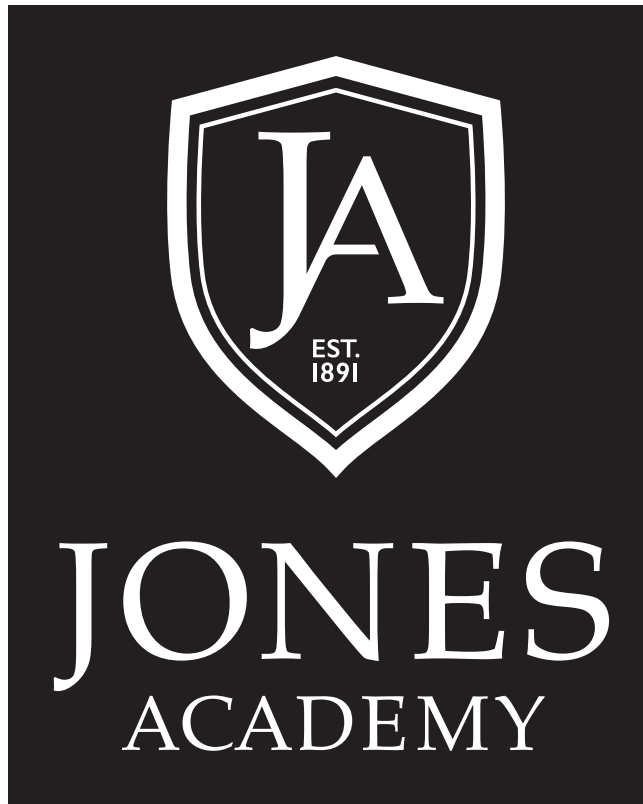
Mateo Lamar Chee is the 18-year-old son of Cassandra Chee and Merlin Benally of Lukachukai, Arizona. He is the grandson of Darren Keyonnie and Harriett Chee. Mateo is a member of the Navajo Nation. During his time at the academy, Mateo has participated in the Hartshorne High School Band and excelled in performance competitions. Mateo's post-secondary plans include attending Dine College in Tsaile, Arizona, and studying computer design.

Francisco DeAngelo Cuellar is the 18-year-old son of Darlene Tubby and the late Jose Cuellar of Morton, Mississippi. He is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Francisco's plans include receiving training from the MBICI Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and becoming gainfully employed.

Gabriella Patreese Angelia Farmer is 18 years old. She is the daughter of Melissa Farmer of Philadelphia, Mississippi. She is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. During her years at Jones Academy, she was a member of the school's STEAM Program and the robotics Botball team. She was enrolled in HCC classes at the Kiamichi Technology Center. At KTC, she was active in Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) and was named to the National Technical Honor Society. She received her CNA certification. Gabriella also made the National Honor Society at Hartshorne High School. She will attend classes in the fall at Meridian Community College in Hinds County, Mississippi. She aspires to major in business administration.

Olivia Sue Gaffney has been a resident of Jones Academy for seven years. She is the 18-year-old daughter of Patricia Luna of Keota, Oklahoma. Olivia is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. She completed her Computer Aided Design course work at KTC and was named to the National Technical Honor Society. Olivia was an active member of the Hartshorne High School band and the color guard for four years. She is enrolled for fall classes at East Central University where she plans to study studio art and music.

Kennedi Blaise Henry is the daughter of Melesia Willis of Choctaw, Mississippi, and the late Milton Ray Henry. She



is an enrolled member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Kennedi was a participant of FCCLA at Hartshorne High School and sang in the school choir. She was a student in Health Careers Certification classes at the Kiamichi Technology Center, which piqued her interest in nursing as a professional vocation. She is planning to attend Tulsa Community College in Tulsa this fall to pursue her goals.

Ralyn "Sam" Wauqua Johnson, 18, is the daughter of Raina Wauqua of Holdenville, Oklahoma. Ralyn is a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma. She participated in FCCLA at Hartshorne High School and played varsity softball for two years. She was in the Health Careers Certification program at the Kiamichi Technology Center. She will attend classes at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami this fall. Ralyn wants to pursue a career in nursing.

Judy Mae King is the daughter of Carla King of Oklahoma City and Darwin Lime of Watonga, Oklahoma, and Jeffrey Madden of Holdenville. She is 18 years old and an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Judy has participated in FCCLA at Hartshorne High School. She was also a member of the high school band where she has performed with distinction receiving numerous awards. Judy is enrolled at East Central University for the 2019 fall semester where she will study Criminal Justice.

Tayah Marie Latimer is the 18-year-old daughter of Tahoma Bell of Philadelphia, Mississippi, and Terrell Latimer. She is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. She has been a resident of Jones Academy since the seventh grade. Tayah was part of the CNO P.A.C.E. running club, the robotics Botball team and 4-H at Jones Academy. She was also the junior class representative on the Jones Academy Student Council. Tayah was active in FCCLA and was also on the yearbook staff at Hartshorne High School. Tayah was inducted in both the National Honor Society and the Oklahoma Honor Society. Her post-secondary plans include attending the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg where she will pursue her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and specialize in neonatal care.

Alexander Lewis is the 19-year-old son of Gregory and Chanda Goings and the grandson of Atheline Lewis and of Norman Goings. Alexander is from Broken Bow and is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He enrolled at Jones Academy four years ago and has been active in community service. As a student at Hartshorne High School, Alexander played football for three years and was a member of both FCCLA and Academic Team for two years. He plans to attend East Central University this fall to begin his studies in pre-med.

Jonathan Chase Mackey, 17, is the son of Amanda Lawson of Harrah, Oklahoma. He is the grandson of Brad Fish of Harrah and Cassandra Russell of Choctaw, Oklahoma. Jonathan is a member of the Choctaw Nation. He played varsity basketball and was in FCCLA at Hartshorne High School. He also took classes in criminal justice at KTC. In the fall, Jonathan will receive training at the Gordon Cooper Technology Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma to pursue his HVAC license.

Maria Nicole Mackey is Jonathan's big sister. She is the daughter of Amanda Lawson of Harrah and granddaughter of Brad Fish and Cassandra Russell. She is a member of the Choctaw Nation. Maria was enrolled in HCC classes at the

Kiamichi Technology Center and received both Certified Nursing Assistant and Home Health Aide Licenses. She was president of Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) chapter at KTC and was a Gold Star Ambassador. Maria was president of FCCLA at Hartshorne High School and was a Girl Scouts counselor in the summer of 2018. She is enrolled at Oklahoma City Community College for the fall where she will begin her studies in nursing.

Kyle Valdez Miller, 18, is the son of Mike Miller of Shawnee and the late Tracy Johnson. Kyle is a descendant of the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma. Kyle began attending Jones Academy in the fourth grade. Kyle has excelled in track and field at Hartshorne High School. He was a member of the high school's four-man relay team that qualified for state last year and was again in the regional competitions this year. Kyle also played basketball on the varsity squad and participated in 4-H. He had one hog place first at the Oklahoma State Fair. Kyle has been accepted at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, where he will pursue a degree in business management.

Tyree Mekhi Moore is the son of Melanie Moore of Del City, Oklahoma. He is 18 years old and an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma. Tyree has participated in FCCLA at Hartshorne High School. He has been a member of 4-H at Jones Academy and an enthusiastic participant in all traditional and cultural activities. Tyree was an excellent student in the Education Accelerated by Service Technology Program at KTC. He has applied at Haskell Indian Nations University. His post-secondary plans include a degree in human services and business.

Cruz Alejandro Ortiz is the 18-year-old son of Jodyann Ortiz and grandson of Rose Neconie of Tulsa. He is enrolled in the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. Cruz has been a member of the Hartshorne High School football team and a participant in track and field. He has also been active in Career and Community Leaders of America at the high school. Cruz wants to study either orthodontics or physical therapy as a post-secondary endeavor. He will begin his studies at Tulsa Community College in the fall.

Edwin Nathaniel Tejeda is the son of Mollie Lanham of Broken Bow and Edgar Tejeda of DeQueen, Arkansas. He is a tribal member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Edwin first arrived at Jones Academy when he was in the seventh grade. He was active in FCCLA at Hartshorne High School and played on the varsity basketball team. Edwin also participated in Future Farmers of America and 4-H at Jones Academy. He is enrolled at East Central University to study kinesiology and in due course become a physical therapist.

Jasmine Mariama Waldon has been at Jones Academy since August 2012. She is the 18-year-old daughter of the late Patricia Waldon and granddaughter of the late Donna Byford. Her guardian is Wendy Scott of Muscogee. Jasmine loves Jones Academy unconditionally and the staff reciprocate that love. She enjoys scary movies and Dr. Pepper. After graduation, Jasmine will move to McCall's Chapel School in Ada, Oklahoma.

Corey Alan Whitecalf is the 17-year-old son of Maria Mesteth. Corey hails from Omaha, Nebraska, and is a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Corey has been at Jones Academy for 10 years. He was active at Hartshorne High School in FCCLA and varsity football. After graduating, Corey aspires to serve his country as a member of the National Guard.

Erin Marie Willis, 17, is the daughter of Lisa Rshaidat of Concho, Oklahoma. She is a member of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribe. Erin has participated at Jones Academy in 4-H, Learn and Serve, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, the STEAM Program and the robotics Botball team. She also served her tribe as 2016-2017 Cheyenne Princess. In addition to her concurrent studies at Eastern Oklahoma State College, Erin was enrolled in the Criminal Justice program at KTC. She also participated in FCCLA at Hartshorne High School. Erin received the Academic Scholarship from Eastern Oklahoma State College and plans to continue her studies in Criminal Justice and Sociology there. She hopes to transfer to the University of Central Oklahoma to pursue a degree in Forensic Science.

Truvon Romain Willis first enrolled at Jones Academy in 2010. He is the 19-year-old son of Courtney McClendon of Choctaw, Mississippi. Truvon is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. He has been an active member of FCCLA and Spanish club at Hartshorne High School. He was in the bio-med program at KTC and completed the PLTW (Project Lead The Way) Biomedical Sciences and Human Body Systems Courses. He was treasurer of the Health Occupations Students of America club at KTC. During his time at Jones Academy, Truvon participated in Club Scrubs and several medical immersion camps at Oklahoma State University. Truvon is enrolled at Oklahoma City Community College in Oklahoma City for the fall semester where he will initiate his pre-med studies.

Secretary Buck tours Choctaw Nation facilities

By Kendra Germany

Oklahoma Cabinet Secretary of Human Services and Early Childhood Initiatives and executive director of the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs Steven Buck made his first visit to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s Durant campus May 10.

Secretary Buck made his visit as part of the Nation’s goal of hosting every cabinet member, to foster a strong partnership between both governments. Gov. Kevin Stitt has 15 cabinet secretaries, and Buck is the third member to visit the Nation.

During his visit, Secretary Buck toured the campus, visiting numerous departments, facilities and programs, including the Childhood Development Center, Food Distribution, Children and Family Services, Juvenile Services, and the Partnership of Summer School Education (POSSE).

“All of these Choctaw staff leads connect with their state counterparts to serve Choctaw children and families around the state. They were able to have frank conversations with Secretary Buck on what works well, and what could be improved,” explained Sara Jane Smallwood-Cocke, director of Government Relations.



Parish receives All-American nod

Missouri Southern junior pitcher Zach Parish has picked up his third different All-American nod as the lefty was named a third-team selection by the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA).

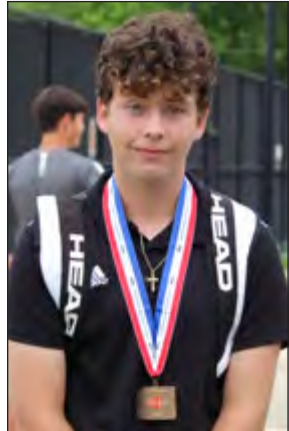
Parish, the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) Pitcher of the Year, is a consensus All-American selection as he has been named an All-American by the three organizations that select teams: Conference Commissioners Association (CCA), National College Baseball Writers Association (NCBWA) and the ABCA. He was also tabbed as the ABCA Central Region Pitcher of the Year, while being a first-team All-MIAA selection and also a first-team All-Region selection by the CCA, the ABCA and the NCBWA.

Parish led the MIAA in strikeouts with 136, games started with 16 and wins with nine. He ranked second in strikeouts per nine innings, third in hits allowed, fourth in WHIP, and fifth in ERA.

This year Parish finished 9-2 with a 2.85 ERA and his 136 strikeouts are a school record. He threw 101.0 innings in 16 starts with one complete game and two shutouts, while holding batters to a .199 average.

He ranks fourth nationally in strikeouts and third in games started, while helping the Lions set the school record for season strikeouts by the pitching staff with 558 k’s of opposing hitters this season, finishing just five away from tying the MIAA single-season record.

Brewer wins 5A singles title



Wallace Brewer won the 5A Boys Singles title at the Mississippi High School Athletic Association’s State Tennis Championship in Oxford, Mississippi.

This is the second year that Brewer has won this title, having won it his freshman year and again, this year, as a sophomore. He entered the tournament as the number one seed and competed against 16 5A schools’ best players. Brewer is the 15-year-old son of the late Wally Brewer of San Angelo, Texas, and McAlester, Oklahoma. He is the grandson of Keith and Susan Brewer of Hartshorne, Oklahoma, Wallace attends school at Germantown High School in Gluckstadt, Mississippi.

“We’re all committed to serving Oklahoma families, and this visit was a great opportunity to strengthen that partnership to continue that service. We appreciate the time Secretary Buck took to spend a day with Choctaw Nation and our departments that serve families.”

According to Buck, he enjoyed his visit and looks forward to visiting again.

“I’m excited about the meaningful discussions I had with leaders of the Choctaw Nation on how we can work together to better serve our youth, especially those involved with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. I enjoyed meeting Chief Gary Batton and others in his administration and was glad to learn more about the tribe’s Child Care Assistance program, which assists eligible families with financial assistance for child care, and its childcare development center. The nation is doing a tremendous job supporting its members and numerous communities throughout southeast Oklahoma, including a well-constructed partnership with local school districts to enhance student reading through innovative summer programs. I appreciate the hospitality and courtesies shown me during my visit, and I look forward to additional visits as well as continued discussions,” stated Secretary Buck.



Photo by Kendra Germany

Oklahoma Secretary of Human Services and Early Childhood Initiatives Steven Buck visits the Choctaw Nation Childhood Development Center, Durant.

Bush to play soccer at Mississippi’s Millsaps College

Kayla M. Bush has been selected for the Millsaps College Soccer team for the 2019-20 school year. Bush graduated in May from Long Beach High School, in Long Beach, Mississippi. She has played soccer on the school’s varsity team since her freshman year, earning the JV Most Valuable Defensive Player and Most Improved Player Varsity awards and becoming one of the team captains her senior year. The team was the Mississippi 5A State Championship runner-up in 2018 and 2019.

Bush graduated with honors and received the Long Beach High School Certificate of Excellence and a Mississippi Scholars award. She was a member of the National Beta Club and 4-H and won the 2019

Harrison County (Mississippi) 4-H second-place photography award.

While also playing select soccer and keeping her “A” average, Bush played on the Long Beach High School softball team for two years and managed the team her junior year. She was coached and mentored by her mother, Jennifer Bush, who had played soccer in grade school, high school and college. Kayla Bush is proud of receiving her school’s sophomore, junior and senior varsity letters.

Kayla Bush is the daughter of Jennifer (Garcia) Bush and U.S. Navy Chief Mark Bush of Long Beach, and the granddaughter of Anella (Bobb) Garcia and Phil Garcia of Kansas City, Missouri. She is the



great-granddaughter of full-blood Choctaw Ethel (Bobb) Vann and the great-great-granddaughter of full-blood Choctaw Mitchell and Agnes Bobb, all of Rufe, Oklahoma.

Oklahoma City-area Choctaws gather for event



Jonas Walker poses with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. at the Oklahoma City community meeting. Walker was friends with Choctaw Code Talker Ben Carterby when he was growing up in the Divide, Oklahoma, area.



Ross Green shows his “pet” raccoon to Madalyn Clay at the Oklahoma City community meeting.



Photos by Chris Jennings

The Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne of British Parliament speaks to those attending the Oklahoma City community meeting. Baroness Nicholson said she was particularly impressed with the Choctaw’s rise to their current state after the unspeakable hardships suffered in the past.



Amelia Tyler was the eldest attendee at 94, at the Oklahoma City community meeting. Tyler currently lives in Oklahoma City, but is originally from the Wheelock Community.



Crowd members enjoy a snake dance at the Oklahoma City community meeting.

Choctaw Nation teams heading to World Series of Stickball

Three Choctaw Nation stickball teams will participate in the World Series of Stickball in July. The tournament is held in conjunction with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ annual Choctaw Indian Fair in Choctaw, Mississippi.

July 5 – Team Tvshka Homma is scheduled to play Koni Hata at 10 p.m. during the first round of the Men’s Division.

July 6 – Tvshka Homma’s Men’s 35+ team will face the winner of the first game between Koni Hata and Warriors at 8:30 p.m.

July 8 – Tvshka Homma Ohoyo will play the winner of Bok Cito Ohoyo and Koni Hata Ohoyo at 7 p.m.

For brackets and more information, log onto choc-tawindianfair.com.

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ITI FABVSSA

Kvfi Hvshi: Sassafras month a time for summer heat

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



Photo provided

Catfish smoking on a grill made of river cane.

Kvfi Hvshi, Sassafras Month, roughly corresponds to July. By this point in the year, summer heat, humidity, and insects reach their peak. The month’s name corresponds with the hot season because tea made from the roots of the sassafras tree was consumed by Choctaw people during the hottest weather in order to “thin” the blood to help stay cool. The height of summer brought the possibility of damaging droughts. According to one Choctaw oral tradition, during an extreme drought in the early 1700s, Choctaw country saw no rain for three years. Bad droughts are known to have completely destroyed the Choctaw

corn harvest several times in the 1700s. The Choctaw people believed that the spiritual balance of their community had an influence on whether or not God provided them with beneficial rain. Rainmakers, known as umba ikbit were specialists within Choctaw society who were called upon to end crop damaging droughts through their supplications to God and practice of boiling certain herbs in a pot of water to infuse the rising steam. When the corn in the community fields reached six to seven feet in height, it was hoed for the third and final time. This third hoeing was known as hopochi. The same name

was used to refer to the corn crop itself at this stage. Soon the silk would change colors, and the ears would begin to fill out. The hominy and flour varieties of corn planted in the communal fields took four to five months to mature and the latter variety could grow to 20 feet tall. Corn ears in the roasting stage were referred to as nipvsha, meat is on it. After the third hoeing and the harvest of some roasting ears, the main part of the fieldwork was done for a while, allowing families the flexibility to go fishing. Fishing, nvn okwehli, was an enjoyable diversion in the hot season which also provided important food. It was principally

done by the men, although the women participated as well, with the exception of expectant mothers and their parents. For people living in the main Choctaw towns, fishing was usually done in nearby streams which dried up during the summer, leaving small pools that concentrated the fish. The backwaters of major rivers including Patasvchi, the Mississippi River swampland, were avoided during this season for fear of disease. Choctaw communities passively caught fish by digging holes in the active floodplains of streams. When the stream overflowed its banks and eventually receded, these holes would become small ponds with fish trapped inside them which could be harvested by hand. In another method, the community cut green branches and piled them across a stream near shallow water. Men climbed on the pile and jumped up and down on it to compress it tightly, so that it could be tied together with vines to create a brush barricade. Boys would get into the water at the other end of the stream and scare the fish towards the barricade, which the men would lift. When the fish had entered

the shallow water, the men would drop the barricade, trapping them. In the shallow water, large fish could easily be shot with arrows. Some species of large fish float near the surface of the water at first light, absorbing some of the sun’s warmth. Native Southeasterners hunted them with harpoons of river cane which had a fire-hardened point at one end and a bark fiber cord at the other. These buoyant harpoons could pull a large, wounded fish to the surface. Men sometimes swam in groups underwater, catching fish by making a line of hand-held fishing nets, nvni isht hokli. Noodling was another technique. Women sometimes also caught fish using coarse baskets as hand-held nets. Choctaws made traps, nvnvpa, from river cane to catch large fish. The most intensive fishing technique involved poisoning fish in pools or creeks that had been dammed up with brush. Men would arrive in the morning, bringing black walnut hulls, roots of the devil’s shoestring plant, buckeyes, or beauty berries. They would pound these near the water’s edge, then mix them into

the water. In larger bodies of water, this was sometimes done with the aid of small rafts. These plants contain chemicals which make it difficult for the fish to breathe, so they would float up near the surface of the water. In small, soft-bottomed ponds, the same effect was sometimes obtained by simply moving the feet around in the muck, stirring up enough silt that it became difficult for the fish to breathe. When fish floated to the surface, they were tossed up onto the bank. After a successful day of fishing, women might coat the fish in clay they had dug from the banks of the stream, and bake them in the coals of the fire. The leftover cooked fish would keep for several days without spoiling. For a longer shelf life, fish were smoked and dried. Fishing was particularly important in drought years when the crops were producing low yields. In addition to fishing, July was also the season for the chestnut harvest. Chestnuts were an important food for Choctaw communities. After the chestnuts fell to the ground, they had to be gathered and processed quickly to prevent spoilage.

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

July Language Lesson

Broken A/C

Directions: Read the dialogue with a partner. Practice fluency! After you take turns as Speaker 1 and Speaker 2, write your own short dialogue pretending the repairman has arrived.

Speaker 1: Kochat lvshpa chiyyohmi.	It is really hot outside.
Speaker 2: Tabokoli ik ono kishia.	It’s not even noon yet.
Speaker 1: Chekusikma lvshpat i shahla chi.	Here in a little bit it will get hotter.
Speaker 1: Peh lvshpa kvf vm atapa.	I am just too hot.
Speaker 2: Aboha kapassali balichi.	Run/Turn on the air conditioner.
Speaker 1: Okpulo.	It is broken.
Speaker 2: Nanta katimi tuk?	What happened?
Speaker 1: Ak ikhano. Peh toksvlit issa tuk.	I don’t know. It just stopped working.
Speaker 2: Apoksia ish i paya ha?	Did you call a repairman?
Speaker 1: A. Pilashash i paya li tuk.	Of course. I called yesterday.
Speaker 2: Katimikma vla chi?	When is he coming?
Speaker 1: Obia pila vla hinla achi tuk.	He said he would come later this evening.
Speaker 2: Aiittvtoba kil ia micha ice cream ke chompa.	Let’s go to the store and buy some ice cream.
Speaker 1: Achukma. Ish chompa chi?	That sounds good. Are you buying?
Speaker 2: Anukfilli la chike.	I’ll think about it.

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RED EARTH PARADE

Photos by Chris Jennings

Chief Gary Batton, grand marshal of the Red Earth parade, waves to the crowd June 8, in Oklahoma City.

Several Choctaw princesses, District 6 Council Member Jennifer Woods and Chief Gary Batton pose for photos before the parade starts.

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Del City	Norman	Wright City

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Alyssiah Camp waves a flag at the start of the parade.



Kalin Beller, left, and Mia Reich wave to the parade crowd.

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Atoka	Colbert	LeFlore	Tahlequah
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Bemington	Durant	Mid Creek	Wheatboro
Bokoshe	Hallsville	Moyers	Wilburton
Bozwell	Hartshorne	Parola	Widewater
Broken Bow	Haworth	Pittsburg	Wright City
Buffalo Valley	Howe	Pocahontas	
Cadoba	Hugo	Rock Creek	
Cameron	Idabel	Silo	

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Obituaries

Patricia Ann Wynn

Patricia Ann Wynn “Baby Girl Folsom”, 62, passed away Jan. 23, 2019. She was born June 10, 1956, to Bob and Grace Folsom.

Patricia is survived by husband Richard Dale Wynn; children Daniel White and Lisa James; siblings Danny Folsom, Karla Ford and Penny Seawright; eight grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and many close family and friends.

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



Betty Gene Johnson

Betty Gene Johnson, 72, passed away Feb. 17, 2019.

Betty was born March 28, 1946, in Atoka, Oklahoma, to Jessie Woodrow and Mabell (Nowabbie) Scott.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Jonas Johnson; daughter-in-law Marilyn Johnson; brothers Steve Scott and Leroy Scott; sister Norma Cole and Ruth Scott.

Betty is survived by children Woodrow Johnson, Jonas J. Johnson, Stanley Johnson, Patrick Johnson; grandchildren Stormy Kenyon, Brittney Kenyon, Tiffany Smith, Tommy Rudder; brother Charles Scott; along with nieces, nephews, cousins, and other relatives and friends.

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



Gerald Wayne Black

Gerald “Wayne” Black, 94, passed away Jan. 14, 2019.

He was born Feb. 28, 1924, in Bethany, Oklahoma.

Wayne is survived by his wife Rhea; son Geoffrey; daughter Cynthia; and extended family of step-children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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



Ruby Alene Prater

Ruby Alene Prater, 96, passed away Sept. 9, 2018.

Ruby was born Oct. 30, 1921, in Belzoni, Oklahoma to James Gratz Birchfield and Ophelia Bertie Lee (Crowder) Birchfield.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Hollie Owen Prater; grandsons Darrell Sides and Roger Moore; brothers Elmer Birchfield, Richard Lee Birchfield, Edgar Birchfield, James Birchfield; two nfant brothers; and sister Eula Nowlin.

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



Ramona Strickland

Ramona Willis Strickland, 68, passed away April 15, 2019.

Ramona was born May 14, 1950, in Talihina, Oklahoma, to Elesten and Lilliella Samuel Willis.

She was preceded in death by father Elesten Willis; husband Larry Stricklin; brother Norman Samuel; niece Amanda Willis; nephew Garreth Stricklin; and mother-in-law Wanda McDaniel.

Ramona is survived by son Dale David Willis; step-son Beau Stricklin and spouse Laurel; daughter Tasha Strickland and spouse Charles; stepdaughters Tonya Thacker and spouse Ron and Toni Gay and spouse Brad; grandchildren Brittanie Willis, Paris, Elvis, Tucker, and Sailor Stricklin, Tateli, Taylor, and Ty Thacker and Ashleigh and Alexis Gay; mother Lilliella Willis; brothers Edgel Samuel, Vernon Willis, Junior Willis and Everett “Glenn” Willis; sisters Elfreda Willis and Alice Thomas; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

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



Roe Dale Dennis Jr.

Roe Dale Dennis, Jr. passed away April 4, 2019.

Roe Dale was born Sept. 8, 1956, to Roe Dale Dennis, Sr. and Sonja June (Milsap)

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Roe Dale is survived by son Dylan Dennis; daughters Norma Greer, Heather Bartlett, and Sarah Dennis; brother Harvey Dennis; sisters Penny Lee, Paula Brady, Patricia Reese and Pamela Neffendorf; and six grandchildren.

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



Rosemary Clinton

Rosemary Clinton, 70, was born Aug. 25, 1948.

She passed away Jan. 21, 2019.

A celebration of life was held at her home Feb. 16, 2019.



Eddie Harrison Barker

Eddie Harrison Barker, 82, of Eufaula, Oklahoma passed away March 29, 2019.

Eddie was born April 16, 1936, on Tucker Knob to William and Mary Barker.

Eddie was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Jack, Wayne and Junior; sisters Billie Murdock and Jimmie Spicer; and grandson Bradley Barker.

He is survived by wife Juanita; children, Cassie Miller and spouse Bill, Eddy Barker and spouse Michelle, and Melinda Barker; grandchildren Jeremy Barker, Tyler Barker, Courtney Barker, and Amanda Landis; great-grandchildren Kaylee Barker and Joshua Limberg; brother Kenneth Barker and spouse Sallie; and sisters Marie Hammtree and spouse Raymond, and Helen Smith and spouse Howard.

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



Addison Lynn Underwood

Addison Lynn Underwood, 27 days, passed away April 3, 2019.

Addison was born March 7, 2019, in Osage Beach, Missouri, to Jessica (Underwood) Reed.

She was preceded in death by grandfather Ken Miller; grandmother Bernadine Underwood; and uncle Ben Underwood

Addison is survived by grandparents Matt and Sherri Underwood; uncles Matthew Underwood Jr., and Zach Underwood and spouse Amanda; cousins Kaylee Underwood, Aubrey Underwood and Charlie Underwood.

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



Patsy Price

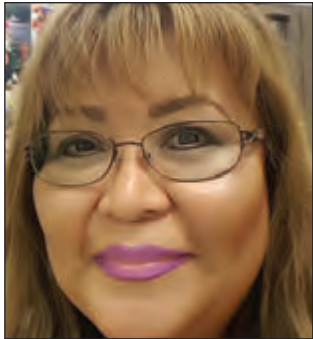
Patsy Price, 62, passed away Feb. 3, 2019.

Pasty was born on June 25, 1957, in San Francisco, California, to Robert Nelson Sr. and Norma Ruth Price.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and brother Robert Nelson Price, Jr.

Patsy is survived by children Sophia (Robert Swain) Leyva, Dania Leyva, Felipe (Amy) Leyva Jr., Melissa (Salvador) Nava-Leyva, Patricia (Josh Kinney) Leyva; grandchildren Salvador Leyva Jr., Miabella and Anthony Leyva; sister-in-law Carmen Price; niece Tiffany Price and nephew Robert Nelson Price, III.

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



Ema Mae West

Ema Mae West, 82, of Heavener, Oklahoma passed away April 7, 2019.

Ema was born April 9, 1936, in Heavener, Oklahoma, to R.C. and Lillie (Kelley) Lewis.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son Joey Dewayne Byrd; brothers Curtis and Donald Lewis; and sister Betty Bearden.

Ema is survived by her daughter Sharon Al Rifai; grandchildren Jimmy, Colby and Hatch Evans; great-grandchildren Eli, Abby Bell, Ada, Aiden, Leland and Jay Evans; niece Linda Lewis; other relatives, loved ones and friends.

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



Sarah Elizabeth Almy

Sarah Elizabeth Hutchison Almy, 73, passed away March 30, 2019.

Sarah was born July 5, 1945, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to Perry and Elizabeth Hutchison.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Sarah is survived by husband Fred Hutchison; sons Scott Hutchison and spouse Renee, and Jonathan Hutchison and spouse Jennifer; five grandchildren Ryan, Morgan, Matthew, Meredith and Dylan; sister Susan Jones and spouse Bob; brother Craig Hutchison and spouse Dianna; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

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



Donald S. Falconer

Donald S. Falconer, 77, passed away Feb. 19, 2019.

Donald was born Aug. 8, 1941, in Keota, Oklahoma, to Leard Tillman & Alva Eva (Tom) Falconer.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Betty Sue Johnnie; and brother David Lee Falconer.

Donald is survived by wife Katherine Lee (Burge) Falconer; children Stephen Stacy Falconer, Michael Scott Falconer and spouse Talitha, and Kristi Dawn Falconer; grandchildren Jamie Nicole Falconer and Michaela Dawn Falconer; great-grandchildren Lukas Mason Christopher McQueen, Natalie Scarlett Nicole McQueen, Demetri Michael Coolbeth, Paisley Amelia Stacey Williams, and Samuel George Williams; siblings, Norman Ray Falconer, Joyce Pancer, and Ronald Falconer; and a host of other loving family members and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [John M. Ireland and Sons Funeral Home](#).



Matevier Thompson

Matevier Thompson, 17, passed away Jan. 24, 2019.

Matevier was born on May 12, 2001, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents/legal guardians William and Quay Myers; and maternal grandparents Robert and Susie Thompson.

Matevier is survived by aunt/legal guardian Greta Myers; sister Sarah Williston; uncle, William Myers Jr.; mother Phyllis Williston; sister Wendy Gaines and family; brother Thomas Williston; and a host of friends, other aunts, uncles and cousins.

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



Alicia Ann Kelley

Alicia Ann (Sockey) Kelley, 71, passed away April 17, 2019.

Alicia was born Jan. 9, 1948, in Borger, Texas, to Roy and Gladys Sockey.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Alicia is survived by her husband Steve Kelley; daughter Tonya Richardson and favorite son-in-law Danny; son Steve Kelley Jr.; grandchildren Kevin Richardson, Brittany Lane and spouse Ethan, Brooke Kelley, Brandalyn Kelley; great-grandchild Zayden Lane; and many friends and family.

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



Kelly Leigh Lloyd

Kelly Leigh Lloyd, 41, passed away March 30, 2019.

Kelly was born Dec. 4, 1977, to Roscoe and Penelope Lloyd.

She was preceded in death by her mother; niece Jessica Farell; and nephew Dallas Lloyd.

Kelly is survived by her father; sister Tammisue Lloyd-Robbins and her daughter Micheale Jenkins; brother David Lloyd and spouse Rhonda and children Michael, Kendy and Renee Lloyd; and brother, Billy Lloyd and spouse Lisa and children Alex and Mason Lloyd.

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



Billy Dwayne Harry

Billy Dwayne Harry, 69, passed away March 29, 2019.

Billy was born March 25, 1950, in Boswell, Oklahoma, to Bill and Loretta (Vaughn) Harry.

He was preceded in death by father Bill Harry; and step-father Andre Cowan.

Billy is survived by daughter Kimberly Haskell; mother Loretta Cowan; grandchildren Whitney McSperitt and spouse Tim, Colton Harry, Madelyn HySmith, John Wayne Sintay; great-grandchildren Gracie and Lakynn Merle and Samuel and Jessalynn Price; sisters Brenda Smith and spouse Dwight, and Debra Waldroop and spouse Roy, and a host of nieces and nephews.

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



Lawrence Noel

Lawrence Cleveland Noel, 80, passed away April 4, 2019.

Lawrence was born Oct. 4, 1938, in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to Edmund and Victoria (Mathews) Noel.

He was preceded in death by his parents; siblings Leo Noel, Wayne Noel and Mary (Noel) Horn.

Lawrence is survived by wife Peggy; children Monique Dodd and spouse David, and Clark Thomas and spouse Kristina; grandchildren Courtney, Payton, Colin, Harley, Sabra and Sahara; siblings Wanema Noel, Joann Brewer and Tressia Ables; and many cousins, nieces and nephews and grand-nieces and nephews.

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



Virginia Lee Stout

Virginia Lee Stout, 94, passed away April 29, 2019.

Virginia was born April 20, 1925 in Daisy, Oklahoma, to Charley Isom and Anganora (Billy) Isom.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Robert Elmer “John” Stout; sons James Robert “Jim” Stout and Dennis Gerald Stout; grandson Robert Edward Stout; brothers Frank Page, Bob Page, Dugan Isom, Joe Isom and Jay Isom; sisters Opal Bureson and Audrey Bureson

Virginia is survived by son Ronald C. Stout Sr. and spouse Regina; grandchildren Sarah Ingram, Ron Stout Jr. and spouse LeAnn, Steven Stout and spouse Cheyenne, Robert Stout, Barbara Garcia, Amy Smith, Jessica Raney, Megan Bacon, Amanda Cabo and Bryan Stout; daughters-in-law Charlene Stout and Janice Twist; sister Alice Hutson; brother CH “Copas” Isom; numerous great- and great-great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and other family and friends.

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





Volleyball Tournament

Saturday, August 31

- Registration is first-come-first-filled.
- Rules will be available June 30 and will be emailed to team contacts.
- Schedules will be emailed to team contacts when all teams are entered.
- Tournament has its own referees.
- Captains must sign in teams on August 31 at 8:00 a.m. All captains must attend 8:30 a.m. Captains’ Meeting.
- Games begin at 9:00 a.m.
- Questions? Contact Crystal Thompson. Work: 580-924-8280 ext. 4649; Cell: 580-916-2920; email: cdthompson@choctawnation.com; fax: 580-920-4963.

Team Name _____

Contact _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

In what city do you regularly play with your team?_____

Registration Deadline: August 16, 2019. Mail, email or fax entries to:
Labor Day Volleyball Tournament, ATTN: Crystal Thompson, PO Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702
email: cdthompson@choctawnation.com | fax: 580-920-4963
LIMITED TO THE FIRST 12 CO-ED TEAMS

Domino/Checkers Tournament

Sunday, September 1

New Location: Information Tent
New Youth Checkers Tournament (0-15 age group)
Registration: Noon | Event begins: 1:00 p.m.

Horseshoe Tournament

Saturday, August 31

Red Warrior Park
Registration: 8:00 a.m. | Event begins: 9:00 a.m.

Chief Batton’s Youth Fitness Challenge

Friday, August 30

Council Lawn
Registration: 5:00 p.m.
Event begins: 6:00 p.m.

For more information:
Seth Fairchild | 580-924-8280 ext. 2639 | sfairchild@choctawnation.com

Annual 5K Run

Saturday, August 31

- Registration: 6:00 a.m.; Capitol Museum
- 5K Race Begins: 7:00 a.m.; Capitol Museum

Name _____ D.O.B. _____ Gender _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Mail or email entries to:
Shane Haddock | PO Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702 | shaddock@choctawnation.com

Fast-Pitch Softball

Friday, August 30 - Sunday, September 1

Team Name _____

Contact _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration Deadline: August 9, 2019. Mail entries to:
Hugo Community Center, Attn: Larry Wade, 1304 W.Victor, Hugo, OK 74743
LIMITED TO THE FIRST 12 CO-ED TEAMS

Tough Tough Choctaw

Saturday, August 31

Council Lawn
Registration: 3:00 p.m.
Event begins: 4:00 p.m.

*There will be male and female divisions
Prizes awarded for first and second places
Free t-shirt for all participants*

For more information:
Chase Henson | 580-916-9140 ext: 83810 | cchenson@cnhsa.com

Fittest Choctaw

Saturday, August 31

Council Lawn
Registration: 8:00 a.m.
Event begins: 9:00 a.m.

*There will be male and female divisions
Prizes awarded for first and second places
Free t-shirt for all participants*

For more information:
Chase Henson | 580-916-9140 ext: 83810 | cchenson@cnhsa.com

Elder Volleyball Finals

Friday, August 30

Information Tent
Event: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

*This is the end-of-the-year tournament for
Elder Chair Volleyball*

For more information:
Chase Henson | 580-916-9140 ext: 83810 | cchenson@cnhsa.com

16th Annual Chief Batton Labor Day Golf Tournament

Sunday, September 1

- Hosted by CNO and Sycamore Springs Golf Course, Wilburton, OK
- 4-person Mixed Scramble, 18 holes
- Teams selected by handicap, 100% Blind Draw
- First group of teams tee off at 8:30 a.m., 2nd group at 1:30 p.m.
- **No requests for partners**
- One mulligan per player (need not purchase)
- Door prizes
- First-come-first-served basis
- Team prizes awarded for First, Second and Third place
- Individual prizes awarded for Closest to Pin and Longest Drive
- **THERE WILL BE NO CASH PRIZES**

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Handicap _____ Shirt size _____
(Valid handicap card required)

Extra mulligan purchased: Yes or No (circle one)

Mail or email entries to:
Nate Cox, PO Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702
email: ncox@choctawnation.com | phone: 580-916-6910

War Hoops 3-on-3 Basketball

Saturday, August 31

Categories/Divisions

4-Person Roster (circle one)

Gender	Division	Age
Women	All Stars	18 & up
Men	Young Guns	19-35
Men	Old Timers	36 & up
Co-ed	Minis	9-11
Co-ed	Tweens	12-14
Co-ed	Teens	15-18

Team Name _____

Contact _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Entry form must be postmarked by August 24.
Mail to: Labor Day 3-on-3 Basketball, ATTN:
Marlo Hill, PO Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702
Teen players who are 18 must still be in high school
LIMITED TO THE FIRST 20 TEAMS

Elders honored at Senior Day

By Chris Jennings

Choctaw elders from across the 10 1/2 counties gathered in Durant May 22 for Senior Day. The event is an opportunity to show appreciation to Choctaw seniors, and provide them with an opportunity to gather information on services and products available to them.

Senior Day also offers participants the chance to visit with old friends. Reta Davis recently moved back to the Choctaw Nation and was attending her first Senior Day. While at the event, she was also able to reconnect with old friends she hadn't seen in years. "This is a good place for people to come and find others...that you might have lost contact with," said Davis.

The day also provided an opportunity for the seniors to show off some of their talents. Competitions at the yearly event include a singing contest, name tag contest, a fashion show featuring traditional regalia that awards a single winner and also an award for the district that has the most participants in traditional dress.

In the name tag contest, third place went to District 10, second to District 8, with District 6 rounding out the top three in first place.

The fashion show parade had over 50 participants making their way through the crowd to show off their regalia to the judges. Third place went to Andrea Yellowfish, second to Dorothy Willis, with Linda Parish taking first place.

District 9 came out strong, winning most traditional regalia by having the most participants dressed traditionally.

Finally, the singing contest had some stiff competition with Atoka taking third, Talihina second, and with a single point lead, McAlester for the win.



The McAlester group took first place in the singing contest.



Fashion show finalists line up for the judges at Senior Day. Linda Parish, fourth from left, took top honors.



Chief Gary Batton spent the day visiting with tribal members such as Anna Dewett pictured here.



District 6 Council Member Jennifer Woods poses with Geraldine Isabella, left, and Claudia Hodge, right, with the winning name badge.



Reta Davis talks with Chief Gary Batton at Senior Day.



Choctaw Little Miss Mia Reich talks with elders Ron and Concetta Gragg.



Chair volleyball was played throughout the day.

Photos by Chris Jennings

Families enjoy District 10 community event



District 10's 2019-20 Little Miss Alyssiah Camp is with family at Atoka – Chiefton Camp Jr., Tamara Camp, Creedence Camp, Chiefton Camp III, and Ariana Camp.



District 10 Junior Miss Kaden Mora and family Vanessa Jefferson, Talon Bohannon, Mason Bohanan, Christy Jefferson, Austin Jefferson, Kamryn Baker and Montana Mora.



Newly crowned Senior Miss for District 10, Jerai Billy, is pictured May 16 at Atoka's community dinner with grandmother Clela Billy and mom Shannon Billy.

Wilburton holds appreciation dinner



Carla Noah serves up fried catfish at the Choctaw Nation Community Center in Wilburton May 23.



Council Member Jennifer Woods and Chief Gary Batton greet John and Sherri Sokolosky.



District 10 Council Member Anthony Dillard, right, visits with Donny Eastep as everyone arrives at the May 16 community event in Atoka.



Mitch Mullin catches up with friends James and Betty Thomas.



District 6 Junior Miss Aiana Holman and Senior Miss Cheyenne Holman, sisters, are pictured at Wilburton with their grandma, Mary Holman.



Richard Bond, 83, stops for a word with Chief Gary Batton. Bond has lived in Atoka all of his life.

Photos by Lisa Reed

We Salute Our Veterans



Wreaths are placed at each of the monuments along the path of the Choctaw Nation War Memorial during a ceremony May 24 at Tvshka Homma.

Memorial Day ceremony held at Tvshka Homma



By Lisa Reed

The Choctaw Nation Veterans Advocacy and Youth Advisory Board (YAB) joined for the third year to present a Memorial Day celebration May 24 at Tvshka Homma.

Dee Ann Cormier said when asked to provide the opening remarks she started contemplating the meaning of “ultimate sacrifice.”

“I forget on a day-to-day basis that people are serving our country each and every day knowing they may give the ultimate sacrifice to keep me safe, you safe, our country free to live, free to worship, free to raise our families as we see fit.

“Today is set aside to move us out of our everyday lives and remember, honor, celebrate the soldiers that for the last 243 years have fought and died to give us freedom, democracy and equality.”

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs:

- Approximately 12,000 Native Americans served in the military during World War I.
- Over 44,000 Native Americans served in World War II between 1941 and 1945. The entire population of Native Americans in the United States was less than 350,000 at the time.
- Approximately 10,000 Native Americans served in the military during the Korean Conflict.
- More than 42,000 Native Americans served in the military in the Vietnam era. More than 90% of those service members were volunteers.

After Vietnam, large numbers of Native Americans continued to see action in Grenada, Panama, Somalia, the Gulf War, and in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn.

To honor the fallen Chahta Tvshka, two members of the Color Guard led the visitors and YAB students around the winding path of the peaceful memorial. A wreath was placed at each of the six black marble monuments representing the Choctaw Code Talkers and Choctaw veterans killed in action. Currently the World War I monument contains the names of nine fallen Choctaw warriors, World War II - 89, Korea - 16, Vietnam - 24, and War on Terrorism - six.

The group then moved to the Choctaw Nation Veterans Cemetery where the Color Guard provided Taps and a 21-gun salute while the YAB students respectfully placed a wreath at each headstone.

For more information about the War Memorial or the Veterans Cemetery at Tvshka Homma, please log onto ChoctawNation.com or contact Veterans Advocacy at 580-924-8280 or toll-free 800-522-6170.

Virtual visits option for veteran patients

The Choctaw Nation Health Service Authority (CNHSA) offers a full suite of primary and specialty care services to its veteran patients. This also includes behavioral health and enhanced support services such as care coordination and wellness visits for veterans 65 years and older. These services are offered at all locations in the health system.

CNHSA has now incorporated virtual visits into the numerous services available to veterans and has actively sought to engage and educate veterans on the services provided by the health system. This has been accomplished via outreach at numerous veterans' events across the service area and has cumulated with two presumptive condition events held in conjunction with the VA the summer 2018. These events were very successful and two more large events are scheduled summer 2019.

Districts schedule special veteran events

Veterans are honored each year at the Choctaw Nation community centers in each of the 12 districts. Pages 14 and 15 include photos of the veterans who attended the special lunches at Idabel, Battiest, Broken Bow, Smithville, Poteau, Spiro, Stigler, Antlers, Wright City, Hugo, Durant, Coalgate and Crowder.

The August issue of the Biskinik will feature groups of veterans from Atoka, McAlester, Talihina and Wilburton.

Yakoke to each of the men and women who have served and protected our country, helping to ensure the freedoms we all enjoy today.



IDABEL



BATTIEST



BROKEN BOW



SMITHVILLE



SPIRO

“When an animal's hurting and I can help it feel better, those are really good feelings.”

- Dr. Ty Smallwood

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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

We Salute Our Veterans



POTEAU



CROWDER



STIGLER



ANTLERS



WRIGHT CITY



HUGO



DURANT



COALGATE

Bringing veteran benefits to your hometown

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs, Choctaw Nation Health Care and Choctaw Nation Veterans Advocacy Department are partnering together to assist veterans with filing for benefits. Veterans will need to bring all documentation possible to help with their filing, including discharge papers (DD 214). During the events vendors will be on site with additional information for assistance. These two events are an opportunity for veterans to get benefit decisions in a timely manner.

July 9
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Kiamichi Technology Center
3205 NE Lincoln Rd., Idabel

July 16
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Conference Center
Choctaw Nation Headquarters
1802 Chukka Hina, Durant

For more information please contact:
Roger Hamill, 580-924-8280, ext. 2160
Harlan Wright, 580-924-8280, ext. 2735
Michael Robbins, 580-924-8280, ext. 4337
Karen Massey, 918-567-7000, ext. 6462
Marry Culley, 405-626-3426



ROBBERS CAVE STATE PARK, OK



Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

- Evaluations and Assessments
- Counseling and Guidance
- Referral Services
- On-the-Job-Training
- Physical and Mental Restoration

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday		
August 2	Durant	8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
August 6	Idabel	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 6	Poteau	11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 13	Talihina	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 13	Antlers	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 14	Wilburton	10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
August 14	Crowder	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 16	Atoka	11 a.m.-2 p.m.
August 20	Wright City	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 20	Poteau	11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 21	McAlester	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
August 21	Stigler	by appointment
August 23	Coalgate	11 a.m.-1 p.m.
August 27	Broken Bow	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
August 28	Durant	8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Call 580-326-8304 for an appointment

Tvshka Holitobli

The Wall That Heals

By Lisa Reed

The Wall That Heals found temporary residence in Durant, a Purple-Heart City, for four days in May. The event, sponsored by the Three Valley Museum and veteran and business organizations from the area, opened with a Welcome Home Ceremony May 9 at the Durant Multi-Sports Complex.

Hundreds visited the replica and mobile education center during that time including bus loads of school students and people from across southeastern Oklahoma. Vietnam veterans and their families sought a long overdue recognition for their sacrifices, and the ultimate sacrifice made by each of the 58,000-plus names on the monument.

Each Vietnam veteran had his or her own unique experience. All were part of the larger experience of being allies with South Vietnam as they defended a takeover by the communist government of North Vietnam. The average age of a U.S. soldier was 20. The youngest U.S. military casualty was only 16 years old.

The Vietnam War is historically the most misunderstood conflict in which the U.S. was involved. It was the first war heavily covered by media, and the images appeared in newspapers and on televisions everywhere. They faced derision and hostility when they returned home. Soldiers who potentially laid down their lives every day, and the medical and support personnel who strived to provide for every need, are now receiving the recognition they deserve.

The 375-foot Wall That Heals has been displayed in more than 600 communities since it was unveiled on Veterans Day 1996. It and the accompanying education center have helped in the process of healing for many of the veterans.

Captain Bob Ford, a keynote speaker at the event, was an aircraft commander of the “Black Cat” 282nd Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam in 1967-68.

“We asked for no reward except our Nation’s thanks,” Ford said. “We signed a code of conduct. There were six items on the code of conduct, the first of which said, ‘I am an American fighting man. I serve with forces that guard our country and our way of life, and I am prepared to give my life in their defense.’”

A veteran should never worry how he is remembered. Five-star General Dwight D. Eisenhower said it best. Chiseled in stone at the base of his statue in Abilene, Kansas, it says, “I cannot let this day pass without telling the fighting men of America that my fondest boast shall always be: I was their fellow soldier.”



Tvshka Holitobli – Honoring Warriors – Choctaw Nation Color Guard members Bruce Jessie, front, Shane Harper, Billy Goins, Michael Robbins, John Bursleson, John Barry, and Jerry Williams salute the names of fallen service men and women on The Wall That Heals during a Welcome Home Ceremony May 9 at the Durant Multi-Sports Complex.



Jeff Hansen, foreground, and his dad, Doug Hansen, play Echo Taps. Jeff is the director of Choctaw Nation’s Office of Emergency Management and an Air Force veteran. Doug is a retired band director and retired from the Army National Guard. He is currently a professor at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.



Photos by Lisa Reed

U.S. Army Captain Bob Ford stands within the doorway of a Huey helicopter, similar to those he flew in 1967-68. He flew over 1,000 missions during that time. Ford wore the uniform he wore on his last mission in Vietnam while attending the Welcome Home Ceremony for The Wall That Heals, to honor all who have stepped up and put on a uniform.

Color Guard chooses to honor fellow veterans

By Lisa Reed

The Choctaw Nation Color Guard is in its 21st year of service to veterans around the country. It provides military funeral honors for Choctaw veterans and adds elements such as posting the colors, presenting arms, and playing Taps at ceremonies and memorials. The Color Guard is a familiar site at tribal events including the annual Trail of Tears Walk, Memorial Day ceremony and Veterans Day ceremony.

The 18 active Color Guard members include one from the Korean era, 11 from the Vietnam era, one from Desert Storm, and five from Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom.

The group has more than 200 years combined combat service – 125 of those years from the Vietnam era alone.

Danny Belvin of Boswell was 20 when he joined the Marine Corps in March 1968. His first tour in Vietnam began in September 1969. A radio operator, he saw action in the area of Dong Ha in the I Corps, just below the border between North and South Vietnam.

The division was pulled and sent to Okinawa. From there he returned to Vietnam from January 1971 until June 1972, when the Marines were pulled out again.

His radio checks would be made every hour at every location, ensuring the transmissions were being received loud and clear.

Now Belvin serves as a member of the Choctaw Nation Color Guard.

“I do it to honor the veterans,” he said.

Belvin saw a name of a classmate who served in the Army on The Wall That Heals, the traveling replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.



Photo by Lisa Reed

Danny Belvin, a Vietnam veteran and member of the Choctaw Nation Color Guard, participates in the Memorial Day celebration at Tvshka Homma.

The classmate was a year ahead of him in school, he remembered.

Terry Cole of Durant said his role in the Vietnam War was similar to “Radar” on the popular TV series, “MASH.”

Cole was 19 years old when he was first sent to Thailand in 1973 as an admin specialist for the 388th Fighter Wing. The fighter route was from the Thai base to North Vietnam.

“I knew that being in the Air Force was what I wanted to do,” Cole said. “It was just a feeling.”

He said mail took forever to reach them, especially those new on base. He would get letters pitched out as quickly as possible with a, “Mail call!”

Empathetic to the loneliness of the men, he would find junk mail to deliver to the new guys, so they

would have something in their boxes.

Cole was one of the original 18 members of the Color Guard when it was created in 1998. He remembers the first veteran’s funeral the group attended. Cole said he believes the services provided by the Color Guard are important for the veterans and their families. After a few years away, Cole has returned to serve on the Color Guard where he can again be part of a group ensuring our veterans are remembered and treated with honor and respect.

For more information on the Color Guard, or if you are a Choctaw veteran who would like to become a member of the Color Guard, please contact the Choctaw Nation Veterans Advocacy Department, 580-924-8280 or 800-522-6170.

BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE’RE MORE ♦

JULY 2019

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Housing programs building a better future for tribal members.



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Veterans are honored throughout the Choctaw Nation for their service.

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.

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