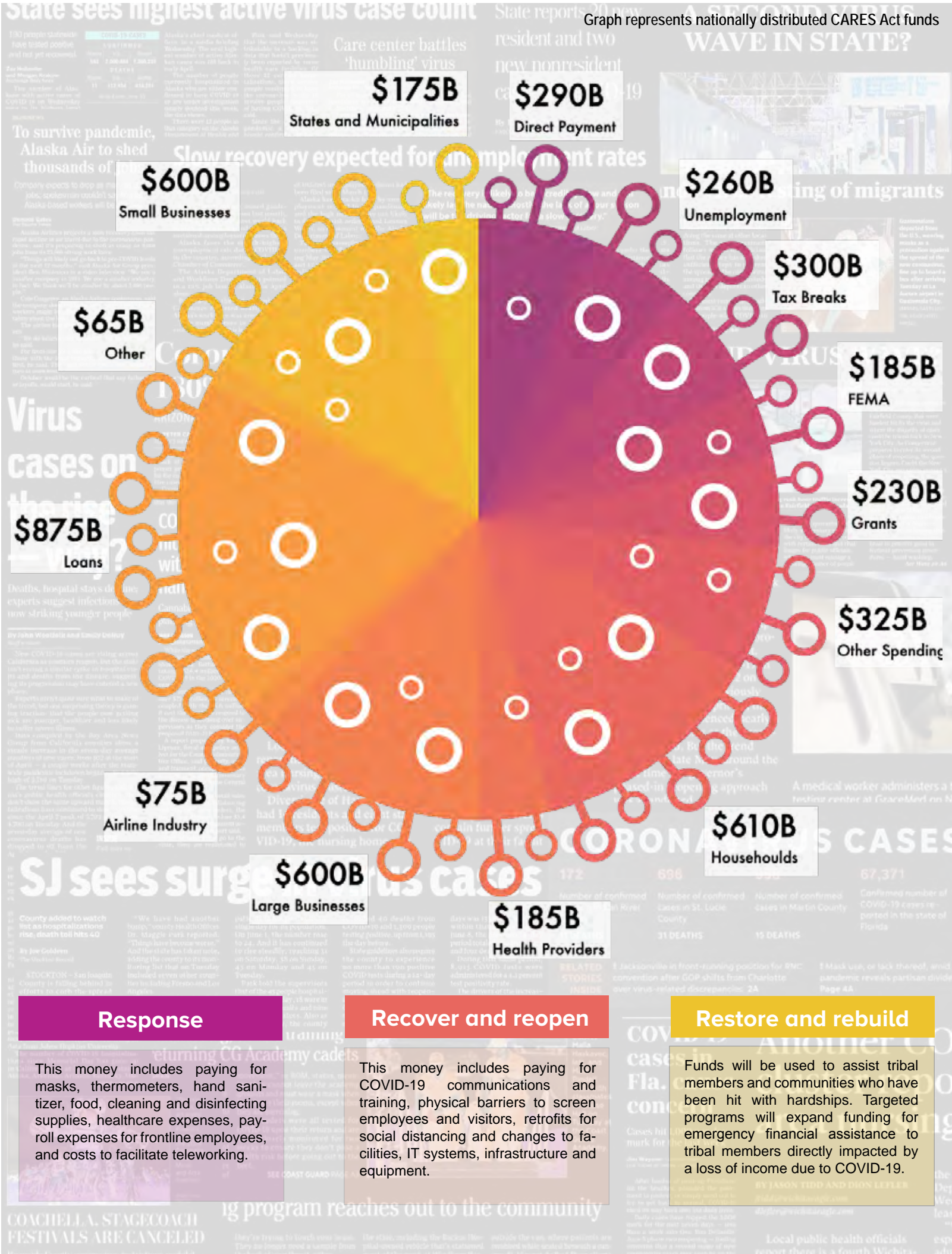




July 2020 Issue



Source CFRB.org

Choctaw Nation receives funding from CARES Act

Relief dollars allow CNO programs to expand services for tribal members during pandemic

By Brad Gernand

A question on the minds of many policymakers and leaders across the Choctaw Nation, the state of Oklahoma and the United States in recent months has been: how do we keep people and businesses afloat until the economy reopens following the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic?

Efforts to combat the effects of the pandemic in public health have been largely state-based, with each state and region tackling the issue separately. Economically, however, the approach has been driven by the federal government. And the most important tool in its toolkit has been direct aid designed to keep consumers and businesses above water financially.

Cornerstone to this is the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Different aspects of the \$2 trillion measure target various sectors of the economy and workforce.

Local, state and tribal governments are being aided via the CARES Act’s Coronavirus Relief Fund, which is funded at \$150 billion. The fund’s major goal is to support government spending in fields that positively impact personal health indicators, such as healthcare, nutrition, emergency services and social services, among others. Ideally, CARES Act funding will allow governments to bridge the crisis and return to full operations without trimming their workforces.

For the Choctaw Nation this has been a bittersweet story.

“We’re very pleased to receive what we did through the CARES Act,” said Chief Gary Batton. The money has been used to backstop tribal operations, particularly those benefiting tribal members directly. The problem, according to Chief Batton, is the money the tribe didn’t receive.

A Flawed Solution

In the first distribution of federal funds, the Choctaw Nation received \$136 million, a sum that will certainly be helpful. At least \$100 million, however, “didn’t come our way as a result of the formula used by the federal government,” Chief Batton explained. Payments to tribal governments under the CARES Act are based on a complex formula. The amount received by the Choctaw Nation was determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, under whose department the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its responsibility for tribal relations, falls.

Tribal officials at Choctaw Nation headquarters say the formula did not use population figures as its basis and placed heavy emphasis on a funding formula known as the Indian Housing Block Grant, used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The effect, they said, was to weigh urban regions heavily at the expense of rural ones.

In Oklahoma, this institutionalized funding bias was toward larger cities and towns. According to a new Harvard University study of the first round of federal stimulus funding to tribal governments, the Choctaw Nation scores first among American Indian tribes who are under-represented by the formula. The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma is in second place. Despite the fact that both tribal nations are in the top three Native tribes in terms of population, both nations’ service territories include sparsely populated rural terrain.

Ironically, Chief Batton said, using a population count, while leading to a more balanced outcome across the tribes, would also have been problematic. A steep undercount of Choctaw Nation tribal members during the 2010 United States Census means that far fewer tribal members are reflected by the Census than exist on official tribal rolls. This has impacted major areas of funding for the Choctaw Nation in the succeeding ten years, such as housing, which was denied a great deal of money for construction. See page 12 for an in-depth discussion on the 2010 Census’ effect on Choctaw Nation housing.

Chief Batton is leading an expansive effort to get every tribal member counted in the 2020 United States Census, which is underway through October 31. “If the data

from 2010 was more accurate,” he said, “it could easily have helped us with the CARES Act, and with lots more, across the board.” The Chief urges everyone who has not filled out the 2020 Census to do so and to indicate their tribal affiliation as “Choctaw Nation.” Anything less specific, such as “Choctaw,” will not be counted officially.

The Choctaw Nation’s Spending Plan

Chief Batton said every dollar the tribe received is very welcome and has been slated for use per guidance by the federal government, but more in the first disbursement would have been helpful. The Choctaw Nation’s spending plan includes three major categories of expenditure: Response, Recover and Reopen, and Restore and Rebuild.

Under the “Response” category, money is being used to purchase supplies and plan for combating the pandemic. It includes distributing medical supplies and personal protective equipment, food, cleaning and disinfection supplies, healthcare expenses, payroll expenses for frontline employees and costs to facilitate teleworking, which in part, has helped the Choctaw Nation continue services for tribal members and avoid furloughing or laying off staff during the pandemic.

The “Recover and Reopen” category is paying for costs associated with reopening Choctaw Nation facilities for members, employees and guests. This money includes paying for COVID-19 communications and training, physical barriers to maintain physical separation for employees and visitors, retrofits for social distancing, and changes to facilities, IT systems, infrastructure and equipment.

Under the third and final category, “Restore and Rebuild,” funds will be used to assist tribal members and communities who have experienced hardships due to the public health emergency. Targeted programs will expand funding for emergency financial assistance to tribal members directly impacted by a loss of income due to COVID-19.

Relief Available for Tribal Members

The CARES Act stipulates that three major conditions must be met for money to be used: the expenditures are necessary and were incurred due to the public health emergency; were not budgeted for in the existing budget; and were incurred during the period beginning on March 1, 2020.

According to the Choctaw Nation’s legal experts, the Choctaw government may use CARES Act funds to provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families directly impacted by a loss of income due to COVID-19. For example, the Choctaw Nation was able to suspend rent and mortgage payments for members living in tribal housing for two months under the CARES Act umbrella.

All assistance to individuals will require their needs to be fully documented in such a way that the documentation passes a future federal audit. Without documentation of a COVID-19 related need, individual aid for tribal members will not be permissible under the law. This means the Choctaw Nation is not permitted to issue individual payments to tribal members across the board.

While some smaller tribes are reported to be issuing per-capita payments to members, the majority are not. The federal guidance appears clear: per-capita payments would violate the CARES Act and place tribes at risk of having to repay the distributed funds to the federal government.

“A per capita distribution of funding is a blunt instrument,” according to legal experts in the Choctaw Nation government. “It does not differentiate between individuals in need of financial assistance due to the pandemic, individuals in need of financial assistance for non-pandemic related reasons, and individuals with no need whatsoever.”

The crux of the problem—distributing pandemic relief funds to individuals who were not harmed financially by the pandemic and do not qualify for it—may be avoided by targeting relief and aid for specific purposes, and not broadly or generally. Per capita payments, by contrast, would violate the CARES Act by providing the same amount of money to every tribal member on the membership roll regardless of need or impact by the pandemic.

As of Biskinik’s press date, detailed plans for spending the CARES Act funds were still in development, but updates on this information will be available on the CNO website and social media.

Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

Moving forward

So far, this year has been a year of ups and downs. It has been a time to reflect on our past, enact change, listen to each other and grow. The past few months have been difficult for so many. My heart goes out to everyone who has been affected by COVID-19. This pandemic is far from over. I urge you to continue to take precautions, wash your hands, wear face protection and continue to be mindful of your surroundings. As a nation, we must move forward, mindful of our mission and taking care to keep ourselves and others safe.

We began Phase III of our reopening process. Our casinos, tribal headquarters and various other facilities are now open with continued emphasis on social distancing and health precautions. We are still monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely, and the health and safety of our associates, tribal members, visitors and vendors is still our top priority.

COVID-19 isn't the only issue facing our nation and country today. America is a nation of the free, but it struggles with unity and is fractured by a lack of mutual respect. Now, more than ever, we must remember to love and pray for one another and to remember that together we're more.

Equality comes from God, not man. Let's allow our faith to guide us, build strong, resilient families and maintain a culture that is respectful of one another as well as those beyond our tribal affiliations.

Today, we must stand on the right side of history. We can make a difference and positive changes for the future. There is still so much to be done. Allow the Choctaw Nation values to guide your actions. Our foundation is built on faith, family and culture. These are our strengths. Upon this foundation are the values of responsibility, honor, accountability, servant leadership, teamwork and integrity.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Chahta culture lives on for future generations

Over the past few months, we've discussed the importance of faith and family during these uncertain times. This month, I would like to focus on our Choctaw culture and some of our resources that preserve our heritage.

Culture is an essential part of the Choctaw way of life, and we want to keep our traditions alive for our generations to come. The Choctaw Nation takes great pride in preserving and celebrating our many unique traditions for future generations. We want to continue passing these traditions on to our youth and sharing the Chahta spirit.

We have year-round language classes that are taught online through our Choctaw School of Language. Our teachers, many of whom are first-language speakers, take pride in keeping our language alive. It is a wonderful experience

to see our language taught in classrooms across Oklahoma and to students from so many different backgrounds. It is up to all of us to pass our language on to future generations, and our language department is doing a great job of keeping our language alive.

As we get closer to the opening of our Choctaw Nation Cultural Center in Durant this fall, I cannot wait for our story to be shared through its state-of-the-art exhibits. Our Cultural Services department has worked so hard to develop these exhibits. This beautiful facility will help us preserve our heritage and share our history with the world.

While we still practice social distancing, the Hina Hanta Project website is a great way to learn about Choctaw culture. Visit hinahanta.choctawnation.com to view curated Choctaw artifacts and art pieces. This is a great resource to use while we wait for the Cultural Center to open and for COVID-19 to slow down.

Another way to get in touch with your Chahta roots is to try out a traditional meal. Recipes for traditional foods like banana, tanchi labona and wild onions have been passed down through Choctaw families for generations. There are several traditional Choctaw recipes available on our website, choctawnation.com/history-culture/heritage-traditions/food.

Our annual Labor Day festival is always a great opportunity for us to celebrate our culture. Due to COVID-19, we will have to celebrate a little differently. This year's festival will be held Sept. 4 through Sept. 6 at Tvshka Homma.

We will be approaching this year's Labor Day Festival with a commitment to celebrating our tribal culture while having an awareness of public health. The event schedule is being narrowed to focus on cultural events and activities. All concerts and festival rides have been canceled. We will also take a virtual approach to the State of the Nation Address. Chief Batton's annual address will be available Sept. 7 across Choctaw Nation's digital channels, including, Facebook, YouTube and website. Even though we are celebrating in a different way, we are still getting to celebrate our culture together. Always celebrate our Chahta people and our rich culture.

TRIBAL MEMBER MASS MAILINGS

IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE WASTE, CHOCTAW NATION WILL TRANSITION MOST MASS MAILINGS TO ONE PER ADDRESS.

If your household requests more than one copy of mass mailings and you have not previously contacted us, then please email or call.
(Excluding Christmas Ornament and Yearly Calendar)

CIRCULATION@CHOCTAWNATION.COM
800.522.6170 EXT. 4028

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma stands for the dignity of human life, the need to listen to all voices, and the right to unite in peaceful protest as we strive for a better world today and for our future generations. Now, more than ever, we must remember to love and pray for one another and to remember that together we're more.

Chief Batton inducted into hall of fame

DURANT, Okla. (May 21, 2020) – Today, the Oklahoma Hall of Fame announced that Chief Gary Batton of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is among the 2020 inductees who will be included in its 93rd class of outstanding Oklahomans.

Chief Batton will join 706 others who have been inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame since 1928. The names of the honorees were announced May 21 during a special online event hosted by the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and the Gaylord-Pickens Museum.

"I am deeply humbled to be among the honorees. I share this honor with my family and friends, coworkers and the entire tribe of the Choctaw Nation. God has truly blessed me by surrounding me with wonderful people who want to make a positive impact on our tribe, communities and our state," states Chief Batton.

Gary Batton serves as 47th Chief of the Choctaw Nation. Chief Batton was raised in the beautiful but rugged mountains of Pushmataha County, near Clayton, Okla., where he lives today. Batton began working for the tribe while still a university student in 1987, assuming a full-time position following his graduation from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. In 1997, he became Executive Director of Health and led its transformation from a 1930s-era hospital into a cutting-edge, state of the art, comprehensive healthcare system, anchored by a flagship hospital and served by regional clinics, wellness programs, and outreach programs. In April 2014, Batton became Chief following the retirement of Chief Gregory Pyle. He was confirmed in the position by the Choctaw people in 2015.

He has made strengthening the position of the Choctaw language and culture central to his legacy, and a new Cultural Center is nearing completion as a result. He has continued to expand the tribe's economic development program, creating thousands of jobs across southeastern Oklahoma. In recognition of his efforts to broaden understanding among peoples and cultures, he was awarded the 2019 Global Citizenship Award by the Happy World Foundation.

"We proudly continue our mission in honoring Oklahoma's best and brightest with our state's highest honor," said Shannon L. Rich, president and CEO of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Gaylord-Pickens Museum. "Since the first induction ceremony in 1928, the Oklahoma Hall of Fame has celebrated the inspiring stories of our native sons and daughters who committed their lives to overcome challenges for the betterment of Oklahoma, our nation and the world. The outstanding class of 2020 is no exception and we look forward to sharing their unique stories that bring an overwhelming sense of pride to communities throughout our great state".

Chief Batton is the third Choctaw Nation leader to receive this high honor. In 2019, Chief Allen Wright/Kiliahot, Mississippi/Boggy Depot, Choctaw Nation was inducted posthumously having been recognized for naming Oklahoma. The late Gregory Pyle, Choctaw Nation Chief, was inducted in 2007.

The other 2020 Oklahoma Hall of Fame Honorees are: Stephen M. Prescott, M.D., Oklahoma City; Charles "Denny" Cresap, Afton; John W. Smith, Del City; Terry Stuart Forst, Waurika; Francis Rooney, Tulsa; Calvin J. Anthony, Stillwater and Martha Burger, Oklahoma City.

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

The Oklahoma Hall of Fame was founded in 1927 with the purpose of honoring Oklahomans in their lifetime with the state's highest honor and educating Oklahoma's youth on our rich history. The Gaylord-Pickens Museum, home of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, opened in 2007 with the intent of giving the public access to the stories of these and other inspirational Oklahomans.

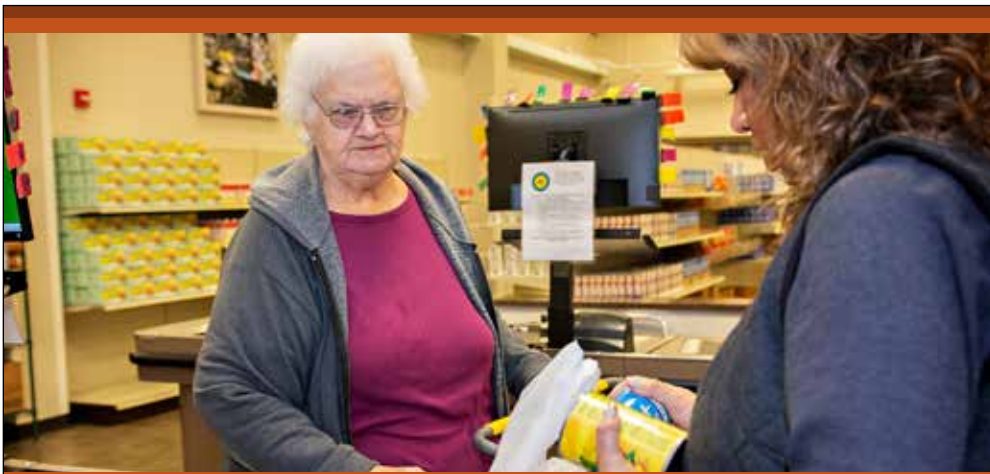


Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

Put up thy sword

The Christian is a citizen of Heaven and subject to its law, which is unconditional love. In the kingdom of God, one conquers not by fighting, but by submitting. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth these instructions: "And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. 4:12,13). Paul the elder taught the younger preacher Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient." Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane when he was betrayed by one of his own, and the soldiers came to arrest him. Then, one of his disciples drew out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. In Matthew 26:52 we read the response of Jesus. Then said Jesus unto him, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Mankind by nature is a

fighter. This is the law of the carnal nature. Mankind fights with his fist and sword, the tongue and wit. His kingdom is of this world so he fights for it with such weapons as this world provides. But the Christian is bound by the law of the new life in Heaven. By recognizing this and obeying it, that new life can be sustained and passed on to others. Putting up the sword (tongue) is much needed today. James said we control the great ships and the animal life but cannot control our tongue. He says in James 3:8, "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."



FOOD DISTRIBUTION

NOW SERVING ARKANSAS AND TEXAS COUNTIES

Choctaw Tribal Members in the following counties can now participate in the CNO Food Distribution Program

Arkansas: Sebastian, Scott, Polk, Sevier and Little River
Texas: Fannin, Lamar, Red River and Bowie

Eligibility Requirements apply
Participant must be willing to travel to one of the pickup sites in Oklahoma (Antlers, Broken Bow, Durant, McAlester and Poteau)

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MCALISTER: 918-420-5716 | POTEAU: 918-649-0431 | MAIN NUMBER: 800-522-6170



Choctaw Nation

Food Distribution

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Congratulations, graduates



Pipes graduates with honors

Devin Pipes is graduating with honors from the University of Texas at Arlington with a major in History and minor in Anthropology.

Pipes would like to thank the Choctaw Nation Higher Education office for all of their help and support. He

could not have done this without all of the help from the wonderful folks there.

Chelsea Herr receives Doctorate in Native American Art History



Chelsea M. Herr, Ph.D., of Norman, received her Doctorate in Native American Art History from the University of Oklahoma on May 8, 2020. Raised in Southern California, Chelsea is the daughter of Paul and Tonia Herr, granddaughter of Pearl Elizabeth Southard Heathcott, and a member of the Durant family.

Chelsea studied Art History and French at Seattle Pacific University before receiving her MA in Art History from the University of California at Riverside. In 2015, Chelsea moved from California to Norman to begin her doctoral program.

During her time at OU, she spent two summers as an intern for the Couse Foundation in Taos, New Mexico. There, she cataloged and archived Native American works of art, including 19th and 20th century beadwork and pottery. Chelsea received the Kerr and Bullard Fellowships from OU, and taught undergraduate art history courses.

After commencement, Chelsea began her career as the new Curator of Indigenous Art and Culture at the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Chelsea sincerely thanks the Choctaw Nation for their financial support for her during eleven years of higher education, from her undergraduate degree through her doctorate.

Hotchkiss graduates Cal Poly SLO

Elizabeth Hotchkiss graduated from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, March 2020, with a degree in Animal Science.

She would like to thank the tribe for their support throughout her education. She hopes to pursue a job in wildlife conservation and research.

She is the daughter of Molly and John Hotchkiss.



Jackson graduates with honors



Callie Marie Jackson graduated with honors from the University of Oklahoma with a major in Public Relations and a minor in French.

She recently started her career as a Strategic Development and Marketing Specialist at an Oklahoma hospital.

Her family said, “We are so proud of you, your hard work, and your accomplishments! Mom, Jake, family, and friends.”



Roberts graduates from OU

The family of Sarah Roberts is very proud to announce her graduation from the University of Oklahoma College of Law with a Masters of Legal Studies in Indigenous Peoples Law. Sarah would like to thank her family, teachers, and the Choctaw

Nation for all the love and support she received through her academic goals. She is the daughter of Richard and Brenda Roberts.

Roberts is the great-granddaughter of Lesa Phillip Roberts and Jesse Roberts.

Gentry earns M.S. In Native American Leadership



Kristin Gentry earned her M.S. in Native American Leadership with Honors from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in May of 2020.

Kristin is the daughter of the late Bill and Pat Hoover and the granddaughter of the late Charles and Jewell Fry, the late Oran and Katherine Hoover, and the late Jack Benjamin. She lives with her husband Ernest Gentry and daughter Jewell in Owasso, Oklahoma.

Kristin works as a full-time Choctaw artist. She is a board member for the Southeastern Indian Artists Association and the Central Regional Adviser for the Alpha Pi Omega Sorority, Inc.

Leach graduates from Union University



Ben Taylor Leach graduated from Union University in Jackson, Tenn. with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with an emphasis in international relations and a minor in Business Management.

Ben is engaged to Kaylee Fernandez. His parents are Alisha Leach and Clark and Monica Leach; brothers Jake Leach and spouse Lillie; sister Sara Leach and spouse Seth;

grandparents Susana Pate and spouse Dave, Cheryl Adams, Kent Leach and spouse Linda, and Vistor Chavez and spouse Mary.

Ben would like to thank God, the Choctaw Nation and his family for making this possible.



Sanner receives Masters degree

Robyn Sanner has recently completed her Masters in Organizational Leadership Business from Cameron University.

Sanner graduated from The University of Oklahoma in 2015 with a degree in Communications Sciences and Disorders and is now employed with Paycom.

She is the daughter of Jeff and Debbie Sanner.



Harms graduates from UT Arlington

Mary Hayes Harms and Melba L. Hayes of Euless, Texas announce with great pride the graduation of their daughter/granddaughter Lauren Oleta Harms from the University of Texas at Arlington on May 20, 2020. Lauren received a Bachelor of

Science in Physics and graduated with the U-Teach program. She minored in Math.

While at the University of Texas at Arlington, Lauren worked as an AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) tutor at Sam Houston High School in Arlington, Texas for four and a half years. She also taught Sunday school at Grace Community Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Lauren plans to teach high school physics and math in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. While teaching, she plans to pursue a Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction in Science Education at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Lauren is the great-granddaughter of John Dennis Spring late of Commerce, Texas known as “Little Choctaw” and is also the great-great-great granddaughter of John Spring Jr. on the Dawes roll of 1907.



Gary Johnson receives MBA

Gary Johnson recently completed studies for his MBA at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

As the Small Business Development Manager for the Choctaw Nation, Gary assists in day-to-day operations in developing the program as well as training and mentoring

small business advisors.

Before joining the Choctaw Nation, Gary was a small business owner and manager of three previous businesses. He currently owns and operates RooCaLoo Design Company and Home Team Pediatric Therapy, both located in Anna, Texas.

Gary graduated from Broken Bow in 1997, where he went on to serve in the Marines. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from American Intercontinental University and a medical transcription diploma from American Transcription Institute.

COMPLETE YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Looking to complete your high school education? Here is your opportunity. The Choctaw Nation offers High School Equivalency Diploma classes online for all Tribal Members within the United States. Our online academy is a self-paced program suited to your schedule. Also, other federally recognized tribes may participate in the online academy if located within the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. All books, supplies and testing fees provided. Most students finish within 12 weeks of study. A \$250 incentive is available to students enrolled in this program upon completion.

CONTACT

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Choctaw Nation Education Services



BOOM IN THE VALLEY

CELEBRATION

July 2, 2020 | TVSHKA HOMMA, OK

DRIVE-IN FIREWORKS SHOW

STARTING AT 9PM

(SOCIAL DISTANCE WITHIN YOUR OWN VEHICLE)

The firework show will be broadcast live on KRMF-FM 102.3

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



PROJECT EMPOWER

EDUCATING, MOTIVATING, AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP VICTIMS ENRICH AND RECLAIM THEIR LIVES

Assisting victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking to achieve a stable, successful life free from violence

- Transitional Housing and Support
- Safety and Life Planning
- Transportation
- Healing Gatherings

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Must be a member of a federally recognized tribe and age 18 or older. Must be able to receive services in the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

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

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

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund To Be Eligible to Apply:

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

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

Crowder Community Center

July 10, 2020
9:00 - 11:00

|| • \$ • ||

Choctaw Nation youth chosen as panelists

By Shelia Kirven

In 2018 and 2019, thirteen grantees were chosen to participate in a Youth Listening Sessions (YLS) project. Two hundred fifteen youth from across the U.S. participated, and ten youth were from the Choctaw Nation SMART Program. The project goal was to better understand what youth need to be healthy, make healthy decisions, and identify what meaningful youth engagement meant to them.

On May 12, the Choctaw Nation SMART Program co-facilitated a virtual/webinar training for TPP and PAR grantees called “Listen Up! The Power of Youth Voice.” Five youth participants were chosen as panelists: one from New York, one from South Carolina, and three from the Choctaw Nation SMART Program. The five-panelists discussed their YLS projects and answered questions regarding the message that youth need to be healthy and make healthy decisions. The purpose of the session was to get youth perspectives on adolescent health in rural Oklahoma. Students also participated in group activities lead by TPP/SMART Evaluator Sarah Rowland.

Choctaw Nation is the only Oklahoma tribe that received funding, a part of Outreach Services Better Beginnings Program. The funding, received in 2015, is part of a five-year grant to reduce teen pregnancy rates in the Choctaw Nation’s service area. Currently, the state of Oklahoma ranks #3 in the nation for highest teen pregnancy rates. The program focuses on Choctaw, Pushmataha, McCurtain and part of Pittsburg counties, which have the highest teen pregnancy rates in the Choctaw Nation service area. The program partners with school districts in those counties to teach evidence-based and age-appropriate teen pregnancy prevention programs to middle school, high school and alternative education students. Though the grant ends June 30, 2020, application has been submitted for renewal of the program.

For more information contact Christi Hammons, Director at 1(877) 285-6893.

Choctaw Nation casinos reopen

By Chris Jennings

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma resumed operations of all casinos on June 1 with increased health and safety measures. This includes all Choctaw Casinos & Resorts as well as Casino Too locations in travel plazas. The casinos were closed for a total of 75 days due to COVID-19.

Chief Gary Batton said in a press release, “We are putting all of the recommended safety measures in place to ensure that our casinos and businesses are ready for our guests.” The following safety measures are in place at all casinos:



Choctaw Nation casinos opened their doors June 1 after being closed for 75 days due to COVID-19.

- Sanitation wipes will be located throughout the gaming floor.
- Occupancy levels will be limited to protect the safety of our associates and guests.
- Acrylic separation panels will be installed at transaction areas.
- Associates on property will be required to adhere to personal sanitation standards, including wearing a face covering.
- Masks will be available but are not required for guests.
- Gaming positions will be reduced where necessary to promote safety.
- Table games will be limited to every other seat, and tables in play will be staggered.
- Additional sanitation stations have been made available around the properties.
- Amenities within the property, such as shops, will have occupancy limitations.

These safety measures are also in place for restaurants in the casinos. Seating has been adjusted to ensure appropriate social distancing. For example, every other bar stool has been removed from use in all bars.

Where possible, self-serve kiosks have been implemented at quick-serve venues. Guests are also asked to use a new cup each time at self-serve drink stations.

The frequency of cleaning and sanitizing by staff has been increased in all public spaces with an emphasis on frequently contacted surfaces, including check-in desks, bell desks, elevators, door handles, public restrooms, room keys, locks, ATMs, escalator handrails, casino cage counters, slot machines, table games, dining surfaces, kiosks and seating areas.

Sandy Thomas-Sobey has been to the casino twice since the reopening, saying, “It was very clean, and I saw plenty of staff cleaning the machines when people got up and moved.”

To accommodate for social distancing, seating in the pool area has also been adjusted to allow for the six-foot guideline. For elevator trips, it’s recommended to limit capacity to four people at a time except for families traveling together.

Cleaning of hotel rooms is also highly focused, with particular attention to high-contact items including remote controls, toilet seats and handles, doors, furniture handles, water faucet handles, nightstands, telephones, in-room control panels, light switches, alarm clocks, luggage racks and flooring.

The safety of guests and associates is of the highest priority. Chief Batton said, “Our priority of health and safety first, everything else second, has guided our actions and decisions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and now also serves as the focal point of our recovery vision within the Choctaw Nation.”

Are Virtual Medical Visits for you?

Virtual Medical Visit services enables healthcare access to patients who are not able to travel to the provider for specific non-life threatening injuries or illnesses.

The service is a video appointment with a healthcare provider that is available to patients with specific symptoms. Patients may have 3 virtual visits within a 30 day period, then must physically see a provider.

Eligibility

To qualify for a virtual medical visit, patient must:

- Be a CDIB holder and have a current Consent to Treat on file.
- Live in Oklahoma and be age five (5) years or older.
- Have an active chart at any Choctaw Nation Health Services facility and have been seen within the last 12 months.

To qualify for Virtual Medical Visits, you must meet eligibility requirements and have one of the approved symptoms:

- allergies
- poison ivy
- sunburn
- head lice
- pink eye
- insect bite(s)
- cough/cold
- yeast infection
- cold sores
- recurrent genital herpes

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Please call (580) 916-9231 or visit us online at choctawnation.com/virtual-visits

Choctaw Nation Health Services

Living out the Chahta Spirit FAITH ♦ FAMILY ♦ CULTURE



Three youth panelists who participated in the recent Youth Listening Session in Hugo were, from left to right: Keeley Johnson, Grady Grimmett, and Sage Smallwood.

Film festival calls for entries



Screening series expanded to accommodate growing talent

Los Angeles, CA (June 9, 2020) – Entries are officially being accepted for the 14th Annual LA SKINS FEST, presented by Comcast NBCUniversal. The festival will be taking place November 17th - 22nd, 2020 at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Chinese Theater in Hollywood, CA. Qualified filmmakers can submit their entries through the LA SKINS FEST online entry form at laskinsfest.com or through filmfreeway.com.

Deadlines to submit are:
Early Deadline: July 31, 2020
Regular Deadline: August 28, 2020
Final Deadline: Sep 18, 2020

The LA SKINS FEST will celebrate filmmakers whose original works are distinguished and offer a new voice in cinema. Films accepted in the festival will be eligible for the competition and prizes from our corporate sponsors. This year, awards will be given to the following categories: Achievement in Narrative Filmmaking, Documentary, Narrative Short, Documentary Short, Animation, Writer, Director, Actor, Actress and Audience Award.

Once again, this year’s festival will offer a week-long series of events throughout Hollywood. The film festival will premier exciting new Indigenous films, present the 9th Annual Native Media Awards Celebration, provide the 9th Writers Pitch Workshop and host Native American filmmakers from throughout North and South America.

The festival is an initiative of the Native American non-profit the Barcid Foundation and aims to showcase the rising talent in Native American filmmaking. This year, the LA SKINS FEST is expanding the screening series to accommodate the

growing talent in Indian Country. Corporate support of the LA SKINS FEST plays an essential role in the life of the festival and emphasizes the festival’s commitment to quality, exploration, and excellence in the art of cinema, TV and new media.

The LA SKINS FEST is privileged to partner with some of the world’s most renowned entertainment brands this year; including Comcast NBCUniversal, Walt Disney Studios, Bank of America, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Bad Robot, Motion Picture Association, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Cast & Crew, Google American Indian Network, STARZ, Snowpants Productions, Kung Fu Monkey Productions, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Final Draft, and City of Los Angeles Council member Mitch O’Farrell.

About The LA SKINS FEST

The prestigious Los Angeles Skins Fest ranks among the country’s best film festivals and is an annual gathering for film industry insiders, cinema enthusiasts, filmmakers, and critics. The LA SKINS FEST is considered a major launching ground for Indian Country’s most talked about films. Founded in 2007, the LA SKINS FEST, presented in the historic TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, is a 6-day multicultural event celebrating the art of film, TV and new media. The LA SKINS FEST’s long-standing commitment is to join filmmakers and film connoisseurs together to experience great cinema. The exciting schedule consists of dozens of filmmakers presenting their newest works, special artist development programs, tributes to community leaders, special events, and re-markable films. Festival headquarters are in Los Angeles, CA.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

The Choctaw Nation Elder Advocacy/ Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) programs, Victim Services, and Outreach Services staff joined the rest of the world in recognizing June 15th as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day by wearing Purple. Many organizations associate the color purple with dignity, respect and royalty. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 66/127, designated June 15th as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It represents the one day of the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted on some of our older generations. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day started in 2006 and keeps growing every year.

The Choctaw Nation Elder Advocacy/Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) program will continue to raise awareness of Elder Abuse.

If you would like more information about the Elder Advocacy Program (VOCA) or questions about ELDER ABUSE please contact the Choctaw Nation Elder/Vulnerable Adult Advocacy Program at 1-877-285-6893.

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NOTES AND EVENTS

OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance

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Oklahoma City Okla. 73119
405-681-0869
www.facebook.com/OKChoctawTribalAlliance

**Choctaw Language Classes ♦ Indian Taco Sales
Monthly Senior Activities ♦ Cultural Events and
Presentations ♦ Volunteer Activities ♦ Craft Classes**

Veterans meeting first Saturday of every month at 10 a.m.
Scholarship Opportunities 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization

Unclaimed funds

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

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
Attn: Jeryn Hart, Payroll Accountant
Or Phone 580-924-8280 ext. 4323

SAMANTHA JILL RICH
JULIA MORGAN TURNER
TOSHA ANN GONZALEZ
CHELSIE RAYANN HEAD

NEED TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS?

Contact the Choctaw Nation
Circulation Department

580.924.8280 x4028

Read the Biskinik online at
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/NEWS

BISKINIK

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
Monthly Publication
of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Dara McCoy, Executive Director
Mary Ann Strombitski, Senior Director
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P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
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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. 4028.

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.

Oklahoma Indian Legal Services may be able to help tribal members who have received storm damage but can't get assistance due to title problems.

Call 800-658-1497 for more information.

Veterans Association Members Needed

Choctaw Veterans Association is searching for new members. Most of our members are Vietnam Vets.

We need young Choctaw military men and women, active or retired. Members of different tribes are welcome as well. Veterans Association paperwork is needed.

Meetings are 8 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month at the Spiro Choctaw Community Center. Members attend funerals, and Disabled American Veterans and Marine Corp League.
For information call:

Ed Hendricks, Recruiter 918-962-5524
Paul Perry, Commander 479-353-2709

Noel and Roxie (Loman) Baker Family Reunion

October 24, 2020 (previously scheduled for June 27)

Choctaw Nation Community Center
2746 Big Lots Parkway, Durant, Okla.
Potluck lunch begins at 11 a.m.

For questions, check the family facebook or contact
Lillie Dusenberry at 580-320-1039.

Send us your stories!

The Biskinik is a free service to our tribal members. We want to be an outlet for all members to share their successes with the rest of the tribe.

Please send your submissions to us at
biskinik@choctawnation.com

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

July Language Lesson

Pronoun – you (all) – hvsh

- Katimikma toksvlit hvsh ilhkola chi?**
When will you (all) go to work?
- Ant hvsh sv pisa chike!**
You (all) come and see me!
- Hvsh aivla hinla ho?**
Can you (all) come?
- Hushi haksobali hvsh haklo ha?**
Did you (all) hear the noisy birds?
- Katimma hvsh impa chatuk?**
Where do you (all) usually eat?
- Holbvttoha nanta hvsh pisa chi?**
What movie will you (all) watch?
- Nan inla hvsh pisa chi.**
You (all) will see something different.

www.choctawschool.com

Thank You

I wanted to say a giant thank you to the Choctaw Nation. I am so grateful for the financial assistance I received while earning my Bachelors of Science degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders this Spring.

Coming from a single parent household, I always knew I wanted to go to college, but was always fearful of the debt that usually accompanied a degree. Thanks to the Choctaw Nation a large financial burden was taken off not only my shoulders, but my family's as well!

I could not be more thankful for the peace of mind this financial assistance provided!

Blessings,
Alexei Green

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

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

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

July 7	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
July 7	Wright City	10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 8	Antlers	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 8	Atoka	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 10	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 14	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 14	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 15	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 15	Coalgate	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 17	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 17	Atoka	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 21	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 21	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 22	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July 22	Stigler	By Appointment
July 24	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 24	Coalgate	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 28	Crowder	By Appointment
July 31	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Call 580-326-8304 for an appointment

Did You Know?

Long before Europeans arrived on this continent, Choctaw people had a deep spirituality and an ancient singing tradition. There were specific songs for hunting, for stickball, for playing hand games, for going to war; songs sung for the safety of loved ones away at war; songs a person sang when facing death; and songs sung during sacred dances at the Green Corn Ceremony. Christian hymns were brought to Choctaw country by protestant Missionaries who arrived in 1819 at the request of Chiefs Mushulatubbee and David Folsom.

Tribal Council holds June session

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

June 13, 2020

- CALL TO ORDER
- OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
- ROLL CALL
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - Regular Session May 9, 2020
- WELCOME GUESTS/RECOGNIZE VETERAN OF THE MONTH
 - District #12 James Bench
- REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
- NEW BUSINESS
 - Approve an Application to Request Funds from HHS for a Cost of Living Adjustment and Quality Funds for FY2021 for the Choctaw Nation Head Start Program - Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Authorize the Chief to Place Property in McCurtain County in Trust Status with the United States of America - Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Rescind CB-135-01, A Council Bill Approving a Motor Fuel Tax Funds Expense for Choctaw Nation Boys and Girls Clubs - Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - Approve Application for the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG)—Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) - Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
- OTHER NEW BUSINESS
- OLD BUSINESS
- ADJOURNMENT
- CLOSING PRAYER

All council members were present. Speaker Thomas Williston, Secretary Ron Perry and Chaplain Jennifer Woods were present in Council House and all others by phone.

ITI FABVSSA

Remembering and Searching for “Wheelock – In song and story”

In the June edition of Iti Fabvssa, we ran an oral history guide to help you start conversations with your family and friends with the aim to record and save those stories for future generations. While stories are important for all people, the stories that Choctaw people tell about our past remind us of the sacrifices our ancestors made to ensure the survival of our culture, language, and community. One subject of many Choctaw stories is Wheelock Female Academy, an all-girls boarding school founded in 1832 by missionary Alfred Wright that educated hundreds of Choctaw and Native girls until 1952. Wheelock was also where Choctaw girls were separated from family and the teachings, language, and culture they would have been exposed to at home. It was also an important site of new ways of remembering the legacy of our Choctaw ancestors, and Wheelock Academy students like Ida Austin and Betty Whitfield carried these stories into the lives of their descendants.

Wheelock has been important to the family of Sandra Moore Riley and her daughter Margaret Riley, the descendants of Ida Austin and Betty Whitfield, for at least five generations. For more than fifty years, Sandra has researched Choctaw history and helped families learn their genealogy. Both Sandra and Margaret actively participate in Choctaw textile revitalization and are skilled artists. Through their retelling of their family connections to Wheelock Academy, Sandra and Margaret shared with us how Betty’s stories prompted a 50-year long search for information about a play performed at Wheelock. Their journey reminds us that that telling Choctaw stories and experiences to the next generation is part of a legacy of maintaining Choctaw lifeways and our connection to our ancestors.

From her home in Connecticut, Margaret helped Sandra, who lives in Texas record Betty’s story. Sandra’s mother went by ‘Betty’ since she was a girl even though her given name was Phoebe Frances Whitfield. Sandra recalls, “Throughout my childhood in California, Mother told me stories about Wheelock Academy, the Choctaw boarding school that she, her sisters, and her mother attended.” Margaret and her mother Sandra speak fondly of Betty’s Wheelock stories of exploring the woods near the school and remembering how, “Once in a while, we could get her to sing ‘Glowworm’ and perform a few steps of the routine she’d done as a schoolgirl.” Margaret’s three children have grown up outside of Choctaw Nation but have visited Wheelock multiple times. When she asks her children about Wheelock, they remember that “[Betty] eventually ran away and followed the train tracks home. Even though she appreciated what she was learning at Wheelock, it was a boarding school after all, and she missed her mother.”

One of the stories Betty often told was of a pageant she witnessed at Wheelock. Sandra recalls that her mother would describe how, “the players rode in on wagons, reenacting their arrival over the Trail of Tears from Mississippi.” Sandra shares that, “Over the years, Mother’s stories about the pageant remained vivid in my memory... After she retired from her teaching career in California, Mother returned to southeastern Oklahoma. When I went to see her, we often visited her old friends and I asked them if they knew anything about the pageant at Wheelock.”

Held in the early 1930s, the Wheelock Academy pageant Sandra’s mother remembered was likely organized to commemorate the centennial of both the Trail of Tears and Alfred Wright’s founding of Wheelock. Edmond J. Gardner, a local historian of Valliant, worked with others to coordinate and present the Wheelock pageant to the community. On one of her visits to Oklahoma in the 1970s, Sandra met Noel Gardner, Edmond Gardner’s son, whom she also asked about the Wheelock pageant. While she learned there was a written description of the pageant in Edmond’s papers, they had been loaned to a historical society. On other occasions, Sandra met with Annie Garland Haynie who attended Wheelock reunions and lived near the Academy. While Annie was also a keeper of many family stories and collections, she too was not able to shed light on the pageant.

Sandra continued her search for records of the pageant. She remembers that, “Over many years and many conversations with area historians, I was never able to find anything more about the pageant my mother had described.” For more than fifty years, Sandra shared her mother’s pageant story while continuing her Choctaw historical and genealogical research in the community and in archives. Finally, in January 2020, Sandra found the missing details of her mother’s Wheelock pageant story in the Gardner family papers, now part of the Gilcrease Museum archives in Tulsa.

Reflecting on that research trip to the archives, Sandra shared her reaction to the discovery:



Photograph circa 1930 of Wheelock students and friends Betty Whitfield (mother of Sandra Moore Riley) on right and Lucy Walker on left. Provided by Sandra Moore Riley.

I was absolutely thrilled to learn they had a very large collection of Edmond Gardner’s papers. The description of the pageant was there, complete with a diagram showing the staging! Just like mother described. My Mother started school at Wheelock about one hundred years ago. It seems fitting that I found the papers this year to mark that anniversary.

Gardner’s pageant included four scenes spanning from the late 1700s Choctaw home life through the Trail of Tears, ending with the early years at Wheelock and Alfred Wright’s passing. The crowd witnessed dramatizations of negotiations between Choctaw leaders and the US government including key figures like Pushmataha, Thomas Leflore, Andrew Jackson, Greenwood Leflore, Major Eaton, and Killihota and the meetings at Doak’s Stand and Dancing Rabbit Creek. The script, entitled “Wheelock – In song and story” includes dialogue like the following representing conversations at the negotiations for the Treaty of Doak’s Stand in 1820 (the transcription uses the notation from the archive, Pushmataha is sometimes referred to as Push):

Brother Push. “I know that a line running due south from the Canadian source would not touch [the] Red River but go into Mexican possessions.”

General Jackson. Interrupts Pushmataha. by saying. “See here [brother] Push look at this map Both examine the map.

Pushmataha. Says. “The map is not true.” Then marks out a map on the ground...

In the stage directions, Gardner recommends that, “The girls should act out as many of the scenes as [possible], because they could be properly trained and instructed, and let the visiting Choctaws serve as fillers to make a crowd.” Sandra’s mother most remembered the procession of wagons that reenacted the Trail of Tears journey during the pageant. Gardner’s stage directions called for at least twenty-five consecutive groups of people on foot, horseback, or wagons to portray the removal by riding through the Wheelock grounds and playing out short anecdotes from the Trail. It is no wonder that Sandra’s mother Betty passionately recounted witnessing the pageant as a girl many decades later.

While oral histories are valid by themselves, these archival records reveal the grand scale of the event and attest to the deep impact of removal on Choctaw people, as played out in this 1932 pageant. By sharing these stories from generation to generation and caring for the heritage materials of families and communities, Choctaw people like Sandra Moore Riley and Margaret Riley, Edmond Gardner and Noel Gardner, preserve a record of the stories that continue to be relevant to understanding our Choctaw history. For Margaret, she hopes “that future generations of our family will appreciate how important Wheelock Academy was to my grandmother. I hope they have the chance to walk down the front walk and imagine her roller skating, playing jacks, or singing Glowworm.” These stories, both great and small, carry significance in the act of retelling and in affirming the way our ancestors played active roles in shaping the Choctaw future.

We encourage you to continue the important work of sharing intergenerational stories. For questions about the Wheelock Academy Historic Site or for contact information for Historic Preservation staff, please visit www.choctawnationculture.com.

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Victim Services Set Aside program funding to provide assistance to qualified adult, youth, and child victims of all types of crime.

Choctaw Nation Victim Services Set-Aside



STUDENT SCHOOL
AND ACTIVITY FUND

The Choctaw Nation offers a \$100 grant to Choctaw tribal students who are attending 3-year-old head start through high school. The grant is provided one time each funding year and will be on a Visa card specifically for clothing; it will be declined at ATMs, gas stations, restaurants, movie theaters, etc.

The Student School and Activity Fund Program funding year is **July 1 - May 1** of the following year.
Applications can be submitted online.

CONTACT

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Choctaw Nation Head Start



AUGUST 3-6
Move in & Family Night
August 3



AUGUST 6-7
Move in & Family Night
August 6



AUGUST 10-11
Move in & Family Night
August 10

MOVE-IN TIME TO BE DETERMINED BY CAMPUS | FAMILY NIGHT BEGINS AT 6:00 PM

CONTACT

800-522-6170 EXT 2292 | COLLEGEFYI@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation

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College Freshman Year Initiative



Laney turns 100

Alma Louise (Moses) Laney is living life to the fullest in sunny Southern California. The 100-year old socialite retired six years ago and has since allowed herself more time to attend luncheons, shopping trips, join friends for visits at the golf club, and even go ballroom dancing.

Alma had one son, John, and has an adopted son, Joe, with whom she currently resides.

Alma is the daughter of Ike Moses, who was an original Choctaw enrollee on the Dawes Rolls, and Lula Belle Hall Moses. She has one grandson, Justin, a granddaughter-in-law, Corrie, and two great-grandchildren, Brenda and Kyler. She is adored by four generations of nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and great-great nieces and nephews.

Prior to retiring, Alma traveled to many different places in the world. Alma still enjoys gathering with friends and family and likes to travel.

Alma attended Wheelock Academy from the age of nine and graduated from Chilocco. She also graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma where she studied business.

Alma says, "Life is what you make of it. You can make it good! I am very fortunate to be at this stage in my life. If there is a message I could leave to my grandchildren, great-grandchildren and all future generations, it would be to know how much I love them, for them to be good, and to always worship God!"



Ferreira celebrates 90 with family

Theresa Ferreira celebrated her 90th birthday on March 7th.

Theresa is the daughter of the late RB and Agnes Mayfield of Hugo.

She is shown here with her gift from the Choctaw Nation. Pictured with her are her children Kenneth Johnson, Richard Johnson, Sue Combs, Charlie Gatlin, Gary Gatlin and Jerry Gatlin.

Theresa still enjoys hosting a Thanksgiving dinner every year for her family.

Bench Veteran of the Month



James Bench of Crowder, Okla. (District 12), was the June 2020 Veteran of the Month.

Bench served in the United States Navy from 1957 to 1961, where he achieved the rank of Seaman. He served in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines. Seaman Bench was stationed on the USS Reaper, which was a minesweeper ship, and then on the USS Pledge where he remained until his discharge in 1961.

Mills turns 90

Verna Mae Mills celebrated her 90th birthday June 19 in Oklahoma. She is the granddaughter of original Mississippi Choctaw enrollees Putwood and Fanny Mae Billy. Her mother was Minerva Billy (Fobb) who raised Verna in the town of Bennington, Okla. She has four siblings, brother James and sisters Bernice, Lou Ella and Eleanor.

Verna has seven children. Evelyn, Marvin Jr, Herbert, Melvin, Ricky, and David and Lorrie (twins). She has 20 grandchildren and 80 plus great and great-great-grandchildren.

Verna has spent most of her life in the Texas Panhandle, where she raised her family, and currently lives in Pampa, Texas. She's a wonderful grandma, who in her day, loved catfishing and gardening. She also makes the best coconut cream pie.



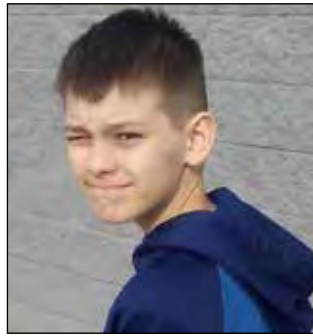
95 years for Lachenmyer

June Moore Lachenmyer recently celebrated her 95th birthday.

She was born in Tupelo, Okla. to Willard Moore and Ruby Calloway Moore. Her grandmother was Elizabeth Harkins, descendant of George Washington Harkins.

Redenius turns 13

Happy 13th Birthday to David Redenius Jr. on July 8. We love you so much! Hope your teenage years are fun and amazing. Love your family. Dad, Mom, Serenity, Devin, Grandma and Neanie.



Ward recognized

Jayse Ward, a 6' 3" junior at Whitesboro High School in southeast Oklahoma, was recently named to the Oklahoma Basketball Coaches Association District 6 All-Star Team.

This year he was also selected for the Prep Hoops Oklahoma Class B All-State Team, Max Preps Oklahoma All-State Team/Top 15 Players in

All Classes, Tulsa World All-State Team, Leflore County Tournament All-Tournament Team, and was MVP of the Hartshorne Pick & Shovel Tournament.

Ward tied a Whitesboro School scoring record that was set in 1991, by scoring 42 points in a single game. He finished his junior year averaging 23.6 points, 13.2 rebounds and 6.1 assists per game.



Adrian Salinas

Adrian Saul Salinas was born Feb. 3, at Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas.

He weighed 6 lbs, 14 oz and was 20 inches long. He is the son of Reynalda Salinas of Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

91 years for Kerr

Happy birthday to our special Mom, Tommie Welborn Kerr. She turned 91 on May 30.

We love you to the moon and back and more. Your loving children Jimmie, David, Janice and Donna.



Braswell selected for All Conference



Layne Braswell, a 2017 McAlester High School graduate, finished his shortened junior year golf season recently at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kans. The Association of Independent Institutions conference named Braswell to their 2020 Spring All Conference and Champions of Character Team.

Braswell has been an active member of the golf program at Haskell, and more importantly a Champions of Character advocate and leader as well. Though the Haskell Golf program is small, Layne competed among well-established programs in the conference and represented Haskell well throughout his performances.

As a freshman, the former Buffalo played number 1 bag for the Haskell golf team during the season. That May, the year culminated in a trip to the A.I.I. Championships in Phoenix, Ariz. He was named Most Valuable Player for 2018 at the Haskell Sports Banquet that May. He was also named the MVP for the 2019 season. He has been very active with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and has also worked on staff at FCA camps during the summers. He will hopefully be starting his senior year in August and is majoring in Environmental Science.

Donoley steps up during COVID



Submitted photo

Chad Donoley goes over an autoclave machine he donated to District 6.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) has been in short supply during the COVID-19 pandemic, but one innovative tribal member has gone above and beyond to ensure the safety and health of others.

Chad Donoley, a firefighter and community leader in Wilburton, ordered PPE for the fire department, including KN-95 masks and a rare FIORI ST-329 autoclave machine for decontaminating the masks. The autoclave allows the masks to be worn safely up to 20 times longer, but because the machines are hard to find and the need for them is great, Donoley began making his own.

"The reason why I started building them was we were having to look at our own equipment with the fire department. I had seen some of the units in the past, and we had low supplies at the fire department, and we are dealing with positive patients who have COVID. When we researched, we found a low-cost way to build them," said Donoley.

So far, Donoley has made three autoclaves, including one he made from an ice chest. He donated two of the machines to the Wilburton Fire Department and one to a nurse in McAlester. The original machine was donated to District 6 Councilwoman Jennifer Woods for use at the Choctaw Nation.

"The reason I wanted to give it to the Choctaw Nation is they are dealing with the most vulnerable with the Choctaw seniors. I thought the best use of it would be to give it to them," said Donoley.

Gold medal for Lockett and team

Kiley Lockett, 18, of Oceanside, California, was a member of the gold medal-winning women's double mini-trampoline team at the 2019 World Trampoline and Tumbling World Championships at the Ariake Gymnastics Center, the Olympic Games venue, in Tokyo, Japan in November 2019.

The U.S. finished 3rd in the qualifying round but Kiley and two of her teammates upped their performances in the finals, earning the World Team Championship Gold Medal with a total score of 104.7 — only .2 ahead of Great Britain, with Russia, Canada and Australia all very close behind.

Additionally, their team's performance qualified them for the 2021 World Games, scheduled for July 15-25 in Birmingham, Alabama.



Farrar turns 98

Billie June Foster Farrar of San Diego, Calif. celebrated her 98th birthday June 9, 2020.

Billie is very much loved and cherished by all of her family.

Tucker turns 1

Tucker Allan Turk celebrated his first birthday April 24 with a lumberjack themed party at his grandparents, Charles and Marcia Bowden's, home in Ardmore. Tucker's parents are Sean and Nicole Bowden Turk. His other grandparents are Justin and Karen Reynolds.



Meeting of cultures from across the world



Pictured above, from left to right, are Jug Krimbel, tribal elder of the Chinook Indian Nation, Thomas Davis, tribal elder of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Matthew Moylan, who is an elementary school teacher in Ireland. Moylan was on holiday in Canada and parts of the United States and took the opportunity to meet with the two elders and discuss tribal and Irish cultures.

On top of teaching his students the Gaelic language, Moylan also teaches his students the history of the Trail of Tears and how the Choctaw Nation helped the Irish during the Potato Famine.



90 years for Packnett

Joe T. Packnett celebrated his 90th birthday May 15. His wife, children, and grandchildren wish their Papa a very happy birthday.

Joe is an incredible storyteller, conversationalist, and Oklahoma Sooner supporter.

He is proud to have served his country as a Marine. His family is proud to call him theirs.

Mitchell gets Fulbright grant



Davis Mitchell, of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, was awarded a Fulbright grant from the University of Oklahoma. Mitchell graduated in December 2019, with a Bachelor's degree in International Business and Finance with minors in Spanish and International Studies.

He will spend his Fulbright year completing an internship in Mexico City and taking graduate courses at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México.

Fulbright grant recipients are selected on the basis of academic excellence and achievement, as well as their leadership potential in their respective fields.

Harold Duane Carshall

Harold Duane Carshall, 65, passed away May 17, 2020.

Harold was born Oct. 16, 1954, in Talihina, Okla., to Neoma (Sockey) and Alvin Carshall.

He was preceded in death by his father; son Kevin Lynn Carshall; sister Patsy Hatcher and brother Sidney Carshall.

Harold is survived by his mother; children Emmett Carshall, Penny Carshall, and Keith Carshall; grandchildren Katelynn Carshall, Rayle Carshall, Arie Anna Marie Pink, Hunter Carshall, Fischer Jolee Hazen, Bailey Crawley, and Sara Stidman; brothers and sisters Alvin Carshall, Larry Thomason and spouse Lynn, Brenda Duprie and Johnnie Petigo, Michael Thomason and spouse Suzy, Betty Smith and spouse Mark, Kenny Thomason, Dakota Cheyenne Thomason; many nieces, nephews and other family and friends.

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



Rev. Charles Battiest

Rev. Charles “Chock” Battiest, 76, passed away May 18, 2020.

Chock was born Sept. 29, 1943, in Honobia, Okla., to Cyrus Wade Battiest and Catherine (Taylor) Battiest.

He was preceded in death by his parents; stepson Bradley James; stepdaughters Nancy Jefferson and Janice Marie Martin; brothers Presley Battiest and Cyrus Battiest Jr.; sisters Cinderella Maytubby and Sally Crosby.

Chock is survived by wife Marietta Choate Battiest; sons David Battiest, Charles Anthony Battiest, Charles Racine Battiest, and Bryan Leon Battiest; stepsons Abbie James I, Billy Ray Martin, Gerald Leon James, and Darrel James; daughters Wanda Timlyn Baker, Carla Rae Madu, and Mary Ellen Battiest; stepdaughter Margie Hernandez; brothers Luther Battiest and Doyce Battiest; sisters Linda Sue Battiest and Loretha Gates; 32 grandchildren; 63 great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

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



Kent Eugene Phillips

Kent Eugene Phillips, 59, passed away March 5, 2020.

Kent was born Jan. 19, 1961, in Talihina, Okla., to Tige and Alta Phillips.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Kent is survived by son Ross Phillips and spouse Savannah; grandchildren Callahan, Vivian, and Bowen; sisters Brownie Fairless and spouse Robert, Janice Hedrick and spouse Bobby; and Terry Beck and spouse Rickey; brother Quinton Phillips; numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins; and best friends Greta Linker, Lanell Warren, Pam Brown, Melody Maxey and Leann Henry.

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



Alan Dale Gibson

Alan Dale Gibson, 37, passed away May 21, 2020.

Alan was born Aug. 30, 1982, in DeQueen, Ark., to Audie and Lucilla (Aaron) Gibson.

He was preceded in death by grandparents Joel and Marian Aaron and William and Quay Myers.

Alan is survived by his parents; wife Crystal; son Jayden Huskins; daughters Cheyenne and Alyssa Gibson; brother Adam Gibson and spouse Alicia; sisters Stephanie Renae Gibson and Geneva Gail Gibson; nephews Austin and Alan; nieces Alana, Aubrey, Sheradawn, Shaylynn Lilah Renae, and Mazhinga; and many other family members and friends.

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



Kathy Jean Fish

Kathy Jean Fish, 65, passed away May 15, 2020.

Kathy was born Jan. 31, 1955, in Poteau, Okla., to Inez (Jones) Logan and John Logan.

She is survived by husband Jeffrey Fish; son Christian Fish; daughter Angelique Fish and spouse Robert; siblings Bobbie Sue Miller and spouse Charley, Ricky Logan and spouse Beverly, Larry Logan, Charlene Hibbs and spouse Craig, Terry McPherson and spouse Bruce, and Rebecca Hart-sell and spouse Earl; longtime friends Kathy Harper and Virginia Rose; many nieces and nephews; and a host of friends.

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



Helen Louisa Marshall

Helen Louisa Marshall, 71, passed away May 23, 2020.

Helen was born May 6, 1949, in McAlester, Okla., to William Franklin and Alice Omega (Robinson) Holloway.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; daughter Denise Marshall; sister Valerie Warren Fernandez; brother William M. Holloway; and brother-in-law Robert Warren.

Helen is survived by daughter Michelle L. Dobbs; son Thomas Marshall and spouse Andrea; brother Thomas Holloway and spouse Ilene; sisters Betty Gallie and spouse Bruce, and Mary Holloway; brother-in-law Ricky Fernandez; and 4 grandchildren.

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



Mason Andrew Justice

Mason Andrew Justice, 18, passed away May 24, 2020.

Mason was born Feb. 10, 2002, in Durant, Okla., to Jessica (Osborne) Justice and Curtis Justice.

He was preceded in death by his grandfather Bill Justice.

Mason is survived by his parents; brothers Joseph Justice, Nolan Davis, and Jaxon Davis; sisters Adrian Justice, Jacey Justice, and Kylie Justice; grandparents Sandra and Henry Rosson, Larry Osborne, Donna James, and Elmer “Poppa Pete” Graham; aunt Jennifer Mayfield and spouse TJ; uncles Kevin Justice and Johnathan Huber; numerous family, friends and loved ones.

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



Alyce U. Caldwell

Alyce U. Caldwell, 99, passed away May 6, 2020.

Alyce was born April 29, 1921, in Bokoshe, Okla., to Jerry and Mattie Elizabeth Folsom.

She was preceded in death by son Christopher Manis and her seven siblings.

Alyce is survived by husband Ray Caldwell; children Deen Manis and spouse Lisa, twins Arch “Buzz” Glover and spouse Janelle, Pamela Day and spouse Keith, and Michael Glover; and five grandchildren.

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



Pamela Sue Taylor

Pamela “Pam” Sue Taylor, 68, passed away June 2, 2020.

Pam was born Dec. 20, 1951, in Grants, NM, to M.L. McBride Jr. and Clara Mae (McBride) Massey.

She was preceded in death by her husband William “Bill” Taylor; brothers Hardy McBride and Brock Massey; sister Brenda Gay Delap; and granddaughter Hope Ray Taylor.

Pam is survived by son William Lee Taylor and spouse Michelle; granddaughters Kyla Taylor and Haley Taylor; daughter Brandie Bennett; granddaughter Bralie Rust; grandson Ty Bennett; and daughter Amy Taylor and spouse Creel; sisters Nyoka Turner and Shauna Montgomery; brothers Rex Blaylock and spouse Cheryl, Randy Blaylock, Rowdy Massey and spouse Jerri, and Mark McBride; sisters-in-law Kay Ollar, Suzanne Ritter and spouse Leo, Vicki Wilson, Jan Clark, and Gean Taylor; brother-in-law Tuffy Taylor and spouse DeeDee; and many nieces, nephews and other loved ones.

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



Nellie Bernice Bounds

Nellie “Polly” Bernice (Giddens) Bounds, 96, passed away April 19, 2020.

Polly was born Oct. 15, 1923, in Garvin, Okla., to Marion T. and Frances (Willis) Giddens.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Phillip; daughters Phyllis and Pamela; son David; and others of her siblings and family.

Polly is survived by son Michael; grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

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



William Kyle Green

William Kyle Green, 39, passed away May 30, 2020.

Kyle was born Nov. 29, 1980, in Talihina, Okla., to Deborah Linton and Ellis Green.

He was preceded in death by his grandpa Odair Rainwater; and grandparents Gordon and Gladys Green.

Kyle is survived by daughter MacKenzie Green; his father; his mother and spouse David; sister Sherry Wall; nieces Madison and Jacie; his grandmother Audie Rainwater; and many other family and friends.

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



Patricia Rae Perry Caughern

Patricia Rae Perry Caughern, 92, passed away June 8, 2020.

Patricia was born Sept. 4, 1927, in Hodgen, Okla., to Charles Raymond and Lulu Thorne Perry.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband John B. Caughern; sister Dema Adams; and brothers Charles and Dick Perry.

Patricia is survived by son John A. Caughern and spouse Marsha; daughter Patti Vickers and spouse Alan; granddaughter Candice Vaughn and spouse Billy; great-grandchildren Nicholas, Zachary and Lilianna Vaughan; and sister Mona Perry.

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



Robert Edward Christie

Robert “Bob” Edward Christie, 79, passed away April 28, 2020.

Bob was born June 24, 1940, in Valliant, Okla., to Cephus Christie and Marjo Honeywell.

Bob is survived by daughters Roberta Jenkins, Tanya Christie, Austina Christie; step daughter Asha Santiago, seven grandchildren; three great-granddaughters; sisters Gwen McCourt and Judi Lewis; and brother Joe Christie.

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



Martha Jan Maxwell

Martha Jan Maxwell, 76, passed away June 8, 2020.

Martha was born Feb. 22, 1944, in Hugo, Okla., to Francis Edward and Nannie Gertrude (Harris) Payne.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother Phillip E. Payne; and brother-in-law Paul Lyles.

Martha is survived by sons Phillip Eugene Maxwell and Robert Wayne Maxwell; stepson A.J. Wicks; daughter Gina Fran Nassar; brothers R.D. Payne, Chris Payne and spouse Vickie; sisters Beverly Peiser and spouse Bill, Linda Robertson and spouse Robbie, Karen Lyles, twin sister Jane Maxwell, Rebecca Smith and spouse Dennis, and Jill Sannerman and spouse Dudley; sister-in-law Sally Payne; grandchildren Gregory Nassar, Shane Nassar, Na’Keia Nassar, Bradley Maxwell, Torie Maxwell, and Dalton Maxwell; great-grandchildren Violet Behling, Cayden Nassar, Abrianna Suhr, Kirsy Curry, Kinzie Nassar, Kaizer Nassar, Gabrielle Searcy, Aiden Maxwell, Baylee Beard, Christie Beard, and Dalton Maxwell; special friend Shirley Slaton Hagen; along with a host of other family, friends and loved ones.

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



Sharon Kay Davis

Sharon Kay Davis, 67, passed away June 10, 2020.

Sharon was born Nov. 15, 1952, in Hugo, Okla., to Leonard “Chuffy” Wayne Tom and Mary Francis (Billy) Tom.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother Preston “Sonny” Lawrence; sister Billie Strickland; granddaughter Julie Davis; and great-grandson Levi Davis.

Sharon is survived by husband Jim Davis; sons David Davis, and Dan Davis and spouse Amber; brothers Raymond Tom, Michael Tom, Larry Tom, and Wayland Tom; sisters Bobbie McKee, Linda Taylor, and Lenora Jackson; grandchildren Gabriel and Jamee Davis, Austin and Talynn Davis, Gideon Davis, Cameron Davis, Avery Davis, Nolan Davis and Jaxon Davis; great-grandson Drake Davis; and a host of other family, friends and loved ones.

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



Claudine Impson Wheeler

Claudine Impson Wheeler, 78, passed away May 24, 2020.

Claudine was born Aug. 31, 1941, in Miller near Moyers, Okla., to Dickey John Impson and Myrtle Lee Bohanan Impson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband James Wendell Wheeler; sisters Mildred “Daisy” Walker, Leona Ruth Wilson, Emma Lee Nelson, Elizabeth Ann Impson, and Sophia Lynn Impson; brothers Dickey John Impson Jr., Finis Ewing Impson, David Warren Impson, and Preston Wayne Impson; and two infant siblings.

Claudine is survived by son Wendell Ray Wheeler; daughters Catherine Renee’ Mueller, and Diana Ruth Woodward and spouse Steven; grandchildren Amanda Buckey and spouse Joshua, Chad Mueller, Lindsay Mueller, Sarah Wheeler, Grayson Wheeler, Elizabeth Wheeler, and Sydney Woodard; nine great-grandchildren; sister Marchelene “Marge” Davis; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and loved ones.

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



Houston Baker Jr

Houston Baker Jr., 74, passed away June 11, 2020.

Houston was born Aug. 13, 1945, in Lodi, Okla., to Houston and Melvina (Colbert) Baker.

He was preceded in death by his wife Lillian Maxwell; mother of his children Cecilia Baker; his parents; daughter Monette Cheryl Baker; and granddaughter Torie R. Baker.

Houston is survived by daughters Tamara Baker, Victoria Baker, and Tina Maxwell; son Jeremy Kemp; grandchildren Jose Gonzalez, Lorenzo Gonzalez, Triston Gonzalez, Juanita Gonzalez, Jennifer Henry, Ly Baker, Houston Ezekiel Gonzalez, Olivia Gonzalez, and Aaliyah Miller; numerous great-grandchildren, nieces and nephew.

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



Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw Nation tribal members only and are free of charge. The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

Family members/individuals may submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspaper through a funeral home service.

Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws, therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice.

Due to space limitations, there is a 150 word limit for obituaries. The online issue of the Biskinik will contain links to the full obituaries.

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik
PO Box 1210
Durant OK 74702

or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Choctaw Nation Public Safety serves, protects all



Photo by Charles Clark / Choctaw Nation

As executive director of Choctaw Nation Public Safety, John Hobbs has stood watch over tribal and community members, guests and employees for more than a decade. The Choctaw Nation Public Safety staff of 500 men and women covers 10½ counties in southeast Oklahoma.

By Charlie Clark

Security

The first word in “Public Safety” is not lost on John Hobbs, Executive Director of Choctaw Nation Public Safety. “Security at the casino alone brings us into contact with thousands of people who are not tribal members,” Hobbs said.

Housed under the Division of Legal and Compliance, each department of Public Safety has significant interaction with people beyond tribal members. The stated mission of Public Safety is to “uphold the constitutional sovereignty and customs of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma while protecting the rights, lives, and property of all the people they serve. With casino visitors, for example, said Hobbs, “Security has to assure their well-being while on casino property, yet still arrange for them to have a great experience.”

Staff size now stands at around five hundred. “And it’s growing,” Hobbs said. Public Safety covers all 10½ counties of the Choctaw Nation, working events such as the annual Labor Day Festival, Trail of Tears Walk, Boom in the Valley, as well as patrolling government, commerce, health and community facilities.

Public Safety’s annual budget is supplemented with grants. However, the continued growth and development of the Public Safety department is dependent on the resources generated by the Choctaw Nation’s commerce activities, including gaming revenues.



Michael Hall, director of Choctaw Nation Security, oversees the 911 Dispatch office. Security officers patrol Choctaw facilities, properties and events across southeast Oklahoma.

Security officers are the largest part of Public Safety making up some 420 positions.

The Security Department is comprised of Security Officers, Bike Patrol, EMS and Dispatch.

“Our job is to assist people, to help, and we get all type of calls for service,” said Michael Hall, director of Security. January 2020’s incident report shows the department responded to, among other things, 196 medical incidents, 50 vehicle accidents and 43 security violations.

As the number of buildings in the Choctaw

Nation grows, so does Security.

“There will be six Security officers assigned to the Cultural Center when it opens and 76 in the new Durant Resort hotel-casino addition,” said Hall.

Probation



Tony Bryant, left front, Chief Probation Officer for the Choctaw Nation, and his staff work with the courts and families throughout the judicial system, including serving as bailiffs.

Tony Bryant is Director of Probation for the Choctaw Nation. The department works most closely with the Choctaw Nation courts. Bryant said, “It staffs the probation officers needed to work with the courts and families throughout the judicial system; bailiffs, who maintain safety and order during courtroom procedures; and security of the courthouse.”

The public’s encounter with the department would most likely be at the Choctaw Nation Judicial Center, the newest structure on the Durant tribal campus. Typical activities include escorting prisoners from holding cells to the courtroom, operating state-of-the-art surveillance in and around the Judicial Center, and follow-up contact with those placed on probation.

Emergency Management

Communities across southeast Oklahoma are familiar with the 14 vehicles of

Choctaw Nation Emergency Management.

“We’ve set up the Mobile Emergency Operations Unit at disaster locations all over,” said Jeff Hansen, Director of Choctaw Nation Office of Emergency Management.

The Choctaw Nation has been recognized outside the 10½ counties, too. Teams with life-saving equipment have pulled duty after hurricanes in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico.

Recovery, planning and hazard mitigation are key directives for Emergency Management.

“Recovery,” said Hansen, “is what we provide after disasters.” It is a time when Public Safety is highly involved with everyone in the community. Hansen cites as an example of the department’s community-wide efforts the tornado that hit the town of Blue, Oklahoma last year.

“We coordinate with other response teams, helping with communication,



Jeff Hansen, Director of Choctaw Nation Office of Emergency Management. OEM has responded in the aftermath of tornadoes and hurricanes across a multi-state area.

keeping everyone up on conditions at the scene. We deliver and hand out water and other supplies, and we help guide people through the FEMA process, as well as Choctaw Nation Housing assistance applications,” Hansen said.

See DPS on page 11

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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

HOME PREPAREDNESS FOR WILDFIRES

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FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR WILDFIRES

Help protect your home and stop the spread of wildland fires by following these eight steps.

- Keep flammable objects (lawn mowers, oil or gas cans, propane tanks and wood piles) at least 30 feet away from the home at all times. Move flammables, such as lawn furniture and toys, during wildfire activity.
- Keep roofs, gutters, decks and patios clear of leaves, pine needles or other flammables at all times.
- Remove flammable mulch and vegetation within 5 feet of the home and replace with nonflammable material.
- Remove tree or shrub branches that overhang within 10 feet of your house, roof or chimney.
- Keep lawns watered and mowed, or if water-conserving, make sure debris is removed within 30 feet of home.
- Trim tree limbs 10 feet above the ground (these are called ladder fuels).
- Install 1/8-inch metal mesh screens over vents and under decks to prevent ember intrusion.
- Go to Firewise.org or LivingWithFire.info to learn more about how to prepare your home for wildfire.

Choctaw Nation Emergency Management

Choctaw Nation rocks worth the climb

By Christian Toews

The sport of rock climbing has gained in popularity in recent years. With indoor climbing gyms opening across the nation, more people are being exposed to the sport. According to the Climbing Business Journal, the commercial climbing industry grew at a rate of 6.9% in 2016, 10% in 2017, and 11.8% in 2018. Rock climbing’s recent surge in popularity is reflected in the decision to add the sport to the 2021 Olympics in Tokyo.

Indoor climbing gyms have become popular in part because they offer the experience of climbing without dealing with the elements of the outdoors, but most climbers will agree, there is nothing like climbing on real rocks outside.

If you don’t live in Oklahoma or haven’t explored some of the state, you might be surprised that people are climbing here. While the majority of the state is made up of prairies and plains, Oklahoma has some areas that are great for climbing, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma holds two of the best places to climb within the state.

Robbers Cave State Park near Wilburton, Oklahoma is known for being an excellent place to explore the outdoors, take in amazing views, and it’s also a destination for rock climbers. With its huge sandstone rock faces, many climbers love to “top rope” in this area. Top roping offers the rock-climbing experience with all the rewards but minimal risks. Top roping, simply put, is climbing a rock face with the climbing rope always anchored above you. Much like an indoor gym, you have someone who belays the climber. The belayer takes the slack out of the rope above the climber and then lowers the climber to the ground when they have completed the route. If you fall, you only fall a short distance, minimizing the risk of injury. Top roping is good for beginners but requires a lot of gear. You need harnesses, ropes, helmets, and other gear, depending on the rocks.

Another popular style of climbing is “Bouldering.” Bouldering is rock climbing stripped down to its raw essentials. Leaving behind ropes and harnesses, bouldering only requires climbing shoes and a bag of chalk over safety mats or “crash pads” as climbers call them. The challenge is to climb short but tricky bouldering

“problems” (a route or sequence of moves) using balance, technique, strength and brain power. Bouldering is a very popular option in climbing because of its simplicity, safety, and the ability to hang out with other climbers while challenging yourself. “I love bouldering because it’s challenging but relatively simple. You just need a crash pad, your shoes, and a few friends. My favorite part of bouldering is the problem-solving aspect. The route is short, but a simple change in your foot position can either make or break your success,” Said Rachel Toews. Toews is a Durant, Oklahoma resident and avid climber.

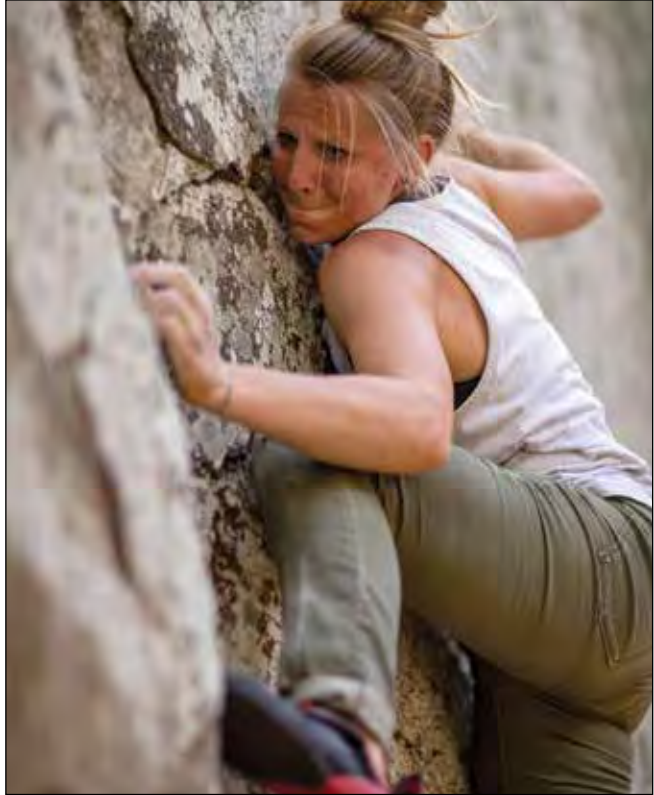
A second bouldering location within the Choctaw Nation is McGee Creek State Park near Atoka, Oklahoma. This state park is located on the southwest edge of the Ouachita Mountain Range. Dallas, Texas locals first started developing here in the early 2000s, and many of the classic climbing routes have long been established. Much of this information hasn’t been published or made public but a guidebook is currently in development and in its final stages that will include McGee Creek bouldering, according to mountainproject.com. McGee Creek State Park offers many outdoor recreation opportunities including water activities, camping, hiking and fishing in addition to rock climbing.

Both of these rock-climbing locations are listed on mountainproject.com. This website (and mobile app) is the definitive guide to rock climbing routes and locations. With over 220,000 routes listed, you can find climbing locations across the United States and around the world. If you would like more information on climbing at McGee Creek or Robbers Cave state parks, you can visit this website to find precise information on climbing routes, difficulty level, and location of each route. If you do make it out to one of these locations, be sure to wear the proper safety equipment when climbing and follow all safety practices within the State park.

Maybe you are an experienced climber who would like to try some new routes, or you have always wanted to get into the sport; either way, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has something for you to discover and enjoy.



Photos by Christian Toews



Top, Sarah Toews makes a complicated move while bouldering in Robbers Cave State Park. Bottom Ryan Jumper looks at his landing spot as Sarah Toews makes sure he doesn’t fall after landing.



Top, Ryan Jumper climbs a low overhang in Robbers Cave State Park. Bottom, Sarah Toews tops out after completing a route in McGee Creek State Park.



Top, Rachel Toews attempts a strenuous move while climbing in McGee Creek State Park. Bottom, Rachel Toews climbs above her crash pad in Robbers Cave State Park.



Housing Headlines

By Carrie Blackmon

On June 7, 2018 the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (HACNO) was selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as one of 17 EnVision Center pilot communities and is the only Tribal Nation selected to participate. The goal of an EnVision Center is to offer families access to support services that can help them achieve self-sufficiency through making resources readily available.

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

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

1. Economic Empowerment

2. Education Advancement

3. Health and Wellness

4. Character and Leadership

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

The EnVision Center has recently partnered with the IRS to become a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. Since the implementation of the Choctaw Nation’s EnVision Center VITA Site in early February, we have electronically filed 53 tax returns.

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

Choctaw Nation

Housing Authority

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- Fixed current market interest rate up to a 30 year term

Choctaw Nation

Housing Authority



DPS, Continued from Page 9

Hazard Mitigation is a plan currently being updated and coordinated with local emergency management groups to help reduce impacts of disasters.

Hansen said, with NOAA's nearest National Weather Services in Tulsa and Norman, Oklahoma, that south-east Oklahoma is lacking in an adequate hazardous storm warning system. He and his team are working on a grant that may bring a weather radar to southeastern Oklahoma.

"It would be able to reach all the way to McCurtain County, providing advance notice of potentially dangerous weather to all the citizens in the area," Hansen said.

But while plans are being made, the Emergency Management team isn't waiting around. A drone component recently has been added to its equipment arsenal that will allow aerial views of a wider range in disaster areas. Some staff members are already trained in drone use and the FAA has cleared Choctaw Nation's drones for take-off. In addition, the department has been helping other local departments of public safety on search, rescue and recovery efforts for missing people.

Police

While officers and their patrol vehicles may be most visible to the public, Choctaw Nation Tribal Police has additional, and very active, components –Investigation, Narcotics, K-9 unit, D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics).

Public Safety has built its police force up to 54 members, and they are cross deputized with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Police, colleges, most county sheriff departments and municipal law enforcement.

"We also work with DA offices, where we have MOUs (memorandums of understanding)," Hobbs said. But it is "technology," he said, that is making all the difference. Fast computers and shared information have created a new ball game. One example cited is a counterfeited one-hundred-dollar bill that was caught at a Choctaw casino. "The couple said they got it at a bank that day and didn't know it was fake. But when we ran a check of other locations, it was discovered within minutes that this was not the first time or place they had tried to pass such bills."

The Choctaw Nation SWAT Team works all across southeastern Oklahoma assisting local law enforcement.

Noting its positive impact on youth, R.D. Hendrix, Choctaw Nation's director of Law Enforcement, said, "Our D.A.R.E. program is one of the few remaining in the area. It's important for the children, while at schools and public events, to be able to learn about drug problems, consequences, and prevention."

The K9 unit includes Speed, a Hungarian Shepherd. Speed's handler is Narcotics Investigator Jeffery Bryant. Speed is so well known and popular that earlier this year he was selected Employee of the Quarter, beating out his nearly 11,000 human co-workers.

Even more interesting is that Speed does not understand English. "Well, he has learned one word in English," added Bryant, "He knows what bacon means."

Preparation and cooperation

It is with camaraderie, laughter and a sense of ac-

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

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

July 2020
All markets open weekdays, July 1-29
Closed: July 3, 30 and 31.
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

ANTLERS 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443
Nutrition ed. and food demo July 2 and 15 10:00-1:00

BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842
Nutrition ed. and food demo July 8 and 21 10:00-1:00

DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773
Nutrition ed. and food demo July 6 and 17 10:00-1:00

MCALISTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716
Nutrition ed. and food demo July 9 and 22 10:00-1:00

POTEAU 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431
Nutrition ed. and food demo July 1 and 13 10:00-1:00

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

HOME VISITATION

WHAT WE DO

- Home Visits: Twice a month, a Home Visitor will meet with you and talk about whatever is on your mind and share information regarding your child's development. We follow an evidence-based curriculum - Parents as Teachers.
- Assessments: A variety of assessments are conducted on schedule to make sure your child is developing on-track, checking for environmental safety hazards, and screening for postpartum depression along with other assessments to ensure complete health and wellness of the family.
- Resources: we are here to support you and your child in all needs. We have a variety of resources available to help meet those needs.
- Monthly Family Group Connections: Once a month, a meeting is hosted in various locations across the service area. Families are encouraged to attend and meet other parents who are expecting and parenting.

ELIGIBILITY

Required for all Home Visiting Programs:

- Live within the 10.5 county service area of the Choctaw Nation
- Be expecting or parenting a Native American child under the age of one year

Additional eligibility will be determined upon contacting the Case Manager. Each program is slightly different. These may include:

- Low income
- Parents under the age of 24
- Past or present history of child abuse or neglect
- Past or present history of substance abuse
- Tobacco users
- Low student achievement
- Developmental delays or disabilities
- Military family

800-522-6170 | CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation Outreach Services



- Among other components, Choctaw Nation Police maintains a K9 unit with Speed, a Hungarian Shepherd, and his handler Narcotics Investigator Jeffery Bryant, left, under the direction of R.D. Hendrix, Choctaw Nation's director of Law Enforcement.
- complishment that Hobbs and his team relate many of their activities. But they remain acutely aware of the sudden turnarounds each day can bring.
- "You never know when you start your day on this job if you'll make it home that night," Hobbs said.
- Sometimes assistance to the public may come with plenty of good feelings for all involved, such as taking the Polar Plunge for the Special Olympics and raising money to buy Christmas gifts for children. At other times, help may come after tragedy, when healing is needed the most. Hobbs recounts:
- After damage from a fatal crash last year, the Choctaw Nation stationed a command vehicle on the Roosevelt Bridge for two weeks to assist the Oklahoma Highway Patrol.
 - Also, in 2018, at the request of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Choctaw Tribal Police traveled to Florida and Puerto Rico to assist when those regions were impacted by two major hurricanes.
 - In 2011, after an EF3-rated tornado claimed 2 lives and destroyed the school, Choctaw Nation Public Safety personnel were on-site around-the-clock for two weeks assisting the townspeople of Tushka, Oklahoma.

Planning and continued training are duties shared by all staff members in Public Safety. That is how they stay ready for emergencies, disasters and service before the needs arise. They also recognize that their helping hands extend well into the community as a whole. "All departments of Choctaw Nation Public Safety touch people outside the Choctaw Nation," said Hobbs.

Currently, in this time of the coronavirus pandemic, and with so many Choctaw Nation facilities temporari-

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

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

Free backpack with every approved Connecting Kids to Coverage application.

Bison Burger

- 1 pound ground bison
- 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
- 1 egg
- 3 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1 pinch pepper
- 1 pinch salt
- 4 Dashes of Tabasco sauce *optional

Preparation

1. Mix all ingredients together in large bowl.
2. Form mixture into 4 patties and cook on preheated grill or greased skillet.
3. Serve patties on hamburger buns topped with desired toppings. Skip the bun and keep the veggies for a healthier alternative.

ly closed, Public Safety personnel remain on the job.

Hobbs said, "While the general public is asked to stay home to protect themselves from the virus, our Public Safety family does not have that luxury. They continue to go to work daily to make sure that the public is protected. The men and women of Public Safety are extraordinary people that know they will be called upon to deal with dangers that some people could never imagine. Yet, in spite of knowing the dangers, they set aside the fear, kiss their family goodbye and head off to try and make the world a little better. They are selfless, they are honorable, they are Tvshkas (Warriors)."

TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP AND COVID-19 GUIDELINES

The Choctaw Nation is taking numerous steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Tribal Membership Department has released important guidelines that we want all members to be aware of.

The safest option for obtaining a tribal membership application is through our online application access.

Guidance can be found at
choctawnation.com/contacts-applications/cdibmembership-information

All membership cards are being mailed to recipients until further notice. Unfortunately, this means same-day card obtainment will not be available. Applications, supporting documentation, and photos can be emailed or mailed to us at the address listed below.

800-522-6170 EXT 4030
CDIB-MEMBERSHIP@CHOCTAWNATION.COM
CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA | ATTN: TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP
PO BOX 1210 | DURANT, OK 74702

Choctaw Nation Member Services

Take a Girls Weekend

Choctaw Country knows sometimes 24 hours isn't enough girl time.

CHOCTAWCOUNTRY.COM

Location	Days	Hours
Antlers 580-298-3161	1st & 2nd Tue. Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Atoka 580-889-5825	Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Battiest 580-241-5458	1st Tue. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Broken Bow 580-584-2746	Tue. & Thur. (except for Battiest & Smithville days)	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Durant 580-920-2100 x-83582	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Hugo 580-326-9707	Daily Mon. - Fri	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Idabel 580-286-2600 x-41113	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
McAlester 918-423-6335	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Poteau 918-649-1106	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Smithville 580-244-3289	1st Thur. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Spiro 918-962-5134	Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Stigler 918-867-4211	Mon. & Tue.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Talihina 918-567-7000 x-6792	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wilburton 918-465-5641	Mon. 7 Fri.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Mobile Clinic	Tues., Wed., & Thurs.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Building Healthy Families Through Good Nutrition

Census undercount leads to fewer homes for tribal members



Photos by Chris Jennings

Several families gather around for the ribbon cutting for the first Lease to Purchase homes built in Durant in this 2019 photo. Since this photo, there have been nearly 100 more LEAP homes built, making a total of 260 with 60 more under construction. The Choctaw Nation has a goal of having 500 homes for purchase and 500 homes for rent within a five year window.

By Bradley Gernand

The slow-motion funding disaster caused by the Choctaw Nation’s severe undercount in the 2010 United States Census continued unfolding this month, as tribal authorities received our share of federal emergency stimulus monies: \$136 million.

While the money was very welcome, it was clearly less than anticipated. The cause? The federal government used part of a complex formula to determine how much emergency aid was distributed to each federally recognized tribe in the United States. The formula, known as the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG), is used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and expresses an institutionalized bias toward urban areas and against rural ones.

The Choctaw Nation is largely rural, and federal stimulus funding was weighted toward Oklahoma’s urban regions. This means despite the Choctaw Nation’s large population, funding was far less robust.

Using U.S. Census figures instead of the IHBG would have resulted in a better balance across the tribes but would still have been problematic. The Choctaw Na-

tion experienced a severe undercount during the 2010 U.S. Census, and this has impacted funding by artificially constricting it for the past ten years.

Chief Gary Batton has convened tribal leadership and launched an expanded effort to get Choctaw tribal members to fill out the 2020 United States Census so they are counted as members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. To be counted appropriately, tribal members should indicate their tribal affiliation as “Choctaw Nation.” Anything less specific, such as “Choctaw,” will not be counted. Chief Batton considers a more successful 2020 United States Census to be “mission critical” for the Choctaw Nation.

“The 2020 U.S. Census is turning out to be really important for us in Housing,”

said Bobby Yandell, the Choctaw Nation’s Executive Director of Housing. “Everyone who cares about the tribe should fill it out and say they belong to the ‘Choctaw Nation.’ Everyone who fills it out enables additional dollars to flow our way,” he said.

The Choctaw Nation’s Housing Department receives a great deal of its funding via the IHBG. The full formula consists of seven points, with the population portion drawn from U.S. Census data. “This has indeed been an issue for the tribe during the past ten years,” Yandell said.

“The more people you have, the more money you get,” Yandell explained, unless they weren’t counted. “Our tribe’s catastrophic undercount in the 2010 Census has limited what we’ve received from Washington.” The bottom line: fewer housing units have been built and fewer Choctaw lives have been impacted.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, provides fully one-third of the Choctaw Nation’s Housing budget each year—typically, at least \$11 million per year. “It’s hard to know how much more money we’d be receiving each year, because we have nothing against which to measure what’s missing. But it’s safe to say it’s probably in the range of between one and two million dollars per year.” And, he points out, “Across ten years that’s quite a few houses that didn’t get built.”

Yandell said HUD fund-

ing pays for important housing services, including its rental assistance and rehabilitation programs. Certain home loans are also funded via HUD.

The Choctaw Nation’s housing budget falls roughly into thirds. HUD pays one-third; an additional one-third comes from the tribal government; and the remaining one-third is investment income earned from seed money provided by HUD for the purpose.

Despite the money not received, the Choctaw Nation’s Housing budget is typically between 30 and 40 million dollars per year. The money helps provide tribal members with small but important comforts such as window-unit air conditioners, refrigerators, and ranges. The department has also embarked on an expansive vision to build 500 homes for purchase and 500 homes for rent within a five-year window.

“We’re right on schedule,” Yandell said, noting that 260 lease-to-purchase homes have opened with 60 more under construction—only 180 away from the goal of 500.

Additionally, 70 additional independent elderly living units and 130 additional affordable rental housing units—200 total—have opened, with 50 more in various stages of construction. Currently, 199 independent elderly units and 276 affordable rental housing units



In 2019 the Choctaw Nation completed an Independent Elder Housing community in Coalgate. The neighborhood consists of 10 brick homes and a common building for Choctaws aged 55 and above.

are open, some of them dating from before the current expansion program began.

Yandell said anyone who is interested in housing should submit an application, even if they live in a town where none are currently under construction. According to Yandell, applications for housing provide an important indicator of interest in a specific area, especially if Choctaw Nation housing isn’t yet available there, and helps guide planning on where to target new construction.

CENSUS 2020

WAYS TO RESPOND:
CALLING TOLL FREE: 844-330-2020
BY MAIL, OR ONLINE AT CENSUS.GOV

SUBMIT DATES: APRIL 1 - OCTOBER 31, 2020

LEARN MORE AT: CHOCTAWNATION.COM/2020CENSUS
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

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WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS

CDC.GOV/NCOV

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

STORM SHELTERS

A grant program for storm shelters to Choctaw Tribal Members who live in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas, which are states with a high risk of tornados.

Visit the website for applicant requirements

FOR MORE INFORMATION

HOUSING@CHOCTAWNATION.COM | 800-522-6170
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/TRIBAL-SERVICES/HOUSING/STORM-SHELTERS

Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

July 2020

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Climbers get a grip at local rock climbing destinations.

Biskinik

Mission Statement:

To serve as the source of information for Choctaw Nation tribal members by delivering community news through a variety of communication channels.

Stay Connected to the Nation

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