



June 2019 Issue



## Historic additions to ballots

Two questions will be included on this year's tribal election ballots – a historic proposal by tribal leaders to amend the constitution of the Choctaw Nation for the first time since it was ratified in 1983.

Choctaw Question 001 proposes an amendment to Section 4 of Article X, changing language to allow members of the tribe to speak to the Tribal Council if a majority of Tribal Council members present approve. The current section states he or she needs unanimous approval.

Choctaw Question 002 adds Section 3 to Article XIV, providing for the Speaker of the Tribal Council to become Chief if the offices of Chief and Assistant Chief both become vacant less than one year before the end of the Chief's term. Ballots will be automatically mailed to all voters who have registered or updated with the Choctaw Nation Voter Registration office since 2016. Mailed ballots must be received processed at the U.S. Post Office in Durant no later than 4:30 p.m. July 12. Early voting at open locations is 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday, July 12. General Election is Saturday, July 13, with voting locations open 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Examples of Ballot Questions 001 and 002 can be found in the 2019 Tribal Election Guide in this month's edition of the BIS-KINIK. The guide also includes information on each candidate, voter registration, early voting guidelines, and voting locations.

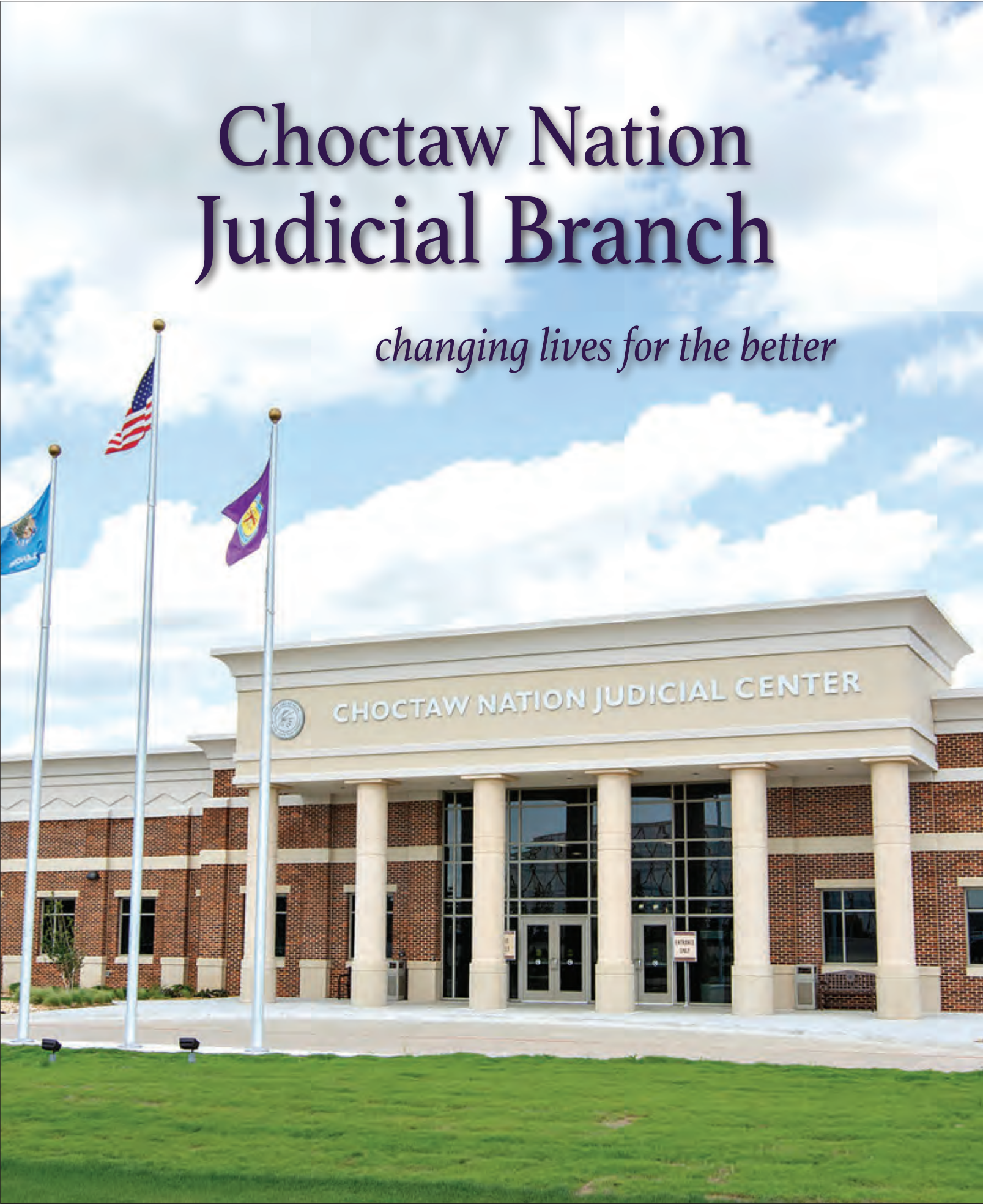


Photo by Deldre Elrod

The Choctaw Nation Judicial Center is state of the art, with advanced technology focusing on providing easy-to-use services.



Photo by Deldre Elrod

Three levels of the court system are represented by, front row from left, Appellate Judge Bob Rabon, District Civil Court Judge Mark Morrison, Special District Court Judge Rebecca Cryer; second row, Appellate Presiding Judge Pat Phelps, Appellate Judge Warren Gotcher, Chief District Judge Rick Branam; and third row, Constitutional Court Judge Mitch Mullin, Chief Justice David Burrage, and Judge Fred Bobb.

## Court system protects the tribe's sovereignty

By Lisa Reed

The Choctaw Nation Judicial Branch oversees a variety of civil and criminal matters. The system is designed to protect an individual's rights, and to provide fair justice to all who enter its jurisdiction. It can provide results in chaotic and sensitive matters. It provides protection and results in the best interest of Choctaw children and elders. The court system is also important in protecting the Choctaw Nation's sovereignty.

"This is a day to celebrate for the Choctaw Nation," Chief Gary Batton said during the grand opening of the Choctaw Nation's new Judicial Center on April 25 in Durant. "It is a celebration of our sovereignty, and of us as a true tribal government."

Chief Batton pointed to the Constitution of the United States and then the Choctaw Nation Constitution on the walls of the Ishahli Courtroom. He stressed the importance of the commitment to bring the Choctaw Nation Constitution to life and provide for the wellbeing of the Choctaw people, exhorting the inherent right to govern ourselves.

Attorneys were appointed as judges – each among the best in their field – to fill the three levels of the court system.

At the District Court level are Presiding District Judge Rick Branam, District

Judge Mark Morrison, and Special District Judge Rebecca Cryer.

Just like the state and federal levels, the Choctaw Nation has an Appellate Court. It consists of three appellate judges, Presiding Judge Pat Phelps, and Appellate Judges Bob Rabon and Warren Gotcher.

The third level – the Constitutional Court – is the Choctaw Nation's "Supreme Court." A case can work its way through the District and Appellate Court levels to be heard by the Constitutional Court, which was established and still meets monthly according to the Choctaw Nation Constitution. It has one attorney judge, Chief Justice David Burrage, and two lay judges who are required to be members of the Choctaw Nation. The tribal judges are Judge Fred Bobb and Judge Mitch Mullin.

One of the Choctaw Nation's first judges, Justice Joe Taylor, attended the ceremony for the Judicial Center and remarked on how the tribe is moving forward. Taylor was previously confirmed as Chief Justice in 1978 along with justices Charlie Jones and Ed Curtis.

"The tribe is continuing to grow in stature and has the respect of so many people and other tribes. When we first came on board we only resolved intra-tribal disputes," Taylor stated.

See **JUDICIAL SYSTEM**, Page 13



Photo by Deldre Elrod

Tribal leaders, tribal members, and city and state officials join the Judicial Court System's team to celebrate the grand opening of the new Choctaw Nation Judicial Center in Durant.



## Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

connected by the Chahta blood running through our veins. We may all look and talk differently from one another; we may live in different places and have different professions. But one thing we all have in

# Family is foundation of all we do

Throughout the last five years, I’m sure many of you have seen or heard us use the phrase faith, family and culture. Living out the Chahta Spirit of faith, family and culture is the Choctaw Nation’s vision. Family is the foundation of all that we do. The word family is often defined as all of the descendants of a common ancestor. As Chahta people, we are family

common is our bond as Chahtas. We all have different levels of connection to our heritage. For many of us living in the 10 ½ counties, we have nearly unlimited access to culture. We can attend cultural events like the Trail of Tears Walk and the Labor Day Festival; we are within driving distance for all Choctaw Nation facilities and programs. Our heritage is a daily part of our lives. But for others, seeking out and connecting with our Chahta culture is a little more complicated. We have tribal members living in all fifty states and around the world. We feel it is vital to reach out to these members through community meetings. Community meetings foster a sense of community throughout the United States. These meetings are more than just taking photos and having fun; they are about family. Tribal members get to meet other Chahtas in their area, visit cultural, artist and services booths. They can also update their membership cards and register to vote. These meetings are to help

bring our Chahta family closer together. I enjoy getting to meet such a diverse group of people at these events and getting to hear their stories. We have so many exciting and talented Chahtas out there accomplishing great things. It has been so great to hear their stories and to share their connections with the rest of the tribe. All their stories somehow tie them back to the Choctaw Nation. I encourage all of you to attend a community meeting if you can. Our next meetings will be Oklahoma City June 7 and Tulsa June 15. We would love to see you there and for you to meet other Chahtas while you are there. For more information, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/communitymeetings>. I want to say yakohe to everyone who has supported me, and for the confidence you have placed in me throughout the past four years. It has been a blessing and an honor to serve the Chahta people, and I look forward to continuing to serve to the best of my ability.

## Time to remember



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

I hope all of you had a great Memorial Day weekend. Memorial Day is often a time many of us take to spend having fun with family and friends. However, this particular holiday is about much more than cookouts and time spent at the lake. I’d like to share with all of you some historical information regarding Memorial Day along with some of the ways the Choctaw Nation honors our Nation’s warriors. Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the U.S., created to remember and honor those who have died serving their country. According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, in World War I, World War II, Korean War and Vietnam wars alone, 666,381 U.S. troops died while in service. Since those wars, many other service members have been killed fighting for our freedom. The Choctaw Nation Color Guard posted the colors during the opening ceremony of The Wall That Heals in Durant May 9. This traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial came to Durant during a stop on its nationwide tour. There are more than 58,000 names on the wall of fallen soldiers from the Vietnam War; there are several names of Choctaw tribal members etched into that wall. We are forever grateful for their sacrifice. We at the Choctaw Nation strive to honor all of our service members, past and present. The Veterans Advocacy program works diligently to ensure our Choctaw veterans receive the honor, respect and benefits they deserve. They assist with Veterans Affairs claims, applications and referrals. The team also sends care packages to those currently serving, among many other great things for veterans and current service members. Memorial Day weekend visitors to the Choctaw Nation Veteran’s cemetery will notice flags at each headstone placed by our very own Veteran’s Advocacy group. Our Choctaw Color Guard takes part in events such as ceremonies, parades and funerals of Choctaw veterans. This group of men and women represent the Nation so well, and we thank them for their service. If you see any of the great men and women from the Veteran’s Advocacy or Color Guard at an event, please let them know how much you appreciate everything they do. Next Memorial Day, I encourage you to take a little time to remember the true meaning of the holiday. Remember those who sacrificed their lives, protecting your freedoms, and share with someone what Memorial Day means to you.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Choctaw Color Guard stands at attention in front of The Wall That Heals.

## Listen before answering

PASTOR OLIN WILLIAMS



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

The key word in the Book of Proverbs is wisdom. Wisdom can be defined as “the ability to live life skillfully.” The Book of Proverbs provides God’s detailed instructions for His people to deal successfully with the practical affairs of everyday life. Our study today is found in Proverbs 18:13. This verse says, “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” There are times when we find ourselves in a situation in which we are asked or required to do things we have never learned to do. There are very few “naturals” in life. We all must acquire skills to do what we need or want to do. We are afraid when we don’t know what to do. We avoid doing what we fear. Psalms 55:1-7 says, “Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplications. Attend unto me, and hear me; I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise: Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said O that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, I would wander off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.” Knowing self in this way will help in times we try to help others to overcome their fear. Listening and understanding the cause before prescribing a cure goes a long way in helping another person with their specific issue. Here is an illustration. There was a group of people in a boat. All were having fun swimming except for one woman. She was not participating. Another woman noticed this, so she tried to encourage her. “Why don’t you go for it? They’re having a blast.” She replied, “I don’t want to, thanks.” The woman kept insisting, “Oh come on. It’s not that cold. You’ll get used to it in no time. Come, I’ll go with you.” The next reply came with a little agitation. “No, really,” she said. “I don’t want to swim.” The woman asked again, “Are you sure? It really is not that cold.” The reply came with an icy glare, “I can’t swim. Now do you get it?” The woman felt embarrassed and foolish. Sometimes we try to provide solutions when we don’t understand the cause of the situation.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Chief Gary Batton, center and Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. talk with Patty Hyde and Kenzie Singleton about tornado damage that was sustained at Hyde’s house as a result of storms on April 30.

## Chahta Spirit can’t be blown away

By Chris Jennings

From the evening of Tuesday, April 30, through the morning of Thursday, May 2, multiple waves of severe weather tracked across all 12 districts of the Choctaw Nation. Considerable wind damage occurred in Atoka, Bryan, and Pittsburg counties, including an EF3 tornado in the area of Blue and Bokchito and an EF2 tornado near the town of Haileyville. Chief Gary Batton said, “Our emergency management was there immediately after the tornado happened, and that’s a servant heart.” Batton issued an emergency disaster proclamation based on reports from the field of the damage caused by the storms. By issuing the proclamation it ensures funds are available for things like clean-up supplies, hotels and heavy equipment to be used for immediate assistance. “The main focus is to get help to our tribal members in times of need as well as the community as a whole,” said Batton. The tornado passed over Trish Singleton’s house. “We could feel our house, it was a pulse, it had a vibration, and then we heard this train sound that just got louder and louder. Within 60 seconds we were in the shelter. He barely got that door closed, and it was a pop and a bang,” said Singleton. A total of 241 tribal citizens have been assisted with everything from work gloves and rakes to debris removal and emergency housing. Counseling, replacing lost diabetes meds, and other medical needs have also been met. The response by the Choctaw Nation of

Oklahoma was provided by 48 tribal employees from 20 different departments. Batton praised those who helped, “That’s who we are as people. We’ve always given like we did to the people of Ireland, that’s just a part of our Chahta spirit. We’re family, we’re going to pull together and help one another.” Singleton said it felt like half the nation showed up to help. “I’m so grateful for everything,” she said. As friends and family helped the Singletons clean debris around their property, an item was found that could force a smile in this sad situation. “My mother-in-law collected Barbie dolls, and she had all of these Wizard of Oz dolls. Yesterday we found Dorothy, still in her box, still perfect, by where the shop used to be,” said Singleton. In the words of the Wizard of Oz, “A heart is not judged by how much you love; but by how much you are loved by others.” The hearts of the Choctaw Nation and its tribal members have proven once again to be strong. In cases of emergency, the Office of Emergency Management can be contacted via the hotline (844) 709-6301 or through email at OEM@choctawnation.com.

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# Marine Corps veteran honored at state capitol

## Logan remembers major campaigns during World War II

By Judy Allen

Former Marine William F. “Bill” Logan Jr. was honored as Veteran of the Week April 22 at the Oklahoma State Capitol, presented with a folded flag, citation and standing ovation as his battle biography was read by State Rep. Lundy Kiger of District 3.

Logan took the podium and led the room in a heartfelt Pledge of Allegiance, then thanked everyone for the honor. “It is my first trip to the Capitol,” he said. It was a trip to add to his memory books.

“I was 18 when I left for the War, and almost 21 when I was discharged,” said Logan. He was born and raised in Albion, Oklahoma, and had gone to Portland, Oregon, to work in the shipyards. A draft letter had been sent to his home in Albion, and his dad forwarded the letter to Logan, leading to his visit to the draft board in Portland.

When he arrived at the board office, “A bird colonel asked me what branch of the military I wanted to be in, and I said I didn’t know, maybe the Navy. The colonel said, ‘Son, you’re in the Marine Corps!’” His enlistment papers were signed Oct. 11, 1943.

“I was asked if I needed a week to take care of business before I shipped out. At age 18, I didn’t have any business, so I told them, ‘I guess I can go ahead and go now.’

“Travel from Portland to San Diego was by train. Then I was sent to Pearl Harbor, where I was part of the 22nd Marine Unit that served in the Pacific.”

The first invasion Logan participated in began at Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands, Feb. 19-26, 1944.

The next major battle against the enemy for Logan was the Guam Marianas Islands July 21, 1944, through Aug. 22, 1944. After Guam, the 29th Marine Regiment was brought in to form the 6th Marine Division. Logan’s 22nd Marine Division and the 4th Marine Division had already combined when getting ready to invade Guam, so now all three made up the 6th Division, training at Guadalcanal as a full division with all the necessary artillery including Howitzers.

Logan said as they trained, the Marines tried to guess where they would be sent next. The well-trained 6th Marines



Photo provided

William Logan Jr., a Choctaw veteran of World War II, is honored as Veteran of the Week at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Also pictured at the event are Logan’s daughter, Sally Logan, Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., and State Rep. Lundy Kiger.

were sent to Okinawa, which may have been the decisive campaign of the Pacific. The beach landing was by Amtrak boats. After hitting the beach, the soldiers ran as fast as they could into the hills. They went up through the mountains until they reached the Moto Peninsula. Half-way up, an enemy Japanese soldier on a ridge shot at them with a light machine gun called a “Nambu.”

“One of the lieutenants was shot on the right side of his lip, and it tore open his mouth all the way back to the gums. You could see his teeth and gums on one side. The lieutenant in charge of the machine gun unit asked where the shots had come from. I pointed up, and the lieutenant opened up on the Japanese.

“I asked Fay if he wanted to go get some more ammunition. We grabbed some ammunition bags and started back and got about halfway and the Nambu cut loose. Fay got shot in the stomach, and I got shot in the leg. We were about 200 yards to cover at the little ridge. Fay said, ‘Let’s just lay still’.

“Finally, I jumped up and ran, and I hit the ground just before I got around the ridge. I could see a Corpsman helping a guy who had been shot in the rear, and then the Corpsman got shot in the rear,”

said Logan. “When I got my mind clear, I got up and ran around the ridge where the rest of the company was.”

He continued, “There was a sergeant looking from a foxhole with field glasses and a sniper shot him in the Adam’s apple and he was instantly dead. I dived over into the foxhole. They put sulfur powder where I was shot, and I took sulfur tablets. We didn’t have anything else back then. They just kept Vaseline bandages on the wound the whole time to let it heal.”

After about three weeks, Logan was out of the hospital, put on an old C-47 plane, and headed back to combat. These were old cargo planes. He and a couple of other guys used boxes of hand grenades as seats when they flew back to Guam. They were outfitted with new helmets, rifles and a new pack, then shipped back to Okinawa just in time to help take Sugar Loaf Hill.

“It rained for two weeks straight,” said Logan. “We even slept in water, just being sure to keep our head out of the water.” The miseries of Sugar Loaf Hill continued. Staying wet caused sores on his legs, then when it finally stopped raining, the humidity and heat were unbearable. The Japanese were holed up in caves, and the

Marines began to take the enemy prisoner. Some of the Japanese would rather be killed or commit suicide than be taken prisoner.

After Okinawa had been secured, an official ceremony was held in Tsing Tsao to receive the surrender of the Japanese forces in the area. Logan was present at the ceremony. General Shepherd, a Japanese general and all the military officers came to a racetrack fixed up as a ‘parade ground.’ They pulled out their sabers and put them on a long table. The Japanese general took his pistol and saber and laid them on the table. Then, official papers were signed.

While serving in the military, Logan was cited for Excellent Character of Service, awarded a Purple Heart, a Good Conduct Medal and Honorary Service Button.

Once Logan was home in Albion, he said a local young lady, Estella Miller, who had been supporting the war effort by working at Tinker Air Field, agreed to marry him. They were married 72 years before she passed in 2018.

When he was discharged, his salary was \$54 a month while in the service, and he was given a monthly stipend of \$20 for 52 weeks while he was looking for a permanent job. After he and Estella were married, he went to Portland to work in the lumber business, and as soon as he had enough money saved, he sent for her. “We spent years in the log woods in that big timber,” said Logan. The couple had three children, two girls and a boy.

Logan advises young people to plan ahead. “If you go to work and get a good job, and want to get ahead – if you invest 10% of your money, you will have quite a bit to retire on.”

When asked what the biggest change he had seen in the world during his lifetime, he immediately responded, “Cell phones! Younger kids can take a cell phone and find out anything! You can even talk to a cell phone and find out anything.”

Logan is surrounded by photos and books in his home that are reminders of the history of his life. One photo is of him and three friends.

“We left for war together, sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge and returned about two years later together, coming back home under that same bridge,” said Logan. “We all made it through the war. That picture is of us celebrating the night we got back. I am the only one left now.”

A photo of four World War II heroes. One of them Choctaw. Thankfully our Choctaw World War II hero survives to share his story and photos.

# LTJG Dry awarded second Navy Achievement Medal

Lieutenant Junior Grade Lynsey Dry of Tahlequah is a 2010 graduate of Sequoyah where she was a member of the Lady Indians basketball and softball teams. Upon graduation she attended the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, Rhode Island. Upon graduation from prep school in 2011, she received her appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. While at USNA she helped establish the Native American Heritage Club where she served as vice president and president her junior and senior years. She graduated in 2015 with a Bachelor of Science in Oceanography and received her commission as a Surface Warfare Officer in the U.S. Navy.

Upon completion of Basic Division Officer School in Norfolk, Virginia, she reported to her first sea tour where she was assigned to a guided missile cruiser, the USS Monterey (CG 61), as the Ordnance Officer. While assigned to the Monterey, she deployed to 5th and 6th Fleet Area of Operations in the Persian Gulf. She oversaw the ship’s ammunition



LTJG Lynsey M. Dry

loadout and coordinated the onload of 122 missiles and 60,000 pounds of munitions for the deployment. She was credited with leading her division on MONTEREY’s weapons systems, in restoring mission readiness in multiple warfare areas.

LTJG Dry finished her tour on Monterey in October 2017 and was highly recommended and selected to become a navigator. Upon completion of Advanced Division Officer Course and Navigation School in Newport, she reported to her second sea tour where she is currently serving as the navigator for the amphibious warship, USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44), in Norfolk. She

finished her deployment to 4th and 6th fleet areas of operations in December 2018 where she created the voyage plans and oversaw the safe navigation of 40,000 nautical miles in the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Arctic and North Atlantic.

During her ship’s deployment with more than 500 sailors and Marines in the Arctic Circle in support of NATO exercise Trident Juncture, the ship encountered rough seas which caused two landing crafts to break free from their lashing in the well-deck. LTJG Dry took Officer of the Deck and maneuvered the ship for the best possible wind and seas, helping to mitigate pitch and roll and facilitate damage control operations in the well deck. Her expert seamanship skills were critical to the ship’s safe navigation in this emergency and allowed the personnel in the well deck


to be safely evacuated. She was recently awarded her second Navy Achievement Medal for her quick action in preventing the loss of life and reducing further damage to the ship.

LTJG Dry’s decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (two awards), National Defense Service

Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal and the Expeditionary War on Terrorism Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (two awards), Navy Rifle Marksmanship Ribbon and Navy Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon.

Lynsey is the daughter of Douglas and Pat Dry.

She is the granddaughter of the late Rev. Key and Anna Ketcher, the late Ernest Dry and Lucretia Adams of Durant. Both of Lynsey’s paternal grandparents attended and graduated from Goodland Indian Academy. Her maternal grandparent graduated from Chilocco Indian School.



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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE



Council Corner



James Dry, District 9

Growth can be seen throughout District 9

Halito, my fellow District 9 Choctaw tribal members! There is a lot going on with our tribe—especially within District 9. Being part of all this positive activity for our tribe and as your councilman, it is such an amazing honor. I am thankful to God and to all of you for giving me the opportunity to represent you on our Tribal Council. Thank you for your support and prayers.

Education is very important to our young Choctaws who will one day be the leaders of our tribe. We had another fruitful season of fundraising for scholarships this year. We made a little

change this year—we joined forces with District 10 for our scholarship golf tournament. It was a resounding success, and we raised enough money, along with the Chahta Foundation, to award a total of 19 scholarships at \$1,000 apiece! A very special thank you goes out to our Seniors and our Youth Advisory Board for working all our fundraisers.

To assist these young people (and others in need), we have our professional clothes closet. Its purpose is to ensure our people have the clothes needed for their interviews or for their daily needs on the job. We dedicated our professional clothes closet to Dick and June Sidles. Dick passed away this year, and he was the first to donate suits to our closet. Dick will surely be missed.

Along with helping our tribal members look the part for interviews, we're offering job interview skills training at the center. Whether you're a student who just graduated or if you have decided you want a career change and need to brush up on your interviewing skills, we will be happy to help.

Adequate housing has been an issue for our tribe for quite some time. I am happy to report that we have 40 District 9 families moving into new homes – thanks to their hard work and a “hand up” from our LEAP program.

Our Choctaw Nation has seen tremendous growth over the past 30 years, and that can be seen all around us. For example, recently we held a ribbon cutting ceremony for our new judicial building and a groundbreaking ceremony for a \$550 million expansion at the Durant casino. This is the largest expansion of this type in the Nation's history. We'll also be getting a new travel plaza in District 9.

To help facilitate and manage the growth of our tribe, we have the task of bringing our legislative branch up to speed just as our other branches have done. Our tribe has three equal branches of government which consist of the Executive Branch (Chief), Legislative Branch (Tribal Council) and the Judicial Branch. The Legislative Branch is charged with oversight of tribal activities and we are in the process of making much-needed changes that will allow us to not only give the proper oversight as required by our tribal constitution but will allow us to be more responsive to your needs. I am honored to have recently been elected as Speaker Pro-Tem of the council, and I look forward to working with other Council members as we move forward.



Anthony Dillard, District 10

Good things happening in District 10, Choctaw Nation

Halito. Chim a chukma? It is always great to get to share good news happening in District 10 as well as some thoughts for continued growth for our Choctaw Nation.

We are excited to have 10 new LEAP homes completed in Atoka with an additional 10 more under construction in the Stringtown area. Along with these homes for our LEAP families, we also have 10 independent elderly units and 10 affordable housing units under construction, scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2019. This first step in housing will go a long way in helping mitigate the housing shortages we currently face in the Choctaw Nation. I encourage all Choctaws in need of housing to apply for housing that meets your needs so we can help you and your family. Whether housing is currently available or not, we use these applications to better understand the needs for housing in each area.

In other news, we continue to foster a strong relationship with the FAA for our IPP (Unmanned Aircraft Systems [UAS] Integration Pilot Program) test site and more information about that can be found at website cnoaa.com. The IPP test site is located on the Winding Stair Ranch in the Daisy area. I believe this is a wonderful opportunity to create a technology cluster for the Choctaw Nation and the state of Oklahoma.

I want to give a big shout out to the District 10 Senior Fitness Challenge team from our Atoka Center. They have regained the title of the senior fitness champions once again so congratulations! Thanks go out to the fitness team for setting a great example of being active in our senior years to promote longevity and mobility and the senior volleyball crew does the same thing.

District 10 joined forces with District 9 this spring to have a fundraiser golf tournament to add more money for Choctaw scholarships in the schools that reside in our district boundaries to complement the money that the Chahta Foundation already provides for scholarships. Together we raised \$9,500, which will be matched dollar for dollar by the Chahta Foundation.

I would like to discuss some initiatives the Tribal Council is working on. Growth of the Legislative Branch of our tribal government will ensure proper checks and balances are being met. With the growth the tribe has experienced over the past 15 years the Tribal Council needs more knowledge about financials, budgets, policy, and advanced business acumen in order to meet the needs of oversight requirements over tribal assets. We also continue to strengthen our election ordinance to ensure we have fair elections. We've taken steps in the right direction in this area, and tribal members will have the opportunity to make some minor amendments to the constitution with their vote in July. We have many issues to stay informed on such as gaming compacts, fuel compacts, tobacco compacts, timber settlements and opioid lawsuits just to name a few. It is imperative that we are prepared and knowledgeable on all issues facing our tribe, and I believe we are up to the challenge.

While I push for and encourage growth and opportunity in District 10, I'm also focused on our entire Choctaw Nation and the wellbeing of our people. As a tribe, we need to be very deliberate about creating opportunities in our rural communities so we can bring prosperity to all portions of our Choctaw Nation. Our Choctaw Nation is strong, and together we can move our tribe forward and make a brighter future for all tribal members.



District 10 Senior Fitness Challenge team

Shaping future of technology

By Chris Jennings

In May, the Choctaw Nation hosted the second annual Emerging Aviation conference, bringing in an impressive list of speakers. To name a few, several members of the Federal Aviation Administration, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt, Oklahoma House of Representatives Speaker Charles McCall and Deputy U.S. Chief Technology Officer at the White House Michael Kratsios.

In May of 2018, the FAA selected the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma as one of 10 participants in its UASIPP. Since that time the Nation has successfully completed several tasks using drone technology:

- Electrical infrastructure inspections using one pilot for more than one aircraft.
- The first public demonstration of open drone ID technology for a mode of



Deputy U.S. Chief Technology Officer at the White House Michael Kratsios

- identification.
- Successful night operations to manage local livestock herds.
  - Members of the Choctaw Nation team

have leveraged other emerging technologies like artificial intelligence to count herd animals.

- Test advanced detect and avoid systems for use in beyond visual line of site operations.

Perhaps the most noteworthy though, was the inventive decision to fly a drone at more than 4,000 feet to drop dry corn in traps used to catch feral hogs

Speaking of the Choctaw Nation Kratsios said, “You continue to show you understand the challenges we need to overcome as a country to advance our drone use and you have the willingness and the ability to meet those challenges.”

By being involved in this program, the Choctaw Nation is able to help shape the future of the next wave of aviation technology. It's not just the future of the technology the Nation is helping to shape though.

Sitting scattered throughout the crowd were students from across the districts and beyond. The presence of this younger generation did not go unnoticed to the speakers at the conference.

Charles McCall, Oklahoma House of Representatives speaker said, “We have to continue to focus state resources in higher education, as well as common education, to try to identify those with a passion. Those with talent that want to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics and put them on the track to develop those young talents for future generations.”

With the Choctaw Nation's involvement with these emerging technologies, they are giving the youth across the area an opportunity to be a part of this next revolution in aviation.

The long-range effects of the Nation being involved at an early stage in the de-



Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt

velopment of drone technologies will also have an impact on the tribe as a whole. The 10 ½ counties are situated in a prime position for testing and development of new technologies that larger companies will need.

Given the close proximity to major hubs such as Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Dallas/Fort Worth, coupled with the availability of non-restricted airspace, makes the Nation appealing for new development related to unmanned aircraft.

Chief Gary Batton said, “This will allow us to do basic leasing businesses, meaning renting of our spaces. It will also allow us to get into the technology field, as well as general aviation and manufacturing.”

When the Wright brothers left the ground for the first time the only other thing in the sky were birds. Since that time, there have been two distinct revolutions in aviation. First, jet engines and commercial flight, and now drones and unmanned flights. With the Choctaw Nation's presence at the forefront of this latest revolution, it is taking another step in strengthening its future.



Have a Feral Hog Problem?

Join us

June 20, 2019

Feral Hog Management, Soil Health Workshop and USDA Program Updates

Free Workshops

- Feral Hog Management & Soil Health Workshops
- Feral Hog Control
- Feral Hog Trapping
- Future Hog Techniques
- Choctaw Nation Soil Health Project
- New Ag Census Data
- USDA Updates

Choctaw Nation  
Spiro  
Community Center  
19400 AES Rd.  
Spiro, OK 74959  
11:00am to 1:00pm

Choctaw Nation  
Smithville  
Community Center  
39618 N. HWY 259  
Smithville, OK 74957  
5:30pm to 7:30pm

Lunch/Dinner  
will be provided

RSVP by June 17

Tonee Wolf  
580-775-5229  
twolf@choctawnation.com

Dr. Carol Crouch  
Carol.crouch@ok.usda.gov  
405-612-9331

Open to the Public

Attention CHOCTAW ARTISTS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A JURIED AND JUDGED CHOCTAW INDIAN ART SHOW, LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Choctaw Nation  
Cultural Services  
Labor Day Art Show  
Ext. 4090

Please complete the following interest form in order to receive more information regarding the 2019 Choctaw Indian Arts Show held Labor Day weekend at Tvshka Homma, OK. Must be 18 years of age and a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to participate.

Categories include: Painting, Graphics, Cultural, Sculpture, Pottery, Jewelry, and Basketry.

Please complete the form and mail to the address below:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Kerry Steve, CNO Cultural Services  
PO Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702





Notes to the Nation

Tribal Council  
Monthly Regular Session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session May 11 at Tvshka Homma.

Minutes of the April 13 Regular Session and the May 6 Special Session were approved.

New business included:

a) Approve Service Line Agreement in Favor of Public Service Company of Oklahoma, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Choctaw County, Oklahoma. Vote counts: YEAs-unanimous; vote result: bill passed.

b) Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets. Vote counts: YEAs-unanimous; vote result: bill passed.

c) Approve Application and Budget for the Continuation of Choctaw Nation Early Head Start-Child Care Program for FY 2019-2020. Vote counts: YEAs-unanimous; vote result: bill passed.

d) Approve Council Bill Enacting the Constitutional Amendment Procedures Code. Vote counts: YEAs-unanimous; vote result: bill passed.

e) Approve the Retention of Professor Jack F. Williams as an Advisor to the Tribal Council of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Vote counts: YEAs-unanimous; vote result: bill passed.

f) Proposed Amendments to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Constitution to Provide for a Succession Plan for the Office of the Chief. Vote counts: YEAs-10; NOs-2; vote result: bill passed.

g) Approve Application for the Native American Affairs: Technical Assistance to Tribes Grant. Vote counts: YEAs-unanimous; vote result: bill passed.

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

The next regular scheduled council meeting will be 10 a.m. June 8 at Tvshka Homma. For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and Council bills, go to [www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills](http://www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills).

LETTERS

We are writing today to say Thank You on behalf of the entire family of Harold Mitchell, a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. Harold “Pop” died peacefully in December 2018 and although we continue to mourn his passing, we know that we would have lost him much sooner if not for the help of the Choctaws. He received such excellent care—from his doctors, the hospital, daily dialysis, pharmacy staff and countless others. None of that care would have been possible for him financially without this assistance. He and his wife also benefited from much-needed upgrades to their home—also from the Choctaw Nation.

We thank you and offer our prayers and blessings.

**Terry and Robert Mitchell, proud Choctaw sons**

Biskinik  
Announcement Guidelines

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above.

Couples may send 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](mailto: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  
Brad Gernand, Senior Director  
Lisa Reed, Editor  
Chris Jennings, News Reporter  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702  
580-924-8280 • 800-522-6170  
[www.ChoctawNation.com](http://www.ChoctawNation.com)  
email: [biskinik@ChoctawNation.com](mailto:biskinik@ChoctawNation.com)

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

Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive. Items are printed in the order received. Faxed photos will not be accepted.

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

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

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

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



EVENTS

District 6 Activities

- Every Monday and Wednesday Senior Fitness Program “55+,” 9 a.m.
  - Chair Volleyball Practice 9:30 a.m. at the Wilburton Wellness Center
  - Every Wednesday Lunch served, with a guest speaker Salad bar opens at 11 a.m. -
- June 4** Grant Casino Day Trip. Bus leaves 8:30 a.m.
- June 5** Senior Monthly Meeting (after lunch) Commodities pickup (McAlester) after mtg
- June 7** Council Member Jennifer Woods Prayer Meeting, 7-8 a.m.; breakfast to follow Indian Taco/Bake Sale/Indoor Yard Sale, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- June 12** Veterans Day Dinner, Noon
- June 13** Short Shopping Day, destination and time to be announced
- June 14** Homebuyers Education Class, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- June 19** Father's Day Dinner
- June 25** Family Night Bingo and Potluck, 6-8 p.m.
- June 28** Long Shopping Day, destination and time to be announced
- \* Dates are subject to change. Other activities and events to be announced at the center.
- Wilburton Choctaw Nation Community Center  
1056 NW 1003 Ave.

Baker Family Reunion  
Saturday, June 8

The Noel Baker and Roxie (Loman) Baker family reunion will be at the “Old Choctaw Nation Community Center,” SW O Street in Antlers. Meat will be provided. Please bring a side dish and refreshments.

Contact: Mary Hayes 918-698-0583,  
Georgia 580-236-4402 or Mary D. 580-982-6300.

Parnell  
Family Reunion  
Saturday, June 1  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Choctaw Community Center, Smithville

Bring a covered dish and enjoy your day.

Contacts: Louise Hamrick 580-244-3478  
Sharon Youngblood 580-244-7372 or Doyleene Vaught 580-244-7276.

Brokeshoulder  
Family Reunion  
June 14-15

The 15th annual Brokeshoulder family reunion will be held at the Sac and Fox Community Center in Shawnee. For more information, contact Kenneth Johnson 580-924-8922 or 580-740-9977 or email [Wynona Lumpmouth at absenteeshaw@yahoo.com](mailto:Wynona Lumpmouth at absenteeshaw@yahoo.com).

Jefferson-Wade-Prock  
Family Reunion  
Saturday, June 15  
Robber's Cave State Park Wilburton, Oklahoma

Same time, same place. Food, family, fellowship. Please bring photos. For more information, call Etta 580-579-2332.

White  
Family Reunion  
Saturday, June 29

The 43rd Livingston Buck and Angeline Mitchell White reunion will be held in the Dale Cox Community Center, Poteau. Bring a covered dish, old photos, genealogy. For more information, contact Traci Cox (918) 677-2235 or Kim White Robertson (918) 647-6153, or check the family Facebook page, Livingston Buck & Angeline Mitchell White family.

Father's Day  
Singing  
Sunday, June 16

Black Jack Church, 11 miles east of Rattan on Hwy. 3

Singing starts at 6 p.m.; supper at 5 p.m. For more information, contact Mary Woody at 580-372-5114.

**RENTAL EDUCATION**

Giving tribal members the necessary skills to become successful renters and potential homeowners.

Dates and cities available:

June 7 - Idabel                      June 21 - Stigler  
June 14 - Wilburton                June 28 - McAlester

**Choctaw Nation**  
Housing Authority

To enroll, email: [HousingEducation@ChoctawNation.com](mailto:HousingEducation@ChoctawNation.com)

Stay Connected  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM) | f t @ v

**CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL**

Choctaw performing artists are invited to apply for two open spots on the main Amphitheater Stage during the 2019 Labor Day Festival.

Please send demo cd/video (on website link) ONLY with current contact information and CNO membership documentation for review. Calls will be made to top prospects for a sample live performance. Must be 18 years or older and a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to be considered. Open to groups solo artists and other performance based mediums.

Mail to: CNO Tribal Events  
Attn: Labor Day Talent Search  
3651 Big Lots Parkway  
Durant, OK 74701

Must be postmarked by July 12, 2019

800-522-6170 | [CHOCTAWNATION.COM](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM) | DEADLINE JULY 12

**Choctaw Nation**  
Success Through Academic Recognition

**STAR PROGRAM**

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

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

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

[STARAPPLICATION.CHOCTAWNATION.COM](http://STARAPPLICATION.CHOCTAWNATION.COM)  
800-522-6170 EXT 2581 OR 2971

**CAMP CHAHTA**  
FOR INCOMING COLLEGE FRESHMEN  
Contact your campus advisor to enroll.

What to expect from Camp Chahta:\*

- Move in early
- Resolve any enrollment and financial aid issues
- Experience cultural events
- Develop new friendships
- Access campus communications
- Earn orientation credit

\*For Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Members only

**CARL ALBERT STATE COLLEGE**  
AUGUST 6 – 8  
Move in: August 5

**Eastern Oklahoma state college**  
AUGUST 8 – 9  
Move in: August 7

**SOUTHEASTERN STATE COLLEGE**  
AUGUST 14-15  
Move in: August 13

[COLLEGEFYI@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:COLLEGEFYI@CHOCTAWNATION.COM) | 800-522-6170

**Choctaw Nation**  
Education Services  
College Freshman Year Initiative



## Brays celebrate 50th anniversary



Michael and Francine (Locke) Bray are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married in Indianapolis, Indiana, on June 7, 1969. Michael, born in Indianapolis, is a retired veteran of the U.S. Air Force and Rolls Royce. Francine, born in Chicago, Illinois, is the daughter of the late Nelson and Arlene (Pritchard) Locke. They have one son, Jeff, who lives in Charleston, South Carolina, with his wife, Kara, and 2-year-old daughter, Kyla. Francine is the granddaughter of Edwin Snow and Emma Frances (Philbrook) Locke, and great-granddaughter of Victor M. Locke, Sr. (wife Susan McKenney) Locke. Francine's Choctaw ancestors can be traced through Susan McKenney Locke to Mississippi prior to the Trail of Tears. Her great-great-grandfather, John McKenney, owned a stand on Robinson Road, about 15 miles from the Choctaw Agency near present-day Columbia, Mississippi. He and his family removed to Indian Territory in 1831. Susan's father was Thompson McKenney of Skullyville. Victor M. Locke, Sr. (wife Susan McKenney), was instrumental with John Farr in founding Antlers. Following retirement, Francine and Michael, in 2012, relocated to Antlers, returning to her heritage homeland. Both Michael and Francine, among other interests, are actively conducting Choctaw and genealogical research, much of it on behalf of the Choctaw Nation.



## Brown celebrates 93rd birthday

Georgeina "Jacks" Brown of Ardmore turned 93 years old on April 26. All of her friends and family feel blessed to have her with them and wish her the happiest birthday ever.

Choctaw Nation  
Higher Education

COLLEGE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

CCAAPPLICATION.CHOCTAWNATION.COM

The Choctaw Nation offers a one-time college clothing allowance to Choctaw tribal members throughout the United States who are currently attending an accredited college or university. Students must be a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The application is open  
**June 1 - September 1**

Qualifying applicants will receive a Visa card to purchase college clothing. The card can only be used at retailers that sell clothing; it will be declined at ATMs, gas stations, restaurants, and movie theaters.

800-522-6170 ext 4240 or 4241  
CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation  
Vocational Rehabilitation

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

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday		
July 2	Coalgate	11 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 8	Atoka	11 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 9	Idabel	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 9	Talihina	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
July 10	Antlers	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 10	Poteau	11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 12	Crowder	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
July 16	Wilburton	10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
July 17	McAlester	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
July 17	Stigler	by appointment
July 22	Atoka	11 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 23	Wright City	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 24	Poteau	11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 24	McAlester	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
July 26	Antlers	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
July 30	Broken Bow	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
July 30	Talihina	10 a.m.-2 p.m.
July 31	Wilburton	10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Call 580-326-8304 for an appointment



Photo by Chris Jennings

## Adult Education grads include students from multi-state area

Twenty-five of the 48 graduates of the Choctaw Nation Adult Education program were on hand to receive their diplomas after successful completion of their courses. The majority of the graduates were from areas spread across Oklahoma. However, due to the availability of online courses, there were also students from Texas, Georgia, Pennsylvania and California. For more information, please call the Adult Education office, 1-800-522-6170, ext. 2122.

## Team Choctaw delivers bikes and smiles to JA students

Team Choctaw, the sister group to the cultural Trail of Tears Riders, is the bicycle group that provided injury prevention education and encouragement to others to choose a healthier lifestyle. Team Choctaw's 2019 project was to donate bicycles to Jones Academy elementary students. Jones Academy is the residential boarding school for Native students, ages 6-18 years old. Students live and study at Jones Academy and attend public school in Hartshorne. These students may have come to Jones Academy from not only Oklahoma, but from any state in the United States.



representatives, and Team Choctaw members Lisa Bohanan, Chris Falco, and Jabe Lawson. Team Choctaw extends a special thanks to Choctaw Nation DARE Officer James, retired OHP Trooper Bohanan, CNHSA Transportation Director Gerrick Johnson and his team, John Franklin, Jason Kennedy, BJ Bodine, and Cassie Newman, for their time and support.

Team Choctaw and the Choctaw Nation Bicycle Team were formed in June 2011 by Nancy Jefferson, CNHSA Talihina, in honor of retired Choctaw Nation Judge Juanita Jefferson, an avid supporter of cycling.

The team has participated in the cultural ride from Mississippi to Oklahoma since it's inauguration in 2012. The team also spends time encouraging injury prevention, alternative transportation, and healthy living opportunities.

Team Choctaw participates in injury prevention activities at Labor Day, hosts and rides in fundraising events such as the American Diabetes Association Tour de Cure and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society MS 150 ride. During the ADA Tour de Cure in Tulsa, Team Choctaw proudly represents the Choctaw Nation and may be seen riding alongside the Cherokee Nation, the Mvskoke Creek Nation, and the Cheyenne-Arapaho Cycling groups in the fight against diabetes. Team Choctaw also hosts the Pink Pearl Luncheon and the weeklong Paint the Town Pink in Talihina.

Team Choctaw welcomes all who desire to ride. Upcoming ride information is available for a tri-state area on the Choctaw Nation Cycling/Team Choctaw Facebook page.

## Choctaw Community Partner Fund awards \$17,000 to City of Wilburton, Latimer County

The Choctaw Nation recently awarded the City of Wilburton \$11,300 and Latimer County \$5,700 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue to help strengthen and develop the local area.

This is the second voluntary contribution from the Choctaw Nation. The first took place in early February and distributed a combined total of \$17,000 to the city of Wilburton and Latimer County. The initiative will continue on a quarterly basis to cities and counties that operate non-gaming businesses throughout the Nation's 10 ½ counties.

"The Choctaw Nation continues to help grow our community, and we will be forever grateful to them," states Jennifer Woods, Choctaw Nation Council Member District 6. "Every little dollar amount helps, especially in these little towns. The funds are greatly appreciated and are being used wisely."

The Choctaw Nation is a sovereign tribal nation that recognizes the impact and in-

fluence in the many cities and counties where their people live and work.

The expectation is for each local government to apply the Choctaw Community Partner Fund contribution toward supporting and developing the communities that serve tribal and non-tribal citizens. Last quarter the Nation distributed a total of \$300,000 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to 24 cities and counties that operate non-gaming businesses in the Nation's 10 ½ counties.

"Our relationship with the Choctaw Nation never ceases to amaze our community members," states Debbie Vega, director of Parks & Recreation for the City Wilburton. "Last quarter the funds were used on several different projects from temporary fencing for our ballpark, a sidewalk project and we were even able to use some on Easter eggs and prizes for the kids."

Latimer County plans to use all the funds for a future project.



Daniel Brooks, Tribal Security; Amanda Woods, Wilburton Police Department; Debbie Vega, director of Parks and Recreation for the city of Wilburton and Choctaw Council Member Jennifer Woods.



Roger Kimble, County Commissioner District 3; Jennifer Woods, Choctaw Nation Council Member, and Daniel Brooks, Tribal Security.

Choctaw Nation  
Student School and Activity Fund

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.

**Eligibility Requirements**

- Students must possess a Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal membership card. (This is not the CDIB).
- If the student is 19 or older and still in high school, please submit a paper form via mail, email or fax and include school documentation verifying enrollment.

The Student School and Activity Fund Program funding year is  
**July 1 - May 1** of the following year.

Applications can be submitted online.

SSAFAPPLICATION.CHOCTAWNATION.COM  
800-522-6170 EXT 2175 OR 2463



## Farrar turning 97

Billie June Farrar will celebrate her 97th birthday June 9. She is the daughter of John Wesley and Mabel Foster. Billie has resided in her home in San Diego since 1952. Her entire family would like to wish her a very happy birthday.





# 2019 TRIBAL ELECTION GUIDE

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

Same-day registration available

## Candidates file for offices of Chief, Council Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11

Elections are held at alternating two-year periods for the four-year terms of Chief and Tribal Council. This year, filing opened April 22 for candidates for Chief and Councilmembers in Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 11. All candidates for the elective offices of Chief, Council District 1, and Council District 3 were qualified, unopposed, and will not appear on the ballot. Elections will be held for Council District 2, Council District 5, Council District 8, and Council District 11. The list of qualified candidates for elective office are:

### Council District 2

Jonathan Anthony (Tony) Ward (incumbent)  
Michael A. Amos  
Sherrill Battiest

### Council District 5

Ronald Clyde Perry (incumbent)  
Louisa Tad Gonzalez

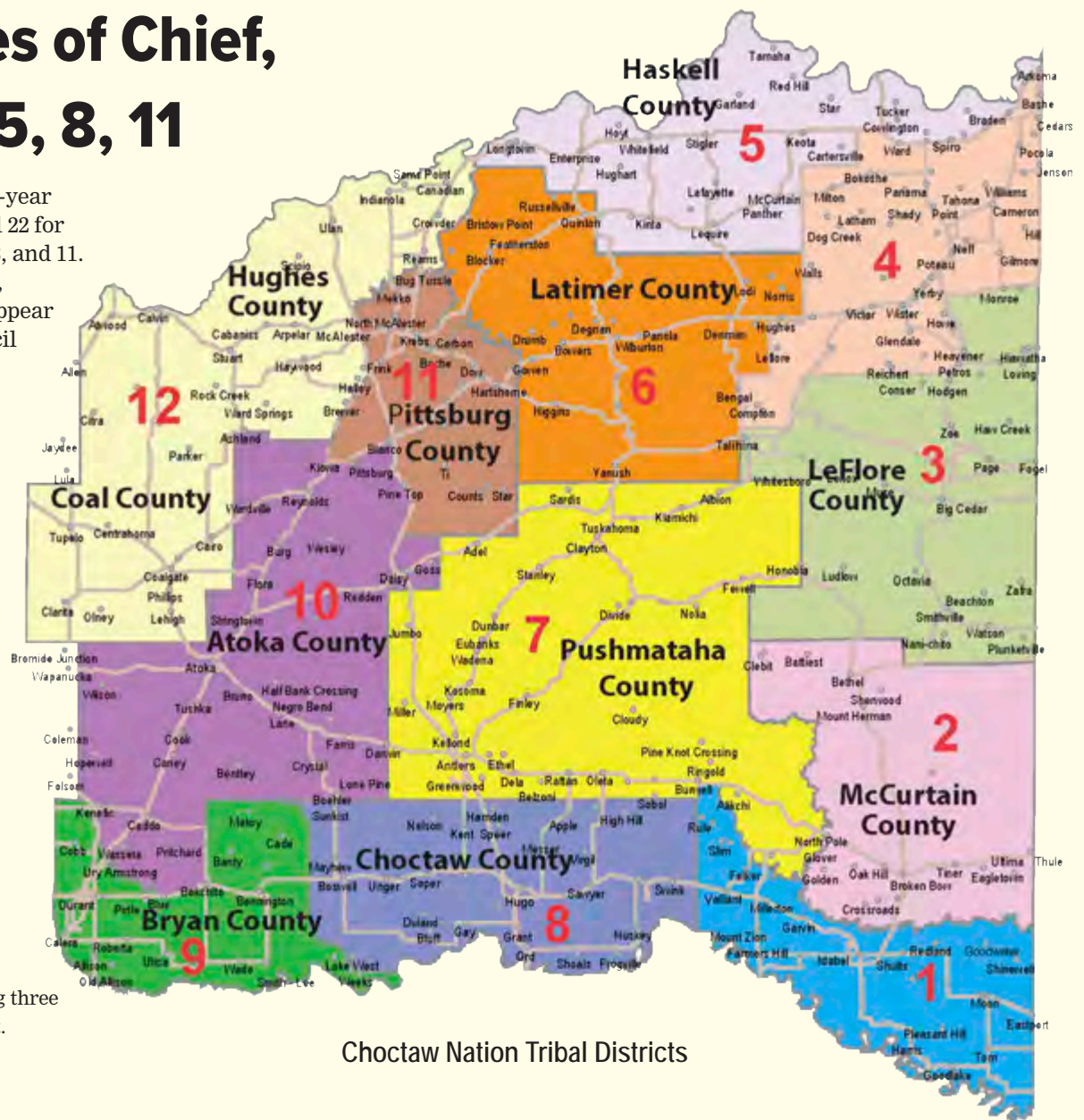
### Council District 8

Perry Thompson (incumbent)  
Paul Roberts

### Council District 11

Bob Pate (incumbent)  
Nellie Meashintubby  
Robert Wayne Karr  
Arthur (Rob) Robertson

Additional candidate and voting information is listed on the following three pages. Candidate information is listed alphabetically by district.  
All information submitted may have been edited per guidelines of the Election Candidate Insert Policy.



Choctaw Nation Tribal Districts

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CHOCTAW VOTERS

Any person who has obtained Tribal Membership as defined by Article II of the Constitution and who has attained the age of eighteen (18) by the date of any election shall be eligible to register to vote in Choctaw Nation tribal elections. Every eligible tribal member must be registered with the Voter Registration Department to vote in tribal elections.

Each eligible tribal member must fill out a Voter Registration form. The information provided on the voter registration form is signed under oath.

Tribal members living inside the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma boundaries must be registered in the district in which they reside and may submit an official ballot as provided in Article XV of this Ordinance.

Non-resident voters may become affiliated with a district of their choice. Once a non-resident voter has affiliated with a district while living outside of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma boundaries, he or she must remain affiliated with their chosen district. Affiliation may change only when a voter moves back within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Non-resident voters may submit an official ballot as provided in this Ordinance.

Non-resident or unaffiliated voters are only eligible to vote in an election for the Chief.

Eligible tribal members may register to vote with the Voter Registration Department all year during regular business hours except holidays recognized by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Ballots will consist of candidates' names or names with pictures, also known as pictorial ballots. A candidate's name will appear on the ballot as he/she so designates on the Declaration of Candidacy filed with the Election Board. If a seat is uncontested, no ballots will be issued for that seat.

Each ballot, except mail-in ballots, shall be coded with a unique number in a way that can identify the voting location from which the ballot was issued.

Mail-in ballots shall be identical to the regular ballots but shall be stamped "MAIL-IN BALLOT" and the date of the issuance shown thereon. The ballots, when mailed to the voter, shall be accompanied by a plain opaque envelope marked "BALLOT", and a pre-addressed postage paid affidavit envelope for voter's convenience. The return envelope will have the mailing address for the Election Board on it.

Sample ballots are printed for every

## CHOCTAW VOTE Be a Voice Be a Choctaw Voter

All Choctaw voters will start receiving ballots in the mail beginning the week of June 17. Mail ballots must be received and processed by the United States Post Office in Durant, Oklahoma, by 4:30 p.m. on July 12. The Election Board will not accept hand-delivered ballots.

To check on the status of your Voter Registration, contact the Voter Registration Department at [www.choctawnation.com/vote](http://www.choctawnation.com/vote) or by email at [VoterRegistration@choctawnation.com](mailto:VoterRegistration@choctawnation.com). A Voter Registration form is included in this guide.

Early voting at open locations is 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday, July 12. General Election is Saturday, July 13, with voting locations open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information on Choctaw Nation elections, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/elections> or contact the Election Board Secretary by email at [ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com](mailto:ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com) or by phone at 580-924-8280.

election. Sample ballots are exact duplicates of regular issue ballots except that no numbers are printed on them and "SAMPLE BALLOT" is printed across the face of the ballot. Sample ballots are posted at each voting location on every voting day and are available in the Election Board office.

Voting, whether in-person or by mail, shall be by secret ballot. Voters shall be tabulated by electronic voting machine and/or done manually. Voting machines will be provided by the company hired to conduct the elections.

Voters may cast a ballot during hours of operation at any open voting location regardless of the district. The voter will provide the Voting Location Board with his/her name and address. The voter must present an ID issued by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (photo or non-photo) showing full name and date of birth or a photo ID issued by another government.

A Voting Location Board member determines the person's eligibility by locating his/her name on the registry

and verifying that such voter has not previously cast a ballot in the impending election. Once the person's eligibility is proven, the voter is asked to sign the registry. A Voting Location Board member then issues the appropriate ballot. A Voting Location Board member provides the voter a marking pen and directs the voter to a voting booth. When the voter has finished voting, he/she must promptly leave the voting location.

A voter who is able to reach the voting location, but because of a physical disability or infirmity is unable to come inside, can be assisted outside of the election enclosure. The Voting Location Board Inspector will stop processing the voters inside the election enclosure. Voters who have already signed the registry will be permitted to complete voting first. The Voting Location Board Inspector and another Voting Location Member will approach the disabled voter outside the voting enclosure and provide whatever assistance is required. The disabled voter must subscribe to an oath, called a Request for Assistance Form (see Appendix Form E), that he/she is entitled to the assistance. The voter may mark his/her own ballot or he/she may choose to be assisted by a person of his/her choosing, provided that person is not the voter's employer or an agent of the employer. The voter may also choose to be assisted by one of the Voting Location Board members other than the Inspector. At no time should the ballot box be left unattended.

A voter who is able to enter the election enclosure but is unable to mark his/her ballot because of a physical or visual disability/infirmity or is illiterate and cannot read and/or write, is entitled to special assistance. The Voting Location Board Inspector will stop processing the voters inside the election enclosure. Voters who have already signed the registry will be permitted to complete voting first. The disabled voter must subscribe to an oath, called a Request for Assistance Form (see Appendix Form E), that he/she is entitled to the assistance. The Voter then indicates whether he/she wishes to be assisted by one of the Voting Location Board members or by a person of the voter's choosing, provided that person is not the voter's employer or an agent of the employer. Assistance in marking ballots is then provided in the voting booth. At no time should the ballot box be left unattended.

### OPEN VOTING LOCATIONS

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

#### Council District 1

Choctaw Community Center  
2408 E. Lincoln, Idabel OK 74745

#### Council District 2

Choctaw Community Center  
1346 Martin Luther King Dr., Broken Bow, OK 74728

Choctaw Community Center

3839 Battiest Pickens Rd., Battiest, OK 74722

#### Council District 3

Choctaw Community Center  
100 Railroad St., Tahleah, OK 74571

#### Council District 4

Choctaw Community Center  
208 B. St., Poteau, OK 74953

#### Council District 5

Choctaw Community Center  
19400 AES Rd., Spiro, OK 74959

Choctaw Community Center

2208 E. Main St., Stigler, OK 74462

#### Council District 6

Choctaw Community Center  
1056 NW 1003 Ave., Wilburton, OK 74578

#### Council District 7

Choctaw Community Center  
400 SW O St., Antlers, OK 74523

#### Council District 8

Choctaw Community Center  
1304 W. Victor, Hugo, OK 74743

Boswell School Auditorium

604 7th St., Boswell, OK 74727

#### Council District 9

Choctaw Community Center  
2746 Big Lots Pkwy., Durant, OK 74701

#### Council District 10

Choctaw Community Center  
1203 W. Liberty Rd., Atoka, OK 74525

#### Council District 11

Choctaw Community Center  
3274 Afullota Hina, McAlester, OK 74501

#### Council District 12

Choctaw Community Center  
103 E. California, Coalgate, OK 74538



# 2019 ELECTION CANDIDATES

## Chief

### Gary Batton, unopposed

Chief Gary Batton filed candidacy papers to serve a second full term as the Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the Choctaw people for another four years,” said Chief Batton. “Thank you for your trust in me. I look forward to the journey as we continue to build a great future for the Choctaw Nation.”

Batton began working for the tribe in 1987 and held positions in purchasing, housing and health. He served as executive director of Choctaw Nation Health Services prior to being named assistant chief in 2007. As director, Batton led construction of a state-of-the-art health care center, completely funded by the tribe, to replace the Choctaw Nation hospital that was built in the 1930s.

Batton won the 2015 election with 86.52% of the vote. In just five years, he has proven his leadership through numerous accomplishments for tribal members and south-eastern Oklahoma. He believes in the vision of living out the Chahta spirit of faith, family and culture.

To show his commitment to faith, he built a chapel and dedicated the Ten Commandments Monument at Tvshka Homma, posted the Ten Commandments throughout the Choctaw Nation, hired a chaplain available for all employees and approved a Council Resolution declaring the Choctaw Nation a Christian nation.

To revitalize culture, Batton commissioned a Choctaw dictionary and a Choctaw hymnal app. He declared the first Monday of every month as Heritage Monday, and the wearing traditional dress, making pottery, singing hymns and speaking our language are once again common.

In the first two years of Batton’s term, the Nation achieved a \$1.8 Billion dollar economic impact on Oklahoma, with expansions to casinos and new travel plazas among the top construction items. With an eye to the future, he has also diversified revenue opportunities with defense contracts, ammunition production, restaurants and food markets.

Job opportunities have risen dramatically in recent years, from 6,500 in 2014 to approximately 11,000 currently employed by the Choctaw Nation. Job for the Day, Educational and Career Development programs have helped many tribal members develop skill sets that enhance their ability to achieve a higher standard of living for their families.

Protecting sovereignty, Chief Batton secured an historic timber settlement with the United States and a water agreement between the federal government and the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations. Choctaw tribal members can now purchase Choctaw Nation vehicle license tags and Choctaw veteran license tags in Oklahoma as well as state hunting and fishing licenses.

A new headquarters building in Durant, opened in 2018, is a centralized location for tribal members and employees where the atmosphere is one of collaboration and Choctaw culture. The headquarters is located near the regional health clinic on an expanding campus which recently added the Choctaw Nation’s first judicial center.

Batton and his wife, Angie, reside in Clayton. They have two children and two grandchildren.



## District 1

### Thomas Williston, unopposed

I would just like to express my sincere gratitude to all for allowing me to serve you as your District 1 Councilperson for the past nine years. I made a promise then to serve diligently, honestly, and most of all fairly. I feel I have fulfilled that. I also strived to assist our people in a manner in which most benefits them either with our Tribal resources, good sound advice, or just listening which I feel helps me guide.

Most often I speak of our great ancestors knowing their plight to Indian territory during the "Trail of Tears" and now the Great Choctaw Nation. I like to think of putting myself in their situation and try to comprehend their pain, feelings, their thoughts, and imagine their hopes for the future.

I strongly feel that their hopes were for a better future for their people, elders and most importantly their young.

The pain of walking through new undeveloped territory, swamps, forests, flood waters, all of natures of the time.

As Choctaw people today I feel we are blessed to have the assets that are available to ALL our people.

I look forward to serving for this next upcoming term again, diligently, honestly and fairly for all.

I was born and raised in District 1, and not with a silver spoon in my mouth. I was taught that work was a good thing and that nothing is free. Being independent is the way to be. Then, one can be proud ... "the Choctaw way."

Yakohe.



## District 2

### Jonathan Anthony 'Tony' Ward, incumbent

Halito!

I am District 2 Choctaw Tribal Councilman Jonathan Anthony "Tony" Ward. I am the son of Kay Ward and the late Jonah Ward, the grandson of the late Sweeney and Mary Mae Wilson and the late Wilson and Eva Mae Ward. I am happily married to my wife of 21 years, Amy. We have two beautiful children, Peyton (21) and Kayla (15). I am a lifelong active member of McGee Chapel Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Broken Bow.

It has been an honor and a great privilege to serve our citizens of District 2 this past term. When I began this journey, I went out and listened to the people of our district, and what I heard were the needs of housing, the need to progress and fairness.

In the past 3 ½ years we have seen great progress in our district. We have opened a Food Distribution Center in Broken Bow, new and larger Community Centers in Battiest and Broken Bow, a state-of-the-art Head Start in Battiest and a stickball field so our young and old can play on to help preserve our culture. One of the biggest needs in our district is housing and has been for a long time. We built 10 Independent Elderly homes and we have completed our first 10 LEAP homes and are currently building our next 20. I have also begun a lawn service for our elders who cannot or do not have anyone to take care of their lawn. We are the only district that provides this service at this time. This is progress and shows we are moving forward!!

You also expressed fairness, so we initiated the Job for the Day program. This program has been one of the most successful programs recently. This program helps with training in the workplace so our citizens have a fair chance to be hired for employment where they may not have had the experience before. I submitted to council to hire an advisor to grow our legislative staff to keep up with the growth of our nation and keep a strong foundation for the legislative body. Moving forward!

Also, in Fairness and Progress during this election we will have a question on our ballots for you to vote on!! This will be a historic event for all of us. We listened to your needs and you will have a chance to vote on a constitutional change to your constitution. This hasn't been done since 1983. Keep moving Forward!

The work in our district is not finished, it has only begun. With your continued prayers and support we can continue to move our district forward! If re-elected I will continue to work hard towards progress and fairness. I look forward to listening to your ideas, suggestions and concerns!

Vote Jonathan Anthony "Tony" Ward on July 13, 2019.

Yakohe.

Jonathan Anthony "Tony" Ward  
603 N. Bock  
Broken Bow, OK 74728  
580-212-7310

Facebook: Re-Elect Tony Ward for Choctaw Tribal Council District 2



## District 2

### Michael 'Mike' Allen Amos

Halito,

My name is Michael "Mike" Allen Amos. I am announcing my candidacy for Tribal Council in District 2. I am the son of Louise Amos of Garvin, Oklahoma, and the late William “Bill” Amos. I am married to Vicky and we have three children, Dayla Amos (and fiancé Jeremiah Tom), Nikki Amos, and Andrew Amos. We also have two grandchildren, Milena and Preston.

I have been a resident of Broken Bow for the past 30 years and employed as the Parts Manager at James Hodge Ford in Idabel for the past four years.

I have completed the advanced level as a Lay Servant with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and every second Sunday present the sermon at my home church, Tohwali United Methodist Church.

As District 2 Tribal Councilman, I will honorably serve the members of my district. To help with the needs of Tribal members, I would be in the office as much as possible. I will have an open-door policy, return your calls, and assist you when emergencies arise after hours. Know that when you face a problem or situation of any kind, and come to me, it becomes my situation as well. I will work with you and for you to find a solution. Serving on the Tribal Council, I will work closely with Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. and the Tribal Council for the betterment of our District 2 Tribal members.

Our heritage is very important to me and my family. I want to continue the support of our Princess pageants, stickball, social dancing, and the Choctaw Language programs in our area. I support the continuation of the many programs offered at Community Centers to inform the Tribal members of programs and services available to them.

I humbly ask for your support and your vote on July 13th as your next District 2 Tribal Councilperson.

Yakohe.



## District 2

### Sherrill Allen Battiest

Halito,

Sa hochifo ut Sherrill Allen Battiest, Broken Bow, Oklahoma, a minti li!

Hello,

My name is Sherrill Allen Battiest. I am from Broken Bow, Oklahoma. My wife, Arita, and I have six grown children and 11 grandchildren. We live about 6 miles East of Broken Bow near the Saint Matthew Presbyterian Church where we are members and my wife serves as Pastor. I was raised in a single-parent home by my mother, Linda Sue Battiest Sampson, along with my younger brother, Devon Battiest. I am full-blood Choctaw. My grandparents are the late Cyrus Battiest Sr. and Catherine Taylor Battiest of Wright City, Oklahoma. They moved to Wright City on a Dierks Lumber Company train from Mt. Herman with six children. After they settled, my grandfather began working with the Dierks Lumber Mill. In addition to their six children, they parented three more which included my mother, who were born in their company home near the mill. My mother, brother and I moved to Broken Bow, where we have resided since 1982. I have worked construction as a structural welder and boiler-maker for over 20 years. I've traveled to many different states chasing shutdowns and outages but would always look forward to returning home. Most of my family still carry on the traditions of hunting, fishing and gathering. We'll catch fish and have a fish fry, hunt and eat our game, pick wild onions in February and blackberries in June. We also like to eat tanchi la bona, banana and we'll even butcher a hog for some shuka nipi! My name is Sherrill Battiest. I am a Choctaw by birth, by blood and by the blessings of Chihowa.

Yakohe!



## District 3

### Eddie Bohanan, unopposed

Retired Oklahoma Highway Patrol Lt. Eddie Bohanan is running for Choctaw Tribal Council District 3. "I am seeking the honor of serving my community and the Choctaw people. I thank retiring Councilman Bryant for his many years of service, and I look forward to working in the years ahead to serve our people to achieve great things. Being Choctaw has shaped who I am, providing a firm foundation of faith, family, and culture. I want to give back to the heritage that has provided me so much – and ensure that our Nation is strong for current and future generations of Choctaws to thrive."

Bohanan served in the Oklahoma Highway Patrol with distinction, working patrol for 16 years and serving as a Lieutenant for the last 12. While assigned to Latimer/LeFlore County Troop D this year, Bohanan was awarded the "Chief's Award" by the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety for protecting others in a dangerous tactical situation.

Bohanan will continue to "Protect and Serve" the district and asks for the privilege, and the responsibility of serving our Choctaw family. His focus will be on caring for our elders and widows, to open doors of opportunity and assist those in need of any age, and to inspire our youth and remove obstacles so they can pursue learning and achieve their dreams.

Bohanan, who has had several family members including Juanita Futrell, Maxine Umsted, and Jerry and Dusty Bohanan all recognized as Outstanding Elders in District 3, will work to expand and improve services for elders. Bohanan said, "One of the key commandments is to Honor our Parents - and our elders sacrificed much to allow us to enjoy the privileges and freedoms we have today." Bohanan also recognized the doors that opened to him with education – and believes we must continue to seek ways to allow our young people to pursue their dreams and destiny. "We serve a God who created all of us for a purpose, and I will dedicate my life to working for our Choctaw Tribal members to achieve their bright future ahead," Bohanan said. He also mentioned the need to expand business, services and infrastructure to prepare for growth potentials in the beautiful region known as District 3 of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Eddie Bohanan was born in Talihina and raised in Smithville where he graduated high school, and attended the OSU Institution of Technology before entering the OHP Academy. While in high school, Bohanan served as President of FFA for three consecutive years. He grew up attending the Indian Baptist Mission Church in Smithville. He and his family are active, 15-year members of the Octavia Baptist Church. He is married to his high school sweetheart Paula, and they are the parents of Charity and Faith, who are married to Sean and Justin, and proud grandparents of Lillian and Eli.

For more information on Eddie Bohanan, please visit Facebook: /Eddie Bohanan for Choctaw Tribal Council District 3 or call directly on his cell at: 918-413-1822.



## QUESTIONS TO APPEAR ON 2019 BALLOTS

### CHOCTAWQUESTION 001

#### CHOCTAW NATION QUESTION NUMBER 001 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSITION NUMBER 001

This proposal amends Section 4 of Article X of the Choctaw Constitution. Currently, members of the tribe are only allowed to address the Tribal Council with its unanimous consent. This proposal allows members of the tribe to speak to the Tribal Council if a majority of Tribal Council members present approve.

#### FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT - YES AGAINST THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT - NO

### CHOCTAWQUESTION 002

#### CHOCTAW NATION QUESTION NUMBER 002 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSITION NUMBER 002

This proposal adds Section 3 to Article XIV of the Choctaw Constitution. It provides for the Speaker of the Tribal Council to become Chief if the offices of Chief and Assistant Chief both become vacant less than one year before the end of the Chief’s term. The Speaker must resign to become Chief. If the offices of Chief and Assistant Chief both become vacant more than one year before the end of the Chief’s term, the Tribal Council must call an election within sixty days. The Speaker shall be the interim Chief until the election of a new Chief, if he resigns as Speaker. In either case, the Assistant Chief is appointed by the Chief with approval of the Tribal Council.

#### FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT - YES AGAINST THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT - NO



# 2019 ELECTION CANDIDATES

## District 5

### Louisa 'Tad' Gonzalez

I, Louisa "Tad" Gonzalez, am seeking the position of Council Member of District 5.

I am 15/16 Choctaw. My heritage is from the James, Billy, and Terrell lineage. I was married to Paul Gonzalez for 48 years and became a widow in 2017. I was a nurse, advocate for the District Attorney's office, employee of the Choctaw Nation for 27 years, SCHR, EMS coordinator, and community-based social worker in General Assistance and General Welfare Staff. We have always lived on allotted family land in Sans Bois, Oklahoma.

We have three children Steven, a Minister, and wife Angela of Fort Smith, Arkansas, Paula, who is a social worker for Choctaw Nation, and husband Bryan of Kinta, Oklahoma, and Tami Snow of Kinta, Oklahoma, an event coordinator for Tribal Self-Governments. We have six grandchildren, Dustin, Joshua, Leslie, Addison, Chloe, and Cody.

My goals are to continue to build on the Choctaw Nation's assets that the district now has and to re-evaluate where growth and expansion is needed. I want to be instrumental in encouraging more participation in meetings that concern any interest in Tribal Affairs, which includes, but not limited to attendance of Tribal meetings. I would like more tribal events in the Northern part of the Choctaw Nation. The district needs more Tribal business and training for jobs. Transportation issues limit many from finding work close enough to continue living here. Cultural events need to be held in every community in District 5 as well as classes on our great heritage during times that are convenient for all ages.

I, as a Senior Citizen, have the utmost respect for all elders and want to preserve and teach the way of the Choctaw to the younger generation for so much of our heritage is being lost through time due to lack of interest and together we can work to bring it back.

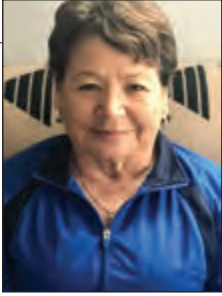
Also, our Choctaw churches need to be recognized for instilling history and cultural fellowship and spirituality of past generations. The cemeteries where Tribal members rest have funding needs that need to be addressed.

There are so many issues that each of you as District 5 Choctaws have that I want to know. I am hearing a lot of your concerns and I am ready to address them.

I recently retired and with your vote will continue to serve you in the capacity of your Council person. Vote so your voice can be heard.

My heartfelt thank you to each of you.

Louisa "Tad" Gonzalez  
Cell: 918-388-7146  
Email: gonzalezstad@gmail.com



## District 5

### Ronald Perry, incumbent

Incumbent Ron Perry has announced his bid for re-election in District 5. He and wife Sherrie live in Stigler and spend much of their time working with Tribal members to make sure needed services are available.

"It is a tremendous honor to work for the Choctaw people," said Ron Perry. "My parents, who were full-blood, instilled in me a deep sense of ethic and respect for others."

Councilman Perry is a proponent of the housing and education services offered by the Choctaw Nation, and strongly supports enhancing those programs. "I want to help Choctaws reach their goals – safe homes and a good education can be an important foundation for that!"

Perry is an advocate for the people of his district, always more willing to talk about the success of others than talk about himself. "I was proud that there were five recipients of the Chahta Foundation Scholarship from this district. I have faith they will do great things with their education!"

Safety of Choctaws is a critical point for Perry, so he strongly encouraged the storm shelter program expansion. Thanks to the subsidy program he voted in, Choctaw people throughout his district have been able to install underground cellars/above-ground storm shelters in order to seek shelter during "tornado weather".

"It has been excellent to have several miles of roads in Haskell County paved the past few years with the help of the tribe," said Councilman Perry. "Having good, safe roads to drive is critical because we all need to go to work, school, and doctors' appointments!" One of Ron Perry's goals is to continue working so that the road improvements in his district continue. He is very proud that the McCurtain school has a new paved parking area – an improvement that happened because of his work with the tribe and county.

Perry is active with the Senior Citizen group in his area, keeping them informed by attending the weekly lunches at the Choctaw Community Centers and supporting field trips to various activities. District 5 Senior Citizens from the Stigler and Spiro Centers have recently returned from trips to Branson. Perry said the Senior Citizens stay "young" by being very active. The new Wellness Center in Stigler features Chair Volleyball as a favorite activity of the Senior group. Other people are in and out of the Wellness Center all day, keeping the facility busy, and proving it a worthwhile investment.

Economic Development in Haskell County has flourished, thanks to Perry's advocacy on the Tribal Council. The Choctaw Nation and the City of Stigler have partnered to build a Sports Complex. Water Treatment Facility Grants have been awarded to the towns of Stigler, Spiro and McCurtain. "My desire is to continue to work for District 5 and for the Choctaw people. I respectfully ask to continue to serve the Choctaw people – please contact me if you have any questions."

Ron Perry  
Councilman, District 5  
30301 S. Fish Creek Rd., Stigler OK 74462  
918-967-2616



## District 8

### Paul Roberts

Halito,

My name is Paul Roberts, I am proud Choctaw Veteran retiree that lives in Boswell with my wife Jessie and our son Max. I have served 4 years in the Marine Corps and 17 years in the Army Reserves. I had worked for Choctaw Nation for 15 years starting out as a floor clerk at the Broken Bow Casino before becoming a Community Based Social Worker for districts 1 and 2 in McCurtain County.

I was then promoted to Director of Youth Outreach and fulfilled that role for 8 years and finally, as the Training Manager for Learning Development overseeing new hire orientation for all locations. I also, received the "Chahta Spirit" Award before going back to college. I will graduate with a Bachelor's of Science in Occupational Safety and Health in May of 2019.

It wasn't until later in life I decided to go back to school to receive some kind of higher education. I feel that is very important and I want to increase those opportunities for our students and non-traditional students, for them to be dynamic and prepared for their future.

In all of the roles I filled, I have proven to be an effective servant leader. I would like to begin by reversing the high poverty and unemployment rates, so that the District 8 reflects job growth and satisfaction, equal opportunity for all tribal members and employees to better access the available resources.

I believe that by working hard on economic development we can help strengthen the community so that families will stay here in District 8 instead of leaving in search of better opportunities. Families are the backbone of our tribe and community that need encouragement and involvement.

By involving District 8 in what is going on at council meetings and holding community meetings once a month, I hope to serve the district better. I will work hard to increase the communication and transparency between our tribal members, employees, and the administration.

I believe in caring for and honoring our elders, letting our youth know that we believe in them and supporting our families to improve their overall well-being.

Our smaller communities are great assets and I would like to see them more involved in what Choctaw Nation offers. I believe in the Choctaw Nation, District 8 and will work hard to meet the needs that our district has and help fellow tribal members and employees' live healthy and successful lives.

Yakoke.

Paul Roberts



## District 8

### Perry Thompson, incumbent

Dear Voter:

Serving as your District 8 Council person is a tremendous privilege. I would be honored to continue to work for you in that capacity. The most fulfilling thing about the responsibility of being your Council person is helping people. It truly is an uplifting job.

My heart has a special warmth for our tribe's elders. It is important their needs are met. I plan to continue to work regularly with staff of the health programs, food programs, and emergency and social programs to find ways the senior citizens, and ALL CITIZENS of the Choctaw Nation can live healthier, more productive lives.

The tribal programs and businesses, including the Grant Casino, Grant Travel Plaza, new Travel Plaza in Hugo, new Choctaw Market in Boswell, Hugo Health Clinic, Social Services building, Wellness Center, Housing Authority and other programs in District 8 have flourished – growing jobs in Choctaw County area impressively. Records show that nearly 850 jobs are currently held from our District, thanks to the remarkable growth! My goal is to work vigorously to continue that progress!

Health and wellness of the Choctaw people is an important focus of mine. I enjoy when the Senior citizens from the Choctaw Community Center get excited about events they can be involved in through the Wellness Center and other programs. This helps keep them and their families stay active and in shape! The beautiful new Choctaw Community Center in Hugo is getting a lot of use, such as the wild onion dinner we just celebrated. The remodel of the Choctaw Nation Health Clinic has made a huge improvement in the patient flow, especially with the expansion of the dental clinic.

District 8 has also been blessed with a new Housing Authority headquarters. Although the area has several beautiful new buildings, the ball fields we built behind the Grant Casino remain one of the most popular improvements of the past few years! It is great to see young people use them so frequently and I plan to continue supporting the youth and their teams!

My votes in Council meetings have always advocated education, career training, health care, youth programs, elder care, LIHEAP, emergency assistance, job development through business development and housing programs (such as the new LEAP homes) and home repair assistance.

My wife, Gail, and my children, and grandchildren and I are proud members of the Choctaw Nation. The values of faith, family and culture have been a natural part of our lives as were raised up through the generations of our family.

Thank you for allowing ME TO WORK FOR YOU as your representative. I am honored to serve you and would be happy for you to contact me.

Perry Thompson  
Choctaw Council, District 8  
Rt 2, Box 846, Hugo OK 74743  
580-317-4188



# Ballot, early voting guidelines

Beginning June 17, ballots for Districts 2, 5, 8, and 11 will automatically be mailed to all affiliated voters who have registered or updated with the Choctaw Nation Voter Registration office since 2016. The election offices of Districts 1, 3, and Chief were unopposed. Those candidates will not appear on the ballot.

In order for a mail ballot to be counted, it must be received and processed at the Durant post office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 12, and the outer affidavit envelope must be signed by the voter.

If voters prefer the option to vote in person, they may go to any open Choctaw Nation tribal voting location in order to have a ballot printed for their affiliated district.

Early voting will begin at 8 a.m. and end at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 12. Designated voting locations will be announced by the Election Board at a later date.

The Choctaw Nation Voter Registration Department will continue to register and update voters through Election Day so all Choctaws have the opportunity to vote.

Eligible tribal members may submit a Voter Registration Form directly to the Voter Registration Department or complete the form at any open voting location during the early voting period or Election Day.

A Voter Registration Form is located on Page 10 for your convenience.

The form must be fully completed, with emphasis in the following areas:

- A physical location is provided such as a street address or 911 address. In some cases, further information such as written directions from the nearest city/town or major highway is needed to determine physical location. A rural route (RR), or post office box (POB) is not acceptable. The physical location is used to determine district affiliation.
- The mailing address, if different than physical, is required. This is the address where the initial ballot will be mailed.
- The signature of the voter is required.

The certification process will begin once forms are received in the Voter Registration Department.

**Early voting is 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. July 12; mailed ballots must be received at Durant post office no later than 4:30 p.m. July 12.**

You will receive a Voter Registration Certificate once we have processed your form which you may keep for your records.

Voters living inside the Choctaw Nation boundaries will be assigned to the Council District in which they reside.

Voters living outside of the Choctaw Nation boundaries may choose to affiliate with a Council District; or, they may choose to remain unaffiliated and only vote in a Chief's election. Once you affiliate, you must remain in the Council District you have chosen, unless you move within Choctaw Nation boundaries.

If your form is not accepted, it will be returned to you with a letter detailing further actions to take for certification to occur.

To check your voter status, contact the Choctaw Nation Voter Registration office at 800-522-6170 or 580-924-8280 or by email to [VoterRegistration@ChoctawNation.com](mailto:VoterRegistration@ChoctawNation.com).

If all information is correct on your Voter Registration Certificate, regardless of whether you live in or out of Choctaw Nation boundaries, a ballot for your affiliated council district and Chief election will be mailed to your current mailing address on file with Voter Registration; or, you may go to your nearest voting location. If you have not received a certificate or have lost your certificate, then you may contact the Voter Registration Department.

Voter Registration has a dedicated team to focus on increasing voter participation and promoting election process transparency. Staff will be available year round in the office and out in the community to assist tribal members with questions in regards to the registration process.

Individual voter information is not shared with other service programs of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for the purpose of protecting the voter's privacy.

The current Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance was approved by Council Bill 124-18 on July 14, 2018, then amended by CB-39-19 on Nov. 10, 2018 and CB-88-19 on March 9, 2019. It is available online at [ChoctawNation.com/vote](http://ChoctawNation.com/vote) or you may contact the Voter Registration Department to request a copy.

Please note that any view or opinions presented in the election insert are solely those of the candidates and do not necessarily represent those of the BISKINIK, Election Board, or Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. The intent of this insert is for candidates of office to share with members of the Choctaw Nation their information and goals prior to the tribal election in which they seek office. Each candidate is provided the same space and followed the same policy for submission of information.



## District 11



Yakoke.  
Please contact me, I value your input:  
520 W. Polk, McAlester OK, 74501  
Robertkarr11@gmail  
918-318-0959  
Facebook: Robert Karr for Choctaw Tribal Council  
District 11

## District 11



Dr. David S. Saper is a professor of Botany and Pharmacology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. He is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Saper has published over 100 papers on the pharmacology and toxicology of natural products. He is currently working on the development of new drugs from natural products.

Rob Robertson

## District 11



## Nellie Meashintubby

## District 11



Councilman Pate is very much a family man and cares deeply for his family and friends. "They have stood by me through thick and thin. I consider the Choctaws of my district my extended family, and I am very loyal to them. I always want to hear from you. I know together we can continue to make a positive difference in the lives of Choctaw people."

**Choctaw Nation Voter Registration**  
**Contact Information**

Toll-Free Phone: 800-522-6170  
Local Phone: 580-924-8280  
Email: [VoterRegistration@choctawnation.com](mailto:VoterRegistration@choctawnation.com)

**Mailing Address**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
Attn: Voter Registration  
P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702

**Office Location**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
Suite #1252, West Wing, 1st Floor  
1802 Chukka Hina, Durant, OK 74702

Please note that any view or opinions presented in the election insert are solely those of the candidates and do not necessarily represent those of the BISKINIK, Election Board, or Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. The intent of this insert is for candidates of office to share with members of the Choctaw Nation their information and goals prior to the tribal election in which they seek office. Each candidate is provided the same space and followed the same policy for submission of information.



Obituaries

Charlie Craven Scaggs

Charlie Craven Scaggs, 68, passed away Feb. 6. Charlie was born Nov. 3, 1950, in Eagletown, Oklahoma, to Charles Benjamin and Bessie (Ashalintubbi) Scaggs. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother James Earl Scaggs; two half-brothers; stepfather Oscar Loman; and niece Paula Wakefield.

Charlie is survived by wife Brenda; son Kirk Scaggs and spouse Kim; daughter Kerri Townsend and spouse Jamie; sister Linda McKendrick; grandchildren Weston Scaggs, Taylor Scaggs, Samantha Townsend and Bran-num Townsend; and numerous nieces, nephews, family and friends. For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).



Ramona Watson-Franco

Ramona Jean Watson-Franco, 61, passed away March 1. Ramona was born Nov. 24, 1957, in Battiest, Oklahoma, to Ray James and Daisy Mae Watson. She was preceded in death by her parents; son Christopher Whitt Hall; daughter Rachel Hill; granddaughter Baby Rachel Hill; brother Danny Wat-son; and nephew Heath Watson.

Ramona is survived by son Steven Hall; daughters To-nia Hall, Wahneeta Hall and life partner Rachel Cortez, Kimberley Page and spouse Jason, and Emily Everitt and spouse Bobby; brother Dixon Watson and signifi-cant other Julia; sisters Linda Baker and spouse Aaron, Wynell Swartz, and Judy Yosting; 14 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews; other relatives and many friends, including a special neighbor that always checked on her. For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).



Myrtle Hopper

Myrtle (Kindred) Hopper, 87, passed away Feb. 28. Myrtle was born Oct. 25, 1931, in Weathers, Okla-homa, to Jim Sr. and Phoebe (Clay) Kindred. She was preceded in death by her parents; hus-band Dick Hopper; Mildred Shaw; and brothers Jack Moore and Jim Kindred Jr.

Myrtle is survived by daughter Melanie Sipe and spouse Mark; granddaughters Rachel and Hannah Sipe; sister Virginia McAlister; sister-in-law Sue Kindred; brother-in-law Dale Shaw; and beloved nieces, nephews and Albion First Baptist church family. For the full obituary, please visit [Burkhart Funeral Home](#).



Ora Flowers

Ora “Marthine” Flowers, 70, passed away Feb. 28. Ora was born May 24, 1948, in Roseburg, Oregon, to Lushis and Betty (Gains) Owens. She was preceded in death by her parents; daughters Naomi and Jean; brothers Aaron, Alfonso and Luther.

Ora is survived by children Marlene Flowers, Merlene Miller and spouse Randy, Ursus Paguaga and spouse Brenda; brother John; five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren; a niece; nephews; and a great-niece and great-nephews. For the full obituary, please visit [Fisher Funeral Home](#).



Michael Eugene Pierce

Micheal Eugene Pierce, 29, passed away Feb. 28. Michael was born July 27, 1989, in Tulsa, Oklahoma to John Warren Pierce and Diane (Mahoney) Jessen-Edgell. He was preceded in death by his brother, Jonathan Pierce; and son, Jaden Pierce. Michael is survived by mother Diane Jessen-Edgell, and her husband, Bobby Edgell; daughter Summarah Wickenhagen; brothers Andrew Jessen, Levi Pierce, Justin Elliott, Anthony Pierce, Joshua Pierce, Charlie Pierce and Aaron Edgell; sister Shelley Maughan; and a host of other family and dear friends. For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).



Sandra Van Der Linden

Sandra Van Der Linden, 71, passed away Feb. 23. She was born Feb. 8, 1948. Sandra is survived by husband Richard Ernest Van Der Linden; sons Ric Van Der Linden and spouse Anne, Chris Van Der Linden and spouse Di-ana, Josh Van Der Linden and spouse Julie; seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. For the full obituary, please visit [Miller-Jones](#).



James Harrison Pusley

James Harrison “Jim” Pusley, 90, passed away March 5. James was born Sep. 30, 1928, in Gerty, Oklahoma, to William Wiley Pusley Jr. and Ella Viola Brooks. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Hilda; sister Gloria Sanders; and brother Hall Pusley. James is survived by brother Paul “Butch” Pusley; children Michael (Norma) Pusley, Lance (Lynn) Pusley and Vicki Pieper; grandchildren Candi, Courtney, Am-ber, Josh, and Zach Pusley, and Matt and Ashley Pieper; and 11 great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Sawyer-George Fu-neral Home](#).



Cara Deanna Smalls

Cara Deanna Smalls, 4 months, passed away Jan. 24. Cara was born Sept. 1, 2018, in Toledo, Ohio, to Heather Beasley and hus-band Kevin Smalls. Cara was preceded in death by brothers Ezra and Kevin Smalls Jr.; great-great-grandparents Richard and Lera Fallea Sr., and Tecumseh and Sophie Anna; great-grandparent Ezra Anna. Cara is survived by grandparents Tonya Anna and Doug Dean; Stephanie Smalls and Darnell Jefferson; great-grandmothers Barbara Wallace and Viola Wil-liams; sister Amber and brother Ethan; aunt Fatimah; uncles Keith Smalls, Tyrell Willis, and Benjamin (Ash-ley Smith); cousins Addie and Amir. For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).



Lahoma Beth James

Lahoma Beth James, 77, passed away March 14. Lahoma was born April 30, 1941, in Cade, Okla-homa. She was preceded in death by her parents; three infant brothers; brothers Hiawatha and Quanah James; sister-in-law Mary James; niece Lisa Weekly; and nephew Jonathan Brinkley.

Lahoma is survived by brothers Quilby James and spouse Elaine, Tom James and spouse Charlotte, and Benny James; sisters Nocona, and Mickey and spouse Kenneth; and many beloved nieces, nephews and couns-ins. For the full obituary, please visit [Holmes Coffey Fu-neral Home](#).



Alexandra B. Spears

Alexandra B. “Ali” Spears, 13, passed away March 12. Alexandra was born Jan. 21, 2006, in Tampa, Florida, to Mara and Cameron Spears. She was preceded in death by paternal grand-parents Moina and Simms Spears Sr.; and uncle Simms Spears Jr. Alexandra is survived by her parents; twin brother Mitchell Spears; maternal grandparents, Lawrence Glassman and Eileen Barber (Edwin); aunt D'Aun Kingsbury (Kim); and uncle Fred Glassman. For the full obituary, please visit [Segal Funeral Home](#).



Cyrus Battiest Jr.

Cyrus Battiest Jr., 79, passed away Jan. 29. Cyrus was born Jan. 31, 1939, in Bethel, Oklahoma, to Cyrus Battiest Sr. and Catherine Taylor Battiest. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Pre-sley Battiest; and sisters Cinderella Maytubby and Sally Crosby.

Cyrus is survived by wife Betty; daughters and sons-in-law Beverly and Greg Richerson and Faith and Harrell Clark; sons Ralph Battiest and Ronald Batti-est; grandchildren Justin Buster, Aaron Buster, Phyllis Nuno, Ryan Oakes, J.R. Battiest, Derek Battiest, Jamie Battiest, Stephanie Depriest Brittany Taylor, Mallori Battiest, Jared Battiest and Jacob Battiest; great-grandchildren Cyrus Buster, Hope Buster, Noah Buster, Sienna Buster, Ellison Buster, Asher Buster, Terrah O'Grady, Joseph Depriest, Jaken Depriest, Philip Bat-tiest, Anawahe Gonzalis, Arayah Gonzalis, Erik Nuno, Grayson Oakes, Maddox Oakes and Kingston Oakes; numerous nieces, nephews other relatives and many friends. For the full obituary, please visit [White Family Fu-neral Home](#).



Cecil Collin Berry

Cecil Collin Berry, 93, passed away Feb. 27. Cecil was born May 8, 1925, in Roff, Oklahoma, to Turner Arthur and Mary Jane (Collins) Berry. He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter Me-linda Kay Berry; sisters Betty Earls, Juanita Donathan; and brother Turner Berry. Cecil is survived by wife Winona Berry; son Raymond “Bubba” Berry and Christine Rogers; grandson Lance Berry; niece Pat Walker; great nieces Angie Fetters and Melissa Fetters; and numerous other family members and friends. For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).

John J. Nix

John J Nix, 94, passed away March 14. John was born March 24, 1924, in McCurtain, Okla-homa to Jonathon and Elba Gowan Nix. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Lola; sisters Helen Nix and Dorothy Gatewood; brother David Nix; son Ronnie Nix; and grandson Jonathan Nix.

John is survived by children Tom Nix and spouse Cheryl, Debbie West and spouse Mike; grandchildren Cindy Reid, Misty Parker and spouse David, Justin Nix and spouse Patti, Angie Denny and spouse Jack, Kristina Nix, Josh Nix, and spouse Kaylen, Mike, Jr. and spouse Katrina, Candace Few and spouse Jeff, Jonathon West, and Will Green, Steve West and spouse Amanda; great-grandchildren Tara and Ahren Reid, Ryan Parker, Christian and Jayden Nix, Joshua and A.J. Ford, Aubrey Nix, Journey and Jaxton West, Zach and Moose Few, Jaden, Stanton, Sadie, Tyson, and Tucker West. For the full obituary, please visit [Mallory Martin Funeral Home](#).



Garner L. Boyd

Garner L. Boyd, 90, passed away March 16. Garner was born Aug. 7, 1928, in Maxwell, Oklaho-ma, to Arthur and Emma (Hischa) Boyd. He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Wanda Hatton; brothers Mack Boyd and Kenneth Turner.

Garner is survived by wife Betty Boyd; daughter Debbie Burnham and spouse Curtis; son Danny Boyd; grandchildren, Amanda Adams and spouse Brent, Cody Brantley, Rhett Brantley and spouse Jamie, Jake Boyd and spouse Savannah, and Kortney Mann and spouse Cameron; great-grandchildren Jake, Luke, William and Elle Adams, Olivia, Rylee and Matthew Brantley, and Dallas and Drue Boyd; and brother Larry Sparks. For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley-Mills Fu-neral Home](#).



Oran Raymond Baldwin

Oran Raymond Baldwin Jr., 61, passed away March 7. Oran was born April 23, 1957, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Oran R and Dora Marie (Pickering) Baldwin. He was preceded in death by his parents; one brother Steve Baldwin; sister-in-law Nola Baldwin.

Oran is survived by sons Chris Baldwin and spouse Lori, Nicholas Baldwin and spouse Angel; grandchil-dren Maxwell, Wyatt, Austin, Kaylob, Corbin, and Mariah; brother William Baldwin, and spouse Michelle; niece Rebecca Gerlach; and nephew Steve Baldwin. For the full obituary, please visit [Mallory Martin Funeral Home](#).



Patricia Ann Shannon

Patricia Ann Shannon, 80, passed away March 15. Ann was born Jan. 30, 1939, in Messer, Oklahoma, to Fred and Mary Jane (Locke) Parker. She was preceded in death by husband Bill Shannon; siblings Adrian Parker, Caral Parker, Dwight Parker, Maleace Hill and Shelva Moore. Ann is survived by daughters Lisa Horne and spouse Mike, and Linda Griffin and spouse Floyd; grandchil-dren Annette Fountas and spouse Bill, Renee Kettman and spouse Vern, Samantha Griffin, Brandon Horne and significant other Ginger Sheaffer, and April Jefferson and spouse Clint; great-grandchildren Kameron Foun-tas, Nicholas Fountas, Tailor Wilson and spouse James and Clayton Keith; brother Jim Parker; and many other relatives and friends. For the full obituary, please visit [Miller and Miller Funeral Home](#).



George William Harrison

George William “Bill” Harrison, 77, passed away March 22. Bill was born Feb. 11, 1942, in Blocker, Oklahoma, to Lymon and Mary Lee (Thrasher) Harrison. He was preceded in death by his parents; daughters Denna Harrison and Mar-garet Harrison; brothers Eugene Harrison, Tildon Harrison and Ernie Harrison; sisters Rosetta York and Rose Inez Talley; granddaugh-ter Tyra Elizabeth Harrison-Sanjines; and father-in-law Ernest Brown. Bill is survived by wife Carolyn (Brown) Harrison; son Keith Harrison and spouse Nikena; daughter Nancy Sanjines and spouse Jesus; mother-in-law Beulah Brown; brothers Jessie Lee Harrison and spouse Kathy, Shirley Wayne Harrison; sisters Donna Bell Miller, Juanita Watts and spouse Thomas, and Wanda Gray and spouse Cody; grandsons Joseph Harrison-Sanjines and Matthew Harrison-Sanjines and spouse Angeline; god-granddaughter Veronica Lopez; and a host of other family and friends. For the full obituary, please visit [Biskinik](#).





# Active play is important

By Chris Jennings

As spring comes to an end and summer begins in full swing, children and parents will be faced with an important decision. Stay inside and watch television or go outside and play?

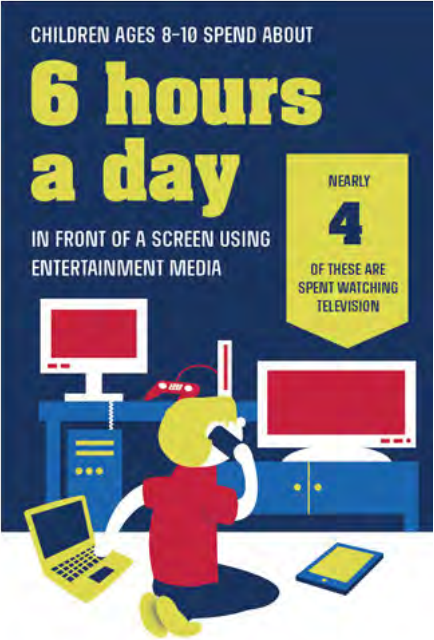
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Indian youth between the ages of 10 and 19 are more likely than any other group to have Type 2 diabetes.

Getting young children involved in active play at an early age can help to reduce the chance of these long-term health problems. Active children are less likely to be overweight and increased physical activity can lower the chances of developing chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes.

Health issues alone are not the only reason to get young children involved in active play. Choctaw Nation WIC Nutrition Coordinator, Lauren Wren says, “Active play has many beneficial qualities such as allowing children to develop their imagination and creativity, promoting healthy habits like exercise as well as increasing self-esteem in children.”

Running and jumping rope help children learn movement skills that develop muscles and strong bones.

Learning how to perform certain tasks, like bouncing a ball or riding a bike, helps children establish self-confidence that encourages them to attempt other tasks,



a habit that can follow them into adolescence and adulthood. Active play doesn’t have to come in one big burst. Activities can be short and can be led by the parent or the child.

“Allowing children to choose the activity will hold their interest and make the activity enjoyable,” says Wren.

Parents can watch for certain milestones in young children. The CDC says at 2 years old a parent should look for running and jumping. At 3, children should be able to start riding a tricycle. At 4, they should be able to complete an obstacle course, skip, and swim with adult guidance.

Getting outside and being involved in active play is crucial to meeting these milestones.

Many doctors recommend limiting screen and computer time to less

than two hours a day.

“Turning off the television and going outside will help direct attention from screen time, and most importantly get the parent to be active as well,” says Wren.

Active parents tend to raise active children. The activities and habits of parents influence children’s behaviors, attitudes and future habits. By being active and limiting television and computer time for the whole family it encourages developing healthy habits at an early age leading to a longer and happier life for the whole family.



Photo by Diedre Elrod

Kids play stickball at the 2019 Choctaw Nation Safety Camp. Team sports are a good way to keep kids interested and engaged in physical activity.

### CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**WAREHOUSES & MARKETS**  
Open 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
**Antlers:** 400 S.W. “O” St., (580) 298-6443  
**Broken Bow:** 109 Chahta Road, (580) 584-2842  
**Durant:** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, (580) 924-7773  
**McAlester:** 3244 Afullota Hina, (918) 420-5716  
**Poteau:** 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431

### June 2019

**ANTLERS**  
Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 26, 27, 28.

**BROKEN BOW**  
Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 26, 27, 28.

**DURANT**  
Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 26, 27, 28.

**MCALESTER**  
Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 26, 27, 28.

**POTEAU**  
Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 26, 27, 28.

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

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

The logo for WIC Choctaw Women, Infants and Children. It features the letters 'WIC' in a stylized purple font, followed by 'CHOCTAW' in a smaller purple font, and 'Women, Infants and Children' in a purple script font below it.

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 580-916-2100 x 83517	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 580-286-2510	Mon., Wed., & 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.

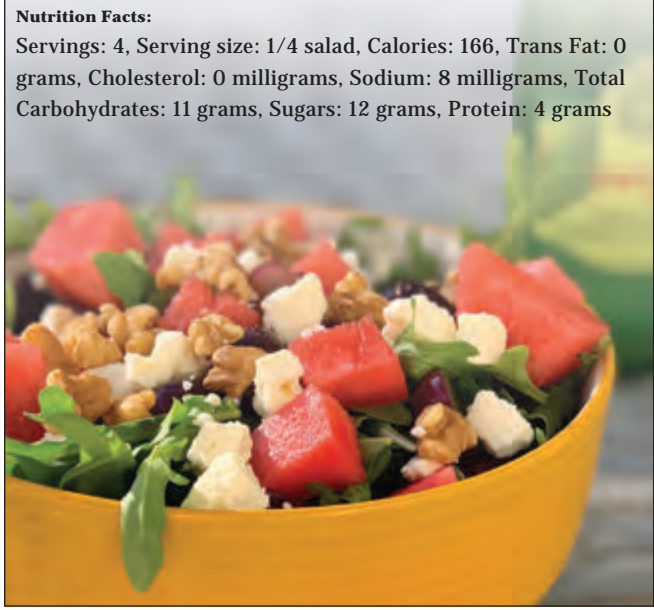
Building Healthy Families Through Good Nutrition

## Watermelon salad

- 5 oz arugula or spring mix
  - 1 cup red grapes, halved
  - 2 cups cubed (about 1” pieces) seedless watermelon
- 1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese
  - 1/3 cup halved and pitted Kalamata olives
  - 1/2 cup walnuts

### Preparation

1. In a medium serving bowl, combine the arugula, cubed watermelon, grapes, walnuts, feta and olives.
2. Serve with a vinaigrette dressing.



**Nutrition Facts:**  
Servings: 4, Serving size: 1/4 salad, Calories: 166, Trans Fat: 0 grams, Cholesterol: 0 milligrams, Sodium: 8 milligrams, Total Carbohydrates: 11 grams, Sugars: 12 grams, Protein: 4 grams

## NURSERY NEWS



Tvli Courtney Thurston-Page was born Jan. 31 in Tulsa to Colleen Thurston and Tom Page. He weighed 9 pounds, 15 ounces and was 20.5 inches long. He is the grandson of Mark and Johnna Thurston, Jack and Marycarol Page, and Barbara Bailey; the nephew of Adrienne and Neel Choksi, Asheley and Mike Page, Catherine Page, Veronica Page and Shannon Lonneman, and the youngest cousin of Aiden, Neal, Nora, Amelia, Norah and Colin.



Naomi Estelle Bible was born April 11 at Chickasaw Nation Medical Center in Ada, Oklahoma, to Isabelle Noel and Taylor Preston Bible. Naomi was 8 pounds, 2 ounces and 19 inches long.



Matteo Ivanni Medrano was born on April 7 at Canadian Valley Integris hospital in Yukon, Oklahoma, to Christian Medrano and Rudy Rehl. He weighed 6 pounds, 10 ounces and was 19 inches long. Matteo is the grandson of Karrie Dodd and also the grandson of Ronda Rehl.



Logan Antimo Tonihka was born at the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center on Dec. 31, 2018. He weighed 8 pounds and was 21 inches long. Logan is the son of David and Jessica Tonihka of Valliant, Oklahoma. He is the grandson of Greg and Becky Cheshire and Sharon Logan and the late Eugene Tonihka.



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

### June Mobile Unit Schedule

5th	Boswell - across from Pushmataha Family Clinic
6th	Heavener - CV's Grocery
12th	Poteau - Choctaw Nation Clinic
13th	Heavener - CV's Grocery
18th	Clayton - Pushmataha Family Clinic
19th	Coalgate - Community Center
25th	Heavener - CV's Grocery
26th	Hartshorne - Caring Hands Clinic
27th	Heavener - CV's Grocery

For More Information Call (580) 380-3628

Free backpack with every approved Connecting Kids to Coverage application.

### 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 CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund To Be Eligible to Apply:

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

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

**Crowder Community Center**  
**June 14, 2019**  
**9:00 a.m. — 11:00 a.m.**

||•\$•||



# Judicial system continues to expand

## Choctaw people, communities will benefit from resources and services currently in place

Continued from Page 1

“Those parameters have been expanded to the point now that we settle disputes between tribal members and non-tribal members in civil cases, divorces, and now criminal justice,” Taylor said.

Judicial Executive Officer Pam Young advised of additional implementations, as in, “We implemented onsite drug testing within the court system in 2015, due to the judges often needing to have an immediate answer on the status of a party to a suit, particularly with regard to the pending custody of our Choctaw children. We first began by inviting Choctaw Nation’s Rapid Results staff to sit in on the docket, prepared and ready to provide testing and a result to the judges. We then implemented the Probation Department and tribal commissioned officers within Judicial, each certified under our Indian Health Service, and delegated the drug testing to the Probation Department.

In 2017, with escalation in jurisdiction over felonies and misdemeanors, the demand became feasible to incorporate a

drug court in their five-year strategic plan and set as one of their goals. They plan to implement a fully operational drug court next year.

Young added, “When Judicial collaborated with the Choctaw Nation Department of Public Safety to start a probation program with CLEET commissioned officers, these unified efforts are now bringing forward successful stories of rehabilitating and sobriety to the offenders. With an estimated 100 probationers in Choctaw Nation custody of supervision, two offices and check-in sites – Talihina and Durant – and three probation officers, we are now able to assist in changing lives for the better.”

Because of the way the structure is set up and the dockets are handled, judges can often recognize whether someone needs rehabilitation. The probation system, “more of a mentor system,” Burrage said, has helped many Choctaw people find their way.

Community service can be utilized to help work off court fines or court costs.

“During the last three

weeks, we have shuttled them to locations where they helped paint and remodel sober living homes,” Young said. Halfway houses and sober living homes are utilized as a next step, once an offender is discharged from a rehabilitation center.

“They need to be kept out of their environment for about two years, away from all the temptation,” Young explained. “Sober homes are usually faith-based homes in which we have confidence and trust. After the sober home, they graduate into

a halfway house. Probation officers can help them with every step of the journey. Our probation officers have helped with obtaining GEDs, driver’s licenses, jobs. No car? They have even purchased bikes to help them with transportation.”

According to reports, one young man has been on probation for two years, the longest he has been clean since he was 17 years of age. He is actually a success story and was due to graduate about six months ago. He went before the judge

and said, “I don’t want to graduate, I want to stay. I’m not ready. This keeps me clean.”

As the Choctaw Nation’s court system continues to expand, the Choctaw people and the communities in which they live will benefit from the resources currently put in place, and many more to come. Young states, “Our Judicial associates are exceptional, in that outside of their skill set, they each have the servant’s heart it takes to reach our daily goals in serving.”

## E-filing adds convenience for members

Planning for the Choctaw Nation Judicial Center included alleviating barriers of entry to the court system that make it hard for people to seek justice. “We want to make it as easy as possible for our Choctaw people to use our Court,” Chief Justice David Burrage said.

By adding an electronic filing system, tribal members living in many of the remote areas of the Choctaw Nation, with little access to the internet, can access the user-friendly e-filing application on their cell phone. It provides 24/7 filing and access to electronically filed documents via a secure web portal.

The Choctaw Nation is the first tribal court to utilize Odyssey, an application from Tyler Technologies Inc. of Dallas.

In addition to the portal, a new website is adding more convenience. Choctawnationcourt.com went live in May.

“Choctaw citizens within our jurisdiction can petition the court within our legislative codes electronically or by walking into our Durant and Talihina Court Clerk offices,” Judicial Executive Officer Pam Young said. “All filing fees are \$50. Tribal citizens can walk in, they can call, or they can access the petitions online. If anyone has any questions or isn’t sure if we have jurisdiction, our CNO codes are available online. They can research the codes to see if their situation is applicable, prior to petitioning the court at the \$50 filing fee.”

The Choctaw Nation Talihina District Court is located at 702 Church St. and the Judicial Center is at 2250 Chukka Hina in Durant.

# District 7 shows community appreciation



District 7 Junior Miss Emily Forbit helps lead the group in The Lord’s Prayer.



Linda Parish talks with Chief Gary Batton.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. sings opening hymns with the district singers.



District 7 Councilmember Jack Austin and District 6 Councilmember Jennifer Woods joke around before the dinner begins.

Photos by Chris Jennings

# Idabel center holds spring wild onion dinner



District 1 Senior Miss Mandy Steele enjoys seeing her cousin, Maelycia Garcia.



Great-grandma Bertha Jefferson holds 3-month-old Jaz'Lynn Bell Jean Jefferson, while dad Brock Jefferson smiles on the two.



Joyce James, left, sitting by Joann McKinney, wins a fun door prize – a pail holding pork, an onion, potato, cornmeal and beans.



Chief Batton stops to visit with people as he arrives.

Photos by Lisa Reed




Photo submitted

Councilmember Thomas Williston is cooking shukha nipi the old way for the District 1 dinner on April 18.

### THE CHOCTAW NATION JUDICIAL COURTS OFFERS E-FILING PORTAL

A new electronic service offered by the Choctaw Nation.



Odyssey e-File breaks the constraints of traditional filing:

- 24/7 filing and access to electronically filed documents via a secure, user-friendly Web portal
- Online tracking and proof of delivery
- Instant access to file stamped copies of filings
- Advanced search functionality indexes, bookmarks and finds documents in seconds
- Streamline filing processes and reduce paper with the e-File solution

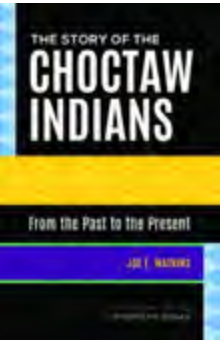
**Choctaw Nation**  
Judicial Branch  
CHOCTAWNATIONCOURT.COM



# Watkins rolling in new direction

By Bradley Gernand

Moss doesn’t grow on rolling stones, according to the old saying. Author and scientist Joe Watkins—a ceaseless bundle of mental and physical energy—is a rolling stone. In December Watkins published the newest history of the Choctaw people. Unlike most others, it is a history of the Choctaw people everywhere, no matter where they live, including the Mississippi Choctaws and the Jena Band who live in Louisiana. The book, “The Story of the Choctaw Indians,” is published by Greenwood Press. Look for it in the Choctaw Store.



Watkins begins our story in the 1500s, before first contact with European explorers. He describes the past and how it feeds into the present. Most histories are of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and not of our relatives who remain behind in the Southeast. Watkins takes care to describe their lives after the main body of Choctaws set out for their new home in the west.

Of particular interest is a timeline of major events compiled by Watkins chronicling the social and political history of the Choctaw people. It provides a consolidated, chronological listing of events in Oklahoma, Mississippi and Louisiana. This is something few, if any, histories have provided—and never one so all-encompassing.

Watkins, a grand-nephew of Choctaw World War I Code Talker Joseph Oklahombi, is in many ways the perfect man for the mission. A member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Watkins was born at what was then called the “Talihina Indian Hospital” and spent many a happy childhood day playing along Cypress Creek outside Wright City. The discovery of a 6,000-year-old projectile point on a nearby hilltop changed the trajectory of his life by awakening an interest in history.

The projectile point wasn’t Choctaw, his grandmother explained. It was much older. This discovery piqued the curiosity of the 10-year-old Watkins, who had already been interested in paleontology. After learning about a related field—anthropology—he realized that was his life’s calling and became immersed in the branch of it known as archaeology. Apples do not fall far from the tree in his family: his mother, like his



Photo by Caleb Gentry

**“I’m a firm believer in one-, three-, and five-year plans. Life should be tackled incrementally.”**

– Joe Watkins

grandmother, appreciated and enjoyed history, and even wanted to teach it. As Watkins notes wryly, archaeology is surely the next best thing.

The first course Watkins enrolled in at the University of Oklahoma was archaeology. He’s been working in the field ever since, and specialized in indigenous archaeology—“archaeology by, with, and for American Indians,” Watkins explains. His work has caused him to live in a variety of places throughout the Southwest. It was while teaching at the University of New Mexico that he encountered a young man named Ian Thompson. Ian is now the Choctaw Nation’s tribal historic preservation officer and senior director for Wheelock Academy and the Tvshka Homma Capitol Museum.

Watkins is “a great mentor in every sense of the word,” Thompson says. “For him, teaching is not just providing knowledge; it’s not just encouraging students to give back to their communities: it’s helping them to

envision what they wish to accomplish and empowering them to put together a plan to get there.” That formula has worked well for the Choctaw Nation, where Thompson conducts a visionary history program which earns positive reviews.

In addition to Thompson, Watkins mentored Lindsey Bilyeu, the Choctaw Nation’s senior historic preservation compliance review officer. Watkins gives Thompson and his proactive history program for the Choctaw Nation a hearty thumbs-up.

Anthropology is not for the faint of heart. As part of his studies, Watkins constructed a circular pit house and lived in it for several months, to better know how original Native American inhabitants of such houses actually used and lived in them. His pit house was 12 feet in diameter and 6 feet deep. Its roof kept the living space dry. Building a fire kept it surprisingly comfortable during the winter, he notes.

The capstone of Watkins’ career was his time spent directing OU’s Native American Studies Program. Prior to his arrival, only one master’s degree in Native American studies had been completed under the program’s auspices. He injected life into the program, and 22 master’s degrees were conferred during his six-year tenure. The program now offers a doctorate in American Indian studies and is one of only a few universities to offer it.

Watkins’ final stop on the career trail led him to Washington, D.C., where he retired as supervisory cultural anthropologist of the National Park Service. As time progressed, he accumulated job duties and titles. “I held three jobs but earned only one paycheck,” he explains. He retired in 2018, partly in response to what he describes as a notable lack of interest in history or heritage at the federal level.

Watkins, who is the incoming president of the American Society of Archaeology, continues to be busy, serving as an archaeological consultant and occasional historian. His new book on the Choctaw people was originally intended to be written for high school or college students. Although it matured after further discussions with the publisher into a book for adults too, it remains an easily approachable, concise, and readable history of a notable people. “I enjoyed writing it, even though Ian [Thompson] will read it,” Watkins says, referring jovially to his former student.

“I’m a firm believer in 1-, 3-, and 5-year plans,” Watkins says. “Life should be tackled incrementally.” He’s now off on his latest plan—and it’s sure to be productive.

## Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

June Language Lesson

### Chihowa Im Osapushi

Himak onnahinli ash tani li cha kocha ia li tuk. Hvshi tomi towikeli yvt pisa achukma micha mahlich chohmi hosh hikiya tuk. Nan ittimi-laiyuka pisa lih mvt sv nayukpa tuk. Hashuk vt okchamali micha hushi lawa hosh talohowa tuk. Akak ola yvt shvkapa tuk. Fvni yvt iti nuta ya impa hosh maya tuk. Iti hishi yvt hochitot isht ia micha napa- kanli yvt pisa achukma hoke. Chihowa im osapushi hochefo li tuk.

### God’s Garden

This morning I got up and went outside. The sun was shining so beautifully and the wind was blowing a little. It made me happy to see different things. The grass was green and many birds were singing. The chickens were noisily crowing. Squirrels were feeding under the tree. The tree leaves are starting to grow big and the flowers are beautiful. I called it God’s Garden.

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

## ITI FABVSSA

# Bissa Hvshi: Blackberry month

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

In the Choctaw calendar, Bissa Hvshi, Blackberry Month, roughly corresponds to June. June brings the summer solstice and the long, hot, and humid summer, punctuated by thunderstorms. This month is when the blackberry and plum seasons reached their peaks. It also kicked off the seasons for picking huckleberries and maypops. When the corn crop



**Blackberries are gathered in a vintage Choctaw basket.**

in the communal fields (planted in April) was about three feet tall, it was hoed for a second time. Some Choctaw varieties of corn produce suckers. These are secondary offshoots that come up from the roots of the plant, but do not produce corn. Called apatali in the Choctaw language, they were removed from the bases of the plants during the second hoeing. By this point, the growing corn stalks in the evenly spaced hills formed rows called tanchi hina, or corn roads. After the second hoeing, beans were planted along the edge of the corn hills. This timing allowed the corn to get large enough that the bean vines would not damage it. Additionally, runner beans were planted away from the corn stalks on bean poles made of river cane. These structures were called tobe isht abehla. Four to six beans were planted at each pole, which would make two to four vines. Bush beans may have also been planted between the corn rows.

At the same time the beans were planted, or perhaps slightly later, isito, winter squash, was also planted between the corn rows. As the season continued, the broad leaves of these aggressive plants would spread over the ground, shading it, outcompeting weeds, and holding onto soil moisture. Sunflowers, hvshi, were likely planted along the edges of the fields where they would not shade out the other plants

Fieldwork was a critical responsibility for the prosperity of the community. It was physical labor, but it was not the

drudgery that one might imagine. According to a firsthand observer: “In sober fact, on account of its social features, there being unlimited opportunities for gossip, the Indian [Choctaw] women, banded together in the cornfield, really looked upon their labor there as a kind of frolic” (Halbert nd.).

Women were not the only ones who helped tend the fields. Boys hunted rabbits and other small animals that threatened the crops, using small bows, blowguns called uskilhumpa, and rabbit sticks, called atalhi. The young hunters looked for the glistening eyes of the rabbit, hiding in the shadows under the greenery. With the blowgun, Choctaw boys almost always hit their mark out to 20 yards.

Men also did limited deer hunting around the villages during the growing season. If a man happened to kill a deer near his home, he would leave it where it fell, breaking the limb tips of bushes on his way back to his house. Upon arriving, he would simply point in the direction of the deer to his wife, whose woods skills were sufficient to get on a horse, follow the trail of broken branches, and bring the kill back home. By retrieving the deer herself, the woman avoided a social custom that would have required the man to share the kill immediately with his neighbors until it was gone. Of course, if someone came to the house asking for a meal, the man would still be obligated to share. During the warm season, men and boys also made summer hunting trips for squirrel and other small game. One favorite location was Fvni Yakni, Squirrel Land, an area that stretched for 20 miles east of present-day Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Sometime around Blackberry month, Tanchusi, the variety of little corn planted two months earlier in the house fields, would have come into the milk stage. In the early 1700s, this was the season for the Green Corn Ceremony, known in Choctaw as Luak Musholi, Fires Extinguished. The Green Corn Ceremony

was a time of purification, of giving thanks, and of renewal. Somewhat different versions of the Choctaw Green Corn Ceremony were conducted at different times and places. In the early 1700s, the Choctaw Green Corn Ceremony involved extinguishing all the fires in the community. The community participated in a fast, called hullochi. Women cleaned out their cooking hearths, cooking vessels, and culinary dishes, and the community cleaned the dance ground located at the center of the village. They took medicine given by a Choctaw doctor. Community members forgave each other for all wrongs committed, with the exception of murder. A new, pure fire was built by religious specialists. Coals from this fire were taken to all of the hearths.

Thereafter, a portion of the new corn crop was burned in the new fire; the community broke their fast and conducted sacred dances.

Reportedly, some Choctaw communities made their laws during the Green Corn Ceremony and leaders preached to their people about appropriate moral conduct. Only after the Green Corn Ceremony did the community begin to eat fresh produce from their agricultural fields. Fresh ears of Tanchusi were eaten green or cut off the cob and put into stews.

Summer was the primary season for war. Before the expansion of the hide trade, Choctaws rarely invaded the lands of other Tribes, finding it more honorable to face enemy warriors defensively rather than attack non-combatants in their own country. Small defensive platoons called tvshka chipunta patrolled Choctaw country, attempting to intercept enemy war parties before they could strike. While the men were away at war, the women sang, atvllwvchi, war songs, calling upon the Sun and the Sacred Fire for the success of their loved ones. Summer was also the prime season for stickball, a sport that was sometimes used to settle disputes instead of going to war.

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# Gift of documents strengthens partnership

By Chris Jennings

The recent passing of the Stigler Act, which allows tribal members that are less than one-half degree Indian blood quantum to keep their original allotment land without having to pay taxes on it, was a huge success for the five tribes.

To commemorate this accomplishment, U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin recently presented Chief Gary Batton and the Choctaw Nation with an original copy of the Stigler Act signed by President Trump.

Rep. Mullin, a member of the Cherokee Nation, had an inside view of the problem created by the blood quantum requirement. Mullin said, “Some of the land that my wife and I have on our ranch was our original family allotment. My family’s been living in the same place for generations.”

Due to the 25% requirement, some of that land had been sold. When Mullin had the opportunity to buy some of that land back, he jumped at the chance.

“Just because of who my ancestors chose to marry doesn’t mean that this has any less historical or heritage value to me than anyone else,” said Mullin.

Keeping family land in the family was the driving force behind the Stigler Act. Chief Gary Batton said the Stigler



Photo by Deidre Elrod

U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin presents a copy of the Stigler Act to Chief Gary Batton and the Choctaw Nation.

Act affects everybody, including himself.

“For me, I know that my mom’s land, my grandfather’s land, is going to stay there forever because there’s not going to be any taxation. If we sell it, we choose to do with it as we please,” said Batton.

The Choctaws, along with other tribes, put forth a considerable amount of resources into getting the Stigler Act passed. The outcome was positive and Batton says that’s because of a newfound respect the tribes are getting in Washington now.

“The federal government is finally recognizing tribes, and they’re willing to listen to us...they know that we have 200,000 tribal members all across the United States, they understand the impact that we can have,” said Batton.

The gift of the Stigler Act documents from Mullin to Batton signifies a shared respect and also a resulting partnership. “I just want to say thank you. Because Choctaw Nation is very aggressively not just working inside their nation, but working with municipalities and the state as a whole. You can see it from Durant to Idabel and everything in between,” said Mullin.

Batton echoed the praise to Mullin. “What I appreciate about Congressman Mullin is that he sees it as a federal responsibility to tribes. They are trustees, it’s their obligation to help us keep our land. That’s what really makes me proud that he’s educated and knowledgeable and willing to support what the tribe has asked him to do.”

A sign of that respect and partnership now hangs in the Chief’s office at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters in Durant, and it has the President’s signature on it.

# Culture shared during 24th annual Okla Chahta Gathering

By Lisa Reed

Choctaw families traveled to Hart Memorial Park near the beautiful Kern River in California to reunite with friends and family during the Okla Chahta Gathering, May 3-4. This year marked the 24th gathering with visitors traveling from as far as Phoenix, Arizona.

Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Councilman Thomas Williston, and groups from tribal and cultural services attended to share their knowledge.

Cultural Services Executive Director Sue Folsom says it’s important to teach the culture to Choctaws



Crystal Felihkatubbee joins the beading project.

wherever they live. “They are culture bearers, helping to preserve Chahta ways.”

The Okla Chahta Clan appoints royalty, crowned

during the first day of each gathering, and filling similar ambassador roles as the Choctaw Nation royalty. Chosen to represent the Okla Chahta Clan in California during 2019-20 are Little Miss Rainey McClees, Junior Miss Taloa Felihkatubbee, and Miss Okla Chahta Aimee Roldan.

Faye Self, princess coordinator for the Choctaw Nation, held a princess training that was attended by a large group of young girls who were eager to learn from each other.

Chahta artists and vendors lined the outer edge of the large circle in the park where they provided uniquely crafted items.

Artist Bobby Martin of Fresno, California, used a marker to draw templates and each person had an opportunity to create a piece of Choctaw art.

“I teach native youth for a living, and the gathering gives me the opportunity to teach my people,” he said.

Martin comes every year but this is the first time he taught the painting class. He said he would also stop in Arizona to teach classes along his way to the Labor Day festival at Tvshka



Newly crowned Okla Chahta Royalty (in center), Junior Miss Taloa Felihkatubbee, Little Miss Rainey McClees and Miss Okla Chahta Aimee Roldan, are pictured with (from left) Councilman Thomas Williston, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Choctaw Nation Little Miss Mia Reich and Junior Miss Kalin Beller, and Chief Gary Batton.



Artist Bobby Martin provides drawings and tips on painting.



Photos by Lisa Reed

Youth enjoyed activities all day including social dancing, stickball, Choctaw games, and storytelling.



Chief Gary Batton visits with the Krebbs siblings – Norman Krebbs, Wanda Krebbs Eaton, and Sharon “Dolly” Krebbs Eskew. Wanda is the oldest person attending the gathering.

Homma in August.

Chief Batton presented a medallion to the oldest person in attendance, Wanda Krebbs Eaton, who turns 88 in July.

Frankie Ervin, also 87, looks forward to the gathering every year. “It’s such a blessing,” she said. “We need to all bring our grandkids and great-grandkids so they can learn about their heritage.”



Signing the Lord’s Prayer are Okla Chahta Junior Miss Taloa Felihkatubbee, foreground, and in background Okla Chahta Little Miss Rainey McClees follows the direction of Little Miss Mia Reich from Oklahoma.



Photos by Charles Clark

Youth enjoy the second annual Kids Fair in Durant.



# Kids Fair popular with Choctaw families

By Charles Clark

The 2019 Kids Fair is being chalked up as a big success for Choctaw Nation Children & Family Services.

This was the second year for the Kids Fair which is held during National Foster Care Month. Due to the popularity of the event it may become an annual occurrence.

Almost 600 people attended the four-hour Kids Fair and, even more importantly, two dozen applications were received offering to become foster homes.

“The turnout is about the same as last year, our first year,” said Kat DeCaire, foster care recruiter with the Choctaw Nation, happy to see the numbers holding. “We hope to continue it. It seems perfect for Foster Care Month.”

Held at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant, it was free and open to the public with informa-

tion available on adoption through the Choctaw Nation Foster Parents Program.

Traditional foods, such as fry bread and grape dumplings satisfied appetites, along with hot dogs, popcorn and other treats. Plenty of fun and games for all ages, including a 27-foot obstacle course set up by the Oklahoma National Guard, offered prizes.

“Cultural Corner” had a Choctaw pottery demonstration and a chance for young stickball players to try out their skills. Meet-and-greet opportunities allowed chances to visit with Choctaw princesses, tribal police officers, and Durant firefighters.

Continued community support for the Kids Fair could help change some statistics for the better. At the beginning of May, Choctaw Nation Foster Care figures showed a need for more foster homes. Currently, there are 51 tribal foster homes,

while 575 Choctaw children are in custody. More than 300 of those children reside within Choctaw Nation’s 10½ counties. To apply or learn more, visit [www.choctawnation.com/tribal-services/member-services/foster-care-adoption](http://www.choctawnation.com/tribal-services/member-services/foster-care-adoption). Foster Care Recruiter Kat DeCaire can be reached at 800-522-6170, ext. 2643 or [kdecaire@choctawnation.com](mailto:kdecaire@choctawnation.com).

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An artist rendering shows the more-than-\$500 million expansion of the Choctaw Casino & Resort. The Nation anticipates it will open in the Spring of 2021 and will generate 1,000 more jobs.

# TRIBE BREAKING RECORDS WITH CASINO EXPANSION

By Chris Jennings

On April 25 the Choctaw Nation broke ground on its largest project to date. Now on its third expansion of the Casino & Resort in Durant since 2006, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is not only breaking ground, but also breaking records with this latest growth spurt.

The number of hotel rooms will increase by 1,000, giving the casino and resort a total of more than 1,600 rooms, making it the largest hotel room count in the state.

Chief Gary Batton said, “Today is a special day for the Choctaw Nation as we embark upon an expansion journey that will result in a top-tier entertainment offering for our region and will spur economic growth for Durant and our state, plus new employment opportunities for our tribal and community members.”

Along with more rooms, the more-than-\$500 million expansion will also bring an expanded game floor, new pools with a lazy river, larger parking garage, retail space, entertainment options and dining venues making the

casino and resort a true destination.

“The expansion will go a long way in meeting the demands of our growing customer base,” said Batton.

The groundbreaking ceremony wasn’t all talk about potential new customers and their revenue stream.

Janie Dillard, senior executive officer of the commerce division, had praises to share all around, especially for the team that helped put the expansion efforts together, saying, “You do not do this with one person, you do it with a team of people.” Dillard went on to show appreciation to Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and the tribal council for the trust and confidence they put in the team that put the expansion together.

The Choctaw Nation opened its first high-stakes bingo hall in 1987 on the same 55 acres the casino currently sits on. Dillard was emotional when speaking about the expansion project and the casino’s history. “I was here when we had 100 employees and we were broke. When we made the first million dollars we thought...this is awesome. That’s [the bingo hall] the little house that made

us,” said Dillard.

From the time the original bingo hall started making those large profits, the Nation has used that money to help its members. Each of the expansion projects and all of the other Choctaw businesses have been able to add to the offerings of the Nation. That money has helped many people.

“It helps to put more kids through college and build more hospitals. Our tribal members are our shareholders,” said Dillard.

The additional opportunities and resources that the expansion will bring to the area were not far from Batton’s mind either.

“To me it’s about the creation of jobs and opportunities for our tribal members and the community. They say the rising tide raises all ships so that’s what we’re going to do,” said Batton.

The Nation anticipates the expansion will open in Spring 2021 and will generate 1,000 more jobs for tribal and community members.



Shovels turn April 25 for the third expansion of the Choctaw Casino & Resort in Durant.

### JUNE 2019

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*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.*

**Page 1:**

*Grand opening marks beginning of a new era for Choctaw Nation’s Judicial Branch.*

**2019 Tribal Election Guide**

*A special insert contains information on this year’s elections and candidates.*

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