



March 2020 Issue

Choctaw Nation's economic impact far reaching

DURANT, Okla. (Feb. 6, 2020) – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma announced today that the Tribe had a \$2.4 billion economic impact on the State of Oklahoma for 2018. Tribal officials made the announcement during a luncheon where several state, county, and local officials were present.

“The Choctaw Nation is a significant contributor to the State of Oklahoma,” states Dr. Kyle Dean, Economist for the Center for Native American and Urban Studies at Oklahoma City University, “and their impact is vital in counties in southeastern Oklahoma where the average poverty rate is 20%.”

The economic impact report, prepared by Dr. Dean, showed the Choctaw Nation to be a driving force in southeastern Oklahoma, as well as for the overall state. In 2018, the Tribe supported 16,974 Oklahoma jobs, represented \$794 million in wages and benefits, and provided more than \$1.7 million in job recruitment incentives to help grow the local economies.

“As our businesses grow, and we create more jobs, the impact we make at the local and state level will increase and provide new opportunities for growth and prosperity to our tribal members and neighbors,” said Chief Gary Batton.

Education

The future of Oklahoma's children, both tribal and non-tribal, is extremely important to Choctaw Nation leaders. The Choctaw Nation has paid more than \$250 million in exclusivity fees to the State, according to gaming compact statistics, including \$26 million in 2018; these funds go directly to support public education state-wide. The study also showed Choctaw Nation funded over \$45 million (beyond exclusivity fees) for educational programs, including \$1.5 million to teach Choctaw language in 44 public schools; \$7.1 million to fund over 9,300 higher education scholarships; and \$3.3 million to fund the Partnership of Summer School Program that served 3,568 Oklahoma students in 74 schools.

Housing

The Choctaw Nation takes care of its members by providing for one of the most basic human needs: housing. The Choctaw Nation built 80 new homes as part of the new Lease-to-Purchase (LEAP) homeownership program to provide a pathway to economic prosperity for Choctaw tribal members. In 2018, the Tribe invested more than \$70 million in housing for new construction, homes repairs, home loans and storm shelters, and served more than 6,500 Choctaw tribal members.



Healthcare

Tribal healthcare is impactful for rural Oklahoma, and Choctaw Nation strengthened the entire state's infrastructure with state-of-the-art facilities, including nine clinics, 13 wellness centers, two inpatient facilities, and one hospital in Tahleah, Oklahoma. In 2018, the Choctaw Nation spent \$240 million to support healthcare for Oklahomans and provided 17,631 free flu shots, supported nearly a million patient-encounters, filled 1.4 million prescriptions, and had 436,021 visits to the wellness centers.

In the healthcare realm, Choctaw Nation saved the State of Oklahoma \$17.4 million by requiring no state matching funds on \$44.4 million in Medicaid expenditures.

Community

Choctaw Nation has invested more than \$101 million in Oklahoma highways and roads since 2010, building over 203 miles and, in 2018, provided more than \$3.8 million towards water projects. Additionally, the tribe has recycled over 24 million pounds of material and hosted 3,000 students at summer youth camps and clinics in 2018.

Bond remains strong between Choctaw and Irish

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation and the people of Ireland have a long and storied history. Although separated by thousands of miles, these two nations are forever entwined because of a small act of kindness nearly two centuries ago.

In March of 1847, a group of Choctaw people met to raise money for the starving poor in Ireland. The Choctaw people had received word about the dire situation of the Great Potato Famine and simply could not stand by and not help. The Choctaws pooled together \$170 which was sent first to the Memphis Irish Relief Committee, then to the General Irish Relief Committee of the City of New York. The \$170 would be worth around \$5,000 in today's economy.

During the Great Potato Famine, more than a million people died in Ireland when their potato crops were decimated. Another two million left the country when the potato crops failed in successive years. Potatoes served as a primary food source for almost half the population but primarily the rural poor. The gift from the Choctaw Nation directly impacted the survival of many in Ireland.

The Choctaw Nation's gift was recognized as extraordinary even at that time. The chairman of the New York committee specifically mentioned it in reports to the Central Relief Committee in Ireland.

The gift to the Irish people was significant, considering the Choctaw people had recently been forced to walk the Trail of Tears between 1831 and 1833.

Choctaws were the first of the large southeastern tribes relocated under the Indian Removal Act. Around 20,000 Choctaw people set out on the journey to Oklahoma from their traditional homelands east of the Mississippi River. Historians estimate that 4,000 Choctaws died along the way.

The Irish people have never forgotten the kindness of the Choctaws in 1847. In 1992, a group of Irish men and women walked the 600-mile Trail of Tears. The walk raised \$170,000 that went toward famine relief in Somalia.

In 1995, Irish President Mary Robinson, later UN Commissioner for Human Rights, visited the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. She used the visit to thank the Choctaws for their generosity toward the Irish. Robinson commented on the extraordinary act of kindness from the Choctaws, saying, “Thousands of miles away, in no way linked to the Choctaw Nation until then, the only link being a common humanity, a common sense of another people suffering as the Choctaw Nation had suffered when being removed from their tribal land.”

The charitable attitude of the Choctaw Nation is a theme that continues today. In times of crisis, the Choctaw Nation has been there. In 2001, Choctaw people made a huge contribution to the Firefighters Fund after the Twin Towers attack in New York City and have since made major contributions to Save the Children and the Red Cross for tsunami relief in 2004, again in 2005 for Hurricane Katrina relief, for victims of the Haiti earthquake, and most recently for people affected by hurricanes in Houston, Puerto Rico, and Florida.

The generosity of the Choctaw Nation does not stop at humanitarian organizations and funds. The Nation received the United States National Freedom Award in 2008 for the efforts made in support of members of the National Guard and Reserve and their families. The Choctaw Nation also had a 2.4 billion-dollar impact on the State of Oklahoma's economy in 2018 alone. There are countless stories of Choctaw individuals who have helped their neighbors in need over the Nation's long history.

The Irish people were so touched by the donation they received in 1847 that the people of County

Cork commissioned a sculpture to the Choctaw Nation in 2015. A delegation of Choctaw people including current Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. attended the dedication of the monument in 2017.

The sculpture, created by artist Alex Pentek, is named “Kindred Spirits” and features nine eagle feathers. “This monument represents this time of great instability,” Pentek explained in an interview with The Oklahoman. “But it also represents this great moment of compassion, strength and unity.”

Pentek told the BBC that the 6-meter-tall feathers are all unique “as a sign of respect” and that they represent the feathers used in Choctaw ceremonies. These feathers are arranged in a circle, creating the shape of an empty bowl that symbolizes the hunger suffered by Irish people in the famine.

Irish Prime Minister, or Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar visited the Choctaw Nation in March of 2018. During his visit he announced a new scholarship program that will allow members of the Choctaw Nation to study in Ireland. This scholarship program began in 2019, and Jessica Militante was the first Chahta Foundation joint-sponsored scholar to Ireland.

“I am the first recipient of the Choctaw Ireland Scholarship, which was created to commemorate the beautiful connection between the Choctaw and Irish people. Ireland is showing that same generosity and love for the Choctaw Nation with this scholarship, which is allowing me to study for my master's in creative writing here at UCC,” she said in an article she wrote for the Irish news source EchoLive.ie.

In January, The Choctaw Nation hosted the Irish folk band RUNA at their headquarters in Durant. RUNA visited the Choctaw Nation in an effort to learn more about the culture and the historical connection between Ireland and the Choctaw Nation. They intend to write a song, and possibly an album, based on the cultural connection between the Choctaw Nation and the Irish people. They spent the day participating in traditional dancing, sampling traditional food, listening to stories about Choctaw heritage and sharing stories about Irish heritage.

The connection between the Irish people and the Choctaw Nation shows that a simple act of kindness can bring nations together.

Chief Gary Batton commented on the tradition of the Choctaw Nation's spirit of giving, saying, “We are committed to continuing the legacy of generosity our ancestors began in the 1800's.

We want to continue to help our tribal members, the state of Oklahoma, and the world.”



Photo by Chris Jennings

Above, Chief Gary Batton talks with members of the Irish folk band RUNA. RUNA is interested in writing songs about the story of the gift given by the Choctaw people during the Irish Potato Famine, as well as highlighting the cultural bond between the Choctaw and Irish. The band was particularly concerned with representing the Choctaw culture correctly.

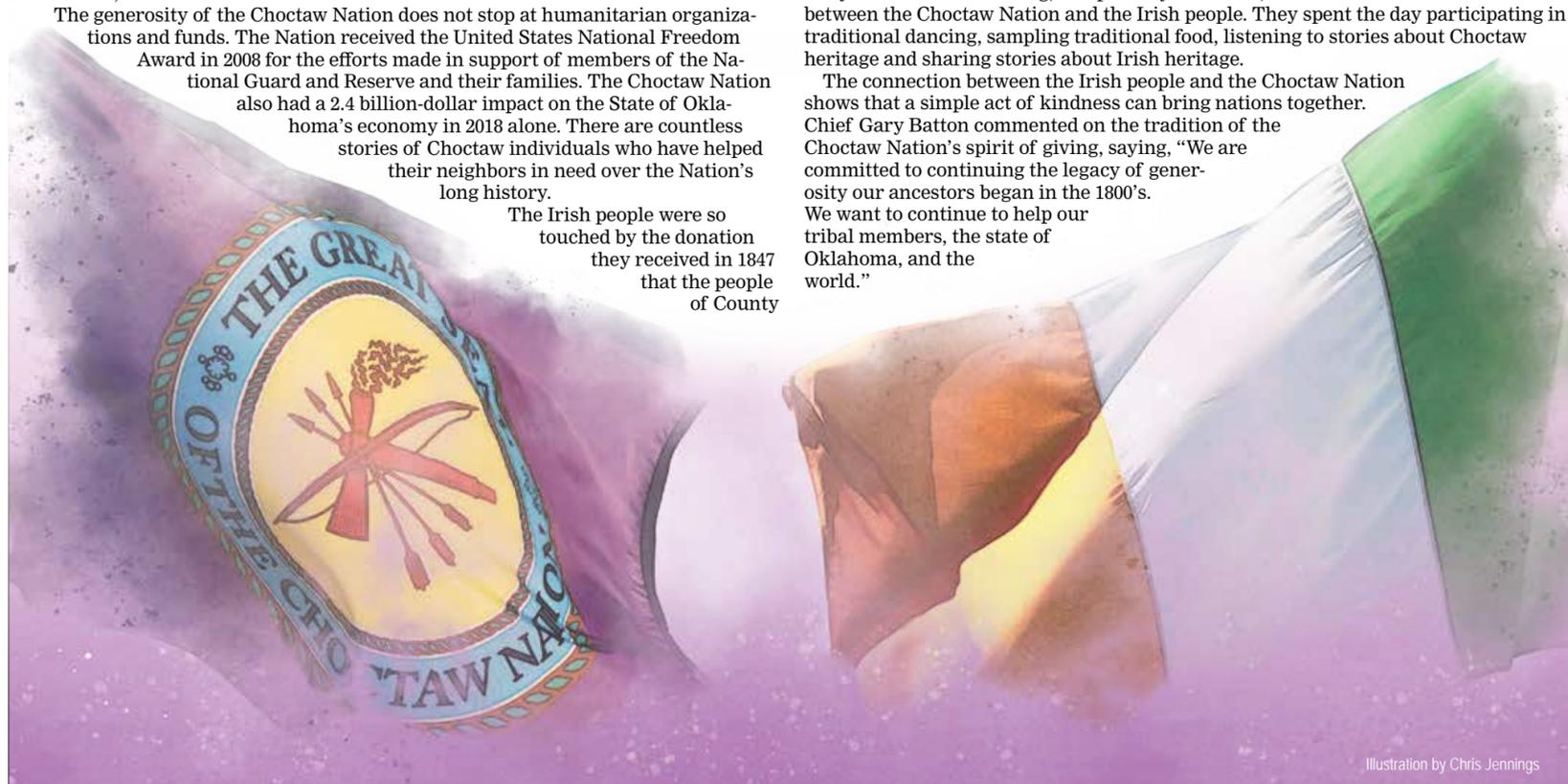


Illustration by Chris Jennings

Faith, Family, Culture

Choctaws count in 2020 census



Chief Gary Batton

The 2020 U.S. Census will be conducted this year and I am asking you on behalf of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to participate. It is crucial for our members to be counted and their voices to be heard.

The census is conducted every 10 years, as required by the U.S. Constitution. The census collects important data from every person living in our country. Census numbers help to decide how an estimated total of \$880 billion a year in federal funding is distributed. These federal dollars are distributed for schools, roads, public services, and tribes through grants. Those dollars also are used by emergency responders during natural disasters. The census also helps determine the number of congressional seats and Electoral College votes every state gets. The census is more than just a survey; it is a vital tool. It is essential that our tribal members complete and correctly identify themselves in the census.

The Choctaw Nation is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to increase participation and help clarify how to accurately identify your Choctaw citizenship.

The information you provide helps put money back into your communities. It helps support important services like emergency management, roads, schools and healthcare.

During the 2010 census, only 24,000 members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma correctly identified themselves on their submissions. There are roughly 200,000 members of the Choctaw Nation. That means approximately 80% of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma wasn't counted in the last census. So show that our ancestors are not forgotten by standing up and being counted. Let everyone know that we are 200,000 Choctaw strong!

If you want to help ensure that all of us are counted, there are multiple things you can do. For the first time in the 230-year history of the U.S. Census, participants will be able to respond online and by calling 1-800 numbers. Paper forms will still be available, and census workers will make door to door visits to rural areas. Households who haven't responded by April will be visited by door knockers who will conduct interviews and collect responses by smartphone. Please complete the census by July 24, 2020. When you reach the "Tribal Affiliation" section, please write "Choctaw Nation." This is the only way for your response to truly count toward the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. If you only write "Choctaw," it will not count.

Make sure your voice is heard in this year's census and remember that Choctaws count.



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

God created darkness

Somewhere in the nature of man, there is that feeling of fear concerning darkness. Darkness is the absence of light. It is the unknown. It is something we can't see through. There is natural fear which is in all people for self-preservation. We find this in the child's development.

There is another fear that grips our hearts. That is the fear of the unknown, the fear of not knowing the future. Uncertainty in the daily life is darkness of the soul. Failing health, job loss, marriage conflicts, social problems and political discords among other factors can fill the heart with despair, despondency and fear. Our childhood fear of darkness creeps upon us and the childhood trauma regains momentum and directs us into the darkness.

What are we to do? First we ask, "Where does darkness come from?" God created darkness. Isaiah 45:7 says, "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

The word creates the means to form, fashion, or to permit. Our natural inclination is to run away from darkness. However, God speaks to us in darkness. Many times, we find ourselves in a deep and dark valley. Job also found himself in a valley.

What did he do? Job 29:3 says, "When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness." Job found the light in the darkness. Lots of times darkness comes our way so God can reveal himself to us in light. God promised to make darkness light. If we run away from darkness, we will never see the light. Isaiah 42:16 says, "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them." God promised to give His children the treasures of darkness. Isaiah 45:2-3 states, "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." It is in the darkness of our lives that we find a close and intimate relationship with God.

According to Psalm 18:9-11, "He bowed the heavens also and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind, He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the sky." Do not run away from the darkness of your life. God is waiting for you to come to Him and find refuge.

Making the world a better place, one smile at a time

By Chris Jennings

The saying "It takes a village" stems from the tradition of many members of a community helping in one way or another to get something accomplished, whether that is constructing buildings, providing food or raising children.

Carmen Martinez was affected by her community of Broken Bow, Okla., whether it was rides to Sunday school, or mentors helping her along the way. Martinez is quick to recognize her tribe and the community as a whole for helping her find her way. "I feel like all you need is one small thing, one person that is invested in you and a community that supports you and you can do anything," said Martinez.

In her case, though, it was no small thing, nor was it quick. After 12 years and two unsuccessful attempts at getting in, Martinez graduated from the dental school at Oklahoma University in 2019 and is now working full time at Masterpiece Smiles in Oklahoma City.

As a first-generation college student, it was a little harder for Martinez than some others. Her father emigrated from Mexico as a child with a fifth-grade education, and her mother only made it through the tenth grade, going back later to get her GED.

Because there was no family history of anyone having navigated the college experience, Martinez had no help, and her path to dental school was unclear. She got advice from members of the community, but it was still a struggle. Sometimes, she was working three jobs on top of school just to get by.

Martinez struggled enough that, despite being a great student in high school, she was put on academic probation after her first semester of college for poor grades.

Martinez didn't know what to do next. "If I go home, what have I done? I haven't moved my generation forward and I haven't created a path for the people coming behind me," she said.

you can fall back on. That is always going to be there," she said.

It was that faith and trust in God's plan that got her through dental school. Along that journey and perhaps as a part of God's plan, she discovered a passion for serving others.

That passion took Martinez on mission trips to New Orleans, where she helped rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. She has lived in downtown Los Angeles serving in the Skid Row and Compton neighborhoods. She has been on mission trips to Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Managua, Paraguay, Argentina, Greece and is currently preparing for her second trip to Peru.

When Martinez wasn't serving on a mission trip, she was serving her fellow students and campus in other ways. Martinez helped co-found an organization called the Diversity Council, an organization that focuses on helping the dental school be more inclusive and attract more students from culturally diverse backgrounds. "When I started dental school, there weren't faculty members that looked like me. I remember looking around, and there weren't a lot of women," said Martinez.

The Diversity Council started a program called A Day in the Life of a Dental Student, where students from underserved communities in Oklahoma City learned what dental school was like with a simulated lecture and hands on work with fillings and impressions on fake models.

On top of that Martinez says, "they were able to see other students that looked like them and be like, I could be that one day."

In school, Martinez was working at a non-profit dental clinic when something clicked. "It almost kind of married the two [mission work and dental work]...using skills that I have, whether that's my language, my hands, or whether that's with my career. That was my goal," said Martinez.

CENSUS 2020

#CHOCTAWSCOUNT



Approximately 80% of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was not counted in the 2010 census. This resulted in a major loss for the Choctaw Nation, including \$1 million on one grant. This year, the Choctaw Nation is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to increase participation and help clarify how to correctly identify tribal affiliation on census forms.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Livestock shows teach important life skills

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma held its 28th annual livestock shows in Durant and Wilburton on Feb. 1 and 2. Hundreds of tribal members in grades third through twelfth showed up to the two-day event to showcase their pigs, goats, sheep, heifers and steers. Each year, this event continues to grow, and it is so great to see our young people take an interest in showing livestock. Chief, Tribal Council, and I all had the opportunity to speak to so many bright young people who are the future of our agriculture industry.

Showing livestock and associated programs like 4-H and FFA help build life skills and develop character traits that will help young people in the future. I'm not sure how familiar all of you are with livestock

shows, but taking care of show animals is a lot of work. These young men and women learn how to select, feed, fit, groom and properly show their animals. They learn how to vaccinate, keep records, add costs and weigh them against future profits. These students take on daily responsibilities that come with showing animals. I don't know if you've seen someone clip, groom and blow dry a cow, but it takes a lot of patience.

Our agricultural department has done so much over the past couple of years to take this event to the next level. This year, they streamlined the registration process by going fully digital — participants registered by going to the Choctaw Nation's website. Everything was located in one place, making the entry process more user-friendly.

If you are interested in participating in our livestock show next year, there are a few requirements. Participants must be a member of 4-H or FFA; must be a student between third and twelfth grade; and must be no older 19 on the day of the show. There are no boundary guidelines for the livestock show, and participants do not have to live or go to school in the 10½ counties.

We would love to see even more student participation in our livestock show next year. If you have any questions about this event or our agriculture department, please visit choctawnation.com or call 580-924-8280. I hope to see you at next year's show.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Hundreds of Choctaw young people took part in the 28th annual Choctaw Nation Livestock Shows in Durant and Wilburton on Feb. 1 and 2. Showing livestock teaches lessons that participants can carry with them throughout life.

Martinez had the full support of her family, but it was her faith in God, instilled in her early on by her family and community, that helped her rise above the struggle.

"Having your faith, I think, is the one thing that you can fall back on. That is always going to be there," she said.

Fulfilling that goal of helping communities isn't all traveling the globe on mission trips. Martinez has volunteered locally with Oklahoma Mission of Mercy for eight years and volunteers at the Good Shepherd dental clinic in Oklahoma City.

The mission work, the volunteer work and the Diversity Council culminated in Martinez being awarded the Multicultural student of the Year award for the Health Sciences program at OU.

Speaking of the award, Martinez said, "You never really know what kind of impact you're going to make on those around you."

Now, in addition to the volunteer work, Martinez mentors another first-generation college student, helping to make her college path a little easier.

The good Carmen Martinez does all stems from her roots in Broken Bow, Okla. and the Choctaw Nation helping her along, and the world is a better place for it.



Submitted photo

Carmen Martinez works on a patient during a mission trip to Jamaica. Martinez overcame many adversities to get through dental school, all the while donating her time to help those in need.

Project Impact makes a difference for Talihina students

By Kellie Matherly

Talihina students in grades 7-12 are getting a leg up on college preparation and career readiness thanks to the Tigers Achieving Greatness (TAG) program. TAG began in January of 2017 as part of the Native Youth Community of Practice Demonstration grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the Choctaw Nation.

Economic projections over the past few decades have indicated that the vast majority of well-paying jobs with opportunities for advancement require some form of education or specialized training beyond high school. TAG introduces students to a wide array of career options and helps prepare them for the training they need to enter their chosen field by offering unique courses and learning experiences. Students who take part in the program study career exploration, ACT prep, leadership development and Native culture. They also have the opportunity to go on college tours and career-inspired field trips, attend summer camps and participate in service learning projects.

“I love the TAG program because it has prepared me for the ACT and college,” said Madisson Ludlow, a sophomore at Talihina High School. “Thanks to TAG, I am now OSHA and ‘My Soft Skills High’ certified. I am so glad I had the opportunity to be a member of such an amazing program.”

TAG Coordinator Marianne Akins is especially proud of the program’s success. “TAG has embedded a plethora of real-life experiences within our students through comprehensive college and career readiness exposures. This career development type of program inside the walls of a high school will allow students to be better prepared after high school graduation,” said Akins.

Kenda Lewis, another sophomore at THS, said, “TAG has helped me by exploring different colleges and careers. I encourage anyone thinking about joining TAG to do it because it will prepare you for college life.”

In May of 2019, high school TAG students traveled to Tulsa to tour the Gilcrease Museum, which houses a collection of over 350,000 items representing hundreds of Indigenous cultures from North and South America. The students also visited the Tandy Center at the OSU School of Osteopathic Medicine. The Tandy Center is a new facility offering state-of-the-art patient simulation tools and equipment for building clinical skills. This hands-on experience was especially impactful for

the students. Marlena Montes, a junior at THS, stated, “The TAG field trip to OSU Medical School really showed me that there are a lot of careers in the medical field. The equipment they have was hands-on and real-life.”

In October of 2019, eighth grade students traveled to McAlester to attend the 8th Grade College and Career Expo sponsored by Kiamichi Technology Center and GEAR UP, an early awareness and readiness program from the U.S. Department of Education. Students visited vendor booths and participated in a financial literacy activity. When asked what they learned from the trip, one student stated, “You always need a good education to achieve your dreams.” Another said, “Not everything that we want will be in our price range, so we may have to change a few things.”

Another important part of the TAG student experience is hearing presentations by people who are successful in their chosen careers. Past speakers have included the special events coordinator for Texas Rangers baseball, Choctaw tribal members who have benefitted from the Nation’s education programs, members of the legal and medical communities, and most recently, Dr. Katricia Pierson, President of East Central University. Dr. Pierson shared her personal story of overcoming adversity and working hard to be successful in her career. She emphasized the importance of college or technical school in today’s workforce and reminded students that every single one of them is capable of earning a certificate or degree.

In addition to student-centered activities, TAG hosts community outreach programs. One example is Family Financial Literacy Night, where community partners join TAG to promote responsible financial decisions through a life-sized Monopoly game for parents and students. At the fall event, families enjoyed pizza and ice cream, and prizes were awarded to those with the most Monopoly money in their bank at the end of the evening. TAG plans to host a similar event this spring.

On February 10, TAG hosted Career Cluster Bingo. This event allowed parents and students to become better educated on various career clusters, while playing Bingo with prizes.

There are also events where parents and students learn about the importance of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA helps determine what federal grants and loans students may receive to help pay for tuition, books, lodging and other



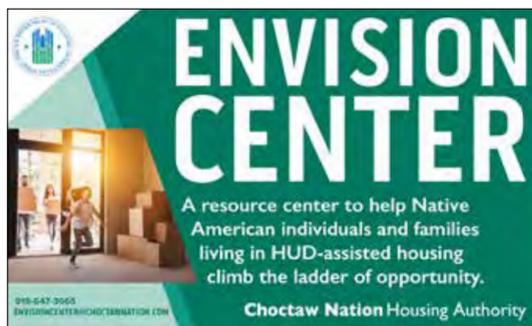
Photo by Mia Pierce

Dr. Katricia Pierson, President of East Central University, talks to students at Talihina High School. Pierson shared her story about overcoming struggle and emphasized the importance of college or technical school after high school.

costs associated with higher education. At these events, students can get a head start on the FAFSA application process.

Although TAG was originally created for Native American students, all Talihina students in grades 7-12 can benefit as long as they have “a desire to achieve greatness” and have a “willingness to impact [their] future by applying the career readiness skills obtained from the TAG program,” according to the program’s website and brochure. Since the program began, over 180 students have been served in some capacity. “TAG is empowering high school students to be proactive in post-secondary academic and career decisions that will impact the rest of their lives,” said TAG instructor, Alicia Herell. TAG Project Director and Senior Career Development Director Robin Counce would love to see the program expand to serve even more Native students across the 10½ counties of the Choctaw Nation.

Grant allows Envision Center to travel to clients



By Shelia Kirven

The Choctaw Nation Envision Center has been awarded a new three-year grant to establish the Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency Program (ROSS). ROSS makes it possible for staff to visit communities and bring services to Choctaw Housing rental sites and LEAP tenants.

Envision Center staff attend multiple meet-and-greets in community centers, Indian housing developments, and other tribal facilities in the 10½ counties. By partnering with other programs, staff are able to make these events a “one-stop-shop” of supportive services, even doing follow-ups with their clients after their visits.

The grant is designed to help Affordable Rental Housing (ARH) residents make progress towards economic and housing self-sufficiency. Service Coordinators assess the needs of Indian housing residents and link them to supportive services that enable participants to increase earned income and reduce or eliminate the need for assistance. In the case of elderly or disabled tribal member residents, these services can enable them to remain at home, thereby avoiding more costly forms of care.

“The purpose is to help our residents become self-sufficient, whether that is to get a better paying job, to get training or to get a degree. For the elders, it is to help them age in place so that they are not having to be 80 years old and moving. With the disabled, it is to help with services for them.” ROSS Program Counselor Shawna Shelton explained.

ROSS services are designed to assist those who live in Choctaw Nation Affordable Rental Housing (ARH), assessing the needs of the residents. By partnering with other Choctaw Nation programs and bringing them together into the communities, the program is getting a tremendous response.

With so many programs available within the tribe, it is a convenient alternative to be able to visit with a

service coordinator counselor who can help recommend which services might help the client. “Imagine assessing a situation, knowing where they need to get and then coordinating those resources and sending them there in that direction,” Scott Grosfield, Senior Director of Support Services, said.

Community visits sometimes include job fairs with information about local employment opportunities, with a chance to visit with recruiters and Workforce Development counselors. The staff have also been able to bring in a representative to visit with clients about the 2020 U.S. Census, offering information about job opportunities that are available with the Census Bureau and about the importance of correct responses on the census regarding tribal affiliation. Staff also help with home ownership counseling, budgeting, and credit counseling.

Another service currently available is an income tax preparation service. The staff have become VITA certified (Volunteer Income Tax Assistants) and can file 1040EZ forms, focusing on low-income tribal members. Though they are not tax consultants, the staff have been certified through the IRS to file tax returns. There has been a lot of interest and excitement about this service, and staff are hoping to build on it, continuing it past this year.

Staff members get together once a month to share successes with each other, and there are definite successes.

Rayann Moore, a Choctaw tribal member, recently obtained employment in the Choctaw Nation EVS Department in Durant. She worked with several programs first, including the Envision Program, Job for the Day, Career Development Program, and Workforce Development, which all assisted her in becoming job ready. She was able to receive help with interview tips and techniques and was even able to attend a budgeting class. She also completed a certification program in medical billing and coding and plans to take her state test in March. She hopes to work in the medical billing and coding field while working to obtain her associate’s and bachelor’s degrees.

With many of its tribal program operations, Choctaw Nation sets the standard, and the Envision Center is no exception. At the recent national conference for Office of Native American Programs (ONAP), the Choctaw Nation was recognized for best practices, and other tribes now try to base their programs on what it is doing.

Carrie Blackmon, Director of Service Coordination,

was also asked to do a live webinar for ONAP which appeared on their website. The webinar was available to other tribes who wanted to learn what the Choctaw Nation does and what makes our Envision Center services so unique.

Most recently, a representative from the Alaskan Tlingit tribe visited the Choctaw Nation to tour and study the Envision Program and to take back information that can be used with their own program.

For more information about this program, email envisioncenter@choctawnation.com or call 918-647-3665.



Photo by Christian Toews

Tribal member and recent Envision Center client Rayann Moore is working towards her goals with guidance from tribal programs.

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).
- Students must be at least 3-years-old in head start/daycare setting through 12th grade.
- 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.

CONTACT
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHAHTAACHVFFA
 800-522-6170 EXT 2175 OR 2463

Choctaw Nation Student School & Activity Fund

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

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

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

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund
 To Be Eligible to Apply:

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

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

Idabel Community Center
 March 27, 2020
 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.

CHOCTAW LANGUAGE COMMUNITY CLASSES

FOR ANYONE WANTING TO LEARN CHOCTAW

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- MATERIALS FOR CLASSES ARE FREE
- NO ENROLLMENT NEEDED
- 16-WEEK LONG SESSIONS

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Choctaw Nation Department of Education

Halito, from District 12.

Another year has gone by and the Choctaw Nation has truly been blessed. Several of our tribal members in District 12 have been provided with new homes, a Country Market, food vouchers and a lawn mowing program for elders over 70 years of age and eligible disabled tribal members. These are just a few of the services available to them.

The Tribal Council, alongside Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., work hard together to bring all these services to the tribal members.

District 12 has held ribbon cuttings for 40 new homes in the Coalgate and Savannah areas since August 2018.

A job fair was held at the Coalgate Choctaw Community Center on January 6, 7, 9 and 10 for the Coalgate Country Market. I visited the store, and the new employees were hard at work getting the store ready to open. This is a blessing for the Coalgate area residents.

Wednesday, February 12, the Coalgate seniors were treated to a meal of chicken tenders, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, rolls and dessert catered by the Country Market. They were the “taste testers” for the new deli. Thank you to the Country Market employees for serving the meal and cleaning. Wednesday, February 19, the Country Market opened the doors to the public at 6:00 a.m.

A health fair by the CNHSA came to our center on Wednesday, February 26. The seniors took advantage of the information they brought.

March 4, Derek Wesley of Housing will present information on the new lawn care program, and census/VITA will be here to assist tribal members with the census and tax preparation. Your participation in the census is very important to the Choctaw Nation. Voter Registration and Hunting and Fishing will also have representatives here to assist tribal elders.

In August, the Coalgate seniors went to Kentucky to see the Ark and then on to Washington, D.C. In November, they went to Tulsa for shopping, then on to Branson. A Christmas light tour to Sherman, TX included shopping, dinner at Golden Corral, and Christmas lights at Loy Lake Park. They had their Christmas dinner and party on December 4, 2019.

Christmas for the Coalgate children was very exciting. Santa arrived in a Choctaw Nation Tribal Police cruiser driven by Tribal Policeman Anthony Garvin. Lights were flashing and sirens were going. After Santa gave each child a gift, they were given a sack of goodies. THEN the children were treated to a ride around the parking area in the Tribal Police cruiser with the lights flashing and sirens going. What a way to end a Christmas party! Thank you, Officer Garvin.

The seniors have two Indian taco sales and silent auctions each year. Proceeds go toward their trips. Jannette Taylor leads the exercise classes for the seniors on Monday and Wednesday mornings. She has been doing this for about 13 years. Ms. Maggie Anderson, who will be 96 years young in March, still rides the exercise bicycle. Average attendance is eight seniors.

Officers for Coalgate seniors are Tommy Morgan, President; Vicki Frazier, Vice President; Gladys Daniel, Secretary/Treasurer; and Ricky Loudermilk, Activities Director. Officers are elected each year in April.

The Crowder seniors are busy with trips to the casino on the second Monday and Tuesday of each month. They have fundraisers on the first and last Wednesdays of the month. Proceeds go toward their trips. Chair volleyball is every Wednesday from 10–10:30 a.m. Birthdays are celebrated on the last Wednesday of the month.

Crowder seniors went to San Antonio and New Orleans for their trips. They also took a Christmas light tour. On Wednesday, February 12, they had their Valentine's party and chose a Valentine King and Queen. Crowder senior officers for 2020 are James Bench, President; Sandy Dugan, Vice President; Regina Etchinson, Secretary; and Jeanne Powell, Treasurer.

The Native American Children Heritage and Culture Program meets on the last Saturday of each month. For grades 1-8. YAB youth meet on the third Thursday at 3:30 p.m., grades 8-12.

If you live in and around the Crowder, Indianola or Canadian area and wish to have a new home, fill out the LEAP Homes application. If we can get ten or more applications, we may be able to get Housing to build in this area. Specify on your application Crowder, Indianola or Canadian.

Senior Farmers Market, Choctaw Nation Princess and Lawn Mowing applications are available at any Choctaw Nation Community Center office. Summer Youth work applications are available online at the Choctaw Nation website.

Labor Day 2019 was exciting for District 12. Our District 12 Jr. Miss, Cheyenne McCoy, won the title of Choctaw Nation Jr. Miss at the Choctaw Nation Princess Pageant. The District 12 Princess Pageant will be held at the Crowder Community Center on Thursday, May 21, at 6:00 p.m.

The Livestock Premium Sales were held in Holdenville, February 25 and in Coal County on February 28. It is a privilege to support these young people.

Language classes are held every Monday evening for the youth. The Coalgate youth go to the Language Fair in Norman, Okla. each year in April. Classes are held on Wednesdays after lunch for the seniors or anyone who wishes to learn the Choctaw language.

I also attended the Inter-Tribal meeting in Tulsa. I try to alternate visits between Coalgate and Crowder when possible to keep the seniors informed.

My door is always open for tribal members who need assistance or just want to visit. I can also be reached by phone and will return your calls. The staff will also relay any message to me.

Halito District 9,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas with their families and loved ones and the new year finds you and your crew ready to make 2020 an even better year than 2019.

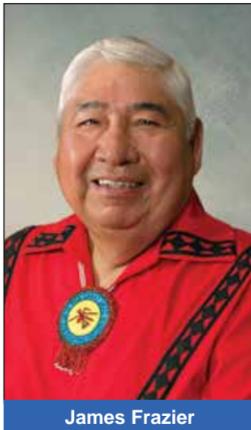
We've had a busy couple of months and I'm happy to start this report by letting you know we had a ribbon cutting for 10 affordable rental homes in January for our tribal members. This is a great program to help our members get into a new home. Not everyone is ready to buy a home or is in a situation where home purchase fits their needs. This program allows us to better serve the needs of our tribe.

I'm also excited to announce 20 new LEAP homes going up in Calera with completion scheduled for this Spring. This latest addition brings our housing total up to 60 new LEAP and 10 affordable rental units in Bryan County. We will see more homes built in the future and I encourage all members to visit www.choctawnation.com or come by the Durant community center to fill out an application.

District 9 held our first ever youth summit to help our kids with college and career readiness programs our tribe offers. It was a huge success, and we had a solid showing of students and families attend. We are very blessed to have so many kids wanting to attend college or learn a trade in order to better their lives. I would like to personally thank all the staff that helped put this on at our community center and to the parents that took the time to bring their kids to our summit.

We recently broke ground on our new Daycare center in Durant. It will be located across from the Durant Community Center and will be able to take care of another 272 kids. Also, our Cultural Center is reaching completion and should open in early fall. As to the answer to the question I get most often, construction is going very well for our Casino expansion and should be completed on time. This will add another 1,000 jobs and I encourage tribal members across the Nation to apply at www.choctawcareers.com for jobs within the Nation.

Thank you to our CHR's and social workers for all the hard work you do in our perspective districts. Our staff in Bryan County does an amazing job and take care of over 300 tribal members every month. Also a thank you goes out to our field rep for District 9, Mary Lee Williams. She takes care of the needs of many Tribal members each month and her efforts are very much appreciated.



James Frazier

Halito, chim achukma.

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season with hopes of a great new year. This past quarter, we had a lot of activities to attend. With Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and parties, it was a blessing to gather and fellowship with family and friends.

Here are just a few updates on some issues this past quarter. The Tribe was able to renew the Hunting and Fishing Compact for another year. We are grateful for this but were hoping for a longer time frame. Unfortunately, the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee Nations were forced to file litigation against the Governor of Oklahoma for his refusal to accept the auto-renewal of the Gaming Compact. We are hopeful that the lawsuit will be resolved quickly. With all of the mixed messages from the media, we felt the need to act to help put our gaming associates' minds at ease until a resolution to the compact can be reached. The Tribes have taken a very aggressive approach in protecting our gaming compact.

We had our annual Choctaw Nation Livestock Show the first weekend in February, with shows at Wilburton on the north end and Durant on the south end. We are so thrilled to support the 4-H and FFA livestock shows because of the life lessons of responsibility, competition, and leadership taught through participation.

One of our big focuses this year is the 2020 Census. It is so important to count EVERYONE in our communities. If you are of Choctaw descent, you will put “Choctaw Nation” in the tribal affiliation line to be calculated for the tribal head count. You may ask yourself, “Why it is so important to fill out the census?” A lot of grant applications are tied directly to the census data. For instance, the numbers from the previous census show that the Choctaw Nation has 24,000 members in 2010 as compared to the 190,000 plus that our membership department showed. The last registration required us to write CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA in the tribal affiliation line. Moving forward, they will now accept CHOCTAW NATION, which should drastically increase our numbers.

Another initiative we are working towards is the consideration of rezoning the 12 districts. I believe it has been around 25 years since the last time the areas were rezoned. A rezoning will help even out the numbers per district, per the constitutional mandate. The growth of the nation is a blessing, and we must continue to strive to manage our responsibilities along with that growth.

I wanted to give a shout out to fellow Choctaw James Winchester for his success as part of the Super Bowl-winning Kansas City Chiefs football team.

Yakoke.

Halito, Chihowa vt Achuckma!

Can you believe it is the year 2020? The Choctaw Nation had a great 2019, and we look forward to new and exciting happenings this year for our tribal members. It is a blessing to serve the Chahta people of District. 11.

We had several things going on in Pittsburg County since the new year that I would like to tell you about. New independent elderly and affordable rental homes opened at Savanna in January. The 10 IE homes were much needed, and our seniors who have moved in are very thankful for their new, energy efficient homes. Plans for 10 more to be completed later this year will give more of our most honored citizens an opportunity to live there. Princess training was offered at the community center on February 8 to prepare our young candidates for the District 11 pageant in April.

The Choctaw Nation Small Business Development program helps tribal members who own or plan to own at least 51% of a business, whether a startup, growth or retention. Congratulations to the two recent recipients of the \$5,000 forgivable loan this program offers, Grayson Smedley and Kyle Robertson. Give local Small Business Advisor David Smith a call if you're interested in the program, but first register at Choctaw Nation Small Business Services website.

Our tribe made donations to the Pittsburg County Sheriff and Police Departments in District 11. We presented the fourth quarter checks to the City of McAlester and Pittsburg County through the Choctaw Community Partnership Fund. In fiscal year 2019, the Choctaw Nation gave back over \$1.6 million to southeast Oklahoma through this fund alone. I am proud to be a member of a tribe that not only supports its people but the local communities where we live and work as well.

January 17, we hosted NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine at Durant, along with several partners of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Pilot Program. Representatives from Oklahoma State University, Bell Textron, GE Aviation, Intel Corp, University of Oklahoma and the FAA were there as we announced an agreement to add Bell to our team. This program has the potential to make a huge impact in Pittsburg county, and I plan to keep you updated.

We attended the Choctaw Nation Livestock Show in Wilburton on February 1 and 2. It is always great to see our young people work hard to raise their animals and learn responsibility by taking care of them. The Pittsburg County Livestock Show and Premium sale was Saturday, Feb. 29.

Spread the word to any tribal member who has a disability or an elder who is 70 or over that we are offering a new lawn service program this year; you can pick up applications at the community centers.

Please help your tribe in making sure all Choctaws are counted in the 2020 U.S. Census. Beginning in April, you can participate by mail, phone, choctawnation.com/2020 or Census.gov. Remember to mark AMERICAN INDIAN as your race, and print CHOCTAW NATION as your Tribe.

Chi Pisa la Chike.



Anthony Dillard



Robert Karr



James Dry



FOOD DISTRIBUTION

NOW SERVING ARKANSAS AND TEXAS COUNTIES

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

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

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

CONTACT

ANTLERS: 580-298-6443 | BROKEN BOW: 580-584-2842 | DURANT: 580-924-7773
MCALESTER: 918-420-5716 | POTEAU: 918-649-0431 | MAIN NUMBER: 800-522-6170



Choctaw Nation

Food Distribution

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NOTES AND EVENTS

Horn Family presents 43rd annual gospel singing

Featuring:
ReDefined Quartet and the Johnsons
Plus many more groups

March 28, 2020 7:00 P.M.
Bryan County Community Center
1901 S. 9th Street Durant Okla.

Emcees Bonnie Horn and Joe Wolf
580-760-4603

Annual Frazier Memorial Gospel Singing

Featuring:
ReDefined (providing sound) – Rosin Bros – Gospel Sound – And many others

March 23 6:30 p.m.
Crowder Choctaw Community Center
707 Bond St. Crowder Okla.

Choctaw Community Center Health Fairs

Mar. 4 Hugo 580-326-7551 10:00 a.m.
Mar. 11 Wright City 580-981-7011 10:00 a.m.

NEED TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS?

Contact the Choctaw Nation
Circulation Department
580.924.8280 x4028

Read the Biskinik online at
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/NEWS

Biskinik

Announcement Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

Mail to: Biskinik
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702

or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

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of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be type-written and double-spaced. You must include an address and phone number where you may be reached. Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive. Items are printed in the order received. Faxed photos will not be accepted.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK or your address needs to be changed, our Circulation Department would appreciate hearing from you at ext. 4028.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation. Circulation is monthly. Deadline for articles and photographs to be submitted is the first day of each month to run in the following month.

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

High school students who are interested in serving as pages for the Oklahoma State Legislature can apply for the High School Page Program at <https://www.okhouse.gov/Pages>. Pages are assigned for one week, Monday through Thursday, during the legislative session that begins the first Monday in February and ends the last Friday in May. Hotel accommodations and chaperones are provided. Student Pages will work with legislators in the House chamber during daily sessions and participate in the House Page Mock Legislature.

Tribal Council holds February session

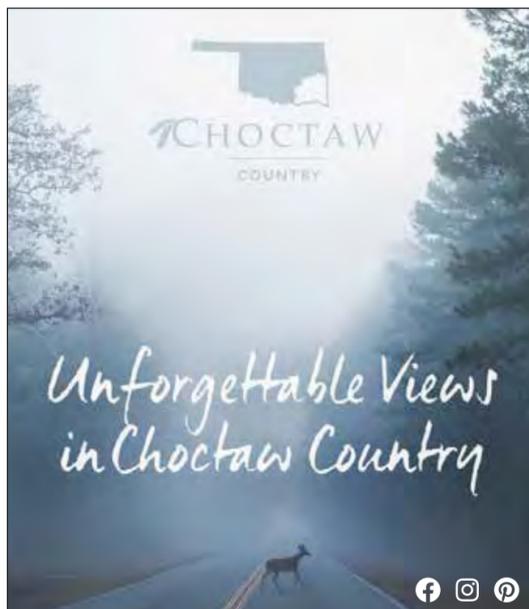
CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL
COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA
February 8, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER
 2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
 3. ROLL CALL
 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. Regular Session January 11, 2020
 5. WELCOME GUESTS/RECOGNIZE VETERAN OF THE MONTH
 - a. Henry Rodriguez, District #8 Veteran of the Month not in attendance. Will be honored at Hugo Community Center this week.
 6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
 7. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Resolution Recognizing Dr. Ian Thompson for His Service and Extensive Contribution to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - b. Approve Application for the Native American Affairs: Technical Assistance to Tribes Grant Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - c. Approve a 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 McCurtain County, OK Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - d. Approve Funding for the Construction of 60 Lease Purchase Homes, 50 Affordable Rental Housing Homes, and 10 Independent Elder Homes Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - e. Approve the Renewal of the Sand and Gravel Business Lease No. 70001 Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - f. Amend the Code of Ethics for the Executive and Legislative Departments of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - g. Approve an Amendment to Council Bill CB-105-18 to Decrease the Budget for the Expansion of the Durant Casino and Resort and Remove a New Laundry Facility from the Expansion Plans Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - h. Approve Funding for the Design and Construction of a New Central Laundry Facility Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - i. Approve the Sale of the Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Machine (Serial Number \$1050) Located in the Talihina Hospital Vote Counts: YEAs- Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 8. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
 9. OLD BUSINESS
 10. ADJOURNMENT
 11. CLOSING PRAYER
- All Council Present



Submitted Photo

A resolution was passed at the February council meeting recognizing Dr. Ian Thompson for his contributions to the Choctaw Nation.



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Broken Bow Pow-Wow

American Indian Youth Leaders Council 24th annual pow-wow

April 4, 2020

McCurtain County Sports Complex
Broken Bow, Oklahoma

11:30 a.m. Stickball Games
2:00 p.m. Gourd Dancing
5:30 p.m. Choctaw Social Dancing
6:30 p.m. Grand Entry

\$4170 in prize money

Arts & Crafts Vendors welcome! For more information, please text or email Faith Parra: (580) 306-5692, or fhparra@bbisd.org

OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance

5320 S. Youngs Blvd
Oklahoma City Okla. 73119
405-681-0869

www.facebook.com/OKChoctawTribalAlliance

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

Veterans meeting first Saturday of every month at 10 a.m.

Scholarship Opportunities 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

March Language Lesson

This lesson will consist of looking at base words and combining them with different words to create new meanings.

lua – n. a burn; a burning

pronunciation: loh-wah

- Nanta hosh lua? – What is burning?
- Chukka mvt lua hosh hikiya. – That house is (standing) burning?

lua taha - consumed with fire

pronunciation: loh-wa tah-hah

- Chukka mvt lua taha tuk. – That house was completely burned.
- Hashuk vt lua taha chi. – All the grass will be burned.

luak - n. fire

pronunciation – loh-wak

- Hattak mak osh luak ikbi tuk. – It was that man who built a fire.
- Iti shauwa ya luak pit opila. – Throw the brush onto the fire.

luak ashoboli – n. a chimney; a flue; a fireplace

pronunciation – loh-wak ah-shoh-boh-le

- Shobuta lawa hosh luak ashoboli ma kucha – There is a lot of smoke coming out of the chimney.
- Luak ashoboli ish bilika nna. – Don't get too close to the fireplace.

www.choctawschool.com

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

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

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

March 3	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 3	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 4	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 4	Atoka	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 6	Crowder	By appointment
March 10	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 10	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 11	Coalgate	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 11	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 13	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 13	Atoka	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 17	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 17	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 18	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 18	Stigler	By appointment
March 20	Coalgate	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March 24	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 25	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
March 31	Wilburton	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Call 580-326-8304 for an appointment

DURANT LIVESTOCK SHOW

Swine Show

Overall

Grand Champion: Grace Palmer
Reserve Grand Champion: Caden Goodson
Bronze Champion: Konner Daniels
Jr. Showmanship: Clancy Davis
Sr. Showmanship: Hunter Hawkins

Berk

Breed Champion: Lexi Clardy, Haworth
Reserve Breed Champion: Jasmine Latham, Cottonwood

Class I

1. Lexi Clardy, Haworth 2. Raylynn M. Parsons, Valliant 3. T'Lee Burk, Durant

Class II

1. Jasmine Latham, Cottonwood 2. Konner Daniels, Van Alystne 3. Sydni Richardson, Lindsay

Class III

1. Breyer Wagner, Tishomingo 2. Hudson Long, Dibble 3. Madison Sam, Coalgate

Chester

Breed Champion: Konner Daniels, Van Alystne
Reserve Breed Champion: Faith Palmer, Palmer Academy

Class I

1. Konner Daniels, Van Alystne 2. Clancy Davis, Bennington 3. Dayla Coker, Bennington

1. Faith Palmer, Palmer Academy 2. Rylie Coker, Rock Creek 3. Hank Bradley, Caddo

Duroc

Breed Champion: Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy
Reserve Breed Champion: Emma Thompson, Valliant

Class I

1. Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy 2. Clancy Davis, Bennington 3. Jaedyn Winters, Tupelo

Class II

1. Breyer Wagner, Tishomingo 2. Brody Daniels, Tishomingo 3. Wyatt Woods, Lexington

Class III

1. Emma G. Thompson, Valliant 2. Hunter Hawkins, Rattan 3. Khloe S. Hatcher, McAlester

Class IV

1. Jenna Traylor, Ada 2. Langston Yort, Shawnee 3. Taylor Mobbs, Tushka

Hamp

Breed Champion: Caden Goodson, Tushka
Reserve Breed Champion: Clancy Teague, Rattan

Class I

1. Kolbi D. Koesler, Pauls Valley 2. Callie Gray, Caddo 3. Rhett Tye Antu, Antlers

Class II

1. Clancy Teague, Rattan 2. Faith Palmer, Palmer Academy 3. Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy

Class III

1. Rachel Palmer, Palmer Academy 2. Kinlyn Hembree, Antlers 3. Natalie Shaw, Cottonwood

Class IV

1. Marlie Leathers, Rattan 2. Erika Medellin, Lindsay 3. Hadley Bell, Madill

Class V

1. Khloe Hatcher, McAlester 2. Lane Wood, Latta 3. Sydni Richardson, Lindsay

Class VI

1. Savannah Herndon, Soper 2. Kaylee Andrews, Colbert 3. Allie Scott, Shawnee

Class VII

1. Caden Goodson, Tushka 2. Ace Wood, Byng 3. Michael Jones, Boswell

Poland

Breed Champion: Konner Daniels, Van Alystne
Reserve Breed Champion: Kaitlyn Dufur, Durant

Class I

1. Erika Medellin, Lindsay 2. Kennedy Edwards, Maysville 3. Gracie Ward, Indianola

Class II

1. Konner Daniels, Van Alystne 2. Kaitlyn Dufur, Durant 3. Clay Stoner, Rock Creek

Spot

Breed Champion: Marlie Leathers, Rattan
Reserve Breed Champion: Blakely Tigert, Lindsay

Class I

1. Blakely Tigert, Lindsay 2. Isaac Garrison, Lone Grove 3. Holden McGahey, Madill

Class II

1. Marlie Leathers, Rattan 2. Hank Bradley, Caddo 3. Hannah Dial, Stratford

Class III

1. Dakota Mobbs, Harmony 2. Dassist May, Shawnee 3. Lathan Ballard, Latta

York

Breed Champion: Marlie Leathers, Rattan
Reserve Breed Champion: Gabby March, Antlers

Class I

1. Marlie Leathers, Rattan 2. Langston Yort, Shawnee 3. Karter Caves, Amber-Pocasset

Class II

1. Breyer Wagner, Tishomingo 2. Clay Stoner, Rock Creek 3. Brighton Lanier, Mill Creek

Class III

1. Gabby Marsh, Antlers 2. Jaelin Lyday, Caddo 3. Rylie Coker, Rock Creek

Cross

Breed Champion: Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy
Reserve Breed Champion: Caden Goodson, Tushka

Class I

1. Hadley Bell, Madill 2. Lexi Clardy, Haworth 3. Lucas Maiden, Atoka

Class II

1. Rachel Palmer, Palmer Academy 2. Brance Gray, Caddo 3. Ava Medellin, Lindsay

Class III

1. Caden Goodson, Tushka 2. Callie Gray, Caddo 3. Holden McGahey, Madill

Class IV

1. Madison Dufur, Durant 2. Kaylee Andrews, Colbert 3. Cash Clardy, Haworth

Class V

1. Rachel Palmer, Palmer Academy 2. Noah Palmer, Palmer Academy 3. Kennedy Edwards, Maysville

Class VI

1. T'Lee Burk, Durant 2. Christian Hammons, Antlers 3. Kaleb Robison, Moss

Class VII

1. Kennedy Edwards, Maysville 2. Faith Palmer, Palmer Academy 3. Hank Bradley, Caddo

Class VIII

1. Ace Wood, Byng 2. Clancy Davis, Bennington 3. Brock Daniels, Tishomingo

Class IX

1. Kaitlyn Dufur, Durant 2. Alexxys Magby, Tushka 3. Annie Thompson, Stringtown

Class X

1. Jacob Thompson, Stringtown 2. Landon Leathers, Rattan 3. Landon Leathers, Rattan

Class XI

1. Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy 2. Hunter Hawkins, Rattan 3. Langston Yort, Shawnee

Class XII

1. Caden Goodson, Tushka 2. Jaelin Lyday, Caddo 3. Noah Palmer, Palmer Academy

Class XIII

1. Gabby Marsh, Antlers 2. Addy Clay, Rattan 3. Jenna Traylor, Ada

Goat Show

Doe

Breed Champion: Jaycee Watkins, Allen
Reserve Breed Champion: McCrae Walden, Allen
Bronze Champion: Jaycee Watkins, Allen

Division I

Class I

1. McCrae Walden, Allen 2. Khloe S. Hatcher, McAlester 3. Gunner McCoy, Edmond

Class II

1. McCrae Walden, Allen 2. Colton Price, Caddo 3. Braxton Castillo, Ada

Class III

1. Diesel Cook, Moss 2. Drake McMillan, North Rock Creek 3. Rainey Davidson, Coalgate

Class IV

1. Colton Price, Caddo 2. Taryn Blankenship, Marietta 3. Maycie Brooks, Moss

Division I Champion: McCrae Walden, Allen
Reserve Division I Champion: Colton Price, Caddo

Division II

Class V

1. Carson Wheeler, Luther 2. Laney Alford, Tishomingo 3. Diesel Cook, Moss

Class VI

1. Jaycee Watkins, Allen 2. Lucas Rezner, Silo 3. Kaine Stokesberry, Ada

Class VII

1. Jaycee Watkins, Allen 2. Jaycee Watkins, Allen 3. Carson Wheeler, Luther

Class VIII

1. Jaelyn Jones, Luther 2. Anna Drinkard, Hugo 3. Raylee Arpealer, Antlers

Division II Champion: Jaycee Watkins, Allen
Division II Reserve Champion: Jaycee Watkins, Allen

Wether

Grand Champion: Berklee Gossen, NRC
Reserve Grand Champion: Lucas Rezner, Silo
Bronze Champion: Drake McMillan

Division I

Class I

1. Johnathan Jones, Mill Creek 2. McCrae Walden, Allen 3. Delaney James, Coalgate

Class II

1. Diesel Cook, Moss 2. Payton Merritt, Coalgate 3. Carson Wheeler, Luther

Class III

1. Lucas Rezner, Silo 2. Drake McMillan 3. Karsyn Flowers, Coalgate

Class IV

1. Lucas Rezner, Silo 2. Diesel Cook, Moss 3. Rebecca Brunson, Buffalo Valley

Class V

1. Berklee Gossen, NRC 2. Carson Wheeler, Luther 3. Laney Sparks, Buffalo Valley

Lamb Show

Overall

Grand Champion: Kirsten Walck, Sulphur
Reserve Grand Champion: Kaylin Young, Broken Bow
Bronze Champion: Cadey Jones, Marlow
Jr. Showman: Laney Alford, Tishomingo
Sr. Showman: Cadey Jones, Marlow

Division I

Class I

1. Leslie Daniel, Ada 2. Bracie Gray, Caddo 3. Talon Shannon, Kiowa

Class II

1. Jolie House, Kiowa 2. Marie House, Kiowa 3. Trenton Barnes, Ada

Class III

1. Hannah Maxwell, Talihiina 2. Laney Alford, Tishomingo 3. Camren Courtney, Mill Creek

Division I Champion: Hannah Maxwell, Talihiina
Reserve Division Champion: Laney Alford, Tishomingo

Division II

Class IV

1. Jace Alford, Tishomingo 2. Taos Cook, Moss 3. Bradyn Courtwright, Antlers

Class V

1. Cadey Jones, Marlow 2. Kyli Green, Broken Bow 3. Katelyn Fleming, Tecumseh

Class VI

1. Lexi Courtney, Mill Creek 2. Hazen Sparks, Buffalo Valley 3. Josie Fortner, Tupelo

Division II Champion: Cadey Jones, Marlow
Reserve Division Champion: Jace Alford, Tishomingo

Division III

Class VII

1. Kirsten Walck, Sulphur 2. Katelyn Fleming, Tecumseh 3. Cadey Jones, Marlow

Class VIII

1. Hannah Maxwell, Talihiina 2. Gracie Ward, Indianola 3. Jace Alford, Tishomingo

Class IX

1. Kaylin Young, Broken Bow 2. Cadey Jones, Marlow 3. Kirsten Walck, Sulphur

Division III Champion: Kaylin Young, Broken Bow
Division III Reserve Champion: Kristen Walck, Class VII, Sulfur

Division IV

Class X

1. Laney Alford, Tishomingo 2. Jace Alford, Tishomingo 3. Kaylin Young, Broken Bow

Class XI

1. Kirsten Walck, Sulphur 2. Bailey Cargill, Indianola 3. David Workman, Stonewall

Class XII

1. Trenton Barnes, Ada 2. Gracie Ward, Indianola 3. Ashlynn Arnold, Madill

Division IV Champion: Kirsten Walck, Sulphur
Division IV Reserve Champion: Laney Alford, Tishomingo

Heifer Show

Overall

Grand Champion: Tabitha Boyd, Kingston
Reserve Grand Champion: Kage Collins, Tishomingo
Bronze Champion: Hailey Morris, Fort Towson

English Division Breed Champion: Kage Collins, Tishomingo
Reserve Breed Champion: Kitana Campbell, Kingston

Class I

1. Landree Eaves, Atoka 2. David Workman, Stonewall 3. Tegan Davidson, Wapanucka

Class II

1. David Workman, Stonewall

Class III

1. Kage Collins, Tishomingo 2. Kitana Campbell, Kingston 3. Harmony Lee, Durant

Continental Division Breed Champion: Hailey Morris, Fort Towson
Reserve Breed Champion: Josie Fortner, Tupelo

Class I

1. Stormy Campbell, Kingston 2. Colton Ince, Lindsay

Class II

1. Jaydon King, Soper 2. Jasmine Latham, Cottonwood

Class III

1. Hailey Morris, Fort Towson 2. Caston Lackey, Vanoss 3. Kodi Hokett, Soper

Class IV

1. Emily Morris, Fort Towson 2. Harmony Lee, Durant

Class V

1. Josie Fortner, Tupelo

Brahman Division

Breed Champion: Colton Ince, Lindsay
Reserve Breed Champion: Kyle Lennon, Avery

Class I

1. Olivia Napier, Antlers

Class II

1. Colton Ince, Lindsay 2. Kye Lennon, Avery

AOB Division

Breed Champion: Tabitha Boyd, Kingston
Reserve Breed Champion: Josie Fortner, Tupelo

Class I

1. Tabitha Boyd, Tushka 2. Connor Williams, Coalgate 3. Garrett Latham, Coalgate

Class II

1. Chase Wood, Savanna 2. Jewel Parker, Tupelo 3. Jaylie Williams, Rattan

Class III

1. Tabitha Boyd, Tushka 2. Kristina Harjo, Kingston 3. Jewel Parker, Tupelo

Class IV

1. James Kellam, Silo 2. Kitana Campbell, Kingston 3. Kayden Payne, Hugo

Class V

1. Kaleigh Payne, Hugo 2. Rose Lamar, Snyder 3. Caston Lackey, Vanoss

Class VI

1. Abigail Cato, Savanna 2. Connor Williams, Coalgate 3. Tiffany Lamar, Snyder

Class VII

1. Josie Fortner, Tupelo 2. Stormy Campbell, Kingston 3. Zailey McCaslin, Clayton

Steer Show

Overall

Grand Champion: John Clancy Foran, Tushka
Reserve Grand Champion: Stetson Hall, Anadarko
Bronze Champion: Nick Northcutt, Tishomingo

Jr. Showmanship: Josie Fortner, Tupelo
Sr. Showmanship: Couy Owen, Fort Towson

English Division

Breed Champion: Tyler Shaw, Dibble
Reserve Breed Champion: Dinney Foran, Coalgate

Class I

1. Tyler Shaw, Dibble 2. Garrett Latham, Coalgate 3. Lilly Martin, Bennington

Class II

1. Dinney Foran, Coalgate 2. Emilie Richards, Milburn

Continental Division

Breed Champion: Stetson Hall, Anadarko
Reserve Breed Champion: Nick Northcutt, Tishomingo

Class I

1. Stetson Hall, Anadarko 2. Couy Owens, Fort Towson 3. Paisley Shaw, Dibble

Class II

1. Stetson Hall, Anadarko 2. Colton Richards, Tishomingo 3. Colton Richards, Tishomingo

Class III

1. Nick Northcutt, Tishomingo 2. John Clancey Foran, Tushka 3. Jaxton Fortner, Tupelo

Class IV

1. Nick Northcutt, Tishomingo

AOB Division

WILBURTON LIVESTOCK SHOW

Swine Show

Overall

Grand Champion Market Swine:
Brenna Gann, Vanoss
Reserve Grand Champion Market Swine:
Brenna Gann, Vanoss
Third Overall Market Swine: Raylee Phillips, Hartshorne
Junior Swine Showman: Leyton Jacobs, Ada
Senior Swine Showman: Grace Montgomery, Red Oak

Berk

Breed Champion: Tory Mason, Hartshorne
Reserve Breed Champion: Tanner Hambright, Spiro

Class I
1. Julian Esquivel, Jones Academy 2. Tory Mason, Hartshorne 3. Bronc Ward, Fanshawe
Class II
1. Tory Mason, Hartshorne 2. Riley Sumpter, Red Oak 3. Kaylyn Griggs, Buffalo Valley
Class III
1. Tanner Hambright, Spiro 2. Gabriella Chatke-hoodle, Jones Academy 3. Shania Peace, Haileyville

Chester

Breed Champion: Javen Sparks, Hartshorne
Reserve Breed Champion: Reed Allen, Red Oak

Class I
1. Reed Allen, Red Oak 2. Leyton Jacobs, Ada 3. Turner West, Hartshorne
Class II
1. Javen Sparks, Hartshorne 2. Jase Sparks, Hartshorne 3. Shailee Whinery, Crowder
Class III
1. Dalton Lee, Sapulpa 2. Dillon Lee, Sapulpa

Duroc

Breed Champion: Emma Jo Holland, Ft. Gibson

Reserve Breed Champion: Leyton Jacobs, Ada

Class I
1. Parker Thomas, Red Oak
Class II
1. Emma Jo Holland, Ft. Gibson 2. Madison Walker, Red Oak 3. Priscilla Trejo-Rains, Jones Academy
Class III
1. Leyton Jacobs, Ada 2. Tyler Thomason, Hartshorne 3. Molly Montgomery, Checotah
Class IV
1. Hailey Cox, Checotah 2. Kaden Dugger, Checotah 3. Wyatt Medders, Red Oak
Class V
1. Braylon Spears, Hartshorne 2. Kelson Bennett, Warner 3. Lainey Hightower, Canadian

Hamp

Breed Champion: Josie Doshier, Woodland
Reserve Breed Champion: Brenna Gann, Vanoss

Class I
1. Josie Doshier, Woodland 2. Rilee Mille, Porum 3. Kasen Krebs, Heavener
Class II
1. Braylon Spears, Hartshorne 2. Gabriella Chatke-hoodle, Jones Academy 3. Augustus Sumner, Luther
Class III
1. Tyler Thomason, Hartshorne 2. Javen Sparks, Hartshorne 3. Mackenzie Johnson, Wilburton
Class IV
1. Brenna Gann, Vanoss 2. Kimbri Huett, Whitesboro 3. Augustus Sumner, Luther
Class V
1. Hunter Johnson, Calvin 2. Caden Tilman, Crowder 3. Hunter Holden, Kinta
Class VI
1. Ashlyn Moody, Heavener 2. Destanie Logston, Jones Academy 3. Grace Montgomery, Red Oak
Class VII
1. Raylee Phillips, Hartshorne 2. Natalie Hale, Spiro 3. Taymen Vocque, Leflore

Hereford

Breed Champion: Tyler Thomason, Hartshorne
Reserve Breed Champion: Parker Thomas, Red Oak

Class I
1. Tyler Thomason, Hartshorne 2. Kensley Yandell, Heavener
Class II
1. Parker Thomas, Red Oak

Poland

Breed Champion: Madison Walker, Red Oak
Reserve Breed Champion: Wyatt Medders, Red Oak

Class I
1. Wyatt Medders, Red Oak
Class II
1. Laynee Varnell, Warner 2. Brinlee Whinery, Crowder 3. Shailee Whinery, Crowder
Class III
1. Madison Walker, Red Oak 2. Dillon Lee, Sapulpa

Spot

Breed Champion: Brenna Gann, Vanoss
Reserve Breed Champion: Leonel Lujano, Jones Academy

Class I
1. Dillon Lee, Sapulpa 2. Charity Thomas, Red Oak 3. Kelson Bennett, Warner

Class II

1. Brenna Gann, Vanoss 2. Turner West, Hartshorne 3. Luke Spradlin, Porum

Class III

1. Dalton Lee, Sapulpa 2. Jenaro Lujano, Jones Academy 3. Chloe Hutchins, Stuart

Class IV

1. Leonel Lujano, Jones Academy 2. Kensley Yandell, Heavener

York

Breed Champion: Raylee Phillips, Hartshorne
Reserve Breed Champion: Brionna Porter, Spiro

Spiro

Class I
1. Emma Jo Holland, Ft. Gibson 2. Braylon Spears, Hartshorne 3. Hailey Cox, Checotah

Class II

1. Luke Spradlin, Porum 2. Mylie Jo Campbell, Checotah 3. Riley Sumpter, Red Oak

Class III

1. Raylee Phillips, Hartshorne 2. Memree Hatcher, Clayton 3. Kimbri Huett, Whitesboro

Class IV

1. Bryleigh Clark, Spiro 2. Mia McGowen, Fanshawe 3. Leyton Walker, Whitesboro

Class V

1. Brionna Porter, Spiro 2. Taymen Vocque, Leflore

Class VI

Class VII

Class VIII

Class IX

Class X

Class XI

Class XII

Class XIII

Class XIV

Class XV

Class XVI

Class XVII

Class XVIII

Class XIX

Class XX

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Stanley Bench

Stanley "Odell" Bench, 75, passed away Jan. 5, 2020.

Odell was born Aug. 24, 1944, in Wilburton, Okla., to Charley and Danner (Stephen) Bench.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter Nikki LaVone Bench; son-in-law Dustin Ballard; granddaughter Jennifer Huff; brothers Ray and Fred Bench; sisters Faye Mullins, Violet White and Starley Loftis.

Odell is survived by wife Hope (Pearson) Bench; daughters Sandy Bench, Danna Huff and spouse Farlan; sisters Pauline Groggins and Betty Cox; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and a host of friends.

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

**Hiram Rowdy Simpson**

Hiram Rowdy Simpson, 44, passed away Jan. 24, 2020.

Hiram was born Feb. 12, 1975, in Fort Polk, LA., to Chip and Debee Simpson.

He is survived by wife Jennifer; his parents; sons Preston, Chance, Chandler and wife Miranda, and Austin; daughter Ainsley; sisters Charity Lively and spouse Paul, and Michelle Tyson and spouse Mike; nephews Tyler, Matthew and Justin; nieces Julia and Victoria; and many other relatives and loved ones.

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

**Thelma Carter**

Thelma "Tink" Cariker, 87, passed away Dec. 27, 2019.

Tink was born May 11, 1932, in Bokoshe, Okla., to Beulah Marie Thomas and Turner (T.A.) Cariker Sr.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister Ladosca "Dot" Cariker; brothers Irby Cariker, Doyle Cariker, T.A. Cariker Jr., and Leon "Butch" Cariker; husband Chester "Chet" Hulsey; and daughter Connie Sue Rivera.

Tink is survived by daughters Cherry DuLaney and Albert Franklin; Jan Allis Cariker and Terry Lister and spouse Andrew; sons Bob DuLaney and spouse Pam, Ronnie Hulsey, 11 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren; and other family and friends.

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

**Kyle Wayne Leach**

Kyle Wayne Leach, 52, passed away Dec. 22, 2019.

Kyle was born Feb. 6, 1967, in Talihina, Okla., to Christopher J. and Wanda (Moore) Leach.

He was preceded in death by his father; grandmother Katherine Shoop; and numerous aunts and uncles.

Kyle is survived by son Caleb Killough and girlfriend Kristin; his mother; sisters Lisa James, Juanita Sanchez and spouse Vidal, and Tanya Leach; brothers Christopher Leach Jr. and Gary "Chubbs" Leach; nephew Chris Smith; nieces Gail Colwell and spouse Jacob, Kasey Leach, Amanda Glass, Jessie Jo Sanchez; great-nephews Cooper, Case and Carson Colwell; great-niece Della Colwell; and a host of aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

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

**George Robert Webster**

George Robert Webster, 64, passed away Jan. 7, 2020.

George was born March 11, 1955, in Coalgate, Okla., to John and Claretta (Wood) Webster.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers Cecil Nicholson and David Nicholson.

George is survived by wife Joanna Webster; daughters Mahli Webster and Bethanie Webster; stepchildren Rainbow Denham and Kenneth Kash; brothers James Nicholson, Sam Webster and Kirk Webster; sister Debbie Fagan; grandchildren Audrey Denham, Aaron Denham, Henry Denham, Logan Kash, and Kenleigh Kash; and a host of other family and friends.

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

**Charlene Hawkins**

Charlene Hawkins, 74, passed away July 13, 2019.

Charlene was born Nov. 30, 1944, in Talihina, Okla., to Buster and Wilma (Bacon) Burris.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Leon, Isaac, Buster Jr., and Richard; sisters Oleta Lafountain, Wynema Loring, and Deloris Cameron.

Charlene is survived by spouse Clinton Hawkins; children Clint Jr., Pamela Johns, Keith, Kent, Anthony Enriquez and Bruce Enriquez; grandchildren Toby, Tara and Trey Hawkins, Skylar, Patrick, Joshua and Mallory Hawkins, Jeffery, Jessica and Anthony Jr. Enriquez, Stormi and Shadoe Enriquez; great-grandchildren Kansas Bronson, Carter and Kenadie Johns, Avery and Zoey Demoss, and Aiden and Kannon Enriquez; sister Joan Cowden; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

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

**Lena Joys (LeFlore) Frazier**

Lena Joys (LeFlore) Frazier, 65, passed away Jan. 1, 2020.

Lena was born May 2, 1954, in Coalgate, Okla., to Abel Paul and Rebakah (Jones) LeFlore.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother Glen LeFlore; sister Margie Gibson; and nephew Douglas Cole.

Lena is survived by sons Gregory Frazier, Jason Frazier and spouse Tiffany and Ronald Buck; daughters Jaylana Frazier, and Rana Frazier; grandchildren Alisha Frazier, Becka Frazier, Cadence Frazier, Carter Frazier, Amelia Frazier, Elliott Frazier Buck, Jerry Buck, Sungie Buck, and Regan Buck; sisters Naomi LeFlore, Mary LeFlore, Sharon LeFlore, Shirley Cummins and spouse Randy; brother Myron LeFlore; and numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and many dear friends.

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

**Glenda Rae Brooks**

Glenda Rae (Green) Brooks, 86, passed away Jan. 12, 2020.

Glenda was born Jan. 19, 1933, in Broken, Okla., to Ted and Laura (Benson) Green.

She was preceded in death by her parents; three infant siblings; sisters Aileen Berry and Lavelle Chapman; and brother Ted Green.

Glenda is survived by daughter Rhonda Mitchell and spouse Steve; son Steven Small and spouse Janet; grandchildren Melissa Hightower and spouse Kelly, Kathryn Johnson and spouse Bryan, and Stephanie Dickerson and spouse Chastin; great-grandchildren Carley and Lainey Hightower, Chloe Dickerson, Laklyn Johnson, Aubree Brojakowski, Chastin Dickerson Jr., and Kandon Johnson; sister-in-law Wanda Green; brother-in-law Bob Chapman; and numerous nieces and nephews.

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

**Donna Sue Bartee**

Donna Sue Bartee, 76, passed away Jan. 18, 2020.

Donna was born March 10, 1943, in Madill, Okla., to Otto Mahaney and Dorothy Buckholts Mahaney.

She was preceded in death by her parents; father-in-law and mother-in-law Hubert and Cris Bartee.

Donna is survived by husband Ronny Bartee; son Chris Bartee; daughter Jody McGowan and husband Peter; grandchildren Will Bartee, Wyatt Bartee, Christian McGowan, Joseph McGowan and Anna McGowan; and sisters Connie Hartin and Vicky Howell.

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

**Jewell Dean Holmes**

Jewel Dean (Brown) Holmes Lidey, 77, passed away Jan. 15, 2020.

Jewel was born Feb. 3, 1942, in Forrester, Okla., to Walter Owen and Maggie (Watson) Brown.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Joseph L. Holmes; daughter Lindagale Holmes; eight sisters and six brothers.

Jewel is survived by daughters Kimberly Howell and spouse Dale, Dorothy Couch and husband Terry, and Joquetta Waters and husband William; sons Pat Forbes and spouse Jennifer, and Joseph Holmes and spouse Stephanie; thirteen grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

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

**Gay Gower**

Gay Gower, 86, passed away Jan. 12, 2020.

Gay was born Aug. 1, 1933, in Lindsay, Okla., to O.L. and Mable (Thomas) Green.

She was preceded in death by husband Gene Gower; parents O.L. and Mable Green; brother A.R. "Buck" Green; and sister-in-law Cleo M. Green.

Gay is survived by sons Andy Gower and spouse Sue, and Grant Gower and spouse Paula; grandchildren Ty and Natalie Gower, Allyson Gower, Matthew Gower, Cami and Garrett Sayre, and Macy Gower; great-grandchildren Greyson Gower, Chloe Gower and Melody Sayre; brother Thom Green and spouse Peggy; and many loving friends and extended family.

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

**Gerald Frank Williams**

Gerald Frank Williams, 80, passed away Jan. 9, 2020.

Gerald was born Feb. 11, 1939, in Coalgate, Okla., to Udell and Frank Williams.

He was preceded in death by wife Beverly Liddle Williams; his parents; and brothers Danny Williams, Chuck Williams and Floyd Williams.

Gerald is survived by daughters Carol Orton and spouse John, Sheri Stinnett and spouse Pete, Lori Williams, and Kathy Bingham and spouse Greg; son Keith Williams and spouse Nancy; 20 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild; sisters Norma Gregg and spouse Donnie, Ruby Wilson and spouse Doug, and Sandra Howard and spouse Jimmy.

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

**Lee Lawrence Jr.**

Lee "Roy" Lawrence Jr., 59, passed away Dec. 13, 2019.

Roy was born March 14, 1960, in Modesto, Calif., to Lee Roy Lawrence Sr. and Jessie Mae (Lung) Lawrence.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brothers Kennedy Lawrence and Russell Lawrence.

Roy is survived by sisters Charlotte Heady, Dora Carlile, Betsie Hunter, and Loretta Manasco; brother David Lawrence of Hugo; numerous nieces and nephews, along with many other relatives and friends.

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

**James Allen Smith**

James Allen Smith, 45, passed away Jan. 22, 2020.

James was born May 16, 1974, in Talihina, Okla., to Madonna Sue Reed and Loyd H. Smith.

He was preceded in death by twin sister Jane Smith; brother Richard Thompson; and grandmother Gladys Johnson.

James is survived by his mother; stepfather Loyd Matthews; brothers Jeffery Smith and Clayton Thompson; sister Preslee Reed; and niece Jessica.

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

**Pearl Mae Lewis**

Pearl Mae Lewis, 88, passed away Jan. 6, 2020.

Pearl was born Oct. 12, 1931, in Fort Towson, Okla., to Roberson and Rhoda (Frazier) Tims.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Noah; daughter Linda; parents; three brothers; and one sister.

Pearl is survived by sons Alvin Lewis, Frederick Lewis and spouse Leandra; daughters Peggy Lewis-Jasper and spouse Steven, and Patty Lewis-Thompson and spouse Ricky; grandchildren Bryana, Brittany and Steven Jasper Jr., Kaleb, Kayla and Christopher Thompson, Drew and Cara Lewis; great-grandchild Aubree; brother Don Tims and spouse Shirley; as well as many other loving family and friends.

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

**Martha Ellen (Pebworth) Pierce**

Martha Ellen (Pebworth) Pierce, 88, passed away Jan. 10, 2020.

Martha was born March 19, 1931, in Boswell, Okla., to Lee Pebworth and Lura (Edrington) Pebworth.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister Margaret Oswald; brothers Joe Pebworth and Art Pebworth; and grandson Jacob Pierce.

Martha is survived by husband Elmer; son Mike Pierce; daughter Lana Casey and spouse David; brothers Larry Pebworth and Jerry Pebworth; grandchildren Shonda Casey, Mary Hitchcock, Amy Pierce, Michael Bryan Pierce, Patrick Pierce, Courtney Anderson, Joe Pierce, and Jesse Pierce; numerous great-grandchildren; special caregivers Vera Caraway and Vicky Ray; and numerous family and friends.

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

**Willis Ray McGuire**

Willis Ray McGuire, 86, passed away Jan. 24, 2020.

Willis was born Aug. 14, 1933, in Davis, Okla., to Emery Willis and Grace Helen (Francies) McGuire.

He was preceded in death by wife Delores; his parents; and sister Kay.

Willis is survived by daughters Vanessa McGuire and Patricia Williams and spouse Paul; son Aaron McGuire and spouse Katrina; grandchildren Jeremy Williams, Jake Williams, Adam Barnes, Cole McGuire, Sam McGuire, Misty Devine and Justin Boyer; 15 great-grandchildren, cousin O.G. McGuire; and nephew Michael Parnell.

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

**Raymond Lee Thomas**

Raymond Lee Thompson, 71, passed away Jan. 18, 2020.

Raymond was born Sept. 25, 1948, in Talihina, Okla., to Ramsey Thompson Sr. and Mary Ann Baker-Thompson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Geneva Morgan; brothers Folsom Perry, Eulius Perry, Darrell Thompson, Walter Ray Wright, Pat Thompson Sr., Jonas Thompson Jr., Ramsey Lee Thompson Jr., and Jimmy Willis. Raymond is survived by wife Maxine; daughters Raylene Echohawk, and Shawneen Little Axe-Thompson; sisters Iola Beaver, Eulema Thompson-Holman, Evylena Thompson, Yvonne Thompson-Arriola, and Carolyn Harris; numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

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

**Mary Elizabeth Robertson**

Mary Elizabeth (Springman) Robertson, 84, passed away Jan. 24, 2020.

Mary was born Oct. 17, 1935, in Lindsay, Okla., to William and Julia (Tecumseh) Springman.

She was preceded in death by husband Troy Robertson; brother John Springman; brothers-in-law John Howell and Clifford Robertson; sisters-in-law Virginia Graham and Carmelitta Menas; and son-in-law Terry Branch.

Mary is survived by sons William Robertson and spouse Cathy, and Darrell Robertson and spouse Lanette; daughters Teresa Brown and spouse Tommy, and Karen Branch; brothers Gene Springman and David Springman and spouse Hazel; sister Thelma Howell; brother-in-law James Robertson and spouse Carolyn; sister-in-law Lynda Boyer and spouse Glenn; 23 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; and numerous aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins.

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





65 years for Young

Jimmie and Loretta (Humphreys) Young celebrate their 65th anniversary this month. They were married Feb. 7, 1955.

Their children Terence Young, Tim Young and spouse Dorothy, Tony Young, Tim Mills and spouse Angela, Tina Sims and spouse Greg, and Jo Young; along with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren would like to wish them a very happy anniversary. Jimmie and Loretta reside in Buffalo Valley, Okla.

Smith celebrates 91 years



Geneva Jane Duncan Smith celebrated her 91st birthday on Christmas Eve with her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchild and friends at her home in Fanshawe, Okla.

Geneva was born Dec. 24, 1928 to Martin and Ethel Lewis Duncan. Ethel was an original enrollee of the Choctaw Nation.

Sells wins Grand Champion Market Goat



Cody Sells, a Junior at Thrall High School in Thrall, Texas, won Grand Champion Market Goat at the National Western Livestock show in Denver, Colorado.



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Atterberry helps missing man return home

By Shelia Kirven

A missing New York man is now back home with his family thanks to the observant and compassionate nature of a Choctaw Gaming associate.

Ford Atterberry, a security officer who has worked for Choctaw Gaming Center in Durant for four years, became aware of a gentleman who was repeatedly coming to the casino's lost and found station asking to use the phone to contact family members. Atterberry stated that it is not unusual for people to come by and ask to use the phone, especially hotel guests, but he noticed that the gentleman was always wearing the same clothing each time and that he kept coming back asking to make calls to his family.

After visiting with the man, Atterberry discovered that his name was Vince, and he had been living out of his vehicle for several years, but his truck was no longer running. He had been trying to contact his uncle and sister who lived in New York for help but was unable to reach them. A manager at the casino tried working on the truck but was not successful in getting it to run. When casino employees were not able to assist with vehicle repair, the man was given time to remove the vehicle from tribal property.

After several days, Officer Atterberry noticed that Vince was losing weight and realized he was not eating. He knew he needed to step in and help.

The next day, Atterberry started talking to Vince about his family in New York. Vince gave Atterberry his family members' names and phone numbers, and Atterberry agreed to try and help call them. He could not locate Vince's uncle but was successful in getting in touch with his sister. Atterberry said with today's scams and telemarketers, he was surprised she answered an unknown phone number. Once he began talking to Vince's sister, she shared with him that the family had reported her brother missing quite a few years ago and that they had not heard from him for a very long time. She was surprised and very happy to learn that he was alive.

Atterberry offered to assist Vince's sister with getting her brother back home if she sent the money for his transportation since his vehicle wouldn't work. At that time, she was unable to do so. This didn't stop Atterberry's determination to help Vince. He offered to pay for the transportation himself. He got information from Vince's sister as to where the closest bus station was to her home. He then called Greyhound Bus Lines and arranged to purchase a ticket to get his new friend home. He also got Vince some clean clothes and fed him a good meal before putting him on the bus to his destination.

Vince would have to change buses several times during the trip, but Atterberry stayed in touch with



Photo by Deidra Elrod

Greyhound Bus Lines. Because they knew the situation, they were able to keep Atterberry updated, letting him know Vince got on each bus safely.

The two men now stay in touch monthly, and Atterberry is proud of the improvements he hears about when they talk. He said that his new friend is living with his sister and has gotten a job and is doing well.

When asked if Vince's family was able to pay him back for the expenses, he said, "No, but I'm not worried about that." He went on to say, "It changed his life. He's living. I don't know how much longer he would have made it on the streets."

Before Vince returned to New York, he confided in Atterberry many of the unfortunate events he had experienced since he had been homeless. Their communication was often difficult because Vince had a very heavy accent, which made it hard for them to understand each other, but they continued trying.

"He kept on talking about life and death," Atterberry remembered. "I was like, do you want to live, or do you want to die? He said he wanted to live."

"He didn't smoke, he didn't drink. He didn't seem like he did drugs," Atterberry said. "And that's why I was so open to taking him under my wing and seeing what I could do for him. He wasn't a troublemaker at all. I think he just needed a little extra shove."

When remembering what it was like putting him on the bus to go home to New York, Atterberry said, "He hugged me and was shaking and crying, and I knew he appreciated it. That was enough for me."

Rowley awarded Fulbright grant, will research in Dublin

Chayla Rowley has been awarded a Fulbright grant to study and conduct research for one year at Dublin City University in Ireland.

Rowley graduated from Colorado University, Boulder with a bachelor's and master's in civil engineering and will complete a master's in refugee integration. Her focus will be on integration through STEM-based activities.

Growing up with an awareness of her Choctaw heritage, and hearing stories of the money raised to help the victims of the Irish Famine in the 1840's, Rowley is excited for this opportunity to study in Ireland.



Chayla Rowley, left, and Jessica Militante at the Kindred Spirits monument in Cork, Ireland. Militante is in Ireland as the first recipient of Chahta's foundation joint sponsorship with Ireland.



Jackson Daniel Bohanon

Jackson Daniel Bohanon was born Dec. 31, 2019, in Longmont, Colorado. He weighed 5 pounds, 10 ounces and was 18.75 inches long.

Jackson is the son of Abigail and Damian Bohanon of Longmont, Colo. He is the grandson of Claudine and Sky Bohanon of Smithville, Okla., and great-grandson of Ruthie and Randel Bohanon, also of Smithville.

Henry Rodriguez Veteran of the Month



Henry Rodriguez, (District 8), was the Choctaw Nation Veteran of the Month for February.

Rodriguez served in the United States Army as a Private First Class from October 1961 to October 1963. PFC Rodriguez was stationed in Oakland, Calif., then Thailand, where he served as a machine operator.

Hearon celebrates 100 years



Jim Freeman Hearon, College Station, TX., turned 100 on Jan. 22. He was born to Walter and Essie Hearon in Rubottom, Okla.

Jim is a World War II Veteran. He married Nadine Brinttle June 14, 1941. The couple have three children; son Timmy Dean Hearon, and daughters June Pottberg and Ginger

Melton. Their grandchildren are Kim Johnson, Robert Pottberg, Carl Layton and Jimmie Johnson.

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ITI FABVSSA

Commerce department continues long legacy of economic adaption

Over the next few months, Iti Fabvssa will reflect on each division of our executive branch of government: Legal & Compliance, Strategic Development, Commerce, Integrated Services and Tribal Services. While our needs today differ from the past, these services have deep roots in our Choctaw history. This month's article focuses on Choctaw Nation's Division of Commerce.

Breaking ground on the casino expansion in Spring 2019, the Choctaw Nation embarked on a major project to help provide for Choctaw people as well as the local economy in southeastern Oklahoma. Gaming is just one of the many business endeavors that falls under the direction of the Division of Commerce. As part of the Executive Branch, this division is responsible for the Choctaw Nation's businesses. With revenue from these projects, Choctaw leadership then makes decisions about how to spend and manage this money in ways to provide the widest possible range of services for Choctaw people and others living in our territory. While casinos, travel plazas, and commercial pecan farms are relatively new parts of Choctaw life, they are part of a long legacy of economic adaptation and participation with the wider world. The Commerce division ensures that people see Choctaws as a modern and dynamic people. We have adapted to a constantly changing landscape while holding onto the values that make us Choctaw.

Choctaw politics, economics and social life are all interconnected and informed by our philosophies of life. Generosity and reciprocity were and continue to be core values for us. We measured the worthiness of our chiefs by their ability to make sure every family had enough food, clothes, and other necessary items to live. Generosity regarding the redistribution of food and goods was the mark of a good leader. Leaders who accumulated goods for themselves were considered poor leaders and that would lead Choctaws to no longer support them. Today's Choctaw Nation still abides by these principles although we see it in different forms.

These values of generosity also informed our historic practices of diplomacy. Prior to European arrival, Choctaws had a vast trade network ranging from the Eastern Woodlands to Mesoamerica, which brought items like corn and copper that we have since made our own. When Europeans came to the Americas and wanted to trade with us, Choctaws taught Europeans our practice of gift-giving. While the English tried to impose their economic system that centered on markets and creating products for sale in them, we chose to deal more with the French since they respected and abided by our gift-giving protocol. Over time, the relationship with the French moved from solely gift-giving into a formal trade relationship. As part of a trading economy, Choctaws provided furs while Europeans brought guns, metal tools and other finished products. While European empires competed for dominance across the globe and in Choctaw homelands, Choctaws used European competition against them. This also provided us with an opportunity to learn from European innovations to improve our own technologies. But as European colonial power strengthened and spread across the Americas, Choctaws and all Indigenous people across the continent had to deal with the ramifications of colonialism.

Land was severely impacted by European colonialism and induced Choctaws to change their economic systems and reorganize social roles to ensure our survival. In particular, environmental changes to the availability of plants and animals that Choctaws had relied upon made getting food from hunting less reliable. European demand for fur led to over-hunting and soon Choctaw hunters had to find new items to trade in order to participate in the early market economy. As a result of these changes, Choctaw men largely turned to raising livestock, moving them away from their traditional roles. Less able to rely on the land as they had done since time immemorial, Choctaws became more reliant on the market economy. Nevertheless, the shift towards greater engagement with European-style markets had a different impact on Choctaw women who had been affected by shifting social relations due to the introduction of European roles for women and men.



Elias Jacob of Hugo and his family showing their home-grown and home-canned fruits and vegetables. Photo courtesy of the 1916 Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes, Five Civilized Tribes, Central Classified Files 1907-1939, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

Choctaw women became actively involved in markets. Learning from and drawing on European traditions of cloth-making, Choctaw women innovated new methods of production and designs for Choctaw pottery, basketry and fabrics. Once Choctaws had made sure their communities had their necessities, they sold any remaining items in markets. Whether selling vegetables in town markets like those in New Orleans or firewood and cooking vessels in the countryside, Choctaw women were constantly engaged in production. Choctaw women's artisanal work created new demands for products which made them a powerful force in shaping European production practices. Their work also helped Choctaws become less reliant on European trade products. Choctaws' ability to make their own cloth became so important that in treaties, including the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, Choctaws requested textile tools and equipment. In this way, Choctaw women were important historical actors in helping us to adapt to the market economy.

Choctaw interaction with European traders and settlers also pushed us toward agricultural practices focused on growing crops solely for sale at markets. Learning from European and American settlers, some Choctaws established their own plantations. This was vastly different from Choctaw practices of subsistence agriculture where we cultivated just enough food to help us get through lean times. Following European arrival in the Americas, our changes in economic activity were partially the result of our traditional methods of acquiring food becoming less available. In addition to changes to the land, European and American colonial powers forced us to make other adaptations that have had a lasting legacy for us today.

Choctaw participation in the market economy was also important because it helped to counter the idea that Choctaws were incapable of being a "civilized" people. European and American intellectuals like Thomas Jefferson circulated the idea that Indigenous peoples were "savages" and had no understanding of how to "properly" use land. This false claim would later justify Euro-American settlers' violent seizure of Indigenous peoples' lands. Choctaws responded by starting their own farms in order to prove Europeans and their ideas of "Indian savagery" wrong. This history of Choctaw transition into the market economy is in part why Choctaws are called one of the Five Civilized Tribes. Learning and appropriating European ideas about markets and private property were strategies undertaken by Choctaws to help us maintain control of our lands from encroaching Euro-American settlers who wanted our lands for themselves. While this ultimately did not stop the U.S. government from removing us from our homelands, Choctaws learned an important lesson in how to deal with the changing world.

Today, the Division of Commerce, the economic arm of the Choctaw Nation's executive branch, actively engages in various economic activities to ensure that the Choctaw Nation has revenue necessary to provide for Choctaw people. In 2018, the Choctaw Nation had an economic impact of \$2,374,645,710 and supported 16,974 jobs in Oklahoma. While the production and commercial activity that defines much of modern life today is a feature of the market economy which did not exist prior to the arrival of French and British traders in North America, our ability to adapt is enduring and has ensured our survival into the present. Furthermore, just as Choctaws had extensive trade networks prior to European arrival, the Choctaw Nation's Division of Commerce contemporary successes show us how we are following in our ancestors' footsteps and how we have maintained our values throughout time.

In the upcoming articles, we will reflect more on the ways that the divisions of Choctaw Nation's Executive Branch carry on ancient and important functions to the benefit of our community today. For more information, please contact Megan Baker at 580-924-8280 ext. 2377 or meganb@choctawnation.com. To read past issues of the Iti Fabvssa, visit <http://choctawnation.com/history-culture/history/iti-fabvssa>.

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Choctaw Nation Youth Events & Activities

Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

We have an exciting new program beginning April 1, designed to assist our elders and those with ambulatory disabilities -- a lawn care program to help with the high price of mowing your yard!

To be eligible you must be a Choctaw tribal member least 70 years old or have a documented ambulatory disability and meet low income guidelines. You will be eligible if you own your home and also if you rent your home but are liable for lawn care. Once eligibility is established you will be given booklet of 20 vouchers. Each voucher will be worth \$25.

This program will be similar to the storm shelter program. You will give the voucher to the person you choose to mow your yard who will then redeem it with the Housing Authority. You can choose anyone you want to mow your yard as long as they are at least 16 years of age.

As an example, if your yard costs \$45 to mow, you would give the mower a \$25 voucher and \$20 to pay for the service, saving you over half of what you would pay for lawn care last year. There will be enough vouchers to mow your lawn on average every ten days from April 1 through October. So, even though you may need to mow weekly in May and June, you may only need four total vouchers through July and August. This gives you the flexibility to use them as you need them.

Contact Derek Wesley at the Housing Authority (580-326-7521) if you have questions or need an application. Applications are also online and at your local community centers.

Choctaw Nation
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Choctaw Nation Outreach Services

Choctaw Nation helps tribal youth on journey to wellness

By Kendra Germany-Wall

It is no secret that America has a criminal justice problem. Nationally, there are 2.3 million people in correctional facilities, according to the Prison Policy Initiative. According to a U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics report, about 1 in 38 adults were under some form of correctional supervision at year-end in 2016. This includes parole and probation. An estimated 6,613,500 people were under correctional supervision on Dec. 31, 2016.

Adults are not the only ones involved in the criminal justice system, however. Youth are also part of some staggering statistics.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, every day, 48,000 youth are held in facilities away from home as a result of juvenile or criminal justice involvement. The National Center for Juvenile Justice shows that, during a single year, an estimated 2.1 million youth under the age of 18 are arrested in the United States. Though overall rates have been declining, approximately 1.7 million delinquency cases are heard in juvenile courts annually.

Since 2000, the total number of youth in confinement has fallen by 60%. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 728,280 juvenile arrests were made in 2018.

However, excluding Indian Country facilities, American Indians make up 3% of girls and 1.5% of boys in juvenile facilities, despite comprising of less than 1% of the youth population nationally.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma recognized this issue, and in fiscal year 2017, applied for and received the Tribal Juvenile Healing to Wellness grant to help address the issue.

According to their website, the Tribal Juvenile Healing to Wellness Program is “an individualized and holistically framed judicial process that provides collaborative, therapeutic, culturally integrative judicial process for tribal youth who are engaged in delinquent behaviors and suffer from addiction to alcohol or illicit substances.”

Their mission is to increase individual and community safety by holding youth accountable for delinquent behaviors, while also providing therapeutic processes within a culturally supportive framework.

To date, the Choctaw Nation has received \$350,000 from the Healing to Wellness grant.

The goal of this program is to divert juvenile tribal members from Oklahoma and Choctaw Nation justice systems into a healing program that engages individualized, culturally compatible treatment services. Choctaw Nation Reintegration oversees this juvenile program.

According to Kevin Hamil, Director of the Choctaw Nation Reintegration Program, the Reintegration program has been contacted 360 times in just 2 ½ years for juvenile related cases.

“If a minor comes in contact with law enforcement, due to some kind of crime they’ve committed, then that referral gets sent to the Office of Juvenile Affairs. The Office of Juvenile Affairs then contacts the district attorney and says, ‘we recommend probation.’ For the first time in history, juveniles and their families have the opportunity to be diverted away from state probation, and work through the Healing to Wellness Program,” explained Hamil.

Hamil went on to describe the benefits of going through the Healing to Wellness program, as op-

posed to state probation.

According to Hamil, if participants succeed, then they will meet the state’s requirements and will not need to serve probation or have a criminal record.

In 2015, House Bill 1834 was signed into law, making the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Services legally responsible for notifying tribes when they complete an intake with a tribal member.

Once the Office of Juvenile Services notifies the Choctaw Nation, they step into action to get that young person back on track.

“We get calls every week that a Choctaw child has been involved in some kind of criminal behavior,” said Hamil.

Hamil pointed out that early intervention is essential to help keep recidivism rates down and prevent these children from committing crimes as an adult.

“What we know is, 40% of incarcerated adults say that they were juvenile offenders. So, one of the things that we thought of is, why should we wait until they are adults to intervene?”

Participants in this program go through many of the same steps as the adults in the reintegration program do.

“When they successfully complete the program, we’re going to track them at six months and again at one year, to see what kind of meaningful change happens,” stated Hamil. “We can do things differently than the state can. I’m not saying that to disparage the state. They’re lending their resources and are partnering with us. We wouldn’t be able to do this if the state wasn’t willing to make these referrals to us.”

According to Hamil, culture is one of the most important differences that the tribe can offer, that the state cannot.

“We can impart culture, positive behavioral changes and different kinds of incentives. The structure of the program looks a lot different based on what resources are within the Choctaw Nation,” explained Hamil. “You’re not having to go to the state agency. I would imagine that Choctaw families feel so much more comfortable coming to a place that they already know, and meeting with people whom they feel that they can trust.”

Hamil went on to explain how the program not only helps the young person but their family as well.

“We work with at-risk kids who are facing criminal charges or are having any issues. We offer case management for referrals and assist families in what to expect when they get involved with the criminal justice system,” said Hamil.

Hamil also stated that the hearts of the individuals working for the program are in the right place to make it successful.

“Typically, our heart is to help people that others oftentimes don’t want to deal with,” said Hamil.



“Yes, we have dollars to help people. However, I think one thing we offer that is so much more meaningful and valuable, is that we believe that they can change their lives.”

Hamil reiterated the importance of having a support system as one of the factors of success.

“When they come in, we tell them that we are here to help, not just hand them stuff, but to make their lives better. We believe in them,” stated Hamil. “The fear and anxiety go down a little for them, knowing that they’re not doing this by themselves. Having someone that believes in you makes you feel less alone.”

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March 2020

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Closed: March 27-31.

Participants can request a calendar at their location.

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Nutrition ed. and food demo March 2 and 18, 10:00-1:00

MCALESTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716

Nutrition ed. and food demo March 10 and 19, 10:00-1:00

POTEAU 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431

Nutrition ed. and food demo March 11 and 26, 10:00-1:00

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Teen Dating Violence Awareness

February was Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

- 1 in 3 teens will experience abuse in their romantic relationships, including verbal and mental abuse
- Nearly 80% of girls who have been physically abused in their intimate relationships continue to date their abuser.
- Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner each year.

Outreach Services Victims Services promoted awareness of Teen Dating Violence in the month of February 2020 by placing orange ribbons on trees outside the Tribal Services Building in Hugo. They also promoted a wear orange day on Feb. 11.

If you or someone you know needs help, please call Outreach Services Victim Services at 877-285-6893 or 580-326-8304.

Vicki Perez, Director Project Empower; Tasha Mitchell, Director Project SERV; Teola Maytubby, Director; Linda Goodwin, Senior Director.

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- 10th Heavener - Chamber of Commerce building
- 12th Clayton - Choctaw Country Market
- 13th Heavener - Chamber of Commerce building
- 17th Heavener - Chamber of Commerce building
- 19th Heavener - Chamber of Commerce building
- 20th Heavener - Chamber of Commerce building
- 24th Heavener - Chamber of Commerce building
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- 1 1/2 lbs wild salmon fillet (with or without skin)
- 1 large crushed garlic clove
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- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp minced fresh parsley or dill
- 2 tbsp salted butter
- 1 large crushed garlic clove
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp minced fresh parsley or dill

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Tear 2 pieces of foil and 1 piece of unbleached parchment paper longer than the width of a large baking sheet. Line the baking sheet with foil horizontally overlapping each other and place parchment vertically on top.
2. Place salmon fillet onto parchment paper, distribute olive oil on top evenly and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Fold parchment paper over the salmon. Then fold the sides of the foil covering the salmon completely and sealing the packet closed (very important!). Bake for 20 minutes.
4. Closer to the end of baking time, melt butter and mix with garlic and lemon juice. Brush over cooked salmon (open that packet carefully – it’s hot), sprinkle with parsley or dill, cut into 5 pieces and serve.

<https://ifoodreal.com/healthy-salmon-recipes/print/39812/>

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

Building Healthy Families Through Good Nutrition

Choctaw Nation census approaches a historic first

By Bradley Gernand

The Choctaw Nation's approach to solving a serious regional difficulty is being noted by the United States Census Bureau as a "first" by any tribe in the United States.

Preparations for the 2020 United States Census are underway across the country, in some places more energetically than others. In the 2010 census, many regions, including most of Oklahoma, were underreported. Many households failed to turn in their census forms and the people living in them were not counted. This was especially true of southeastern Oklahoma.

Because its official population count was low for these communities, the federal government reduced the amount of aid allocated to this region. This is true, too, both of the Choctaw Nation, which relies on federal grants for 24% of its operating budget, and of the 10½ counties which comprise it.

The Choctaw Nation's response to the issue is historic, according to the United States Census Bureau. "Nobody else is doing what you are doing," said Charles Tippeconnic, the Census Bureau's official liaison to the Choctaw Nation. "No other tribe is taking an active role in helping the cities and counties inside their service territories organize for the census. You are taking partnership to an entirely new level," Tippeconnic said.

This is for good reason.

"We want all of Oklahoma to fare the best it can," said Chief Gary Batton. "We all live, work, shop, go to school and contribute to our communities," he added. "I absolutely believe a successful census will be important to increasing our prosperity during the next ten years, and beyond."

Chief Batton established a steering group and began organizing the Choctaw Nation's efforts for the upcoming census in the summer of 2019. The group planned a major effort to reach out to every Choctaw tribal member regardless of where they live. It quickly discovered the same was not true in the 10½ counties, where less local planning was underway. Only the towns of Broken Bow, Durant, and McAlester were organizing to ensure a successful Census.

"Many citizens didn't fill out their census forms in 2010 because nobody told them how important it is. As a result, many people went uncounted and their cities and counties have received far less federal aid for the past ten years than they should have," said Melissa Landers, a member of Chief Batton's steering group.

In McCurtain County, the Choctaw Nation helped Idabel organize a committee, and then helped it and Broken Bow consolidate their efforts into a single, county-wide campaign to include the towns of Valliant and Wright City. Over 7,000 tribal members live in McCurtain County, and the Choctaw Nation is partnering actively with city and county leaders to reach out to everyone in the county.

"This is important," said Chief Batton. "We're helping the cities and counties organize because we need everybody living there to be represented in the Census. 2010 was a real mess, and we've been living with the aftermath for the past ten years. We absolutely are going to turn this around in 2020," Chief Batton said.

In Poteau, the Choctaw Nation has helped organize the outreach committee serving Le Flore County.

Karen Wages, chairperson of the Poteau Chamber of Commerce, noted how important it has been. "We're so appreciative that the Choctaw Nation cares as much about our community as we do," she said. "They've partnered with us at every step in the process."

The tribe is coordinating with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the United States Census Bureau to make sure the count in 2020 is the best one possible. This includes generating and sharing data with the local jurisdictions about the severe undercounts which occurred in 2010. In McCurtain County, for example, the undercount was at least 62%.

Craig Young, the mayor of Idabel, said, "We had no idea the severity of the problem we've lived with for ten years, until the Choctaw Nation called it to our attention and helped us organize to combat it."

The undercount cost McCurtain County at least \$26 million over ten years. Young and Broken Bow city manager Vicky Patterson say McCurtain County is now well on its way to experiencing a much better Census in 2020.

Choctaw census committee members have traveled extensively across the 10½ counties, meeting with city, county, and community leaders. "The Choctaw Nation has been increasingly helpful over time, but this is an entirely new level of partnership," said Debbie Vega, Wilburton's city manager. The Choctaw Nation partnered with Wilburton's economic development board to organize efforts for Latimer County.

In Coal, Choctaw, Haskell and Pushmataha counties the Choctaw Nation has made similar investments of time and energy.

"Here in Pushmataha County we've been living with the effects of our severe un-

dercount in 2010 for the past ten years," said Wayne Tipps, Choctaw tribal member and owner of Sacred Grounds Coffee House in Antlers. "The Choctaws provided the spark we needed to organize and have supported us the entire way."

Pushmataha County lost out on over \$9 million dollars during the past ten years due to its undercount in 2010, and perhaps much more. Getting federal dollars to patch potholes, buy sheriff's vehicles, and provide health care may not sound alluring, "But it sure is important," said Tipps.

"I'm a believer," said Jayne Hughes, City Manager for Atoka.

Hughes, the Economic Development Director of Fort Smith, Ark., during the last census, saw the amount of money received by her city drop in 2011, due to the undercount it received in 2010. Atoka's city government, along with local groups and the Choctaw Nation, have partnered to ensure a better Census count in 2020 for the City of Atoka and Atoka County. "I'm optimistic," Hughes said.

Americans will receive their 2020 Census forms in the mail during the last week of March. "It's vitally important to us that you fill it out and turn it in," Chief Batton said. "We need you to be counted wherever you live in Oklahoma or the United States."

Of equal importance, he said, "We need you to be listed as Choctaw."

Noting that the Census form in 2020 will have only nine questions, Chief Batton urged tribal members to pay special attention to question seven regarding race. After checking the box for "American Indian," he said, "Please use the fill-in boxes provided on the form to write in 'Choctaw Nation.'" One of the core Choctaw values is taking care of the community. Imagine what the Nation could do with even more resources.

CENSUS 2020

#CHOCTAWSCOUNT



HOW TO RESPOND

For information on phone and mail options
VISIT: CHOCTAWNATION.COM/2020CENSUS
YOU CAN ALSO RESPOND AT CENSUS.GOV

HOW TO FILL OUT TRIBAL AFFILIATE FORM SECTION

What is this person's race? Mark one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.

American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name or enroller or principal tribe. 7

C H O C T A W | N A T I O N

WHEN TO COMPLETE THE CENSUS: APRIL 1, 2020 — JULY 24, 2020

Federal law protects your census responses. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics.

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\$2,374,645,710 economic impact revealed.

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Choctaw Nation and Irish bond remains strong.

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Carmen Martinez uses her faith and passion for serving to inspire others.

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

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