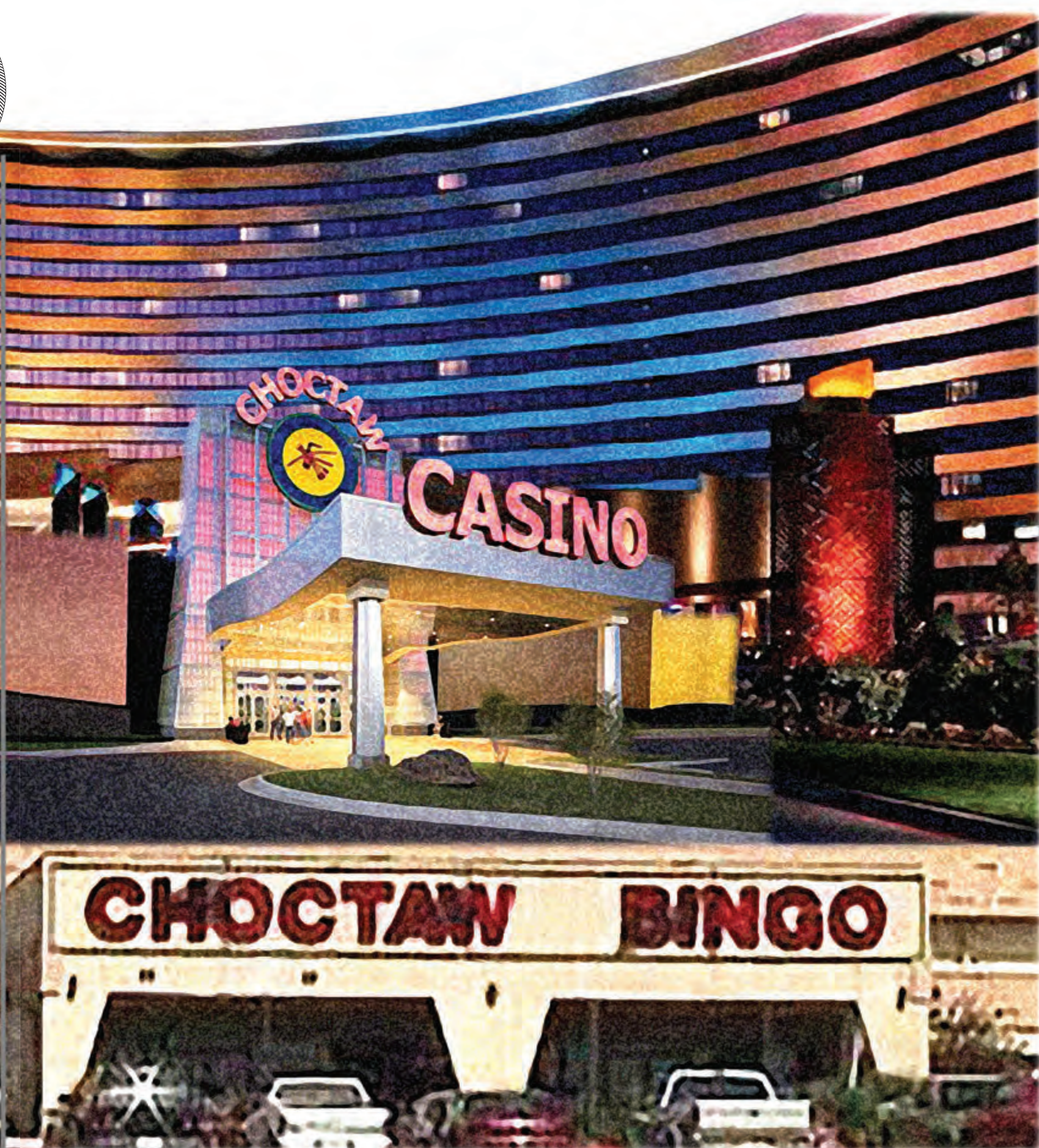




BISKINIK

May 2017 Issue



HISTORIC COURT BATTLE ENDS IN VICTORY FOR ALL TRIBES

30 Years after Landmark Ruling, Diversification is the Path to the Future

by RONNI PIERCE

What started off as a lone bingo hall in 1987 has developed into one of the largest tourist destinations on the Oklahoma-Texas border.

The tribe's road to economic independence was set in motion 30 years ago. In a landmark 1987 case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians in its lawsuit with the State of California. The ruling recognized that tribal gaming activities are not subject to state regulation.

Following that ruling came the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) of 1988 which encouraged tribes to use the net revenues from gaming for government and economic development.

The domino effect came into play with tribes across the country opening their own gaming facilities, along with the Choctaw Nation which opened a bingo hall on Choctaw land. Simulcast horse racing followed over a decade later in 1998.

Then in 2004 came State Question 712. Voters in Oklahoma recognized that opening compact gaming businesses on Indian land would produce mutual and widespread benefits including giving tribes a new and empowering revenue stream.

According to the Compact, revenue from this industry could support programs such as health care, housing, sewer and water projects, police, corrections, fire safety, judicial services, highway and bridge construction, general assistance for tribal elders, day care for the children, economic development, educational opportunities, among other governmental services and programs for tribal members.

As acknowledged in the Compact, the state recognized that not just tribal members would benefit from this agreement but surrounding communities would also reap the rewards from the increased revenues and reinvestment into local economic development. The education system in Oklahoma would see advantages as well. The agreement with the state included the division of gaming revenues with a percentage going to local schools and to college scholarships.

Next for the Choctaws was producing a way to take full advantage of the ruling. The original Choctaw Casino Resort opened its doors on March 8, 2006, on a 50-acre site of land just south of Durant. An expansion followed in 2010. In 2016 the casino grew again adding more gaming, an additional hotel with a spa and a family-friendly enter-

tainment district including a movie theater, an arcade, and bowling lanes.

A casino in Grant started off in small trailers in 1999 and has steadily grown into a casino resort. It is currently in the midst of a large expansion set to be complete late this summer. Other casinos around the 10½ counties include a Choctaw Casino Resort in Pocola and casinos in Idabel, Hugo, Stringtown, McAlester, Broken Bow, and Stigler. Sixteen Travel Plazas with Casino Too's also dot the Nation. Along with recreational gaming, the Travel Plazas provide groceries and gasoline, often in communities that have no other resources for these goods.

With a consistent revenue stream in place, came the need and desire to further diversify business interests.

Other Choctaw owned revenue generators include Choctaw Automotive Services, Choctaw Hunting Lodge, the Choctaw Store, KOA RV Park, Construction Authority, Country Market, Choctaw Print Services, restaurant franchises, and farms and ranches.

"In the past 30 years, we have been able to accomplish so much," states Janie Dillard, Executive Officer of Op-

erations for Choctaw Nation. "From a small bingo hall to developing the best resorts and casinos in Oklahoma. We never believed what gaming would do for the tribe, and we couldn't have gotten to where we are today without the team of people that made our tribe so successful. And to think this is only the beginning."

As of last quarter 2017, Choctaw businesses and government had accumulated revenues of over \$316 million, and those dollars were poured into several improvements for both tribal and community members including expenditures for health, education, community, cultural, judiciary, and internal services (*For a detailed accounting, please see the March 2017 Biskinik*).

Head Starts, community centers, wellness centers, and food distribution centers are all under different phases of construction across the Nation.

Revenues also support the various clinics in the Nation and the newest clinic in Durant.

The 143,000-square-foot clinic in Durant is the latest jewel-in-the-crown facility for the Nation. The clinic houses health services for podiatry, cardiology, dental, behavioral health, and several other services.

Open to Native Americans and Alaskan Natives with a CDIB card, the clinic provides preventative care and out-patient services to tribal members who have not had access to affordable basic health care.

Also, another project taking shape is the Choctaw Na-

tion headquarters with a completion date scheduled for the end of 2017.

The tribe now employs 9,000 people with the majority working in the Durant area. Employees at the headquarters complex had long outgrown the historic building at 16th and Locust. The new state-of-the-art, 500,000-square-foot facility will combine tribal services that have been scattered over 30 buildings in the Durant area making it easier for tribal members to access needed programs.

In addition, the Choctaw Nation is scheduled to break ground on a cultural center in the near future.

In the coming year, more revenue producing businesses such as Travel Plazas are planned for Coalgate and Talihina, and Travel Plaza/Casino Too's are slated for Heavener, Poteau, and Stigler.

And another Choctaw Country Market will soon break ground in Boswell similar to the one that opened in Clayton in 2016.

In effect, the Cabazon ruling in 1987 and the 1988 enactment of IGRA allowed tribes to stabilize their economies and prosper with self-determining economic planning. Tribes can now focus on the future while staying committed to investing in tribal languages and cultures.

“

We never believed what gaming would do for the tribe, and we couldn't have gotten to where we are today without the team of people that made our tribe so successful. And to think this is only the beginning.

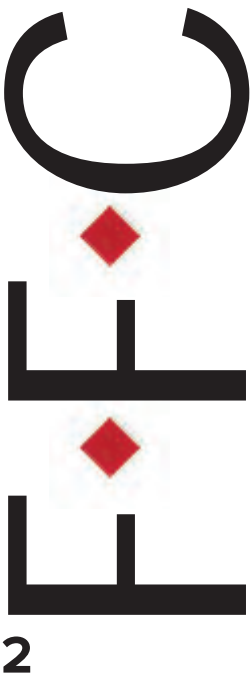
— Janie Dillard

Executive Officer of Operations, Choctaw Nation

Choctaw Nation Election 2017

The 2017 election season will include Council seats for Districts 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12. For information on all the candidates, see this month's special election insert.

The terms for Tribal Council last four years. Council elections are held at alternating two-year periods with six Council seats up for election in each period. Elections are held on the second Saturday in July. This year, elections will begin at 7 a.m. and end at 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 8.



Choctaw Nation Provides Many Programs for Tribal Elders



walk. Jannette Taylor of Crowder is 85 years old and she walked away with the first-place spot in the 80+ challenge. The centers vie for the honor of being named the Senior Fitness Challenge Community Winner. The Choctaw Center in Atoka won the trophy this year.

Ensuring the seniors have opportunities to live healthier lives is very important to us. The health advantages provided by the clinics, wellness centers, and health representatives go a long way in making this happen. As with anything, we are more likely to do it if it is fun and the wellness centers are providing innovative ways to engage the seniors. In addition to walking and using the fitness equipment at the centers, they participate in chair volleyball tournaments, line dances, and more.

It's also time for the Choctaw Nation Senior Farmers Market Program as gardens begin yielding fresh vegetables. Farmers bring their produce to the Community Centers in Durant, Atoka, Hugo, McAlester, Stigler, Broken Bow and Idabel on Wednesdays.

Tribal Services has several programs that benefit our elders. Health Fairs are held at each center and information is provided on Community Health, Elder Advocacy, Emergency Services, the Eyeglasses, Dentures and Hearing Aids program, Family Caregivers, Family Solutions, Food Distribution, Healthy Aging, Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP), Nutrition Services and Tribal Burial Services.

A groundbreaking was held recently for another Independent Elder Housing site. These sites provide 10 residences and a common building for Choctaw seniors. The Tribal Council invests in the elders and in the communities by providing these affordable homes.

Providing safe homes is important, and safe shelter from storms is also crucial. The Choctaw Nation Storm Shelter Program provides a grant for Choctaw tribal members to have storm shelters installed in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas, states at high risk for tornadoes. Any tribal member age 45 or older can apply to receive the full amount of \$2,500. Tribal members under the age of 45

can apply to receive a storm shelter grant in the amount of \$1,200. There are special grants for members with disabilities.

If you are needing more information about the Choctaw Nation's programs benefitting elders, please look under Tribal Services on ChoctawNation.com or call (800) 522-6170.



Provided by Rae Rowland

During the Fitness Challenge Walk, 85-year-old Jannette Taylor from Crowder took the top spot in the 80+ age category. The walk was part of the annual Choctaw Nation Healthy Aging/Senior Nutrition's Senior Fitness Challenge.

Our senior citizens are who I hold dear to my heart and who I hold in the utmost respect. They have prepared the path we follow and I hope I can learn from their wisdom.

The annual Senior Day is this month, May 17, at the Event Center in Durant. It is one of the seniors' special days and one of my favorite to attend. I enjoy the stories I hear about their families and the memories they share.

I am amazed at their zest for life. They get up early and travel, some for close to four hours, to spend the day with their friends from the other centers. They bring their competitiveness, too, and participate in name tag, hat, and hymn-singing contests. Their energy fills the room.

The Senior Day is just one event the seniors enjoy. It's documented that helping seniors find ways to interact socially can improve the elders' overall health. They jump on the bus every chance they get to travel to tribal events.

The annual Choctaw Nation Healthy Aging/Senior Nutrition's Senior Fitness Challenge was held in March for seniors age 55 and over. There were several age categories for their

Spring Events Showcase Choctaw Values



There have been several events this spring that exemplify the Choctaw Nation's values of faith, family and culture. Among them are the third annual Chief Gary Batton Easter Celebration, the Youth Stickball League's end-of-year tournament, and the dedication ceremony for the new Choctaw Dictionary.

Hundreds of people came together once again to enjoy the Easter Celebration at Tvshka Homma. I believe this year's event was bigger than ever. Families gathered on the capitol grounds to visit, share a meal, listen to great music, and participate in egg hunts for all ages.

Employee Chaplain Olin Williams, who delivers all of his messages from the heart, gave a special message about the Easter season.

I watched people interact with each other. Everywhere were grandparents enjoying the time with their grandchildren and it reminded me of the early Labor Day gatherings that

were like big family reunions.

The egg hunts started with the youth groups on the ball field, then everyone moved to the capitol lawn to watch the elders. There were so many of our elders lined up they stretched around the perimeter of the lawn. I love that they are so healthy they moved just about as quickly as the kids.

The Choctaw Nation Outreach Staff prepared an amazing 12,000 eggs for the hunts. Yakoke to everyone who put in days of preparation for the event and ensured it was so much fun.

The day concluded with the last of this season's youth stickball games. Watching my son, Sam, and the others play this year has been a lot of fun. The kids play as family even though they are competing on the field. They honor the tribe every time they pick up their sticks.

The School of Language is also making it possible to carry on Choctaw traditions. They developed a committee to complete a labor of love—a user-friendly Choctaw Dictionary for anyone wanting to learn the language. Yakoke to Richard Adams, Teri Billy, Hannah Bryan, Eleanor Caldwell, Kay Noah Choate, Bernie Davis, Mike Davis, Lola John, Abe Frazier, Bob Ludlow, Christine Ludlow, Rebecca Nahwooksy, Lillie Taylor Roberts, Eveline Battiest Steele, Betty Ward and Jack B. Martin.



by Jeanne Porter

Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. award medals to stickball players at the conclusion of the Choctaw Nation Youth Stickball League End of Season Tournament in Tvshka Homma on Saturday, April 8.

learned of the Choctaw language—are a wonderful sight.

In addition to the classes offered at high schools, there are accredited courses at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Eastern Oklahoma State College and the University of Oklahoma. More than 30 community classes are offered throughout Oklahoma as well as outside the state. Internet classes are also available to anyone at ChoctawSchool.com.

Keeping our language alive helps keep our tribe alive and attests to the uniqueness of our sovereign Nation.

It is wonderful to see how events such as these are revitalizing the Choctaw Nation and ensuring the culture and traditions stay strong.

All of the committee are first-speakers. They learned to speak in Choctaw before they learned to speak in English. The number of our treasured first-speakers is becoming fewer and it is so good to have the new dictionary to help the younger generations learn the language.

The School of Choctaw Language has accomplished many things in its mission to promote and preserve the language, history and culture of the Choctaw people. The instructors teach the Choctaw language via distance learning to 41 schools in the Choctaw Nation. A finale is held every spring to honor and reward the year's language students from these high schools. Hundreds are bussed to the event in Durant where they participate in a number of activities. The youth—many in traditional clothing and sharing what they have

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Page 1:

In a landmark 1987 case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians in its lawsuit with the State of California. The ruling set in motion economic independence for all tribes, including the Choctaw Nation.

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

Stay Connected. ChoctawNation.com features access to information about tribal history, culture, news, services, government, businesses, applications and contacts. The Choctaw Nation's official publication, the BISKINIK newspaper, is available to tribal members by mail and archived editions are on ChoctawNation.com.

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

SUMMER FUN HAS JUST BEGUN

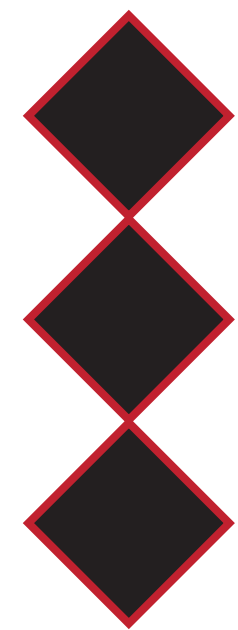
Beavers Bend Rod Run & Cool Cars
May 20 - 21 | Hochatown, OK

Magnolia Festival
May 31 - June 4 | Durant, OK

Owa Chito Festival of the Forest
June 16 - 17 | Hochatown, OK

Stigler Reunion Days
June 17 - 18 | Stigler, OK

www.ChoctawCountry.com/SummerFun



3

by ERIN ADAMS

Halito,
Recently I learned that a single word can evoke many different responses in people. That word is cancer.
For many it brings fear, confusion, denial, anger, or just an overwhelming sense to fight. However, I also have learned that knowledge is power, and that once knowledge is gained, it cannot be taken from you, not even by “cancer.”
A few months back we looked at Breast Cancer. This month I would like to shine a light on Colorectal Cancer (CRC). The National Cancer Institute reports CRC is the third most common malignant

Where Cancer is Concerned, Knowledge is Power

neoplasm worldwide and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in men and women combined in the United States. Risks for CRC are increased with a family history, yet risks are roughly doubled with a first-degree relative diagnosed younger than age 55.
Other factors that put one at a much higher risk are:
• Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), Ulcerative Colitis, Crohn Disease
• Inherited conditions such as Lynch Syndrome and Familial Adenomatous Polyposis
• Age greater than 55
• Excessive alcohol use
• Obesity
• Being physically inactive
• Cigarette smoking
• Diet
Although older age is a current risk factor, the National Cancer Institute reports researchers predict that by 2030, based on current U.S. trends, colon cancer incidence rates will increase by 90 percent for people aged 20-34 years and by 28 percent for people aged 35-49 years. Staggering, I know. But remember, knowledge is power.
If you are 50 years of age or greater, talk with your doctor about having regular screenings. Those at increased risk due to IBD, ulcerative colitis, Crohn’s disease, or an inherited condition, as mentioned above, may be advised to start screening before age 50 and/or have more

frequent screenings.
Currently, there are a few different screening options and there are new tests being developed for CRC screening. For more information on current screening options and ongoing clinical trials, go to NCI’s Cancer Information Services or call 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).
Another proactive approach is to live a healthy lifestyle and decrease stress. Unfortunately, stress is just part of life. Research has shown that people who experience intense and long-term stress can have digestive problems and weakened immune system. Ways to help cope with stress include:
• Training in relaxation, meditation, stress management
• Counseling or talk therapy or Social support in a group setting
• Medications for depression or anxiety
• Healthy evenly spaced/ balanced meals following the plate method
• Exercise
• Playing with and/or petting an animal
• Watching and/or reading comedy
So, in closing, cancer can bring about many differ-



ent reactions. However, the knowledge of healthy lifestyles to help live a good quality of life can be a game changer:
• Exercise daily
• Sleep 6-8 hours daily
• Drink more water
• Laugh more often
• Hang out with family and friends
• Go for a walk with your dog or hang out on the porch petting your cat or your animal of choice
• Have evenly spaced balanced meals daily following the plate method.
And here is a delicious recipe to help you get started on balancing your plate.

Recipe of the Month Broccoli, Garlic, and Lemon Penne



Recipe from American Cancer Society

- Ingredients**
- 1/2 lb penne pasta
 - 5 cups or 1-12 oz bag broccoli florets
 - 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 - 10 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
 - 1/2 cup reduced sodium chicken broth
 - 1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
 - Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation
Prepare penne according to package directions for al dente (just firm). Two to three minutes before penne is ready, add broccoli. Finish cooking, drain, and set aside.
Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium-high heat, add oil. Sauté the garlic for 1 to 2 minutes, or until aromatic and beginning to color. Add broth and bring to a boil for 3 to 5 minutes, or until reduced by half, stirring frequently. Add pasta, broccoli, and lemon zest and cook until coated with sauce. Season generously with salt and pepper. Transfer to serving bowl and top with cheese.

Nutrition Facts: Makes five servings
Per serving: 395 calories; Sodium 135mg; Total Fat 17g; Total Carbohydrate 50g; Saturated Fat 3g; Dietary Fiber 5g; Cholesterol 5mg; Protein 13g

I hope you all enjoy this tasty recipe served with baked chicken or fish. For further information, you may contact Erin Adams, RD, LD. Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center (800) 349-7026 ext. 6959.

Choctaw Programs are Honored as Certified Healthy

by BRANDY GRIFFIN

Representatives from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma gathered in Norman March 1 for the Certified Healthy Oklahoma awards ceremony.
The Certified Healthy Oklahoma program began in 2003 as a way to recognize businesses, campuses, communities, congregations, early childhood programs, restaurants, and schools across the state committed to improving the health of Oklahomans. Through policy implementation and various programs and procedures, recognized entities set examples to promote healthier futures for not only their employees but others as well.
This year’s Certified Healthy Oklahoma awards ceremony and luncheon recognized over 1,900 certified programs. Governor Mary Fallin welcomed and recognized awardees for their efforts.
“The Certified Healthy Oklahoma recipients are the leaders who have gone above and beyond,” said Fallin.
Dr. Terry Cline, Oklahoma Secretary of Health and Human Services and Commissioner of Health for the Oklahoma State Department of Health, congratulated those in attendance.
“You are improving the health of people that surround you,” said Dr. Cline.
Dr. Cline also gave special recognition to the Choctaw Nation for their participation in a flu vaccination program that began as a partnership between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma State Department of Health in 2015. He noted that due to the initiative, flu vaccination rates tripled across the 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation, compared to previous years.
Presenting sponsors for the event



by Stacy Hulls

Choctaw Nation Head Start educators receiving Certified Healthy Oklahoma awards, but were unable to attend the awards ceremony are (front, from left) Jennifer Coffey, Wright City; Lauren Scott, Durant; Kathy Tisho, Broken Bow; Cindy Janway, Poteau; Jennifer Helt, Wilburton; and Michelle Miklaucic, Coalgate. (back, from left) Michael Gills, Chahta Pre-School Bethel; Katy Pruitt, Head Start Director; June Dobbins, Bennington; Kim Griffith, Idabel; Anita Zurline, Atoka; Lindsay Sistrunk, McAlester; Sharon Carter, Antlers.

included Jay Foley, Interim President and CEO of Cancer Treatment Centers of America, and Teresa Jackson, Senior Executive Officer of Tribal Services for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Highlighting initiatives across the Choctaw Nation, Jackson noted the 14 Wellness Centers now open in communities across the Choctaw Nation and a partnership with the University of Oklahoma to provide fitness classes.
“The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is committed to improving health,” said Jackson.
This year, 32 Choctaw Nation programs applied for and received the free, voluntary statewide certification, receiving recognition as a “Certified Healthy Oklahoma” establishment.
To receive the Certified Healthy Oklahoma honor as a business, applicants must meet criteria in nine scored categories: Organizational Support; Tobacco Control; Nutrition; Physical Activity; Stress Management;

Mental Health; Chronic Disease Prevention and Management; Occupational Health and Safety; and Health Promotion. Those submitting applications must receive a minimum of required points and fulfill specific criteria in order to receive a certification as either Excellence, Merit, or Basic.
The following Choctaw Nation programs received the Business Excellence certification: Head Start Administration–Durant; Wellness Centers–Durant, Crowder, Antlers, Stigler, Poteau, Wilburton, Atoka, Hugo, Idabel, and McAlester; Health Clinic–Atoka; and Child Care Development–Bennington.
The following Choctaw Nation programs received the Business Merit certification: Child Care Development–Durant, Stigler, Coalgate, Idabel, and Talihina.
To receive the Certified Healthy Oklahoma honor as an Early Childhood program, applications must meet criteria in seven scored categories: Nutrition, Physical Activity, Health Promotion, Safe and Healthy Environment, Community and Family Involvement, Professional Development, and Staff Health. Scoring depends on the type of program and additional criteria, depending on the program situation. Programs receive certification as either Excellence, Merit, or Basic.
The following Choctaw Nation programs received the Early Childhood Programs Excellence certification: Head Start–Bennington, Broken Bow, Stigler, Poteau, Hugo, Antlers, McAlester, Idabel, Wilburton, Durant, and Atoka; and Chahta Preschool - Broken Bow.
The following Choctaw Nation programs received the Early Childhood Programs Merit certification: Head Start–Coalgate and Wright City.

Choctaw Nation WIC		
WOMEN, INFANTS and CHILDREN		
Site	Hours	Days
Antlers (580) 298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tues.
Atoka (580) 889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.
Bethel (580) 241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tues.
Boswell (580) 380-5264	8:30-4:00	Every Fri.
Broken Bow (580) 584-2746	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs
Coalgate (580) 927-3641	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.
Durant (580) 924-8280 x 2257	8:00-4:30	Daily
Hugo (580) 326-5404	8:00-4:30	Daily
Idabel (580) 286-2510	8:00-4:30	Mon., Thur., & Fri.
McAlester (918) 423-6335	8:00-4:30	Daily
Poteau (918) 647-4585	8:00-4:30	Daily
Smithville (580) 244-3289	8:30-4:00	2nd Thur.
Spiro (918) 962-3832	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.-Fri.
Stigler (918) 967-4211	8:30-4:00	Every Mon.-Wed.
Talihina (918) 567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton (918) 465-5641	8:30-4:00	Every Thur.



Breastfeeding assistance is just a phone call away. 1-800-522-6170 ext. 2507.

Come join us for a breastfeeding class in your area! Many mothers want to learn more about breastfeeding so they can feel more confident in their decision to breastfeed. This breastfeeding class will address the following topics:

- latch
- frequency of feedings
- breastfeeding resources
- positioning
- growth spurts

Durant

Friday • July 7 • 9am
Thursday • Nov. 9 • 9am
Location TBD

Idabel

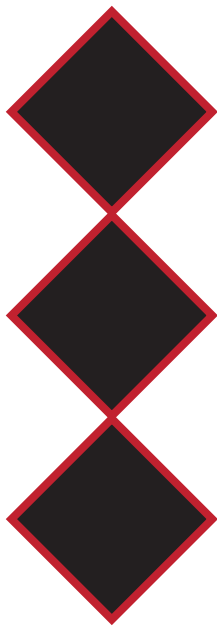
Wednesday • May 3 • 9am
Wednesday • July 5 • 1pm
Wednesday • Sept. 6 • 9am
Wednesday • Nov. 1 • 1pm
Located at the Choctaw Nation Clinic (Education Room)

Poteau

Wednesday • May 10 • 9am
Wednesday • July 12 • 9am
Wednesday • Sept. 13 • 9am
Wednesday • Nov. 8 • 1pm
Located at the Choctaw Nation Community Center (behind Rubin White Clinic)

Talihina

Thursday • June 8 • 1pm
Tuesday • Aug. 15 • 9am
Wednesday • Oct. 18 • 1pm
Located at Kiamichi Vo-Tech



4

—YOUTH OF THE NATION—

Be True to Yourself

by
Nicole Nail

What do you want to be when you grow up?

This is probably the question that most of us hear from the time we start kindergarten.

Then, we would answer with our dreams....an astronaut, a ballerina, an NBA player, a cheerleader, the President!

It is all really cute then, but as

we grow, our expectations begin to change. Adults begin to encourage us to create “realistic goals” or “get a job that pays good.”

I don’t want to be an accountant, because I’m not good with numbers, I don’t want to be a lawyer, because I would feel so intimidated that I would lose the case, and I DEFINITELY don’t want to be a doctor, because I’m too much of a germaphobe. It just isn’t my calling. I know these are good jobs, but they are just not for me.

Another obstacle that some of us face is the small town mentality that no one can escape the clutches of our hometown. A lady told me the other day at the grocery store that I would never leave the small town I live in... EVER. She said “Oh quit lying to yourself, you know you’re never gonna leave this place.”

It made me want to try even harder to be successful one day. Just so I could show all the people back home that I am different. The people who try to destroy your goals, probably had goals at one point too, but they didn’t accomplish most of them.

You know why? Because they let someone tell them how it was going to be. They let someone else choose what path they were going to take in their life. For example: Since everyone in your class says they are going to college, you are supposed to do that too. That’s how it seems anyway, because all throughout high school, you are asked, “Where are you going to college?”

So you go to college at the same place all of your classmates went to, because it was the “cool thing to do” and you flunked out because you were smart, but you weren’t college smart.

Or maybe you made it through and graduated, even though you didn’t really want to be a teacher. You don’t even like kids, but you didn’t know anything that sounded better, and your parents approved.

You accomplished a goal, but you didn’t accomplish YOUR goals because you were too busy letting everyone else control you.

A prime example of someone who has persevered in their life, is Eminem. Many important people in his life passed away. He was bullied severely, and he fell into depression. If he can overcome everything that happened to him, imagine what you can do.

Your possibilities are truly endless. Just because someone says “you can’t do that... It’s never been done before.” Don’t give up, because you might just be the first to do it.

If you live in a region where YouTube is frowned upon, but you enjoy making videos, go for it. It doesn’t matter what anyone else says. You may not think it’s a realistic goal, but if you can believe in yourself, and work hard at it, you can do whatever you want in life.

It may sound a little far-fetched now, but we all have potential. If you want to be an artist, but it only pays \$18,000 a year... Do it anyway, because if you are doing what you love then you should be happy. You are putting most of your money and time into one of your favorite things in this world. I think that’s pretty good.

Nicole attends Talihina High School and is a representative of the Clayton Youth Advisory Board Chapter.



Photo Provided

Tonihka Named Co-salutatorian

Deedra Tonihka was named co-salutatorian at Battiest High School. For the last four years Tonihka has played softball for the Lady Panthers. She also played basketball for two years.

During her high school career, Tonihka has participated in many school organizations.

She has been a National Honor Society member for three years, Fellowship of Christian Athletes member for four years, a part of ISA for four years, a FCCLA member for three years, a part of the Gifted and Talented program for four years and on the Panther Prowl School News staff for one year.

Tonihka’s plans for the future are to attend Murray State College and work



towards her degree and become a Physical Therapist Assistant.

She is the daughter of Dewayne and Michelle Tonihka. She is the granddaughter of Edgel and Jane Samuel of Broken Bow and the late Bill and Elizabeth Tonihka.

Battiest Graduates With Honors

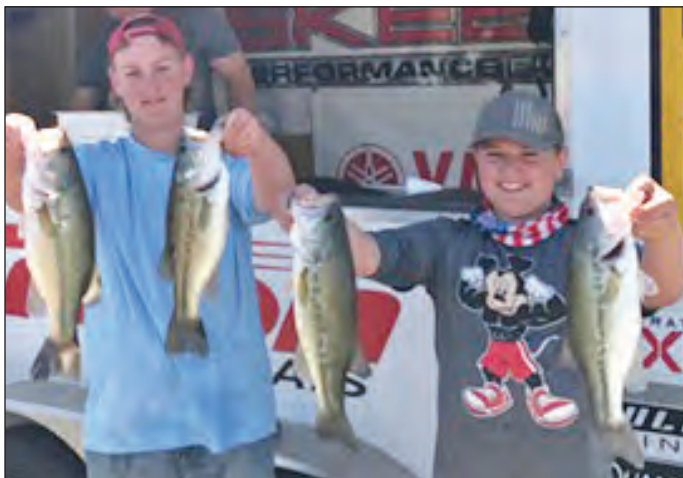
Dakotha Battiest, a senior at Cameron High School, will graduate in May with honors as the senior class valedictorian. Her plans for the future are to attend Bacone College with a softball scholarship. According to her parents, this had been a dream of hers since she was young and playing coach pitch.



Battiest is the daughter of Stephen and Stephanie Battiest and has a sister, Amber. Pictured (*from left*) are Amber Battiest, sister; Stephanie Battiest, mother; Stephen Battiest, father; Dakotha Battiest; Coach Devin Cross; and Dacey Cloud, teammate.

Team Catches 12th Place

Garrett “Moose” Shelby (*right*) and his partner Carson Moudy (*left*) competed in the Oklahoma High School B.A.S.S. Nation event No. 2 on Saturday, April 8, at Lake Eufaula. The Choctaw Middle School eighth graders weighed in a limit of four bass totaling 10.42 pounds for a 12th place finish. The next day during event No. 3, wind made fishing difficult. They caught several fish, but only one 1.84 pound keeper. Over 100 teams representing grades 8–12 from across the state competed in the event. Shelby and Moudy earned 125 team trial points, which will accumulate towards the end of the season total and a chance to qualify for the National High School Championships.



Zalenski Inducted into Hampshire Honor Society

by STACY HUTTO

Cordell Zalenski, No. 94, was among five Harding University football seniors inducted into the Hampshire Honor Society.

The teammates were starters, or significant contributors in their senior seasons and earned a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher during their college football career.

There have been 37 Harding Bisons inducted into the Hampshire Honor Society since the award’s 2008 beginning.

Zalenski, a Durant native, was a CoSIDA (College Sports Information Directors of America) Academic All-American and fought his way to second team All-GAC (Great American Conference.) Zalenski’s teammate, Eric Mitchell, was also named CoSIDA Academic All-American.

Zalenski started all 14 games of his senior year at defensive end. He had 35 tackles, with 6 tackles for loss.

He graduated in December 2016 with a 3.6 GPA and an accounting degree.

During his college football career, Zalenski started 11 out of 33 games,

While he made his Harding Bison debut at Southwestern Oklahoma State University on Thursday, Sept. 5, 2013, Zalenski’s first career start came a little over a year later at Southern Nazarene.

He had 61 tackles, 11 tackles for loss, 6 sacks, 1 pass break up, and forced 2 fumbles.

Zalenski had a very eventful year in 2015. He was



named CoSIDA Academic All-District, All-GAC second team and Academic All-GAC. In 2014, he was named Academic All-GAC.

He is the son of Connie Zalenski. He has a sister named Amber and an older brother, Waddel Hearn Jr.



Amos Medals at State Track Meet

In 2016, Jacob Amos was a junior at McAlester High School. He played basketball and was a member of the track team.

In May the 2016 State Track Meet was held in Moore. During the State Track Meet Amos earned a medal in the 5A 100 meter and the long jump. He is the son of Jennifer Amos Watkins.

Choctaw Nation Adult Education 2017 Graduation



Friday • May 12 • 7 p.m.
Eastern Okla. State College
Mitchell Auditorium
Wilburton



Dinner for graduates and their families will be served immediately after the ceremony. The graduation is for all Adult Education students who earned their High School Equivalency diploma over the past year.

For more information contact Adult Education at (800) 522-6170 ext. 2122, or email kbench@ChoctawNation.com.

2017 EDUCATION CLASSES

Choctaw Nation Adult Education High School Equivalency(HSE)

Class sessions will meet twice weekly for three hours each day for 12 weeks. Students can enroll only during the first two weeks of class.

Please bring Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), Social Security card, and state-issued ID (driver’s license, permit, or ID).

The class will meet each week for approximately 12 weeks. Books, supplies, and testing fees are provided. In addition, a \$10 per day attendance stipend will be paid to those who attend classes on a regular basis and attempt the HSE/GED test. Please contact Kathy Bench at the Durant office, (800) 522-6170 ext. 2122 for more information. A CDIB is required.

July - September

Monday, July 3, 9 a.m. - noon
Poteau, Carl Albert St. College, Ollie Bldg.
Thursday, July 6, 9 a.m. - noon
McAlester, Eastern Okla. State, Clark Bass Bldg.
Thursday, July 6, 1 - 4 p.m.
Hugo, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.
Thursday, July 6, 5 - 8 p.m.
Durant, Headquarters South Bldg.

5

THE

Tribal Council

Holds Regular Session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Saturday, April 8, in its chambers at Tvshka Homma.

During the regular session committee reports were presented. New business included approval of the following items:

- Letter of Appointment of Kitty Halcomb to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Election Board.
- Approved disposal of surplus capital assets.
- Application for the Rural Business Development Grant–Commercial Business Space and Resource.
- Application for the Rural Business Development Grant–Choctaw Business Lending Program feasibility study and planning project.
- Application for the Indian Community Development Block Grant (Proposed cash match.)
- Application for the Indian Community Development Block Grant (Approve of standard housing conditions.)
- Application to request carryover of funds from FY 15–16 of Choctaw Nation Early Head Start.
- Approved an underground right of way easement in favor of Public Service Company of Oklahoma on Choctaw Fee land in McCurtain County.
- Approved a utility easement in favor of Bryan County Rural Water District No. 5 on Choctaw Tribal Fee Land in Bryan County.
- Approved a lease of land to Union Chappell Volunteer Fire Association.
- Approved waiver for the Homeliving Standard Addressing Qualifications of Jones Academy.
- Approved the consent for annexation of property in Wright City.

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

The next Tribal Council meeting will be held on Saturday, May 13, at 10 a.m. in Tvshka Homma.

Biskinik Announcement Policy

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

Couples may send in announcements of their 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 apologize for any inconvenience. This is a necessary adjustment due to rising production and mailing expenses.

Notes to the Nation Submissions

Send thank you notes and event notices to:

Biskinik, Attn: Notes to the Nation

P.O. Box 1210

Durant, OK 74702

or email to: biskinik@ChoctawNation.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication
of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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Ronni Pierce, News Director

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Fax (580) 924-4148
www.ChoctawNation.com
email: biskinik@ChoctawNation.com

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

Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive. Items are printed in the order received.

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

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

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

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

LETTERS

Thank you to Stacy Hutto, the *Biskinik*’s film crew for Our Legacy series and others who came for Mr. Grant’s interview. The 2017 Bluegrass Festival was made a lot more colorful with the addition of your Color Guard, and beautiful princesses. Their interpretation of the *Lord’s Prayer* was moving as always. Again, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to attend.

Bill and Barbara Grant
Hugo, Okla.

I just wanted to extend a big thank you for the grant that allowed me to install an above ground storm shelter recently. Without your generosity, I would not be able to afford one. I feel much safer just knowing it is outside my door ready to use if and when the need arises.

Rebecca Farrell
Stillwater, Okla.

Our family would like to send a special thank you to the Choctaw Nation Color Guard, who did a 21 Gun Salute in honor of my dad. Our family and friends will forever remember that special tribute. They did an excellent job and we appreciate it so much. We are so grateful for all the services my dad received prior to his death.

Anna Jean Craig Brown
Norman, Okla.

EVENTS

Choctaw Nation Community Center
May Health Fairs

Idabel
Wednesday, May 3

All Health Fairs begin at 10 a.m. at the Choctaw Nation Community Center unless otherwise noted. Choctaw Nation Emergency Management will be at the health fairs to assist people in signing up for the Mass Notification System.

Siloam Spring
Cemetery Clean-up Day
Saturday May 13 / 9:30 a.m.

Siloam Spring Cemetery is located near McCurtain, 11 miles south of Stigler in Haskell County. In case of inclement weather, the event is canceled.

Bring a dish for a fellowship luncheon;
also bring lawn chairs and yard tools.

Bill Durant, (918) 917-7322
Katherine Durant Prince, (918) 799-5167

Ritter Family Reunion

Saturday, May 20
Quarry Island in Wister

An invitation to any relatives of
Issac (Ike) & Georgia Ritter and Frank & Tennie Ritter.

Bring a covered dish & a drink. Donations appreciated.

Imogene (McCoy) Odell,
(918) 647-3791or (918) 647-7596
507 Chickasaw, Poteau, OK 74953

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Legal Assistance

A licensed attorney will be available by **appointment ONLY** to provide assistance with simple legal documents free to all Choctaw members. Examples of matters that the attorney may be able to assist with:

- Family law (divorces, custody, child support)
- Contracts and leases
- Guardianships and modifications

The office does not provide representation in court or assist in criminal matters. At this time the legal department is not providing assistance with wills and probate. To make an appointment, or for any questions, contact Samantha Guinn at (580) 380-8149.

May Community Center Schedule

5-4 Atoka: 10-1 & 1:30-3
5-11 Coalgate: 10-1 & 1:30-3
5-25 Crowder: 10-1 & 1:30-3

June Community Center Schedule

6-1 Hugo: 10-1 & 1:30-3
6-6 Wright City: 10-1 & 1:30-3
6-22 Spiro: 10-1 & 1:30-3
6-29 Idabel: 10-1 & 1:30-3

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

June 2017

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

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

Idabel by appointment

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

District 10 Councilman Anthony Dillard

invites tribal members, friends, and families to a Community Dinner on Thursday, May 25 at the Atoka Community Center after the Princess Pageant. The pageant will begin at 6 p.m.

Thompson Family Reunion

May 27

Sequoia State Park, Seminole Shelter
17131 Park 10
Holbert, OK 74441

Bring a potluck dish. Supper will be burgers and hot dogs. Bingo prizes and cakes needed.

For more info call,
Yvonne Arriola (918) 471-5458

21st Annual King Family Reunion

Saturday, June 10 at 10 a.m.

Senior Citizens Building
Railroad Street, Talihina

Descendants of Judy (King) Potts, Robert King, Ada (King) Spring, William Joseph King and Lillie Josephine (King) McGee are invited to attend the reunion.

Bring a covered dish, family pictures, family tree and a good story.

Janelle Kirkes, (918) 522-4309, or John Bull, (918) 522-4881

Annual Hampton Chapel Church Singing

Saturday, May 20

Wild Onion Supper starts at 5:30 p.m.

Singing begins at 7 p.m.

Floyd Peters–Henry Battiest will be the MC.

Everyone is welcome.

For more information call,
(580) 372-0775 or (580) 372-0449

Reunion for the Families of
Folsom-Ward-Thompson-Kelly

June 10

Choctaw Community Center
1203 W. Liberty
Atoka, OK

Starts at 10 a.m.

Bring a dessert

Karen Kelly, 580-509-0254 Jaynell Patton, 405-238-6564

Look!

Tribal Members in 10.5 Counties

The Choctaw Nation Next Step Initiative is a supplemental **food and necessities voucher** program that promotes self-sustainability through **foundational training** opportunities.

Contact a Next Step Social Worker to see if you are eligible.

Antlers
(580) 298-6443

Broken Bow
(580) 584-2842

Durant
(580) 924-7773

McAlester
(918) 420-5716

Poteau
(918) 649-0431

nextstep@choctawnation.com

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit
Association
and Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement, and agriculture loans. To be eligible to apply, a person must reside within the 10 1/2-county service area of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and must possess a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) from a federally recognized tribe. Micro-loans are available for emergency home improvements and small businesses. The loans are available up to \$2,500 and are to be repaid within 24 months. To be eligible to apply you must be Choctaw, possess a CDIB and reside within the 10 1/2 county area of the Choctaw Nation.

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

If you are interested in applying for a loan from the SOICA or the Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund, there will be a representative from the Choctaw Nation Credit Department at the:

Coalgate Field Office
May 19
9:00–11 a.m.



The following candidates are listed in alphabetical order. All information submitted by the candidates may have been edited per the guidelines in the Statement of Policy, #EB-201: Election Candidate Insert Policy.

This special 2017 Tribal Election insert is for all Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma members who subscribe to the Biskinik newspaper. The insert offers information important for the upcoming election season. Inside you will find short bios for each person who chose to submit such information and who is running for a position within the Choctaw Nation's government. You will also find information pertaining to voting guidelines, as well as information on where and when to vote.

In accordance with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Election Board, all candidates running for seats on the Tribal Council, have been allotted equal space and opportunity to introduce themselves to the Choctaw people. Candidates were held to a 500-word maximum word count, allowed one photograph submission per candidate, and required to meet a deadline for submission.

General Information

The terms for Tribal Council last four years. Council elections are held at alternating two-year periods with six Council seats up for election in each period. The 2017 election season will include Council seats for Districts 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12.

Ballots for Districts 4, 6, 7, and 9 will automatically be mailed to all affiliated voters, who have registered or updated with the Choctaw Nation Voter Registration office in the last year, before Saturday, June 17, 2017. Districts 10 and 12 were unopposed, so no ballots will be issued for those districts. In order for a mail ballot to be counted, it must be received at the Post Office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 7, 2017 and the outer affidavit envelope must be signed by the voter.

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

Early voting will begin at 8 a.m. and end at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 5; Thursday, July 6; and Friday, July 7. Designated voting locations will be announced by the Election Board at a later date.

Elections are held on the second Saturday in July. This year, elections will begin at 7 a.m. and end at 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 8.

Voter Registration

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

In order to become a voter, a person must be 18 years of age by Election Day, an enrolled tribal member with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and be registered to vote using the Voter Registration Form. No enrolled member of another tribe or person who votes as a citizen or member of another tribe will be eligible to vote in Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma elections. Eligible tribal members may submit a Voter Registration Form directly to the Voter Registration Department or complete the form at any open voting location during the early voting period or Election Day.

The Voter Registration Form must be fully completed, with emphasis in the following areas:

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

To check your voter status, contact the Choctaw Nation Voter Registration office at (800) 522-6170 or (580) 924-8280 exts. 2410, 5190, 2289, 2989, or by email at VoterRegistration@ChoctawNation.com. The Election Board and Voter Registration Department are located at 1205 W. Main St. in Durant, Okla. 74701.

CHOCTAW
VOTE
Be a Voice
Be a Choctaw Voter

Voter Registration Form

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA

PO Box 1210 Durant, OK 74702

Phone: (580) 924-8280 or (800) 522-6170, ext. 2289, 2410, 5190

Email: voterregistration@choctawnation.com

First Name (please print) Middle Last/Suffix Maiden
Birth Date Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number Phone Number Email

Street or 911 Address City State Zip Code County
OR, Provide Physical Directions to your home from the nearest town/city or major highway
(A physical address must be provided in order to register)

Mailing Address (if different than above) City State Zip Code

DISTRICT AFFILIATION

NON-RESIDENTS ONLY: If you live outside of the Choctaw Nation boundaries, you may affiliate with ONE of the districts below, however, it is not required. If you affiliate with a district, you will be mailed a ballot when there is a Tribal Council Member election for that district. *Once you affiliate you must remain in the district you have chosen, unless you move within the Choctaw Nation boundaries.* If you choose not to affiliate, you will only be mailed a ballot when there is an election for Chief of the Choctaw Nation.

PLEASE CHECK THE DISTRICT YOU WOULD LIKE TO AFFILIATE WITH OR if you prefer "NOT TO AFFILIATE" with a particular district, then you may check this box instead: ☐ I choose not to affiliate at this time

<input type="checkbox"/> District 1	<input type="checkbox"/> District 2	<input type="checkbox"/> District 3	<input type="checkbox"/> District 4	<input type="checkbox"/> District 5	<input type="checkbox"/> District 6
<input type="checkbox"/> District 7	<input type="checkbox"/> District 8	<input type="checkbox"/> District 9	<input type="checkbox"/> District 10	<input type="checkbox"/> District 11	<input type="checkbox"/> District 12

RESIDENTS: Residents of the Choctaw Nation 10 ½ county service area (below) will be assigned to vote in the district in which they reside.

ADDRESS RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

Would you like your name and address released to candidates who run for Choctaw Nation Chief and Tribal Council?

☐ YES (I want my name and address released)

☐ NO (I do not want my name and address released)

I certify that the information given on this application is true. I am eligible to be a registered voter of the Choctaw Nation as stated in the Constitution of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. I understand that false or erroneous information can cause loss of voting privileges. I am not a member of another tribe, nor am I registered to vote with another tribe.

Date: ____/____/____

Sign Here

Signature of Applicant - Forms without signature will not be processed

**Choctaw Nation
of Oklahoma
District Boundaries**

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

Record ID:

Date Processed/Initials:

District Assigned:

Date Scanned/Initials:

V2.02022017

V2.02022017

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

CANDIDATES FOR TRIBAL COUNCIL



Brian Barnard

District 4

Halito, District 4 Voters!

I was born in Talihina and raised in Red Oak. I graduated high school in 1993 and continued my education at Carl Albert State College. I have worked in construction and for the tribe at the Casino in Pocola, where I started in OTB and then moved in to security. While there, I met several of our local and Tribal Officers, and that prompted my decision to return to Carl Albert, where I was able to go through the Collegiate Officers Program. Thanks to my employer, I was able to work through the program while working full-time.

After graduating, I worked for the Panama Police Department for almost three years. We moved away for a job opportunity for a year. Before I left, I had been promoted to Chief. I was re-employed by the Casino where I remained until I was hired as a police officer for the city of Fort Smith. To this date, I work for the FSPD and continue to serve my community to the best of my ability. I have been a member of the South Rock Creek Baptist Church for longer than I remember, and I am currently worshipping at Cross Community Church in Poteau. I consider myself both morally and fiscally conservative. Honesty and integrity are the virtues I live by. I believe our Choctaw Nation Council leaders should be held to a high standard, and as a Choctaw, I believe our culture should be preserved and revitalized. Our elders are our greatest treasures and should be treated accordingly. Our children are our future and should be given any and every opportunity we can make available to them. As an enterprise, our tribe's greatest assets are our employees and should be treated with respect and high regard for the tireless work they do.

My professional life is my continued commitment to my community as a corporal patrolman for the city of Fort Smith and as a martial arts instructor in Poteau. I have been with the FSPD for almost 13 years, and I have been training and teaching martial arts in the area for over 25 years. My goal has always been to treat each and every person I encounter with the same respect and compassion I would want my own family to receive. In my time as a law enforcement officer, there has not been a single substantiated complaint lodged against me. I strive to approach my job and my life with the heart of a servant. We all have a duty to help each other succeed, both personally and professionally. These are the same goals and values I seek to bring to the Choctaw Tribal Council as your District representative.

My personal life revolves around my beautiful and talented 10-year-old daughter, my family and friends.

My greatest wish is to serve you, the Choctaw people, as Council Person of District 4. I sincerely hope that you will afford me that opportunity! God Bless and Yakoke!



Delton Cox (Incumbent)

District 4

Delton Cox is seeking re-election as District 4 Councilman. He and his wife, Deloris, live in Pocola, enjoy participating in Native American activities and in helping their people. They believe in preserving the Choctaw language and culture. He is one-fourth Choctaw and she is four-fourths Mississippi Choctaw. They have been married for over forty-seven years and have two grown sons and four grandchildren. He is a graduate of Leflore High School, Eastern Oklahoma State College, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Pennsylvania State University, and Mississippi

State University.

Delton, Treasurer of the Choctaw Nation from 1997 to 2001, District 4 Tribal Councilman since 2001, and elected nine times as Speaker of the Tribal Council since 2007, is proud of the Councilmen of District 4 that came before him. He recognizes that he is standing on the shoulders of those Choctaw leaders. Since he became Councilman in 2001 some of the accomplishments in this district are: the Poteau Travel Plaza and Casino Too, Spiro Community Center, Pocola Casino and Hotel employing over 650 employees, renovation and expansion of the Rubin White Health Clinic with an increase in the number of doctors/providers and staff (such as Optometrist, Physical Therapist, Podiatrist, another Pediatrician, and Behavioral Health Counselor) for a total of over 140 employees, construction of the Lois White Burton Refill Center, Wellness Center, Employee Clinic, Domestic Violence Prevention Program, Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program, Youth Outreach Program, Food Distribution (Commodities) Store, renovation and expansion of the Dale Cox Choctaw Community Center, Recycling Center, and a Chili's Franchise Restaurant. Choctaw Nation has become the largest employer in Leflore County and many more projects are planned for in the near future such as a new Travel Plaza Casino Too at Pocola, new Head Start and Day Care Center, a new Food Distribution Market Building, a new, larger Wellness Center, expansion of the Physical Therapy space and Refill Center, and a new, larger Community Center.

Delton believes in working closely with community leaders as well as the elected Tribal, City, County, and State officials. As in the past, he will strongly encourage the Choctaw Nation to continue helping improve county roads and city streets, donating funds to assist our local schools; assisting the county law enforcement officials, local churches, and fire departments with funds; assisting economic development to develop better quality jobs, providing summer camps for youth, and encouraging healthy living to improve the overall health of everyone. The Tribal Council appropriates the funds for the tribe's activities. Delton believes in partnerships with other governmental officials. We can get more done together than separate. Let's continue the progress. Re-elect Delton Cox, a proven leader.



Bruce Curnutt

District 4

Halito, my name is Bruce Curnutt, and I am running for Choctaw Tribal Council person in District 4. I would like to tell you a little about myself, and my background. I was born at the Talihina Indian Hospital, my father was Edgar Curnutt and my mother was Bobbie Anderson Curnutt of Talihina. I graduated Talihina High School. I also graduated Carl Albert State College with a degree in Psychology. I have attended numerous council on law enforcement education training classes (CLEET) and have an advanced certificate in law enforcement. I currently work

for OK Farms, as a service tech and have for the last five years. I oversee the care, health, and any other farm issues in the production of broilers. I presently have approximately 1.5 million square feet of houses in production. I am on call 24/7 to assist with any issues that may arise. I am also responsible for all of the reports and record keeping which is sent to the main office on a weekly basis. I feel this experience will allow me to better serve and perform the duties necessary to fill the Tribal Council position.

Before my present job, I was a CLEET certified peace officer in the state of Oklahoma. I served eight years as Sheriff and UnderSheriff in LeFlore County. Prior to that I was Sergeant Detective for eight years in Heavener. I also served as Chief of police in Wister for five years. Law enforcement was a challenge at times but it was my passion to help others and I enjoyed the personal interaction.

My wife Francine and I have been married 24 years and have two daughters, Callie and Adrianna Curnutt. Both girls have been very active in the Nation throughout their whole lives. Callie was Miss Choctaw Nation during 2013-2014. Adrianna was Junior Miss Choctaw Nation during 2011-2012. For enjoyment I love to hunt deer and squirrel. I also love to bass fish in my spare time. I love attending the Labor Day Festival visiting and catching up with old friends. I thoroughly enjoy and am so proud to witness the exhibition of my heritage and culture each year, especially the stickball and fast pitch softball competitions. I would love the opportunity to serve as Choctaw Council Person of District 4, so that I may use my years of administrative skills and the driving desire to help my fellow tribal members. I would like to work with Chief Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and our Council to help bring more jobs and businesses into District 4. I want to work towards and continue making great strides in healthcare and providing further education opportunities within the tribe. I would like to thank you for your consideration and humbly ask for your vote. Yakoke!

Jennifer Roberts

District 4



My name is Jennifer M. Roberts and I am announcing my candidacy to proudly serve the Choctaw people of District 4 Northern Leflore County on the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council. I have two young sons (ages 9 and 5) and I am the wife of Jeff Roberts of Poteau and the daughter of Denise and the late Victor Dale Carshall. My grandparents who are now with the Lord, Reverend Jimmy Lee and Ruth (Mackey) Carshall from the Leflore area; greatly portrayed the pride of being faithful servants to the Choctaw people. My motivation has always been to carry on this tradition of compassion, strength and leadership to provide the best representation our tribal members deserve. The betterment of our senior citizens, Choctaw families and our youth will always be my focus and my hard work will reflect this improvement. I want our youth to have a strong cultural identity that gives them the confidence to continue our tribal successes for many generations. I will continue to advocate for quality education and will do what is needed to help provide the most advanced educational resources for our tribal members in order to gain valuable employment and career choice opportunities. Quality healthcare and healthy lifestyles are also a huge priority for me because I want our Choctaw families to live in homes that reflect this kind of care for the benefits of overall health and wellness of our tribal members.

District 4 has always been my home and not only do I want our tribal members to thrive but also our communities where we raise our families. I attended school at Poteau High School, Carl Albert State College and graduated with a Bachelor Degree and Master of Science Degree in Counseling in 2012 from East Central University in Ada. I've worked professionally for the Choctaw Nation for the past 7 years as an advocate, grant coordinator and therapist for the Behavioral Health department, where I worked with many different tribal programs, law enforcement and community agencies, tribal and public schools, elder programs, as well as crisis shelters and child advocacy centers. Since early 2016, I have worked as a career development counselor to provide academic and guidance support for our Choctaw tribal members at colleges, universities, and vocational technology centers, as well as support our high school Choctaw students with future career and academic goals. I have always taken great pride in working hard for our tribal members, because I feel it is an honor to help and assist in any type of work I do for the Choctaw Nation that betters the lives of the Choctaw people. Yakoke!

Please contact me at any time with any questions or concerns and check my website for all campaign events. My info is:

Website- www.jrobertsdist4.com

Email- jrobertsdist4@gmail.com

Phone 918-658-8012

Address: 504 Grace Street Poteau, Ok 74953

Facebook- Jennifer Roberts for Choctaw Tribal Council District 4

Alice Caldwell

District 6



Alice (Lewis) Caldwell, with much prayer and deep consideration has decided to seek the office of Councilperson for District 6. She feels that she has much to offer to the Choctaw people living in her district.

Alice has helped many people in Latimer and Pittsburg counties for over 20 years by serving as a mental health therapist. She sees the District 6 Council position as a way for her to provide additional assistance to those in need.

She was born in McAlester to C.H. Lewis Sr. aka "Chief Lewis" or Buster and Marie Kindred Lewis, and was raised outside of Wilburton. Her father, "Chief Lewis" built the Chief Motel in Wilburton in the 1940's and operated it until 1976, when he sold it to Alice's brother Sonny Lewis. Sometimes later Sonny changed the name to the Landmark Center and still operates it with his wife today.

Alice graduated from Wilburton High school and went on to Eastern Oklahoma State College where she received two degrees. She graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) with two Bachelor's Degrees, was nominated Who's Who, graduated with her Master's Degree in Behavioral Science from SOSU, and School Psychology from ECU. Alice received her Doctorate Degree from AACCS in Clinical Psychology/Clinical Sexology. Dr. Caldwell built her home in the Wilburton area approx. Twenty-seven years ago with help from the Choctaw Nation Housing Program and lives in this house today. Having lived all but a few years of her life here, going to school, and raising her family in District 6 ensures that she fully understands the joys and hardships faced by those living in her district. She reports remembering being unable to afford the bus that ran to Durant for college, so she drove the bus to assist in paying for her passage. Much of her time has been devoted to improving the quality of life of those in her community by promoting wellness, creating jobs, and helping the many she has worked with as a mental health therapist. Alice regularly volunteers her time and energy both locally and across the country. She has a passion for helping those in her community and she fulfills that passion by serving as a song leader in her church and other roles such as the President Elect of the Oklahoma Counseling Association. Her pride as a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma drives her to improve the lives of those in her community and strengthen our Choctaw culture.

Alice recognizes that none of her accomplishments were made alone and says, "It is always a team effort." She reports "a daily special than you to my Lord in Heaven, family, friends, and colleagues that have stood by me throughout this journey. Our journey is not over; we still have work to do." As a Choctaw Nation Councilperson for District 6 she will strive to continue her vision within the Choctaw Nation, for her district, serving others with a mindfulness of the unique specialties of the region.

Joe Coley (Incumbent)

District 6



My name is Joe Ed Coley, Councilmen for District 6 Latimer County. I became councilman in 2004 and presently the Chaplain, opening each tribal council meeting with prayer.

I was born at home, south of Red Oak, to Ranes "Rufus" and Lela (Yota) Coley on May 15, 1949. I am married to Mary (Mackey) Coley and we have three children: Diane, Roger, and Heather and seven grandkids.

My first job was working at Conjoleum Carpet as a carpet inspector for 8 years. Then I worked for Whirlpool at Fort Smith and spent 4 years in Tulsa, before settling back to Latimer County.

I also worked as a Community Health Representative (CHR) for 24 years. I presently serve on the Board of Keddo and Kibois.

I have assisted with the county in the completion of the road project. I attend all required tribal council meetings involving issues resolving decision making by all council members. My goal as a councilman is to continue serving the Choctaw people, old and young. My other avenue of assistance is to be available, at all time to those needing assistance.

Outside of the tribal council, in my religious activities I serve as the Sunday school assistant Superintendent, song leader, adult Sunday school teacher, and trustee of the Cedar Baptist Church. I also emcee some cultural events and many gospel singings as requested.

As stated before, "I had prayed earnestly about this position." I know I have the support of many family and friends, because of their encouragement, which helped me to make this decision. I feel highly qualified to serve our Choctaw people having 14 years experience with a passion for assisting others, with heartfelt duties to make right decisions. Yakoke.

CANDIDATES FOR TRIBAL COUNCIL



Jennifer Woods

District 6

Jennifer Prock Woods was born and raised in District 6, and her roots are in Latimer County. She descends from a long line of proud Choctaws. Her grandmother, Classie Wallen helped raise Jennifer to respect her culture and to be proud of who she was. At the young age of 13 Jennifer went to live at Jones Academy and completed her high school education at Hartshorne High School in 1977. From Jones Academy Jennifer went to East Central University where she received a Bachelors of Arts in Social Work. Her minor was in Alcohol and Drug Counseling. Additionally, in 2015 Jennifer graduated from Choctaw University.

Jennifer is a member of the Cedar Indian Baptist Church. Her father Robert Prock is buried at the Cedar Cemetery. Her mother Evelyn Moore Prock was strong in Choctaw tradition. She passed on those traditional values to Jennifer. A part of those traditions included family, faith, as well as culture. Jennifer accredits Jones Academy for teaching her to be the person she is today. Her work ethic and person values come from those who taught her there. She has a passion for Jones Academy and the students who go there.

The majority of Jennifer’s career has been with Choctaw Nation. She began working for Choctaw Nation at Jones Academy as a student counselor/drug & alcohol group. Jennifer was later promoted to Director of Indian Child Welfare where she worked for nine years. She later managed the Project YOUTH Grant, which covered the entire 10 ½ counties of the Choctaw Nation. Until filing to run for office, Jennifer was employed as the Director of Community Based Social Work and General Assistance Program. She oversaw 17 employees and managed 1.5 million dollar budget.

In addition to Jennifer’s work skills she has also been involved in her local community. She currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Wilburton School JOM Board, she is involved in the Latimer Coalition, she sets on the board of the Latimer County Red Cross, the Choctaw Nation Sexual Assault Team, the Choctaw Nation Victim Assistance Advisory Board, the Choctaw Nation Better Beginning Leadership Team, and is a vital part of the Choctaw Nation Service Team. Jennifer is a former member of the Latimer/Leflore County Child Advocacy Board. She is a true servant leader.

If elected as Councilperson for District 6 she will represent every tribal member in the district. She will make it a priority to know tribal members and know their needs. Latimer County has a high rate of unemployment, substance use, domestic violence, as well as other issues. Jennifer would like to be the voice to help those in need. To help the area grow and prosper. With her experience with the tribe she is already familiar with program management and budgeting. She is prepared to use her experience to work for all areas of District 6.



Jack Austin Sr. (Incumbent)

District 7

Halito, I am Jack Austin Sr., and have been blessed to serve District 7 since 2001 as the current Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilman. My wife Norma and I have been married for 34 years with four wonderful children blessing us with 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. I learned at an early age to serve others before myself from parents, Sam and Maggie Austin. The lessons I learned from my parents served me well in life, from serving my country in the United States Army, my church as a board member for the last 34 years, and our Choctaw people from my days as a youth to 32 years with Indian Health Services in the OEH

Department.

Serving as Councilman for District 7, I’ve had the opportunity to advocate for our Choctaw People and their communities. Antlers and Wright City have beautiful new community centers for our people to use and enjoy. Focusing on health and wellness we were able to build a state-of-the-art wellness center in Antlers with another center planned in Wright City. Our younger Choctaws will enjoy a new head start in Wright City this year with beginning work scheduled for one in Antlers also this year. Recently we broke ground in Antlers for a new Independent Elderly Housing addition to provide adequate housing for the elderly. District 7 experienced a first for the Choctaw Nation by way of the Choctaw Country Market opening in Clayton last year. This provided a great service to an area known as a food desert. Another first, the city of Antlers has the first Travel Plaza and Casino Too with an area dedicated to highlight our history and culture of the Choctaw Nation. Working with various county commissioners we have been able to improve, repair, and resurface many roads in District 7 that our Choctaw people live on. My relationships with Choctaw Churches, schools, Chambers of Commerce, water departments, fire & police departments in District 7 have always been good, as I have supported their mission of serving our Choctaw people and the communities they live in.

In my role as Councilman I’ve had the opportunity to work with some great leadership to achieve great outcomes for our Choctaw people. Choctaw hunting & fishing license, Choctaw car tags, lowering the age requirements for the storm shelter program, improvements to the council grounds, and Job for the Day program are just a few to name. As a member of the tribal council, my vote will always be for what is best for our Choctaw families in District 7 and throughout the Choctaw Nation. I will continue to assist families in District 7 when they are in need of services.

I respectfully ask to continue serving the Choctaw people as the District 7 Councilman. Feel free to contact me with any questions or if I can be of assistance. Yakoke! District 7 Jack Austin Sr. To contact District 7 Councilman Jack Austin Sr.

P.O. Box 725
Clayton, Ok 74536
(918) 569-4804



Bobby Baker

District 7

Halito,
My name is Bobby Baker Sr., the son of William and Alice Baker. I am full-blood Choctaw and a resident of Wright City for the past thirty years. I am a member of Bethel Hill Methodist Church. My wife Pearline Baker and I have been married 35 years and we have two children, and three grandchildren. I am the second oldest of 16 children, of 10 boys and six girls. I enjoy hunting, watching stickball, camping, and spending time with my children and grandchildren. I am running for councilman in District 7. My goals for my Choctaw people are to provide any and all help to our Choctaw people, elderly Choctaws, and I will

accommodate the disabled and our younger generation is the future of our tribe. I am looking forward and excited to serve my Choctaw people and to honor and maintain our Choctaw tradition.

Yakoke,
Bobby Baker, Sr.
580-236-6282
Facebook/Bobby Baker, Sr.



Adrian Johnico

District 7

I am Adrian Johnico, a proud Choctaw and have lived in Clayton for 27 years. I am the youngest of four children. My mother passed away when I was five months old. For a short time, my brother and my twin sisters, lived in a small Indian home in Talihina with nine people. My aunt, Ella Shattuck, took me in but could not afford to care for my brother and sisters so they went to Jones Academy. Most Choctaws in our area remember my sisters, Felicia and Melody Johnico, also known as “Double Trouble” as they were outstanding basketball players at Talihina High School.

I started Head Start in Talihina, then moved to Buffalo Valley and went there for sixth and seventh grade, and then moved to Clayton and went there from eighth grade until I graduated in 1996. My aunt Ella passed away in 1999. My aunt took me to the Indian Church at the Sardis Narrows for all night singings and I grew up learning the culture of our tribe and eating out traditional foods.

I have been married to Jessie Pugh Johnico for 17 years. Jessie teaches Kindergarten at Tvshka Homma. We have three children: a 16-year-old son, Carson; a 12-year-old daughter, Maggie; and an 8-year-old son Aidan, who has Down syndrome.

I took Auto mechanics at Vo-tech in Talihina during my junior and senior years. As soon as I graduated in 1996, I went to work at the Durant Bingo Hall in the kitchen then moved up to a pull-tab clerk. After two years, I started working at a welding shop in Durant. I am a state certified welder with a special license to work on power plants, boilers and steam operated turbines.

My first job in a power plant was the GE plant near Hugo. In 2000, I started working for AEP and have worked in Gentry, Arkansas, Tulsa, Marshall and Vernon, Texas, Lawton, and Kemmerer Wyoming. I now work in Oologah. When I work away from home, I live out of my camper. I have been away from home as long as two months and it is not uncommon for me to be gone as 30 days at a time. During those times, my family comes to see me on weekends.

My wife and I have been active members of the First Baptist Church in Clayton for 16 years as well as supporters of the Red River Valley Down Syndrome Society.

My dream is for every Choctaw to be able to find good paying jobs and not have to leave home for work. I also dream of a day when our tribe provides a helping hand to our elders and our most needy - the least among us. Our ancestors taught us to take care of the most vulnerable - which are usually our elders and our children. I believe in giving a hand up, not a hand out.



James Dry

District 9

Dear Choctaw Tribal Members,
I, James Dry, would like to announce my candidacy for District 9 Tribal Council. I am immensely humbled and grateful for the opportunity to run for this position.

The 46-year-old son of James H and LaDonna Dry, I graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University and began my career with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma at the Choctaw Bingo hall 27 years ago, as a cook to work my way through college. Together with my wife, Carie, we have five sons; Kannon (21), Karson (16), Nie (16), Tucker (11), and Noah (9). It has been a pleasure to hold many leadership positions within Choctaw Nation as well as in the community. I am the current President of the Durant Chamber of Commerce, co-chair of the Magnolia Festival, Committee member on the Imagine Durant team, as well as board member for Bryan County EMS.

Coming from a long line of educators, I understand the importance of an education. I want our tribal members to have the opportunity to go to college or to a skilled trade school. It will be my priority to work with our public schools and Vo tech to ensure that our Choctaw students and Tribal members are succeeding. Education was instilled into our family by the late Ernest Dry, who graduated from Goodland Indian School and later became superintendent of schools in southeastern Oklahoma.

I am committed to our elders and culture. We as a tribe must listen to what our elders have to say, as they are the heart of the Nation. It will be a top priority of mine if elected to ensure they are heard.

I want to be the voice for the people. We will create an advisory board and hold monthly meetings to listen to the concerns of our people. It is very important to inform all tribal members of our many services, as well as listen to your concerns. The future of our Tribe depends on the voice of the people.

As a proud Choctaw tribal member and an employee of Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for 27 years, it has been a passion to serve the Choctaw people. I will continue to work hard for all Choctaw citizens to make sure our Nation works for us.

If you don't know me, I want to gain your trust. I encourage anyone that would like to talk with me to contact me at (580) 920-0872 or email to jamesdry9@gmail.com. Please join me at one of our dinners in Bokchito, Ada, Pauls Valley, Bennington, Caddo, Calera, and Durant. Details are listed on my website www.jamesdry.com or on my Facebook page www.facebook.com/RealJamesDry/.

I am committed to making a difference and committed to you!

Yakoke,
James S Dry



CANDIDATES FOR TRIBAL COUNCIL



Michael Folsom

District 9

Halito Chahtas,
My name is Michael Folsom; most people know me by “Happy.” I was born at Talihina Indian Hospital and raised at Bennington. I started school and graduated from Bennington High School and graduated from Okmulgee Tech Trade school with a Mechanic Certification.
I started to work in the road construction industry before entering military service. I served our great country during the height of the Vietnam War in the Republic of South Korea, I am a proud Choctaw Veteran.

After returning home from the military, I married Sue (Williams) Folsom. We will be celebrating our 45th Anniversary this year. We have three adult children, four grandchildren and one great-grandson. I am proud to say that our entire family is actively involved in participating and preserving the Choctaw culture. My entire family speaks some Choctaw. I also attended Choctaw Language at SOSU.

After my military career, I went to work in the construction/environmental industry and worked the next 30 years as operator and supervisor on military bases across the US.

I recently retired from being self-employed in the trucking and dozer business. My experience and training has led me to work currently as a Tribal Monitor for the pipe line industry to assure the pipe lines are protecting any historical, burial, and cultural sites.

I enjoy working on my farm raising cattle and have horses for the grandchildren. I serve as Chairman of the Board for the Bennington Volunteer Fire Department. My service to the Choctaw people will be to promote health, education, social welfare and to sustain the Choctaw culture and language.

I will work jointly with the administration, staff, and the Tribal Council to meet the needs and concerns of our people for a healthy life style.

I will support the Annual Choctaw Powwow, livestock shows, and stickball teams. I have traveled to the Mississippi World Series Stickball Tournament and also the games that we hold here in Oklahoma to support our team and youth.

My vision is to see the Choctaw Nation’s continued success. I will support continued job creation for our Tribal members and Tribal programs that serve our elders, youth, and Choctaws in need.

I have lived in Bryan County and grew up among you, the Choctaw people. I relate to Choctaw’s needs and concerns. I have heard and seen your needs, I can say I have been in many of your situations as a young man with a family.

If you vote for me and I am elected as your Choctaw Tribal Councilman for District 9, it will be an honor for me to serve you, listen to you, and to work with the administration to make a better place for our people. I will work for you, our children, and our grandchildren who will be the future leaders of our great Choctaw Nation.

I am Michael “Happy” Folsom, asking for your vote for District 9 Choctaw Tribal Councilman. Feel free to contact me at 580-920-5601, mfolson4875@yahoo.com, or Facebook @happyfolson. Yakoke!



Berdie Williams

District 9

Dear Fellow Choctaws,
I’m writing today to announce my candidacy for the Choctaw Nation District 9 Tribal Council seat. It is an important time in tribal government when our citizens have the opportunity to elect a representative to work alongside tribal leadership, communities, and other Choctaws to continue the work, success, and progress of the tribe. As a current, long-time employee in Choctaw tribal government, I’ve witnessed the tremendous strength, growth, and economic rise of this proud Nation. Working together we can continue to build a stronger Tribe and homeland, so that fellow Choctaws everywhere and their families can have a successful, healthy, and enjoyable quality of life.

Raised in a large, traditional Choctaw family within the grasp of rural poverty and lacking opportunity, I was challenged by these personal hardships to complete college and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to help others and myself.

Establishing the first senior citizen nutrition program and a food bank gave me important skills into program development and created a lifetime desire to serve others. Coordinating the Student School and College Clothing Programs allowed me to serve thousands of Choctaw students nationwide. As Community Health Director for more than 27 years, I acquired valuable experience as a leader in the creation of numerous health education and disease prevention programs to directly benefit Choctaws in their homes and communities. Programs created include mobile breast cancer screening, vaccination and health screening clinics, as well as the Eye Glass, Denture, and Hearing Aid program, patient transportation, and other health programs for men, women and children.

As a grant writer for the Tribe, I secured federal grants to support senior citizen lunch programs in each district, purchase library books for Jones Academy, and agriculture programs to help veterans, farmers, and ranchers gain access to financial and educational resources to become successful producers.

Grants were secured to grow and save rare heirloom Choctaw seed for eventual distribution to tribal members and another, to study the efficiency of administrative functions at the tribal hospital. Grant funds were also obtained to examine the feasibility of establishing a regional food hub in rural southeastern Oklahoma.

Along with protecting and advancing the Nation’s culture, assets, and resources, as District 9 Tribal Council member, I will focus on: Employment, Individual business development, Services for our elders and disabled, and Being responsive to the needs and concerns of tribal members.

I humbly ask for your vote. I hope you will join my efforts to continue the growth and success of the Choctaw Nation. If you give me the chance to serve as your Tribal Councilmember, I will use my experience and skills for the benefit of tribal members everywhere because the future of our Nation and our people depend on the good work we accomplish today. My husband Jim and I live in Durant, Oklahoma and have three adult children and one grandchild, Everly Mae.

For more information, please visit www.BerdieforCouncil.com and Facebook. Best regards to all,
Berdie Williams



Timothy Sexton

District 9

Timothy Sexton has always been committed to helping others. With a great attitude, he is known to stand up for all the Choctaw people who he has worked with, even the non-Choctaws. Timothy Sexton believes helping people no matter what their race or culture is. He has five years working for the Choctaw casino in Durant. With a strong commitment to his Lord and savior Jesus Christ. From a young age his father David Sexton was a preacher and his mother Ruth was always by his side taking care of the old church. Known as Buffalo Indian Methodist Church in Harmony.

One of his brothers Daniel Sexton preached for

most of his life. He could sing in many different native languages. Cane Hill United Methodist Church in Atoka, was his last great adventure to bring the Lord’s word. By Daniel’s side was his wife Catherin who kept him going with her support and strong love for the family. Timothy served in the U.S. Army from December 1979 to April 1982, he worked in the supply and mortars department where he trained other soldiers (AIT). With numerous medals issued by the U.S. Army, he completed his duty for America with an Honorable Discharge. However, even to know he’s a strong man it couldn’t have been easier without his loving wife Shirley, they were married in 1969. Still going strong together, they had five children and raised six. Timothy Jr., Kimberly, Monica, Candy, Isaac, and Matthew Sexton. With numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Timothy has strong roots that run just as swift and deep as a running river. With growing up in the Indian church singing those lovely Choctaw Hymns. This legacy was passed down to us kids. Timothy Sexton is committed to: serving the people of District 9, help and work for the elders, be there in your time of need, fight for better treatment of the Choctaw Veterans, help all tribe members even if Absentee, advocate for the young children to learn the Choctaw language in head start, at least have the option to learn your culture, committed to mixed blood, committed to non-Choctaws who work for our great nation, committed for better higher education options to help students pay for college, committed to an open door policy, no door shut, and you will never be locked out, better treatment of all Choctaw associates especially those not in management, committed to a better response time to help you if disaster strikes your home and family.

Timothy Sexton is not one to back down or lay over for anyone if it’s not right. There is no, “YES MAN” in his nature. Speaking your mind and not giving into peer pressure is what we need.

In June, my fellow Choctaw members of District 9, Let’s knock on that door and walk through it together. With your voice and Timothy’s drive, no man or women will be left behind. Yakoke! “Chi Pisa La Chike.”



Anthony Dillard (Incumbent)

District 10

Halito,
I would like to thank all of the Choctaws of District 10 for the opportunity to serve you the past 12 years. I am announcing my candidacy for the opportunity to serve 4 more years as your councilman; with the same focus on making our District and the Choctaw Nation a better place to live and raise a family.

A lot of things have changed for the better since first coming into office. We now have a Choctaw Health clinic with two family practice providers to help with our local health needs. A new community center for senior lunches and service delivery for meeting needs of tribal members. A new wellness center to encourage health and fitness, to help combat obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes to name a few. A new Housing Authority development of project 202 housing options for senior elders to utilize in Atoka. A new Chili’s restaurant franchise that provided 40 jobs for the local economy. A Casino Too remodel and expansion of Atoka Travel Plaza with a Travel Plaza update coming soon. We just recently had a ribbon cutting of a new state-of-the-art Head Start building for the upcoming school year.

I have been a very strong advocate for open and transparent government, with the proper checks and balances to promote integrity and accountability. The tribal economy has been a high priority both local and abroad, especially as it relates to the diversification of all tribal businesses. I have lobbied for a strong, fair election ordinance and very proud of the progress we have made over the years. I have participated in all strategic planning opportunities that have been afforded to me over the recent years. I was proud to help advocate for the storm cellar program as well as lobbied to add more money into the home repair program at the housing authority.

I continue to serve on various community organizations to further my knowledge on events that could possibly affect the Choctaw Nation and its residents. Again, I ask for your support to continue to serve the Choctaw people.

Yakoke
Anthony Dillard



James Frazier (Incumbent)

District 12

James Frazier is a proud Choctaw tribal member who currently serves as the Choctaw Nation District 12 Tribal Councilmember. James has served in this position since 1990. He has greatly enjoyed serving Choctaw people and the communities in his service area throughout his tenure in this position. He feels very blessed to have the opportunity to connect people with the many resources and opportunities the Choctaw Nation provides.

James is a lifelong resident of the Choctaw Nation and is dedicated to serving the needs of Choctaw families who reside within Choctaw Nation District 12. James also works diligently to help those Choctaw tribal members who live throughout and beyond the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation.

James grew up in a large Choctaw family. He was one of nine children born to Edgel and Lavada (Belvin) Frazier. His mother, Lavada, was a longtime employee of the Choctaw Nation, serving in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. James graduated from Kiowa High School in 1971. In 1973, while working in the Wrangler factory in Coalgate, he met and later married his wife, Vicki. They made their home in Coalgate where they raised their two daughters, Michelle and Valerie. They now have two wonderful grandsons, Colton and Jackson.

James worked as an employee of the City of Coalgate from the late 1970s until 1990. He first worked as part of the street crew and then acquired the formal training and certification required to become the City of Coalgate water plant operator. He later worked as the Physical Plant Operator II at Mac Alford Correctional Center in Stringtown.

James is proud of the accomplishments and the tremendous economic growth of the Choctaw Nation during his years of service as a Tribal Council Member. He credits the tremendous success to the hard work and dedication of Tribal Leaders including Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., the Tribal Council, Choctaw Nation employees, the Choctaw people and the many working partnerships the Choctaw Nation has with local, state, tribal and federal entities. James is particularly proud of the two Choctaw community centers located within District 12. He sees these centers as a vital part of the communities in which they are located. They serve as a hub for Choctaw people to gather and fellowship while sharing culture, food, traditions, and of course, laughter. Each year, James and his family look forward to the many events held at the community centers, including the Thanksgiving dinners and the Children and Elders Christmas celebrations. These events allow people in the community to share the holidays and fellowship. James feels all those who attend these celebrations are part of the Choctaw Nation District 12 family.

Along with serving as Councilman to the Choctaw people of District 12, James enjoys spending time outdoors fishing and hunting with his two grandsons. He is also an avid NASCAR fan and participated in local stock car races, winning the Pure Stock Championship at the Ada Dirt Track in 2000.

**Election Day will be on
Saturday, July 8 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.**

**Visit
www.ChoctawNation.com
for updated information on Voting Location
addresses.**

S **T** **B** **O** **11**

CJ Adcock



CJ Adcock, 85, of Russellville passed away March 20, 2017, in Quinton.

CJ was born Sept. 14, 1931, in Russellville to Ira Nolan and Edna (Ginn) Adcock.

He was preceded in death by parents; sister Kathrine Stevens; and brother OC Adcock.

CJ is survived by his spouse Gloria Adcock; children Ira Adcock, Julie Roberts, and Johnnie Adcock; nine grandchildren; sisters Claudine King and Alice Ann Pryor; brothers Ralph, Billy, and Darrell Adcock; many nieces, nephews and numerous other family members.

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

Edith Ardinia Mobbs

Edith Ardinia (Ned) Mobbs, 80, a long time Atoka County resident, passed away Feb. 17, 2017, in Coalgate.

Edith was born March 30, 1936, in Lawton to Abe and Lena (Carr) Ned.

She was preceded in death by her parents Abe and Lena (Carr) Ned; spouses Alvin Vernon Cagle Sr. and Marion Mobbs; sisters Ozella Dayton, Doris Kent, Bobbie Simmons, Nina Johnston, Lahoma Boykin, and Maxine Ned; and brothers George Ned and Dennis Ned.

Edith is survived by son Alvin Cagle and spouse Faye; grandchildren Jason Cagle and spouse Amy, Shane Cagle and spouse Bradi, Chey Anne Cliftt and spouse Jade, Rachel Wood and spouse Jeremy; sister Betty Perrie; great-grandchildren Kaden and Briley Cagle, Gage, Garrett, Gavin Keith McMichael, Gavin Hayden and Ashton Cagle, Cashin and Hazin Cliftt, and Parker Wood; stepchildren, Michael Mobbs and spouse Glenda, Mark Mobbs and spouse Vickie, and Kristy Mobbs and spouse Keith Sutherland; eight step-grandchildren; numerous step-great-great-grandchildren; numerous nieces, nephews, and other relatives; along with special friend Ethel Woods of Atoka.

Interment was at Bentley Cemetery in Atoka.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Browns Funeral Service](#).



Andrewette Bohanon Wood

Andrewette Bohanon Wood, 78, passed away March 24, 2017.

She was born Oct. 2, 1939, in Wewoka to Andrew and Lois Mae Walker Bohanon.

Sue was preceded in death by parents; brothers Josh and Webb Bohanon; grandson Sgt. Ryan M. Wood; and her fiancé, Jack Gregg.

She is survived by sons Bonner and Andy Wood; daughter Lee Ann Wood and spouse Kerry Van Ess; granddaughters Candice and spouse Jay Bunce, Stephanie and spouse Brandon Kellar, Audrey Vorderlandwehr, and Addyson Wood; great-grandchildren Cooper and Leyton Bunce; sister-in-law Judy Bohanon; nephews James and spouse Julie Bohanon and Josh Bohanon; and cousins Joe Lee Walker and Jackie Mae Walker.

Interment was held at the Oakwood Cemetery in Wewoka.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Island Cremation and Funeral Services](#).



Loretta Snyder

Loretta “Kaye” Snyder, 60, of Broken Bow, passed away April 12, 2017, at her home.

Kaye was born Sept. 16, 1956, in Talihina to Pickens and Juanita (McAfee) Thomas.

She is preceded in death by her parents, three brothers, and seven sisters.

Kaye is survived by sons Allen Snyder and Matthew Thomas and spouse Adrianna; daughters Michelle Williams and spouse Lonnell, Jennifer Williston and spouse Sheldon Herrod and Kayela Thomas; sisters Wanda Francis and spouse Anthony, and Lee Wagstaff; grandchildren Cody, Katelyn, Baylee, and Brandon May, Ronnie Williams, Jordan and Aspen Williston, Cienna O’donnell, Sheldon Jr., Aleah, Jasiah, Kaylem, and Noah Herrod, Nathaniel Thomas, Marius Lewis, Bresias Thomas, Canion McKinney and Castiel Thomas; several great-grandchildren; numerous nieces, nephews, and other relatives; Sharla Thomas; and many other friends.

To read the full obituary please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).



Rena Mae Six

Rena Mae Six, 84, passed away July 7, 2016, in Haslet, Texas surrounded by her family.

Rena was born April 28, 1932, in Bennington to Elizabeth and Stinnes Tistubbee.

She was preceded in death by sister Hattie; brothers Raymond and Calvin; and spouse Russell Six Jr.

Rena is survived by son Kenny; daughters Kathy, Karen, and Kay; son-in-law Michael; granddaughter Amber; three great-grandchildren; sister Inell; devoted cocker spaniel, Rocky; and numerous nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).



Jay Tee McCurtain

Jay Tee McCurtain, 54, passed away Jan. 5, 2017.

Jay Tee was born Dec. 16, 1962, in Big Spring, Texas, to Jim and Edna McCurtain.

He was the great-great-grandson of Chief Green McCurtain.

He was preceded in death by mother Edna and brother Leslie.

He is survived by father Jim McCurtain and spouse Lazell McCurtain; son Jay McCurtain and spouse Brenda McCurtain; daughter Jaye McCurtain; four fur grandchildren; siblings Gary McCurtain and spouse Kat, Sheila Shanks and spouse Larry, Sheryl McCurtain, Wesley McCurtain and spouse Rosie; best friend since childhood Tony Meeks; and several nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Jay Tee was cremated and interment will be held June 10, 2017, in Big Springs, Texas.



Eugene Branam

Eugene Branam, 91, of Stigler passed away March 18, 2017, in Muskogee.

Eugene was born Feb. 4, 1926, in Tuskahoma to Luscious J. and Nora Anderson.

Eugene was preceded in death by his parents; wives Sadie and Bonnie; and brothers James and Gerald.

Eugene is survived by children La Kresa Cornell and spouse Dale, Tresa Byrd and spouse Steve, and Tony Branam and spouse Susan; grandchildren Jonathan Byrd, Joseph Branam, Elisabeth Branam; great-grandchildren Kaleb and Addison Byrd; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. To read the full obituary, please visit [Mallory-Martin Funeral Home](#).



Vickie Sanchez Vansill

Vickie Sanchez Vansill, 66, passed away on March 31, 2017, in Ardmore.

Vickie was born on Dec. 11, 1950, in Talihina to Alfredo Castillo Sanchez and Juanita Mae (Wade) Sanchez.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and great-grandson, Jayceon Young.

Vickie is survived by daughters Yolanda Christina DeBord and spouse John, and Shalena Bruce; sons Jackie Bruce, Phillip Whitthorne, and Matthew Whitthorne, 12 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren; sisters Delores Weisner, Lawanda Elles, Carla Venable, Lisa Martin, and Lee Ann Mashore; and brothers Glenn Sanchez and Nat Sanchez.

Interment was at the Hillcrest Memorial Park in Ardmore.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Griffin-Hillcrest Funeral Home](#).



JoAnn Coley

JoAnn Coley, 68, of Red Oak passed away April 12, 2017, at her home.

JoAnn was born April 30, 1948, in Red Oak to Roosevelt and Martha (McCurtain) Coley.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Dorothy Gotes and Lenora Brewer; brothers Albert Coley and Larry Coley; and nephew Randall Adams.

JoAnn is survived by spouse John Coley of the home; sons Daniel Coley and Marco Coley; brother Bobby Coley and spouse Doris; along with numerous nieces, nephews and other family and friends.

Interment was held at Red Oak City Cemetery. To read the full obituary please visit [Jones Harkins Funeral Home](#).



Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw tribal members and are free of charge. The *Biskinik* will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes. Family members/individuals may still submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspapers through a funeral home service. Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The *Biskinik* strives to serve all Choctaws, therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice. Due to space limitations, there is a 150 word limit for obituaries. Full obituaries can be read online at the funeral home’s website. Send official obituary notices to: Biskinik PO Box 1210 Durant OK 74702 or email: biskinik@ChoctawNation.com

Virginia Lois (Going) Williams

Virginia Lois (Going) Williams, 78, passed away Dec. 10, 2016, in Edmond.

Virginia was born Oct. 5, 1938, in Wilburton to Rayson Gibson and Lucy Grace Going.

She was preceded in death by her parents; siblings Dollie Scott, Samantha Neal, Vernola Going, Francis Neill, Rayson Jr., Joe, John, and Baby Sonny.

Virginia is survived by children Dean (Denise) Kerns, Eric Williams, and Lisa Kerns; sisters Mabel McGuire and Ruby Stotts (who passed away on January, 30, 2017); grandchildren Michelle, Andrew, Dakota, Hayden, Kaya, Reed, and Rayson; many great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews; and her special friends Amber and Graig Scarberry.



William Wayne Stewart

William Wayne Stewart, 66, of Norman, passed away Jan. 3, 2017.

William was born July 21, 1950, in Talihina to Thomas and Bessie (Robinson) Stewart.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Dora Mae Peters; and nephew Curtis Spybuck-Stewart.

William is survived by spouse Cora of 42 years; sons Patrick, Thomas and David Stewart; daughter Regina Stewart; brother Jonathan Stewart; niece Sherrie Stewart; and cousin Donna Jean Robinson.

Interment was at the Choctaw Veterans Cemetery in Tvshka Homma.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Advantage Funeral Home Services](#).



Raphael (Rafe) Edmond Shackelford

Raphael (Rafe) Edmond Shackelford, 91, died March 22, 2017.

Rafe was born June 12, 1925, in Valliant to John Clifton and Lela Mae Shackelford.

He was preceded in death by his parents; six siblings; his infant daughter; and youngest son, Dale Lee Shackelford.

Rafe is survived by spouse of 71 years Betty Jane; daughter Karen and spouse Charles Meade; son Dennis; grandchildren Bryna and Mackenzie Tayler Shackelford; and many nieces and nephews.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Smith and Kernke Funeral Home](#).



Troy Dale Pierce

Troy Dale Pierce, 48, of Tulsa, passed away on Feb. 27, 2017, in Tulsa.

Troy was born Sept. 20, 1968, in Tulsa to Malcolm and Ollie Pierce.

He was preceded in death by his father; grandparents Bill and Troy Ryles; Aline Roson and Ernest Pierce Sr.

Troy is survived by spouse Melissa Pierce; children Falicia Knight and spouse Chance; Robert Bishop and spouse Cassie; Dawna Setzer; Trey Bishop; Megan Bishop; grandchildren Carmen, Elijah, Noah, Ruby, Kirsten, Winter, Allyssa, Ayden, Samuel, Jonas, and Issacs; mother Ollie Pierce; brother Ronnie Pierce and spouse Lori; sister Pam Sanders and spouse Tim; nieces and nephews Courtney Stewart, Mitchell Powell, and Ben Roden; as well as numerous other loving relatives and close friends.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Mark Griffith Memorial Funeral Home](#).



Clennon Eugene (Gene) Sockey

Clennon Eugene (Gene) Sockey, 91, of Muldrow died March 19, 2017, in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

He was born Aug. 24, 1925, in Bokoshe to the late Richard Anderson and Minnie Sockey.

He was preceded in death by his first spouse Beatrice B. Sockey.

He is survived by children Phyllis Wolfe and spouse David Wallace; Charles Sockey and spouse Barbara; Lisa Walker and spouse Harding; five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

To read the full obituary, please visit [Edwards Funeral Home](#).



Geneva Arlease Wright

Geneva Arlease Wright, of Calistoga, California, passed away on May 2, 2016.

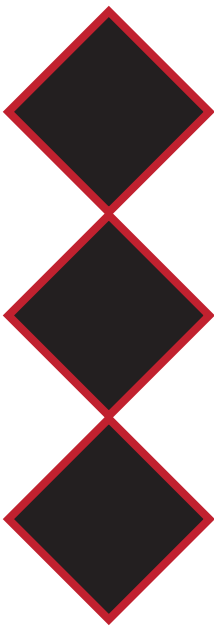
Geneva was born June 17,1930, in Pharaoh to Annie Welborn and Alfred Bryant.

She was preceded in death by spouse Jack Wright; 10 brothers and sisters.

Geneva is survived by son Glenn Wright and Christina; son Douglas Wright and Glendora; daughters Teresa Wooten and Kathryn O'Neill and Douglas; nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Interment was held at Camellia Memorial Lawn in Sacramento, California.





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HOT JOBS

Get HIRED! May 2017



Every month the Biskinik will spotlight open job positions in the Choctaw Nation. For job objectives, primary tasks, as well as required education, skills and experience, visit www.Careers.ChoctawNation.com.

Position	Location
• Executive Director of Legal	• Durant

To apply for these positions or see other job postings in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, visit www.Careers.ChoctawNation.com

Choctaw Asset Building 2017 Financial Education Class Schedule

Saturday, May 13
Oklahoma Choctaw Alliance Building
5320 S. Youngs Blvd., Oklahoma City

Saturday, June 10
Choctaw Community Center
208 B St., Poteau

Saturday, July 15
Choctaw Community Center
3105 Elks Rd., McAlester

For more information, please email:
dhix@ChoctawNation.com.



Spring Time is Upon Us!

I love opening the windows to let the warm breeze blow in. One thing could make it better, the smell of lavender flowing through the house because you just mopped the floors with the wonderful scents of pine sol. With the assistance the Next Step Initiative offers, you could go down to your local grocery store and purchase those cleaning items!

After burning all those calories and energy, sit down and have a healthy lunch! Our voucher also lets you purchase grocery items such as fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy products.

In all likelihood, you have worked up a sweat. I have great news for you! Hygiene products are approved to be bought with our voucher!

Lastly, all that change you found in the couch cushions can be deposited straight into your savings because your grocery bill is covered!

We would love to answer your questions and see if you're eligible for our services!

Antlers: Amanda Heath (580) 298-6443
Broken Bow: Tracey Risner (580) 584-2842
Durant: Michael Williams (580) 924-7773
McAlester: Kimberly Helmer (918) 420-5716
Poteau: Hank Harris (918) 649-0431
Email: nextstep@choctawnation.com

Visit our new Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NextStepInitiative/>

PRE-HOMEOWNERSHIP EDUCATION

**ARE YOU CONFUSED ABOUT HOME LOANS?
FIRST TIME HOME BUYER?
IS THERE A FINANCE PACKAGE AVAILABLE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU?
NOT SURE WHERE TO START?
NOT SURE ABOUT YOUR CREDIT?**

Come to our pre-homeownership class to learn the important steps in the home buying process.

No Fees. All materials furnished. Pre-registration is required. Classes are listed below please contact:

Sheila Ramirez at (800) 522-6170 ext. 4127 or sramirez@ChoctawHousing.com to register.

Shelbie Crow (580) 579-4068 scrow@ChoctawHousing.com McAlester 5/18/2017 Hugo 6/08/2017	Susan Shelton (580) 372-3738 sshelton@ChoctawHousing.com Idabel 5/06/2017 Battiest 6/22/2017
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Beckie Johnson
(580) 372-4154
bjohnson@ChoctawHousing.com
Stigler 5/09/2017
Poteau 6/03/2017

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX G
Hugo, Oklahoma 74743

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

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

Antlers: 400 S.W. "O" St., (580) 298-6443
Broken Bow: 109 Chahta Road, (580) 584-2842
Durant: 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, (580) 924-7773
McAlester: 3244 Afulota Hina, (918) 420-5716
Poteau: 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431

June ANTLERS Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for: Closed: June 28, 29, & 30. Cooking with Carmen: June 6 & 23, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	BROKEN BOW Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for: Closed: June 28, 29, & 30. Cooking with Carmen: June 8 & 21, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	DURANT Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for: Closed: June 28, 29, & 30. Cooking with Carmen: June 2 & 9, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	MCALESTER Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for: Closed: June 28, 29, & 30. Cooking with Carmen: June 5 & 19, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	POTEAU Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for: Closed: June 28, 29, & 30. Cooking with Carmen: June 1 & 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
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In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; Fax: (202) 690-7442; or Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Monthly Gospel Singings

For a listing of Monthly Gospel Singings please visit

<https://www.choctawnation.com/annual-and-monthly-singings>

District 7 Princess Pageant Deadline

The deadline for applications to be turned in to the Antlers or Wright City Field Office is May 19 at 4 p.m.

Any questions, contact Debbie Wesley in Wright City at (580) 981-7011 or Regina Tedder in Antlers at (580) 298-5501.

Choctaw Royalty

District Pageants



*1 May 13, 2:00pm Idabel Community Center	*7 June 4, 2:00pm Antlers Community Center
*2 June 3, 6:00pm Broken Bow Community Center	*8 May 26, 6:00pm Hugo Community Center
*3 June 27, 6:00pm Talihina Community Center	*9 June 2, 6:30pm Choctaw Event Center
*4 May 13, 4:00pm Poteau Community Center	*10 May 25, 6:00pm Atoka Community Center
*5 May 31, 11:00am Stigler Community Center	*11 April 21, 6:00pm McAlester Community Center
*6 May 25, 6:00pm Wilburton Community Center	*12 May 25, 6:00pm Coalgate Community Center

***District winners will compete Thursday, August 31 at the Tvshka Homma Labor Day Festival.**

Trail of Tears Walk T-Shirt Order Form



2017 Shirts are Blue with a Pocket Print

Sizes available are:

Youth Sizes:
YM (Medium 10-12) & YL (Large 14-16)

Adult Sizes:
S (Small), M (Medium), L (Large), XL (X Large), 2X, 3X, and 4X

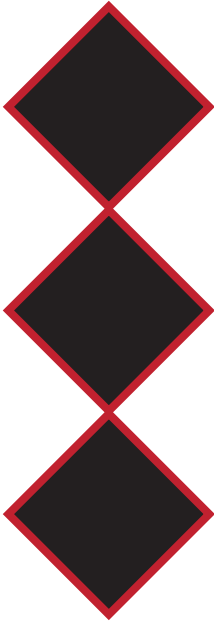
Item	Size	Quantity	Total Price
T-Shirt- \$10 ea.			
Cap- \$10 ea.			

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone Number: _____
E-Mail: _____

Price includes postage and handling. Limited supply of youth, 3X and 4X sizes. To order, send cash or money order (NO PERSONAL CHECKS) with completed form to:

ALL MAIL ORDERS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY: MAY 20, 2017

**Cultural Events Dept.
Trail of Tears Walk T-Shirt
PO Box 1210 Durant, OK 74702-1210**



Iti Fabussa

Chahta Nan Ikhvna: Choctaw Education

This month's edition of *Iti Fabussa* is about the Choctaw education. We, as Choctaw people, have placed value in learning since time immemorial.

From interactions with family and the community, to sharing stories and experiences we pass down knowledge to our future generations, thus preserving our unique identity as Choctaw people.

However, as with all cultures, we adapt and change in order to perpetuate our way of life. This natural process is what allows us to sustain our culture as Choctaw people in today's modern world.

Before moving to Oklahoma, and the relocation of many families to other parts of the United States, the majority of Choctaw people lived in communities located in our homelands of Mississippi and Alabama.

Throughout daily life infants would be watched by their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers until they reached an age where they could begin to help the community.

Once able to walk, young girls would interact with their mothers and aunts while young boys would interact with their maternal uncles to learn the skills and knowledge necessary for every Choctaw man.

Oral education through storytelling was common within the family and in the community. At the beginning of each community meeting an elder man would recite the full history of that individual community.

Education on Choctaw life was done through immersion, allowing students to learn interactively throughout each day. At night, elders would gather the youth and tell them stories and metaphors to explain the Choctaw world view.

Society began to change as Choctaws interacted with European nations. Trade with these nations brought new ideas and materials into the community. Choctaws quickly adapted to new clothing materials like cloth and wool, metal for tools and knives, and guns for hunting. In return, European nations began trading for our

pottery, basketry, spices, horses, animal products, and most importantly food.

Near the end of the 1700s after the civil war between Britain and the American Colonies, the United States replaced the French and Spanish as our primary trade partner. As American expansion grew, so did the relationship between Choctaws and the United States.

Choctaw leadership viewed the United States as a strong partner and accepted our warriors to aid in the War of 1812. However, continued pressure from American settlers and federal agents pushed Choctaw leaders to construct a strategy to ensure the continuation of Choctaw Sovereignty.

Choctaw leaders understood that pressures would continue with the United States. Planning for the future, Choctaw chiefs wanted to educate upcoming generations of Choctaw youth.

In 1818, Choctaw leaders invited a Protestant missionary, Cyrus Kingsbury, into the Choctaw Nation to build schools using funds they had acquired through the 1816 Treaty of Choctaw Trading House.

Elliot Mission was quickly constructed near the Yalobusha River. The school required Choctaw students to move there to attend.

Securing more funding in the Treaty of Doak's Stand, Choctaw leadership asks for more schools to be constructed throughout the nation. By 1824, there were eight schools within the Choctaw Nation and in 1825, the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky was opened as a school for higher learning (Kidwell, 1995). By 1830, four more schools were built within the Choctaw Nation.

Overall, there were 528 students that attended schools, with 278 attending mission schools, and 250 going to day schools within the villages. It is estimated that 4.8 percent of the school age population attended these schools (Kidwell, 1995).

While few Choctaw youth attended school, many that



Provided by Francine Locke-Bray

This is the only original building remaining from the Choctaw Academy near Georgetown, Kentucky. The Choctaw Academy was opened in 1825 as a school for higher learning.

went to the Choctaw Academy came back to become important leaders within the Choctaw community and would later come back to preserve our Choctaw sovereignty.

Today, school is part of everyday life for many Choctaw people. From youth in head start to adults and elders returning to school, we have a long legacy of education that continues today. We go to school to learn about the American world, and we go to our elders, our parents, and our community to learn about the Choctaw world.

Coleman Cole went to school at Elliott Mission. He was one of many who then attended Choctaw Academy for their higher education and went on to become an important leader. Cole was Chief of the Choctaw Nation from 1874-1878. Despite fighting to remain in Mississippi, he would walk the Trail of Tears and settle on lands 20 miles northeast of Antlers.



by Choctaw Nation

Ireland to Hold Dedication Ceremony for Choctaw Tribute

by LISA REED

The Choctaw and Irish cultures will come together June 18 for a long-awaited dedication of the Kindred Spirits sculpture in Midleton, County Cork, Ireland.

Cork-based artist Alex Pentek was commissioned to create a sculpture commemorating the donation by the Choctaw people to Ireland during the Great Famine.

He created a beautiful representation of life and generosity from one Nation of people to another.

Nine majestic 20-foot eagle feathers form a perfect circle, reaching to the skies above Bailic Park in Midleton.

The eagle feathers are arranged in a circular shape representing a bowl filled with food and presented to those suffering hunger.

According to Cork County Council Official Joe McCarthy, the circle may also represent life, the beautiful planet we inhabit, the universe and God and also reflect that the Irish Nation now responds to the needs of others as the Choctaw did when they were in need.

"The Choctaw, having suffered themselves and out of their own poverty, could be so kind, generous and considerate for people on the other side of the world, barely known to them, follows the flight of the eagle and repre-

sents a rising above," said McCarthy. "They bestowed a blessing not only on the starving Irish men, women and children, but also on humanity as a whole causing a shift in human consciousness and progressing human evolution. "The gift of the Choctaw was a demonstration of love and I hope that their monument will encourage us to act as they did."



Provided by Brian Martin

Chief Gary Batton and a delegation from the Choctaw Nation will be attending the ceremony, one that will include traditional Choctaw and Irish music and dance as well as several activities around the story and sculpture. "This bond between our Nations has strengthened over the years,"

said Chief Batton. "We are blessed to have the opportunity to share our cultures and to meet the generous people who have continued to honor a gift from the heart," Batton said.

"I envision the joining of our spirits 170 years ago and know the Chahta and people of Ireland will forever share a special bond."

The dedication is expected to take place during the afternoon of June 18. Updates will be posted on ChoctawNation.com.

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

Singular, Dual and Plural Verbs: 'to be' 'to exist' live, stay or reside

Singular-1 vtta – one to live, stay, or reside
Katimma ish vtta?

Phonetically: Ka-tihm-ma ish aht-tah?
Where do you live?

Dual-2 vhsua – two to live, stay, or reside
Katimma hvsh ashwa?

Phonetically: Ka-tihm-ma hah-sh ahs-wah?
Where do (the two of) you live?

Plural-3 asha/aiyasha – three or more to live, stay, or reside
Katomma/Katimma hvsh asha?

Phonetically: Ka-tihm-ma hah-sh ash-ah?
Where do you all live?

Katimma/Katomma – where?
vtta – one 'to live, stay, or reside'
ashwa – two 'to live, stay, or reside'
asha – three 'to live, stay, or reside'
ish – you
hvsh – plural you all; more

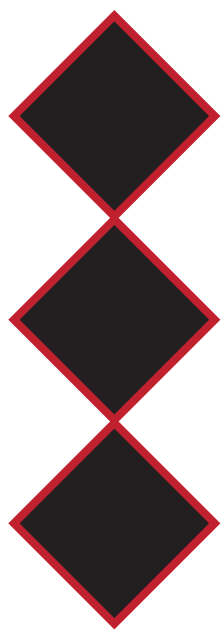
Attention CHOCTAW ARTISTS

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

Please complete the following interest form in order to receive more information regarding the 2016 Choctaw Indian Arts Show held Labor Day weekend at Tvshka Homma, OK. Must be 18 years of age & a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to participate. Categories include: Painting, graphics, cultural, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, & basketry. Please complete the form and mail to the address below.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Mail to: Shelley Garner - CNO Cultural Services
PO Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702



COMMUNITY MEETINGS

ALBUQUERQUE

14



Veronica Wilson learns to bead at the make and take class before the meeting begun at Albuquerque.



Brenner Billy teaches Ronnie Covel about stickball.



Lawrence Battiest showing traditional pottery to Baldwin Lester and Judith Lester.



Paul Notah, Christian Nez and Sheldon McArthur pictured with Chief Gary Batton at the Albuquerque cultural meeting.



Snake dance performed with members of the audience at the Albuquerque meeting.

Photos by Deidre Elrod

AMARILLO



Tina Rainwater Johnson and her daughters look at an artist booth in Amarillo.



Derryl Wyatt and grandson Luke learn about traditional weaponry at the Amarillo meeting.



Melba Leitch pictured with Chief Gary Batton at the Amarillo cultural meeting.

MEET THE ARTIST

Linda Alexander

SATURDAY - MAY 20 2017- 11AM TO 4PM

1882 HWY 69/75 - COLBERT, OK 74733 - 580-296-2672

CHOCTAWSTORE.COM

Like Us On

Children at the Amarillo meeting learn about stickball.



CHOCTAW

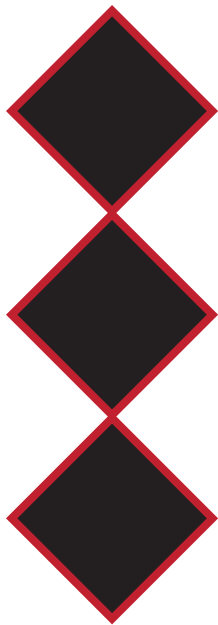
SENIOR GAMING

Active members of the Seniors program at Choctaw Community Centers in Districts 1-12 can receive **\$20 Free Play** and one complimentary buffet **Sunday – Thursday!** Please see your local community center for eligibility.

These offers will be valid at the following properties: Choctaw Casinos & Resorts - Durant, Grant or Pocola. This offer is valid once a month and at one property per month only. Buffet hours vary by location. Please check your local Choctaw Casino & Resort for hours of operation. To register, please bring your Choctaw Rewards Club card to your local community center.



Sydney and Sloan Burns show off their necklaces made at the make and take tables.



Easter in Tvshka Homma



Kendall Wesley and Kevin the goat finish up their egg hunt.



Rebel (left) and Krista Campbell take a pause as they make their way to the egg hunt and Easter celebration.



The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council and Chief Gary Batton bow their heads for a prayer before the Easter meal.



Kynza (right) and Kylin Wright take a break with the Easter Bunny and his giant eggs, some of the decorations around the Tvshka Homma lawn.



Katlyn Lyrica showed off her Easter Egg after the hunt was all over.



Haydn Bryant, Ryder Breshears, Payton Young, and Angus Williston III all found the golden eggs. Haydn and Angus won beaded medallions and Ryder and Payton took home Easter baskets stuffed with goodies.

Photos by Tina Firquain, Kendra Germany, Ronni Pierce, and Krislan Turner.



Elders search for the golden egg during the Elder egg hunt on Saturday afternoon.



Purple Shirt Team is Tvnvp Issuba Sr. and the Gray is Tvshka Waya Sr. Tvshka Waya won the game. Tvnvp Issuba took Jr. first place. Tvshka Waya Sr. and Jr. teams were runners up for the whole tournament.



The Third Annual Easter Celebration saw clear blue skies, soaring temperatures, and big crowds enjoying egg hunts, an Easter lunch, and stickball.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. welcomes the crowd under the tent during the Easter Celebration.



Camp Chahta

Sponsored by The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
for incoming college freshmen



Enrollment is Now Open,

Contact your campus advisor to enroll

What to expect from Camp Chahta

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

For more information, contact: ccr@choctawnation.com



918.465.1705
August 2-4



918.647.1423
August 9-12



580.745.3314
August 16-19



by Kendra Germany

Brian Post, Director of Economic and Strategic Development Business/Economic Development Choctaw Nation Division of Commerce; Olivia Smith, Choctaw Nation Small Business Development Services (CSBDS) Coordinator; Tammye Gwin, Senior Director of Business Development; Deby Snodgrass, Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce and Tourism; Gary Johnson, CSBDS Specialist; and Billy Hamilton, CSBDS Manager pose for a picture after the GrowOK Press Conference on April 3.

GrowOK Grant Program Aims to Sprout Native American and Rural Businesses

by KENDRA GERMANY

On April 3, Gov. Mary Fallin, i2E, Inc., and seven state and tribal partners announced the start of the new GrowOK program.

During a press conference at the state capitol, it was announced that the program, backed by a \$200,000 federally matched grant, is set to begin this spring.

The program features a curriculum designed for rural communities and Native American entrepreneurs.

“I’m so pleased that i2E is taking this creative program to Oklahoma’s rural and Native American population,” said Fallin. “It will offer rural entrepreneurs access to services that will help them find new markets and new customers for products developed in their communities.”

The program is a partnership between the nonprofit high-tech business incubator i2E, the Choctaw Nation, Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Oklahoma Business Round Table, the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science & Technology (OCAST) and Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma Inc. (REI). The U.S. Economic Development Association awarded the grant for the program in November 2016.

“Thanks to the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) and our great partners here in Oklahoma, this program will allow i2E to take our services to the state’s Native American and rural entrepreneurs in areas where they live and work,” said Scott Meacham President and CEO of i2E. “Our mission with GrowOK will be to help grow successful ventures in rural communities across the state.”

The GrowOK program is a three-week program designed to explore product/market fits for new business concepts.

Each program will include three two-hour in-person workshops with outside activities to be completed by the participating company or entrepreneur.

Companies will also participate in weekly one-on-one meetings to receive individualized feedback and direction.

While participating in the GrowOK program, participants will evaluate customer segments, product/market fit, risks and competition, initial paths to market, how to reach potential customers, implementing customer feedback, setting metrics for success, and introducing to start up capital.

Following completion of the program, each participant will receive a recommendation report with next steps for their business venture.

According to Scott Meacham, President and CEO of i2E, GrowOK’s curriculum will challenge rural and Native American Oklahoman entrepreneurs to grow successful ventures in their communities.

“Small business plays an essential role in our rural part of the state because it provides employment opportunities and keeps our smaller communities alive,” said Chief Gary Batton. “We welcome every opportunity to partner to find ways to help our small business communities grow and thrive.”

Participants in the program must be a resident of Oklahoma. They must also either be a tribal citizen or resident of rural Oklahoma. Participants must also show commitment to the success of the business.

Classes hosted by the Choctaw Nation will be held on June 8, 15, and 22. For more information contact Gary Johnson at Choctaw Nation Small Business Development Services at (580)924-8280 ext. 2998.

For more information on the GrowOK program or to apply online, visit <https://growok.org>.

Bluegrass Legend Bill Grant Inducted Into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame

by STACY HUTTO

Fans of bluegrass music filled the Bill Grant Civic Center in Hugo for Bill Grant Presents Bluegrass on the Kiamichi Trace on Friday, March 24, and Saturday, March 25. The two-day festival officially started at noon both days and ended at 10 p.m., but bluegrass filled the air hours before the festival started.

Bluegrass legend and Choctaw tribal member Bill Grant performed the second day of the festival with his band and his stepdaughter Amy Patrick. After his set, Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame Executive Director Jim Blair took the stage and introduced Board Member and Bill Grant’s former Kiamichi Mountain Boys band mate, Virgil Bonham.

Bonham spoke about his dad coming home from a bluegrass festival in Hugo in 1969 and saying they had to go back next year because it was an awesome event. The following year Bonham slept under a station wagon and they stayed the night.

While Bonham’s dad and uncle were playing they met Grant. After the festival the three men got together and formed the Kiamichi Mountain Boys and Bonham said at 11-years-old he cut his first record with Bill Grant.

“Virgil was about this tall (hip height) and standing on a box playing a big bass,” Grant told the audience.

Bonham wove a tale about the first record they cut. With hot links cooking they ate good food and did some picking. They wrote a few tunes. Emmylou Harris recorded one of them, “Roses in the Snow,” and it became a country hit. Another song from that session, “Stairway to Heaven,” continues to be performed by Grant to this day.

For Bonham, the day was an honor because Grant gave a 10-year-old boy a chance to play on a stage and write songs, which Bonham continues to do as part of the Bonham Review and Hankerin’ 4 Hank, a Hank Williams tribute band.

He credits Grant with being a musical influence. He said Grant was his influence to play the mandolin. Until he met Grant he thought he’d play the bass fiddle, but to this day he continues to play the mandolin.



by Stacy Hutto

Bluegrass legend Bill Grant (right) holds up his trophy after being inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame on Saturday, March 25. Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame Board Member Virgil Bonham (center) along with Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame Executive Director Jim Blair (left) inducted Grant into the Music Hall of Fame.

Grant has influenced many musicians besides Bonham. Among those who credit Grant’s influence are Vince Gill, Ricky Skaggs, Keith Whitley and many more.

Bonham mentioned that as a member of Choctaw Nation, Grant has done wonders for the tribe and the recognition Grant brings back to the tribe is nothing but positive.

After speaking about Grant, Bonham said, “Bill, it is my honor to be the one to hand you this trophy, and I would like to induct you into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame.”

Grant, a soft-spoken, humble man, accepted the award from Bonham.

“You sure know how to make a country boy proud. I can’t hardly express words to say what is in my heart,” Grant said.

He talked about being in Muskogee while the Music Hall of Fame was being built and someone telling him he might be in there one day. “I said I doubt it, but it’d be nice and it is nice,” Grant said.

Before exiting the stage Grant said, “Thank you very much. God bless you and thank you one more time.”

In addition to being inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, Grant has been inducted into the International Bluegrass Hall of Fame, awarded the International Bluegrass Music Association’s Distinguished Achievement Award for his contribution to bluegrass as a promoter, songwriter and performer, and the Oklahoma Arts Council created a special recognition award for Grant’s support of the arts in Oklahoma.

Pastor Olin Williams

Don’t Quit

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Galatians 6:9).



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

She was our access to the love of the heavenly Father. Then one day, a spiritual storm came by. She had some marital problems that were not her doing, but she felt the jolt from the church as well as the community.

We heard rumors and gossip among the adults whether she would continue teaching or not. Well, on that one particular Sunday, which sticks in my mind, is when the storm of her life was at its darkest, she taught me the true love of God and courage.

Dismay was the emotion of that one Sunday morning when we arrived at church. As we, her class, awaited her arrival, we played, yet quietly looked toward the top of the hill from which there was no Fannie on this day.

Time of her usual arrival passed and we could hear the adults confirming among themselves that she had failed. Our little hearts was also losing hope when all of a sudden we saw the top of her head emerging at the top of the hill, followed by her smiling face, then the rest of her as she ascended to the top and as usual stopped and rested.

We didn’t know what to do in response because of all the talk. Then even with all the weight of talk on her shoulders, she smiled and opened her arms to welcome us as usual. It was then I was impressed to desire the same God she serves. The character of love, courage, responsibility, commitment, duty, work, and other attributes of God was taught to me that day. Years later, that same God of Fannie Billy called me and I answered. Don’t quit. Someone may be looking up to you.



Look for information on the 2017 Labor Day Festival in upcoming issues of the Biskinik, Choctaw Nation social media and the Choctaw Nation website!

Annual Trail of Tears Walk
Saturday, May 20
Walk begins at 10 a.m.
in Tvshka Homma
Parking available east of the amphitheater.



Heritage Day
After celebrating the strength of our ancestors and honoring those who perished, continue to celebrate our Faith, Family and Culture at the Choctaw Capitol Grounds.

Cultural demonstrations and activities are planned, including Choctaw artists, pottery, baskets, beadwork, ancient weapons, men’s and women’s exhibition stickball games, dancing, and singing.