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CHOCTAW NATION

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

December 2015 Issue

Tribal Council holds regular session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Nov. 14 at Tvshka Homma. Committees from the following departments reported: Vocational Development, Travel Plaza, Choctaw Wellness Center, Antlers Head Start, Grant Casino, Durant Health Clinic, Circulation Department, Antlers Food Distribution, Language program, and Texoma Printing.

The following council bills were unanimously approved:

- Approve funds and budget for Child Passenger Safety Seat program
- Approve funds and budget for the National Workforce Diversity Pipeline program
- Approve funds and budget for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative-Project Strong
- Approve funds and budget for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative-Project Homakbi
- Approve funds and budget for the Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative
- Budget for FY 2015-2016 Indian Child Welfare
- Budget for FY 2015-2016 Family Violence Prevention
- Approve to dispose of surplus equipment

For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and council bills, go to <http://www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council-bills/2015-council-bills>.

Tribal Council meets at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tvshka Homma.

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The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To enhance the lives of all members through opportunities designed to develop healthy, successful and productive lifestyles.

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Photo by Charles Clark

The parking lot was full of tribal, city officials, and well wishers as Choctaw Nation representatives and Atoka city officials cut a ribbon to welcome a new Chili's to the community.



Photo by Brandon Frye

Roselee (Williams) Senior of Smithville stands with Chief Gary Batton, Tribal Councilmen, and community members to cut a ribbon opening the new wellness center expansion attached to the Smithville community center.

Ringling out the old with new ventures

Business looks hot as the Choctaw Nation adds another Chili's to the mix; this one in Atoka on U.S. Highway 69

By SARAH ORO
Choctaw Nation

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to welcome a new Chili's® franchise to Atoka.

Residents of Atoka will now be able to enjoy a fresh casual lunch or a night on the town at Chili's®. The restaurant's ribbon-cutting and soft opening was held on Friday, Dec. 4. There were over 100 people present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, with Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., several members of Tribal Council and local officials in attendance. The restaurant officially opened its doors to the public on Monday, Dec. 7.

"The Choctaw Nation is excited about opening this location in Atoka. We have been very pleased with the performance of the Poteau restaurant and we look forward to serving and being a part of both these wonderful communities", said Jody Standifer, Execu-

tive Director of Retail and Food & Beverage for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The Atoka restaurant has provided over 45 new jobs to the surrounding area. District 10 Princess December Pittman is among those employed.

Positions are still available for anyone interested in working in a fun, fast-paced environment. To apply, visit www.careers.choctaw-nation.com.

The restaurant is located at the junction of U.S. Highway 69 and Highway 3, adjacent to the existing Choctaw Nation Travel Plaza and Casino Too.

The Atoka Chili's is a 4,500 square-foot restaurant with seating for 156 customers.

The hours of operation will be 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday–Thursday and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday–Saturday.

The Chili's restaurant is the newest addition to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Franchise Division.

Choctaw Nation adds its 11th wellness center to help tribal citizens and members of the communities stay healthy

By BRANDON FRYE
Choctaw Nation

With all the goodies and dinners during the holidays, it's not unusual for people to gain weight, then make resolutions to get fit. Just in time, the health of Choctaw people has again shown its importance as a goal of Choctaw Nation leaders.

Smithville community members, Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., members of the Tribal Council, and Choctaw Nation employees met at the Smithville Choctaw Community Center on Nov. 17, to officially open the Choctaw Nation Wellness Center expansion.

Roselee (Williams) Senior, a Smithville local and Choctaw elder, cut the ribbon, signaling the availability of the workout equipment. Senior said she plans on coming to the facility as often as possible.

Treadmills, ellipticals, and stationary bikes line up against windows so riders may look out onto the wooded trails near the

community center.

There are also free weights, lifting benches, and weight machines.

"We want to make sure to keep our people well," Chief Batton said. "We want our tribal members to live longer and have good, long, fruitful lives."

Chief Batton went on to explain the Choctaw Tribal Council members serving all counties, such as District 3 Councilman Kenny Bryant, have consistently worked to bring these types of opportunities to their people.

"I am very proud of them for making that a wish, and then making it become a reality for us over here on this side of the state," he said.

This new wellness center marks the eleventh center to open within Choctaw Country, and another is on the December schedule for McAlester.

Smithville's wellness center is attached to its community center located at 39617 N. Highway 259, Smithville.

ConnectHome

Rural broadband dream on way to becoming reality

By CHARLES CLARK
Choctaw Nation

Three public meetings have been held concerning the Choctaw Nation and its ConnectHome program: Hugo, McAlester, and most recently Talihina.

President Obama visited the Choctaw Nation in Durant on July 15 and unrolled the ConnectHome initiative, a followup to ConnectED, which seeks to have 99 percent of K-12 students have high-speed Internet in their classrooms and libraries by 2018.

Along the same line, ConnectHome means to bring high-speed, broadband Internet to designated low-income residences in rural America.

In his talk, President Obama referred to targeting residents of HUD housing for the assistance. Residents of the Choctaw Nation's HUD-type program, under the Housing Authority, will benefit from this plan. But there have been some misunderstandings about who is eligible.

Scott A. Grosfield said his office had received more than 60 calls in the week before the Nov. 20 meeting in Talihina, including one from Utah, wanting to know when their new tablets would arrive.

Scott A. Grosfield, Regional Director of Rental Property Services & ConnectHome Project of the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation, explained who can expect a free device and training to the more than 100 area residents at the Choctaw Nation Community Center in Talihina. He also sent an email the



Photo by Charles Clark

Connecting after the ConnectHome meeting in Talihina are, from left, Stacy Shepherd, SEO of Choctaw Nation Member Services; Scott A. Grosfield, Regional Director with Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation; and from everyoneon, Washington, D.C., Chike Aguh, Chief Programs Officer, and Amber Petty, national program coordinator.

following week: "The ConnectHome Project is bringing wifi to rental units within the Choctaw Housing's inventory only. If you don't live in any of our rental sites, this program will not impact you. The tablets that GitHub donated to Choctaw Housing this past Friday the 20th is strictly for residents with children who reside in our low income or ARH sites only. Our Rental Managers for those sites will be signing all of the devices out to the children's parents sometime after the Thanksgiving break. The devices already have programs installed in them to get

started on their learning process. The ConnectHome team is working diligently behind the scenes to negotiate the best data plans and the overall best infrastructure to bring broadband wifi to all of our rental sites within our service area. We are trying to roll out the service to these sites at one time and are projecting that time frame to be sometime in January 2016."

After entertainment by traditional Choctaw dancers and a dinner, Fred Logan, ConnectHome Coordinator of the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority, emceed the meeting, which among other things, sought to explain ConnectHome and its goal of "bridging the digital divide."

Representatives from participating agencies and companies delivered brief presentations and answered questions from the crowd. Among the private-public supporting organizations attending were EveryoneOn and GitHub. Other organizations that have announced support of the Choctaw program, and attended previous meetings, are OETA, Best Buy, the Oklahoma Public Library System, the Boys & Girls Club and several Internet companies. GitHub announced that it plans to provide 58 free tablets to Talihina families participating in the program.

For additional information on the ConnectHome Initiative in southeastern Oklahoma, contact: Scott Grosfield, Regional Director of ConnectHome for the Choctaw Nation, 580-743-5360, sgrosfield@choctawhousing.com.

FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE



More blessed to give

It's a season of giving thanks for all the blessings we receive and to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a part of our culture to celebrate our faith and to spend time with family.

I have so many things to be thankful for, especially the times I have to enjoy being with my family and friends, and with great groups of Choctaws who gathered at community centers for Thanksgiving celebrations last month. Whenever we have a chance to get together is a chance to make memories.

I would like to say Yakoke! to all of the employees who helped by cooking, serving, and cleaning up during the Thanksgiving meals. These gatherings are full of fellowship, fun, and catching up with those we haven't seen in a while.

When Choctaws get together they like to sing. I love hearing the Choctaw hymns any time of the year. I remember my Grandpa speaking the language and am now learning it more. Some of the best times I've had this year have been with Choctaw families at reunions or celebrations. It's a time of singing, eating, and just enjoying the time together.

Another thing to be grateful for are our healthcare professionals. Hospitals don't close during Thanksgiving or Christmas or any other holiday. Their doors remain open and the doctors, nurses, CNAs, and support staff are there for us year-round, as well as the public safety departments and firefighters. We have peace of mind knowing this. Yakoke! for your dedication and the ways you try to make the holidays better for everyone.

Also, Yakoke! to our employees who keep the travel plazas, casinos, and restaurants open for visitors. There are travelers and many others who look forward to spending time with people who have become their friends and are often like family. We all appreciate you very much.

Jesus teaches us to do good to all people when we have the opportunity. Christmas is a special time of year when we are blessed with many opportunities to reach out to a neighbor in need. There are toy drives and food drives. The Choctaw Nation employees have once again made sure hundreds of families have food, children have toys to open, and elders receive a gift.

The greatest blessing of all is the opportunity to give. Many of these families who find themselves in need because of circumstances beyond their control, will remember the kindness and pay it forward. They will in turn help someone else.

It's the most glorious time of the year! May God bless you and your families this Christmas and through the next year!



Photo by Brandon Frye
Teri Billy, with the Choctaw Nation Language School, volunteered at the Broken Bow Thanksgiving dinner, handing out drinks and food as locals came in to enjoy the meal as a community.



Traditions of Christmas

The weather in the Choctaw Nation is finally feeling like winter. We experienced record rainfall over the Thanksgiving holiday but many have remarked that this gave their families more time to be indoors and enjoy spending time together. Building that first fire in the fireplace and playing games together without the television on is a treat. Sadly, it is not something we get the chance to do often but that kind of quality time is cherished. The avid hunters, however, were not pleased that the weather did not present a perfect opportunity for harvesting a trophy buck!

Although December is a very busy time with holiday events and of course carrying on business as usual, I love this time of year. The employees of the Choctaw Nation are remarkable individuals whose calendars are full of countless events including dinners, parades, and events for the kids with special appearances from Santa himself. I truly appreciate their tireless efforts for the Choctaw tribal members.

Remembering old traditions from my childhood and carrying them forward with my own family is such a joy. There was always an eventful journey involved when we went out to select the perfect Christmas tree each year and then make the popcorn strands to decorate it when we get home. Living in the country, my kids always have several in mind on our property to choose from. It's fun to look back at pictures of me cutting the tree, then my oldest son and my daughter getting their turn. Watching them grow up through those photos is priceless and it won't be long until our youngest will have the honor of cutting the family Christmas tree, maybe sooner than I think.

I love that I get to read the story of Christmas from the Bible to my kids so that the real meaning of Christmas is always at the forefront in our home. We are so very blessed; my wife and I try to instill in our children that doing something for others is really the essence of Christmas. Of course, there is nothing like the excitement of Christmas Day, especially with our six year old already anticipating what gifts are his under the tree. This reminds us daily how much we should all appreciate life and the blessings that we can be thankful for. This year our two oldest children have married so we have two new grown children to enjoy and we have our first grandson who we look forward to teaching all the traditions we share in the Austin family.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma emphasizes Faith, Family and Culture and it is truly a privilege to work in a place that mirrors the priorities in my home. Chief and I spend a lot of time out in the communities visiting with our members and to see old Choctaw tradition being carried forward through the generations is so encouraging. The Choctaw Nation is strong because our faith shows us the way, our families hold us together, and our culture is the thread that makes us Choctaw. I hope that all of our employees, their families, and all of our tribal members have an opportunity to share special traditions together. From my family to yours, may you all have a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.



Photo by Kendra Germany
This year's new Choctaw ornament decorates Assistant Chief's office Christmas tree.

Chaplain's Corner

The true meaning of the season



**Rev. Bertram Bobb
Tribal Chaplain**

May the Lord bless you and your loved ones in a very special way during this Christmas season and in the coming New Year 2016 is my prayer.

During this Christmas season, Christ is often left out as we forget that it is His birthday we are celebrating. The meaning of that first Christmas is clear: God came to earth in human form.

Genesis 1:1 begins with "In the beginning God ..." and the Gospel of John 1:1 begins, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God."

Jesus Christ was the Word and "The word was made flesh, ..." (John 1:14).

Our Lord Jesus Christ was marked from the beginning of time to reign.

On the first Christmas Jesus came as the Savior, born of virgin Mary in Bethlehem. When He comes again, He will come as the Sovereign. Sovereign means that whatever He says or does is final, He answers to no one.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to die on the cross for our sins.

He bought us back with His precious shed blood. He went to heaven and today He sits at the right hand of God the Father and He is coming back to this earth.

Once He came in lowliness, then He will come in glory.

The matter of who shall rule has been the cause of all our conflicts down through the ages.

Who shall rule in heaven? Who shall rule in earth? Who shall rule in the hearts of men?

Two of these questions have already been answered.

God is ruling in heaven now.

Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name ... Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." God's will is done in heaven. This is settled, God rules in heaven.

And God shall rule on the earth. He has given to His Son the right to rule on the earth when He comes the second time.

The scriptures declare in Isaiah 2:3-4, "... for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

But peace is not due until the Prince of Peace comes. What are we doing today? We are doing right the opposite—we prepare for wars. At that time we shall beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks.

We will prepare for peace, because the Prince of Peace will be here and ruling with a rod of iron.

Jesus Christ is not only appointed to reign in the hearts of men. Christ did not come to take away our joy, to work hardship upon us, or to make us slaves of fear and men whose hearts are full of misery. He came that He might reign in our hearts and reign there in peace.

Jesus said, "... My peace I give unto you: ..." (John 14:27) and this is why He came, this is why He wants to rule in our hearts.

Not just to rule so that He might be the Sovereign and make us do His will, but to rule in our hearts to give us peace, to make us joyful, happy people.

Paul the Apostle writes in Romans 5:1; "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Let us not make the mistake of trying to find peace somewhere else. We will never find peace until, by trusting in the Prince of Peace, we allow Him to reign in our hearts. This is God's remedy for all the problems of the heart.

Do you go to Church and sing the songs of life, while deep in your heart you know that you have never accepted His invitation to come to Jesus and live?

The Church will not give us peace, and I believe in the Church.

But we can go to Church forever and sing its songs and go through all the religious rites and still not find peace. The Church was not crucified for us. It did not shed its blood as a sinless sacrifice that we might be redeemed from sin. Jesus did that. Nothing else and no one else can bring peace into the human heart.

Again the prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 57:20-21, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Peace was the promise of the angels at Christ's birth. As the Prince of Peace He came to bring men peace with God, and the only experience of peace of heart. Only those who accept Christ as their own personal Savior find peace with God and it is necessary to commit our life to Jesus Christ as the ruler of our lives in order to experience daily peace of heart.

When you come to Christ, the Holy Spirit will give you joy and peace in the midst of your trials and troubles. You can start now, by being willing to give up your sins and by receiving Jesus Christ in a childlike faith. Will you do that? When you make this choice to trust Jesus as your Savior this Christmas will be the greatest you will ever have.

Continue to pray for our Native American people.

Remember our Nation's leaders, both our Indian Nations and our United States of America.

Pray for our brave men and women in our armed services.

May God bless you and a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2016.

Mark Your Calendars!

Youth Work Program

Applications will be Available

Friday, January 1, 2016

www.choctawnation.com

APPLY NOW!!!



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Early Head Start

Is Now Accepting Applications for the Durant Area

Early Head Start is a federally funded low-income, community-based program for eligible families with infants and toddlers up to age 3. The program also follows a Selection Criteria that families will need to meet. It is a program that came out of the Head Start Program providing school readiness for children. In addition to providing or linking families with needed services—medical, mental health, nutrition, and education—Early Head Start can provide a place for children to experience consistent, nurturing relationships and stable, ongoing routines.

Applications are now being accepted
Please contact Choctaw Nation Early Head Start Administration
580-924-8280 ext. 2644
3815 Enterprise Drive, Durant, OK 74701



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma commemorates Veterans Day

By **RONNI PIERCE**
Choctaw Nation

Approximately 900 Choctaw citizens and veterans gathered on the Choctaw Nation Capitol Grounds Nov. 11 to honor our country's veterans.

The ceremony opened with Choctaw Nation's Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., acting as master of ceremonies, introducing the Rev. Bertram Bobb to give the invocation followed by the posting of the colors by the Choctaw Nation Color Guard.

Choctaw Royalty, as represented by Miss Choctaw Nation Neiatha Hardy, Junior Miss Choctaw Nation Loren Crosby, and Little Miss Choctaw Nation Ariana Byington, signed the Lord's Prayer and the Talihiina High School band played the National Anthem and later in the program played the Armed Forces Medley.

Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton thanked the veterans for their service and welcomed them, their families, and Choctaw Nation citizens for attending the ceremony.

"Today we are here to honor you,

our veterans, for all the sacrifices you and your families have made for God and country and for making the United States truly the land of the free and the home of the Tvshka Homma [Choctaw for red warrior], the brave," Chief Batton said.

He acknowledged that some families have paid the ultimate sacrifice by losing their loved ones in battle. He also recognized the number of troops who come home with depression, PTSD, and traumatic brain injuries and told them they are not forgotten.

"I want you to know today that you are the ones who inspire me," Chief Batton said. "I look around this room and know that you inspire all of us. There are never enough words to say, so I just say Yakoke, thank you for making our world a better place."

Guest speakers Tribal Council Speaker Thomas Williston and Colonel Bobby Yandell followed and the program ended with a 21-gun salute and taps. Lunch was served in the cafeteria on Tvshka Homma grounds.



Choctaw Royalty (left to right) Little Miss Choctaw Nation Ariana Byington, Miss Choctaw Nation Neiatha Hardy, and Junior Miss Choctaw Nation Loren Crosby start the Veterans Day ceremony with the Lord's Prayer.

Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton (left) and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. accept flags from the Skullyville Post Veterans Association from Spiro, Oklahoma, during the Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11, 2015.



Choctaw Stickball



After a long fall stickball game, teams Osi Heli and Southeast Thunder huddle together to raise their sticks toward a twilight sky.



Chief Gary Batton, who played for team Osi Heli, moves his sticks to pick up the ball. Batton played center for Osi Heli during the annual north vs. south stickball game.



Coach Les Williston makes his way off the field after checking with each team for their readiness to begin. Williston also announced the game alongside J. J. Jacob.



Members of both teams scramble toward the stickball, which has just hit the ground after being tossed down field.



Members of the winning team, Southeast Thunder, line up to meet sticks with team Osi Heli after the game. The scoreboard reflects the final score of six-to-one.



A large scrum, or group of players charging for the ball, breaks out with many sticks pushing to grab the loose ball.

Durant Pow Wow



Chief Gary Batton leads the Choctaw Royalty at the 11th Annual Durant Pow Wow. Over \$100,000 in prize money was awarded during the 2-day event.



One drum at the pow wow shows you are never too young to learn and enjoy.



Choctaw artists Anthony Thompson and Judy Davis from Arlington, Texas, display their work on artists' row.



Ronald Monoessy Jr., from the Comanche tribe, reads for competition in the Junior Boys Straight category. Ronald's father participated as a singer during the Pow Wow.



Jingle bells compete during the holiday season pow wow.



Under watchful young eyes, Josey Bird, a Lakota from South Dakota, styles the hair of Laryan Oakes, from Canada, before she enters the dance arena.

Photos by
Charles Clark,
Brandon Frye,
&
Ronni Pierce

Dedicated to diabetic care and staph prevention

By **BRANDON FRYE**
Choctaw Nation

Shane Cessnun, a Choctaw born and raised in Denison, Texas, saw a need and dedicated his entrepreneurial efforts to aiding the Native population in Choctaw Country.

Wound care is his focus, and it is a balance of preventative and restorative measures. It saves limbs, toes, and legs from being amputated, keeps deadly microorganisms from spreading, and helps patients maintain a healthy lifestyle so sores and injuries will not develop again.

“The goal is to offer a high quality service with all of the new technologies alongside the traditional therapies,” Cessnun said.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Indian Health Service, American Indians are 2.2 times more likely to have diabetes compared to Caucasians.

Cessnun aims to work alongside the healthcare of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) in these ways. For the last 18 years, CNO has offered specialized care to patients with diabetes—what started with a small team in a nursing home has grown to a full Diabetes Care Clinic at the hospital in Talihina.

“We have continuously grown and provided better care,” Janet Maddox, RN, CDE and Clinic Supervisor for the Diabetes Wellness Center, said. “We’ve got educators out in the communities. We have endocrinologists, dieticians, and case managers. We have a structured, accredited program we provide for our patients.”

To add to these efforts, Cessnun developed two businesses, each working hand-in-hand. Advanced Wound Care, located in Sherman, Texas, heals wounds before they require amputation. And the BCW Group creates clean environments to control infectious contaminants which could lead to more wounds.

Cessnun enlisted a number of physicians and experts in the field of wound management and preventative surgery to help offer treatment and guidance.

Dr. Mark Dickson is Cessnun’s partner, and currently works at the limb salvage



Dr. Mark Dickson



Boyd Miller with the Choctaw Nation’s Preferred Supplier Program stands with business owners Charlotte Burris and Shane Cessnun. Burris and Cessnun teamed up to start a new business, the BCW Group, with the help of Miller.

clinic in Sherman. He said he heals wounds within 16 weeks, though many patients come in with wounds which have been there for longer.

“If you don’t heal the wound, eventually it will get worse and impact the rest of the limb. Ultimately, if you don’t do anything, it can kill the patient,” Mark Dickson, a general surgeon specializing in minimally invasive surgery, said. When a wound won’t heal, there is usually a problem with the immune system or blood supply, Dickson explained. And for people living with diabetes, there are many biochemical reasons why immune systems don’t work correctly and blood doesn’t flow.

The other thing diabetes does is impair the walls of the very small arterial vessels, which can become thick and blocked off from years of extra sugar, preventing proper blood flow to wounds.

Additionally, if there is too much sugar, it helps bacteria to grow faster, damaging healthy flesh around wounds.

But diabetes is not the only negative contributor to risky wounds, lifestyle choices play a role. “Smoking is a big problem,” Dickson said, “And if someone is malnourished or taking certain medicines like steroids.”

After meeting up, the two founded the BCW group. This business maintains healthy environments using antimicrobial protection and infection control assessment. It is a local Native American and female owned company.

There is a risk with patients who are recovering from wounds or infections. Once they leave the sterile, safe environment of clinics and centers, they re-enter spaces which pose the same threats which harmed them in the first place.

“They can be treated, go home, and in four or five months they are back with an infection,” Cessnun said. He explained, most people with a healthy immune system can fight off these infections. But, again, people with diabetes can have impaired immune systems, poor circulation, and a tendency to develop wounds which harbor infection.

To combat this, the BCW Group sterilizes spaces with a revolutionary product. The treatment ruptures microorganisms found on most hard surfaces, and the non-detectable substance stays put for a year preventing further contamination.

BCW Group also works with facilities to get them in alignment with state and federal regulations. Taking it a step forward, the group developed a certification called H.E.I.D.I. or the Healthy Environment Institute against Dangerous Infections. H.E.I.D.I. takes a more strict look at federal regulations and expects more in terms of infection protection. In addition to creating programs like H.E.I.D.I., they also have the drive to use a sustainable, recycled materials. “An important part of responsible product design lies in material selection. Choosing the right raw materials—rapidly renewable materials—we use materials made with a high percentage of recycled content, as well as such renewable materials as wheat board, soy board, sunflower board, linoleum, cork, rubberwood, soyblend foams, recycled seat belts, and more. In addition, we take the same approach to textiles and fabrics, ensuring that each selection is appropriate for its environment. By using unique materials we are able to provide healthy environments that inhibit the spread and growth of viruses, staph, and other life-threatening bacteria.”

Anyone looking to protect a space from infectious disease can email the BCW Group at info@bcwgroup.net or visit www.bcwgroup.net. For product information contact Charlotte Burris at 918-441-5731.

Cessnun is currently working to open more wound care centers within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation.

With the help of Boyd Miller and the CNO Preferred Supplier Program, Cessnun and Dr. Jason Willis joined up with Charlotte Burris to found the BCW Group.

Boyd Miller, Director of the Choctaw Nation Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) said after working with both Cessnun and Burris, he saw how their business goals fit together. Bringing Native business owners in contact with the right people is one of the services the PSP offers. In this case, Cessnun had past experience with medical supplies, and Burris who is also Native from Tuskahoma, has a background in interiors and materials. She has worked in the commercial design industry for six years. She brings to the table not only design but a straight forward approach to product specifications, budgets and contracts. She, like Cessnun, has a passion for caring for our people and culture.

They, together with direction from a board certified doctor in infectious disease, promote clean products and procedures that will greatly reduce the risk of contracting staph and other bacteria. These clean environments are created not only in new construction but also existing facilities.

2016 Education Classes

2016 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.

Jan - March

Monday, Jan. 4, 9 a.m. to noon
Poteau, Carl Albert State College

Tuesday, Jan. 5, 5 - 8 p.m.
Durant, Headquarters South Building

Tuesday, Jan. 5, 1 - 4 p.m.
Hugo, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Tuesday, Jan. 5, 9 a.m. - noon
McAlester, Eastern Oklahoma State College, McAlester Campus

Apr - Jun

Monday, April 4, 9 a.m. - noon
Stigler, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Tuesday, April 5, 1 - 4 p.m.
Broken Bow, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Tuesday, April 5, 9 a.m. - noon
Durant, Headquarters South Building

Tuesday, April 5, 9 a.m. - noon
Wilburton, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Jul - Sep

Monday, July 6, 9 a.m. - noon
Poteau, Carl Albert State College

Tuesday, July 5, 5 - 8 p.m.
Durant, Headquarters South Building

Tuesday, July 5, 1 - 4 p.m.
Hugo, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Tuesday, July 5, 9 a.m. - noon
McAlester, Eastern Oklahoma State College, McAlester Campus

Oct - Dec

Monday, Oct. 3, 9 a.m. - noon
Stigler, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Tuesday, Oct. 4, 1 - 4 p.m.
Broken Bow, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Tuesday, Oct. 4, 9 a.m. - noon
Durant, Headquarters South Building

Tuesday, Oct. 4, 9 a.m. - noon
Wilburton, Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

2016 Choctaw Nation Distance Learning HSE/ GED

Distance Learning GED classes are now available at the following locations. An experienced GED teacher will instruct you, using Distance Learning Technology. Distance Learning allows the student and teacher to see and hear each other on large monitors. You will be able to interact with the teacher as she prepares you to take the GED test. 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. Classes meet three days each week for approximately nine weeks. Books, supplies, and testing fees are provided. Please contact Kathy Bench at the Durant office for more information, (800) 522-6170 ext. 2122. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) is required.

McCurtain County

Bethel
Beginning date and time
Jan. 4
Monday, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center

Smithville
Beginning date and time
Jan. 4
Monday, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center

Wright City
Beginning date and time
Jan. 4
Monday, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center

Atoka County

Atoka
Beginning date and time
Jan. 4
Monday, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center

Coal County

Coalgate
Beginning date and time
Jan. 4
Monday, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center

Leflore County

Talihina
Beginning date and time
Jan. 4
Monday, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center

The CSBDS provides business assistance to Choctaw tribal entrepreneurs that want to start or expand their business.

Choctaw Tribal members that utilize the services will receive specialized technical assistance through one-on-one business counseling, training workshops, an extensive network of business assistance programs and educational networking opportunities. Assistance offered includes, but is not limited to:

- Business Planning
- Business Counseling
- Business Registration
- Access to Financing
- 8(a) Certification Assistance
- Minority Business Registration
- Marketing
- Business Taxes
- Bid Assistance

January Events Calendar:
(Please contact CSBDS for more details and to register)

Jan 7th Stigler: Business Planning 10:00 – 12:00

Jan 14th Hugo: Business Planning 10:00 – 12:00

Jan 21st Durant: Marketing Your Business 10:00 – 12:00

Contact Small Business Development Services today!

bhamilton@choctawnation.com or 580-924-8280 ext.2901

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 you must reside within the 10 1/2 county area of the Choctaw Nation.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at 580.924.8280 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:

Wright City Field Office • December 18, 2015
at
9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

NOTES TO THE NATION

Youth of the Nation

By Tyler Wickson
of the Choctaw Nation Youth Advistory Board

Halito! My name is Tyler Wickson.

On Sept. 16, 2015, I attended the National Indian Health Board Native Youth Health summit in Washington, D.C. I was one of 29 other Native youth selected from tribes across the nation.

At the summit we were to pick a problem in our community to focus on and make a digital story over this to show to leaders in our nation's Capital. We were able to also tell these stories to the Bureau of Indian affairs and the U.S. Senate.

My digital story was over a big problem in our generation: texting and driving.

On Jan. 31, 2015, an Oklahoma Highway Patrol officer responded to a wreck. While assisting others involved in the wreck, an oncoming car struck him, killing him. The driver who struck the officer was texting. The officer killed in this accident was Highway Patrol officer Nicholas Dees.

Nicholas left behind a very sweet family including a wife, two daughters, and a very grieving mother.



Her name is Shelley Glenn Russell, of Idabel. Since her only son's passing, Shelley has been going through counseling and is still grieving, even after almost a year. But Shelley has turned that sadness into an objective to make sure that this doesn't happen to any wife, daughter, or mother again. She has been advocating for more awareness about texting and driving by making wristbands and t-shirts. She also is holding a memorial 5k run on Jan. 23, 2016 in Durant, Oklahoma.

Shelley has turned that sadness into an objective to make sure that this doesn't happen to any wife, daughter, or mother again.

I personally feel that this is a big problem with our generation of technology.

So many people drive and have cellphones now, it's possible for almost anyone to do this. But remember if you do text and drive, as of Nov. 1, you are breaking a law. The next time you are driving, remember the acronym H.O.W., which stands for Hands. On the Wheel.

And help make sure that a tragedy like this doesn't affect another amazing family like that of Nicholas Dees.

Yakoke.
To see this video go to NIHB.org

Letters of Thanks



The 8th grade class from Decatur, Texas, including Choctaw student RayAnn Schooling, makes a special trip.



Schooling

Rowland), The Decatur Jr. High School Teachers and the parents that chaperoned, you ALL made this trip possible for my daughter RayAnn Schooling and the other students that made the trip.

In June 2015, my daughter and part of her 8th grade class from Decatur Jr. High in Decatur, Texas made a trip to Washington, D.C. The Choctaw Nation gave my daughter a \$300 donation towards funding her trip. We appreciate them so much for all they do to better the future generations of the Choctaw Tribe.

We just want to say to the Choctaw Nation, Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., the Choctaw Nation Donations Committee (Angel

Julie Schooling
Decatur, Texas

To the Choctaw Nation and Choctaw Housing Authority, this letter comes from Betty Baker and her family.

We wish to thank you very much for renovating our entire house. We say it's like moving back into a new home;

it's just not the same. Our house was really falling apart. Dukes, and Betty Baker and family, full-blood Choctaws, moved into our house in the fall of 1970. That was 45 years ago, one of the first brick homes built in Hugo. All of Betty's children and grandchildren have grown up in that house, and now her great-grandchildren can visit her.

We wish to thank the Choctaw Housing Authority; Keno Cloay and his department; Burnett Construction, Perry Thompson; former Chief Greg Pyle; Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

We could have never gotten our house fixed this past summer without the help of the Choctaw Nation. Also thank you for the new refrigerator and stove. Thank You.

BettyBaker, WIC
Choctaw Nation Employee
for over 37 years, and family



We would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the scholarship support that our son, Andrew Lett, received during his four years at Texas A&M University. Andrew graduated last December with a bachelor's degree in political science and enlisted in the United States Navy last July. We couldn't be more proud of him and wanted to let the Choctaw Nation know that those scholarships are helping kids accomplish great goals.

Laura Lett and family

To our Choctaw Family:

The family of Katie (Nail) Strain would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for everything they have done in the loss of our loved one. A special thank you to Bob Pate for his assistance, kindness and concern. We appreciate everything you have done for us. Sincerely yours,

The (Nail) Strain Family

LIVESTOCK DISASTER ASSISTANCE NOW AVAILABLE IN SEVERAL COUNTIES

As a result of the extreme dry conditions from August through early October, Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, and McCurtain Counties have all been designated drought counties eligible for the USDA's Livestock Disaster Assistance Program.

Livestock producers in these counties are now eligible to sign up and receive payments from the USDA's Farm Service Agency. Livestock producers should contact your local office to make an appointment to sign up.

Atoka County – (580) 889-2554 ext. 2
Bryan County – (580) 924-4131 ext. 2
Choctaw County – (580) 326-3655 ext. 2
McCurtain County – (580) 286-2574 ext. 2

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication
of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Judy Allen, Senior Executive Officer
Lisa Reed, Executive Director
Vonna Shults, Media Director
Ronni Pierce, Editor
Charles Clark, Assistant Editor
Brandon Frye, Reporter/Photographer
Kendra Germany, Reporter/Photographer
Payton Guthrie, Social Media Coordinator

P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
580-924-8280 • 800-522-6170
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 edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for 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.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs changed, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Article deadline is the 10th of the month for the following month's edition.

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.

Reserve Your 2016 Labor Day Festival RV Site

In order to reserve an RV site with electric and water hookups for the 2016 Labor Day Festival, please mail the reservation request form at below **no earlier than January 2, 2016**. RV sites will be reserved on a **lottery-style** basis. **Please include a copy of your CDIB card**. Also, include the year, make, model, and length of your RV or camper and the number of slide outs.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY AT THIS TIME.

All reservations will be drawn randomly for the RV sites. If your name is drawn, you will be notified by mail. At that time you will send in your cashier's check or money in the amount of \$75 and you will receive your confirmation and rules for RV camping at the Labor Day Festival.

No phone reservations will be accepted.

Please only include one reservation per application. We will do our best to respect the requests for preferred RV pads; however, we cannot guarantee you will get the pad number requested. Please watch the Biskinik newspaper and Choctaw-Nation.com for future articles or changes in parking, tent camping, and tribal preferences for the 2016 Labor Day Festival.

2016 RV Space Reservation

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____ Alternate Phone _____

Email _____

RV camper description _____

Length _____ Number of Slide-outs _____ Width of Slide-outs _____

Only one (1) reservation per application
No reservations will be accepted prior to January 2, 2016

Please return to
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Attn: Janita Jeffreys
RV Reservations
2101 West Arkansas Street
Durant, OK 74701

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation						
January 2016						
Durant - Monday, Wednesday and Friday		Broken Bow - Monday, Wednesday and Friday		Idabel by appointment		
Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-0115		Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com				
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Durant 8:00-4:30	5 Talihina 10:00-2:00	6 Antlers by appt.	7	8 Wright city by appt.	9
10	11 Durant 8:00-4:30	12 Broken Bow Idabel by appt.	13	14	15	16
17	18 Durant 8:00-4:30	19 Poteau 11:30-1:00	20 McAlester 10:00-2:00 Stigler by appt.	21	22 Atoka by appt. Coalgate by appt.	23
24	25	26 Broken Bow Idabel by appt.	27 Wilburton by appt.	28	29	30
31						

HEALTH

Plan ahead for healthy, guilt-free holiday meal

By ERIN ADAMS
Choctaw Nation

Halito,
A few years back I wrote this article. The other day a friend suggested I put this out again. So, here we go looking back on ways to enjoy the wonderful foods of the season without all those feelings of regret.

December is a wondrous time of year. As we look around at all of the many blessing we have, all the young children wondering what Santa will put under the Christmas tree for them, wondering what to prepare for family Christmas dinner, and, oh yes, wondering why oh why did we eat so much so fast!?! More often we are putting so much thought into why we ate what we did and feeling guilty for these over-indulgences that we are not enjoying the special holiday foods that typically come around one to two times a year.

Yes, we will be tempted with an abundance of wonderful meals full of old family recipes and new, yet if we allow ourselves to truly enjoy the once-a-year treats we just might be able to avoid the overindulgence and look back at these special moments with wonderful memories.

Here are a few ways to slow down and enjoy this time of year:

- Make a list of your typical holiday meal, divide into foods that taste best just placed on the table and foods that still taste good or better as leftovers. Then from the first list take off all the foods that you can have any time of year, i.e., mashed potatoes. All the foods left high in carbohydrates, you can portion into three to four carbohydrate servings. Generally a carbohydrate serving is about ½ cup.
 - Include a lot of non-starchy vegetables on your plate. Half of your plate should be filled with non-starchy vegetables. Such as garden salad, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, squash, tomatoes, green beans (not in a creamy casserole), etc.
 - Go for a family walk after the meal and before the dessert.
 - Wait two hours between the meal and dessert.
 - Portion desserts to have one after the family meal then save the rest to enjoy another serving the next day.
 - Drink plenty of water, just plain water. To enhance the flavor try adding sliced cucumber, berries, and/or citrus slices to a pitcher of water.
 - Enjoy family conversation and memories while at the table—this can help to slow down how fast we eat.
- And enjoy tasty recipes that will help keep us healthy in the years to come.

2016 HEALTH FAIRS AT COMMUNITY CENTERS				
CENTER	COUNCILMEMBER	DATE	START	LUNCH
(DIABETES EDUCATORS)				
Smithville	Kenny Bryant	1-13	10:00	11:30
Durant	Ted Dosh	1-20	10:00	11:30
Stigler	Ronald Perry	2-03	10:00	11:30
Atoka	Anthony Dillard	2-10	10:00	11:30
Coalgate	James Frazier	2-24	10:00	12:00
Hugo	Perry Thompson	3-09	10:00	12:00
Wright City	Jack Austin	3-23	10:00	12:00
Antlers	Jack Austin	4-06	10:00	11:30
Spiro	Delton Cox	4-13	10:00	11:30
(COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSES)				
Idabel	Thomas Williston	5-04	10:00	12:00
Broken Bow	Tony Ward	6-01	10:00	12:00
Talihina	Kenny Bryant	7-13	10:00	11:30
Poteau	Delton Cox	7-20	10:00	12:00
Wilburton	Joe Coley	8-10	10:00	11:30
McAlester	Bob Pate	9-07	10:00	11:30
Bethel	Tony Ward	9-21	10:00	11:30
Crowder	James Frazier	10-12	10:00	11:00




Recipe of the Month
Roasted Citrus Turkey Breast

- Ingredients**
- Whole Turkey
 - 1-3 pinch parsley, finely chopped
 - 1-3 pinch fresh thyme, finely chopped
 - 1-3 pinch fresh rosemary, finely chopped
 - 1-3 pinch fresh ground black pepper
 - 1-3 pinch paprika
 - 2-6 oranges
 - 1-3 lemons
- Instructions**
1. If turkey is frozen, thaw turkey prior to cooking
 2. In a medium bowl, combine parsley, thyme, & rosemary
 3. Grate the oranges and lemon peel and set the oranges and lemons aside
 4. Add the peels to the herb mixture and toss until combined
 5. Rub the herb mixture over the skin of the turkey
 6. Place the turkey on a rack in a large roasting pan
 7. Cut the oranges and lemons in half and squeeze their juices over the turkey
 8. Also sprinkle the turkey with the pepper and paprika
 9. Loosely cover the turkey with foil during roasting to avoid over browning
 10. Roast turkey uncovered at 325 degrees for 2 ½ - 4 ½ hours, depending on size of turkey, until the thermometer registers 170 degrees to 175 degrees
 11. Baste turkey often with the pan juices
 12. Let turkey rest 30 minutes prior to craving.

SERVINGS: 4- 12 servings depending on size of turkey

Nutrition Facts Per Serving:
Calories 480.6 Total Carbs 10.6g Total fat 20g
Sodium 167.8mg Fiber 2.8g Sat fat 5.4g
Protein 62.9g Cholesterol 183.9mg

I hope you enjoy this recipe and have a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year! For further information you may contact Erin Adams, RD, LD, at the Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center (800) 349-7026 ext. 6959.



Give Your Baby the Gift of Life, Breastfeed

Christmas is a great time to think about the gifts that breastfeeding can offer both moms and babies. Besides creating a special bond between a mother and her baby, breastfeeding gives lifelong health benefits that a baby can't get from anywhere else.

Breastfeeding gives babies special protection by reducing the risk of diabetes, ear infections, respiratory diseases, obesity, and diarrhea and is easier to digest than formula. Breastmilk is the perfect food for babies and provides all of the nutrients that a baby needs to get a healthy start in life.

Mothers benefit from breastfeeding too! By breastfeeding their babies, moms reduce their risk for breast and uterine cancer and can help moms quickly return to their pre-pregnancy weight.

For more information about breastfeeding, please call (800) 522-6170 ext. 2507.

Choctaw Nation WIC Encourages Breastfeeding

NURSERY NEWS

Briley Tate Malott

Adley Malott is proud to announce the birth of her sister, Briley Tate Malott. Blessed parents are Keith and Whitney Malott of Calera. She was born Aug. 5, 2015, at 3:25 p.m. at Texoma Medical Center in Sherman, Texas. She weighed 8 pounds 10 ounces and was 20 1/2 inches long. Grandparents are Gina and (the late) Steve Harris of Calera, Terry Anderson of Roberta, Curt Malott of The Woodlands, Texas, and Will and Debbie Turner of Montgomery, Texas. Great-grandparents are Marvetta and (the late) Benny Phelps of Calera, the late Bob and Angie Malott of New Rochelle, New York, and the late Richard and Barbara MacMurchy of The Bronx, New York.



Adrian Rogers Blair

Adrian Rogers Blair, was born 11:37 a.m. Oct. 19, 2015, at Baylor Scott and White hospital in Fort Worth, Texas. He weighed 10 pounds, 13 ounces and measured 19 3/4 inches long. Proud parents are Jack C. “Chris” and Emily Rogers Blair. Big brother, Austin Brooks, is overjoyed with Adrian’s arrival. The Blairs reside in Fort Worth, Texas. He is the grandson of Truitt and Melinda Rogers of Aledo, Texas, and Jack and Gail Blair of Willow Park, Texas. He traces his Choctaw heritage from his great-great-grandmother Lena Rivers Dobson Rogers (and Harley “Red” Rogers) of Stigler and to Thomas M. and Ollie Crow Dobson of Poteau.



Wyatt Ronnie Beesinger

Wyatt Ronnie Beesinger was born into the Choctaw tribe on Nov. 10, 2015, at 10:19 a.m. at the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center in Ada. He weighed 8 pounds 15 ounces and was 20 3/4 inches long. Proud parents are Eric and Rhiannon Beesinger of Wichita Falls, Texas. Maternal grandparents are Rhonda Reynolds of Bowie, Texas, and Robert Baugh of Archer City, Texas. Paternal grandparents are Ronnie and Cheryl Beesinger of Archer City, Texas. Great-grandmother is Eleanor Rushia of Wichita Falls, Texas.



Michael Kale Pinson

Michael Kale Pinson was born Nov. 18, 2015, to Michael and Rachel (Boykin) Pinson and big sister Betheny Rochelle. He weighed 8 pounds, 2 ounces and was 21 inches long. His grandparents are Sam and Jana (Pisachubbee-Williams) Boykin of Hugo and Mike and Peggy Pinson of Hugo. His great-grandfathers are Vance Boykin of Soper and the late Bill Pinson, the late TJ Frost, and the late Bob Williams. His great-grandmothers are Opal Frost of Hugo, the late Bardean Pinson, the late Carol Boykin, and the late Mary (Pisachubbee) Williams.



CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

Antlers: 306 S.W. “O” St., (580) 298-6443
Durant: 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, (580) 924-7773
McAlester: 1212 S. Main St., (918) 420-5716
Poteau: 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431

FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

Bethel: Choctaw Community Center
Broken Bow: Choctaw Community Center
Idabel: Choctaw Community Center
Smithville: Choctaw Community Center

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.

***** HOURS *****

Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday;
10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Thursday

ANTLERS

Market open weekdays January 1-31, except for:
January 6: Idabel 9-11:30 a.m.; Broken Bow 1-3:30 p.m. (market open)
January 13: Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)
Closed: January 1 for holiday and 28 and 29 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: January 6, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

DURANT

Market open weekdays January 1-31, except for:
Closed: January 1 for holiday and 28 and 29 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: January 8, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

McALESTER

Market open weekdays January 1-31, except for:
Closed: January 1 for holiday and 28 and 29 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: January 12, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

POTEAU

Market open weekdays January 1-31, except for:
Closed: January 1 for holiday and 28 and 29 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: January 14, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

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.

Do You Need Help Paying For Your Child’s Daycare?

The Choctaw Nation Child Care Assistance Program May Be Able To Assist You!

Eligibility Requirements

1. The child must be under the age of 13
2. The child must have a CDIB or reside with an Indian Family
3. The child must reside within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation 10 1/2 county service area
4. Both parents must be working, in training, or attending an educational program
5. You must meet income guidelines based on family size and income

Child Care Assistance Eligibility Caseworkers:

Margie Cloud
Atoka, Bryan, Coal, and Choctaw counties
mcloud@choctawnation.com
580.924.8280 ext. 2387

Laura Matthews
Hughes, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, and Pushmataha counties
lmattthews@choctawnation.com
580.924.8280 ext. 2390



Illustration 1

Iti Fabussa The Big Hunt

Choctaw society developed out of a long and intimate relationship with the plants, animals, soil, and water of our homeland in the southeast. Through this relationship, Choctaw ancestors engineered a food way that minimized their risk of going hungry by relying on a combination of four independent food systems: agriculture, gathering wild plants, fishing, and hunting. This food way was flexible enough to adapt to fluctuating conditions. For example, if it was a bad year for crops or wild plants, Choctaw communities relied more heavily on hunting and fishing to get their sustenance and vice-versa. This month, Iti Fabussa presents some information about the Choctaw fall and winter hunts.

In the Choctaw calendar, the months after the agricultural fields were harvested are known as Little Hunger Month and Big Hunger Month, roughly corresponding with November and December. This is when Choctaw men would leave the villages on an extended hunting trip known as Owachito (meaning big hunt). The Owachito was so-named because it could last for months, and take hunters over hundreds of miles of territory. Little and Big Hunger Months received their names because Choctaw hunters would take limited, light-weight food rations with them on the Owachito, and because fasting for spiritual purification was an essential part of hunting. It was a hungry time of year.

The regions that Choctaws hunted in the fall and winter changed over the years in connection with changes in the natural and political environment. During the centuries before European contact, most of the ancestral Choctaw population was concentrated in major farming communities located on the central Tombigbee, the central Alabama, and the Black Warrior Rivers and also around Mobile Bay. The neutral ground between these communities was maintained as hunting preserves. In response to European arrival, disease, and slaving raids, Choctaw populations started to reorganize into communities located in what is now east-central Mississippi and western Alabama. In the early 1700s, these communities conducted winter hunts in the Tombigbee River valley, the area just north and east of Mobile bay, and also in what is now central Mississippi. Through the 1700s and early 1800s, Choctaw communities and our neighbors, became increasingly involved in the hide trade with European groups. Ultimately deer were hunted at an unsustainable level and became rare in and around the Choctaw homeland. This compelled hunters to travel still farther west on the Owachito. By the 1750s, after making peace with the Chickasaw, if not before, Choctaw hunting parties were traveling as far west as the bank of the Mississippi river. Some of the names given by Choctaw hunters

to places in this area are still in use today, including Issaquena (from issi okhina, meaning “deer creek”). and Nita Yuma, probably meaning “bears are there”. By the late 1760s, at the invitation of the Spanish governor, some Choctaw people began moving into what is now Louisiana. By 1800, Choctaw hunting parties were traveling all the way to present-day southern Oklahoma. In fact, the Ouachita mountains may derive their name from the Choctaw term “Owachito”. The familiarity that Choctaw hunters had with the west was demonstrated when, in negotiations for the 1820 treaty of Doak’s Stand, Chief Pushmataha drew out the course of the Canadian River and the upper part of the Red River (between present-day Oklahoma and Texas) for future president Andrew Jackson, whose aides had never been there before. For several decades, Pushmataha and other Choctaw men had been traveling to this area, hunting, encroaching on the territory of the Quapaw, Caddo, and Osage and fighting along the way.

As alluded to above, deer were the main query of Choctaw hunters on the Owachito. The Owachito was not the only time that deer were hunted, but it was the main time. During the fall, deer were to be found in largest numbers in patches of oak/hickory forest, eating fallen nuts and acorns. Later in winter, they moved into dense cane breaks, where they were harder to reach. After deer, bear were the next-most important Choctaw game animal. More essential than the bear meat itself, was the fat, which was rendered into grease (see *Illustration 2*). During the 1600s, and up until about 1740, bison herds lived in the heart of the Choctaw homeland, and were regularly hunted. As Choctaw hunters moved west in the 1700s and early 1800s, they continued to hunt small numbers of bison.

From today’s perspective, we only have partial glimpses of what life was like in a Choctaw hunting camp on the Owachito. Able-bodied women may have been present, but primary sources speak of

men. We know that parties hunting in distant lands built temporary houses by setting a line of posts in the ground, and then laying sheets of stripped bark from the top of the posts down to the ground on each site. This created an “A” frame-like structure. The ends, left open, had camp fires burning near them to keep the occupants warm. (see *Illustration 1*). Hunting was a spiritual activity. In camp, hunters fasted and prepared themselves to go out and get meat and other products for their community that was depending on them.

We know a little more about the hunting techniques that they used. The surround was an ancient one, whereby hunters went out and encircled herds of deer, sometimes with the use of fire. By the late 1700s, deer were mostly being hunted through stalking. Sometimes, hunters used elaborate decoys made from a stuffed deer head to get close enough to the animals for a good shot. These hunters often walked 30 miles in a day in stalking their quarry. When a successful hunter brought meat back to camp, it was shared. The kidneys were cut up, distributed, and burned in the hunters’ fires as a way of giving thanks.

Meat was preserved by cutting it into strips and drying it over a smokey fire. Hides were scraped fresh and then dried into rawhide for transport. Fat was taken from the bear and rendered pure in a clay pot over the fire. It was preserved by mixing it with sassafras root chips, and placing it in a pot that had been buried in the cool ground up to its rim. Choctaws probably transported the bear grease in containers made from sewn-up green deer hides. Once emptied, the bags could be un-sewn and, already exposed to the bear grease, would be ready for tanning. When it was time to head back home, hunters would pack up the dried meat and other items on the back of their Choctaw

ponies. Two 50-pound packs would be suspended on each side of the horse, and a third one set on top. For protection from rain, all would be covered by a hide.

When a hunting party returned to their village, it was a time of joy and celebration, both because the men had made it home safely, and because of the essential food and materials that they brought with them. Hunters are said to have shared the bounty with their estranged wives and other households that had no one to provide meat.

After spending some time in the village, hunters would again go out in the heart of winter in search of animals with prime pelts.

Although bear were hunted on the Owachito, this later season hunt was favored by Choctaw hunters because by December the bear were at their fattest and they moved slowly. In hunting bear, hunters would go out into cane break and look for a rotten, hollow tree showing signs that it was being used as a bear den. They would build a fire at the base of the tree, causing the rotten wood to smolder. Eventually, the bear would be awakened by the smoke and forced to jump from the top of the trunk. Hunters would shoot the bear with arrows in mid-air or on the ground. Choctaw oral stories indicate that hunting dogs were also sometimes



Illustration 2

This was during Koichito Hvshi and Koichusk Hvshi (Panther Month and Wildcat Month, respectively), which roughly correspond with January and February. These month names come from two of the animals that were hunted for peltry. Hunters would set up temporary camps, sometimes with their women and children, in places several miles from their village where they could easily access the swamps and cane breaks where pelt-bearing animals lived during that time of year. Among all of the Southeastern Tribes and European communities, Choctaw men were said to be the best at the dangerous job of hunting panther and bear. Black bear migrated into Choctaw country during late fall, to avoid colder temperatures to the north.

used to harass the bear. The Owachito and the winter pelt hunt were dangerous, but enjoyable times for Choctaw men. The hunts provided them with an opportunity to show their skill and their spiritual efficacy. Through the hunts, they provided their communities not only with animal protein, but also the raw materials such as hides, tendons, antlers, horns, bison wool, glue stock, bones, and hooves that Choctaw people used to make a variety of life-supporting implements, structures, and tools. Today’s Choctaw people who prepare themselves spiritually to go into the woods in November, December, and January, to hunt for meat and other animal products for their families are carrying on a very ancient and storied tribal tradition.



Ryan Spring (left) and David Batton of the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department display an award for their work with geographic information systems.

Department named Tribal GIS Program of the Year

By BRANDON FRYE
Choctaw Nation

The Choctaw Nation’s Historic Preservation Department received a national award on Nov. 18 for its work mapping information of cultural importance.

The National Tribal Geographic Information Support Center (NTGISC), which represents more than 200 tribes, issued the award for the department’s outstanding performance in geospatial practice, community outreach, and contributing to the development of others.

Ryan Spring and David Batton are the individuals within Historic Preservation who work most closely with geographic information systems (GIS)—the method of organizing information in a geographic space.

The landscape is dotted with reminders of the Choctaw ancestors’ presence. These

reminders include archaeological sites, burials, sacred places, and artifacts. Unique and irreplaceable, these sites are threatened by looting, development, and the progression of time.

But, documented historic sites are protected from disturbance at a federal level. When a road needs to be built or a cell tower needs to be constructed, federal construction must first check with Native governments.

Historic Preservation annually consults on 1,800 to 2,000 federally funded projects within a nine state region, to insure that these projects do not disturb Choctaw ancestral sites. The department also regularly consults with state agencies, tribal members, and the general public to protect Choctaw sites on non-federal land.

Spring gave a presentation at the Choctaw Nation Tribal Complex in Durant, explaining his GIS work with the Trail of Tears. Watch it online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9z5ep-Be9A.

In addition to mapping out the Trail of Tears and pinpointing historic locations, Historic Preservation also used GIS in a Place Names Project.

“We are able to acknowledge the connection between Choctaw people and our homeland through the research and documentation of place names using Cultural GIS,” Spring said.

“Cultural GIS allows us to map the landscape without western boundaries and gives us a glimpse into the past,” Spring explained.

The department shares its work and knowledge with other tribes helping them to start similar programs. It also teaches students at the Tali hina Kiamichi Technology EAST program, who get a hands-on experience with GIS equipment and methods.

See the complete story on *Choctaw Nation.com*. For information, contact Ryan Spring with the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department at (800) 522-6170 ext. 2137.

Chahta Anumpa
Aii khvna
◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

Nittak Hullo Chito

Christmas

P	E	E	K	A	A	A	F	S	P	I	O	D	H	L
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AFOACHI-wrap
CHOMPA-buy
HABENA-receive a gift
IMPA-eat
NAHVLBINA-gift
NAYUKPA-joy
PVLA-lights

AIOKPACHI-worship
ENCHIL-angel
HOMMA-red
ITI-tree
NANOLA-bells
OKCHAMALI-green
SHEMACHI-decorate

CHISVS-Jesus
FICHIK-star
IHULLO-love
ITTIKANOHMI-relatives
NAYIMMI-faith
OKSAK-nuts
TALOWA-sing

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OBITUARIES

Karl Milton Hart

Karl Milton Hart, 71, of New Castle passed away on Sept. 24, 2015 after a courageous battle against cancer. Karl was born on December 30, 1943 to Floyd M. and Amelia B. Hart in Oklahoma City.

He was self-employed in the drywall, finishing and texture business, which took him to many places working. He learned the trade from his father. Karl restored many hot rods during his life and enjoyed going to and entering his cars in car shows. He was a hard worker, always working and doing something to keep busy.

Karl was a Vietnam War veteran. He served in the US Army as a tank commander, and proudly served his country. Karl was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He was the grandson of original enrollee Rev. John M. Hart.

He is preceded in death by both parents, his first born son Randal C. Hart; and two older brothers, Floyd R. and John I. Hart.

Karl is survived by his wife of 29 years Lois; son, Adam Hart of Oklahoma City; sister Markredith and husband Ed Schenk of Chickasha; brothers RG and wife Pam Hart of Moore, Shane Hart and Jerry Cable of Oklahoma City; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other family members and friends.

Karl will be greatly missed by all that knew and loved him.

Arrangements were made under the direction of John Ireland Funeral Home in Moore. Interment was at the Hart/Walker Cemetery in Soper.

Bill E. Russell

Bill E. Russell, 84, passed away on Nov. 22, 2015 at his home in Bartlesville. He was born Oct. 1, 1931 to John and Ruth (Rowe) Russell in Davis.

Bill attended Davis Schools, and had fond memories of ranch life in Murray County.

Bill always loved his cowboy roots and considered himself a rancher at heart. He loved rodeos, and he even did some calf roping when he was in high school.

Bill was a member of the 1949 graduating class of Davis High, where he was named the All Around Outstanding Athlete for that year. Following graduation, Bill enrolled at East Central State University in Ada, where he attended for three years until being drafted in the U.S. Army in 1953. While in the military, Bill served as an MP.

On Oct. 16, 1955, Bill married June Hunt in Pampa, Texas.

After his service to his country, Bill took a job with Phillips Petroleum in Borger, Texas. He worked as a research and development chemist. In 1969 Bill was transferred to Toledo, Ohio. In 1979, Bill was again transferred, this time to Bartlesville, where he spent the remainder of his career, retiring from Phillips Petroleum in 1986. He then became a consultant for Phillips after his retirement, which he did for a number of years.

Bill enjoyed OU football and he liked being outdoors. In his younger days he was a Boy Scout, and as an adult he remained active in scouting, serving as a Scout Master when he was in Texas.

Bill loved to visit with people. He loved telling stories about his life, his career, his travels, and about those wonderful times growing up on a ranch in Davis.

Bill is survived by his wife of 60 years Hugo; son, Bill W. and wife Janet Russell of Victoria, Texas; grandson John Russell of Berkley, California; brother Johnny Ross and wife Carolyn Russell of Norman; sister Patsy Carter of Davis; and sister-in-law Judy Tipton and her husband Larry of Columbus, Montana.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Stumpff Funeral Home & Crematory in Bartlesville. Graveside rites with Military Honor Guard and interment was at Green Hill Cemetery in Davis.

Orville Ray Yandell

Orville “Ray” Yandell of Red Oak, 80, passed away on Oct. 8, 2015 in Oklahoma City. He was born Nov. 23, 1934 in Red Oak, to Orvel and Maggie (Hardaway) Yandell.

Ray graduated from Red Oak High School in 1953. He married Frances Strong in 1968 in Oklahoma City.

Ray worked as a truck driver for Mayflower and Goodyear. He retired from the YMCA in 1999 as building superintendent.

Ray was a survivor of the 1995 Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing. He enjoyed the outdoors hunting, fishing and gardening. He was a member of the Bethel Baptist Church of Red Oak. Ray enjoyed cooking biscuits and gravy and fish fry for his friends and family.

He was preceded in death by both parents; sons, Henry Wire, Jr. and Peter Wire; and brother, Gerald Yandell.

Ray is survived by his wife, Frances Yandell of the home; son, Steve Yandell and wife, Debbie of Red Oak; daughters, Terri Lunday of Oklahoma City and Tedra Phelps and husband, Ron of Wilburton; grandchildren: Stephen Yandell, Jr. and wife, Shirley of Poteau, Rachel Fields and husband, Jeremy of Ft. Smith, Arkansas, Jacob Yandell of Yukon, Nathan Lunday and wife, Amber of Oklahoma City, Ethan Lunday and wife, Kyndell of Oklahoma City, Douglass Wire and wife, Evangelina of Red Oak, Dawn Wire of Oklahoma City, Catherine Wilkinson and husband, Haven of McAlester, Matthew Chance and wife, Ashley of Shawnee, Kayla Blake and husband, Mikel of Panola, Trevor Chance and wife, Megan of Wilburton, Patrick Wire and wife, Stephanie of San Diego, California and McKenzie Wire of Oklahoma City; sister, Frances Hopkins of Edmond; brother, Harold Yandell and wife, Mary of Shattuck; sister-in-law, Mollie Thomas of Hull, Texas; special uncle, L.A. Yandell of California; 21 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces, nephews, other family, church family and friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Jones Harkins Funeral Home in Wilburton. Interment was at North Rock Creek Cemetery.



Rosalie Virginia Mitchell

Rosalie Virginia (Thorpe) Mitchell, 89, passed away on Nov. 18, 2015. She was born on Nov. 2, 1926 to Grover and Betsy Thorpe in Hugo.

Rosalie married Oscar L. Mitchell on Jan. 5, 1946. They were married for 52 years, until Oscar passed away in 1998. Rosalie’s life was one of giving, sharing, loving and sacrifice to the greatest degree.

She was preceded in death by six brothers; and one sister.

Rosalie is survived by sons Vernon Mitchell of Idabel, Floyd Mitchell and wife Letha of Durant, and daughter Linda Mitchell Thorpe of Sawyer; sister Leola (McMaw) Finch of Goodland, Carolyn Harless of Spavinaw; eight grandchildren, Michelle Barrilleaux and husband Chris, Christie Werts and husband Ronnie, Stephen Mitchell, Letha Hardwick and husband Kelson, Victor Mitchell, Shane Mitchell, Danielle Mitchell and Kelley Weiner and husband Nick; two great-grandchildren.

Arrangments were made under the directon of Miller & Miller Funeral Home in Hugo.



Johnie (Gibson) Meeker

Johnie (Gibson) Meeker, 94, passed away on Nov. 2, 2015 at her residence in Lane. She was born on Dec. 30, 1920 to Robert Ed Lee and Minnie Bell (Taylor) Gibson in Boswell.

Johnie married Floyd Everett “Doc” Meeker in August 1943 in Atoka.

She worked for General Electric and was a caregiver. Johnie was of the Baptist faith. She was a member of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, nanny to all the kids around, enjoyed going to the Choctaw Center and to the casino. Johnie loved spending time with her family.

She was preceded in death by both parents; brothers, Andy Gibson, Robert Gibson, Joe Gibson, Earl Gibson, Leonard Gibson, and Leslie Gibson; sisters, Leona Gibson, Bernice Spanhanks; great-grandson, Kyler Allen Campbell; and special friends, Rosie McClinton and Gerald Summer.

Johnie is survived by daughter, Janie Allen and husband Dewayne of Lane; grandsons Darrell Allen and wife Shelia of Lane, Gerald Allen and wife Denise of Lane; great-granddaughters, Traci Allen of Lane, Mandy Edwards and husband Chance of Hugo, Teneshia Allen of Hugo, Stephanie Dawn Powell and husband Shawn of Mena, Arkansas; great-grandson, Tanner Allen of Lane; grea-great-grandchildren, Nataley Edwards, Kingston Crowder, Tranden Campbell, Aubree Edwards, and Birdie Jane Allen; special nieces and nephews, Betty Houck, Flint Sutton, Bud Sutton, Shelia Spanhanks, Janice Burton, Leroy Gibson, Sarah Wall, and Diane Proctor; great-niece, Elisha; along with other relatives and many dear and loved friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brown’s Funeral Service in Atoka. Interment was at Butler Cemetery in Lane.



Charles Ray Harkins

Charles Ray Harkins, 96, passed away on Oct. 29, 2015. He was born on April 22, 1919, to Albert Pike Harkins and Cena Bessie Davis in Tupelo.

Charles was a descendent of George Washington Harkins, a Choctaw Chief. Charles was extremely proud of his Choctaw heritage and membership in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Charles and his wife Arnetta were long time members of the Waterford Assembly of God in Waterford California.

He was preceded in death by his wife Arnetta (Gilstrap) Harkins; brothers, A.C. Harkins and Roy Lee Harkins; sisters, Odessa Hamilton, Geneva Anderson, Melba Polk and Ora Mae Vaughn.

Charles has one son, Everett Harkins. Charles loved God, Arnetta, family, and his life as a cowboy. He will be truly missed by all.

A celebration of life was held at the Waterford Assembly of God.



Winnie Margaret Robbins

Winnie Margaret Robbins, 89, passed away on Oct. 6, 2015. She was born on Nov. 17, 1925 in Davis to the late John Thomas and Rhoda Marie (Russell) Marby.

She was preceded in death by her husband, W.C. Robbins; four brothers; and three sisters.

Winnie is survived by daughter, Sonja Fowler and husband Daniel of Seattle, Washington; granddaughters, Ashley Deasy and husband John, Arianne Gilfreather and husband Patrick; great-grandson, Calum Gilfeather, all of Seattle; as well as one sister, Dorthy Masters of Davis.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Hale’s Funeral Home in Davis.

Interment was at Green Hill Cemetery in Davis.

Nettie Ruth Dandridge

Nettie Ruth Dandridge, 57, a long time Atoka resident, passed away on Oct. 28, 2015. She was born on Oct. 15, 1958, to Pony and Mary (Coats) Dandridge in Dodge City, Kansas.

Nettie was a homemaker. She married the late Don Wilson. Nettie enjoyed riding motorcycles and playing with her grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by husband, Don Wilson; both parents; and daughter Lynndee Dandridge.

Nettie is survived by special friend, Terri Barris of Atoka; daughters, Khyishia Dandridge of Lane, and Ollie “Odie” Dandridge of Atoka; son-in-law, Charles Thompson of Lane; grandchildren, Ray Thompson, Charlie Thompson, Mac Thompson, Ford Thompson and Ruger Clyde Moon; along with other relatives and many dear and loved friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Brown’s Funeral Service of Atoka.



Thomas Marris

Thomas Marris, 78, passed away on Sept. 13, 2015. He was born on June 1, 1937 to Gilbert and Bessie (Johnson) Marris in Stigler.

Thomas married Eldina Parish in Los Angeles, California on Feb. 9, 1963.

He was a member of the Grace Indian Baptist Church. He previously worked as a paper handler for Apperson Business Forms, also for the Travel Plaza for 18 years. Thomas enjoyed watching sports and especially going to his grandsons’ games.

He was preceded in death by both parents; brothers, Junior Lee Marris and Charley Glen Marris; sister-in-law, Vivian Lee Marris; brother-in-law, Noble Grant; paternal grandparents, Sanderson and Lena Marris; and maternal grandparents, Tatum and Marceline Johnson.

Thomas is survived by his wife, Eldina of Calera; sons, Michael Marris of Durant, Reuben Marris of Durant and Thomas Marris of La Puente, California; sister, Fannie Grant of Tulsa; brothers, Truman Marris of Achille and Woodrow Marris of Hendrix; and eight grandchildren.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home in Durant. Interment was at Rosewood Cemetery.



James Samuel “Sam” Oakes

James Samuel “Sam” Oakes, 78, passed away on Oct. 19, 2015. He was born on April 6, 1937 to James Grant Oakes and Ruby Lola (Sweeten) Oakes in Frogville.

Sam was a life long resident of Hugo. He married Cecilia Ann Edmonson on March 16, 1957 in Paris, Texas.

Sam was employed as a truck driver and ranch foreman for Holton Cattle Company for over 25 years. He also worked for Red River Co-op in Hugo.

In his earlier years, Sam was a member of the Hugo Horse and Rodeo Club and was also active in the Hugo Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. He was a recipient of the Justin Boot award. Sam’s hobbies included fishing, hunting, and gardening. He always had a beautiful garden. Sam was also a great cook, known for his smoked brisket. He especially enjoyed cooking for friends and family.

He was preceded in death by his wife Cecilia; both parents; brother, David Oakes; and four sisters, Lajuan Withrow, Lola Withrow, Sybil Makerney and Joyce Withrow.

Sam is survived by three sons, Robert Oakes and wife, Tammie of Hugo, Jamie Oakes of Hugo, and Joseph Hayslip of Durant; two daughters, Susan Ann Mills and husband, Ben Bob of Hugo and Jimmie Kay Ainsworth of Hugo; brothers and sisters, Edna Berndt of Wills Point, Texas, Tommie Oakes of Dallas, Henry Oakes of Naples, Texas, Earnest Oakes of Sawyer, Bunion Oakes of Hugo, and Robert S. Oakes of Ft. Towson; nine grandchildren, thirteen great-grandchildren, and one great-great-granddaughter; along with many other relatives and friends.

Arrangements were made under the direction of Miller & Miller Funeral Home in Hugo. Interment was at Mt. Olive Cemetery in Hugo.



Katie (Nail) Strain

Katie (Nail) Strain, 86, of McAlester, passed away on Sept. 29, 2015, at her daughter’s home in Blanco. She was born on Aug. 31, 1929, to Dock P. and Mabel Simpson Nail in Savanna.

She was employed for many years at McAlester Regional Health Center in the housekeeping department.

Katie married W.S. “Bill” Strain on Nov. 3, 1951. She was a member of the Pentecostal Holiness Church. She was also active in making quilts and crocheting. She attended church and sang in the worship service and played her guitar. Katie enjoyed fishing and camping and most of all, taking care of kids.

She was preceded in death by her husband, W.S. “Bill” Strain; both parents; stepmother, Zettia Nail; brother, James Paul Nail; and stepchildren, Sanford Strain, Wenford Strain, Lenford Strain, T.J. Ledford Strain, Billy Edford Strain, Dolly Spears, Nellie Smith and Shirley Ann Cook.

Katie is survived by her children, Laverne Caudill, of Blanco, and Kenneth W. Strain, of Blanco; stepchildren, Joetta Strain, of Moore, Jim Strain, of Jones, and Stanford Strain, of Quinton; brothers, Leroy Nail, of McAlester, Ronnie Nail, of McAlester, Dock Nail, of McAlester, and Robert Nail, of McAlester; sisters, Anna Mae Beasley, of McAlester, Lillie Hennington, of McAlester, Linda Disney, of McAlester, Della Eisel, of Oklahoma City, Mildred Kay Miller, of McAlester, and Carolyn Nail, of Sulphur; five grandchildren and numerous step-grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Arrangements were made under direction of Brumley-Mills Funeral Home of McAlester. Interment was at Featherston Cemetery.

PEOPLE YOU KNOW



Bundy secures 2015 forty under 40 award

and the community.

Kevin is a licensed architect in Oklahoma and is employed by HSE Architects of Oklahoma City. He has been with the firm since 2006. He is a member of AIA and current president of the Helm Farm Neighborhood Association.



Meza earns new honor as forty under 40

community.

All 40 honorees were officially named during the Reservation Economic Summit in New Mexico at the Buffalo Thunder Resort and Casino in Santa Fe, held from Nov. 16-19.

"It's a prestigious accomplishment and validates my hard work in my industry, to my community, and to my tribal community," Meza said.

Meza started her own children's clothing business, Dazzling Diva Designs, out of her living room in 2012. It started as an effort to craft boutique clothes for her two daughters.

One of her daughters had a recital and one had a birthday party to attend, so she decided to make their outfits. People kept asking where she got the clothes and if they

Anderson attends leadership event



Hunter MacKenzie Anderson attended the Oklahoma Association of Middle School and Junior High Student Councils Fall Leadership Conference (OAMJHSC) on Nov. 5-6. The event was held at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant.

OAMJHSC consists of students throughout the state of Oklahoma who are working together in a harmonious effort to bring about growth in student councils—to make them

respected investments of time and energy in education.

Anderson is 14, and an eighth grader from Snyder, and is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. She said she was excited to be the first in her family to visit the Choctaw Nation facilities in Durant.

She is the daughter of Jessica and Heath Snyder of Snyder. Her brother is Tristan "Turtle" Anderson. Hunter is also the great-granddaughter of Choctaw member, Mildred Crow of Hobart.



The Atoka county seniors group and Youth Advisory Board members sit atop a float during the annual Atoka Christmas Parade. In an experience involving both youth and elders, the two groups worked together to create the float. Their float had a theme based on the movie "It's a wonderful life."

Dancer and Wilkson advocate at D.C.



Madeline Dancer and Tyler Wilkson recently represented the Choctaw Nation at the Native American Health Summit in Washington, D.C.

Along with learning how to advocate before congress on issues that were important to the people of the Choctaw Nation, they were able to share these with members of the Committee on Indian Affairs on Capitol Hill.

Next they were challenged with making a digital video about topics where they are passionate to see change. They spent two days with specialists creating their digital story.

On the final night of the summit they, along with 24 other Native American and Alaska Natives, presented their story on Capitol Hill at a special reception.

tion. Kevin received the Volunteer of the Year award from AIA Central Oklahoma Chapter in 2013.

Kevin Bundy is originally from McAlester, Oklahoma where his parents Brent & Pam Bundy still live. His mother Pam Bundy is a loan officer for Choctaw Home Finance. Kevin graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 2002 with the help of Choctaw Nations grant program. He is married and has a one year old son.

He says that the architectural profession intrigues him due to the creativity, problem-solving and general knowledge of just about everything that is required. The leadership and creativity required to be an architect has given him the ability to be a community leader as well. "There are a lot of little decisions that we as architects have to make that affect everyone that interacts with the spaces that we are designing. As a profession we strive to create spaces that have a positive impact for the users of the space no matter how small or how large it might be perceived."

could purchase them. From here, the business kept growing through word of mouth, and focusing on online sales.

Meza is a first generation college graduate who has volunteered at food banks, local church missions, and Habitat for Humanity. She has been the keynote speaker at leadership conferences and tribal events. She also said she is passionate about ending cycles in domestic violence.

Of the issues she is passionate about, literacy is a focus for Meza. She works to support literacy and education from youth to adults.

"My grandma, who was a registered Choctaw, was born in 1914 and only had a 3rd grade education," Meza said. "They had to work in cotton and potato fields, not go to school. She taught me the Choctaw language but there were so many times I'd have to read to her at the bank, stores, and restaurants. That was my life lesson on how important literacy is."

In her work to raise literacy, Meza conducted years of research and worked hands on with students.

She was a college instructor from 2008-2013 and mentored thousands of emerging business leaders, founded ambassador programs, internship programs, served as chair on committees, mentored single moms, and served as a liaison between businesses and tribes.

As a Choctaw, she said, "I actively practice Choctaw beliefs and teach my kids the importance of what was almost lost to previous generations."



Choctaw veteran Sequoyah Trueblood brought a display of all his military medals to the Choctaw Nation Tribal Complex. Brent Oakes, Director of Veterans Advocacy for the Choctaw Nation, received them on behalf of the Nation. Pictured, from left, are granddaughters Julia Kirby, Cassidy Kirby, daughter Stephanie Kirby, Trueblood, and Oakes.

Barnard donates to Beautiful Lengths



Kelsey Barnard donated 13 inches of her hair to Pantene Beautiful Lengths. Pantene uses the hair to make wigs for people going through chemotherapy. Barnard's donation is one of 800,000 ponytails donated so far.

Kelsey is the daughter of Lindsey Phillips and Thomas Barnard.



Master Sergeant retires from Air Force

After 26 years of service in the Air Force, Choctaw Allan Folsom retired during a ceremony at the Joint Reserve Base in Fort Worth, Texas.

Roger Hamill, with the Choctaw Nation's Veterans Advocacy group, was on hand to present Master Sergeant Folsom with an Award of Honor and a Choctaw Nation flag.

Over 300 people attended the event, consisting of family, friends, and fellow servicemen.



Kiley Lockett (middle) celebrates earning a gold medal.

Lockett to represent U.S. in Denmark

Kiley Lockett of Oceanside, California, was selected by USA Gymnastics to represent the United States at the 2015 World Age Group Competition in Odense, Denmark in December.

Lockett is in 10th grade and attends Classical Academy High School in Oceanside, California.

She will be competing in Power Tumbling and Double Mini Trampoline.

In July, at the 2015 USA Gymnastics Trampoline and Tumbling National Championships in Greensboro, North Carolina, Lockett won the national championship in power tumbling in the Youth Elite division, her second national title in power tumbling.

At the national championships, Lockett was named to the Trampoline and Tumbling Junior National Team.

She also won a silver medal in double mini trampoline, and came in 4th in synchronized trampoline with her partner Savannah Gordon.

Misha Yordanov, a former Bulgarian National Power Tumbling Champion, coaches Lockett at Force San Diego.

Lockett is the grand-daughter of Betty (Suddath) Lockett and Jack Lockett. Jack played tight end and cornerback for the Sooners from 1949-1951 and was on the 1950 National Championship team. She is also the great-granddaughter of Ralph and Gladys Suddath.

Wright ranks First Class in Boy Scouts



Jared Wright earned a promotion to First Class in Boy Scouts of America troop # 116, in Madera, California on Sept. 12.

He is currently working toward a promotion to Star Scout in December, with the most service hours in his troop!

He joined the Boy Scouts in April of 2014 and worked through the ranks of Scout, Tenderfoot and Second Class in the short time since then.

Wright did all of this while holding a 3.83 GPA at Jack G. Desmond Middle School, participating as the captain of his team at the science bowl. His team won 5th place. He also participated in various other clubs.

His family said they are very proud of Wright and wish to congratulate him.



Joy Benson attended an honoring of the new bison calves born this year in Georgetown, Tenn. and took this picture of the grazing herd.

Polumsky leads realtors association



The Montana Association of Realtors recently named Choctaw Teresa "Teri" Polumsky as the 2016 president of the organization.

The event commemorating the appointment was held in September in conjunction with their fall business meetings. The installing officer, Mike Ford, is vice president of the National Association of Realtors.

Polumsky will preside at all realtor functions in her state and will represent Montana during 2016 meetings held by the National Association of Realtors.

She is a certified real estate instructor as well as supervising broker of the brokerage she owns with her husband, Andy Polumsky. They reside in Corvallis, Montana.

Her past awards include being chosen as Montana's Realtor of the Year in 2011 and being honored in Anaheim, Calif. in front of an audience of over 20,000 fellow realtors.

Polumsky is very proud of her Choctaw heritage and traces her lineage to Chief Moshulatubbe. A highlight for her was traveling with family to the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. to see a portrait of their ancestor. Teri also has fond memories of visiting family in Quinton, Okla. and touring the area resting places of many Choctaw family members.

Thanksgiving Community Dinners 2015



The five-year-old center in Antlers is currently without a fulltime cook, but there was plenty of help on hand Nov. 18, including Oma Clay, right, assistant director of Antlers' CHR program.



From left, Edgar Taylor of Antlers, District 7 Councilman Jack Austin, and Tommy Wesley of Antlers partake in a little after-dinner conversation.



Teri Billy, with the Choctaw Nation Language School, volunteers at the Broken Bow Thanksgiving dinner handing out drinks as locals come in for a seat.



Attending the Coalgate lunch are the Soto family: Amanda, Ali, Jorge, Izaiah, and the family matriarch, Vicki McClure. Pictured here being greeted by the Chief and his wife.



Matthew Kemp and James Charles were greeted by District 12 Little Miss Cherokee McCoy and Miss Choctaw Nation Neiatha Hardy at the Crowder dinner.



Fran Fragola and Tina Eagle Road two long time friends from Hugo visit before the Choctaw Nation Thanksgiving dinner in Hugo.



18-month-old Noah Wesley, son of Tony Wesley, made it all the way over from Hugo to dine with family in the Antlers area.



Ivan Battiest leads the Broken Bow senior group in singing songs in Choctaw, including Hymn #48.



Leslie and Cooper Battles smile for the camera at the Coalgate Thanksgiving lunch.



Durant's Ann Baskin is pictured with her former coworker at the Indian Health Clinic in Durant, Clint Morrison.



The Payne Family of Hugo pose for a photo with Chief Gary Batton after the Choctaw Nation Thanksgiving dinner in Hugo.



Pictured, from left, are Bertha Jefferson, Brock Jefferson Jr., Amya Jefferson, Jordan Jefferson, Elijah Jefferson, Ayden Jefferson, April Burris, and Brianna Jefferson. The Jefferson family were the first to arrive for the Idabel Thanksgiving dinner.



Niva Loudermilk, Lou Draper, Glennette Cooper, and Alma Bell (Alma and Lou are sisters) pause for a picture following the Atoka dinner.



Kelly and Maecian Bond and Chief Batton proudly wear traditional Choctaw clothing as they attend the Bethel Thanksgiving dinner.



Linda Wade, Choctaw Nation Community Health Representative from Broken Bow, prepares the Thanksgiving ham for the Broken Bow dinner.



Malissa Buchanan, Miss Choctaw Nation Neiatha Hardy, Charlotte Dickey, District 12 Little Miss Cherokee McCoy, and Crystal Morgan pose for a picture after the Crowder Thanksgiving dinner.



Channing Steve poses for the camera before the Durant Thanksgiving dinner held at the Choctaw Event Center.



Greg and George Bailey pose with their mother Indell Bailey and District 8 Councilman Perry Thompson during the Choctaw Nation Thanksgiving Dinner in Hugo.



The kids from the Choctaw Nation Head Start, perform the Snake Dance during the Atoka Thanksgiving dinner.



Pictured are three generations of Choctaws: grandmother Veronica McDaniel, her granddaughter, Maci Wagoner, and her daughter, Jennifer Wagoner.



Alexis and James Reynolds met with Chief Batton at the Bethel Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 23.



Jeremy Burris visits with Councilman James Frazier and Chief Gary Batton after the Coalgate Thanksgiving luncheon.



Concetta Gragg, Margaret Yocco, Shirley Cloud, and Leon Cloud pose for a picture at the Crowder Thanksgiving dinner.



Odessa St. John, Gaylia Green, and Carole Ayers enjoy sharing lunch and fellowship during the Durant senior citizens Thanksgiving for District 9.



Father Felix Salinas keeps daughter Ariyah Salinas happy as they wait for the food to be served at the Idabel Thanksgiving dinner. Ariyah wears a Choctaw dress every year for the event.



Speaker of the Council Thomas Williston helps Leandra Carter lead attendees of the Idabel Thanksgiving dinner in singing Choctaw Hymn #48.



District 11 Councilman Bob Pate visits with seniors during the McAlester Thanksgiving dinner.



Maudie Stubblefield and great-grandson Bentley Baldwin of McAlester. Bentley loves coming to the center to eat the homemade rolls. He also has his own horse he named Bob Pate.



Volunteers preparing to serve the Thanksgiving meal before the McAlester Thanksgiving dinner.



Choctaw Nation employees volunteer at Poteau Thanksgiving dinner.



Minnie Hamm, Georgia Taylor, Iona Parker, and Jerry Byous visit with each other at the Poteau Thanksgiving dinner.



Christine Ludlow, Evelyn Ludlow, Roxie Page, Margie Watson, and Minnie Edwards enjoy their day at the Choctaw Community Center in Smithville.



Choctaw Head Start students perform the snake dance at the Poteau Community Center.



Wanda Leet, Geraldine Hale, Cindy Goings, and Joseph Goings are ready for lunch at Smithville's Thanksgiving lunch on Nov. 18.



Enjoying the Spiro Thanksgiving get-together are Ethelyn Moore, Evelyn Kasworn, Kelly McGee, District 4 Jr. Miss Jade Cossey, and Beverly Moore-Honaker.



Councilman Ron Perry visits with Larry Lovejoy and Grady Adams at Spiro's Thanksgiving lunch.



District 3 Councilman Kenny Bryant welcomes Tommy Blake to Smithville's Thanksgiving celebration.



Councilman Delton Cox stops to say hello to Lena Cminez, Shirley Picklesimer, District 4 Little Miss Gracie Mattox and Brinley Mills at Spiro.



Virginia Terrell and Topsy Williams pose for the camera before the Thanksgiving dinner is served in Stigler.



Jovani Flores smiles for the camera after the Stigler Thanksgiving lunch.



Ramona Baker celebrated her 76th Birthday with her family at the Stigler Thanksgiving lunch on Nov. 18. Pictured with Ramona are her daughters.



Cecil Watson poses for a picture with Councilman Kenny Bryant at the Talihina Thanksgiving dinner.



Chief Batton visits with James Melton during the Talihina Thanksgiving dinner.



Bobby Coley leads a group of Talihina seniors in singing Amazing Grace during the Talihina Thanksgiving Dinner.



Chief Batton and his family take a break from their meal to smile for the camera during the Tvshka Homma Thanksgiving dinner.



Eva Head, Shawana Edwards, and Evalynn Edwards visit with each other after the Tvshka Homma Thanksgiving Dinner.



Chief Batton, Rooster, and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. pose for a picture before the Tvshka Homma Thanksgiving Dinner.



John Bull, Councilman Joe Coley and Josh Bull visited with each other after the Wilburton Thanksgiving dinner.



Lisa Bohanan, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Loretha Bohanan, Justin Risner, Councilman Jack Austin, and Tracy Risner pose for a picture after the Wright City Thanksgiving lunch. Loretta is a relative of the Austins.



Sandra Noltkamper and Rebecca Pittwood take a break from volunteering to pose for a photo at the Wilburton Thanksgiving dinner.



From left, (front row) baby Raleigh Duckett, sister Killian Duckett, and mother Lakien Duckett huddle together with (back row) Joann Battiest and Cheyenne Cherry. All are waiting for the food to be served at the Idabel dinner.



Trence Holt and Rosalee Ramirez playing a game of cards after the Wright City Choctaw Thanksgiving lunch.



Connie Slabaugh holds baby Lioha Malaltakachi Ray Baker after the Wright City Thanksgiving lunch.



EDUCATION

Choctaw College Connect introduces students to their dream universities



Chief Gary Batton addresses the students and families who attended the 2015 Choctaw College Connect as the Choctaw royalty and education department leaders look on. He spoke to support the students pursuing their educational goals.

By BRANDON FRYE
Choctaw Nation

In a yearly effort to bring students and universities together, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) held the 2015 Choctaw College Connect (CCC) event at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant on Nov. 7.

CCC is a service offered to Choctaw citizens at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels. Interested attendees from all over converged on the location in the early morning, and perused the event floor until the afternoon.

As a rare opportunity for young Natives, a wide mix of state, regional, and highly selective colleges like Dartmouth, Cornell, Oklahoma State University, Brown, Carl Albert State College, Carnegie Mellon, Berkeley, East Central University, Notre Dame, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and Vanderbilt (among many others) stationed representatives across the center with the express purpose of recruiting Choctaws. These recruiters explained why their college was the right fit, and how to apply and enroll.

This diverse cast of schools sets CCC apart from other college fairs, as it recognizes the varied interests of tribal members and multiple pathways in reaching their goals.

Chief Gary Batton spoke to the students in attendance, urging them to take full advantage of everything offered during CCC.

“I can see nothing but pride and success, our culture and our history, with you,” Chief Gary Batton said, addressing the students. “We need to make sure you seize today, help you find opportunities for your future.”

Over 400 Choctaw students and their parents did just this, making use of the opportunity.

Lauren Rowland, Director of the Choctaw Nation College and Career Retention Program, had a leadership role in planning and putting on

the event. The way she sees it, CCC is quite remarkable.

“Every year college representatives pour into Choctaw Country with the specific goal of recruiting our tribal members to attend their institutions,” Rowland explained. “Tribal members attend from all over the country, some traveling from as far as Hawaii! That alone speaks volumes about the cali-



Student Treyton Lester (middle) and his family visit with a representative from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College. His mother Mandy Smith and grandmother Janet House came along to support Lester as he pursued a school with a worthwhile art program.

ber of this event and the significance tribal members find it has in their college planning.”

Rowland gave credit to a team effort, which made the event possible. She said the entire Education Department selflessly gave of their time and resources to support and promote CCC, as well as volunteer at the event.

Kathy Carpenter with Special Projects in the Education Department, and Allison Britton, Director of the Higher Education Program, also played pivotal roles.

“It was just a few years ago when most of us thought it was difficult for a student from southeast Oklahoma to attend an Ivy League college,” Carpenter said. “We found that’s just not the case.”

In offering the CCC event, Choctaw Nation education staff like Rowland and Carpenter hope young Choctaw students realize the same thing—it is entirely within reach to attend a university, even in the Ivy League.

As an added incentive for students

to attend, three scholarships of up to \$1,000 were awarded as door prizes. This year, John Sokolosky, Jerai Billy, and Paula Talley received scholarships.

CCC offers something for tribal members at every stage of the college planning process. High school students may come to connect with Choctaw Nation education programs such as High School Student Services and the Higher Education Program to gain information about available resources. Someone who has already made applications to schools may come to the representatives from those schools, visit with the Chah-ta Foundation about scholarships they should apply to in the spring, and attend a breakout session on what to expect their first year in college. Someone working towards an undergraduate degree may come to talk to representatives from graduate or professional schools, sit in on a breakout session about graduate school admissions, and visit with CNO Human Resources about internship opportunities.

Thomas Williston, Speaker of the Choctaw Tribal Council, spoke to the students and parents during the event. He addressed the importance of having a purpose.

“Everyone here got here by way of a purpose. And you got here by the purpose of your ancestors a long time ago, and the thoughts and hopes they had for the future—and their future is you, each and every one of you,” Williston said. “You as leaders of tomorrow, future parents and grandparents, you’ve got your lives ahead of you, and the Choctaw Nation is here for you.”

Though this year’s event has come and gone, students should plan to attend next year’s CCC. For more information, visit <http://www.choctawcollegeconnect.com>. Remember to pre-register for the event. Additionally, the CNO Higher Education Program can be reached at 800-522-6170, ext. 2518.



Jennifer Johnson, left, stands with her family while holding her daughter Arabella during a community gathering. She has since become a registered nurse.

Johnson becomes registered nurse

Jennifer Johnson graduated from Rose State Collage this December with her registered nurse degree.

Jennifer is the daughter of Marvin and Cheryl Johnson of Choctaw.

“Thanks to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for helping me reach my educational goals,” she said. “Chahta sia hoke. Yakoke!”

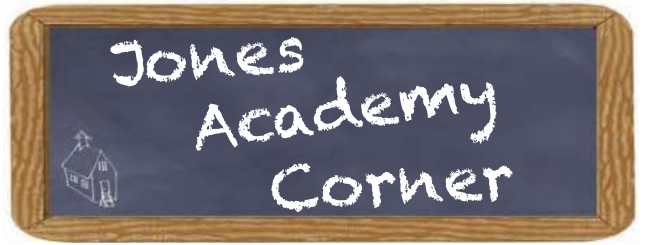
Medina earns bachelor’s degree



Catherine Medina graduated from The University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, with a bachelor’s degree in nursing and psychology.

She will continue her education at Texas Women’s University in the spring for her master’s.

She is proud of her Choctaw heritage and is thankful to the Choctaw Nation for its academic assistance.



A table full of young Jones Academy students take a break from enjoying their shared Thanksgiving meal to play it up for the camera. The cafeteria was packed with over 200 guests and students. It was a group effort for the staff to prepare the meal.

Students at Jones Academy kick off holidays with a feast

Over 200 guests, students, staff, friends and families of Jones Academy celebrated a season of Thanksgiving on Nov. 18.

This special supper officially kicked off the holidays. Guests enjoyed a meal of grilled ribeye steaks, chicken and shrimp. The buffet included green beans, corn on the cob, hot rolls, and a variety of sumptuous desserts. While the kitchen team seasoned and marinated the steaks, staff member Mike Duran, superintendent Brad Spears and principal Robert Ray began grilling the main course early in the morning. As the meal progressed, the kitchen manager, Sheila Coshatt, became concerned that the calculated 600 slices of cake and pie might not be enough for the zealous diners. In the end, her math proved near-perfect with the small remainder of only two whole pies! Everyone was in accord that it was the perfect meal and that there is much for which to be grateful.



High School Student Services

A Choctaw Nation Education Program

The Choctaw Nation High School Student Services Program serves students in grades 9-12 who are tribal members. The goal of the program is to assist our students with academic information to promote education and/or career path beyond high school.

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- Choctaw Tribal Member
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