



November 2019 Issue



Above: Jennifer Byram gathers dogbane for twining; Top Right: Buffalo wool twining; Right: A buffalo wool skirt nears completion; Below: A painted tvlhko cape made by Sam Stitt



Photos by Diedre Elrod and Christian Toews

# Choctaw artists revive traditional practices for new Cultural Center

by Kellie Matherly

The new Choctaw Cultural Center is still under construction, but preparations for the traditional artwork featured throughout the grounds began almost a year ago. In November of 2018, the Choctaw Nation Cultural Services Department began partnering with 42 Choctaw artisans from all over the United States to create authentic clothing, tools, and household items from different periods in Choctaw history for dioramas and exhibits.

Traditional art is different from fine arts like painting and sculpture. In fact, the Choctaw language does not even have a word for art. The word imponna, to be skilled at something, comes closest. Traditional art focuses on skills and knowledge passed down through generations, and while this type of art may be beautiful, its function and usefulness in a culture is what makes it valuable. For this reason, it is important that Choctaw community members be involved in making artifacts for display.

“This is the Choctaw community telling its own story,” said Dr. Ian Thompson, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Senior Director of the Historic Preservation Department for the Choctaw Nation. According to Thompson, hundreds of hours have been spent researching Choctaw history and culture to ensure that every piece of traditional art “fully and accurately represents the time period.”

Getting the process just right for each of the artifacts has not always been easy. Over time, some traditional knowledge and skills have become rare or were lost altogether. “We are revitalizing practices people haven’t seen in 300 years,” says Stacey Halfmoon, Senior Director of the Cultural Center. In some cases, artists had to be taught the history, style, and context of the pieces they were asked to create in order to make them as historically accurate as possible.

One example is a hide tanning process that uses egg yolks to produce tvlhko, a type of leather that is edible as well as exceptionally strong and insulating. Because this particular method was fairly rare, Choctaw Nation Cultural Services partnered with a local tanner to teach classes on the process. The tvlhko students produced in these classes will be used in Cultural Center exhibits. Plus, the number of tvlhko makers has grown as a result.

Clothing and ceremonial regalia have also been commissioned for the center. Jennifer Byram, Research Assistant for the Historic Preservation Department, has been working alongside other Choctaw tribal members to make twined skirts, from traditional materials such as stinging nettle. Another skirt was made from gathered, processed, and spun bison wool and dogbane yarns, which were also hand-twined. “Reawakening textile traditions with our textile community for the Cultural Center has been a great honor for us all. Some of the clothing may seem foreign to visitors, but by making and sharing these items, we hope to renew understanding of Choctaw textiles that have thousands of years of nearly forgotten history,” Byram said.

In addition to the buffalo wool and other plant fiber skirts, the Cultural Center will house a cape made from turkey feathers and another made from racoon skins, both created from designs based on centuries-old Choctaw and European descriptions. Both capes are in New York being fitted to the mannequins that will wear them in the Cultural Center. The raccoon skin cape will be fit-

ted to a mannequin of Tuscalusa, who was chief around the same time the description of the cape was written.

Visitors to the Cultural Center will see exhibits highlighting Choctaw metalwork, jewelry and beadwork as well.

Brent Deramus, a Choctaw coppersmith living in Colorado, has contributed 18 pieces of stamped copper for a woven buffalo wool belt. Deramus, who learned his craft as part of his recovery from addiction, drew his inspiration from research he did on the importance of copper to the Choctaw people. “I like to make things that are different and unique,” Deramus said. “There’s so much more to our art in the past few hundred years.” Deramus, whose copperwork has won many awards, hopes to contribute other pieces to the Cultural Center as well.

Choctaw tribal member and U.S. park ranger Roger Amerman worked on several historical research projects in his career that helped inspire the beadwork and clothing he created for the Cultural Center. Although Choctaw clothing of the early 1800s is his specialty, Amerman was also asked to collaborate on a diorama depicting Choctaw life in the 1500s. He knew it would be a challenge because he could only use materials available before European contact. With Dr. Thompson’s guidance, Amerman used elk hide, tiny shells, and pigments he ground himself from minerals for his contributions to the diorama. “This has pushed me to learn more about my tribe and be a better artist,” he said.

When asked what contributing to the Cultural Center meant to him, Amerman added, “I am more than pleased and honored to give back to my nation...I can’t think of a better way to honor my ancestors and our unborn.”

Traditional art is just one of the many features that

will make the Cultural Center special. The overall goal is to create an immersive encounter with Choctaw life, past and present. Over 100 interviews combined with community surveys and input from Choctaw leaders helped shape the guest experience from start to finish. “The art will combine with videos, interviews, and food to tell the whole story,” said Thompson.

When it is finished, the grounds of the Cultural Center will total approximately 98,000 square feet and house dioramas, landscapes, a living village, and a mound based on Nvnih Waiya, the Mother Mound in the Choctaw homelands in Mississippi. The center will also have a café featuring traditional Choctaw cuisine. The Cultural Center is scheduled to open to the public in the fall of 2020.



Top Right: Audrey Jacob twines a skirt from stinging nettle in her office at Cultural Services. Above: Brent Deramus stamped copper pieces for a buffalo wool belt woven by Debbie Damron.



# Faith, Family, Culture

## Celebrating Native November



Chief Gary Batton

November is a special time of year. Not only is it a time to spend with our families during Thanksgiving , but it is also Native American Heritage Month. Native American Heritage Month, also known as Native November, is a time to celebrate our cultural heritage and share with others the history of our people. Native Americans were here long before Europeans made it to America. Our history is rich, and our culture is vibrant. Through hardships, struggles and turmoil we still managed to hold on to what makes us uniquely Choctaw.

At the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, we try to embrace our culture every day. We host Heritage Monday events at our tribal headquarters in Durant. During these events, visitors can take part in cultural and language classes, eat traditional meals and purchase Native American art. We also have year-round language classes that are taught online through our Choctaw School of Language. Our teachers, many of whom are first-language speakers, take pride in keeping our language alive. It is up to us to pass our language on to future generations, and our language department is doing a great job.

We are eagerly awaiting the opening of the Choctaw Nation Cultural Center in Durant. Construction is coming along, and we cannot wait to be able to share our story through its state-of-the-art exhibits. In this month’s issue of the Biskinik, you will get a glimpse into some of the traditional artwork that will be displayed in the facility. Some of the artwork has been created in the spirit of long-forgotten art styles. For example, there are buffalo wool skirts and a turkey cape, which was last documented centuries ago. This is just a small glimpse into the fantastic array of curated pieces that will be on display. I cannot wait to see the finished product next year.

Another great resource on Choctaw Culture is the Choctaw Capitol Museum in Tvshka Homma. Housed in the historic capitol building, which was built in 1907, the museum is full of history. It houses numerous exhibits that depict life before colonization, the Trail of Tears, Choctaw life in Oklahoma, code talkers and much more. If you ever have the time to visit, I highly encourage it. It is a fascinating place to visit, and you are sure to learn more about our culture.



Photo by Deidre Elrod

Native American Heritage Month has long been a time to celebrate and share Native culture. On Nov. 5, 2018, Chief Gary Batton signed a proclamation officially recognizing November as Native American Heritage Month for the Choctaw Nation.

I also encourage you to visit the Hina Hanta Project website, [hinahanta.choctawnation.com](http://hinahanta.choctawnation.com). This website allows visitors to view curated Choctaw artifacts and art pieces. This is a great resource to use while we wait for the Cultural Center to open.

This month I hope you take some time and get in touch with your Choctaw roots and share with others what it means to you to be Choctaw. You don’t have to travel to Oklahoma to do this. You can attend a Native November event in your area, wear a piece of traditional clothing or jewelry, tell a story about your heritage, or even simply wear a Choctaw t-shirt. Be creative and be proud of what makes you a Native American and of the Choctaw blood that is running through your veins no matter the month on the calendar.

## Choctaw Nation takes steps to help domestic violence survivors



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

October was National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma takes domestic violence awareness and prevention very seriously, and we are taking steps each day to help our tribal members living with domestic violence.

Domestic violence is an issue that affects all demographics in communities everywhere. According to a study conducted by the Center of Disease Control, on average, 24 people are victims of intimate partner violence per minute in the U.S. About 1 in 5 women and 1 in 12 men reportedly experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner, while about 10% of women and 2% of men reported being stalked by an intimate partner.

As disheartening as this information is, statistics in the Native American community are even more alarming.

According to the National Congress of American Indian’s Policy Research Center, more than 4 in 5 Native American and Alaskan Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime. Native women are 1.7

times more likely than white women to have experienced violence in the past year. Native women also face murder rates that are 10 times the national average in some areas of the U.S.

These statistics have driven the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to seek change. We offer numerous programs and services to help our tribal members remove themselves from domestic violence situations.

Project SERV is a new transitional housing program. It services 8 to 12 individuals for 6 to 24 months. To be eligible for this program, recipients must have experienced intimate partner violence and become homeless as a result of victimization, be a member of a federally recognized tribe or have dependents in the household who are and reside in the 10 ½ counties. This service provides assistance with utilities, childcare, safety planning, case management, personal goal setting, financial literacy, legal assistance and gas vouchers.

Our Family Violence Prevention program is designed to address the specific needs of victims who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking by an intimate partner. Services include safety planning, crisis intervention, emergency/ safe shelter locations, advocacy, prevention education, needs-based referrals, case planning, court advocacy, protective order assistance, education and outreach. To be eligible, individuals must be a current or recent survivor of intimate partner abuse and reside within the 10 ½ counties. These services are available to all survivors, not just Native Americans.

Project EMPOWER is also a great program. Three advocates work with survivors across the 10 ½ counties through the transitional housing program. The program provides rental and utility assistance, gas vouchers, home visits, healing circles, court advocacy, safety planning and goal setting. To be eligible for this program, victims of intimate partner violence must be at least 18, hold a CDIB from a federally recognized tribe, have fled or be fleeing domestic abuse or stalking, be willing to participate in weekly home visits and follow-ups, and the household must only include the victim and dependents.



Photo by Chris Jennings

The Family Violence Prevention Program hosted a Flowers on the Pond Vigil at the Choctaw Headquarters Amphitheater Oct. 15, 2019. The vigil was held to raise domestic violence awareness and to show support for survivors.

Finally, the Choctaw Nation Victim Assistance provides culturally sensitive, holistic, victim-centered programming with a focus on providing specialized services for underserved child victims. In addition, the program can provide the same services to other crime victims. Program services include case management, accompaniment to medical exams, transportation, counseling, emergency food, clothing and shelter.

I want anyone reading this to know that no matter what situation you are living in now, you are important enough to be treated with kindness, love and respect. If you are in a domestic abuse situation and do not know how to seek help, contact a Family Violence Prevention Social Worker today at 800-522-6170. If you are living outside the 10 ½ counties and need help, you may also contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233. Deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired individuals may use their TTY line at 800-787-3224. The Native specific hotline, StrongHearts, also offers culturally appropriate support and advocacy from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. This hotline can be reached at 844-762-8483.



## Assistant Chief sworn in for second term

Jack Austin Jr., left, is sworn in as Assistant Chief of the Choctaw Nation on National Boss’s Day, Wednesday, Oct. 16. Chief Gary Batton, center, and Chief Justice of the Choctaw Nation David Burrage conduct the ceremony.

Austin has served in the capacity of assistant chief since 2014. More than 200 employees and Austin family members gathered in the outdoor amphitheater at Choctaw Nation Headquarters for the festive event. Austin has been employed with the tribe for 29 years, previously serving in the Health Services Authority, including as director of the men’s recovery program.

The assistant chief was appointed by Chief Batton and confirmed by the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council on Saturday, Oct. 12.

## Loneliness

Shortly after God created Adam, he made a declaration. In the Book of Genesis 2:18, the Bible tells us, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a help meet for him.” Adam and God had communed in the Garden, but God knew that human beings need other humans to relate effectively. The animals did not qualify to fill this void, so God created Eve to become the help meet.

For a time, there was good communion between God, Adam and Eve. With this fellowship, Adam and Eve were neither alone nor lonely. Then sin came into their world. They rebelled against God by disobedience, and fellowship was broken. God separated himself from Adam and Eve, and a wedge was driven between husband and wife. Selfishness and interpersonal tension came into their relationship, and feelings of isolation and loneliness came into the world.

Today, loneliness is a common problem and one of the most universal sources of human suffering. There are many social influences which increase our loneliness. We will look at three of them. The first one is technology. Efficiency and convenience demanded the increase of larger business, government and education. There is less time to develop deep, satisfying relationships. As technology became complex, it required specialized fields of study. This separated people into classes in society. Relationships became shallow and understanding decreased, which made loneliness more prevalent.

The second one is transportation. Mobility increased with the inventions of automobiles and public transit systems. People were lured to a better life elsewhere, and better transportation made it possible to move. This tore up friendships, families and the core values of community. Now people avoid close relationships which would end in painful separations later.

The third one is social media. The introduction of modern social media has changed our society. Like anything else, it has great benefits but also has a negative influence. The entertainment business provides content which seems to promote superficiality. Television, cell phones and movies interrupt interactions with neighbors and relatives. There are seldom direct human communications between people. This detachment from human relationship intensifies the potential for isolation and loneliness.

The Bible focuses on our need for communion with God and good relationships with other people. How can this be done? It is by being reconciled back to God that which occurred in the garden. Romans 5:10 says, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Loneliness is a void in the soul only God himself can fill.



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain



# Social Dancing



Photo by Kellie Matherly

The Snake Dance is performed during the social dancing exhibition. Participants dance in a spiral until they form a tight coil before breaking out.



Photo by Christian Toews

Crowd members were encouraged to participate during some of the social dancing.



Photo by Christian Toews

Social Dancers perform the Stomp Dance.



Photo by Kellie Matherly

Participants of all ages performed in the social dancing exhibition.

# Choctaw Village



Photo by Chris Jennings

Jacqueline Putman gives a tour of the greenhouse.



Photo by Chris Jennings

From left: Te'Ata, Chloe and Bryar Maldonado all work on their pieces in pottery class at the Choctaw Village.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Festival attendees work on flint knapping at the Choctaw Village.



Photo by Christian Toews

Oklahoma Secretary of Native American Affairs, Lisa Billy participates in the social dancing exhibition.



Photo by Kendra Germany

Mahli Billy chants during the social dancing exhibition. Billy underwent a kidney transplant in July but decided to attend and participate in the Labor Day events, despite still recovering from the surgery. "It's like the slogan says, Faith, Family and Culture. It's my faith that got me through to where I am today," said Billy. It was his family that helped make his attendance possible. Billy said it's always been important to him to share the culture with his kids. Because of that he was able to rely on them to help with some of the events that he couldn't do because of certain restrictions after his surgery.

# Bow Shoot



Photos by Deidre K. Elrod

Men's 18+ Winners: First - Dexter Underwood; Second - Jason Heckle; Third - David Edward



Girls 14-17 Winners: First - Journey Bell; Second - Aubrey Hopson



Boys 14-17 Winners: First - Tristen Ross; Second - Matthew Wilder; Third - Dylan Wilder



Boys and Girls 9-13 Winners: First - Carl Heckle; Second - Tabitha Wilder; Third - Kadey McKay



Women's 18+ Winners: First - Anna Diaz; Second - Alecia Ross; Third - Valerie Underwood



# Council Corner



Ronald Perry, District 5

## Nation offers assistance during holiday season

Halito from District 5. With the holidays approaching I would like to take this time to reflect on all we have to be grateful for. With that being said, I’m very thankful to be part of a Nation that gives back to its tribal members. Choctaw Nation offers many programs focused on providing assistance to tribal members during the holiday season.

The Holiday Food Voucher applications for Christmas are now available as well as the LIHEAP applications. LIHEAP provides tribal members with utility assistance during the winter months. Many of our elders on fixed incomes benefit tremendously from these programs. Youth Outreach also has the Christmas For Families In Need applications available. All the above-mentioned applications are income based and are available at all community centers or can be mailed to you.

Our seniors here at District 5 have been very active the last few months. They enjoy our Wednesday dinners, monthly silent auctions, casino trips and bingo. They also participate in chair volleyball twice a week and have hosted several volleyball games against Broken Bow, Bethel, Poteau, Wright City, McAlester and Wilburton. The seniors will be traveling to the pumpkin patch and A-Z as well as to Pigeon Forge, Tennessee this month for their “big” trip. A lot of hard work has gone into planning and raising money for this trip. We hope they have a great time.

Our local 4-H and FFA students participated in the Haskell County Livestock Show this past month and we had several Choctaw Nation participants. Jody House was able to bid and purchase their animals. This is another way Choctaw Nation contributes back to the community.

Construction on the 10 new affordable rental homes has begun here in Stigler. These homes should be available in the next few months and will provide 10 families with income-based housing.

On October 3, 2019, I attended the Outstanding Elder Banquet in Durant. The outstanding elders nominated from District 5 were Argie “Ken” Davis and Gail Peterson. Congratulations to them both, and I appreciate their involvement and continued support.

At our last meeting the Tribal Council elected Councilman Thomas Williston as Speaker, and I was elected Secretary. The growth of Choctaw Nation and the budget were approved for the new fiscal year.

I also attended the inter-tribal meeting in Durant, w and I’m happy to report the tribes are all still united with the gaming compact.

Yakoke and God bless.

## Tribal Council holds August session

Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session October 12 2019, at Tvshka Homma, Oklahoma.

- 1) CALL TO ORDER
- 2) OPENING PRAER/FLAG SALUTE
- 3) ROLL CALL
- 4) APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER SESSION MINUTES
- 5) WELCOME GUESTS/RECOGNIZE VETERAN OF THE MONTH
- 6) APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES
- 7) COMMITTEE REPORTS
- 8) NEW BUSINESS
- 9) Letter of appointment for Jack Austin, Jr. to the position of Assistant Chief of the Choctaw Nation (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 10) Approve Funds and Budget for:
- 11) 2019 Native American Library Services Enhancement (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 12) 2019 Native American Library Services (Basic Library) Grant (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 13) Year Five of Five Continuation of the Native Asset Building Initiative (CAB-NABI) (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 14) Year Four of Five Native Youth Initiative for Leadership, Empowerment, and Development (I-LEAD)—Chahta Himmak Pila Pehlich (CHIPP or Choctaw Future Leaders) (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 15) Year Five of Five Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative—Project Homakbi Ribbon (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 16) Year Five of Five Continuation for the Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative—Project Apelachi (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 17) Year Three of Three Continuation for the Behavioral Health Integration Initiative (BH21)—Project Integrate (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 18) Year Four of Five Continuation for the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program—Chahta Inchukka (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 19) Year Two of Five Continuation for the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program—Chahta Villa Apela (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)

- 10) Passed)
- 11) k. Year Five of Five Continuation for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative—Project Strong (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 12) l. Year One of Five for the 2019 Oklahoma Dementia Education Enhancement Program (OK-DEEP) Subaward (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 13) m. Authorize Chief to Place Property In Atoka County in Trust Status with the United States of America (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 14) n. Approve an Electric Transmission Line Easement in Favor of Public Service Company of Oklahoma on Choctaw Nation Fee Land in Atoka County, Oklahoma (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 15) o. Approve an Electric Line Easement in Favor of Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company on Choctaw Nation Fee Land in Bryan County, Oklahoma (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 16) p. Approve an Electric Line Anchor Easement in Favor of Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company on land held by the US in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Bryan County, Oklahoma (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 17) q. Approve FY2020 Budget for Choctaw nation Food Distribution Program (Yea’s Unanimous; Bill Passed)
- 18) 9) OTHER NEW BUSINESS
- 19) 10) OLD BUSINESS
- 20) a. Appoint Sergeant-At-Arms for the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council
- 21) 11) ADJOURNMENT
- 22) CLOSING PRAYER

Council Members Present:

Thomas Williston  
Tony Ward  
Robert Karr  
Ron Perry  
Jennifer Woods  
Jack Austin  
Perry Thompson  
James Dry  
Anthony Dillard  
Delton Cox  
James Frazier  
Eddie Bohanan

The next regularly scheduled council meeting will be 10:00 a.m., November 9, 2019, at Tvshka Homma.

## Logan named Veteran of the Month

Former Marine William F. “Bill” Logan Jr. was honored as Veteran of the month at the October council meeting.

Logan was born and raised in Albion, Oklahoma, and had gone to Portland, Oregon, to work in the shipyards. A draft letter was sent to his home in Albion, and his dad forwarded the letter to Logan.

After his visit to the draft board in Portland, Logan left for Pearl Harbor to join the fighting during World War II, serving until he was almost 21.

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

The next major battle against the enemy for Logan was the Guam Marianas Islands July 21 through Aug. 22, 1944.

In a previous interview published in the Biskinik, Logan said, “It rained for two weeks straight...we even slept in water, just being sure to keep our head out of the water.”

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

After his service, Logan married Estella Miller. They had three children, two girls and a boy.



Jennifer Woods, District 6

## Housing applications needed for growth

It’s fall, and we have been busy. There’s always something going on in our great Choctaw Nation. Hearing from you all and getting feedback is very important to me as your Tribal Councilwoman, and it’s my privilege to serve our wonderful District 6. From attending committee meetings and the Outreach community meeting in Red Oak to getting the Thanksgiving and Christmas vouchers out in the community (pick up your application at the field office), I love serving my people.

Congratulations to Joe Williams Jr. for winning Outstanding Elder 2019-2020. Our elders are special, and we respect their ways and what they can teach us, which brings me to our youth. The YAB program has a new coordinator, Mrs. Brandy Vasquez. I am excited to see what all YAB will be doing this year. Our youth are the future leaders of our nation, and it’s amazing to see all the programs and opportunities we have available to assist them.

District 6 seniors have been very busy with chair volleyball and participating in tournaments while having a fun time, getting exercise and staying healthy. Terri Ramirez is teaching a new class called SAIL Balance Training at the Wellness Center on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m.

District 6 seniors’ activities like shopping trips and museums are in the Biskinik every month and weekly in the newspaper. The last Tuesday of every month, we have family night bingo and potluck. All are welcome. If you have a favorite dish and want to bring it and share, please do. If you can’t, you’re still welcome to share and enjoy fellowship from 6 – 8 p.m.

Rural areas face many challenges, and District 6 is striving to meet those needs with Choctaw Nation Housing. We are very excited to get 10 new independent elderly units and 10 low-rent units, to be completed by December. We also have five LEAP houses in Red Oak and five in Wilburton proposed. Please continue to fill out the housing applications to show the true need for housing and what areas are most needy. Quinton, Buffalo Valley and Panola area need to fill out applications for LEAP homes and specify the area you live in. Once 10 applications are identified and approved, 10 new LEAP homes can be built in that area. Yakoke to Bobby Yandell and all of Choctaw Housing associates for working to meet the home shortage and crisis of housing with affordable rentals.

The ribbon cutting for our new Talihina daycare, which was much needed and is very appreciated, will be Oct. 22. The daycare will provide 20 jobs and serve 60 children ages 6 weeks to 5 years, which is an increase of 31 children served. There will also be four much-needed classrooms. Most importantly, the daycare will be keeping our most precious commodities, our children, safe.

The Talihina hospital chapel was completed in July 2019. The chapel will benefit not only our employees at the hospital but all the tribal members that utilize the hospital. We are truly blessed with the chapel. It honors our faith, family and culture—who we are.

With the Talihina Med Surgical Expansion, our hospital continues to grow and serve our people with the best up-to-date services.

Job For the Day is continuing to put tribal members to work in all of the 10 ¼ counties. This program is meeting the needs of tribal members in District 6 who are looking for work. Working with Career Development and WIOA, we are able to place those members in correct positions for success.

Choctaws are known for having big hearts and helping others, and Dist. 6 is an example of that. We partner with the Back to School Bash, Halloween Bash at Roseburg Park, See You At the Pole, and anything going on in our communities, to make life better and help others. I’m so proud that our Choctaw Community Partner Fund awards gave back to the City of Wilburton and Latimer County and will be used to help with community projects.

It is my privilege to serve as the District 6 Tribal Councilwoman, and my door is always open, or you can call and leave me a message. It takes a great team to work together, and I’m very thankful for your District 6 community center team members. We are here to serve.

I’m looking forward to seeing you all at the Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 13 and the Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11 at 10:00 a.m. in Tuskahoma. Come help us honor our veterans. We will have a sign-up sheet if you need transportation. Yakoke and God bless. Chi pisa la chike.

## Resolutions passed at Inter-Tribal

By Kellie Matherly

The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes met for the general session on October 11 in the Grand Theater at Choctaw Resort and Casino. All five chiefs were present for the event, with Chief Greg Chilcoat of the Seminole Nation leading the meeting. The proceedings also drew a large crowd of tribal leaders, including assistant chiefs and council members as well as tribal staff from all five nations.

After introductions and updates by each of the chiefs, the council began voting on the following resolutions:

- A Resolution Supporting Efforts to Ensure Full Participation of Tribal Citizens in the 2020 Census (R#19-20) encourages efforts to market and share 2020 census information through partnerships with local stakeholders; furthermore, it encourages the establishment of Complete Count Committees to ensure tribal citizens are counted accurately and to raise awareness about programs and services made possible by the census.
  - A Resolution Supporting the Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony (STOP) Act of 2019 (R#19-21) supports legislation that strengthens the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) by implementing procedures at the federal level that will facilitate the return of Native American cultural items to tribal governments and citizens. The bill also helps fulfill the US government’s trust responsibility to Indian tribes.
  - A Resolution Supporting Expansion of the State of Oklahoma’s Medicaid Program to Certain Low-Income Adults, as Permitted Under Medicaid Laws (R#19-22) supports expansion of Oklahoma’s Medicaid program to improve historically insufficient federal appropriations for American Indian/Alaska Native healthcare.
  - A Resolution Supporting Tribal Promise Zones (R#19-23) supports the designation of additional Promise Zones in Indian Country in order to ensure investment in underserved areas. This resolution also encourages the Department of Agriculture to begin the consultation and application process to name additional Promise Zones.
  - A Resolution in Support of the Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium (R#19-24) supports the OTFC’s mission to advance tribal economics, strengthen tribal finance, and ensure financial and economic synergy through intertribal relations. The Inter-Tribal Council also agrees to participate in OTFC activities that are beneficial to the Five Civilized Tribes.
  - A Resolution Urging Congress to Reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) (R#19-25) asks Congress to reauthorize NAHASDA and to uphold its commitment to government-to-government negotiations as changes to NAHASDA are considered.
  - A Resolution Urging Congress to Pass a Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (R#19-26) recognizes that American Indian women experience violence at alarming rates and are less likely to receive the resources they need. This resolution asks Congress to expedite the reauthorization of VAWA to ensure protection for Native women who are experiencing or are at risk of violence.
  - A Resolution Supporting the Cherokee Nation’s Assertion of Its Treaty Right to a Delegate in the United States House of Representatives (R#19-27) recognizes and supports the Cherokee Nation’s right to seat Delegate Kimberly Teehee in Congress as explicitly stated in the 1835 Treaty of New Echota and other treaties with the US government.
- All resolutions passed unanimously, and the general session was adjourned. The Cherokee Nation will host next quarter’s Inter-Tribal Council meeting January 8-10.



From Left: Chief Greg Chilcoat, Seminole; Chief James Floyd, Muskogee Creek; Governor Bill Anoatubby, Chickasaw; Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr., Cherokee; and Chief Gary Batton, Choctaw



EVENTS

**Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund**

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

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

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


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


Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund To Be Eligible to Apply:

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

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

**Wilburton Community Center**  
November 15, 2019  
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.





**Chili Cook-Off**  
Saturday, November 30, 2019  
4:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
\$10 Entry Fee  
1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes  
Silent Auction and Bake Sale  
Sponsored by Grace Indian Baptist Church  
Open to the public!

**Jack Stockton Community Center**  
Calera, Oklahoma

For information: [graceindianbaptist@gmail.com](mailto:graceindianbaptist@gmail.com)

**Veterans Association Members Needed**

Choctaw Veterans Association is searching for new members. Most of our members are Vietnam Vets. We need young Choctaw military men and women, active or retired. Members of different tribes are welcome as well. Veterans Association paper work is needed.

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

**For information call:**  
**Ed Hendricks, Recruiter 918-962-5524**  
**Paul Perry, Commander 479-353-2709**

**NEED TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS?**

Contact the Choctaw Nation  
Circulation Department  
**580.924.8280 x4028**

Read the Biskinik online at  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/NEWS](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/NEWS)



**Biskinik**  
**Announcement Guidelines**

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above. Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.

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

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

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

**Mail to: Biskinik**  
**P.O. Box 1210**  
**Durant, OK 74702**  
**or email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)**

*Gary Batton*  
Chief

*Jack Austin Jr.*  
Assistant Chief

The Official  
Monthly Publication  
of the  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Dara McCoy, Executive Director**  
**Mary Ann Strombitski, Senior Director**  
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email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

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

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

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

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



**District 6 Nov. Activities**

\*Every Monday and Wednesday  
"SAIL" Balance Training Class 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.  
\*Chair Volleyball Practice – 9:30 a.m.  
\*Every Wednesday – Lunch served,  
with guest speaker – salad bar opens at 11:00 a.m.  
\*Choctaw Language Class Monday Evenings 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
\*GED Classes Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m. - Noon

**Nov. 1**  
Councilwoman Jennifer Woods Prayer Meeting  
7:00-8:00 a.m. - (Breakfast to follow)  
**\*\*NO INDIAN TACO SALE\*\***  
CHR Fall Fest – McAlester Expo – 9:15 doors open. (Bus leaves at 8:15)

**Nov. 5-9**  
Senior New Orleans Trip

**Nov. 5**  
Business Planning Meeting with Kreg Haney – 9:00 a.m.

**Nov. 11**  
Veterans Day Assembly -Tvshka Homa  
Tribal Holiday Center is Closed

**Nov. 13**  
Thanksgiving Dinner - Noon

**Nov. 14**  
Durant Casino Day Trip – Bus leaves at 8:30 a.m.  
Emergency Management Meeting – 11:00 a.m.

**Nov. 22**  
Long Shopping Day – Destination to be announced

**Nov. 26**  
Family Night Potluck and Bingo – 6:00-8:00 p.m.

**Nov. 28 – 29**  
Thanksgiving Holidays – Center is Closed  
**\*More Activities, Chair Volleyball Games, Day Trips and Events to be announced \***  
**\*\*Dates are subject to change\*\***

**Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna**  
*November Language Lesson*

**Usage of Common Verbs**

**nukshopa – to be afraid; to fear**  
**Pronunciation – nohk-shoh-pah**

- Chi nukshopa ho?  
Are you afraid?
- Ofi ma ish i nukshopa ho?  
Are you afraid of that dog?
- A, ofi ma i sv nukshopa.  
Yes, I am afraid of that dog.
- Kvta ish i nukshopa?  
Who are you afraid of?

**nukshopli / nukshobli – to frighten; to scare; to intimidate**  
**Pronunciation – nohk-shohp-lih / nohk-shohb-lih**

- Kvta hosh chi nukshopli/nukshobli tuk?  
Who scared you?
- A nakfi yvt sv nukshopli/nukshobli kvt im achukma.  
My brother likes to scare me.
- Malvttakvchikma, sv nukshopli/nukshobli bieka.  
A thunderbolt usually scares me.

**ilenukshopli / ilenukshobli – to scare or frighten oneself**  
**\*ile – prefix meaning 'oneself'**  
**Pronunciation – il-e-nohk-shohp-lih / il-e-nohk-shob-lih**

- Sinti habli im ahwa cha ilenukshobli tuk.  
He thought he stepped on a snake and scared himself.
- Apisa ilepisah mvt, ilenukshopli tuk.  
He scared himself when he saw himself in the mirror.

**nukshompiksho – to be fearless; unafraid**  
**Pronunciation – nohk-shohmp-iksho**

- Nukshompiksho hosh wakaya cha anumpuli tuk.  
With no fear, he stood up and talked.
- Hattak mvt nukshompiksho hosh aboha okhlilika pit chukowa tuk.  
That man fearlessly entered the dark room.

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

LETTERS

Birthday thanks

Thank you for sending a birthday card to Brinn. Brinn and I were talking about the Chief of the Choctaw Nation and I told him the Chief is Chief Gary Batton. Brinn said I got a card from the Chief. A card is a small thing but it meant a lot to 7-year-old little boy. So Thank You for the card.

Sandra Twaddle

From Ireland with love

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Jeff Peter from Ireland. In history class we were learning about the Great famine. We learned about the causes of the famine, the result and the aid from other nations. We also studied the aid your ancestors gave us by giving our country what we needed to survive, even if it meant giving up all the money you had. Though I am not from Ireland (as were none of my descendants) I (and my fellow countrymen) would like to thank your people for your aid through this challenging misfortune. It really means a lot to me because I am here(probably) because of the decisions you made to aid our nation. May good fortune follow you and your people as the years go by, thank you!

Kind regards,  
Jeff Peter

**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

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

**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

Dec. 9	Durant	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Dec. 10	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Dec. 10	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Dec. 11	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Dec. 11	Coalgate	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Dec. 13	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dec. 13	Atoka	11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Dec. 17	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Dec. 17	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dec. 18	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dec. 18	Stigler	by appointment
Dec. 20	Crowder	by appointment
Dec. 31	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.


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

**Send us your stories!**


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

Please send your submissions to us at  
[biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

*Enjoy stopping for red lights*



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# Kicinski graduates from Texas Tech

Eric Duke Kicinski graduated from Texas Tech University in May. He grew up in Rhome, Texas and is the son of Aaron and Dannielle Kicinski, and the grandson of Juanita and John Kicinski. He attended Northwest High School where he began his track and field career. He began his college career at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas before transferring to Texas Tech. Kicinski is an accomplished athlete who won the 2019 NCAA National Championship in the Discus throw. He is a member of the first and only team to win a men's team title in Texas Tech's school history and he is the first athlete to win both an NCAA Division II and Division I individual title since 1987. He said he is very thankful for the Choctaw Nation's assistance throughout his college career.



# Henry promoted to Cadet Commander

Skylar Henry, the fifteen-year-old son of Raifel and Lorrie Henry and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Gene Henry, was honored recently with the position of Cadet Commander for the Civil Air Patrol squadron SWR-TX-450. In addition, this past summer Skylar was accepted to and graduated from the United States Naval Academy's Summer STEM program in Annapolis, Maryland and NESA at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. He is a sophomore at Ancient Oaks Homeschool Academy in Valliant.



# Sells earns silver at fair

Cody Sells, age 17 is a Jr. at Thrall High School. He placed 2nd in Class 7 at the livestock show at the State Fair of Texas this year with his goat named Gatsby.

# First Drone Camp builds confidence, futures

By Chris Jennings

The Choctaw Nation's Advanced Technology Initiatives and Youth Events and Activities Programs teamed up to offer a drone camp to tribal members and employees' kids in October at Tvshka Homma. The two-day camp had 29 kids from across the Nation learning how to program and fly drones.

The autonomous drones used during the camp did not have the typical remote-control customarily seen with drone flying. Instead these drones followed a set flight path specific to each course programmed into the drone by the kids

Robert Huck, Director of Advanced Technology Initiatives for the Choctaw Nation said, "You're programming it to do basic commands like takeoff, climb move forward, move back move left move, right, turn at a different angle, and then land."

Campers used the Python computer language to program these commands into the drones. Colt James, who was the only camper to initially begin his flight path programming by drawing out a map of directions and commands on paper, said, "I thought was going to be really hard, but it's been really easy and fun."

It's that fun part that leads to the ultimate goal of this drone camp, which is not necessarily to fly a drone, but to learn computer programing. That serves as a gateway to computer sciences. Making it fun at the same time increases the chances that the lessons will stick with the campers.

Huck says, "You can't imagine the excitement that these kids see when they see that their drone is actually flying, and they get excited about science and technology and engineering and mathematics." Huck continued, "You've got to really get them interested...at the earliest age possible so that they can progress through those courses at the right time to be successful in college."

Getting kids interested in these fields is important not just for the Nation but for Oklahoma as well. Having a well-trained job force is key to the success of both, and camps like Drone Camp and code are ensuring the Nation is doing its part to make Oklahoma better.



Logan Taylor watches his drone fly after programming it.



Colt James works on programming the flight instructions for his drone.



Carol Goodgame helps Montana Markham with the programming of his drone.

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A photograph of several men in military uniforms marching in a parade. They are wearing white shirts, dark pants, and red berets. They are carrying flags.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONY 2019  
NOVEMBER 11 • 10AM • TVSHKA HOMMA

The logo of the Choctaw Nation, featuring a circular design with a star and the words 'CHOCTAW NATION' and '1867'.

A photograph of a Thanksgiving dinner spread, including turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and vegetables.

2019 Community  
Thanksgiving Dinners

<b>November 5</b> Durant 6:00 p.m. Choctaw Event Center	<b>November 13</b> Hugo 11:00 p.m. Hugo Community Center	<b>November 17</b> Crowder 1:00 p.m. Crowder Community Center
<b>November 6</b> Atoka 12:00 p.m. Atoka Community Center	<b>November 14</b> Broken Bow 6:00 p.m. Broken Bow Community Center	<b>November 20</b> Smithville 12:00 p.m. Smithville Community Center
<b>November 7</b> Battiest 6:00 p.m. Battiest Community Center	<b>November 14</b> Poteau 6:00 p.m. Poteau Community Center	<b>November 21</b> Talihina 6:00 p.m. Talihina Community Center
<b>November 10</b> Coalgate 1:00 p.m. Coalgate Community Center	<b>November 14</b> Wright City 12:00 p.m. Wright City Community Center	<b>November 23</b> McAlester 1:00 p.m. McAlester Community Center



# Outstanding Elders honored



Sue Crowley

Sue Crowley is a proud Choctaw tribal member who is very active in the District 10 Wednesday luncheons and taco sales. Atoka had eleven recorded events this year and she worked 10 without complaints. Sue makes fry bread for every taco sale and is a constant baker for monthly cake sales; her cakes are auctioned and sometimes purchased for \$30.00-\$40.00, all proceeds going to the Senior fund. Sue’s calming disposition and tenacity to volunteer at the center is outstanding.

Joe Williams Jr.

Joe Williams Jr. is a Choctaw tribal member who worked for the county of Red Oak for 25 years upon retirement last year. He became one of the most active volunteers in the Wilburton center, working taco sales, bingo and helping with all Senior events. Joe is proud of his Choctaw heritage and is willing to help with anything. He enjoys singing Choctaw hymns, playing chair volleyball, and he was nominated the Valentine king in February. Joe always welcomes new members when they come to the Wednesday luncheon; he is liked by all of his peers and is a hard worker. Joe shows the true Chahta Spirit; he loves the Choctaw Nation and is proud of our Chief.



# Ferrall rolls into 90th

Newana (Crowder) Ferrall celebrated her 90th birthday on September 17, 2019. Her family and friends would like to wish her a happy birthday!



# Longs celebrate 25 years together

Gabriel and Tammy Long of Choctaw, Oklahoma celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary June 17. They were married in 1994, in Ardmore Oklahoma.

Truel turns 75

Michael Truel turned 75 on July 4, 2019. He is a retired army veteran and graduate of Oklahoma University. He began his college career at Southeastern State College in Durant. His mother was Edith Semple of Caddo, great granddaughter of Peter P. Pitchlynn.



Pena turns one

Brody Pena turned one year old September 19, 2018. He is 28 inches tall, and 22 pounds. His family said he is always full of joy and energy and has a smile with only 3 teeth that can brighten everyone’s day.

# Shoemake celebrates 80th



Family and friends gathered at Hugo Lake to celebrate JoAnn Shoemake’s 80th birthday on May 25, 2019. JoAnn is an active Choctaw senior, along with her husband Marvin. They enjoy working the concession stand at the baseball games and traveling with the senior Choctaws all over the United States. JoAnn is a 1957 graduate of Soper High School and loves living on the land that her grandfather Green Walker and grandmother Irrie Ketchum Walker were allotted in the 1900s. JoAnn enjoys visits from her children and grandchildren, loves gardening, is an avid reader and a cat lover.



# 2020 LABOR DAY TRIBAL MEMBER RESERVATION

ONE REQUEST PER ADDRESS | ELECTRIC AND WATER HOOKUP RESERVATION FORM  
RESERVATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED PRIOR TO JANUARY 2, 2020

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
RV/Trailer description: (All information must be complete for reservation consideration)  
Trailer type: ☐ Bumper Pull Trailer ☐ 5th Wheel ☐ RV Length of RV/Trailer \_\_\_\_\_  
Amperage required: ☐ 30 amp ☐ 50 amp # of Slide-outs \_\_\_\_\_

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma | Labor Day RV Reservations | P O Box 1210 | Durant, OK 74702

No phone reservations will be accepted | Please include a copy of your CDIB card only  
Sites will be assigned by lottery | DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY AT THIS TIME | All applicants will be notified by mail

CHOCTAWNATION.COM  
#CHAHTALABORDAY

# Help Choctaws get counted during the 2020 census

The U.S. Census, which is conducted every ten years, will take place in 2020. Field workers hired by the Census Bureau will be coming to neighborhoods between now and next spring to verify residential addresses. If they come to your home, please make sure they have your address correct.

The Census questionnaire, due to be mailed on Apr. 1, 2020, will include a question about the respondent’s ethnic heritage. Federal agencies use the official Census results to determine the amount of money made available to the tribe through grants. The first step to correctly filling out the Census will be to ensure every potential recipient receives it.

Only 24,000 Choctaw Nation tribal members indicated their tribal affiliation in the 2010 U.S. Census. The tribal membership is over 200,000.

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Obituaries

Malcolm Delos Wade

Malcolm Delos Wade Jr., 98, passed away August 22, 2019. Malcolm was born March 3, 1921, in Talihina, Oklahoma, to Malcolm D. Wade Sr. and Lucy (Cenotto) Wade.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Mary Louise Honea; second wife Delores; son Robert M. Wade; and sister Margaret Wade.

Malcolm is survived by wife Cynthia Wade; children Charles Dean Wade and Linda Carol Wade; grandchildren Charles D. Wade II, Josh Wade; and great-grandchildren Warren D. Wade, Harrison Malcolm Wade and Vivian Lee Wade; Siblings James Wade and Betty J. (Wade) Estep; as well as numerous other relatives and friends.

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



Dixon Watson

Dixon Watson, 69, passed away September 9, 2019.

Dixon was born December 16, 1949, in Battiest, Oklahoma, to Daisy Mae Watson.

He was preceded in death his mother; brother Danny Watson; sister Ramona Franco; and son Heath Watson.

Dixon is survived by his significant other Julie Billy; children Richard Billy and Renita Billy; sisters Linda Baker and spouse Aaron, Wynell Swartz, and Judy Yoesting; grandchildren Rodrick Watson, Taryn Watson, Darien Jefferson, Sadie Billy, Kobe Billy, and Renika Billy; several nieces and nephews; many great nieces and great nephews along with other great-great nieces and great-great nephews; many friends, including special friend Gary Noah; and a host of other relatives and other friends.

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



Dorothy Virginia Masters

Dorothy Virginia (Mabry) Masters, 89, passed away Aug. 27, 2019.

Dorothy was born Aug. 14, 1930, near Davis, Oklahoma, to John Thomas & Rhoda (Russell) Mabry.

She was preceded in death by her parents; spouse Loy C. Masters; son John Masters; daughter-in-law Susan Masters; son-in-law Jeff Yeargin; as well as eight siblings, Thomas Mabry, Eugene Mabry, Carl Mabry, Buddy Mabry, Juanita Burris, Marie Anderson, Thelma Smith and Winnie Robbins. Dorothy is survived by son Mark Masters; as well as numerous extended family members.

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



Sherri Annette Santillano

Sherri Annette Santillano, 61, passed away June 13, 2019.

Sherri was born July 6, 1957, in Talihina, Oklahoma, to Kelsey Noah and Vivian Maytubbi Noah.

She was preceded in death by her parents; spouse Eusebio Santillano Sr.; sister Patricia Rodriguez; and brothers Sonny Noah and Troy Noah.

Sherri is survived by son Eusebio Santillano Jr.; daughters Cassandra Santillano-Davis and spouse Scott, and Marie Santillano-Smith and spouse Phillip; brother Randall Watson and spouse Rita; sisters Hannah Bryan, Jonita Noah and Vicky Noah; grandchildren Deja Davis, Trenton Davis, Phimaria Smith, Santilla Smith, Topanga Smith and Champion Smith; many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

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



Karry Johnson

Karry Johnson, 51, passed away August 1, 2019.

Karry was born November 21, 1967, in McAlester, Oklahoma, to Eulus and Evelyn (Taylor) Johnson.

He was preceded in death by his father; brothers Eulus Johnson III and Charles Jones.

Karry is survived by daughter Kwashae Ruffin and spouse Ernest; son Reginald Cedrae Thompson; grandchildren Sonali Ruffin, Terrani R. Thompson and Aurelia Ruffin; mother Evelyn Johnson; brothers Paul Carter, Chris Carter, Troy Johnson and Derward Johnson; sisters Jeannie Cumming-O'Belia Shaw, Jackie Johnson, Maxine Johnson, Deloures Smith, Marilyn Berry, Sharon Flemming, Debbie Mardini, Pat Lorne and Annetta Johnson.

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



L.C. Gardner

L.C. Gardner, 97, passed away Sept. 9, 2019.

L.C. was born Dec. 30, 1921, in Bennington, Oklahoma, to William and Zora (McDonald) Gardner.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Lila Gardner; and eight siblings.

L.C. is survived by his granddaughter Janice Bates and significant other Tracy Byrum; granddaughter Susan Bates and significant other Jerry Russell; son James Bates and spouse Shirley; granddaughter Rhonda Bates; step-son David Middaugh; daughters Linda and Diane Simpson; granddaughter Lisa; grandson Clint; great-granddaughter Brandy Green; great-great-grandchildren Harleigh Tucker and Tripton Callicoat.

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



Sally Joan Harris Fredrickson

Sally Joann Harris Frederickson, 83, passed away Aug. 25, 2019.

Sally was born Sept. 20, 1935, in Baker, Oregon.

Sally was preceded in death by husband the Rev. Bill Frederickson.

Sally is survived by children Charles Frederickson and spouse Lisa, Willard Frederickson and spouse Judy, Nikki Keating and spouse Kevin, and Toni Shroyer and spouse Jim; 10 grandchildren Matt, Leo, Erica, Jacqueline, Conor, Summer, Sean, Luke, Nicole and William; and siblings Sue Hval and spouse Merrill, Mary Kay Jackson and spouse Ray, and Reed Harris and spouse Aileen.

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



Ola Winona Humes

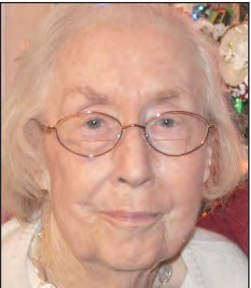
Ola Winona Humes (nee Wightman), 92, passed away April 16, 2019.

Winona was born June 19, 1926, in Wichita Falls, Texas, to Columbus Brooks and Pinky Winona Cotten Wightman.

She was preceded in death by brother Pinkney Sherwood Wightman.

Winona is survived by son Alex and spouse Mary Ramirez; daughter Jane; granddaughters Alexandra, Beatrix and Christina Smith; and nephew George Douds and his family.

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



Verlin D. Bornmann

Verlin D. Bornmann, 82, passed away Sept. 11, 2019.

Verlin was born Feb. 7, 1937, in Soper, Oklahoma, to Perry R. and Lora Ada (Edge) Bornmann.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Shirley; brother Billy Ray Bornmann; and a sister Virginia Fern Ary.

Verlin is survived by brother Ueal Bornmann and spouse Sue; sister Ramona Joy Pugh; and sister Betty Jo Robinson.

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



Franklin Delano Noah

Franklin Delano Noah, 79, passed away Sept. 12, 2019.

Franklin was born April 2, 1940. In Broken Bow, Oklahoma, to Ellisman and Rena Mae (Thomas) Noah.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Hampton, Marvin, Johnson, and Paul Noah; and sisters, Ruth Alice Lewis, Rebecca Hattie Nahwooksy, Ramona Noah, and Sharon Noah.

Franklin is survived by his wife, Sharon Noah; and sons, William Masquas Jr., Shawn Noah and spouse Kimberly, Kyle Noah and Brian Noah; daughters Leslie Noah-Grover and spouse Brett, Kelly Franklin and Dusty Hayes, Martha Taylor and spouse Hobie Sr., and Stephanie DeSandre; multiple grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; multiple nieces and nephews; and many special friends from all over the world.

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



Curtis D. Samuels

Curtis D. Samuels, 48, passed away July 1, 2019.

Curtis was born December 7, 1970, in Talihina, Oklahoma, to Nelson Samuels and Edith Mae (Ludlow) Samuels.

He was preceded in death by his mother; grandparents; and best friend Kevin Romine.

Curtis is survived by his father; sisters Peggy Ludlow and spouse Bobby Samuel, Katie Noahubi and spouse Nolan, Cindy Samuels, and Jamie Samuels and fiancé Brandon Tollison; as well as many other nieces, nephews, friends and other extended family.

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



Arnold Charles Lee Taylor

Arnold Charles Lee Taylor, 73, passed away June 20, 2019.

A.T. was born March 27, 1946, in McAlester, Oklahoma, to Johnson and Ethel (Perry) Taylor.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and a brother Jessie Taylor.

A.T. is survived by children Charlie Taylor, Donya Battiest and spouse Randy, Brandon Taylor, and Starla Austin and spouse Ed; special niece and nephew Kami Taylor and Chase McKinney; sister Peggy Larney; and nephew Brian Larney.

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



Barbara Jean Conrad

Barbara Jean (Nolen) Conrad, 93, passed away Sept. 1, 2019.

Barbara was born May 21, 1926, in Pocola, Oklahoma, to Walter Lee and Lillie Mae (Gregory) Nolen.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband JV "Joe" Conrad; son Bobby Lee Conrad; father; step-father Jim Ridenour; sisters Juanita Tormey, Charlene Ramsey, Dorothy Rodgers, Margie Cox; and brother Jack Nolen.

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



Yvonna Mae Beaver

Yvonna Mae Beaver, 82, passed away April 20, 2017.

Yvonna was born March 8, 1935, in Waurika, Oklahoma, to Norby Dale and Mary Jane Plant.

She was preceded in death by her husband AJ Beaver; and by brothers and sisters Dale Plant, Sarah Anthony, Henry Plant and Margie Burnam.

Yvonna is survived by sisters Ethel Anthony, Stella Heemer, and Wanda King; and her children and grandchildren Cathy Patterson and spouse Greg and their children, Collin and Connor; Randy Beaver and spouse Sue and their children, Brooke, Steve, Blake, Connie, Danielle, Jamie and Brandon; and Michael Beaver and spouse Tish and their children, Chris, Aaron, Wil, Grayson and Weston; and five great-grandchildren Kynleigh, Austin and Alyvia Duran, Claire and Evan Beaver and Piper Schultz.

For the full obituary, please visit [Lunn's Colonial Funeral Home.](#)



Florence Ann Cameron

Florence Ann Cameron, 51, passed away August 24, 2019.

Florence was born October 29, 1967, in Idabel, Oklahoma, to John and Christie Bell (Lewis) Maytubbi.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Quincy and John Maytubbi; sisters Eunice Almaraz and Isabelle Ludlow; son-in-law Anthony M. Yanez; and several cousins and nieces and nephews.

Florence is survived by husband Randy Cameron; children Tabitha Mendoza and spouse Joshua, Samson Cobb and spouse Shelby, Tiffany Rutherford and spouse Charles, Garold Cobb, Kelly Cobb, Katrece Cobb, and Shaylia Cobb and Darrius Baker; sister Gwendolyn Maytubbi; brother Floyd Maytubbi and spouse Lorretta; grandchildren, Micaiah, Tristian, Nikolia, Urijah, Khiza, Dayton, Dazon, Ayden, Cole, Levi, Serenity, Tessa and Ashtyn; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

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



Peggy Annette Wyatt

Peggy Annette Wyatt, 68, passed away Aug. 21, 2019.

Peggy was born Feb. 17, 1951, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Imo Gean Webb Fisher and Donald Eugene Miller.

She was preceded in death by her father; stepfather Kenneth Gene Fisher; and brothers Donald, Rick, and Glenn Miller, and Robert Fisher.

Peggy is survived by daughters Bridget James and Melissa Shukis; mother Imo Gean Webb Fisher; sisters Tamra Clark and Kim Gordon; and grandchildren Michael, Matthew and Makayla Shukis.

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



Lonnie Earl Cox

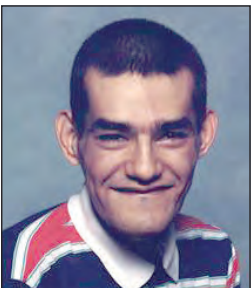
Lonnie Earl Cox (Pedab), 53, passed away Sept. 5, 2019.

Lonnie was born January 10, 1966, in Talihina, Oklahoma, to Lonnie Eugene Cox and Faye (Jones) Cox.

He was preceded in death by his father; paternal grandparents Vernie Cox and Ann Fox; and maternal grandparents Selton Jones and Rosie Louis.

Lonnie is survived by his mother Faye Cox; sister Melinda Webb and spouse Steve; brother Silas Louis, Jr.; nieces Ashley Adams and spouse Kelby, and Brittany Leach and spouse Thomas; nephew Colby Webb; great niece Emilia Leach; and great nephew: Joshua Leach.

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



Mary Nell Crain

Mary Nell Crain, 87, passed away July 21, 2019.

Mary Nell was born December 8, 1931, in Zafra, Oklahoma, to Edgar Ellis James and Nellie Perkins James.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Donald Neil Crain; and brother Ellis James.

Mary Nell is survived by children Rickey Dale Crain and spouse Kimberly Ann, Randy Lee Crain and spouse Christi Ann, and Gayla Sue Dixon and spouse Rodney Keyth; grandchildren Joshua Dixon, Samantha Crain, Brandon and Charis Dixon, Lindy Crain, Rickey Crain, and Mikala and Robby Tabuchi; great-grandchildren Paisyn Crain and Emma Dixon; siblings Charlie and Gloria James, and Juanita Lewark.

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



Carl Albert Oldham

Carl Albert Oldham, 71, passed away Sept. 3, 2019.

Carl was born July 13, 1948, in Antlers, Oklahoma, to Lester Marrs Oldham & Opal Truby (Labor) Oldham.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Debbie Oldham; and Brother Billy Harold Oldham.

Carl is survived by children Justin Mark Oldham and spouse Monica, Lesley Matt Oldham and spouse Sharon, Renee Michelle Rios and spouse Oscar, Holly Nacole Oldham, Kailey Marie Oldham, Hailey Elaine Oldham, Darla Henry, and Doug Lewis; grandchildren Caleb Blaine Alvarez, Kiana Renee Rios, Mattison Henry, Matthew Henry, Morgan Lewis and Kyler Landrey Oldham; sister Dolly Dale Oldham Orr; brother Troy Lee Oldham; and numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and many, many friends.

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





ITI FABVSSA

History of Choctaws in Louisiana: Successful in hunting, agriculture and trade

While it is known that the Choctaw homelands lie in Mississippi, did you know that Choctaws also have a history in Louisiana? The Choctaw people are connected to the Poverty Point culture. The Poverty Point World Heritage Site can be visited in Louisiana, along with the Tensas and other tribes who were adopted by the Choctaws. These small tribes were adopted due to population loss from warfare and disease brought by Europeans in their quest to colonize the tribes. Beginning in the mid-1700’s, Choctaws began moving into Louisiana from Mississippi.

There were various reasons for this movement into Louisiana. There was the issue of trade. There was a lot of tension among the Choctaws in Mississippi due to the split in who wanted to trade with the English and who wanted to trade with the French. This caused tension between the western Choctaws, who had allied with the French, and the eastern Choctaws who were allied with the English. To escape some of the tension, some Choctaws began moving into Louisiana, especially New Orleans, to buy, sell, and trade.

There were also issues of settlers encroaching on Native lands. The Choctaws settled in many locations across Louisiana and established several village locations, seasonal occupational areas, and cultural and religious sites. The Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department works to protect these sites even today. One area that Choctaws were attracted to was the piney woods, which was an area that held a similar environment to what was in Mississippi.

Choctaws prospered and grew in Louisiana until we



Photo provided

Choctaw Village near the Chefuncte by François Bernard, 1869

became the most known native group in the region. We lived in small family groups, hunted for game and traded the game for European goods. We also survived by agricultural ventures. According to historians Kniffen, Gregory, and Stokes, many would plant “corn, pumpkins and potatoes, and raise chickens” (1994, pg. 95). Women dominated their own area of trade. The trading opportunities consisted of trading cane baskets and medicinal plants to plantations and markets; New Orleans was one large trading hub. Choctaws were successful in establishing a new life

in Louisiana. By 1700, tribes had developed a standard of living that was comparable with that of European newcomers. Among Choctaw people, opportunities for personal advancement were even greater due to our democratic society.

Choctaws remain in Louisiana to this day with the largest populations descended from eighteenth century Choctaw settlements in Rapides Parish and on the Ouachita River. These groups now compose the Jena Band of Choctaw.

The Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, who make up one the three federally recognized Choctaw Tribes, are in Jena, La Salle Parish, LA. They are the smallest of the Choctaw Tribes. Out of the Choctaw communities in Louisiana, the Jena Band is the community that has retained Choctaw language and crafts. They also practiced the old religion until the 1940’s.

Choctaw history in Louisiana may not be as well-known as that of Mississippi and Oklahoma, but it is of great importance. It teaches us that while we had the unfortunate event of removing from our homelands, we still thrived in whatever environment was thrown our way.

For more information about Louisiana Choctaws and for the source of the references in this article, refer to the book “The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana: From 1542 to the Present from 1994” written by Fred B. Kniffen, George A. Stokes, and Hiram F. Gregory. To learn more about Choctaw history in Louisiana, contact Lindsey Bilyeu of the Historic Preservation department at lbilyeu@choctawnation.com or at 1-800-522-6170 ext. 2631.

Batton receives Lifetime Achievement Award



Photo by Christian Toews

From left: Akash Patel, founder, Happy World Foundation; Lisa Ritter, president, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; Chief Gary Batton

By Christian Toews

Choctaw Chief Gary Batton was honored on Sept. 7 when he received the Lifetime Achievement Award in Global Citizenship from the Happy World Foundation. Chief Batton’s work in preserving and strengthening Choctaw language and culture is globally significant and illuminates the way for other peoples and nations, according to both the foundation and the United Nations.

Chief Batton was nominated for the award by staff of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian for fostering a greater sense of community between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Republic of Ireland. The Choctaws, while reestablishing themselves following the Trail of Tears, donated money to assist the Irish during the potato famine of the 1840s.

During Chief Batton’s administration, the Choctaw Nation and Ireland have rekindled historic links and forged close ties. Ireland’s prime minister, or Taoiseach, visited Choctaw Nation headquarters in 2018, and its Consul General followed suit this year.

In accepting the Lifetime Achievement

Award, Chief Batton noted the value of embracing multiculturalism and continuing the traditions, languages, and faiths which make each tribe and group of people unique.

“Never lose what makes you distinctive,” Chief Batton said in accepting the award. “Don’t forget your roots, and make sure your children learn their heritage and pass it down to future generations. And contribute your strengths to the communities where you live. Society will be stronger and richer for it.”

Ramu Damodaran, the United Nations’ Deputy Director for Partnership and Public Engagement, congratulated Chief Batton on receiving the award. Damodaran noted Chief Batton’s efforts to strengthen and revitalize the status of the Choctaw language as a living tongue. The U.N. believes native languages should be preserved because they help achieve the “dignity and worth of the human person,” Damodaran said.

The Choctaw Nation operates an extensive language instruction program incorporating a mix of in-class instruction and online learning and is available to students around the world. Chief Batton’s leadership and efforts have been key, Damodaran said. “Such values are at the heart of global citizenship.”

Chief Batton was also named as one of several recipients of the 2019 Global Citizenship Award. He was selected, according to Happy World Foundation, “for his record of protecting, revitalizing and passing down the Choctaw culture, providing opportunities for employment, improved health care, financial stability and overall well-being of all Choctaw citizens.”

Other recipients include David Bong, founding sponsor of the Global Seal of Biliiteracy; Steven O’Day, president of Austin College; Joe Pellow and Sherry Long of the Council on International Educational Exchange; and Ivonne Durrant, chief academic officer of the Dallas Independent School District.



Shannon Keller O’Loughlin, Chahta inspiration

By Chris Jennings

Shannon Keller O’Loughlin describes herself as a citizen of the Choctaw Nation, first and foremost. Beyond that, she is a mom, an attorney, and a protector of Native American interests across the country.

Serving as the Executive Director of the Association on American Indian Affairs, the oldest non-profit organization serving Indian Country, she takes the responsibility of protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity seriously.

Between growing up hearing stories from her grandmother about her family’s hardships during the dustbowl and knowing the Choctaw history of struggle and survival during the Trail of Tears, it is no surprise that she was drawn to serve in such a way.

O’Loughlin has served Indian Country in various capacities for almost 20 years, a role that may have been foretold when she was a young college student.

When O’Loughlin was in college a Choctaw elder was explaining the symbology of the ribbon work on her skirt and how it represented a rattlesnake. The elder then went on to tell a story of how a rattlesnake brought medicine to a little girl to help make her people healthy. The elder then said that it was O’Loughlin’s job, to make [Choctaws] healthy.

O’Loughlin said, “What struck me about that interaction is this Choctaw elder telling me that I had a job to do and it was to make sure that that we were all doing well and that we’re all healthy.”

“I do not take my position for granted. There is so much work to do and I’m so grateful to be in the position I am in to hopefully do good work. It’s not about me, it really is about building community and building strength.”

Standing up for Indian Country and making sure their interests are protected is not a job a single person can do. It takes a team of people working together and that is how O’Loughlin approaches the job. She goes on to say, “What I’m here to do is help bring people together and move us forward, together.”

O’Loughlin has taken the interaction she had with the elder and gone a step beyond, working not just for the well-being of the Choctaw people, but also for the well-being of Native Americans as a whole. She has taken the lessons she learned from her grandmother about her Choctaw heritage and their struggles and applied them on a national level to help Indian Country grow and heal.

20 LEAP homes made available in Krebs



Photo by Diedra Elrod

The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation held a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 13 in Krebs, Oklahoma. This ribbon cutting celebrated the addition of 20 new lease-purchase, or LEAP homes. With the addition of these 20 homes, it brings the total number of LEAP homes in Krebs to 30. The Choctaw Nation has made a total of 220 LEAP homes available since June 2018.

Chief Gary Batton commented on these most recent LEAP homes and what they mean to the community. He noted that “these homes not only represent hope and change for you, the parents and homeowners – but for your children.”

He shared that efforts to accomplish this goal are underway across the Choctaw Nation. “It’s been an initiative of the tribal council to build 500 homeownership homes, 500 rentals and independent elder homes for our tribal members,” said Batton.

District 11 Councilman Robert Karr also commented on the newly constructed homes saying, “It’s just something special to be able to provide all these quality homes for these good people.” He noted that the recipients are working families, some of whom are just starting their careers.

The Choctaw Nation LEAP Program is helping families become homeowners by assisting with credit issues and homebuyer education courses.

The LEAP Program’s mission statement is “to build strong families and vibrant neighborhoods through quality affordable housing and strengthened financial stability for those we serve.” For additional information about LEAP, contact Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation in Hugo, 800-235-3087 or online at www.choctawnation.com/leap-program.

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## Schedule of Events

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10 a.m. ....Gourd Dance	10:30 a.m. ....Sunday Service
12 noon ....First Grand Entry	12 noon ....Grand Entry Contest
4 p.m. ....Break	
7 p.m. ....Second Grand Entry	

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# Braiden Williams overcomes injury to start music career

by Christian Toews

Braiden Williams is no stranger to adversity. One November evening, while driving home from work, Williams lost control of his truck and crashed. His vehicle flipped multiple times. Despite wearing his seatbelt, he was thrown from his vehicle. Braiden was only 17 years old at the time. He said, “I remember flipping once and then I don’t remember anything after that until I woke up.”

It took around 45 minutes for someone to notice the accident because his vehicle landed upright, according to Braiden’s mother, Michelle Williams. Braiden said he lay in the field and assumed he would have to stay there all night.

It was a semi driver who noticed something wasn’t normal about where his truck was parked and called emergency services. Braiden said that he never got the name of that truck driver, but he is forever grateful that he stopped. As he was lying in the field, he noticed that his legs wouldn’t move. “I knew [I was paralyzed] when I was laying the field. I tried to get up and my legs wouldn’t work,” said Braiden. He was transported by ambulance across the highway to a helicopter waiting to fly him to Medical City of Plano.

After an initial assessment the doctors told Braiden’s mother that he had contusions on both lungs, a broken sternum, five broken ribs, a broken left thumb and one broken tooth. The most severe injury, however, was to his spinal cord. He fractured his spine in two places.

One of the spinal injuries was a burst fracture. The doctors told Michelle that 80% of people with a burst fracture are paralyzed for life. Michelle remembers the hospital staff saying that the best spinal doctor in the area was on call at the time. She felt a level of comfort from knowing Braiden was in good hands. Six hours after surgery, Braiden was able to move both legs. Michelle said it was nothing short of a miracle.

Although Braiden’s surgeries were a success, it took some time for him to recover. He was originally told by the doctors that he would need inpatient physical therapy for six months to a year. After they saw how quickly he was progressing, though, he was able to do outpatient physical therapy instead.

Braiden and his family are Choctaw tribal members and he was able to begin physical therapy at Choctaw Regional Medical Clinic in Durant, Oklahoma. Braiden said that his physical therapy went so well that he was able to leave the program early. “I went five days a week for three months, and then I cut back, and then I just



Photos by Deidre Elrod

stopped going,” he said. “I was flying through it and it got to the point where it just wasn’t helping anymore because I was doing so well,” He said. “The accident happened in November and I was roping at a rodeo in March,” He continued. “I’ve been called a miracle for two years, and I still don’t know how to take it.”

Michelle shared how much the Choctaw Nation’s support meant to her family. “What the Choctaw Nation did for us is allow him to have physical therapy, number one, and then to allow him to have that type of aggressive schedule with physical therapy. Even if I’d had insurance, I wouldn’t have been able to afford a copay for five days a week for four months. I mean no one can afford that. But thank God that we are Choctaw and that they have that benefit for us,” she said.

Braiden didn’t allow this adversity to hold him back. During his recovery, Braiden discovered his love for music. “A friend of mine gave me a guitar. I had watched everything there was to watch on Netflix, so I decided I’m just going to watch Youtube and learn how to play

it.” He said. He couldn’t walk very well during his recovery process and he couldn’t put the guitar down very far away. This made it easy to spend a lot of time practicing after physical therapy every day, he remembered.

He posted a video of him playing and singing on Instagram which got a lot of views, and he liked it. After sharing his talent online, he began playing at several different venues in southern Oklahoma and North Texas. He placed third in the music competition at the Sandbass Festival in Madill, Oklahoma this year. “Playing on stage, there is just no other feeling like that,” he said.

Braiden hopes he can turn his passion for music into a career. “I hope I can be a musician, go on tour, make music, record albums.”

His mother says the accident was difficult, but it helped to bring about this newfound talent. “My mother was a singer, I’m a singer; both of us piddled with it when we were young, but Braiden never showed interest in that until now,” she said. “Without this accident we may have never known that he even had this talent inside him.”

You can find out more information about where Braiden will be performing next and follow his music journey by following Braiden Williams Music on Facebook and Instagram.



# Harvest Carnival provides treats and screams



Photos by Chris Jennings

Visitors get spooked as they go through the haunted house.



The long line for harvest carnival event shirts makes its way through the Choctaw store at Tvshka Homma.



## RIDE THROUGH HISTORY

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Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team

From left: Maria and Zoey Hoofnagle go through the line to get some candy; Jasper Green picks out his free candy bucket; Tessa Jones picks up a duck at one of the games; bright signs lead the way to terror at the haunted house.



Kids try to get a sneak peek inside the haunted house before it opens.



Logan Taylor throws a football through a target for a prize.

## HINA HANTA

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Choctaw Dolls | CM.2017.118.1a-b

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE



Melina Tushka tosses a ring at coke bottles.



Scary sights wait for visitors in the haunted house.



# Nation helps fights breast cancer with resources and education



Photo by Chris Jennings

Breast cancer survivors, Brandy Sigler, left, and Camille Tehauno lead the way during the Breast Cancer Awareness walk in Hugo. Over a hundred people attended the event at the Wellness Center.

By Chris Jennings

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. For many, breast cancer is more than just a month-long campaign, it’s something they live with daily.

The human body is in a constant state of change. Cells regenerate at varying rates across our bodies all through our lifetimes. Those cells, which are the basic building blocks of human tissue are also a culprit when it comes to breast cancer.

When new cells form, or old damaged cells don’t die as they should, a buildup or mass can develop. That mass then forms as a lump, growth or tumor.

The statistics for breast cancer are staggering:

- On average, every 2 minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States.
- In 2019, an estimated 268,600 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the U.S.
- This year, an estimated 41,760 women will die from breast cancer in the U.S.
- 1 in 8 women in the United States will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.
- There are over 3.5 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

Even with the staggering death rate, “survivor” is a word that you hear often with breast cancer. Communities, employers and organizations across the country have rallied to provide support to those diagnosed with breast cancer and their families.

Cassie Stafford is a breast cancer survivor. She had no family history of breast cancer but there was a history of cancer in her mother and grandparents. For that reason, Stafford says she had been getting yearly mammograms for 11 years. “My mother passed away in 2006, so that’s when I really got scared,” said Stafford. That’s when the yearly mammograms started.

However, Stafford had lagged behind three months this time. A point where it would have been easy to just skip this year and go next year. Instead, Stafford went and had her mammogram done. Then, a second mammogram.

That’s when the nervousness began to kick in, said Stafford. “I’m thinking well, yeah, it can’t be anything because I’ve been getting my mammograms every year and it’s only been a year and three months so it’s no big deal,” said Stafford. Then she had to get an ultrasound, then another ultrasound, then an MRI, then finally she was told she needed a biopsy.

Stafford still remembers what she was doing when she got the phone call, “I was getting ready to get towels out of the dryer and I got the phone call. It was the next day and I said please God, please.

You know, I kind of already knew because they kept poking at me over here with all these mammograms

and ultrasounds.”

She was told in that phone call that it was invasive ductal carcinoma. IDC is cancer that begins growing in a milk duct and invades the fibrous or fatty tissue of the breast outside of the duct. IDC is the most common form of breast cancer, representing 80 percent of all breast cancer diagnoses.

“I just remember that I walked outside, tears rolling down my face. I came back in and I got my dog, picked him up and I told him I said it’s not good, Lucky. You know, it’s just not good,” said Stafford.

The cancer had progressed into the tissue but had not gotten into the lymph nodes yet. Because of this, Stafford was able to have a lumpectomy and go through treatments and avoid a mastectomy. Stafford says this has to be because doctors found it so early.

Found early because the Choctaw Nation has established programs encouraging its members to get mammograms and plans and procedures in place for what to do if cancer is found.

The Nation does much more than just helping its tribal members when it comes to fighting cancer, though. For six consecutive years the Nation and its employees have held fundraisers that go directly to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

Fundraising numbers for 2019 are not in yet, but in 2018, the Nation donated \$160,000 to the foundation, \$60,000 more than was donated in 2017. That money was raised through donations, t-shirt sales, specialty drinks and other fund-raising events held by employees.

The Nation has also taken steps to help its members with early detection. Julie Brennan with Choctaw Nation Health Services says, “What we have now is the GE Pristina units. They create mammogram images in 2-D and 3-D, which supplies the radiologists with a lot more information than just the plain 2-D.”

Patients using these units often report a more pleasant experience due to the machine’s design. “They are not painful whatsoever...It’s not even painful for me after surgery and radiation,” said Stafford.

On top of state-of-the-art machinery, the Durant location has added improved ambient lighting to their mammography suite to ease some of the tension patients feel while getting a mammogram.

Radiologists for the Choctaw Nation recommend getting a mammogram every year. As far as when to start getting mammograms, that may change according to family history. Brennan says, “Our radiologists recommend that the patients start between 35 and 39 for their initial screening mammogram. However, if a patient has had a strong family history, like a mother, sister or daughter with breast cancer, then their age for the initial screening may be changed according to whatever time frame that, say, the mother was diagnosed.” For example, if the mother was diagnosed at 43, then radiol-

ogists may want them to start getting mammograms 10 years prior to that, at 33.

Stafford stresses how important it is to get your yearly mammogram. “Even though I had gotten mine every year, I pretty much know that a year and three months back, it wasn’t there.”

Stafford says she thinks she wouldn’t be here today without that mammogram and the Choctaw Nation.

Mammograms and breast ultrasounds are available at all five locations, and breast MRI will be coming soon.

## Nursery News



### Grayson Thomas Wrenn

Proud parents Keith and Alexis Wrenn of Jacksonville, Florida would like to welcome Grayson Thomas Wrenn to their family. Grayson was born Aug. 6, 2019 at 10:02 p.m. weighing 8lb 4oz. Big siblings Lean-na, Carly, and Connor are overjoyed with Grayson’s arrival. Proud grandmothers are Billie Merit of Davie, Florida and Janet Hoyt of Lynn, Massachusetts. Proud grandfather is Thomas Deem of Margate, Florida.



### Lakota Ray Vanriette

Lakota Ray Vanriette Jr., was born on September 12, 2019, to Lakota Vanriette and Kassondra Coronado of Crystal City Texas. He weighed 7.05 oz and was 20 inches long. Proud grandparents are Darrell and Beverly Vanriette.

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**November Mobile Unit Schedule**

5th	Heavener - CV's Grocery
7th	Boswell - Across from Pushmataha Family Clinic
8th	Heavener - EOMC
12th	Heavener - CV's Grocery
14th	Clayton - At the Choctaw Country Market
15th	Heavener - EOMC
19th	Heavener - EOMC
21st	Coalgate - Choctaw Nation Community Center
22nd	Heavener - CV's Grocery
26th	Heavener - CV's Grocery

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### Apple Cider

- 4 tart apples, sliced \*
- 4 sweet apples, sliced \*
- 1 orange
- 4 cinnamon sticks

- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp allspice or pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 cup brown sugar


\* Tart apples: Granny Smith, Braeburn, Jonathan, and Pacific Rose.  
\* Sweet apples: Jazz, Honeycrisp, Pink Lady, Gala, Fuji, and Cortland.

#### Preparation

1. Place apples, orange and spices into large pot.
2. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer for two hours.
3. Using a potato masher or wooden spoon mash apples and oranges.
4. Strain cider through a fine mesh sieve, using the spoon to press out extra juice.
5. Add brown sugar, serve warm.
6. Garnish with orange slice and cinnamon stick.

To use a crock pot place ingredients in the order above and cook 6-7 hours on low, or 3 hours on high then continue with step 3.





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Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

**November 2019**  
All markets open weekdays, November 1-22, **Closed:** November 11 and 25 - 29 for tribal holidays.  
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

**ANTLERS** 400 S.W. “O” ST., 580-298-6443  
Nutrition education and food demo November 19, 10:00-1:00


**BROKEN BOW** 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842  
Nutrition education and food demo November 7, 10:00-1:00

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773  
Nutrition education and food demo November 14, 10:00-1:00

**MCALESTER** 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716  
Nutrition education and food demo November 20, 10:00-1:00

**POTEAU** 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431  
Nutrition education and food demo November 13, 10:00-1:00

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Location	Days	Hours
Antlers 580-298-3161	1st & 2nd Tue. Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Atoka 580-889-5825	Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Battiest 580-241-5458	1st Tue. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Broken Bow 580-584-2746	Tue. & Thur. (except for Battiest & Smithville days)	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Durant 580-916-2100 x 83517	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Hugo 580-326-9707	Daily Mon. - Fri	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Idabel 580-286-2510	Mon., Wed., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
McAlester 918-423-6335	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Poteau 918-649-1106	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Smithville 580-244-3289	1st Thur. of Every Month	8:30 a.m - 4 p.m.
Spiro 918-962-5134	Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Stigler 918-867-4211	Mon. & Tue.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Talihina 918-567-7000 x-6792	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wilburton 918-465-5641	Mon. 7 Fri.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Mobile Clinic	Tues., Wed., & Thurs.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Building Healthy Families Through Good Nutrition**



# Choctaw Nation to help local water utilities

By Bradley Gernand

Thanks to a grant received by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, public water systems in southeastern Oklahoma will soon receive assistance to operate more efficiently and safely.

Heightened state and federal regulations designed to protect the public health are more difficult to meet than in the past. Many rural public water suppliers do not have the technical knowledge to remain in compliance. As existing treatment plants and water distribution systems age, the problem may grow worse before it gets better.

“We’re becoming concerned that repeated violations by public water systems may indicate infrastructure or treatment issues that need to be addressed to entice new businesses or residents to come to southeastern Oklahoma,” said Ethan Schuth, the Choctaw Nation’s water resources manager. “We’d like to help local communities stabilize their public water systems and remain in compliance.”

The \$197,454 grant by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, will allow the Choctaw Nation to assist the City of Antlers, Town of Talihi-na, and Sardis Lake Water Authority examine their operations and determine cost-effective ways to reduce or end the instances in which their

operations run afoul of regulations. Antlers and Talihi-na have both experienced repeated violations in recent years.

The Choctaw Nation’s water resource management office has worked closely with all three public water systems. In addition to administering the grant, the Choctaw Nation will contribute its staff and expertise and serve as project manager of the study.

“Clean water is something everyone expects and requires,” said Schuth. “When public water systems experience problems and issue public alerts, or are cited for falling outside safety codes, this reduces the confidence business owners and citizens have in the ability of their local governments to operate effectively. We want southeastern Oklahoma to be fully competitive with other areas.”

The Choctaw Nation is interested in taking a more active role in helping the communities within its 10,922-square-mile service area manage their water and wastewater better. “We hope to offer both technical and financial assistance in the near future. This grant is our first step toward offering technical assistance,” Schuth said.

“A lot about our operation is electronic—the equipment is highly computerized and complex, and is expensive to repair,” said Mike Taylor, who manages Antlers’

water treatment system. Taylor noted that it is much harder to remain in compliance with water treatment regulations now than it was even a few years ago. The machinery is expensive to repair or replace, and staffing can be an issue. “It’s especially challenging for us in small towns,” he said. “We can’t afford outside consultants and even if we did, they don’t really understand the unique environment we operate under. The Choctaw Nation does.”

Don Faulkner, a trustee for the Town of Talihi-na and its Public Works Authority, agreed. “The circumstances here are pretty challenging. Our operating environment is complex. We’re very thankful to have the Choctaw Nation help us identify vulnerabilities in our treatment system. I’m anxious to sit down with their engineers,” Faulkner said.

A key objective of the grant is to learn of ways in which the Antlers, Talihi-na, and Sardis Lake water authorities may adjust their treatment processes at low or no cost. Should costs be incurred, the Choctaw Nation plans to use its existing relationship with the Oklahoma Rural Development program to secure funds for these utilities and may contribute funds of its own to stabilize their operations.

“Contributing our know-how across southeastern Oklahoma helps us be good friends, neighbors, and partners,” Schuth said. “Our end goal is making our area be the best place to live and work, bar none.”



Photos by Christian Toews

Ethan Schuth, water resources manager for the Choctaw Nation, plans to expand the assistance provided by the tribe to local water authorities in southeastern Oklahoma.



Antlers water treatment plant manager Mike Taylor tests the town’s water every day for impurities. Each faucet delivers water from a different source. One delivers raw, unfiltered water from the Kiamichi River; another delivers treated water from the Antlers water towers.



“My background as a Navy electronics technician has come in handy,” Antlers water manager Mike Taylor says. “These plants are highly computerized.”

## Did you know?

- Communities in southeastern Oklahoma typically receive their water from one of two different sources: subsurface water via wells (mostly in the southernmost counties), or surface water drawn from lakes or rivers (mostly in the central and northern counties). This is because only minor aquifers occur in the central and northern reaches of the Choctaw Nation and cannot supply large quantities of water for treatment.
- Many of the lakes in southeastern Oklahoma were constructed for purposes of flood control or water supply but serve double duty by providing recreational opportunities.
- The lifecycle of public water begins when it is drawn from its sources, such as a well or a river. The water is treated in a plant and then distributed through a network of pipes. The used water discharged from homes and businesses is treated in wastewater treatment facilities before being released back into streams or rivers.
- Southeastern Oklahoma’s communities are facing multiple issues concerning their public water systems. Federal and state environmental regulations are difficult to meet, requiring increasing training for staff. Treatment plants are aging and are expensive to maintain and repair. Distribution systems are also aging and will be expensive to replace.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE’RE MORE ♦

## November 2019

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