



September 2024 Issue



## Together We're More Campaign highlights Choctaw spirit and impact

By Christian Toews

Faith, family and culture are the driving forces behind the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Generations of Choctaw resilience and achievement shape these core tenets, made possible by building a Choctaw family with a culture of collaboration.

This collaboration is what Choctaw Nation's "Together, We're More" campaign is all about.

Readers may have seen commercials, billboards, social media posts or other media with the "Together We're More" tagline but perhaps have never considered the story behind it.

From the beginning, the goal was to show how the Choctaw Nation worked with others to grow the reservation's economy and the surrounding area. It also inspired the next generation to collaborate for a better future.

According to Sarah Jackson, Senior Director of Brand Marketing at the Choctaw Nation, the campaign began with one mission: to show the nation's diversity.

"We were trying to show how diverse the Choctaw Nation was," said Jackson. "When you spend your money with the Nation, it goes to bigger things."

Jackson gave an example of one of the first ads produced in 2017 that stated, "Our travel plazas fuel more than cars."

According to Jackson, this ad highlighted how every Choctaw-owned business supports the tribal members and the local economy.

Together We're More is not simply a tagline.

Economic reports give a clearer picture of the Choctaw Nation's impact on the entire State of Oklahoma.

According to Dr. Kyle Dean, Economist for the Center for Native American and Urban Studies at Oklahoma City University, in 2018, the tribe had a \$2.4 billion economic impact on the state. This number increased by hundreds of millions over a few short years to a staggering 3.2 billion in 2021.

According to Jackson, by the time the campaign reached its third iteration, they were focused on illustrating the Choctaw Nation's role in strengthening the community.

While this was a success, Jackson said they had missed the emotional tie to the Choctaw people they had hoped for.

"We went a little too far towards "matter of fact" and lost some of that emotional tie," she said.

This feedback led their teams and The Richards Group, the outside agency that helped with the campaign, to the fourth and most successful version, Together We're More 4.0.

"We consistently see engagement from audiences throughout Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas," said Charlotte R. Hodson, a Market Research Analyst with the Choctaw Nation. "However, we have had stories that had a global impact, like in June 2023 (Wilson Roberts), which reached over 50 different countries."

According to Jackson, their lessons from the first three versions enabled them to craft something more culturally focused.

"We wanted to lean into being Choctaw proud, and we wanted to show our tribal members and really focus on them," Jackson said.

The 4.0 campaign celebrates people from across the Choctaw Nation who contribute to the community in many ways, each equally important.

One of the most significant changes was incorporating the Choctaw language more prominently in the messaging.

The Choctaw phrase "Chahta ilefehnachi li" or "I am Choctaw Proud" was prominently displayed across the created media.

As the 4.0 campaign has grown, so has the team behind it. The Choctaw Nation's creative teams have begun producing this extensive campaign with less help from outside agencies and resources.

"Our internal teams are now producing 95% of all created content," Jackson said.

According to Sara Seals, Marketing Director of the Choctaw Nation, the Nation's teams create everything from social media to written content, videos and pictures.

"Internally, for our communications division, it's been a project that has gelled us together in a way," said Seals. "We can see more of each other's functions and what they do. It's a lot of learning about each other and our roles and then taking that knowledge and building even better projects."

Seals also mentioned that the Choctaw Nation had saved money by tackling these projects internally instead of paying an outside agency.

One department that has helped with these cost savings has

been the multimedia department.

According to Trevor Rogers, a Senior Digital Content Producer at Choctaw Nation, even with a small team, they have been able to do big things.

Rogers has experience in the film industry and freelancing on large productions and knows that producing broadcast commercials requires a lot of different people.

"Sometimes you can have three people to operate a single camera," he explained. "We don't always have the luxury of having a giant crew. Our team has had to adapt and wear multiple hats in order to produce the same quality. But everyone is willing to pitch in and help. This has given us an opportunity to really show what our small team is capable of."

This ingenuity has saved money and simplified the communication of the vision from inception to completion.

"Being able to work with everyone in our department directly, you really get this personal touch and extra level of detail that is brought to this project," said Rogers. "Everyone is very passionate about this campaign."

Production has begun on Together We're More 5.0.

According to Jackson, they hope to continue communicating the same message with the new content being created.

"People have really resonated with 'I am Choctaw Proud,' and that has been part of our brand promise and mission for eight years now," said Jackson. "That's something that people are understanding is part of who we are as an organization and as a tribe."

According to Jackson, some exciting new stories and content are coming up with the same vision.

"This is the first time, with 5.0, that we haven't recreated the wheel," explained Jackson. "We aren't really deviating too much from what we have done in 4.0, but we are being a little more intentional with some content."

Together We're More is not only a celebration of the Choctaw culture and impact.

It is a testament to the teamwork and collaboration of the Choctaw Nation and those who have faithfully told the story, showing that together, we indeed are more.

To learn more about the Together We're More campaign or to share your story with the Choctaw Nation team, visit [www.choctawnation.com/together-were-more/](http://www.choctawnation.com/together-were-more/).



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

TogetherWereMore.com

# Faith, Family, Culture

Na Yimmi, Chukka Achvffa, Im Aivlhpesa



Chief Gary Batton

Inter-Tribal Council is All About Friendship, Cooperation Aivtta-Ibafoka Aianumpuli Ittvhoba yvt Ittibatoksvli Apisa

The Choctaw Nation participates in the quarterly gathering of the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma for fellowship, cooperation and updates on the good works our tribes are fulfilling for all our tribal members.

Our most recent Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting was held from July 10-12 in Tulsa, Oklahoma at a Cherokee Nation owned and operated facility (Hard Rock Hotel & Casino). I represented the Choctaw Nation and met with leaders from the Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Muscogee Nation, Seminole Nation. We discussed a large agenda that ranged from healthcare, homes, culture, commerce, natural resources and a whole list of the other items that affect our respective tribal members.

In this space, I want to highlight the large agreement that came from this past Inter-Tribal meeting that involves the signing of the Five Tribe Wildlife Management Reciprocity

Agreement. This important agreement allows tribal members and citizens of the Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation, Muscogee Nation, and very soon Seminole Nation, to utilize their tribal membership and enjoy hunting and fishing in participating tribes' treaty territories.

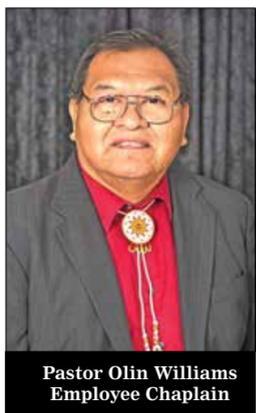
The pact allows hunting and fishing licenses issued through each tribe to be recognized by the other tribes that are party to the agreement, on respective reservation land. Most tribes allow for their tribal membership cards to serve as their credential or license. All Oklahoma residents with valid state-issued hunting and fishing licenses are eligible to hunt and fish within these tribal treaty territories in accordance with all applicable laws.

You may recall that we established the Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation Department in 2022 to assert our tribal sovereignty. I'm proud of this department for the great work it does in helping determine how our citizens hunt and fish on our reservation by using their tribal membership. We have now taken a significant step forward by partnering with the Inter-Tribal Council. This partnership will provide further opportunities for our tribal members to hunt and fish on our reservations using their tribal membership. Together, we are asserting our tribal sovereignty and benefiting approximately 815,000 tribal citizens.

This new hunting and fishing agreement is just one example of the level of cooperation amongst the tribes that has emerged from these ongoing Inter-Tribal meetings. These meetings prove that all the Civilized Tribes are unified, and there is a tight-knit cooperative of nations that come together for self-reliance and sovereignty. When we have a unified message and cooperation between the Civilized Tribes, I and the other tribal leaders believe there is nothing we can't accomplish for the success of our tribes and the betterment of our tribal members.

I am so proud to represent the Choctaw Nation in the Inter-Tribal meetings. The friendships and cooperation amongst the leaders of the Civilized Tribes are strong and have produced amazing projects that push our nations forward and bring better services to all our tribal members. I am confident that this new wildlife management reciprocity agreement will prove to be yet another, great agreement from the tribes. It will not only bring further prosperity to our respective tribal nations, but it will give all our tribal members more choices for a better future and another way to honor our faith, family and culture.

Yakoke and God Bless!



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

## Brainwashing

1 Corinthians 2:14- "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Every human being is brainwashed to some degree by one philosophy or another. Depravity itself holds the human to satanically inspired humanism. This is in direct opposition to God's truth. Brainwashing is not meant to mean the systematic alteration of personal convictions, beliefs, habits, and attitudes by means of intensive, coercive indoctrination. And yet, there is a sense in which everybody's beliefs, habits and attitudes are influenced by some form of "indoctrination" (voluntary or involuntary). In whatever station of life, a person operates according to his doctrine (teaching). This is why a person must be born

again from above so his mind can begin to be deprogrammed from sinful nature and programmed with the Word of Truth. The natural mind must be changed by repentance, actively renewed, and controlled by God's word. Sometimes, God's people are content with salvation only and become passively satisfied with saying, "I'm saved," and cruise along.

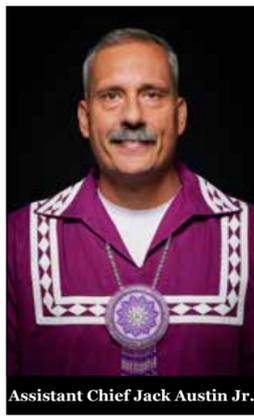
Paul wrote to Timothy in II Timothy 4:2,3, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itchy ears."

The time has come for the local church to be "indoctrinated" in the Word of Truth.

Many of God's people have joined the health food and diet fad. They are rightly concerned about what enters and occupies their bodies.

However, the real concern should be what enters and occupies the mind. Galatians 6:7 says, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." No believer can ever be successful before God apart from the meditation and observance of the Word of God. Today, the emphasis is on "how to be successful." There are secular and religious books written to fill the mind on how to be successful. There are motivational speakers and conventions to promote this type of thinking. The church of God can adopt this way of thinking and wants motivational preachers and motivational services only. Perhaps that is the reason why the modern church seems to appear more theatrical.

God's way of success is written in Joshua 1:8. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein, day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

## Lots of summer left for family fun in the Choctaw Nation

School kids are settling into the new school year, days are beginning to get shorter, and while the calendar says autumn is approaching, there is still summer left for family fun!

Just here in the Choctaw Nation there is a fall festival, basketball showcases, fun runs, and an Indigenous archaeology day. The Community Health Representative (CHR) Department is holding the 2024 CHR Fall Festival at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 11 at the McAlester Expo Center. Plan to spend the day with the CHR Department as they present health information, program booths, entertainment, lunch. Immunizations will be available at no cost.

Two Futures of Basketball showcases for girls and boys take place at 9 a.m. for the girls and 1 p.m. for the boys on Sunday, Sept. 15 at the Bloomer Sullivan Arena at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. The event is for grades 9-12 to demonstrate skills for college coaches. The event is open to the public.

The third annual Glowing with Hope Glow Run is at 7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 20, at the Durant Community Center. The event features a 1-Mile Fun Run and 5k with proceeds benefitting Feeding Hope, a non-profit organization in Durant, Oklahoma.

The Sewell Animal Hospital's 5K9 Mutt Strut for PAWS will take place at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 21 at the McAlester High School. It is the only race in the area where your dog can participate and win an award, too. It's a fun event for a great cause for supporting pets in need of medical support they cannot afford.

A Warrior Wellness Charity Wine Run on Saturday, Sept. 21, at 10 a.m. at the Blue River Valley Winery. It's an exciting new event that also features the amazing scenery and landscape of Blue River Valley Winery.

The Heroes 4 Health Trail Run gets underway at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 28 at the Arrowhead State Park - Echo Ridge Campground. The event brings together a scenic, challenging trail run (5k, 10k and 1-mile race) and a great cause for supporting our frontline healthcare workers and first responders.

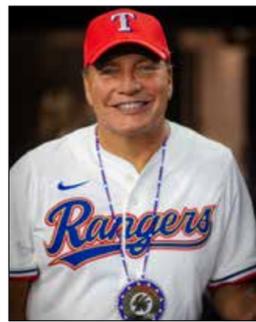
Also, at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 28 the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Historic Preservation Department, in collaboration with the Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network, will be hosting an Indigenous Archaeology Day at Wheelock Academy Historic Site to promote Indigenous approaches to Archaeology. The event will be split into morning and afternoon sessions. The tables include information on traditional Choctaw art forms including pottery, flintknapping, and textiles, which have been documented archaeologically and still practiced by the Choctaw community today. Demonstrations scheduled throughout the event will provide deeper insight into traditional Choctaw artforms and lifeways. Traditional foods will be prepared onsite and served at noon.

## Batton throws out first pitch

Chief Gary Batton represented the Choctaw Nation at Globe Life Field as he threw the Ceremonial First Pitch at Texas Rangers game against the Minnesota Twins on August 15.

Joining Chief Batton for support was Jack Austin Jr. and a group of Choctaw youth. Junior Miss and Miss Choctaw Nation were also in attendance.

Did you know that as a Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal member, you can get discounted Texas Rangers tickets, among other incredible discounts? Visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/discounts/> for more information.



Photos by Christian Toews



## WARRIOR WELLNESS CHARITY WINE RUN

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2024**  
**10:00 AM**

Join us for the Annual WW Charity Run! Come experience hand-crafted wine while you relax and enjoy the scenic Blue River Valley Winery. Whether you want to run, walk or just enjoy the wine, this race promises to be a great time and an incredible experience.

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma [CHOCTAWNATION.COM](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

## JONES ACADEMY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Did you know Jones Academy partners with Hartshorne Public Schools to provide quality education to students? Students who are residents at Jones Academy attend Hartshorne Middle School and High School for grades 7 through 12. At Hartshorne Public Schools, Jones Academy students receive an education based on academic standards for Oklahoma Public Schools. Additionally, Jones Academy students participate in various extracurricular activities, including athletics, band, choir, 4H and student leadership organizations.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JONES ACADEMY, PLEASE VISIT: [JONESACADEMY.ORG](http://JONESACADEMY.ORG)

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

## APPRENTICE POSITIONS NOW OPEN

The Choctaw language is vital to the culture and sovereignty of the Nation. The Language Department offers innovative programs to preserve and protect the Choctaw language for future generations.

Scan the QR code with your smartphone for eligibility requirements and more information.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

# Choctaw Nation opposes hydropower project to protect natural resources and sovereignty

Tribe looks forward to discussions with federal agency

By Chris Jennings

On July 13, 2024, the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council unanimously voted to oppose a proposed pumped storage hydroelectric power station (PSH) in Pushmataha County. The PSH project would supply electricity to Texas residents.

A pumped storage hydroelectric power station mainly consists of two water reservoirs at different elevations. Electricity is generated as water passes through a turbine as it moves down from the upper reservoir to the lower reservoir.

Southeast Oklahoma Power Corp. (SEOPC) has proposed the installation of the PSH along the Kiamichi River in Pushmataha County, Oklahoma, approximately five miles south of Talihina, Oklahoma. The project would include a transmission line extending through Pushmataha and McCurtain Counties in Oklahoma and Red River and Lamar Counties in Texas ending in Paris, Texas.

According to documents provided by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the project would consist of construction of a new 599.5 acre upper reservoir with a 886-foot-long upper dam and a 887.37 acre lower reservoir with a 13,615-foot-long lower dam.

Initial fill water and make-up water would be provided via a concrete intake channel on the Kiamichi River.

To give a scope to the size of the project, the 886-foot-long upper dam would be the equivalent of 2.8 stickball fields; the 13,615-foot-long lower dam would be equal to 45.3 stickball fields. That’s just over a 2.5 mile long for the lower dam for those who don’t measure distances in stickball fields. The SEOPC has said there will be no dam across the Kiamichi River.

In a letter to FERC, Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton expressed his opposition to the project.

**“The Choctaw Nation is a federally recognized sovereign nation with rights and obligations to protect our homeland, including cultural and ecological resources and community.”**

– Chief Gary Batton

Several cultural and ecological resources have been identified by the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department (CNHPD). In a letter submitted to FERC, the CNHPD said, “Without knowing the precise project location, we have conducted a preliminary review of the Choctaw Register of Historic Places for sites located within a 5-mile radius of the project area. This search identified 36 historic archaeological sites, including 14 Choctaw Cemeteries.”

Also, mentioning that they did not know the precise location of the proposed site, in a letter dated July 25, 2024, the Oklahoma Historical Preservation Society said they had not received adequate maps or location information to identify the project area of potential effect.

The CNHPD also expressed concern about the ability to communicate with parties concerning the project, saying in a letter dated July 8, 2024, that when they tried to contact the SWCA tribal liaison listed in the pre-application document on June 7, 2024, the number had been disconnected.

The Chickasaw Nation has also expressed concerns over the lack of communication about the project. In a letter dated July 8, 2024, Governor Bill Anoatubby said, “Hydropower plants have deep and lasting impacts on the regions

in which they are built, and the outreach accompanying them should reflect the level of seriousness appropriate to such impactful matters.”

Area residents and those who could be affected by the project have also voiced their opinions. As of August 13, 2024, nearly 300 letters of opposition have been submitted to FERC regarding the project. Many citing a disruption of well-being and livelihood.

One landowner near Hugo, Oklahoma wrote in his letter, “I fear that the creek will eventually be dry most of the year. This creek is a main water source for an abundance of wildlife in our area...I also have concerns about the ground water levels if so much run-off is captured up stream. I am completely dependent on my well for my home and livestock use. We do not have a rural water system in our area.”

The concern about the amount of water and how the PSH project may affect the flow of the river were also brought up by Kenneth Collins, a field supervisor with the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Services, who wrote in a letter to FERC, “The expected decreased flows below the pumps could reduce the quantity and quality of aquatic habitat downstream.”

Collins went on to explain, “Flows in this reach of the river often may be very low naturally during certain times of the year in the absence of any artificial pumping efforts.

The estimated average flow in the Kiamichi River at the proposed extraction point (approximately 12 miles upstream from the confluence with Jackfork Creek) in August is only 50 cfs and minimum flows can be zero cfs for any time of year.”

Collins also listed several federally-listed, proposed or candidate species that could be impacted by the PSH project.

**Some of those species are:**

- Indiana bat
- Northern long-eared bat
- Ouachita rock pocketbook freshwater clam
- Scaleshell mussel
- Winged mapleleaf freshwater mussel
- The threatened American burying beetle
- Rabbitsfoot mussel

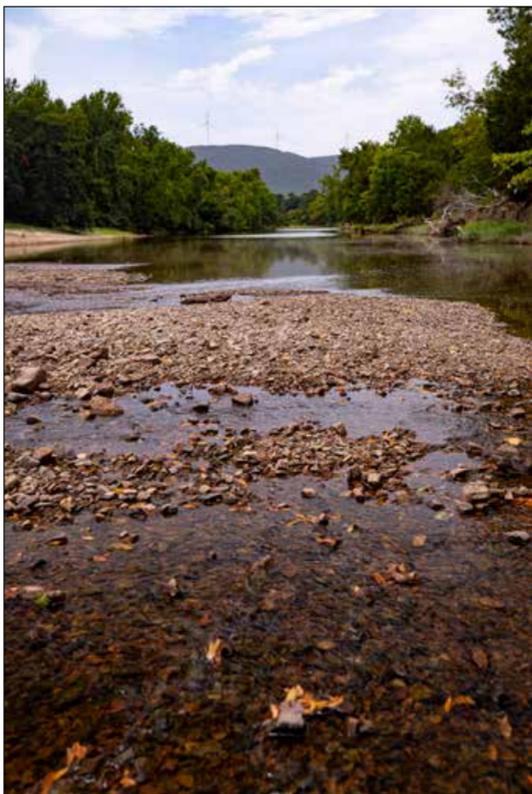
The Monarch butterfly, along with several migratory birds, is also listed as a potential species that could be impacted, particularly by the nearly 100 miles of power lines associated with the PSH project.

“In conclusion, the Service believes the potential impacts of the Project and related adverse effects to federally-listed species would require formal consultation on this project through Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act,” Collins said in his letter.

**“The Choctaw Nation is committed to the sustainable use and protection of our natural resources within the reservation.”**

– Chief Gary Batton

Water is a resource that the Choctaw Nation takes seriously, not just for tribal members but the non-tribal community members who also rely on it for their livelihood.



This spot on the Kiamichi River near Tvshkahomma highlights how low the river’s flow can be during certain times of the year. The proposed plant would pull water from the river upstream.

Many feel that these scenes show the beauty of the Kiamichi River as it winds its way along Highway 271 between Talihina and Tvshkahomma, which is in jeopardy if the pumped storage hydroelectric power station is approved.

Photos by Chris Jennings





James Dry

## District 9

Halito, from District 9.

I hope everyone has enjoyed a wonderful summer, and I'm looking forward to the fall. We had an unbelievable District 9 Princess Pageant at our Cultural Center in May. We would like to thank all the staff who put on a wonderful event for all our young ladies and the support they all received from our District. Our 2024-2025 princesses, Senior Miss Kalin Beller, Junior Miss Daryan Eubanks, and Little Miss Ava Davenport, will represent our District very well.

We have several construction projects underway and starting in the coming months. Durant multi-family apartments will become available this fall. Sixty Independent Elderly Units, 25 LEAP homes, and 10 affordable rental units in Bennington are

currently under construction. Also, this fall we will be having a groundbreaking for our new Community Center. This has been a great need for our District, as we are serving close to 500 meals weekly and our service needs have grown. This new building will have enough seating for over 400 Tribal members!!!

It was a privilege to honor Jerry Tomlinson as District 9 veteran of the month and First Language Speaker Dora Wickson at our Tribal council meeting in June. We appreciate the sacrifices you've made throughout the years to protect our Great Nation and preserve our language. Congratulations to Mary Lee Williams and Roger Scott for being selected as District 9 outstanding elders for 2024-2025 as well.

I would like to encourage everyone to live each day enjoying moments with family and friends. The next time you are sitting at a restaurant or at the dinner table, put your phones away and have a conversation with everyone. We get so wrapped up with social media on our phones that we forget what's most important: our Faith, Family, and Culture. Start living life in Himonasi (this moment).



UPCOMING EVENTS		SEP 21 2024 10:00AM	Warrior Wellness Charity Wine Run
SEP 11 2024 6:00PM	2024 CHR Fall Festival	SEP 26 2024 5:00PM	Community Cultural Meeting – Olympia
SEP 14 2024 10:00AM	Wheelock Arts and Crafts Fair	SEP 28 2024 6:00AM	Heroes 4 Health Trail Run
SEP 15 2024 8:00AM	Futures of Basketball Showcase – Girls	SEP 26 2024 5:00PM	Community Cultural Meeting – Olympia
SEP 15 2024 1:00PM	Futures of Basketball Showcase – Boys	SEP 28 2024 6:00AM	Heroes 4 Health Trail Run
SEP 20 2024 6:00PM	Glowing with Hope Glow Run	SEP 28 2024 10:00AM	Indigenous Archaeology Day
SEP 21 2024 8:00AM	Sewell Animal Hospital's SK9 Mutt Strut for PAWS	SEP 28 2024 5:00PM	Community Cultural Meeting – Eugene

For more information on upcoming events, visit, <https://www.choctawnation.com/events/>.

## West is August 2024 Veteran of the Month

Floyd "Buddy" West, District #11, is Choctaw Nation's Veteran of the Month.

West was born in Bache, Okla., where he currently resides. He attended school there until 8th grade and graduated from Haileyville High School in 1964. After a year of college, he married and was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1966. He did basic training at Fort Bliss, Texas, followed by assignment to Fort Dix, New Jersey. He initially trained as a carpenter, then served as a Post Engineer specializing in woodworking. He participated in funeral details, serving as pallbearer for 33 funerals in less than two years.

He transferred to Fort Devans, Mass., where he contributed to the reconstruction efforts of the 18th Engineer Brigade. His projects included constructing a miniature Corps of Engineers Castle. He fondly remembers his time at Fort Dix, where he was joined by his wife and their first child was born. He discovered he had not been deployed to Vietnam because he was the only son of an only son. He left the Army with an E5 ranking. After his time in the Army, West returned with his family to Bache.

West and wife, Kathryn, have been married for 58 years and have four children: Katrina Dugger, Roy West, John West, and Elizabeth Connor. They have six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. They tragically lost one step-grandson during his military service.

He pursued a career in construction, ranging from low-rent housing to business buildings. He played a role in building Choctaw homes across the Choctaw Nation.

The Choctaw Nation holds our veterans in the highest esteem and appreciates their sacrifices and contributions to preserve our freedoms and the way of life we hold dear.



## Tobey is First Language Speaker of the Month

Ann Tobey of Hartshorne, Oklahoma, was recognized as the First Language Speaker of the Month during the August 10 Choctaw Tribal Council Meeting.

Tobey was born in the Talihina Hospital, and her parents both spoke Choctaw. Tobey and her sisters spoke and understood Choctaw but mostly spoke English. Tobey's father was a preacher, and she preached in Choctaw. She grew up in Choctaw churches.

Tobey received a bachelor of science in Education and a Master of Teaching from Eastern State University. She taught seven years at the Najao Boarding School and 23 years at Hartshorne Public Schools. After retirement, Tobey began attending Choctaw classes in McAlester and started teaching the Choctaw language in Canadian, Oklahoma, in 2001. She has also taught the language at Crowder and Hartshorne.



## Indian Affairs announces Tribal tourism grant opportunity

WASHINGTON (August 20, 2024) – The Indian Affairs Office of Indian Economic Development announced the availability of \$1.4 million for the Tribal Tourism Grant Program.

"Revitalizing Tribal economies and promoting Tribal self-determination are key to our aiding Tribes in their efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities," said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland. "Our Tribal Tourism Grant Program supports Tribal economic self-determination by helping Tribes build their capacity to develop and grow their tourism industry as part of an overall economic development strategy."

Indian Affairs expects to select 10 to 15 projects which will receive between \$75,000 to \$150,000 each over two years. The grants are intended to support building Tribal capacity to plan, develop and manage tourism and related infrastructure in support of economic development to elevate the living standards of the community.

The grants are authorized under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act, or NATIVE Act.

Proposals must be submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on October 25, 2024.

Details on how to apply can be found at <https://www.bia.gov/service/grants/ttgp>. Questions about this solicitation may be

addressed to Mr. Dennis Wilson, OIED-DED Grant Management Specialist, at 505-917-3235 and by e-mail at [DEDGrants@bia.gov](mailto:DEDGrants@bia.gov).

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs advises the Secretary of the Interior on Indian Affairs policy issues; communicates policy to and oversees the programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration; provides leadership in consultations with tribes; and serves as the DOI official for intra- and inter-departmental coordination and liaison within the Executive Branch on matters concerning American Indians and Alaska Natives and the federally recognized Tribes in the United States.

The Office of Indian Economic Development is located within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

Indian Affairs OIED supports the economic development of American Indian and Alaska Native communities by offering access to capital through grant opportunities and loan guarantees, and by providing technical assistance to federally recognized Tribes. The OIED administers the Tribal Tourism Grant Program through its Division of Economic Development.

For more information about OIED's mission and programs, visit the OIED website.

# WILDLIFE & OUTDOORS

By Matt Gamble

As the fall quickly approaches, it is time to get ready for the fall hunting seasons. To different people that can mean many different things, and I would like to touch on a few here.

First of all, do you need to take a hunting safety course? It is required of anyone over the age of 10 who wants to hunt by themselves. The Choctaw Nation now has its own hunter-ed course. It is available online on the CNO Wildlife Conservation page. Just click on the Hunter Education Course tab to get started. If you do not have hunter ed certification, you can still hunt under the apprentice designation. You must be accompanied by an adult 18 years or older. Please consult all the regulations on the Wildlife webpage to make sure you are following the law.

Another important thing to take care of this time of year is to check all your tree stands and safety harnesses. Falling out of tree stands is the number one killer and cause of serious hunting accidents nationwide. Check stands for loose straps, rotten lumber, loose bolts, and all parts that need attention. Make sure the tree is alive, and there are no dead limbs above your stand. Check box blinds and ground blinds for wasp and hornet nests. You don't want to try and share a hunt with a swarm of angry insects!

Never forget to check the little things like bowstrings, bow cams, sharpness of your broadheads, and if your scope on your muzzleloader or rifle is still sighted in. You don't want to miss the deer of a lifetime because you didn't check the zero of your firearms.

Lastly, don't forget to contact the landowner to make sure you still have permission to hunt on their land. Things change from year to year, and permission is only valid for one year at a time unless previously given for a longer period of time. If hunting public land, consult the regulations before going to ensure no changes have been made since the last time you were there. If hunting on Honobia or Three Rivers WMAs, make sure you have a valid land access permit. It is required for tribal members to use those areas.

It is never too early to get ready for the fall hunting season. Start now and you'll be ready when opening day arrives.

Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation

## Help Take The Recycling Out!



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

# Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

One of the most successful programs Housing now has is our voucher program for home rehabilitation. There are two types of vouchers: the Rehab Voucher and the SHIP Voucher. These vouchers allow the homeowner to make repairs on their home themselves by utilizing a voucher provided by the Tribe.

The Homeowners Rehabilitation Services Rehab Voucher helps homeowners with home repairs and ADA accessibility items to single-family homes. Eligible repairs are based on a priority list provided through a home inspection conducted by the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation. Homeowner's must meet eligibility requirements based on income, age, disability, and family size. Voucher amounts are up to \$10,000.00 and up to \$15,000 for disabled persons (if ADA work is needed) or veterans. You can apply and qualify for three consecutive years up to \$30,000.00 in total assistance or \$45,000.00 for veterans/ADA repairs. The homeowner receiving the voucher is responsible for contacting contractors for bids and entering a contract with them for the completion of the work according to the priority list. Once the work is complete, the signed approved voucher is submitted for payment and work is confirmed through an inspection. This program is available within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation and does NOT require a lien to be filed on your property.

The Homeowners Rehabilitation Services SHIP Voucher provides assistance to participants who do not meet the requirements for the Rehab Voucher. This program assists tribal members who may have higher incomes, live in a family home, or are non-tribal homeowners but have custody of a tribal child. Participants must still meet eligible requirements based on income, age, disability, and family size. Voucher amounts range from \$5,000.00 to \$15,000.00, depending on circumstances and eligibility. You can apply and qualify for three consecutive years. The homeowner receiving the voucher is responsible for contacting contractors for bids and entering into a contract with the contractor for the completion of the work according to the priority list. Once the work is complete, the signed approved voucher is submitted for payment and work is confirmed through an inspection. This program is available within the Choctaw Nation Reservation and does NOT require a lien to be filed on your property.

Applications can be obtained online, at community centers or at the Housing office.

Choctaw Nation  
Housing Authority

Stay Connected  
CHOCTAWNATION.COM



NOTES & EVENTS

**OILS Choctaw Nation Outreach Events**

OILS will be available to provide answers to legal questions and take applications for legal services. OILS cannot provide advice if you currently have an attorney. We cannot provide advice for criminal matters involving the state district courts. OILS must follow federal poverty guidelines to provide services.

McAlester Choctaw Community Center – Sept. 25, 10 a.m. -2 p.m.  
www.oilsonline.org, 405.943.6457, 800.658.1497 (In-State Only)

**Cinema at the Center**

This monthly series features a wide range of films designed around a fun, family-friendly theme. Join us in October for a screamin' good time or put Cinema at the Center on your Christmas list! In fact, why not add us to your calendar every month? We'd love to see you for movie night. Visit, bit.ly/cc-workshop-events for more information.



**FOOD DISTRIBUTION PARTICIPANTS MUST REPORT HOUSEHOLD CHANGES**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/FOOD-DISTRIBUTION](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/FOOD-DISTRIBUTION)  
Choctaw Nation Food Distribution



**HONOR GUARD**  
— POSITIONS AVAILABLE —  
APPLY BY CONTACTING: 580-642-8451  
[VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)



**LIFE IS BETTER WITH BLOOD DONORS**  
Every two seconds, someone in our community urgently needs blood. This could be a child battling cancer, a trauma victim, a patient undergoing surgery, or someone with a chronic illness.  
Imagine the hope, relief and second chance your donation can bring them and their families.  
By becoming a blood donor, you can become a lifeline for those who desperately need it.  
Join the Annual Blood Drive Challenge and help save a life.  
Scan to learn more about the challenge.  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**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  
**Shauna Williams, Executive Director**  
**Kristina Humenesky, Senior Director**  
**Kellie Matherly, Content Development Director**  
**Kendra Wall, Content Development Manager**  
**Chris Jennings, News Reporter**  
**Christian Toews, News Reporter**

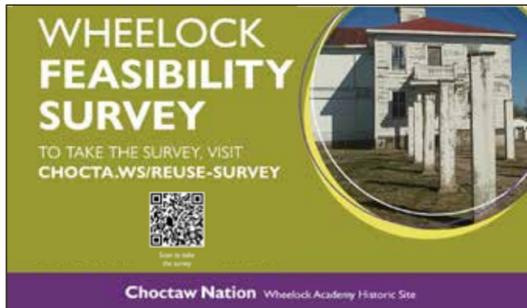
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702  
580-924-8280 • 800-522-6170  
[www.ChoctawNation.com](http://www.ChoctawNation.com)  
email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

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

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

The BISKINIK is a non-profit 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.



**WHEELOCK FEASIBILITY SURVEY**  
TO TAKE THE SURVEY, VISIT [CHOCTA.WS/REUSE-SURVEY](http://CHOCTA.WS/REUSE-SURVEY)  
Choctaw Nation Wheelock Academy Historic Site

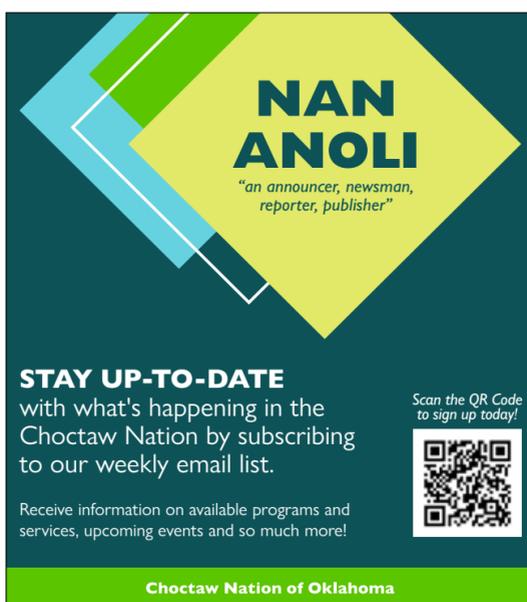
**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL**  
**REGULAR SESSION AGENDA**  
August 10, 2024

- CALL TO ORDER
- OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
- ROLL CALL
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - Regular Session July 13, 2024
- WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
  - Veteran of the Month, District #11 – Floyd 'Buddy' West
  - First Language Speaker of the Month, District #11 – Ann Tobey
- 6) PUBLIC COMMENTS – None
- REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
- 8) NEW BUSINESS
  - Letter of Reappointment for David Burrage to Fulfill the Choctaw Nation Tribal Court Judiciary Position of Chief Justice
  - Resolution Supporting the Nomination of Austin West to the United Nations Indigenous Fellowship Programme for 2025
  - Resolution Supporting the Nomination of Trent Shores to Serve on the National Institute of Standards and Technology Information Security and Privacy Advisory Board
  - Approve and Support Oklahoma Western Telephone Company's Application for the United States Department of Agriculture Community Connect Grant Program
  - Approve Application for the 2024 Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG)
  - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles
  - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment
  - Approve Application to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Veterans Administration Supportive Housing Grant FY24
  - Approve Application for the 2024 Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG)
  - Approve a Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity in Favor of SA American Dream Vacations, LLC
  - Approve Purchase of Approximately 34.5 Acres of Land at Preston Harbor in Grayson County, TX
  - Council Bill Amending the Choctaw Nation Criminal Procedure Code
- OTHER NEW BUSINESS
- OLD BUSINESS
- ADJOURNMENT
- CLOSING PRAYER

All votes passed unanimously



**WHEELOCK ACADEMY HISTORIC SITE ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR**  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2024 | 10 AM - 3 PM  
Come visit the Wheelock Arts & Crafts Fair and shop for items made by Native and local artists. While you're here, learn more about Choctaw History in the Wheelock Museum, located at 1377 Wheelock Road, Garvin, OK 74736.  
For more information, call 580.746.2139 or email [dstandridge@choctawnation.com](mailto:dstandridge@choctawnation.com)  
Scan for more info about the event.  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



**NAN ANOLI**  
"an announcer, newsman, reporter, publisher"  
**STAY UP-TO-DATE** with what's happening in the Choctaw Nation by subscribing to our weekly email list.  
Receive information on available programs and services, upcoming events and so much more!  
Scan the QR Code to sign up today!  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna Siptimba Language Lesson**

**Time – Hvshi Kanvlli In the Past – suffix 'kash'**

**Katimi kash – When?**

Katimi kash ish pisa ha?	When did you see him?
Katimi kash chim vlhtoba tuk.	When did you get paid?
Katimi kash yohmi ish ahni ha?	When did you notice (a situation)?

**Chekosi kash – A short time ago/while ago\***

Hattak mvt chekosi kash pa ant ia tuk.	That man came by here a short time ago.
Chekosi kash impa li tuk.	I ate while ago.
Chekosi kash pisa li tuk.	I saw her a short time ago/while ago.

**Ahchiba kash – a long time ago, awhile back, a while ago**

Ahchiba kash nvni vbit ia li tuk.	I went fishing awhile back.
Ilefoka himona ya ashchiba kash chompa li tuk.	I bought a new dress a while ago.
Ahchiba kash iskvli i pota li tuk.	I loaned him money a long time ago.

**Hopaki kash – a long, long time ago**

Hopaki kash vno, Chahta Anumpa illa ho anumpuli li tok. *	A long time ago I only spoke Choctaw.
Hopaki kash vno, holisso lawa hochefo li beka tok. *	A long time ago I used to read a lot of books.
Hopaki kash vno, il it-tiholissochi beka tok. *	Long ago we wrote letters to each other.

\*tok; past tense marker indicating remote past

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



**JUROR SUMMONS**  
Choctaw Nation tribal members, spouses of tribal members, and any Choctaw Nation associate residing within Choctaw Nation territory may be summoned to jury duty with the Choctaw Nation court system.  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



**CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER MEMBERSHIP**  
**BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER TODAY!**  
Your annual membership helps support the preservation of Choctaw culture. Membership benefits include:  
Complimentary admission to the Cultural Center, advance notice of special events and exhibits, invitations to members only events, discounts at Hvshi Gift Store and much more!  
SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM](http://CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION



**EMPLOYMENT TRAINING SERVICES**  
Do you need assistance finding a job or paying for job training?  
The 477 Employment Training Services aim to help people succeed in the workforce by providing opportunities for employment, education and training.  
Services are available within **Choctaw Nation Reservation.**  
Scan to learn more and to apply!  
Choctaw Nation 477 Program

Smithermans graduate from Georgetown and Harvard Universities

The Smitherman family has much to celebrate, as two of their children recently graduated from prestigious universities.

Lauren Smitherman graduated from Georgetown University in D.C. with a master's degree in biomedical engineering and plans to attend medical school.

Louis Phillip Smitherman graduated with a degree in government from Harvard University and will attend graduate school at Howard University in the fall. Phillip and Lauren are the children of Don and Carla Smitherman and grandchildren of the late Louis Smitherman and Marilyn.

"We, as proud members of the Choctaw Nation, want to thank everyone who made this educational experience a great success." - The Smitherman Family



Lauren Smitherman



Louis Phillip Smitherman

Bakers graduate from Gannon and Liberty

Trey Baker, of Kettering, Ohio, graduated with his bachelor's of arts degree in social studies secondary education from Gannon University.

He graduated with high distinction magna cum laude and received the special award for scholastics excellence in his program.

Trey will return to Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, for his fifth year of football, where he will study Curriculum Instruction and Management in the master's program.

Shannon Baker (formally Shannon Hickman of Poteau, Oklahoma) of Kettering, Ohio, graduated with her master's degree with a dual license program in school counseling and professional license counseling from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. She graduated with the high distinction of summa cum laude. Shannon currently works as a school counselor and will volunteer at her church's restoration center for counseling.



Trey Baker



Shannon (Hickman) Baker

Boehne graduates from Gateway

Brook Boehne (Pebworth) graduated from Gateway Community College with a degree in Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

The higher education program helped achieve her goal. She would like to thank her friends and family that offered so much support. We are so proud of her.



Watson to attend West Point

Caden Watson of Arlington Heights, Illinois, recently accepted a nomination to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Caden is the son of James "Curtis" Watson (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma) and his wife Stephanie Watson. Caden Watson, who resides with his family in Arlington Heights, Illinois, accepted an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Caden joined the other new Cadets on July 1 and is participating in Cadet basic training. Once he completes basic training, he will begin his Plebe (freshmen year) at West Point in August as a part of the class of 2028.

Caden's paternal Grandmother is Nancy (Herron) Watson from Idabel, Oklahoma (a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma), and his grandfather, Dennis J. Watson, a longtime resident of Miami, Oklahoma.

Caden was a five-sport athlete in high school, and he was a member of the varsity swim, water polo, cross country, football, and wrestling teams during his time at Buffalo Grove High School in Illinois. Caden's athletic achievements include being named All-Conference as a defensive lineman, All-Academic, and Football Defensive Player of the Year Award for his team. In his senior year, he qualified for the State wrestling tournament in Illinois.

Caden's academic awards include the National Technical Honors Society, the National Indigenous Recognition Award, and the AP Scholar with Distinction award.

Caden hopes to study cybersecurity and join a martial arts sports team at West Point.



Porter earns President's Education Award

Logan Porter, age 10, of Woodburn, Oregon, received the highest state test scores in his 5th-grade graduating class, earning him a President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence.

Logan is a Choctaw tribal member and was given a certificate signed by President Biden for achieving such excellent work.



Kraft earns masters from Southeastern

Sausley Kraft, Honor Society and Sigma Alpha Pi National Society of Leadership and Success chapter member, earned a Master's Degree in Native American Leadership with Honors from Southeastern Oklahoma State University.



Hamilton earns masters from TWU

Yasmin K. Hamilton, 23, recently received a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in accounting from Texas Women's University in Denton, Texas.

Hamilton earned her Bachelor of Science in accounting from Grambling State University in Louisiana in December 2022.

She will be sitting for her CPA and CFE Exams soon.



Daxton Michael Countz

Daxton Michael Countz was born March 31, 2023, at the Chickasaw Health Hospital in Ada, Oklahoma.

Daxton is the son of Krystle Countz of Stuart and joins siblings Payton, Jaxton and Braxton.

Daxton is the grandson of Eric and Pam West of Stuart, Sue Countz of Shady Grove, Oklahoma and Jimmy and Donna Countz of Shady Grove.



Willis graduates from Oregon State

Aidan T. Willis received his Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Oregon State University on June 16, 2024.

"Thank you, Choctaw Nation, for your constant support of Aidan in this amazing accomplishment. It is truly appreciated." - The Willis Family



A heartfelt reunion: Honoring our Choctaw heritage in Arlington

"Halito! In memory of our beloved grandparents, H.D. & Claudia Blythe, whose lives were deeply intertwined with the rich heritage of the Choctaw Nation, our family came together at the Choctaw community cultural meeting in Arlington, Texas. The gathering took place on Saturday, August 3.

Relatives from Fort Collins, Colorado, Van Buren, Arkansas, Houston, and various places in between joined us in Arlington. The cultural meeting was a vibrant display of the traditions and future aspirations of the Choctaw Nation, offering a unique opportunity to connect with our shared history.

One of the most enlightening aspects of the event was the array of booths representing the individual departments that serve the Choctaw Nation. Each booth provided insight into the services and initiatives designed to support and advance our community. It was inspiring to see the dedication and effort being put into preserving our culture and ensuring a bright future for the Choctaw people.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the meeting and the presentation by our chief. His words resonated deeply with us, reinforcing the importance of our heritage and the collective strength of the Choctaw Nation. It was a powerful reminder of where we come from and the legacy we carry forward.

After the meeting, our family extended the day's celebrations by attending the Texas Rangers game against the Boston Red Sox. It was a perfect conclusion to the day, giving us time to relax, enjoy each other's company, and share stories. The game served as a backdrop to our conversations, laughter, and the bond that our Choctaw heritage continues to strengthen.

This gathering was more than just an event; it was a heartfelt tribute to our grandparents and a reaffirmation of the ties that bind us. This experience reminded us of the importance of preserving and honoring it. As we look to the future, we do so with pride and a deep sense of connection to our past, carrying forward the values and traditions that our grandparents cherished.

A special thank you to Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Austin, and the many people that were responsible for this wonderful event.

Chi pisa la chike!"

- Drew Hudson



Huddleston turns 90

Phyllis Huddleston of Konawa, Oklahoma, recently celebrated her 90th birthday on July 3.

She had the pleasure of spending time with family and friends and enjoyed a lake-side BBQ in her honor. Her birthday was filled with all her favorite things! However, the highlight of her birthday was receiving a very special, unexpected gift from the Choctaw Nation.

Phyllis received a beautiful, hand-stitched wisdom blanket to commemorate her birthday. She treasures this gift and proudly displays it in her home.

"Yakoke to Chief Gary Batton and the Choctaw Nation for making her milestone birthday so very special!" - The family of Phyllis Huddleston



McDonald wins at FCCLA National Conference

SEATTLE (July 3, 2024)

Brannon McDonald from Spiro High School placed second in the National STAR Event Competition at the 2024 FCCLA National Leadership Conference (NLC). The NLC took place in Seattle, Washington, from June 29 - July 3, drawing more than 8,000 students, educators, and guests from across the nation. This gathering provided a valuable platform for attendees to expand their leadership skills, sharpen their talents, explore career pathways, and listen to inspiring speakers.

The highly anticipated Students Taking Action with Recognition (STAR) Events were at the heart of the conference. Over 4,300 FCCLA Members competed in these events, where they were recognized for their proficiency and achievement in chapter and individual projects, leadership skills, and career preparation. The collaboration between youth and adults in managing the events and evaluating participants allowed students to develop real-world skills and gain valuable insights.

We are thrilled to share that Brannon McDonald proudly represented Spiro High School at the FCCLA National Leadership Conference.

McDonald competed in the Professional Presentation STAR Event and achieved a remarkable Gold medal and placed 2nd placed in recognition of his outstanding performance. Professional Presentation is an event that recognizes participants who make an oral presentation about issues concerning Family and Consumer Sciences and/or related occupations. Participants must prepare a file folder, an oral presentation and visuals. McDonald's presentation titled, Operation Freedom, brought awareness about human trafficking. His project exemplified his dedication, creativity, and commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of others. His accomplishment at the national level is a testament to his hard work, teamwork, and unwavering passion.



**CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER**  
IBAIAYA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

**BE AN ACTIVE PART OF THE CHOCTAW JOURNEY!**

The Choctaw Cultural Center is looking for volunteers to help share our culture with guests. Volunteer benefits include:

Opportunities for personal and community enrichment, Ongoing training and learning opportunities related to Oklahoma history, Free or reduced admission to training activities, lectures, and workshops and much more!

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION

Collier places in national wrestling tournament

Kinslee Collier of Edmond, Oklahoma, placed third in the 2024 U.S. Marine Corps Junior and 16U National tournament in Fargo, North Dakota.

She also earned the All-American award. Kinslee is an Edmond North High School sophomore who has been wrestling for two years. She was 6A State runner-up in 2023 and 6A State Champ in 2024.

Kinslee is the daughter of Russell and Ginna Collier of Edmond, Oklahoma.



Moon plays in USA Fast Pitch All-Sate Game

My daughter Kinsley Moon recently played in the USA Fastpitch All-State games at Firelake Ball Fields in Shawnee. At the young age of 8, she is representing the Choctaw youth in our community, being able to showcase her athletic skills and work ethic. Kinsley thrives in social structure, always talking about her Choctaw heritage and eager to learn more about it. She was also recently awarded the Choctaw Star Student award for finishing last semester with all A's and is a part of the Native American tutor program at her school.

A little birdie told us that Kinsley is a big fan of the Biskinik and reads the paper every month. We at the Biskinik would like to give her a shout-out for being such a fan.



**CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER**  
GROUPS & TOURS

BRING YOUR GROUP TO THE CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER!

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM INCREASES FOOD AMOUNTS AND OFFERS NEW SELECTIONS**

Beginning in June, Choctaw Nation Food Distribution Program participants will see an increase in the following food amounts they receive:

- + Meat/Poultry/Fish (increase from five to six units)
- + Vegetables (increase from 18 to 20 units)

New food items will also be available.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

### Heemer turns 100

Stella Plant Heemer of Houston, Texas celebrated her 100th birthday on July 18, 2024.

She is a long-standing, proud tribal member and is always delighted to receive her copy of the Biskinik.

Stella was born in Waurika, Oklahoma in 1924 and grew up there with her parents, two brothers, and six sisters.

In 1947 she married Leonard Heemer and they settled in Houston where they had two daughters and a son. Together, they marked 76 years of marriage last Christmas Eve.

To commemorate 100 years, Stella enjoyed a week full of birthday parties and love with her two daughters, six grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren, and other family, friends, and neighbors.



### Thanks from Peterson

“Halito. I graduated in May from Lamar University with a Master’s degree in Special Education and received my Educational Diagnostician certification.

Thank you to the Choctaw nation for the grants and beautiful stole I wore to honor my Choctaw heritage!”

- Stephane Peterson



### Roberts turns 1

Tinsley Rayeann Roberts recently celebrated her first birthday.

She is the daughter of Suzanne and Dustin Roberts of Tuskahoma, Oklahoma.

Hannah Williams of Talihina made the custom dress, and Haylee Himes of Talihina made the custom beaded jewelry. Summer Cassel Photography of Talihina took her photo.



### Jones honored for service

Walcott Milton Jones was honored for his military service on July 19.

Cross Timbers Hospice and his children, Dale, David and Julie Jones organized this event.

Jones served in the Korean War between 1951 and 1954 on the USS Rowan DD-782. Thank you for your service, Milton.



### Duffy earns masters from SMU

Weston John Duffy, son of Stacy and John Duffy of Tulsa and grandson of Donna Daggs Goswick of Tulsa, graduated from TCU in May 2023 with a double major in accounting and finance and a minor in financial technology.

He graduated in May 2024 with a master’s in finance from SMU. American Bank of Dallas currently employs him as a credit analyst.



## Dr. Deana Ward among seven Choctaw artists representing tribe at SWAIA

By Kendra Germany-Wall

Dr. Deana Ward, a proud Choctaw from Durant, Oklahoma, recently participated in the 2024 Santa Fe Indian Art Market.

Each August, an estimated 100,000 people attend the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) annual Indian Market, the largest juried Native American art show in the world – Southwestern Association for Indian Arts.

This event occurs on and around the central plaza in Santa Fe, New Mexico. It sponsors over one thousand Native artists from more than one hundred tribal communities in North America and Canada. Artists show their latest work and compete for awards in SWAIA’s prestigious judged art competition. Santa Fe’s Indian Market has endured for the past 100 years and generates upwards of 160 million dollars annually in revenues for artists and the community.

Dr. Deana Ward was one of the artists featured in this year’s market.

Ward has been attending the festival as an artist for 15 years. She had been beading for about three years when she first started entering her work. Though she lacked the experience of most artists at the market, she was determined to be a part of it after visiting as a spectator in 2018.

“I grabbed my daughter, Gabrielle, and we came here. I didn’t enter it; I just wanted to see it,” said Ward. “All it did was wet my appetite to submit an application and see if they accepted me. I was juried in. I didn’t have to wait for an okay. They invited me out the following year, and I’ve been a part of it ever since.”

For other Choctaw artists who dream of entering SWAIA but are afraid their work isn’t “up-to-par” with others who enter the market, Ward has one word of encouragement, “Try.”

“It doesn’t hurt to try any kind of information you get back on, whether you’re accepted or not,” said Ward. “I didn’t think I would get in. It felt like I’d only been beading for three years. It felt like I was going from high school ball to the major leagues.”

But Ward doesn’t regret the choice to enter one bit. She uses the time each year to celebrate.

“My birthday is August 12. My birthday has become less important to me and used to be a big deal,” Ward said with a smile. “This is like my birthday.”

This year, her beaded purse, titled Shohmalali (Reflection), was entered into the SWAIA’s annual competition for Best in Show.

Shohmalali is a one-needle applique, wrap-beaded, picot edging, and 14 kt gold wire work. The back of the purse is English paper piecing, hand and machine sewn. Micro beads from 15/0-13/0, 14 kt gold-plated cones, beaded on brain-tanned smoked deer buckskin, Swarovski spacer beads, antique sequins, and moonstone and hawkeye gemstone beads. The inside of the purse is lined with satin.

The purse features a swan, which, according to Ward, is a part of Choctaw culture, though many are unaware of its significance.



Photo by Rodolphe Foucher  
This beaded purse, titled Shohmalali (Reflection), is one of Deana Ward’s art pieces.

“Swans were really important to our culture. Not a lot of people know that. And I want Choctaws to know that, and I want the world to know that this animal was sacred to us, and I did a project around it.”

Ward grew up in a multi-generational family that spoke fluent Choctaw. She attended Grace Indian Baptist Church as a child and still maintains the traditions modeled for her. Ward raised five children while earning a doctorate in Psychology from Oklahoma State University. She came to beadwork a



Photo Provided  
Dr. Deana Ward poses for a photo at her booth at the 2024 Santa Fe Indian Art Market.

little late in life but quickly learned different stitches and how to incorporate Southeastern Native culture into her art.

Ward feels deeply connected to her culture and loves telling Choctaw stories through her work.

“I feel like, when I get to come here [SWAIA] and enter my artwork or put out a booth with my art on it, I’m representing my tribe,” said Ward. “I feel a huge amount of responsibility to make sure that the stories I’m telling are accurate. I do a lot of research. I just want to put us on a pedestal. I feel like I’m a teacher. I’m teaching our culture.”

Ward has won many awards over the years, and her artwork is featured in two permanent exhibits at the Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant.

If you are interested in Dr. Deana Ward’s artwork, she suggests contacting her via social media on Facebook: Deana Dudley Ward or Instagram: deanawardartist.

Ward was among seven Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Artists representing their tribe at the market. Artists J. Dylan Cavin, Karen Clarkson, Yasmine Del Rosario (Cedar Sapling), Candace Shanholtzer and Janie Semple Umpsted were also present.

For more information on the Santa Fe Indian Art Market and the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts, visit <https://swaia.org/>.

### Ward and daughter make a coloring book

Dr. Deana Ward and her daughter, Lauren, teamed up to create a coloring book after an opportunity through a grant program presented itself.

The duo created and illustrated the coloring book “Nan Inchuwa,” which draws upon their love of Choctaw culture. According to Ward, “Nan Inchuwa” is a coloring and activity book developed for all ages.

The book features traditional and contemporary Choctaw iconography. Some pages are traditional coloring pages, and others ask the artist to develop their own art.

“Many surprises developed as we collaborated in the creative process. We had a lot of fun working on this coloring book together,” said Ward. “Making a book can be



Photo Provided  
Lauren Williams and Deana Ward show off new coloring book.

fun and scary. We believe this effort made our relationship stronger. The hope is you too will continue to create your own artwork and celebrate Indigenous culture along with us.”

To purchase “Nan Inchuwa,” visit <https://payhip.com/Wardbooks/collection/all>. It can also be found at <https://www.booksamillion.com/> and <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/NanInchuwa>.

### Regional Elder Chair Volleyball Tournament



The Annual Elder Chair Volleyball Regional Tournament was held July 25 at the Durant Wellness Center. Thirty teams signed up, with over 180 players on six courts. The top qualifying teams went on to compete in the Labor Day Championship Tournament.



Elders warm up before the tournament.



Meredith Billy of Broken Bow and Susy Adcock of Stigler enjoyed watching the day’s activities.



Photos by Shelia Kirven  
Elder chair volleyball is serious business in the Choctaw Nation.



Walker Davis, 84, of Idabel, is the wellness leader for his district. He started out as an exercise leader and has been doing this for 20 years.

### Indian Health Services recognizes Choctaw Nation/CNHSA associates

**DURANT, Okla. (July 24, 2024)** – Leaders and innovators across Native American tribes were recognized at the Annual Oklahoma City Area Director’s Indian Health Services awards ceremony in Oklahoma City.

Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) associates received several honors which were presented.

Service awards were given to those who have served Native Americans for 30 years or more. Alicia Noah, Connie Lakey, Doris Winlock, Gary Lawrence, Kevin Collins, LaQuetia Helm, and Lisa Russell were recognized for their service with CNHSA for the last three decades. Linda Bryant and Patsy Dukes have been with CNHSA for 35 years. Dennis King recognized for his 40 years of service at CNHSA.

The Oklahoma City Area Director’s IHS/Tribal/Urban Awards Committee took submissions from all the tribes across the area and recognized those who stood out among their peers.

CNHSA had several standout associates receive awards:

Charli Wallis, Christina Lorey, Erin Hander, James Haley, Karen Billy, Latrishia Dunlap, Laura Stumpf, Marcella Winklepleck, and Venita Lynn Williston:



CNHSA Photo  
CNHSA award recipients and leadership pose for a photo.

Peer Recognition Tribal Award for outstanding work in their respective fields.

- Chris Owens: Merit Tribal Award.
- Hannah Hodge: Exceptional Individual Performance, Non-Clinical Award.
- Clint Bullock: Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Chance Davis: Area Director’s Individual Area Impact Award.
- Choctaw Nation Rubin White Pharmacy Refill Center: Area Director’s Group Area Impact Award.
- Kaleb Kasitz: Area Director’s Individual Customer Service Award.

Choctaw Nation Pharmacy, all locations: Area Director’s Group Customer Service Award. Information is available on each awardee upon request.

**OKHVTA CHITO OKHOATALI**  
CHOCTAW AND FRENCH TRANSATLANTIC LEGACIES

**EXHIBIT NOW OPEN**  
JULY 6 - NOVEMBER 30

Explore the continued relationship between the Choctaw Nation and France through a collaborative exhibit featuring items from the eighteenth century. Step into the Choctaw world of early European trade and how the relationship with France has continued to modern day.

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER  
[CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM](http://CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM)

This exhibit was produced with the generous collaboration of the Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac and the University of South Alabama Archaeology Museum.

**HEAD START**  
NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Providing educational, health and family services for eligible children and families, including children with special needs.

Available to all children who will be 3 or 4 years old by September 1, 2024.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL  
**580.924.8280**

Scan to learn more about the program.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

## Non-Emergency Dispatch Line available to contact CNO Lighthouse Police and Security

A public telephone number is now available to reach the Choctaw Nation Department of Public Safety dispatch center.

Tribal members on the reservation, visitors to the Choctaw Nation facilities and properties, and Choctaw Nation associates can use the number to contact CNO Dispatch for non-emergencies (those experiencing an emergency such as a crime in progress or a life-or-death situation should call 911 instead of the non-emergency dispatch line.)

### **CHOCTAW NATION DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY NON-EMERGENCY DISPATCH (580) 920-7000 SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING**

The dispatch center is in Durant, and calls are answered there. In response to the calls, Choctaw Lighthouse Police and Security Officers are dispatched from assigned zones.

The easy-to-remember dispatch number (580-920-7000) creates an easily accessible way to contact CNO Dispatch.

According to Lacy Christian, Director of the Choctaw Nation Department of Public Safety Dispatch Center, calls being received include requests for welfare checks, domestic violence and assault calls and requests for agency assistance. Christian said that in their line of work, one never knows what may happen daily.

In the event of welfare check requests for individuals, Lighthouse Police Officers are sent to check on tribal members on the reservation.

For welfare checks of non-tribal individuals or those off the reservation, dispatch requests the applicable agency that has jurisdiction over the area in which the individual is in question.

For situations at a tribal facility on the reservation, the concerned party can talk to an on-site security officer if one is available or contact the dispatch service. The Dispatch service maintains contact with security officers at each location.

The Choctaw Nation Department of Public Safety dispatch center is for more than just callers from the reservation area. Callers from any location can contact the center with questions or concerns.

Choctaw Nation's officers want to help prevent crime and keep citizens safe.

"Our officers are absolutely service-oriented and want to help the public we serve," said Jesse Petty, Senior Director of Choctaw Nation Law Enforcement and Chief of Police.

Before calling the dispatch line, know your location and be prepared to give the operator an address if possible.

Highway names, cross streets, and landmarks are very helpful to officers in finding the location they need to be at.

## With Tim Walz as Kamala Harris' vice president pick, Peggy Flanagan could make history — again

By Kadin Mills  
Indian Country Today

Minnesota may soon be home to the country's first Native American woman governor.

On Tuesday [August 6], Vice President Kamala Harris chose Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz to join the Democratic ticket as her running mate. The duo are scheduled to make their first campaign appearance later Tuesday together in Philadelphia for the first time since the announcement.

If Harris and Walz win the presidential election and are inaugurated in January, the role of governor will fall to Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan. Flanagan, a citizen of the White Earth Nation, was first elected with Walz in 2018, becoming the first Native woman in the Lower 48 to serve as a state's lieutenant governor. Valerie Davidson, Yup'ik, briefly served as Alaska's lieutenant governor in 2018.

Flanagan would become Minnesota's first female governor, as well as the first Native woman to serve as governor of any state. She would still be the highest-ranking elected Native woman to serve in an executive office in the country. Bobby Joe Champion, president of the Minnesota state Senate, would become the new lieutenant governor. He'd be the first Black person to serve in that role in Minnesota.

On July 23, Flanagan told ICT that she

and Walz "stand ready to do what it takes" to elect Kamala Harris, adding she would "absolutely answer" the call if she was asked to step up as Minnesota governor. Flanagan gave a keynote at the Advance Native Political Leadership in Scottsdale, Arizona. She sat down for a brief interview with ICT's Aliyah Chavez.

"I've really been fortunate, I've worked side-by-side with Tim Walz and I know what kind of leader he is," she said. "I also know that when I accepted the role of being his running mate and the role of lieutenant governor, if I am called to be the next governor of Minnesota I will absolutely answer that call, but for now I am laser-focused on ensuring that we elect Kamala Harris president of the United States."

The race for the White House will consign Gov. Walz to the campaign trail, taking him away from his duties in Minnesota. Harris and Walz are expected to campaign aggressively in key swing states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, as well as Georgia and Arizona. As a result, Flanagan will likely spend the next few months carrying out most of the duties of the governor's office when he's out of the state.

Following a Democratic win this fall, Walz could choose to resign after the November election or wait until he is inaugurated on Jan. 20. In either case, Walz will vacate the office of governor pursuant to the state's constitution, and Flanagan will succeed him for the duration of his term — two years.

## More than a Princess: Haleigh Gibson

By Kellie Matherly

Haleigh Gibson is a proud tribal member from Durant, Oklahoma, whose story is rooted in faith, family, and culture. Growing up in Durant with her parents and an older brother, Haleigh knew she was a Choctaw tribal member, but she had very little awareness of the traditions and culture of the Chahta people, like dancing, stickball, or artwork.

The turning point in Haleigh's life came at age 12 when her aunt, Patricia Brown, introduced her to the Choctaw beadwork. Patricia, whom Haleigh affectionately called "Aunt Taters," taught Haleigh to make her first daisy chain with beads and thread. This sparked Haleigh's passion to learn more about her culture, leading her to further explore Choctaw traditions through beading classes at the Choctaw Nation. With help from Choctaw Artist Debbie Damron, Haleigh quickly advanced in her beading skills, even assisting in teaching classes.

Haleigh's involvement with the Choctaw Nation's Cultural Services Department began through the Summer Youth Program, which allowed her to work and learn more about her heritage at the same time. Her dedication and skill in various cultural practices, including beading, basketry, and social dancing, landed her a permanent role with the department. Over the past four years, Haleigh has contributed significantly to the preservation and sharing of Choctaw culture through outreach events, presentations, classes, and demonstrations.

Patricia has passed away now, but for Haleigh, there's a little bit of "Aunt Taters" in every piece of beadwork she makes because that skill was passed down from the woman she loves so much. After Patricia passed, Haleigh was given beads and finished projects that belonged to her beloved aunt.

"I use some of her beads sometimes within my own work that I keep for myself, and I always feel connected to her every time I do that," Haleigh said. "That's part of the reason why I do keep beading. I want to keep going and passing this down if I have my own children one day."

Another significant milestone in Haleigh's life was her participation in the Choctaw Princess Program. Inspired by her parents and her own desire to honor her aunt's memory, Haleigh ran for District Princess in 2019.

Haleigh remembers, "I told my mom, 'You know what? If I run for Princess, it's going to be for [Aunt Taters]. Not only for her but also for myself. I'm going to go and try to do my best.'"

Although she did not expect to win, she succeeded and

kept entering the pageants for four years. In her final year of competition, she was crowned Miss Choctaw Nation, a role she embraced with passion and commitment.

During her reign, Haleigh found the most joy in meeting people and sharing their stories about discovering their Choctaw roots. Her goal was always to inspire others to be Choctaw proud.

"It was always a fun time listening to different people's stories about how proud they were to be Choctaw. That was always my favorite part," Haleigh said. "But one of the goals I had everywhere I went was to always touch someone's heart, whether it was me talking to them and sharing my own stories or doing the Lord's Prayer in sign language." In addition to her time as Miss Choctaw Nation, Haleigh has achieved another significant goal as a beadworker: designing district crowns, a project she considers a highlight of her cultural involvement. This role has allowed her to further contribute to the Choctaw community by creating symbols of pride and identity for her peers.

"I never thought I would get a chance to do district crowns. When I was asked last year, I'll tell you I cried about it. That is one of the things that I got to mark off my bucket list. It was definitely a privilege and an honor to be able to make district crowns," she said.

Looking to the future, Haleigh continues to work with the Cultural Outreach Department, dedicating her time to preserving and teaching Choctaw traditions. She remains committed to her cultural heritage and is motivated by the support of her family and the memory of her loved ones, including her aunt and grandparents.

According to Gibson, her mom is her biggest female inspiration.

"My mom has been the most inspirational person in my life; she has taught me to always be strong, work hard and follow my dreams but always be humble and kind. She has always told me that life is what you make of it, to always take chances, push yourself out of your comfort zone," she said.

Haleigh's journey is a testament to the impact of mentorship, the importance of cultural connection, and the power of perseverance. Her gratitude towards her family and mentors reflects her deep appreciation for the support that has shaped her path. Haleigh's story serves as an inspiring example of how reconnecting with one's heritage can lead to a fulfilling and impactful life dedicated to cultural preservation and community service.



Choctaw Nation Photo

Choctaw Nation Department of Public Safety Dispatch officers answer calls through the new non-emergency dispatch line and send out officers in response to a variety of needs. Currently, over 250 calls are being answered at the call center daily.

Response times to calls vary depending on where assistance is needed, as the Choctaw Nation's reservation covers over 10,000 square miles and has populations in rural areas.

**Instances where you should contact the non-emergency include, but are not limited to:**

- Reporting a crime that did not just occur, and the suspects are not in the immediate area.
- Reporting a serious crime with suspect(s) but with a lengthy delay (example: a crime that occurred last night).
- Reporting a crime with no suspect (example: public property damage).
- A suspicious circumstance that may indicate an ongoing criminal activity, but you are not sure.
- Non-emergency in progress (example: noise complaint).
- Traffic accidents that do not involve injuries.
- Ongoing crime issues or crimes that are not in progress.
- Requests for information.

**Instances where you should contact the emergency line 911 include, but are not limited to:**

- Serious medical problems (chest pain, seizure, bleeding, etc.).
- Any fire (business, car, building).
- Any life-threatening situation (fights, a person with weapons, etc.).
- Crimes in progress.

"I am hopeful that whomever you call will see to it that you get the resources and response that is needed," said Christian. "If you ever have a doubt, just call Lighthouse dispatch, and we can make sure your concern or issue is taken care of in the most efficient manner."



Photo by Bella Haveman, Special to ICT

Minnesota Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, White Earth Nation, sports an outfit by Spirit Lake Dakota Nation fashion designer Rebecca Mousseau on April 25, 2024, at Quincy Hall in the Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Minnesota's next gubernatorial election will be held in November 2026.

This move may demonstrate that Walz believes Flanagan is ready for the role. After all, she taught Walz what he knows. Mark Trahant wrote in his blog, Trahant Reports, that the two met in 2005 at Paul Wellstone's camp. "Peggy's vast knowledge and expertise will be something I rely on daily," Walz said in his campaign news release for his first congressional race. They've had a close friendship since then.

During their time in office, Walz and Flanagan have worked to improve relationships with the 11 federally-recognized tribal nations in Minnesota. This includes creating the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office to address alarming numbers of Indigenous people who have

disappeared across the state. Flanagan has also helped pass legislation for an historic child tax credit, in addition to supporting free and reduced-price school meals.

Before serving as lieutenant governor, Flanagan was previously a member of the Minneapolis Board of Education from 2005 to 2009. She went on to serve in the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2015, and she formed the state's first People of Color and Indigenous Caucus, which works to improve social and economic opportunities for marginalized communities across the state.

This story has been updated to clarify that state Sen. Bobby Joe Champion would become the first Black lieutenant governor in Minnesota if Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan ascends to the role of governor. For more ICT stories, visit <https://ictnews.org/>.



Choctaw Nation Photo

Haleigh Gibson connected with her Choctaw roots at age 12, thanks to the guidance of her beloved aunt.

**LEARNING COMMUNITIES**  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES



Scan to learn more about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/HIGH-SCHOOL-STUDENT-SERVICES](https://choctawnation.com/services/high-school-student-services)

Choctaw Nation High School Student Services

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES**

OUR GOAL | To assist our students with academic information to promote education and/or career path beyond high school.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **800.522.6170** OR EMAIL  
[HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

Choctaw Nation High School Student Services

**Glen T. Minyard**

Glen T. Minyard, 93, passed away Jan. 1, 2024.

Glen was born in McAlester, Okla., to Onnie T. Minyard and Nina Mae Minyard.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter Sharon Harvey; and son Charles David Minyard.

Glen is survived by his son Dale Minyard; siblings Sue Joiner, Gayle Yost, Beverly Perry, Vicky Casey, and Guy Minyard; grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and many family members and friends.

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

**Leroy Houston Frazier**

Leroy Houston Frazier, 76, passed away July 18, 2024.

Leroy was born May 25, 1948, at Talihina, Okla., to Aben Frazier and Florence Baker Frazier.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Ruth Frazier; sisters Naomi Warren and Agnas Ward; and brothers Eslyn Frazier and Solman Frazier.

Leroy is survived by his daughter Florence Frazier; granddaughter Hanna Frazier; sisters Amy Shelton and Cora Stewart; brothers Randall Frazier and spouse Sheryl, Abe Frazier, and Jimmy Baker and spouse Charmain; as well as a numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and other family members and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Serenity Funeral Service – Antlers](#).

**Rodney Mark Johns**

Rodney Mark Johns, 65, passed away July 13, 2024.

Rodney was born April 29, 1959, in Seattle, Wash., to Markerlee and Zelma Johns.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Rodney is survived by sons Mark and Jonathan; daughters Ashleigh and spouse William, and Marlee and spouse Brandon; grandchildren Rhett, Lily, Cora, and Ruby; brother Randy Johns and spouse Karen; sister Debbie Henderson and spouse Steve; wife Brenda Johns; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other family, and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Blackburn-Curry Funeral and Cremation](#).

**Aurora Elaine Pitman**

Aurora Elaine Pitman, 11, passed away July 28, 2024.

Aurora was born April 19, 2013, in Little Rock, Ark., to Charles Wesley Pitman and Neva Rose (Day) Pitman.

She was preceded in death by her grandfather Richard Day; papa Jeff Davis; and aunts Onita Pitman and Amber Day.

She is survived by her parents; sisters Melanie Pitman and Olivia Pitman; maternal grandmother Camilla Day; paternal grandparents James and Mary Pitman; cousin Landon Parker; and a host of other family, friends and loved ones.

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

**Bryce Mueller**

Bryce Mueller, 29, passed away July 17, 2024.

Bryce was born May 11, 1995, in Phoenix, Ariz., to Kurt and Lorrie Mueller.

He is survived by his parents; grandmother Patricia Lewallen; siblings Brent, Brittany, Ricky, Korey, Haylee, and Hannah; niece Emma; nephews Cameron, Derrick Jr, and Brandon; aunt Jerrin Watkins Ferroni; numerous cousins he held dear as brothers and sisters; aunts and uncles; and many friends he considered family.

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

**Randy Gene Bertis**

Randy Gene Bertis, 49, passed away July 1, 2023.

Randy was born Oct. 20, 1973, in Talihina, Okla., to Richard and Naomi (Wallace) Bertis.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters Roberta Bertis and Wanda Bertis; and brothers Glen Bertis and Richard Bertis.

Randy is survived by his children Brianna Bertis, Mitchell Perry, and Jacob Bertis; sisters Anita Cooper and Sandra Campos; brothers Dennis Bertis and Dwayne Hamill; and many dear and loved grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit [Browns Funeral Home – Atoka](#).

**Becca Lamoreaux**

Becca Celeste (Dominick) Lamoreaux, 36, passed away July 26, 2024.

Becca was born March 23, 1988, in Woodward, Okla., to Darrel and Gwyn Dominick.

She was preceded in death by maternal grandparents James and Sadie (Quinn) McClendon; paternal grandparents Max and Mary (Guest) Dominick; and beloved companion dog Choco.

Becca is survived by her husband Dustin; sister Erin Anderson; nephew Asher; mother-in-law and father-in-law Gary and Lisa Lamoreaux; grandfathers-in-law Gerald Hyatt and Walter Lamoreaux; uncles and their families Don Dominick and spouse Kathy, Jimmy McClendon, and David McClendon and spouse Pat; and Red Labrador “son” Wren.

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

**Kayza Nicole Giles**

Kayza Nicole Giles, 19, passed away June 24, 2024.

Kayza was born July 27, 2004, in Okla. City, Okla., to Catina and Justin Giles.

She is survived by her parents; brother Michael Williams; niece Kinley Williams; nephew Austin Williams; grandparents Karen and Preston McPhail; uncle Chris Lisle; aunt Beth Deuel; and cousins Camie Deuel and Charlie.

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

**Ashley Dawn Miller**

Ashley Dawn (McKinney) Miller, 38, passed away Aug. 10, 2024.

Ashley was born Sept. 9, 1985, in Talihina, Okla., to Gary “PeeWee” McKinney and Teresa (Anderson) McKinney.

She was preceded in death by Grandpa Ed McKinney and Grandma Nora McKinney; Grandpa William Anderson and Grandma Estherleene Anderson; Pa James Muse; and brother-in-law, Nathan Miller.

Ashley is survived by her husband Jason Miller; children Kenlie Miller and Jaxson Miller; her parents; brothers Carl McKinney and spouse Valarie, and Reggie McKinney and spouse Whitley; sister Kay Meddock; father-in-law and mother-in-law Ronny and Cheryl Miller; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law Jeremy and Brittney Miller, Michelle and Allen Stinnett and Tammy Miller; Granny Betty Muse; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, many friends, family and loved ones.

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

**Bryan Kevin Hunter**

Bryan Kevin Hunter, 61, passed away Aug. 14, 2024.

Bryan was born October 17, 1962, in Hugo, Okla., to John Douglas Hunter and Virginia Mae (Walton) Hunter.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Wilma Hunter; son Kenneth Batchelor; brother Douglas Keith Hunter; and granddaughter Michelle Crosby.

Bryan is survived by sons Tommy Batchelor and spouse Mary, and Jerry Batchelor; daughters Sherri Smith and spouse Lane, Jackie Teague, Amanda Shovanec and spouse Donavan, and Terry Gage and spouse Tony; 19 grandchildren; great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren; sisters Theresa Garman, Mavis Bastible, and Melanie Faith Priddy; and a host of other family, friends and loved ones, especially his friends at Elmbrook.

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

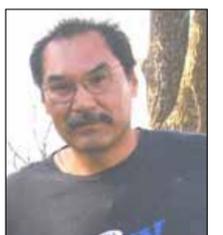
**Richard Ray Johnson**

Richard Ray “Rick” Johnson, 57, passed away Aug. 10, 2024.

Rick was born Nov. 17, 1966.

He is survived by his spouse Carla Ripley; children Michael Ripley, Nathaniel Ripley, Richard Johnson Jr., Hopi Johnson, and William Johnson; and many other family members and friends.

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

**Mildred Louise Lunsford**

Mildred Louise Lunsford, 84, passed away Tuesday, July 22, 2024.

Mildred was born Sept. 18, 1939, in Red Oak, Okla., to Simpson Burgess and Mary Ellen Bench Coulter.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Grady Lunsford; and sisters Glenda Jones, Mary Lawrence, Joyce Schaeffer, and Carolyn Manning.

Mildred is survived by her daughter Pam McConnell and spouse Mike; granddaughter Joy and spouse Matt; brothers Joe Burgess, and Henry Coulter and spouse Leah; sisters Dorothy Trusty and spouse Bobby, and Donna Holmes and spouse Bruce; beloved fur babies Sister and George; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Bowser Family Funeral Home – Broken Bow](#).

**Floyd Eugene Satterfield Jr.**

Floyd Eugene Satterfield Jr., 58, passed away Aug. 12, 2024.

Junior was born Nov. 15, 1965, in Talihina, Okla., to Floyd Eugene “Gene” Satterfield and Eunnella Myrtle (Davis) Satterfield.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Junior is survived by sons Trace Satterfield, Ryne Satterfield and spouse Kandii, and Kelton Satterfield; daughter Summer Satterfield; grandchildren Caydin Carter, Ava Bunn, Braxton Carter, Lakyn Carter, Karter Satterfield, Ripp Satterfield, Everett Satterfield and Parker Satterfield; brothers Keith Satterfield and Gary Satterfield; sisters Gwen Coffman and Teresa Davis; along with numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

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

**Obituary Policy**

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw Nation tribal members only and are free of charge.

The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

Family members/individuals may submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspaper through a funeral home service.

Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws. Therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice.

Due to space limitations, there is a 150 word limit for obituaries. The online issue of the Biskinik will contain links to the full obituaries.

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik  
PO Box 1210  
Durant OK 74702  
or email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

**Anthony James Scantlen**

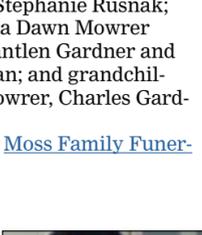
Dr. Anthony “Tony” James Scantlen, 97, passed away June 30, 2024.

Tony was born in Tamaha, Okla., to James Russell Scantlen and Eunice Ford Scantlen.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and son Mitchell Scantlen.

Tony is survived by his wife Dr. Stephanie Rusnak; son Scott Scantlen; daughters Tonia Dawn Mowrer and spouse Michael, Stephanie Scantlen Gardner and spouse Adam, and Meridith Harman; and grandchildren Elizabeth Mowrer, Abigail Mowrer, Charles Gardner, and Anthony Mowrer.

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

**Visha Elfeadia Morris**

Visha Elfeadia Morris, 82, passed away July 13, 2024.

Visha was born Jan. 31, 1942, in Abilene, TX., to Haskell and Elfeadia Morris.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister Jane Morris; brothers Joseph, Robert, Laddie, and Henry.

Visha is survived by her sister Sarah Tilden and spouse Richard; brother Haskell Morris, Jr. and spouse Debbie; cousin Dean Ferguson; nephew Laddie Morris Jr.; nieces Kristi Kubalek, Kerri Taylor, Sammi Johnson, Emily Mendoza and Babette Harrell; and many great-nephews and great-nieces.

For the full obituary, please visit [Butler-Stumpff & Dyer Funeral Home](#).

**Carolyn (Lucas) Davis**

Carolyn (Lucas) Davis, 69, passed away July 19, 2024.

Carolyn was born May 10, 1955, in Talihina, Okla., to Josh Lucas and Mary Jane (Marris) Lucas.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Ira Davis; daughter Sherry Durant Ross; brothers Frank Lucas and Tom Lucas; and sister Barbara Sloan.

Carolyn is survived by her daughters China (Davis) Allen, Shawna Benavides, and Debbie Sarpy; grandchildren Gabrail Durant, Jimmie Williston, Riley Williston, Carrisa Lucas, Jaxon Lucas, Brekken Ross, Legacee Ross, Andi Teague, and Liberty Benson; one great-grandchild; sister Lena Clark; and a host of other friends, family and loved ones.

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

**Samuel Ed Peters Sr.**

Samuel Ed Peters, Sr., 80, passed away July 19, 2024.

Samuel was born March 14, 1944, in Bethel, Okla., to Ed Peters and Melcie (Bond) Peters.

He was preceded in death by his parents; son Cary Peters; and sisters Effie Shomo, Virginia Jefferson, Jansey Wade, and Melissa Bohanan.

Samuel is survived by sons Samuel Peters, Jr. and spouse Shirley, and Gary Peters and spouse Monica; sister Francine Howell; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, other family and friends.

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

**Brenda Lewis Smith**

Brenda Lewis Smith, 64, passed away Aug. 9, 2024.

Brenda was born Nov. 9, 1959, in DeQueen, Ark., to Tommy Sherman Lewis and Ruth Alice Noah.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother Roger Lewis; and sister Lillian Gross.

Brenda is survived by her daughter Amanda Lewis; brother Robert Lewis; sisters Ruby Lewis and Viola Perin; grandchildren LaShari Claborn, Davion Byrd and Kaylei Byrd; great-grandchild Emerius Claborn; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

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

**Jeannette Jean Hardy**

Jeannette “MaJean” Jean (Hilliard) Hardy, 93, passed away July 28, 2024.

Jeannette was born July 4, 1931, in San Angelo, Tex., to Louie and Reynelda (Bass) Hilliard.

She was preceded in death by her husband LeRoy; and son Larry.

Jeannette is survived by sisters Helen Malone and Darlene Demeter; brother Paul Hilliard; daughters Beverly Allen (John) and Patricia Abercrombie (Matt), grandchildren John A. Allen, Julianne Albertson, Stacy Huggins, Patrick Abercrombie and Bradley Abercrombie, 16 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

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



## ITI FABVSSA

## Minutes from the Treaty of Fort Adams (Part 3)

This month, Iti Fabvssa will conclude following the conversations between representatives of the United States and the Choctaw Nation from the 1801 Treaty of Fort Adams. In last month's Part 2, we followed the speeches of the Choctaw Chiefs who spoke at the treaty ground. Miko Tuskonahopai, Miko Tootehoomuh, Miko Oakchume, and Miko Elautaulahoomuh each gave speeches to the commissioners, granting the U.S. permission to improve the Nache Hina, or Natchez Road, into a wagon road. They agreed to allowing the boundary between the Choctaw Nation and the United States to be marked by representatives from both Nations. Miko Puckshemubbee also agreed to the survey, but also requested that any American squatters to be removed from Choctaw Lands. Miko Pooscoos stated that he did not have the authority to grant permission for the United States to improve the southern trade road into a wagon road, and that they should instead continue to use the existing roads. After the chiefs finished speaking, they asked that the U.S. Commissioners make time to record additional speeches.

Below are the speeches of a Choctaw Chief and several Choctaw warriors present at the treaty negotiations. Following the excerpts (italicized), we provide additional context. This transcript has been copied from the American State Papers Indian Affairs volumes.

The communications made from the deputation from the Choctaws, in their camp, to the commissioners of the United States, through their agent, Colonel John McKee, on the 15th December, 1801.

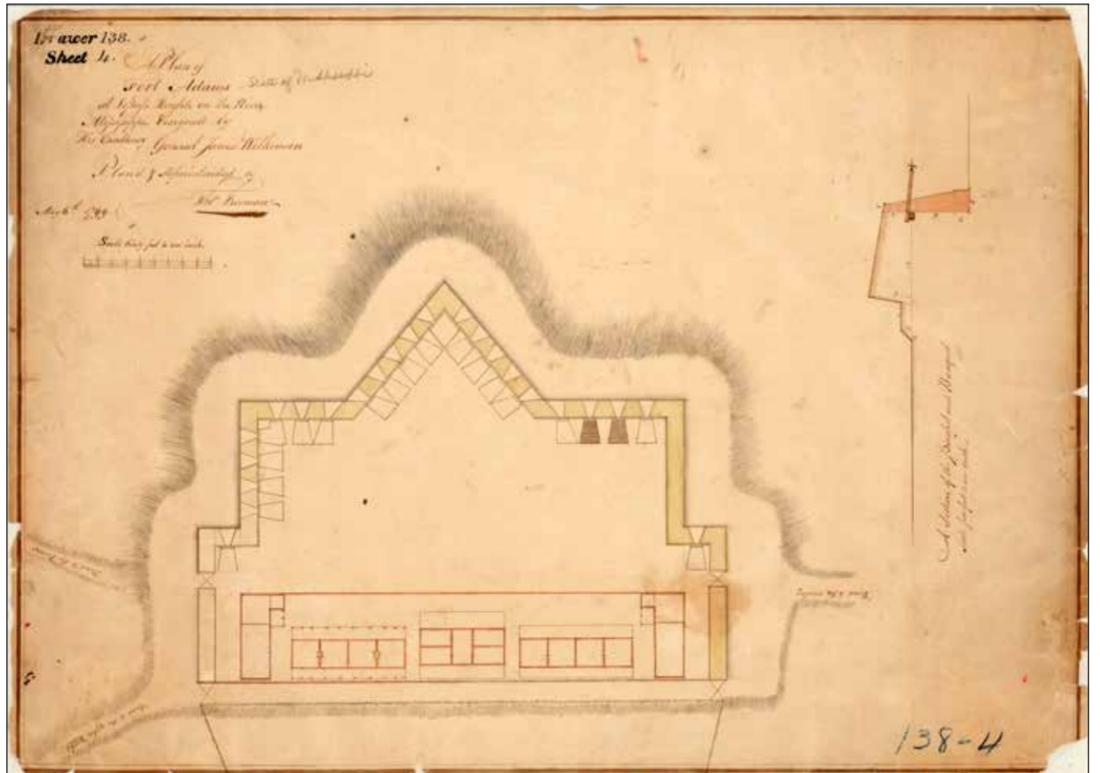
**Bun-shun-abbe:** *I am a factor, and have been so for a long time; my merchant is in Mobile; I have traded for him till I am become old. I am a man of one heart, and of one mind. White people make a number of fine things; my mind is not to be changed for these fine things; and, if the people at Mobile are not able to supply us, I do not wish to look to other people to supply us. We are old; we cannot take all the supplies that may be offered to us; the trade of the Choctaw nation is my object; I do not look for any trade from this quarter. We wish that no people may, from this quarter, cross the road we have granted, with trade to us; we receive our supplies from another quarter, and must make our remittances there. There are a number of people wanting to trade, from this quarter. We do not wish the people of Bayour Pierre, and Big Black, and Walnut hills, to purchase skins from the red people. We do not apply for that trade; 'tis a trade interfering with ours, and stealing our property, who trade from other places. These people may introduce a trade of liquor amongst us, that may cause the death of red people, which has happened lately, at Natchez, for which we are sorry. I want our father to send us iron wedges, and hand-saws, and augers.*

Bunshunabbe is a "factor," a type of trader who buys and sells goods on commission. He brings trade goods, from a merchant in Mobile to the Choctaw Nation; in return he receives a commission. He mentions that Euro-Americans trade many "fine things," but he will not be turned away from his Choctaw lifestyle for them. Bunshunabbe mentions that he does not want increased trade with the American settlements of "Bayour Pierre, Big Black, and Walnut Hills" and that trade with the merchants in Mobile is sufficient. Trade goods coming from these towns would have had a negative effect on Bunshunabbe's profits, however he provides some justification for his comment. American traders were known for trading alcohol into the Choctaw Nation, despite treaties and agreements between Choctaw leaders and U.S. officials to keep alcohol out of the Choctaw lands. Alcohol was used as a weapon to disrupt Choctaw society. Bunshunabbe understands the issue of alcohol and may have worked to keep it out of his trade network. If American traders from Natchez district begin to trade, they may send large amounts of alcohol into Choctaw communities.

**Mingo Hom-massatubley.** *I understand our great father, General Washington, is dead, and that there is another beloved man appointed in his place, and that he is a well wisher and lover of us four standing nations of red people. Our old brothers, the Chickasaws, have granted a road from Cumberland, as far south as their boundary; I grant a continuance of that road, which may be straightened; but the old path is not to be thrown away entirely, and a new one made. We have been informed, by the three beloved men, that our father, the President, has sent us on a yearly present, we know nothing of. There are three other nation; perhaps some of them have received it. Another thing our father, the President, has promised us, without being asked, that he would send people among us, to learn our women to spin and weave; he has made us these promises; I will not ask for men, I ask for women, to learn our women. These women may first go amongst our [mixed-bloods], and learn them, and the thing will then extend itself; one will learn another; and the white women may return to their own people again. I have people qualified well to teach our women, not people that know nothing. I understand that such things are to be furnished us; I wish, therefore, as we have half breeds, and others accustomed to work, that ploughs may be sent us, weeding hoes, grubbing hoes, axes, hand-saws, augers, iron wedges, and a man to make wheels, and a small set of blacksmith's tools, for a red man. Father (the President of the United States:) We have a number of warriors who use their guns for a living; I understand your goods are cheap; I wish you to send us on a supply trade; I do not want this trade here this is a strange land; I want the store at fort Stoddart, or fort St. Stephens. Father: I hold your talks strong, I hope you will hold our fast, also; (i.e. grant what we ask.) I hope our father will comply with my request, as we have been informed by his beloved men, that he is disposed to afford us aid.*

*We came here sober, to do business, and wish to return so, and request, therefore, that the liquor which we are informed our friends had provided for us, may be retained in store, as it might be productive of evil.*

Mingo Hommassatubley gives his approval for the Nache Hina (Natchez Road) to be improved and tells the commissioners that he has not received the President's gifts. He notes that the president offered to send people to teach the Choctaw how to spin and weave fabrics. He wants qualified women to come teach mixed-race Choctaw women. After the mixed-race Choctaw women learn to spin and weave, they would teach other Choctaw women while the American teachers would return home. Hommassatubley asks for ploughs, tools, a wheelwright, and blacksmith tools. He asks for a trade store



Plans for Fort Adams at Loftus's Heights, State of Mississippi" Courtesy of The National Archives at College Park.

to be built nearby so that Choctaw traders do not have to travel far to exchange goods. Lastly, he asks that the provided alcohol be kept in storage and not be dispersed to the Choctaw present at the treaty "as it might be productive of evil".

**Hoche Homo.** *This is the talks of the chiefs and warriors; I am one of the children of the President, who have seen him in his own house; I saw my father in the great beloved council house in Philadelphia; he is now dead, and I am informed there is another father to the red people appointed, to keep up the great council house. I have taken by the hand, these three beloved men, sent by my father, the President, to meet the Choctaws; I have received his talk by them, and put it in my heart, and send this mine in return. With the other chiefs, I have granted permission to the commissioners to open the white road of peace asked for. Father, when you receive this, I hope you will hold it fast; the chain of friendship, like an iron chain, should never be broken. I have but a short talk, and hope it will be remembered.*

Hoche Homo speaks of previous travel to meet President George Washington at the old Capitol building in Philadelphia, PA. He grants his permission for the trade road to be improved, and that the road be a symbol of peace and friendship between the Choctaw and United States.

**Shappa Homo.** *I was present when my father, the President, talked with the Choctaws, Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws, and four Northern nations, and heard his good advice to his children. When I was in the beloved house, all talks and all paths were whitened with every nation; I am well pleased that they are kept white yet; I am glad there are some people alive yet, who belonging to that white house, wish to take care of the red people. We give up this road; it is not to be settled by white people.*

Shappa Homo had also previously met President George Washington. He attended a meeting with the Choctaw, Muscogee, Cherokee, Chickasaws, and four tribes from the Ohio River Valley; possibly the Miami, Delaware, Shawnee, and Wyandot. He gives his permission for the trade road to be improved but denies the road's right-of-away to settlement.

**Edmond Fulsome.** *Mingo Hom-Massa-tubba's talk is mine, except, that he has forgot to ask for cotton cards; my people already make cloth; I know the advantage of it, and request that good cotton cards may be sent us.*

Edmond Fulsome is requesting cotton hand carders, a tool used to process cotton for use in fabrics.

**Robert McClure.** *A gin is a thing that I asked for long ago; it was once offered to my nation, and refused by our chiefs; I asked for it last July, but have received no answer; I now ask for it again; if this will be granted, I wish to know, soon. I am glad to hear it is the wish of our father, the President, to teach us to do such things as the whites can do. The sooner those things are supplied, the better, for, by long delay, they may grow out of our young people's minds. We, half-breeds, and young men, wish to go to work, and the sooner we receive those things, the sooner we will begin to learn. I want a blacksmith sent to the lower town district, with a good set of tools, which may not be at the disposal of the smith, but remain with us, should he go away. Some of our young people may learn to use these tools, and we wish them to remain for the use of the district. My reason for asking this, is, that our interpreter may die, and our agent may be recalled by his superior, and another sent to us, who may not live at the same place, and may wish to remove the tools; we wish them to remain to us and our children. We red people do not know how to make iron and steel; we wish our father to send us these, with the smith, &c. And when presents are sent on, we wish a true inventory of all the presents, that we may know when we are cheated, and that the invoice may be lodged with one of our chiefs.*

Robert McClure requests a cotton gin, a mechanical tool used to process cotton for making fabrics. He states that if these things are supplied, then young people can be taught how to use them. He also requests a blacksmith and tools to send to the Six Towns District. The blacksmith can use the tools, but McClure wishes them to be owned by the Tribe so if the blacksmith leaves then they will still be retained for the Choctaw apprentices to use.

*17th December. The chiefs met the commissioners of the United States in the council chambers, and were addressed by the latter.*

### Mingoes, Chiefs, and Principle Men of the Choctaw nation:

*We have heard the talks you delivered to us the 13th, and we have since received your written address of the 15th. Those talks and this address have sunk deep into our hearts; they give us great pleasure, and must prove highly satisfactory to your father; the President of the United States, to whom we shall faithfully transmit them, because he will perceive therefrom, that his red children of the Choctaw nation are wise, just, dutiful, and affectionate.*

These negotiations lead to the Treaty of Fort Adams being signed by Choctaw Leaders on December 17th, 1801. It was ratified by the U.S. Congress on April 30th, 1802. Article II of the written Treaty states that the Choctaw Nation gives its consent for the wagon road to be "...explored, marked and opened..." and that the Choctaw Nation nominate two men as advisors who will be paid for their services. Article III states two Choctaws will be appointed to assist with the survey of the Choctaw Nation and U.S. boundary line and that anyone who is illegally living on Choctaw lands will be removed and their property demolished. Article V provides the Choctaw Nation \$2000 worth of trade goods and merchandise and three sets of blacksmith tools.

While most of the issues raised by the Choctaw leaders were listed in the written Treaty, there are a few items not specifically addressed such as the fabric teachers and blacksmith. It is not known if the \$2000 worth of gifts by the President included the additional items requested by the Choctaw leaders; additional archival research would need to be done to look into the treasury records.

This treaty was the first major land cession from the Choctaw Nation to the United States. A mere one year later, the United States returned to negotiate a cession of a small acreage of land in the 1802 Treaty of Fort Confederation. Furthermore, the 1803 Treaty of Hoe Buckintoope and the 1805 Treaty of Mount Dexter forced the Choctaw Nation cede its southern hunting lands to settle its trade debts. This acreage totaled approximately 8.3 million acres.

We hope that this series, "Minutes from the 1801 Treaty of Fort Adams, Parts 1-3. Has been helpful in understanding how Choctaw leaders approached an important treaty negotiation. " We encourage you to look back at the American State Papers. Class II Indian Affairs. Volume 1. Pages 658-663 and the 1801 Treaty of Fort Adams.

For more Iti Fabvssa's visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/biskinik/iti-fabvssa/>

**2024 INDIGENOUS ARCHAEOLOGY DAY**  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2024 | 10:00AM - 3:00PM

Dive deep into Choctaw art forms and lifeways during this all-day educational and fun event.  
All ages are welcome to this free event.

- Pottery making
- Textile education
- ATL-ATL throwing
- Children's events
- Flint knapping
- Bow shooting
- Stickball
- Resource Tables:
  - Growing Hope
  - Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network
  - Choctaw Nation Forestry

Traditional foods will be prepared onsite and served at noon.  
Don't miss the Growing Hope Garden walkthroughs at 10:30AM and 1:30PM.

**WHELOCK ACADEMY HISTORIC SITE**  
1377 Wheelock Road | Garvin, OK | 580-746-2139

Scan to learn more.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

# Proper child safety seats can prevent tragedies

By Chris Jennings

Motor vehicle crashes remain a leading cause of death for children.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), a total of 859 children younger than 13 died in motor vehicle crashes in 2022; almost three-quarters of these deaths were children riding in passenger vehicles.

For Native Americans, those statistics are even more grim. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), death rates among American Indian and Alaska Native children and youth aged 0-19 years were about 2 to 5 times higher than those of other racial and ethnic groups in motor vehicle crashes.

CDC statistics point to a lower-than-average usage of child safety and booster seats among the Native American population. While rates can vary across reservations, proper restraint use among American Indian and Alaska Native children aged 7 years and younger ranged from 23% to 79% in a study of six Northwest tribes. A nationally representative study in 2015 found proper restraint use among U.S. children aged 7 years and under ranged from 63% to 87%.

When looking at these statistics comparing other races to Native Americans, it points to the fact that many of these deaths are preventable.

"With the Native American population, we see high rates of injury and deaths, higher than any other races nationwide," said Consuelo Splawn with the Choctaw Nations Children Matter program.

A rider vest is a wearable booster seat alternative for children that brings the seatbelt down to your child's level.

The Vest is a legal alternative for children as young as 3 years old and 30 pounds to belt-positioning boosters in all states that do not require the child's body to be elevated off the vehicle seat.

Splawn added that not only do they install car seats, but they also provide education on best practices for a family or caregiver so that they're comfortable installing the car seat, too.

"The staff and the other CPS techs are available to check a car seat anytime, not just at the car seat check events," said Splawn.

Any CDIB card holder is eligible to apply for the program.

They also have to be a resident within the tribal reservation area," Splawn added. "If you're pregnant, then you have to show proof of pregnancy after 31 weeks of gestational period."

## Follow the law

Different states have different laws for car seats. For Oklahoma, the laws are as follows:

- Children under age 2 must be properly secured in a rear-facing car seat.
- Rear-facing is the safest way for small children to travel, and they should remain rear-facing until they reach 2 years of age or until they exceed the height or weight limit of the car seat.
- Riding rear-facing with legs bent or against the back of the seat is a safe and comfortable position for children. This position best protects the head, neck, and spinal cord in the event of a crash.
- All children under age 4 must be properly secured in a car seat with an internal harness.
- A 5-point harness is the safest restraint system and should be used as long as possible (until the child exceeds the harness' weight limit).
- Children at least 4 years of age (but younger than 8) must ride in a car seat or booster seat unless they are taller than 49".
- A booster seat should be used until the child can properly fit into a seat belt.
- Children 8 years or older, or taller than 49", should always be restrained in a seat belt. Riding in the vehicle's back seat is the safest way for children to travel.

If you live outside of Oklahoma, the Governors Highway Safety Association lists child passenger safety laws by state.

Visit <https://www.ghsa.org/state-laws/issues/child%20passenger%20safety> for more information.

## Types of car seats

The primary types of car seats are rear-facing, forward-facing and booster seats.

Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. It's the best way to keep them safe.

**STEP 1 REAR-FACING**  
A rear-facing car seat is the best seat for your young child to use. It has a harness which, in the event of a crash, cradles your child and moves with them to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord.  
Keep children REAR-FACING as long as possible.

**STEP 2 FORWARD-FACING**  
A forward-facing car seat has a harness and tether that limits your child's forward movement during a crash.

**STEP 3 BOOSTER SEATS**  
A booster seat positions the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body.

**STEP 4 SEAT BELT**  
A seat belt should lie across the upper thighs and be snug across the shoulder and chest to restrain the child safely in a crash.

State by state, the rules vary for different types of child safety restraints. Here are a few tips from the Governors Highway Safety Association. More can be found on the GHSA website.

Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until they reach the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer.

Splawn says this is important because of the way children develop.

"Their head and body aren't going to be able to survive an impact if they were forward facing, so they recommend rear-facing in a car seat for that reason."

Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, they're ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness and tether.

The next stage is a booster seat, but still in the back seat. Keep your child in a booster seat until they're big enough to fit in a seat belt properly.

For a seat belt to fit properly, the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snugly across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. It's recommended that your child rides in the back seat because it's safer there.

Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions (check height and weight limits) and read the vehicle owner's manual on installing the car seat using the seat belt or lower anchors and a tether, if available.

## Common mistakes

One common mistake Splawn sees is parents moving to forward-facing seats too early.

"They have a car seat that can allow that child to continue to ride rear-facing, but because their legs are folded up in the back, they want to go ahead and turn them

around. We always want to check the manufacturer's recommendation for that car seat," Splawn said.

Another mistake Splawn sees often is extra accessories added to the car seat.

"Things like extra little pillows, bulky coats in the winter, and securing the child in a car seat, but adding to that car seat," said Splawn. "A good rule of thumb that we usually tell people is, if it's not already with the car seat in the box, you don't need it."

If you live outside the reservation, resources are available from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/>.

You can find help in understanding the parts and tips used for installation, detailed car seat installation instructions and videos, and a place to get your car seat inspected near you.

Registering your car seat and signing up for recall notices to receive safety updates is also important.

"We tell our families they're at great risk already, so let's mitigate that risk as best we can," said Splawn.

If you're a new parent or would like to have your car seat checked, Splawn says you can set up an appointment by calling 580-642-6001. Applications for free car seats are also available on the Chahta Achvffa member portal.

There will be a car seat check event in Hugo on September 27 from 10 to 2.

The exact location has yet to be announced, but it will be posted on the Choctaw Nations events page at <https://www.choctawnation.com/events/> and Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Facebook page.

**1 OUT OF 2 KIDS**  
ARE NOT AS SECURE AS THEY SHOULD BE  
because their car seats are not being used correctly.  
Properly installed car seats & booster seats reduce the chance of death

Children Matter is part of the Choctaw Nations Injury Prevention program, which provides education for properly installing car seats for children who are members of a federally recognized tribe.

The goal of the Injury Prevention Program is to focus special attention on activities to prevent or reduce the occurrence of injuries for Native Americans residing in the Choctaw Nation service area.

One way this is done is by ensuring that Native Americans living on the Choctaw Nation reservation have access to adequate child passenger safety seats or equipment appropriate for their child.

"We have anything from infant carriers to backless boosters, and it's basically for the ages of zero to eight," said Splawn.

Splawn says that in the last six months, over 300 car seats have been given out on reservation through the program.

Splawn says they can also provide appropriate safety equipment for a child with special needs.

"For instance, if we have someone that may have a child that's autistic, then we can provide not just a car seat, but even the possibility of what they call a rider vest," explained Splawn.

**TAKE IT SLOW**  
MANY KIDS MOVE TO THE NEXT CAR SEAT OR BOOSTER SEAT TOO SOON

[NHTSA.gov/TheRightSeat](https://www.nhtsa.gov/TheRightSeat)

NHTSA

**SAY THANK YOU TO YOUR NURSE!**

Share your story of their compassionate and skillful nursing care. Scan the QR code from your smartphone camera to access the online nomination form.

Scan to nominate a nurse today!

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/THE-DAISY-AWARD/](http://WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/THE-DAISY-AWARD/)

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS		
LOCATION	DAYS	HOURS
<b>Antlers</b> 580.916.5609	Tuesday	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
<b>Atoka</b> 539.316.2050	Daily   Monday – Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Battiest</b> 580.241.5458	1st Tuesday of every month	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
<b>Broken Bow</b> 539.316.3011	Daily   Monday – Friday (Except the 1st Tuesday & 2nd Thursday of the Month)	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Durant</b> 539.316.3517	Daily   Monday – Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Heavener</b> 539.316.4784	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Hugo</b> 539.316.5089	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00 am – 4:00 pm
<b>Idabel</b> 539.316.4313	Daily   Monday – Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>McAlester</b> 539.316.2431 539.316.2430	Daily   Monday – Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Poteau</b> 539.316.4606	Daily   Monday – Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Smithville</b> 580.244.3289	1st Thursday of every month	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
<b>Spiro</b> 918.962.5134	Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Stigler</b> 918.967.4211	Monday & Tuesday	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
<b>Talihina</b> 539.316.6792	Daily   Monday - Friday	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
<b>Wilburton</b> 580.642.7588	Wednesday	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
<b>Mobile Van</b> 580.380.8193	1st Tuesday – Boswell 3rd Tuesday – Coalgate 4th Tuesday - Clayton	9:00 am – 3:00 pm

**Choctaw Nation** Health Services

**CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

**MARKET HOURS**  
Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday  
Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
*Markets will be closed the last two days of each month for inventory.*

**September 2024**  
All markets open weekdays, September 1-26  
**Closed:** September 27 & 30  
Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation  
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

**ANTLERS** 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443  
FOOD DEMO SEPTEMBER 5

**BROKEN BOW** 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842  
FOOD DEMO SEPTEMBER 12

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773  
FOOD DEMO SEPTEMBER 19

**MCALESTER** 3244 Afullotha Hina, 918-420-5716  
FOOD DEMO SEPTEMBER 10

**POTEAU** 106 B St., 918-649-0431  
FOOD DEMO SEPTEMBER 17  
*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

September 4	Antlers	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
September 9	Idabel	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
September 10	Talihina	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
September 11	Crowder	By Appointment
September 13	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
September 13	Coalgate	12:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
September 16	Wright City	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
September 17	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
September 18	McAlester	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
September 23	Broken Bow	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
September 24	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
September 27	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
September 27	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
September 30	Stigler	By Appointment

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

# Nike partners with Choctaw Nation and Texas Rangers for youth event

By Christian Toews

On July 13, Choctaw Nation Youth enjoyed an exciting opportunity to partner with the Texas Rangers, Southeastern Oklahoma State University and Nike.

This group came together for the Nike N7 Diamond Experience, held on the campus of Southeastern in Durant, Oklahoma.

Choctaw athletes, ages 8 to 18, of all genders, abilities and experience levels, had the opportunity to attend camp with top national and local coaches.

The Nike team set up stations around the Mike Metheny Field on the Southeastern campus for athletes to practice various skills and talk to experienced players and coaches.

Athletes were split into groups, and the groups rotated through each station, where they had a chance to hone their abilities with specialized coaches.

According to Javen White, Program Manager with the Choctaw Nation Youth Activities, seeing an organization like Nike highlight Choctaw kids was great.

According to Nike, N7 was founded in 2000 with the mission "to fuel positive change by celebrating the strength of

Indigenous culture through the power of sport."

Sam McCracken (Sioux and Assiniboine) is the General Manager and Visionary of Nike's N7 programs and founder of the N7 Fund.

In 1999, Sam proposed a business development strategy targeting Native American communities to increase health and wellness through physical activity.

He became the Manager of Nike's Native American Business in 2000 and has led the development of the Nike Air Native N7 shoe, the N7 retail collection, and the N7 Fund, which helps to create access to sports for Native American and Indigenous youth in the United States and Canada.

According to White, it was important for the kids to see McCracken as the head of such a large organization.

"He may not be from our tribe, but how amazing for these kids to get to see leaders in those capacities who are also Indigenous," said White.

To learn more about Choctaw Nation youth activities, visit [www.choctawnation.com/services/yea/](http://www.choctawnation.com/services/yea/).

For more about Nike's N7 program, visit [www.nike.com/n7-native-american-indigenous-heritage](http://www.nike.com/n7-native-american-indigenous-heritage).



Photos by Christian Toews

Around 90 athletes from all over the Choctaw Nation Reservation participated in the Nike N7 Diamond Experience on July 13. Choctaw Nation partnered with Nike and the Texas Rangers to bring this opportunity to Choctaw athletes ages 8 to 18.



# Choctaw Nation nonprofit continues to help tribal members achieve higher education goals

## Chahta Foundation awards \$1.8 million in scholarships

By Christian Toews

At the 2024 Chahta Foundation scholarship banquets held at the Choctaw Cultural Center, 177 Choctaw students were awarded 1.8 million scholarship dollars.

The Chahta Foundation is the nonprofit arm of the Choctaw Nation, working to empower the next generation of Choctaw students through education.

The Chahta Foundation has helped Choctaw students achieve their higher education goals since 2011.

It offers competitive scholarships that help fund the Choctaw recipients' educational dreams. While these students and scholarships are the foundation's focus, the Chahta spirit remains the driving force behind the foundation.

"All of our scholarships are funded through donations from people all over the country, including CNO employees who can donate through payroll deductions," said Angela Palmer, the Executive Director of the Chahta Foundation.

Individual generosity is essential to funding, and the Choctaw Nation encourages it by matching each donation dollar for dollar.

"CNO also matches all donations received, so donor impact is doubled. They also donate so that our administrative costs are all covered," said Palmer. "Ensuring that 100% of all donor gifts go to their intended purpose, making our nonprofit unique."

Kinsley Scrivner is one of this year's scholarship recipients, opening new doors for her educational journey.

"I had received my NSU scholarship, which lacked around \$2,500 a year. I applied for the Chahta Foundation scholarship, and it was the perfect amount to cover the rest," said Scrivner.

According to Scrivner, The Chahta Foundation scholarship helped her decide which school to attend.

"I'm really thankful that it definitely allowed me to narrow down that NSU is definitely where I want to go," she said.

This year, the Chahta Foundation handed out the most scholarships to date, requiring two separate banquets—primarily because one Choctaw family donated 56 scholarships alone.

The Taylor Family wanted to give back to the Choctaw Nation to honor their son, Dr. Ryan Lee Taylor. They worked with the Chahta Foundation to establish four different scholarships.

The Ryan Taylor Memorial Scholarship directly benefits medical students; Heritage and Healing, honoring Dr. Ryan Taylor, helps nursing students; the Joe Taylor Trades Scholarship assists those going to learn a skilled trade; and the Taylor Family Scholarship for first-generation students seeking an associate degree.

"I had no idea how much their family would impact my life. Working with Carolyn over the last year, for me, has been a master class in love and honor," Palmer said during her opening remarks at the second scholarship banquet.

Joe and Carolyn Taylor were not able to attend the banquet, but they sent a letter that was read during the ceremony.

The letter read as follows, "During his medical career, he saved and invested his money for his retirement, and you are all the recipients of his years of dedication and savings.

And to honor our son Ryan Lee Taylor, we expect you all to study diligently, complete the degrees in your chosen field and then maximize your potential, doing your best to honor the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Taylor Family."

To learn more about the Chahta Foundation, visit [chahtafoundation.com](http://chahtafoundation.com).



Chahta Foundation scholarship recipients and board members pose after the 2024 Chahta Foundation Awards Banquets held on August 2 and August 15 at the Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant, Oklahoma.



Executive Director of the Chahta Foundation, Angela Palmer, addresses the crowd at the Chahta Foundation Award Ceremony.



The Scott family sings Choctaw Hymns at the opening of the August 16 Chahta Foundation's awards banquet at the Cultural Center in Durant, Oklahoma.

**VISIT CHAHTA CONNECT**

Make Chahta Connect your go-to resource for finding Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on the Choctaw reservation in Southeast Oklahoma. Whether you're looking to get connected or upgrade your service, Chahta Connect has you covered. Features of the Chahta Connect website include:

- ISP Locator: Easily find ISPs in your area.
- Submit Your Location: If you don't have a qualifying service, let us know by submitting your location.
- How-To Video: With a step-by-step video guide on how to look up your location using your address.
- Free Wi-Fi Locations: Discover free Wi-Fi spots near you. More locations will be added as they are verified.

**HELP US IMPROVE**  
We are continually gathering data and requesting carriers to submit their coverage details. This means the website will keep getting better with your help and contributions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT, [CHAHTACONNECT.COM](http://CHAHTACONNECT.COM)

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

**HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM APPLICATION NOW OPEN**

The application for the 2024 Fall semester is now open. The deadline to apply is **October 1, 2024.**

Scan to learn more about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY NOW AT [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/HIGHER-EDUCATION/](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/HIGHER-EDUCATION/)

**Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program**

**UPDATE YOUR CHOCTAW NATION MAILING SUBSCRIPTION**

At Choctaw Nation, we constantly try to improve our services and look for better ways to serve you, our Tribal Member.

To choose your Circulation subscriptions, scan the QR code or visit the website above to select which of these items you wish to continue receiving through the mail.

- Biskinik
- Birthday Card
- Calendar

- Christmas Ornament
- Member Letter

[choctawnation.com/subscribe/](http://choctawnation.com/subscribe/)

Please allow time for changes to be effective. You will continue to receive your items during this process. Subscribers must be 18+ years of age, or the only member in the household.

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma** • TOGETHER WE'RE MORE •

# CNO summer camps host over 2,200 youth in sports, culture and education

By Christian Chaney

Kids and teens across the reservation enjoyed an exciting summer filled with camps organized by the Choctaw Nation.

These camps, which ran from May through early August, saw over 2,200 registrations and offered a wide range of activities for various interests.

From athletics to academics, there was something for everyone.

Elite coaches and instructors provided fundamental training in different sports, while STEAM and cultural camps offered enrichment opportunities, ensuring a fulfilling and impactful summer for all participants.

Youth Events and Activities (YEA) hosted the second annual Rodeo Camp, welcoming 138 participants.

Attendees had the opportunity to meet and learn from Don Gay, a rodeo legend and partner of the Choctaw Nation. Don Gay, an 8-time World Champion Bull Rider, tribal member, and National Rodeo Hall of Fame inductee, shared his expertise with the participants.

The camp offered practice and coaching in various rodeo events, including steer wrestling, bronc riding, bullfighting, bull riding, breakaway roping and barrel racing.

Aside from athletic camps, Choctaw Nation hosted Cultural, Wildlife Conservation and STEAM Camps.

Campers who registered for Cultural Camp learned and participated in pottery, beading, traditional archery and studied the Choctaw language.

The Wildlife Conservation Camp partnered with the Choctaw Nation's Wildlife Conservation Department and Oklahoma Game Wardens to offer campers a chance to complete their Hunter's Safety Course, learn about ATV safety, compete in skeet shooting and fish in the Tuskahoma village pond.

Hosted by Project Pelichi WILL, the STEAM camps offered workshops, college trips and tours, academic development and more.

Program Manager Javen White expressed her excitement about the camp turnouts and is already looking forward to next year. "It was another incredibly successful summer camp season. Our participants experienced immersive, hands-on learning across a diverse range of subjects, including athletics, wildlife conservation, and cultural enrichment. We wish all our participants a fantastic school year and eagerly anticipate seeing everyone again in 2025!"

To learn more about the camps and activities offered by Youth Events and Activities (YEA), visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/yea/>.

### Summer Camps

- Cultural (South); May 21-22; 172 participants
- Cultural (North); May 23-24; 160 participants
- Stickball (All Districts); May 28-29; 193 participants
- Rodeo (All Districts); May 30-31; 138 participants
- Softball (South); June 3-4; 118 participants
- Softball (North); June 6-7; 87 participants
- Baseball (South); June 10-11; 139 participants
- Baseball (North); June 13-14; 97 participants
- Cheer (All Districts); June 17-18; 125 participants
- Football (All Districts); June 19-20; 129 participants
- Golf (South); June 24-25 (Cedar Creek Golf Course; Broken Bow, OK); 137 participants
- Golf (North); June 26-27 (Arrowhead State Park Golf Course; Canadian, OK); 86 participants
- Wildlife Conservation (South); July 8-9; 109 participants
- Wildlife Conservation (North); July 11-12; 84 participants

### Basketball

- Wilburton High School; July 15-16; 58 participants
- Broken Bow High School; July 18-19; 88 participants
- Panama High School; July 22-23; 56 participants
- Talihina High School; July 25-26; 51 participants
- McAlester High School; July 29-30; 66 participants
- Durant High School; August 1-2; 110 participants

### STEAM

- Senior STEAM Camp; May 28-June 2
- Junior STEAM Camp; June 5-7



Photos Provided

Choctaw Nation Youth Activities and Events hosted several summer camps for Choctaw children ranging from cultural camp to STEAM. Campers were able to get hands on instruction from elite coaches and learn from experts in their craft.



# Camp Chahta: Guiding college freshmen and building a tribal community

By Christian Chaney

Camp Chahta kicked off the 2024-2025 school year with a focus on helping incoming freshmen transition smoothly into college life.

Organized by the Choctaw Nation's College Freshman Year Initiative (FYI), this camp is designed to create a close-knit community among freshmen tribal members, providing them with the tools and support needed to succeed in their first year of college.

Now in its seventh year, Camp Chahta continues to be hosted at Carl Albert State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University and Eastern Oklahoma State University.

The Southeastern Oklahoma State session of Camp Chahta, held from August 12 to August 14, had 37 students participate in activities to familiarize them with college and the resources available to them through Choctaw Nation.

These activities included guided tours of the Choctaw Nation Headquarters, the Wellness Center and the Cultural Center.

A highlight of the camp was a speech and Q&A session with Chief Gary Batton, offering students the opportunity to engage directly with tribal leadership.

In addition to cultural enrichment and campus orientation, students attended seminars hosted by various Choctaw Nation education programs designed to introduce them to the academic and support services available.

On the last day of camp, participants could obtain their student IDs, parking permits, and class schedules, ensuring they were well-prepared for the start of classes.

Taylor Olive, College Counselor for College FYI at Southeastern Oklahoma State, emphasized that the support from the Choctaw Nation extends far beyond the camp itself.

"Once they join the College FYI program, part of their agreement in joining the program is that they'll come in to check in with me weekly, and then I'll host different resume-building workshops, different interview skills, study skills and time management," said Olive. "We'll do grade checks and just make sure they're understanding what they're doing and everything like that."

Camp Chahta prepares students for the academic challenges ahead and creates a sense of community, ensuring that these freshmen have a strong support network as they begin their college journey.

For more information on Camp Chahta and College FYI, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/college-fyi/>.



Photo Provided

Camp Chahta students pose for a photo on the steps of the Morrison Building on the campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University.



Photo by Christian Chaney

Camp Chahta students tour Choctaw Nation Headquarters and hear from Chief Batton.

**YEAR-AROUND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

COMING SOON!

Youth Employment Services is offering exciting paid employment opportunities for youth aged 16-21 in the Choctaw Nation Reservation service area starting October 1. Youth Employment Services is transitioning from a traditional 5-week summer work experience to a year-round employment opportunity with Project Auatvchi and Project Toksvi, allowing participants to work up to 200 hours at any time of the year.

Scan to learn more about the program.

Choctaw Nation 477 Program

**2024 CHR FALL FESTIVAL**

SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 | 9:30 AM

MCALESTER EXPO CENTER  
4500 WEST US-270, MCALESTER, OK

Plan to spend the day with the CHR Department as they present health information, program booths, entertainment, and lunch. Immunizations will be available at no cost.

Buses will run for this event from Choctaw Nation Community Centers. Check with your local community center for details.

Scan to learn more about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL OR CALL  
[OCLAY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:OCLAY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)  
800.522.6170

Choctaw Nation Community Health Representative Program

**TIME FOR PICNICS AND GRILLING!**

CNO FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Prepare your family's favorite summer recipes using nutritious items from the Food Distribution Program.

Visit any Food Distribution market (Antlers, Broken Bow, Durant, McAlester or Poteau), a Choctaw Nation community center or apply online.

Scan to learn more about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/FOOD-DISTRIBUTION](https://www.choctawnation.com/services/food-distribution)  
800.522.6170

Choctaw Nation Food Distribution

# ARPA Elder and Disability Food Security programs coming to an end

## Eligible participants must apply by Sept. 30

By Kellie Matherly

Federal law requires the Choctaw Nation to obligate all ARPA funding for the Elder and Disability Food Security Programs by the end of December 2024. To help tribal members for as long as possible through these services, the Nation will roll out a final set of payments intended to cover applicants through September of 2025. Eligible tribal members can apply for assistance through September 30, 2024.

The Biden Administration's American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) allotted federal funds for relief efforts during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, including a substantial amount paid to tribes to use for projects and assistance programs on reservations across the country. The Choctaw Nation received \$944 million in initial funding.

According to Council Bill 88-21, \$627,154,677 of ARPA funding was allocated to the Tribal Member Relief Fund to provide assistance, "including but not limited to assistance with food security, housing security, necessary living expenses, childcare, and internet and technology access."

Two of the ARPA-funded programs the Nation gave eligible elders and tribal members with disabilities who applied a \$200 per month stipend for groceries. Since its inception, these programs have helped well over 100,000 people.

The initial ARPA funding was always set to expire in December 2024, which is just around the corner, so the Nation has allocated the remaining funds to comply with the federal mandate.

Eligible tribal members can apply for the final payments through the Chahta Achvffa Member Portal until September 30, 2024.

Both programs are nationwide.

Once the application is approved, the applicant will receive a new card, which will be loaded monthly from October through December.

**New to this application is the requirement to upload proof of income documents. One of the following types of documentation may be required for income verification:**

- Monetary Determination Letter of Unemployment Benefits
- No Income Statement
- Copy of pay stub
- Copy of filed federal tax return or tax transcripts
- Unemployed Attestation
- Proof of Unemployment
- Copy of W2 Statement

The structure of the final phase of the program will be \$200 in October and \$200 in November. In December, program participants will receive \$2000, which is meant to cover their \$200 stipends through September 2025.

**Eligibility requirements for the Elder Food Security program are as follows:**

- Tribal members aged 55-74 with individual income less than \$40,000.
- Tribal members aged 75+ at any individual income level.
- Anyone wishing to receive assistance must apply, even if they have received Food Security funds before.
- Tribal members must attest that they have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Eligibility for requirements for the Disability Food Security program are as follows:
- Disabled tribal members under age 55 at any income level.
- Disabled tribal members aged 55-74 making more than \$40,000.

Anyone wishing to receive assistance must apply, even if they have received Food Security funds before.

Tribal members must attest that they have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important to remember that tribal members who meet the eligibility criteria for both programs can only receive funding for one of them.

Tribal members can get more information at [www.choctawnation.com/covidrelief](http://www.choctawnation.com/covidrelief).



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Applications for the final disbursement of Elder Food Security Program funds are open through September 30, 2024. Apply today to receive your new card. Income restrictions may apply.

## Chahta Achvffa connects tribal members to services

**DURANT, Okla.** – Chahta Achvffa (One Choctaw) is an online portal that streamlines tribal member services. Once a user profile has been created, account holders will be able to use their securely stored data and documentation to apply for services in a more user-friendly and efficient manner. Access is available 24/7 using any device (computer, tablet, or smartphone).

**Can I Apply for All Services on the Portal?**

We are adding new services to the Member Portal each year. If you do not see a service program application available on the Member Portal, please continue to apply in the usual manner.

**How Do I Create an Account?**

You must have a valid email address and your personal information; DOB and SSN (or Member ID) to create an account. Your Member ID is located on your Choctaw Nation Tribal Membership card. If you don't have access to that information, you can use your Social Security Number or contact the Membership Department at 580-634-0654 or use the contact form on the Tribal Membership and CDIB webpage. If you do not have a SSN, please contact support at 800-421-2707.

**What If I Forgot My Username and/or Password?**

From the Sign In page, click 'Forgot Password' to be navigated through the process to create a new password. Your username is the email address you used to create the account.

Call support for any further questions or concerns with logging in or creating an account.

More information can be found at <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/chahta-achvffa/>. A step-by-step tutorial can also be found at <https://www.choctawnation.com/news/videos/using-the-chahta-achvffa-member-portal/>.



Photo by Chris Jennings

CNO ARPA Food Assistance Cards can be used to purchase groceries nationwide.

**Who Can Use It?**

- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal members
- Non-tribal parents/guardians of Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal members

**How Do I Sign Up?**

Account creation requires personal identification information and a valid email address. Once a user profile has been created, account holders will be able to use their securely stored data and documentation to apply for services in a more user-friendly and efficient manner. Access is available 24/7 using any device (computer, tablet, or smartphone).

## FAQS

**What is Chahta Achvffa?**

A site is designed to be a convenient source for members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) or the guardians of a Choctaw Nation tribal member, to update their contact information, apply for services, store documents and much more from anywhere at any time.

**The Annual Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival was held Aug. 30 - Sept. 2. Check out next month's issue of the Biskinik for all of the highlights from this year's festival!**

# BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

## Siptimba (September) 2024

### In This Issue

- 2 FFC
- 4 Council Corner
- 5 NTN
- 6 PYK
- 7 PYK
- 8 PYK
- 9 Obits
- 10 Iti
- 12 Chahta Foundation
- 13 Camp Chahta
- 13 Summer Camps



**Page 1:**

Together, We're More campaign highlights Choctaw spirit and impact.



**Page 3:**

Choctaw Nation opposes proposed hydropower plant.



**Page 11:**

Proper child safety seats can prevent tragedies.

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

Stay Connected to the Nation  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM)





## CHOCTAW NATION AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

Federal law requires the Choctaw Nation to obligate all ARPA funding for the Elder Food Security Program by the end of December 2024.

Applications for this final allocation of funds open July 30, 2024, and close September 30, 2024.

Income restrictions may apply.

APPLY NOW

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/COVIDRELIEF](http://WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/COVIDRELIEF)



## CHOCTAW NATION AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

**APPLY NOW FOR  
DISABILITY FOOD  
SECURITY FUNDS**

Federal law requires the Choctaw Nation to obligate all ARPA funding for the Disability Food Security Program by the end of December 2024.

Applications for this final allocation of funds open July 30, 2024, and close September 30, 2024.

APPLY NOW

PRESORT STD  
AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
CHOCTAW NATION

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

P.O. BOX 1210  
DURANT OK 74702-1210  
**BISKINIK**