



April 2022 Issue



Choctaw Nation “Invests in Our Planet” on 52nd Annual Earth Day

By Kendra Germany-Wall

Every year, Earth Day is celebrated on April 22. EARTHDAY.ORG, the global organizer of Earth Day, announced that the theme for Earth Day 2022 will be “Invest in Our Planet.”

The holiday was created in 1970 and has grown into a global celebration. In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, the public knew little about the effects of pollution on the environment.

Senator Gaylord Nelson, a junior senator from Wisconsin, had long been concerned about the environment. In January 1969, Senator Nelson and many others witnessed the ravages of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California.

Inspired by the student anti-war movement, Senator Nelson wanted to infuse the energy of student-led anti-war protests with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution. He announced the idea for a teach-in on college campuses to the national media and persuaded Pete McCloskey, a conservative Republican Congressman, to serve as his co-chair. They recruited activist Denis Hayes to organize the campus teach-ins, and they chose April 22, a day between Spring Break and Final Exams, to maximize student participation.

They changed the name to Earth Day, which immediately sparked national media attention and caught on across the country. Earth Day would come to provide a voice to this emerging environmental consciousness and put ecological concerns into the public mind.

Earth Day inspired 20 million Americans to take to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests, and there were massive coast-to-coast rallies across the nation.

According to EARTHDAY.ORG, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the passing of other environmental laws, including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Clean Air Act. Two years later, Congress passed the Clean Water Act. A year after that, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act, and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act soon followed.

More than 1 billion people participate in Earth Day activities every year, and the holiday has become a significant steppingstone along the pathway of engagement around the protection of the planet.

The Earth is a sacred place for the Choctaw people.

There are two oral histories of how the Choctaw people came into existence. One of those stories tells of the Creator forming the Choctaw people underground from yellow

clay. They then surfaced from the earth from a cave at the base of a natural hill in Mississippi. Nvnih Waiya, Place of Creation, is known as the Mother Mound.

As Dr. Ian Thompson, Senior Director Historic Preservation, said in his book, Choctaw Food: Remembering the Land, Rekindling Ancient Knowledge, “We are all connected to each other through the land. We depend on the earth to provide the physical necessities that keep us alive.”

The Choctaw Nation has a long history of living with and caring for the land. That tradition continues today with Choctaw Nation Environmental Protection Services and its recycling program.

The Choctaw Nation Recycling Program began in 2009.

There are two Choctaw Recycling Centers, one in Durant and one in Poteau.

According to Jason Lilley, Choctaw Nation’s recycling manager, the Recycling Center has collected and processed 33,526,234 pounds of material, 449,955 tires and 9,450 printer cartridges.

Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into new products. Recycling can benefit not only the environment but communities as well.

According to the EPA, the benefits of recycling include:

- Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators
- Conserving natural resources such as timber, water and minerals
- Increasing economic security by tapping a domestic source of materials
- Preventing pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials
- Saving energy
- Supporting American manufacturing and conserving valuable resources
- Helping create jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries in the United States

There are several ways to recycle, even if your city does not offer curbside pickup.

Several retail stores like Target have recycling stations at the front of their stores, and many cities across the country offer some form of recycling drop-off.

The Choctaw Nation takes that a step further, offering over 100 different recycling drop-off locations throughout its reservation and beyond. For a complete list of sites and a list of recyclable materials, or to see a video on the recycling program, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/recycling>.

The Choctaw Nation’s Environmental Protection Services receives EPA, Indian Environmental General Assistance Program and Environmental Justice grants that help fund the program’s educational component.

According to Tracy Horst, Environmental Compliance Director, Students living within

the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation are learning about the importance of recycling and environmental protection.

Choctaw Nation Head Start programs participate in recycling education programs that teach students recycling.

For example, Choctaw Head Start students in Idabel took part in a six-week Reduce, Reuse and Recycle study.

Students learned various aspects of the recycling process and discussed what is considered garbage and what can be recycled. They then took all recycled material to the large recycling roll-off bin at the Idabel Field Office for the Recycling Team to pick up and process.

Choctaw Nation Environmental Protection Services helps the environment in other ways as well.

“From an environmental perspective,

we’ve also started battery collection and safe disposal at all tribal facilities; however, this is in conjunction with Facilities Maintenance and not Recycling,” said Horst.

This year, the department has a grant allowing them to do more events like tire, electronic, recycling and household waste collection events.

According to Horst, there will be events in Caney, Wilburton and Durant in April.

For more on recycling and how to help the environment, no matter where you live, visit <https://www.epa.gov/recycle>.

To keep up with what the Choctaw Nation Recycling program is doing, follow Choctaw Nation Environmental and Recycling on Facebook.

If you have questions about recycling, please contact Recycling-Center@choctawnation.com.



Photo Provided

Above: An Idabel Head Start student poses for a photo behind a recycling study station. Right: A list of recyclables accepted at Choctaw Nation Recycling Centers.



Choctaw Nation Developing New Environmental Codes

DURANT, Okla. – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) is developing a new set of environmental codes thanks in part to a two-year grant. The new codes will protect and impact the land and people living on the Choctaw Nation Reserve for years to come.

The grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Native Americans was received in October 2021 by the Choctaw Nation to introduce its own set of environmental protection codes. Currently, the Choctaw Nation relies on federal, state or local guidelines that may apply.

The Office of Environmental Protection Services, under CNO’s Department of Risk Management, will oversee the \$200,000 grant. Curtis Martin, CNO Environmental Specialist, Policy and Permits, has been assigned to lead the project. The grant added one new staff member, Environmental Coordinator Shawanna Bivings, to help develop the codes. She will also educate communities on how to increase environmental awareness and decrease waste and pollution within the reservation.

Martin said, “We’re developing a set of codes to protect our environment and natural resources. The codes will allow us to further develop our environmental programs, helping to exercise and expand CNO’s sovereignty.”

Bivings added, “These Codes will help Choctaw Nation assert jurisdiction within our reservation. By developing and enforcing them we will ensure environmental stewardship and preserve our land for future generations.”

A minimum of 12 codes are expected, covering solid waste control and illegal dumping to maintaining air and water quality. As data is being gathered, codes are written and reviewed by CNO’s Legal Department, each code when ready will be presented to the Tribal Council for consideration and passage.

If you have questions, please contact Choctaw Nation Environmental Protection Services at environmentalprotectionservices@choctawnation.com.

Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

Spiritual Wellness

Halito,
Spring is close at hand, and there's a sense of renewal in the air.

We not only celebrate the beginning of spring, but March was Spiritual Wellness Month.

The definition of spiritual wellness is unique to each person; however, spiritual wellness acknowledges our search for inner peace.

The goal is to discover if your beliefs, activities, work, family relationships and friendships are all in alignment.

When we're spiritually healthy, we're not only connected to God, but to those around us because it enriches the relationship between our mind, body, and spirit.

I encourage you to take some time to reflect on what gives your life purpose, meaning, happiness, and peace.
Yakohe and God bless!



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

What is Easter?

Easter is the Christian celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ made possible the salvation of souls and changed lives. The counsel of God determined the death and resurrection of Christ.

Acts 2:23-24- "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

The resurrection of Christ was the act of God which declared his Sonship of the Father. Romans 1:4- "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." By his resurrection, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father to make intercession for believers.

Romans 8:34- "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Our salvation is eternal since Christ ever lives to make intercession. Jesus Christ, our Lord, is our advocate (lawyer, mediator, intercessor) with the Father when we believers sin.

1 John 2:1-2- "My little children, these things I write unto that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities since he was tempted in all points as we."

Hebrews 4:14-16- "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a great high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Celebrating Easter

April is already here, and it's a welcome sign that spring is truly in the air. The world comes back to life before our eyes with the symbolism of rebirth, renewal and love with the celebration of Easter.

What I love most about spring is Easter and the story of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His death, burial, and resurrection is the ultimate example of love, sacrifice, and hope.

"The resurrection of Jesus Christ lifts us up to a higher standard," noted Chaplain Olin Williams. "It's the start of something fresh and provides us with an opportunity to not only exist but truly live."

These past two years have been challenging, but our focus on God's promises gives us hope in these uncertain times.

I'm happy to announce that we will be able to gather in person at Tvshka Homma this year to celebrate Easter together. I'm looking forward to the fellowship and hope to see you there.

God bless.

DOJ Applauds Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act

WASHINGTON (March 16, 2022)- Attorney General Merrick B. Garland, Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco, and Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta today applauded the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA was reauthorized as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, which President Joe Biden signed into law this week.

"Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are serious violations of criminal law that demand our sustained attention and action," said Attorney General Garland. "The Department of Justice welcomes the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and will continue to use the resources at our disposal to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and provide critical services for survivors."

"One of the many achievements of this bipartisan reauthorization of VAWA is recognizing expanded jurisdiction for American Indian and Alaska Native tribes to protect their communities from domestic and sexual violence, which I highlighted as a priority in my testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee last October," said Deputy Attorney General Monaco. "It is fitting that this important legislation was passed during Women's History Month, as it will help combat the epidemic levels of gender-based violence that stand in the way of equality in our society. We have made substantial progress since I worked on the original VAWA in Congress in the 1990s, but VAWA's programs, protections, and new initiatives remain critical to address unmet needs in our communities."

"VAWA's reauthorization helps ensure all survivors can live safe and healthy lives, free from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence, and stalking," said Associate Attorney General Gupta. "Preventing and ending violence creates a more equal and equitable world for women and girls, and people of all genders who experience harm. I look forward to working with the Office on Violence Against Women to implement and administer new programs and services that support underserved communities."

In addition to recognizing expanded jurisdiction for American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, the VAWA reauthorization addresses numerous Department of Justice priorities, including:

Reauthorizing until 2027 VAWA's vitally important grant programs, which will allow communities to provide critical services to survivors, as well as the right tools and training to make sure that responses to these crimes are survivor-centered and trauma-informed.

Increasing services and support for underserved populations, including culturally specific communities, LGBTQ survivors, individuals with disabilities, immigrant survivors, older adults, and victims in rural communities, among others.

Closing gaps in federal sex crimes statutes and promoting accountability for law enforcement officers, by strengthening the ability to prosecute federal officers who sexually assault or abuse those in their custody, and by appropriately penalizing defendants who commit civil rights offenses involving sexual misconduct, which includes those who commit sexual assault while acting under color of law and those who commit sexual assault as part of a hate crime.

Enhancing efforts to reduce homicides through enforcement of federal and state firearms laws, including by enacting the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Denial Notification Act to help state law enforcement investigate and prosecute unlawful firearms purchasers and amending the Gun Control Act to make clear that the firearm prohibitions apply to domestic violence offenders convicted under municipal ordinances.

Improving access to justice for survivors by expanding grant funding for legal services and authorizing post-conviction legal assistance to survivors in matters arising out of their domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or sex trafficking victimization.



President Joe Biden recently signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, into law, which includes the Violence Against Women Act.

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CHOCTAW NATION PHYSICIANS HIGHLY RECOMMEND EVERYONE BE VACCINATED AND RECEIVE THEIR BOOSTER DOSE WHEN ELIGIBLE.

Choctaw Nation Health Services



Chief Batton's EASTER CELEBRATION

2022

APRIL 9 | 10:30AM IN TVSHKA HOMMA

EASTER EGG HUNT AGE DIVISIONS

2-4 YEARS, 5-7 YEARS, 8-10 YEARS & 55+ YEARS

- EASTER PHOTO OP
- GRAB AND GO LUNCH
- MESSAGE BY CHAPLIN OLIN WILLIAMS
- CHOCTAW ARTISTS & DEPARTMENTAL BOOTHS
- STICKBALL TOURNAMENT FROM 10AM TILL DARK

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT:
TRIBALEVENTS@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

SUMMER 2022 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



The program provides opportunities for Choctaw students from area colleges to gain career fundamentals at Choctaw Nation offices throughout the CNO Reservation while also earning college credits. The program offers temporary, paid positions and is mutually beneficial for both the intern and hosting department. Students are rewarded with academic and professional experience. CNO benefits from the additional support and expertise interns provide to help meet business and operational needs.

DEADLINE TO APPLY: MARCH 31

FOR ALL INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, VISIT
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Choctaw Nation Human Resources

Christi Heath is 2022 Champion for Native Children

By Shelia Kirven

Cristi Heath, Yukon, Oklahoma, has been selected by the National Indian Child Welfare Association as a 2022 Champion for Native Children.

A member of the Choctaw Nation, Heath has worked for the Department of Human Services (DHS) for over 17 years and has spent most of her career with DHS in Oklahoma county.

She received her associate degree from Rose State College with honors and was a part of the Sociological Honor Society. She received her bachelor's degree from the Univ. of Central Okla. (UCO) in Edmond, Okla., graduating magna cum laude.

Heath said, "When I started with the Department of Human Services, I did investigations (Child Protective Services) for four and a half years. Then I was part of the pilot program that they started in Oklahoma County called Kinship Foster Care. I worked doing that for a year and then supervised Kinship Foster Care in Oklahoma County from 2006-2009."

She went on to reading home studies for people who wanted to be foster parents.

"I did what they called Family Centered Services for five years, supervised that for five years. And then I came to STPU (Specialized Placement and Partnership Unit) and have been doing that for the last two years," said Heath.

On a day-to-day basis, Heath oversees the DHS youth in shelters across the state of Oklahoma. She supervises four liaisons who are each assigned a region of Oklahoma with 21 shelters that have placement of DHS youth. The liaisons check the shelters, assess safety, and see how the kids are doing.

She is also on the multi-disciplinary teams for the regions (five in Oklahoma) and sits on the team that staffs the youth in the shelters to see what/how they are doing and if there is any possible way to get the kids out of the

shelter. One of the liaisons she supervises works with developmental disability applications, ensuring that all youth have an application for services that need it.

"I was a single mother for a long time and went back to get my education and was an older adult when I graduated. I felt like I had the life experience and the empathy and compassion and understanding of how it could be stressful to be a parent, but we all love our children and want the best for our children. I do believe that helped me be a more knowledgeable CPS worker.

"I did Kinship Foster Care because Kinship and ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) have always been in the forefront keeping families together, which is part of the reason why I went from foster care to prevention, the family-centered services."

When asked what she would say to readers who either want to be a foster or adoptive parent or want to go into the field of child protective services, Heath said, "I would want them to know how very important it is that we keep kids connected to our kin, culture, to their kin, their culture and their community, and how important it is for children that are involved in the system to still have that feeling of belonging, what a difference it makes in their resiliency and their success. Someone who is getting involved, I would say to hope. Hope is what keeps me going and keeps me advocating for these youth, that they will have a better and brighter future no matter what their circumstances. I just feel like they can succeed so much better when they have that connection."

Being Choctaw herself, she is always advocating for the children. Knowing the background of the historical trauma that Native American children experience, Heath recently took her team to Oklahoma City's First American Museum to explain historical trauma and her own experiences to them. She said she tried to show them the correlation of the youth in the shelters and how important it is to keep them connected because of the historical trauma that goes along with where we came from.



Photo Provided

Cristi Heath is an advocate for Native American Children, having worked for the Department of Human Services for over 17 years.

Heath went on to explain her motivation for the trip. "I did that so they would get a better understanding of how to assist and how very important it is to work with Native children and make sure they see their grandma and grandpa, that they have visits, and making sure that they have connections, even if they can't have placement, they need to stay connected," said Heath.

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Oklahoma City– Oklahoma City Indian Clinic (OKCIC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit clinic providing health and wellness services to American Indians in central Oklahoma, wants to educate patients about risk factors and prevention methods for colorectal cancer.

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is observed every March to highlight the prevalence of colorectal cancer and provide information about the disease. Colorectal cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Luckily, there are prevention methods.

"Early detection is the best prevention for colorectal cancer," said Janice Hixson, MD, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic's Chief Medical Officer. "Regular screening can detect polyps before they become cancerous."

The CDC recommends regular screening beginning at age 45. Regular screening increases your chances of detecting cancer in an early stage, when it's easiest to treat. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly nine out of ten people who found and treated colorectal cancer early are still alive five years later. Talk to your provider about which screening method is right for you.

In addition to routine screening, increasing physical activity, keeping a healthy weight, avoiding tobacco and limiting alcohol are all ways to reduce your risk of developing colorectal cancer.

"Your risk for colorectal cancer increases as you get older," Hixson said. "It's important to be aware of your risk factors, and continue to get screened regularly."

Other risk factors for colorectal cancer

10 Colorectal Cancer Facts

1. In 2021, an estimated 149,500 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in the U.S. this year, and an estimated 52,980 will die — making this disease the second-leading cause of cancer deaths among men and women combined.
2. The average lifetime risk of colorectal cancer is one in 24, and age is the biggest risk factor. Most cases are diagnosed in people over age 50.
3. Unlike most cancers, colorectal cancer is highly preventable with screening. With early detection, it's highly treatable. Localized colorectal cancer (the earliest stage) has a 90% survival rate with treatment.
4. The most common symptom of colorectal cancer is no symptom. When symptoms are present, they include blood in or on stool, persistent abdominal discomfort and unexplained weight loss.
5. Black/African Americans have the highest incidence and mortality rate of colorectal cancer in the U.S.
6. The incidence rate of young-onset colorectal cancer is rising. In people ages 55 and younger, incidence is rising by 2% every year. Colorectal cancer screening should begin at age 45. Screening is the No. 1 way to prevent colorectal cancer. Still, a third of eligible adults is not getting screened. Learn more at getscreened.org.
7. People who have a first-degree relative (parent, sibling, offspring) with colorectal cancer have two to three times the risk of developing the disease. They should speak to a doctor about getting screened earlier than normal.
8. Simple ways to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer include eating healthy, not smoking, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting red meat intake and adding calcium and vitamin D to your diet.
9. There are more than one million colorectal cancer survivors in the U.S.

Information Provided by the Colorectal Cancer Alliance

include inflammatory bowel disease, a personal or family history of polyps or colorectal cancer, or genetic syndromes, such as familial adenomatous polyposis or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (Lynch syndrome).

If you're at higher risk for colorectal cancer, you may need to watch for symptoms and get screened earlier or more often. Symptoms of colorectal cancer include a change in bowel habits, blood in or on your stool, diarrhea, constipation, the feeling that your bowel does not empty all the way, unexplained weight loss and abdominal pain that doesn't go away. If you're experiencing symptoms of colorectal cancer, talk to your provider. Oklahoma City Indian Clinic patients can schedule an appointment with their medical team at (405) 948-4900.

Colorectal cancer can be deadly, but there are methods for prevention and early detection.

Students take part in Tech IKBI Camp

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation Youth Events & Activities Department (YEA) held its Tech IKBI Camp on March 14 and 15.

The camp took place at four locations, including Durant, Poteau, Broken Bow and Antlers.

According to Dena Rymal, who taught the Durant camp, the camp's purpose is to explore technology.

"We are exposing students to different types of technology. The purpose of these camps is to hopefully show them things they've never seen before. It doesn't matter what your career path is; technology is

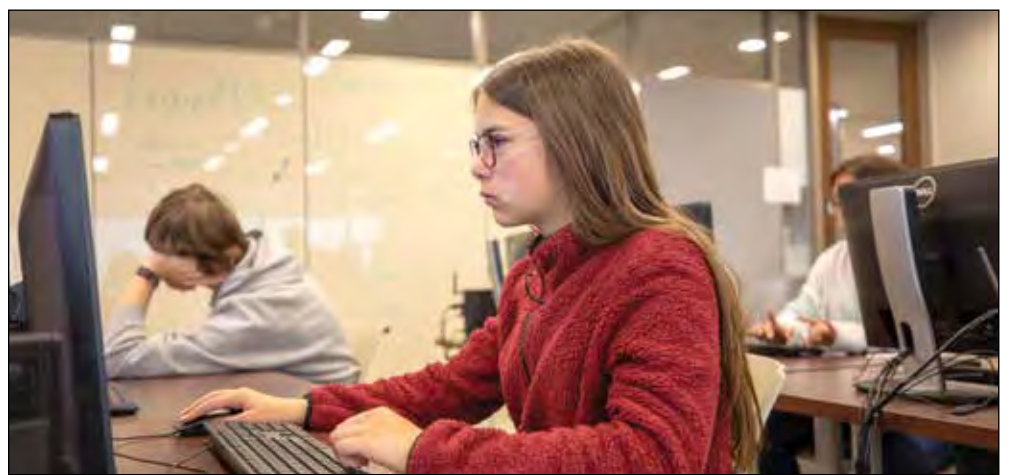
going to touch it," she said.

Javen White is the director of the youth camps.

White said she was excited to be back to in-person camps this year, although the virtual camps reached even more students. She said they hope to offer a virtual option again in the future.

YEA provides a wide variety of activities, hosting over 40 events for Choctaw youth every year. From athletic clinics and STEAM camps to field trips.

To learn more about Choctaw Nation Youth Events & Activities, and see upcoming events, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/youth-events-and-activities>.



Photos by Christian Toews

Top: Students hard at work on their projects during the annual Tech IKBI Camp in Durant. Bottom: Jerni Williams took part in the Durant Tech IKBI Camp, where students learned about different aspects of technology.

I DIDN'T KNOW I COULD RECYCLE ALL THAT!!!

If you are new to recycling or need a refresher on what items can be recycled and where you can drop off your recyclable items, visit our webpage.

You may be surprised at all the items that can be recycled rather than filling our landfills.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE...RECYCLE TOGETHER WE'RE MORE.

CONTACT

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Choctaw Nation Recycling Center

SUMMER CAMPS

CHOCTAWNATION.COM/YOUTH-EVENTS-AND-ACTIVITIES

APPLICATIONS OPEN FEBRUARY 1 - APRIL 15

Choctaw Nation Youth Events & Activities

World Poker Tour is coming back to Choctaw Casino & Resort-Durant

DURANT, Okla., (March 8, 2022) - Excitement is stacking up in our poker room as Choctaw Casino & Resort - Durant hosts the World Poker Tour (WPT®). On Thursday April 28 to Sunday, May 15, the WPT will provide an exciting schedule of events for poker players from around the country!

This year, Bally Sports will exclusively broadcast the 2022 WPT at Choctaw Casino & Resort - Durant.

"At Choctaw Casino & Resort - Durant our goal is to provide the best poker tournament experience to our guests and players from around the world," states Bob Barnes, table games manager at Choctaw Casino & Resort- Durant. "We're excited to offer players and spectators the opportunity to watch our live poker tournament as it elevates the poker experience and takes our WPT to the next level."

Primary events kick off with a \$300 buy-in featuring four opening flights and a \$50,000 guarantee. The championship event will take place Friday, May 13 to Monday, May 16 and will play down to the final six players with a \$3,800 buy-in and a \$2 million guarantee. The final six players will advance on to the E-Sports Arena at the Luxor Casino and Resort in Las Vegas on May 26.

Each tournament throughout the tour will have a guarantee, making the prize pool total more than \$3 million.

Registration will be available on April 21 on Ticketmaster. Hotel Rates start at \$119 Sunday through Thursday. For reservations, call 888.652.4628 and mention offer Code "WPT22".

For more information on the World Poker Tour tournament and a complete schedule



Photo Provided

visit, World Poker Tour - Choctaw Casinos.

Choctaw Casino & Resort - Durant is located 4216 S. Highway 69/75 in Durant, Oklahoma.

About Choctaw Casino & Resort- Durant

Located an hour north of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex lies a AAA Four Diamond resort and entertainment destination in southeastern Oklahoma. Choctaw Casino & Resort-Durant is a three-level convention/entertainment venue offering more than 100,000 square feet of meeting and convention space with seating for more than 3,000. Resort amenities include swimming, shopping, dining, a spa, and the region's premier entertainment complex, The District, with dining, drinks, 20 bowling lanes, a 70-game arcade, and state-of-the-art movie theater. In August 2021, a major expansion added the Sky Tower: 21 stories high featuring 1,000 new luxury hotel rooms, 3,300 additional slot machines, table games, a new poker room, new restaurants, bars, movie theaters and three-acres of swimming pools. For more information, visit choctawcasinos.com.



Jess Henry

District 4

Halito from District 4! I am excited to share what has been happening in District 4 and upcoming events.

Thank you to the Choctaw Nation Child Care Center in Poteau for inviting me to read to the children in the Read Across America Event. I enjoyed it as much, if not more, as the children! The Child Care Center does a great job taking care of our children.

Congratulations to all the youth who participated in the LeFlore County Premium Sale. The Choctaw Nation invested in the community and our future by supporting these young FFA members. It was my pleasure to be a part of the sale.

I attended the Archery Tournament sponsored by the Howe Public School. The Choctaw Nation was a part of supplying the awards for the participants.

Congratulations to Alicia Griffin, Poteau Craft Barn, Keith Gammel, SOS Fire Equipment in Poteau and Katie Wooten, Southern Drift Lake Rentals in Wister, for being awarded checks for your businesses. I joined Kreg Haney and Brittany Rice from Small Business Development in presenting the checks.

It was my pleasure to honor veteran Larry Sockey, of Pocola, as Veteran of the Month at the January Tribal Council Meeting.

A few upcoming events you may like to attend:

- Chief Gary Batton's Easter Celebration, April 9, 10:30 a.m. at Tvshka Homma
- Youth Advisory Board Quarterly Conference, for students 8-12 grades, April 23, 9 a.m. in Durant
- District 4 Princess Pageant, May 12, 6:00 p.m. at Poteau Community Center

I look forward to seeing you at some of the events!

As always, if I can be of assistance to you and your family, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yakoke,
Jess Henry



Photo Provided

District 4 Councilman, Jess Henry, reads to children at the Poteau Child Care Center on Reading Across America Day.

Choctaw Development Fund supports towns of Caddo and Kenefic

CADDO, Okla., (March 1, 2022) - On February 9, The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Choctaw Development Fund awarded the town of Caddo \$8,767 for the purchase of a sewer camera, pipe locating system, and a sewer jetter system. The funds will match a grant that the town received from the Oklahoma Municipal Assurance group to help identify issues with inflow and infiltration issues with the collection system.

"The town of Caddo has been having issues with inflow and infiltration and the tools we're able to purchase on behalf of the Choctaw Nation's donation we'll help identify these issues, repair pipe failures within the collection system and clear blockages," states Jeff Lackey, Mayor of Caddo.

The Choctaw Development Fund supports economic viability and sustainability by partnering with Choctaw small business owners, cities and municipalities to create long-term growth and job creation within the territories of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.



Photo by Choctaw Nation

Left to right: Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.; Chief Gary Batton; Jeff Lackey, Mayor of Caddo; Charla McMichael, Caddo Town Clerk; Dwight Gould, Caddo Public Works and James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 9.

KENEFIC, Okla. (March 21, 2022) - The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) and the Choctaw Development Fund (CDF) on March 9, awarded the town of Kenefic \$20,645 to purchase a new backhoe, excavator and trailer for the town.

The funds will match a grant the town received from the USDA that will allow them to continue installation of water meters and make necessary repairs without having to rent the equipment each time.

"This new equipment is going to be very useful for our town moving forward," said Allen Hicks, Mayor of Kenefic. "Small towns like ours often struggle to make ends meet and cannot afford the right tools to complete necessary projects. This donation from the Choctaw Nation will allow our town to work more safely and efficiently without having to rent equipment each time."

The CDF supports economic viability and sustainability by partnering with Choctaw small business owners, cities and municipalities to create long-term growth and job creation within the territories of CNO.



Photo by Choctaw Nation

From left to right: James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 9; Robert Brewer, Kenefic City Councilmember and Allen Hicks, Mayor of Kenefic.

Bipartisan appropriations deal includes Indian Affairs, increased funding for Native communities

WASHINGTON (March 10, 2022) - U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, helped secure inclusion of Indian Affairs priorities and increased funding for Native communities in a bipartisan appropriations deal yesterday.

"Today's bipartisan deal authorizes critical Indian Affairs priorities and delivers billions in federal dollars that will directly support Native health, education, housing, and more," said Chairman Schatz. "With these new resources and strong funding, we continue our work toward fulfilling the federal government's trust responsibility to Native communities."

The bill includes critical funding that will provide budgetary certainty through the end of the 2022 fiscal year for essential programs serving tribes and Native communities. It also contains important policy provisions, including a Violence Against Women Act reauthorization with a tribal title based on a discussion draft the Committee released in December, an update to the Department of Energy's Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program, and a bill to protect Indian tribes and their members from deceptive business practices and scams.

The bill passed the Senate tonight and now heads to the President's desk to be signed into law.

Outlined below are Native priorities included in the bipartisan appropriations deal.

Indian Affairs-Related Provisions

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Reauthorization

- Maintains tribal jurisdiction over crimes of dating violence, domestic violence, and violations of tribal civil protection orders first put in place by the 2013 Violence Against Women Act reauthorization
- Maintains tribal jurisdiction over crimes of dating violence, domestic violence, and violations of tribal civil protection orders first put in place by the 2013 Violence Against Women Act reauthorization

- Restores tribal jurisdiction over crimes of child violence, sexual violence, sex trafficking, stalking, obstruction of justice, and assault of tribal justice personnel committed by non-Indians offenders
- Ensures all tribes, including those in Alaska and Maine, can exercise these same important jurisdictional tools to keep their communities safe

Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program Update

- Opens tribal access to lower interest rates and additional available capital for energy projects
- Authorizes access to Tribal Energy loans backed by the Federal Financing Bank and Department of the Treasury
- Increases by 165 percent funding for Department of Energy's Indian Energy Policy and Programs for an appropriation of \$58 million

Protecting Indian Tribes From Scams Act

- Directs the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to work with tribal authorities to study scams targeting Indian tribes and tribal members

members

- Requires the Federal Trade Commission to submit recommendations to Congress on policies to curb deceptive business practices and scams targeting Indian tribes and tribal members

Funding For Native Programs

\$6.707 billion for Native health programs at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

- \$6.63 billion for Indian Health Service (IHS) programs, including \$2.3 billion for Indian Health Service clinical services
- \$55 million for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Tribal Opioid Response grant program
- \$22 million for Health Resource and Services Administration grants to the Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems

\$3.65 billion for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education at the Department of the Interior (DOI)

- \$7 million for Department of the Interior's Indian Boarding School Initiative to conduct a comprehensive review of the troubled legacy of federal boarding school policies
- \$1 billion for Native American housing programs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- \$922 million for the Indian Housing Block Grant program
- \$72.09 million for the Indian Community Development Block Grant program

Advertising

- \$22.3 million for the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program
- \$86+ million to address the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) Crisis and public safety needs of Native communities
- \$50 million for the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office of Justice Programs assistance to Indian tribes
- \$25 million for Department of the Interior's initiative to address MMIW cases
- \$5.5 million for Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) Tribal Violence Against Women Act implementation grant program
- \$3 million for a Department of Justice initiative to support cross-designation of tribal prosecutors as Tribal Special Assistant United States Attorneys
- \$1 million for Department of Justice - Office of Violence Against Women to conduct analysis & research on violence against

Indian women

- \$1 million to support establishment of a Native Hawaiian Resource Center on Domestic Violence
- \$500,000 for a national Training and Technical Assistance clearinghouse on issues relating to sexual assault of American Indian & Alaska Native women

- Five percent set-aside for Indian tribes to receive direct funding from the Crime Victims Fund
- \$47.5+ million for programs to support Native American languages and cultures
- \$16 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
- \$14 million for Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Native Americans Native language grant programs
- \$9.37 million for the Department of Education's (ED's) K-12 Native American language immersion grants
- \$2.3 million for Native American/Hawaiian museum services
- \$1.5 million for Native Hawaiian/Alaska Native culture and arts development
- \$1.5 million for Department of the Interior Native American language instruction and immersion programs for federally recognized tribes and tribal organizations
- \$1.5 million for Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act implementation and enforcement at Bureau of Indian Affairs
- \$1 million for the National Bison Range
- \$600,000 for a cultural resource study to protect Chaco Canyon
- \$500,000+ for Department of Education to fund establishment of a Native American Language Resource Center
- \$65.42+ million in tribal climate and environmental resiliency funding to help tribal communities address and prepare for the effects of climate change
- \$5 million for Department of the Interior's tribal climate adaptation grants
- \$8 million for Department of the Interior's tribal relocation grants
- \$10.65 million for reclamation of abandoned mines on tribal lands
- \$4.8 million for clean energy development through Bureau of Indian Affairs Minerals and Mining
- \$12 million for mitigation of environmental impacts of Department of Defense activities on Indian lands
- \$6 million for the Indian tribes wildlife conservation grant program at Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service

LAWN SERVICES

APPLICATION NOW OPEN

- Must be between 18 and 64 years old with an ambulatory disability or 65 and older at the time the application is submitted
- Must meet income guidelines for the household
- Must be a tribal member residing in the Choctaw Nation's reservation boundaries
- Must be a homeowner or rental tenant (must be responsible for own lawn care)
- Other restrictions may apply

CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHAHTAACHVFFA
 Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

April 1	Crowder	By Appointment
April 5	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
April 7	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
April 8	Atoka	8:00 a.m. - 11 a.m.
April 8	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
April 12	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
April 13	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
April 19	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
April 20	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
April 20	Stigler	By Appointment
April 22	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
April 22	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
April 26	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
April 27	Broken Bow	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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



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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 below to select which of these items you wish to continue receiving through the mail.

- Biskinik
- Christmas Ornament
- Birthday Card
- Member Letter
- Calendar

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



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CHOCTAW NATION CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
800-522-6170

Biskinik

Announcement Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

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

or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication
of the

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be 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 nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation. Circulation is monthly. Deadline for articles and photographs to be submitted is the first day of each month to run in the following month.

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



YAB YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD QUARTERLY CONFERENCE

APRIL 23, 2022 | 9:00AM
CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER | DURANT, OKLAHOMA

THIS OPPORTUNITY IS AVAILABLE TO ALL STUDENTS, NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE, IN GRADES 8-12 WHO LIVE IN THE CHOCTAW NATION.

AGENDA

- YAB BUSINESS MEETING
- CHOCTAW HISTORY
- TEAM BUILDING
- CULTURAL CENTER PROVIDING LUNCH
- CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
- CULTURAL TOUR

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EVENT LINK: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/YAB-CONFERENCE](https://bit.ly/yab-conference)

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA
March 12, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. OPENING PRAYER/ FLAG SALUTE
3. ROLL CALL
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. Regular Session February 12, 2022
5. WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - a. Veteran of the Month, District #6 – Leonard Draper
 - b. Choctaw School of Language Certification - Courtney Sisnerous
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - a. Lisa Williams, Individual—Choctaw-Owned Small Business Partnerships
 - b. Nellie Meashintubby, Individual Speaker – Taxes
7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
8. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Letter of Appointment for Honorable Judge Payton Phelps as Appellate Judge of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - b. Letter of Appointment for Honorable Judge Mark Morrison as District Court Judge. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - c. Letter of Appointment for Jane Parent to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Election Board. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - d. Letter of Appointment for Kay Green to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Election Board. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - e. Amend CB-84-22 to Approve Application for the FY22 Zero Suicide Initiative. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - f. Approve the Funds and Budget for the FY21 Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation Purpose Area 8: Juvenile Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - g. Approve the Funds and Budget for the FY21 Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation Purpose Area 1 (COPS). Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - h. Approve the Funds and Budget for Year Seven of Seven of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians Community-Directed Grant Program (SDPI). Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - i. Approve the Funds and Budget for Years One and Two of the Building Cancer Survivorship Research Capacity in Rural Oklahoma Subaward (RC3). Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - j. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - k. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - l. Council Bill Amending the Choctaw Marriage Act Relating to Child Support. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
9. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
10. OLD BUSINESS
11. ADJOURNMENT
12. CLOSING PRAYER

EVENTS

Watkins Family Reunion

April 30, 2022, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Old Watkins Place, Wright City, OK. Bring covered dish, drinks will be provided. For more information call Solomon Tönhka at 580-236-0525.

Wilson Family Annual Grave Cleaning

Saturday, April 30, 2022, 9 a.m. We will gather at the community center. I look forward to seeing everyone there. We will have sandwiches and snacks available. Gloria has been busy buying flowers. Feel free to bring your own flowers for your immediate family's graves. For more information, contact Jody Henderickson at 918-134-2084.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Child Care Assistance Program

The Choctaw Nation Child Care Assistance Program will conduct a public hearing on **April 1, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. at the Choctaw Nation Child Care Assistance Office located at 1802 Chukka Hina Dr. Durant, OK, in Room 2210.**

Child Care Providers, parents and the public are invited to attend the hearing or may forward comments or questions to:

Choctaw Nation Child Care Assistance
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
(580)642-8148

OKLA CHAHTA CLAN OF CALIFORNIA 25TH ANNUAL GATHERING

MAY 7 & 8, 2022

10 AM (Gates open at 8 AM)
Ming Lake (Pyles Boys Camp)
13375 Lake Ming Road Bakersfield, CA

- Cultural Games & Activities
- Traditional Choctaw Social Dancing
- Storytelling
- Princess Contest
- Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Jack Austin, Jr and Tribal Membership staff will be in attendance.

For more information, visit www.oklachaha.org, call 661-319-6308, email choctaw@oklachaha.org or follow us on Facebook at Okla Chahta Clan of California.



Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association Loan

To Be Eligible to Apply:

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

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

To Be Eligible to Apply:

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

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

Atoka Community Center
April 22, 2022
9:00 – 11:00



Chahta Anumpa Aikhvna April Language Lesson

Common Questions
Katimikma – Katimikash - When?

The -kma at the end of 'Katimikma' is a future tense marker.

Katimikma ish ia chi?	When will you go?
Katimikma ish vla chi?	When will you come/arrive?
Katimikma ia la chi?	When will I go?
Katimikma alikchi pisa la chi?	When will I see the doctor?
Katimikma ona chi miya?	When did he/she say they would arrive there?
Katimikma isht ia chi?	When will he/she take it?
Katimikma towa washoha yvt isht ia chi?	When will (the) ballgame start/begin?
Katimikma ant ish sv pisa chi?	When will you come to see me?

The -kash at the end of 'Katimikash' is a past tense marker.

Katimikash ish ia tuk?	When did you go?
Katimikash ish vla tuk	When did you come/arrive?
Katimikash yohmi tuk?	When did it happen?
Katimikash alikchi ish pisa tuk?	When did you see the doctor?
Katimikash chi chukka ona tuk?	When did he/she come to your house?
Katimikash aiittvtoba ia tuk?	When did he/she go to the store?
Katimikash falamvt vla tuk?	When did he/she come back?
Ofi yvt katimikash falamvt vla tuk?	When did the dog come back?

Choctaw tribal member appointed to USDA Advisory Committee

DURANT, Okla., (February 17, 2022) - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack selected 12 members to serve on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) inaugural Secretary's Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture.

Among the newly appointed committee is Choctaw tribal member Kaben Smallwood. Smallwood, who lives in McAlester, was nominated for this role by Chief Gary Batton and was chosen from more than 300 applications nationwide. Smallwood is the co-founder and CEO of Symbiotic Aquaponic, an aquaponics provider and consultancy company.

"Innovation comes naturally to Kaben," said Chief Gary Batton. "He led a team in developing innovative indoor growing practices that conserve water and provide nutrient-rich food in a sustainable manner. He always looks for ways to partner with the local community and gives back, holding true to Choctaw values instilled in him by his family."

The Secretary's Advisory Committee is part of USDA's efforts to support urban agriculture, creating a network for feedback, helping identify barriers and providing input on policy development.

The committee is made up of agricultural producers, and representatives from the areas of higher education or extension programs, non-profits, business and economic development, supply chains and financing.

"Urban agriculture has been growing in impact and importance, and we are taking bold actions to build a support structure," said Vilsack. "I look forward to learning how we can better serve urban agricultural producers, which will complement our efforts focusing



Photo Provided by Symbiotic Aquaponics

Choctaw tribal member Kaben Smallwood was recently appointed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's inaugural Secretary's Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture.

on equity, local food systems, access to safe and nutritional food and new ways to address climate change."

The inaugural committee will hold its first meeting in late February. The conference call will be open to the public. For more information, visit the new Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture website, www.usda.gov/partnerships/advisory-committee-urban-ag-innovative-production.

Beau Mario Villa



Beau Mario Villa was born in Laguna Hills, California, on February 24, 2022, at 4:43 p.m. to the proud parents, Amanda and Mario Villa. Beau weighed 7 lbs 9 oz and was 20" long.

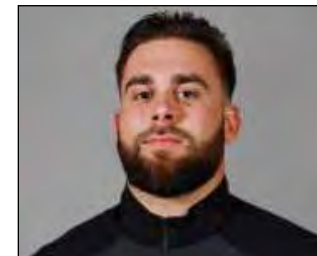
Allen Marshall Reed



Allen Marshall Reed was born Jan. 21, 2022, 9:08 p.m. at 7 lbs 15 oz and was 21 inches at Jacksonville Naval Hospital.

Allen was born to Nathan and Linda Reed of Jacksonville, Florida.

Mommer places at nationals



Tribal member Tommy Mommer placed fifth in the NAIA Wrestling National championship for 285lbs.

Mommer's team, the Grand View University Vikings won the team title at the 2022 NAIA men's wrestling national championship this weekend in Kansas, totaling 206.5 team points. It is their 10th national team title in program history, which is also the most in NAIA men's wrestling history.

Choctaw Casinos & Resorts launches mobile slots game

DURANT, Okla., (March 1, 2022) - Choctaw Casinos & Resorts is excited to announce a new way to play your favorite casino games, Choctaw Slots! The launch of Choctaw Slots brings a unique, free-to-play gaming experience available on all mobile application platforms including Facebook and online at ChoctawSlots.com.

"Choctaw Casinos & Resorts is seizing the opportunity to enhance the overall gaming experience beyond South-eastern Oklahoma as users can play Choctaw Slots on any device and from anywhere around the world," states Wendy Carter, Executive Director of Gaming Marketing at Choctaw Casino & Resort - Durant. "We're excited to expand into the global social casino market, while also continuing to create superior free-to-play gaming experiences for our current casino and resort customers."

With more than 100 popular casino games, Choctaw Slots offers users the chance to play blackjack, bingo, video poker and more: all for free! Users can play their favorite slots from the casino floor from providers like Konami, AGS, Everi, Aruze and Incredible Technologies.

Choctaw Casinos & Resorts chose the leading free-to-play social casino provider, Ruby Seven, to develop Choctaw Slots. Ruby Seven has over seven years of casino app development experience and creates the ultimate experience for avid casino game players, making them the ideal partner.

Choctaw Slots is a free-to-play social game only intended for entertainment purposes. While you can make in-app purchases to enhance the overall gaming experience, there is no chance of winning actual money. To experience Choctaw Slots, visit ChoctawSlots.com or download it today on your mobile device.



Gray wins second national title

Proud Choctaw Heath Gray won his second national title on March 12, 2022, in St. Louis, Missouri.

Gray claimed his second straight championship at 184 pounds

The University of Central Oklahoma Broncos, Gray's team, ended with six All-Americans, the most since having the same number in 2013. The No. 2-ranked Broncos ended with 86 points for their best national finish since 2007 and the ninth runner-up showing in program history to go along with 15 titles.

Gray downed West Liberty's Connor Craig in the finals for the second straight time, winning 4-3 this time after beating the 2019 champion 3-2 last year.

The senior star had a first-period takedown and third-period reverse while giving up three escapes in capping off a 16-1 season. He became the 11th four-time All-American, and 17th two-time national champion in school history while finishing a phenomenal 94-4 for his UCO career.

"The main thing is being under the big lights," Gray said. "You get to the big tournament and it's a weight off my shoulders and I can just go wrestle. I love the huge atmosphere. It's what we've been working for all year."



Alexander turns 70

Valerie Alexander turned 70 on March 2. She is the mother of Willie and Derek. Happy Birthday, Valerie!



McFarland wins pageant title

Alexandria Jo McFarland was crowned Regency International Miss Junior Arkansas March 12, 2022.

Regency International Pageant is an innovative organization that is helping to change the world for today's women.

Her twin sister, Sophia is the 2021-2022 Little Miss Choctaw Princess for District 11. Alexandria is the daughter of Daniel and Crysta McFarland of Hartshorne, Oklahoma.

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Paid admission is not required.

ENVISION CENTER

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- Free Basic Tax Preparation for Tribal Members
- By Appointment Only (per CDC guidelines)
- Virtual Tax Preparation Available
- What tax forms we are able to prepare: W-2, W-2G, SSA-1099, 1099-R, 1099-G, 1099-C, Child Tax Credit, Earned Income Credit
- What tax forms we are Not able to prepare: Itemized deductions, Schedule C, Schedule D, Self Employment

Scan here to schedule an appointment

580-380-9370 OR 580-642-7727

ENVISIONCENTER@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

FUTURES OF BASKETBALL SHOWCASE

APRIL 24, 2022 | DURANT, OK

BLOOMER SULLIVAN GYMNASIUM | SOUTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

GIRLS SHOWCASE

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

BOYS SHOWCASE

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 14 | CLOSES APRIL 20

MORE INFORMATION

580-642-6981 | KNCAUTHEN@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

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CHOCTAW TRAVEL PLAZA

Pittman celebrates 101 years

Helen Pittman turned 101 on February 26, 2022. According to her family, Helen is a loved mother, grandmother and aunt. "Here's to another year!"



March Veteran of the Month

Born in Talihina and raised in Wilburton, Oklahoma (District 6), Leonard Draper graduated from Wilburton High School in 1968. After graduation, he volunteered for the U.S. Marine Corp. He attended Recruit Training in San Diego, California. After Infantry School, he went to Okinawa, Japan, before heading to Vietnam, where he spent one year and achieved the rank of Lance Corporal.



Pictured with members of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council is Leonard Draper of District 6, the March Veteran of the Month.

Farmer earns bachelors



Megan Renee' (Carl) Farmer graduated on May 7, 2021, from Cameron University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. She is the daughter of Richard and Sandra Carl Jr., the granddaughter of the late LTC Richard Carl Sr and Betty, great-granddaughter of Jack Benjamin

and Jewell Alexander Frye. Megan is the wife of Wade Farmer and the mother of Waylon Farmer. She would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for their help in her attaining her teaching degree. Megan is now a third-grade teacher at Marlow Elementary School.

Herndons celebrate 50 years



Richard and Lodie Herndon recently celebrated 50 years of marriage. "The perfect marriage is just two imperfect people who refuse to give up on each other. Happy 50th Anniversary!"



Hevalow makes PBR history

Koltin Hevalow, 19, is making PBR history as the first cowboy to enter his first PBR event and win. He collected his career-first Pendleton Whisky Velocity Tour's (PWVT) Bad Boy Mowers Youngtown Invitational win. He was also the

only one to go 3-for-3 during the entire weekend's events in February in Youngstown, Ohio. After tying for 8th place during the first night's events, he was perfect through both rounds of competition on Saturday. He now sits at No. 49 in the world standings with 41 world points.

Hevalow is a proud Choctaw from Smithville, Missouri, and has worn a Choctaw patch on his vest since he was a young boy.



Daniel turns 80

James T. Daniel was born March 26, 1942. He is the grandson of original enrollee, Lela Shackelford (Gardner). James has lived in Pheonix, Arizona since 1951, and has three sons, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

He served four years in the Navy, and went on to work at Sperry/Honeywell for 38 years.

Brewer celebrates 95 years



Jeanne Brewer of Yorba Linda, California, will turn 95 on April 13, 2022. She is in good health. Her caregivers at Crescendo Senior Living deserve praise.

Jeanne's mother, Elma Willis, is an original enrollee. Her father, Charles Wells of Texas, married Elma in Oklahoma. They moved West to a coastal paradise, where he worked as a fisherman. Born in their Costa Mesa home, Jeanne is the second youngest of six children. Her mother raised vegetables, fruits and chickens in their backyard.

As a girl, Jeanne earned spending money working in the school cafeteria. After graduating, she worked as a telephone operator. She met Wayne Brewer, a former classmate when he was home on leave from the U.S. Navy.

One of Jeanne's fondest memories is Wayne phoning the telephone switchboard, hoping Jeanne would answer his call. She loves remembering Wayne's voice saying, "Number Please," a common request of callers.

Thanks from Kogler



Now, I stand on the other side with "RN, BSN" behind my name. I worked extremely hard for this degree and am proud to be able to go out and care for others with the compassion and respect that every person deserves. I have so much gratitude for Choctaw Nation and their support of my education and hold so much pride in being a part of this tribe. I

feel grateful for the financial support, but even more so for the eye opening to the wonderful community that I have been a part of all along. I am forever proud to hold the Choctaw name and move forward modeling the care, inclusion, and support that I feel to every patient I have the privilege of caring for.

Thank you always, Audrey Kogler RN, BSN

Alexandre Forrest Riopelle



Alexandre Forrest Riopelle was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Christmas Day, 2021.

His parents are Dr. Sarah and Sean Riopelle. Alexandre's grandparents are Joyce and Phil Perdue, Tom Krajicek, and Forrest and Perliita Riopelle.

He has three siblings, Pomeranians named Bear, Jasmine, and Hans

Gruber and a cat named Léon. His family couldn't be more excited, and were happy to share the great news with their tribe!

Rita Laws releases new book

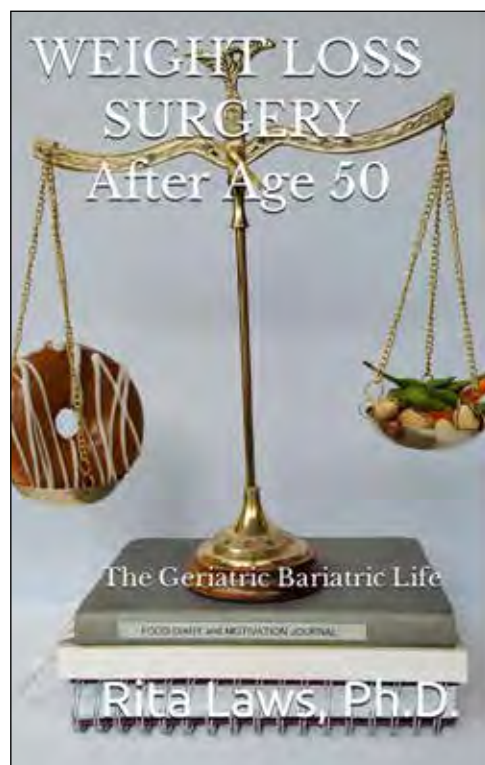
Choctaw tribal member, Rita Laws, Ph.D., recently published her new book, *Weight Loss Surgery After Age 50: The Geriatric Bariatric Life*.

The description of the book says, "Many people don't realize that there is no upper age limit for bariatric surgery."

This memoir of one woman's fifty-year struggle with super morbid obesity (BMI of 63) culminates in lasting improvement at age sixty-two after gastric bypass surgery. Funny and devastating, it chronicles her weight war through multiple weight loss attempts, diets, support groups, regaining pounds, co-morbidities, battles with health insurance companies, and an earlier stomach band surgery that was nearly fatal.

Now at age sixty-five and 113 pounds lighter (BMI of 40) the author is living a healthier happier life with much more energy. All co-morbidities are better or much better, and the Hunger Monster is under control because all of the lifelong questions about her obesity have been answered. With this knowledge she was able to create an effective fifteen-point strategy for keeping the weight off permanently without suffering and for keeping critically important motivation at a constant high level.

Since bariatric surgery is much less common in her age group, the author wants to share her experience with those who want to know more about the before, during, and after of various weight loss surgeries. Bariatric surgery can increase the length and quality of life. Since losing significant amounts of weight means a decreased need for sleep, you can gain hours in the day,



too. Procedures like RYGB (gastric bypass) and sleeve gastrectomy can be for the geriatric population because there is no upper age limit for these procedures. If you are over fifty, it's not too late to consider consulting with a bariatric surgeon.

The long-term effects of obesity create misery in the Golden Years. Suffering in silence, procrastinating, or ignoring the pain won't help. Looking for potential solutions and encouragement is the wiser course.

The 67,000-word book includes before and after photographs plus weight and size conversion charts for international readers."

Laws' books can be purchased on Amazon at https://www.amazon.com/Rita-Laws/e/B000ARC632%3Fref=db_s_a_mng_rwt_sens_share.

Cooper signs with Palm Beach Atlantic University



Ty Cooper recently signed to play collegiate golf at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida.

He is a current senior at Reeds Spring High School in Branson, Missouri, and he will be graduating with a 4.0 GPA. He will be majoring in Marketing/Finance & Sports Management.

Since he could grab some good ole' snoopy clubs, he has been playing golf. His favorite golfers are Justin Thomas and Jordan Spieth.

He won South West Missouri Junior Golfer of the Year and made all-conference and all-district and qualified for State the past three years.

He has the record for the most threes in a game and the highest three-point percentage in his basketball season to go along with his athletic ability. He reached 1000 points in his career, which mainly were three-pointers. He has been playing varsity basketball since his freshman year.

"I would like to thank my wonderful grandmother Lou and Phil Smith along with my #1 Uncle Roy Smith, Phoenix Smith, Tim Smith, Shawn Smith and Michael Smith for their love and supporting me to never give up even when things seem impossible! Along with my devoted hardworking parents Glen and Kelly Cooper," said Cooper. "I would like to personally thank Max White and Tesia Rose with the Choctaw Nation Education Department. I will be wearing my Cords & Stole with much pride representing the Choctaw Nation when I graduate this May as a Senior Class of 2022."



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Henry Washburn

Henry "Hank" Washburn, 84, passed away Jan. 16, 2022.

Hank was born March 10, 1937, in Lawton, Okla., to Ollie and Amanda Washburn.

He was preceded in death by brothers Jack Washburn, Eddie Washburn, and Kenneth Washburn; sisters Susie Bassee, Irene Anderson, Mary Sanbranno, and Frankie Cobb.

Hank is survived by his wife Carolyn; sister Dorie Denney; many nephews, nieces, and friends.

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

**Wanda M. Clinton Stapp**

Wanda M. Clinton Stapp, 94, passed away Feb. 2, 2022.

Wanda was born Aug. 12, 1927, in Stroud, Okla., to Avery Sherrill and Gertrude Ford Sherrill.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husbands Earl Clinton and Dee Stapp; and brother Tommy Sherrill.

Wanda is survived by daughters Sherrill Dooley and spouse Bob Reeves, and Jana Oliphint and spouse Kevin; grandchildren Clinton, Matthew, Janae, Ryan, Michael, Thomas, and Nicholas; and five great-grandchildren.

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

**Doris Jane Bray**

Doris Jane (Harris) Bray, 76, passed away Jan. 13, 2022.

Doris was born No. 14, 1945, to Claude Harris and Lottie Barnes Harris.

She was preceded in death by her parents; twin brother David Harris; brothers Claude, Benjamin, Robert, Hiram, William, Willie B., and Larry; and sisters Martha Louise and Dorothy Maxine.

Doris is survived by her husband Fred; sons David and spouse Sarah, and Jeff and spouse Kristin; daughter Tonya and spouse Alex; brother Stanley Harris and spouse Susan; sister Lucille Banzhaf and spouse Darrell; grandchildren Nikki, Abby, Kyle, and Julianna; and great-grandchildren Mikayla and Jordan, and their father Eric Bower.

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

**Judy Ann Herald**

Judy Ann (Fuller) Herald, 72, passed away Nov. 27, 2021.

Judy was born Feb. 15, 1949, in Stigler, Okla., to Jennings Bryan and Alice Ray Harrell Fuller.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers J.B. Fuller, Bill Fuller, Jerry Fuller and Muriel Fuller; sisters Gloria Rinke and Linda Burgess; nephews Joe Bryan, Lory and Rendil; and in-laws Frank, Peggy and Dan Herald.

Judy is survived by her husband Pat; daughter Keeli Herald Bowers; son Damon Herald and spouse Alicia; grandchildren Mia Bowers, Jace Herald and Bella Herald; sisters Melba Dennis, and Donna Morris and spouse Ed; sister-in-law Mary Obert, spouse Allen and son Drew; brother-in-law Mike Herald; extended family members Bob Cottingham and Jeff Holman; and a host of nieces, nephews, and beloved friends.

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

**Syble L. Weathers**

Syble L. Weathers, 85, passed away Feb. 3, 2022.

Syble was born Nov. 9, 1936 to Buford and Zelma (Shillings) Smith.

She was preceded in death by her siblings Buford Smith Jr., Stacie Smith, and Betty Wilkerson; her husband Melvin Weathers; and her parents.

Syble is survived by her sons Paul E. Weathers and spouse Teresa, and Chris Weathers; brothers Jerry Smith and Mike Smith; sisters Patsy May, and Linda Battles and spouse Doyle; grandchildren Sabre Rivas and spouse Andy, Evan Weathers and wife, and Kevin Weathers; and great-grandchildren Koa Rivas and Forrest Weathers.

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

**Teri Pebsworth**

Teri Pebsworth, 66, passed away Jan. 31, 2022.

Teri was born Aug. 8, 1955, in Lubbock, Texas, to J.A. and Joyce (Williams) Pebsworth.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and brother Tim.

Teri is survived by her brother Todd Pebsworth and spouse Rob-in; nieces Shadarah Pebsworth, and Natalie Heald and spouse Mason; great-nephew Asher Heald; and many others she considered family from the churches she was a part of.

For the full obituary, please visit [Lake Ridge Chapel](#).

**Josephine Marie Saclolo**

Josephine Marie (Wilson) Saclolo, 89, passed away Feb. 13, 2022.

Josephine was born April 21, 1938, in Haworth, Okla., to Sarah Hill and Caston Wilson Sr.

She was preceded in death by her parents; siblings Betty Wilson, Annette Tili, Shirley Tubby, James Wilson, and Wanda Lingo.

Josephine is survived by her husband Benigno; children Delicia Saclolo and spouse Lisa, Juliana Garza and spouse Francisco, Raoul Saclolo, and Reynaldo Saclolo; siblings Catherine Miller, Ida Mae Young, Kenneth Wilson, and Caston Wilson; sister-in-law Arlene Wilson; and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

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

Redonia Kaye Bowers

Redonia "Dodie" Kaye Bowers, 61, passed away Feb. 8, 2022.

Dodie was born July 22, 1960, in Compton, Calif., to Geraldine Harris James and Leslie Roy James.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister Regina Gayle; and brother Gerald Leslie James.

Dodie is survived by her husband Dennis Bowers; sister Marcia James and Jayson Dailey; brother Gary James and spouse Shelly; nieces Carmen Futch, Raeanna Shoat and spouse Robert, Leona Ward and spouse Dustin, Leslie Clark and spouse Daniel, Valerie James and Dustin Gomez, Vanessa James and Raymond Eidinger; nephews Frank Johnson and Rhonda Caution, Anthony James, and Zachary James; numerous great-nieces and great-nephews; as well as many extended family members, loved ones and friends.

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

**Ralph Lawrence Ward**

Ralph Lawrence "Butch" Ward, 56, passed away Feb. 7, 2022.

Butch was born Nov. 23, 1965, in Talihina, Okla., to J.D. Ward and Lucinda "Cindy" Ward.

He was preceded in death by his mother.

Butch is survived by his wife Michelle; daughters Caterina Deon Ward, Emily Smalley, Madison Smalley, Alexis Smalley and Sons, Dakota Dyaami Nashoba Ward and Taylor Smalley; his father; brother John Ward; sister Tammy Douglas and spouse Sam; granddaughter Leylah Terry; nephews Michael Shane Ward and Ethan Cole Douglas; great-nephews Braxton Youngblood, Rawling Osburn, and Layton Osburn; niece Rachael Ward; great-niece Haysleigh Osburn; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

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

**Kenneth Gene Stanley**

Kenneth Gene Stanley, 67, passed away Feb. 7, 2022.

Kenneth was born Jan. 22, 1955, to Cecil Stanley and Nora Christine Stanley.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Tommy Daniels, Don Daniels, and Phillip Daniels; sisters Shirlene Henry and Lillian "Josie" Burns.

Kenneth is survived by daughters Kimberly Gale Butler and spouse James, Latonya Baxter, and Teresa Gallean; nieces Donna Simmons and spouse Malcolm, and Julie Gayle Daniels; brothers Jerry Stanley and Wayne Stanley; sisters Betty "Tom" Teel and Judy Taylor; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces and nephews.

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

**Carolyn Frances Simpson**

Carolyn Frances Simpson, 77, passed away January 19, 2022.

Carolyn was born Jan. 2, 1945, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Benjamin (Pete) and Olive Marie Freeny.

She is survived by her son Jason Simpson and spouse Tracy; daughter Jessica Baldwin and spouse Greg; son Ben Simpson; grandchildren Preston, Logan, Benedict, Zachary, Tara, and Amelie; and sisters Mary Lou Ullrick and Joanne Bushman.

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

**Clifton Dale Hensley**

Clifton Dale Hensley, 85, passed away Jan. 26, 2022.

Dale was born June 18, 1936, in Raymondville, Texas, to David Hensley and Helen Rowlett.

He was preceded in death by his parents; son Christopher Hensley; and sister Jeanette Hensley.

Dale is survived by his wife Jo Ann; sons Monty Hensley and spouse Tammy, Randy Hensley and spouse Vivienne; daughter Carrie Nunes; stepchildren Justin Bickerstaff, and Heather Woodruff and spouse Chris; sister Patsy Simpson and spouse Glenn; grandchildren Ryan Hensley, Jeremy Hensley and spouse Jamia, Siarra Robles and spouse Anthony, David Nunes and spouse Jenna, Adam Nunes, and Kevin Hensley; great-grandchildren Ezekiel, Landon, Waylon, Jaxsen, Joshua, Journee, Christopher, Travis, and Brynlee; step grandchildren Trenton Heenan, Samantha Bickerstaff, and Shyla Heenan; along with several nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [Lamb-Roberts-Price Funeral Home](#).

**James Wayne Stephens**

James Wayne Stephens, 58, passed away Feb. 14, 2022.

James was born April 15, 1963, in Lawton, Okla., to James Stephens and Gloria (Pair) Stephens.

He was preceded in death by his father; paternal grandparents Paskel and Myrtle Stephens; and maternal grandparents Everett and Jewell Pair; and best friend and cousin Jimmy Don Stephens.

James is survived by his mother; children Tasha Cummins and spouse Dillon, Justin Anzaldua, Cory Anzaldua, and Dalton Anzaldua; brothers Terry Stephens and spouse Angie, Billy Stephens and spouse Sherry, Michael Stephens and spouse Soni, and sister Lisa Waggoner and spouse Jim; grandchildren Addilyn Piper, Gracelyn Piper, Jamison Cummins, Eden, Tay, Kayden and Stormie Anzaldua; numerous nieces and nephews; special friend Marquita Hughes and Allen Stephens.

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

**Jerry Walton Friedel**

Jerry Walton "Walt" Friedel Sr., 87, passed away Feb. 16, 2022.

Walt was born Jan. 8, 1935.

He was preceded in death by son Walty; and his grandmother.

Walt is survived by two sisters; a brother; six children; eight grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

For the full obituary, please visit [Baum-Carlock-Bumgardner Funeral Home](#).

**Edson Dennis Williams**

Edson Dennis Williams, 75, passed away Jan. 12, 2022.

Edson was born Dec. 8, 1946, in Idabel, Okla., to Dennis and Emma Jean Williams.

He was preceded in death by his wife Connie; his parents; brother David Williams; and sisters Olivia Longoria and Jackie Davis.

Edson is survived by his daughter Angelica Martinez and spouse Otniel; grandchildren Gabriel, Joseph, Bubba, and Gina; special companions Toby and Oliver Williams; sisters Jean Noahubi and Bertha Bason; brothers Greyhawk Williams and James Williams; numerous nieces, nephews, and many other loving family and friends.

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

**Donald Rodney Leflore**

Donald Rodney Leflore, 65, passed away Feb. 23, 2022.

Donald was born Dec. 28, 1956, in Talihina, Okla., to Alice Lee Jacob and Alexander Leflore.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters Bertha Jacob, Elizabeth Dunham, Pauline Tom, Josephine Gallant, and Cathleen Nelson; brothers Willie Robinson, Earl Wallace, and Tommy Leflore.

Donald is survived by his wife Janice Leflore; sons Joseph Leflore and spouse Shelby, and Joshua Leflore and spouse Heather; brother Johnny Leflore; grandchildren Walken Leflore, Gabriel Leflore, Elizabeth Leflore, Madelynn Leflore, Jalynn Leflore, Angelina Butler, Charity Sparks, and Kaleigh Sparks; great-grandson Saul Diaz Ruiz; and other relatives and friends.

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

**Janet Jacob**

Janet Jacob, 60, passed away Feb. 27, 2022.

Janet was born Feb. 7, 1962, in Honey Grove, Texas, to Sylvester and Joann Billy Jacob.

She was preceded in death by her mother; stepmother Ruth Harris Jacob; daughter Jami Kay Jacob; and grandparents Nettie and Rev. James Jacob, and Margaret and Simon Billy.

Janet is survived by her father; son Brent Jacob; brother Carl Jacob; stepsister Hettie Harris; grandson Sebastian Thurman; granddaughter Haileigh Jacob; great-grandchildren Grace Thurman and Dax Lindly; aunts Maryedna Miller, Stella Laurence, Olene Honanie, Naomi Billy, Mary Johnson, Darlene Billy, Doren Cusher; and Doris Winship; uncles Don Jacob, Doyle Billy, Delton Billy, Danny Billy, and Bert Billy; nephew Damien Jacob; nieces Kimberly and Kristen Jacob; great-nephews Jordan Nolin, Adrian Jacob, and Landon Proctor; and many cousins and dear friends.

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

**Jennifer Nicole Donathan**

Jennifer Nicole Donathan, 45, passed away Feb. 26, 2022.

Jennifer was born Nov. 9, 1976, in Ardmore, Okla., to Jimmy Darrell Southerland and Nina Charlene Holt.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents Don and Callie Waldrum, Clifford Lee Holt, Dorothy and James Cullins, and R.H. Southerland, and her uncle Clifford Ray Holt.

Jennifer is survived by her husband Tony Donathan; daughter Lorian Pierson and spouse Tyler; son Christian Graziano; grandson Rebel Don Pierce; her parents Nina Holt and Steve Holt, and Jimmy Southerland; brother Jayson Southerland; sister Jade Southerland; nephew Jakob Southerland; and many other loving family members and friends.

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

**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:

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PO Box 1210

Durant OK 74702

or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

ITI FABVSSA

A New Chahta Homeland: A History by the Decade, 1930-1940

Iti Fabvssa is currently running a series that covers the span of Oklahoma Choctaw history. By examining each decade since the Choctaw government arrived in our new homelands using Choctaw-created documents, we gain a better understanding of Choctaw ancestors' experiences and how they made decisions that have led us into the present. This month covers the 1930-1940 period when Choctaws responded to the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act and formally organized an Advisory Council to help make decisions regarding Choctaw issues – serving as a de facto legislative branch.

The 1928 'Meriam Report,' which we discussed in last month's article, was an important step in changing poor living conditions for many Choctaw and other Native peoples across the United States. It critically highlighted allotment's negative impact on Native people and how it created poverty on reservations. After the report's publication, Native communities in the U.S. faced even more difficult times with the onset of the Great Depression. In response, President Franklin D. Roosevelt pushed for 'New Deal' policies to stimulate the U.S. economy and end the economic downturn. This included numerous legislative bills that supported Native American communities and their ability to improve their own economic conditions. These pieces of Native-oriented legislation were collectively known as the Indian New Deal. One of the most significant bills was the Indian Reorganization Act, also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act.

Passed in June 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) significantly refocused attention to the nation-to-nation relationship between the U.S. and Indigenous nations by promoting tribal self-governance. It ended the federal allotment policy, which the Meriam Report found to be a disaster. Instead, the IRA would focus on bringing tribal lands allotted back together and consolidating them, reorganizing tribal governments to govern over those lands, and pushing them to develop economic development programs that fit the cultures of those nations. This legislation was a significant turning point in federal-Indian relations because it was the first time the U.S. government incorporated Native people's feedback to shape federal policy significantly. While this was a landmark piece of legislation for many Native nations across the United States, six out of nineteen provisions of the act did not apply to the nations in Oklahoma, including Choctaw Nation.

During the proposal stage before the passage of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, several Native nations and Native individuals in Oklahoma had opposed the bill. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier himself went to Oklahoma to hold meetings with communities to get feedback on the act. The Oklahoma congressional delegation also expressed concern that Oklahoma had the highest population of Native peoples in the United States at that time. The way the land runs and allotment had divided up the lands in Oklahoma made it distinct from other states with large Native populations. The Indian Reorganization Act, which sought to help tribes gain greater control over their reservation lands to improve their economic conditions, would have an important impact on the rest of the state, particularly non-Native landowners whose plots of land were in Native nations' treaty territories. Individuals and companies with connections to the oil, timber, mining, farming and ranching industries of Eastern Oklahoma, in



Photo Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society

Muriel Wright, granddaughter of Chief Allen Wright and well-known Oklahoma historian, served as the Secretary of the Choctaw Advisory Council.

particular, opposed moving back to tribal control over their lands. The opposition by Natives who didn't want a return to tribal governments and non-Natives alike led the Oklahoma congressional delegation to advocate for Oklahoma tribes' exclusion from the act. Instead, different legislation catered to the unique situation in Oklahoma would be drawn up.

In 1936, U.S. Congress passed the Thomas-Rogers Bill or Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, which applied the principles of the Indian Reorganization Act to Oklahoma with some essential modifications. Given the issues that Choctaws had with probates and restrictions, as mentioned in the previous two articles, the act moved those matters from the jurisdiction of Oklahoma state courts to the federal government. It also created a credit fund where Native people could get loans – something which had been very difficult before the passage of this act. The Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act paid careful attention to the legal differences and histories of the nations in Oklahoma and their needs. With the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, Oklahoma tribes gained more control in bettering their economic conditions since they now had greater authority and power over their own affairs. One of the major organizations that worked on the legislation from the Choctaw perspective was the Choctaw Advisory Council.

Although the Choctaw national government was down-

sized to a few officials in 1906, Choctaw community members continuously convened to discuss issues that Choctaw people were facing and collectively decide on future actions. At a meeting held on June 5, 1934, Choctaws voted to establish a Choctaw Advisory Council at Old Goodland. Chief Ben Dwight nominated eleven Choctaw citizens to represent the different counties that make up the Choctaw reservation to serve on the council and tribal members living outside of the treaty boundaries. Those individuals included: William A. Durant (At-large), Victor M. Locke (Pushmataha County), Elam Johnson (McCurtain County), Thomas W. Hunter (Choctaw County), E.A. Moore (LeFlore County), George Scott (Haskell County), Ben C. Palmer (Latimer County), Silas Cole (Atoka County), Muriel H. Wright (Coal County), James Culberson (Bryan County), and CB Bascomb (Pittsburg County).

The Choctaw Advisory Council's first meeting was held on October 11, 1934, and lasted three days. The next day, they continued their meeting and met at the federal building in Muskogee. At this meeting, the council established and elected its officers. Other attendees to the meeting included Chief Ben Dwight, Bureau of Indian Affairs Superintendent of the Five Tribes, A.M. Landman, and William G. Stigler, a former member of the Oklahoma State Senate and later became the Oklahoma Congressional Representative for District 2 from 1944-1952. The council had two main goals: plan a welfare program for the betterment of Choctaw economic and social livelihood and craft legislation that would create this welfare program. Since Choctaws made up a sizeable portion of southeastern Oklahoma, they had the attention and aid of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and local government officials. The council would get Choctaws' opinions on the matter to figure out a plan that benefited Choctaws. Their meetings and decisions based on Choctaw community members' feedback eventually resulted in the terms found in the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act.

In addition to their work regarding federal legislation, the Choctaw Advisory Council worked hard to support the Choctaw people. They approved and allocated funds to establish a general hospital in Tahihina using Choctaws' federal funds and made decisions regarding the sale of the Choctaw coal lands and Choctaw cases before U.S. courts. To preserve Choctaw history and culture, the council approved funds for the maintenance of Wheelock Academy, the re-purchase of the old Choctaw Council House and 100 acres around it, and the reconstruction of the Council building to make it modern and fireproof. Their attention to these important Choctaw historical buildings is why they still stand today and have become important spaces for sharing Choctaw history and culture.

Next month, we will cover the 1940-1950 era, which covers World War II and the events leading up to the sale of the Choctaw coal lands.

Additional reading resources on this period are available on the Choctaw Nation Cultural Service webpage (<https://choctawnationculture.com/choctaw-culture/additional-resources.aspx>). Follow along with this Iti Fabvssa series in print and online at <https://www.choctawnation.com/history-culture/history/iti-fabvssa>. If you have questions or would like more information on the sources, please contact Megan Baker at meganb@choctawnation.com.

Read Across America

The Choctaw Nation recently celebrated Read Across America Day on March 2, 2022.

This year-round program focuses on motivating children and teens to read through events, partnerships, and reading resources that are about everyone, for everyone.

Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., and Tribal Council stopped by Choctaw Nation Head Start locations to read to the children.

"When we make time to read to children, it helps show the importance and value of reading. Together, we can celebrate reading. Together, We're More."

– Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Chief Gary Batton gets hugs from Durant Head Start students.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. high fives a Durant Head Start student on Read Across America Day.

Photos by Biskinik and Choctaw Nation Staff



Councilman James Frazier, Five Mile Charlie and the Queen Bee Nora pose for a photo with Coalgate Head Start students and staff.



Chief Gary Batton and Councilman James Dry pose for a photo with The Cat in the Hat in Durant.



Councilwoman Jennifer Woods reads "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" to Wilburton Head Start students.

Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

The Section 184 Home Loan Guarantee Program is a home mortgage product specifically designed for American Indians to provide access to mortgage financing. Congress established this program in 1992 to facilitate homeownership and increase access to capital in Native American communities. With Section 184 financing, borrowers can get into a home with a low down payment. Section 184 loans can be used, both on and off Native lands, for new construction, rehabilitation, purchase of an existing home, or refinance. Loans must be made in an area approved by HUD and deemed an Indian Servicing area. All loans are approved by manual underwrite and not by an automated system. Fees are monitored and restricted to protect against predatory lending. Interest rates must be fixed, not adjustable, and based on the current market rate, not by credit score. By serving Native communities, Section 184 is increasing the marketability and value of the Native assets and strengthening the financial standing of Native communities. Section 184 is synonymous with homeownership in Indian Country.

Participating tribes determine the areas where the Section 184 loans can be used. Loans must be made in an eligible/approved area. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma requested to The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Native American Programs, Office of Loan Guarantee and has been approved for an expansion of eight counties in Arkansas to be deemed an Indian Service Area for Section 184 loans. Little River, Sevier, Polk, Scott, Howard, Montgomery, Logan and Yell are now Section 184 approved counties and available to Native Americans who reside there. Previously approved Arkansas counties are Benton, Crawford, Sebastian, and Washington. There are now 12 approved counties in Arkansas eligible for Section 184 loans.

Down payment assistance is offered with Section 184 loans to Choctaw tribal members who apply with Choctaw Home Finance and use a partner lender. The down payment loan is up to 2% assistance at a fixed 5% interest rate for up to 5 years. Borrowers must make a minimum investment of 1% from their own funds. There are no set income limits to be eligible. Credit guidelines must be met. We understand unique circumstances and want to assist with all homeownership goals. Let our knowledgeable staff help you. Call us at 1-800-235-3087 or visit our website, <http://www.choctawnation.com/tribal-services/housing/home-finance> for more information.

Choctaw Nation

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April is Autism Acceptance Month

By Chris Jennings

According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. People with ASD will often not appear any different but may communicate, interact, behave or learn differently than a neurotypical person.

About 1 in 44 children has been identified with ASD, according to estimates from the CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network.

While statistics point to more ASD diagnoses than before, better testing and screening procedures can be credited for the increase in cases that may not have previously been diagnosed.

There is no cure for ASD, and there is no known cause for ASD, but health professionals agree that early detection can help.

Choctaw Nation Psychiatrist Kelly S. Andrzejczyk-Beatty, D.O. said, "It's really crucial to get them diagnosed as early as possible because early intervention is key. If we intervene earlier, they may not need as much social support or financial support down the line as an adult."

When it comes to treatment for people diagnosed with ASD, there's no one method. It often takes a team of people to determine the best path for each individual.

"There are so many different facets when dealing with autism, and so many different team members have to be on board to treat. It's not just seeing a psychiatrist or a developmental pediatrician," said Dr. Andrzejczyk-Beatty.

While catching ASD early is the best-case scenario, many people don't get diagnosed until they are adults.

Rick Hamilton was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, which falls under the umbrella of ASD, when he was 31 years old. Hamilton is a medical records supervisor at the Choctaw Nation Health Clinic in McAlester. This job came about after working through Job for the Day in the medical records department.

"Job for the Day gave me a chance. I got in and started working, and my supervisor got to see how I worked. So, when the full-time job came up, I was able to move into the job," said Hamilton.

While working at the clinic, Hamilton started to think that he might have autism. It was a social media post that made him start thinking about it. Then, after another post

made it more evident, Hamilton went to his primary care doctor.

After his diagnosis, Hamilton says things just kind of clicked.

"It was a big deal. It just kind of explained things," he said.

He went from wondering what was wrong with him to realizing nothing was wrong; he was just different.

Having access to the CNO clinics is one benefit of being Choctaw and living on the reservation.

"What's nice about the Choctaw Nation is that we can refer to occupational therapy, and they'll see anyone of any age. So, we get less pushback as far as funding since they're able to be seen within the CNHSA," said Dr. Andrzejczyk-Beatty. "When I was in private practice, it was a lot harder to get resources or get other providers, physicians and resources on board, whether it was funding or insurance reasons. So, I think we're actually at an advantage since we do offer the health care system here for our patients."

It can be more frustrating for those who don't live on the reservation to get help.

A psychologist first recognized Terry Pollard's autism in 1989, when he was a young man. It wasn't until 23 years later that his autism was officially recognized during a lengthy hospital stay. Even then, Pollard says he wasn't told about it until a different visit with his primary care doctor.

"It was like opening a book about myself. It explained why I always knew I was different and never felt, thought, learned or saw this world like neurotypical people," said Pollard.

The world is different for people with ASD. It doesn't look, feel or sound the same as for a neurotypical person. On top of that, each one of those senses could be different for each individual with ASD.

The fact that autism fits such a broad spectrum makes it hard to treat efficiently. This difficulty is compounded for people with ASD and leads to frustrations for many in what kinds of treatments and support are available.

"The very hospital and physicians that diagnosed me aren't able to offer any treatment for autism and say they do not understand autism enough to specifically treat it," said Pollard. "A great misconception is that all autistic individuals are cared for and provided for; facts show this is not the case. I personally have faced homelessness more than a few times in my 50 years."

While it's hard to pinpoint the prevalence of ASD among the homeless, it's believed that



Photo by Chris Jennings

Rick Hamilton is a medical records supervisor at the Choctaw Nation clinic in McAlester. Hamilton was diagnosed with ASD when he was 31 years old.

the rates of autism among the homeless are much higher than the rates of autism among the general population.

"Many of us aren't able to hold down employment and are highly sensitive to our surrounding environments such as bright lights, overbearing noisy places, background noise, crowds, and certain smells easily cause sensory overloads and shutdowns," said Pollard.

Those with ASD want to be heard and listened to.

"It is well known among us that suffer, that the doctors and so-called professionals believe they know and understand how we feel. When in fact, they know very little because they refuse to listen when the truth is right in front of them. This ignorance has damaged and hurt us as a whole worldwide. We watch and listen as we are used for gain, thus we continue to suffer at the very hands claiming to support us," said Pollard.

While not every experience is the same as Pollard's, the frustration is still out there for those with ASD and those trying to help. There's no one method of diagnosis; there's no one treatment; there's nothing black and white about ASD, which makes it hard for everybody.

There's a popular quote that sums this up by Dr. Stephen Shore, an autistic professor, author and speaker, "If you've met one individual with autism, you've met one individual with autism."

Treatments and results have come a long way over the years. Dr. Andrzejczyk-Beatty says that 20 years ago, we probably didn't expect people with moderate to severe autism

to live independently.

"I feel that was probably underrated, or people thought that they weren't going to gain those skills, or that they weren't able to learn as much as they can," she said.

While working to help those with ASD function in a neurotypical world, Dr. Andrzejczyk-Beatty brings up a valid point.

"Why are we trying to have them accommodate and get accustomed to what's normal for us when it's harder for them to do that?" she said.

In many cases, it would be easier for a neurotypical person to make accommodations to help someone with ASD. Bright office lights or light background music can be very different experiences for those with ASD.

Hamilton refuses to let his autism stop him. "Being autistic, for me, is never an excuse. I'm never going to say I can't do that because I'm autistic. I'm not going to use it as a crutch," he said.

Pollard offers some advice to parents.

"If you're a parent, about to become a parent or want to adopt a child with autism spectrum disorder. No matter the level that child's on, they need you; they need to feel love, compassion and above all else, they need to know that you will be there for them no matter what. They need to know they are accepted as is. They aren't broken, so no, they don't need to be fixed," he said.

Pollard added, "We may not be the child you envisioned. We may never have that life you dreamed we would have, but rest assured God has a plan for our lives, if you will let Him use us."

Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month

By Rashad Riazuddin, MD

Choctaw Nation Family Medicine Residency Program

What is the most diagnosed gastrointestinal condition and yet is so poorly understood? KB, a young mother in her 20s, reported a longstanding history of recurrent abdominal pain and loose stools since she was a teenager. Over the years, her symptoms have caused her much social and mental distress. She had periods of improvement and worsening, making it even more frustrating. After over a decade of suffering, doctors found that she was suffering from Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

According to research done by Sayuk et al, about 40% of people who meet the criteria for IBS do not have a formal diagnosis. Other studies say only a small percentage of those affected seek medical attention. Another study done at the University of North Carolina reported that IBS accounted for the second-highest cause for work absenteeism, causing a significant economic burden. It is estimated that 10 to 15 percent of the population of the United States has IBS.

So, what is IBS? It is defined as a functional disorder of the gastrointestinal system associated with chronic abdominal pain and fluctuations in bowel habits. It can affect both genders, but women are slightly more likely to have it. Its presentation can vary widely but typically involves abdominal cramping with varying intensity, often relieved with defecation. Other symptoms include diarrhea, constipation or both in alteration and mucus in your stools.

Although poorly understood, it is thought that IBS is caused by hypersensitivity of the gut wall. There may be a genetic component since individuals suffering from this condition often have a family history of IBS. Other factors associated with IBS are psychosocial in nature, such as anxiety and depression.

By being a functional disorder, it is essentially a diagnosis of exclusion. Meaning other more ominous causes of these symptoms must be ruled out to be able to diagnose IBS. The red-flag symptoms are weight loss, blood in stools, onset after 50 years of age, anemia and family history of colon cancer. These symptoms should prompt immediate medical attention. Your doctor may do several tests to exclude other causes of your symptoms, including blood tests and stool tests for infections, autoimmune conditions and metabolic dysregulation.

tions, among others. Your doctor may order imaging such as a CT scan or refer you for a colonoscopy. Your primary care provider (PCP) may even refer you to a Gastroenterologist, a specialist in this condition.

The good news is that IBS is a treatable condition. Once diagnosed, there are several treatments available to help mitigate your symptoms. These include dietary modifications, medications, physical activity and behavioral therapy. Treatment is tailored to the patient, and you may require a trial of different modalities before finding one that is effective for you. This requires working closely with your physician with frequent follow-ups to find the right fit.

As for KB, she was able to work with her doctors to find a regimen of dietary modifications, exercise, medications and behavioral therapy that worked for her. She had also had underlying anxiety, which provided a marked improvement in her symptoms when treated. KB is now living with her children and husband and reports that she is the happiest she has ever been in a long time.

This column was written by a guest contributor from the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority.

WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS		
LOCATION	DAYS	HOURS
Antlers 580-298-3161	Every Tuesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
Atoka 580-889-5825	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Battiest 580-241-5458	1st Tuesday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
Broken Bow 580-584-2746	Monday - Friday (except 1st Tuesday & 2nd Thursday of the Month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
Durant 580-920-2100 ext 83852	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Heavener 918-974-1820	Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Hugo 580-326-9707	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Idabel 580-286-2600 ext 4113	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
McAlester 918-423-6335	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Poteau 918-647-4585	Mon, Wed & Friday Tuesday & Thursday	8am - 4:30pm 8:30am - 5pm
Smithville 580-244-3289	2nd Thursday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
Spiro 918-962-3832	Thursday & Friday (3rd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays of the month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
Stigler 918-967-4211	Monday - Tuesday (the first two Wednesdays)	8:30am - 4:00pm
Talihina 918-567-7000 ext 6792	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
Wilburton 580-642-7588	Monday and Wednesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
Mobile Van 580-380-5679	Dates & times vary due to weather & travel (Service in Boswell, Coalgate and Clayton)	

Choctaw Nation Health Services

Green Smoothie

- 1.5 cups of milk/ juice of choice
- 2 cups of spinach (frozen, canned or fresh)
- 1 medium banana (frozen or fresh)
- 1 cup frozen fruit of choice

Preparation

1. Put ingredients into blender.
2. Start blending on low speed and increase to high.
3. Blend on high speed for 50-60 seconds until mixture is smooth.



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

April 2022

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Closed: April 15, 28 & 29.

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 demos April 5 & 21

BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842
Food demos April 6 & 20

DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773
Food demos April 4 & 19

MCALESTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716
Food demos April 7 & 25

POTEAU 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431
Food demos April 12 & 26

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SHOULD I BE SCREENED FOR LUNG CANCER?

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- 50 to 80 years old
- Current smoker or former smoker who quit less than 15 years ago
- A smoking history of at least 20 pack-years (this means one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years, etc.)

If you are in the high risk category, talk to your physician about whether screening is beneficial for you.

For more information:
Choctaw Nation Health Services
Low-Dose CT Program
(800) 349-7026 ext. 6545

Convery founds PureWild Co.

By Chris Jennings

For three years, starting in 2015, Cindy Convery traveled a lot, not eating as healthily as she wanted and suffering a lot of aches and pains.

Around the same time, she started having knee pains, with doctors recommending surgery. She didn't like that idea, saying, "I started looking into collagen and diet and exercise instead of surgery."

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, collagen is a fiber-like structure used to make connective tissue. It's the most abundant protein in the body and is a major component of bone, skin, muscles, tendons and cartilage. It helps to make tissues strong, resilient and able to withstand stretching. All things we need help with as we age.

Convery's knee is better now. She says it's partly due to a drink she created in her kitchen containing marine collagen. That drink is now available at stores across the country under the brand name PureWild Co.

Convery chose marine collagen for her drink because she didn't like the taste and texture of other collagen. "The proteins are bigger in the bovine collagen, so it's not as easily absorbed. It doesn't disappear into the product; it's just a heavier product," said Convery.

The better taste and the fact that marine collagen is more sustainable than bovine collagen means she had found a good source for her drink.

Convery mixed up a small batch of 36 bottles and got it on the shelves of a local natural food store in Ojai, California. Within a week, they were all sold.

"I put them on the shelf on Monday at two o'clock, and they were sold out on Friday at two o'clock. Three cases, that's 36 bottles. And I thought, Okay, I'm in business," Convery said.

She built on that success, receiving help from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Loan Guarantee and Insurance program (ILGP). She secured a loan for \$250,000, which was later increased to \$350,000 and a line of credit from Chickasaw Community Bank in Oklahoma City that helped get the company going.

Convery said her company would not be in business if she weren't in the Choctaw Nation and qualified for the ILGP program.

With a source of starting capital, Convery then worked to find a place to bottle the drink. Convery had high standards for her bottling location, saying, "I had to be in a factory that was certified non-GMO and kosher, and there are very few of those."

The healthfulness and quality of the PureWild Co. Products are essential to Convery. According to the PureWild website, every ingredient they source is organic and sustainable, with only small amounts of raw organic honey or organic agave syrup as natural sweeteners. There are no preservatives in their products, and they don't use plastic in their packaging.

They also give 1% to the Sierra Club to give back to the planet for the ingredients they use in their drinks.

"I thought, I'm getting my ingredients from the planet...so I should really give money back to the planet. To protect the environment because that's where my ingredients are coming from," said Convery.

There are three flavors of the PureWild drink, Mango Turmeric, Blueberry Holy Basil and Lime Agave Ginseng. Each flavor contains different adaptogens that many believe contribute to whole-body wellness.

Turmeric is used for anti-inflammation; holy basil relieves stress; and ginseng serves



Submitted photo

Cindy Convery started PureWild Co. in her California kitchen, now the marine collagen based drink is available across the country.

as a natural energy booster. A marine collagen chardonnay will also be available for purchase on the PureWild website soon.

Perhaps the biggest thing in the works, though, is a collagen lotion that Convery plans to distribute through a subscription plan. In May, she's packaging 15,000 boxes of a 30-day supply of the collagen formula she developed with a nutritionist and oncologist near her in California.

Convery hopes she can give the lotion to cancer patients in need with every third subscription. She's looking into Native groups that work with Native women with breast cancer; "I want to work with a breast cancer organization to distribute and identify who would be the recipients," she said.

From five-star hotels to major grocery store chains to large casinos and soon helping to heal cancer patients, PureWild Co. is poised to make a difference. "That's really the company I want. That's like people, profit, planet. That's the real triple bottom line company that I feel good about," said Convery.

Tyler King makes a name for himself

By Shelia Kirven

"If It was easy, everyone would do it." That is how Tyler King feels about his chosen career path in high-level competitive sports. A Choctaw tribal member from Northern Massachusetts, King, has spent years making a name for himself in football, MMA and Jiu-Jitsu.

King, 41, commutes to Boston daily and is accustomed to the area, having grown up there, but he is no stranger to his family's Oklahoma roots. He was born in Massachusetts when his dad, Steve King, played NFL football there. Steve graduated from Quinton high school, in Quinton, Oklahoma, in 1969, and went on to play for the University of Tulsa and then was a linebacker for nine seasons for the New England Patriots from 1973-82 out of the University of Tulsa.

Originally from Massachusetts, Tyler's mother, Cathleen, met Steve after mutual friends fixed them up on a blind date. Steve and Kathleen now live in Oklahoma.

Tyler initially followed in his dad's footsteps when he began a career in the NFL at age 23 as a defensive end and linebacker. A graduate of the University of Connecticut, his football career years included playing with the Yukon Huskies and the Arizona Cardinals. He went on to the Saint Louis Rams, was signed by the San Diego Chargers and the Jaguars. He played in Cologne, Germany, with NFL Europe and Arena Football in the U.S.

After his years in the NFL, King took a job in the financial world and trained in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). He has been called a natural in the full-contact combat sport mixed martial arts competitive



Photo Provided

Tyler King shows off his medals.

world. He got into Jiu-Jitsu as part of the MMA training. King is currently classified as a black belt and is about to receive his first degree.

Tyler travels for professional exhibitions and competitions, and goes to martial arts schools to conduct seminars, teaching principles and moves. He also trains others for matches and has plans to move on to coaching in MMA and Jiu-Jitsu.

King's statistics and competitive activities are all over the internet, and you can even view MMA matches he has been in. When asked if he would do it all over again, he said, "one hundred percent, with or without the lessons I've picked up along the way."

You can keep up with Tyler King on social media at @tylerking52 on Instagram, Tyler King on Facebook, and @tking52 on Twitter.

Interior Department takes steps to increase voter registration in Indigenous communities

WASHINGTON (March 24, 2022) — The Department of the Interior today announced that it is working with states to formally designate the Department-operated post-secondary Tribal institutions – Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in New Mexico – as voter registration agencies under the National Voter Registration Act. This designation will facilitate voter registration opportunities for enrolled students and members of the community.

The announcement follows the release of the White House's Native American Voting Rights Report, which chronicles the barriers Native voters face and recommends actions for policymakers at every level to help break these barriers down.

These efforts support President Biden's Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting, which aims to expand access to, and education about, voter registration and election information in order to enable all eligible Americans to participate in our democracy.

"Tribal nations have played a significant role in influencing the contours of American democracy, yet systemic barriers continue to disenfranchise Indigenous people and impede a free and fair electoral process," said Secretary Deb Haaland. "The Interior Department is committed to defending the right to vote, which includes increasing access to voter registration and engaging young people in our democratic system."

"Today's announcement helps further the Administration's goals of increasing voter outreach, education, registration and turnout in Indigenous communities. Haskell and SIPI serve as important touchpoints in their respective communities," said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland. "Designating these schools as voter registration agencies is an important move that will allow more Native people the opportunity to register to vote."

In March 2021, President Biden directed the creation of an Interagency Steering Group on Native American Voting Rights to study the barriers Native voters face in casting their ballot and to recommend steps to mitigate or eliminate these barriers. The Steering Group held six consultations with Tribal leaders and Native American voting rights advocates across the country, and engaged in listening sessions with Native Hawaiians, organizations advocating for improved Tribal voting rights, and state and local election officials in jurisdictions with sizable Native populations. These sessions sought ways to mitigate barriers to voting for Native communities and revealed recurring and unnecessary impediments to the franchise.

To ensure that the White House report is accessible to a wide audience across Indian Country, the Assistant Secretary's office is spearheading an effort to translate the report into six Native languages that reflect the regional consultation structure: Navajo, Yup'ik, Ojibwe, Cherokee, Lakota and Native Hawaiian.

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Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation

MMIW COMMUNITY EVENT 5K & 1mi AWARENESS WALK

HONORING MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN

MAY 7, 2022 | 8:00AM
ANTLERS COMMUNITY CENTER

Choctaw Nation Outreach Services Victim Services

OurWorlds and “Choctaw Code Talkers 1918” take South by Southwest by storm

By Kendra Germany-Wall

For decades, South by Southwest (SXSW) has taken over downtown Austin, Texas, turning the state's capital into “an essential destination for global professionals.” The annual March event features sessions, music and comedy showcases, film screenings, exhibitions, professional development, and a variety of networking opportunities.

Each year, thousands of people flock to the city to participate in the festivals. According to SXSW, 232,258 people attended SXSW festivals in 2019.

However, in 2020, like many things, the in-person party came to a halt.

SXSW was one of the first major events to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

After two years of being virtual only, the 29th edition of SXSW was held in person from March 11-20, 2022.

This year, the Choctaw Nation had a unique link to the festival's historic return. OurWorlds Inc., a San Diego-based tech start-up and XR experience, entered their film, “Choctaw Code Talkers 1918” into the 2022 SXSW Film Festival in the Extended Reality category. The film was one of 11 to be selected to compete in the category.

The film tells the pivotal story of the original Code Talkers, a group of 19 Choctaw soldiers from Oklahoma who fought bravely on the fields of France during WWI and used their Native language cryptographically to help turn the tides of war—even as their language was forbidden to be spoken at home.

“The Choctaw Code Talkers played a crucial role in battle victories for the United States, eventually ending World War I. It's important to pass that information down to our children and this production will only serve to help teach other generations about the heroic efforts of these proud and brave Choctaws,” said Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

OurWorlds collaborated with the Texas Military Forces Museum in Austin, who provided historical pieces, WWI reenactors and historical experts who helped bring the project to life.

“As the official museum of the Texas National Guard and the 36th Infantry Division, we are delighted to work with OurWorlds to share this story,” said Jeffrey Wm. Hunt, Director of the museum. “OurWorlds technology can help connect students and others to this important chapter in US and Choctaw history.”

When it came to choosing the topic, Kilma Lattin (Pala Tribe), founder of OurWorlds, wanted to share a piece of Indigenous history that isn't well known.



Photo Provided by OurWorlds, Inc.

WWI reenactors, provided by the Texas Military Forces Museum in Austin, were on hand to contribute to the immersive experience.

“Many Americans believe the original Code Talkers were Navajo from WWII. In fact, the original code talkers were Choctaw, first used in WWI,” said Lattin. “I believe this film is a significant piece of American history that needs to be retold in new ways. A win for this film means a win for Indian Country, American military history, education and Extended Reality 360.”

“Our XR360 platform provides a powerful way to convey this important story. It presents the soldiers in volumetric point clouds to give viewers a compelling sense of their physical presence that we hope conveys some of their battlefield experiences in an immersive new way,” said Catherine Eng, co-founder of OurWorlds.

The OurWorlds team worked closely with the Choctaw Nation to ensure that the film authentically and factually told the stories of the Code Talkers. The Choctaw Nation School of Language, Judy Allen, Choctaw Nation's historic project officer and Choctaw Author Sara Elizabeth Sawyer were all involved in the project.

“Like I've said, no Choctaw, no story. So, obviously, we want to pay homage to the origins of the story, and we want to tell it in the most respectful way possible. It was really crucial working early on with Judy and getting her as a point person to kind of navigate us the right way and linking us with the language school,” said Lattin. “We wanted to go about it from a culturally sensitive perspective. Being from the Pala Tribe and having served on my tribal council, I'm very aware of how to work with Native people in a respectful way. We wanted to make sure we put that at the forefront of all of our decision-making.”

On March 10, OurWorlds was announced as the winner of the fast-paced live pitch event at SXSW EDU, Launch, presented by Schmidt Futures and the Walton Family Foundation.

According to Lattin, with this win, OurWorlds became the first-ever Native American-owned technology company to win an international technology conference: SXSW/SXSW EDU.

The Launch competition is an opportunity for companies seeking market exposure, investment, and strategic partnerships to showcase their innovative products. This year, six early-stage startups were selected to compete as finalists.

- Affectifi Inc. (Brooklyn, N.Y.)
- Epixego (Berkeley, Calif.)
- IEP & Me (San Francisco, Calif.)
- OurWorlds, Inc. (Pala Indian Reservation, Calif.)
- Readlee (Worcester, Mass.)
- Schoolytics (Washington, DC)

There are still ways to view the film for those unable to attend SXSW. The beta version can be requested at <https://ourworlds.io/beta/>.

The team worked hard on this project and spent their time at the festival promoting their project.

According to Lattin, the team worked long hours, and their family and friends made a lot of sacrifices during the 18 months it took to complete the project. The team spent 10 days straight in Austin, promoting the film and their company to everyone who would listen, including Dallas Mavericks owner, Mark Cuban.

While they didn't win the SXSW Film Festival's XR competition, they made a name for themselves and etched their names in history.

DG Smalling, Choctaw artist, Choctaw Code Talkers Association board member and great-grandson of Code Talker Calvin Wilson, attended the festival on behalf of the Choctaw Nation.

According to Smalling, the Choctaw Code Talkers Association hopes to work with the OurWorlds team in the future to share this story with Choctaw tribal members and visitors.

For more information on OurWorlds, visit <https://ourworlds.io>.



Photo by Tico Mendoza

Kilma Lattin and Catherine Eng, co-founders of OurWorlds, Inc. pose for a photo with Dr. Stanley Rodriguez, a lecturer in American Indian studies at Cal State San Marcos. OurWorlds recently won the SXSW EDU Launch Competition.



Photo by Christian Toews

Robert Huey, one of the WWI reenactors stationed at the OurWorlds booth views “Choctaw Code Talkers 1918” through the Oculus system. The XR film was one of 11 films selected to compete in its category at SXSW.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Announces ARPA Second Round of Funding Address Verification Required for All Participants Prior to Second Disbursement Payments

Durant, Okla. (March 23, 2022) – The second round of funding for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal members has been announced today. The Economic Impact Recovery for Adults and Dependents funds are part of a possible two-year distribution program for tribal members.

Choctaw tribal members have until June 30, 2022, to apply for year 1 ARPA - Economic Impact Recovery funds.

Year 2 funds will be available only after address verification by participants is completed on the Chahta Achvffa member portal (<https://chahtaachvffa.choctawnation.com/>). The address verification portal will be open from July 1, 2022 – Sept. 30, 2022.

More information and details on mailing address verification can be found on the FAQ section of the <http://www.choctawnation.com/covidrelief> web page.

The initial distribution criteria of ARPA funding was developed after receiving guidance from the U.S. Treasury on acceptable distributions for the COVID-19 relief program.

“Our elders and those Choctaw families with children were our priorities,” said Chief Gary Batton.

“The plan centers around taking care of our elders and is available to all Choctaw tribal members living anywhere in the U.S. who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope these dollars assist you during these difficult and trying times,” Batton said.



2022 ARPA FRF ECONOMIC IMPACT RECOVERY

ACT NOW TO RECEIVE FUNDING!

NEW APPLICANTS:

New ARPA Economic Impact Recovery applications close **6/30/2022**.
If you haven't applied, please do so, today.

PREVIOUS FUNDING RECIPIENTS:

Verify your contact information in Chahta Achvffa to receive 2022 funds.
Verification will be open from **7/1/2022 to 9/30/2022**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: CHOCTAWNATION.COM/COVIDRELIEF

Choctaw Tribal Members must verify address prior to being issued 2022 funds.
Tribal Members who fail to validate address will not receive 2022 funds.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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CHOCTAW LANGUAGE SECOND SPEAKERS SURVEY

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QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK MAY BE EMAILED TO TBILLY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation School of Choctaw Language

Hit the open road and plan your next road trip in Choctaw Country

Part 1

By Christian Toews

When you think about taking a road trip, you probably think about driving across the United States. But what if you didn't have to travel as far to have an incredible road trip experience? We are going on a road trip across Choctaw Country and visiting some well-known places, some lesser-known places and a few that you might discover for the first time.

Spring is the perfect time to pack up the car with friends, the kids, or your furry friend and hit the road. It doesn't matter what you enjoy seeing along the way, Southeastern Oklahoma has what you are looking for. Within the Choctaw Nation's borders are hidden gems that will get everyone excited.

We are going to begin our journey in the city of Hugo, Oklahoma. This destination has several unique experiences that you won't find anywhere else. One of these experiences is Hugo Lake State Park. If you are car camping along your road trip, this is a perfect place to pitch your tent for the night. This park is ideal for a day out in nature or a camping adventure, with hiking trails, fishing, swimming, and even hot showers and restroom facilities. Dustin Searles grew up in Hugo and said he enjoyed the outdoor spaces when he lived there. "There's a lot of water around; you're within driving distance of several lakes, and we would fish a lot and enjoy all the outdoor activities in and around Hugo," he said. If you don't want to camp, you can still enjoy everything Hugo Lake State Park offers by renting a cabin near the park. With several options listed on VRBO and Airbnb, this could be your next location for a weekend getaway or a stop along a road trip through Choctaw Country.

Hugo offers an assortment of local restaurants as well as fast food. Some of these local restaurants include Buffalo Grill, where their menu boasts everything from barbeque to burgers and even steak. Hugo hosts Mexican, Italian and a few popular chain restaurants such as Chili's in nearby Grant, Oklahoma.

If you are looking for a more all-inclusive feel along your road trip, you should visit the Choctaw Casino and Resort in Grant, Oklahoma. This resort offers everything you need for a luxurious stay just a few miles from Hugo, Oklahoma. Choctaw Casino and Resort in Grant is worth the trip, with pools, bars and restaurants. So, whether you are passing through or planning to stay a few days, be sure and add this stop to your list.

Hugo also has many entertainment options, and the history of the town is fascinating. According to www.hugook.com, the city was founded in 1901 and named for the French novelist Victor Hugo. The town serves as winter quarters for some circus performers. It is adjacent to one of the oldest schools west of the Mississippi, Goodland Academy,



Photo by Christian Toews

Spring is the perfect time to pack up the car with friends, the kids or your furry friend and hit the road. Choctaw Country offers breathtaking views and unique experiences that you won't find anywhere else.

founded in 1848.

One of the unique entertainment options in Hugo is visiting The Endangered Ark Foundation. Their website states that the foundation "is a private non-profit dedicated to ensuring the future of Asian elephants in North America, providing a retirement ranch for circus elephants, and educating the public about this endangered species." The Endangered Ark Foundation offers tours where you can meet the elephants, and who doesn't want to meet an elephant? According to their website, they offer public tours of their facility on Fridays, Saturdays, and most Sundays. You can find more information and book a tour online at www.endangeredark-foundation.org.

The next leg of our road trip takes us to Idabel, Oklahoma. This is a great place to stop at a Choctaw Travel Plaza to refuel and maybe grab a bite to eat at one of the local restaurants or fast-food options. While there, you will want to plan a stop at the Museum of The Red River. According to their website, this museum is the largest cultural institution in a 150-mile radius. The museum has many permanent art and artifact exhibits and houses a variety of temporary exhibitions. One of the most noteworthy artifacts in the museum is the cast skeleton of *Acrocantiosaurus atokensis*. According to the museum website, this giant dinosaur skeleton was discovered in McCurtain County and is the most com-

plete skeleton ever recovered. You can learn more about this museum by visiting www.museumoftheredriver.org.

Our final stop on this leg of our road trip leads us just a short drive north of Idabel to Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Nestled in the foothills of the Kiamichi Mountains, Broken Bow is a community of nearly five thousand people, according to the City of Broken Bow's website. This area has become a popular tourist destination because of the beautiful scenery and available activities. That makes it a perfect spot for a stop along a road trip through Choctaw Country.

There are many lodging options around Broken Bow, from hotels and cabins to RV and camping spots. One of the most popular attractions in the area is Beavers Bend State Park. This park offers everything: mountain biking and hiking trails, fly fishing, ATV adventures, kayaking and canoeing, camping,

swimming, a museum and so much more.

The town nearest Beavers Bend State Park is Hochatown. This area has become a popular tourist attraction with an almost unlimited number of cabins for rent, restaurants to enjoy, coffee shops, breweries, wineries, distilleries and other entertainment options. It doesn't matter what you enjoy doing; you are sure to find something that interests you in the Broken Bow area.

To find out more information on any of these areas listed, you can visit www.choctawcountry.com. You can also find a comprehensive list of events and activities in southeast Oklahoma in the "Pathfinder" magazine linked on the Choctaw Country website and begin planning your spring or summer road trip today.

This is the first article in a special tourism series. Look for more in future issues of the Biskinik.

CNO Associate Michael Southard named to Prestigious Planning College of Fellows

DURANT, Okla. (March 14, 2022)– Michael Southard has achieved the planning profession's highest honor by being named to the prestigious American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) College of Fellows for his outstanding achievements in urban planning.

Fellowship is granted to planners who have achieved certification through the American Planning Association's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, and have achieved excellence in professional practice, teaching and mentoring, research, public and community service, and leadership. Invitations to join the College of Fellows come after a thorough nomination and review process, ensuring the candidate has had a positive, long-lasting impact on the planning profession.

"Individuals who make up the College of Fellows are the true leaders of the planning profession," said past AICP President Valerie Hubbard, FAICP. "These individuals have made lasting contributions to the profession and have inspired generations of new planners. They are truly awe-inspiring."

Michael is the Economic Development Director for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and has 30 years of planning experience. Prior to this position, he worked in rural Oklahoma communities focusing to create workforce housing, revitalize downtown business districts, grow local economies, and enhance the overall community experience.

Michael is one of 53 inductees into this year's College of Fellows. Inductions are done biennially. This year's formal induction will take place during APA's National Planning Conference in San Diego, on Sunday, May 1, 2022.

About the American Planning Association

APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic, and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. The American Institute of Certified Planners provides recognized leadership nationwide in the certification of professional planners, ethics, professional development, planning education, and the standards of planning practice. For more information, visit www.planning.org.



Photo by Christian Toews

Sunsets are just better in Choctaw Country. Make sure to add watching the sunset to your list.

CHOCTAW NATION DISTRICT PRINCESS PAGEANTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 14 - 6 P.M.
District 1 – Choctaw Community Center, Idabel
District 2 – Choctaw Community Center, Broken Bow

THURSDAY, APRIL 21 - 6 P.M.
District 3 – Choctaw Community Center, Talihina
District 6 – Choctaw Community Center, Wilburton

THURSDAY, MAY 12 - 6 P.M.
District 4 – Choctaw Community Center, Poteau
District 5 – Choctaw Community Center, Stigler

THURSDAY, MAY 19 - 6 P.M.
District 7 – Choctaw Community Center, Antlers
District 8 – Choctaw Community Center, Hugo

THURSDAY, MAY 26 - 6 P.M.
District 9 – Cultural Center, Durant
District 10 – Choctaw Community Center, Atoka

THURSDAY, JUNE 2 - 6 P.M.
District 11 – Choctaw Community Center, McAlester
District 12 – Choctaw Community Center, Coalgate

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The Trail of Tears is a part of our tribal history that will not be forgotten.

Join us in remembering the journey and celebrating our culture.

CHAHTA HYPVIA!

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Volunteers needed for CNO Peacemakers Court

By Rob Henderson

The Choctaw Peacemakers need qualified volunteers to help members achieve peaceful resolutions to disputes pending in the district court of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO).

"Peacemaking is a great opportunity to express our culture and our sovereignty by acknowledging that there are other ways to resolve issues that are different from the traditional court process," said Erica Stedman, a CNO tribal member who has served as a Choctaw Peacemaker since 2018.

According to Stedman, the primary purpose of peacemaking is to restore good relations between tribal members—oftentimes divorcing parents of minor children—to maintain peace between those parties and promote peace within the greater tribal community.

"I want to help the people of my tribe by showing up to help our people learn to communicate and understand each other better," said Stedman.

To facilitate peaceful resolution of tribal disputes, CNO adopted the Peacemaking Act in 2015 "to provide a forum for the use of traditional Choctaw methods of peacemaking to resolve disputes in a fair, informal, and inexpensive manner." See CNO Peacemaking Act, at §2B. Utilizing this restorative approach, Peacemakers are allowed to use Choctaw cultural traditions and customs, including present day religious teachings, in the peacemaking process.

"In my peacemaking, I like to use the story of a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis," said Stedman. "As the butterfly struggles to break out of the chrysalis, its wings are made stronger, allowing it to take flight once free. Without that struggle, the butterfly would not be strong enough to fly. It's the same with peacemaking. Through the struggle of making peace, the tribal members get stronger and can succeed after the peacemaking process ends."

Stedman said she brings sage, sweetgrass, and tobacco to her talking circles for members who still practice the old ways. If requested, the parties will burn the sage and sweetgrass and open the talking circle with a prayer while making a tobacco offering. Observation of tribal rituals sets the peacemaking process apart from the "colonial court processes," according to Stedman.

"When I open my Peacemaking circle, I let them know that it is a sacred space," said Stedman. "We use the talking piece to show that everyone has respect for themselves and each other."

The sacred space is also unique because parties must volunteer and agree to use traditional peacemaking. If disputing parties agree to the peacemaking process, they can file a written request with the CNO District Court asking for a referral to a Peacemaker. Once referred by the court, the Peacemaker has jurisdiction over the dispute, and if successful at peacemaking, the parties are bound by the agreed-upon resolution. Attorneys are generally barred from representing parties at peacemaking; however, under the Peacemaking Act, a Peacemaker has wide discretion to hear from witnesses during the process.

If peacemaking fails to reach a settlement, the case is returned to the courts for resolution. "When you go to Court and ask the judge to make the decision for you, you may not be okay with the judge's decision. With a peacemaking circle, it gives people more peace to move forward and grow," said Stedman.

According to the CNO Peacemaking Act, a Peacemaker must have the following minimum qualifications: 1.) be of good moral character and integrity;

2.) not have entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere (no contest) or been convicted of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude; 3.) be familiar with the history, customs and traditions of the Choctaw people; 4.) be familiar with the provisions of the Choctaw Nation Peacekeeping Act, the court procedures of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and federal law applicable to CNO; 5.) be proficient in oral and written communications, and 6.) be capable of preparing the documents and reports incidental to the office of Peacemaker. After meeting the minimum requirements, a prospective Peacemaker must take a Constitutional oath and agree in writing to serve under the authority of the District Court.

"I think getting our elders involved as Peacemakers is important for peacemaking," said Stedman. "Elders can bring so much insight and knowledge. In their sacred circles, our people would listen to them because we are a culture that emphasizes respect for our elders."

If you are interested in volunteering as a Peacemaker or would like more information about the program, contact Cara Schumann, Constitutional Court Clerk, at (580) 642-6448 or email her at cschumann@choctawnation.com.

For more information regarding the Choctaw Nation Peacemakers, visit www.choctawnationcourt.com/courts/peacemaker.

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Primary phone number _____ Alternate phone number _____

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Trailer type: Bumper Pull Trailer 5th Wheel RV

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April 2022

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

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