



February 2023 Issue



## Choctaw Nation works to preserve the stories of its tribal elders

By Shelia Kirven

Elders have told the stories of the Choctaw people for many generations. The stories are of origins, cultures, families and customs.

Tribes like the Choctaw Nation recognize the importance of preserving the stories of their elder for future generations and recorded history.

Several departments focus on preserving the histories and stories of our Choctaw people, specifically our elders.

A number of Choctaw Nation departments record and preserve stories, memories, histories and legacies in one way or another.

Below are just some ways Choctaw Nation works to ensure that elder stories are protected and preserved.

### BISKINIK

The BISKINIK has recorded the stories of countless Choctaws over the decades.

Past issues since 2004 are available on the tribe's website at <https://www.choctawnation.com/biskinik-archives/>. Older issues not available online are archived at the Choctaw Cultural Center.

In addition, the Biskinik has printed obituaries and obituary photos of Choctaw tribal members for many years.

Chahta Anumpa Aiihkvna  
(School of Choctaw Language)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the School of Choctaw Language received a grant for the Endangered Language Preservation Program, a program to begin recording authentic language speakers.

"The department's goal was to gather these stories in Choctaw," said Teresa Billy, Assistant Director.

They also had to find people who understood the language and could write it out in both Choctaw and English.

"As far as we know, we only have two or three people in the Nation who actually can do transcription. One is 80 and one is 70."

Twenty-six Choctaws were interviewed and recorded. They were asked to share several short stories in the Choctaw language.

"The importance is one day when all the speakers are gone, you should be able to go and listen to authentic language spoken with different verbs, and listen to the inflections and nuances of how the vowels and the language are supposed to sound like and how you pronounce your words."

Billy explained that the recordings leave behind the right inflection and

tones you look for in teaching the Choctaw language.

Additionally, all audio clips recorded for lessons and the website are spoken by Choctaw elder first speakers.

A new online Choctaw dictionary was recently released with corresponding audio clips and corresponding sentences spoken by Choctaw elders.

The dictionary is available at <https://dictionary.choctawnation.com/word/>.

Elder stories are also used for curriculum reasons.

Students can listen multiple times, and instructors can have them hone in on specific pronunciations and ways words are used.

The department has also begun an apprentice program.

Five apprentices spend each day interacting in the language with Choctaw elders.

The year-long program will open up for more participants and plans are to bring in more fluent speakers representing other regional dialects. "There's opportunity for other fluent speakers who will call in and be a part of this as we move along," Billy said.

The new Choctaw Language Nest is launching soon. Families are invited to join in a multi-generational effort to save our ancestral language.

Participants will practice and learn the Choctaw language within their individual families and with other families.

"In order to preserve the language, they have to learn the language," Billy said.

Community visits have been very positive in tribal members wanting to be part of the program.

"They're opening up their hearts. They know there is a need. We are very excited about it," said Billy.

More information is available at [www.choctawnation.com/language-nest](http://www.choctawnation.com/language-nest).

Additionally, a Choctaw first speaker is recognized each month by the Choctaw Nation. They receive a citation and plaque and their biographies are recorded and preserved.

### Chahta Foundation

The Chahta Foundation ([www.chahtafoundation.com](http://www.chahtafoundation.com)) has recorded and preserved elder stories for several years.

Scholarship Director Scott Wesley said the program works with individuals and tribal programs in scheduling interviews, some even during the Choctaw Labor Day Festival.

"Ultimately what we want to do is try and preserve these for the families in the future so they have access to them

so they can reach out and get to listen to their loved one once again."

Wesley said, "It's extremely important. We've lost so many individuals that we haven't recorded their stories that we don't know it from their perspective anymore. World views are so unique."

The foundation has completed around 65 interviews so far, and sadly many of those interviewed have now passed away.

"It's painful to see this many Choctaw lives that have passed on, but at the same time, I can pull up a video and listen to their voice and listen to their Choctaw legacy," Wesley said.

To view some of the videos which have been recorded, go to <https://vimeo.com/chahtafoundation/videos>.

Participants do not have to be an elder to participate in the program to get stories preserved.

A loved one is strongly encouraged to be with the person being interviewed.

"Our goal is to have the elder or the individual being interviewed be interviewed by a loved one, whether it be a child, whether it be a grandparent, whether it be a grandchild or a husband or a spouse," said Wesley. "We want someone who is familiar with them that they are comfortable with to be able to have that conversation so that it leads to further questions."

This process usually goes into more depth and sparks questions and memories.

"You don't get that if it's just a standardized interview with someone you don't know," Wesley said.

### Choctaw Cultural Center

The Choctaw Cultural Center (CCC) was built upon 14,000 years of stories of the Choctaw people.

"Because those stories were preserved, this is our way to share those stories," Executive Director Seth Fairchild said.

CCC encourages families to visit and learn the stories that the tribe has been built upon, and they also encourage families to record their own family histories.

Fairchild spoke in a Ted Talk ([https://youtu.be/6JcKbN\\_GjCE](https://youtu.be/6JcKbN_GjCE)) about the importance of recording elder stories.

"It seems like every single week, we hear about another tribal elder, a first speaker who has passed away, and with them all the knowledge that life's experience had taught them." He said, "If we fail to pass on this generational knowledge, we do a great injustice not only to our tribe, but we do a disservice to our children and grandchildren."

Fairchild pointed out the importance of knowing where you come from and more about your story.

"Every single person who has Choctaw blood running through their veins has a Choctaw story. It's important to capture those as much as we possibly can because that is the Choctaw legacy," Fairchild said.

### Community Centers

Elders attending the Choctaw community centers are always happy to share their stories. Youth Advisory Board (YAB) members and other youth are invited to various centers for opportunities to get to know elders and hear their stories. According to Callie Youngblood of the Smithville community center, the interactions between YAB members and elders allow their stories to be passed on for generations.

Each year, Outstanding Elders are selected from tribal districts to vie for the title of overall outstanding male and female elder for the Choctaw Nation. These elders are active members of their community and participate in events held at Choctaw community centers. Written biographies are collected on each candidate.

### Historic Preservation

The Historic Preservation Department records elder stories in several different ways.

Because they work in the communities, they can visit with tribal members about traditional art and food and hear family stories.

Senior Director Dr. Ian Thompson said the department works with the Chahta Foundation to record the individual's story.

"We have an individual who is a community liaison in the Historic Preservation Department, and he works with community centers a lot and elder groups, does tours of historic sites, does videos online of some of these historic sites that are protected so people can connect with them," said Dr. Thompson. "And in doing this, he interacts a lot with the elders and takes audio recordings of the elders talking about the specific memories that they have, different information and he documents all of those and has an archive of all of those."

Dr. Thompson said he interacts with elders quite a bit in his work. He can share, with their permission, the information he learns from their interactions in the department's publications.

Continued on Page 12

## Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

### Looking Ahead to 2023

Halito,

As we start 2023, I want to begin by wishing you and your family a “Happy New Year!” I hope the next 12 months are healthy, safe, and prosperous for you and all members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma!

Assistant Chief, our Tribal Council, the Choctaw Nation’s senior leadership and I will continue to work together to drive for results in support of improving all aspects of the quality of life for our tribal members in the new year. From education, housing, and health to employment, data digital transformation and an increase in economic development activities across the reservation, we will be razor-sharp in our focus to deliver more opportunities to enhance the well-being of our tribal members in 2023.

An example of this focus can be seen in the growth of both our health and our housing options and opportunities for our tribal members. Later this year, we’ll break ground on a major expansion of our McAlester Health Clinic, which will more than double the size of the clinic’s square footage and provide services not currently offered once the expansion is completed. In housing, senior tribal leadership established a goal of 1,000 new homes to be developed within the Choctaw Nation by 2023. Here’s where we are: As of December 2022, 1,018 homes and 392 apartments (total of 1,354 units) have been approved by Tribal Council.

- 735 have been completed
- 619 are currently under contract for construction
- 600 additional homes approved by Tribal Council in November 2022

To improve education and economic opportunities we need to improve broadband coverage and technology adoption across the reservation. In 2023, we’ll continue our work to develop and implement a Choctaw Nation Broadband strategy and while also continuing to work to increase access to targeted services in Chahta Achvffa. An example of successful results in this area can be seen in our support of tribal members, who are interested in pursuing employment at the Choctaw Nation. Tribal members can now subscribe to CNO job postings based on their location and job category preference via the Chahta Achvffa portal in coordination with our Careers website! As we start the new year, I’m proud to note that we now have approximately 12,000 employees, the most in Choctaw Nation history!

Speaking of broadband service, I would note that the Oklahoma Broadband Office wants all of us to check our address for current service availability on a map released by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The map, available at [broadbandmap.fcc.gov](http://broadbandmap.fcc.gov), allows residents to look up their address to see if the broadband availability information in the map is correct. The FCC deadline to provide corrected/updated information is this Friday, Jan. 13, 2023.

The Oklahoma Broadband Office says after the challenge process is completed, the data in the final version of the map will be used to determine how much grant money Oklahoma will get to improve internet service throughout the state. We need your help. It’s important for everyone in the reservation to go to the referenced website and fill out the information so that we can get as many dollars as possible to support the broadband strategy for our nation.

To support our focus on improving quality of life for our tribal members, we continue to look for opportunities to strengthen our financial growth and economic sustainability. One such example is our Reba’s Place partnership. Reba’s Place is expected to hold various grand opening activities and ceremonies this month in Atoka.

As you can tell, lots to talk about and lots to look forward to in 2023! Again, Happy New Year!

Yakoke and God Bless!

## CNO leaders attend OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance Christmas event



Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr., Council Member Robert Karr and Council Member Thomas Williston visited tribal members during the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance Christmas event held on December 17, 2022.

The event allowed tribal members living in the OKC area to fellowship together.



## YOUTH WORK OPPORTUNITIES



TO APPLY OR FOR MORE INFORMATION SCAN QR CODE BEGINNING JANUARY 1



APPLICATION CLOSES ON APRIL 1, 2023

Choctaw Nation Summer Youth Employment Services

PROGRAM FUNDED BY PUBLIC LAW 102-477



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

### Heart healthy for February

During February, stores are full of heart-shaped cards, candy boxes and decorative hearts of all sizes and shapes. February is also the month to consider the shape of your heart.

Although February is known for its Valentine’s Day celebrations, it is also “American Heart Month.”

American Heart Month brings awareness to the factors surrounding heart disease, like symptoms, complications and risk factors.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States.

According to the CDC, Native Americans / Alaska Natives were 50% more likely to be diagnosed with coronary heart disease than their white counterparts.

With this knowledge, the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) has prioritized identifying and treating cardiovascular health in the patients they serve.

“From early detection of heart conditions while still in the womb, through screening and monitoring during childhood, to ongoing care and treating into adulthood, CNHSA provides state of the art detection and treatment of heart-related issues,” stated Dr. Jason Hill, CNHSA Chief Medical Officer.

The CDC lists ways to help prevent heart disease. Positive lifestyle changes include:

- Quitting smoking if you smoke
- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Managing diabetes if you have diabetes
- Managing blood pressure
- Stress management

On February 3, the Choctaw Nation encourages all Associates to wear red for the American Heart Association’s “Go Red for Women Day.”

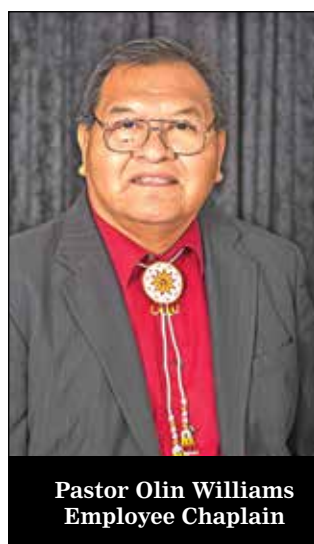
The movement launched in 2004 to raise awareness and fight a woman’s greatest health threat — cardiovascular disease.

I encourage all of us to speak to our friends, family and loved ones about the importance of educating ourselves and being proactive regarding heart disease.

After all, we owe it to ourselves, our loved ones, and our tribe.

To contact the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority, call (800) 522-6170.

God Bless!



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

### New Wine in Old Bottles

In answering a question made by the Pharisees, Jesus uses an analogy to make a point.

He says in Matthew 9:17, “Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”

In biblical times the word “bottle” meant something different than what the modern word would imply.

A leather bottle, wineskin or bottle referred to a container made of skins to transport liquids in that time period.

It was usually a bag made of goatskins, tanned with acacia bark and left hairy on the outside.

New wine or freshly squeezed grape juice would have to be placed in new bottles for storage during fermentation. In time the new wine or grape or fruit juice will automatically ferment and generate gas and exert pressure on the bottle.

New skin will allow elasticity with the expanding nature of the maturing wine.

However, an old bottle will not stretch, yield, and respond to the gas pressure developed by the fermenting wine. Because the old bottle will not stretch, it will just explode. Then, both the bottle and wine are lost. Therefore new wine needs to be put into new bottles.

God does a similar procedure in the salvation of a believer. God makes the believer a new being.

(1 Corinthians 5:17)- “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”

God has placed in the believer a new nature or “new wine.”

The Word is made alive in the heart of the believer. Now it begins to grow or expand.

The old mind and body cannot contain it. There is a conflict between the old and new natures.

In the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, chapter 7, verses 15-16, Paul describes this. “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that do I.”

In Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, Paul writes, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

When God makes a new believer, he begins to transform the mind and conduct of the life of the believer.

The Christian life is a renewing process that will only be completed once the believer reaches home. Thus the Christian life today is a process of new wine placed in a changing bottle.



### STAR PROGRAM APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Choctaw Nation’s STAR Program applications are now available. Parents and guardians can apply for rewards on behalf of their students in grades 2 – 12 in the spring and fall semesters.

APPLICATION PERIODS

FALL JAN 1 - APR 1

SPRING JUN 1 - SEP 1

All A’s - \$50 GIFT CARD

All A’s and B’s - \$25 GIFT CARD

Perfect Attendance - \$25 GIFT CARD

Apply with Chahta Achvffa at  
[choctawnation.com/chahtaachvffa](http://choctawnation.com/chahtaachvffa)

For more information, call 800-522-6170  
or visit [choctawnation.com/star-program](http://choctawnation.com/star-program)



Choctaw Nation STAR Program

# CNO Community Centers offer essential services for tribal members and elders

By Christian Toews

Community centers are a vital resource to the tribal members across the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma reservation area.

They provide access to critical programs and assist tribal members in every part of the reservation. These centers and their field representatives impact the lives of tribal members daily.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma currently has 17 community centers across the reservation.

Three to four thousand tribal members are physically assisted in some way each month through the centers, according to Robyn Morgan, Program Manager for the community centers.

Morgan said that number doesn't include the four to five thousand phone calls they receive each month.

According to Morgan, the numbers fluctuate depending on the time of year. However, the number has increased in the six years she has been the program manager.

Choctaw elders utilize the community centers to gather, play games and share meals.

Every Wednesday, a meal is provided by each community center for Native American elders 55 and older.

According to Jana Underwood, the Program Manager of the Senior Nutrition Program, they served over 120,000 meals in 2022.

During the holidays, the community centers host a Thanksgiving meal in each district.

According to Morgan, they also utilize the community centers for Christmas celebrations for local children.

"Santa will come, and we will give gifts and have treats for the kids," she said.

One of the most popular features of the community centers, especially in the more rural areas of the reservation, are the computers and Wi-Fi access.

Morgan said that these business units allow tribal members, who might not otherwise have the opportunity, to apply for jobs, get assistance and study for school, among other things.

The business units are available during regular business hours.

There is also a lab assistant who can help people as they access the computers or the internet.

At the heart of every community center is a field representative.

These are the first people who greet you inside the community center, and they provide and assist people with

information.

"Our field reps are so important. They (tribal members) can come here, and we can get it to where it needs to go without having to drive all over," said Morgan.

The field representatives assist tribal members with a vast array of information and assistance in getting that information to the correct departments.

"We are front lines. Whatever they need, if we can do it, we will," said Terri Ramirez, the field representative in Wilburton, Oklahoma.

According to Ramirez, she assists people with all types of needs.

"Emergency services, homeless, health issues, the safety of an elder, helping people apply to different services that the Choctaw nation offers. And if we can't help them, we try to always get them to the right person," she explained.

For Vanessa Allen, the field representative in Crowder, Oklahoma, her job means more than simply helping people.

It also involves developing lasting connections.

"A lot of people come in to see the same person and feel comfortable because they trust us," said Allen. "Sometimes they don't even want to talk to anyone else because you have built a lasting relationship with them."

Both field representatives highlighted their satisfaction in connecting with tribal members for many years.

Ramirez said helping multiple generations of the same Choctaw families is very rewarding.

"I wouldn't have it any other way. I love my job, and this community has become my family, and we help each other, and that's the way it's supposed to be," said Ramirez.

Scotti Fralicks is a tribal member from the Durant area. Fralicks finds the convenience of the community center very helpful.

"I don't have to drive anywhere, and that's really nice. They are great about helping me out. I do go online, but it's so much easier for me to speak with someone in person," said Fralicks.

Whether it's assistance in finding the correct department, internet access, a meal or a gathering location, the community centers are an extending arm of the Choctaw Nation's services and culture.

For more information on events happening at Choctaw Nation Community Centers, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/events/community-centers>.



Photo by Christian Toews

Field Representative Marry Lee Williams assists Scotti Fralicks with some paperwork at the community center in Durant, Oklahoma. Currently, 17 Choctaw Nation Community Centers serve as a gathering places and offer assistance to tribal members.

## Choctaw Community Center Locations

### Antlers Community Center

Phone: 580-298-5450  
Address: 302 SW O Street  
Antlers, OK 74523

### Atoka Community Center

Phone: 580-889-6147  
Address: 1625 W Liberty Road  
Atoka, OK 74525

### Battiest Community Center

Phone: 580-241-5637  
Address: 3839 Battiest Pickens Road  
Battiest, OK 74722

### Broken Bow Community Center

Phone: (580) 584-6372  
Address: 1346 E Martin Luther King Drive  
Broken Bow, OK 74728

### Coalgate Community Center

Phone: 580-927-3641  
Address: 103 E California Avenue  
Coalgate, OK 74723

### Crowder Community Center

Phone: 918-334-5344  
Address: 707 Bond Street  
Crowder, OK 74430

### Durant Community Center

Phone: 580-924-7810  
Address: 2746 Big Lots Parkway  
Durant, OK 74701

### Hugo Community Center

Phone: 580-326-7551  
Address: 1304 W Victor Street  
Hugo, OK 74743

### Idabel Community Center

Phone: 580-286-6116  
Address: 2408 E Lincoln Road  
Idabel, OK 74745

### McAlester Community Center

Phone: 918-423-1016 ext. 5220  
Address: 3274 Afullota Hina  
McAlester, OK 74501

### Poteau Community Center

Phone: 918-647-9324  
Address: 208 B Street  
Poteau, OK 74953

### Smithville Community Center

Phone: 580-244-3289  
Address: 39618 N US Hwy 259  
Smithville, OK 74957

### Spiro Community Center

Phone: 918-962-3832  
Address: 19400 Aes Road  
Spiro, OK 74959

### Stigler Community Center

Phone: 918-967-2398  
Address: 2208 E Main Street  
Stigler, OK 74462

### Talihina Community Center

Phone: 918-567-2106  
Address: 100 Railroad Street  
Talihina, OK 74571

### Wilburton Community Center

Phone: 918-465-2389  
Address: 516 Center Point Road  
Wilburton, OK 74578

### Wright City Community Center

Phone: 580-981-7064  
Address: 5718 Rodeo Grounds Road  
Wright City, OK 74766

For upcoming events, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/events/community-centers>.



Photo by Charlie Clark

Joey Tom speaks to those attending the Thanksgiving meal at the Wright City Community Center.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Choctaw Princesses perform the Lord's Prayer at the Broken Bow Community Center.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Thanksgiving meals are prepared at the Tvshka Homma Community Center.

I AM CHOCTAW PROUD

SCAN CODE TO VIEW STORIES

TOGETHER, WE'RE MORE!

## ENVISION CENTER

### VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

- Free basic tax preparation for tribal members with a combined household income of \$60,000 and below
- Virtual tax preparation by appointment only
- 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 cannot prepare: Itemized deductions, Schedule C, Schedule D, Self Employment

Scan here to schedule an appointment

580-380-9370

ENVISIONCENTER@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation Housing Authority



Jennifer Woods

## District 6

Halito, 2022 is over! It is a new year, which means there are new beginnings, and we are looking forward to this year, believing that good things are ahead for us.

In the fall, we had a "Wall Breaking" event at our new center. Chief Batton, myself and the District 6 seniors and employees joined the construction crew at the center and had the opportunity to help in demolition by knocking down a wall that was standing in the center. Everyone had an opportunity to wear safety gear and put a hole in the wall with sledgehammers. It was a fun experience for all of us and a great reminder that work is being done to get the center remodeled for our grand opening that is scheduled for this year.

We made it through all of the holidays with the parties and celebrations that go along with them. We held our first Halloween party in the Center since COVID started two years ago. All of the District 6 employees dressed up like the Wizard of Oz characters and had a great time. It was exciting to see all the children and parents coming to the center. We also held our Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas lunches for our seniors and our Children's Christmas Party. We were all exhausted after all the festivities but were grateful for all the holidays truly represented in our lives. We ended the year with a New Year's dance that was hosted by the Youth Advisory Board (YAB). Those who came enjoyed a night of food, fellowship and dancing to celebrate the coming of a new year. I want to thank all who took part in working and volunteering to make our celebrations memorable. We are only successful when we all work together.

I would like to give a big Yakoke (Thank You) to our tribal police officers who went door to door checking on our elderly during the winter ice storm that hit right before Christmas. Their actions truly show the Choctaw way of helping others. We are blessed with our tribal officers for all they do and the risks they take each day for our safety. We appreciate all they do.

We also held our quarterly check presentation for both the City of Wilburton and Latimer County through our Economic Development Program. It's always an honor to support our local agencies.

With a new year ahead of us, we are always thinking of new ways to better serve our tribal members. Many of the applications that you are used to having a paper application are now on our membership portal, and more are being added. If you do not have a computer or need help applying for these programs, please know that you can get assistance at our community center. Call or go to the center, and one of our employees will be there to assist you.

It is my privilege to serve District 6. My door is always open, and I enjoy the visits. Yakoke!



Photos Provided

Top Left and Right: District 6 staff celebrate Christmas with Santa. Bottom: Wilburton held a wall-breaking to ceremonially mark the beginning of construction on their long-anticipated new community center.

## Choctaw elders participate in annual pecan harvest

The Choctaw Nation's Agricultural department held its annual Elder Pecan Harvest on December 20, 2022.

The event drew elders from every district in the Choctaw Nation, who were shuttled in from their community centers to the pecan orchard near Idabel, Oklahoma.

The event allowed many elders within the Choctaw Nation to come together and enjoy the company of others while gathering pecans to take back home.



Photos by Mekayla Monroe



## Final meeting held in CNO Tribal Council Chambers

On January 14, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council held its last council meeting in the existing Council Chambers in Tvshka Homma.

Construction will soon start on the new facility.

The existing building served the Choctaw Nation for decades. Tribal members and visitors packed the house to witness the historic event.



## Kelly is First Language Speaker of the Month

Mary Kelly from District 4 was recognized as the First Language Speaker of the Month.

Each month, during the monthly Tribal Council Meeting in Tvshka Homma, a community member is honored for their contributions to preserving the Choctaw Nation as a first language speaker.

Council Member Jess Henry presented Kelly with her award, along with Chief Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr.

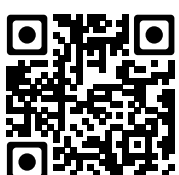


# CARE KITS



KITS CONTAIN SUPPLIES TO HELP YOU PREVENT SERIOUS ILLNESS FROM VIRUSES THIS WINTER.

Protect yourself from COVID-19, influenza (the flu), and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus infection).



ORDER YOUR CARE KIT FROM THE CHAHTA ACHVFFA PORTAL TODAY.

Choctaw Nation Health Services

# COLLEGE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE



APPLICATION DATES: JANUARY 2, 2023 - MARCH 1, 2023

This one-time payment is available to eligible Choctaw tribal members who are currently attending an accredited college or university.

For more information, please visit

[WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/COLLEGE-CLOTHING-ALLOWANCE/](http://WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/COLLEGE-CLOTHING-ALLOWANCE/)

Choctaw Nation Education Services

NOTES

**OKC Zoo Discount**

Starting Friday, January 13, 2023 through Friday, March 31, 2023, the OKC Zoo will provide \$3.00 general admission to guests presenting a valid Tribal WIC Program card. This \$3.00 general admission fee is limited to 4 paying guests per card. Children age 0-2 are always free and do not count as part of the 4. For more information about this discount, you can visit [www.okczoo.org/discounts](http://www.okczoo.org/discounts)

**COVID-19 Care Kit**

COVID-19 care kits are available to all tribal members with a Chahta Achvffa account. These can be useful to prevent severe illnesses from diseases that spread quickly through the winter months. Care kits are available for all family members, and orders can only be placed through the Chahta Achvffa portal. One care kit can be ordered per tribal member. Order your COVID-19 kit today by visiting <https://chahta-achvffa.choctawnation.com/>.



**CHOCTAW VETERAN ADVOCACY PROGRAM**

Are You a Choctaw Veteran?

Let us help guide you to the benefits and services that you have earned.

580-642-8451 | [BIT.LY/CNO-VETERANS-ADVOCACY](http://bit.ly/CNO-VETERANS-ADVOCACY)

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

**Biskinik**

**Announcement Guidelines**

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above. Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements. News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows. We welcome all letters from Choctaw tribal members. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all letters our readers send. Letters chosen for publication must be under 150 words. We require full contact information. Only the writer's full name and city will be published. All events sent to the Biskinik will run the month of the event or the month prior to the event if the event falls on the first of the month.

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

*Gary Batton*  
Chief

*Jack Austin Jr.*  
Assistant Chief

The Official Monthly Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
**Shauna Williams, Executive Director**  
**Kristina Humenesky, Senior Director**  
**Kellie Matherly, Content Development Director**  
**Kendra Wall, Content Development Manager**  
**Chris Jennings, News Reporter**  
**Christian Toews, News Reporter**

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

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

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

The BISKINIK is a 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.

**OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance Membership Event**

The OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance (OCTA) will host the CNO Membership department on Saturday, February 11, 2023, beginning 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the Moore Public Library, at 225 S. Howard, in Moore, OK. Please bring your documentation for new enrollment or to update your CNO ID picture/renewal. You may contact the CNO membership department with additional questions at 580-634-0654. Light refreshments will be provided, and OCTA will have a OCTA membership meeting from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. following the event. For directions, please contact the library at 405-793-5100. Yakoke to Terry Stephens, Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Austin and Council for supporting our Choctaws located in the metro area.

**Intertribal Community Council of Texas Raffle**

The Intertribal Community Council of Texas (ICCT), a non-profit organization serving the Native American community, announces its Raffle Ticket Fundraiser. This special fundraiser will support all programs and projects produced by the ICCT. A Raffle Ticket is \$50 each and will be limited to only 1,000 tickets. First Place Prize is a beautiful 2023 Indian Motorcycle Scout Cruiser; 2nd Place Prize is a Luxury Weekend at the Winstar World Casino & Resort for 2 nights with Golf Foursome; 3rd Place Prize is a \$250 Target Gift Card. The drawing of winning ticket holders will be held on Saturday during ICCT's "American Indian Art & Culture Festival", April 28 & 29, at the Latino Cultural Center in Dallas, Texas. Winners do NOT have to be present for the drawing. All winning ticket holders will be notified within 24 hours of the drawing. Raffle Tickets can be purchased online at [www.intertribal-texas.org](http://www.intertribal-texas.org) or for questions, email the ICCT at [community@intertribaltexas.org](mailto:community@intertribaltexas.org). The ICCT is proud to be supported by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the City of Dallas Office of Arts & Culture, and the Chickasaw Nation Winstar World Casino & Resort.

**CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER**

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE ACTIVITY? SCAN THE QR CODE TO PLAN YOUR TRIP!

**SPECIAL GROUP RATES AVAILABLE!**

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL  
REGULAR SESSION AGENDA  
January 13, 2023

- CALL TO ORDER
- OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
- ROLL CALL
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - Regular Session December 10, 2022
  - Special Session December 22, 2022
- WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
  - Veteran of the Month, District #4 – Robert McCaslin
  - First Choctaw Language Speaker, District #4 – Mary Kelly
- PUBLIC COMMENTS – None
- REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
- NEW BUSINESS
  - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment
  - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles
  - Approve a Fiber Optic Easement in Favor of Pine Cellular, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in McCurtain County, Oklahoma
  - Approve an Electric Line Easement in Favor of Choctaw Electric Cooperative, Inc., on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in McCurtain County, Oklahoma
  - Approve a Water Line Easement in Favor of McCurtain County Rural Water District #5, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in McCurtain County, Oklahoma
  - Amend the Choctaw Nation Juror Code Relating to Summoning Jurors
  - Approve the Donation of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles
  - Approve Rescission of CB-86-21 and Approve Funding for an Equity Investment in a Restaurant to be Located in Atoka, Oklahoma
  - Resolution Supporting the Coal County General Hospital's Application to the USDA for a Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant
  - Resolution Supporting the McAlester Regional Health Center's Application to the USDA for a Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant
  - Resolution Supporting Nomination of Dr. Marie Cole to HHS Advisory Committee on Infant and Maternal Mortality
  - Resolution Supporting Nomination of Tye Baker to serve on the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Committee
  - Resolution Supporting Nomination of Brian McClain to the USDA Forest Service Southern Region Rural Schools Resource Advisory Committee
- OTHER NEW BUSINESS
- OLD BUSINESS
- ADJOURNMENT
- CLOSING PRAYER

All council bills passed unanimously.

**TASTE THE TRADITION**

Located in the Choctaw Cultural Center

Lunch Served  
Tuesday – Saturday | 10:30am-4:30pm  
Paid admission is not required.

**CHAMPULI CAFE**

**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

February 1	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 3	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
February 3	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
February 7	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 8	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
February 10	Crowder	By Appointment
February 14	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
February 15	Stigler	By Appointment
February 15	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
February 17	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
February 17	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
February 21	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 22	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
February 28	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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



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

**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:

**Spiro Community Center**  
February 24, 2023  
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**Chahta Anumpa Aikhvna February Language Lesson**

**Pa chohmi-like this**  
**Ma chohmi – like that**

**Ilvppa** – long form of 'this' or 'these', **pa** is the shortened form from **ilvppa**.  
**Ymma** – long form of 'that' or 'those', **ma** is the shortened form from **ymma**  
**chohmi** – to be like; to be similar

Pa chohmi yo chompa sv bvna.	I want to purchase/buy one like this.
Shulush pa chohmi yo aiokpanchi li.	I like these kinds of shoes.
Na champuli pa chohmi vpa sv bvna beka tuk	I usually want to eat dessert like this
Pa chohmi ish pisa yo?	Have you seen something like this/these?
Pa chohmi is sa hoyo chike.	Look for (something) like this for me.
Nana ma chohmi pisa li chatuk	I usually see something like that.
Topa chaha ma chohmi sv bvna beka tuk.	I've been wanting a high bed like that
Shikvlla innuchi ma chohmi ish ikba hinla hq	Can you make a beaded necklace like that?
Ma chohmi ikbi li chatuk.	I usually make them like that
Ma chohmi is sa chompa chike.	Buy (one/some) like that for me

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

**Al-Khalili celebrated eighteenth birthday in 2022**

Abraham Al-Khalili celebrated his 18th birthday on December 5, 2022.



**Mosley turns 85**

Avis June (Pharis) Mosley turned 85 years old in January 2023. She is next to the youngest of nine siblings of Walter Polk Pharis. She and her brother Rex Pharis, age 87, are the only living siblings. Mosley is proud to be a Choctaw tribal member.



**Tonubbee turns 80**

J. Wayne Tonubbee celebrated his 80th birthday this year. J. Wayne was born on July 18, 1942. His parents are original enrollees Murphy Tonubbee and Lillian Tonubbee. He enjoys playing guitar and studying the Bible. He would like to thank everyone for all their prayers.



**Al-Khalili earns bachelors from James Madison University**

Mohammad Al-Khalili graduated from James Madison University on December 17, 2022, with a Bachelor of Music with a minor in Education.

Mohammad plans to become a band director in a northern Virginia school.



**CNO tribal member among 40 Native elders honored by AARP Oklahoma**

**OKLAHOMA CITY (November 12, 2022)** – The 14th annual AARP Oklahoma Native American Elder Honors event honored 40 Native American elders from 20 Oklahoma tribal nations for their achievements, community service and impact.

The ceremony was held in Oklahoma City at the First Americans Museum, 659 First Americans Blvd., November 12, 2022.

Choctaw tribal member Jacque Gray, Ph.D., was recognized during the event for her accomplishments. Dr. Gray has worked with tribes throughout Indian Country for 40 years in health, education, counseling and program development.

Dr. Gray earned a Bachelor of Science in Laboratory Technology from the University of Oklahoma, a Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling Psychology from the University of Oklahoma and a doctorate in applied behavioral studies from Oklahoma State University.

She also has experience in policy work and advocacy through testimony in Congress on suicide among American Indian youth, funding for Indian Health Service, addressing elder abuse in Indian Country, serving on the Health and Human Services Secretary's Advisory Committee for Interdisciplinary Community-Based Linkages, and other health disparity related issues.

Dr. Gray developed a rural crisis intervention program and an adolescent suicide prevention program in Oklahoma that have been adopted across the state and began the first viable divorced parent education program in Oklahoma.

These are only a few of Dr. Gray's many accomplishments.



**US Marine Nowlin graduates as PFC**

Madison Nowlin graduated from Plano West in June 2022. Shortly after graduation and after a 4-year high school career in ROTC with the title of Battalion Commander, she continued her military journey and left for Bootcamp October 17, 2022. She has answered the call to service as a U.S. Marine and graduated as PFC Nowlin on January 13, 2023.

Madison's mother, Priscilla, is very proud of her daughter's accomplishments.

"You have put in the time and work and through the sweat and tears you are exactly where you are meant to be," said Priscilla. "You continuously make me proud, and I congratulate you on your accomplishments. Semper Fi!"



**Harms earns masters from UT Arlington**

Lauren Oleta Harms of Eules, Texas, earned her Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction - Math Studies from the University of Texas at Arlington on December 16, 2022. The ceremony took place at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas.

She is the great-granddaughter of John Dennis "Little Choctaw" Spring of Hugo, Oklahoma and Commerce, Texas. With an 8th-grade education as a cotton farmer, he was able to put both his children through college. It is through his legacy that Lauren is now the third generation to attend university. To honor him and all those who came before her, Lauren wore the Choctaw Nation stole to her graduation.

She wishes to thank her family and friends for their support during her studies and the Choctaw Indian Nation, without whose help she would not have been able to complete her degree. She plans to give back to her Dallas/Fort Worth community.



**McCathern voted teacher of the year**

Cole McCathern of Mustang, Oklahoma, was voted Teacher of the Year for 2022-2023 at his school, Mustang Trails Elementary in Mustang.

This is Cole's fourth year teaching the Functional Skills Class for grades K - 2nd.

In 2019-2020, he also won Rookie Teacher of the Year at Mustang Trails.



Cole is currently in the graduate program at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, working on his Master of Education in Special Education.



**Fowlie earns masters from Arizona State**

Dallas Nicolette Fowlie graduated December 13, 2022, from Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, receiving her master's

degree in Elementary Education with distinction upon earning a 4.0 cumulative GPA for her graduate work.

She is deeply grateful for the support she received throughout her educational journey and proud to represent the Choctaw Nation.

Fowlie is looking forward to working with children to help them become our leaders of tomorrow. Yakoke!

**Lein graduates from ERAU**

Jackson Lein graduated in 2022 with an aerospace engineering degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and was quickly hired by Northrop Gruman.

Jackson finished on the dean's list and was also a Delta Chi Fraternity member and baseball player at ERAU. Jackson's parents are Torree and Chris Lein of St Augustine, Florida.

"We are so grateful to the Choctaw Nation on helping our Choctaw attain his goal," said his mother, Torree.



**Choctaw-Ireland Scholarship holder presents her Master of Arts research**

**CORK, Ireland (December 1, 2022)** – Current Choctaw-Ireland Scholarship holder Aurianna Jewell Joines gave her Master of Arts thesis proposal presentation at the final seminar of this semester in the MA in Digital Arts and Humanities.

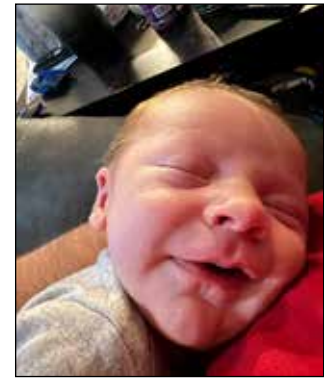
In her ambitious project, she is aiming to build guides to embed sustainable storytelling in brand identities for small business entrepreneurs. Speaking of sustainability, oral history, art and how these coalesce in terms of representation and identity, her project is profoundly pro-social and looks to build openly accessible guides for the community.

The Choctaw-Ireland Scholarship was instituted in recognition of the act of generosity and humanitarianism shown by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma towards the people of Ireland during the Great Famine of the mid-Nineteenth Century and to foster and deepen the ties between the two nations today.

"We are delighted to welcome Aurianna to the growing international UCCDH MA family," said Dr. Órla Murphy, Head of Digital Humanities at UCC.



**Canaan Thomas Troussel**



Canaan Thomas Troussel was born June 30, 2022, at McAlester Regional Hospital, weighing 8 lbs 1 oz.

Canaan was welcomed into the world by his parents, John and Natasha; brothers, Carter and Caiden; grandparents, Chris and Kim; grandparents, Jim and Terri; great-grandparents, Don and Sandy; great-grandparent, Betty.



**Curtis celebrates first birthday**

Connor Dewey Curtis celebrated his first birthday January 3. He is the son of Evan and Kelly Curtis, grandson of John and Sheila Hampton-Curtis and great-grandson of the late Lewis and Lu Hampton.

**Two Eastern meat judgers named All-Americans**

**WILBURTON, Okla. (December 7, 2022)** – Two Eastern Oklahoma State College meat judging team members were recently named Collegiate Meat Judging All-Americans.

Taylor McGill, a sophomore from Tuttle, Okla., and Emma Victory, a sophomore from Chickasha, Okla., became the first Eastern meat judgers since 2007 to earn All-American status.

"I am extremely proud of Emma and Taylor for achieving such a high honor," said Logan Rea, Eastern meat processing and food safety instructor and meat judging coach. "They have both worked very hard all season and have helped continue the rich tradition Eastern has had in years past for meat judging."

Only eight collegiate meat judgers nationally are selected for All-American status each year. Academic performance, judging performance and the judger's ranking among all collegiate judgers are evaluated to determine who is selected for the honor.

McGill plans to attend Oklahoma State University upon graduating from Eastern and will pursue a double major in agricultural communications and animal science. From there she intends to pursue a law degree from the University of Arkansas.

Victory plans to attend OSU or Texas Tech University and major in animal science and pre-veterinary medicine. From there she plans to attend veterinary school and specialize in cattle reproduction. Victory hopes to one day return to Chickasha and open her own veterinary practice.



# Housing Headlines

**By Bobby Yandell**

Halito! This month I would like to address our Lease/Purchase (LEAP) program that assists our tribal members in becoming homeowners.

The LEAP program is designed loosely on the old Mutual Help program. It is a 25-year program where, for the first 15 years, the participant leases the home from the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority, and the last 10 years, the home will be financed. The lease portion of the program helps get families ready to become homeowners while, at the same time, all rent paid goes toward paying the home in full.

During the lease portion of the program, participants will receive homeowner and home-buyer education classes from the Service Coordination department of the Housing Authority. Property Managers will also work hand in hand with participants to meet their needs and help guide the way to homeownership.

We make determinations of where we build on where the approved applicants state they want to live. If you want LEAP homes in your community, please apply and encourage others to apply. There are income limits, both minimum and maximum, based on family size, and since the first 15 years are a lease, those with bad credit are not disqualified. However, background checks are completed, and at least five years since any criminal charges have been filed need to have passed.

Applications are located at each community center and can be found on the Choctaw Nation website. Tribal Council just approved another 300 LEAP homes to be built! Get your application in now!

**Choctaw Nation**
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## HIGHER EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY ALLOWANCE

### APPLY NOW!

[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/TECHNOLOGY-ALLOWANCE/](https://choctawnation.com/services/technology-allowance/)

The Technology Allowance applications open Jan. 2, 2023. This one-time payment of \$500 is available to eligible Choctaw tribal members who are currently attending an accredited college or university. Program funding is limited, and applications will remain open until limits are met.

**Choctaw Nation** Higher Education Program

## DOI welcomes significant progress for Indian water rights settlements

WASHINGTON (January 5, 2023)—The Department of the Interior today celebrated significant progress by the 117th Congress to advance settlements of Indian water rights claims and to protect Tribal sovereignty, key priorities for the federal government’s efforts to uphold its trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal communities.

“Water is a sacred resource, and access to water is fundamental to human existence and economic development. Tribal water rights are crucial to ensuring the health, safety and empowerment of communities,” said Secretary Deb Haaland. “The Biden-Harris Administration was proud to support these bills, and I am grateful to the bill sponsors and committee leaders for making progress in Congress to ensure that Tribes are finally getting the water resources they have long been promised.”

Indian water rights settlements help ensure that Tribal Nations have safe, reliable water supplies; improve environmental and health concerns on reservations; and enable economic growth. These settlements have the potential to end decades of controversy and contention among Tribal Nations and neighboring communities and promote cooperation in the management of water resources. Indian water rights settlements also promote community and economic development for regions surrounding Tribal communities, as conflicts are resolved and vital infrastructure is developed. At the Department, the Secretary’s Indian Water Rights Office manages, negotiates, and oversees implementation of Indian water rights claims and is committed to continuing to work with Tribes across the West as they seek to realize their long-promised water rights.

As part of the 117th Congress’ closing activity, one settlement was enacted, another settlement was amended, and another bill affecting Tribal water rights was enacted. This includes:

S. 4104, the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2022: The Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2022 settles the Tribe’s water rights claims in Arizona and is the result of over a decade of dedicated, good-faith negotiations among the tribe, the federal government, the State of Arizona, and other parties. The bill approves a settlement agreement that will provide much needed water to the Tribe and establishes a trust fund of \$312 million that the Tribe can use to develop water infrastructure on its Reservation. The Act’s provisions will help provide certainty to the Tribe and to



surrounding communities regarding access to water resources, enable Tribal economic growth, and promote Tribal sovereignty and self-sufficiency.

S. 3168, an Act to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to modify the enforceability date for certain provisions, and for other purposes: This Act amends the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s 2010 Settlement, which settled the Tribe’s water rights claims in Arizona. That Act authorized the design and construction of a rural water system to address the dire need for a domestic water supply on the Tribe’s Reservation. Working closely with experts at the Bureau of Reclamation, the Tribe identified critical changes to the infrastructure design along with the need for additional funding to complete the project. This amendment provides the additional \$530 million needed to complete construction of the rural water system.

S. 3308, the Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act of 2022: The Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act of 2022 authorizes the Colorado River Indian Tribes to lease, exchange, store, or conserve portions of their decreed water rights located in the State of Arizona to off-Reservation users. This Act—the product of many years of diligent negotiations among the Tribe, the State, and non-Indian water users—reflects the federal government’s commitment to Tribal self-determination and Tribal sovereignty.

These new laws supplement the significant resources provided for in President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides more than \$13 billion directly in Tribal communities across the country and makes Tribal communities eligible for billions more in much-needed investment. That includes \$2.5 billion to implement the Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund, which will help deliver long-promised water resources to Tribes, certainty to all their non-Indian neighbors, and a solid foundation for future economic development for entire communities dependent on common water resources.

## OG&E partners with Meals on Wheels for new Oklahoma City delivery route

OGE Energy Corp. Foundation donates \$50,000 to the nonprofit

**OKLAHOMA CITY (January 9, 2022)** – OG&E announced a donation and special partnership with St. Luke’s United Methodist Church to support Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City. The OGE Energy Corp. Foundation’s \$50,000 donation will allow Meals on Wheels to add a new route to their service in west Oklahoma City, and OG&E employees will serve as volunteers to deliver the meals.

“We are grateful to OG&E not only for the donation, which will help feed more than 70 seniors in our community, but also to the electric company’s employees for volunteering their time to help us deliver food on the new route,” said Chris Lambert, Meals on Wheels OKC Director. “This generous donation will allow us to provide approximately 18,500 meals to our elderly and homebound neighbors.”

Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City is a nonprofit organization that delivers fully prepared meals to people aged 60 or older who are unable to leave their home without significant assistance and have no one who can prepare meals.

“We pretty consistently have a waiting list of folks who need our help,” said Dr. Bob Long, St. Luke’s Senior Pastor. “The donation and volunteer support from OG&E is going to help us significantly reduce that wait list and ensure our friends and neighbors have the sustenance they need delivered straight to their door by a friendly, welcoming face.”

“It is an honor to help St. Luke’s and Meals on Wheels in their mission to serve some of our community’s most vulnerable residents,” said Sean Trauschke, President and CEO of OG&E. “Meals on Wheels is an incredible ministry that provides critical resources for seniors, and we encourage others in the community to consider donating their time to help this organization further its impact.”

This isn’t the first time the foundation and Meals on Wheels have teamed up. In 2020, the OGE Energy Corp. Foundation donated \$250,000 to the Meals on Wheels OKC program. The funds were used to purchase food from local restaurants that were struggling. A portion of the donation also acted as seed money for a community market that now provides fresh produce to people every Friday. OG&E employees also regularly volunteer for the nonprofit.

“OG&E is already one of our top volunteer organizations, and we are so grateful for the longstanding



Photo Provided

OG&E community outreach coordinator John Koons makes the first Meals on Wheels deliveries on the new Oklahoma City route made possible by a donation from the OGE Energy Corp. Foundation and volunteer commitments from OG&E employees.

partnership,” said Lambert. “We can always use more hands to help bless those in need. Anyone can volunteer—no special skills needed! Just a smile and the desire to help others.”

One in 12 senior citizens in Oklahoma County live in poverty, and nearly 16,000 lack consistent access to the food needed for an active, healthy life. Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City provides homebound seniors with nutritious meals to help them remain in their homes and maintain their independence and well-being. Home-delivered meals are available to all seniors 60 and older, regardless of income, who are unable to leave their homes without assistance and prepare meals due to health limitations. To apply to receive assistance or to volunteer for Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City, visit [endinghungerokc.org](http://endinghungerokc.org).

The OGE Energy Corp. Foundation also contributed to the following community organizations in December 2022:

- Boys & Girls Club of Shawnee
- Center for Children and Families, Inc. of Norman
- Fields & Futures Foundation
- FIRST
- Harding Independence Charter District
- Junior Achievement of Oklahoma
- Oklahoma City Public Schools Foundation, Inc.
- Positive Tomorrows, Inc.
- ReMerge of Oklahoma County, Inc.
- Smart Start Central Oklahoma
- Thunder Cares Foundation

## Huddleston to support REDW, LLC CPA firm

**(Oklahoma City, Okla. – Dec. 7, 2022)** — REDW LLC, one of the Southwest’s 10 largest advisory and CPA firms, also recognized among INSIDE Public Accounting’s Top 200 Accounting Firms, is welcoming Kevin D. Huddleston, CPA, CFF, CGMA as Director of Gaming Operations for the firm’s Client Advisory & Accounting Services (CAAS) practice.

In this newly created role, Huddleston, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, will enhance REDW’s current gaming practice with a focus on Tribal gaming—an industry REDW has served for more than 30 years. Huddleston will be based in the firm’s Oklahoma City office and work in partnership with REDW Principal and Director of Tribal Services Victor Flores MBA, MHA, to serve the 38 federally recognized Tribes in the state. With a passion and respect for Tribal sovereignty and culture that has been sustained over the decades, he will be working closely with the Oklahoma Tribal Gaming Regulators Association (OTGRA) and Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association (OIGA).

Huddleston will also travel to the Albuquerque and Phoenix offices to provide vision and support to REDW’s Tribal gaming practice. With approximately 200 tribes in its client base, REDW serves more sovereign nations and has been estimated to employ more Native American professionals than any other CPA firm in the country. In addition to client service, the firm supports Tribal communities with financial literacy education programs, scholarships for Native American accounting students, art commissions, workshops, and compensation surveys for Tribal government employees and gaming operations.

“REDW’s National Tribal Practice Leader, Wes Benally, and I have been working to find the right person for this position for some time,” says Flores, who, in addition to presently leading REDW’s Oklahoma City



team, years ago collaborated with the Native American Financial Officers Association (NAFOA) to create the Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium (OTFC) and serves as its president. “Kevin will be an invaluable member for REDW’s gaming practice and serve as a trusted partner to the many Tribal nations who entrust their business to our firm.”

Prior to joining REDW, Huddleston was with Finley & Cook for 15 years, serving as a partner, leading the Client Accounting Services (CAS) team, and overseeing the Casino Services Division. In addition, he also served as the Operations Accounting Controller for Cherokee Nation Entertainment, as the Controller of Local Federal Bank, and as an Auditor for Arthur Andersen.

Huddleston currently serves as the treasurer and on the board of directors for the United Way of Pottawatomie County. He is a past advisory board member for the Shawnee Regional Airport as well as the former treasurer of the Historic Shawnee Alliance. Huddleston earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from East Central University. In addition to his CPA designation, he holds the Certified in Financial Forensics (CFF®) credential and is a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA).

BUSINESS

# CHAHTAPRENEUR

CHIT ♦ CHAT

By Gary Johnson

It is tax season again, which means it’s a good time to start gathering your business receipts, income statements and expense reports for tax purposes. It is also a suitable time to reorganize and adjust your processes for record keeping in order to maximize your deductions for next year. Below are seven tips to help you with your business:

- **Collect Receipts** – Be sure you keep up with all business receipts throughout the year for tax deductions. It is always a good idea to keep receipts for purchases made for business such as supplies, equipment, rent, electric and any other services provided to the business.
- **Mileage Expense** – Deduct mileage for using your personal vehicle for business purposes. Standard mileage can very quickly add up to a big tax deduction. There are different alternatives to track mileage with the most common being a log sheet, which can be quite the hassle to keep up with. There is a variety of mileage tracking apps that you can use on your phone that will automatically record each trip.
- **Classification of Business** – Be sure you properly classify your business to take advantage of all tax benefits. Classifying your business as a sole proprietorship, partnership, Limited Liability Company, S-Corporation and C-Corporation can have a big influence on your taxes. It may be beneficial to contact an accountant or attorney to help you determine which classification is best for your business.
- **Stay organized and keep accurate records** – It is important to minimize taxes for small business, so make sure you deduct all your business expenses. Maybe purchase a bookkeeping software to track your business activities.
- **Hiring a Certified Public Accountant** – It may not be possible for you to run your business and know everything about managing payroll or taxes. It may be a good idea to hire a CPA to help remit taxes for you during the year and help you file your tax returns. A tax professional will more than likely pay for itself with additional tax savings.
- **Make estimated tax payments** – Estimated tax payments should be made by small business owners and independent contractors on a quarterly basis. To avoid late fees and penalties it is good to pay estimated taxes on a quarterly basis.
- **Separate business from personal accounts** – Keeping your business and personal checking accounts separate is always a good idea. Separating accounts may give added protection against personal assets.

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**Choctaw Nation** Small Business Development

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RESERVATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED PRIOR TO JANUARY 2, 2023

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

RV/Trailer description: (All information must be complete for reservation consideration)

Trailer type:  Bumper Pull Trailer  5th Wheel  RV

Length of RV/Trailer: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Slide-outs: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information \_\_\_\_\_

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**  
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PO Box 1210 | Durant, OK 74702

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All applicants will be notified by mail



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#CHAHTALABORDAY

**Casey Allen McKinney**

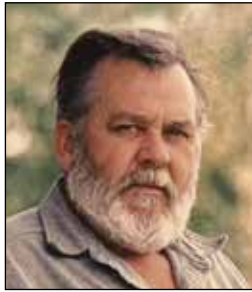
Casey Allen McKinney, 36, passed away Dec. 4, 2022.

Casey was born Feb. 4, 1986, in Talihina, Okla., to Dalton James Ward and Allison McKinney.

He was preceded in death by his mother; brothers Bradley and James McKinney; paternal grandparents Johnny and Mary Ward; and material grandparents Silas Jr. and Betty McKinney.

Casey is survived by his children Masyn Williston, Khamden Cloud, Kameron Cloud, Jakoda Noah, Bradley McKinney, Mahali McKinney, and Hiloha McKinney; his father; brothers and sisters-in-law Corey McKinney, Kyle and Amber McKinney, Tyler McKinney, and Cole and Baylee McKinney; sisters and brothers-in-law Taylor and Kyler Johnson, and Keandra and Matthew Bray; girlfriend Heather Watson; uncles John McKinney and Nathan Ward; aunts Joey McKinney, Lisa McKinney, Loretta Nash, and Roberta Ward; special cousins Janelle Walker, Jr. Shomo, and Carly Harjo; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

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

**Donald Gene Dean**

Donald Gene Dean, 73, passed away Nov. 8, 2021.

Donald was born Aug. 28, 1948, in Pittsburg, Okla., to Albert and Nellie Dean.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and six brothers and sisters.

Donald is survived by his wife Wanda; sister Ruby and brother-in-law Dennis Kennedy; children Billy Dean, Andy and Sharon Dean, and Donny and Beth Dean; grandchildren Jake and Jessica, Collin, Dylan and Jace; and great-grandson Finn.

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

**Wallace Beck**

Wallace Beck, 86, passed away June 8, 2022.

Wallace was born March 28, 1936, in Oklahoma to Wallace Beck Sr. and Mitti Mae Mills.

He was preceded in death by wife Doris Ann Beck; infant son Stevie; and son Jeffrey Scott Beck.

Wallace is survived by his wife Joanna; daughters Terry Lee Wahl and Dorelle L. Beck; stepdaughter Hannah Faye Birch; daughter-in-law Cindy Beck; nephews Terry James Beck and Wayne Beck; Dr. Richard Allen; very special friends Rocky G. Robbins and Kenny Anderson; grandchildren Mike and Sarah Beck, Clayton and Niki (Beck) Meyers, and Christopher Beck; step-granddaughter Ava Faye Birch; great-grandchildren Dallas and Luke Myers; a host of friends; and great-grand doggie Kiva.

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

**Davania Yvonne Wesley**

Davania Yvonne Wesley, 49, passed away Dec. 18, 2022.

Davania was born Oct. 12, 1973, in Talihina, Okla., to Eugene and Corliss Virginia Thompson Dwight.

She was preceded in death by her father; paternal grandparents Nicholas and Maryline Colbert; and maternal grandparents Robert Sr. and Susie Mae Thompson.

Davania is survived by her husband Keith Wesley; children Keaton Rowell, Noah Rowell, Emily Rowell, Carmen Wesley, and Aleia Lira; her mother; brother Kameron Dwight; grandchildren Jordan Beccera, Mahayla Brandy, Maritza Rios, Alessandra Lira, and Kenny Lira; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

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

**Norma R. Sam**

Norma R. Sam, 85, passed away Dec. 4, 2022.

Norma was born April 5, 1937, to Alton Lee Carney and Juanita Belle Coley.

She was preceded in death by her husband Cornelius Jr. Ray Sam; daughter Theresa Sam; son Carlos Sam; her parents; daughter-in-law Elaine Sam; son-in-law Rolando Querubin; brother-in-law William Hood; sisters Kathryn Seyler, Helen Brannon, and Willhemina Baker; brothers Johnny Carney, Victor Billy, Frank Bell, Ron Billy, Don Billy, and Jerry Billy; grandchildren Jeremy Dodson, Nicole Sam, and Emily Sizemore.

Norma is survived by daughters Debra Sam, Della Querubin, Rebecca Pruter and spouse Chad, and Carla Enriquez and spouse Daniel; sons Merle Sam, Morris Sam and spouse Roberta, Matthew Sam; Mark Sam and spouse Lucinda; stepsons Paul Sam, and John Gaines and spouse Jeannette; sisters Geraldine Isabel, Julia Hood, Connie Meftahi, Doris Box, Mary Lou Ellenburg, and Isabel Carney; 27 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family.

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

**Rebecca Jane Choate**

Rebecca Jane "Janie" Choate, 64, passed away Nov. 12, 2022.

Janie was born Feb. 12, 1958, to Andrew and Norma Choate.

She was preceded in death by her father.

Janie is survived by her mother; siblings Jackie Quiver, Warren "Bud" Choate, and Ed Choate; nieces Holly Mejorado and spouse Michael, and Kari Quiver; great-niece Briony Mejorado; uncles, aunts, and cousins.

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

**Dennisa Ann Hurst**

Dennisa Ann Hurst, 69, passed away Dec. 17, 2022.

Dennisa was born Aug. 30, 1953, in Sapulpa, Okla., to Mary Helen "Otema" (Hickman) and Dennis Smelser.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Dennisa is survived by her sons Marshal Hurst and spouse Heather, and Nathaniel Hurst and spouse Amelia; grandchildren Hannah, Kenzie, Marlee, Ezekiel, Matthew, and Hope Hurst; sister Fawn Hicks; and numerous other family members and loved ones.

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

**Edwin Joe Beams**

Edwin Joe Beams, 88, passed away Dec. 18, 2022.

Joe was born Dec. 25, 1933, in Longview, Texas, to Levi Lee Beams and Dollye Tigner Beams.

He was preceded in death by his siblings Mary Siems, Janice Crouch, Jesse Beams, and Lynn Beams; and his parents.

Joe is survived by wife Betty Moore Beams; children Ronald Keith Beams and spouse Marla, Sheila Beams Daigneault and spouse Kerry Dunn, Terry Beams, and Wanda Beams Guadamud and spouse Mario; grandchildren Joshua, Kayla, Jeremy and spouse Danielle, Ryan, Jenn, Tara, Cameron, and Cody; great-grandchildren Charli, Gabby, Levi, and great-grandchild on the way.

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

**Robert H. Thompson Jr.**

Robert H. "Long John" Thompson Jr., 69, passed away Sept. 18, 2018.

Long John was born Oct. 1, 1948, in Talihina, Okla., to Robert H. Thompson Sr. and Susie Mae (Polk) Thompson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers LeRoy Thompson and Harold Wayne Taylor; and sister Diane Roberts.

Long John is survived by daughter Lisa Deel, her spouse Dewayne, children Joshua Battiest, Garrett Thompson, Michaela Catano and spouse Johnny, Alissa, Anissa and Waylon Deel, and great-grandchildren Emilio, Azariah, and Sanaya Catano; son Tyron Bohanan, his spouse Wanda, daughters Kiesha, Karis, and Nia, and grandchildren King and Kalen; brothers Anthony Thompson and spouse Judy, and Dean Thompson and spouse Sue; sisters Corliss Dwight and David Jacobs, Laverne Tiger and spouse Jon, Debbie Wolfmule, and Phyllis Williston; a host of nephews, nieces, other relatives and many special friends.

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

**Betha M. Hodges**

Betha M. Hodges, 93, passed away Oct. 30, 2022.

Betha was born March 22, 1929, in San Bois, Okla., to Cearil and Della (Killian) Vance.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Gerald and Billy Ray (Pete); and sister Louise Butler.

Betha is survived by her sons Lynn and spouse Rita, Danny and spouse Doris, and Steve and spouse Jackie; grandchildren Brad Hodges, Cara Severson, and Krista Hodges-Eckhoff and spouse Don; great-grandchildren Brooke Severson and Madeline, Emery, and Kinley Eckhoff; as well as many nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [Yanda and Son Funeral Home](#).

**Robert Jay Ross**

Robert "Bob" Jay Ross, 64, passed away July 24, 2012.

Bob was born Sept. 12, 1947, in Atoka, Okla., to Robert Juneur Ross and Rosalee Vail Ross.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and mother-in-law Mary Moon.

Bob was survived by his wife Mary Kathryn (Moon) Ross; daughter Jessica Gerson; son Jeremiah and spouse Nicole; granddaughter Kirra Ann; Cliff Moon, Aunt Bev, Uncle Phil-Dick, Aunt Shirlee, Uncle Bill, Aunt Betty Ross and families; sister Rose Ross Nichols and family; Carol and Greg Goodwyn; Larissa Caldwell and family; Kirsten Keneipp and family; and many friends, especially Steve, Leonard and Joan, Harry and Carolyn, Pat and Marty, and Bill and Diane.

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

**Geneva Derlene Vails**

Geneva "Judy" Everett Vails, 95, passed away Dec. 27, 2022.

Judy was born Nov. 30, 1927, in Durant, Okla., to John Houston Everett and Haskell (Huggins) Everett.

She was preceded in death by her parents; an infant daughter; sister Juanita Russell and spouse Neal; brother James "Buddy" Everett and wife Abbie; grandparents J.J. "Doc" and Lula Ella Huggins, and James "Jim" and Martha "Lizzie" Everett; son-in-law Stephen "Steve" Kirven; nieces Joanne Sanders and Brenda Hampton; nephew Rusty Russell; many aunts, uncles and cousins; special friends Mary Jo Hughes, Lucy Stephenson, and Kay Green; and many precious pets that she loved dearly.

Judy is survived by her son Larry Pace and spouse Carolyn; daughter Shelia (Vails) Kirven; grandchildren April Pace, Kassidy (Kirven) Conway and Chris, and Ashley Kirven-Bobier and Cort; great-grandchildren Elliott Conway, Henry Kirven-Bobier, and Emily Conway; niece Trisha Hamel; and numerous great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, and dear friends.

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

**Leroy Summers**

Leroy Summers, 85, passed away Dec. 8, 2022.

Leroy was born Sept. 23, 1937, in Claremore, Okla., to Sylvia (Tom) and Eli Wayne Summers.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter Rhonda Summers; son Scott Summers; and brothers Harley Summers, Bill Summers, and Junior Summers.

Leroy is survived by his children Debra Summers, Gary Wayne Summers, Pamela Batts, Darren Summers, Ronald Summers and spouse Sheree, and Leroy Summers Jr. and spouse Lisa; sisters Patricia McKinney and Betty Sue Price; brother Herold Summers; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

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

**Jimmy Richard Hill**

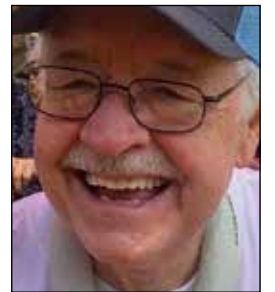
Jimmy Richard Hill, 79, passed away Dec. 22, 2022.

Jimmy was born May 27, 1943, in Oologah, Okla., to Finis Hill and Ona McAlvine.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Billy Hill, Donald Hill, and Robert Hill; and sister Mandy Sue Jenkins.

Jimmy is survived by his children Jamie Crowson and spouse Jody, David Hill and spouse Sheila, and John Hill; grandchildren Ashlee Driskell and spouse Dallas, Karlee Akin, Perry Dillman, Jacob Hill and spouse Desirae, Kelsey Harris and spouse Reed, Wyatt Hill, Dakota Crowson and spouse Megan, and Colton Crowson; great-grandchildren Felicity Akin, Remington Hill, Mia Erickson, Maggie Hill, and Cohen Harris.

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

**Jerry L. Wilson**

Jerry L. Wilson, 78, passed away Dec. 21, 2022.

Jerry was born Nov. 16, 1944, in Phillips, Texas, to Nadine and Vernon Wilson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister Verna.

Jerry is survived by his son Douglas Wilson and spouse Cristine; daughter Lisa Wilson McCaul and spouse Dave; grandchildren Dalton Wilson, Alexis Thomas, Tavin I. McCaul, and Naomi R. McCaul; great-grandchild Rowan Thomas; sister Janine Park and spouse Bob; and many nieces and nephews.

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

**Ethan Dale Stone**

Ethan Dale Stone, 18, passed away Dec. 31, 2022.

Ethan was born June 24, 2004, in Ada, Okla., to Glynn and Jessy (Riley) Stone.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents Glynn Stone Sr., Linda Black, Albert Byrns, and Dennis Tomlinson; cousin Nate Marsh; and his aunt Teresa Fritcher.

Ethan is survived by his parents; stepfather Dustin Tomlinson; brothers Logan Stone and Tristen Stone; sisters Skylar Letterman and Lily Tomlinson; nana Sharon Byrns; numerous aunts and uncles, cousins, and other relatives; and a host of friends.

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

**Versa Crow**

Versa Hayse (Billy) Crow, 83, passed away Jan. 5, 2023.

Versa was born May 2, 1939, in Corrine, Okla., to Wesley Billy and Nellie (Charlie) Billy.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Ronald K. Crow; son Danny Dean Billy; daughter Alice Fay Crow; brothers Byington Billy, Solomon Billy, Junior Billy, and Edwin Billy; sisters Delories (Billy) Taylor and Hazel (Billy) Taylor; and granddaughter Heather Billy.

Versa is survived by her sons Donald Ray Billy and Ronald Heath; great-granddaughter Madison Rae Billy; grandchildren Elijah Crow and spouse Kim, Amy (Crow) Bean and spouse Steven, Paul Crow and spouse Sarah, Silas Crow and spouse Shelbie, Emily (Crow) Deshiell and spouse David, Bethany (Crow) Elam, Brandi Billy, and Mendy (Crow) Harvey and spouse Cody; 26 great-grandchildren; numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, friends and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller & Miller Funeral Home - Hugo.

**Obituary Policy**

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

The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

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

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

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

Send official obituary notices to:

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Durant OK 74702

or email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)



ITI FABVSSA

# Makers and Masterpieces: Silversmith work at the Smithsonian

Last month, Iti Fabvssa shared information about Choctaw baldric sashes held at the Smithsonian and highlighted the skilled craftsmanship still maintained by traditional artisans in the Choctaw community today. We presented a little bit about an informal network of tribal artisans who share the goal of revitalizing Choctaw arts. We also shared that it takes time to develop these skills. This month, we will focus on the art of silversmithing and feature a family who works to honor this tradition by passing on their generational knowledge.

Choctaw people were skilled in making personal adornment through time. Early work included the use of bow drills to make beads from the columella of the Busycon shell. These long, thick, solid, spiraling pieces of shell were a highly prized material for making clothing pins, ear ornaments, and of course, beads (oksup). Shells and stone were also used to make gorgets worn around the neck. Later, Choctaw artisans found copper an excellent addition to their jewelry making, finding it soft enough to add stunning symbols using tools and punches; a tradition we share with our Muskogean brothers and sisters. It is thought that the first contact with the Spanish in the 1500s influenced our metalsmiths. However, we have a gap in our knowledge about the history of how silversmithing began in our tribe.

Silverwork, like the pieces at the Smithsonian (pictured here) created by Hickman Thomas in the late 1800s in Neshoba County, Mississippi, give us a unique lens into the past. They reflect the long tradition of the

passing of skill sets onto the next generation. Thomas Hickman's four-tier gorget is similar in design to gorgets made hundreds, or even thousands, of years ago, yet there is a striking solution that can only be realized by turning it over. To hold the weight of the silver gorgets, Thomas designed rings for a long string of glass beads to pass through to add support as it was worn. This was an exciting discovery! Partnerships with institutions that care for Choctaw collections allow for opportunities to glimpse generational knowledge at work in the craftsmanship of a piece. Every item has a story to tell and possibly a legacy to accompany it.

Anthony James of Talihina, Oklahoma, can speak to this legacy in silversmithing. His father, Harry James, learned from Jerry Lowman of McCurtain county and continued to develop his skill set under his direction, even learning to make silver stickball pendants. As a child, Anthony often watched them and sat tinkering around in the shop right alongside his father, eventually learning the art himself. After high school, Anthony didn't have much time to devote to learning with the increased demands of work and family. Later in life, he picked it back up after his father passed away. He admits, "I had to learn some things the hard way. Once I got into it, I would talk to my dad and let him know, 'I wish you were here.'" Anthony offered guidance to the younger generation of Choctaw artists, "If you have a parent that knows how to do this stuff, you need to get in there with them, ask them a lot of questions."



Submitted Photo

Anthony James passing on generational knowledge to his son, Colt.

His son Colt James is taking this guidance to heart. Colt grew up watching both his dad and grandfather work silver in their shop. As he got older, Colt would look around the workbench for pieces that weren't finished, find stones to shape, and talk with his dad about how to work them into his own masterpieces. His dad would share what worked for him and Colt valued the firsthand lessons. One of the most meaningful pieces Colt made with his father is an eagle feather pendant that symbolizes the long tradition in their family. As he advanced in skill, he shared with his father an idea for a pendant

of a feather. When they went into their shop, they noticed among his grandfather's materials an unused sheet of silver with an eagle feather outline already drawn out. Colt reflected, "It was three generations of work to get this one feather done: the feather shape was marked out by my grandpa, we cut it out and finished it." Colt proudly wears his pendant every day. Colt says learning to be a silversmith took practice and dedication, "It took a while to learn how to do it and not burn everything, but eventually I started getting it. Every so often, I'd still burn something. It's something that just happens." Colt is looking ahead to the future but is grounded in his family's past. He understands he is the next generation to forge a legacy, "I think about how it was something my grandpa did, back all those years ago. Then my dad started doing it. Now I am."

Next month, Iti Fabvssa will continue to share objects from the Smithsonian and highlight the connection between basket makers and their communities.



Left: Hickman Thomas, Neshoba County, MS, 1909. Right: Silverwork gorget by Thomas. Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, NO2661.



Silverwork, Neshoba and Scott County, 1860 to 1900. Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 019087.



Silver Earrings, Saint Tammany Parish, Louisiana, circa 1900. Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 018485.



Scan the QR Code for a video highlighting the story of a father passing on generational knowledge to his son, featuring the James family.

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**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

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**Choctaw Nation** Higher Education Program

# Eating disorders can affect all shapes, sizes and ages

By Chris Jennings

Every year, the last week of February is designated National Eating Disorder Awareness (NEDA) week.

Eating disorders like anorexia, bulimia and binge-eating disorder are serious conditions that affect the lives of many Americans and their families every year.

According to Desiray Moore with Choctaw Nation Behavioral Health, eating disorders are any problematic behaviors and eating patterns that cause physical and/or emotional distress.

Eating disorders are classified as mental illnesses in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM-IV) and can affect everybody.

"It isn't specific to any age or gender. It can really be anyone at any age that may be affected by an eating disorder," said Gail Schumacher, a registered dietician with the Choctaw Nation.

Several things can trigger an eating disorder. While it's tough to pinpoint an exact cause, as with other mental illnesses, genetics, biology and psychological and emotional health can contribute.

A family history of eating disorders can also make them more likely.

Other factors, such as a history of anxiety, depression or obsessive-compulsion disorder, can take what starts as a simple diet and turn it into an eating disorder.

"Sometimes, these behaviors can come after certain emotional states. And then over time, it becomes their go-to way to cope with whatever's going on," said Moore.

A 2010 study that followed 496 girls until they were 20 years old found that 5.2% met the criteria for anorexia, bulimia or binge eating disorder. When the study included non-specific eating disorders or those that met most but not all the criteria for one or more eating disorders, a total of 13.2% of the girls were affected by age 20.

Eating disorders can affect males as well. For binge-eating disorder, preliminary research suggests equal prevalence among men and women. Although differences in symptoms exist, women are more likely to focus on weight loss; men are more likely to focus on muscle mass.

The difference is often attributed to how people are portrayed on different media channels.

"If you look at the way society views health and beauty, typically you're going to have very specific images of people in the fashion industry, or movies, or music, or any of those kinds of popular culture types of things. For instance, if young girls or boys go online or watch TV, they're confronted with these images of very skinny-looking individuals," Moore said.

It's important to remember that these images alone don't cause an eating disorder. According to NEDA, while these factors can contribute to eating disorders, biological, social and environmental factors can turn these ideals into a disorder.

Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa have been documented in medical literature as far back as the 1800s when the idea of a perfect body shape for women and men differed very much from today.

Some corporations have taken steps to represent more real-world body shapes and sizes.

Nike, Old Navy, Nordstrom and Target all have mannequins that are more reflective of actual shapes and sizes that are shopping in their stores.

Seemingly healthy athletes are at risk too.

According to a study published in the Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology, athletes struggling with disordered eating are at higher risk for Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S), which occurs when energy expenditure exceeds energy intake, creating an energy deficiency.

This can then compromise the athlete's metabolism, menstrual function, bone health, immunity, protein synthesis, cardiovascular health and psychological health.

When a wrestler is trying to make a weight class, or a cross-country runner may be trying to lose weight, their methods can be unhealthy.

Schumacher says proper diet and nutrition can have a much greater impact on sports performance than trying to binge eat to gain weight or purge to lose weight. Restricting or eating beyond fullness can affect your

## Eating Disorders: Signs & Symptoms

Some of the most common eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder.

- Only 1 in 10 people affected receive the formal treatment they need.
- People who get treatment are 4x more likely to recover from their eating disorder.
- Treatment looks different for everyone - it can include hospitalization, inpatient or outpatient treatment, psychiatrists, therapists and counselors, dietitians and nutritionists, primary care physicians or support groups.

metabolism and change your mood and sleep patterns, which can negatively affect your performance.

"As a dietician, I'm there to help that person participate in their sport, whatever that may be, to the best they possibly can," said Schumacher.

It's important to remember that not every person dieting, exercising or taking their chosen sport seriously has an eating disorder. It's the obsession with it that reflects a problem.

Once that line is crossed, the dangers of eating disorders are serious. Significant weight loss or gain can stress the cardiovascular system, gastrointestinal system, neurological and endocrine systems. Hair may fall out or become brittle, and a person may experience fatigue or shortness of breath.

Recognizing eating disorders can be challenging because there are multiple aspects to consider.

Schumacher says the prevalent idea that someone with an eating disorder will always look emaciated is false. "If you're considered above weight for your height and age [it's often thought] you couldn't possibly have an eating disorder, and that's not true," Schumacher said.

There are some signs you can watch for to pick up on possible disordered eating.

"Noticing that the person is bowing out anytime, you might run and get something to eat or choose to not eat altogether," said Schumacher. "Going to use the bathroom shortly after eating a meal could be that the individual is purging or making themselves throw up. Or it could be noticeably seeing that person's weight change. Or a person being very rigid with their working out, they have to go and workout every day at these times, and nothing can get in the way of that. Anything that is a change from that person's normal behavior surrounding foods can be a red flag."

According to Moore, if you know someone well enough to know their nature or a little bit about who they are, you can try to pick up on cues about how they talk about themselves, like constantly making negative comments about their appearance.

If you find yourself in that situation, NEDA offers some recommendations for supporting someone with disordered eating.

- Educate yourself on eating disorders.
- Learn the differences between facts and myths about weight, nutrition, and exercise.
- Ask what you can do to help.
- Listen openly and reflectively.
- Be patient and nonjudgmental.

There are also some things NEDA recommends not doing in these situations.

## Anorexia Nervosa

People struggling with anorexia nervosa have a distorted body image and view themselves as overweight. Symptoms include restricted eating and intense fear of weight gain. Anorexia nervosa can lead to the thinning of bones, brain damage, drop in body temperature and more.

## Bulimia Nervosa

People with bulimia nervosa typically have recurrent episodes of overeating and feel a lack of control during these episodes. These episodes are often followed by vomiting, the use of laxatives, extreme exercise, fasting and other forced behaviors. Symptoms include dehydration, acid reflux disorder and electrolyte imbalance.

## Binge-Eating Disorder

Similar to bulimia nervosa, people with binge-eating disorder lose control over their eating. However, these episodes are not followed by any actions such as purging and extreme exercise. Symptoms include eating when you aren't hungry, frequently dieting and feeling distressed about eating. This is the most common eating disorder in the U.S.

- Accuse or cause feelings of guilt.
- Invade privacy and contact the patient's doctors or others to check up behind their back.
- Demand weight changes (even if clinically necessary for health).
- Insist the person eats every type of food on the table.
- Create guilt or place blame on the person.
- If you or someone you know has an eating disorder, help is available at the Choctaw Nation.
- Speaking to your primary care physician is a good first step.

Integrated counselors are also available at all the Choctaw clinics to work with physicians and dietitians to help get the patient on the path to recovery.

For help and resources available no matter where you live, visit <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/help-support>.

## Food Distribution Headlines

By Chase Ward

It's February, and that time of the year when we celebrate Valentine's Day and the importance of love in our lives.

Focusing on heart-healthy foods will enable us to enjoy good health for years to come as we create memories with our families and those we love!

The Choctaw Nation Food Distribution program provides foods that align with a well-balanced, heart-healthy diet!

An important thing to remember when trying to make healthy habits is balance. Remember to eat a well-balanced, healthy diet and move your body daily. Balance means making room for healthy things and allowing yourself guilt-free time to celebrate life. Remember, everything in moderation is the key!

Stop by your nearest Choctaw Nation Food Distribution Facility for more information about the program.

## Corn and Cucumber Salad

- 1 cup cucumber (chopped, with peel)
- 1 can corn (8 3/4 ounces, drained)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes (chopped)
- 1/8 cup red pepper (chopped)
- 1/8 cup green pepper (chopped)
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin (ground)
- 1/4 teaspoon cilantro or coriander (dried)
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

### Preparation

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Chop cucumber, cherry tomatoes, red pepper and green pepper.
3. Combine all ingredients into a bowl and mix well.
4. Serve cold.

Makes 7 servings



## Fraizer is first baby of the New Year

Congratulations to Amber and Hunter Frazier. Their baby, Brooklyn Ray Frazier, was the first baby to be born this year at the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Talihina. Brooklyn was born at 5:09 p.m. on January 1, 2023, weighing 6 pounds 5.2 ounces and was 18 1/4 inches long. Big sister was excited to welcome her as well as mom and dad.



### HEALTH FAIRS IN 2023

Learn about health services offered by Choctaw Nation.

Scan the QR code, or visit [chocta.ws/health-fair](https://chocta.ws/health-fair) for dates and locations throughout the year.

Choctaw Nation Health Services | CHNSA.COM

Choctaw Nation Health Clinic Contact Information	
<b>Atoka</b>	(580) 889-1981
<b>Broken Bow</b>	(580) 584-2740
<b>Durant</b>	(580) 920-2100
<b>Hugo</b>	(580) 326-7561
<b>Idabel</b>	(580) 286-2600
<b>McAlester</b>	(918) 423-8440
<b>Poteau</b>	(918) 649-1100
<b>Stigler</b>	(918) 967-9200
<b>Talihina</b>	(918) 567-7000

You may also schedule an appointment via [my.chnsa.com](https://my.chnsa.com).

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

### CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**MARKET HOURS**

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

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

*Markets will be closed the last two days of each month for inventory.*

**February 2023**

All markets open weekdays, January 1-24  
**Closed:** February 20, 27, and 28.  
Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation  
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

**ANTLERS** 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443  
*Food demo February 7*

**BROKEN BOW** 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842  
*Food demo February 9*

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773  
*Food demo February 21*

**MCALESTER** 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716  
*Food demo February 23*

**POTEAU** 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431  
*Food demo February 14*

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

## CNO helps bring troops home for Christmas

By Chris Jennings

Thanks in part to help from the Choctaw Nation, members of the 45th Field Artillery Brigade of the Oklahoma National Guard were able to spend time with their families over the Christmas holidays.

Several of the soldiers got off the buses dressed for the warmer Fort Bliss, Texas, climate, where they are currently training for an overseas deployment to the Central Command area of responsibility. The bitter cold and blowing snow served as a reminder of the season and why they were coming home.

Staff Sergeant Makayla McKean said some were more prepared than others. "Luckily, a lot of us had been talking about the weather difference here, so most of us were pretty prepared," she said. Some others were seen getting off the warm buses in shorts and flip-flops.

Specialist E4, Lainey Lordahl, from McAlester, Oklahoma, was excited to be home. "I'm just going to spend a lot of time with my family before we go [back to El Paso] and see my dogs. I miss them," she said.

When asked what her top priorities



The Choctaw Nation was among several organizations that helped pay for the buses for soldiers to be home with their families for Christmas.



Photos by Chris Jennings

Oklahoma National Guardsmen unload buses and collect their gear as they return home for a quick Christmas break from training at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas.

were for her short time home, she said, "Hanging out with my dog, my parents and my sister. I don't get to see them too often. So that's definitely top 10 for sure...take some naps and eat and just kind of love on my family. Make sure we all get to spend some good quality time together." McKean said.

McKean and Lordahl were both grateful to all of the organizations.

"It was super helpful to have somebody take care of us and our families to get us home and whatnot. The Choctaw Nation and a bunch of other companies and groups really did their part in trying to take care of us and get us home for the holidays," said McKean.

Lordahl was glad for the opportunity to come home as well. "Number one, I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for giving us the opportunity to come home in the first place. There's a bunch of organizations that helped as well, so thank you," she said.

The organizations that worked with the Choctaw nation to help get the guardsmen home for the holidays were the Oklahoma City firefighters association, The Oklahoma City fraternal order of police and the plumbers and pipe fitters local union 344.

## NFL spotlights Chicana, Native American artist Lucinda 'La Morena' Hinojos for Super Bowl LVII

**NEW YORK CITY (January 10, 2023)** – The NFL has partnered with artist Lucinda "La Morena" Hinojos, the first Chicana, Native American artist to work with the league on Super Bowl theme art. She will be the marquee artist of Super Bowl LVII, designing an elaborate, deeply meaningful piece that will be featured on an array of design activations for the upcoming Super Bowl LVII in Arizona, including Super Bowl tickets, out-of-home (OOH) displays, and more.

Born and raised in Phoenix, Hinojos, also known as "La Morena," and her family have close ties to the community of Arizona. She embodies the spirit and history of the city. As a Chicana, Native American artist with multicultural roots from Mexico and the Pascua Yaqui, Chiricahua Apache, White Mountain Apache, and Pima (Akimel O'odham) Tribes, she uses her unique identity and experience to design an intricate, emblematic piece of art that the NFL will proudly display throughout Super Bowl LVII.

"I create art to hopefully provide an element of healing, unity, and real human connection, so with this Super Bowl piece, I hope people from all over the world can have a dialogue about what this painting means to them...and that's what's beautiful to me," said Hinojos. "I've always thought that the Super Bowl ticket is the centerpiece of this hallmark event, and for me, as the first brown Indigenous woman to design the ticket's artwork, it is amazing and something I'm very proud of."

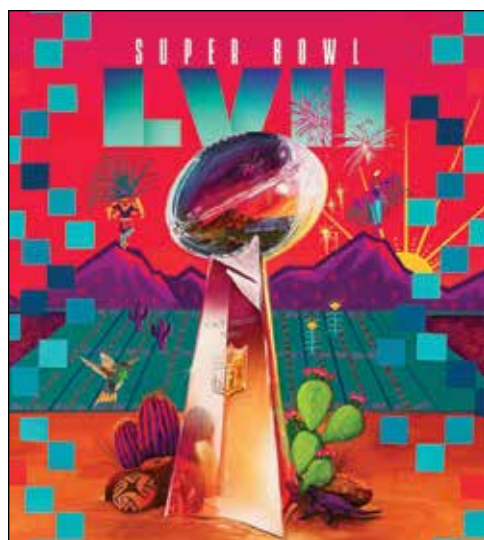
The art piece itself features multiple symbols that represent key parts of the culture and history in Arizona. Reflected on the Vince Lombardi Trophy are the White Tank Mountains, which can be seen behind State Farm Stadium, home of the Arizona Cardinals and Super Bowl LVII. In addition, on each side of the trophy, Hinojos depicts a Fancy Shawl dancer and an Azteca dancer to pay homage to the Indigenous tribes in Arizona. Her ultimate goal with her artwork is to unite and shed light on underrepresented communities of color in Arizona.

"Lucinda's insight and direct, personal connection to the amazing and diverse history in Arizona made her the perfect partner for this project," said MARISSA SOLIS, NFL SVP of Global Brand and Consumer Marketing. "She is a gifted artist, a football mom, and a woman who authentically represents her Chicana heritage, and we are so thrilled to use Super Bowl as a platform to showcase her beautiful artwork and by extension, spotlight the local communities integral to Arizona."

Another aspect of Hinojos' partnership with the NFL is a massive mural she will paint in collaboration with Indige Design Collab of Cahokia Socialtech and Artspace, the Indigenous-led platform for creative peace-keeping, and fellow Native American artists Randy Barton of Diné/Navajo descent, Anitra "Yukue" Molina of Yaqui descent, and Carrie "CC" Curley of the San Carlos Apache descent. The team will collectively create the largest Super Bowl mural to date at 9500 square feet. Painted on the Monarch Theatre, the artwork is a symbol of Indigenous collaboration and emphasizes the narrative of community and unity. It will feature meaningful contributions representative of each artist's respective backgrounds, including an Apache Woman, a Diné/Navajo rug pattern, and more.

NFL partner Wilson is also collaborating with Hinojos on a football design. The ball is inspired by the progression of Lucinda's own personal artistic journey and how important heritage and community are to her. The ball will be available for purchase on <http://Wilson.com> and at Super Bowl Experience at Phoenix Convention Center.

The Super Bowl LVII will take place on Sun-



Photos Courtesy of the National Football League

Phoenix-based artist, Lucinda "La Morena" Hinojos, is the first Chicana, Native American marquee artist.

day, February 12, 2023, at State Farm Stadium in Arizona, where a wide array of activations and experiences including Super Bowl Experience, NFL Honors, and more will take place throughout the week. The artwork created by Hinojos will also be showcased around the state, culminating in being displayed on the Super Bowl gameday tickets. For more information on the Super Bowl, visit [www.nfl.com/super-bowl](http://www.nfl.com/super-bowl).

### About Lucinda Hinojos

Lucinda Hinojos, who also goes by La Morena, is a visual artist and cultural organizer who is showcasing her Native American/Mexican roots and activism through her art. Her murals focus on the power of community, culture, and current political issues, healing as well as the inspiration and guidance of her ancestors. She has been featured in Galleries, Museums and painted murals across the US and Internationally. Recently, she was personally invited by the US Embassy of France to paint in Marseille, France. In 2018 she launched "Colors of La Comunidad" an incubator for 'artivismo' where artists can showcase their activism through art.

### About Cahokia

Cahokia is a female-owned, Indigenous-led Social Tech + Art Space in downtown Phoenix. On the ancestral lands of the O'odham and Piipaash, Cahokia is an established enterprise between social entrepreneurs and community-based organizations whose mission is to support and revitalize underrepresented communities through capacity building, place-making, place-keeping, workforce training, and collaboration.

### About Indige Design Collab

The Indige Design Collab is a network of Indigenous designers and creatives working to cultivate visual and vocal discussions around Indigenous design perspectives, ecosystems, and continued way-of-life as they Indigenize Space. As creative professionals in the Southwest, brought together by design, they lean into their cultural norms of living between two worlds. It is between these realities they seek to bridge cultural ideas with place-based advocacy and the implantation of design principles. Their projects have collectively brought together 40+ Indigenous designers who produce work to advocate for the Indigenous movement. They impact audiences through their entrepreneurial spirit, challenging themselves to be present, communicating their existence, and inspiring Indigenous resilience in the 21st century. Collectively, they test boundaries, create functional design, structure critical data, and influence others to bridge the gaps in social, economic, and justice systems.

## SHOWTIME Documentary Films announces MURDER IN BIG HORN

**LOS ANGELES – January 5, 2023** – SHOWTIME Documentary Films today announced that MURDER IN BIG HORN will make its SHOWTIME debut on demand and on streaming Friday, February 3 and on-air on Sunday, February 5 at 10 p.m. ET/PT following its world premiere at Sundance Film Festival on Sunday, January 22. Directors Razelle Benally and Matthew Galkin craft a powerful portrait of tribal members and their communities within Big Horn County, Montana battling an epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) that has been prevalent since colonization. The three-part docuseries examines the circumstances surrounding many of these cases, told solely through the perspectives of those involved: Native families, Native journalists, and local law enforcement officers. All three episodes will also release on demand and on streaming platforms for SHOWTIME subscribers on February 3.

To watch and share the trailer, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fx-dY-KRQaa0>.

Within the past decade, dozens of young Indigenous women and girls from the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Nations have disappeared from Montana's Big Horn County and its surrounding areas. Grieving Native families who fear the worst press local law enforcement for answers, but their pleas are most often met with silence or indifference. Arrests in these cases are rare, and convictions are virtually nonexistent. Elsewhere in



Photo Courtesy of SHOWTIME

Murder in Big Horn crafts a powerful portrait of tribal members and their communities within Big Horn County, Montana battling an epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) that has been prevalent since colonization.

America, similar stories of disappearances and death shock communities and become nationwide news, but when they occur on Native land, a circle of bereft family members, friends, and activists are left to fight for justice on their own. MURDER IN BIG HORN intimately embeds with these families and this community in an effort to shine a light on the unanswered mysteries of this land.

Oglala Lakota/Diné filmmaker Razelle Benally wrote for the noir Navajo Tribal Police investigation drama series Dark Winds. Benally was a Sundance Native Lab fellow, a Creative Producers fellow, and a Screenwriters Intensive fellow and is pursuing an MFA in film production at NYU Tisch School of the Arts. She is currently in development on her directorial feature film debut.

Matthew Galkin's recent directing work includes the SHOWTIME limited series MURDER IN THE BAYOU, Kevorkian, the award-winning documentary I Am an Animal: The Story of Ingrid Newkirk and PETA, and

loudQUIETloud: A Film About the Pixies.

The series is produced for SHOWTIME by Fairhaven. Producers are Benally, Ivan MacDonald and Ivy MacDonald. Galkin executive produces.

Showtime Networks Inc. (SNI), a wholly owned subsidiary of Paramount, owns and operates the premium service SHOWTIME®, which features critically acclaimed original series, provocative documentaries, box-office hit films, comedy and music specials and hard-hitting sports. SHOWTIME is available as a stand-alone streaming service across all major streaming devices and Showtime.com, as well as via cable, DBS, telco and streaming video providers. SNI also operates the premium services THE MOVIE CHANNEL™ and FLIX®, as well as on demand versions of all three brands. SNI markets and distributes sports and entertainment events for exhibition to subscribers on a pay-per-view basis through SHOWTIME PPV®.

For more information, go to <https://www.sho.com/>.

## Choctaw Nation awards \$5,000 forgivable loan to Leedom Counseling Services

**STIGLER, Okla. (November 16, 2022)** – On October 21, Leedom Counseling Services in Stigler was awarded a \$5,000 Small Business Forgivable Loan from Choctaw Nation Small Business Development program and the Choctaw Development Fund.

Leedom Counseling Services is a sole proprietorship start-up business that offers counseling services to individuals with substance abuse disorders. Owner, Teri Leedom, has been in the counseling field for over six years in various roles and is an Alcohol and Drug Substance Abuse Course facilitator certified through the state of Oklahoma, as well as facilitation certifications with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

"Teri and Leedom Counseling Services have made such a positive impact in Stigler and the surrounding area," states Ron Perry, Choctaw Nation Tribal



Choctaw Nation Photo

Left to Right: Ron Perry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 5; Brittany Rice, Choctaw Nation Small Business Advisor; Teri Leedom, Owner of Leedom Counseling Services and Jerry and Gloria Womack.

Councilmember District 5. "We're so proud of Teri's commitment to better the lives of community members. She is passionate about trying to help individuals navigate the court system to get their life back on track and we're honored to support her efforts through our Choctaw Development Fund and Small Business Development program."

The Choctaw Development Fund supports economic viability and sustainability by partnering with

Choctaw small business owners, cities and counties to create long-term growth and job creation within the territories of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Funds received from the Choctaw Nation will be used to purchase office furniture and technology to better serve her patients.

For more information on Leedom Counseling Services or to schedule an appointment, visit <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100084066250287>.

## Choctaw Nation Family Medicine Residency program improving Oklahoma healthcare

By Christian Chaney

The Choctaw Nation Family Medicine Residency program (CNFMR), located in Talihina, Oklahoma, has improved Oklahoma's difficulties in recruiting and retaining physicians in rural areas.

The ACGME-accredited program started in 2012 and has since made strides toward producing graduates to support the need of physicians in rural, underserved areas and improve health care in these regions.

Those who enter the program are graduates of either a D.O. or M.D. program.

There are currently two medical schools in Oklahoma—The University of Oklahoma College of Medicine and Oklahoma State College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Six current residents and nine graduate residents are OSU-COM alumni.

To date, there have been two Choctaw tribal members and one non-Choctaw tribal member to graduate from the program.

Residency training takes place after completing medical school in a hospital or clinical setting for three years.

This comprehensive training allows the trainee to acquire in-depth, hands-on training in specialized fields of medicine and become eligible for board certification in the specialty of Family Medicine.

Residents in the program obtain numerous certificates, including Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO), Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS).

An average work week for a trainee in the program is between 60 and 70 hours.

Resident physicians spend each calendar month on various training services.

The distinctive design of rotations provides residents with an expansive base of

patient care experiences.

The core rotations at CNFMR include inpatient, outpatient, emergency room, pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology.

However, residents can partake in rotations in additional specialties through a tertiary care training hospital that shares an affiliation agreement with the program.

Since the program's inception in 2012, it has seen exponential growth.

RN Unit Manager, Angela Battles, highlighted some of the transformations she has witnessed since joining the program in 2017.

"I have seen significant growth in both patient accessibility and staffing over the past five years," said Battles. "In 2017, two LPNs and one ward clerk were the only staff to complement seven resident physicians."

Since 2017, CNFMR has relocated to a larger facility in the Talihina Health Care Center, extended the number of residents from three to twelve and increased the number of patient visits to nearly 7,000 per year.

"I have enjoyed the growth we have been fortunate enough to experience in staff, resident physicians, and, most importantly, patient accessibility," Battles said.

According to Battles, she is honored to participate in the program.

"It is a tremendous honor to be a part of a program providing excellent healthcare while honoring the cultural traditions and values that are so vital," said Battles. "I truly feel the Choctaw Nation Family Medicine Residency Program exemplifies the values recognized by CNHSA, and I am proud to be a small part of providing amazing health services to the people we serve."

CNFMR seeks trainees through recruit-



Choctaw Nation Photo

Family medicine is the cornerstone of medical practice. The Choctaw Nation Family Medicine Residency program is broad in scope and designed to develop a family physician who cares for the whole person and their family.

ment who possess local, rural or tribal roots and intend to serve tribal members and rural communities upon completion of the program.

On average, the program produces four rural primary care physicians each year. According to Program Director Ashton Clayborn, D.O., 85% of graduates continue to serve in rural, medically underserved areas, and 70% continue to serve Choctaw Nation in various practice settings.

Clayborn, D.O., says there are many reasons medical school graduates should choose CNFMR.

The program offers a supportive family atmosphere for residents and devotes itself to supplying tribal members and rural communities with qualified, well-trained physicians to meet their vast needs.

CNFMR offers residents an attractive benefits package, competitive salary and on-campus family housing.

Clayborn, D.O., says housing is one of the most intriguing benefits, as it allows resident physicians to focus on their stud-

ies and alleviates some stress.

Ashton Clayborn, D.O., is a product of CNFMR's success. She is a program graduate and has continued to serve the Choctaw Nation and the state of Oklahoma proudly.

"As a previous graduate of the program, it has been an honor to give back in the role of Program Director and to be afforded the opportunity to enhance the education of physicians well-trained to meet the needs of the people we serve," said Clayborn, D.O.

Clayborn, D.O., is enthusiastic about the future of the program.

According to Clayborn, D.O., Choctaw Nation can expect "continued improvement in patient care, ongoing progress toward the most advanced and broad medical training in family medicine and continued focus on tribal and rural health outcomes for those served by graduates of the program."

The future of healthcare is promising for tribal members and rural Oklahoma residents.

## Durant local featured in new CNO series 'Choctaw Proud'

**DURANT, Okla. (January 11, 2023)**—The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has launched another series of the Together, We're More campaign titled 'Choctaw Proud' with several Durant residents featured. This month Choctaw Nation spotlights Durant resident and Choctaw Cultural Center Associate, Brenner Billy.

Billy is a Choctaw tribal member whose family history is interwoven with the game of stickball. Billy's father, grandfather and great-great uncle all made kapucha, or stickball sticks by hand, and he began making the sticks himself around age 12.

"For me, it's a way of sharing love for the game but also that sense that this is part of my contribution to my history, to my heritage, to my people," said Billy.

In his role as program coordinator for the Choctaw Cultural Center, Billy brings the history and traditions of the Choctaw people to life for fellow tribal members and guests who visit from all over the country.

Billy also teaches others how to make the sticks as a way of giving back to the Choctaw community and helping preserve the culture.

Choctaw stickball, or ishtaboli, is historically known for its aggressive, full-contact play. Often serving as an alternative to war, the game was used as a method of mediating conflicts and tensions between tribal members as well as other towns or districts.

Today, stickball stands as an enduring part of Choctaw culture not only as a sport but also as a way of teach-



Choctaw Nation Photo

Brenner Billy crafts kapucha, or stickball sticks, by hand in his workshop.

ing traditional social structures and family values.

Together, We're More features 18 tribal members from different careers, locations and walks of life, making a difference in Oklahoma and beyond. Each month the Choctaw Nation will release short stories of tribal members and how they exemplify being 'Choctaw Proud.'

Watch Billy tell his story in the "More Than a Craftsman" video or go to [togetherweremore.com](https://togetherweremore.com) to learn more about how the Choctaw Nation is making a difference in Oklahoma and beyond.

Being Choctaw Proud means learning from the past, living in the present, and preparing for the future ensures success for generations to come. #TogetherWereMore #TWM

In honor of the craft, Choctaw Nation is giving away a pair of stickball sticks made by Brenner Jia Billy to one lucky winner. The giveaway ends February 14, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Visit the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Facebook page for more information.

## Preserving culture through the lens of tribal elders

Continued from page 1

During the pandemic, the department put together a how-to guide for talking to elders and recording their stories.

The guide is available at [https://choctawnationculture.com/media/41403/2020.06\\_guide\\_to\\_using\\_time\\_at\\_home\\_to\\_record\\_oral\\_family.pdf](https://choctawnationculture.com/media/41403/2020.06_guide_to_using_time_at_home_to_record_oral_family.pdf).

The department also works with the Wheelock Academy Historic Site, and an alumni reunion is held each year.

Some alumni have had the chance to record their stories and much of their histories are maintained at the site's museum.

Databases of Choctaw landscapes (GIS-based work), of locations of Choctaw homes and homesteads have been created and are maintained.

They are recorded and kept in the event state work needs to be done in the future and roads constructed so the tribe can ensure those things are considered.

They conducted a project on Choctaw homesteads, reaching out to the community to see if they had memories of old homesteads.

The department worked with community members to record the memories, locations and importance the homesteads hold to them.

Also, the Chahta Tosholi Speakers Series is produced to focus on conversations of history and with elders.

Recordings are available for online viewing at [www.Choctawnationculture.com](http://www.Choctawnationculture.com) (dropdown Choctaw Tosholi).

Other videos are located on the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation YouTube channel.

The department also works with the Cultural Center providing historical information for exhibits.

Dr. Thompson said they set up several interviews with elders for the video and audio at CCC. There is an orientation gallery set up with vignettes with members from each district that help to tell their stories.

For questions or more information, readers can contact the department by calling or emailing Joseph Wolf at 800-522-6170 [jwolf@choctawnation.com](mailto:jwolf@choctawnation.com).

### Historic Projects Department

Memory Keepers is the tribe's newly published collection of stories of the Choctaw people. Readers are introduced to Choctaw families and culture in different areas of the nation, learn how they were raised and what they have learned through their experiences.

Memory Keepers is available at Choctaw Nation gift shops for \$59.

The Historic Projects Department collects stories of elders for Choctaw Nation archives.

Anyone wishing to share their story can write and submit it or contact the office for an interview.

Historic Projects has a special focus for a new project – Choctaw Veterans' stories.

The stories of the life and military career of Choctaw warriors will be placed in Choctaw Nation archives, with a portion of the stories in an upcoming book about our Chahta Tvschka.

The upcoming Choctaw Veterans book will also feature chapters on sovereignty and the Native American vote and citizenship.

A previously published 134-page book featuring Choctaw elder stories was printed in 2018.

Our Legacy was a joint project be-



Through video projects, like Our Legacy in 2015-2017, the Choctaw Nation was able to preserve the stories of elders like Lorene Blaine, a vital member of the Choctaw community. Though Lorene passed in 2016, her memory and experiences live on to this day.

tween the Historic Projects and Public Relations Departments.

Choctaw elders or Choctaw veterans who wish to contact the Historic Projects office to participate in interviews may contact Judy Allen, P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702, email [judy.allen@choctawnation.com](mailto:judy.allen@choctawnation.com) or call 580-513.7984.

### Tribal Membership and Genealogy

The Choctaw Tribal Membership and Genealogy departments hear many family stories relating to the lineage of Choctaw families and assist countless Choctaws in becoming tribal members.

Records are considered confidential to anyone outside of the direct lineage. However, any tribal member can get a copy of their own CDIB 8x10, which is the federal document that lists the full direct lineage going back to the Dawes Commission enrollee(s) by contacting the Tribal Membership or Genealogy department.

### Veterans Advocacy

Each month, a Choctaw Veteran is selected to be honored as the Choctaw Veteran of the Month.

In addition to being recognized by the Chief, Assistant Chief and Tribal Council, their story is highlighted in the Biskinik newspaper, and their individual story recorded.

The Veterans Advocacy Program works with the Historic Projects Department to preserve the histories of Choctaw Veterans.

### History Books, Museums, Family Recorded Histories

The stories of the Choctaw people are widely known and many books have been published.

One only has to do an online search to see the massive amount of recorded stories and histories available.

Most are available online through the Choctaw Store or other bookstores and sellers nationwide.

There is also an enormous amount of Choctaw stories available to view and read through various museums and online databases.

Additionally, countless Choctaw members are working hard to preserve and honor their families' stories, memories and legacies through their research and preservation efforts.

Through collective efforts to collect elder stories, more are coming to light each day and being recorded for future generations.

The Choctaw Nation's history is made up of many stories.

Through preservation efforts, the tribe honors its past, celebrates its present, and looks forward to the future.

To learn more about ways the Choctaw Nation is preserving culture, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/>.



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**Choctaw Nation** Head Start

## Tribal member wins big at Junior World Finals

By Christian Toews

Choctaw tribal member, Savannah Toon, won the Junior World Finals for Barrel Racing in Las Vegas in December 2022.

Over 800 contestants from across the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Australia competed for \$1 million in prizes, cash and scholarships Dec. 1-10 at the Wrangler Rodeo Arena inside the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Savannah, a Smithville, Oklahoma, native, competed in one of the qualifying tournaments held all over the country for the 12 and under girls.



Savannah Toon won the title of Girls 12 and Under Barrel Racing Champion during the 2022 Junior World Finals in Las Vegas.

Only the top two girls from each tournament are selected to compete in the finals.

Savannah's parents taught her a strong work ethic, which paid off in winning a competition as big as the Junior World Finals.

According to Savannah, she was inspired to enter the rodeo world by her dad, Lynn Dale Toon, who competed in high school, amateur and IPRA rodeo.

Savannah has three siblings who also train and compete in different rodeo events.

Rebecca Toon, Savannah's mother, credits her husband's family's deep rodeo roots for inspiring her kids.

"His dad loved rodeo; his granddad loved rodeo, so it's in their blood," she said.

According to Savannah, having her siblings interested in rodeo helps her stay motivated, and they can work and train together for their respective events.

Savannah mainly trains with her sister, who competes in breakaways and goat tying.

The horse Savannah competed with in Las Vegas is named Mo, with whom Toon has been competing for about three years.

Building trust between the rider and the horse takes years.

According to Rebecca, the bond runs deeper than trust.

"There has to be total trust to run into the arena full blast. I think the



Photos Provided

Savannah Toon and her horse Mo run barrels during the 2022 Junior World Finals in Las Vegas. Toon took home the top prize in her division, competing with the world's top racers.

horse has to really love his rider to do that because it's actually really hard on their body," she said.

Savannah said she hopes to continue to compete for years to come and enjoys training young horses for competition.

Savannah understands the significance of winning this title at such a young age.

"It means everything to me," Savannah said.

Savannah encourages anyone who has a dream to work toward it.

"If you have a dream, it's not just going to walk up to your door. You have to work for it," said Savannah.

For more information on the Junior Finals Rodeo, visit <https://www.nfr-experience.com/juniorworldfinals/>.

## Dakota Clark accomplishes goals thanks to help from Choctaw Career Development

By Christian Chaney

Tribal member Dakota Clark of Poteau, Oklahoma, transformed his life after working with Choctaw Nation's Career Development Program.

He utilized the tools and various services offered by the program to fulfill his professional and personal goals.

Dakota is a motor vehicle operator (MVO) employed by Louis V. Lepak Trucking company delivering for the United States Postal Service (USPS).

With the help of Career Development and his supportive family, Dakota obtained his Class A commercial driver's license (CDL) and executed each goal he set out to achieve.

Before graduating from truck driving school, Dakota worked as a carpentry specialist.

When asked why he decided to change careers, Dakota said he wanted to challenge himself.

Dakota felt he had mastered his craft in carpentry and decided to step out of his comfort zone and explore other career avenues.

This decision led him to reach out to Career Development to learn about the assistance provided by Choctaw Nation and embark on obtaining his CDL.

Dakota began working with Career Counselor Cynthia Martin to develop a plan to advance his career. He decided on Kiamichi Technology Center in Poteau, Oklahoma, where he would attend classes for the next five and a half weeks.

In 2022, Kiamichi Tech partnered with Central Technology Center of Drumright, Oklahoma, to offer Truck Driver's Training for the very first time.

According to KTC.edu, students enrolled in the program have access to a wide variety of training, including quality classroom instruction, Virage Simulation, range and road driving and practical application of skills used in highway driving.

Dakota said completing the training was "a challenging time, but worth it," as he had to dedicate himself to the

program Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Thankfully, he had a great support system rallying behind him during this journey.

"My mom is the most supportive and loving mom you could ask for. It is such a blessing having my family by my side, supporting me in anything and everything I choose to do," said Dakota. "I would not have it any other way."

Due to the training schedule, Dakota could not work throughout the program's duration.

He worked to save money before enrolling in the program to ensure he was financially prepared to go nearly six weeks without pay. Nevertheless, his hard work paid off, and Dakota was proudly a part of the first graduating class of Kiamichi Tech's Truck Driver Training.

After graduation, Dakota was hired as an MVO for Louis V. Lepak Trucking Company, delivering packages and mail for USPS.

In Dakota's new position, he travels many miles to complete his designated daily route.

His route includes traveling from Poteau to Idabel, then to Sallisaw and Tulsa and returning to Poteau to end his day.

Traveling that much in a single day might be unappealing to some, but not Dakota.

"I actually enjoy going to work now," he said.

Dakota said the Career Development Program helped him change his life and find his passion.

"The Career Development Program is very helpful and made the process easier. They want to help you further your career and give you more opportunities," said Dakota. "The program has been so helpful in working towards my goals and has enabled me to succeed and excel in anything I choose to pursue."

Dakota has not only seen an improvement in his yearly income and expanded his opportunity for future endeavors, he has also proved that he can reach goals he did not once think were achievable.



Photo Provided

With the help of Choctaw Nation's Career Development Program, Dakota Clark fulfilled his goal of graduating from truck driving school and obtaining a commercial driver's license.

"I never thought I would be driving semi-trucks," he said.

Dakota expressed that his success would not have been possible without the assistance of his Career Counselor, Cynthia Martin and the Career Development team.

Cynthia was happy to comment on Dakota's achievements.

"Dakota was very eager to complete his CDL program, and I could tell when he set his mind to it that he would complete training and be successful," Cynthia said. "I am very honored to witness his accomplishments."

Dakota hopes to use the tools he learned while working with Career Development to progress in his career.

After spending time in his current role with the company and learning more

about the organization, he plans to work his way up to a succession planning specialist.

In this role, his duties will include implementing, developing and maintaining organizational programs and policies. Choctaw Nation's Career Development Program provided Dakota with the skills he needed to be successful in the workforce and instilled confidence in his abilities to challenge himself by stepping out of his comfort zone and continuing to reach goals in his profession.

For more information on Kiamichi Tech's truck driving training and other programs, visit <https://www.ktc.edu/>.

To learn more about Career Development and eligibility requirements, please visit [choctawnation.com/services/career-development/](https://choctawnation.com/services/career-development/).

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## Choctaw Nation forms relationship with NASA to support science education for local students

**DURANT, Okla. (January 4, 2023)** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) and NASA have developed a new relationship which will offer school students more direct insight to Science, Technology, Engineering and Technology (STEM) education.

Staff at NASA will collaborate with CNO's Education Department on programs involving science and technology.

The first element of the relationship will involve a video uplink connection to NASA astronauts, allowing students to speak directly to those aboard the space station. The program will provide unique, authentic experiences designed to enhance student learning, performance, and interest in STEM. Astronauts living in space on the orbiting laboratory communicate with NASA's Mission Control Center in Houston 24 hours a day through the Near Space Network Tracking and Data Relay Satellites (TDRS).

Approximately 1,500 students will submit questions, with 20 to be selected and asked of the astronauts. The astronauts will have opening and closing remarks in addition to answering the questions live during the 20-minute uplink to be conducted at Bloomer Sullivan Arena on the campus at

Southeastern University on February 1.

"The downlink is a great opportunity for students and tribal members to get a firsthand look at what scientists, physicians, and educators do in space and inspire the next generation of students to pursue STEM careers," said Joy Tribbey, program manager for the Choctaw Nation.

Students selected were part of an application process and were chosen based on the desire to participate, curriculum alignment with STEM and NASA Downlinks goals, and how they will prepare and utilize the curriculum for the event, Tribbey said.

The chosen schools receive NASA curriculum and all supplies through Project Pehlich (purchased with federal funds from the Department of Education). The classrooms will utilize the lessons and curriculum for a full school year (22-23), including professional development from NASA and elements needed for the lessons.

The schools selected to participate are all Choctaw Nation Head Start and Preschool facilities, Jones Academy Elementary and seven public schools: McAlester's Puterbaugh Middle School, Battiest, Valliant, Clayton/Crain Elementary, Kinta Elementary and Canadian.



Photos Courtesy of Jones Academy

Jones Academy students record their questions for astronauts on the International Space Station. The NASA In-Flight Downlink event gives students more direct insight into Science, Technology, Engineering and Technology (STEM) education.

## Community Partnership Fund awards City of Atoka, Stringtown and Atoka County quarterly contribution

The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Atoka \$37,300, Stringtown \$16,800 and Atoka County \$26,100 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue strengthening and developing the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund gives voluntary quarterly contributions to cities and counties where non-gaming businesses are located throughout the Nation's territories. The expectation is for each local government to apply the Choctaw Community Partner Fund contribution toward supporting and developing the communities which serve tribal and non-tribal citizens.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last four years. The Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of over \$1 million to the cities of Atoka, Stringtown and Atoka County.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund began in 2019 and has put back more than \$7.6 million into Southeastern Oklahoma communities.



Choctaw Nation Photos

Chief Gary Batton; Carol Ervin, Atoka City Industrial Authority; Diane McGee, Vice-Mayor of Atoka and Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 10 and City of Atoka Representatives.



Chief Gary Batton; Atoka County Representative and Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 10.



Chief Gary Batton; Susie Moore, Stringtown City Clerk and Rick Boston, Mayor of Stringtown and Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 10.

## CNO awards Stigler and Haskell County a quarterly contribution to strengthen and develop the local area

**CHOCTAW NATION, Okla. (November 18, 2022)** – The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Stigler \$12,500 and Haskell County \$7,100 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue strengthening and developing the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund gives voluntary quarterly contributions to cities and counties where non-gaming businesses throughout the Nation's territories are located. The expectation is for each local government to apply the Choctaw Community Partner Fund contribution toward supporting and developing the communities which serve tribal and non-tribal citizens.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last four years. Over this period the Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of \$227,350 to the city of Stigler and Haskell County.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund began in 2019 and has put back more than \$7.6 million into southeastern Oklahoma communities.



Choctaw Nation Photos

Left to Right: Amber Hamilton, City of Stigler Representative; Cheryl Monks, Stigler City Clerk; Ron Perry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 5; Janice Williams, Stigler Chamber of Commerce and Greg Haney, Senior Manager of Economic Development for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.



Left to Right: Greg Haney, Senior Manager of Economic Development for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; Gayla Orr, Haskell County Treasurer; Ron Perry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 5; Karen McClary, Haskell County Clerk and Janice Williams, Stigler Chamber of Commerce.

# BISKINIK

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Choctaw Nation works to preserve the stories of its elders.



### Page 3:

Community centers serve the tribal community.



### Page 10:

Eating disorders can affect all shapes, sizes and ages.

*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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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Tobi</b><br>Smith Peas                   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Chukfi</b><br>Peas              |

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