



January 2022 Issue



# A year in review: Choctaw Nation celebrates successes of 2021

By Kendra Germany-Wall

As 2021 comes to an end, we reflect on a year filled with new experiences, changes and growth.

For nearly two full years, the world has had to adjust to "the new normal." The Choctaw Nation has also had to learn how to navigate in a world changed by COVID-19.

Through everything, the Choctaw Nation has prided itself on its resilience. As Chief Gary Batton stated at the beginning of 2021, "Our ancestors knew how important it was to stick together, and that's what helped them survive the Trail of Tears and prosper in their new home."

Here are a few successes and highlights from 2021.

## January

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) began Phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan. This phase centered on CDIB holders aged 60 or older, their household members, teachers and non-CN-HSA health care workers. The goal was to vaccinate as many elders and frontline public servants as possible, based on their risk of contracting COVID-19. The Choctaw Nation also teamed up with the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) to administer COVID-19 vaccines to the public by appointment. On Jan. 6, the first public vaccination event was held at the Choctaw Event Center. By the end of the day over 800 people, including frontline healthcare workers, first responders and people aged 65 and older, had been inoculated.

On Jan. 13, the Choctaw Nation Election Board, released the public notice of the general election calendar. This kicked off preparation for the upcoming Tribal Council Election for districts 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12.

## February

The Choctaw Nation announced the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). This program assisted Choctaw Nation tribal households who rent and were unable to pay their monthly rent payment and/or utilities (electric, water, gas, sewer, trash removal) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ERAP assisted eligible households with rental and utility arrearages, current rental payments and current utility payments. This program was limited to one tribal member per household and did not apply to households with a mortgage or tribal members who

owned their homes. Lease-to-own situations were reviewed, and eligibility was determined on a case-by-case basis.

In honor of those lost in 2020, Chief Gary Batton recognized Feb. 18, 2021, as a National Day of Remembrance.

One of the worst winter storms in recent history struck the southern U.S. in February 2021. Frigid temperatures and winter weather battered the state of Oklahoma and the surrounding region, leaving many people in dire situations and struggling for basic needs. This storm caused many disruptions to power, water and travel across the state. Due to the frigid temperatures, water main breaks across the state left many without potable water, while others were left without water at all. Despite the difficulties, The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma showed the Chahta Spirit in providing necessities to tribal members and surrounding communities. The Choctaw Nation's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) filled trucks with nearly 40 pallets of drinking water on Feb. 18. It delivered the water to communities across southeastern Oklahoma with little to no water pressure following water main line breaks. In a collaborative effort between Choctaw Global, local cities of Caney, Stringtown and Antlers, as well as the U.S. Army, the Choctaw Nation's OEM delivered over 6,800 gallons of drinking water across the Choctaw Nation. This water was delivered using "water buffaloes" and "Camels," water transport tanks from the U.S. Army. Choctaw Global LLC manufactures these water transport tanks. From February 13 – 25, OEM received more than 547 calls to the CNO Disaster Hotline. The assistance provided ranged from hotel rooms, frozen/broken water pipe assistance, food assistance, diapers, and even medication delivery for elders stuck at home due to the snow and ice. During the storm, CNO social workers spent time checking on elders and delivering groceries and supplies. Outreach Services team members helped relocate elders to hotels after finding them with flooding due to broken water lines or without heat. Other Outreach Service associates worked to find propane for shivering tribal members. Travel Plaza, Country Market and casino teams worked hard to accommodate the needs of clients and customers by staying open and finding a way to meet staffing and supply chain challenges, despite dangerous driving conditions, extreme cold and power outages in various locations throughout the CNO

service area.

Choctaw Nation announced on Feb. 25 that the Tribe had a \$2,519,532,303 economic impact on the State of Oklahoma in 2019.

## March

During the COVID-19 pandemic blood donations increased, with drives particularly requesting convalescent plasma from patients who had and recovered from the virus. Such plasma is used directly in the treatment of patients with COVID-19. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) was recognized by the Oklahoma Blood Institute on Tuesday, March 9, for outstanding service to communities across south-east Oklahoma.

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) opened vaccination appointment times for non-tribal members. Starting March 8, 2021, educators of any level or type of institution were able to schedule their appointment. Beginning March 15, 2021, appointments were opened to the public, providing patients met the vaccine manufacturers' minimum age requirements.

President Biden signed the U.S. government's second coronavirus relief package, the American Rescue Plan Act, into law on March 11. Chief Gary Batton announced on March 15 in his bi-weekly blog that the Choctaw Nation was still in the planning phase and had not received information on how the U.S. government would allocate funds to tribes.

Assistant Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Jack Austin Jr., was named the March Texoma Hero on March 26 to recognize his service in the United States military.

March 27, the Durant clinic opened its doors to the public. According to Infection Control Nurse Natasha Hill, a total of 1,570 shots were provided.

## April

On April 1, 2021, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals issued a ruling in Sizemore v. Oklahoma, declaring that the Choctaw Nation reservation was never disestablished. This decision was long-awaited after the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling in the McGirt v. Oklahoma case which was decided in July 2020.

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council held a Special Session on April 20, 2021 and voted to amend its Public Health and Safety Code regarding medical marijuana. The amendment passed by an 11-1 vote. Following the Oklaho-

ma Court of Criminal Appeals ruling in the Sizemore case, applying the McGirt decision to the Choctaw Nation reservation, state-issued medical marijuana cards or business licenses were not recognized by the Choctaw Nation laws. In a discussion of the amendment Tribal Council indicated that their intent is to research this issue further and propose better rules and regulations concerning medical marijuana for Native Americans within the Choctaw Nation reservation that minimize misuse of medical marijuana.

## May

The Choctaw Nation School of Language conducted a vital survey beginning in May of tribal members who are fluent first speakers of the Choctaw language. The survey remained open through the end of June.

The Oklahoma Hall of Fame hosted a reception on May 5, 2021 to honor its 2020 inductees, including Chief Gary Batton.

As of May 18 the Choctaw Nation Health Care Services Authority had administered 35,207 total COVID-19 vaccinations.

## June

Elections are held at alternating two-year periods for the four-year terms of Chief and Tribal Council. Filing opened April 19 for candidates for Tribal Council in Districts 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12. In the June 2021 issue of the Biskinik, the Choctaw Nation Election Board released the 2021 Choctaw Election Guide. This guide announced that all candidates for the elective offices of council districts 6, 9 and 12 were qualified, unopposed, and would not appear on the ballot. Elections would be held for council districts 4, 7 and 10. Within the guide was election information, dates, times and candidate bios.

In June, through the Community Development Fund, the Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Broken Bow \$12,300, Idabel \$6,400, Garvin \$4,400, McCurtain County \$13,500, the city of Wilburton \$9,700, Talihina \$15,000, Latimer County \$13,600, the city of Hugo \$29,300, Boswell \$11,900, Choctaw County \$24,700, the city of Antlers \$19,800, Clayton \$30,900, Pushmataha County \$26,800, the city of McAlester \$13,500 and Pittsburg County \$5,400.

On June 2, Choctaw Casino & Resort – Grant excitedly introduced their newly remodeled entertainment venue Stage 271, formerly known as the Grant Event Center.

Continued on page 11

## Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

### Looking back on 2021

Halito,  
As the final days of 2021 drew near, I couldn't help but smile and reflect on the many accomplishments made by our tribal members this past year.

One of the first successes was the opening of the Choctaw Cultural Center after more than a decade of research and work. It was a proud and significant moment for our nation because it is a symbol that perpetuates the Choctaw culture and serves as a place for the Choctaw proud, our allies and partners to share and celebrate our many unique traditions.

The Choctaw Nation also opened resident and nursing duplexes in Talihiina, the Hugo Central Laundry facility, and the Durant Child Care Center located across the street from the entrance to CNO Headquarters. Additionally, we saw the opening of the Choctaw Casino & Resort Sky Tower expansion in Durant.

Another 2021 win was the Choctaw Nation's ability to use the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to assist our tribal members nationwide who had been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was truly an honor to have our in-person Veterans Day Ceremony. It's important to show our Choctaw veterans how much we appreciate them, but it was an even greater privilege and honor to hold Joseph Oklahombi's Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame induction on our Choctaw Capitol Grounds.

The Choctaw Nation truly demonstrated the Chahta spirit in 2021. I'm excited for what 2022 holds in store for us and how we can be a blessing to our tribal members.

Yakoke and God bless!



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

### National Mentoring Month

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed spending time and creating wonderful memories with your family and friends during the holiday season.

It's the beginning of a new year and with it comes new opportunities to give back and instill hope in others, especially our youth.

January is National Mentoring Month, an opportunity to promote youth mentoring. Research has shown that relationships with caring mentors offer youth valuable encouragement, motivation and support to guide them toward making positive choices, and the Choctaw Nation's Jones Academy is committed to encouraging and supporting Native youth.

The Jones Academy's mission is to empower Native American youth by providing individualized care and development through educational, cultural and spiritual opportunities and help them discover life pathways and cultivate a sense of cultural identity.

Ensuring that our youth are provided with educational, cultural, and spiritual opportunities helps to create mature, balanced, responsible and compassionate adults.

The Choctaw Nation's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) empowers youth to become leaders with a servant attitude toward others. Through its John Maxwell Youth Leadership Values Program, community services initiatives that include mentoring young children, YAB inspires students to use their service-leadership skills through community service projects to promote positive change within our communities.

For more information about Jones Academy, contact (888) 767-2518. God bless.

### Indian Affairs announces new tool to bring attention to missing and murdered cases

**WASHINGTON**—The Bureau of Indian Affairs announced today the launch of its new website dedicated to solving missing and murdered cases in Indian Country. The tool draws attention to unresolved cases involving indigenous persons that the BIA, Office of Justice Services, Missing and Murdered Unit (MMU) is working on and invites the public to help law enforcement solve those cases. Today's announcement comes as Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Bryan Newland participates in a panel on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Crisis at the Western Governors Association Winter Meeting.

"The Missing and Murdered Indigenous peoples crisis has plagued Indian Country for too long, with cases often going unsolved and unaddressed," said Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. "This new website represents a new tool in the effort to keep communities safe and provide closure for families."

"This is an important new resource that connects those who might have case information with the investigating agency and agent – speeding feedback to address the legitimate concerns of our Native communities," said Jason O'Neal, Deputy Bureau Director, Justice Services.

Under Secretary Deb Haaland's leadership, Interior is committed to working with Tribal governments, law enforcement agencies, survivors, families of the missing, and all

communities impacted to coordinate inter-agency collaboration to address this crisis. Within the first 100 days of the Biden-Harris administration, Secretary Haaland created the MMU to pursue justice for missing or murdered Indigenous people.

The new site provides detailed case information that can be easily shared, and three pathways to submit important tips and other case information that may help investigators with the detection or investigation of an offense committed in Indian Country.

The site also contains information regarding how to submit tips or case information that may help investigators. For some tips, BIA offers rewards for information assisting in the detection or investigation of an offense committed in Indian country or in the arrest of an offender against the United States. The standard reward may be up to \$5,000, depending on the specific details provided. BIA may increase the amount conditional on the circumstances.

Additionally, an important feature of the site is its connectivity to the National Missing and Unidentified Person's System and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Indian Country Case website, which aims to enhance the Missing and Murdered Unit's ability to connect cases that involve American Indian and Alaska Native people.

For more information, please visit the BIA's new missing and murdered cases website.



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

### Newness in the New Year

The story is told of a famous preacher by the name of Charles Spurgeon.

He was sitting in his class of young preachers, listening to their "practice sermons."

One very clever young man was preaching from Ephesians chapter 6.

He went into much detail about each piece of armor mentioned in this chapter. In a dramatic form, he emphasized "putting it on" as he spoke. When he finished, he paused, looked about him and asked, "Now! Where is the enemy?" Mr. Spurgeon quietly replied, "Inside the armor."

The Book of Numbers, chapters 11-16, has a perfect demonstration of this fact.

The book deals with the pilgrimage of God's people in the wilderness. God had made every provision for their every need.

They had the cloud above to guide them and to give them shade from the burning sun. At night, they had the pillar of fire to keep them warm in the cold desert air. God provided fresh Manna each day. They had a great leader by the name of Moses. There were warriors to protect them from the enemies. Yet they complained. They complained about everything in general.

The human heart has been one of discontent since the time of Eve when she was dissatisfied with God's provision in the Garden of Eden. Not only did they complain about the food, but murmured against their leader, Moses. Murmuring is contagious. Moses also began to complain of his task. Then it reached the family of Moses. Miriam and Aaron began to murmur against Moses. Jealousy, greed and racial vindication of the heart began to surface. They even complained about the land God had provided for them.

Unless God changes the human heart, all armor we place on the outside will not protect us from our enemy within. Our people have been blessed extensively. We need a newness within in the new year to find contentment. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us to be a new creature in Christ. Old things are passed away, and all things become new. Romans 6: 4 teaches us that like as Christ was raised from the dead, we should walk in newness of life.

### Elders enjoy annual pecan pickup event

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation's Agricultural department held its annual Elder Pecan pickup on Tuesday, November 30, 2021.

The event drew around 250 elders from every district in the Choctaw Nation, who were shuttled in from their community centers to the pecan orchard near Idabel, Oklahoma.

Jody Standifer is the executive officer of Agriculture at the Choctaw Nation.

According to Standifer, the pecan orchard has around 1,000 trees on the property, and they hope to harvest around 90,000 lbs. of pecans after the elders gather what they want.

Standifer said that he was happy the event could take place this year as the event was canceled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was great to see so many Choctaw Seniors come out to participate in the event," said Standifer.



Photos by Christian Toews

Sharon Mullins takes a break to chat with friends while harvesting pecans at the elder pecan pickup on November 30.



Left, Ernest Dry fills his bag at the pecan orchard during the elder pecan harvest. Above, some elders brought their own buckets to collect as many pecans as they could before the orchard had their commercial harvest

## CHOCTAW NATION LIVESTOCK SHOW



FEBRUARY 5-6, 2022 | [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/LIVESTOCKSHOW](https://choctawnation.com/livestockshow)

Choctaw Nation Natural Resources



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Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

## SUMMER 2022 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



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

DEADLINE TO APPLY: MARCH 31

FOR ALL INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, VISIT

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# Washington’s film career is “Panning Up”

By Shelia Kirven

When he has a dream, Taylor Washington is the kind of person who goes out and chases it, not stopping until he finds success.

Washington, a Choctaw tribal member, started his life like many kids who wanted to make it in the film production business. He started working with his dad’s old camera and video equipment growing up.

“I was the kid at Blockbuster where they knew me by name and were recommending stuff as it came out. I have always been fascinated with movies,” explained Washington.

According to Washington, he always knew he wanted to go into film.

Washington attended the University of Texas at Austin’s Radio-Television-Film program. During his time there, he received scholarships from the Choctaw Nation.

With the help provided by the Choctaw Nation, Washington said he was able to purchase editing software and his first camera—a pivotal moment in starting his career.

Originally from Shoreacres, Texas (just outside of Houston), Washington now lives in Brooklyn, New York, where he is co-founder and co-owner of the production company Pan Up Productions.

He began directing two years after graduation in 2011 when he ended up in New York after a friend advertised looking for a roommate. Washington jumped on the opportunity. He moved to New York with no contacts, paving the way for himself from scratch.

Washington started out working in a lighting department to make a living, later moving on to the camera, where he got to work with actors. From there, he started moving toward directing.

“It was when I started directing a lot of music videos, I realized that working with a lot of managers was very similar to working

with agencies, and through them, it fell into brand partnerships with music videos and live events with music. And then it was just really an easy transition into the commercial world,” said Washington.

According to Washington, he also had friends at another agency he started working with, and it skyrocketed from there.

“I did a campaign with Southwest Airlines that just took off and I got a lot more work from them and other agencies,” explained Washington.

He said it all started with a short film he made called “Putting the Dog to Sleep.”

Washington and two others made the film together and didn’t know what to do with the company but enjoyed working together. They still focus on narratives and music videos, but it has become more focused on commercials.

Washington also has an extensive background in music video production and has directed over 50 videos worldwide.

Washington’s full-service content production company also has sites in Austin and Los Angeles and they work heavily in commercials. The company also represents other directors in those cities. Their teams are multi-faceted and work in video, print, digital, experiential, or broadcast, handling every detail of conception, production, and final deliverables. Pan Up has worked with company giants such as Netflix, Apple, Amazon, Ford, Southwest, Samsung and Virgin Atlantic, just to name a few.

Washington says he is most proud of his accomplishments in his work with the film *The Irishman* by Martin Scorsese.

He is also proud of the last music video he directed for Jukebox the Ghost, for their song, “Everybody’s Lonely.”

He says the views are well over a million now and that the band was great to work

with and it was really fun.

Washington said his goal was, “If we don’t have fun making this, the whole video is going to fail. This should be a good time, and it was. And I’m super happy with how it turned out.”

Washington said the pandemic has made the business ebb and flow for the last couple of years, and for the company he took it very seriously and didn’t want to put any of his people at risk until they had a better understanding of what they were going through. He said it took a while to figure out how to do the work safely.

“I’m proud to say a couple of crew members have said it’s been the safest sets they’ve been on,” said Washington.

Future projects include some fun shoots coming up with an agency called AKA that focuses on Broadway plays, and the company is doing a lot of projects with Broadway.

He said they did a shoot for the resurgence of Broadway’s 75-year-old COMPANY, and were able to shoot with Steven Sondheim before he passed away. Sondheim was a famous American composer and lyricist who is said to have been one of the most important figures in 20th-century musical theater.

Another project is a short documentary he produced called Zaida that has been hitting festivals. The documentary is about a Holocaust survivor, the grandfather of one of Washington’s friends. He escaped the Holocaust when he was just 12 years old.



Photo Provided

With assistance from the Choctaw Nation, Washington has gone from his Dad’s old camera to working with companies like Netflix, Apple, Amazon, Ford, Southwest and Samsung.

“It just played at Coronado Film Festival and won Best Short Film in Audience Award,” explained Washington.

The film is still playing at festivals, and he says it should be online next year.

Washington’s company is also beginning pre-production for their first feature film called RACQUETBALL.

With his busy schedule, Washington is planning to give back to his tribe.

He explained, “It’s not just the scholarship. The tribe has done so much for my family, my grandma, and my Mom’s side of the family who are in Oklahoma.”

You can follow Taylor E. Washington on Instagram or his website at [www.panup.tv](http://www.panup.tv).

# Today’s scams, aren’t old tricks

By Shelia Kirven

“Hello, this is Jessica, and I’m calling about your car’s extended warranty.” “We are calling you from Amazon, and we show that you have an outstanding invoice of \$400 with us.” “Hello, I’m calling to help you with the problem you’ve been having with your email account.” Most people have received these calls.

These calls are common scams. Experts suggest it’s best to hang up immediately or don’t even answer the call in the first place.

Potential scams are an everyday part of our lives. Sometimes it can be hard to know what’s real and what’s not.

To some this may be annoying, but to many it can be a scary experience. These scams can come through our phone, email, mailbox, fraudulent credit card charges, online apps, dating sites and sometimes even from uninvited visitors to our doors.

Scammers may promise something if the person on the other end sends them money, guarantee prizes from sweepstakes, lottery or even promise to help you with some problems you may be having (such as computer problems). Scammers make false promises and trick victims into giving them personal information. They can even call with threats of sending you to jail or claiming to file a lawsuit against the victim if they don’t pay.

One common scam is a “Yes” scam. According to the FCC, the scam begins as soon as a person answers the phone. A recorded voice or an actual person asks: “Can you hear me?” And the consumer responds, “Yes.”

The caller then records the consumer’s “Yes” response and thus obtains a voice signature. This signature can later be used by the scammers to pretend to be the consumer and authorize fraudulent charges via telephone,” an FCC news release said.

Those with caller ID should also use caution when answering the phone. Some scammers change the phone number to look like a local call, something called “spoofing.”

Advance fee schemes happen when someone asks the victim to pay money to get something in return, such as a loan, contract or gift. Experts suggest using common sense when something appears to be too good to be true.

Do not make any financial arrangements

until talking to someone you trust about the situation, such as a bank, attorney or the authorities. Other types of these scams promise a prize or vacation that you have “won,” but they need your personal information and sometimes even a fee to claim your prize.

Sadly, even some who claim to be with charitable organizations can be scammers. During times of natural disaster and emergencies, scammers work double-duty to try and appeal to the sense of concern.

If a request is received from someone who says they need a donation, it’s best to suggest doing personal research first and contacting the organization directly.

Visit the Federal Trade Commission’s online resources for validity records of a charity, how much goes to the charity, and their ratings. Those who do donate should do so with a check or credit card, so there is a record. If the “charity” suggests using cash, gift card or wire transfer, it is probably a fraudulent request.

Another scam is Internal Revenue Service impersonation. These imposters may try to contact victims through telephone calls, email, text or mail.

If a scam call is received, victims are encouraged to ask the caller to provide their name, badge number and a callback number. Then contact the IRS yourself to verify the caller. Remember not to pay any money over the phone or wire it, don’t trust it if caller ID says “IRS” as the number may have been spoofed, and don’t click any links on emails or text messages that ask you to verify your information. If you become victim to an IRS scam, contact the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) by calling 1-800-366-4484. Email messages that claim to be from the IRS can be forwarded to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).

Ransomware is another common scam. Ransomware is malicious software or malware that cybercriminals use. If downloaded onto a computer by opening an email attachment, clicking an ad, following a link, or even visiting a website with malware embedded, it can lock the computer and files.

For more ways to stay safe and up to date on all scam and fraud trends, visit

<https://www.usa.gov/common-scams-frauds> or <https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes>.

## How to Spot, Stop, & Report Government Imposter Scams

Consumers reported more than 498,000 imposter scams to the Federal Trade Commission in 2020.

- Nearly 1 in 5 people reported losing money
- Overall, reported losses were nearly \$1.2 billion
- The median loss was \$850
- Almost one-third of the imposter scams reported involved someone posing as a government representative

**How to Spot the Scam**  
Scammers will call, email, text, or direct message you on social media.

- Scammers say you did not appear for jury duty and must pay a fine or you will be arrested.
- Scammers say you will be fined, arrested, or deported if you do not pay taxes or some other debt right away.
- Scammers say your Social Security or Medicare benefits have been suspended because of COVID-19-related office closures.
- Scammers say you can get a free COVID-19 test kit from Medicare in exchange for giving personal or financial information.
- Scammers say you owe back taxes, there is a problem with your return, or please verify your information.

STOP.  
These are all scams!

**How to Stop & Report the Scam**

- 1. Don’t give information or money to anyone who calls, texts, emails, or direct messages you on social media.** Keep your Social Security, bank account, debit and credit card numbers to yourself.
- 2. Never make a payment to someone you don’t know,** especially by gift card, mobile payment apps, money transfer, or cryptocurrency. Only scammers will demand you pay that way. They know these payments are hard to reverse.
- 3. When in doubt, check it out.** If you’re concerned about the request, contact the agency directly. Look up the government agency’s real number on the agency’s site and call to get the story.
- 4. Report the scam to the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov).** Tell your bank, and be sure to share these tips with your friends and family.

Learn more at [ftc.gov/imposters](https://ftc.gov/imposters) and [aba.com/consumers](https://aba.com/consumers)

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

ABA FOUNDATION

# Chief Batton Hosted at General Motors

By Christian Toews

Chief Gary Batton had the opportunity to visit General Motors (GM) in Austin, Texas, on November 4, 2021. Batton met with GM CIO Tobin Beal (Choctaw tribal member) and GM Global CIO Randy Weeks (Cherokee citizen) for a “fireside chat” broadcast to GM’s 155,000 employees and the Choctaw Nation’s associates. GM’s Indigenous Employee Resource Group organized the chat.

The purpose of this “fireside chat” was to educate associates and others about the Choctaw Nation and hear from Batton on issues such as tribal sovereignty, culture and business.

After the initial interview and discussion, Batton opened the floor for questions in the auditorium and many people asked questions about the Choctaw people and life in Oklahoma.

GM’s Indigenous Employee Resource Group said they

work to educate, inform and create greater awareness among GM employees, customers and the general public about North American Indian culture. After the “Fireside Chat,” Batton met with senior-level executives to discuss ways that the Choctaw Nation can partner with GM to provide opportunities for Choctaw tribal members in the future.

Batton thanked Beal and Weeks for coordinating the opportunity to meet with and speak to GM.



Photo By Christian Toews

Chief Batton recently visited General Motors in Austin, Texas for a “fire side chat”.

# COVID-19 & FLU VACCINES AVAILABLE

## PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

### Choctaw Nation Health Services

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

If you are new to recycling or need a refresher on what items can be recycled and where you can drop off your recyclable items, visit our webpage. You may be surprised at all the items that can be recycled rather than filling our landfills.

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Choctaw Nation Recycling Center



Jess Henry

## District 4

Halito! I'm excited to share some of the great things that are happening in District 4. We wrapped up 2021 on a great note, and I'm looking forward to an even better 2022!

I'll start by honoring our veterans. On Veterans Day, we presented two quilts of honor to Choctaw veterans Robert McCaslin of Pocola and William Kline of Poteau. I know all of District 4 joins me in saying thank you for your service to our great nation.

We were also able to recognize one of our elders, Leatrice Joy (Bishop) Carter, on her 97th birthday!

Carter is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. Born in Tuskahoma in October 1924, her father was an original enrollee on the Dawes Rolls. At the age of three, she went to live at Saint Agnes Mission School for Indians in Antlers. Later she attended Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas. She

has been many things throughout her life, an apple picker in Washington State, a "Rosie the Riveter" for Boeing during WWII, a bounty hunter, bail bondsman, process server and an avid OU fan and even a dance partner for Bob Wills. She has been a symbol of fierce independence for her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and now her great-great-grandchildren.

In economic news, I'm thrilled to announce that we were able to invest in our local communities and award Poteau, Heavener, Pocola and LeFlore County nearly \$100,000 in the fourth quarter. Coming Spring of 2022, we will have 10 affordable rental houses and 20 LEAP houses ready in Poteau. Also, coming to the Spiro area, Summer 2022, we will have 10 affordable rentals.

The Spiro and Poteau Community Centers have been busy. We had to do things a little differently this year. We did drive-thrus for Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. We gave out hundreds of bags of candy to the children. On Thanksgiving, we were able to share and give back by handing out meals. For Christmas, Santa gave out gifts to the children and meals were picked up.

I trust everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I hope it was filled with joy and you made great memories with family and friends. As always, if I can be of assistance to you and your family, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yakoke,

Jess Henry



Submitted Photo

Leatrice Joy Carter recently celebrated her 97th birthday. District 4 Councilman Jess Henry visited Carter and her family for her special day.

## Reba's Place coming soon

**Nashville, Tenn. - November 29, 2021** - Reba McEntire revealed some exciting news this past weekend, announcing to a homestate crowd in Durant, OK on Friday (11/26) the development of "Reba's Place," a restaurant, bar, live music venue and retail store set to open in Atoka, OK in 2022. Constructed in a century old Masonic Temple, "Reba's Place" features two stories of dining space that opens up to a central stage which will regularly host live music performances. The aesthetics of the venue are heavily influenced by Reba's western heritage and include a curated collection of memorabilia from Reba's personal archives. Reba's Place is created in partnership with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the city of Atoka, OK.

"I'm very excited to be opening a place so close to my roots," shared Reba. "The Choctaw Nation and the city of Atoka are wonderful partners and I can't wait to welcome our first guests to Reba's Place. We are working very hard to create something not only for the local community, but that will also bring in folks from across the country."

Watch Reba make the special announcement here, [https://www.instagram.com/p/CWxE\\_gmALKD/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CWxE_gmALKD/).

Menu highlights at "Reba's Place" include the "Fancy" steak dinner, street tacos, chicken fried steak and Reba's personal favorite, pinto beans and corn bread. The menu also includes scratch-made versions of many of the dishes most popular in the region, alongside favorites from other areas including Nashville, New Orleans and Mexico. The main floor also showcases a restored antique bar that is more than 100 years old and offers a broad range of beer, wine and spirits crafted into signature cocktails. The retail space will feature a combination of merchandise created just for this new venture alongside established Reba favorites.

Reba just released her celebratory three-part box set REVIVED REMIXED REVISITED. The set is a reimaged collection of some of Reba's most iconic songs. REVIVED includes some of Reba's biggest hits as they've evolved over the years in her live show and features all new arrangements of fan favorites. REMIXED puts a whole new spin on some of her most beloved tracks and on REVISITED, Reba works with Grammy Award-winning producer Dave Cobb to strip things back.

Multi-media entertainment mogul Reba McEntire has become a household name through a successful career that spans across music, television, film, theater and retail. The Country Music Hall of Fame and Hollywood Bowl member has won 16 ACM Awards, 15 American Music Awards, 9 People's Choice Awards, 6 CMA Awards, 3 GRAMMY® Awards, a GMA Dove Award and was a 2018 Kennedy Center Honors recipient, in addition to multiple philanthropic and leadership honors. Reba has celebrated unprecedented success including 35 career No.1 singles and selling over 56 million albums worldwide. Reba recently earned her 60th Top 10 on the Billboard Country Airplay chart, extending her record for the most Top 10 hits among female artists. Reba's Top 10 success spans across five straight decades and lands her alongside only George Jones, Willie Nelson and Dolly Parton in the achievement. The Oklahoma native and Golden Globe® nominated actress has 11 movie credits to her name, a lead role on Broadway in Irving Berlin's Annie Get Your Gun and starred in the six-season television sitcom Reba. Her brand partnerships include Dillard's, REBA by Justin™ and she was named the first female and musician to portray KFC's iconic founder Colonel Harland Sanders in their celebrity colonel campaign. Last year, Reba launched her very first Spotify original podcast, Living & Learning with Reba McEntire, featuring guests including Dolly Parton, Leslie Jordan, Kristin Chenoweth, Jane Fonda and more. Reba is also set to hit the road this winter for

"REBA, BROOKS & DUNN: Together in Vegas," the longest-running country residency in Las Vegas taking place Dec. 1-15, 2021 at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace. Reba will hit the road again at the top of 2022 with her nationwide REBA: LIVE IN CONCERT. Joining her for various dates across the tour include Brandy Clark, Hannah Dasher, Caylee Hammack, Reyna Roberts, Cailtyn Smith, Brittney Spencer and Tenille Townes. For more information, visit [www.Reba.com](http://www.Reba.com) or follow @Reba on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



Submitted Photo

The Choctaw Nation has partnered with country music superstar Reba McEntire to bring Reba's Place to Atoka, Oklahoma.

## December Veteran of the Month

Preston Ludlow, Talihina, Oklahoma, is December's Veteran of the Month.

Sgt. Ludlow was born in Osceola, Arkansas, and raised in Honobia, Oklahoma. He attended Haskell Indian Nation University and graduated as an electrician. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps three months after graduation.

He served with the First Marine Division Headquarters Company as an electrician, radioman and recon personnel. From Oct. 6, 1966 to May 25, 1970, Ludlow served with two tours of duty

in Vietnam. He was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with Star and Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma holds our Veterans in the highest esteem and appreciates the sacrifices and contributions they have made to preserve our freedoms and the way of life we hold dear.



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**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

January 4	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
January 5	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
January 7	Crowder	By Appointment
January 11	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
January 12	Talihina	10:00 a.m. - 2 p.m.
January 14	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
January 14	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
January 18	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
January 19	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
January 19	Stigler	By Appointment
January 25	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
January 28	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
January 28	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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



**UPDATE YOUR CHOCTAW NATION MAILING SUBSCRIPTION**

At Choctaw Nation, we constantly try to improve our services and look for better ways to serve you, our Tribal Member. To choose your Circulation subscriptions, Scan the QR code or visit the website below to select which of these items you wish to continue receiving through the mail.

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

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



[choctawnation.com/biskinik-subscription](http://choctawnation.com/biskinik-subscription)

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**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

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

The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be 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.

**EYEGLASSES, DENTURES AND HEARING AID PROGRAM (EDH)**

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL MEMBERS OF ALL AGES ACROSS THE U.S. ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE WITH EYEGLASSES, DENTURES AND HEARING AIDS.

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION  
(800) 522-6170 OR (800) 349-7026

Choctaw Nation Health Services

**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA**  
December 11, 2022

- CALL TO ORDER
  - OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
  - ROLL CALL
  - APPROVAL OF MINUTES
    - Regular Session November 13, 2021
  - WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
    - Veteran of the Month, District #3 – Preston Ludlow
  - PUBLIC COMMENTS – None
  - REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
  - NEW BUSINESS
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for Years 1 and 2 (of 3) of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention: Setting Morals and Resisting Temptations (SMART) Program. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICD-BG) – Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES). Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for FY20 Basic Library Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for the FY20 and FY21 Tribal Historic Preservation Office Grants (THPO). Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for the National Endowment of the Arts FY20 Arts Engagement Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for FY21 Tribal Opioid Response (TOR2) Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for the Supporting Tribal Public Health Capacity in Coronavirus Preparedness and Response – 2020 Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for an Additional Sixth Year of Planned Five Year Grant for the Chahta Inchukka Tribal Home Visiting Program. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for Years One through Five for the Tomorrow's Hope Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) Crisis Emergency Response to COVID-19 Subaward. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for Year Four of Five for the Chahta Vlla Apela Tribal Home Visiting Program. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Funds and Budget for the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) for the Tribal Infrastructure Support Initiative Subaward. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Application for the FY22 Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) Program: Competitive Grant Application AD. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Application for the FY22 Native American Affairs: Technical Assistance to Tribes Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve a Service Line Agreement in Favor of Kiamichi Electric Cooperative, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Latimer County, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Grazing Lease No. 4200266223 (G09-2005), in Favor of Fred James, Jr., on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Latimer County, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Grazing Lease No. 4200266226 (G09-2004), in Favor of Fred James, Jr., on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Latimer County, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Grazing Lease No. 4200266501 (G09-2006), in Favor of Darrell Bell, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in Latimer County, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Designate the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Complex Located at 529 North 16th Avenue, Durant, Oklahoma, as the "Gregory E. Pyle Tribal Complex". Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
  - OTHER NEW BUSINESS
  - OLD BUSINESS
  - ADJOURNMENT
  - CLOSING PRAYER
- All Council members were present.

**EVENTS**

**Native American Arts & Craft Show**  
Native American Arts & Craft Show, Saturday, February 5, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the McAlester Choctaw Community Center located at 3274 Afullota Hina McAlester, OK. Many authentic vendors will showcase and sell their beadwork, wood carvings, jewelry, crafts, etc. Traditional foods will be available at the show.

**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:

Antlers Community Center  
January 14, 2022  
9:00 – 11:00



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**Chahta Anumpa Aikhvna**  
January Language Lesson

**Weather dialogue**

Pair with a partner and practice speaking Choctaw. Then, fold the paper, so the English words are hidden and speak Choctaw to one another. Eventually, speak Choctaw without the worksheet.

<b>Speaker 1:</b>	Kucha yvt pisa katiohmi?	How is the weather outside?
<b>Speaker 2:</b>	Kucha yvt kapvssa.	It is cold outside.
<b>Speaker 1:</b>	Chekusikash omba tuk.	It was raining a while ago.
<b>Speaker 2:</b>	Oktusha tuk o?	Did it snow?
<b>Speaker 1:</b>	Ak ikhano.	I do not know.
<b>Speaker 2:</b>	Mahli chohmi hosh hikiya.	It is sort of windy.
<b>Speaker 1:</b>	Himak ninak a oktusha chı ho?	Will it snow tonight?
<b>Speaker 2:</b>	Chı sv yimmi.	I believe so.
<b>Speaker 1:</b>	Okti yvt hina pakna ashakma ak aiokpacho.	I do not like ice on the road.
<b>Speaker 2:</b>	Onnakma, kucha ya hvshi toma chı ho?	Will the sun shine tomorrow?
<b>Speaker 1:</b>	Ak Ikhano. Keyu kasha.	I don't know. Probably not.

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

**James Monroe Little**

James "Jim" Monroe Little, 89, passed away Sept. 29, 2021.

Jim was born June 29, 1932, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to John Rudolph Little, M.D. and Ruby O. (Fowler) Little.

He is survived by his wife Joyce; daughters Lauren Little Greer and spouse Jerrand Joy Sturgil Patton and spouse Russell; son Braxton Little and spouse Nancy; brother John "Rudy" Little; grandchildren Charlotte Greer Johnson and spouse Michael, Gerald Greer Jr., Ryan Patton and spouse Lacey, David Patton and spouse Cara, Claire Patton Wilkerson and spouse Zach, Skyler Little, Heartleigh Little, and Phoebe Little; great-grandchildren Shane Patton, Anna Johnson, Alice Patton, Craig Johnson, Elliot Patton, and Mia Wilkerson; along with many loving nieces and nephews, friends and SAE brothers.

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

**Charles Henry Snead Jr.**

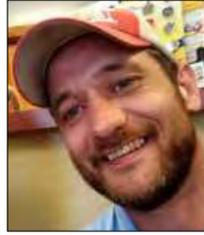
Charles Henry Snead Jr., 44, passed away Nov. 11, 2021.

Charles was born Sept. 29, 1977, in Fortuna, Calif., to Charles Henry Snead Sr. and Elizabeth Ann Seymour.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Sherry Bullard; grandpa Gavin Cain; and uncle Jimmy Cain.

Charles is survived by his fiancée Kimberly Brantley; children Sara George and spouse Mason, Sadie Snead, and Suzanna Snead; sister Teresa Snead Scarberry; stepfather John Seymour; grandmother Alice Coffee; grandchildren Rylin Roberts, Azariah Gallagher, and Jolie George; niece Jennifer Hammonds; nephews Mark Kugle, Ty Corley, and Charles Kendrick Snead; uncle Ross Snead; cousin Samantha Eppler, and other special family members and friends.

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

**Sweeney McKinney Thompson**

Sweeney McKinney Thompson, 60, passed away Nov. 22, 2021.

Sweeney was born Aug. 19, 1961, in Talihina, Okla., to Betty (Jones) and Homer Thompson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Billy Thompson; and sister Faith Thompson Watson.

Sweeney is survived by his children Kandice Austin and spouse Jonathan; Claudia Keith and spouse Alva, MaKayla Thompson, and McKinney Thompson; nephew John Thompson and spouse Toni; sisters Sissey Coley and Sonyea Miller; brothers William Thompson and spouse Penny, and David Thompson; grandchildren Tayla, Jessie, Kaleb, Jacob, Allie, Liam, and Kinslee; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and a host of friends.

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

**Allie Johnson**

Allie (Marris) Johnson, 89, passed away Nov. 6, 2021.

Allie was born Aug. 27, 1932, in Overbrook, Okla., to Arch and Sallie (Farve) Marris.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and husband James "Jay" C. Johnson.

Allie is survived by her children Uwanah Watts and spouse Mike, Yolanda Johnson, and James Paul Johnson; grandchildren Mika Watts, Brett Pittman, Brendan Hudson, Joby Johnson Acea Johnson, Keely Johnson, Kyndal Jones, Dakota Brown, Taylor Johnson, Ashley Farmer, and Alexis Farmer; great-granddaughters McKenzie Williams, Abbigayle Hamilton, Amelia Payne, Emerald Williams, and Amelia Farmer; and special nieces Betty Baptiste, Tessa Almond, and Yvonne Vansill.

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

**Carol Joan Johnson**

Carol Joan Johnson, 76, passed away Nov. 12, 2021.

Carol was born Jan. 31, 1945, in Quinton, Okla., to J.B. Sr. and Flossie (Turner) Christy.

She was preceded in death by her parents; stepfather George Carter; brother Joshua Bush Christy Jr.; and sister Janice Wann.

Carol is survived by her husband Willard "Junior" Johnson; sons Vencent Johnson, David Johnson and spouse Sherry, and Jonathan Johnson and spouse Lana; grandchildren Matthew, Jesse, Lauren, Nicole, Ashley, Jeremy, Kirstin, Sage, Madison, Hannah, Lance, and Tarin; great-grandchildren Addison, Harley, Paisley, Emma, Daithon, Driston, Diesel, Daxon, Holden, Juliet, Oliver, Jordan, Wyatt, Keely, Lucy, Felicity, Roper, Laydenn, Chanley, Chloe, Brycen, and Chacen; sister Pat Carpenter; and brother Jack Christy.

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

**Pat McDaniel**

Pat McDaniel, 89, passed away Oct. 20, 2021.

Pat was born Oct. 9, 1934, in Allen, Okla., to Orphus W. and Ethel Mae Scroggins Jones.

She is survived by her husband Charles "Corky" McDaniel; son Terry McDaniel and spouse Deanna; daughters Charlotte Foughty and spouse Les, and Pam Rahhal and spouse Scott; brothers Tommy Chaffin and spouse Lynn, and Harold Dean Chaffin; sister Betty Kantner; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

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

**Wrightsmen Thomas**

Wrightsmen "Rex" "W.W." Thomas, 89, passed away Nov. 18, 2021.

Wrightsmen was born Feb. 11, 1932, in Corinne, Okla., to Impson Mataha Thomas and Lizzie (Wilson) Thomas.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sons Lyle Thomas and Daryl Thomas; and siblings Clarence Thomas, Hazel Cora Thomas Wilson, A.J. Thomas, and Jimmy Ray Thomas.

Wrightsmen is survived by his children Gary Thomas; Wendell Gay, and Lori Lynn Thomas; siblings Ruby Lizzie Thomas Harjo, Gerald Don "Chub" Thomas, McNew Islam Thomas and spouse Nadine, Lester Berry Thomas, and Impson Mataha Thomas Jr.; as well as numerous grandchildren.

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

**Carrie Renea Knight**

Carrie Renea Knight, 56, passed away Nov. 13, 2021.

Carrie was born Sept. 4, 1965, in Antlers, Okla., to Walter Allen and Neomi Lovita (Nelson) Moore.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and grandparents Theodore and Carrie Nelson.

Carrie is survived by her husband Roland Lee Knight; children Brittany Hearrell, Amanda Hearrell, and Zachary Knight; grandson Dorian Huey; and siblings Consetta Leflore, Michael Moore and spouse Ranay, Bryan Moore and spouse Khrystle, Natalie Kennedy and spouse Larry, and Walter Moore Jr. and spouse Tina.

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

**Denise Renee Barboan**

Denise Renee Barboan, 53, passed away Nov. 15, 2021.

Denise was born Oct. 27, 1968, in Durant, Okla., to Daniel Richard Sr. and Shirley Ann (Williams) Barboan.

She was preceded in death by her father; grandparents Nelson and Samantha Fobb Williams; uncle Nelson Williams Jr.; aunt and uncle Delbert and Bertha Brock; and cousins Gladys Rogers, Michael Brock, and Twila Long.

Denise is survived by her daughter Shanelka Renee Barboan; her mother; brother Daniel Richard Barboan Jr.; sister Marian Stephanie Pritchett (Ricky Haislip); niece Kira Moore; nephews Jared Pritchett and Kerwin Moore; aunts Melissa Sue Folsom and spouse Michael "Happy", and Anita Navarro; along with numerous cousins and friends.

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

**Linda Sue Cunningham**

Linda Sue Cunningham, 82, passed away Nov. 2, 2021.

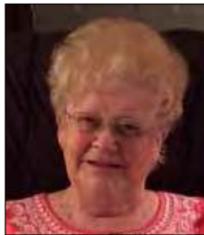
Linda was born Feb. 15, 1939, in Hoyt, Okla., to Olin Hoyt and Golda (Cariker) Hoyt.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Carl Cunningham; brothers William Leon Hoyt, Milo Hoyt, O.V. Hoyt, Terry Hoyt and Fred Hoyt; sisters Helen Marguerite Boyd, LaWanna Chuning, and Flora Lee Hoyt.

Linda is survived by her daughter Carla Peterson and spouse Bill; daughter Karen

Cunningham; son David Cunningham and spouse Gretchen Reeder; grandchildren Sarah Harvey and spouse Stephen, Jeff Peterson, Tim Peterson, Peter Cunningham, Alysha Cunningham, Brandon Cunningham, Maise Cunningham, and James Cunningham; great-grandchildren Baxter Anderson; Frederica Harvey, Cayden Wayland, and Leo Jordan; many nieces and nephews; and numerous other family and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit [Fir Lane Memorial Park](#).

**Joyce L. Daniels**

Joyce L. Daniels, 93, passed away Nov. 18, 2021.

Joyce was born Sept. 29, 1928, in Antlers, Okla., to Victor and Delila Underwood.

She was preceded in death by her husband James H. Daniels; her parents; sister Jerri Burton; and brother Jim Underwood.

Joyce is survived by brother Vic Underwood; sister Glenna Cash; children Jim Daniels and spouse Martha, and Dave Daniels and spouse Rhonda; grandchildren James Daniels, Stacy Goldsberry, Elizabeth Orozco and spouse Rick, Tisha Vana and spouse Mike, and Charlie Daniels and Shondell; great-grandchildren Jeffery Goldsberry, Alexa Hale, Brooklyn Daniels, Aiden Daniels, Addison Daniels, Kaitie Vana, Ashlyn Vana, and Madi Vana; and great-great-grandson Steven Hale; as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

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

**Cheryl Gwen Stephan**

Cheryl Gwen (Jessie) Stephan, 59, passed away Oct. 5, 2021.

Cheryl was born May 5, 1962, in Lawton, Okla., to Lillie and Herbert Jessie.

She was preceded in death by her mother; brother Douglas; and husband Paul "Pee Wee" Stephan Jr.

Cheryl is survived by her father; brother Robert Jessie and special friend Cherie; aunt and uncle Eddie and Susie Oliver; several nieces and nephews; other relatives; many friends; and special friend John Hampton.

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

**Jo Ann Kessel**

Jo Ann "Jo" Kessel, 93, passed away Sept. 19, 2021.

Jo was born May 30, 1928, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Dr. Darrel G. and Naomi Coon Duncan.

She was preceded in death by parents; stepfather William M. Dodson; and sister DeDe Maxwell.

Jo is survived by her brother Dr. Tom Dodson; and nephews Ryan Dodson and Dr. Brennan Dodson.

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

**Ruby Dell Wiginton**

Ruby Dell Wiginton, 89, passed away Oct. 6, 2021.

Ruby was born May 4, 1932, in Soper, Okla., to H.L. and Dora Davenport.

She was preceded in death by her husband Claud Edward Wiginton; sons Larry Edward Wiginton and David Keith Wiginton; sisters Bobbie Grace Marsh and Georgia Stubbs; and brothers Bucky and Wayne Davenport.

Ruby is survived by daughter Patricia Ann Hammer; granddaughter Bobbi Jo Crittenden and spouse David Hilsenteger; great-granddaughters Ashton and Briana Hilsenteger; sisters Tommie Jones, Linda Garrison, and Brenda Splawn; brothers Jerry Davenport, Larry Davenport, and Mike Davenport.

For the full obituary, please visit [Bill DeBerry Funeral Directors](#).

**Obituary Policy**

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

The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

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

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

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

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik

PO Box 1210

Durant OK 74702

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

## The future is bright for Ambree Shelton

By Kendra Germany-Wall

In mid-April 2005, the course of Ambree Shelton's life changed drastically.

Life circumstances and financial trouble left Shelton, her mother and her brother alone and in a tight spot.

"Sitting in the parking lot of a Walmart as a measly four-year-old, I watched my mother cry," explained Shelton. "She cried because we genuinely had nothing but the clothes we were wearing. While we sat in front of the Walmart entrance, a lady by the name of Kathryn approached us and would be the stepping block we needed to get back on our feet."

According to Shelton, Kathryn was a social worker for the Choctaw Nation who gave her family a ride to the only homeless shelter in town, where they stayed for four months.

"I remember how kind the ladies who ran the homeless shelter were, as they never failed to make mini pancakes for my brother and me," said Shelton. "I thought of it as the mansion, never once thinking we were homeless and barely getting by."

After Shelton's mother found a stable job, they moved away from the "mansion" into a trailer house where we lived for a large portion of the remainder of Shelton's childhood.

Shelton spoke fondly of that period of her life.

"It was this time in my life where I watched my mother go back to school to get her degree and continue to strive for more as a family. The most prominent role model in my life as a child, she channeled an inner prosperity in life that I wanted, too," Shelton explained.

Shelton says she got her first job when she was 16 years old because she liked the thought of being able to earn her own income.

"I knew all too well about the stereotype of Native Americans in my hometown never making it out, and that thought struck a chord in me to persevere," said Shelton.

She tutored three times a week during the school year, all four years of high school.

"I was working hard for that goal of making sure I was not a high school dropout, explained Shelton.

While Shelton was in high school her mother moved her family into their dream house.

Her mother was Shelton's role model.

"She broke a barrier most never get through, and it only pushed me to start thinking about life after high school," said Shelton. "I longed for a future where life was anything but ordinary; however, no matter how far and fast I found myself running toward it my past stayed close behind because I kept looking back."

It wasn't until she was accepted into her top choice university, the University of Oklahoma, that Shelton felt her future taking shape.

Shelton was given academic scholarships that helped her pay for college. During her freshman year, Shelton also got a job, continuing her strong work ethic.

While considering academic career paths, Shelton landed on practicing law.

"Being someone who pushes to reach goals that are not always clearly visible, my tenacity for a career in the legal field felt apparent," explained Shelton.



Submitted Photo

Ambree Shelton, of Broken Bow, served as the only intern for the Choctaw Nation Judicial Center in 2021.

Shelton was selected as the only intern for the Judicial Branch of the Choctaw Nation in 2021. She describes her time with the judicial branch as "a whirlwind of firsthand experience into how a sovereign nation conforms to the laws of Oklahoma."

According to Shelton, she learned a lot during her time at the Nation.

"I learned many values and traits that come with being in any part of the justice system. I know how immeasurable some people can be and how morally valued others are," said Shelton.

According to Shelton, her internship sparked a desire to uphold the law and help tribal members.

"Tribal members, regardless of status, deserve high-quality legal aid, and that is what I plan to give them as a tribal prosecutor in the future," stated Shelton.

After speaking with Chief Gary Batton this summer, they agreed that the legal system isn't tailored for tribal members.

Chief Batton encouraged Shelton to work for the Nation after law school, a goal she is highly considering.

Her life experience helps her empathize and relate to those she would represent in the future.

"I have seen firsthand how having a bad financial history can impact where you go in life. I know how societal influences can labor someone into their own expectations of where they think they will end up; however, I also know how far I have come means a lot, not only to my mother but also to myself," explained Shelton. "I am proud of being the first of my family to attend a large four-year institution and to go beyond that to attend the highly respected University of Oklahoma College of Law. I can feel my past stay far behind me as I refuse to look back."

Shelton has some advice for others who might find themselves in a situation as she was at an early age.

"It was hard growing up, but I wanted it (success), and I think that makes a difference. I had people around me that helped. I think making sure that you find at least one person who can kind of be that guide for you, that's all you need to kind of like, push yourself to do more," explained Shelton.

According to Shelton, having a support system is essential, no matter how small.

"It was definitely not an individual thing. I had help from the Choctaw Nation, my counselors and the people around me to help push me here. You don't have to do it all alone; people are there to help you," said Shelton. "I know it sounds cliché, but if you want it hard enough, you can get there."

For more information on Choctaw Nation academic services and the internship program, visit [choctawnation.com](http://choctawnation.com).

## Choctaw tribal members recognized as 2021 AARP Oklahoma Indian Elders Honorees

**DURANT, Okla.** - Four Choctaw Nation tribal members were virtually recognized as honorees at the 13th annual AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honors event.

Pauline "Paula" Wilson-Carney, Gloria Sirmans, Olin Williams and Loyce Wright were among 47 Native American Elders selected for their notable contributions.

"Our Choctaw elders are vital to the continuation of our heritage. They have an important role in sharing their knowledge, language, traditions, and Choctaw culture," said Chief Gary Batton. "I am excited to see these deserving Choctaw members be honored and am truly grateful for each of them and what they mean to me, their families, their tribe and community."

Honorees were chosen based on their achievements, community service and impact. Since 2009, AARP Oklahoma has honored nearly 600 Native American elders from Oklahoma's 39 tribal nations.

As a part of the honoree recognition, AARP Oklahoma sent each honoree a specially curated celebration box that arrived during November, which is Native American Heritage Month. Contents included the 2021 AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honors medallion, program featuring the honorees' picture and biography, a gift card, sweetgrass braid, two tickets to the First Americans Museum and additional gifts from AARP Oklahoma.

AARP Oklahoma biography of each honoree, listing their accomplishments and why they deserve to be honored are as follows:

### Pauline "Paula" Wilson-Carney



Paula was born in 1940 at her Coal County home. She received her education at Wheelock Academy Missionary School for Girls and Chillico Indian School. Ms. Wilson-Carney later met and married Rev. Raymond Carney. Together, they ministered the gospel from Oklahoma to Florida. Rev. and Wilson-Carney parented six children, 52 foster children and multiple families. After Rev. Carney died in 1999, she continued caring for foster children while working for the Choctaw Nation Language Program and teaching children at the Coalgate Elementary School. Ms. Wilson-Carney currently teaches adult language and culture classes. Ms. Wilson-Carney has served as the Choctaw Nation District 12 Community Center president for 13 years. Her recognitions include an award from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services for her contribution to foster children's programs and an Outstanding Elder Award from the Choctaw Nation.

### Gloria Sirmans



Gloria enjoys caring for her family and is known for her excellent cooking and family gatherings. After graduating from

Hartshorne High School, Mrs. Sirmans began working for the Choctaw Nation as the District 11 field office secretary. She helped many people access programs available to Choctaw members and other American Indian tribal members. Mrs. Sirmans began working for Feed the Need Foundation of Oklahoma in 2004. In this role, she served as an elder advocate, assisting elders with transportation to health services. In 2007, Mrs. Sirmans was recognized for these efforts and was named "Outstanding Outreach Worker" by the State of Oklahoma. After working 10 years as an outreach worker for Pittsburg County, Mrs. Sirmans returned to the Choctaw Nation field office, where she is currently employed in a senior clerk position.

### Olin Williams



Olin was born in 1952 on the Conehatta Reservation in Newton County, Mississippi. A first language Choctaw speaker, Mr. Williams studied at Haskell Indian Nations University. Mr. Williams' faith in God, life experiences, failures and successes have enabled him to elevate tribal members through ministering God's word. He has served the Choctaw Nation for 23 years and is currently the Choctaw Nation employee chaplain. Williams has preached at many churches and shares God's word in the Choctaw News publication. He has assisted countless people in need, visiting homes, hospitals, preaching and delivering hope without hesitation. Williams has dedicated his time studying and understanding the European invasion's impact on Native American tribes. Mr. Williams actively uses his knowledge of language, history and culture to teach the historical ways of respect. He shares, "Freedom and sovereignty are our legacy. We must stand up emotionally, mentally and culturally."

### Loyce Wright



Loyce graduated from Pittsburg High School and subsequently pursued a career in nursing. To date, she has worked in the nursing industry for 55 years. Thirty-eight years of service have been dedicated to Indian Health Services and the Choctaw Nation, respectively. Ms. Wright has received many accolades for her work, including two Indian Health Services awards and an outstanding recognition award. Ms. Wright was instrumental in securing a full-time registered nurse position at the Choctaw Nation-Jones Academy boarding school. She also submitted a needs assessment to Indian Health Services' Public Health nursing program in 2012 to help improve the health outcomes of Native Americans. Ms. Wright currently serves as a healthy aging case manager to support increased access to health and wellness services for Choctaw Nation tribal elders.

## Choctaw Period Project to help young women

By Chris Jennings

If Monica Brooks has her way, girls in the Choctaw Nation, regardless of tribal affiliation, will have one less thing to worry about while they're at school. Brooks has started the Choctaw Period Project (not associated with the Choctaw Nation) to gather donations of personal hygiene products for young women.

Once Brooks has enough product on hand to create individual kits, she plans to distribute them to any schools within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation that would like them.

"That way, any young lady that has a need while they're at school, and they don't have those products on hand, they can get one for free," said Brooks.

The Choctaw Period Project (CPP) idea stems from Brook's belief that if you take something, you need to give back. She had recently gone through some medical issues and was cared for by Choctaw Nation medical staff. Earlier in the year, she had received CARES Act money at a time when she needed it.

Brooks knew that it would be her time to give back when things calmed down. "Two days after my medical procedure and receiving positive news from that, I started CPP to keep that promise," said Brooks.

She does not take any cash donations; instead, products can be purchased from an Amazon wish list and sent to her through Amazon. Items available to buy range from tampons and pads to sanitary wipes and even some comfort items like small bags of candy and tissues.

"Those little things like a piece of candy, Chapstick or some tissues, if you know, you're just having a bad day those little things can make a difference," said Brooks.

Brooks says you don't need to spend a lot of money to be part of the project. There are several items on the list under \$2.00 and anything helps. You can also subscribe to certain items through Amazon that will then ship to Brooks at



Submitted photo

Period packs getting ready for assembly. Each pack will come in its own discrete bag that will be given to those requesting one.

regular intervals to be added to kits.

Most young girls get their first period at about 12 years old. However, anytime between 10 and 15 is within the average range. This significant milestone in a girl's life marks her transition from girlhood to womanhood. It can also be stressful for many reasons.

Brooks herself has stood in the shoes of the young women she's trying to help. "When I was a kid in grade school, I had some embarrassing little situations, and I didn't have products...I remember it and how it affected me emotionally. I was already going through enough as it was, and then to not have the things that are needed," said Brooks.

Brooks aims to start at smaller, rural schools to get things going but hopes to expand beyond that if possible.

"It is really about showing the Chahta Spirit, keeping that promise and showing my daughter and grandchildren that it is nice to have 'things' but it is important to give back. We never know what one simple act of kindness can do to change someone's life," said Brooks.

Check out Choctaw Period Project on Facebook for more information.

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## Boosters now available

**DURANT, Okla. (December 1, 2021)** – The COVID-19 vaccination booster doses are available for all patients 18 years and older, regardless of the vaccine brand previously obtained. The Choctaw Nation Clinics will be providing the booster to all eligible individuals, regardless of tribal member status or residency.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a COVID-19 booster dose if you are 18 or older and: Received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago.

Received both shots of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago.

“Previously, there were more requirements to be eligible for the booster dose,” explains Dr. Jason Hill, Chief Medical Officer for Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority. “Opening that eligibility to anyone who would like a booster dose over the age of 18 will provide even further protection against serious illness.”

To find the closest Choctaw Nation clinic near you visit [www.cnhsa.com](http://www.cnhsa.com). You can make an appointment to receive the vaccine by calling 800-349-7026 ext. 6, using your myCNHSA app, or visiting [my.cnhsa.com](http://my.cnhsa.com).



## Broken Bow Wellness Center Celebration

On Tuesday, Nov.16, 2021 the Broken Bow Wellness Center was recognized for their hard work in achieving the highest Member Experience score for FY21 (98.3) out of all eleven Wellness Centers across the Choctaw Nation. The metrics that were measured were overall satisfaction, cleanliness and friendliness/knowledge at the front desk. The Operational Excellence Department, a part of the Division of Strategic Development, hosted the celebration to recognize Wellness Center Director, Chase Henson and his staff at the Broken Bow Wellness Center, Cassie Tisho (Supervisor), Don Tsosie, Tara Hopson and Jason White. The event was attended by special guests, District 2 Council Member, Tony Ward and CEO of Member Services, Teresa Jackson, who also spoke during the celebration. In addition to staff and special guest speakers, around 20 of the elder Broken Bow Wellness Center members attended the celebration. Congratulations Broken Bow on a job well done.



## Rylynn Rozencrantz



Rylynn Ella Marie Rozencrantz was born Oct. 16, 2021, in Carson City, Nevada. She weighed 8 lbs, 1 oz and was 20 inches long. Rylynn is the daughter of Victoria Lee Sheehan and Brandon David Rozencrantz. Her parents live in Dayton, Nevada. Rylynn is the great-granddaughter of Judith Lynn Whaley.



## 50 years for Alexander

Willie B Alexander III turned 50 years old on Nov. 15, 2021.

Birthdays are extra special for Willie, a survivor of a kidney and pancreas transplant four years ago.

## 80 years for Wilma Heflin Sullivan



Former tribal councilman, Delton Cox, presented a beautiful blanket to Wilma Heflin Sullivan for her 80th birthday.

Wilma was born on Nov. 12, 1941, and is the granddaughter of original enrollee Levi Washington. Wilma would like to thank everyone who came and fellowshipped with the family at the home of Francis Heflin Walker.

## Evans graduates from OCU



Caleb Evans of Midwest City, Oklahoma, graduated from Oklahoma City University in 2021 with a degree in Political Science with minors in International Studies and History. Caleb was a pitcher on the OCU baseball team, a member of student government, and a Clara Luper Scholar.

As an athlete at OCU, Caleb was a three-time Academic All-SAC recipient and a two-time NAIA Scholar-Athlete. He was also the Baseball recipient of the Jim Wade Award, the OCU Student-Athlete of the Year in 2021, and was mentored by two hall-of-fame coaches and men, Denney Crabaugh and Keith Lytle.

As a servant in student government, Caleb was the Senator for Athletics, the Student Representative on the OCU Athletics Committee, and the Secretary of Policies and Initiatives, where he pioneered the Pads and Tampons Initiative to expand free access to feminine hygiene products to the female students on campus. As Secretary of Policies and Initiatives, he also launched the “Let’s Talk” Initiative to encourage mental health awareness at OCU.

In the classroom, Caleb was the recipient of the Robert S. Kerr Political Science Student of the Year in 2021, made the Dean’s Honor Roll several times, and was always guided in the right direction by Dr. Mohamed Daadaoui and Dr. Richard Johnson. Caleb was also published in the Johns Hopkins Macksey Research Journal and the OCU Stellar Research Journal.

According to Caleb, his greatest achievement at OCU was meeting his wife, Anna. Anna is a second-grade teacher in the Putnam City School District in Oklahoma City. They attend St. Mark’s United Methodist Church in Bethany, Oklahoma, where Caleb’s father-in-law is their pastor. The couple resides in Yukon, Oklahoma, where they are proud parents of four houseplants that they tend tediously to keep alive.

Caleb is currently pursuing his life-long dream of becoming a lawyer with the support of his family. He plans to expand access to healthcare and ensure that everyone gets the quality of healthcare they deserve regardless of their socio-economic status.

## Seymour publishes book



Tribal member George Seymour, a Bible teacher, author of book and speaker on biblical teachings, recently published a children’s book. Jackfruit teaches the principles of God in a fun way through the main character Jackfruit.

For more information contact Seymour at [jfruit-books@gmail.com](mailto:jfruit-books@gmail.com) or by mail at : Desiland, LLC 2910 W. 51st ST Tulsa, OK 74107.

## Vails celebrates 94 years



Geneva “Judy” Vails of Durant, Oklahoma, turned 94 years old on Nov. 30, 2021. She was born in Durant, Okla., and still lives there on the same piece of land she and her family purchased and moved to when she was 11 years old.

Judy has two children Larry Pace and Shelia Kirven; three granddaughters April Pace, Cassidy (Kirven) Conway, and Ashley Kirven-Bobier; and three great-grandchildren Elliott Conway, Henry Kirven-Bobier and Emily Conway.

Judy’s family loves her very much and hopes she had a wonderful birthday!

## Detective Hussey receives award



Tribal Member and Dallas Police Detective Samuel “Bob” Hussey was among several police officers who received the “Meritorious Conduct” award on November 15, 2021.

Detective Hussey and other officers who are members of a specialized unit within the Dallas Police Department received the award for their pivotal role in closing the investigation of a nationwide human trafficking case which led to the arrest of Tremont Blakemore and his co-conspirators.

The Assistant U.S. Attorney prosecuting the case described Blakemore as one of the country’s top 10 most prolific human traffickers. The Dallas Police Department collaborated to cover multiple departments across the state of Texas and the country, including the FBI, Houston Police Department, Lubbock Police Department and many more. The diligent efforts of information gathering, interviewing, investigating and securing evidence were essential in the arrest of the suspect and his nationwide prostitution ring.

As a result of the monumental efforts, federal charges were filed, including aggravated promotion of prostitution, compelling prostitution, tampering with evidence, money laundering and engaging in organized crime. Since the arrest, several previously identified victims have come forward to corroborate and provide additional information on criminal offenses dating back almost a decade. It is estimated that hundreds of young women have been victimized by Blakemore and his organization.

The Dallas Police Department recognizes the supervisors and detectives of this unit for their dedication, tenacity and unwavering pursuit of justice for the victims and to take a violent criminal organization off the streets.

## Paisley Ann Kerrick



Paisley Ann Kerrick was born on Oct. 26, 2021, in McAlester to Samantha Mietchen and Alex Kerrick. Paisley was welcomed by her brother Beau and sister Khaleesi. Paisley is the granddaughter of Monica Brooks and the fifth great-granddaughter of original Choctaw enrollees Reuben and Nicey (Waters) Gibson.

## Tuhro celebrates 96 years



Frances McIntosh Tuhro celebrated her 96th birthday with her family, including many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She luckily just recovered from a breakthrough case of COVID-19 just before her birthday on Oct. 20. She has one surviving sister, Sylvie Abney, and her two children Donna

Roberts Davis and Melvin Lawrence T. Tuhro. She is recovering well now. Her parents were William R. McIntosh and Mrs. Ruby Miller McIntosh.

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ITI FABVSSA

# A New Chahta Homeland: A History by the Decade, 1910-1920

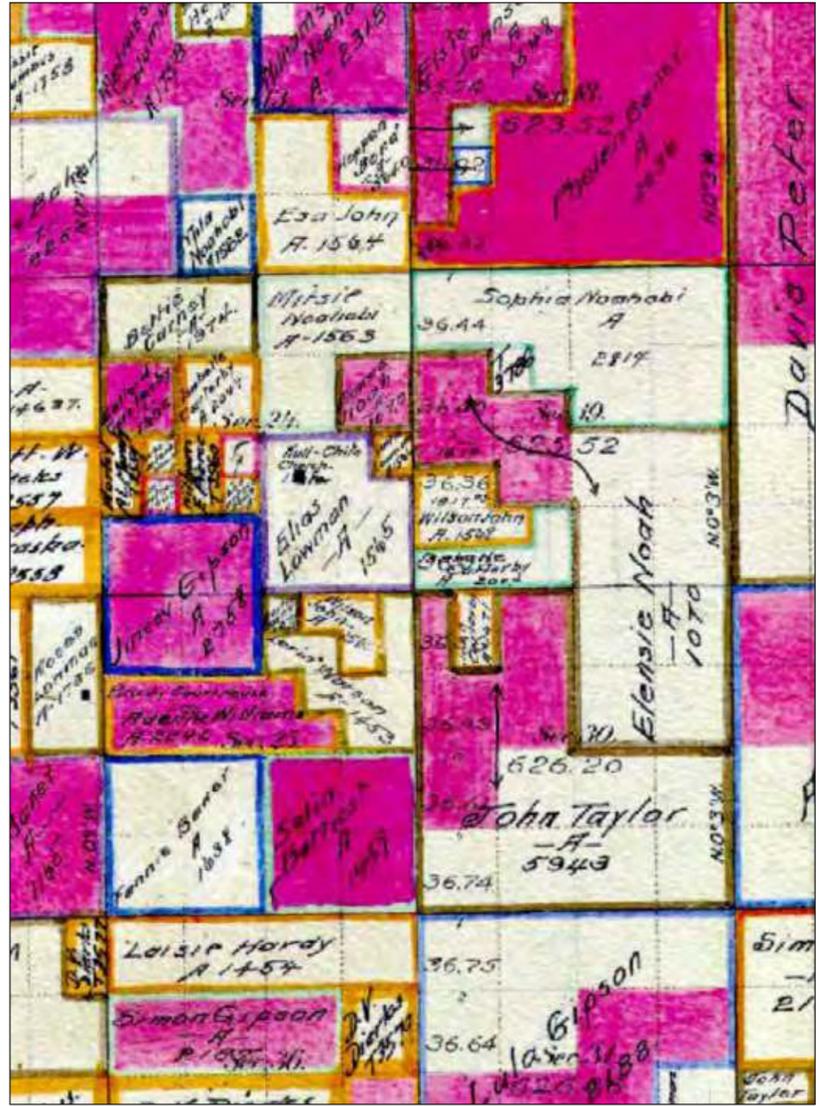
Iti Fabvssa is currently running a series that covers the span of Oklahoma Choctaw history. By examining each decade since the Choctaw government arrived in our new homelands using Choctaw-created documents, we gain a better understanding of Choctaw ancestors' experiences and how they made decisions that have led us into the present. This month we will be covering 1910-1920 when Choctaws dealt with the immediate aftermath of statehood and attempts to undermine Choctaw allotments.

Oklahoma statehood introduced massive changes into the lives of the Choctaw people and their government. As mentioned last month, the 1906 Five Civilized Tribes Act made critical adjustments to Choctaw Nation's governmental structure and how it operated. The goal of the United States was to eliminate the governments of the Five Tribes, including the Choctaw Nation. However, this was not possible, as the United States still needed tribal governments to take care of remaining tribal business like the sale of their lands. Nevertheless, the Choctaw national government was reduced to a handful of government officials to handle this business, such as the Chief, National Attorney, Mining Trustee, and a council of Choctaw leaders, which was organized in different ways over the years. Throughout the 1910-1920 period, Choctaw leaders figured out ways to settle Choctaw affairs so people could receive individual cash payments known as per capita payments from the sale of joint tribal lands, while trying to find solutions through the U.S. government for the various economic and social issues that many Choctaws were experiencing.

Immediately following statehood was a period when a large portion of Choctaws began to lose their allotments for a variety of reasons. Allotment, which was supposed to "teach" Native people how to be landowners by providing them with an individual plot of land, was quickly revealed to be a legal method for getting Native people to sell or give up their lands as well as to create conditions that would facilitate land loss in various ways. It was also destructive to the community-oriented way that Choctaws traditionally lived. Sometimes Choctaws in need would sell their lands to ensure that there was food on the table; others sold land to be able to buy other necessities like appliances or a car. Land squatters were a constant problem, and for those whose allotments were located far away from where they lived, they might not know about squatters living on their land until it was too late. Choctaw allotments with land restrictions were supposed to be exempted from taxation by local governments, but county registers would illegally add them to the tax rolls and then seize the lands from Choctaws for not paying taxes on their land. Choctaw minors with land allotments were particularly vulnerable to land theft. Since minors needed a legal guardian to manage their allotments, some men made careers out of managing Choctaw minor allotments. Some of these guardians would make deals with timber or mining companies to lease or sell Choctaw minors' land and keep a portion of that money for themselves. Men who served as guardians might also work for those natural resource extraction companies or be closely associated with them and use their legal guardianship to broker deals with such companies. Throughout the 21st century and today, individual Choctaws and families would continually have to deal with these issues that stemmed from allotment.

The loss of land due to allotment often contributed to a decline in the wealth of Choctaw families. Choctaws turned to their chief and wrote letters about their need for per capita payments to help with financial problems. At various times in the 1800s, the Choctaw national government issued per capita payments to Choctaw citizens, which is part of the reason extensive census records were kept. Often, the money for per capita payments came from legal settlements with the U.S. government for violating its treaties with Choctaws. After Oklahoma statehood, Choctaw lands that were reserved from allotment were sold and money from those sales went into the Choctaw account managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This money from the sale of lands was then distributed to individuals listed on the Dawes Rolls. If an individual passed away, the payment might be divided among his or her heirs if they maintained proper records. It quickly became a difficult task to keep track of people who might have changed their names and deceased individuals and their heirs. This added to the already massive workload of the local Bureau of Indian Affairs office in Muskogee that managed Choctaw people's accounts and allotments, which contributed to delays in response times. While trying to manage the accounts of all the Native people in Oklahoma (which had the highest Native population until the mid-1900s), these government offices were being reorganized and having their budgets cut. This made the management of individual Choctaw accounts even more difficult and caused great frustration of many Choctaws who did not know about all these different processes behind the scenes.

In 1915, Choctaws gathered at Durant, calling for the distribution of money to every Choctaw in the form of per capita payments. Knowing that many Choctaw community members struggled to hold onto their lands and to make a living, Chief and the National Attorneys, in particular, worked hard to hold the U.S. government accountable for its treaty promises and to stop non-native people from acquiring Choctaw lands and funds through fraudulent means. For instance, Choctaw Nation hired lawyers to fight fraudulent citizenship cases made by white people who tried to get onto the Choctaw rolls despite not being Choctaw. Later, these lawyers sued Choctaw Nation for not paying them for their work even though they had. When Choctaw National Attorneys considered the possibility of reopening the rolls to add Mississippi Choctaws that had been left off, one major factor in why they did not end up doing so was that the National Attorney found numerous fraudulent cases that had been organized by a local company. The Choctaw National Attorney, a position originally established by General Council in 1860 but was appointed by the Chief after 1911, worked hard on this particular case. At the same time, Choctaw governmental officials focused on settling the remaining affairs of the Choctaw government. One of the most important tasks for the National Attorney and Mining Trustee was the sale of the segregated coal lands, which would provide money for the per capita payments for Choctaw citizens. Choctaw community members often did not know



Land allotment map with the names of individual allottees in Bethel, Oklahoma. Image courtesy of the Choctaw Nation GIS Department.

about this difficult work. So they would call for the abolishment of the Choctaw government since they did not think the Chief and government officials were working on anything.

Gatherings of Choctaws like the one regarding per capita payments -- which were often referred to as conventions -- were important because they were spaces where Choctaws collectively made decisions about the direction of the nation and what should be done. These conventions were also held at different locations throughout the Choctaw Nation boundaries. At these events, the Chief would update Choctaws on the status of matters regarding the U.S. government, and various community leaders would speak and inform them of issues in their community. Whenever there was an opening for the position of Chief, Choctaws would hold an election that was then passed along to the Secretary of Interior. Often, people thought the U.S. President appointed the Chief, but he delegated that job to the Secretary of the Interior, and he always respected the wishes of Choctaws and selected the individual that the Choctaws elected in their conventions. This is significant because it shows how Choctaws still had power and control over their affairs despite the interpretation of the law that stated the U.S. President appointed the Choctaw chief.

Choctaw Nation always retained its government through these officials and by having conventions where Choctaws met and made decisions about what should happen and who should be their leaders whenever it was time to appoint a new chief. It is important to recognize the dedication of these Choctaw government officials and of community members in their work to preserve the foundation for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma today.

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

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## Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

Our third year to implement the lawn care service is about to begin. Get your application in now.

To be eligible, you must be Choctaw, at least 65 years of age (or have a documented ambulatory disability) and meet income guidelines. You will be eligible if you own your home or rent your home but are liable for lawn care. Once eligibility is established, you will be given a booklet of 20 vouchers. Each voucher will be worth \$25.

This program will be similar to the storm shelter program. You will give the voucher to the person you choose to mow your yard, who will then redeem it with the Housing Authority. You can choose anyone you want to mow your yard as long as they are at least 16 years of age and do not live in the home where the work is being done.

An example of how this will work is as follows:  
 Your yard costs \$45 to mow. You would need to give the mower a \$25 voucher and \$20 to pay for the service, saving you over half of what you would pay for lawn care last year. There will be enough vouchers to mow your lawn on average every ten days from April 1st through October. So, even though you may need to mow weekly in May and June, you may only need four total vouchers through July and August. This gives you the flexibility to use them as you need them.

Contact Derek Wesley at the Housing Authority at 580-326-752 if you have questions or need an application. Applications are also online and at your local community centers.

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Experience in service learning and work environments. Including apprenticeships, internships, mentorships, job shadowing and other on the job opportunities.

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 CDIB/Tribal Membership card, Utility Bill (water, electric, natural gas) or copy of lease agreement to verify address, proof of income of household adults, social security card, youth aged 16-17 accompanied by parent/guardian. If you have a laptop or tablet, bring it.

**APPLY ONLINE AT:**  
**CHOCTAWNATION.COM/EMPLOYMENT-TRAINING-SERVICES**

**OR AT ONE OF THE CHOCTAW COMMUNITY CENTERS ON THE DATES LISTED**

Antlers	February 15 & 24	2-7 PM	McAlester	January 5, 19	2-7 PM
Atoka	February 22	2-7 PM	Poteau	January 3, 10, 24	2-7 PM
Battiest	February 3 & 17	2-6 PM	Smithville	February 8 & 21st	2-6 PM
Broken Bow	January 6, 13	2-6 PM	Spiro	January 17	2-7 PM
Coalgate	January 12 & February 9	2-7 PM	Stigler	January 11	2-7 PM
Crowder	January 31st	2-7 PM	Talihina	February 2 & 28	2-7 PM
Durant	January 7 & 25	2-7 PM	Wilburton	January 18 & February 7	2-7pm
Hugo	January 28 & February 23	2-7 PM	Wright City	February 11	2-6pm
Idabel	January 20	2-7 PM			

Applications also available every Friday in January and February Employment Training Services located in Durant Headquarters, available from 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

**APPLICATION CLOSES ON APRIL 1, 2022**

**Choctaw Nation** Summer Youth Employment Services PROGRAM FUNDED BY PUBLIC LAW 102-477

# Flu vaccines important for Native Americans

By Chris Jennings

With many restrictions being lifted and more families getting together during the holidays, the 2021-2022 flu season is poised to be more severe than last season.

The Walgreens Weekly Flu Index shows that as of December 16, Oklahoma was ranked 6th highest for the number of flu cases. The Walgreens Flu Index is compiled using retail prescription data for antiviral medications used to treat influenza across Walgreens locations nationwide.

“The best way to reduce the risk of seasonal flu is to get vaccinated,” said Janice Hixson, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic’s Chief Medical Officer. “An annual vaccination is recommended because a person’s immune protection declines over time. Flu viruses also change frequently, so the vaccine composition is reviewed and updated each year based on which virus is making people sick.”

The CDC reported that flu activity and the number of people who received flu shots during the 2020-2021 season was very low, likely because of COVID-19 prevention measures. Now that more people are getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and getting together for the holidays, it’s important to get the flu vaccine as well.

“Thanks to the COVID-19 vaccine, many of us will be able to celebrate the holidays with our loved ones this year,” says Oklahoma State Department of Health Immunization Service Director Dr. Fauzia Khan. “But the COVID-19 vaccine does not protect against flu, so it is important individuals also get vaccinated for the flu to ensure the safety of their family and friends.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a health advisory concerning increased influenza A (H3N2) activity for this flu season. During seasons where the H3N2 strain has been prominent, it has been associated with more severe illness and death in persons over 65. The CDC also states the H3N2 strain

evolves more rapidly to escape human immunity.

The quadrivalent flu vaccine available this flu season includes protection against the H3N2 strain. This season’s vaccine also contains protection against the H1N1 strain and two different Influenza B strains.

Brandi Burris, RN with the Choctaw Nation, says, “Every flu season is different, and influenza can affect people differently...flu can mean a few days of feeling bad and missing work, or it can result in more serious illness.”

The more severe aspect of illness would include hospitalization for things like pneumonia, bronchitis and even death. According to the CDC, Native Americans are at a higher risk of developing severe complications from the flu.

“Flu and pneumonia rank among the top 10 causes of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives,” said Burris. Native American women who are pregnant are at an even greater risk.

Changes in the immune system, heart and lungs during pregnancy make pregnant women more likely to experience severe illness from the flu. The CDC and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend that all pregnant women get a flu shot during flu season, regardless of their trimester.

There are several reasons a flu shot could be beneficial to both a mother and her child. Research done by the Mayo Clinic showed that high fever during pregnancy increases the risk of disabilities at birth. By getting a vaccine and limiting the effects of flu, the mother is also protecting her child.

During and after birth, antibodies from the flu vaccine are passed through the placenta and breast milk. These antibodies can help protect newborns who are more susceptible to the flu virus but can’t be given the vaccine until they are six months old.

Photo provided by CDC

Flu illness is more dangerous than the common cold for children. Children under five years old and especially those under two years old are at a higher risk of developing serious complications from the flu. “Each year, millions of children get sick with seasonal flu; thousands of children are hospitalized, and some children die from flu,” said Burris.

**BOOSTER**  
On top of flu vaccines, the Choctaw Nation is also offering COVID-19 booster shots for everyone over 18 who wants one regardless of tribal member status or residency.

The CDC recommends a COVID-19 booster dose if you are 18 or older and received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago or received both shots of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at least six months ago.

“Previously, there were more requirements to be eligible for the booster dose,” explains Dr. Jason Hill, Chief Medical Officer for Choctaw Nation Health Services

Authority. “Opening that eligibility to anyone who would like a booster dose over the age of 18 will provide even further protection against serious illness.”

The Nation is also offering COVID-19 shots for pediatric patients. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination for children ages 5 to 11.

“Previously, the only thing that stood between the kids and the virus was a mask. The vaccination will provide their immune systems the extra protection needed to be able to ward off any potentially serious symptoms,” said Dr. Jason Hill, Chief Medical Officer of Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority.

The CDC says it’s safe to get the flu and COVID-19 vaccinations at the same time.

You can make an appointment to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by calling 800-349-7026 ext. 6, using your myCNHSA app or visiting my.cnhsa.com. Call your local clinic for details on how to get your flu vaccine.

# Pediatric vaccines are a new weapon in the fight against COVID-19

By Dr. Townsend Cooper, CNHSA

COVID has significantly impacted all of our lives since it began to spread widely in the United States in early 2020. Thankfully, over the last two years, an increasing number of tools have become available to fight the disease. Approximately one year ago, the first vaccine became available for adults. Since that time, more vaccines and therapeutics have emerged, and the use of the vaccines expanded first to adolescents and now to school-age children.

In October, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized emergency use of the COVID vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 years old. This authorization applied only to the Pfizer COVID vaccine for a two-dose series at reduced dosing. In a study of more than 3,000 children, this vaccine was approximately 90% effective in preventing COVID infection, and no serious side effects were noted in the children in the study. Following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendation and FDA approval, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) also recommended COVID vaccines for all children ages 5-11 who do not have a contraindication to the vaccine. Children will receive a dose that is approximately 1/3 the size of an adult dose and then receive a second dose three weeks later.

COVID-19 generally causes a milder illness in younger children than in adults, but there is still a small risk of more severe infection. Additionally, there is also the risk of a serious post-COVID inflammatory process called MIS-C (multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children), which can cause serious inflammation of the heart and other organs. There have already been several potential cases of MIS-C in our community and more documented cases across Oklahoma. Even though these instances of primary or post-infection severe disease are rare, the vaccine can further decrease their prevalence. Perhaps most importantly, however, receipt of the COVID vaccine can decrease the risk of the child acquiring and transmitting the virus to vulnerable adult caregivers, such as grandparents and other older relatives. These individuals are generally at much higher risk for severe disease. By vaccinating the children in a household, the overall risk of COVID and subsequent severe disease will likely decrease for the adults in their lives as well.

Some have raised concerns that the size of the study used to examine the vaccine in children may not have been large enough to detect all side effects, such as myocarditis, which can be a rare side effect of the vaccine in older adolescents. However, with the considerable positive experience of vaccine administration to the adult and adolescent populations, the decreased dose of the vaccine for children, and the lower incidence of myocarditis in general in this population, experts feel that the likelihood of significant side effects is very small.



Photo provided by CDC

Pediatric vaccines are available at pediatric clinics across the Choctaw Nation.

Approximately 280 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine have been given worldwide. As new waves of illness continue to enter the community, the authorization of the use of a formulation of the vaccine for children 5-11 is a critical new tool available to blunt the spread of the disease. You can take advantage of this new weapon in the fight against COVID by having your children and grandchildren ages five and older vaccinated at local Choctaw facilities. Vaccines are available at pediatric clinics across the Choctaw Nation. Caregivers can contact the pediatric clinic that their child attends for details on how they can get started on the two-dose series.

Help protect your family and the community from COVID by taking advantage of this valuable new opportunity!

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 Health Services

### Roasted Chicken

- 1 whole chicken
- 3-4 oranges
- 1.5 cups of fresh cranberries
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3-4 table spoons of butter

**Preparation**

1. Wash hands thoroughly. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. One-two days in advance, place chicken in the refrigerator to defrost. Remove any packages in the cavity of the chicken.
2. Slice oranges into rings and set aside. Place half a cup of cranberries and half a cup of orange slices into the cavity of the chicken. Slice butter into 8 small pats and place under the skin of the chicken. Season the exterior of the chicken with salt and pepper. Place remaining cranberries and orange slices in the bottom of a roasting pan with half a cup of water. Place chicken on top of cranberries and oranges, cover with lid from roasting pan or aluminum foil, cook in the oven for 2 hours or until an internal temperature is 165 degrees.
3. While the chicken is cooking, baste the chicken every 20 minutes with the liquid at the bottom of the pan. When the chicken has reached desired temperature, slice and serve.

## Gregory E. Pyle Tribal Complex



During the December 2021 Tribal Council meeting, the Choctaw Tribal Council unanimously voted to designate the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Complex located at 529 North 16th Avenue, Durant, Oklahoma, as the “Gregory E. Pyle Tribal Complex.” Pictured is the late Chief Pyle’s family and members of the Tribal Council.

### CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS  
Open 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

**January 2022**  
All markets open weekdays, January 3-26  
**Closed:** January 27-31.  
Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation  
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

**ANTLERS** 400 S.W. “O” ST., 580-298-6443  
*Food demos January 5 & 19*

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

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773  
*Food demos January 7 & 25*

**MCALESTER** 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716  
*Food demos January 11 & 26*

**POTEAU** 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431  
*Food demos January 12 & 27*

*This Institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

## SHOULD I BE SCREENED FOR LUNG CANCER?

The more you smoke, and the longer you smoke, the higher your risk is for lung cancer.

You should consider being screened using a Low-Dose CT Scan if you have all three of these risk factors:

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

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

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

# #TogetherWe'reMore

Throughout 2021, the Choctaw Nation collected stories from tribal members, community partners, associates and anyone else who is Choctaw Proud. Here are a few of the responses to the Together, We're More project.

## What is your dream career at the Choctaw Nation?

“I currently manage my own business doing software quality assurance and narrative design while working days for Tribal Vocational Rehab in the Pacific Northwest. My dream is to be able to move to a place where I can work for my own Tribe. I imagine the perfect job would be doing backend QA with tribal IT, writing for the Biskinik, and serving as a mentor for any youth who want to pursue a career in a STEM field.”

– Chrissi Ducotey



## How is your family staying physically and mentally healthy?

“Staying home and staying safe. We haven't really been going out in the public much. We play lots of basketball. My son loves sports; it reminds me of back when I was a child. He loves it just as much as I did! I'm glad to be able to play it with him.”

– Justa Park Matthews



## What makes your house a home?

“What makes my house a home is my children, my husband, our family pictures on the walls, my children's beautiful works of art, the toys everywhere, the time spent with each other, and the laughter we all share together.”

– Marlena Gutschalls



## What does the Choctaw Flag symbolize for you?

“The color represents the dignity of our people, to me. The purple is regal, and the symbolism of the bow in particular represents a readiness to defend.

It means home to me, and the honor of our elders establishing our homes because they looked to our future and secured our culture and lives.”

– Brianda Batcheshire



## How do you celebrate Native November?



“In elementary school, teachers asked me to do show and tell. I brought ball sticks and some of my mom's beadwork. One year, mom came and did a presentation in her Choctaw dress. Some classmates would still remember that time. Living in Dallas, I feel I make myself known to anyone who says they have never met a real Native.

There's still a tribal community in Dallas even though its more spread out.

Today, I am glad to see a resurgence of culture because not all was by family, but through a community. Celebrating being Choctaw isn't a month, it is every day.”

– Emery Moses Roberts Jr.

## What is your favorite way to spread cheer?

“We love to decorate the house together, watch Christmas movies, bake cookies, and make candy for our family, friends and neighbors. My kids go through their toys and donate them to families in need and each kid gets to pick out a toy to buy for Toys for Tots. Lastly, my son especially looks forward to going to church and learning this time of year about the birth of Christ.”

– Melissa Waterman



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Choctaw Nation Health Services

# A year in review

Continued from page 1

## July

On July 1, the Choctaw Nation announced the launch of an initiative to consider tribal membership for Choctaw Freedmen. Changing the tribal membership requirements would require a Constitutional amendment, which will require a vote from tribal members.

The 2021 Tribal Council Election was held on July 10.

The Choctaw Nation Election Board announced on July 15 the official results of the 2021 General Election. The District 4 winner was Jess Henry, with 617 votes (53.37%). The District 10 winner was Anthony Dillard, with 554 votes (90.67%). In District 7, no candidate received more than 50% of the total votes cast. The two candidates that received the most votes were Adrian Johnico (36.67%) and Joey Tom (40.07%). It was announced that this race would proceed with a Runoff Election between the two candidates. Other districts that were up for election but drew no opposition were District 9 Council Member James Dry, District 6 Council Member Jennifer Woods, and District 12 Council Member James Frazier.

On July 16, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the new Choctaw Nation Central Laundry Facility in Hugo, Oklahoma. Choctaw Nation Central Laundry provides an easier, more effi-

cient way to manage with increased laundry services. It services all laundry from the three casino and resort properties in Durant, Pocola and Grant.

On July 23, the Choctaw Cultural Center opened its doors to the public with a grand opening ceremony. Featuring rich interactive and immersive exhibitions and engaging programs and activities, the Choctaw Cultural Center showcases the Nation's treasured history and culture and serves as a place to gather, learn and preserve the Choctaw spirit and way of life.

## August

In August, Jones Academy celebrated its 130-year anniversary. Jones Academy was founded in 1891 by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, one of the first tribes to build its own school. The facility was named after Mississippi-born Choctaw Chief Wilson N. Jones. Jones had traveled with his own family over the Trail of Tears and was a strong advocate for his tribe's people to become educated. Situated on 540 acres near Hartshorne in southeastern Oklahoma's Ouachita Mountains range, Jones Academy began as a school for boys (serving girls after the closure of Wheelock Academy). A \$10 million state-of-the-art elementary academic facility was constructed on the campus in 2008, and in 2012 it became a BIE (Bureau of Indian Education) elementary

school under the authority of the Tribe. The elementary school educates students in grades 1-6, while older students attend Hartshorne public school.

On Aug. 6, Durant's resort expansion opened. The expansion features the 21-story, luxury Sky Tower Hotel, an expanded gaming experience, elevated amenities, restaurants, lounges and entertainment options, and a world-class collection of Choctaw art.

The Chahtapreneur awards banquet was held on Aug. 10. Over 600 Choctaw business owners participate in the Choctaw Small Business Development Chahtapreneur program.

On Aug. 11, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Election Board certified Joey Tom as the winner of the District 7 seat of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council. Tom garnered 52.26% of the vote over Adrian Johnico with 47.74%. The official results showed Tom with 660 votes to Johnico's 603 of the 1,263 votes cast in the Run-Off Election held Aug. 7.

Aug. 15, the Choctaw Nation announced its plan for the allocation of ARPA funds. Chief Batton unveiled the basics of the plan in a video presentation made available to tribal members. Batton stated that “The plan centers around taking care of our elders and is available to all Choctaw tribal members living anywhere in the U.S. who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Chief Gary Batton of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma threw out the first pitch before the Texas Rangers took

on the Seattle Mariners on Aug. 18 at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas.

On Aug. 22, the American Legion Riders kicked off day-one of their annual Legacy Run. The more than 200 motorcycle riders made a pit stop in Tvshka Homma, Oklahoma, to lay a wreath in honor of the Native Americans buried at the Choctaw Nation Veterans Cemetery and the multitude of others who have served in the U.S. military through the years. Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. were in attendance and took part in the ceremony.

On Aug. 25, the Texas Rangers and Choctaw Casinos & Resorts announced a multi-year naming rights partnership for Globe Life Park in Arlington.

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council unanimously approved a \$1.88 billion comprehensive expense budget for fiscal year 2022 during a special Tribal Council session on August 26. The new fiscal year began on October 1, 2021.

## September

Beginning Sept. 1, all Choctaw members were able to receive allocations for the FRF-ARPA Food Security Program (Elder and Disabled) and FRF-ARPA Economic Impact Recovery Program (Adult and Minor).

Though the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival was canceled, the Annual Choctaw Royalty Pageant was held Friday, Sept. 3, at Tvshka Homma, crowning the new 2021 princesses. New Royalty includes Little Miss Milena Amos, Ju-

nior Miss Adelyn Brown and Miss Madison Jade Cossey.

Also on Sept. 3, Choctaw Council Members were sworn into their new terms.

On Sept. 6, Chief Gary Batton delivered his virtual State of the Nation Address. As of Sept. 10, the Choctaw Nation had received 115,194 applications for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) programs and 93% were approved at the time of reporting.

The Choctaw culture of tradition and honor was on full display Saturday, Sept. 18. A group of tribal members gathered to honor the Choctaw people who have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic.

In September, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Choctaw Development Fund awarded the towns of Kenefic \$202,850 and Calera \$145,000.

## October

On Oct. 14, The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) announced that it had earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Accreditation by demonstrating continuous compliance with its organization's commitment to providing safe and quality patient care.

The Choctaw Nation celebrated its inaugural Flag Day Oct. 16. On Oct. 15, Choctaw tribal members, associates, leaders and friends gathered in front of Choctaw Nation Headquarters to honor the day. A contest was held in honor of the occasion. Participants submitted photos on social

media to show Chahta pride. Five winners and one grand prize winner were announced.

On Friday, Oct. 22, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the new state-of-the-art Choctaw Nation Child Care Center. The 41,186-square-foot building holds 19 classrooms, serves 252 children, and brought 106 new jobs to the area. Included in the facility is a large saferoom that also serves as a child sensory room.

## November

On Nov. 11, the Choctaw Nation hosted its first in-person Veterans Day Ceremony since 2019.

During her Nov. 26 concert at Choctaw Casino & Resorts-Durant, Reba McEntire and Chief Batton announced a partnership between Reba and the Nation to bring Reba's Place to Atoka, Okla., in 2022.

## December

In December, the Choctaw Nation hosted its first Pow Wow since 2019. Opening three days of activities was Choctaw Cultural Day at the new Choctaw Cultural Center on Dec. 3. This event showcased hymnal singing, sessions on Choctaw culture, a stickball exhibition and gourd dancing. On Dec. 4 and 5 at the Choctaw Event Center, the Choctaw Pow Wow hosted a full slate of competitions for traditional Native dancers and drums from as far away as California and Canada. Dozens of local artists, craftsmen and food concessionaires were to help make the Pow Wow an even more immersive experience.

# POW WOW

By Christian Toews

The annual Choctaw Pow Wow was held December 3 through 5 at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant, Oklahoma. Over 600 registered dancers, with over 50 tribes from more than 25 states and three Canadian provinces, participated in the weekend-long event filled with dancing, singing, food and crafts.

Hundreds of spectators were also in attendance throughout the weekend. Pow-wows.com reported 640,000 views on the live

webstream, with 111 countries watching and Russia being a new one this year.

Over 30 vendors with 15 Choctaw and other tribal vendors attended the weekend with their products and services.

According to Kerry Steve, one of the event's organizers, an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 visitors came and went each day.

With lots of dancing and prizes, there was plenty of activity to keep visitors and competitors entertained throughout the three-day event.



Photos by Chris Jennings

Left, William Daniel Isaac of the Mississippi band of Choctaws sings as dancers perform the garfish dance. Right, Dallas Ruiz and Catherine Estrada play a practice game of stickball after learning the basics at the Choctaw Cultural Center. The cultural center had a full schedule to open the pow wow weekend.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Choctaw singers sing Christmas carols in both Choctaw and English at Choctaw Day activities at the new Choctaw Cultural Center.



Photo by Kellie Matherly

Contestants young and old danced in this year's pow wow. Kids categories ranged from ages 0-6, 7-12 and 13-17 all with cash prizes available.

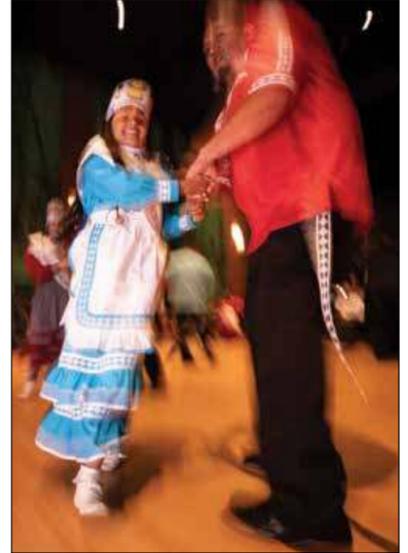


Photo by Chris Jennings

District 9 Little Miss Choctaw Princess Little Miss Kiree Louis dances with Brenner Billy during the social dancing portion of the Choctaw Day activities at the cultural center.



Photo by Kellie Matherly

The sound of jingle dresses fill the Choctaw event center during the pow wow.



Photo by Kellie Matherly

The Choctaw Nation Color Guard takes part in the grand entry of the 2021 Choctaw pow wow.



Photo by Kellie Matherly

Drummers and singers compete for prizes and first-place jackets. The drum contest had \$23,000 in prize money available for both Northern and Southern styles.



Photo by Kellie Matherly

Over 600 registered dancers from 50 tribes across 25 states competed in the 2021 pow wow.



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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

# Choctaw Country is the perfect backdrop for your next couples getaway

By Christian Toews

With the holiday season behind us, it's the perfect time to slow down and relax with your partner or a friend. A weekend away from the hustle and bustle might be what you need to start this new year right. Choctaw Country has exactly what you need for a relaxing weekend, no matter what that looks like to you. If you want entertainment, escape from the world, or a unique getaway, southeast Oklahoma has you covered. Durant is home to a newly opened 21-story luxury Sky Tower Hotel. The tower is part of Choctaw Casino and Resort and is the perfect place to unwind with your partner if you want to live in the lap of luxury. Not only are the rooms immaculate, but excellent restaurants are just a short walk away. If you want to get even deeper into relaxation, book a couples massage and spa day at the world-class spa, see the latest releases at The District Cinema, go bowling or sit down and have a few cocktails in one of the luxury lounge areas. With this many options for entertainment and relaxation in the same place, you don't need to bring anything other than your favorite person. For more information on amenities and booking, visit [www.choctawcasinos.com](http://www.choctawcasinos.com).

Perhaps you are looking for a more outdoorsy adventure where you break away from flashy entertainment and enjoy some peace and quiet in nature. If that sounds like something you're interested in, look no further than Hochatown, Oklahoma and the surrounding area. Hochatown sits just a few miles from Broken Bow and borders Beavers Bend State Park. The area has a seemingly endless number of cabins available for rent and more are being built every year. Some of these cabins are extremely well furnished with a hot tub, fire pit and other amenities. This area is the perfect location for cozying up with your partner to read books, see wildlife, get away from your routines, and enjoy nature. Jim and Valerie Tarpley have visited the area many times. They said they often use it as a retreat. "We love going to Beaver's Bend and that area. It has become a yearly tradition for our family towards the late summer and early fall. The destination often is where we aim for an anniversary trip. The pines, hills, trails, rivers and lakes offer plenty of seclusion and escape to nature. There is a wide array of outdoor recreation as



Photo By Christian Toews

A relaxing weekend might be what you need to start this new year right. Choctaw Country is the perfect destination for your next getaway trip, with so many fun things to do.

well," said Jim. The area is unique to Oklahoma. With towering pine trees and large rolling hills with vista views, it is a far cry from the waving wheat plains covering other parts of the state. The Tarpleys said they appreciate that aspect of the area. "Being from North Texas, we recommend it as a quick getaway destination. After a picturesque under two-hour drive you don't have to spend all day traveling. Once there, the change in the terrain and landscape fosters a sense of traveling much further," said Jim.

Maybe it's time for you and your significant other to break away from the routine and sample what this part of Oklahoma has to offer. Many of the cabins are listed on Airbnb or VRBO, and a quick google search will point you to cabin rentals or more information on the area.

If you are looking for something in between both options, you should consider Carlton Landing on Lake Eufaula in Pittsburg County. This destination is on the other side of Southeast Oklahoma but has its own unique beauty. Carlton Landing is an idyllic lakeside community that boasts many rentals available for visitors looking to get away. It is the perfect combination of luxury and amenities within walking distance. With a pizza parlor and a pub-like restaurant called The Meeting House built right into the community, you don't have to look far for amenities. Why not watch the sunset on the lake and then head to get a drink, spend some time in the hot tub, or take a walk along the lakeshore? Carlton Landing is a great option if you are looking to get away from the norm and start your new year right. If you want to find out more information or book a rental, visit [carltonlanding.com](http://carltonlanding.com).

# 2021 Thanksgiving Dinners



Photo By Randy Sachs

Volunteers box up meals at the Broken Bow Thanksgiving Dinner on November 15.



Photo By Kendra Germany-Wall

Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr., District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston, Little Miss Kristin Jefferson, and other volunteers pass out hundreds of Thanksgiving meals in Idabel.



Photo By Rylee Tollett

District 6 Royalty help pass out meals to tribal members at the Wilburton Thanksgiving Dinner.



Photo By Charles Clark

District 5 Councilman Ron Perry hands out meals during the Spiro Thanksgiving Dinner.



Photo By Chris Jennings

District 2 Councilman Tony Ward, Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. deliver curbside Thanksgiving dinners in Battiast.



Photo By Sheila Kirven

Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and other volunteers serve up meals at the Wright City Thanksgiving Dinner.



## LABOR AND DELIVERY DEPARTMENT

I was blessed with the most wonderful experience with the Choctaw Nation throughout my first pregnancy and the delivery of my baby girl. All of the staff here were very attentive, caring, and provided amazing expertise in helping me prepare for delivery. I could not have asked for a better midwife who delivered my baby. The time spent with the lactation consultant was very informative and extremely helpful to prepare me for my breastfeeding journey. Words cannot describe how appreciative I am of the Choctaw Nation and their wonderful staff. Yakoke!

Choctaw Nation Health Services



## SCHEDULE A RIDE WITH TRIBAL TRANSIT

### Did you know?

You can schedule your ride on the Tribal Transit vehicles through your [myCNHSA app](http://myCNHSA.com) or online at [myCNHSA.com](http://myCNHSA.com).

Rides are available for non-emergency medical visits to those living within the Choctaw Nation reservation. They must be scheduled 5 business days in advance. The full list of eligibility and procedures is available in the app or online.

*If you are experiencing any symptoms of a contagious disease, such as coughing, fever, loss of taste or smell, etc., you will not be able to use the Transit rides and will need to provide your own transportation to your appointment.*

Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit

## WE ARE HERE FOR YOU



Even though we are socially distancing due to the pandemic, you do not need to feel alone or isolated. The Choctaw Nation Family Violence Prevention Program is here to support you. If you or someone you care about is a victim of domestic or family violence and wants assistance, please reach out to us.

800-522-6170 | [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/VICTIM-SUPPORT](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/VICTIM-SUPPORT)  
CONTACT US FOR HELP

Choctaw Nation Family Violence Prevention

## Five Tribes issue statement on Governor Stitt canceling hunting and fishing compacts

Stitt had previously renewed and praised the programs, which have generated tens of millions of dollars for Oklahoma

**OKLAHOMA (December 13, 2021)** – Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt has said he will not renew standing hunting and fishing compacts with tribal governments after they expire this year. The agreements with the Cherokee and Choctaw Nations, which the governor has previously praised for generating funding for state conservation efforts, have been in place since 2016, but have now been terminated effective December 31, 2021. The governor previously approved the compacts in 2019 and 2020.

The landmark compacts were the first state-tribal agreements of their kind in the country and captured millions of federal dollars for wildlife management. Over their lifetime, the Cherokee compact generated more than \$32 million and the Choctaw compact accounted for \$6 million. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation dedicates that funding for wildlife management planning and operations, law enforcement and conservation efforts, benefiting Natives and non-natives alike.

Although tribes have guaranteed hunting and fishing rights on their reservations under their treaties with the United States, the compacts allowed for a coordinated, inter-governmental system that provides hunting and fishing opportunities for tribal citizens while generating revenue and federal funding for wildlife management programs across the state.

“Under previous administrations, compacts regarding hunting and fishing licenses were a routine matter. They clearly provided great financial and cultural benefit to both the state and tribal members. Unfortunately, Gov. Stitt has once again decided to let his personal concerns outweigh what is best for the people he was elected to represent, putting conflict above cooperation,” said Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton. “We hope he will change his stance and respect tribal sovereignty while protecting wildlife, generating revenue and improving the quali-

ty of life for Oklahomans.”

“This decision is tremendously disappointing, not just for Cherokee citizens who are losing a program that Governor Stitt himself knew was a win-win, but for every Oklahoman who has benefited from these agreements and the future generations that would have benefited from federal funding to support wildlife management and conservation,” said Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr. “Unfortunately, this is consistent with what we’ve seen from the governor since the Supreme Court’s McGirt decision. Whenever there is an opportunity to cooperate with tribes – whether on keeping criminals off the streets or on hunting and fishing rights – the governor has instead sought to undermine collaboration and claim McGirt created chaos. I promise the citizens of the Cherokee Nation that I will continue to aggressively defend our treaty rights and sovereignty against these attacks.”

“We believe in the treaty rights of tribal nations,” said Muscogee Nation Principal Chief David Hill. “The state’s decision to end the hunting and fishing Compacts with the Cherokee and Choctaw Nations is disappointing especially in that it only hurts the state of Oklahoma, but the true intent is to demean tribal sovereignty.”

“Chickasaws have long had a close relationship with the land and a strong commitment to responsible stewardship of our natural resources,” said Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby. “Wildlife conservation is an important aspect of our duty to protect and preserve our environment for future generations. Therefore, the Chickasaw Nation is joining the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole Nations in a collaborative effort to protect the hunting and fishing rights of our citizens while also preserving Oklahoma’s abundant wildlife for the benefit of our children and grandchildren.”

“The Treaty of 1866 between the United States and Seminole Nation guaranteed the Seminole possession of their land and protection against enemies in exchange for peace,” said Seminole Nation of Oklahoma Chief Lewis Johnson.

“The Seminole Nation since time immemorial has supported tribal sovereignty and

remains at peace with other Indian tribes and supports our fellow tribes in calling for the methods and tactics of the Governor of the State of Oklahoma to cease the acts of hostility on tribal sovereignty,” said Chief Johnson. “It’s time for the governor to change his approach to tribal rights, and instead focus on doing what’s best for the people of Oklahoma and recognize the value of tribal partnerships. Seminoles will always stand up for tribal rights and sovereignty.”

Cherokee Nation and Choctaw Nation leaders also sent letters to the governor’s office on the decision. Those letters can be viewed on <https://www.oursovereignland.com> and <https://www.oursovereignland.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021.12.13-Chief-Batton-letter-to-Stitt1-2.pdf>.



The Five Tribes recently released a joint statement addressing Governor Stitt’s cancellation of tribal hunting and fishing compacts.

## McCortney and Paxton assume high-level positions in Oklahoma State Senate

**DURANT, Okla.** – Two Choctaw tribal members have assumed high-level appointments in the Oklahoma State Senate.

Senator Greg McCortney (R-Ada) was selected to serve as Majority Floor Leader, making him the second-ranking member of the body.

Senator Lonnie Paxton (R-Tuttle) was selected to serve as Assistant Majority Floor Leader, making him the third-ranking member of the body.

The two appointments were announced by Oklahoma Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat on October 27, 2021.

According to Treat, McCortney, will take over the duties of majority floor leader from Sen. Kim David, (R-Porter).

Additionally, Treat stated that Paxton would join Sen. James Leewright, (R-Bristow,) as an assistant majority floor leader.

The appointments took effect immediately for McCortney and Paxton, making them the highest-ranking Choctaw members in the Oklahoma Senate, according to available records.

“These two Choctaw tribal members exemplify the character and leadership we embrace as a people,” said Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. “Having Choctaw tribal members help lead the state makes us very proud.”

“Throughout his time in the Senate, Greg McCortney has proven himself to be an insightful leader and skilled legislator. I know Greg will serve the Senate and the state of Oklahoma well as majority floor leader,” Treat said.

For more information and to stay up-to-date on what is happening in the Oklahoma State Senate, visit <https://oksenate.gov>.



Left, Senator Greg McCortney (R-Ada) and Right, Senator Lonnie Paxton (R-Tuttle) were both recently appointed to high levels in the Oklahoma State Senate. McCortney and Paxton are both Choctaw tribal members.

## GROWING HOPE PROGRAM

### 2022 APPLICATION FOR TRADITIONAL CHOCTAW SEEDS

Please check the three plants that you would like to receive seed for:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Isito</b><br>Choctaw Sweet Potato Squash | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Tvnishi</b><br>Lambquarter      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Tanchi Tohbi</b><br>Choctaw Flour Corn   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hakchuma</b><br>Perique Tobacco |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Tobi</b><br>Smith Peas                   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Chukfi</b><br>Peas              |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form to:**  
 Growing Hope Project  
 163665 N 4355 RD  
 Tushkahoma, OK 74574

**Contact:**  
 Growing Hope Program Manager  
 918-567-3709 ext. 1016

Seeds from the Growing Hope Project are intended for Choctaw people and family members. They will be given out on a first come, first served basis while supplies last.

**YAKOKE!**

## 2022 LABOR DAY TRIBAL MEMBER RV RESERVATION

ONE REQUEST PER ADDRESS | ELECTRIC AND WATER HOOKUP RESERVATION FORM  
 RESERVATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED PRIOR TO JANUARY 2, 2022

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

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

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



CHOCTAWNATION.COM  
 #CHAHTALABORDAY

# BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

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A year in review: Choctaw Nation celebrates a year of successes in 2021.



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Choctaw pow wow returns for 2021.



### Page 13:

Choctaw Country is the perfect backdrop for your couples getaway.

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

Stay Connected to the Nation  
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