



January 2023 Issue



# A year in review: Choctaw Nation celebrates successes of 2022

By Christian Chaney and Shelia Kirven

As the year 2022 comes to an end, we reflect on our new experiences, changes and growth.

"As 2022 draws to a close, I can't help but smile and think about how the Choctaw Nation has embodied faith, family and culture by giving back to our tribal members," said Chief Gary Batton. "This year was truly a blessing and I'm looking forward to what 2023 will bring."

Here are some of the Choctaw Nation's successes and highlights from the previous year.

## January

The Choctaw Nation held its second jury trial. The domestic violence case trial was the first since the landmark rulings of *McGirt v. Oklahoma* and *Sizemore v. State*, which together affirmed the Choctaw Nation's reservation boundaries.

CNO broke ground on an expansion project at Choctaw Print Services (CPS) in Durant. The new facility will have an additional 15,000 square feet of space, offering more room for services and sales operations.

## February

Choctaw Casino & Resort – Durant was nominated for an Academy of Country Music Award. This year the casino is up for its first "Casino of the Year – Theater" award in the 57th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack selected 12 members to serve on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) inaugural Secretary's Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture. Among the newly appointed committee was Choctaw tribal member Kaben Smallwood. Smallwood was nominated for this role by Chief Gary Batton and was chosen from more than 300 applications nationwide.

## March

Choctaw Casinos & Resorts announced a new way to play your favorite casino games, Choctaw Slots. The launch of Choctaw Slots brought a unique, free-to-play gaming experience available on all mobile application platforms, including Facebook and online at ChoctawSlots.com.

Another win for the Choctaw Nation in March was the opening of

Chop House at the Choctaw Casino & Resort in Grant.

## April

April 1 marked the first anniversary of the *Sizemore* decision, which applied the U.S. Supreme Court's *McGirt* Ruling (2020) to the Choctaw Nation and affirmed the sovereignty of the Five Tribes.

The Choctaw Nation hosted the Second Annual Esports Invitational. The tournament helped facilitate growth of the emerging sport.

On April 5, CNO hosted its third Emerging Aviation Technology Conference. The conference offered opportunities for stakeholders to network and provide input on emerging aviation technology initiatives, including drone operations. The Choctaw Nation is working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to create appropriate regulations to support the unmanned aerial infrastructure necessary to ensure safe operations.

The Housing Authority also began successfully processing online payments.

## May

More than 500 supporters gathered on May 7 at the Choctaw Community Center in Antlers, Oklahoma, to walk in honor of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIW/MMIWG) movement.

Jones Academy held a ceremony to dedicate a building to Robert Smith. Smith retired from the facility after 57 years.

Gilley's at Choctaw Casino & Resort – Durant celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The Choctaw Nation website was completely redesigned to make it easier to use and provide consistent information across all programs and services. The development phase was completed in April, and Phase I launched in May.

## June

On June 14, CNO was recognized for its annual powwow by the Oklahoma Travel Industry Association (OTIA) at the annual RedBud Awards at the Oklahoma History Center.

CNO broke ground on Choctaw Landing, the Nation's newest entertainment and resort development in Hochatown, on June 17. The Nation plans to invest \$238 million into the

project and create 400 new jobs.

Both Forbes magazine and HRDUS, a highly respected online journal for Human Resources Directors in the United States, recognized the Choctaw Nation as an exceptional place to work. CNO received recognition as one of six "Best Places to Work in the United States" as selected by HRDUS.

Choctaw Casinos & Resorts received recognition from Forbes as a "Best Employer for Diversity" in the Travel & Leisure category.

Forbes also recognized the Choctaw Casino and Resorts as one of "America's Best Employers for New Graduates."

## July

On July 23, Choctaw Cultural Center in Durant, Okla., celebrated its first anniversary. Since then, visitors from all over have come to learn about Choctaw history and culture.

The Choctaw Nation Wellness Center in Durant hosted the Elder Chair Volleyball Regional Qualifier Tournament on July 28. Elders from every district of the Choctaw Nation made up the 30 teams participating in the contest.

## August

On Aug. 3, Chief Gary Batton and CNO Executive Director of Advanced Technology Initiatives James Grimsley participated in the White House Summit on Advanced Air Mobility in Washington, D.C. Chief Batton delivered a keynote presentation titled "Emerging Aviation Technology in Local Communities," which was followed by the panel discussion including Grimsley.

Choctaw Casino & Resort – Durant celebrated 35 years of exceeding guests' gaming and resort industry expectations. The property celebrated all month with concerts, \$2 million in cash giveaways, specials throughout the resort, guest appearances at The League sports bar and activities at The District entertainment venue.

## September

In September, the Labor Day Festival returned after a two-year break due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Chief Gary Batton digitally delivered his State of the Nation Address on Sept. 5.

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council unanimously approved a

\$2.1 billion comprehensive expense budget for fiscal year 2023 during its Sept. 10 session. The expense budget is a 15 percent increase over 2022.

The Choctaw Nation Clinic in Broken Bow, Oklahoma, celebrated its 15th anniversary with a ceremony and a new name. The clinic is now known as the Choctaw Nation Ruby Choate Clinic.

## October

CNO hosted its first-ever Native American fashion show on Oct. 6 during the Inter-Tribal Council meeting of the Five Civilized Tribes.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) invited Chief Gary Batton to the university to unveil their new basketball jerseys. The SOSU men's and women's basketball teams will represent Choctaw culture by wearing alternate jerseys with the words "kucha okpulo" displayed on the front of the jersey. On Oct. 27, Choctaw Nation Health Clinic held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the new extension location in the Stigler office building.

Choctaw Casino & Resort Grant hosted the first-ever Taloa Music Festival. Performers included Gary Allen, Elvie Shane, Callista Clark, Frank Ray, Meghan Patrick and Neon Union.

CNO held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new Wellness Center in Wright City.

The Breast Center and Cancer Survivorship Clinic in Tahihina, Oklahoma, received the Joint Commission's Center of Excellence designation.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) appointed a Choctaw tribal member as the first National Tribal Affairs Advocate. Kelbie Kennedy was sworn in on October 11 and formally announced as the first tribal political appointee in FEMA history on October 12.

## November

The 2022 Choctaw Powwow kicked off Native American Heritage Month. Dancers from across the nation gathered to compete. This year's grand prize was the largest in the event's history, almost \$177,000. More than 600 dancers, joined by singers and drummers, participated.

Chief Batton declared a State of Emergency for the CNO Reserva-

tion after an EF4 tornado hit Idabel on Nov. 4.

On Nov. 8, the Choctaw Code Talkers Association dedicated a six-foot black granite monument that tells the story of the Choctaw Code Talkers. This monument is the second to be placed along the portion of State Highway 3 between Antlers and Broken Bow that is designated as the "WWI Choctaw Code Talkers Highway" by the Oklahoma State Legislature.

## December

The Choctaw Nation Head Start centers held a canned food drive and a coat drive. Food and coats collected were given to local families in need, churches and food banks.

Choctaw Wellness centers also held winter apparel and toy drives. New socks, gloves, beanies, scarves, jackets, blankets and toys were collected at Wellness Centers throughout the Choctaw Nation.

Outreach Services distributed holiday food vouchers to low-income elders and families who live within the Reservation boundaries.

## Other Highlights

Throughout the year, the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority received several awards:

- 9 Peer Recognition Tribal Awards
- Merit Tribal Award
- Exceptional Individual Performance Non-clinical Award
- Area Director's Individual Area Impact Award
- Area Director's Individual Excellence in Customer Service Tribal Award
- Area Director's Group Excellence in Customer Service Tribal Award

Additionally, seven more programs added online applications to the Chahta Achvffa Member Portal:

- Emergency Services
- Biskinik Address Updates
- Higher Education
- STAR Program
- Student School and Activity Fund (SSAF)
- College Clothing Allowance
- Bear Harvest Reporting

Stay up-to-date in 2023 by following Choctaw Nation on social media or visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/>.

# Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

## Looking back on 2022

Halito,  
As 2022 draws to an end, I can't help but smile and think about how the Choctaw Nation has embodied faith, family and culture by giving back to our tribal members.

Ensuring that our tribal members have access to quality, safe and affordable housing was a key focus. We completed 60 Lease to Purchase (LEAP) homes; 231 Independent Elder units; 376 affordable rental units; installed 349 storm shelters; and completed 2,120 home repairs.

Our Career Development department awarded more than \$6 million to nearly 6,000 students and more than \$2.8 million in food value was provided to more than 34,400 participants to fight hunger and food security through the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations – co-funded with USDA.

We also impacted the health and wellness of our Tribal members in a great way, as Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority had more than 1 million health encounters and filled more than 1.5 million prescriptions during the year.

We broke ground on Choctaw Landing in Hochatown, where we plan to invest \$238 million on this entertainment and resort development project that will create more than 400 new jobs.

This year was truly a blessing and I'm looking forward to what 2023 will bring. Yakohe and God bless!



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

## New Year's Resolution

A new year brings new resolutions to consider. First, what is a New Year's resolution? This is a tradition in which a person resolves to continue good practices, change an undesired trait or behavior, accomplish a personal goal or otherwise improve their life at the start of a new year. The most common resolutions are concerning health and physical appearance.

Let us consider spiritual resolves as well. Let us consider the Jewish Days of Awe. This is the Jewish New Year called Rosh Hashanah.

Rosh Hashanah means "head of the year" or "first of the year." The final 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) are called the Days of Awe, in which Jews engage in repentance, prayer and acts of charity.

It is written in Leviticus 23: 24-27, "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall you have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work

therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement; it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord."

The first day of the year was a day of repentance from sin. The first ten days of the new year were spent making up differences with their enemies. It was also a time of resting and refreshing spiritually. They brought an offering unto the Lord. They dedicated themselves to helping the poor and needy.

Perhaps if people resolved similar New Year's resolutions like this, life would be more gracious and less stressful.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

## Donate blood this New Year

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

It's National Blood Donor Month, which falls during one of the most difficult times to maintain a sufficient blood supply – the winter months.

It's tough because people donate less blood during the holidays due to busy schedules, illness during cold and flu season, as well as inclement weather, that can prevent volunteering to give blood.

Oklahoma is facing a blood supply shortage and desperately needs donors, according to the Oklahoma Blood Institute (OBI).

The Choctaw Nation is doing its part to assist by hosting the OBI bloodmobile onsite at various

locations throughout the Reservation.

For more information and to schedule your appointment, call (877) 340-8777.

We want to do our part, so let's show the Chahta Spirit and donate blood when we can.

God Bless.

Chohta Foundation scholarships send two Choctaws to Ireland 2022 marks 175th anniversary of gift that made kindred spirits of nations

**DURANT, Okla. (November 30, 2022)** – Two Choctaw students are in the Republic of Ireland this school year working toward master's degrees courtesy of the Choctaw-Ireland Scholarships from the Chahta Foundation. Skylee Glass and Aurianna Joines Palmer are attending their first semester at University College Cork.

The scholarship program was initiated in 2017 by the government of Ireland in recognition of Choctaw communities helping Irish people during the Great Famine, sometimes called the Potato Famine of the mid-nineteenth century. Barely a decade off the Trail of Tears themselves and still

struggling, Choctaws received news of the suffering in Ireland. They collected what they could (equivalent to \$5,000 today) sending it through churches to the Irish people. 2022 marks the 175th anniversary of that life-saving gift. The scholarships include tuition and expenses for a full year of study for two Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma students each year.

Glass, 23, has two sisters and is the daughter of Dion Glass. Growing up in Verden, in southwest Oklahoma, she graduated a state academic champion from Anadarko High School in 2018. In 2022 she graduated cum laude from the University of Central Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, while being active in many different clubs on campus.

Glass said, "I am very thankful to the Choctaw Nation and UCC Cork for giving me this great honor of being the Choctaw-Ireland Scholar."

The daughter of Roger and Dana Joines, Aurianna, 22, grew up in Durant. In 2018 during her senior year at Durant High School, she also attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University as a concurrent student completing 28 credit hours. In addition, she received the Martin Scholarship covering full tuition to attend Oklahoma Baptist University. During college she started her own graphic design and photography business, Foundwell Design, which was awarded an American Advertising Award (ADDY) for her Brand Identity Campaign. In 2022 she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design from Oklahoma Baptist University. At Cork she is majoring in digital arts and humanities.

"I feel incredibly honored and blessed to be a Choctaw-Ireland Scholar. This scholarship has granted me the opportunity to experience a new country and culture in a way I could have never imagined," said Joines Palmer. "I am proud to be a member of the Choctaw Nation and have the opportunity to continue the relationship between the Choctaw and Irish people during my time here."

Students may begin the Choctaw-Ireland Scholarship process by logging on to [chahtafoundation.com/scholarships/choctawirelandsscholarship](http://chahtafoundation.com/scholarships/choctawirelandsscholarship). Forms for other Chahta Foundation scholarships and requirements may be downloaded at [chahtafoundation.com](http://chahtafoundation.com).



Photo Provided

Choctaw-Ireland scholars Skylee Glass and Aurianna Joines-Palmer visited with Chief Batton and Assistant Chief Austin at the Choctaw Nation Tribal Headquarters.



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## Nassaney is “one to watch” in MotoGP Racing

By Christian Toews

In recent years, Jaret Nassaney has raced his way up the MotoAmerica circuit rankings.

With tenth place in 2021 and seventh overall in the 2022 seasons, he hopes to continue this progression next year.

“My goal is to be on the podium next year,” Nassaney said.

This dream is a genuine possibility, according to those around Nassaney. An article published on motoamerica.com praised Nassaney’s results and claimed he is “one to watch” in upcoming seasons.

Nassaney is not only an accomplished professional MotoGP racer, but he is also a proud Choctaw tribal member.

Although he lives in Altus, Oklahoma, his ties to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma run deep.

According to Nassaney, his family has always been aware of their Choctaw heritage



Photos Provided

Pictured are Jaret Nassaney and his wife, Maclay Nassaney.

and clung to many historical documents passed down from generation in his family.

He is also different from most competitors because he keeps a full-time job as a Dedicated Crew Chief for a KC-46 at Altus Airforce Base and finds time to train and race.

According to Nassaney, his interest in MotoGP began in 2013 when his father, George Nassaney, owner of Altus Power Sports, won tickets to one of the largest MotoGP races in the country in Austin, Texas.

“I saw them racing, and I told my dad I wanted to try this,” he said. Although Jaret and his older brother grew up around motorcycles, they mainly rode dirt bikes and enjoyed it, but it never caught his attention like MotoGP.

“I rode dirt bikes all the time growing up with my brother, and I really enjoyed that, but I was never really competitive,” said Nassaney.

The following year Nassaney and his dad converted a Ninja 250 into a road racing bike and began racing.

Nassaney has raced for over eight years and moved up in the Moto America rankings. The size of his engine has also moved up. He said he is now riding a Suzuki GSX-R 750.

According to George Nassaney, his son’s talent was evident in his first race.

“Honestly, after the first time we raced up at a track in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at his first CMRA (Central Motorcycle Road-racing Association) race, he was already doing pretty good for never ever racing one of these bikes. We thought this kid could maybe do something,” he said.

According to his father, the results that Jaret has seen are a product of hard work.



Jaret Nassaney, a Choctaw tribal member and professional MotoGP racer, has been making a name for himself in the MotoAmerica circuit.

“I am very proud of him. He goes to work at 7:30 in the morning, and he goes straight to the gym after work. He trains hard, and he’s married; he has a lot going on,” said George.

Nassaney works with a motorcycle coach and works hard to dial in his riding performance on top of all the other training he does.

While MotoGP comes with many challenges and risks, Nassaney has already overcome one of the biggest challenges of his life.

While on the way back from a trip to Austria when he was 14, he became very sick.

After extensive testing, doctors determined he had contracted a rare disease called Acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM).

ADEM is an autoimmune condition that often occurs after a child has an infection, such as a cold. The immune system protects the body from invaders, like bacteria and viruses. Autoimmune diseases confuse

the body’s immune system. Instead of fighting against bacteria or viruses, it attacks healthy cells and tissues.

According to his father, Jaret fought for his life for about six months.

“He almost passed away at 14. So, he has had a lot of cards dealt to him at a young age,” he said.

His struggle with ADEM makes his success in racing even more meaningful for their entire family.

Jaret Nassaney lives in Altus with his wife and races for Altus Motorsport’s team.

The team is sponsored by Altus Motorsports, FLY Racing, WPS, Suzuki Motor Corporation, Moto-D Racing, Bonamici, Hot Bodies Racing, M4 Exhausts, Vortex EK, Motion Pro, Barnett, Maxima Racing Oils, SBS Brakes, Galfer USA, Ohlins, K-Tech, RS Taichi, Arai, Law Tigers Oklahoma and Altus Factory Racing.

To follow Nassaney in the 2023 season, which starts in April, you can follow him on social media or look for news and updates on MotoAmerica’s website.

## Wilson elected as history’s first Indigenous Methodist bishop

By Chris Jennings

The first Indigenous bishop in the history of the United Methodist church will become the episcopal leader of the Great Plains Conference on January 1, 2023.

Choctaw tribal member, Bishop David Wilson, will take over for Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr., who was assigned to the Central Texas Conference.

Wilson, 59, has been the assistant to the bishop for the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC) since 2021. Before that, he served 19 years as a conference superintendent for the OIMC.

The third time was a charm for Wilson, who was up for the position of bishop twice before. Once in 2012 and again in 2016.

“I was quite elated and happy to be elected as the bishop,” said Wilson.

Wilson is excited about what he calls a daunting task.

According to Wilson, being the “first” at anything is not new for Indigenous people.

“Often, your race is judged upon one person and what he or she does or does not do. I meet a lot of people who are the first Native persons across the country to do this and do that, and it’s exciting. But, we also realize the responsibility that comes with that,” he said.

Wilson, the grandson of WW1 Choctaw Code Talker Calvin Wilson, grew up in Muskogee, Oklahoma, attending Fife United Methodist Church. He was involved with the church at a young age, teaching Sunday school.

Wilson has continued to work with young people ever since and says that helping to shape their lives is important to him.

“It’s the same with campus ministry; that’s probably one of my finest appointments, working with young college students,” said Wilson.

According to Wilson, he is ready for this next chapter of his life.

“What I look forward to the most is getting to know the people in the Great Plains Conference, get to know the pastors and lay people and the work that they’re doing,” said Wilson. “What I hope is just to develop some relationships. How can we help each other, learn from each other and make our communities better places.”

Wilson says the Great Plains Conference

is known for its work on social justice issues and that he looks forward to that. He also hopes to expand on those issues to help understand some of the things that Native people deal with daily.

One of the first things Wilson says he plans to do is learn more about some of the cultures and traditions of the tribes from his new area.

“I have friends and colleagues who belong to those tribes. I’ll visit with them and talk with them and learn about those tribes and their history,” said Wilson.

At the same time, he hopes to pass on what he’s learned to non-Indigenous people about who their local tribes are, their history and culture. All these things are essential to help them understand the diversity of their communities.

“That’s what I’ve done a lot here at home and around Oklahoma the last 20 years, to help educate non-Native people about who we are, our culture, life in the church and outside the church. I always enjoy doing that,” Wilson said.

He hopes to foster new relationships by engaging these churches in his new area.

“I hope to develop some relationships that say, how can we help each other and learn from each other to make our communities better places,” Wilson said.

According to Wilson, he wants to work with these churches to continue to figure out how to serve the community.

“So many of our churches are inward. We come to worship, and we only care about who comes, yet we need to realize we have communities that are in need,” said Wilson. “Many issues like poverty, social justice, high substance abuse and health care issues. All these things affect our communities, and there’s so much that our local churches can do to help others.”

Wilson says he can use some of what he sees as Native traditions to help teach non-Indigenous people. One of these traditions is a better understanding of the community and how decisions can affect the whole community, not just one person.

“You see the Choctaw Nation doing that every day; relationships are so important with not just blood relatives, but with others [in the community], and that’s important,” Wilson said.

Wilson shares a story that a Kiowa elder, his mentor, told him.



Photos Provided

The Rev. David Wilson, assistant to the bishop of the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, was recently elected as bishop in The United Methodist Church’s South Central Jurisdictional Conference, becoming the denomination’s first Native American bishop.

“When the missionaries had first come in among our people, they said, ‘tell us about this Jesus. The missionaries said Christianity is where you take care of each other. You love everybody, and you reach out and help people.’ And they said, ‘we already do that.’”

Because the tradition of helping and caring for others already existed among the tribes, it was easy for some to embrace Christianity. However, aspects of it made it hard.

According to Wilson, boarding schools and other horrific things that happened to Indigenous people specifically made it hard for some to accept Christianity.

“It was how it was lived out that gives Christianity a bad name among many of our Indigenous peoples,” said Wilson.

The church has changed since then and continues to evolve as more and more young people get involved or return to the church bringing a more inclusive view.

Being kind and more inclusive and loving of other cultures and traditions isn’t just an idea for Wilson; it’s something he’s called to do by the bible. Wilson’s favorite bible verse is Micah 6:8, “What does the

Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

According to Wilson, that’s been his mantra.

“I hope I’ve served people to fight for justice, to love people everywhere I go, and just to be humble about my life and the work that I get to do,” said Wilson.

He’s also looking forward to showing that he is not defined by his lifelong work with Indigenous people but by using Native American culture and the diversity of his new conference better to teach a message of justice, kindness and love.

Wilson is a 1990 graduate of Oklahoma City University with a B.A. in Mass Communications. He received his Master of Divinity from Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1994. He was the first clergyperson from OIMC to graduate from Phillips Theological Seminary. Wilson was named the Phillips Distinguished Alumni for 2007. He received an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters from Bacone College in 2009 and the Excellence in Teaching Award for Adjunct Faculty at OCU in 2012.

## Tribal members encouraged to check identification card expiration dates

By Christian Chaney

Tribal Membership ID cards will begin expiring in Jan. 2023.

The expiration date on tribal membership cards are for ID purposes only.

An expired card does not impact tribal membership status. However, once the card expires, it can no longer be used as a form of ID.

Tribal Membership ID cards are federally recognized identification. This means the photo, security features and ID expiration date on your Tribal Membership Identification Card are within federal compliance to meet security standards as an official ID.

The Tribal Membership ID cards are considered an all-in-one card and include the individual’s tribal membership information, CDIB and photo for identification purposes.

According to the Choctaw Nation

Tribal Membership Department, owning a Tribal Membership ID card is vital to exercising tribal sovereignty.

To renew your Tribal Membership ID card, tribal members must complete an application and submit a valid photo identification and passport-style photo.

Valid photo identification includes, but is not limited to, a non-expired Tribal Membership Identification card, state-issued identification card, state-issued Driver’s License, Military ID, student/school ID, passport and SmileSafe photo card.

Tribal members are welcome to renew their cards in person in the Membership Department at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters.

For questions regarding your Tribal Membership ID card, please contact the Tribal Membership Department at 580-634-0654.

## TRIBAL CARD FOR ID USE EXPIRING SOON

PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHOCTAW TRIBAL MEMBERSHIP IDENTIFICATION CARD FOR ITS EXPIRATION DATE.

**Your status as a Choctaw tribal member will not expire; however, the photo ID will need to be updated before its expiration to be utilized as identification.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you have not updated your old Tribal Membership card to the all-in-one identification card, it is suggested to protect your social security number.

For more information, forms and a list of frequently asked questions, visit [www.choctawnation.com/services/tribal-membership](http://www.choctawnation.com/services/tribal-membership)

Point your phone camera at the QR code and tap the pop up to learn more!

Choctaw Nation Member Services



Eddie Bohanan

## District 3

Halito District 3, Smithville and Talihina Centers finished the holiday season strong with a string of events and celebrations. The Halloween parties, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and the Kids' Christmas parties were celebrations of good food, fellowship, lots of fun, great gifts and door prizes.

Veteran Willard Johnson of Talihina was recognized as Veteran of the Month at the December regular session of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council. Additionally, tribal member Lodean Starr of Talihina was honored as First Speaker.

Congratulations to Ricky Dearmore of Smithville for being selected for Outstanding Choctaw Elder of the year. I want to give a big "Yakoke" to the Choctaw Nation

Associates, community center staff and volunteers who worked hard to make each of these events a success.

Yakoke,  
Councilman Eddie Bohanan

## Starr is First Language Speaker of the Month

First language speaker, Lodine Starr from District 3, was honored at the December 10 Tribal Council meeting as the First Language Speaker of the month.

Council Member Eddie Bohanan, District 3 royalty, and a host of friends and family were in attendance to support Starr for her commitment to sustaining the Choctaw Language.



## Willard Johnson is Veteran of the Month

Willard Johnson, from Talihina, Oklahoma (District 3), is the Choctaw Nation Veteran of the Month.

Johnson attended Smithville Public Schools, graduating in 1976. He went on to OSU Okmulgee where he attended for two years and then entered the workforce.

He shipped off to basic training and AIT in Fort Benning, Georgia, where his military occupation specialty was as Infantryman. After rigorous training, PFC Johnson was ordered to his first duty station immediately with first battalion, seventh infantry (1/7) at Fort Ord, Calif., where he served two years in a special cohort battalion, continually working with month long field operations and workup for deployments. He was then given orders to Camp Graves, Korea where he served as part of First Battalion, ninth infantry (1/9). His duties included patrolling the Demilitarized Military Zone, the 38th parallel. His duties were to keep people from crossing over and detain ones who were caught. He served there from 1983 to 1984 and then returned home to Talihina.

He worked in Talihina and eventually returned to the Army in 1986



in the National Guard as an infantry soldier. He went on to EMT school and eventually became an X-ray technician. SPC Johnson was given an honorable discharge in 1994 and stayed in the medical field for 33 years until his retirement in 2020.

The Choctaw Nation 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.

## Top ten museum status awarded to the Choctaw Cultural Center

**DURANT, Okla. (December 5, 2022)** – The Choctaw Cultural Center has been named a Top Ten Model Museum and cultural center staff members were on hand to accept the award at the 2022 International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums recently in Temecula, Calif.

The centers and museums selected served as models for the Culture Builds Communities Project sponsored by the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums.

"The Choctaw Cultural Center is grateful to accept the award as a Top Ten Model Museum," said Seth Fairchild, executive director of Cultural Services for the Choctaw Nation. "Our Center was created to share the Chahta Nowvt Aya, the Choctaw Journey, and to honor our culture and people. For it to receive such a prestigious award is a testament to that vision and



Photo Provided by the Choctaw Cultural Center

Choctaw Cultural Center staff accepts Top Ten Model Museum honors at the recent 2022 International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums in California.

to everyone who worked on its development."

Selected cultural center staff also served as co-presenters on conference panels and provided a virtual tour of the Choctaw facility to conference attendees. The virtual tour was accompanied by a presentation highlighting the process and design decisions made by planners.

The cultural center was named as the award re-

ipient in 2019, but COVID delayed the center opening and the conference. The Choctaw Cultural Center, a 101,000 square-foot facility on 100 acres in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Reservation, opened July 23, 2021.

The Choctaw Cultural Center is located at 1919 Hina Hanta Way, Durant. For information: 833-708-9582 or choctawcultural-center.com.



Jess Henry

## District 4

Halito, chim achukma?

Happy New Year from District 4. I hope all is well with you and your family. I trust everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

We had a busy end of the year! We had several children's events in the last few months. Both Poteau and Spiro Community Centers had Halloween and Christmas events. The excitement of the children playing games, getting candy, visiting with Santa and receiving a toy was a time to remember. Yakoke to the staff and volunteers for making the events a success! The YAB students and District 4 Princesses are always eager to serve!

I was happy to work with the Town of LeFlore and Mayor Stites in getting playground equipment for the town park. I know the kids in the area will have fun with the new equipment. It makes me proud when I see all the Choctaw Nation does for our children.

Our Seniors have been staying busy. In October, we honored outstanding Choctaw elders in Durant. District 4 nominees were Lucretia McAfee and Gregory Nichols from Poteau Community Center and from Spiro Community Center Donna Zimmerman and Bobby Whiteaker. Poteau Seniors were "On The Road Again" with a trip to the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. They served Indian Tacos to the veterans and community after the Veterans Day parade. Spiro Seniors have taken trips to the Culture Center, Branson, and Honor Heights to see the Christmas lights.

Some exciting news... 10 Affordable Rental Homes are nearing completion. Ten Spiro families will be moving into a new home soon after the start of the new year!

We have two Blood Drives coming up in District 4. January 10, 1:30 p.m. at Rubin White Health Clinic in Poteau and January 26, 7:15 a.m. at the Choctaw Casino and Resort in Pocola.

I am looking forward to 2023 and all the opportunities it brings.



Photos Provided

Above: District 4 Council Member Jess Henry presents the town of LeFlore with a check for new playground equipment for LeFlore Park.

Left: Pictured is construction on the new affordable rental homes in District 4.



## CNO awards \$5,000 forgivable loan to Mings Trucking

**Talihina, Okla. (November 15, 2022)** – On October 24, Mings Trucking, in Talihina was awarded a \$5,000 Small Business Forgivable Loan from Choctaw Nation Small Business Development program and the Choctaw Development Fund.

Owned and operated by Kelly and Bryan Mings, Mings Trucking offers land renovation services including excavation, pond construction, house pads, land clearing and landscaping in Talihina, Oklahoma, and the surrounding area. With over a decade of experience in the renovation business, Mings Trucking is dedicated to offering excellent service for its customers.

Funds received from the Choctaw Nation will be used to purchase additional tree removal equipment to provide more services to their customers.

"Mings Trucking takes pride in our work. We work efficiently, expediting our projects and completing them on or before schedule, saving everyone money and time," said Kelly Mings, owner of Mings Trucking. "This donation is greatly appreciated as it will allow us to continue providing stellar customer service



Photo Provided

From left to right: Kelly Mings, Owner of Mings Trucking and Christian Hampton, Choctaw Nation Small Business Advisor.

by bringing our own equipment, operator skills and extensive construction experience to your next project."

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

For more information on Mings Trucking contact, (918) 649-3282.

# COLLEGE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

**APPLICATION DATES:**  
JANUARY 2, 2023 - MARCH 7, 2023

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

For more information, please visit:

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

**Choctaw Nation** Education Services

# CHILLY?

WARM UP AT THE  
CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

SCAN FOR MORE  
INFORMATION

CHOCTAW  
CULTURAL CENTER


NOTES

**BIA, Talihina Agency Has New Location**

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Talihina Agency is now located at the Choctaw Nation Tribal Headquarters in Durant, Oklahoma.  
 Contact Benjamin Daniels, Superintendent of the Talihina Agency, at (918) 781-4622 (Office) or (918) 616-8241 (Cell) or Benjamin.L.Daniels@bia.gov.  
 The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Talihina Agency proudly services the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Please visit <https://www.choctawnation.com> for further information regarding the latest programs, services, events, facilities, history and culture offered by the Nation.

**Mailing Address:**  
 Talihina Agency  
 Bureau of Indian Affairs  
 P.O. Box 1430  
 Durant, OK, 74702

**Physical Address:**  
 Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma C/O BIA-Talihina Agency  
 1802 Chukka Hina  
 Durant, OK, 74701




**WAR 1950 - 1955**

**CHOCTAW VETERAN ADVOCACY PROGRAM**

Are You a Choctaw Veteran?

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



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

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

**Biskinik Announcement Guidelines**

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above.  
 Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.  
 News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows.  
 We welcome all letters from Choctaw tribal members. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all letters our readers send. Letters chosen for publication must be under 150 words. We require full contact information. Only the writer's full name and city will be published.  
 All events sent to the Biskinik will run the month of the event or the month prior to the event if the event falls on the first of the month.  
**Mail to: Biskinik**  
**P.O. Box 1210**  
**Durant, OK 74702**  
**or email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)**

*Gary Batton*  
 Chief

*Jack Austin Jr.*  
 Assistant Chief

The Official Monthly Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
**Shauna Williams, Executive Director**  
**Kristina Humenesky, Senior Director**  
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**Kendra Wall, Content Development Manager**  
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[www.ChoctawNation.com](http://www.ChoctawNation.com)  
 email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

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

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

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

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

Montgomery Restaurant Group would like to express appreciation for CNO Retail & Small Business Development Team's commitment to our success. Your expertise and guidance have been invaluable, and our organization wouldn't be what it is today without you. We are deeply grateful for your support through the years and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Thank you,  
 Thomas & Leigh Anne Montgomery  
 Durant, Oklahoma  
 Krush'd Vitality Kitchen Juices, Smoothies, & More  
 Main Street Barbecue & Catering  
 Roadhouse Bar & Grill  
 Garnish Provisions Catering Co.  
 Gigi's Made in Oklahoma



**TASTE THE TRADITION**

Located in the Choctaw Cultural Center

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

**CHAMPULI CAFE**



**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL**  
**REGULAR SESSION AGENDA**  
 December 10, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
3. ROLL CALL
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - a. Regular Session November 12, 2022
5. WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
  - a. Veteran of the Month, District #3 – Willard Johnson
  - b. First Choctaw Language Speaker, District #3 – Lodine Star
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
  - a. Judith Patterson – Individual Speaker – Peter Conser House
7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
8. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Amend CB-11-23, a Council Bill to Approve Application for the 2022 United States Department of Agriculture Rural eConnectivity (Reconnect) Program. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
  - b. Approve an Electric Line Easement in Favor of Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company, on Choctaw Nation Fee Land in Bryan County, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
  - c. Approve a Substation and Access Road Right of Way in Favor of Wester Farmers Electric Cooperative, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in McCurtain County, Oklahoma. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
  - d. Approve Oil and Gas Lease No. 4200357192 in Favor of Arkoma Woodford Partners, LLC, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - e. Approve Oil and Gas Lease No. 4200357195 in Favor of Arkoma Woodford Partners, LLC, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - f. Approve Oil and Gas Lease No. 4200357049 in Favor of WSGP Gas Producing, LLC, on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Atoka County, Oklahoma. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - g. Resolution Supporting the Nomination of Rachel Harrison to Serve on the Bureau of Indian Education Advisory Board for Exceptional Children. Vote Counts: YEAs - 11; 1 Abstain; Vote Result: Passed
  - h. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - i. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - j. Approve Funding for Renovations at Choctaw Village Shopping Center in Idabel, Oklahoma. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - k. Approve Additional Funding of a Meat Processing Facility to be located near Octavia, Oklahoma
  - l. Enact the Choctaw Nation Unlawful Entry/Presence Act. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - m. Rescind Council Bill CB-033-89 Relating to Community Centers. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - n. Grant a Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity in Favor of BOKF, NA in Connection with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Supplemental Retirement Income Plan and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Executive Deferred Compensation Plan. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
  - o. Approve and Adopt Rules for Appeals to the Constitutional Court of the Choctaw Nation. YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed.
9. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
10. OLD BUSINESS
11. ADJOURNMENT
12. CLOSING PRAYER

**JUROR SUMMONS**

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

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

January 6	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
January 6	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
January 10	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
January 11	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
January 13	Crowder	By Appointment
January 17	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
January 18	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
January 18	Stigler	By Appointment
January 20	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
January 20	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
January 24	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
January 25	Poteal	10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
January 27	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
January 31	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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



**HONOR GUARD**  
 POSITIONS AVAILABLE

APPLY BY CONTACTING: 580-642-8451  
[VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

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

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

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


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

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association Loan  
 To Be Eligible to Apply:  
 - Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation  
 - Must possess a CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund  
 To Be Eligible to Apply:  
 - Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation  
 - Must possess a CDIB card from the Choctaw Nation

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

**McAlester Community Center**  
 January 27, 2023  
 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.



**Chahta Anumpa Aikhvna**  
**January Language Lesson**

**Kuchi / Kucha**

kuchi – take out of something, ex. purse, pocket. To remove something/someone

Isht tiwa ya kuchi li tuk	I took out the keys.
Vm iskvli kuchi la chi.	I'm taking out my money
Ofi ya kuchi.	Let the dog out.
Chishno akosh pishokchi ish kuchi tuk o?	Are you the one who took the milk out
Ohoyo ma okla kuchi bvna tuk.	They wanted to remove that woman
Im ohoyo ya kuchi tuk.	He kicked his wife out. Or He removed his wife.

kucha – change 'i' to 'a' for future tense.

Ampo aiachefa ya isht impa ish kucha chike.	You take the spoons out of the dishwasher.
Vlla yvt i bahta ma im isht washoha kucha chi.	The child will take his toys out of his bag.
Ilefoka shila ya ashilili ma ish kuchi hinla ho?	Would you take the dry clothes out of the dryer?
Iskvli katohmi ish kucha chi?	How much money will you take out?
Alikchi yvt sv noti bash-lit kucha chi.	The doctor will extract my tooth.

Pronunciation: kuchi - koht-chi - The 't' is slightly pronounced very quickly.  
 Pronunciation: kucha – koht-cha - The 't' is slightly pronounced very quickly.

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

## Woodruff celebrates 70 years

Susie Woodruff (Cummins) will celebrate her 70th birthday in January. She also celebrated in May this year 25 years of marriage to her husband, Henry.

## Wilson earns master's from OU

Christopher Wilson received his master's degree in History in May from The University of Oklahoma. His thesis, titled "Republic on the Red River," covered the period from the Trail of Tears to the Civil War and documented the Choctaw transformation from a pre-colonial society to a modern republic. While the Tribe was in a time of political change, Wilson demonstrates how they retained their cultural identity: "History shows us that cultures and people adapt for their own survival, at times willingly, and others under threat of hostility: this does not mean they lose the inherent traits that make them who they are. The Choctaw people are one of the greatest examples of this principle in the modern era."



Wilson is grateful to God for the strength to endure the long hours of dust-filled microfilm and migraines and to his family for always supporting him with care packages from home.

He is also appreciative of the Choctaw Nation's Higher Education Program, which assisted him in his academic journey. Wilson will begin teaching History as an adjunct professor at Concordia University Irvine in January 2023.

## Allen and the Texas Canes take State

Choctaw Nation member Jaxon (AJax) Allen and his Texas Canes SW Futures 9U took home the gold rings and a nice trophy on Nov. 6, 2022, at the Perfect Game 9U (Majors) Fall Texas State Championships. Jaxon is always excited to represent his nation and family with his bat and his glove. The boys went 4 for 5 winning four in a row scoring more than 30 runs, and stealing more than 50 bases on their way to winning the championship. AJax entered the first game from the bullpen, pitching to close out the game. Over the weekend, he hit a Triple with an RBI, drove in runs on multiple doubles and laid down some filthy bunts to move his team forward, but most of all AJax enjoyed showing his courage and speed stealing bases, including home plate.



Jaxon is making a habit of playing in big games and doing his part to win. He has been to the 2022 Baseball Youth World Series and the 2022 Baseball Youth All-American Games and will be playing in the Baseball Youth Elite All-American Games over the 22-23 New Year Holiday.

## Bell wins at AOK State Championship

Hattie Malone Bell is the 9-year-old daughter of Chris Samarra Bell. She is a fourth grader at Marietta Elementary School. Hattie started Taekwondo at the age of 7 and is a part of the Southern Oklahoma Martial Arts school in Ardmore, Oklahoma, under the instruction of Mr. Adolfo Orellana.



Hattie is ranked: #2 forms (intermediate), #4 sparring (intermediate), #6 traditional forms (intermediate), #1 forms (advanced), #1 traditional forms (advanced), #1 special weapons (advanced) and #1 sparring (advanced).

Hattie Bell competed in the 2022 AOK Texas State Championship tournament with other competitors from the northern and southern regions of Texas. She received a silver medal for sparring, one bronze for traditional forms, one bronze for open forms and one bronze for specialty weapons. In addition, she received the Linda Denley award for her 2022 tournament achievements.

Since starting Taekwondo, Hattie has received numerous awards, including the 2020 best newcomer of the year, 2021 Best Kicks, Best Blocks, Best Katas, Most Dedicated and Student of the Year at her gym. She was also the 2022 Grand Champion at the Wild Wild West Karate Tournament in Abeline, Texas.

Hattie is currently a 3rd gup brown belt and will soon test for her 2nd gup red belt. She is an honor roll student, a member of First Baptist Church of Lone Grove, and her local 4H club. Hattie is a member of the Choctaw Nation and is also Creek and Seminole.

## Melton turns five

Jaxon Melton celebrated his 5th birthday on Jan. 18.

Jaxon is the son of Jeremy and Jakki Melton, the grandson of David and Rhonda Mize and the great-grandson of Choctaw Elder Mary Lou Phillips.

Jaxon attends pre-k at Stratford Elementary School and loves dinosaurs and animals of all kinds. He is smart, funny, energetic and imaginative.

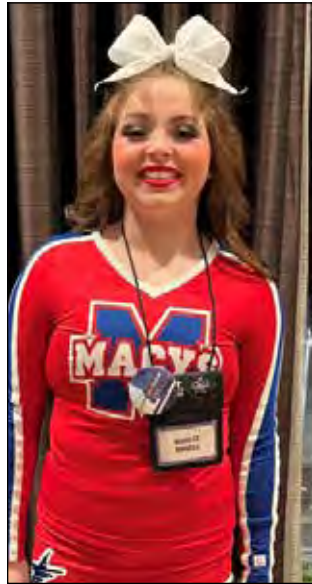
"Mommy and Daddy love you more than words can express Jaxon! Happy Birthday!"



## Rodes cheers in Macy's Parade

Marlee Rhodes, Choctaw, cheered in the 96th Annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City.

Marlee is an 8th grade student at Ada Jr. High and cheers for Oklahoma Legends Cheerleading in Ada, Oklahoma. She was selected and joined cheerleaders from across the United States to represent the Macy's Cheerleaders and Spirit of America Productions.



## Koda Kai Smith

Koda Kai Smith was born Oct. 9, 2022, in McKinney Medical Hospital, weighing 7 lbs and 7 oz.

Koda was welcomed into the world by parents Cody and Katherine; sisters Arianna and Jasmine; grandparents Steve and Brenda Smith of Idabel, Oklahoma, Neil and Patricia Harney of Princeton, Oklahoma and great-grandparents Adeline Neil of Princeton and Glenda Ward of Louisiana.



## Tribal member conducts Roseville Rotary club Veterans Day program

The Rotary Club of Roseville, California, has held a Veterans Day program each year since the end of World War II.

For the last 13 years, the Veterans Day program has been conducted by Choctaw Tribal member John C. Smith, a retired chief of police and veteran of the US Marine Corps.

John is the son of tribal member J.W. Smith and grandson of Ruby G. Crawford, both of Bennington, Oklahoma.

As a child, John lived in Boswell, Oklahoma, and on a Choctaw land grant that had been given to Ruby's stepfather Joe Durant.

John says he wants to honor the veterans in Rotary like the Choctaws honor their veterans, including his two brothers, Lewis and Ralph Smith.

John frequently wears a jacket with the Choctaw seal to meetings which has promoted conversations about Choctaws.

Pictured are John Smith with Roseville Rotary Club President, Michele Wilkerson.



## Winters competes in Junior NFR

Jaedyn Winters is a member of the Choctaw Nation and a freshman at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, where he competes as a steer wrestler on the rodeo team.

Winters competed in Las Vegas at the Junior National Finals Rodeo Dec. 6 through 10.

This will be his second and last year of the Ote Berry Junior Steer Wrestling World Championship Tour. Jaedyn finished the regular season in third place out of over 100 competitors. His accomplishments include the 2020 SCYRA Champion Chute Dogger,

2021 OHSRA Top 15 Steer Wrestler, 2021 OBJSWWC Top 25 qualifier 2021 "Live Like Max" award recipient, 2022 2x- Hooley Junior Patriot Finals qualifier, 2022 WCRA Division Youth Top 2, 2022 WCRA Rodeo Corpus Christi qualifier, 2022 OHSRA Reserve Champion Steer Wrestler, 2022 NHSRA Finals qualifier and 2022 OBJSWWC Top 3 qualifier.



## Glidewell selected as Special Judge

Jason Glidewell was recently selected as Special Judge for the Oklahoma County District Court. Appointed by the 14 District Judges of Oklahoma County, Glidewell will preside over felony preliminary hearings for crimes charged there. With a population of 811,824 people, Oklahoma County is the most populous jurisdiction in the state.

Glidewell currently serves as a Municipal Judge for Oklahoma City. Prior to that appointment, he maintained a private law practice in Anadarko and was a Chief Magistrate for the Court of Indian Offenses and served as an Assistant Attorney General for Oklahoma and an Assistant District Attorney for Caddo and Grady Counties. He also serves as an Adjunct Professor for the University of Oklahoma, teaching American Judicial Processes and Comparative Justice Systems.

Glidewell is a graduate of the Anadarko High School and earned both a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Oklahoma.

Glidewell is the son of Jim and Carolyn Glidewell of Anadarko and a member of the Choctaw Nation. He will assume his new duties on January 9, 2023.



## Sellers turns 50

Colonel Kevin Sellers, USAF (Ret.), of Grapevine, Texas, turned 50 years old on December 15, 2022.

A native of Oklahoma City, he graduated from Westmoore High School and the U.S. Air Force Academy. Kevin served on active duty for 25 years before retiring in 2020. He currently is the Managing Director and Co-Owner of Excel Medical Staffing, a nationwide travel clinician business.



## Stapelton earns masters from Trinity University in Dublin

Halley Stapelton graduated from Trinity University in Dublin, Ireland, with a Master of Science in nursing and midwifery with a specialization in aging health and well-being for intellectual disabilities.

Part of the reason she chose to travel to Ireland and reside there for over a year was the rich history that the Choctaws share with the Irish. With a relationship built upon support, hope and goodwill, she was determined to reconnect with the Irish culture with such deep seeded roots in Choctaw culture.

"We could not be prouder of Halley and hope that this news is shared with the other members of the Choctaw Nation, hopefully inspiring others to not only reach for higher levels of education, but to also explore and celebrate our history," said Halley's sister Sara Stapleton Barrera.



## SUMMER 2023 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



The Summer 2023 program provides opportunities for Choctaw students from area colleges to gain career fundamentals at Choctaw Nation offices throughout the Choctaw Nation 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. Choctaw Nation 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  
**CAREERS.CHOCTAWNATION.COM**

Choctaw Nation Human Resources

## HIGHER EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY ALLOWANCE



**APPLY NOW!**

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

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

Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program

### Thompson interns for CNHSA

Gunnar Thompson of Poteau, Oklahoma, is a senior health and human performance (H&HP) major at Emporia State University (ESU) in Emporia, Kansas.

After earning his Bachelor's degree at ESU, this highly motivated young man aims to achieve a Doctorate in physical therapy. Gunnar hopes to open his own physical therapy (PT) clinic that focuses on helping high school and collegiate athletes recover correctly.

Gunnar is on his way to this goal, having just completed his 50-hour practicum assisting physical therapists at the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

"This was one of the best experiences of my life," said Gunnar. "I got to use many of the skills I've learned through my H&HP courses at ESU! I spent time getting hands-on experience with diverse populations, including pediatrics, geriatrics, middle-aged individuals and athletes."

According to Gunnar, he was able to learn the ins and outs of PT in a clinical setting. He had the opportunity to reconstruct patient intake forms for aquatic and land therapies, work in aquatic therapy and assist with wound care. The Choctaw PT personnel worked hard to give Gunnar the most valuable experience possible.

Gunnar will do part of his hours within Choctaw Nation for his summer internship. He has also secured a position at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, working with their athletes on recovery. He is also working to secure a recovery-based internship with the Texas Rangers.



### Speers is cycling coach of the year

Tribal member, Andrew Speers of Evergreen, Colorado, was honored as the Colorado High School Cycling League's Coach of the Year.

The Colorado League hosts 2000+ racers from 180 high schools. Andrew has coached the Evergreen High School Mountain Bike team for 13 years, the last two as head coach.

The team consists of 70 students and over 20 assistant coaches. This year, under Coach Speers' direction, the team has added mountain bike trails on the campus of their high school, created a film festival to fund raise for the purchase of a new trailer for the team and led the team to a 1st place finish, in its region and a 4th place overall finish at the State Race in 2022, the best finish in the school's history.



### Mays releases new book

Tribal member, B.V. Mays releases New Thriller, CONTRACTOR II – Operation Alpha Count.

The book follows the continuing adventures of CIA contractor Andrew Gold in Russia and Eastern Europe (Sequel to CONTRACTOR). Find out more at <https://www.amazon.com/Contractor-B-V-Mays/dp/1800740107>.

LONDON, UK – December 2022: CONTRACTOR II – Operation Alpha Count. B.V. Mays' stories are based on two decades of living and working in Eastern Europe. A senior executive for several multinationals while carrying out contract work out of the U.S. Embassy in Poland, he now lives in Spokane, Washington and divides his time between Europe and the United States. Check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/bvmaysbooks>.

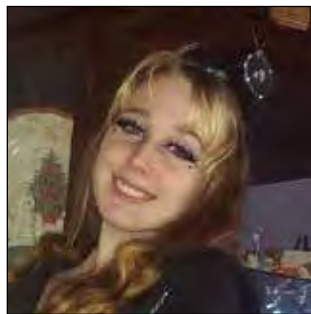
Operation Alpha Count, a joint operation between the CIA and Mossad, recruits mercenaries and terrorists to smuggle nuclear weapons out of Russia into the Middle East. Their covert operations soon put them on the radar of the ATG, a talented team of CIA contractors led by Andy Gold, who prove to be an unexpected threat to the plot's success. Will Andy and his team survive the approaching storm of espionage, murder, and corruption, or will they be just more casualties of this deadly secret war? Find out more at <https://www.amazon.com/Contractor-II-Operation-Alpha-Count/dp/1800746741>.



### Fuller turns 18

Bianca Fuller of Edgewood, Texas, turned 18 on Dec 17, 2022. She will graduate in May 2023.

"Today is a super special milestone; seeing you grow up to become the smart, beautiful, and wonderful woman that you are today fills our heart with so much pride. We wish only the very best for you as you embark on your journey of adulthood. We are so proud of the beautiful, kind and loving young lady you are. Always follow your dreams and never give up on what you believe in. You are the kindest girl we know with the sweetest heart of all. We love you to the Moon and Back." – Dad and Princess (Nana)



### James has prolific wrestling career

David James, a Choctaw tribal member, was a two-time NAIA national champion, three-time finalist and the University of Central Oklahoma's first four-time All-American.

Since he first stepped on the mat as a freshman in 1976, David James has been synonymous with wrestling at the University of Central Oklahoma. James compiled an impressive 116-16 record with the Bronchos, good enough to still rank third in career winning percentages at the school with 88 percent and 11th on the career win list.

He coached his alma mater from 1982-2016, leading the University of Central Oklahoma Bronchos to 12 national championships - second-most among all college coaches at any level - and racking up a 396-144-5 dual record during an amazing 34-year career.

UCO captured NAIA national titles in 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1989 and NCAA Division II crowns in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2002, 2003 and 2007, while David was named National Coach of the Year seven times.

He coached 48 individual national champions and 182 All-Americans at UCO while guiding the Bronchos to 19 regional titles and 24 top-four national tournament finishes, including five runner-up showings.

David received the Lifetime Service to Wrestling award from our Oklahoma Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2006 and is also a member of the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame, the NAIA Hall of Fame, the UCO Athletic Hall of Fame, the NCAA Division II Wrestling Hall of Fame and the Del City (Oklahoma) High School Hall of Fame.

To learn more about James' career and others in the National, visit <https://nwhof.org/>.



### Choctaw Casinos & Resorts returns as presenting sponsor for the second annual Invited Celebrity Classic

IRVING, Texas (December 2, 2022) – Officials at the Invited Celebrity Classic today announced that Choctaw Casinos & Resorts will return as presenting sponsor of the tournament at Las Colinas Country Club on April 21-23, 2023. The Invited Celebrity Classic presented by Choctaw Casinos & Resorts returns with a star-studded field of celebrity golfers competing alongside top PGA TOUR Champions players and support of partners like Choctaw Casinos & Resorts will help create an incredible atmosphere while ultimately generating impact back to the greater Dallas-Ft. Worth community through economic impact and charitable donations.

"We are building a new tradition in Dallas-Ft. Worth as the Invited Celebrity Classic presented by Choctaw Casinos & Resorts brings the worlds of entertainment, sports and golf together in a fun, relaxed and entertaining atmosphere," said Invited CEO David Pillsbury. "Choctaw Casinos & Resorts is well-known as a leader in hospitality as well as the work they do in giving back through their charitable efforts which will only help grow and enhance the tournament in its second year."

"Choctaw Casinos & Resorts is proud to sponsor and support complimentary general admission tickets for fans in the greater Dallas/Ft. Worth area for the Invited Celebrity Classic on Sunday, April 23," says Janie Dillard, Senior Executive Officer of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. "This is the second year we've partnered with the Celebrity Classic tournament, and our partnership has continued to grow and evolve with a shared culture of respect, innovation, and entertainment. We are looking forward to another must-see PGA Tour Champions event."

The Invited Celebrity Classic presented by Choctaw Resorts & Casinos will feature 78 PGA TOUR Champions professionals and 40 of the top stars from the worlds of sports and entertainment. The PGA TOUR Champions professionals will play 54 holes of stroke

## Open casting call for feature film 'Thorpe'

LOS ANGELES (November 30, 2022) – Pictureworks Entertainment, Director Tracey Deer, and Casting Director, Rene Haynes, announce an online open casting call event to find the next Jim Thorpe for the upcoming feature film Thorpe.

Deadline reported on November 21, 2022 that award-winning Indigenous director Tracey Deer (Beans) will direct Thorpe, written by William N. Collage (Emancipation). This will be the first time in history Thorpe will be portrayed by a Native man in a major motion picture.

Thorpe is an inspiring sports drama about the Indigenous multi-sport athlete Jim Thorpe. Aided by the legendary coach, Pop Warner, Jim attempts to overcome the devastation of the Native American boarding school system to achieve Olympic glory at Stockholm in 1912 and fulfill the words of his father to "show the world what an Indian can do."

Rene Haynes (Prey, The Revenant, The New World, and the upcoming Killers of the Flower Moon) is recognized, internationally, as one of the foremost experts in Native American/First Nations/Indigenous casting.

ROLE: JIM THORPE, male, to play age 22-25. The acclaimed Sac and Fox and Potawatomi athlete as a young man (circa.1910 – 1913). For information on how to submit an audition, go to [thorpemovie.com](http://thorpemovie.com).

Producer Chris Taylor, Chitimacha Tribe of LA, said: "The challenge with this project has always been deciding which part of Jim's story to focus the movie on. Previous versions of the script portrayed an older Jim, but what's so exciting about Collage's script is how youthful it is. We are very much looking forward to finding the right young Native man to step into Jim's giant shoes. We invite every tribe in the U.S. and Canada to encourage their young people to audition."

Deer, the first Indigenous Filmmaker to get the TIFF emerging talent award, said she was "honored and thrilled to bring Jim Thorpe's incredible story to the screen so audiences worldwide can experience the tremendous hurdles he overcame to become the greatest athlete of the 20th century. His resilience, passion and pride are shining examples of the greatness that Indigenous people are capable of but that the dominant society has tried so hard to quash over the years. The residential school system is just one of the injustices Jim and so many of our people have had to survive. Just as Jim has now been rightfully restored to his proper place as an Olympic champion, so too it is time for the world to face the realities of systemic racism and persecution that have permeated North American society so that we can begin to heal as a nation. My goal for Thorpe is to create a film that offers hope and inspiration, in spite of so much darkness, to show what is possible when you dare to dream. This is the gift of Jim's legacy to us all."



Photo Provided

The Invited Celebrity Classic presented by Choctaw Casinos & Resorts returns this April, with celebrity golfers competing alongside top PGA TOUR Champion players.

play for a purse of \$2 million, along with the celebrities in a separate \$500,000 competition utilizing a modified Stableford scoring format.

At the 2023 tournament, fans can once again expect the type of high-end hospitality and entertainment experiences that are synonymous with these two brands.

Choctaw Casinos & Resorts are owned and operated by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the third largest Indian Nation in the United States with more than 200,000 tribal members and 10,000 employees. Choctaw Casinos & Resorts features a variety of gaming, hotel and resort properties throughout southeastern Oklahoma.

Choctaw Nation generates revenue to accelerate the success of the tribe. The strong, sovereign tribal government is an economic engine that provided nearly \$2.5 billion in economic impact in the state of Oklahoma in 2019. From jobs and roads to emergency services and education, Choctaw Nation contributes in numerous ways that benefit all tribal and non-tribal members in the communities where they live, work and raise their families. The Invited Celebrity Classic presented by Choctaw Resorts & Casinos will benefit two children's non-profit organizations, Momentous Institute, and the First Tee Greater Dallas and First Tee Fort Worth. The Momentous Institute is a North Texas nonprofit dedicated to building and repairing social and emotional health so that all children can achieve their full potential, while First Tee Greater Dallas and First Tee Fort Worth are committed to "Building Game Changers" by empowering kids and teens through the game of golf.

For more information about the Invited Celebrity Classic presented by Choctaw Resorts & Casinos, visit <https://www.invitedcelebrityclassic.com>.

# Housing Headlines

**By Bobby Yandell**

Our fourth year of implementing the lawn care service is about to begin! Get your application in now!

To be eligible, you must be Choctaw, be 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.

The program is simple. For example, say your yard costs \$45 to mow. You would need to give the vendor 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 1 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 (580-326-7521) if you have questions or need an application. Applications are also online, on the Chahta Achvffa portal and at your local community centers.

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[CHOCTAWNATION.COM](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

Housing Authority

## 2023 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, 2023

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Trailer type:  Bumper Pull Trailer  5th Wheel  RV

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

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

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
Attn: Janita Jeffreys, 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

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**Christa Lynn Layman**

Christa Lynn (Thompson) Layman, 50, passed away May 21, 2022.

Christa was born Nov. 28, 1971, in Ada, Okla., to Charles and Frances (Haney) Thompson.

She was preceded in death by grandparents Clint Thompson and Barbara Hackworth, and Homer and Lillian Haney.

Christa is survived by her husband Jeremy Layman; daughters Madison and Mackenzie Layman; her parents; sister Crystal Thompson; niece Christian Chaney; mother-in-law and father-in-law Vickie and Mike Layman; brother-in-law Jason Layman and spouse Karie; niece and nephews Amelia, Nathan, and Eli Layman; numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins; and many friends.

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

**Julius Russell James**

Julius Russell James, 59, passed away Nov. 12, 2022.

Julius was born Feb. 5, 1963, in Delano, Calif., to Georgia (Owen) James and Julius James.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister Nona Anderson-Reed.

Julius is survived by his wife Theresa Oliver-James; daughters Ashley Row and spouse Dameon, and Amber Ashing; son Timothy James; sister Jessie Parsels and spouse Wayne; grandchildren D.J. and John Wayne, Annie and Wade Russell (Little Russell), and Jaxon and Gunner; Chihuahua dogs Max and Fatboy; and numerous other relatives and loved ones.

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

**Leslie Rae Stead Croson**

Leslie Rae Stead Croson, 67, passed away Nov. 13, 2022.

Leslie was born June 9, 1955, to D. Roemer Stead (Ray) and Joan Roe Stead.

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

Leslie is survived by her husband Frank; their children and grandchildren Matthew and Kathryn Croson and daughters Cora and Annabel; and Michael and Elizabeth Croson and their children Addison, Molly, and Gabriel; sisters Terri and Laura; and brother Clay.

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

**Betty Jean McKinney**

Betty Jean McKinney, 72, passed away Nov. 27, 2022.

Betty was born May 13, 1950, in Talihina, Okla., to J.D. and Nellie Mae Gipson Shomo.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Silas McKinney Jr.; daughter Allison McKinney; son Silas "Sonny" McKinney; grandsons Bradley McKinney and James McKinney; brothers Johnny Shomo and Virgil Shomo; and sister Margie Shomo Going.

Betty is survived by her son John McKinney; daughters Joey McKinney and Lisa McKinney; brothers Stanley Shomo and spouse Gaye, Robert Shomo, Jimmy Shomo, David Shomo, and Mark Shomo; sisters Barbara Tonihka and Linda Hernandez; grandchildren Casey, Corey, Jamelle, Kyle, Keandra, Tyler, Cole, Taylor, and Carly; 20 great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

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

**Harold Davis White**

Harold Davis White, 75, passed away Nov. 15, 2022.

Harold was born June 8, 1947, to Benjamin Davis White and Rachel Loman White.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Elizabeth "Pat" White (Williams); daughter Janice Lynn Garrett; siblings Helen Kay Kasony, Roberta Gayle White, Charles Allen White, and Arnold Gene White; nephew Anthony Douglas White; grandson Jay Maghoney; grandmother Sophia Burris White; and uncle Alfred C. Ben.

Harold is survived by his daughter Delphina D. Castillo; grandfather Justin Dwayne Maghoney; brothers James R. Baker and Jerrold W. White; his grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

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

**Kathleen Hudson**

Kathleen "Kat" Hudson, 75, passed away Nov. 18, 2022.

Kat was born Nov. 14, 1947, in Talihina, Okla., to Dixon Hudson and Sarah (Amos) Hudson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Von Hudson and Thurman Hudson; and sisters Corinne "Chop" Hudson and Lita Baxter.

Kat is survived by her brothers E.B. Hudson, Dean Hudson, Cordell Hudson, Greg Hudson, and R.E. Hudson; sisters Meg Scott, Verdella Hudson, and Loretta Richardson and spouse Jimmy; several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, great-great-nieces and great-great-nephews; and other family and friends too numerous to mention.

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

**Christopher Jay Welch**

Christopher Jay Welch, 44, passed away Nov. 13, 2022.

Christopher was born July 24, 1978, in Talihina, Okla., to Danny Jay and Valerie Gwen (Wigington) Welch.

He is survived by sons Matthew Jay Welch and Marshal Tate Welch; daughters Kynnady Rose Welch, Jaylynn Brille Welch, and Krystal Denise Thomason and spouse Jordan; grandchildren Layken Yvonne Frank, Charles Reid Thomason, and Bentley David Thomason; his parents; brothers Chuck Welch and spouse Carrie, and Kyle Welch and spouse Jillian; his dog Margaret Welch; paternal grandmother Ula Mae Foote; maternal grandmother Christie Despain; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and other extended family.

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

**Carol Nadean Kemp**

Carol "Sugar" Nadean (Tims) Kemp, 85, passed away Aug. 23, 2022.

Carol was born March 9, 1937, in Lawton, Okla., to Rufus and Ora Mae (Wright) Time.

She was preceded in death by her husband Jesse Kemp; daughter Renae Kemp; and her parents.

Carol is survived by her sons Rondel Kemp and Darren Kemp; sisters Wanna More and Lila Kemp; and a host of other family members and friends.

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

**Simpson DeWayne McCann**

Simpson DeWayne McCann, 64, passed away Nov. 4, 2022.

DeWayne was born June 14, 1958, in Talihina, Okla., to Simpson and Aren McCann.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Katherine Smart; brother Sonny McCann; and niece Shelly Sandlin.

DeWayne is survived by his son Dustin Dwayne McCann; grandchildren Sadye and Dash McCann; sisters LaVern McCann and Delores Sandlin and spouse Oliver; brothers Phillip McCann and Kenny McCann; and numerous nieces and nephews.

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

**June Loretta McCormick**

June Loretta McCormick, 99, passed away Nov. 18, 2022.

June was born June 10, 1923, in Ashland, Okla., to Mack and Julia Ann Jones Eden.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Nick McCormick; son Mackey Ren Ely; and siblings Foy, Fred, Bessie, Helen, Idabel and Luceil.

June is survived by her children Bobby Francis Bernardy, Daniel Wayne Bernardy and partner Susan, and Mary Ellen Bernardy and partner Jeff.

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

**Debra Lynn Miller**

Debra Lynn Miller, 48, passed away Nov. 23, 2022.

Debra was born Oct. 18, 1974, in Mena, Ark., to Daisy (Bond) Watson and George Watson.

She was preceded in death by her father.

Debra is survived by her husband Tim Miller; son Timothy Miller II and spouse Katrina; daughter Talia Miller; her mother; sisters Renae Watson, Sheala Crosby, Priscilla Wright, Alice Rodriguez, Heather Watson, and Valerie Watson; brother Garrick Watson; grandchildren Madeline, Matilda, Micah, and Malachi Miller.

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

**Edna June Gibson**

Edna June Gibson, 83, passed away Nov. 19, 2022.

June was born June 10, 1939, in LeFlore, Okla., to Ivan Mitchell and Lillian Lucille Burns.

She was preceded in death by her husband M.C. Gibson.

June is survived by her daughters Laurie Gibson, and Davida Criner and spouse Tom; grandchildren Rachel Polk and spouse Noah, and Mary Criner; great-grandchildren Ellie Joy Polk and Finn Thomas Polk; as well as several extended family members and friends.

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

**Megan Jaunell Springers**

Megan Jaunell Springer, 39, passed away Nov. 18, 2022.

Megan was born Sept. 25, 1983, in Denison, Texas, to Timmy and Donna Lee (Phillips) Williams.

She was preceded in death by her father; grandparents Jesse and Georgie Williams, and Weldon and Mary Jaunell "Nell" Phillips; and aunts Denice Allen and Debbie Hohn.

Megan is survived by her husband Orrin Springer; son Ransom Tell Springer; her mother; in-laws Eddie and Pamela Springer; great-grandmother Betty Williams; brothers Jeffrey Phillips, and T.J. Springer and spouse Haley; niece and nephew Peyton Springer and Eli Springer; cousins Tanner Allen and Traci Allen; uncles Gerald Allen and Wayne Phillips; cousins A.J. Burkett and Elvis Burkett; aunt Connie Carroll and spouse Glen; and numerous other aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

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

**Betty Sue Briggs**

Betty Sue Briggs, 75, passed away Oct. 29, 2022.

Betty was born July 28, 1947, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to James Whitney and Lucille Mae Briggs.

She was preceded in death by her parents; and brothers James L. Briggs and Richard Briggs.

Betty is survived by her brother Steve Briggs and spouse Susan; daughter Andrea "Kristin" Clement; husband Brent; son Robert W. Helt II and spouse Tonya; granddaughters Kelsey Helt, Kyleigh Ortega, Rylee Helt, and Reagan Ortega.

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

**Tyler James Betsey**

Tyler James Betsey, 24, passed away Oct. 27, 2022.

Tyler was born Jan. 20, 1998, in Ada, Okla., to James David Moore and Tina Deliene Betsey.

He was preceded in death by his sister Angie Nix; maternal grandfather Adam Betsey; maternal grandmothers Annie Betsey and Gladys Barcus; nephew Seminole Nieto; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Tyler is survived by his parents; sisters Kelly McCoy and Sylvester Boyce, and Jennifer Betsey; brother Dillon Betsey and spouse Shelby; half-brother Nathan McCoy; and numerous nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

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

**Missy Leann Howton**

Missy Leann Howton, 40, passed away Oct. 24, 2022.

Missy was born Feb. 23, 1982, in Delano, Calif., to Laurel and Roy Patrick.

She was preceded in death by Pat; and her maternal grandparents.

Missy is survived by her parents; brother Roy Patrick Jr.; and sister Kristy Scott.

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

**Joseph Junior Billy**

Joseph Junior Billy, 79, passed away Dec. 2, 2022.

Joseph was born Oct. 30, 1943, in Talihina, Okla., to Joseph Billy and Ida "Bell" King.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother William Sonny Billy; and sister Wanda Pridemore.

Joseph is survived by his wife Sondra; brother-in-law Titus Wilson; nephew Shawn Billy; cousin David Moore; and other family members and friends.

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

**Velma Jean McFarland**

Velma Jean McFarland, 85, passed away Nov. 8, 2022.

Velma was born Aug. 3, 1937, in McCurtain, Oklahoma.

For the complete obituary, please visit [Evans-Miller Funeral Home - Poteau](#).

**Calvin Wright**

Calvin Wright, 95, passed away Dec. 3, 2022.

Calvin was born Dec. 1, 1927, in Matoy, Okla., to William Walter and Willie Mae (Robinson) Wright.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter-in-law Elizabeth Wright; brother Albert Wright; and sister Gertrude Hall.

Calvin is survived by his wife Barbara Wright; and sons Roy Wright, and Clay Wright and spouse Lawanda.

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

**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)



ITI FABVSSA

Makers and Masterpieces: Baldrick Sashes and Bandolier Bags at the Smithsonian

Over the next few months, Iti Fabvssa will share some of the Choctaw items held at the Smithsonian and highlight the skilled craftsmanship still used by the Choctaw community today.

This month, we will be focusing on bandolier bags and baldrick sashes.

The southeastern woodland tradition of making baldrick sashes and bandolier bags was common among the southeastern tribes in the late 18th century.

The Choctaw shared this tradition with the Alabama, Koasati, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Muscogee Creek, Natchez, Seminole and Yuchi, to name a few.

Each tribe had its own style and embedded meaning. Some of these likely derived from earlier versions of sashes made from bison wool and hand-carved shell beads. Isht vskufvchi (Baldricks or Baldrick sashes) were typically made of trade cloth and featured wool applique edged with intricate beadwork using glass trade beads.

Each unique sash held deep symbolic meaning for the maker in both its design motif and significance, often employing curvilinear lines to create suns, moons, spirals and other dynamic forms.

It is thought that the X and O design could resemble stickball sticks and the ball of kapucha toli (stickball), but this varied from region to region and maker to maker.

Makers used primarily white, black or blue seed beads but later incorporated more colors into their work as they became accessible. Sashes were typically worn by tribal members of high status in their community, including men and possibly women.

Bandolier bags can be seen as an extension of this tradition.

While baldrick sashes served as a form of adornment, bandolier bags were utilitarian in purpose yet just as intricate as the sashes themselves. Of note, it

is rare to find Choctaw bandolier bags in collections.

Sashes like the ones at the Smithsonian (pictured here) were documented in photographs of Choctaws in the early 1900s but collected as early as the late half of the 1700s.

Many institutions worldwide have fine examples of these beautifully designed Choctaw textiles in their collections.

Museum partnerships offer a unique opportunity to examine the techniques of our ancestors and learn what decisions went into each piece. This is incredibly helpful for the continuation of this tradition.

Sam Stitt, a Choctaw tribal member based in Spokane, Washington, finds this knowledge crucial to his revitalization efforts.

An early goal of Sam's was to create full regalia worn in the late 1700s to early 1800s, completely adorned, as a warrior of high status.

He fielded questions about this era of Choctaw material culture from his community and decided to add this creation to his ongoing community outreach to teach about Choctaw culture.

Understanding this textile tradition was shared among the southeastern tribes, Sam dove deep into online collections to research and examine many styles to learn about their construction, design motifs and the materials used.

However, there is nothing like seeing it up close. Sam says he benefits when he can get close-up photographs of details or even the back side of a piece from someone working in collections. It's the finite details that help understand some of their choices.

Sam works with traditional tools and materials in his textile and metalsmith creations. However, he avoids copying from other artists, choosing instead to make it his own.

"I have always had ideas in my mind of designs to create or different ideas to try out. And over time you evolve as an artist, experiment, and keep what works...I think over time, I have developed a recognizable design that is my own," said Stitt.

He had some suggestions for those who want to learn. First, Sam says it's important to reach out to artists for help. They can offer advice on the basics, which materials to use, teach the initial steps and be honest about the investment it takes (both time and monetary).

Second, Sam encourages students to take it slow at first. Complete a small project that is simple to get used to working with the materials. Finally, keep some first aid supplies handy to plan for safety issues, especially when working with metal.

As an artist learning about traditional Choctaw arts, Sam is part of a growing community of artisans that network and support one another in their revitalization efforts. Sam credits this support for being a critical part of his creative process and success as an artisan.

"I need someone to bounce ideas off of," said Stitt. "Even questions about fabricating and design."

Sam continues to expound on his skillset and concentrates primarily on metalsmithing at this time. He strives to make his silver gorgets distinctly Choctaw.

Next month, Iti Fabvssa will continue to share objects from the Smithsonian and highlight the work of a father and son who continue to pass on their generational knowledge as silversmiths.

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



Smithsonian – NMAI - Choctaw Sash, Accession #018439-78



Sam Stitt – Baldrick Sash (wool, cotton, size 11 seed beads, edged with horn beads)



Sam Stitt- Traditional Artisan, Full Regalia



Smithsonian – NMAI - Choctaw Sash, Accession #018864-81



Gorget with cone and ball style attachments, Sterling Silver

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Choctaw Nation Voter Registration

THE HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR THE SPRING 2023 SEMESTER IS NOW AVAILABLE.

The application deadline is March 1, 2023. For more information, visit [choctawnation.com/services/higher-education/](https://choctawnation.com/services/higher-education/)

Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program

# Warrior Wellness launched for Native American veterans

By Chris Jennings

Choctaw Nation launched Warrior Wellness, a grant-funded program, during the recent Choctaw Nation Veterans Day Ceremony.

The new program is designed to connect Native American veterans with their culture, heritage and each other to reduce rates of death by suicide among veterans.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there were 6,146 veteran suicides for an average of 16.8 per day in 2020. However, the data points to a declining trend in these suicides.

In 2020, there were 343 fewer veteran suicides than in 2019, and the number of veteran suicides was lower than in each prior year since 2006.

The decline in deaths points to how treatment programs geared toward veterans and their families can help those in need.

Thanks to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs SSG Parker Fox Suicide Prevention Program, the Choctaw Nation can offer more help to veterans in need.

“Being one of only 80 organizations awarded the grant means we can provide pivotal services here in southeast Oklahoma for Native American Veterans and their families,” said program coordinator Courtney Trent, Licensed Clinical Social Worker for Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority.

The Choctaw Nation Warrior Wellness Program will support veterans and their families with various options. Some available options are veteran peer support, case management, Veterans Affairs benefits assistance and income assistance.

The Nation has always prioritized serving veterans, but the behavioral health program has never had anything specific to veterans outside of regular outpatient counseling.

Shauna Humphreys, Director of Choctaw

Nation Behavioral Health Services, is excited about the Warrior Wellness program and its creative approaches.

According to Humphreys, the grant would now allow them to serve those that fought for our country.

“I really like the aspects of this grant and the creative things that are happening, and I think it’s very much needed,” said Humphreys.

“A lot of non-traditional services that we haven’t had available for our veterans in the past are going to get a lot more accessible,” Trent said.

By partnering with the Choctaw Nation Veterans Advocacy office and other established programs throughout the Nation, the Warrior Wellness program will be able to help veterans and their families in many ways.

“We’ll have weekend retreats with cultural activities, resilience training, and trauma-focused services and healing for coping and how to thrive instead of just survive. We’ll really try to enrich their coping skills and their knowledge of resources and strengthen their family systems,” said Trent.

It’s not just the veterans themselves who can get help. Their families will also be able to get involved with treatment.

A recent Holiday for Heroes veteran-led women’s support group met in December in McAlester, Oklahoma.

Trent highlighted the importance of these meetings during the holidays.

“They [Holiday for Heroes events] are focused on coping with holiday stressors and how you manage and navigate through some of those tough times during the holidays,” she said.

“It’s really important that you treat the whole family, not just the veteran and then send them back into a family system that is struggling... it’s really exciting for us to be



Choctaw Nation Photo

The recently announced Choctaw Nation Warrior Wellness Program will support veterans and their families with various options. Some available options are veteran peer support, case management, Veterans Affairs benefits assistance and income assistance.

able to have the opportunity to offer these services to the whole family and not just the veteran,” Trent said.

Some more examples of non-traditional services available include hiking, animal-assisted and equine services, trail riding, gardening, fishing, family retreats and cultural options like the drum circle recovery groups. The goal of these types of offerings is to make the veterans who are seeking treatment more comfortable.

“They [veterans] have a difficult time coming into a typical counselor setting. By using these non-traditional settings, along with peer support with another veteran, it really opens up a window for them to engage and be connected with someone who has similar life experiences. Being able to connect with those peers is just so powerful,” said Trent.

Mental health support and community connection can make a huge difference for many veterans.

One of the ways that Native veterans will be able to get that community support is

through the Operation Pop-Smoke app.

The Pop-Smoke app is designed for peer-to-peer support with the veterans in mind. It will serve as a veteran’s personal and confidential emergency response team with trusted peers that they choose.

Using the app, they can “pop smoke” or request help from their trusted team. The app also allows confidential texting and gives the group their exact GPS coordinates in live time so they can find them in times of need.

By providing several different treatment methods to veterans and their families, the program is more likely to connect with those in need, including those who may need or want treatment but are reluctant to go into a typical counselor’s office.

Warrior Wellness is available to all Native American veterans and their families from any tribe or service. For more information, go to [www.choctawnation.com/services/warrior-wellness/](http://www.choctawnation.com/services/warrior-wellness/)

If you have suicidal thoughts, you can call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.

## Farm to School: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma announces partnership with Atoka Public Schools

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) and Atoka Public School (APS) have announced a multi-year farm-to-school partnership.

CNO will produce and distribute fresh beef, raised and harvested in Southeastern Oklahoma, to APS campuses.

APS is a rural Southeastern Oklahoma district with just over 800 students attending its two campuses.

It will be the first school in the CNO reservation to provide only Choctaw beef on their school lunch menu. CNO will be distributing the meat to APS every week.

Jody Standifer, Executive Officer of Agriculture for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, said this ground beef is from the same cattle that will also serve the restaurant in Atoka, owned by country music superstar Reba McEntire. Reba’s Place is a combination restaurant, bar, live music venue and retail store.

“We are providing Choctaw beef to Reba’s restaurant, so you will get top-shelf steaks and ribeye and those things, then we are utilizing the remaining high-quality beef to serve the schools at Atoka. So, these kids are getting the same high-quality beef that you would get at Reba’s or any premium steakhouse across the country,” said Standifer.

CNO owns seven cattle ranches across its Reservation. These ranches raise and maintain around 27,000 Angus cows, according to Standifer.

In addition to providing beef for Reba’s and APS, CNO will soon serve Choctaw branded beef in the Pocola and Grant resorts.

Standifer said CNO hopes to expand its beef production and provide even more beef for consumers throughout the Choctaw Nation.



Photo by Atoka School

Atoka Elementary School students enjoying hamburgers made from Choctaw beef.

“At CNO, we’re committed to producing safe and nutritious beef with a commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility; we hope to partner with other school districts within the CNO reservation as we grow this program,” he said.

The program kicked off on November 16, 2022, and Atoka Public Schools will receive around 400 to 600 pounds of beef each week for its school lunch program.

“This partnership allows our school district the opportunity to offer beef to our students that is right from the fields of Southeast Oklahoma to our cafeteria tables,” states Stephanie Bray, Child Nutrition Director for Atoka Public Schools. “It’s important for our students to know where their food is coming from and care about what they are eating. Thanks to the initial idea from the CNO, school lunches at APS are tasting better than ever.”

### 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

### Food Distribution Headlines

By Chase Ward

The Choctaw Nation Food Distribution Program is here to provide healthy and nutritious foods that families need for a healthy and delicious year.

It has come to that familiar time when many make diet and nutrition resolutions. With the common goal of healthy eating in mind, now would be a great time to take advantage of all the fresh produce available through the Food Distribution Program.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are something that many of us need to eat more of because they play a vital role in a healthy diet.

They make great snacks throughout the day. You can also create lower-calorie versions of some of your favorite dishes by substituting low-calorie fruits and vegetables with higher-calorie ingredients.

The water and fiber in fruits and vegetables will add volume to your dishes so that you can eat the same amount of food with fewer calories.

### Jalepeno Popper Egg Muffins

- 10 eggs
- 1 teaspoons salt or to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 3-4 jalapeños de-seeded and chopped
- 1/3 cup cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup shredded cheese
- 1/3 cup bacon cooked crumbled

#### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Get a 12-count muffin tin and line it with silicone liners, or use a silicone muffin pan or coat a regular muffin pan with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, crack in eggs and whisk together with salt and black pepper.
4. Add in all other ingredients.
5. Divide evenly into muffin tins filling each about 2/3 full. Top with cheese.
6. Place 1-2 jalapeño slices on top in each muffin cup.
7. Bake in preheated oven for 12-17 minutes or until set.



### CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

#### MARKET HOURS

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

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

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

#### January 2023

All markets open weekdays, January 1-27

**Closed:** January 2, 30, and 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 demo January 10*

**BROKEN BOW** 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842  
*Food demo January 17*

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773  
*Food demo January 24*

**MCALESTER** 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716  
*Food demo January 12*

**POTEAU** 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431  
*Food demo January 19*

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

## COVID-19 CARE KITS

ORDER YOURS TODAY  
AVAILABLE FOR TRIBAL MEMBERS NATIONWIDE!

**Choctaw Nation** Health Services

### Choctaw Nation Health Clinic Contact Information

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

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

## Winter tradition continues at Choctaw Cultural Center

**DURANT, Okla. (November 12, 2022)**– The Choctaw Cultural Center offered the public a messy but educational opportunity recently for a hands-on experience to “mud” a traditional Choctaw winter home.

Early-day Choctaws gathered mud from nearby rivers and creeks, water, and hay or grass to make a sticky clay. That material would bind between logs of the structure.

This method would serve as insula-

tion and a protective shell against the natural elements.

More than 20 participants joined in the session held on Nov. 12, 2022.

“The guests enjoyed the experience and community efforts like our ancestors,” said Brenner Billy, program coordinator at the center.

Activities for all ages are scheduled through the holiday season at the Choctaw Cultural Center and can be found at <https://choctawculturalcenter.com/>



Photos by Christian Toews

From left to right Arianna Myers, Colt, James and Cheyhomia Dugger all work together to throw and spread clay on the outside of a traditional Choctaw shelter.



Aliiah Myers and Demetrius Williams spread clay near the entrance of the traditional shelter.



Kaleb Standridge uses tools to help mix the clay to the proper consistency, allowing it to stick to the outside of the traditional shelter.



Arianna Myers spreads clay on the wall of the traditional shelter.



A mixture of dirt, straw and water is used to create the clay thrown against the side of the traditional shelter and spread by hand for insulation.



Demetrius Williams helps with the construction of the traditional Choctaw winter home.

## Interior Department strengthens Tribal Consultation Policies and Procedures

**WASHINGTON (December 1, 2022)** — The Department of the Interior today announced new policies and procedures to strengthen and fulfill the federal government’s responsibility to ensure regular and meaningful consultation with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, as well as a second policy for consultation with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations.

“Tribes deserve a seat at the decision-making table before policies are made that impact their communities. Our ongoing efforts to evolve and strengthen consultation policies and procedures will ensure that Tribal Nations can engage at the highest levels of the federal government on the issues that matter most to their people,” said Secretary Deb Haaland. “From climate resilience to clean energy investments, the Biden-Harris administration has made available unprecedented resources for Indian Country – but we can only maximize those investments by working directly with Tribes.”

“We must develop collaborative partnerships with Tribal nations so that we uphold our trust responsibilities and build consensus when developing policies that impact Tribes. These updated policies and procedures will further our work at the Department to protect and strengthen Tribal sovereignty,” said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland. “Consultation is the cornerstone of the political relationship between the United States and Tribal Nations as we work to revitalize the way of life for Indian people.”

The announcement was made during the 2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit, which provides an opportunity for Administration and Tribal leaders from the 574 federally recognized Tribes to discuss ways the federal government can invest in and strengthen nation-to-nation relationships as well as ensure that progress in Indian Country endures for years to come.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs consulted with Indian Tribes and ANCSA Corporations to gather feedback from Tribal leaders and ANCSA Corporation representatives on the new policies and procedures.

The Tribal consultation policy and procedures seek to, among other things:

- Bolster the Department’s consultation policy to encourage early, interactive, pre-decisional, informative and transparent consultation;
- Establish a model for seeking consensus;
- Require that Department staff undergo training before participating in consultation;
- Codify the Secretary’s Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC);
- Prioritize Departmental statutory or regulation waivers when in the best interest of Tribes;
- Clarify that the Department’s decision-makers must invite Tribes to engage in consultation; and
- Require a record of consultation.
- The Alaska Native Corporation Consultation policy and procedures seek to, among other things:
- Outline the requirements for consultation between ANCSA Corporation officials and Department officials;
- Clarify that the Departmental Manual chapter applies to all Department bureaus and offices;
- Identify the responsibilities of the Department bureaus and offices in the consultation process; and
- Establish an ANCSA Corporation consultation annual report for Department bureaus and offices.

The Department’s new policies help further the policy goals and intent of President Biden’s “Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships,” which outlines the Administration’s efforts to engage Indigenous communities early and often in federal decision-making.

## Submitted Public Notice

Heirs of Silas Samuel, Full Blood Choctaw, Roll # 5823  
S/2 NW/4 NW/4; SW/4 NW/4 and NW/4 SW/4 of Section 20, Township 6 South, Range 5 West, Jefferson County, Oklahoma, containing 100 acres, more or less

Heller Oil Inc. is attempting to locate the following: Phyllis Jean Cusher, Leslie Harrison Cusher Jr, Freeman C John, Felicia A John, Anita S. Cusher, Beatrice L. Jefferson Lowe, Bertha Carterby Going, Carol S. Going, Charles Samuel, Clara Bohanan Taylor, Linda Bunch Morrison, Cordell R. Hudson, Cynthia A. Cusher, Cynthia L. Stalvey, Danny Cusher, Darryl W. Samuels aka Darryl W. Ludlow, Angel Frazier, Deborah S. Jefferson, Diechman Dean Hudson Sr, Wayne R. Scott, Narvie Charles Scott, Norman Frank Scott, Thomas N. Scott, Regina R. Galvan, Josephine Scott, Sarah F. Grimes, Donald G. Cusher, Donald Samuel, Linda Johnson, Edna M. Going Rowan, Eugene B. Hudson, Corneal Anthony Cusher, Debbie Sue Raper, Robin Gail Taylor, Dorothy Marie Potter, James Russell Wood, Gregory R. Hudson, Gwendolyn Going Waterman, Harlan Ludlow, Hazel Carney Going, Donald Hugh Pisachubbe, Margaret E Pisachubbe, Timothy Wayne Pisachubbe, Isom Going, Jr, Jeri Lynn Dickson Trumbly, Jesse R. Hardy, Joe R. Cusher, Dakota Joe Going, Alfred Rayson Going, David Leroy Going, Forrest El Going, Henry Lee Okpik Going, Juelene Cusher Ice Lane, Karen L. Going, Kathleen Trula Hudson, Kathy Beaugez, Joe Noah, Samantha Noah, Timothy Dixon Brady, Loretta Gaye Tadlock, Louise Levine (Levenne) Samuel Amos, Luci Logan, Magdalene Hudson Scott, Martha Jean Carterby, Melinda Carterby Simpson, John Ray Carterby, Michael E. Going, Michael L. Jefferson, Noakola Noah now Bowen, Norman Douglas Samuel, Jr, Mark Anthony Samuel, Sylvester Dee Samuel, Pamela McLeod, Paula Ruiz aka Paula Rena, R.E. Hudson, Rhoda Jefferson Sullivan, Richard V. Going, Robert L. Reynolds, James L. Reynolds, Margaret Reynolds, Robert W. Hardy, Cynthia A. Baker, Nathaniel Ray Stotts, Sharon Cusher Flournoy, Shirley Cusher Bledsoe, Stacey Noah, Theodore Ludlow, Tracie Going Walley, Anita Green, Vernon Going, Watkin Going, Tina LeMasters, Jamil Going, Tusha Going spa Tausha Going, Keso Going, Athena Heaton, Verdeen Belvin Hallman, Vanessa Herron, Anthony Going, Loretta Blatchford Parker, Walinda Blatchford, Robert Alva Griffin, John Michael Griffin, Randi Going, The Unknown Heirs of Allen G. Going, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of John Monroe Cusher, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Alfred Samuel, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Arnold D. Jefferson, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Betty R. Belvin, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Cordia Lena Samuel Bunch Heimel, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Paula Jean Bunch Gann, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Robert Bunch, Sr, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Corinne Hudson, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of David Jefferson, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Deborah Kaye Noah Osage, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of George A. Scott, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Martricia A. Wilson, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Dwight Belvin, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Edward Pisachubbe spa William Edward Pisachubbe, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Frances Cusher House, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Frances J. Going Neill, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Julia Charlene Durrence, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Ira Dean Pisachubbe, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of John A. Going, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Josiah C. Going, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Julia A. Melton, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Justin Carterby, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Lacreatea Belvin Carterby Billy, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Lena Leanna Noah Roberts, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Lita Michele Baxter, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Mable J. Going Maguire, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Loretta Going, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Mary Wesley Carterby, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Michael E. Cusher, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Minnie Fae Jefferson Barnes, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Minnie Jefferson Edwards, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Raphael Jefferson, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Rayson G. Going, Jr, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Norman D. Samuel, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Pauline Samuel Reynolds, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Samantha L. Going Neal, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Shirley James Cogburn, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Stephen R. Going, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Virgil A. Going, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Virginia L. Going Williams, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Wauleah Bohanan Blatchford, deceased, The Unknown Heirs of Winfred W. Going, deceased

All the names listed are heirs of Restricted Indian Silas Samuel, Full Blood Choctaw, Roll #5823. Our firm has acquired Oil and Gas Leases from other mineral owners in the captioned lands except for the interests named above. We desire to re-work an existing well on the referenced lands and need to acquire an Oil and Gas Lease from each of the names listed above. If anyone knows the whereabouts and/or has any information on them, please contact us at the one of the following: (Office) 580-226-5218 (Cell) 580-220-9279 (Email) [scott@helleroilinc.com](mailto:scott@helleroilinc.com).



# CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

MEMBERSHIP



## BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

# Community meals

Throughout the holiday season, community meals and parties were held at community centers throughout the Choctaw Nation.

Pictured on the following two pages of the Biskinik are photos from Thanksgiving meals in Antlers, Atoka, Battiest, Broken Bow, Coalgate, Crowder, Durant, Hugo, Idabel, McAlester, Poteau, Smithville, Spiro, Stigler, Talihina, Tvshka Homma, Wilburton and Wright City.



# Community meals



## CNO Voter Registration to tribal members: Get registered and vote in 2023 Tribal Elections

**DURANT, Okla. (Dec. 2, 2022)** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) is again asking eligible members to get registered and go vote, but this time, CNO officials are hoping to increase voter participation for the upcoming tribal election.

The elective offices set for General Election in July 2023 are Council District 1, Council District 2, Council District 3, Council District 5, Council District 8, Council District 11, and Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Now, CNO officials are reaching out directly to eligible members who are not registered.

“The first thing I would tell eligible members is to register to vote,” said Candace R. Perkins, the Director of CNO Voter Registration and CNO Election Board Secretary. “If a member is over the age of 18 and is not registered to vote, they will be receiving a packet from us with a Voter Registration Form and simple instructions on how to register.”

Eligible members who are not registered to vote in tribal elections can expect to see that packet in their mailboxes beginning the second week in January, according to Jennifer Johnson-Williams, Program Manager, CNO Voter Registration.

“We are always trying to increase the number of registered voters for our tribal elections,” said Johnson-Williams. “It is our goal to make sure that we answer any questions and provide any information our members need to get registered and to vote in our tribal elections.”

Currently, only 28% of eligible Choctaw members are registered to vote in tribal elections, according to data compiled by the CNO Voter Registration Department. To increase access to these important elections, CNO officials are also asking registered voters to pay attention to the election calendar.

“After getting registered, I would encourage members to stay aware of important dates,” said Perkins. “The prospective candidate filing period begins April 17th, and there are several important dates between April and July. There is no deadline for voter registration, but we encourage all members to register early to ensure timely delivery of mail ballots to their homes prior to General Election on July 8.

The CNO Election Board recently posted the Public Notice of General Election Calendar which lists all deadlines for the 2023 General Election. Members with further questions are encouraged to visit the CNO Voter Registration website at [www.choctawnation.com/vote](http://www.choctawnation.com/vote). In addition, members may visit the CNO Election Board for further information at [www.choctawnation.com/elections](http://www.choctawnation.com/elections).

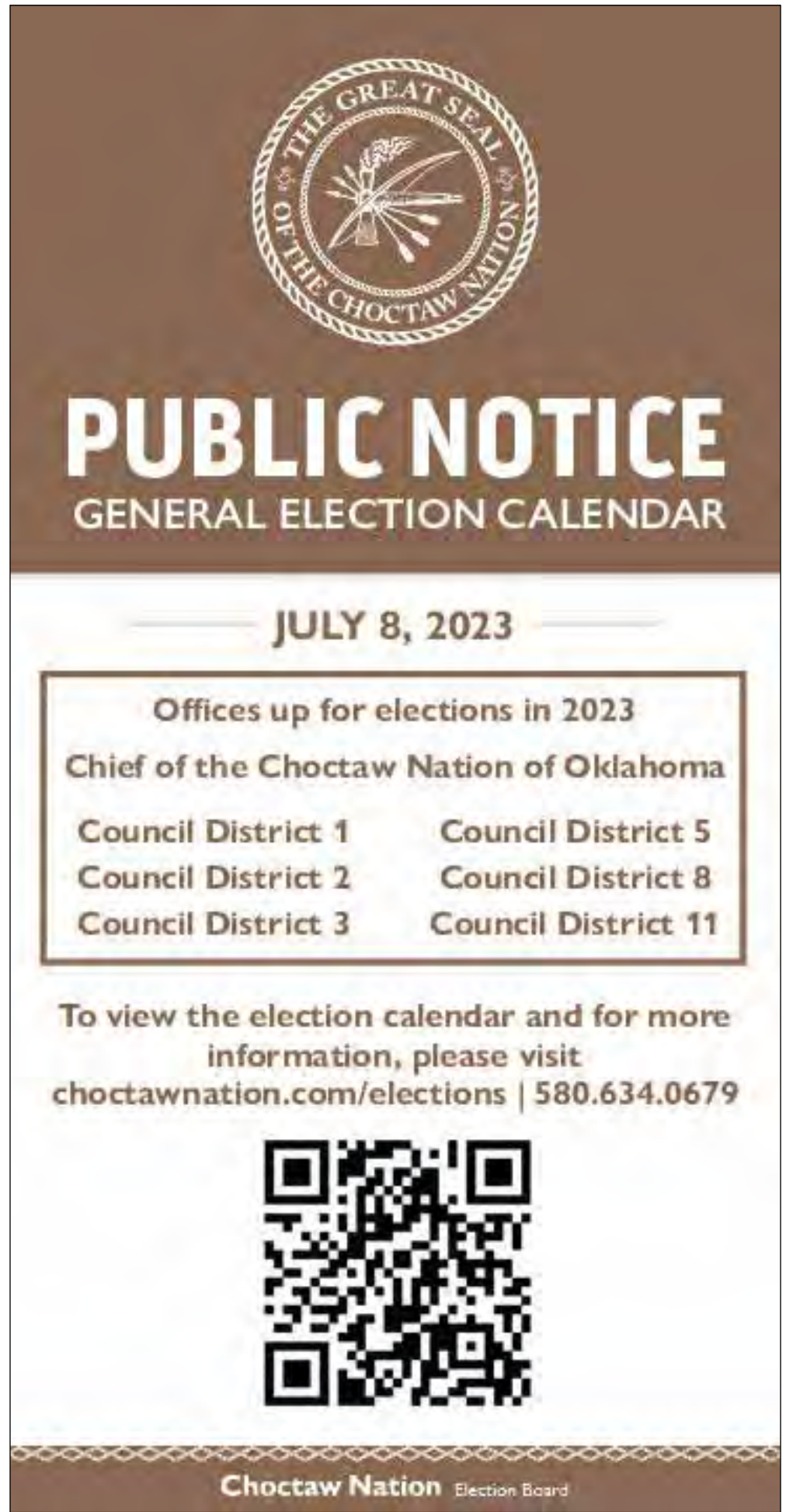
The CNO Election Board office is located at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters, 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701, in the Voter Registration and Election Board Suite, #1252. The office hours shall be Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will close to observe all holidays recognized by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.



**CHOCTAW NATION LIVESTOCK SHOW**

FEBRUARY 4-5, 2023  
800-522-6170  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/LIVESTOCKSHOW](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/LIVESTOCKSHOW)

Choctaw Nation Natural Resources



**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**GENERAL ELECTION CALENDAR**


**JULY 8, 2023**

**Offices up for elections in 2023**

**Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

<b>Council District 1</b>	<b>Council District 5</b>
<b>Council District 2</b>	<b>Council District 8</b>
<b>Council District 3</b>	<b>Council District 11</b>

To view the election calendar and for more information, please visit [choctawnation.com/elections](http://choctawnation.com/elections) | 580.634.0679



Choctaw Nation Election Board



**GIVE BLOOD TO HELP YOUR TRIBE AND COMMUNITY**






Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ◀ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ▶

# BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ◀ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ▶

**January 2023**

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

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