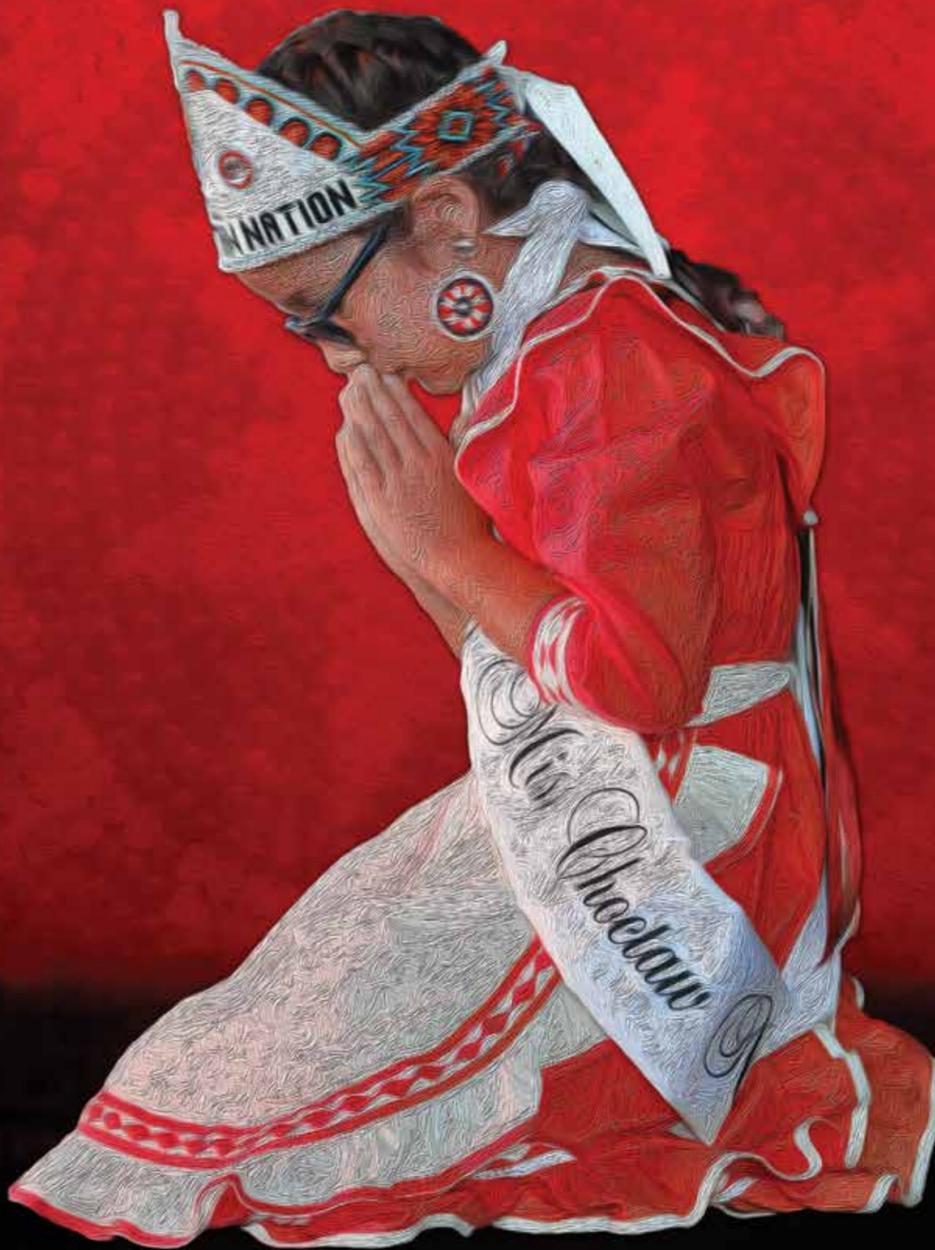




June 2022 Issue

# NO MORE STOLEN SISTERS



## A Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Movement Update

By Kendra Germany-Wall

On May 7, 2022, supporters gathered at the Choctaw Community Center in Antlers, Oklahoma, to walk in honor of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIW/MMIWG) movement.

A total of 198 5K runners and 146 1 mile walkers took part in the MMIW Awareness Walk and Community Event. More than 500 people attended the event overall.

"We had racers ranging from the ages of 5 to 80; and those who traveled from Dallas, Texas and Bentonville, Arkansas to compete. The fastest race of the day was 22 minutes, 28 seconds by a 45-year-old gentleman from Bentonville, Arkansas," said Tasha Mitchell, Director of Choctaw Nation's Project EMPOWER.

Youth stickball players and Choctaw drummers were at the starting line, giving participants a rhythmic send-off. MMIW statistics lined the route, reminding runners why they were running, and 18 programs were in attendance to share resources. The event was a success according to Mitchell.

During the month of May, events like this happened across the country, in hopes of bringing awareness to the crisis in Indian Country.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, murder is the third leading cause of death for Indigenous women. A National Institute of Justice report in 2016 found that nearly 85% of Indigenous women have experienced violence in their lifetime.

In recent years, the topic of MMIW has been thrust into the spotlight by activists, demanding change and awareness for their missing and murdered Indigenous sisters.

Below is a brief timeline of national events regarding MMIW awareness efforts within the U.S. government.

May 5, 2019, a White House proclamation officially designated May 5 as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls.

Nov. 26, 2019, Executive Order 13898, Operation Lady Justice, created a task force for missing and murdered AI/AN peoples that will address the concerns of Indigenous communities in the U.S., such as data collection, policies and establishing cold-case teams and improving investigative responses.

Oct. 10, 2020, Savanna's Act became law, requiring the Department of Justice to review, revise and develop policies and protocols to address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) cases.

Also, on Oct. 10, 2020, The Not Invisible Act of 2019 was signed into law as the first bill in history to be introduced and passed by four U.S. congressional members enrolled in their respective federally recognized Tribes, led by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland during her time in Congress.

Apr. 1, 2021, Secretary Haaland announced the formation of a new Missing & Murdered Unit (MMU) within the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) to provide leadership and direction for cross-departmental and interagency work involving missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives.

"Violence against Indigenous peoples is a crisis that has been underfunded for decades. Far too often, murders and missing persons cases in Indian country go unsolved and unaddressed, leaving families and communities devastated," said Secretary Haaland. "The new MMU unit will provide the resources and leadership to prioritize these cases and coordinate resources to hold people accountable, keep our communities safe and provide closure for families."

At the time of the announcement, approximately 1,500 American Indian and Alaska Native missing persons had been entered into the National Crime Information Center throughout the U.S. and about 2,700 cases of murder and nonnegligent homicide offenses had been reported to the Federal Government's Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

Investigations often remain unsolved due to a lack of investigative resources available to identify new information from witness testimony, re-examine new or retained material evidence and review fresh activities of suspects. The MMU will work with Tribal, BIA and FBI investigators on active Missing and Murdered investigations.

The MMU will also enable the department to expand its collaborative efforts with other agencies, such as working to enhance the DOJ's National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) and developing strategic partnerships with additional stakeholders such as the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Units, the FBI Forensic Laboratory, the US Marshals Missing Child Unit and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

"We are fully committed to assisting Tribal communities with these investigations and the MMU will leverage every resource available to be a force-multiplier in preventing these cases from becoming cold case investigations," said Secretary Haaland.

March 15, 2022, President Joe Biden signed the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022. This law

expands the special criminal jurisdiction of Tribal courts to cover non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse, stalking, sex trafficking and assaults on Tribal law enforcement officers on Tribal lands.

On April 30, 2022, Oklahoma recognized Missing Murdered Indigenous Women—Chahta as a charitable foundation. The group was co-founded by Karris Hodge and Christa Lampkin, employees of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO).

"I wanted to start this organization because there wasn't one that covered our area. I was vice-chair of another MMIW chapter and was picking up these cases. God lead me to start our own chapter here. While doing so, we wanted to do something a little more for the families. We wanted to incorporate healing events for them. These will happen four times a year, going around the seasons," said Hodge.

The first healing event will be held in June.

The group will also hold educational classes for tribal members and the community on domestic violence, human trafficking, healthy relationships and addiction.

"Our primary goal is to support MMIW families during the tragedy and after," said Hodge. "We also want to bring awareness to the community and educate them in different areas to do preventive maintenance to help reduce the number of our Women getting murdered or joining abusive relationships."

According to Hodge, she has learned a lot during this process.

"The most rewarding part about this journey is seeing our elders' faces and having mothers who have lost their daughters reach out when hearing about this chapter. You can see the pride in their eyes, knowing their loved ones have not been forgotten and we are here to serve our people," Hodge said. "We just want to show love and support and promote healing for our Native people in general."

For more information, visit the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women—Chahta Facebook page.

May 5, 2022, President Biden released a proclamation on Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day 2022. Also on this day, Secretary Haaland and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco recognized National Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day with a virtual event, highlighting the Not Invisible Act Commission. During the event, the names of commission members were announced.

The Departments of the Interior and Justice are working to implement the Not Invisible Act, sponsored by Secretary Haaland during her time in Congress. The law established the Not Invisible Act Commission, a cross-jurisdictional advisory committee composed of law enforcement, tribal leaders, federal partners, service providers, family members of missing and murdered individuals and most importantly — survivors.

"Everyone deserves to feel safe in their community, but a lack of urgency, transparency and coordination have hampered our country's efforts to combat violence against American Indians and Alaska Natives," said Secretary Haaland. "As we work with the Department of Justice to prioritize the national crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples, the Not Invisible Act Commission will help address its underlying roots by ensuring the voices of those impacted by violence against Native people are included in our quest to implement solutions."



Photos By Shelia Kirven

Lena Sexton Maturino takes part in the MMIW 5K & 1 Mile Awareness Walk on May 7, 2022 in Antlers.



People of all ages turned out to take part in the MMIW 5K and 1 Mile Awareness Walk, showing support for their community.

Continued on page 14

# Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

## Older Americans Month

Halito, In May, we observed Older Americans Month. It's a time devoted to celebrating elders and their contributions, as well as raising awareness about issues related to age and aging. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the nation's observance of Older Americans Month. They designated Age My Way to serve as this year's theme, as an opportunity for all of us to explore the many ways elders can remain in and be involved with their communities. Our elders are near and dear to our hearts at the Choctaw Nation. We value their experience, wisdom, and knowledge every day and throughout the year because they are the link to connecting us

and preserving our past.

I value the time that I am able to spend with our elders. It brings me joy knowing that I can tap into the wealth of knowledge that they possess.

Older Americans Month serves as a reminder to recognize and value the significant role our elders play in our culture.

Yakohe and God bless!



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

## National Homeownership Month

It's June and summer is around the corner! June also marks National Homeownership Month, a time to celebrate the benefits that homeownership brings to families, neighborhoods, and communities.

The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation is committed to providing tribal members with the assistance they need to obtain the homeownership dream. Our Lease to Purchase (LEAP) Program's mission is to build strong families and vibrant neighborhoods through quality affordable housing and strengthened financial stability.

"Since the program began in 2018, 330 homes have been built with another 110 estimated to be completed this year," noted Valerie Powell, Senior Director of Homeowners Services. "Families have been able

to reduce their monthly housing costs by paying less than traditional rent for these homes and less in utility costs through the more energy-efficient design of these homes."

Our Housing Authority has several programs that can assist our tribal members with their housing needs. If you have any questions about the services our Housing Authority offers, I encourage you to contact them at (800) 235-3087 or online at [www.choctawnation.com/services/leap](http://www.choctawnation.com/services/leap).

God bless.



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

## Salvation of the Mind

The place where God begins His work in the believer is in the spirit. This is how a true believer discerns his new birth and has become a child of God. This is because the inner spirit has been quickened or made alive by the Holy Spirit, who dwells within.

The new spirit is regenerated and renewed and is abiding with the indwelling Holy Spirit. And the two of them bear witness together. The Holy of Holies of the Old Testament temple is an illustration of this. Jehovah God's glorious presence dwelt there. The innermost part of the temple pictures our spirit from which the Holy Spirit influences our soul and body.

The blueprint of the Old Testament temple or Tabernacle was given to Moses by God. It begins with the Ark in the Holy of Holies and proceeds to the outside gate. Also, God begins his saving work in man's spirit and progresses outwardly through the soul and body.

Man's religion begins with outside changes attempting to change the inside eventually. Man's religion majors in external

"dos and don'ts" but is not capable of changing the heart of man.

However, God's salvation is a divine process of inward change and outward godliness. God has made provision in grace for the whole person who truly believes. He granted not only love and power but also a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7- "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. "Sound mind" literally means the "saving of the mind."

This is a tremendous thought that redemption is not only salvation of the soul but also the deliverance of the mind.

Consider Luke 8:26-35. Jesus confronted a maniac who had been demonized for a long time. In this state, the man had the spirit of fear, which drove him to acts of violence, nudity, uncleanness, and no permanent structured homelife. When the demons left him at the command of Jesus, he was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

Luke 8:35- "Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid."

This man was once mentally deranged but now is completely healed. He is now capable of thinking logically, soberly and spiritually.

## Choctaws prepare to open '22 Stickball season

**DURANT, Okla. (May 10, 2022)** – The season is about to get underway for what is one of the oldest sports played in America today, stickball. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) will hold its first Adult League Stickball Tournament of 2022 on June 11. A total of 12 teams have signed on. Organizers are preparing for a banner year of games on the tribe's new field at the Choctaw Cultural Center.

**WHO:** Everyone is invited to watch and cheer on players in the season-opening games. Seven men's and five women's teams from across the region will be represented.

**WHAT:** The Choctaw Cultural Center will host an Adult League Choctaw Nation Stickball Tournament that will feature 20 games in a double-elimination bracket.

**WHEN:** Team check-in begins at 8 a.m. Saturday, June 11 with the first men's game beginning at 9 a.m. and the first women's game at 9:30 a.m. Games will run non-stop throughout the day. The women's championship is slated for 4:30 p.m. and the men's championship at 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Competition Stickball Field on the north end of the grounds of the Choctaw Cultural Center, 1919 Hina Hanta Way, in Calera, OK.

**HOW:** Admission to the tournament is complimentary, with plenty of parking. Food and drinks will be available at the Champuli Cafe inside the Cultural Center. For information, contact CNO Director of Public Relations Randy Sachs at 800-522-6170.

## Delton Cox celebrates retirement

On April 20, 2022, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma celebrated the retirement of long-time Tribal Councilman Delton Cox.

Chief Gary Batton presented Cox with a Pendleton blanket, thanking him for his years of service during and before his time on Tribal Council.

Cox served as an administrator of Jones Academy and the tribal treasure before being elected as a Tribal Councilman. Cox was also a member of the Constitutional Committee for the 1983 Choctaw Constitution, serving as one of two neutral members.

Before his time with the Choctaw Nation, Cox was an educator for many years. Cox has spent most of his adult life sharing the history of the Choctaw Nation with others.

One of the gifts presented to him during his retirement party was a scroll titled "Hear Ye, Hear Ye" from the Spiro Senior Citizens. The document told the life story of Delton Cox.

Delton served on the Choctaw Tribal Council from 2001 until his retirement in 2021. In total, Cox dedicated 20 years of service to the tribe.

"I have the greatest respect for Delton and was happy to honor his servant's heart and lifetime of dedication to the Choctaw People," said Chief Batton.



## EXPLORE YOUR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TODAY!

# Project Iti (Tree)

**Choctaw Nation & General Motors** are teaming up to identify job candidates for *Information Technology (IT)* related positions.

Project Iti is committed to empowering **Choctaw Veterans** and **Choctaw females** who are interested in a meaningful career in the IT field.

**Training is provided tuition-free.** Additional assistance may be available.

**For More information:**

- Contact Rebecca Hawkins at 580-916-0420 or [rhawkins@choctawnation.com](mailto:rhawkins@choctawnation.com) or Bryan Martin at 918-429-3134 or [bmartin@choctawnation.com](mailto:bmartin@choctawnation.com)
- Complete the Career Development application at <https://cdapplication.choctawnation.com>
- Place **"Project Iti"** on step 2 of 9 in the Career Goal/Certification Seeking Box.
- A+ Certification is a plus.

Stay Connected

**CHOCTAWNATION.COM**

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [v](#) [p](#)

**DAILY INTERACTIVE PROGRAMMING**

CHAHTA 101  
STICKBALL  
SOCIAL DANCING  
SCAVENGER HUNTS  
THE HISTORY OF CHOCTAW EDUCATION  
CULTURAL DEMONSTRATIONS

**COME JOIN US**

USE THE CAMERA ON YOUR SMART PHONE TO SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO PLAN YOUR TRIP

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

## OUTREACH AT THE BEACH

SWIMMING | FREE LUNCH | KARAOKE | GIVEAWAYS | TSHIRT

**Plenty of fun activities and free food as well as representatives from our programs and services who are looking forward to connecting with you.**

**JULY 13, 2022 | 10 AM - 2:30 PM**

SARDIS LAKE | 432646 EAST 1625 LANE | CLAYTON, OK

**877-285-6893 | CHOCTAWNATION.COM**

**Choctaw Nation** Outreach Services

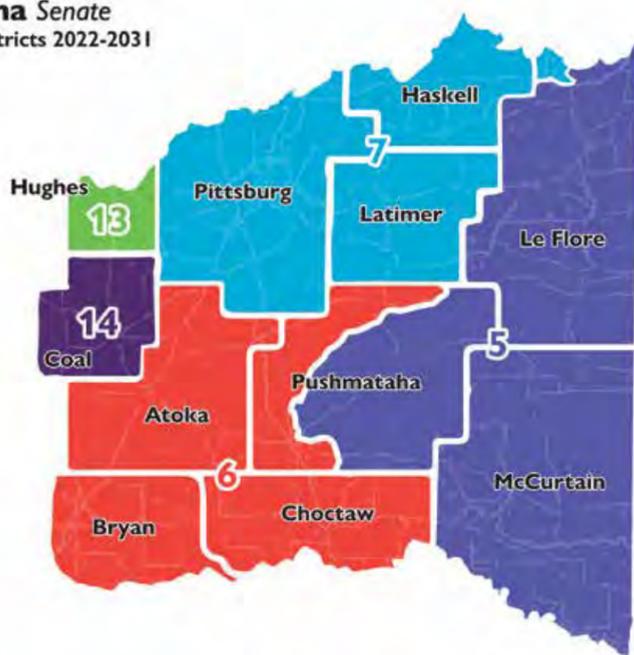
## SENIOR NUTRITION VETERAN LUNCHES 2022

Wednesday, June 1	TIME
Battiest/Bethel	11:30 AM
Tuesday, June 7	TIME
Talihina	11:00 AM
Wednesday, June 8	TIME
Atoka	10:45 AM
Broken Bow	11:30 AM
Coalgate	11:00 AM
Hugo	12:00 PM
Spiro	11:30 AM
Wright City	11:30 AM
Tuesday, June 14	TIME
Smithville	12:00 PM
Wednesday, June 15	TIME
Antlers	11:30 AM
Crowder	11:00 AM
Poteau	12:00 PM
Stigler	11:30 AM
Wednesday, June 22	TIME
Durant	11:00 AM
Wednesday, June 29	TIME
Idabel	11:15 AM
McAlester	11:30 AM
Wednesday, July 20	TIME
Wilburton	11:00 AM

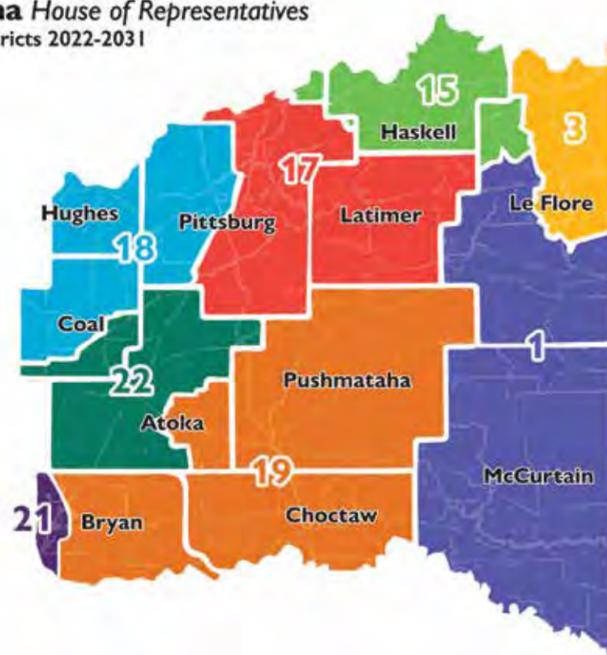
**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

# State congressional and legislative redistricting impacts voters across CNO reservation

**Oklahoma Senate**  
Electoral Districts 2022-2031



**Oklahoma House of Representatives**  
Electoral Districts 2022-2031



## New congressional and legislative district boundaries

**Durant, Okla.** – Every ten years state and federal legislative bodies including the United States House of Representatives, the Oklahoma Senate, and the Oklahoma House of Representatives, go through a redistricting process after the federal census to enact new congressional and state legislative district boundaries. On November 22, 2021, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt signed new congressional and legislative district maps into law.

The new congressional and legislative district boundaries will impact voters in state and federal elections beginning in 2022. Voters across the 10½ counties comprising the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma have been impacted by the redistricting process and may be voting in different districts than in previous years. For example, the city of Poteau was previously split between House Districts 3 and 15 but is now fully encompassed within House District 3. After the 2020 census, Oklahoma was apportioned five seats in the United States House of Representatives; however, those districts have been reapportioned for the 2022 election cycle.

The State of Oklahoma has compiled and released maps showing the new boundaries which will be effective until the year 2030 after the next federal census. Importantly, the State Election Board will conduct the 2022 primary and general elections according to the new district lines.

Voters who wish to access the new congressional district maps for the Oklahoma House of Representatives can find them online at <https://okhouse.gov/Publications/GISDistrictMapsReports2.aspx>.

[senate.gov/redistricting/district-maps?msckid=122f29b8c01811ec9fa689cf7353b7a4#l-district-2](https://senate.gov/redistricting/district-maps?msckid=122f29b8c01811ec9fa689cf7353b7a4#l-district-2).

The new United States House of Representatives district maps can be found online at the following website: [https://www.okhouse.gov/Publications/GISDistrictMapsReports2.aspx - Congressional\\_District\\_Maps](https://www.okhouse.gov/Publications/GISDistrictMapsReports2.aspx-Congressional_District_Maps).

Oklahoma residents who want to vote in Primary Election on June 18, 2022, must register before the deadline on June 3, 2022. To vote in the Runoff Primary Election on August 8, 2022, potential voters must register before the deadline on July 29, 2022. To be eligible to vote in the General Election on November 8, 2022, potential voters must register on or before October 14, 2022. Oklahoma voters can register to vote online by following the instructions online at the following website: <https://www.oklahoma.gov/elections/voter-registration/register-to-vote.html>. Voter registration applications are also available at each County Election Board and at most Oklahoma tag agencies, post offices, and public libraries, according to the Oklahoma State Election Board.

Oklahoma residents who are at least 18 years old and who are citizens of the United States may register to vote. Oklahoma residents who are U.S. citizens may pre-register to vote when they are 17 ½, however, they may not vote until after their 18th birthday. Persons convicted of a felony may register to vote after he or she has fully served any sentence, including any term of incarceration, parole or supervision, or completed the period of probation ordered by any court. To find out more about how to register and registration requirements, visit the Oklahoma State Election Board online or you County Election. A list of County Election Boards is available online at the following site: <https://www.oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/elections/ceb-physical-addresses/ceb-physical-addresses-20220401.pdf>.

The new Oklahoma Senate district maps can be accessed at the following website: <https://ok->

State of Oklahoma		2011 Redistricting		2021 Redistricting	
County	Municipality	Senate District	House District	Senate District	House District
Le Flore	Arkoma	4	3	5	3
Le Flore	Bokoshe	4	15	5	15
Le Flore	Cameron	4	3	5	3
Le Flore	Cowlington	4	15	7	3
Le Flore	Fanshawe	4, 5	3, 17	7	1
Le Flore	Fort Coffee	4	3	5	3
Le Flore	Heavener	5	3	5	3
Le Flore	Howe	5	3	5	3
Le Flore	Le Flore	5	17	5	1
Le Flore	Panama	4	15	5	3
Le Flore	Pocola	4	3	5	3
Le Flore	Poteau	4, 5	3, 15	5	3
Le Flore	Rock Island	4	3	5	3
Le Flore	Shady Point	4	15	5	3
Le Flore	Spiro	4	3, 15	5	3
Le Flore	Talihina	5	1, 17	5	1
Le Flore	Wister	4, 5	3	5	1
Atoka	Atoka	6	22	6	22
Atoka	Caney	6	22	6	22
Atoka	Stringtown	5, 6	19	6	22
Atoka	Tushka	6	22	6	22
Bryan	Achille	6	21	6	19
Bryan	Armstrong	6	21	6	21
Bryan	Bennington	6	19	6	19
Bryan	Bokchito	6	19	6	19
Bryan	Caddo	6	21	6	19
Bryan	Calera	6	21	6	21
Bryan	Colbert	6	21	6	21, 19
Bryan	Durant	6	21	6	21, 19
Bryan	Hendrix	6	21	6	19
Bryan	Kemp	6	21	6	19
Bryan	Kenefic	6	21	6	19
Bryan	Mead	6	21	6	21
Bryan	Silo	6	21	6	21
Choctaw	Boswell	5	19	6	19
Choctaw	Fort Towson	5	19	6	19
Choctaw	Hugo	5	19	6	19
Choctaw	Sawyer	5	19	6	19
Choctaw	Soper	5	19	6	19
Coal	Bromide	6	18	14	22
Coal	Centrahoma	6	18	14	18
Coal	Coalgate	6	18	14	22
Coal	Lehigh	6	18	14	22
Coal	Phillips	6	18	14	22
Coal	Tupelo	6	18	14	18
Haskell	Keota	7	15	7	15
Haskell	Kinta	7	15	7	15
Haskell	McCurtain	7	15	7	15
Haskell	Stigler	7	15	7	15
Haskell	Tamaha	7	15	7	15
Haskell	Whitefield	7	15	7	15
Hughes	Allen	7	18	13	18, 25
Hughes	Atwood	13	18	13	18
Hughes	Calvin	7	18	13	18
Hughes	Dustin	7	24	13	18
Hughes	Gerty	7	18	13	18
Hughes	Holdenville	13	24	13	18
Hughes	Horntown	7	18, 24	13	18

Information sourced from <https://www.okhouse.gov/>

State of Oklahoma		2011 Redistricting		2021 Redistricting	
County	Municipality	Senate District	House District	Senate District	House District
Hughes	Lamar	7	18, 24	13	18
Hughes	Spaulding	13	24	13	18
Hughes	Stuart	7	18	13	18
Hughes	Wetumka	7	24	13	18
Hughes	Yeager	7	24	13	18
Johnston	Bromide	14	22	14	22
Johnston	Mannsville	14	22	14	22
Johnston	Milburn	6	22	6	22
Johnston	Mill Creek	14	22	14	22
Johnston	Ravia	14	22	14	22
Johnston	Tishomingo	14	22	14	22
Johnston	Wapanucka	6	22	14	22
Latimer	Fanshawe	7	17	7	17
Latimer	Red Oak	7	17	7	17
Latimer	Wilburton	7	17	7	17
McCurtain	Broken Bow	5	1	5	1
McCurtain	Garvin	5	1	5	1
McCurtain	Haworth	5	1	5	1
McCurtain	Idabel	5	1	5	1
McCurtain	Millerton	5	1	5	1
McCurtain	Smithville	5	1	5	1
McCurtain	Valliant	5	1	5	1
McCurtain	Wright City	5	1	5	1
Pittsburg	Alderson	7	17	7	17
Pittsburg	Ashland	7	18	7	18
Pittsburg	Canadian	7	17, 18	7	17
Pittsburg	Crowder	7	17, 18	7	17
Pittsburg	Haileyville	7	17	7	17
Pittsburg	Hartshorne	7	17	7	17
Pittsburg	Indianola	7	18	7	17
Pittsburg	Kiowa	7	18	7	17
Pittsburg	Krebs	7	17	7	17
Pittsburg	McAlester	7	17, 18	7	17, 18
Pittsburg	Pittsburg	7	17	7	17
Pittsburg	Quinton	7	17	7	17, 15
Pittsburg	Savanna	7	17, 18	7	17
Pontotoc	Ada	13	25	13	25
Pontotoc	Allen	13	25	13	18, 25
Pontotoc	Byng	13	25	13	25
Pontotoc	Fitzhugh	13	25	13	25
Pontotoc	Francis	13	25	13	25
Pontotoc	Roff	13	25	13	25
Pontotoc	Stonewall	13	25	13	25
Pushmataha	Albion	5	19	5	19
Pushmataha	Antlers	5	19	6	19
Pushmataha	Clayton	5	19	6	19
Pushmataha	Rattan	5	19	5	19

## 2022 Oklahoma Elections - Voter Information Center

Election Date	Voter Registration Deadline	Absentee Ballot Request Deadline	Election Type	Election Day Hours	Early Voting Dates and Hours
June 28 (Last Tuesday)	June 3, 2022	June 13, 2022 5 PM	Primary Election Special Elections	7 AM to 7 PM	June 23 – 24, 8 AM to 6 PM June 25, 8 AM to 2 PM
July	Elections are prohibited by state law in July of even-numbered years.				
August 23 (4th Tuesday)	July 29, 2022	August 8, 2022 5 PM	Runoff Primary Election Special Elections	7 AM to 7 PM	August 18 – 19, 8 AM to 6 PM August 20, 8 AM to 2 PM
September	Elections are prohibited by state law in September of even-numbered years.				
October	Elections are prohibited by state law in October of even-numbered years.				
November 8 (1st Tuesday after 1st Monday)	October 14, 2022	October 24, 2022 5 PM	General Election Special Elections	7 AM to 7 PM	November 2 – 4, 8 AM to 6 PM November 5, 8 AM to 2 PM
December	Elections are prohibited by state law in December of even-numbered years.				

# CNO Community Partner Fund awards quarterly contributions to strengthen and develop local communities

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

**District 3 and 6** – The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Wilburton \$14,200, Tahihina \$18,500 and Latimer County \$17,900 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue to help strengthen and develop the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last three years and The Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of \$478,200 to the city of Wilburton, Tahihina and Latimer County.

**District 3 and 4** – The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Pocola \$18,300, Poteau \$32,400, Heavener \$15,400 and Le Flore

County \$39,700 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue to help strengthen and develop the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last three years and The Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of \$984,250 to the cities of Pocola, Poteau, Heavener and Le Flore County.

**District 9** – The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Durant \$73,700 and Bryan County \$8,400 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue to help strengthen and develop the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last three years and The Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of \$870,000 to the city of Durant and Bryan County.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund began in 2019 and has put back more than \$5 million into southeastern Oklahoma communities.



Jennifer Woods, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 6, City of Wilburton Officials; Latimer County officials, Wilburton Chamber and Mainstreet Representatives; Choctaw Nation Small Business and Government Relations.



Jennifer Woods, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 6; City of Wilburton Officials; City of Wilburton Police Department; Wilburton Chamber and Mainstreet Representatives; Choctaw Nation Small Business and Government Relations.



Eddie Bohannon, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember and Jack Cosper, Interim Tahihina town administrator.



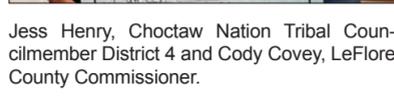
Cody Smith, Heavener City Manager and Eddie Bohannon, Choctaw Nation Council Member District 3.



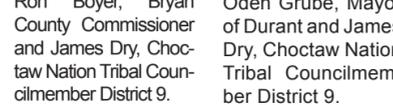
Jess Henry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 4 and Cody Covey, LeFlore County Commissioner.



Ron Boyer, Bryan County Commissioner and James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 9.



Jess Henry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 4 and Bill Hoffman, City of Poteau Chair of Planning Commission.



Jess Henry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Councilmember District 4 and Roy Walker, Mayor of Pocola.

## District 9 helps those looking for employment

**DURANT, Okla.** – Lena Sexton Maturino, a longtime participant at the Choctaw Community Center in Durant, has helped develop a unique program to assist those in their career search or workplace. The District 9 Professional Clothes Closet is so far proving to be a success for those in need of a helping hand with a more professional-style wardrobe.

"It's a clothes' closet specifically for those going on job interviews or starting new jobs where they need the right clothes," said James Dry, District 9 councilman for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO).

It got underway in 2018 on a small scale when June and Richard Sidles donated a number of suits after Richard's retirement. Dry had already been thinking about such a project and accepted the clothing, and it grew from there.

"Right now, we keep about eight racks of men's and women's clothes on hand," said Dry, plus shoes, belts, and ties.

Although it's housed at the Choctaw Community Center, the program is open to the public.

"It's open to everyone," said Maturino, who oversees the closet daily. Non-Choctaws and those needing dress clothes or jeans and other outfits for work outdoors are assisted, as well as the homeless who just need basic clothing. "And people are coming from all over," she added, noting that visitors from Tulsa to Sherman, Texas have used the free service.

Even recent college graduates who have never owned a suit and young women who needed a nice pair of slacks and jacket have used the service. The wardrobe has aided in successful interviews landing jobs as hosts and entry positions at the Choctaw Nation and other companies.

"At least 95 percent of donations come from our Choctaw elders and Choctaw Nation associates," said Dry.

Donations of clothing items also have been passed on to other community centers that have now started their own local clothes closets. "This was the first and it's been like a seed," said Dry.



Photo by Charles Clark

Pictured are the founders of the District 9 Professional Clothes Closet, District 9 Councilman James Dry, June Sidles and Lena Sexton Maturino.

Well over a thousand people have been assisted since the program began, they said.

Another benefit to come out of the project – "I feel like it saved Lena's life," said Dry.

"I was recovering from cancer," Maturino said. "I was mad at the world. Why me? I was in a wheelchair, had quit coming to the center, just staying in my apartment. I was depressed."

Dry knew in the past that she had been a longtime employee at the Nation and felt she needed to engage with others again. He convinced her to help with the project. Now she's at the center every day it's open, sorting, sizing and mending clothes to help others dress for a professional start.

The District 9 Professional Clothes Closet is open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday for donations and service.

Clothing should be brought in clean, ironed and hanging if possible. A local Choctaw-owned cleaners donates services when needed.

Councilman Dry said, "The biggest need at this time is for men's shoes. But that could change, and all clothing is welcome."

Choctaw Community Center, 2746 Big Lots Dr. (on the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma campus), Durant, Okla.

Contact Field Office Clerk Mary Lee Williams, 580-924-7810 or mlwilliams@choctawnation.com



Anthony Dillard

## District 10

Halito, Chim Achukma from District 10.

As the summer season approaches, the summer camps for the kids will soon start across the reservation. We are truly blessed to have a variety of camps that the Choctaw Nation offers throughout the summer. We have expanded our offerings to stickball, wildlife, cheer, NASA and drone. In addition, over spring break, technology and art camps were provided to our youth.

With the growth of Esports in our schools, I speculate that an Esports camp or possible tournaments could be in the future. I want to shout out to the Atoka High School for partnering with the Choctaw Nation and allowing us to host their second annual Esports tournament. This event brought gamers in from all over the state to participate.

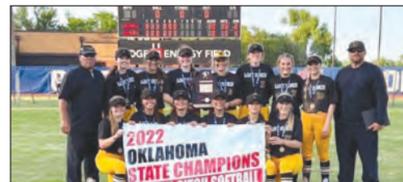
I want to give some accolades to our District 10 sports teams! They all achieved some monumental successes this season.

The Tushka High School Boys Basketball, Pittsburg High School Girls Basketball, Caddo High School Girls Fall Fast Pitch, and Caddo High School Spring Slow Pitch won the state championships in their divisions. Congratulations to all the athletes, coaches, and parents for their hard work and sacrifices it takes to achieve such accomplishments. We are all very proud of you!

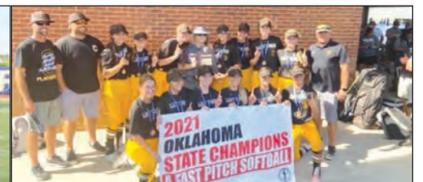
We are also very proud of the District 10 Senior Nutrition Center Fitness Team for retaining the traveling Fitness Challenge trophy for the fourth straight year. You are leading by example and encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle for all of us to follow.

As we are concluding this first anniversary of the ARPA programs the Choctaw Nation is administering, we will go into year two of the funding and encourage all who didn't get their application in for year one; you can still apply for year two. For everyone else, address verifications will begin July 1st for year two funding on the Chahta Achuffa member portal. If you cannot access this member portal on your own, be sure and visit your local community center for assistance.

Yakoke!



Caddo High School Slow-Pitch Softball Team



Caddo High School Fast-Pitch Softball Team



Pittsburg High School Girls Basketball Team



Tushka High School Boys Basketball Team



Robert Karr

## District 11

Halito, Chim Achukma from District 11. I love to see the opening of all the activities to gather for our tribal members and their families. It was such a blessing to see our people out for the Easter Celebration and Trail of Tears Walk this spring.

I would like you to know that as your legislative representative of District 11, I work with a great group of council members who have the heart to serve their people. They show it often whether we're discussing services for tribal members, business opportunities to bring in more revenue, or fighting to protect our sovereignty. It is a very important responsibility, and I am humbled that you gave me the opportunity to represent D-11.

In the last few months, I had a chance to visit the Hartshorne Elementary School Star Program kids and read to the Jones Academy students and our D-11 Head Start children. Also, I attended the McAlester Indian Education JOM Banquet and read to the Jones Academy students and our D-11 Head Start children. Also, I attended the McAlester Indian Education JOM Banquet and

an elementary cultural day at Will Rogers school. Like I've heard Speaker Williston say before, "Nothing is too good for our children because they are our future leaders."

It was a blessing to visit Choctaw families in Bakersfield, California, at the Annual Okla Chahta Gathering in May. They were happy to see their Chief, Asst. Chief and Council and take part in all the cultural activities our employees presented. Tammy and I enjoyed making new friends and were especially excited to see people from District 11.

Yakoke to Choctaw Defense for providing a trailer for our District 11 Veterans at the Armed Forces Day parade. We are having good participation at Wednesday's Senior lunches; I would like to thank our special speakers that have come to share their programs with our Elders.

Any CDIB holder 55 or over and their spouse can come to eat and take part in the activities and trips. We have speakers every Wednesday at 11, with lunch served at 11:30. The group is going to tour the CNO hunting lodge June 7, June 29 is our veteran's meal to honor those who served our nation. June 2 is the District 11 Princess pageant, where we will be selecting the 2022 Princesses.

The 30 Leap homes in Krebs will be finished soon, with young families moving in to start the homeownership chapter in life. Also, we are going to build seven Affordable Rental homes in McAlester that will provide an option for tribal members who wish to rent a nice house.

Yakoke for allowing me to serve the great people of D-11, and don't forget, "A single twig breaks, but a bundle of twigs is strong" (Together we are more). If I can answer any questions or help in any way, please let me know.

Chihowa vt Achukma,  
Robert Karr

## Choctaw Print Services named in top 300 list

By Kendra Germany-Wall

Choctaw Print Services (CPS) recently ranked 213 on the 2021 Printing Impressions 300 list.

Printing Impressions magazine provides authoritative coverage on the industry trends, emerging technologies and the news in the graphic arts industry with a specific focus on the commercial print segment. Their goal is to connect the readership with cutting-edge solutions and provide stories of success that will drive the future goals of their organization.

The Printing Impressions 300 rankings are based on the largest printing industries in the U.S. and Canada, ranked by annual sales.

CPS began in 1979 as Texoma Business Forms. Founded by Don Marcum, the company provided a variety of graphic communications, including forms, promotional products, inventory management and related services for businesses in Southern Oklahoma and North Texas. In 1981, Texoma Business Forms entered the commercial printing industry with the purchase of Texoma Printing and Supply in Durant and the two companies began to develop a commercial printing division. The companies were purchased by Russell Marcum in 2003 and consolidated into Texoma Print Services, which became a subsidiary of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in 2005. Its name was later changed to Choctaw Print Services.

CPS offers complete service in multiple product lines. Their in-house team of designers and printing specialists produce high-quality printed materials, includ-



ing commercial publications, brochures, business forms, stationery, direct mail and point-of-purchase materials, and promotional products and apparel.

CPS has had continual success even during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Earlier this year, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma broke ground on the CPS expansion project in Durant, Oklahoma. The new facility will have an additional 15,000 square feet of space, offering more room for services and sales operations. The larger warehouse will provide new equipment and services such as outsourced mailing services, screen printing and embroidery will eventually be brought in-house—along with room for increased print production.

The expected completion date for the CPS expansion project is winter 2023.

For more information on Choctaw Print Services, visit <https://choctawprint.com/>.

**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

June 3	Crowder	By Appointment
June 7	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
June 8	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
June 10	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
June 10	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
June 14	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
June 15	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
June 21	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
June 22	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
June 22	Stigler	By Appointment
June 24	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
June 24	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
June 28	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
June 29	Broken bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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

**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

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

**Biskinik Announcement Guidelines**

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

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

Gary Batton Chief      Jack Austin Jr. Assistant Chief

The Official Monthly Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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

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

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

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

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

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

**EVENTS**

**Battiest, Williams, Allen and LeFlore Family Reunion**  
June 4, 2022, at noon at McGee Creek State Park. Bring a covered dish. For more information, contact Naomi at 580-927-5696.

**Brokeshoulder Family Reunion**  
June 10-11, 2022 (begins 7:00 p.m. on June 10) Sac & Fox Multi-Purpose Building Center, Shawnee, OK. For more information, call Wynona Lumpmouth Brokeshoulder 623-451-4653 or Serena Brokeshoulder Underwood 918-820-2629

- CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA**  
May 14, 2022
- CALL TO ORDER
  - OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
  - ROLL CALL
  - APPROVAL OF MINUTES
    - Regular Session April 9, 2022
  - WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITION
    - Veteran of the Month, District #8 – Thomas Wheelus
  - PUBLIC COMMENTS
    - Billy Smallwood, Individual Speaker—Agriculture Federal Fund - KeepsEagle
  - REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
  - NEW BUSINESS
    - Approve the Application and Budget for the Continuations of Choctaw Nation Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Program for FY2022-2023. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Application for the FY22 Tribal Wildlife Grant (TWG). Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Consolidation of Department of Labor Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Grants under PL-102—477. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Business Lease No. 4200337498 (G09-2017) on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Latimer County, Oklahoma. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Approve Application for the Cost-of-Living Adjustment & Quality Improvement Funds for FY 2022 for Choctaw Nation Head Start Program. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Rescind CB-124-18, CB-39-19, and CB-88-19 and to Approve the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - Resolution Supporting Sara Curtis to Serve on the U.S. Government Accountability Office Tribal Advisory Committee. Motion to Postpone: Vote Count: YEAs – 7; NEAs – 5. Vote Result: Postponement Passed
    - Resolution Supporting Chief Gary Batton to Serve on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Tribal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
    - To Approve the Use of Tribal Property for Certain Campaigns. Vote Count: YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
  - OTHER NEW BUSINESS
  - OLD BUSINESS
  - ADJOURNMENT
  - CLOSING PRAYER

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

How has the Choctaw Nation made a difference in your community?

Scan here to share your answer.

[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/TOGETHER-WERE-MORE](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/TOGETHER-WERE-MORE)

Together, we're more.

**YAKOKE**

A big thank you to the Choctaw Nation for my new hearing aids and to Dr Laurian Duncan and her staff for being so nice and friendly.

Larry Bramlett  
Roxton, Texas

Heritage Quilters of Durant wishes to thank District 9 Councilman James Dry for taking time out from his busy schedule to be a judge at our recent Quilt Celebration 2022. His task was to select his favorite quilt in seven different categories. There were 90 quilts in all, ranging from 8"x8" to king size and were from quilters all over the Texoma Region. Our oldest quilter was in her 90's; our youngest, a boy of 9. Both quilters took first in their categories. It was a joy to have Mr. Dry at this extraordinary show and we're grateful to him for helping select the best of the best.

Suni Hart  
Durant, Oklahoma

**AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM**

FCC.GOV/ACP

This program was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provides eligible households on tribal lands with a discount towards broadband service in the form of a monthly stipend of up to \$75.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**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:

Smithville Community Center  
June 24, 2022  
10:00 – 12:00

**Chahta Anumpa Aikhhvna June Language Lesson**

**Common Questions**  
Katimi ho/na- Why?

The interrogative word for 'why' is 'katiohmi ho' or 'katiohmi na'. Conversationally 'katiohmi' can be shortened to 'katimi ho' or 'katimi na'. 'Ho' and 'na' can be used interchangeably.

Katimi na tvmaha ish ia tuk?	Why did you go to town?
Katimi ho tvmaha chik iyo tuk	Why did you not go to town?
Katimi na chi nukowa?	Why are you mad/angry?
Katimi na impa ik chi bvno?	Why do you not want to eat?
Katimi ho chik impo?	Why are you not eating?
Katimi ho okla chi ponaklo tuk?	Why did they ask you?
Katimi na chi na yukpa?	Why are you happy?
Katimi na tvmaha ish ia chi?	Why are you going to town?
Katimi na ik chim vltobo tuk?	Why did you not get paid?
Katimi ho okla aiyvla chi?	Why are they coming?
Villa mvt katimi na yaya?	Why is that child crying?
Hattak mvt katimi ho kafi ikbvno.	Why does that man not want coffee?
Katiohmi ho ant chi pisa tuk?	Why did he/she come to see you?
Katiohmi na chi hvshaya?	Why is he/she being sulky (to you)?
Katiohmi ho okla ant chi nowa tuk?	Why did they come and visit you?
Katimi na chi chukka okla abinachi tuk?	Why did they stay overnight at your house?
Katimi ho alikchi ish pisa?	Why are you seeing the doctor?
Katimi na chik talowo tuk?	Why did you not sing?

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

## Release of 1950 Census proves to be useful research tool

By Shelia Kirven

Many tools are available to help with conducting family research, including the recently released 1950 U.S. Census records and at-home DNA testing kits. Both can provide helpful information, with census records being a vital part of the research. DNA test results, however, remain less reliable when attempting to prove tribal ancestry.

Census records remain the gold standard for researching ancestors. A census has been conducted every 10 years since 1790, as outlined in the U.S. Constitution and provides totals for the nation's populations. It takes 72 years for the U.S. Government to release a new decade's version to the public due to the privacy of individuals in the records.

The newly released records represent the Baby Boom generation. According to [www.Archives.gov](http://www.Archives.gov), they contain 151 million people and 33,378 additional census pages from Indian reservations.

The records show household member names, locations, ages, states born in, marital status, military service and occupations. It even shows which families owned television sets at that time. Race also begins to be broken down more.

Census records are valuable because they help provide names to people's family members and put them in locations at certain times.

"In Indian Territory, we have been getting a census since 1900. For someone who thinks they may be Choctaw, 1900 was important because it tells where someone was living at that time. In 1950, a lot of people's grandparents were living and [census records tell us] what they were doing and who was in the household," Gwen Takes Horse, Choctaw Nation Genealogy/Research Specialist. "They need to be able to do a family tree, starting with themselves and working backwards. When they get to 1950, they are going to see someone like grandparents or great-grandparents and you're working back to get to 1900 to find where your relatives were living. You're not looking to see if they're Native American; you're

just trying to find your family back to 1900. If they were living in southeastern Oklahoma, there might be a chance they were Choctaw."

At that point, the Dawes Records need to be consulted to see if anyone on the family tree signed up affiliating with a tribe.

According to Takes Horse, Ancestry.com will give researchers districts and counties. Researchers can enter a name, state and county, then go page by page due to the 1950 Census not being indexed yet.

Takes Horse explained that the site has only a few states indexed at this time and that the advantage of indexing is being able to locate names easily. Users will need to pull up the county and state rather than the individual name they are searching to go page by page.

An added function on the National Archives website is the ability to search the state and county, and it will find each person by the name(s) listed.

With census records, researchers can see who lived next door to their family by looking at the families below, and above them, on the page, they are listed. The older censuses were recorded manually by a census taker door-to-door. This is consistent with the 1950 census as well. This information can open possibilities to reach out to others who may be able to fill in gaps in research.

"A great part of history is recorded in these records as well and what was going on in American society at the time," Greg Peterson, Choctaw Nation Genealogy/Research Program Manager.

According to Peterson, the census records are helpful to open doors for those who didn't know their ancestors were in the military and give opportunities to do more research on families' military histories.

The official website of the 1950 Census is <https://1950census.archives.gov/>.

Researchers can search the census by name or identify their relatives' geographic area in 1950 and then browse the census population schedules for that enumeration district.

With the advance in science in genealogical research, many are now turning to at-home DNA tests to find clues in their family histories. There are a variety of tests available for purchase and most are simple to use, with results available within a few weeks.

Data privacy differs from each company, and users should review the privacy policy and determine their limits for risk before purchase and testing. Tests are relatively inexpensive, but with the purchase of add-ons, the cost can quickly add up.

DNA tests give percentages of ethnicity estimates and areas from which ancestors may have come. Some provide information about matches for biological family members who have taken the same test, and some may even offer health indicators. Results are based on databank information and algorithms. A recent New York Times article reported most DNA samples to consist of samples from those with European ancestry.

DNA test results can vary. Individuals may take tests from various companies and get different results. This is because testing services may use markers that provide a diverse representation of ethnicity.

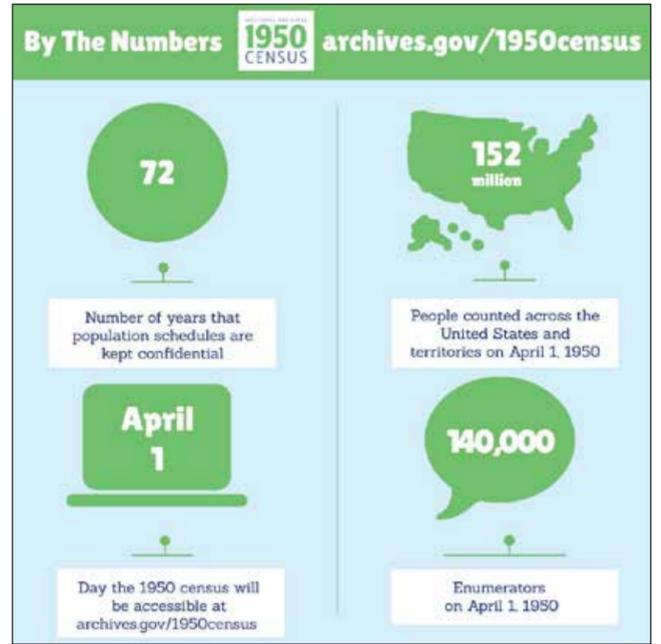
Sometimes ancestral DNA results can be shocking, and test-takers get results they did not anticipate, such as proof of biological parents and siblings who differ from what they knew. It is best to keep an open mind before doing a DNA test.

Inherited genetic markers can play havoc with ethnicity results, resulting in small amounts not appearing on test results. The results of siblings will be similar but may not show the same results. According to National Geographic, siblings only share about 50% of the same DNA on average.

Peterson also said to keep in mind that it may be because of the percentage for those whose Native American blood does not show on their DNA results.

"With the genetic markers, it may be such a small amount that it doesn't register on the test," said Peterson.

If researchers have Native Amer-



ican ancestry on their test results, it may show as vague as "Indigenous Americas North." Test results usually will not pinpoint specific tribes.

Ancestry's website explains its results are broken down by geographical region (Indigenous Americas). It also states that because many Native Americans carry DNA from multiple tribes and non-Indigenous DNA, it can be hard to distinguish between tribes.

The Choctaw Nation does not use DNA test results to verify Native American blood.

Peterson said, "Choctaw Tribal Code states you must have a CDIB to be a member. If you have a CDIB, you must be able to trace your ancestry back to someone on the Dawe's Rolls with a blood quantum. As a researcher goes, DNA tests are great to fill in the gaps with your genealogy and what you have questions about."

He continued, "If you show you are Indigenous on a test, that does not necessarily tie you to a single tribe or, more importantly, to a single individual of that tribe. That's what is important for membership. We must be able to trace you back to an individual who was on a roll that was registered with a tribe."

DNA testing cannot determine eligibility and should only be used as resource information.

After taking a DNA test, researchers' next steps should be to consult census records. If researchers don't know where their relatives lived, they can go to census records, find lineal ancestors, and put them into places that might help identify what tribe they could be a part of.

"That's what we always tell people when they call," said Peterson. "Take yourself and work backwards."

Because the science of ancestral DNA testing is expanding and companies are adding more data to their reference panels, test results may update from time to time.

Peterson said, "With science like this, the more information they receive, the more this stuff changes."

Regardless of the method used for research, a paper trail of birth and death certificates going back to an enrollee on the Dawes Rolls is a must to be able to validate Native American ancestry and to be able to apply for tribal membership.

The Choctaw Nation Genealogy Department can be reached by emailing [genealogy@choctawnation.com](mailto:genealogy@choctawnation.com) or 800-522-6170.

## Jones Academy dedicates building to Robert Smith



Photo by Christian Toews

By Christian Toews

Jones Academy held a ceremony on May 10, 2022, to dedicate a building to Robert Smith. Smith retired from Jones Academy after 57 years with the Academy. Chief Gary Batton was in attendance and spoke to Smith during the ceremony saying, "Thank you so much for all that you've done. I don't know if you realize the positive impact and the shape that you have put on all of our youth, and we just appreciate you so much for your commitment."

In a 2020 interview with the Biskinik, Smith was asked what he plans to do now that he is retired. Smith said, "I will continue supporting them [the students] as far as their activities. As far as going back and working, that's for the younger people to do now. If anybody ever asks for my advice, though, I will still give it to them."

He says he plans to go fishing and to his deer cabin in the mountain on the weekends, plus doing things around the house. During the event Smith said "I would like to thank everybody who took part in planning this. I appreciate you guys coming out."

Jones Academy is located on a 540-acre campus, five miles northeast of Hartshorne, Oklahoma and was initially an all-boys school. In 1955, Jones Academy became a co-ed school after Wheelock Academy, a boarding school for girls, closed. In April of 1985, the Choctaw Nation contracted the boarding school operation from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In 1988, Jones Academy became a tribally controlled school. Jones students come from

as many as 29 different American Indian tribes, though the two largest populations, due to proximity, are Choctaw and Muscogee (Creek). For more information on Jones Academy, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/jonesacademy>.

### Old Choctaw Headquarters dedicated to late Chief Pyle

On May 13, the Choctaw Nation honored former Chief Gregory E. Pyle with the dedication of the old Choctaw Nation Headquarters building. Many friends, family, and associates gathered to honor his legacy and take part in the dedication ceremony.



Photos by Kendra Germany-Wall

Above: The Pyle family unveils the new Chief Gregory E. Pyle Tribal Complex sign.

Below: Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. and Tribal Council Members pose for a photo in front of the newly dedicated complex.



CELEBRATE OUR

# GRAND APP-ENING!

COUNTRY MARKET NOW HAS AN APP.

Download today and start your online order with Market Curbside. You can view our biweekly ad and even scroll through delicious recipes to prepare for your next home-cooked meal!

Download the Choctaw Country Market app today.

**CHOCTAW**  
COUNTRY MARKET

**CHOCTAW**  
CULTURAL CENTER

**MIKE BONE**  
IN CONCERT AT THE CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

**JUNE 11, 2022 | 2:00PM**

LIMITED SEATING AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE TICKETS VISIT: [BIT.LY/CCC-WORKSHOP-EVENTS](https://bit.ly/ccc-workshop-events)

## JOB FOR THE DAY

JOB FOR THE DAY OFFERS TEMPORARY POSITIONS WHILE OUR TEAM WORKS WITH YOU TO FIND AND APPLY FOR PERMANENT PLACEMENT.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:**  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/TRIBAL-SERVICES/MEMBER-SERVICES/JOB-DAY](https://choctawnation.com/tribal-services/member-services/job-day)

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

## MMIW Awareness event held in Antlers

By Tasha Mitchell  
Director of Project EMPOWER

May was Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) Awareness Month. Red is the chosen color for MMIW awareness. The role of red is being used to call attention to the invisible- missing and murdered. May 5 has been commemorated as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls across the nation, we are called upon to wear red to acknowledge thousands of young women and girls who go missing each year without so much as a search party.

According to Urban Indian Health Institute's 2017 report there were 5,712 known incidents of missing and murdered Native American and Alaskan Native women across the US, only 116 of those cases were logged into the Department of Justice database. The report identified 506 cases across 71 urban cities including Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Based on this data, Oklahoma has the 10th highest number of MMIW at 18. Murder is the third leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women. Currently there are more than 220 missing Native Americans in Oklahoma (\*2017 data).

On May 7, 2022 Outreach Services held its first Annual MMIW 5K/1 mile Awareness Walk and Community Event in Antlers. The event was a success! We had



Photo by Shelia Kirven

Over 500 people attended the MMIW 5K/1 Mile Awareness Walk and Community Event.

a total of 198 5K runners and 146 1 Mile walkers and more than 500 people overall in attendance. We had racers ranging from the ages of 5 to 80; and those who traveled from Dallas, Texas and Bentonville, Arkansas to compete in the race.

One of the many things that made our race unique was at the starting line. We had our Youth Stickball Players beating their sticks in rhythm with our drummers that made for a very memorable kickoff to this race. We also had national MMIW statistics placed along the beginning of the route. We had volunteers from the local Girl Scouts troop cheering the runners on.

Aside from the 5K and 1 Mile Awareness Walk we had 18 program booths and three vendor booths.

We are very excited to have had the opportunity to bring awareness to MMIW by hosting this race and look forward to an even bigger and better event next year.

## Production underway in Atlanta for Marvel Studios series 'Echo' coming to Disney+ in 2023

**ATLANTA** – Production is underway in Atlanta on Marvel Studios' "Echo," a series streaming exclusively on Disney+ in 2023. Alaqua Cox ("Hawkeye") stars as the unforgiving Maya Lopez, who made her MCU debut in 2021 in Marvel Studios' "Hawkeye" as a deaf gang leader who was determined to make Ronin aka Clint Barton pay for his own vengeful deeds. First-look image is now available.

Streaming exclusively on Disney+ in 2023, the origin story of Echo revisits Maya Lopez, whose ruthless behavior in New York City catches up with her in her hometown. She must face her past, reconnect with her Native American roots and embrace the meaning of family and community if she ever hopes to move forward. "Echo" also stars Chaske Spencer ("Wild Indian," "The English"), Tantoo Cardinal ("Killers of the Flower Moon," "Stumptown"), Devery Jacobs (FX's "Reservation Dogs," "American Gods") and Cody Lightning ("Hey, Viktor!" "Four Sheets to the Wind"), with Graham Greene ("Wind River," "Longmire") and Zahn McClarnon ("Dark Winds," FX's "Reservation Dogs").

Episodes of the series are directed by Sydney Freeland (Navajo) and CaTriona McKenzie (Guna-



Photo Courtesy of Walt Disney Studios

Production is officially underway on Marvel Studios' Echo, coming to Disney+ in 2023. Above is the first look of Alaqua Cox back in role of Maya Lopez, who viewers first met in Marvel Studios' Hawkeye.

kurnai). Executive producers are Kevin Feige, Louis D'Esposito, Victoria Alonso, Brad Winderbaum, Stephen Broussard, Richie Palmer, Marion Dayre and Jason Gavin (Blackfoot). Co-executive producers are Amy Rardin, Sydney Freeland, Christina King (Seminole) and Jennifer Booth.

Disney+ is the dedicated streaming home for movies and shows from Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and National Geographic, along with The Simpsons and much more. In select international markets, it also includes the new general entertainment content brand, Star. The flagship direct-to-consumer streaming service from The Walt Disney Company, Disney+ is part of the Disney Media &

Entertainment Distribution segment. The service offers commercial-free streaming alongside an ever-growing collection of exclusive originals, including feature-length films, documentaries, live-action and animated series, and short-form content. With unprecedented access to Disney's long history of incredible film and television entertainment, Disney+ is also the exclusive streaming home for the newest releases from The Walt Disney Studios. Disney+ is available as a standalone streaming service or as part of The Disney Bundle that gives subscribers access to Disney+, Hulu, and ESPN+. For more, visit disneyplus.com, or find the Disney+ app on most mobile and connected TV devices.

## Biden administration announces additional free at-home, rapid COVID-19 tests at COVIDTests.gov

**WASHINGTON** – Today, the Biden Administration is announcing that COVIDTests.gov is now open for a third round of ordering. U.S. households are now able to order an additional eight free at-home tests at COVIDTests.gov — bringing the total number of free tests available to each household since the start of the program to 16. As the highly transmissible subvariants of Omicron drive a rise in cases in parts of the country, free and accessible tests will help slow the spread of the virus.

In January 2022, President Biden committed to making one billion at-home tests available to the American people for free, including half-a-billion available for ordering at COVIDTests.gov. Since then, over 70 million households have visited COVIDTests.gov to order at-home tests to be mailed directly to them. To date, the Administration has delivered approximately 350 million free tests to mailboxes and doorsteps across the country, in U.S. territories, and at overseas military bases, with most tests delivered by the U.S. Postal Service within 48 hours of shipping. The third round of tests available were purchased by the federal government earlier this year with funding from the American Rescue Plan.

People who have difficulty accessing the internet or need additional support placing an order can call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489) to get help in

English, Spanish, and more than 150 other languages — 8 a.m. to midnight ET, 7 days a week. For more information, people can visit: <https://www.covid.gov/tests/faq>.

Since January 2021, the Biden Administration has taken significant action and invested resources provided by Congress to dramatically increase domestic COVID-19 testing manufacturing, the number of tests authorized for use in the U.S., and the number of places where Americans can get a test, as well as to decrease costs for consumers and increase access to free tests.

COVID-19 testing is a critical tool to help mitigate the spread of the virus, which is why maintaining domestic testing capacity is an essential component of the President's National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.

Due to Congress's failure to provide additional funding for the nation's COVID-19 response, the Administration cannot continue making the types of federal investments needed to sustain domestic testing manufacturing capacity, and this may jeopardize the federal government's ability to provide free tests moving forward. Today's announcement underscores the Administration's commitment to doing everything in our power to ensure the American people have the lifesaving tools they need — so they are prepared for whatever comes. Congress must step up and act as well.

## 'Vote Your Values' promotes importance of engagement among Oklahoma voters

**OKLAHOMA CITY**(March 11, 2022) – Vote Your Values, a coalition of tribal nations and community partners, has launched an initiative to increase voter education, registration and engagement.

The initiative's launch included unveiling of VoteYourValuesOK.com, a one-stop resource for connecting Oklahomans with voter registration resources and information on upcoming elections.

"Oklahoma is strong because of its diversity," said Matthew L. Morgan, a spokesperson for Vote Your Values. "Each Oklahoman has their own prioritization of values – important issues such as education, health care and tribal sovereignty. Vote Your Values honors this diversity of principles and encourages Oklahomans to make their priorities known through the election process. Dozens of tribal



nations and community partners endorse this unified effort to educate voters and encourage voter participation amongst all Oklahomans."

To learn more about Vote Your Values or discover ways to get involved, visit [VoteYourValuesOK.com](http://VoteYourValuesOK.com).

## William Parker Oklahoma Veteran of the Week

By Judy Allen

Technical Sergeant William Norman Parker was recognized April 18, 2022, as State of Oklahoma Veteran of the Week. State Senator Kevin Matthews, District 11, presented Parker to the full Senate with a Citation of Commendation. Parker was born November 1, 1924. He attended McCurtain High School until 1943 when he received draft papers for WWII. Parker traveled by train for boot camp to prepare for war at Ft. Sill and later at Camp Wolters, Texas. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Parker, followed by the rest of the 116th Infantry's 2nd battalion, entered WWII. When the ramp dropped, he led the charge out of the English Channel and onto the French beach. He believes he was the first soldier to touch the sand. The 116th lost over 1,000 men that day.

"I believe I was the first because there were no dead bodies in front of me," he said.

Parker was among the victorious on



Photo by Kriea Arie/Legislative Service Bureau

Tribal member, William Norman Parker was recently recognized as the State of Oklahoma Veteran of the Week.

D-Day. He later learned he marched 600 miles (some of those miles with a foot so swollen with shrapnel, he briefly thought he was going to lose it) across France and Germany until he met the Russians on the other side of the Elbe River.

Parker was discharged October 25, 1925. He was awarded two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, multiple ribbons for battles fought, a Good Conduct medal and a Sharp Shooter medal.

## DOI releases investigative report, outlines next steps in Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative

**WASHINGTON** — Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland today released Volume 1 of the investigative report called for as part of the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, a comprehensive effort to address the troubled legacy of federal Indian boarding school policies. This report lays the groundwork for the continued work of the Interior Department to address the intergenerational trauma created by historical federal Indian boarding school policies.

This investigative report is a significant step by the federal government to comprehensively address the facts and consequences of its federal Indian boarding school policies—implemented for more than a century and a half—resulting in the twin goals of cultural assimilation and territorial dispossession of Indigenous peoples through the forced removal and relocation of their children. It reflects an extensive and first-ever inventory of federally operated schools, including profiles and maps.

The investigation found that from 1819 to 1969, the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states or then territories, including 21 schools in Alaska and 7 schools in Hawaii. The investigation identified marked or unmarked burial sites at approximately 53 different schools across the school system. As the investigation continues, the Department expects the number of identified burial sites to increase.

"The consequences of federal Indian boarding school policies—including the intergenerational trauma caused by the family separation and cultural eradication inflicted upon generations of children as young as 4 years old—are heartbreaking and undeniable," said Secretary Haaland. "We continue to see the evidence of this attempt to forcibly assimilate Indigenous people in the disparities that communities face. It is my priority to not only give voice to the survivors and descendants of federal Indian boarding school policies, but also to address the lasting legacies of these policies so Indigenous peoples can continue to grow and heal."

"This report presents the opportunity for us to reorient federal policies to support the revitalization of Tribal languages and cultural practices to counteract nearly two centuries of federal policies aimed at their destruction," said Assistant Secretary Newland. "Together, we can help begin a healing process for Indian Country, the Native Hawaiian Community and across the United States, from the Alaskan tundra to the Florida everglades, and everywhere in between."

As part of the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative and in response to recommendations from the report, Secretary Haaland today announced the launch of "The Road to Healing." This year-long tour will include travel across the country to allow American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian survivors of the federal Indian boarding school system the opportunity to share their stories, help connect communities with trauma-informed support, and facilitate collection of a permanent oral history. "The Department's work thus far shows



that an all-of-government approach is necessary to strengthen and rebuild the bonds within Native communities that federal Indian boarding school policies set out to break," added Secretary Haaland. "With the President's direction, we have begun working through the White House Council of Native American Affairs on the path ahead to preserve Tribal languages, invest in survivor-focused services, and honor our obligations to Indigenous communities. We also appreciate the ongoing engagement and support for this effort from Members of Congress and look forward to continued collaboration."

Volume 1 of the report highlights some of the conditions children endured at these schools and raises important questions about the short- and long-term consequences of the federal Indian boarding school system on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities.

The investigation found that the federal Indian boarding school system deployed systematic militarized and identity-alteration methodologies in an attempt to assimilate American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children through education, including but not limited to renaming Indian children from Indian to English names; cutting the hair of Indian children; discouraging or preventing the use of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian languages, religions and cultural practices; and organizing Indian and Native Hawaiian children into units to perform military drills.

Despite assertions to the contrary, the investigation found that the school system largely focused on manual labor and vocational skills that left American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian graduates with employment options often irrelevant to the industrial U.S. economy, further disrupting Tribal economies.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting closures of federal facilities reflect the need for further investigation. The report identifies next steps that will be taken in a second volume, aided by a new \$7 million investment from Congress through fiscal year 2022. Recommendations by Assistant Secretary Newland include producing a list of marked and unmarked burial sites at federal Indian boarding schools and an approximation of the total amount of federal funding used to support the federal Indian boarding school system, and further investigation to determine the legacy impacts of the school system on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities today.

**Ethel M. Wilkerson Phares**

Ethel M. Wilkerson Phares, 90, passed away April 11, 2022.

Ethel was born Nov. 2, 1931, in Kemp, Okla., to Lonnie and Melissa (Johnson) Wilkerson.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband Jerrell; brother Bennie Wilkerson; and granddaughter Melissa Phares.

Ethel is survived by daughters Gail McGarry and spouse Butch, and Teresa Owen and spouse Tom; son Jerry Phares; grandchildren Justin McGarry, Chad McGarry and spouse Amber, Clint Phares, Zack Owen, and Laura Owen; and great-grandchildren Julia McGarry, Gentry McGarry, and Ainsley McGarry.

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

**Dalton James Farrell**

Dalton James Farrell, 24, passed away April 26, 2022.

Dalton was born Aug. 28, 1997, to Jerrell Wayne Farrell and Frances Mae (Fannin) Farrell.

He was preceded in death by his grandpa James Fannin, and grandparents A.J. and Doris Kirk.

Dalton is survived by his daughter Abigail Farrell; his parents; siblings Jerred Farrell and Brittany Farrell; grandparents Kathy Townsend and Jerry Farrell; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

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

**Vanard Lee McIntyre**

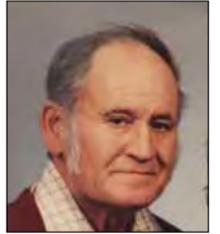
Vanard "Van" Lee McIntyre, 85, passed away Dec. 12, 2021.

Van was born May 30, 1936, to Preston McIntyre and Aurelia Kanuelibee.

He was preceded in death by his parents; son Victor McIntyre; daughter Aurelia McIntyre; brother Bob McIntyre; aunt Effie Rogers; and sister Ramona McIntyre Domebo.

Van is survived by his wife Kay Glenn McIntyre; daughter Vandy Lujan; several grandchildren; brother Charles "Beaver" McIntyre and his children Charlie, Julie, and Maureen McIntyre.

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

**Danny Fulton**

Danny Fulton, 59, passed away Dec. 5, 2021.

Danny was born Aug. 7, 1962, to Tommy and Bonnie Fulton.

He was preceded in death by his mother; and his grandmother Verna Satterwhite.

Danny is survived by his partner Shellie Cox; son Zachary Fulton; daughter Dana Fulton; his children's mother Rhonda; his father; brother Tommy Lee Fulton and spouse Jan; nephew Tom Fulton and spouse Tawny and their children Karly, Alaina, Hannah, and Caleb; niece Jenna Smith and spouse Travis; nephews Seth Fulton and Justus Fulton; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

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

**Jerry Lawrence Tonubbee**

Jerry Lawrence Tonubbee, 75, passed away April 24, 2022.

Jerry was born Aug. 15, 1946, in Grandfield, Okla., to Empson and Lillie (Mintz) Tonubbee.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Delbert Tonubbee; and grandparents Jerry and Sealeh Mintz, and Louis and Betty Tonubbee.

Jerry is survived by his daughters Delayna Tonubbee and Amanda Tonubbee; grandchildren Presley, Logan, James, Ashley, Evan, and Noah; great-grandchild Elana; sister Lila Tucker and spouse John; aunts Jane Mintz and Marie Kidd; along with numerous nieces and nephews.

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

**Earl Ingram**

Earl "Bear" Ingram, 81, passed away March 15, 2022.

Earl was born July 1, 1940, in Non, Okla., to Clarence "Bart" and Annie Hayes Ingram.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sons Gavin and Ryan; sister Lois McCain; brother Jack Ingram; and an infant brother.

Earl is survived by his wife Sandra; son Robert; granddaughter Emily; sisters Ruby McCoy and Donna Kay Stafford; brother Roy Lee Ingram and spouse Teresa; brother and sister-in-law Ed and Cindy Hull Fulmer; and many other relatives and friends.

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

**Maggie Mae Anderson**

Maggie Mae (Hall) Anderson, 98, passed away April 9, 2022.

Maggie was born March 16, 1924, in Atoka, Okla., to Allington Hall and Ida Watson.

She was preceded in death by her husband Willie; her parents; daughters Ida Anderson and Mary Roberts; sons Gary Anderson and Don Anderson; sisters Betty Cole and Alice Foloto; and grandchildren Dean Anderson, Lisa Anderson, Isabinda Anderson, and Angel Cruz.

Maggie is survived by son David Anderson and spouse Patricia; daughters Jeanette Anderson and Vickie Anderson; grandchildren Donnie Anderson, Ronnie Anderson and spouse Ashley, Enessa Scott and spouse James, Steven Anderson and spouse Shelly, Tanya Vallejo and spouse Frankie, Margaret Tate and spouse Bennett, Penny Anderson, Anita Anderson, David Chunky Anderson, and Callie Anderson.

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

**Michael Dale Sockey**

Michael Dale Sockey, 71, passed away May 5, 2022.

Michael was born July 22, 1950, in Poteau, Okla., to Ricard and Ernestine (Ferguson) Sockey.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Michael is survived by his daughters Chrystl Lee Miller (Sam) and Nisha Sockey; son Anthony Dale Steiber; four grandchildren; sisters Judy Hogan (David) and Beverly; brothers Richard, Larry (Katie), and Bobby.

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

**Earline Billie Bullard Dilbeck**

Earline Billie Bullard Dilbeck, 90, passed away Jan. 7, 2021.

Earline was born Sept. 20, 1930, in Shady Grove, Okla.

She was preceded in death by her husband Benson "Hunky" Dilbeck; sister Sharon Kay (Martin) Long; son Richard "Bimbo" Elvis Dilbeck; brother Johnny Martin; great-grandson Benjamin Shallenberger; her parents; and various other relatives.

Earline is survived by her children Richard Boone, Cindy Lorenson and spouse Jeff, Andrew Van Leuven and spouse Scott, Nena Kyriakidis and spouse Antonis, and Donnelle Dilbeck; grandchildren Michael Shoaf, Joy Lawson and spouse John, Crystal Moore, Tyler Moore, Jolene Shallenberger and spouse Mathew, Kadie and Macey Zeller, and Michael Dilbeck; 13 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; as well as countless cousins and family members in Nevada and Oklahoma.

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

**Dolly Leah Johnston**

Dolly Leah Johnson, 80, passed away May 25, 2020.

Dolly was born May 4, 1940, in Lomo, Colo., to Thelma Gertrude Sheets Palmer and Sylvan Jack Palmer.

She was preceded in death by her parents; infant sister Coleen Faye; younger brother Jimmy; and son Joe Jr.

Dolly is survived by her husband Joe; daughters Meta Johnston and Dana Elliott; and son Jon Johnston and spouse Lisa; 12 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

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

**Troy Eugene Noah**

Troy Eugene Noah, 79, passed away Feb. 3, 2022.

Troy was born Nov. 22, 1942, in Talihina, Okla., to Theodore Noah and Edith Daney Noah.

He is survived by his wife Sarah Kouba Noah.

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

**Denver Laverne Mills**

Denver Laverne Mills, 91, passed away May 7, 2022.

Denver was born Dec. 30, 1930, in Quinton, Okla., to Thomas A. Mills and Delora (Beck) Mills.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and siblings Haskell, Raymond, Sylvester, Jack, Flora, Goldie, Alma, and Melba.

Denver is survived by his wife Jackie; daughters Nancy Mills Mackey and spouse John, and Susan L. Humiston and spouse Dave; grandchildren Erin Warner (Andy), Price Mackey, Charlotte Mackey Baird (Zach), Lance Mackey (Mylene), Ashley Elmore (Jeff), John Mackey III (Laura), and Bryant Humiston; and 11 grandchildren.

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

**Timothy Dale Parker**

Timothy "Tim" Dale Parker, 64, passed away April 17, 2022.

Tim was born Dec. 6, 1957, in Lubbock, Texas, to Caral Parker and Ethel (Humphrey) Jackson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and brother Richard Parker.

Tim is survived by his son Derrick Parker and spouse Lyndsey; girlfriend Peggy Robinson; brother Garry Parker and spouse Robbie; sisters Pam Baldwin and spouse Gene, and Ladonna Johnson; grandchildren Landon Parker, Beckham Parker, Caydin Benjamin, and Camdyn Thomas; and a host of other family, friends, and loved ones.

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

**Norma Jean Sullivan**

Norma Jean Sullivan, 74, passed away Oct. 13, 2021.

Norma was born April 6, 1947, in McAlester, Okla., to Edgar Preston and Grace (Smith) Tannehill.

She was preceded in death by husband Calvin; her parents; granddaughter Megan Letourneau; siblings Helen Tannehill Roth, James Tannehill, Carl Tannehill, and Joe Tannehill; brother-in-law Wayne Greer; and sisters-in-law Bernice Tannehill and Joanne Tannehill.

Norma is survived by her life partner Dale Blankenship; son Paul Letourneau and spouse Christy; stepchildren Dale Blankenship Jr., Curtis Blankenship, Venus Hendricks, Danny Letourneau, and Maria Letourneau; grandchildren Whitney Letourneau and Amber Avila; great-grandchildren Dylan, Hayden, Kinsey, Maddilynn, Abel, Mya, and Bailey; siblings twin brother Norman Dean Tannehill and spouse Joan, Vernon Dale Tannehill, Vera Gale Greer, and Edwin Tannehill; special friends Charles and Charlotte Wilson; along with numerous nieces, nephews, and other family and friends.

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

**Paul Willis Cooper**

Paul Willis Cooper, 83, passed away May 7, 2022.

Paul was born Oct. 22, 1938, in Tulsa, Okla., to Paul Ward Cooper and Velva Ivy (Stout) Cooper.

He was preceded in death by his daughter Lee Ann Cooper; his parents; in-laws Lee and Katherine McClure; brothers-in-law Robert McCarley and Pat Gleason; sister Sue and spouse Bill.

Paul is survived by his wife Carolyn; daughter Paula Carol Whatley; son Cory Cooper and spouse Kacey; grandchildren Steven Chad Whatley and spouse Amba, Bryan Paul Whatley and spouse Jenny, Camdon Cade Cooper, Kenedi Katherine Cooper, and Haylie Kreitz; great-grandchildren Sebastian Whatley, Yossarian Whatley, Juniper Shalom Whatley, Avery and Rylan Whatley; sister Sandra Pauline Gleason; sister-in-law Deloris McCarley; brother-in-law Charles McClure and spouse Jeannie; many nieces, nephews, and their children including Chris McClure and spouse Colleen, and Ginger Rodgers.

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

**Bobby Lee Vantrees**

Bobby Lee Vantrees, 36, passed away April 30, 2022.

Bobby was born May 12, 1985, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Leon Vantrees and Robin (Wilson) Vantrees.

He is survived by his parents; son Devon Lee Vantrees; daughter Chloe Chyenne Vantrees; brother Leon Roger Vantrees; sister Tina Moore and spouse Daniel; along with a host of other family and friends.

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

**Bruce Hensley**

Bruce Hensley, 79, passed away March 4, 2022.

Bruce was born Feb. 20, 1943, in Mecca, Calif, to Alonzo and Cleo Hensley.

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

Bruce is survived by his wife Betty; sons Joel and spouse Katie, and Jeff; daughter Stacy Koop and spouse Mike; grandsons Brandon and spouse Ali, Dakota and spouse Katie, and Gannon; granddaughter Annabelle; sister Diane Wilhite; and brother-in-law Keith Bush.

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

**Lisa Warren Roberts**

Lisa Warren Roberts, 60, passed away May 4, 2022.

Lisa was born July 15, 1961, in Dallas, TX., to David Warren and Lena Helen Jacob.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Marvin; brothers Stephen Impson and David Impson; and sister Marcia Impson.

Lisa is survived by her sons Ramsey Williston, Keith Williston, and Max Williston; daughter Amy Williams and spouse Jerome; brother Dennis Impson; sister Marie Battiest and spouse Isaac Jr.; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

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

**John Edgar Johnson**

John "JJ" Edgar Johnson, 60, passed away April 22, 2022.

JJ was born June 4, 1961, in San Diego, Calif., to Sharon Crabtree and Jack Lewis Johnson.

He was preceded in death by his father; grandfather Edgar Crabtree; grandmother Hellen Crabtree; and brother Rodney Smith.

JJ is survived by his wife Karen; sons Cody Ritter and spouse Abbie, and Jack Johnson and spouse Amanda; daughters Katy Bowling, and Kathleen Childress and spouse Ryan; grandchildren Lily Sturges, Creek Ritter, Guy Sturges, Corbin Ritter, Wyatt Childress, and Rylee Childress; mother Sharon Bond and spouse Lex; brothers Jack Johnson and spouse Beth, and Donald Smith; many nephews, nieces, family, and friends.

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

**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)

## Francis goes to State

Landen Francis is a Junior at Prescott High School. Landen placed third in the Arizona State Championship on March 17, 2022.



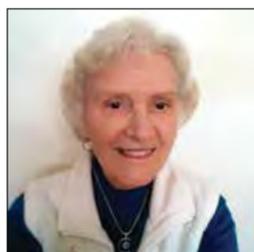
## Burges celebrate 70th anniversary

Reuben and Betty Burge celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on May 31. 2022 is a year of milestones for the Burges. Reuben also celebrated his 90th birthday on May 14.



## Adkins celebrates 95th birthday

Frances (Taylor) Adkins celebrated her 95th birthday on May 13, 2022. Fran grew up on the Taylor Ranch in Rocky Point, Oklahoma; attended Moyers school 1st-12th grades. She also studied at Eastern OK State College and Modesto Junior College, California. Fran lives independently, is a deaconess in the Brethren Church, and does volunteer work with the homeless. Her remaining siblings are Elizabeth Nored of Hugo, Oklahoma, Buddy (Jerry) Taylor of Moyers, Oklahoma, and Lucille Absher of Modesto, California. Fran is very proud to proclaim her Choctaw heritage.



## Amos celebrates 95th birthday

Louise Amos celebrated her 95th birthday on May 6. Her family wishes her happy birthday! She thanks friends for their phone calls and many cards. Isaiah 46:4



## McGinnis signs letter of intent

Tribal member Gwendolen McGinnis recently signed her letter of intent to attend college and play softball at the University of Tampa, beginning in the fall semester of 2022. She graduated from high school in May of 2022 and has a 4.52 GPA. Gwendolen has worked hard at school and softball for many years to make this possible. She plans to study to become a physical therapist.



## Roberts graduates from OSU

Kennedy Kaye Roberts of Broken Bow, Oklahoma recently graduated from Oklahoma State University on May 7. Roberts earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Sciences and Natural Resources in Animal Science and Natural Resource Ecology and Management.



## Ortega graduates from UT Tyler

Kyleigh Nicole Ortega graduated from UT Tyler on Friday, April 29 at 4:00 p.m. Pictured is Kyleigh with her sister Reagan Ortega. Reagan is a senior at Royse City High School.



## Choctaw basketball teams win at national tournament

**DURANT, Okla. (April 28, 2022)** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) fielded two basketball teams for a national tournament recently, bringing home trophies, including the boys' championship.

Kevin Gwin, senior program manager for CNO Youth Activities, oversaw the project that took a nine-member high school boys team and an eight-member high school girls team to Colorado for the 37th Amerind All West Native American Basketball Tournament. The event was held last month on six courts at the Gold Crown Plaza in Lakewood, outside of Denver.

After putting out a call for players across the Choctaw Reservation, Gwin said, "The boys who made the cut were from Caddo, Fort Towson, Hartshorne and Stringtown, even one from Tulsa."

Gwin and his six-member coaching staff were already familiar with many of the youth having seen them at sports camps over the years.

"However, they had never played together on the same team until their first game in Denver," Gwin said. "Yet of the 100 teams in the tournament, the Choctaws won first place undefeated. In fact, their closest game was the final which we won by 18 points." That was a 76-58 score over a team from Montana.

The trophy for Most Valuable Player of the tournament also went to a member of the Choctaw team. "Seth Pratt of Tulsa was named MVP," Gwin said.

The girls team reached the semi-finals, placing third overall. Again, most had never met until shortly before boarding the bus Wednesday with their first game Friday of that week. They came from as far away as Pittsburgh, Oklahoma, Calumet and Kansas.

Each team each year is different, Gwin said, adding that "We had to scramble to make teams this year. But the talent came through and they did a great job representing the Choctaw Nation."

The teams were appreciative of the several carloads of family that traveled to the event in support. After their showing in Colorado, the Choctaw Nation teams received an invitation to another major all-Native tournament in Atlanta in August.

"We're already making plans," Gwin said.



Photos Provided



Above: The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma high school boys team receives the championship trophy at the 37th Amerind All West Native American Basketball Tournament held recently in Colorado.

Left: The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma high school girls team brings home a third-place trophy.

## Futures of Basketball Showcase

Choctaw Nation Youth Events and Activities (YEA) hosted their annual Futures of Basketball Showcase on April 24 at Southeastern Oklahoma State University's Bloomer Sullivan Arena.

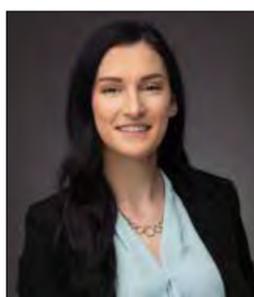
Athletes who attended the event were given the opportunity to show off their skills and learn new ones from college coaches.

A total of 12 athletes and 10 colleges attended the girls showcase and 45 athletes and 8 colleges attended the boys showcase.

YEA offers something for everyone, from athletic clinics and STEAM camps to field trips throughout the year. Through partnerships with college coaches, professors and even NASA engineers, this department knows how to learn while having fun. For more information on the program and upcoming camps and activities, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/yea/>.

## Gaskill, DO finishes medical school

Katy L. Gaskill, DO finished her medical education at Oklahoma State University Center for Health in Tulsa and graduated May 14, 2022, at the Mabee Center in Tulsa. She took part in the Native American Ceremony May 10, 2022, at 1 p.m. Katy has proven to be a great example that once you commit to something it can be achieved. Katy L. Gaskill is the daughter of Royce D. Gaskill and Sandra L. Gaskill. Born in El Paso, Texas then moved to Oklahoma where she connected with her Choctaw roots. Katy is a small-town girl that had this big, big dream to become a doctor, something she set her mind to since a very young age. Katy finished her Pre-Med at SOSU in Durant, and then she was accepted to attend Oklahoma State University Center for Health in Tulsa. It has been an adventure and a commitment she set out to do without ever giving up. Katy will be doing her residency at the Osteopathic Medical Education Consortium of Oklahoma. Katy comes from a humble working-class family that has always supported her dream to become a doctor. Katy has a younger sister, Natalie L. Gaskill, that is currently a chemistry student at SOSU. Katy's mother is very proud of her children's accomplishments.



"Katy Gaskill, DO: you have done very well my beautiful, brave daughter of mine. There were times that life treated you unfairly but your unwavering faith in the Lord kept you from ever leaving your dream behind. You are a true hero in my eyes and an example to be followed. Keep aiming high, my daughter, as the Lord will always be by your side. Love Mom."

## M/Sgt. Chambers retires

M/Sgt. Philip M. Chambers of Moorpark, California retired from the Air Force after 21 years. Assignments were Tinker AFB, OK (911) Oman, Afghanistan, Iraq, Azores, Portugal, South Korea, and Japan where he met his wife, Aya. His mother, Cynthia Chambers, is a tribal member and his grandfather, Patrick Coxsey, was a tribal member, who retired from the US Army after 20 years, a veteran of WWII in France, 66th division Black Panthers. M/Sgt Chambers' awards in Air Force Communications Squadrons: NCO of the Quarter, 2018, 2020, Joint Services Commendation, National Service Defense, Korean Defense, AF Achievement, Meritorious Unit, Defense Superior Service, AF Expeditionary, Iraq Campaign.



## Wheelus is Veteran of the Month

Thomas Wheelus is Choctaw Nation's Veteran of the Month. Wheelus was born, raised, and currently resides in Hugo, District 8.

He graduated from Hugo High School in 1966 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1969. Upon graduation from boot camp, Wheelus went to Norman, Oklahoma, where he worked as an auditor for the University of Oklahoma until he received active orders in Sept. 1970 and was home ported on the USS Oklahoma City Yokosuka, Japan.

Wheelus arrived in Vietnam in Oct. 1970, where he served 33 months in the Combat Zone aboard USS Oklahoma City which provided troop support and ground fire from the Mekong Delta up the coast to Hanoi, participating in Operation Linebacker. USS Oklahoma was the first ship to use a guided missile from ship to shore. SK Striker Wheelus was promoted to Storekeeper 2nd class (SK2) E-5.

Upon release from the U.S. Navy, Wheelus resumed his job at the University of Oklahoma and attended classes, majoring in music until 1977. He left college to be District Manager for Oklahoma Publishing Company until 1979, went on to work in a foreign car salvage yard until 1980, then ultimately worked as a music therapist until 1983. Wheelus returned to school at Northwestern in Weatherford, Okla. and graduated in 1985 with two bachelor degrees. He worked at the J.D. McCarty Handicap Children Center in Norman, Okla. until 1990, during which time he earned his Master of Music. He worked until retirement in 2010 at Griffin Memorial Hospital and attended Doctoral level classes in music at the University of Oklahoma.

He is the great-great nephew of Chief Justice Joel Everidge, born in 1828, who came across the Trail of Tears at age four. He was carried most of the way by his older sister Harriet Everidge, who married Thomas Oaks.

Wheelus comes from a military family. His father served the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, two uncles served in Europe, and an uncle served in Korea.

## Barnett graduates from SEOSU

Robi-Von Barnett graduated from SEOSU in Durant on May 7. Barnett graduated with a degree in Occupational Safety and will be interning in Anchorage Alaska for Granite Construction this summer. "I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the scholarships and the opportunities you have given me. I was an Ambassador for Camp Chahta and attended the Governor's Leadership program during my time at college. I have learned so much about my heritage during these years at Durant, and this has given me a new perspective and a new appreciation about my culture. I will forever be grateful. The Choctaw Nation truly cares for their people. Thanks again for everything," said Barnett.



## SUMMER SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE



APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW

SUMMER FUNDING IS NOW AVAILABLE!

Award amount will be based upon GPA and credit hours attempted up to six hours maximum. All applications must be received prior to the stated deadlines.

Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for processing.

TO APPLY

CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHAHTAACHVFFA  
800-522-6170

Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program



## STUDENT SCHOOL AND ACTIVITY FUND

The Choctaw Nation offers a \$100 grant to Choctaw tribal students who are attending 3-year-old head start through high school. The grant is provided one time each funding year and will be on a Visa card specifically for clothing; it will be declined at ATMs, gas stations, restaurants, movie theaters, etc.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Students must possess a Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal membership card (This is not the CDIB).
- Students must be at least 3-years-old in head start/daycare setting through 12th grade.
- If the student is between ages 19 to 21 attending high school additional school enrollment documentation will be required.

580-634-0681

CHAHTAACHVFFA.CHOCTAWNATION.COM

APPLICATIONS OPEN JUNE 1 - AUGUST 31, 2022

## COLLEGE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE



### APPLICATION DATES:

FALL FUNDING CYCLE: JUNE 1 - SEPTEMBER 1  
SPRING FUNDING CYCLE: JANUARY 2 - APRIL 1

CHAHTAACHVFFA.CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Choctaw Nation Education Services

ITI FABVSSA

# A New Chahta Homeland: A History by the Decade, 1950-1960

Iti Fabvssa is currently running a series that covers the span of Oklahoma Choctaw history. By examining each decade since the Choctaw government arrived in our new homelands using Choctaw-created documents, we better understand Choctaw ancestors' experiences and how they made decisions that have led us into the present. This month covers the 1950-1960 period when legislation outlining the process for Choctaw termination was developed and passed into U.S. law.

Many Choctaws were frustrated that it took 43 years for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to sell the Choctaw-Chickasaw coal and asphalt lands. Since Choctaws were supposed to receive per capita payments from the sale, the delay in the sale prevented many from receiving much-needed money. Many who were unaware of the complicated nature of this process came to believe that Choctaw chiefs were not doing their job – even though they worked diligently with other Choctaw leaders, BIA officials, members of Congress, and local state leaders to move the process along. In response, some Choctaw community members wrote letters to local Congressmen and BIA officials to complain about the chiefs. Some even went as far as to call for the abolishment of the office of the Choctaw chief and the dissolution of the relationship between the U.S. and Choctaw government. These misunderstandings about the nature of the duties and job of the Choctaw chief ultimately led to greater challenges for the Choctaw people to overcome as a whole.

Community frustrations with Choctaw leaders' limited ability to respond to community members' needs and concerns were used and cited by individuals in the BIA to push for termination. Beginning in the 1940s, the federal government began to pivot towards disestablishing tribal governments to assimilate Native people into U.S. society and its norms. In August 1953, U.S. Congress passed a resolution to "make the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other citizens of the United States, to end their status as wards of the United States, and to grant them all of the rights and prerogatives pertaining to American citizenship." This resolution marked a new direction in federal policy regarding Native peoples. Across the United States, Native peoples grappled with poor economic conditions, which the 1928 Meriam report found to be the primary result of allotment. Moving beyond World War II, the federal government developed a policy that built upon previous laws like the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act to help Native people. Strategies that became increasingly prominent were termination policies that would further



Chief Harry J. W. Belvin oversaw the development and passing of Choctaw termination legislation that would later be reversed. Image courtesy of The Gateway to Oklahoma History, Oklahoma Historical Society (<https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1618936/>).

disrupt Native communities.

In addition to termination legislation that aimed at ending the nation-to-nation relationship between Native nations and the U.S. government, a major and infamous termination-era policy was relocation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs-run urban relocation program was meant to solve the problem of poor economic conditions on the reservations while assimilating Native people into American society. The logic of this policy was to move Native people from reservations to major cities like Dallas, Chicago and Los Angeles so they could learn skills and gain employment. The BIA pledged to help people find housing and employment but in practice, the program often did not provide all of the support needed by Native people to make such a big move and life change. The relocation program, which began in 1952 and later expanded in 1956, caused major shifts in Native communities across the U.S. and contributed to building urban native communities.

Numerous Choctaws, faced with low economic prospects in Southeastern Oklahoma due to reliance on the low-wage economy, participated in relocation programs. Oklahoma City and Dallas were the primary local destinations for Choctaws. Throughout this period,

many left Oklahoma to find work and opportunities unavailable in Choctaws' new homeland. Military service also offered a way to leave the poverty that was increasingly becoming entrenched in rural Choctaw communities. As a federal policy, Relocation helps to explain why so many Choctaw community members live outside of our treaty boundaries. Despite the physical distance, some Choctaws maintained their connections to our Oklahoma communities and would travel back and forth. Others may have lost those connections, but many of them and their descendants are reconnecting with our Choctaw community today.

To help the Choctaws, Chief Harry J. W. Belvin went to court for financial compensation from the U.S. government for failing to fulfill their legal obligations to the Choctaw Nation. In 1943, the federal government set up the Indian Claims Commission as a venue for Native nations to bring lawsuits against the U.S. government. In 1951, Belvin took a case regarding the Net Proceeds and Leased District to the Indian Claims Commission for \$753,609. The court's rejection of the Choctaw suit motivated Belvin to organize a democratically elected tribal council and councils for each of the counties in Choctaw territo-

ry. This was ultimately rejected by the BIA area director and led Belvin to try to move away from BIA interference in Choctaw affairs.

Chief Harry J. W. Belvin worked with the Oklahoma congressional delegation to draft legislation that would restructure Choctaw Nation's relationship with the federal government to reduce the BIA involvement with Choctaws' daily lives. The legislative path to Choctaw termination differed from other Native nations slated for termination in the same time period since much of the push for it was initiated by Chief Belvin and a small group of Choctaws who thought such a separation would help their business interests. Initially, when Belvin proposed this legislation in his letters with the Oklahoma congressional delegation, he called for a policy that would give Choctaws greater management and control over their own lands and affairs. Belvin wanted to maintain Choctaw political distinctiveness, but through a legal entity like a corporation that would not be subjected to BIA oversight.

The law that the BIA officials drafted was different than what Belvin advocated for in his correspondence with the members of the Oklahoma congressional delegation and federal officials. The draft legislation proposed a wholesale termination of the Choctaw Nation. In congressional testimony years later, Belvin stated that the legislation that was read to and approved by a convention of Choctaw community members was different from the one that was approved and passed into law by Congress.

In 1959, the U.S. Congress passed an act that would become known as Choctaw Termination. This law outlined the procedure for what needed to happen to officially sever Choctaws' nation-to-nation relationship with the U.S. government. The law stated that it would supplement the original 1906 act to provide for the final disposition of the affairs of the Five Tribes in Indian Territory by terminating only the Choctaws' unique status as a nation. In the next decade, Choctaw community members would learn about this termination legislation while Choctaw leaders worked to wrap up Choctaw affairs. Covering 1960-1970, we will delve into the Choctaw efforts that stopped Choctaw termination.

Additional reading resources on this period are available on the Choctaw Nation Cultural Service webpage <https://choctawnationculture.com/choctaw-culture/additional-resources.aspx>.

Follow along with this Iti Fabvssa series in print and online at <https://www.choctawnation.com/biskinik/iti-fabvssa/>

If you have questions or would like more information on the sources, please contact Megan Baker at [meganb@choctawnation.com](mailto:meganb@choctawnation.com).

**ORDER ONLINE!**  
Curbside or Delivery!  
Get grocery ads! Find recipes!  
Download the app today!

CHOCTAW COUNTRY MARKET

**ART MARKET**  
JUNE 11, 2022 | 12:00PM-4:00PM

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: [BIT.LY/CCC-WORKSHOP-EVENTS](https://bit.ly/ccc-workshop-events)

**CHOCTAW POWWOW 2022**

**SAVE THE DATE | NOVEMBER 4-6**

NOVEMBER 4  
POWOW KICK-OFF AT CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

NOVEMBER 5-6  
THE GRAND THEATER AT CHOCTAW CASINO & RESORT - DURANT

Make plans to join us as we kick off Native American month with one of the nation's largest powwows. Experience the sights and sounds of dancers from all over the country. You won't want to miss it!

Choctaw Casino & Resort hotel discount code: POWWOW22

[CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM/EVENTS](https://choctawculturalcenter.com/events)

HOSTED BY CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER | CHOCTAW CASINO & RESORT DURANT

**CHAHTA HOMESTEAD PROJECT: 1830-1930**

HOMESTEADS | OLD SCHOOLS | CHURCHES | FAMILY HISTORY | PHOTOGRAPHS

Our project aims to bring together the information we do know with community knowledge to stitch together a map of the Choctaw Nation's early landscape.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**  
What are you interested in learning from this project? Do you have information to provide?

[HISTORICPRESERVATION@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:historicpreservation@choctawnation.com) | [CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://choctawnation.com)

**Choctaw Nation** Cultural Services

# Animal Assisted Interventions help make therapy more comfortable

By Chris Jennings

Choctaw Nation Behavioral Health is taking steps to help patients feel more comfortable during visits by offering Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI). AAI are structured meetings or therapy sessions with specific goals to incorporate animals in health, education and human services. These goals can produce therapeutic gains and improve health and wellness.

Examples of AAI include Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), Animal Assisted Activities (AAA), and Animal Assisted Workplace Well-being (AAWW).

Casey, an American Kennel Club (AKC) registered Labrador retriever, and her owner, Rachel Long, a licensed professional counselor with the Choctaw Nation, see patients of all ages at the Windhorse Family Counseling Center in McAlester, Oklahoma. She also visits the group therapy sessions at Chi Holla Li and the Recovery Center and goes to Behavioral Health staff meetings.

The human-animal bond is strong. Research has shown that being in the presence of animals can reduce stress levels, blood pressure and anxiety. Long says, "It really helps people with their anxiety, calms them and soothes them a little bit better."

In the case of Chi holla Li and the Recovery Center, residents may have had pets they had to leave at home or had a pet during their childhood. "A lot of them had to leave their pets behind or no longer have their pets. So, I think for them, it's a bond with another animal that they had before," said Long.

Getting Casey approved as a therapy dog wasn't easy. Long, who has worked for the Nation for five years, saw a need and made it happen. "I took it upon myself to see what I could do to make this program happen. I kind of took it on as a special project on the side, in my free time," said Long.

During that limited free time, Long went through the steps to get Casey certified as an AKC Good Citizen; took a 40-hour handlers course; tested with Pet Partners International, an animal-assisted therapy organization; and wrote the Choctaw Nation's policy and procedures for the whole program.

Long, who completes most of the training at night and on weekends, says, "in the back of my head, I've always wanted to start this... ever since I started here five years ago, I was thinking, 'well, why don't we have this?' And then I was like, okay, yep, we're doing it. I definitely wanted to make this happen for

the Choctaw Nation," she said.

Making it happen for the Choctaw Nation has also made good things happen for her patients. Long says Casey can sense what kind of help patients need. "People that are really anxious, she just wants to sit by them and lay her head on them, she wants to be close to them. She can feel the anxiety or tension they're having, and she wants to be there, kind of like to hug them," she said.

"Kids interact a lot more with her, like playing with her and want her to sit or lay down. They think it's really neat that they can say it, and she'll do it. But adults, it's more of an emotional support kind of connection that she makes with them," said Long.

Staying on top of Casey's mental health is also a priority for Long. She says they have a schedule for Casey so that she's not overstressed by seeing patients back-to-back.

By working an hour and then taking an hour off, Casey can decompress and release some of the tension and anxiety she takes on from patients. "We take the time out, and we'll go take a little walk around a couple of blocks, play outside for a little bit and get her a drink and a snack," said Long.

Like many humans, Long says Casey will take something of her work home with her. Long says that on days when Casey doesn't work, she's just like a regular dog.

"She wants to play, she wants to go out, she wants to do things. On the days she works, she will come in the house, and she'll hang out for just a little bit with us, and she'll want to eat dinner and go straight to bed," she said.

To open up more possibilities and maybe take some of the load off Casey, Long is working with one of her other dogs to be certified hopefully by the end of the summer. Long says she would like to get into more schools and do more community service projects with her other dog.

From that idea in the back of her head years ago to where she is now, Long says she is happy that she and Casey can help the citizens of the Choctaw Nation. "It makes me feel so excited that I've gotten the opportunity to do this and that my director has let me come this far with this program. And it makes me extremely happy to be able to provide this service for people and see the change that she makes for people and for patients of the Choctaw Nation," said Long.



Submitted Photo

Rachel Long, a licensed professional counselor for the Choctaw Nation and her dog Casey offer support in the form of Animal Assisted Intervention at several Nation locations

## Prescription Refill Center celebrates 15 years

**POTEAU, Okla.** – Last month, the Choctaw Nation Refill Center in Poteau celebrated 15 years of operation. The Refill Center opened in 2007 with the purpose of delivering prescriptions in a more efficient way to Choctaw Nation tribal members. The Refill Center services the entire United States and is available to anyone who has a Certified Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card or is an employee of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Today, the prescription refill center is located in a 15,000+ square foot space in the Poteau Clinic. On average, they can send out 4,000 prescriptions a day. The most scripts filled in a single day is 10,300.

"Several employees have been with us from the beginning," says Candice Vaughn, Pharmacy Manager. "It has been exciting to see the improvements in technology that allow us to reach and exceed our goals. We started out with very manual processes and advanced over these 15 years to be very automated with only a few tasks remaining manual. The Refill Center has sent over 10.5 million prescriptions since opening in 2007!"

The Refill Center "employs" several robots throughout the facility. A robotic arm fills pill bottles using the weight of the pills in a machine holding 254 bays of medications. "The robotic arm has several contingencies if it malfunctions, but we haven't needed them," explains Vaughn. Conveyor belts carry pill bottles and other items throughout the facility to be labeled and packaged for delivery.

"Rex and Wall-E are my favorite robots," says Matthew Akers, Poteau Clinic Director. "These robots carry prescriptions from the back of the facility to the front desk to serve patients in person. This keeps the pharmacy technicians at the patient window to provide better customer service to our patients."



Photo by Choctaw Nation

Teresa Jackson, Candice Vaughn, Todd Hallmark, Jess Henry, Brian Danker and Matthew Akers celebrate the 15 years of the Choctaw Nation Refill Center.



**NEW VIRTUAL  
DIABETES PREVENTION  
PROGRAM CLASS STARTS  
JUNE 7**

APPLY AT:  
**CHOCTAWNATION.COM/DPP**

Choctaw Nation Health Services

**CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

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

**June 2022**  
All markets open weekdays, June 1-28  
**Closed:** June 29 & 30.  
Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation  
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

**ANTLERS** 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443  
*Food demos June 14*

**BROKEN BOW** 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842  
*Food demos June 8*

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773  
*Food demos June 9*

**MCALESTER** 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716  
*Food demos June 7*

**POTEAU** 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431  
*Food demos June 15*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Chicken Chili Soup

- 1 pound, Chicken breast, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 red bell Pepper, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- ½ cup canned whole kernel corn,
- drained 2 (15 oz.) cans kidney beans
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (15oz.) can tomato sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 Tablespoon cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

### Preparation

1. Coat a large pot with a tablespoon of oil and place over medium-high heat. Cook and stir chicken, bell peppers, and onion until chicken is brown and peppers are just tender.
2. Stir in corn, beans, tomatoes, tomato sauce and water. Season with chili powder, garlic powder, cayenne, cilantro and cumin. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 30 minutes. Yield: 8 servings



## SHOULD I BE SCREENED FOR LUNG CANCER?

The more you smoke, and the longer you smoke, the higher your risk is for lung cancer. You should consider being screened using a Low-Dose CT Scan if you have all three of these risk factors:

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

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

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

**WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS**

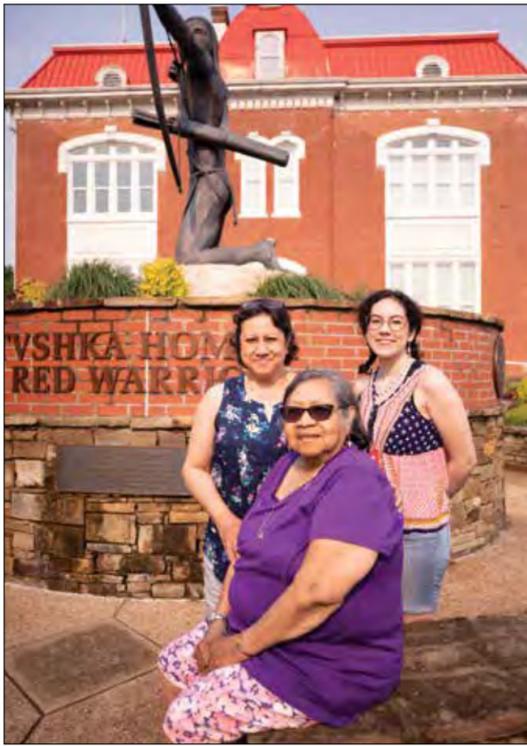
LOCATION	DAYS	HOURS
<b>Antlers</b> 580-298-3161	Every Tuesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Atoka</b> 580-889-5825	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Battiest</b> 580-241-5458	1st Tuesday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Broken Bow</b> 580-584-2746	Monday - Friday (except 1st Tuesday & 2nd Thursday 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

# Remembering the Trail of Tears



Many Choctaw tribal members and friends traveled to Tvshka Homma April 30, for the 2022 Trail of Tears Walk. The commemorative 2.5-mile hike is only a fraction in comparison to the some 700 miles covered by foot in the 1830s when Choctaws were removed from their homeland.



Photos by Chris Jennings

Betty Karbo, front with her daughter Julie Prowdly and granddaughter Carly. Karbo has been attending the Trail of Tears walk since 1992. This was Carly's first year to attend.

## Michigan Choctaw preserves memories of Trail of Tears Walks



Submitted photo

Betty Karbo of Cadillac, Michigan, has traveled to Tvshka Homma yearly since 1992 to attend the Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Walks.

Though she was born in Talihina, Oklahoma, Karbo said she married a military man, and they ended up settling in Michigan. Michigan is far from her original home, but Karbo said she has loved coming to the walks and can't miss them. "When you start walking, you can almost be with your ancestors. It's a wonderful thing we do to honor our ancestors."

Karbo, 77, said that she got excited when she found out the walk would be happening this year. Her 21-year-old granddaughter has always dreamed of meeting her Oklahoma family and doing the walk with her grandmother, who will be accompanying her.

Each year that Karbo has attended the walk, she has purchased a t-shirt commemorating the event. She had some of the shirts made into a quilt and planned to use this year's t-shirt to make a pillow.







**GET REWARDED FOR GRADES AND PERFECT ATTENDANCE!  
NEW ON THE CHAHTA ACHVFFA MEMBER PORTAL**

APPLY FOR THE STAR PROGRAM AT  
[CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHAHTAACHVFFA](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHAHTAACHVFFA)

800-522-6170 | [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/STAR-PROGRAM](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/STAR-PROGRAM)

Choctaw Nation STAR Program



**TASTE THE TRADITION**

Located in the  
Choctaw Cultural Center

Lunch Served  
Tuesday – Saturday | 10:30am-4:30pm

*Paid admission is not required.*




# CAMP CHAHTA

**At Camp Chahta, our College Counselors will help you with:**

- Applying for financial aid
- Adjusting to dorm life
- Registration and Enrollment
- Making new friends
- Orientation
- Participating in cultural activities

FAMILY NIGHT BEGINS AT 6:00 PM



**AUGUST 4-5**  
Family Night  
August 4



**AUGUST 8-11**  
Family Night  
August 8



**AUGUST 15-17**  
Family Night  
August 15

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT THE LOCAL COLLEGE COUNSELORS

**800-522-6170**

**COLLEGEFYI@CHOCTAWNATION.COM**

**Choctaw Nation**

College Freshman Year Initiative

Stay Connected

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





Everybody wants a

# Country Market Gift Card

Give the gift they'll love to get and love to use. Choctaw Country Market gift cards, now available in any desired amount.

**See Associate for details.**



# Take in the views and soak up the sun on your next road trip through Choctaw Country

## Part 3

By Christian Toews

As spring is ending and we start to see the first glimpse of summer in Choctaw Country, we are making the final leg of our three-part road trip through Southeastern Oklahoma. We visited large cities and small towns in the first part of our trip. We have already seen some of the best and most beautiful areas in Oklahoma – but we aren't done yet. We will explore even more destinations worth adding to your list in this portion of our road trip. It doesn't matter if you want to take a day trip or spend a few days in each location. There is plenty to see and experience at all of our stops.

We ended the last section of our road trip in Pocola, Oklahoma. We will travel southwest from Pocola and take a scenic drive to Talihina, Oklahoma. The drive from Pocola to Talihina is beautiful no matter what road you take, but the most scenic route would be along Highway 1. This highway is part of the Talimena National Scenic Byway and is one of the most spectacular places in Oklahoma. The U.S. Department of Transportation has designated this section of road as an official National Scenic Byway. Driving the entire scenic byway takes you across one of the highest mountain ranges between the Appalachians and the Rockies. The whole drive is 54 miles long one-way, so you will need most of the day to explore the byway

if you plan to drive its entirety. Stopping at any sweeping vistas along the way is well worth your time. There are no services along the drive, so make sure you stop in Talihina and get some snacks and drinks before you head out.

Chamber of Commerce director, Vera Nelson, said that people come from all over the country and worldwide to visit the Talimena drive. "The most popular time to visit is in the fall, and we get people from all around the world who visit our area." Nelson encouraged visitors to stop by the visitor center in Talihina and pick up a Talimena Scenic Byway guidebook. You can also visit [www.talimenascenicdrive.com](http://www.talimenascenicdrive.com) and the Talihina Chamber of Commerce website [www.talihinacc.com](http://www.talihinacc.com) to plan your trip.

Talihina is well known for the Talimena drive, but there are many other reasons to stop in this city with great coffee at My Crystal Chandelier Coffee House & Gift Shop or a historic place to spend the night at Hootie Creek Guest House. If you need to stop for gas and a snack, stop at the Choctaw Travel Plaza. Anything you need for your journey is right here.

From Talihina, we are going to travel west to McAlester, Oklahoma. This large city is well known for the McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, where the majority of the bombs used by the United States military are manufactured. With many wineries, breweries, and restaurants, this is an entertaining stop on any road trip

through the area. One of the most popular restaurants is Pete's Place in Krebs, Oklahoma. Krebs borders McAlester and is worth the stop if you love good food. If you are looking for something quick, there have been many developments near the highway through McAlester, and there is a variety of fast food, coffee, and gas options.

Leaving McAlester, we are headed south to our final destination on our road trip. Our last stop



Photo by Christian Toews

The Talimena Drive is known for its vivid foliage, beautiful views and stunning sunsets, making it a perfect stop on your next road trip through Choctaw Country.

has everything you need to stay for a few hours to a few days. Durant, Oklahoma, has become one of Oklahoma's most popular tourist areas, and with good reason. Durant has something to offer everyone with multiple outdoor recreation options, a world-class resort hotel, and a vibrant downtown.

A few minutes drive from Durant will bring you to Lake Texoma. With approximately 1200 miles of shoreline, there are plenty of swim beaches, recreation areas, and things to do on and off the water. Many marinas in the area offer boat rentals, so you can get out and enjoy being on the water even if you are visiting. If you want to camp, there are plenty of options near Durant to camp close to the water.

After you play on the lake, head to Durant's downtown. This is a wonderful place to visit a local coffee shop, brewery, restaurant, or shop for some unique treasures. Durant offers a farmers' market and various other community events during the warmer months of the year. You can visit [www.durant.org](http://www.durant.org) and see a calendar of community events to help you plan your stop in Durant.

If you want a world-class, luxurious experience in the heart of southeast-

ern Oklahoma, visit Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant. With 1,700 hotel rooms available at the AAA Four Diamond hotel, 16 restaurant options, and a variety of bars and lounges, it's easy to enjoy yourself. Are you traveling with kids? Visit The District, where there is an arcade, six movie theaters, bowling and more. The food and entertainment options are almost limitless.

Visiting Choctaw Casino Resort Durant in the warm months of the year is particularly appealing because of the newly opened resort pools. Aqua is a three-acre area of pools, cabanas, outdoor bars, and more. One family-friendly pool is fully equipped with two waterslides, and the other is an exclusive, adult-only pool. If you want a place of your own for the day, Aqua offers 50 luxurious poolside cabanas. For more information on Aqua or anything Choctaw Casino Resort offers, you can visit [www.choctawcasinos.com](http://www.choctawcasinos.com).

Our road trip through southeastern Oklahoma has ended, but now is the time to let your adventure begin. Whether you follow the road trip exactly or create your own from our three-part series, you are sure to enjoy Choctaw Country.



Choctaw Nation Photo

Nothing says tropical escape quite like three beautiful acres and two pools: one family-friendly and fully equipped with two waterslides, and the other an exclusive, adult-only pool.

# Risner inspires others while staying true to her roots

By Shelia Kirven

Rachel Risner has not been one to be satisfied with minimal requirements for her nursing career and is going all the way to the top to ensure that she is making a positive impact on her patients and nursing students.

"It's been a journey. It started out in my much younger days. I was taking care of a young man that had cerebral palsy, and I was working as a home health aide. He really inspired me to do more. And so that's really how my career in nursing started." She went on to say, "It opened my eyes to want to go into nursing."

After finishing her basics at Oklahoma City Community College, she applied for the nursing program and completed her Associate of Applied Science and Nursing in 2005.

She went to Oklahoma City University, where she completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and graduated in 2007.

Risner began working in a hospital, starting in Med Surge and ICU and eventually moved into a wound care position. Yet, something inside her kept nudging her to do more.

After being accepted to Frontier Nursing University, she completed her Master of Science in Nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner in 2010. She had also begun working as a nurse educator in 2008 while going to school. She is a full-time nurse educator in an administrative position and continues as a part-time family nurse practitioner.

Risner went back to Oklahoma City University to complete her Doctor of Nursing Practice with a Clinical Focus and graduated in 2013. Her doctoral project focused on decreasing prescription drug abuse in the clinical setting.

Yet again, she felt she was still missing something. She then received a double doctorate completing her Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Education in 2016. Her dissertation focused on the FDA's up scheduling of hydrocodone and the effect of nurse practitioner pain management practices.

She now works for Frontier Nursing University out of Kentucky. In 2018, she became Associate Dean

of Academic Affairs and is also the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning Director, the Quality Enhancement Program Director, doing this since 2018 while still practicing as a part-time family nurse practitioner.

Risner has also done overseas work for several years, working with the American Institute of Health Care Quality and the American Gulf International Consulting Agency, traveling to the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, working in hospitals to provide healthcare consulting and teaching a course on certified professional and infection control.

She is an accreditation commission for nursing education peer evaluator and evaluation review panel member and is very involved in the National League of Nursing (NLN). She was the NLN AARP Representative for the American Indian Alaska Native Work Group, a native curriculum committee member, and American Indian Alaska Native webinar committee member and presenter. She helped the same group develop a tool kit for faculties to work with American Indian and Native Alaskan students. She is also working with the NLN on diversity, equity, and inclusion series for which they have been developing workshops and webinars. She is an NLN Step into Leadership Coach and is on their strategic action group.

Risner has recently been nominated for the NLN Governor At-Large Position, which she says is an esteemed position on the NLN board. "I was extremely excited just to be nominated," she said.

She is a committee member and contributor to the Oklahoma state plan to decrease prescription drug abuse, has published on prescription drug abuse and is a professional member of several educational and research organizations.

Risner said she is also very proud to be a member of a small group of Native American nurses in Oklahoma that came together 18 months ago to develop the first official organization in the state called the Oklahoma Indigenous Nurses Association, of which she is president-elect.

"We have been doing some phenomenal work. We did just respond to the American Nurses Association's reckoning statement that they put out providing language surrounding Indigenous populations and



Photo Provided

Rachel Hope Risner is making a difference in the world of nursing, both through the clinical and teaching fields.

how we would like that language that they provided to include the word 'Indigenous' in their statement," said Risner. "We did receive a very nice response from them."

She said she is grateful for the Choctaw Nation's educational assistance. "It was so helpful. I come from a home that was also underserved, and we struggled, and it was difficult for me to go to school. I had to take out student loans to pay my way through school."

She said she also received other services, such as the clothing allowance.

"It made a world of difference. Plus, just being able to have medical care and having that available was huge, not just through my childhood, but through my adult life and not having to worry about paying for that outside of everything else that was impacting me. It was also so helpful."

Today, Risner is making an impact in the world of nursing and continues to do so from her native state of Oklahoma.

"I am just trying to stay true to my roots and make sure I am encouraging others to go out there and spread their wings and know that you can always do more and help others and be kind and be compassionate. There's always work to do. It may be busy, and it may be time-consuming, but we can always do something to impact somebody," said Risner.

She has advice for anyone who wants to get started in the nursing field.

"I have a simple statement for you. Positive thoughts, positive actions, positive reactions," said Risner. "That's the motto I live by. You can do anything if you put your mind to it. Anything. Regardless of where you come from. You can do anything, and you can accomplish anything. You just have to work hard."

Her future goal is to move up in administration. Risner would love to be the provost for a large university one day and would love to work for the National League of Nursing to influence health policy and nursing in a much more significant way to impact the nation positively.

Through everything she is involved in, Risner said she still takes time out for herself and practices self-care. "Self-care is so important. If we don't take care of ourselves, we can't take care of anybody else. We've got to feed ourselves. We've got to feed ourselves spiritually, health-wise, mentally, everything."

Risner said she hopes that this article can inspire one person. She said she would love to mentor someone and wanted our readers to know that she's always there with anything she can do to help someone.

Rachel can be reached by emailing [Rachel.risner@frontier.edu](mailto:Rachel.risner@frontier.edu).

## YAB YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

### QUARTERLY CONFERENCE

**JULY 9, 2022 | 9:00AM**  
CHOCTAW NATION CAPITOL GROUNDS | TVSHKA HOMMA

- YAB Business Meeting
- Team building with the University of North Texas
- Your FUTURE with UNT
- Catered Lunch
- Keynote Speaker - Terry Ashby (Choctaw Nation Operational Excellence)

**RSVP NOW: [YAB@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:YAB@CHOCTAWNATION.COM) | 580-740-1204**  
**EVENT LINK: [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/YOUTH-EMPOWERMENT](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/YOUTH-EMPOWERMENT)**

This opportunity is available to ALL students, Native and non-Native, in grades 8-12 who live in the Choctaw Nation.

### UPDATE YOUR CHOCTAW NATION MAILING SUBSCRIPTION

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

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

- Biskinik
- Birthday Card

- Calendar
- Christmas Ornament

- Member Letter

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

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

**CHOCTAW NATION CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT**  
800-522-6170

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma • TOGETHER WE'RE MORE •

## Robert Holster and Oregon Air National Guard pay tribute to Choctaw Code Talkers with aircraft art

By Christian Toews

The Oregon Air National Guard held a ceremony on April 14, 2022, to dedicate the nosecone of one of their F-15 Eagle fighter aircraft with artwork that honors the Choctaw Code Talkers who served in WWI.

Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. attended the event, and Batton addressed the audience in the Choctaw language during the ceremony.

Staff Sergeant Robert Holster is the Dedicated Crew Chief for the decorated jet. Holster designed the artwork and said that he was inspired by Choctaw artist Gwen Coleman Lester's work.

"I drew the arrowhead because it's significant to the original code talkers. It was part of the original artwork when the code talkers were called 'The Telephone Warriors,'" said Holster.

According to Holster, the artwork took over 30 hours to design and draw.

Holster would spend any downtime working on the art using mostly applications on his phone. After the artwork design was complete, he had help from other colleagues on his base to enlarge the art and prepare it for placement on the nose of the aircraft.

He said the idea for the nose art came from learning the history of the Choctaw Code Talkers from WWI. Their bravery inspired him. He hopes the nose art honors their service and helps educate people about the code talkers who served in World War I.

"Honoring and continuing to honor our code talkers is important to me. I feel like they are honored, and they are proud to look down on us. I can tell other crew members about the history of it. I just hope that people remember that piece of history," said Holster.

Holster began his career with the Air National Guard after a divorce. He had an extensive career as a firefighter and had worked his way up to an engine captain. He began to make some bad decisions while going through the divorce. He said that he knew he needed more discipline and direction in his life. "I just kept driving past the recruiters, and every time I would feel that I needed to stop and talk to them. After the third time I drove by, I decided to stop and talk to them. The recruiter was honest,

and everything he said would happen happened. I really enjoy what I do now," said Holster. It was essential to know what would happen in his Air National Guard career because he had to care for his children, and leaving his children for basic training was one of the most challenging things he has ever done. "But since then, my career here has been nothing but positive," said Holster.

Holster's 18 years of experience as a firefighter helped him earn a silver star. He said that another part of his mission as an Air National Guard member is to support the state of Oregon with any emergency response.

With his previous fire experience, he volunteered to help with the numerous wildfires that Oregon faces each year. In 2017, he assisted the firefighters when his Sergeant approached him and told him that he had a member down.

Holster immediately ran to the injured firefighter's location. After making his way to the injured firefighter, he assessed that the individual had a severe heat-related illness and injuries. The firefighter was incapacitated and needed rescue, so Holster transported the firefighter over two miles through rugged terrain to get him to safety and ultimately saved his life. He was awarded a silver star for this act of bravery and fast recognition.

Holster said having his artwork that honors the WWI Code Talkers put on his aircraft was an exciting and memorable experience despite all of these accomplishments.

"At Kingsley Field, it's unique to have the opportunity for nose art, as most Air Force aircraft have lost this customary practice. When I became the crew chief on this jet, it didn't have any nose art. I took the opportunity to not only honor military tradition but also honor my heritage as a Choctaw Native American. I would like to thank our Wing Commander Colonel Edwards and Maintenance Group Commander Colonel Bouma for continuing this tradition and allowing my design to get approved and placed on the nose of the jet," he said. "I'm deeply grateful to share part of my heritage and to honor these amazing and groundbreaking warriors from the Choctaw Nation through this nose art."

American victims of crime, including emergency food, clothing, shelter, safety plans, goal planning, courtroom advocacy (support) and other emergency services to restore the victims' sense of dignity and self-esteem.

Tribal Victim Services guides victims of crime and their families with counseling and group therapy. This program consists of a Victim Advocate and a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) who provide comprehensive, culturally competent, direct services to victims of crime and their families.

Project EMPOWER assists victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking by helping them stabilize housing, childcare and other day-to-day support so they can focus on reclaiming their lives.

For more information about the CNO programs mentioned above, call 877-285-6893.

Family Violence Prevention provides quality specialized services and resources that promote family strengths and stability and enhance the safety of victims of domestic violence, family violence or dating violence and their dependents.

Choctaw Children and Family Services is ready to help anyone experiencing domestic violence. If you or someone you know is a victim of family violence or you're living in fear of violence, call 800-522-6170.

Other useful contacts include:

- Oklahoma Safeline - 800-522-7233 (SAFE)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline - 800-799-7233 (SAFE)
- Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network Hotline - 800-656-4673 (HOPE)
- Communication Services for the Deaf - 800-252-1017 (TTY) / 866-845-7445 (Voice)
- Okla Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.) - 405-524-0770
- Stronghearts Helpline - 844-762-8483 (1-844-7NATIVE)

Even though all of the progress is a step in the right direction for activists and families, there is still much left to do to address this issue correctly.

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center offers resources and ways to get involved in the MMIW movement and information on other Indigenous Women's Issues.

Visit <https://www.niwr.org/> for more information.



Photo by Christian Toews

Robert Holster stands in front of an F-15 Eagle fighter decorated with artwork that honors the Choctaw Code Talkers who served in WWI, which Holster designed.

## Three residency program graduates to serve CNO patients

**DURANT, Okla. (June 27, 2022)** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma will bestow congratulations on three Family Medicine Residency graduates this month. Doctors Eric Gillette, James Stull, and Dustin Davis completed the 3-year program at the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Tahihina.

All three men will begin their careers within the Choctaw Nation Health system. "The Choctaw Nation Family Medicine Residency program takes pride in knowing it imprinted these physicians with such purpose they decided to stay with us," says Dr. Ashton Clayborn, Program Director. "Keeping the doctors we train in our health system is always an added bonus for us."

Dr. Eric A. Gillette comes from Twin Falls, Idaho. He graduated in 2012 from Lewis-Clark State College with his bachelor's in biology. In 2019, he completed his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from A.T. Still University, School of Osteopathic Medicine Arizona. Dr. Gillette enjoys mountain sports including hiking, hunting and skiing. Upon completion of his residency requirements, he will be moving to Poteau, Oklahoma and joining the CNHSA Family Medicine Residency program as an attending faculty member.

Dr. James Stull grew up in Easley, South Carolina. In 2012, he graduated with his bachelor's in biology from the University of Florida and then his Master's in Biomedical Sciences degree in 2013 from Barry University. He ended at Nova Southeastern with his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree. He enjoys anything outdoors and will begin his



Choctaw Nation Photo

Dustin Davis, D.O., James Stull, D.O. and Eric Gillette, D.O. will begin their careers within the Choctaw Nation Health system after graduation.

professional career at the Choctaw Nation Tahihina Clinic.

Dr. Dustin Davis considers Heavener, Oklahoma his hometown. He graduated from the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith with his bachelor's in biology in 2009. He finished his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree in 2016 from Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He is excited to begin his professional career in the Choctaw Nation McAlester Clinic. Dr. Davis and his wife, Jessica, will be welcoming their first child, Hudson, in August.

"It has been an honor to be involved in the training of these physicians and for all of us to serve the Choctaw Nation in this capacity," says Clayborn. "We welcome them to our physician team."

## MMIWG Update

Continued from page 1

"The Justice Department is committed to addressing the crisis of missing or murdered Indigenous persons with the urgency it demands," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "That commitment is reflected in the strength of our partnerships across the federal government, including with the Department of the Interior as we take the next steps in launching the Not Invisible Act Commission. The Commissioners announced today will play a critical role in our efforts to better meet the public safety needs of Native communities. The Justice Department will continue to work alongside our Tribal partners with respect, sincerity and a shared interest in the wellbeing of Tribal communities."

The Not Invisible Act Commission will make recommendations to the Departments of the Interior and Justice to improve inter-governmental coordination and establish best practices for law enforcement, as well as bolster resources for survivors and victims' families and combat the epidemic of missing persons, murder and trafficking of Indigenous people.

According to its mission, the Commission will:

Identify, report and respond to instances of missing and murdered Indigenous peoples (MMIP) cases and human trafficking.

Develop legislative and administrative changes necessary to use federal programs, properties and resources to combat the crisis.

Track and report data on MMIP and human trafficking cases.

Consider issues related to the hiring and retention of law enforcement offices.

Coordinate tribal-state-federal resources to combat MMIP and human trafficking offices on Indian lands.

Increase information sharing with tribal governments on violent crimes investigations and other prosecutions on Indian lands.

For more information and a list of commission members, visit <https://www.doi.gov/priorities/strengthening-indian-country/not-invisible-act-commission>.

CNO offers several services to those affected by domestic violence and abuse.

The Tribal Victim Assistance Program provides comprehensive services to Native

# BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

## June 2022

### In This Issue

- 2 Faith Family Culture
- 3 Okla. Legislative Info
- 4 News of the Nation
- 5 Notes to the Nation
- 6 Family Research
- 7 William Parker
- 8 Obituaries
- 9 PYK
- 10 Iti Fabvssa
- 13 Road Trip



### Page 1:

No more stolen sisters, MMIWG update.

### Page 11:

Casey the therapy dog comforts tribal members.

### Page 12:

Trail of Tears Walk held April 30.

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

Stay Connected to the Nation  
**CHOCTAWNATION.COM**



2022  
**CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL**  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4  
CHOCTAW CAPITOL GROUNDS | TVSHKA HOMMA  
**CHOCTAWNATION.COM**  
FOR UPDATES TEXT 'LABORDAY' TO 888777

PRESORT STD  
AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
CHOCTAW NATION

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